



Communities on the Edge?

Working together to sustain rural communities

An event for the Landowning Sector

18th November 2008, Floors Castle, Kelso, Scottish Borders





Welcome to the post event report of the recent ‘Communities on the Edge: Working Together to Sustain Rural Communities’ event held at Floors Castle, Scottish Borders in November 2009. This event for the UK’s landowning sector brought together a diverse group of land owners and land managers from across the UK and Ireland to learn about the important initiative, ‘Communities on the Edge’, and to discuss current and emerging issues facing the rural community. Representatives from over sixty land owning estates attended the event, hearing from a superb range and quality of speaker and participating in a number of themed workshop sessions.



John Gold, 'Communities on the Edge' Project Coordinator, sets the scene for the event in his introductory presentation:

'Communities on the Edge is a project which is impossible to describe in ten minutes. It is a project which has grown and developed over seven years and it exists in its current form as a result of the contributions and influences of many people. Its lofty aim of trying to create sustainable jobs and rural enterprise was triggered by the story of one man who made an approach to Buccleuch Estates to request access to their forestry waste to produce kindling for sale locally. His enterprise grew and, with support from the estate, he purchased a charcoal kiln and successfully managed to add value to what had previously been an underused resource. His business later grew to sustain seven employees.

This story, coupled with the need for rural communities to become more self sustaining in the face of challenges such as climate change and peak oil, led to the birth of the COTE project. Adopting a community development approach, it aims to build skills and confidence within the rural community, equipping it with the resilience required to be able to cope with external shocks to the system, shocks which have since reared their heads in the form of the global credit crunch and escalating energy costs. It is a project which aims to re-localise economies and raise the profile of the need to grow strong local markets for locally produced goods. In essence, to build sustainable enterprise which lasts.

But how does all that translate to work on the ground? We have been fortunate enough to have had the support of the Carnegie UK Trust for the past three years of the project who, through their Rural Action Research Programme, have enabled the deployment of three full time equivalent workers in three estate communities across the South of Scotland. Working alongside Buccleuch Estates in Langholm, Roxburghe Estates in Yetholm and Douglas and Angus Estates in Douglas, our small team of 'Community Animators' have engaged with local people in ways which are recognised to be among the best in current community engagement practice.

Recruited from within these communities, our team of animators have worked to encourage individuals and groups to become more active citizens, supporting them to participate in the shaping and development of their communities. A truly 'bottom-up' approach, our project respects and values the opinions of local people above all else. Local people, the local experts, are those who are best placed to define the priorities for their own community. Implementing large group processes, we have drawn up a local agenda with the local community and established working groups around each of those priorities. Through animation, many of the projects which have grown from this local agenda are now beginning to bear fruit and the skills, knowledge and confidence of the community has been enhanced as a result.

To us, processes are as important as products. Community Animators do not deliver services. They do not do things for people; rather they work to develop communities, working with and alongside people. Doing things to or for people is not sustainable. Doing things with and alongside them, passing on knowledge and skills and empowering them to do it for themselves, is. These processes are also long. There are no quick fixes. But by taking time and investing in relationships, much broader and stronger foundations will surely lead to more sustainable outcomes. Failure must also be acknowledged, and lessons learned.

Our project is no longer primarily focussed on the creation of sustainable jobs and rural enterprise through utilising underused estate resources. It is focussed on building strong, resilient rural communities which have the capacity and ability to shake off the unknown challenges of the future. I have little doubt that the legacy of our project will last well beyond the project's end date of this December. I also have little doubt that as our communities grow and develop, opportunities to work in close partnership with our landowning partners will increase.

COTE is a holistic approach to rural community development which places at its heart the concerns, priorities and ambitions of local people. Working to a locally shaped agenda, it bridges sectoral divides, embracing the challenges of partnership working between the private, public and voluntary sectors. It's long term outlook has alerted three rural communities not only to the uncertainties and challenges of the future, but more importantly to the opportunities and possibilities which will provide them with the income streams, jobs and infrastructure to ensure that they thrive for centuries to come'



Mr Mike Russell, MSP, Minister for the Environment, delivers the key note address:

Emphasising the Scottish Government's commitment to keep people living and working in rural communities across Scotland, Mr Russell welcomed the intention of the COTE approach to construct a narrative of communities interacting with landowners to build mutually-beneficial partnerships. Acknowledging the difficulties and challenges of the moment, he noted the financial problems facing rural businesses and the fear felt by landowners in the form of right to buy legislation.

Solidarity (raising the earnings of the poorest), cohesion (across Scotland) and sustainable development (fair to current and future generations, and recognising quality of environment as an asset and key source of revenue) were viewed by the minister as key to the sustainable economic growth of a strong and resilient rural Scotland. Prioritising education, he applauded the Scottish Government's position of a presumption against the closure of all rural schools.

The management of Scotland's land resource is in no way a static situation. Mr Russell noted that 1.9% of the Highlands and Islands are now held in community ownership and that a shift of power had taken place with local communities now able to exercise much more direct action. Welcoming the diversity of owners and ownership models which now exist in Scotland, he perceived the challenge to be in the ability to get the best out of all ownership models, be it a large private estate or a community owned island. In fact, the issue may not ever have been in the ownership of the land, but rather its use, particularly in the face of challenges such as climate change and food security.

Such aims are predicated by ambition and optimism and the minister hopes that the Scottish Government is fully engaged.

Michael Russell is a Member of the Scottish Parliament for the South of Scotland region. Educated at the Marr College, Troon and Edinburgh University he worked in television and the media prior to establishing his own media company, Eala Bhan Ltd. He was Chief Executive of the SNP from 1994 to 1999 and was elected to the Scottish Parliament as a regional MSP for the South of Scotland at the first Scottish Parliament Elections in 1999. He was re-elected in May 2007 and was appointed Minister for Environment in Scotland's first-ever SNP administration



Chris Gregory, Agent for the Duchy of Cornwall on the Dartmoor Estate, summarises the challenge and opportunity of stimulating economic growth through stewardship:

Speaking with ample experience in the field and a great conviction, Chris Gregory told of the long term economic benefits which can be achieved through good stewardship. Insisting that there is no one correct way to engage with a community, and admitting that mistakes will undoubtedly be made while ‘learning on the job’, Chris demonstrated clearly his opinion that relationships with tenants, neighbours and the wider community are fundamental to the success of the growth of the estate.

The Dartmoor Estate, six sevenths moorland, and of a composition similar to that of many other large estates, has a rich natural resource managed by only around one hundred farmers. Hard hit financially, and with the statistics to back this up, Chris painted a picture of issues which can be mirrored up and down the British Isles.

Insisting that the estate is no better off financially than many others, Chris described a number of projects with which the estate are involved covering issues as wide ranging as affordable housing, local service provision, the arts and young people. Convinced that the only way to deliver successful solutions is to get close to a community, he recommended the establishment of community fora where neutral territory is established and action can take place as a result of fruitful discussion. Projects include a new community centre and centre for excellence for arts and crafts.

Speaking with a deep respect for the people of the Dartmoor estate, Chris is sure that it would be impossible to disengage now. Building the capacity of the community to manage and develop its assets is ongoing and Chris envisages a strong partnership between business and community developing for many years to come.

Chris Gregory is a Chartered (Rural Practice) Surveyor and has been employed as agent for the Duchy of Cornwall for the past 20 years, the last 5 of which have been based in Princetown, Devon, managing the Duchy’s 70,000 acre upland estate. At the heart of the estate, the village of Princetown is well known because of its remote location and of course is home to Dartmoor Prison. The village is a designed settlement, built to meet the past needs of prison officers and staff and is now in the final phase of a twenty year programme of reinvestment into the fabric and social capabilities of the community.



Philippa Grant MBE, of Rothiemurchus Estate shares her experiences of the benefits of developing a common agenda in her presentation ‘Common Cause, Better Rewards’

With over half a million people passing through the estate every year, Rothiemurchus must be one of the busiest private estates in the country. ‘Loved by generations, cared for by you’ it promotes a sense of shared responsibility and partnership which is mirrored in every one of the estates business dealings. Be it their attendance at Community Council meetings or representation on the Cairngorms National Park Authority, the estate clearly sees itself as part of a wider community. The Rothiemurchus Concordat, an innovative agreement between the public sector and the estate sharing the responsibility to care and shape the future of this special area, is chaired by the CNPA. Indeed, it is recognised by the CNPA that the purpose and aims of National Parks in Scotland reflects the purpose and aims of the management of Rothiemurchus for several centuries.

However, this comes with its problems as well as its advantages and Philippa spoke of a place where conflict was once rife and getting people, agencies and businesses to sit down round a table was impossible. In an environment where ‘moderation and good manners were seen as signals of weakness’, it took time and commitment from groups and agencies to learn to work together. Coupled with the apathy of a community which had been consulted ‘to’ but never ‘with’, it’d understandable why it’s taken so long for productive dialogue to develop. It was only through sustained commitment by all the local and national public, private and NGO stakeholders in the area to the CRAGG (Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Group) process of shared understanding leading to resolution, that local solutions to long standing conflicts of national significance were found.

Rothiemurchus differs from many other estates businesses due to the intensity and complexity of conflicting pressures which are of a scale not experienced in other places. It has vast experience of the challenge of achieving short and long term sustainability, where 100% of the natural resource is designated to be of national and international significance for bio-diversity as well as scenery, while the local economy is dependant on large numbers of visitors enjoying outdoor activities who do not have to make any financial contribution to the longer term management of the sensitive resource.

A second facet of the estate business is its role as a first ‘port of call’ for other outdoor businesses. Facilitating and coordinating an online bookings system, a business partnership has developed which is mutually beneficial for all concerned, and presents the customer with a streamlined and efficient service.

Summing up, Philippa noted the importance of building strong relationships and partnerships which leave doors open rather than closed. Businesses which are healthy and sustainable are not so because they exist in isolation, but rather they work together to a common vision for the benefit of all.

Philippa Grant MBE found herself becoming a community development activist after 1975, when her husband Johnnie returned to manage Rothiemurchus Estate near Aviemore where he was born. Her training as a volunteer and helping to establish a diverse range of user, voluntary, community and business led organisations and networks throughout the Highlands taught her skills to start her own businesses. She has been involved in the reorganisation of several Scottish public sector bodies to enable user focused policies and services to be developed. Badenoch and Strathspey, with Aviemore at its centre, has multi-layered public sector intervention and an evolving private sector hunger for change. Once known for conflict the area was recently found to be one of the happiest places to live in the U.K. Philippa is currently developing a Rothiemurchus activities bookings service with local independent activity providers.



Dr Kate Braithwaite MBE, Director of Carnegie UK Trust's Rural Programme imagines new possibilities:

'Life on estates will never be the same again'. Speaking with conviction, a conviction backed up by her experiences of meeting and working with rural communities across the UK and Ireland, she insists that business as usual is not an option. With new drivers of change affecting the well being of rural communities Kate asks what collective action can be taken swiftly to take into account these fundamental changes.

A proposal to think in terms of assets, and to focus on the optimisation of these is heard – focussing not on land and buildings, but on people, communities, culture and heritage – things which every place has in abundance. By mobilising and developing these assets, new solutions can be found to the big issues facing the world today – food security, jobs, housing.

Quoting the recent OECD evaluation of Scottish rural policy, Kate notes three new opportunities for rural communities:

- o Place – the power of place; encouraging the creatively inspired to come and live here – but they need places to live and infrastructure.
- o Energy – huge opportunities in renewable energy.
- o Broadband.

Calling for new leadership by landowners, Kate insists that here is a need for the landowning sector to have its voice heard. Offering to work with a number of case study estates, she notes a number of opportunities which she'd like to see taken up:

- (1) Substituting income from farming and EU payments to come from elsewhere, e.g., ecosystem services, flood prevention in the form of water catchment management – if stewardship is to continue it needs financial benefits.
- (2) Big opportunities in new settlements; a version of the pioneering Community Land Trust where landowners retain ownership of the land.

Kate Braithwaite MBE is the Director of the Carnegie Rural Community Development Programme, leading on Commission and the Rural Action Research Programme. Kate was previously Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Cumbria – the Rural Community Council for the County. She was responsible for the delivery of innovative rural development programmes including Rural Women's Network, Enterprising Communities (social enterprise support), hosting a LEADER+ programme and work with hill farming communities. Kate chaired Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership and the Voluntary Sector North West – the regional voluntary and community sector network.



To Conclude

There were a number of very powerful issues emerging from the event; firstly that progressive estates are working with their immediate communities to generate spectacular rural development - BUT this rarely finds its way into mainstream literature. The sector must raise its head above the parapet and find a voice.

Secondly, the delivery of some very important national targets for carbon reduction, renewable energy and water catchment management will be delivered on our behalf by land managers but there is currently no adequate way of valuing this contribution.

We are operating in difficult times. It is now more important than ever before to develop innovative solutions to the challenges we face. The opportunities are abundant – but we must work hard to learn to work together, developing new models and establishing effective partnerships.

The local community will become increasingly important both as a source of labour and as a market for new products and services. The need for positive relationships to exist is now paramount and the nature of these relationships will be very different from those which existed in the past – this is not about benevolence. There must be mutual gain from schemes in order to secure genuine buy in.

Across the board, from government to agency to estate to community, there is a need to improve engagement and communication. If we are to reinvigorate the rural economy, the latent skills and energy which exists must be harnessed and this relies upon a shift away from traditional methods and statutory consultations. This shift will be costly in terms of both time and resources but are essential if progress is to occur. A call is issued to membership bodies to equip their members with the skills and knowledge and confidence to reengage with their communities, and to government agencies to become involved in, support and resource this important work.

Intelligent.
Ambitious.
Committed to sustainable communities.

(We are. Are you?)



Dr Kate Braithwaite MBE, of the Carnegie UK Trust's Rural Programme, sums up the event in her recent article in New Start magazine.

'For anyone who formed a view of rural landowners from watching 'Monarch of the Glen', the modern day realities may be quite surprising. Far from being naïve and distant, landowners are all too aware of the economic challenges faced by those involved in farming, and that the future wellbeing of their tenants and neighbouring communities will be dependent upon their ability to anticipate new opportunities and income streams. The landowners may in fact be the community, or increasingly an NGO or a public body such as the Ministry of Defence. Now more than ever, in the context of an economic downturn, there is a duty of care on all landowners to help stimulate local rural economies.

The rural economy is facing enormous challenges even without a recession. According to the Scottish Agricultural College's Rural Policy Centre report, 'Farming's Retreat from the Hills', the national sheep flock has declined by 2.3 million animals over the last nine years. This has resulted in a £25 loss per hill ewe in 2006. Yet we know that traditional rural industries such as hill farming can have clear social, cultural and community benefits for communities, and for those wider public benefits they should be supported.

Stuart Burgess, Chair of the Commission for Rural Communities, recently launched an inquiry into the future of England's upland communities. He said that "new economic opportunities needed to be identified". His examples included the growth of home-based offices, high levels of entrepreneurship, improved internet access, the demand for renewable and new markets and the role of hill farms as carbon stores.

At Carnegie we're consistently impressed by the success of diversified rural industries such as these, and by the leadership many UK estates have shown in stimulating them. In many cases, estates are sitting on an enormous skills resource which can help kick-start rural economies. In future, the nation as a whole will become increasingly dependent upon the estates for water catchment management, flood prevention, carbon storage and renewable energy. Carnegie is keen to support estates in this work, which should translate into income streams in the future, and help rural communities thrive. We are working with a small group of UK estates to determine how the provision of environmental and public goods benefits for all of us can be adequately rewarded.

We believe passionately that as well as financial support, an important step is to improve relations between landowning estates and their local communities. That was the theme of the recent UK landowners' conference held in Floors Castle in the Scottish Borders which we sponsored. Delegates heard speeches from the Scottish Environment Minister, Mike Russell MSP, and the agent to the Duchy of Cornwall, Chris Gregory. Chris told us how the Duchy's experience on Dartmoor has shown that partnership working is the only way to achieve effective solutions for estates and estate communities. He acknowledged the challenge of combining social and commercial objectives, but suggested that when the two work together, the results can deliver long-lasting solutions for our rural communities.

Our partner in this work is the Communities on the Edge (COTE) project. COTE was the brainchild of independent Scottish charity the Southern Uplands Partnership, which has managed the project since its inception. COTE aims to help local people safeguard their rural communities by building sustainable enterprises which grow from within that community. COTE's premise is that these enterprises don't need to reinvent the wheel – they could start just by using a redundant estate building. COTE has supported a variety of projects across the Southern Uplands, going beyond estate resources and helping communities in a wider sense. These include a local food

producer's market in Langholm, widely recognised as the most successful in South West Scotland; a sports pavilion regeneration project in the village of Yetholm; and a brown field regeneration project in Douglas to develop a redundant coal yard into a new village square with retail accommodation and much needed car parking.

As a result of these processes the skills, knowledge and confidence of local people has been enhanced and they are now better equipped to tackle some of the many challenges which face rural communities both now and in the future. 'These experiences were shared at our landowners' conference with estates from as far afield as Blairquhan in Ayrshire and Abercorn in Ireland. At Carnegie we believe that the results we've seen across the UK – from the Borders to Dartmoor to Ireland - show that positive relationships can flourish between local people and estates. We have moved on from the traditional perceptions of laird and tenant, and now landowners and local communities are working together towards a common goal: sustaining and growing the local rural economy'



Workshop Findings

Engaging with Our Communities – Annie McKee

This workshop explored the potential of mutually beneficial relationships between estate businesses and the people who live in and around them. The potential of regular and meaningful engagement with the wider community and the role of the estate in the development of a sustainable, resilient rural community was discussed and debated.

Who/what is the 'estate community'?

- ☐ 'definitions aren't always important'.
- ☐ Depends on the function of the estate and includes visitors; involves the needs and skills meeting each other (need to bring in skills).
- ☐ Better to identify stakeholders – and relationships between them.
- ☐ Different estates will have different estate communities – for example, a traditional estate likely to have a more narrow definition of estate community.
- ☐ Would tick all boxes and then add more...
- ☐ If you have been brought up on the estate, then likely estate community – incomers shifts balance; freeholders vs. community example; need ideas vs. buy-in. The time it takes is significant.
- ☐ The community perceive themselves as part of subgroups that each have special needs.
- ☐ This question would be good to assess how successfully an estate has engaged – if these perceptions change, if people feel a greater part of the 'estate community'- question could be used as a proxy.
- ☐ Difficult to define an estate community – probably varies with type of estate. Where estate works well with community – people may be more inclined to feel part of the estate. Where relations are poor or non-existent it is unlikely that there will be much affiliation. Perhaps the question could be used to measure success? New definition of estate community emerging – will differ for different communities.

Discussion Point – Examples of Community Engagement? Constraints and Solutions:

- ☐ 'community engagement often very badly done'; requires skilful facilitation. Good example in Pembrokeshire through LEADER programme.
- ☐ The 'Honest Broker' role is imperative.
- ☐ The community could add value; skills, knowledge, experience and sense of place.
- ☐ To live as 'them and us' is difficult.
- ☐ Can't say 'the' community, for example difference between permanent vs. second home owners – communities are constantly changing, and their views may change too.
- ☐ Dilemma – how to undertake a meaningful community engagement in a short timescale?
- ☐ Challenging to engage; difficult to get communities involved; very feudal feel. 'Visioning' dominated by a vociferous minority. Anyone can 'consult' – communities feel powerless. Drinking club example – set up by estate on a Friday night – open to estate workers and all community (incl. children, so networking place for them too); very sociable – cricket club then set up. Next steps easier to talk through.
- ☐ Huge amount of time needed by landowners; new representative bodies may be beneficial – create new relationships.
- ☐ Good community planning processes established (eg. in literature); must recognise difference between 'consultation' and 'engagement'. The key is 'interdependency' and partnership.
- ☐ Communication important; telling everyone about everything; community associations; requires time and energy.
- ☐ Leadership important.
- ☐ Results of consultations can be contradictory. First stage may suggest outcome A but once stated – outcome

B turns out to be preferred. Various reasons for this – requires ongoing communication and iterative processes to iron-out differences.

- ☐ Communities can be over-consulted. Is consultation the same as engagement? Tends to be assumed so but is not the same.
- ☐ Engagement is time consuming and labour intensive
- ☐ Consultation can raise expectations and this can be followed by let-down and disillusionment, leading to even less participation next time
- ☐ Communities do change – leading characters come and go and can alter balance of views
- ☐ Bottom-up initiatives are probably more useful than top-down ones but also harder to manage and involve more risk. You may not get what you want from them.
- ☐ Top-down and bottom-up may need facilitation to engage in the middle (COTE model perhaps?)
- ☐ Rural Homes for Rent example – wanted to establish housing need on estate. Previous Shelter ‘SHARK’ report for housing trust to demonstrate need. Utilised community questionnaire and surgeries (although low attendance). Has provided a boost to previous understanding of housing need, but concerned whether it is real reflection of housing need.
- ☐ Problems of communities being ‘consulted to death’; issues of ‘who has been asked what’, and the perceptions of people too.
- ☐ Communities change over time; often vociferous individuals; difficulties of engaging/retaining young population, how they interact.
- ☐ Experience of SUP with young people; education – ‘Care Farming’ example. Must be ‘multi-angled’.
- ☐ Getting to know one another – time issues; difficulty in getting resources and energy; likely a failing of us [landowners/managers].
- ☐ Composition of estate is important factor; Glenlivet example – about 18 years ago employed mostly local people, now many newcomers.
- ☐ ‘Walk to work’ example – finding ‘champions’ in the community (who know community); use schools.
- ☐ Is there a model or framework for engagement? [Practical processes important].
- ☐ How you treat people and manners are important. Truth in Philippa Grant’s ‘ground rules’. Importance of building trust and ‘open door’ policy (as attempted at Scone, although don’t have time to really get to know community).
- ☐ Trust is vital. May need to develop a set of ground rules to encourage dialogue – a “framework for productive relations”.
- ☐ Knowing the key people in the community can help effective communication.

Discussion Point – ‘What is the potential to improve effective community engagement by estate businesses?’

- ☐ River Trust example – catchment area rather than estate; farmers won’t express views in-front of their peers, but open up when one-on-one (eg. with vet).
- ☐ Peer pressure often a key factor; useful to identify ‘future champions’.
- ☐ Need to identify different ways for consultation.
- ☐ Need to try things for yourself, can only learn, won’t lose; need a balance – experts vs. honest broker.
- ☐ Roddy Jackson: used facilitators at Roxburghe who teased out ideas from the community (champions) – then wrote Development Plan and made mistake of removing community in that process – community disagreed with final report, despite early engagement.
- ☐ Need to build and use momentum rather than community engagement as a ‘knee-jerk’ – but need support from Local Authority.
- ☐ For land managers to improve this is very difficult; partnership example – not effective but provided opportunities.
- ☐ No real answer – depends on situation.
- ☐ ‘Rural Animators’ example (England) - supported by government grants; rural housing generally better supported in England.

- ☐ Effective community engagement is time consuming and costly – need some way to be assisted.
- ☐ Opportunities for business cooperation – communities and businesses working together – people to put pieces together.
- ☐ One person as a facilitator could put pieces together – have a broad range of roles – huge potential for facilitation and more ‘bangs for buck’.
- ☐ Every community needs a facilitator – ‘bridging with no agenda’.

Recommendations for action

- ☐ Start ‘small’, build momentum rather than ‘knee-jerk’ engagement.
- ☐ Identify underlying agendas for genuine engagement.
- ☐ Experts vs. honest brokers – need ‘champions’ to listen and bridge gap between estate and community, therefore create partnership.
- ☐ Create new/appropriate forums for community representation, suitable for estate situation.
- ☐ Create register of ‘rural skills’ in estate communities.
- ☐ Utilise different methods for engagement to ensure all groups of community and communities of interest are ‘engaged’.
- ☐ Continue/maintain participation process from beginning to end; create and harness engagement ‘momentum’ in community.
- ☐ Access to trained ‘facilitators’ for all communities and estates – spread the success of COTE
- ☐ Importance of building trust and getting to know your community, although takes time and resource.
- ☐ Consult as much as you can – not just occasionally. Ideally consultation should be an ongoing process not just a one-off. Good relations require a good allocation of time.
- ☐ Good communication is vital.
- ☐ Consider a charter for relations between estate and community – setting out ground rules, lines of communication, etc. Have an “open-door” policy. Base this on best practice from elsewhere. Could SRPBA develop something like this?
- ☐ It was suggested that as good facilitators were scarce and could not be afforded for every estate or community, an alternative approach would be to use them more widely – to work with a wide range of rural players – facilitating positive relations and promoting partnerships between businesses, agencies, estates and communities. The cost could then be shared more widely.



Embracing Energy Insecurity – Pip Tabor, Kevin Dickson and Phil Leigh

Achieving energy security poses one of the biggest challenges and opportunities of the twenty first century. This workshop explored new possibilities for local fuel and energy production and the role of the landowning sector in this field.

Conclusions

- ☐ Need to impart message that there are other renewable energy solutions rather than just wind farms.
- ☐ Highland communities have taken up opportunities due to support from HIE – very stark contrast to minimum uptake in South. Additional support structures are badly needed in the South.
- ☐ Nervousness over new products/ technologies – people need convincing of worth. Where are the demonstration sites? Where is the independent advice?

Recommendations for Action

- ☐ Real opportunity for estates and communities to work collaboratively. The need for renewable energy is going to grow. The economics will become favourable. If a partnership can be developed the outcome should be win-win, but some facilitation will probably be required.

Implications for Landowners

- ☐ Difficult to overcome negative community feeling towards estates. Communities are naturally suspicious of the estate's ulterior motive.
- ☐ Can estates offer skills and support to help communities take on renewable energy projects?
- ☐ Opportunities within SG Climate Challenge Fund will only be taken-up if local groups are helped to develop projects and apply!

Implications for Communities

- ☐ Still need help and support to develop renewable energy projects
- ☐ Divisions within communities re. responses to wind farm developments must not be allowed to stop new projects.
- ☐ Opportunities within SG Climate Challenge Fund – resources are there for the time being but will go to where the call is loudest. The South is not making much noise as yet.



Eating Our Way to a Vibrant Local Economy – Ninian Stuart and Geoff Brown

Increasing fuel costs and climate change pose threats to the global supply chain. This workshop examined the opportunities which exist in the production of quality local produce. The need to grow robust local markets through engagement with the wider community was discussed and the economic, social and environmental benefits of local food production were explored.

Conclusions

- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Importance of local abattoirs
- ☐ Local procurement policies

Recommendations for Action

- ☐ Local growing schemes and allotments need to be connected to the market/ public.

Implications for Landowners

- ☐ Opportunities through collaboration
- ☐ Issues around seasonality of produce
- ☐ Food costly to produce

Implications for Communities

- ☐ Healthy eating schemes and work in schools
- ☐ Important to encourage people to cook.



Imagining New Possibilities – Mairi Telford-Jammeh and Judith Johnson

This workshop invited participants to look at the future of estate communities. The facilitators used an approach that starts with identifying current issues and then, based on these, invites people to think forward twenty years. By the end of the workshop several scenarios had been developed and the group was able to see actions that can be taken to lead to positive futures.

Conclusions

- ☐ Same issues facing urban and rural areas– e.g. housing, jobs, transport, skills, local services, young people leaving community - but urban areas get more support
- ☐ Very easy to list lots of deficits
- ☐ Facilitation enables mutual respect and understanding
- ☐ Global issues impacting on local situations more now than ever
- ☐ Solutions are not always ‘rocket science’ and the answers may lie locally but will only emerge through networking, relationship building and gaining a mutual understanding of each others positions
- ☐ Local market of growing importance.
- ☐ Need for positive relationships – it’s not about benevolence – mutual gain from schemes (use business head).
- ☐ Greater collaboration required in government funding schemes
- ☐ Initiatives aren’t easy – take time. Benefits accrued – dynamic, positive, wealthier communities.
- ☐ Must hone effective consultation and engagement
- ☐ Move away from top-down methods, new methods needed for on-going engagement and participation

Recommendations for Action

- ☐ Embrace positive, asset based approaches to rural development – what can we do with what we have?
- ☐ Lobby government and agencies to provide intensive facilitation and paid support for rural communities.
- ☐ Encourage membership organisations to provide training in community engagement techniques.

Implications for Landowners

- ☐ Potential to engage with communities
- ☐ Agenda’s highlighted
- ☐ Wind farms may not be the solution!

Implications for Communities

- ☐ Potential to benefit from any gains and to enter dialogue
- ☐ How do you overcome apathy without paid facilitation support?



Building Rural Viability – Kate Braithwaite and Derek Logie

Provision of affordable rural housing is widely acknowledged as one of the key challenges in trying to maintain viable communities. This workshop engaged participants in identifying innovative estate – community solutions. The workshop aimed to draw on the collective experience of participants to propose and explore innovative models.

Conclusions

- ☐ Grid Connections
- ☐ We need affordable housing

Recommendations for Action

- ☐ Feed in tariffs
- ☐ Landowner involvement on RDC
- ☐ Need to keep housing within community – CLT's
- ☐ Concessions in taxes
- ☐ Need to develop existing building stock

Implications for Landowners

- ☐ Tax concessions could encourage land to be released



Assets – Roger Hemming

The workshop facilitator defined the term ‘assets’ and then led a discussion about the advantages of building on them for economic, social or environmental benefit rather than starting from a deficit model of what a community lacks. Participants then pooled their entrepreneurial experience and enthusiasm to list all the assets that an estate and its community might be able to harness. A ‘random ideas generator’ enabled the workshop to produce examples of business plans for novel ideas.

An asset was defined by the group as any resource with a value/opportunity/benefit – it need not be tangible, e.g. history, experience etc.

Benefits that participants had found arising from estate/community asset development projects were:-

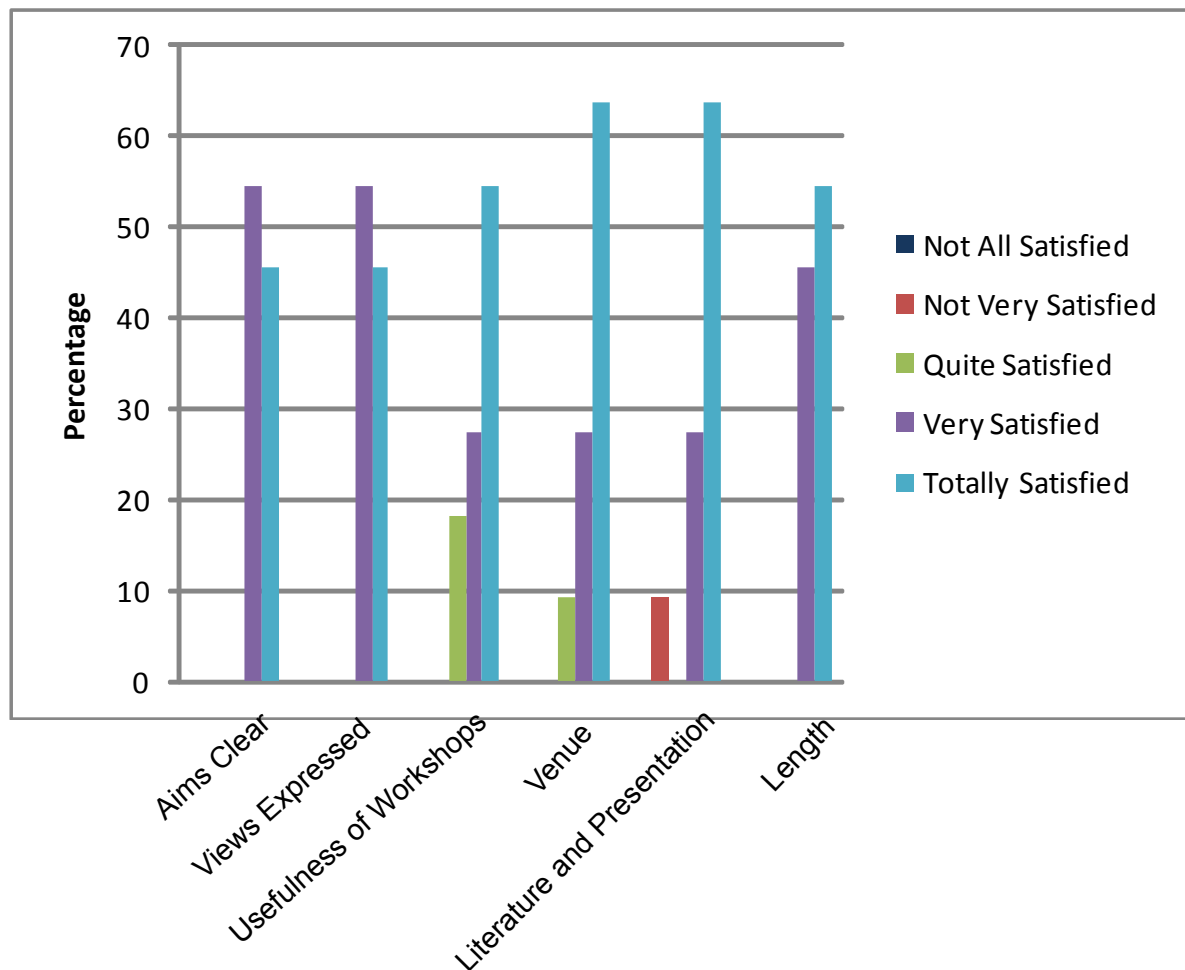
- ☐ A greater appreciation of the assets available
- ☐ Pride in what has been achieved
- ☐ Income for both the estate and the community
- ☐ Sustainable local business
- ☐ A plan that everyone is signed up to.
- ☐ Development of a business cluster
- ☐ Opportunity to involve young people
- ☐ Locally produced energy
- ☐ A constituted group
- ☐ A new local enterprise linked to schools and young people
- ☐ A pilot that could inform other projects

Workshop participants identified the following as ‘lessons learned’ from estate/community projects

- ☐ The timescale for these projects is long
- ☐ Grant funding can run out, cutting off activity
- ☐ There can be a financial risk
- ☐ It may not be the most cost efficient way of getting something done
- ☐ Mistakes get made
- ☐ Sometimes plans fail to deliver what they set out to do, but still have a positive outcome.
- ☐ ‘Consultation, consultation, consultation!’
- ☐ Be sure that decision makers are signed up at the start.
- ☐ If tensions arise you may need to step back
- ☐ It can be an exhausting way of doing things and much patience is required by all
- ☐ Not everyone identified the same things as ‘assets’
- ☐ Active participation is needed
- ☐ People value assets more if they are involved in developing them
- ☐ There are no set rules
- ☐ The most important element in estate/community asset development is an individual who has drive and vision.



Event Feedback



“A really positive and inspiring day”

“I am a rare attendee of conferences, but this one exceeded my expectations.”

“We are not unique in the time it takes to bring about change”

“For once I am bereft of words to express how much I have enjoyed this experience”

“The workshops were topical and worthwhile. The speakers were good and demonstrated a wide range of projects and the need to keep working - all projects take a long time to deliver!”

“You can have all the facilities in the world but projects/new enterprises only ever succeed if you can find the right people and incentives to make them work.”

“I think it is always interesting to see where others are at and to see the similarities where they exist – encouraging us that the challenges are not ours alone - but also the different approaches to solutions.”



Summary of media coverage

Date	Publication	Headline
14 November 2008	Rural Gateway	Landowners to share ideas at Floors Castle conference
19 November 2008	Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser	Owners look to future land uses
19 November 2008	Whitehaven News	Owners look to future land uses
19 November 2008	Times & Star (Workington)	Owners look to future land uses
26 November 2008	The Berwickshire News	Floors Castle venue for conference
27 November 2008	The Southern Reporter	Floors hosts rural workshop
5 December 2008	NFU Countryside Magazine (online)	Role of landowning estates in kick-starting the rural economy
12 December 2008	Rural Gateway	Landowners urged to kick start rural economies

Landowners to share ideas at Floors Castle conference

Landowners from across the UK will get together at a conference in the Scottish Borders next week to share ideas about rural land management. The Duke of Roxburghe is hosting the conference at Floors Castle, Kelso on Tuesday 18th November 2008.

The event has been organised by the Southern Uplands Partnership as part of the Communities on the Edge project (COTE). COTE aims to help local people safeguard their rural communities by building sustainable enterprises which grow from within that community. The Carnegie UK Trust is sponsoring the conference.

John Gold, COTE project coordinator (and Rural Gateway contributor) said, "The Floors Castle conference, with its mix of speakers from the government, private and voluntary sectors will provide a unique opportunity for UK landowners to learn about cutting edge land management ideas, and better ways to work with their local communities.

"The Communities on the Edge project is all about helping rural communities to strengthen themselves in the face of threats like climate change, energy security and sparse housing supply. We look to pool expertise and offer advice to those who need it. The conference will be a great opportunity for landowners to share advice but also to learn new ways to work with communities they are such a big part of."

Carnegie Rural Director Kate Braithwaite said, "Today, our landowners are custodians of the land - and we need to recognise that they need help and support to safeguard the long term future of those communities. We're supporting this event as part of our programme of work on rural community development, in which estates and their communities play a central role."

Speakers at the event include Environment Minister Michael Russell and Duchy of Cornwall agent Chris Gregory. Delegates will explore how to improve the relationship between landowning estates and their local communities. Workshops will cover a range of themes including local food production, the future of estate communities and affordable housing.

Estates including Buccleuch in the Scottish Borders, Eshott Hall in Northumberland and Blairquhan in Ayrshire are among those that will be represented at the event.

Related links

John Gold's 'A Southerly Aspect' archive
Your Project - Communities on the Edge

19 November 2008

Owners look to future land uses

SCOTTISH environment minister Michael Russell and Duchy of Cornwall agent Chris Gregory were among the speakers at a landowners' conference hosted by the Duke of Roxburghe at Floors Castle on Tuesday.



Michael Russell

The event, sponsored by the Carnegie UK Trust, saw landowners from the UK gather to share ideas about rural land management.

Delegates explored how to improve the relationship between landowning estates and their communities. Workshops covered themes ranging from local food production to affordable rural housing. Estates, including Buccleuch, Eshott Hall in Northumberland and Blairquhan in Ayrshire were among those represented.

The conference was organised by independent Scottish charity the Southern Uplands Partnership as part of its Communities on the Edge project.

COTE helps people to safeguard their rural communities by building sustainable enterprises which grow from within those communities. Langholm has been one of the communities to take part in the COTE project and it helped to set up the monthly producers' market.

COTE project co-ordinator John Gold said: "The Floors Castle conference, with its mix of speakers from the government, private and voluntary sectors provided a unique opportunity for UK landowners to learn about cutting-edge land management ideas and better ways to work with their communities.

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Carnegie rural director Kate Braithwaite, who led a workshop on the future of estate communities, said: "Our landowners are custodians of the land and we need to recognise that they need help and support to safeguard the long-term future of those communities. We're supporting this event as part of our programme of work on rural community development, in which estates and their communities play a central role."

<http://eladvertiser.co.uk/farming/1.272395>

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<http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/1.272395>

Times & Star (Workington)

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<http://www.timesandstar.co.uk/1.272395>

26 November 2008

Floors Castle venue for conference

ENVIRONMENT Minister Michael Russell MSP and Duchy of Cornwall agent Chris Gregory were among the inspirational speakers at a landowners' conference hosted by the Duke of Roxburghe at Floors Castle last Tuesday.

The event, sponsored by the Carnegie UK Trust, saw landowners from across the UK gather to share ideas about rural land management.

Delegates explored how to improve the relationship between landowning estates and their local communities. Workshops covered themes ranging from local food production to affordable rural housing.

Estates including Buccleuch in the Scottish Borders, Eshott Hall in Northumberland, and Blairquhan in Ayrshire, were among those represented.

The conference was organised by independent Scottish charity the Southern Uplands Partnership as part of its Communities on the Edge project.

Communities on the Edge (COTE) aims to help local people safeguard their rural communities by building sustainable enterprises which grow from within that community.

COTE project co-ordinator John Gold said: "The Floors Castle conference, with its mix of speakers from the government, private and voluntary sectors provided a unique opportunity for UK landowners to learn about cutting edge land management ideas, and better ways to work with their local communities.

"The Communities on the Edge project is all about helping rural communities to strengthen themselves in the face of threats like climate change, energy security and sparse housing supply.

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"The conference was not only a great opportunity for landowners to share advice but also to learn new ways to work with the communities they are such a big part of."

<http://www.berwickshire-news.co.uk/10770/Floors-Castle-venue-for-conference.4734032.jp>

27 November 2008

Floors hosts rural workshop

Landowners from across the UK met at Floors Castle last week to share expertise on helping rural communities tackle the threats posed by a range of environmental and economic issues.

Climate change, energy, food production and housing supply were among the topics discussed at the Communities on the Edge event on Tuesday, at which delegates heard from various speakers, including environment minister Michael Russell MSP and Duchy of Cornwall agent Chris Gregory.

Sponsored by the Carnegie UK Trust, the event saw landowners gather to share ideas about rural land management, exploring how to improve the relationship between landowning estates and their local communities. Workshops covered themes ranging from local food production to affordable rural housing.

The conference was organised by independent Scottish charity the Southern Uplands Partnership as part of its Communities on the Edge (COTE) project. The scheme aims to help local people safeguard their rural communities by building sustainable enterprises that grow from within the community.

COTE project co-ordinator John Gold said: "The conference, with its mix of speakers from the government, private and voluntary sectors, provided a unique opportunity for UK landowners to learn about cutting edge land management ideas, and better ways to work with their local communities.

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Carnegie rural director Kate Braithwaite, who led one of the workshops, added: "Today, our landowners are custodians of the land and we need to recognise that they need help and support to safeguard the long-term future of those communities. We supported this event as part of our programme of work on rural community development."

Role of landowning estates in kick-starting the rural economy

UK landowners have been urged to lead the way in reinvigorating the rural economy in the current financial difficulties.

The call came from the Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP) during a conference of landowners that the Scottish charity staged as part of its Communities on the Edge project. This SUP initiative aims to help local people safeguard their rural communities through developing sustainable enterprises.

John Gold, Communities on the Edge co-ordinator and organiser of the Carnegie UK Trust-sponsored conference, called on estates to harness their potential to become new rural hubs and support local communities.

‘Our estates have the skills and impetus needed to kickstart rural economies, and many are doing a fantastic but uncelebrated job,’ he said at the conference, held at Floors Castle in Scotland.

We’d like to see estates reclaim their role as rural developers, and we know from delegates at our landowners’ conference that the appetite to do so exists,’ he said.

Delegates looked at how to improve relations between landowning estates and their local communities. They heard from Mike Russell, the Scottish environment minister, and Chris Gregory, the agent to the Duchy of Cornwall.

Kate Braithwaite, the Carnegie UK Trust’s rural director, said: ‘Estates make an exceptional contribution to rural development, not least on rural challenges such as water management, flood prevention and renewable energy.

‘Carnegie is keen to support estates in this work, which could translate into income streams in the future, and help rural communities survive and thrive.’

<http://www.countrysideonline.co.uk/news.php?extend.3122>

Landowners urged to kick start rural economies

Delegates at a recent conference organised by the Southern Uplands Partnership spent the day working on how to improve relations between landowning estates and their local communities.

The conference was part of the Communities on the Edge project. Project coordinator John Gold urged estates to harness their potential to become rural hubs and support local communities during the current financial crisis. A call from the floor urged membership bodies such as the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) to support their members to re-engage with local communities.

The conference was hosted by the Duke of Roxburghe at Floors Castle in the Borders. The Carnegie UK Trust sponsored the event. Speakers included Environment Minister Michael Russell and agent to the Duchy of Cornwall, Chris Gregory. Landowners from estates including Buccleuch in the Scottish Borders, Blairquhan in Ayrshire and Abercorn in Ireland attended the conference.

Communities on the Edge coordinator and conference organiser John Gold said, "Our estates have the skills and impetus needed to kick-start rural economies, and many are doing a fantastic but uncelebrated job. We'd like to see estates reclaim their role as rural developers, and we know from delegates at our Landowners Conference that the appetite to do so exists. We now need membership bodies such as the CLA to support the UK's estates, so that they can lead their local rural economies through the current financial crisis and prepare the rural area for the challenges of the future."

Chris Gregory, agent to the Duchy of Cornwall described the approach taken on the Duchy's largest estate in Princetown, Devon. He said, "From the Duchy's experience on Dartmoor, effective solutions for landed estates and the communities that are associated with them are only really secured by embracing partnership working. There is sometimes a challenge in successfully combining commercial and social objectives but when these two powerful forces are guided to pull together, the results can be stunning and capable of delivering enduring solutions for all."

Carnegie UK Trust Rural Director Kate Braithwaite said, "Estates make an exceptional contribution to rural development, not least on rural challenges such as water management, flood prevention and renewable energy. Carnegie is keen to support estates in this work, which could translate into income streams in the future and help rural communities survive and thrive. We will be working with UK estates to determine what financial support is needed to continue and expand work in these areas."

Related links

Landowners to share ideas at Floors Castle conference

John Gold 'A Southerly Aspect' series

Special report: Communities on the Edge update

Your Project - Communities on the Edge

Photographs courtesy of Sarah Peters

<http://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=2488&d=11&h=24&f=46>



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