

MINUTE OF FLAG MEETING

THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2015 AT 10.00 AM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BUCHAN HOUSE, PETERHEAD

Present

Belinda Miller	FLAG Chairperson
Neil Christison	Visit Scotland
George Cameron	Aberdeenshire Council - Principal Engineer Harbours
Chris White	Aberdeenshire Council - Area Manager

Officers in Attendance

Martin Brebner	Team Manager European Policies & Programmes
June Jaffrey	European Programmes Claims Officer

Apologies

David John McRobbie	European Programmes Co-ordinator
Moira Beverley	Aberdeenshire Council – Finance
Gavin Clark	Scottish Natural Heritage
Gina Ford	Scottish Enterprise
James Buchan	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Will Clark	Peterhead & Fraserburgh Fish Processors Association
Ian Gatt	Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association Ltd
Roger Goodyear	Banff Coast Tourism Partnership
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Economic Development
Michael Park	Scottish Whitefish Producers Association
Philip Smith	Visit Scotland
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

1.1 Belinda welcomed those present and round the table introductions were made.

2. DRAFT MINUTE OF AEFF FLAG MEETING

2.1 The draft minute of the AEFF FLAG meeting held on 2 June 2015 was approved and will be uploaded on the AEFF website.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE

3.1 Belinda thanked everyone in the FLAG and FLAG staff for the hard work involved with the FLAG programme. All co-financers who assisted in the finance for delivering the successful projects and project applicants were also thanked.

4. CO-ORDINATOR'S UPDATE

4.1 In David John's absence Martin summarised the Co-ordinator's Update:

- Financial update;
Approx. 70% of the funding available was drawn down, this is partly

due to the late start of the programme, some applicants relinquishing grants due to timescales and four projects being de-committed. A total of £650,926 of Axis 4 funds was committed.

- Spend update;
All project claims have been submitted to Marine Scotland and those outstanding will be processed by Marine Scotland shortly.
- Claims;
The remaining Admin expenditure for the period to the closure of the programme (31 December 2015) will be collated and submitted for reimbursement from Marine Scotland. In the new programme Admin claims will again be collated and submitted by the Claims Officers to Marine Scotland for payment.
- Reports, Monitoring & Audit;
Previous delays with the pre payment selection process used by Marine Scotland caused delays in project payments and put pressure on project expenditure, these will be overcome in the new programme as claims will be submitted directly to Marine Scotland and they will pay the project claims. A full audit by Marine Scotland sampling projects was undertaken. They were complimentary of file procedures and generally happy with our processes with one slight criticism being lack of quotes.
One project concerned Marine Scotland; Cairnbulg Harbour had been found to be overpaid by Aberdeenshire Council as they had made payment upfront. Marine Scotland advised that this council funding would have to be recovered from the applicant. It has been clarified that an issue of this nature will not happen in the new programme.
- Promotion; with the closure of the programme an evaluation report has been drafted. The profile of projects have been raised with a Royal visits, Fisheries Working Group and councillors visiting various completed projects across the area.

A query on future proofing files for future audits was raised and Martin confirmed that all recommendations received by Internal Audit had been implemented. The Co-ordinator previously undertook a thorough check of all AEFF project files and any missing information was requested and submitted by project applicants. AEFF files will be archived in the coming months with the files being kept mean time in Gordon House for ease of accessibility. Belinda thanked David John for his work on this.

5. AEFF PROJECT UPDATE

- 5.1 **AEFF/R2/Sep12/004 Cairnbulg Harbour Development Phase II** – the Council overpayment error was highlighted by Marine Scotland and measures were taken by the Council's Finance section to reclaim from the project the overpayment.
- 5.2 **AEFF/R2/Sep12/005 Our Village: A People's Story of Johnshaven** – David John met with the project applicants in July to discuss concerns regarding any potential project underspend. A small final AEFF payment was processed with the project totalling £108,000 instead of the £127,000

original estimated cost. Resulting in a £15,076 AEFf underspend associated with the project.

- 5.3 **AEFF/R2/Sep12/006 Whitehills Seafood Restaurant** - this project has been visited by Councillors and is proving to be a thriving business.
- 5.4 **AEFF/R2/Sep12/007 Taste of Grampian Seafood Pavilion** – this has been successful when funded by AEFf with a number of seafood producers being showcased there is however uncertainty regarding future funding.
- 5.5 **AEFF/R2/Sep12/008 Banffshire Coast Tourism Development 2012-15** – this project is complete and a case study has been included in the Evaluation report.
- 5.6 **AEFF/R2/Sep12/009 Portsoy Organisation for Restoration and Training Boatshed** – challenging timescales and operational delays were of concern with this issue but the project completed on time albeit with extension being granted previously and an overspend they incurred being covered by CARS. David John undertook regular monthly visits for reassurance.
- 5.7 **AEFF/R3/Dec12/011 Energetica Coastal Path Phase I** – Concerns had been highlighted regarding the number of signage boards and the progress of the project and claims. Discussions took place between the Co-ordinator and the applicant and it was decided that the applicant would revise the number of signs to be installed to allow the project to be closed off. There are still concerns regarding erection of signage and possible reclaiming of AEFf grant.
- 5.8 **AEFF/R4/Mar13/016 Whistle My Lad** – this project is complete and it was noted that film screenings which were held in Aberdeen and at the Cannes Film Festival attracted attention and were well received. The applicant hopes to make this short film into a feature film.
- 5.9 **AEFF/R5/Jun13/017 Gardenstown Harbour Development** – this project was completed some time ago.
- 5.10 **AEFF/R5/Jun13/019 Installation of Wi-Fi at Fraserburgh Fishmarket** – the project has now been completed resulting in a very positive industry focussed project.
- 5.11 **AEFF/R5/Jun13/021 Enabling works at Sandhaven and Pitullie Harbour** – this project is complete and has been audited by Marine Scotland with no issues arising.
- 5.12 **AEFF/R5/Jun13/022 Peterhead and Fraserburgh Fish Producers Association (PFFPA) Development Officer** – The project is now complete and PFFPA continue to employ the Development Officer who is participating in the new FLAG.
- 5.13 **AEFF/R6/Sep/023 Increased Efficiency for Macduff Shipyards** – This project has proved to be very successful in reducing operating costs and making the organisation more sustainable.

- 5.14 **AEFF/R6/Sep/024 Banff Ice Machine** – The ice machine project is very successful and is fully operational with 24 boxes per week being produced. George Cameron updated the FLAG advising that customers are coming from along the coastal area. The priority is that In-shore fishery customers are first priority, then council with Leisure customers then encouraged to make use of the facility. A trail of two boxes was undertaken in Macduff and was successful, consideration is being made to extend this project to Macduff.
- 5.15 **AEFF/R6/Sep/026 Ythan Estuary Forvie New Visitor Facility -**
The project is now complete with a new visitor facility being built and open to the public since spring 2014 and a new pathway/carpark installed.
- 5.16 **AEFF/R7/Dec13/027 Installation of pontoons at Fraserburgh Harbour –**
Despite an initial delay, the pontoons were installed in January 2015, with the security fencing and water/electrical works being finished in March. The project is now complete with the berths being fully utilised.
- 5.17 **AEFF/R7/Dec13/028 Gardenstown Harbour Eco Tourism Vessel Access Project** – The project is now complete and the full amount of AEFF grant has been drawn down.
- 5.18 **AEFF/R7/Dec13/031 Apex Church International Fishermen Social Project** – This project is now complete with Wi-Fi being installed into the Apex Church Centre with International Fishermen benefiting as a direct result by providing a safe space and facilities for contacting their families.
- 5.19 **AEFF/R8/Feb14/032 Feasibility Study on Phase three of the Harbour Regeneration plan -** The project is now complete with the completed Feasibility Study setting out the findings including a Visitor Centre and Lobster Hatchery proposal at Port Erroll Harbour.
- 5.20 **AEFF/R8/Feb14/033 Seafood Sea Here!** – This co-operation project is now complete and the full amount of Axis 4 grant has been drawn down. Seven Seafood events were arranged throughout the Highland, Moray and Aberdeenshire administrative areas. And a new dedicated website has been developed. This project is seen as a positive element in the promotion of seafood.
- 5.21 **AEFF/R9/Apr14/036 Peterhead Town Heritage Trail** – The installation of the visual blades is now complete and much interest has been generated with the potential to expand the project in the future.
- 5.22 **AEFF/R9/Apr14/039 The Seafront Seafood Restaurant** – The project overcame initial delays and challenging timescales. Three full time staff has been employed.
- 5.23 **AEFF/R9/Apr14/040 Rosehearty Boat Compound** – The project is complete and full AEFF grant has been drawn down. The boat compound is now fully utilised and has proved a welcome addition to the coastal village of Rosehearty.

- 5.24 **AEFF/R9/Apr14/041 Marina Feasibility Study** – After a short delay the Feasibility study was finalised in the summer; it is yet to go through the Area Committee for noting. The report resulted in four outcomes and there is a question over the outcomes of the feasibility study coming forward.
- 5.25 A question on the process for monitoring and evaluation was raised. Martin advised that a minimum requirement for capital projects was 5 years. It was confirmed that AEFF undertake monitoring of individual projects and Marine Scotland also undertake.

6. EVALUATION REPORT

- 6.1 David John has spent time working on an evaluation report which covers the background and detail of the programme. It contains an overview by themes with the projects funded fairly balanced across the themes. There were a range of projects within the area with Banff and Buchan having most number. It was noted only two projects were funded in K&M but the new programme will look to raise the profile of the EMFF funds in the South. Involvement with Angus in the new programme should address this. The Summary gives a good demonstration of the variety of projects. It was noted that the administrative workload on the seventy four claims which were processed was manageable. An online survey went out to projects with a high number of responses returned. The report identifies the application process with the Expressions of Interest initially submitted were followed with detailed applications. Emphasis was placed in project outcomes and finances enabling capacity building. Noted was the difficulties applicants faced with co-financing; a table illustrates the sources of funding providers. Although projects faced challenges with match funding 87% felt they had had a positive experience securing match funding. In the new programme co-finance will be provided by Marine Scotland and applications to the Council for match funding will be feasible. Limitations on providing advance grants did not cause projects cash flow issues and applicants returned a positive responses regarding timescales for claim payments. Martin advised that in the new programme Marine Scotland will process claim payments and work will be done to expedite these. All who applied for funding voiced that they would apply again. The main areas of promotion for the programme centred around specific events and word of mouth with the programme being widely publicised in the local media. Concern was raised on the FLAG membership and lack of meeting attendance. It was concluded that match funding issues would be addressed by Marine Scotland, aid intensity levels would be clarified by Marine Scotland, procurement draft and eligible costs guidance are clearer and there is an increase of fishery industry representatives on the new programme. It was noted that although the evaluation report was seen as concise there was missing detail on the decommitted projects; David John will add an entry into the report to explain these. Martin advised that once the report is amended it will be circulated to the FLAG, Councillors and new applicants; accessible online with a printed version being sent out to the projects. It will be sent to the Infrastructure Services Committee for noting.

7 UPDATE ON NEW PROGRAMME

- 7.1 Martin advised that progress has been made on the new programme; with a proposed launch for all Fishery programmes in mid-January. The funding allocation for North East Scotland FLAG will be announced shortly with an anticipated launch in February/March. With the inclusion of Angus in the new programme this will include a focus on the Montrose and Arbroath fishery areas. Therefore the allocation, when announced, will then have to be broken down for the Angus area. Re-allocations can be made with FLAG agreement. The strategic groups will meet regularly. A question on trans-national projects arose and Martin confirmed that 10% of the funding will be ring-fenced for this. A potential project could be Maritime training. There is on-going discussions on these with co-ordinators generating activity to have the LAG undertake the activity. It was noted that the Council is pushing for Inter Reg potential ideas.

8. AOCB –

- 8.1 The Chair thanked the FLAG members and project applicants for both creating and debating the successful projects. Thanks were also expressed to the FLAG team and previous staff members for the robust processes and the good bill of health intimated by the Auditors. Belinda formally closed the 2012 - 2015 programme.