

News Release

Issue Date: Thursday, October 14, 2010

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Autumn Gold for new LEADER Projects

In the most recent funding round, the Rural Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (LAG) approved a further 10 projects with funding of more than £320,000.

This means that Aberdeenshire LEADER has approved more than 90 projects with total funds committed to date of £2.8million.

The diverse range of LEADER projects which received a share of the funding from Round 9 include: harbour restoration work at Sandhaven, the co-ordinated promotion of local farmers markets, the revitalisation of the West Pavilion at Banff Castle to form a cultural arts centre and other visitor attractions in Aberdeenshire and the north east.

James Knowles, Rural Aberdeenshire LAG Chairman said: "As in previous funding rounds, the LAG assessed a wide range of projects from modest revenue and marketing projects to substantial capital projects.

"We are also supporting a group from Huntly to undertake a learning journey to Finland which we hope will result in a co-operation project with Finnish LEADER LAGs who we welcomed to Aberdeenshire in January this year.

"Furthermore, it is most welcome that the LAG has been awarded additional funds to our original allocation. We therefore expect a busy year ahead with funds still available for new projects during 2011."

Vicky Thomson, LEADER Co-ordinator added: "There has been a lot of activity with LEADER in recent months with many projects underway or at completion stage.

"The tangible benefit of LEADER funding is becoming evident across Aberdeenshire with a number of community projects and community facilities now up and running.

"LEADER is contributing to a series of food tourism related initiatives in Royal Deeside as well as supporting the Enchanted Castle Event at Crathes Castle to be held in December.

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“A key project brought forward by Turriff and District Tourist Association is coming to fruition with a ceremony in late November to celebrate the placing of the Turra Coo sculpture in the centre of Turriff.”

The next meeting of the LAG will be an extraordinary meeting to consider applications to the Rural Broadband Challenge Fund.

The Scottish Government announced one-off funding of more than £800,000 to enhance Broadband provision across rural Scotland. A bid for the funds will be submitted by Aberdeenshire LEADER by the end of October.

New applications for Round 10 of LEADER are currently being worked up and the closing date is Wednesday, October 27.

Details of all approved projects to date and information on the application process are available on the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER website:
www.aberdeenshireleader.org

Project	LEADER Award
Sandhaven Harbour Middle Jetty Repair (Sandhaven & Pitullie Harbour)	£13,750
Quote	
Robbie Smith, Chairman, Sandhaven & Pitullie Harbour Trust	
Sandhaven & Pitullie Harbour Trust is extremely grateful to have secured LEADER funding. This will ensure that, for many years to come, protection will be provided for safe winter berthing in the West Harbour. It will also allow the opportunity of greatly increasing the number of berths in that inner basin, thereby increasing the economic viability of the harbour with respect to inshore fishing capacity, leisure craft and water sport facilities. The restoration work which we will now be able to bring about on the middle jetty will also signal to the wider public that the harbour will continue to be the focal point of the community with respect to social activities. This will help maintain the sense of community in the locality, and pride in the Sandhaven & Pitullie.	

Project	LEADER Award
The Revitalisation & Enhancement of Oldmeldrum Pleasure Park	£21,000
Quote	
Lindsay Threadgold, Chairperson, Meldrum Play	

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Securing the LEADER funding is a significant step for Meldrum Play as it will enable the revitalisation of the Meldrum Pleasure Park. This will bring benefits to all the park users and help to develop the park as a valuable community asset.

Project	LEADER Award
Aberdeenshire Farmers & Community Markets Association (AFCMA) Marketing & Development Programme	£26,000
Quote	
Kenny Groat, Chairman, Aberdeenshire Farmers and Community Markets Association	
This is excellent news for the Farmers Markets of the North East. It is a great achievement to bring together all the North East farmers markets to collaborate the marketing efforts and increase the awareness of the benefits that the markets have to offer to the general public. I hope this will strengthen the producer v customer link and allow Farmers markets to continue to grow, and this should offer the chance for more producers to get out and sell there own produce direct to the customers.	

Project	LEADER Award
Pitcaple Environmental Project Interpretation Centre	£20,800
Quote	
Kay Diack, Pitcaple Environmental Project	
Pitcaple Environmental Project is delighted to have been awarded assistance from Aberdeenshire LEADER. This represents a significant proportion of the funds required for our new interpretation centre. The centre will showcase renewable technologies while also providing enhanced training facilities for adults with disabilities. This project is a major step forward for PEP setting it on a course for a sustainable future.	

Project	LEADER Award
Resurfacing Multi-Purpose Sports Area, James Tennant Playing Field, Cuminestown	£36,285
Quote	
Alistair Strachan, Chairman, James Tennant Playing Field	
The LEADER grant forms the basis of funding for our project, and gives us	

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the confidence to gather the remainder of the funding to drive the project forward. The Trustees are delighted to have been awarded the LEADER funding which will greatly enhance the community sport facilities in Cuminestown.

Project	LEADER Award
Banff Castle West Pavilion Development	£94,790
Quote	
Julian Watson, Property Convenor, Banff Castle	
LEADER funding has validated our project by showing confidence in the association's aspirations. The grant is fantastic and will go a long way towards the development of the Banff Castle Complex which will incorporate the Kelpie Café, Arts and Folklore Centre.	

Project	LEADER Award
Edzell Woods Excess Water Study	£7,206
Quote	
Linda Wilson, Chairman, Edzell Woods Owners Group	
We are extremely grateful to receive funding from LEADER and Aberdeenshire Council's Top Up grant towards a feasibility study which will help the community develop a system to manage its infrastructure more effectively. Edzell Woods is a good place to live with wonderful safe open spaces and a number of people who voluntarily give time and effort to help maintain the estate and run social events throughout the year which make us a true community.	

Project	LEADER Award
MacRobert Hall Development Project	£100,000
Quote	
Mike Powell, Trustee and Secretary, Tarland Welfare Trust	
We're delighted and most grateful to Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER for this generous grant. It will help the people of Tarland make their hall once again the central focus and heart of the village. It will also help us considerably to be able to raise the rest of the funds needed to make the hall development project a reality.	

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Project	LEADER Award
Linking with Finland	£4,950
Quote	
Donald Boyd, Development Manager, Huntly Development Trust	
<p>Huntly Development Trust is delighted to receive the support of LEADER funds to help us take a small community delegation to the town of Juankoski in Finland. We were happy to host a group from there in January of this year when both parties identified opportunities to build on. The purpose of our current trip is to learn how the Finns approach rural development, get to know their community and examine the potential for future transnational collaboration. Ideally we will be able to set up further longer term projects to bring lasting benefit to both our communities. We will be happy to share our findings widely in the Aberdeenshire LEADER area as without the support of LEADER this trip would not have happened.</p>	

Project	LEADER Award
Explore for a Day – Aberdeen & Grampian	£2,488
Quote	
Maren Ebeling, Tourism Officer, Scottish Natural Heritage	
<p>Tourism is an important industry in Aberdeenshire. We are very keen to support this with a professional tourism publication that tells visitors and local people about natural and cultural attractions in the area. The LEADER funds will enable us to do this in a meaningful way. The publication will include suggested visitor itineraries, running in consecutive days. This will encourage longer stays and therefore increased spend in local attractions and communities.</p>	

Total LEADER Award for Round 9	£327,269
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Notes for Editors

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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 £4.52 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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