

Minutes of the Gwynedd Local Action Group - LEADER.
26/03/2015 (1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting).
Porthmadog Football Club.

**Present:**

Enterprise Sector Representatives:		
Ceri Cunningham	(CC)	Antur Stiniog
Gwenan Williams	(GW)	Bwyty Lleu
Gwion Llwyd	(GLI)	Dioni
Ian Nellist	(IN)	Federation of Small Businesses
Llywelyn Rhys	(LIRh)	Fflam Cyf
Menna Jones	(MJ)	Antur Waunfawr
Stewart Jones	(SJ)	7aross ltd/ Geosho Cyf
Voluntary/Community Sector Representatives		
Arwel Jones	(AJ)	Llyn Partnership
Craig ab Iago	(Cabl)	Dyffryn Nantlle 2020
David Ingham	(DI)	Community Hydro Schemes Project Manager
Delyth Vaughan	(DV)	Mantell Gwynedd
Owen Gwilym Thomas	(OG)	One Voice Wales
Robert Lowe	(RL)	Plas Heli Cyf
Sian Tomos	(ST)	GISDA Cyf
Public Sector Representatives		
Aled Jones-Griffith	(AJG)	Llandrillo Menai Group – Coleg Meirion Dwyfor
Dr Einir M Young	(EY)	Bangor University
Ifer Gwyn	(IG)	Snowdonia National Park
Mandy Williams-Davies	(MWD)	Gwynedd Council
Menter Môn Representatives		
Gerallt Llewelyn Jones	(GLLJ)	<i>Temporary Chairman</i>
Dafydd Gruffydd	(DG)	
Zoe Pritchard	(ZP)	<i>Minutes</i>
Rachel Roberts	(RR)	
Aaron Warren	(AW)	
Gwynedd Council Representatives		
Dylan Rhys Griffiths	(DRhG)	
Sioned Morgan Thomas	(SMT)	

**Apologies:**

Anwen Jones – PEG Tourism sub-group  
 Alun Wyn Evans – Joint representative of the NFU / FUW.

Point	Details	Action
<b>PART 1 – What is LEADER?</b>		
1.1.	A warm welcome was given to everybody by the temporary chairman.	
1.2.	<p><b>European Programmes: Funding Context 2014 – 2020 – Dylan Rhys Griffiths.</b></p> <p>Dylan Rhys Griffiths from Gwynedd Council was welcomed to the meeting to give an overview of the financial situation through European programmes in 2014-2020.</p> <p>It was explained that two main European programmes would impact Gwynedd, those being the Structural Funds (ESIF) and the European Territorial Co-operation (ETC).</p> <p>A summary was given of all 4 programmes within the ESIF, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Social Fund (ESF)</li> <li>• European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)</li> <li>• European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)</li> <li>• European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)</li> </ul> <p>Focus was made on ERDF, as this is the fund within which Gwynedd LEADER lies. An overview of the financial split of the ERDF was given, with 60% of the funding going to the agricultural sector (farm payments, farming connect etc), 30% of funding going on climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the last 10% of the ERDF funding was earmarked for LEADER and local development – approximately £95million. The local Gwynedd allocation of the funding is £4.3million and it was emphasised that LEADER had returned to its roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animation, trialling and experimentation</li> <li>• Bottom-up approach</li> <li>• No grants</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that joint collaboration was active in Gwynedd and Anglesey through Menter Môn, and that local management was via this Local Action Group.</p> <p>The presentation finished by touching on the ETC programme and Gwynedd Council's priorities through the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>It was agreed that an electronic version of the presentation was to be circulated to the LAG members after the meeting.</p>	<p><b>ZP</b></p>
1.3.	<p><b>What is LEADER and the role of the LAG – Dafydd Gruffydd.</b></p> <p>Dafydd Gruffydd presented to the members the aim of the Gwynedd LEADER programme and what their roles were as members.</p> <p>Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions.</p> <p>Craig ab Iago enquired what the intention was with risk – was it to seek and trial high risk schemes? GLLJ noted that a balance was needed between</p>	

	<p>trialling moderately risky activities so as to experiment in a climate where no other organisation / body would be willing to take the risk. However, the application process has been designed so as to take small steps with the hope that this would decrease risk.</p> <p>OG stressed that LEADER needed to create employment in rural areas, as a number of young people from the area leaving due to lack of employment. GLLJ agreed that this was a weakness in the local economy and that there was no easy answer to this challenge, but it is a possibility through LEADER to look at some possible solutions by pulling intelligence in and trying to tackle the challenge in a creative way.</p> <p>SJ questioned where ideas come from – from the members? MM? Communities?</p> <p>DG confirmed that LEADER is open to ideas from anywhere. As part of the application process of the LEADER programme, possible activities had to be noted in the LDS as a requirement, therefore some activity ideas can be found there.</p> <p>However, as the LDS is a living document, it's possible to change these suggested activities as the programme progresses, and the LAG will be able to decide whether to pursue the suggested activities or dismiss them.</p> <p>LIRh inquired how communities of interest would be targeted – wait till they contact MM?</p> <p>GLLJ answered that both the programme and MM are flexible and that the majority of work in the first year will require MM staff to go out to rural communities and find, create and develop communities of interest. As the programme develops and case studies appear, communities of interest and enquiries will naturally approach MM themselves.</p> <p>GLI and EY agreed that the programme was very open, and that specific case studies would assist members of what is possible. DG summarised that Porthmadog market and Snowdonia Market story as a local example of the LEADER methodology.</p> <p>MJ noted that she had been a member of the Gwynedd Economic Partnership but not much information sharing and ambassador work had gone on. She noted that the general feeling of the LEADER programme was different and enquired whether LAG members were required to play a more pivotal part in marketing and referring people? DG confirmed that it is expected for LAG members to be more proactive, and MM will ensure that this is made easier by increased and effective use of social media channels.</p> <p>AJG raised a concern about sharing ideas and developing trust within the new members to be able to openly share ideas without fear that individual organisations will benefit from those ideas themselves.</p> <p>GLLJ closed the questions by emphasising that the main purpose of the LAG members were to work for the future of rural Gwynedd as a whole and that it's important they become ambassadors of this.</p>	
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<b>PART 2 –Gwynedd Local Action Group Meeting.</b>		
2.1.	<p><b><u>Welcome, introductions and apologies</u></b></p> <p>A warm welcome was give to all to the first meeting of the Gwynedd Local Action Group – LEADER by Gerallt Llewelyn Jones the acting chairman until an official chairperson can be appointed.</p> <p>Members went around the table to introduce themselves to the other members.</p> <p>Apologies were received via ZP from two members.</p>	
2.2	<p><b><u>LEADER Programme update</u></b></p> <p>DG presented the programme’s timeline to the LAG Members showcasing the main steps during the LEADER application process, including the Welsh Government’s requirement back in 2013 to encourage collaboration to decrease the number of administrative bodies across Wales, to receiving the LDS Guidelines in June 2014 and presenting the 1<sup>st</sup> version of the Gwynedd LDS to the Welsh Government at the end of September 2014 following public consultation over the summer.</p> <p>It was noted that Approval in principle had been received by the Welsh Government regarding the Gwynedd LDS in February 2015, and awaiting formal approval in July 2015. DG confirmed that delivery expenditure could not commence until formal approval is received.</p>	
2.3	<p><b><u>Present and endorse the administrative body</u></b></p> <p>This item was led by Dylan Griffiths, Gwynedd Council, whilst Menter Môn staff stepped out of the room to allow members to discuss the matter and come to an agreement.</p> <p>A comment was made to the fact that Gwynedd Economic Partnership, as the body responsible for the current rural development program (2007-2013) and developments on the wider economy, has acted as a proxy during the transitional period before this Local Action group was formed and that discussions about the new structures have been discussed in the meetings leading up to Christmas.</p> <p>Reference was made to a report that was prepared for those members about the proposed changes to the structure and administrative management of the LEADER Programme for the 2014-2020 period.</p> <p>As has been noted in the report, clear emphasis and guidance has come from WG to see areas work together in terms of the administrative side of the next programme and to see a reduction in the number of lead organisations across Wales. Reference was made to the North Wales Ambition Board’s discussions and vision to see two lead bodies in the North; Menter Môn as the administrative body for the Western areas and Cadwyn Clwyd as the lead body for the East.</p>	

	<p>It was pointed out that different options have been considered, and that these have been set out in section 2 of the report presented to them, with the obvious advantages and disadvantages for each option attached; namely: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No change</li> <li>2. One of the Local Authorities becoming the lead body</li> <li>3. Undertake a tendering process</li> <li>4. Appointment of Menter Môn</li> </ol> <p>A comment was made to the fact that a tendering process for this type of work can hinder the programme as it forces someone to go too "prescriptive", and from past experience can be negative.</p> <p>It was also noted that Gwynedd Council, as the lead body for the current program (2007-2013) has undertaken a check to assess the appropriateness of business and financial stability of Menter Môn and that that check has been favourable.</p> <p>AJG questioned if there are any issues to raise about the competitive element of ensuring money if Menter Môn will be the lead organisation for the two counties. DRhG confirmed the financial position by noting that WG for this program has allocated a specific amount of funding for each area - with Gwynedd receiving £4.3million and Anglesey £2.1m, which removes the competitive element out of 'the program completely. The leading bodies and the local action group worked with WG in order to ensure that this would be the process and it can now be reported that Gwynedd is amongst the highest allocated areas.</p> <p>Concerns were raised by one member of the group about a lack of presence in Meirionnydd if the main office is to be located in Porthmadog. DRG noted that although the 'base' would be in Porthmadog the staff would be working with communities of interest across the County. Members were also reminded that responsibility rested on them as members of the Local Action Group to ensure and monitor that LEADER investments were spread across the County, and even more importantly that lessons learnt were widely distributed to all areas within the County. Reference was also made to the fact that the Meirionnydd area has benefited very well from last RDP programme, with the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas benefitting more than the Arfon area.</p> <p><b>It was suggested that Menter Môn were appointed as the Administrative Body and this was seconded by all the members. No objections were raised.</b></p>	
2.4	<p><b><u>Present and endorse the Local Development Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Hard copies of the most recent version of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) – version 2 and the Logic Table were presented to the members. It was</p>	

	<p>explained that this is the second version following modification and re-submittal of the LDS on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, 2015 in response to inquiries from WG.</p> <p>It was noted that the LDS is a living document, which can be modified at any time, with an annual review mandatory.</p> <p>Introductions to some elements of Gwynedd LDS was made, in particular the logic table presented to WG outlining the types of activities which could be delivered through the Gwynedd LEADER programme - but it was strongly emphasised that this was not a definitive list of activities – only a general outline in order to meet WG requirements. The Gwynedd LAG will determine which activities to support or not throughout Gwynedd LEADER programme.</p> <p>An overview of the financial plan was presented to the members, stressing that the funding is divided into 3 parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Core costs (administrative and financial management - claims etc.)</li> <li>2. Animation: Finance supporting 50% of GLLJ and DG's salary, half the salary of the Gwynedd Council contact officer, and mainly for marketing and engagement with communities across Gwynedd to promote the programme and identify and develop plans.</li> <li>3. Implementation: Financing activities and project officers in the Porthmadog office.</li> </ol> <p>It was noted that part 1 and 2 will be funded 100% by LEADER, but that part 3 required 20% match funding. It revealed that an application was being developed for all of the match funding through the NDA.</p> <p>This financial a structure has already been submitted and approved by WG, with some further inquiries to be answered by MM to WG by May 2015.</p> <p>It was asked whether audit structures were attached to the funding component of the programme. DG confirmed that strict requirements are in place for submitting claims to WG, as well as rigorous audits being possible at any time via WG or WEFO.</p> <p>They went on to challenge the high amount of delivery funding going on MM staff, and the concern that these will be cost that the LAG won't see. GLLJ acknowledged the concern and tried to explain the challenging work to be done by the staff which will include developing applications, implementation and collaboration of communities of interest and find financial sources beyond the trial package through LEADER.</p> <p>A question was raised whether Communities of Interest had to raise their own finance towards activities, and DG confirmed that LEADER will fully fund activities 100%.</p> <p>EY inquired if the program's outputs are indicative and GLLJ confirmed that they were. 5 indicative outputs are shown in the Logic table currently but have not been confirmed as WG are still working on final outputs and definitions.</p> <p>RL noted that the strength of the LEADER scheme will be the staff's ability to</p>	
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	<p>listen to communities of interest and respond to ideas, and supported MM's strategy in agitating rural communities and working in a flexible manner.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Gwynedd Local Development Strategy was accepted and this was seconded by all the members. No objections were raised.</p>	
2.5	<p><b><u>Local Action Group Constitution</u></b></p> <p>ZP presented a copy of the latest version of the Local Action Group's constitution to the members. This latest version has been submitted to WG in February 2015 and is waiting to see if any further changes need to be made.</p> <p>It was noted that there will be an opportunity in the next meeting to go through the constitution in detail, but raised the key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A quorum of eight members is needed to be able to hold a meeting</li> <li>• Rule that no more than 49% of the members present represent the public sector - must have more Enterprise or voluntary sector members to be able to make decisions, to adhere to EU regulations.</li> </ul>	
2.6	<p><b><u>Process for nominating a chairperson</u></b></p> <p>ZP confirmed the chairperson appointment process as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Members to email ZP with the names of the members they would like to nominate.</li> <li>2. ZP to contact nominated members to ensure that they are happy to be nominated.</li> <li>3. Following the team building session where members will get to know each other better, they will be asked to vote at the next meeting from the nominated names accepted prior to the meeting.</li> <li>4. The appointment of the chairperson is for one year, and the chair is chosen based on the highest amount of votes.</li> <li>5. The vice-chairman will be chosen on the basis of the second member with the most votes.</li> </ol>	
2.7	<p><b><u>Date of the next meeting to be confirmed by MM by e-mail.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Close.</u></b></p>	