

**Yorkshire Dales LEADER
Notes of Management Group meeting
9th February 2011, 10.30am – 12.15pm
Middleham Key Centre**

Present:

Management Group:

Kevin Lancaster – Chair	Yorkshire Dales National Park
Mike Keeble	Heritage/culture representative
Tom Wheelwright	Business/tourism representative
David Doorbar	Business/tourism representative
Ann Harding	Environmental representative
Rachel Allen	Community/rural services representative
Cllr Les Ellington	Harrogate Borough Council
Cllr Margaret Atkinson	Nidderdale AONB
Stephen Ramsden	Agricultural representative

Support Officers:

Rita Lawson	North Yorkshire County Council
Rima Berry	LEADER Co-ordinator
Catherine Maudsley	North Yorkshire County Council
Patrick Robertson	North Yorkshire County Council

Apologies for absence:

Cllr Richard Foster	Craven District Council
Prue Keigwin – Vice Chair	Community/rural services representative
Colin Bailey	North Yorkshire Work & Skills Partnership
Cllr John Fort	North Yorkshire County Council
Alan Simpson	Richmondshire District Council (Substitute)
Graham Wilkinson	Community/rural services representative
Cllr Jimmy Wilson-Petch	Richmondshire District Council

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Rita advised the Management Group that there had not been any nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair. Kevin Lancaster and Prue Keigwin were therefore returned unopposed for the next 12 months of office.

Kevin Lancaster thanked those present and said he considered it to be a privilege and not an onerous task. It was good to meet other LAG Chairs four times a year and attending events such as that at Burton Agnes Hall.

2. Minutes of the meeting 20th October 2010

It was noted that the venue was incorrect on the minutes.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Financial update

The October minutes had not been added to the website and were not for public consumption. All of the projects that had been approved had been informed of the current

situation. Since the October meeting Dacre and Hartwith have not been successful with their match funding and NYCC has withdrawn their conditional offer of funding. The Dales Walking to Health Initiative has also withdrawn though they have recently obtained funding elsewhere.

Rita informed the Group that Yorkshire Forward were still in discussion with DEFRA about the future of LEADER, and DEFRA had imposed a moratorium on any funding decisions to be taken. This obviously had an effect on applications that had applied for the final round in 2010. Those present were asked not to approach Elizabeth Scott during the AGM later in the day about the current situation as she was fully aware of the October projects that were awaiting a decision and she was not able to comment any further. There were queries as to who DEFRA was likely to contract the work to. Kevin had last met with the other LAG Chairs who had wondered about setting up a stand alone body to do the Yorkshire Forward work.

LEADER Dales is fully committed so in the event of any funding cuts there will be a definite impact on the 2011-12 budget. Any impact to individual projects would need to be minimised by working with them to look at re-profiling to ensure they had a viable project.

Concerns amongst the Group were what was their role and relevance if LEADER was not currently awarding project funding. Rita assured them that their role was not only to give out funding but to be involved in the monitoring and delivery of the programme. The opportunity to approve projects in the future will depend very much on funding becoming available. This was a time to note that despite funding being lost the Management Group should also look at the quality and not the quantity of good projects approved that are proving to be successful, many of which are still currently running and in some cases completed. There will not be a need to meet as regularly as previous years however meetings will still be held. There are proposals to carry out an evaluation to confirm what we have done and what will be the needs of rural areas in the future. A timetable and framework would need to be set up and this would be discussed at the next meeting in April 2011.

David Doorbar suggested that members could visit the projects to help and encourage them and perhaps offer some mentoring where appropriate. He was concerned that some of the projects weren't being run properly. It was felt that there was a wealth of experience within the Group and Rita was sure that they could assist with the evaluation of the projects and the programme. The projects could be told of the individual skills of the Management Group members and offer perhaps a half day of their time where help could be given. Rita agreed that this would be useful as some of the situations she found when going on a monitoring visit were occasionally not good. Kevin felt that the Group had also grown collectively in experience and would be able to contribute more in future with the decisions that were made though there was a concern raised that if a more rigorous process was used it might in turn quash the innovation that LEADER was about.

In Northumberland the Group are allocated projects to 'look after' and in the Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER area the Group visit projects together.

It was difficult to give a definitive financial update at this time as the position was changing daily as the Period 4 claims were being processed and all of the Team were hard at work getting through them as carefully and quickly as possible. A problem being encountered during this process each time is the fact the projects have not been truthful until it is too late in the timescales imposed to stop money being under claimed. Rita and the Team are continually reminding projects that what they are doing is not what they wrote in the application, request they go back to the original application and deliver that. Thus meaning that the over commitment we encountered early on had been disproved at the end of the December when projects could not claim what they had promised.

5. LEADER Dales Coordinator update

Rima gave an update of several of the current projects;

- Wensleydale Tournament of Song produced a beautiful book that has been well received, the book was passed around those present
- Upper Nidderdale Heritage Lighting, Burnsall Village Hall Expansion and Bentham Community Youth Project have all completed after Rima paid them a monitoring visit. The Team have to retain 15% of the original grant awarded until this monitoring visit has been carried out and a report submitted. This is an opportunity for Rima to not just take pictures but to mark the official visit by checking the systems they have in place for monitoring and evaluation and insurance etc.
- Rima carried out a presentation at Barnard Castle for the Northern Pennines Group on Cooperation Projects which was very well received and she has been asked to visit again. Northern Pennines AONB is putting an application into LEADER but they are in same situation as Dales.
- Geo Heritage had been given pre approval and Rima is meeting in Leeds with partners from South Pennines. Research will be carried out to find what other groups are currently working on across the Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and see what the strengths and weaknesses are across the Yorkshire Dales and South Pennines areas.
- Local Food Scoping Study - Craven CVS has now commissioned Rose Regeneration to carry out the project. They have been handed a huge list of people to contact and carry out a desk based audit.
- Rima completed her update by asking the Management Group if they approved of the News burst and they did.

6. Projects

Skills in the Hills

A report had already been circulated to the Management Group from Ann Harding. This was because the project was awarded funding for one year with a premise that a second year could be awarded after the presentation of a year end report. Rita Lawson asked that that report be retracted. Craven College were not happy with how the project had been run and will now take it over if allowed further funding. The Craven College report was then circulated to the Group and they were given time to read it.

A lengthy debate then took place where concerns were raised on the quality and quantity of courses that had been delivered to date. It was also noted that the full amount of the Year 1 funding was not being claimed though they could see why the Summer School had been cancelled. Rita stressed that Lindsey Johnson was submitting a new claim for the final funding amount and had assured her that the project would be run in a very different way in 2011/12. There were concerns that the project was 'sold' to the Management Group as the up-skilling of people and those skills were expected to be taken, developed and used. The courses felt more like hobbies for the retired than real practical and useful skills. Kevin Lancaster would agree to further funding if the original project was delivered with robust practical skills being offered to the correct age group. These should be meaningful training of benefit to individuals working in the agricultural and countryside sector. Following comments on the work of volunteers who were not skilled in such as dry stone walling Cllr Les Ellington asked it to be noted that the volunteers working in the AONB were of a high standard and the area would not be as it is if it were not for those people.

Rita proposed that as the award cannot be made at the moment because of the moratorium she would like to arrange, along with Rima to meet with Lindsey Johnson and her team to discuss what the Management Group had concluded.

There are 10 projects in the pipeline including 5 Parish Councils.

7. Any other business

Rima asked that the Management Group agree to a letter of support being sent to the Resident String Quartet Project based in the Ripon area. This was agreed and Rima will send it.

With support from the Yorkshire and Humber Empowerment Partnership and Harrogate Borough Council, The Plunkett Foundation is providing two free seminars with guest speakers and presentations, illustrating how rural communities can establish and operate a range of facilities and enterprises, including shops, to support their locality. These will be held on 28th February 2011 at Conyngham Hall, Knaresborough.

Kevin was sad to inform those present that he had received a letter from Ann Harding informing him of her wish to resign from the Management Group.

8. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is the 13th April 2011, venue to be arranged.