

News Release

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Renewed energy for Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER projects

The European and Scottish Government funded LEADER programme has completed two highly successful years in Aberdeenshire.

Since the programme's launch in June 2008 more than £2.5m has been committed to fund 80 rural projects throughout the north-east of Scotland.

The most recent awards under Aberdeenshire LEADER funding Round 8 were made in June.

The Local Action Group (LAG), which oversees delivery of the funding, met in June at the recently completed Rothienorman Bowling Club building.

This community facility was built by residents from the village, which has seen rapid expansion in recent years, creating increased demand for recreational facilities for the village.

James Knowles, LAG Chairman, said: "This is a fantastic project which has been completed to a very high standard. The new facilities have been built by the community for the community and will be a valuable resource for years to come.

"One of the key statistics about the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme is applicants have worked hard and persevered to lever in match funding towards their projects.

"The net result of this is that our £3 million LEADER Programme will deliver projects in excess of £10 million. This excellent leverage, I believe, represents one of the true benefits of LEADER as an approach to delivering Rural Development."

The LAG approved nine new projects and committed LEADER funds of £350k after hearing a presentation about the Rothienorman community facilities.

One exciting project is the 100% owned Udney Community Wind Turbine – which will provide an income stream for the community for the next 20 years through renewable energy from an 800kw turbine.

Vicky Thomson, LEADER Co-ordinator said: "As in previous funding rounds, we have seen a diverse range of projects coming forward.

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“There is a real breadth of expertise and determination in community groups across Aberdeenshire to bring forward projects that will provide community benefit.”

Selected quotes for use

Project	LEADER Award
Proposed Extension of Keig Community Hall	£55,556
Quote	
Sandy Innes, Chairman of Keig Community Hall Users' Group (KCHUG)	
“Keig is a small but vibrant community which is working hard to raise funds for the proposed community hall extension.	
“The award by Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme of £55,556 is a significant vote of confidence in the community and is a major step forward in our fundraising.	
“It sends an unequivocal message that the proposed hall extension is a realistic project that merits consideration. By LEADER recognising KCHUG's efforts in this way, it will hopefully act as a catalyst and encourage other funding agencies to support us.”	

Project	LEADER Award
Udny Community Wind Turbine Purchase	£95,040
Quote	
Garth Entwistle, Director of Udny Community Trust Co. Ltd.	
“The Udny Community Trust is very pleased to receive LEADER support for the Trust's development of a Community-owned turbine within the parish of Udny.	
“LEADER grant aid will help us to finance the purchase, construction and commissioning of the Enercon E48 turbine we have selected. This LEADER grant gives us comfort and encourages us to move forward.	
“We have ambitious plans for the funds that will flow into the Trust from the community turbine. These plans will be re-visited later this year when we arrange another community-wide planning event. The whole of the Udny community is excited.”	

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Project	LEADER Award
Meldrum Hall – Access for All	£61,468
Quote	
Aird Buist, Managing Director, Making Meldrum Better Community Interest Company	
“This LEADER grant will allow us to give the whole community access to the Town Hall and return it to the centre of social activity.”	

Project	LEADER Award
The Bothie, Kintore	£47,400
Quote	
Liz Mackay & Kenny Thomson, Action Kintore	
“This LEADER grant will enable Action Kintore and the Kintore Youth Forum to become one step closer to their goal of an Eco build Youth Cafe in Kintore.	
“This is their first big successful funding application which means that the three years of hard work which has gone into reaching this stage is all worth while. All adults and young people involved are very pleased. Thank you.”	

Project	LEADER Award
Boddam Community Park Project	£25,925
Quote	
Michelle McCallum, Boddam Development Trust	
“Boddam Development Trust would like to thank LEADER immensely for awarding funding in order to complete a new children’s play area in Boddam due for completion in August 2010. This will be a fantastic community area for the whole of Boddam.”	

Project	LEADER Award
The Enchanted Castle	£7,500
Quote	
Gerry Muldoon, Director of GM Events Ltd	
“Securing financial assistance from LEADER was a vital part of the funding package required for the Enchanted Castle project.	

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“This combined with other public and private sector input will enable us to proceed on a sound financial basis. LEADER’s contribution in terms of advice and support has also been extremely helpful in getting us to this stage in the project.”

Project	LEADER Award
Food Tourism Project and the Deeside Sessions	£26,000
Quote	
John Carnie, Tourism Development Manager, Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms DMO	
“Royal Deeside and the Cairngorm DMO is delighted to received this assistance from LEADER.	
“The funding for the projects, many of which are food tourism related, will help drive forward tourism in the area and raise awareness of Royal Deeside as a premier, year round destination.	
“It will enable us to deliver the projects to a higher standard and help to increase tourism visits outside the current peak seasons. We have a number of exciting food projects and will be marketing these under the Royal Deeside Larder brand.”	

Project	LEADER Award
North of Scotland Rural Touring Fund	£33,600
Quote	

Project	LEADER Award
Castle Fraser Steam & Vintage Fair 40 th Anniversary	£4,944
Quote	
Jill Standing, Secretary of Bon Accord Steam Engine Club Ltd	
“The Club were grateful to Aberdeenshire Council and LEADER for their tremendous support for the 40th anniversary event.	
“This allowed us to celebrate 40 years of rallying, with the largest number of steam exhibits ever seen in the north east of Scotland, including two carnival rides from a bygone era.	

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“The increase in visitor and exhibitor numbers this year should secure this event for the foreseeable future.”

Total LEADER Award for Round 8	£357,433
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Notes for Editors

Picture caption: The Local Action Group (LAG) which oversees delivery of LEADER funding met at the recently completed Rothienorman Bowling Club building in June. James Knowles, LAG chair and Vicky Thomson, LEADER co-ordinator pictured centre with members of Rothienorman Bowling club committee.

LEADER stands for Liason Entre Actions pour le Developement de L'Economie Rurale (links between actions for the development of the rural economy).

LEADER is an innovative rural development programme which aims to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in rural communities through locally driven rural development initiatives and projects.

LEADER is funded by the Scottish Government and the European Commission with match funding from public bodies and the project groups.

The Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme was launched in June 2008.

The Local Action Group (LAG) was awarded LEADER funds of £3.36 million to deliver its strategy in Aberdeenshire rural areas and communities with populations of less than 5,000.

The LAG has a membership of 14 partner organisations, 50% from the public sector and 50% from the private sector. More than 50% of the organisations represented on the LAG are also members of Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership.

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