

ARIA Fund LAG (A-LAG) MEETING

15th November 2023 12:00 – 15:00

MS Teams

Attendees

Non- Public Sector	Attended	Public Sector	Attended
Jean Brown (JB)	X	Eddie Bulik (EB)	X
Kevin Brown (KB)	X	Brian Connolly (BrC)	X
Barbara Conner (BC)	X	Melissa McCulloch (MM)	X
Chris Campbell (CC)	X	Colin McKee (CM)	X
Claire Donaldson (CD)	X	Rosemary Ramsay (RR)	X
Holly Fitzsimmons (HF)			
Alistair (Ally) Henry (AH)	X from 14:10		
Marie Oliver (MO)			
Jim Watson (JW)	X from 12:50		
		Emma Bernard (EB)	
		Sarah Smillie (SS)	
		Jamie Tait (JT)	

LAG Staff	Attended
Angela Lamont (AL)	X
Jennifer Macdonald (JM)	X

Apologies

Noted from HF.

Acronyms

CIA	ARIA Communities into Action Fund
CAM	ARIA Community Asset Maintenance Fund
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
CWB	Community Wealth Building
EAC	East Ayrshire Council
EOI	Expression of Interest
HSPC	Health and Social Care Partnership
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAC	North Ayrshire Council
NFUS	National Farmers' Union of Scotland
QS	Quantity Surveyor
SAC	South Ayrshire Council
SG	Scottish Government
SPF	Shared Prosperity Fund
SRUC	Scotland's Rural College
TBC	To be completed/confirmed

Introduction	Actions
<p>Welcome</p> <p>In the absence of JW (entered later), AL welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Quorum</p> <p>The meeting began with 10 LAG Members so was quorate with at least 50% of the 14 standing Members. This comprised 5 non-public sector and 5 public sector representatives, so the minimum</p>	

51%: 49% non-public: public split was not fulfilled. As this was the case 1 public sector member (EB) abstained from voting until JW entered at 12:50 (Pirnmill project). At this point there were 11 Members, 6 non-public sector and 5 public, increasing to 12, 7 non-public and 5 public at 14:20 with the arrival of AH. He commenced voting on the West Kilbride project.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

AL made a small addition to the actions of the 28th & 29th Sept 23 LAG meeting minutes and they were approved. AL ran through the actions:

Continued

- AL to revert to LAG with recommended new change request limit(s). **COMPLETED.**

New

General

- AL to review budget. Knockentiber project could be moved from revenue budget (capitalisation thresholds) to capital budget if sufficient to free up revenue funds. **COMPLETED.**
- Guidance altered to preclude funding bodies from applying to ARIA in future years. Partnerships however welcomed. **NOTED FOR 24/25.**
- ARIA to monitor/evaluate/use for learnings of Ochiltree project for future – young people engagement/encouragement of applications. **CONTINUED – ACTIONED END 23-24.**
- AL to remove:
 - Pig ark/water trough/field ark from Helena Paul (/Ashlea Farm) project costings. **COMPLETED (/AMENDED SUBSEQUENTLY).**
 - Chairs/tractor climbing frame cost from Messers D&A Currie (Bellevue) project costings. **COMPLETED.**

For Applicants – Questions/Conditions/Feedback – ALL COMPLETED.

Register of Interests/Conflicts of Interest

KB declared a conflict of interest for the St. Sophia’s Church project. No other conflicts were declared.

Community Asset Maintenance (CAM) Fund

Budget

AL corrected the £40k budget figure previously reported for allocation on the CAM Fund to £35k. With a £6,697 revenue surplus, c. £38k CAM Fund grant request and c. £42.2k project cost total she advised the projects could be awarded at 100% if there was will. This was discussed later (Fund Finance/Surplus).

Application Assessments

AL presented the table below to show average scores/% approvals from the online scoring. She/JM then presented the projects in alphabetical order.

	Average Score	Approve	Abstain
St. Sophia's*	4.14*	100%*	
Pirnmill	4.11	100%	
Ballantrae/Stair/West Kilbride	3.92	100%	
Crossroads	3.78	100%	
CGHT	3.7	100%	
NICE	3.48	78%	22%

*Updated post meeting, please see presentation note.

1. The Ballantrae Trust

Survey Cost	£5,670.00
Total Project Costs	£7,670.00
Grant Request (90%)	£6,903.00
LA Area	SA

Average Score: 3.92 – joint 3rd

% Approval: 100%

Points Raised at Technical Check

- Not cheapest quote – rationale given.
- Acknowledged financial challenges with pub but wider Trust has sufficient reserves.
- Not most up to date letters of support – but support acknowledged from Main Fund/CIA applications.

LAG Discussion

- Support from SA LAG Members, will benefit group going forward including to leverage funding. Forward thinking to buy out pub.
- Surprised at costs but supportive.

Decision

Project approved unanimously with no conditions.

2. Catrine Games Hall Trust (CGHT)

Survey Cost	£3,192
Total Project Costs	£5,192
Grant Request (90%)	£4,672.80
LA Area	EA

Average Score: 3.7 – 5th

% Approval: 100%

Points Raised at Technical Check

Accounts:

- Unrestricted £24.5k, restricted £1.53m.
- Current assets: liabilities £2: £1.
- Substantial reserves.

The LAG were asked to be mindful of the CAM Fund being an 'opportunity fund', without it would applicants think to conduct survey, with/without reserves? Reserves could be seen as a secondary consideration.

LAG Discussion

- Concern about long term lease applicants, confirmed this along with ownership was eligible for the fund.
- Lack of business plan raised, especially surprising given large amount of restricted funding held. AL reported part of remit of ARIA Main Fund funded Development/Fundraising Officer is to develop business plan concerned with the sustainability of the facility, the group's current focus. AL to feedback inclusion of maintenance plan from survey/register would be beneficial in business plan. Not set as condition – business plan may not be fully developed by projects end date 28th Feb 24.

Decision:

Project approved unanimously with no conditions.

AL to recommend inclusion of maintenance plan into business plan under development with CGHT.

3. Crossroads – Ayrshire Food Hub

Survey Cost	£1,950
Total Project Costs	£3,950
Grant Request (90%)	£3,555
LA Area	EA

Average Score: 3.78 – 4th

% Approval: 100%

Points Raised at Technical Check

- N/A

LAG Discussion

- Surprise relatively new build did not have existing maintenance register. Importance of new builds (especially those as this with large footfalls) having a register noted.
- Recommendation business plan provided is expanded beyond 2022 and conditions register included.
- Suggestion for case study – return to applicant in 5 years and see how work has assisted the facility.

Decision:

Project approved unanimously with no conditions.

4. Netherthird Initiative for Community Empowerment (NICE)

Survey Cost	£3,240
Total Project Costs	£5,240
Grant Request (90%)	£4,716
LA Area	EA

Average Score: 3.48– 6th

% Approval: 78% (22% (2) abstained)

Points Raised at Technical Check

- Poorest application
- Only 2 quotes provided.
- No letters of support.

LAG Discussion

- Disappointment at application quality given that applicant (like others) was given more time to provide items lacking. EA based LAG Members commented on applying officer's wide remit meaning they can lack time. Question raised over capacity to deliver project. AL reported she had raised withdrawing application with applicant on these grounds but they had urged against.
- Reluctance to approve application which had not met minimum requirements, including letters of support. Recommendation to applicant, letters of support are a must going forward, for ARIA/other funders.
- EA LAG Members explained local significance of organisation/work they achieve and facility – much used. Justified taking risk on poorer application?
- AL suggested gaining written agreement that the applicant will be able to complete the work by the deadline. LAG Member suggestion that Vibrant Communities at EAC could support.

Decision

Project approved with one rejection.

JW joined the meeting (meeting now fully quorate with 11 LAG Members, 6 non-public and 5 public).

AL to recommend to Crossroads their business plan is extended beyond 22 & includes maintenance register.

AL to recommend NICE routinely seek letters of support for funding applications & seek written agreement that project can be delivered in time.

5. Pirnmill Village Association

Survey Cost	£1,680
Total Project Costs	£3,680
Grant Request (90%)	£3,312
LA Area	NA – Arran

Average Score: 4.11– 2nd

% Approval: 100%

Points Raised at Technical Check

- Lack of detail – 2nd & 3rd quotes.

LAG Discussion

- Question raised about lack of detail and price differential among quotes. Suggestions given
- Increased demand through CAM of companies who provided 2nd and 3rd quote resulting in more expensive quotes?
- 2nd/3rd quoting companies reluctant to travel to Arran, 1 had issue going to Largs (NA) previously.
- Request brief from applicant? AL stated brief had been uploaded.
- Point raised that LAG should be provided a copy of the reports generated to ensure bases covered/value for money. AL confirmed this was part of the claims procedure.
- Encouragement of CAM applicants to apply to future ARIA rounds for works arising/other eg: Pirnmill net zero improvements.

Decision:

Project approved unanimously with no conditions.

Break for Lunch

6. St Sophia's Church

KB left the discussion with a conflict of interest. This left 10 LAG Members: 5 non-public sector, 5 public. EB abstained from voting to allow the minimum 51%:49% non-public: public split.

Survey Cost	£5,760
Total Project Costs	£7,760
Grant Request (90%)	£6,984
LA Area	EA

Average Score: 4.14 – 1st*

% Approval: 100%*

*The above score/approval was questioned when AL reported KB had scored the project. The LAG requested to be sent the scoring link again to rescore.

Points Raised at Technical Check

- Significant local support.
- Different types of constitution/deeds due to nature of building but equivalent information provided.

LAG Discussion

- Confusion over supporting documents. No constitution but Deed of Appointment provided, for a church member who resided over a number of churches in the diocese.
- Confusion over applicant. Main accounts provided for Diocese of Galloway, informal income/expenditure sheet provided for church. OSCR registration is for Diocese of Galloway (Ayrshire address), so this agreed as applicant.

AL to resend St. Sophia's scoring link for rescore.

AL to seek OSCR required documentation

- Question over documentation required by OSCR, usually constitution (/similar) but churches dealt with differently. OSCR required documentation (constitution/similar) to be sought from applicant. May be Deed of Appointment but confirmation required.

(constitution/similar) and Diocese of Galloway bank statements from St. Sophia's.

Decision

Project approved with 1 abstention and no conditions.

KB returned to the meeting resuming the quorum of 11 Members, 6 non-public, 5 public.

7. Stair Community Association

AH joined the meeting midway so did not vote on this project.

Survey Cost	£2,340.00
Total Project Costs	£4,340.00
Grant Request (90%)	£3,906.00
LA Area	EA

Average Score: 3.92 – joint 3rd

% Approval: 100%

Points Raised at Technical Check

- Reserves tight but manageable.
- Most accompanying documents out of date but detailed.
- Decent local support.

LAG Discussion

- Business plan missing in this/some other applications. AL explained this requested where applicants held them but was not a pre-requisite. Applicants to come to ARIA for business plan development in 24-25/beyond where needed? Maintenance register could slot in.

AL to note for 24-25: CAM applicants targeted for business plans/other outcomes (eg: Pirnmill net zero works).

Decision

Project approved unanimously.

8. West Kilbride Community Initiative (WKCI)

AH commenced voting making the meeting 12 Members, 7 non-public: 5 public.

Survey Cost	£2,400
Total Project Costs	£4,400
Grant Request (90%)	£3,960
LA Area	NA

Average Score: 3.92 – joint 3rd

% Approval: 100%

Points Raised at Technical Check:

- 2nd/3rd quote considerably higher than preferred.
- Abundant local support.

LAG Discussion

- Preferred quote (ARPL) low in comparison to alternatives, but these are international firms (cf: national obtained by other applicants) with relatively high overheads.
- Concern ARPL quote not covering detail/requirements of applicant building. Decision (if approved) to revert to applicant and request more detailed quote; if not sufficient to seek alternative quotes from more local companies.
- Question over focus of organisation – strictly arts, and if so, question over inclusivity. NA based LAG Members gave reassurance – large community space, workshops for wider community & community choir. Arts had been a previous focus but focus now on wider. Name discussed as misleading, recommendation to applicant to make more of community aspect in funding applications.

AL to request more detailed preferred quote from West Kilbride and

<p>Decision Project approved unanimously.</p> <p>Recommendations, All Projects Discussed throughout were some points which should go to all projects as recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The condition registers generated should cover at least 5 years and repairs (costed) are presented as immediate, short term or regular maintenance issues/similar. • Where not in place, applicants should develop a business plan into which the maintenance register, including costings, can be slotted. As discussed previously (along with resultant works), applicants would be welcome to apply to ARIA for this in future years. 	<p>recommend highlighting wider community work (cf: arts) in funding applications.</p> <p>AL to send general recommendations to all CAM applicants.</p>																		
<p>Fund Finance (Standing Item)/Surplus AL presented the ARIA Budget 23-24 spread sheet. She noted the Main/CIA funds revenue spend figure since the Community Led Tourism (CLT) Project contract had increased and the figure for the day/week Admin Assistant had increased slightly. This stood at £360,525, giving a £6,697 surplus on revenue with projects passed previously. A £5,650 surplus stood on capital also.</p> <p>Revenue Surplus The LAG had approved consideration of the following options for allocating the revenue surplus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing projects with <90% grant to 90%, where match funding would allow. • Reviewing previously rejected Netherthird Community Action Training (NCAT) & Visit Arran projects, grant requests c. £9.7k & £3.1k respectively. <p>AL added to this awarding the CAM Fund projects at 100% instead of 90%.</p> <p>She asked for comments on the CAM option, and the 2 which came forth were split, 1 for, 1 against. She therefore suggested presenting the projects with focus on NCAT as this fulfilled the surplus. This was agreed.</p> <p>From 28th/29th Sept 23 LAG Meeting: Netherthird Community Action Training (NCAT) – Growing Opportunities in the Local Community</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="70 1312 986 1895"> <tr> <td>Summary/Main Costs</td> <td>Salaries for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Training Officer • Community Nature Warden </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Eligible Costs</td> <td>£11,856.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grant Request</td> <td>£9,772.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grant Request Capital</td> <td>NA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grant Request Revenue</td> <td>£9,772.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>% Grant Request</td> <td>90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LA Area</td> <td>East Ayrshire</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Applicant Type</td> <td>Third Sector</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>2022-23 applicant – small capital fund</td> </tr> </table> <p>Ranking: 3.67 – 5th % Approval of Scoring Group: 68% Points Raised at Technical Check</p>	Summary/Main Costs	Salaries for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Training Officer • Community Nature Warden 	Total Eligible Costs	£11,856.25	Grant Request	£9,772.92	Grant Request Capital	NA	Grant Request Revenue	£9,772.92	% Grant Request	90%	LA Area	East Ayrshire	Applicant Type	Third Sector	Other	2022-23 applicant – small capital fund	
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Applicant Type	Third Sector																		
Other	2022-23 applicant – small capital fund																		

- N/A

Reasons for Rejection

- Staffing roles/additionality - lack of clarity as to how roles would be additional to business as usual.
- If to free up funds, application should have been clearer as to for what activities/projects.

New

The applicant had provided a list of activities/items it would be possible to undertake/purchase with the freeing up of funds. These were:

- Plants/trees/shrubs
- Equipment – primary school
- Netherthird Community Garden
- Repair/renew paths/beds
- Seeds/shrubs/plants/bulbs
- Materials/paint – repairs/shed
- New path
- Netherthird Nature Walk
- Repair/maintenance
- Fruit trees/shrubs – bee/butterfly area

LAG Discussion

- LAG Members from EA vouched for the applicant doing valuable work in a deprived area. They felt it would worthwhile spend.
- The previous assessments being highly competitive and this being a different scenario was highlighted.

Decisions

- Award CAM projects at 100%, rejected with 1 vote in favour.
- NCAT project approved with 1 rejection, 1 abstention and no conditions.

Capital Surplus

To allocate the capital surplus it had been agreed to review the previously rejected Adventure Centre for Education (ACE) EV Charging Points project, grant request c. £6.8k.

From 28th/29th Sept 23 LAG Meeting:

Adventure Centre for Education (ACE) – Electrical Vehicle Charging Points

Summary/Main Costs	2 x EV charging points
Total Eligible Costs	£7,585.00
Grant Request	£6,826.50
% Grant Request	90%
LA Area	South Ayrshire
Applicant Type	Third Sector
Other	2022/23 applicant – electric van

Ranking: 2.67 – joint 8th

% Approval of Scoring Group: 100%

Points Raised at Technical Check:

- N/A

Reasons for Rejection

- Townspeople accessing chargers cited in application but were they accessible? ACE is c. 2.5km out of town center. Public unlikely to use but local businesses likely.
- Reason applicant did not get charge points at the time of van?
- Alternative charging point funding schemes discussed/recommended to applicant.

<p>New AL stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Townspeople had had 1 mention in the application; use by staff/visitors/local businesses had far greater focus. • Alternative funding schemes did exist for EV chargers but they were also listed eligible spend in the ARIA guidance. Fairness to applicants? <p>LAG Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the delay would the supplier be able to install in time? Question for applicant prior to issue of grant award (if approval granted). • For use out with the organisation, the applicant should be able to charge so they are not out of pocket. A payment option through an app was discussed in the preferred quote. AL to raise this with applicant. Monitoring through this was felt a good idea. • To answer why the applicant did not apply for chargers at the same time as the van, they understood the fund was competitive and did not want to reduce chances of securing the funding for the electric van itself. • Question over the applicant having sufficient funds to cover the (c. £1.2k) shortfall was raised. From discussion with applicant/bank statements, this was answered yes. <p>Decision Project approved unanimously with no conditions.</p>	<p>AL to request ACE provide confirmation from supplier charging points can be installed in time and use of app for charging external users.</p>
<p>Youth Involvement 24/25 CC led the discussion. Having had discussion with a youth group in Girvan, he proposed piloting a young people's initiative in 24-25 to start ARIA's engagement. The suggestion developed as a pot of money per LA area for young people to distribute, led by a group in each area. AL noted from other CLLD areas this could be resource heavy but added designing it similar to the 23-24 Video Project, with a small upfront grant with few requirements, it could work. It could even be a continuation of the Video Project with skills training & video applications. Discussion with the wider group covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups who could lead: EA's Children and Young People's Cabinet & NA's Youth Council. Equivalent in SA? MM to pass on SAC youth contact; EB & RR to do this for EA & NA respectively. • Experience could be utilised from contacts in Community Learning & Development (CLD) with emphasis on rural/islands area. • Importance of support, within ARIA & outwith noted, suggestion that a LAG Member per area champion/lead. • Even if pilot in 1 / 2 areas - still worthwhile. • Model with Ardrossan youth org but this not in the rural area. <p>AL to sound out with forwarded contacts and begin the conversation.</p>	<p>EB/MM/EB to send on youth contacts and AL to initiate discussion on potential youth project for 24-25.</p>
<p>Date of Next Meeting/AOCB Suggested as 7th Feb 24 for Video Project application assessments. AL to send invite/bring forward to Jan 24 if possible.</p> <p>Close</p>	<p>AL to send invite for 7th Feb 24 LAG meeting.</p>

Actions

Continued

- ARIA to monitor/evaluate/use for learnings of Ochiltree project for future – young people engagement/encouragement of applications. **CONTINUED – ACTIONED END 23-24.**

New

- AL to recommend inclusion of maintenance plan into business plan under development with CGHT.
- AL to recommend to Crossroads their business plan is extended beyond 22 and includes maintenance register.
- AL to recommend NICE routinely seek letters of support for funding applications and seek written agreement that project can be delivered in time.
- AL to resend St. Sophia's scoring link for rescoring.
- AL to seek OSCR required documentation (constitution/similar) and Diocese of Galloway bank statements from St. Sophia's.
- AL to note for 24-25: CAM applicants targeted for business plans/other outcomes (eg: Pirnmill net zero works).
- AL to request more detailed preferred quote from West Kilbride and recommend highlighting wider community work (cf: arts) in funding applications.
- AL to send general recommendations to all CAM applicants.
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- EB/MM/RR to send on youth contacts and AL to initiate discussion on potential youth project for 24-25.
- AL to send invite for 7th Feb 24 LAG meeting.

James Watson

Jim Watson
ARIA LAG Chair
7th Feb 24