

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF  
AEFF PROJECT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2012 AT 2,00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM E2, WOODHILL HOUSE**

**Present**

Belinda Miller	FLAG Chairperson
Jamie Bell	Scottish Enterprise
James Buchan	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Gavin Clark	Scottish Natural Heritage

**Officers in Attendance**

Ann Marie Macaskill	Aberdeenshire Council
David-John McRobbie	Aberdeenshire Council
Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

**Apologies**

David Cook	Banff & Buchan College
Ian Hay	East Grampian Coastal Partnership

**1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

1.1 Belinda welcomed those present and apologies were noted as above

**2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING**

2.1 The draft minute of the FLAG meeting of 18 September 2012 was noted and will be considered for approval at the FLAG meeting on 4 December 2012.

**3. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE**

3.1 Belinda welcomed David-John McRobbie, the newly appointed Fisheries Project Officer, and introductions were made round the table. The post is funded under Axis 5 for two years and David-John will help to generate project ideas and assist applicants to work up applications coming forward to AEFF and also undertake promotional work across Axes 1-3 of EFF.

**4. CO-ORDINATOR'S UPDATE**

4.1 The Co-ordinators update, which will be presented again at the FLAG, is summarised briefly below:

- Approximate total funds remaining after commitment of £334 in rounds 1 and 2 is £0.623 million.
- Number of Expression of Interest forms being submitted has slowed down slightly.
- Axis 5 claim was submitted to Marine Scotland in July. A first payment has been received, with the possibility of a second payment

to follow.

- Response regarding the draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) was submitted to Marine Scotland – awaiting response.
- AEFF Newsletter 3 was issued detailing successful round 2 projects.
- Ann Marie has been attending community planning partnership meetings where possible.
- Three round 2 projects were presented to be matched from the Aberdeenshire Council Towns & Villages Priority Fund – Cairnbulg Boathaven, Whitehills Seafood Restaurant and PORT Restoration. Both Cairnbulg and PORT were successful. Finance for the Seafood Restaurant has been secured from Aberdeenshire Council's Economic Development budget.
- Marine Scotland has highlighted the importance of regular reporting on FLAG expenditure. Project claim forms are to be submitted to Marine Scotland along with all backup documentation, a copy of the application form and the grant award letter.
- FARNET has stressed the importance of FLAGs considering their objectives as set out in their Development Strategy document at all times. Marine Scotland are focusing more on the eight eligible measures but it was agreed that the FLAG must not lose sight of the objectives as per the Strategy.

## **5. COMMUNICATION**

- 5.1 E-mail notification received from Marine Scotland that Adam Groat is to replace Gordon Hart. PAC suggested it would be useful to request a copy of an organisation chart with job titles and telephone numbers for Marine Scotland.
- 5.2 Letter received confirming that although Marine Scotland will be happy to offer an opinion regarding the eligibility of projects coming forward to AEFF, it will, in future, be at the discretion of the FLAG when making the final decision on project approvals and be able to defend any decision taken if challenged by audit.

PAC agreed that this is critical to how Axis 4 performs in the future.

## **6. FARNET CONFERENCE**

- 6.1 Ann Marie attended the FARNET (Fisheries Areas Network) Seminar on Fisheries Communities at the Heart of Local Development on 13, 14 & 15 November 2012 in Quiberon, France. The seminar had over 150 delegates and represented FLAGs Europe wide. The focus of the seminar was to take stock of FLAG partnerships, assess, evaluate and develop achievements. FARNET was strong on the message that every member of the FLAG has an important role and to view it as such. A strong message about the importance of FLAGs and their active and ongoing participation both inside and outside PAC and FLAG meetings was given. It was stressed that attendance at meetings whilst crucial, is not the sole purpose of FLAG members. FLAGs are the builders and enablers to reaching communities and organisations, and must be empowered to do so.

Ann Marie attended workshops regarding FLAG partnerships: why we have a FLAG and what kind of FLAG should we have and took home valuable information which she intends to present to the FLAG on 4 December.

The groups visited three projects in the FLAG area of Pays D'Auray and gained an appreciation of the issues unique to the FLAG area. The focus of the Pays D'Auray Strategy is to improve the environment and particular nurture the environment for oyster farming - a key industry in the locality, and one that has suffered a sharp decline since 2008 due to deterioration in water quality and bacterial infections. Over 60% of the Pays D'Auray monies has been invested into improving water quality. FARNET highlighted that every FLAG has to consider their own unique area and deliver projects that protect these interests whilst also sustainably developing their fisheries areas.

The seminar ended on focusing on the "FLAG of the Future". The next funding programme, the EMFF is programmed for 2014-2020 and will have a strong focus on "Community Led Local Development". Future funding allocation will have a strong focus on FLAG participation and this will need to be demonstrated in FLAG strategies. This will include FLAGs promoting the AEFf message and not relying solely on the Co-ordinator ensuring those in their field of expertise are aware of Axis 4 and ensuring no opportunities are missed in the AEFf areas.

FLAG members have an understanding of the economic function of the areas, provide knowledge and should be marketing the FLAG, acting as builders and enabling integration amongst groups and areas. FARNET highlighted that for future funding programmes FLAGs will have to evidence how their members add worth to the partnership and how they can reach people and groups where other organisations have failed to do so - or simply cannot. The FLAG members have the paramount role of sustaining the Fisheries areas and in future funding programmes including the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), will act as the knowledge and enablers for the "Community Led Local Development".

FARNET emphasised that whilst EC Reg 1198/2006 Article 44 "Sustainable Development of Fisheries Areas" is important in identifying project eligibility, FLAGs must also consider their Local Fisheries Development Strategy at all times; all members should be aware of the content therein and be mindful of this in the decision making process.

The take home message from FARNET on Axis 4 is: this is our last opportunity to deliver projects that leave a lasting impact in fisheries areas and FLAGs play a big role in this - both individually as members and collectively as a group working towards the objectives in our Strategy.

## **7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 7.1 Belinda Miller declared an interest in the Energetica Coastal Path project. As she is not directly involved in the application, Belinda will take part in the discussion and vote.

## **8. PROJECTS 011 and 013**

### **8.1 011 Energetica Coastal Path – Phase 1**

This project, which relates to eco-tourism, is to develop two stretches of the same coastal path, namely Collieston to Cruden Bay and Cruden Bay to Slains Castle. The first stretch will link Collieston, Whinnyfold and Cruden Bay. This missing link will complete the coastal network from Aberdeen to Peterhead. The wider Aberdeenshire Coastal Path will then extend from St Cyrus in the south to Logie Head, just east of Cullen.

The second section of pathwork will improve access from Cruden Bay to Slains Castle. This section will be an all-abilities path, suitable for buggies and wheelchair users and will include passing places and resting areas, making the path fully accessible.

Following an independent survey of the “Energetica Coastal Pathway”, the preferred outcome was the development of Phase 1 of the coastal path network. The project will link settlements with strong maritime/fishing heritage and this will be promoted on the information boards which will be located along the route.

Public co-finance is confirmed from Scottish Enterprise and Aberdeenshire Council. Planning permission and SSSI consent have been submitted. Proposals meet AEF eligible measures B, E, and F and sit well with strategic outcomes.

Ongoing maintenance of paths will be undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council.

PAC agreed that proposals will link the coastal communities, improve the profile of the area and increase opportunities for wildlife and cultural heritage tourism. It was considered to be essential to use information boards to highlight the fishing links and marketing/advertising will be important to promote eco-tourism.

PAC would welcome further information from the applicant regarding the exact length of the two sections of path. Clarification was also sought regarding whether the path will cross the existing Ladies Bridge structure.

Constructed all-ability pathwork is very expensive and PAC considered costs to be low for what is proposed. It may be that the first section will include small scale improvements such as a mown path, with the all-abilities section being a hardcore path.

PAC highlighted the importance of insurance and questioned who would have liability should accidents occur. Adequate signage and hazard warnings will be essential for health & safety and it was considered essential to have a disclaimer included in all marketing materials.

Although the PAC was supportive of the proposals, it was suggested that the applicant be invited to provide a presentation at the FLAG meeting on 4

December to address the questions raised by the PAC.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £20,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL  
WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR FLAG.

## 8.2 **012 – Skills Diversification in Kincardineshire**

Project number 012, Skills Diversification in Kincardineshire, was withdrawn at this stage but will be re-submitted in Round 4, allowing the applicant to work up a stronger standard of application.

## 8.3 **013 – Events and Exhibitions**

The project is to promote and display North East seafood produce at events and exhibitions in the local area such as the Turriff show, as well as throughout Scotland, at events such as the Skipper Expo in Glasgow.

The proposal will showcase the quality of locally landed seafood products, host cooking demonstrations and encourage buyers by providing free taster samples.

Project costs include the purchase of a mobile refrigeration and display vehicle, marketing and promotional materials, display graphics and exhibition space.

PAC agreed that proposals have a strong fisheries focus and the project would put Aberdeenshire fishing towns on the map. However, there were a number of questions raised, namely:

- How much time will be spent promoting in Aberdeenshire and how much Scotland wide?
- Who is likely to be the end beneficiary?
- Public co-finance has not been identified and there is no indicative minimum level of applicant contribution, making it difficult to assess value for money and economic viability.
- The business plan provided does not clearly demonstrate how the aims and objectives will be delivered.
- What are the timescales for the project and how many exhibitions will be attended? A draft work plan and project timetable of events is essential and must be submitted to enable adequate assessment of the proposals.
- Breakdown of the £34,000 identified for marketing costs is required.
- Estimates have not been provided.
- Who will be manning the stand and how will this be funded?
- Who will supply the seafood product and, as the samples are to be free of charge, assurance is required that this will not result in displacement issues for other exhibitors at events.
- What are the differences between what is proposed in this project and the work already undertaken by Seafood Scotland. Is there a risk of being in competition with Seafood Scotland?

PAC considered there may be a potential risk of overlap with the Taste of Grampian project which was approved in Round 2 although it was

recognised the promotional activity in this application would cover a range of events locally and nationally. PAC highlighted the possibility of integration with the display trailer which will be purchased for this project.

PAC suggested the applicant might wish to seek some consultant advice to help strengthen the application.

Although the concept is good, PAC felt unable to provide a recommendation to the FLAG due to insufficient information being provided. Applicant to be invited to submit more detailed information for the FLAG meeting on 4 December.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £27,825 DEFERRED TO THE THE FLAG

**9. AOCB**

It is anticipated that the first application deadline and meeting dates in 2013 will be held in tandem with LEADER. However, as the LEADER budget is likely to be fully committed in 2013, the timing of PAC and FLAG meetings will be kept under review.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

LAG meeting – Tuesday 4 December 2012, at 10.00 am in Committee Room 4, Woodhill House.

PAC meeting – 2013 Timetable yet to be confirmed.