

£3.8 million fund drive for Perth and Kinross rural communities

LEGACY: Scottish Government and EU money to help 94,000 population

GRAHAM GIBSON

Around £3.8 million of combined EU and Scottish Government funding will be ploughed into Perth and Kinross rural communities.

The money will be used for priorities identified in the new Leader, (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) rural development programme for the region.

Rural Perth and Kinross has a population of around 94,000 people and the aim of the programme is to create a long-term legacy of vibrant, healthy and inclusive rural communities.

Funding will be allocated by the Rural Perth and Kinross Local Action Group, (Lag), an independent body that consists of representatives from local businesses, public sector and third sector organisations.

The Lag led an extensive engagement process via surveys of individuals, community groups and social enterprises, as well as using focus groups and social media.

The group also used lessons learned from the previous Rural Tayside Leader

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programme to guide the development of a draft local development strategy (LDS).

The Lag chairman for the Rural Perth and Kinross programme Jackie Brierton said: “The award of £3.8m of Leader and Scottish Government funds for the development of rural communities and rural enterprise in Perthshire is a fantastic opportunity for us all.

“The action group members have invested considerable time identifying the priorities for rural Perth and Kinross which are set out in the Local Development Strategy for the programme and spend of the funding allocation.”

Projects identified in the rural Perth and Kinross Leader LDS include establishment of a youth challenge fund, with micro-funding up to £5,000, to support projects led by young people.

There are also plans to establish a new rural community future leaders programme. This will target individual volunteers of all ages but focus on young people and retirees, leading or aspiring to lead community organisations and projects.

Mrs Brierton said: “Implementing the strategy is now the priority and local communities and enterprises are being encouraged to attend our launch event to find out about project funding opportunities and to help the Lag deliver on its objectives.”

The launch will be at Bankfoot Community Church Hall on January 14 from 3pm-6.30pm.

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