

**Issue Date: Wednesday, October 12, 2011**

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## **A legacy for communities as Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER continues to enhance local facilities**

Five new LEADER projects have been awarded funding by the Aberdeenshire LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) at its September meeting, resulting in full commitment of the current available budget.

As Aberdeenshire's LEADER budget has been allocated to worthwhile projects across Aberdeenshire further applications are not being considered at the current time.

The LAG meeting was held at 'The Lodge', Strichen Community Park, which was funded by LEADER in 2009 and opened in May 2011.

The combined award of the projects from Round 13 was £317,186 for the five projects, with total costs of £2,731,406.

LEADER is a rural development funding programme which is financed by the European Commission and the Scottish Government and administered locally by Aberdeenshire Council.

It awards grants to projects which demonstrate innovation and community benefit. 116 projects have now been supported to date, with combined LEADER awards of £4.09million and total project costs of £16.14million.

A number of the projects will enhance Aberdeenshire's recreational, sporting and tourist facilities and provide an important legacy for rural communities.

These include a revitalisation programme for a community hall in Longside; a major enhancement of Haddo Country Park; a study for a potential traditional boatbuilding facility in Portsoy; a new community sport facility and pavilion in Newburgh and the construction of a new village hall for Daviot.

Belinda Miller, Rural Aberdeenshire LAG Chairperson, said: "The projects approved in Round 13 of the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER programme show a clear commitment to the enhancement of community facilities in the area.

"The five projects will benefit rural areas in individual ways but will all contribute to the delivery of enhanced community facilities that will contribute to social inclusion and wellbeing.

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“The reason that the LEADER approach succeeds is not only due to the variety of projects which it supports, but also its ability to deliver a broader strategy which will continue to revitalise communities and provide the legacy of a thriving rural society.

“The success of LEADER has been clearly demonstrated by the strong and ongoing capacity to bring forward community projects, and although we can’t accept more applications at the moment, should any additional LEADER funds become available in future a call will be made for new applications.”

Vicky Thomson, LEADER Coordinator, said: “I am delighted to see the latest group of projects being supported by LEADER.

“In order to achieve the LEADER vision of revitalised and sustainable communities it is crucial that rural villages such as Daviot and Longside retain successful, thriving community halls. Leisure, tourism and sporting facilities such as the projects at Haddo, Portsoy and Newburgh are also vital to the wellbeing of rural areas.

“It is important to recognise the huge amount of hard work which is put into the application process by communities across Aberdeenshire. Many of the applicants are volunteers working in their spare time to benefit the wider community by the provision of enhanced facilities or the delivery of ongoing community projects.

“LEADER would not succeed without the fantastic effort which is contributed by these volunteers.”

Details of all approved projects to date and information on the LEADER programme are available on the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER website: [www.aberdeenshireleader.org](http://www.aberdeenshireleader.org)

## Project Details

**Longside Community Hall Improvement Project**  
**Managed by: Longside Parish Church of Scotland**  
**LEADER Award: £63,641**

Project Description
Longside Hall is run by the local Church of Scotland parish as a community facility for the village of Longside and its hinterland. The hall is well used and enjoyed by many members of the local community but has problems with internal layout, storage space and energy efficiency.

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The project will see the delivery of a programme of works to upgrade and improve facilities within the hall to improve its accessibility to users, whilst improving its energy efficiency. This will be achieved by installation of double glazing and new doors throughout the building; internal refitting to create an open and welcoming entrance hall; insulating wall space to reduce heat loss; a small extension to provide a storage room; and the enlargement of toilet facilities.

The project has been developed in close consultation with the community to ensure that it will directly benefit the community. The improvements made will increase the use and sustainability of a facility in an area which is experiencing above average population growth.

## Quote

Bill Sarson, Longside Parish Church Congregational Board, said: "The Congregational Board of Longside Parish Church would like to accord a big thank you to LEADER for the recent generous award in Round 13. As more than a quarter of the total cost of our planned hall refurbishment, it undoubtedly makes the difference between the project going ahead or not. The LEADER grant will help bring our facilities up to modern standards of heating and insulation.

"The advice provided by the Aberdeenshire LEADER team to help improve our application was invaluable and all contacts with the organisation have been friendly and efficient."

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## Haddo Country Park Regeneration Project

Managed by: Aberdeenshire Council

LEADER Award: £70,845

## Project Description

The project relates to the strategic development of Haddo Country Park, which is owned by Aberdeenshire Council, to enable the facilities at Haddo become a major visitor destination. Haddo is renowned as a prime example of 18<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape, while Haddo House, under ownership of National Trust for Scotland, is an A Listed building of strategic significance.

The key elements within the project include improvements to the visitor arrival area including new access paths to the Stables complex, the installation of an interpretive centre at the Stables, new signage, and improvements to the visitor reception area. The LEADER elements focus on items which demonstrate strong community benefit and sustainable tourism development.

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The project is an element of a much larger redevelopment of Haddo Country Park. Project works outwith the LEADER application relate in the main to parkland improvements to infrastructure including dykes, bridges, pheasantry building, statues and monuments, roadways and environmental enhancement works.

## Quote

Peter Fraser, Environmental Planner (North), Aberdeenshire Council said: “The award of LEADER funding for the Haddo Country Park Regeneration Project has been a major financial boost to the process of carrying out some much needed enhancement and renovations to improve the overall attraction of this, one of the north east’s most beautiful and historically important destinations.

“The emphasis of the project is to conserve the Park and encourage all year round recreational activities. The regeneration of Haddo has a key role in enhancing recreational facilities for local communities and also has an important role to play in the local and regional economy as a premier tourist attraction. The securing of LEADER funding is a major element in making this all possible for Haddo.”

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## P.O.R.T. Scoping Study

**Managed by: Scottish Traditional Boat Festival**

**LEADER Award £5,000**

## Project Description

Scottish Traditional Boat Festival has an overall aim to establish a permanent training centre by undertaking capital works to restore a derelict building at the harbour side in Portsoy. Once this building –a prominent former boat shed- has been restored it can then be used for delivery of a range of training activities, primarily focused on traditional skills for young adults and children. This would be operated as a social enterprise and be self sustainable. In order to realise this aim there needs to be initial scoping study undertaken to determine the likely costs, sustainability and a business plan for the proposal.

The first scoping study would see a consultant employed to provide a costed design brief with planning advice and professional surveys for the development of the building. This study would lead to the undertaking of a future capital project.

The second scoping study would see a consultant employed to undertake a range of community activities to determine the value of the proposed future project in terms of economic and social sustainability. This study would also look to identify potential

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revenue sources for such a project, and develop a five year business plan based on a commercially viable curriculum.

## Quote

Jane Cotton, Project Support Worker, Scottish Traditional Boat Festival, said:  
“Scottish Traditional Boat Festival is delighted to receive LEADER funding to continue the development of their exciting new project – the Portsoy Organisation for Restoration and Training or PORT.

“PORT will be restoring an old maritime building in the heart of the harbour area of Portsoy. This will become a residential training centre for young people to learn traditional maritime skills like boat building. The funding will be spent on undertaking all the essential planning and costings work and on involving the wider community in the project.”

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**Gallows Hill Community Pavilion, Newburgh**  
**Managed by: Foveran Community Council**  
**LEADER Award £80,000**

## Project Description

The project involves the construction of a new community changing room facility in Newburgh. The building will be situated between an existing modern full size football pitch and existing multi-purpose courts and will serve both facilities. The project also comprises landscaping and car parking which will improve access to both of the existing pitches.

The pavilion will house home/away and referee changing rooms with showers; male, female and disabled toilets, galley kitchen and two community/meeting rooms. The community rooms will be used for educational and recreational purposes and will be available for public use.

Much of the work will be self-built by members of the community and the community council is working in partnership with a number of local stakeholders including the football club. Solar panels and a rainwater collection tank will be installed to maximise energy efficiency.

## Quote

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Duncan Milne, Secretary, Foveran Community Council, said: "The generous support of the LEADER programme has provided the foundation of a building programme which will give the people a proper centre with changing rooms and a classroom/meeting room which will service the football pitch and the court and provide a vital stimulus in leisure activity and in the creation of clubs and groups where none existed before.

"A major deficiency in Newburgh and the surrounding district has been the total lack of proper community leisure and recreational facilities. A piecemeal approach in the past had left the community with a football pitch and a multi-purpose, all-weather court at a site on the natural arena of Gallowshill but with limited access and no changing rooms.

"Without LEADER support, none of this would have been possible."

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**New Daviot Village Hall**  
**Managed by: Daviot Village Hall**  
**LEADER Award £97,700**

Project Description
<p>Daviot Hall is an ageing, outdated but well used hall situated in the small rural village of Daviot. After plans to renovate proved prohibitively expensive, the committee decided that the best course of action was to replace it with a new building on the site of the present car park.</p> <p>The replacement building will be an energy efficient, purpose built facility. It will far better suit the needs of the Daviot community and will include modern kitchen and toilet facilities, extra storage space for user groups and a larger main hall. Heating will be provided through an innovative renewable air source system and maximum insulation will ensure reduced energy consumption.</p> <p>The committee have worked very closely with the community to secure its support and have organised numerous fundraising events over a number of years. It is currently running a 'buy-a-brick' scheme which is encouraging local residents to have their name engraved on a brick in return for a donation to the project.</p>

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Diane Scott, Secretary, Daviot Village Hall, said: "Daviot Village Hall Committee is thrilled to receive a grant of £97,700 from LEADER. We have been trying to build a new hall for almost ten years and LEADER's support will finally make this achievable.

"Daviot is a small rural village and the hall is at the heart of our community. The LEADER grant will ensure that Daviot will have a modern facility for recreational, educational, social and sporting activities which will contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community now and in the future."

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## **Notes to Editors**

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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## Endnotes