The Partnership is currently bigger and busier that it has been since it started in 1999. We now employ 15 people and although funding remains very difficult, there are lots of positive signs. The arrival of the South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SoSEP) should result in a fresh approach to rural development and the Borderlands Initiative may inject significant additional resource into the Region. Brexit is clearly causing significant uncertainty, but it is also stimulating debate on future priorities and again this should result in new opportunities.

Many of you will have attended one of the 26 SoSEP consultation events that SUP helped facilitate across the region. The results of these have now been written-up and will be published shortly along with the results of the formal online consultation. A link to the report will be placed on SUP’s website as soon as the report is released so keep an eye on www.sup.org.uk.

Lindean Mill

Those of you who have visited us at Lindean Mill will know what a lovely, peaceful and productive office we have here. Since the Red Squirrel project moved out earlier this year, we have a spare desk which we are keen to rent to a suitable person, organisation or business. If you are looking for a work space in a quiet and friendly location, please get in touch with Pip on 01750 725154.

Galloway Glens Biosphere Experience

Laura Davidson started work on 4th Sept as Experiential Tourism Officer for the Galloway Glens Biosphere Experience project, which is part funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Programme. Laura comes from Dalbeattie and has a strong marketing background so is ideally placed to work with local businesses and to develop new tourism opportunities based on “authentic experiences”. If you live or work in the Galloway Glens area, Laura may be getting in touch or you can contact her directly at laura@sup.org.uk.

Ride Scotland’s Horse Country

Gowan has been surveying riding routes across the Scottish Borders and is now uploading information onto the new “Ride Scottish Borders” website which we hope will go live later this year. The idea of visitors bringing their horses to the Borders and exploring on horseback is attracting attention. The project has attracted plenty of interest and we are now looking to expand it beyond the Scottish Borders. If you would like to get involved, email gowan@sup.org.uk. Remember, you don’t need to be an equestrian business. We are looking to cluster equestrian businesses with tourist attractions, accommodation providers, local food makers, artists, etc. This project is part funded by Scottish Borders LEADER.
Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership

Ed and Marie have just returned from Greenland where they were sharing knowledge and experience with rural communities and businesses over there as part of the SHAPE project. There will be a full Biosphere update next time.

Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG)

Twelve applications totalling £205,500 were received for the second round of funding from the Ewe Hill 16 Fund, administered by SUP for DECBG. The Trustees of DECBG will meet on Wednesday 3rd October to make decisions on the applications which will benefit communities in south Annandale and Eskdale.

Borders Energy Agency (BEA)

The programme of visits to renewable energy sites finishes for 2018 with a visit to Floors Castle Biomass heating scheme on the afternoon of 19th October. There are free places still available - if you are interested just email Pip (piptabor@sup.org.uk). BEA has got through the first round of the SPEN Green Economy Fund application process and is now working up a full bid for a full-time community support worker. It is likely that this post would be hosted by SUP.

Scottish Rural Parliament 2018

Remember the Scottish Rural Parliament 2018 will take place in Stranraer from 14th – 16th November 2018.

Scottish Border Biodiversity Action Plan

Scottish Borders Council is consulting on a new Biodiversity Action plan 2018 to 2028. You can see this and submit comments at http://scotborders.citizenspace.com. The deadline for comments is 30th November.

‘A National Park for the Kingdom of Galloway - The Way Forward’

Galloway National Park Association (https://www.gallowaynationalpark.org/) is hosting an open meeting on Monday 12th November 2018 from 10.00 am - 12.45 pm at the new GG’s Yard venue at Laggan Outdoor Centre, Gatehouse of Fleet. This will be an opportunity for you to catch up on what’s been happening. To find out more and book your free ticket, please follow the Eventbrite link:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-national-park-for-the-kingdom-of-galloway-the-way-forward-registration-49241913890

Scottish Rural Action

Scottish Rural Action is running a series of “What does Brexit mean to you?” sessions in October. Follow hyperlinks for more details:

Galashiels: https://www.sra.scot/event/galashiels-what-does-brexit-mean-for-you/

Kelso: https://www.sra.scot/event/kelso-what-does-brexit-mean-for-you/

Ayr: https://www.sra.scot/event/ayrshire-what-does-brexit-mean-for-you/

and Castle Douglas: https://www.sra.scot/event/2282/

http://www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk/
SUP Board and AGM

The Annual General Meeting took place in Moffat on 22nd August 2018 and Professor Russel Griggs (Chair of SoSEP) gave an update on where the Economic Partnership had got to, and how its priorities were taking shape. We also heard from Bruce Wilson, Scottish Wildlife Trust, on the work of the Natural Capital Forum and Dr Cat Barlow gave a talk on the Golden Eagle Project. This project is going really well – check out the project website for the latest news: https://www.goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk/

There were a number of changes to the Board of Directors. Tony Fitzpatrick, John Thomas and Alan Crichton all stood down having completed two three-year terms each. Their contributions to the development of the Partnership were significant and much appreciated, as was the input from Fergus Watson who also stood down and Dr Liz Brooks.

Four new Trustees were elected and welcomed to the Board:

**Professor Dave Roberts**

Dave is Professor of Dairy Farming Systems and Knowledge Exchange Director at SRUC. He has worked in Dumfries and Galloway for over 35 years and has a particular interest in ensuring that we have a competitive agri-food industry which also meets high environmental and animal welfare standards. In addition to work in the UK, he has been involved in the development of dairy farming training and education in Malawi, working with colleagues at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. He is Scottish Regional Chairman for LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) having been a Trustee from 2009 to 2014. Dave is also a Trustee of the Crichton Foundation and also of the Hannah Dairy Research Foundation.

**Sarah Macdonald**

Sarah started her working life in London in jobs which included the promotion of the Volunteer Reserve Forces and later as the Marketing Manager for the Olympia International Show Jumping and the Royal Tournament. Exciting and educational jobs; but after 10 years, city life no longer appealed.
She arrived in the Scottish Borders to start her first job coordinating *The Land of Creativity*, a programme of events, trails and promotions to celebrate the Millennium. That was the first of many projects in which she was involved that linked tourism and the local community.

It was supported by agencies including VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Borders Council, and funding organisations including the Millennium Fund.

Subsequently, she has been involved in event and project management; including LEADER funded projects: the New Ways Events Innovation Scheme and the Tweed Valley Tourist Consortium. These projects, along with direct employment with Floors Castle and Traquair House, have cemented her experience and links within the Tourist Industry, the local event infrastructure and our local communities.

Along the way, although not strictly a project, she has become part of a farming family, a rural community and has three children that call the Scottish Borders home!

**Dr Joan Mitchell**

Joan is an active partner in family upland farm at Carsluith, near Newton Stewart; Trustee and Chair of Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership Board and Chair of Newton Stewart Walking Festival.

Joan’s academic background is in Biogeography with a Phd in bracken ecology.

Joan was an elected member of Dumfries and Galloway Council from 1994-2007, with periods as Deputy Leader of the Council and Chair of Planning and Environment Services. Other Councillor roles included Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Access Forum and involvements with European Committees such as EU Committee of the Regions.

She has previously served on the board of the Southern Upland Partnership, including a period as Chair. She is also a former Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board

A Board member of Scottish Natural Heritage from 2007-2013, including a period as Chair of Scientific Advisory Committee, Joan also served for ten years on South of Scotland Forestry Advisory Committee and served on the Forestry Commission panel assessing applications for community ownership.

Joan is also a former Trustee of Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust.

**Lynne Jobes**

Lynne has been married to her husband Alan for 25 years and has two adult children, Georgia and Mark. They moved to the Scottish Borders in 2016, taking on a run-down old farm. Deciding on a career change she set up a business from the farm and has begun the journey of developing a variety of holiday accommodations and runs a successful Alpaca Trekking business.

Previously she worked for Northumbria Health Care Trust as a Social Worker and continued in the position until May 2017. She worked for a number of years in Child Protection, again in Northumberland before moving to Adult Care in 2014. This was a challenging and demanding role which often saw her working with multiple agencies in sometimes difficult situations. A key strength is her ability to communicate with different people in some complex situations and to understand and work within legal frameworks.

Currently she is Chair of Ride Borders; a Scottish Enterprise Planning to Succeed Group. This Group works closely with SUP’s Ride Scotland’s Horse Country project (RSHC) mentioned above.

The Southern Uplands Partnership is in good shape and the new Board will be looking to see further developments in 2019.