



Rural Development Strategy
Steering Group

OPEN MINUTES

Held at 13:30 on Thursday 29th October 2015
in the Chamber of Commerce, Stanley

These minutes are draft until confirmed at the next meeting of the Steering Group

Present	MLA Phyl Rendell	(PR)	Chair
	MLA Ian Hansen	(IH)	Deputy Portfolio Holder
	Vicki Jackson	(VJ)	Senior Public Policy Advisor
	Martin Slater	(MS)	Managing Director, FIDC (minutes)
	Ian Campbell	(IC)	Senior Agricultural Advisor
	Ben Berntsen	(BB)	East Falkland Representative
	Louise Pole-Evans	(LP)	Islands Representative
	Neil Judd	(NJ)	Camp Representative
	Anne Wagner-Gras	(AWG)	Development Manager, FIDC (minutes)
By invitation:	Andrew Crighton	(AC)	
	Esther Bertram	(EB)	Rural Energy Advisor Chief Executive Officer, Falklands
	Farrah Peck	(FP)	Conservation Falklands Conservation
Public & Press	None		

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Dot Gould and Keith Padgett.

2. Declarations of Interest in items

2.1 NJ, BB and LP declared a general interest.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th July 2015

3.1 Add Keith Padgett's name to the list of those present.

3.2 P.3, 5.7 it was agreed to delete the word 'they' at the start of the second line to read 'she has met'.

3.3 With these changes agreed, the minutes were then confirmed as a true and accurate account of the meeting.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 30th July 2015

4.1 4.1 Rural Tax Reliefs, draft legislation: VJ advised that she had met with the Head of Tax and the Legislative Drafter assigned to this work. There was some on-going work with regard to some of the detailed aspects of the definitions which will inform the legislation, and it was anticipated to have an early draft of the legislation by the end of November. VJ

4.2 4.4 FLH settlement water improvements: NJ advised that he has now received proposals from one supplier, and he is exploring other options for the installation of water filtration systems in FLH settlements. He hopes to reach a decision on the most appropriate solution within the next few weeks. Once a decision has been made, he will discuss opportunities for sharing skills with the rural community. NJ

4.3 All other matters arising were covered under the relevant agenda items.

5. RDS General Update

5.1 AWG updated the Steering Group on the progress made with the RDS since the last meeting.

5.2 Grants – AWG informed the group that there is funding available in all the RDS grant schemes for 2015-2016. AWG then gave an update on the applications approved under the different grant schemes for this financial year.

5.3 Camp Tourist Map - The Camp Tourist Map has now been printed and shipped to the Falkland Islands. As soon as they arrive, copies will be sent to all the stakeholders included in the map contact list as well as key partners (library, museum, jetty visitor centre, PWD housing officer to include in welcome pack, etc.) AWG

5.4 Tourism Road signage: AWG indicated that PWD had reported on the additional signage they had procured in the last financial year. They have indicated that installation would be completed before the main tourist season. For this financial year, they have undertaken designs for other signs, but these have not been procured yet. They indicated that they were looking at including signs along to Hill Cove and Dunbar and to upgrade the signage at the MPA Road/Mare Harbour Road/ Goose Green Road with the Military's co-operation.

5.5 MS reminded those present that the RDS-Coordinator had previously contacted business owners in Camp to identify what was needed by way of additional signage and this information, along with an appropriate budget, had been passed to PWD.

5.6 PWD would be contacted and asked for a list of all the signs ordered and installed to date. BB mentioned the need for additional signage at the main turnoffs and it was agreed that PR would contact PWD and report back to the Transport Advisory Committee. PR

5.7 Training Scheme: AWG noted that the RDS had allocated £3,000 to co-fund, along with the CDS and the Tourist board, Customer Service training. The funding was provided to facilitate the delivery of training sessions in Camp

and sponsor flights for Islanders to be able to participate. The Tourist Board reported that 97 people had taken part and that they received excellent feedback on the training provided. As far as the Camp businesses are concerned, two days training took place at Bluff Cove (11 participants) and Darwin (2 participants), with a further 3 participants from Camp travelling to one of the Stanley sessions to take part.

- 5.8 LP indicated that, should we want to offer this course again next year, it should ideally take place just before the 1st of September before most of the Tourist businesses start the season.
- 5.9 Fox Bay REZ: MS gave an update on the master planning process and indicated that the working group had met for the first time on the 21st of October. Having reviewed the list of priority actions identified by the Community it had been noted that most of them were in train and those that remain could be addressed fairly quickly. The working group had agreed that, where possible, these issues should be addressed and progress reported back to the community. There is further work needed to progress the master plan itself, which will take a longer-term view on how Fox Bay East could develop as a Rural Enterprise Zone.
- 5.10 PR then asked for an update on the Old Manager's House. MS explained that PWD will be visiting Fox Bay at the end of the week and he hoped that the paper, that he and the Director of Central Services had drafted, could be submitted to Executive Council within the next two weeks. MS
- 5.11 Review of waste Management & recycling methods: FIG's appointed Waste Management Coordinator had organised the first workshop at Goose Green in August, which was well attended. Unfortunately, due to the weather conditions, the two workshops planned on the West needed to be postponed. When all three workshops have taken place, FIG's Waste Management Coordinator will come back to the Steering Group with a proposal to take this project forward.
- 5.12 PR commented that the proposed camp workshops seemed to be a good approach and looked forward to seeing the project move forward.

6. Rural Energy Project Update

- 6.1 AC provided the Steering Group with an update on progress to date including the launch of the Rural Energy Partnership Scheme and the review of Energy Grant Schemes. He mentioned the Best Practice Guides and Energy Grant Leaflets that were available, as well as the monitoring and test equipment that has been purchased and installed. He gave an update on the work carried out with energy policies and strategies, in conjunction with FIG, as well as the recent site visits and meetings he had with Camp stakeholders. He reminded the group that, pending any agreed changes, the energy grants were still available and gave an update on recently approved applications.
- 6.2 BB suggested sending copies of the Best Practice Guides and Energy Grant Leaflets to farms and businesses in Camp. It was agreed that this would be done along with the new version of the Camp Tourist Map. AWG

6.3 VJ indicated that the REA's recent trip to Brussels to attend the Overseas Countries and Territories Information Day at the European Parliament was a good opportunity to promote the Falklands and its commitment to renewable energy and pointed out that this was cost-neutral for FIG as all the expenditure had been covered by the EU.

7. RDS Energy Survey 2015 – Key Results

7.1 AC provided the Steering Group with an update on the key results from the RDS Energy Survey conducted in June/July 2015. He mentioned that the aim of this survey was for him to get the views of the Falkland Islands population, to inform the review of Energy Grant Schemes and update guidelines and eligibility criteria as well as to put forward proposals for new schemes. Having presented the key findings from the survey, he invited anyone wanting more information to contact him directly.

7.2 NJ indicated that, now that 5 to 10000 KWH energy systems were becoming much more affordable, they could be a very interesting option for farms and camp businesses wishing to upgrade the capacity of their current systems. He would be interested in any further technical or costing information as well as opportunities for joint purchase.

7.3 BB indicated that, based on the results of the survey, insulation would need to be further considered as the current scheme seemed to be quite restrictive on the list of eligible materials. AC explained that all the survey results had been taken into account when conducting the review of the schemes and any proposed changes would need to be considered by Executive Council.

7.4 MS indicated that he was pleased that the key results of the survey have been published and suggested it was good practice to make this information available. Publishing the survey results and providing details on how they been used to inform decision making encouraged participation in surveys and helped ensure people's views are taken into account.

8. Energy Grant Review

8.1 AC provided an update on the review he has done on the three energy grant schemes in place and indicated that the proposed amendments to the schemes have been submitted to Executive Council to secure approval to implement the changes recommended as a result of the review. He indicated that he would present details of any approved amendments to the schemes in the next meeting of the Steering Group. AC

8.2 MS highlighted the fact that, as the budget holder, the Head of Environmental Planning had been consulted throughout the review and supported the recommendation to make the proposed changes to the Energy Grants.

8.3 PR thanked AC for the work done so far.

9. Environmental Awareness Raising Campaign

9.1 AWG gave an introduction to the discussions she has had with key partners for a joint approach to the delivery of the Environmental Awareness Raising Campaign amongst the rural community. She indicated that Falklands Conservation had been identified as being well placed to take a lead on this.

Based on these initial discussions, she invited FC to present details of their suggested approach for the delivery of this project.

- 9.2 EB indicated that FC were keen to take a bottom up approach to increasing awareness as FC, being landowner's themselves, recognized that there are a range of activities that can be undertaken to improve land. These include conservation activities that benefit the natural environment. FC would investigate different activities being undertaken by themselves and other landowners to identify areas of interest and shared challenges with conservation and environmental activities.
- 9.3 The objectives would be to gain a better understanding of i) the aspirations of different landowners for their land, ii) the land management activities already being undertaken which landowners see as having the most benefit for the natural environment, iii) the limitations landowners are experiencing on expanding this work and iv) whether collaborations/shared learning/resources could be beneficial.
- 9.4 In terms of activities, FC would organise individual site visits on West and East Falklands and follow up with suggestions for collaboration on the shared challenges, such as planning joint proposals and exploring the restoration options available. They would identify what would be possible to undertake under this project and which would need funding beyond this project.
- 9.5 MS asked what FC would prioritize if they had to choose just one objective for conservation in the Islands. After some discussion Steering Group Members agreed that habitat restoration would be of importance to every landowner.
- 9.6 BB indicated that to get support from landowners, conservation activities would need to make business sense in the longer term, even if, in the short term, there might be some opportunity costs. There is a need to find a sensible balance between short term interests versus a longer term increase in the productivity of land.
- 9.7 NJ indicated that from FLH's perspective, their focus is to manage both livestock and land for a win-win situation, land conservation and profitability for the farm. They couldn't prioritize habitat restoration activities which would be too labour or capital intensive. He indicated that some farms were exploring different grazing systems and that it would be relevant to look at these initiatives to better understand how these could benefit the environment.
- 9.8 EB indicated that for landowners the choice between short term costs and long term gain could be difficult and this might be a barrier.
- 9.9 IH indicated that when dealing with habitat restoration there was a need to consider long term investment and not only short term costs.
- 9.10 PR suggested that the focus should be on encouraging people to set aside land as an investment in the future. The priority would be for FC to start talking to landowners to see how they could support them with this approach.
- 9.11 AWG agreed that this project was a good opportunity to start working on these issues. There can be concrete short term actions which shouldn't

prevent key stakeholders from discussing activity that would go beyond this project, for example research proposals.

- 9.12 AC indicated that it was important to better promote the activities that were already undertaken by landowners.
- 9.13 BB indicated that it was important for landowners to understand that this project was a joint approach with key stakeholders like the DoA and Environmental Planning. He suggested creating a working group with key stakeholders to monitor this project.
- 9.14 Based on the discussions, it was agreed that Falklands Conservation would take a lead on this project and convene a working group with the DoA, Environmental Planning, SAERI, FLH and 1-2 other landowner representatives to monitor this project and discuss a longer-term approach. The working group would report back on progress at the next Steering Group Meeting. EB

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 No other business.

11. Date of Next Meeting(s)

- 11.1 The next meeting of the RDS Steering Group will be held on the 21st January 2016.