

Southern Upland NEWS

Newsletter of the Southern Uplands Partnership

#12 Summer 2003



THIS EDITION LOOKS PARTICULARLY AT ACCESS ISSUES - SEE INSIDE

OUR FRIENDS IN THE NORTH:

Some radical views on rural development were expressed at the lively AGM event held by the Southern Uplands Partnership in Moffat on June 11th.

The theme of the evening was "the Key to Sustainable Rural Development in South Scotland".

Professor Mark Shucksmith argued that rural did not have to mean peripheral and that rural communities with the right skills and support systems could thrive in the new global economy. The need was to develop community "capacity" so that we could adapt and cope with major upcoming changes such as CAP reform, increasing national and international competition, demographic change and the need to work in an increasingly flexible job markets.

Simon Pepper expressed frustration at the lack of imagination in the Scottish Executive and the minimal efforts that had gone into seeking real agricultural reform. Scotland had a single Rural Development Plan - when it could have had regional plans suited to specific areas of Scotland. Spend too had been minimal - with Sweden spending 14 times the Scottish rate. WWFNs role was to lobby for improved Government policy so as to reduce environmental degradation so that biodiversity was conserved. He also bemoaned the absence of SEERAD at the Community Planning table.

Without reform to the CAP the environment would continue to suffer. Integration of agriculture with the other rural sectors (forestry, tourism, business, conservation) was essential and offered the best way of generating new sustainable jobs and a diverse and rich countryside.

Dr Jim Hunter then spoke of the success that the Highlands and Islands was enjoying - with economic growth, increasing population, falling unemployment, and a high rate of businesses start-ups with women often taking the lead. Amongst other things, he put this down to a positive approach to new housing in the countryside - something he felt was lacking in south Scotland. He praised the development of a partnership approach to addressing rural issues and stressed that no one would take south Scotland forward and deal with the issues we faced unless we did it ourselves. He advised the audience to take advantage of the three most vibrant cities sitting on our doorstep - Edinburgh, Newcastle and Belfast. He also suggested that Scotland should be far more welcoming to in-migration as the need for new skills and new ideas grew.

He also argued that the remit of Highlands and Islands Enterprise made it a much more creative organisation than Scottish Enterprise and the LECs - which were constrained to a purely economic role. HIE had been able to put funds into the arts, languages and the environment. The result of this was that community confidence had grown and economic success had come as a result of this increasing confidence. The Scottish Executive were now looking to the north for inspiration and lessons to apply elsewhere.



1 - The Rhinns of Galloway

The Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP) is a membership organisation and a registered company with charitable status. Its aim is to keep people living and working sustainably in the Southern Uplands of Scotland. We work with others to promote an integrated and sustainable approach to rural development and land use, promoting best practice, encouraging joined-up thinking and working and looking to add value to projects and initiatives by bringing them together. Projects we are currently working on include the development of walking, cycling and horse riding routes linking the Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, South Lanarkshire, Cumbria and Northumberland; red squirrel and black grouse conservation; nature-based tourism; heather regeneration; green labelling and bracken control. We are also becoming involved in renewable energy and local food production. The "Southern Upland News" is the newsletter of the SUP. The SUP also has a website www.sup.org.uk and employs a project manager who is based in the Borders. Core funding is provided by the three Local Authorities as well as SNH and Esme Fairbairn Foundation. Funds are also raised through membership subscriptions and project management fees.

Did You Know? . . . A recent survey commissioned by HIE showed a big increase in the number of visitors undertaking longer walks (up from 11% in 1977 to 25% now)

Directors Comment

Hello all, and wonderful to see such a big turn-out at the AGM – thank you. The speakers were well worth it, with controversial but welcomed messages. Although approaching the issue of sustainable rural development from completely different viewpoints, they came up with three surprisingly similar conclusions: rural development means “we need more young people and more housing for them in the countryside”. “Scotland’s agri-environment policies need modernising if we are to catch up with the rest of Europe” and “community development depends upon people being able to network and work together”. That’s what the SUP is all about, and judging from the arguments during the buffet, it seems that the networking side of things benefits greatly from meetings like these, where people can express themselves. Did we let the speakers get away without challenging them? I know some of us thought so – some of the issues are more complex than there was time for! Next time, let’s have more noise from the floor!

In the meantime, the focus of this issue of Southern Uplands News is Access – footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes and more. In the Cairngorms, public funding over the last ten years has resulted in footpath training and contracts for footpath building – which in turn has led to the development of several small businesses specialising in footpath provision. Here in the South of Scotland we have fewer paths and few local businesses able to construct paths, kissing-gates and foot-bridges. Fortunately, SNH keep a database of companies offering such skills – contact them if you’d like a copy, although they cannot guarantee quality or make any recommendations. Perhaps there is scope for a [www.list](#), where people can share experience and make recommendations on who can do the work locally. One thing for sure – now that Countryside Trails and Making Tracks are underway, and once the Scottish Outdoor Access Code is finalised, we should have many new paths in the South of Scotland, and with that, we hope, more people enjoying the countryside, and more jobs.

Finally – a personal request – is anyone else interested in creating a New Forest or Wood Pasture in southern Scotland? A mediaeval hunting forest for the new age? Perhaps a large area of native trees and open areas lightly grazed by cows, deer and sheep? Is anyone already doing this? Any suggestions for suitable sites?

Mary Ann Smyth

Annual General Meeting

The third AGM of the Partnership saw the election of Michael Williams and Cllr Eileen Logan onto the Board as group-nominated members and James Pringle re-elected as an individual nominee. Cllr George Prentice and Cllr Alastair Hewat (who were both founding Directors of the SUP) stepped-down and everyone thanked them sincerely for their work over the last three years.

Earlier in the afternoon, the Board and their guests saw at first hand the opportunities and dilemmas faced by organisations in the Southern Uplands. At the Grey Mares Tail, there is a need to improve the facilities offered to the 45,000 visitors the site attracts each year – and yet the location is highly sensitive to inappropriate design and also to increased visitor use.

The group then visited Beattock where there are real opportunities to apply joined-up thinking to bring economic growth to the village, get timber off the road and onto the railway and to enhance access for walkers, cyclists and riders into the Forest of Ae. It was agreed that local efforts to see this approach taken forward should be supported although the powers that be seem to be reluctant to be so creative.

Since the AGM – one local community has taken heed of the advice of Jim Hunter to take a more active role in local land management and is exploring the possibility of a community buy-out of an upland farm with the aim of encouraging the development of small-holdings. The SUP is assisting in looking into the feasibility of this.

Report and Accounts

Members will have received a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts (also available on the website) which we hope shows how the Partnership has delivered across a number of fronts during the year as well as growing in complexity and scale. We heard on the 6th June that thanks to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we are now in a position to take on a project officer and we hope to have the post filled in July. Not only will this allow us to play a more active role in the Western half of the Southern Uplands – it will also enhance the strategic role of the SUP and allow us to more actively engage in the debate over the future of rural southern Scotland post 2006.

A Shared Agenda

Our first step towards a strategy for land-use in the Southern Uplands has been drafted and put out for consultation to all those with existing strategies that impact on land-use (available on request and on our website www.sup.org.uk). We have had a large number of responses – many of them positive and all of them valuable contributions to the debate. We are awaiting a response from one or two key partners before revising the draft and circulating it more widely. So far the aim has been to restate the policies and actions from existing published strategies – of which there are many. Once we have a document that everyone is happy with, we hope to get partners to sign-up to taking the whole thing forward in an integrated fashion. If you want to add your views – the draft is on the website.

~ PROJECT NEWS ~

The last three months have been especially busy on a number of fronts and the next few look like being just as hectic.



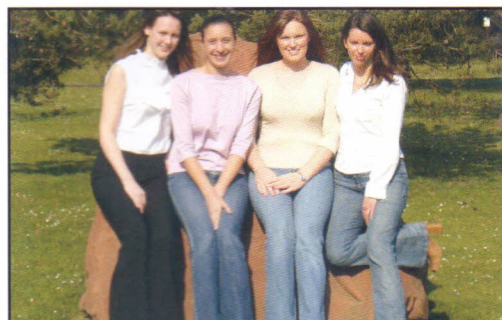
2 – HRH Princess Anne arriving at Bowhill after riding Tweed Trails

SHE'S NUTS TO LEAVE . . .

The Squirrel project has lost another project officer to Forest Enterprise – who clearly regard the Partnership as an excellent source of well-motivated, creative, hard-working and very capable staff! We wish Sarah Oakley well in her new role as Community and Environment Officer based in the Tweed Valley. To keep the project going to the end of phase 1 we have taken on Elly Hamilton. Elly did some of her Masters degree work with the project and knows many of the ropes. Elly and Zoe are working hard to secure funding for phase 2 of the project which we hope will start in August and Elly has taken promotion of the species to new heights during a recent “wing-walking” flight over the Forth Estuary.



3 – Elly “Nutkins” Hamilton



4 – University of Glasgow students

The **NATURE-BASED TOURISM REVIEW** contract is nearing completion and we hope to have a link to the report on the website before long. Over 680 sites have been identified during the study and these have been “clustered” in a variety of ways which we hope will assist the development of targeted support and marketing. Our thanks go to the four students at Glasgow University Crichton Campus (Vicky Poynton, Lindsay Orr, Lynn Brotherstone and Elizabeth Garbutt) who did an excellent job in identifying sites in D&G and to Denise Walton and Jim Hume for their work in the Borders. Benjamin Carey of Dunire Strategy undertook the analysis and will produce the final report. The next step is to review the findings of the study and determine whether there are particular tasks that need to be undertaken and if so by whom to ensure we make the most of the rich resource of nature-based visitor attractions we have in S Scotland.

The **BIODIVERSITY ON THE EDGE** project is moving forward now that we have secured a Project Planning grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We hope to contract someone shortly who will consider the most likely sites for watching black grouse and then draw-up costed proposals for each. All being well we will be able to make a full HLF application later in the year.

SOUTHERN UPLAND WAY 2004

The Action Plan is almost ready and the proposal is that a Marketing Officer be employed to co-ordinate activities for the 20th anniversary as well as developing a more integrated approach to the marketing of the SUW corridor. It is also suggested that a “brand” for the route should be developed to create links between the route and the businesses along it. The Partners are keen to see a much more integrated approach to the route management with the aim of increasing use of the resource. It may not be possible to significantly increase the number of walkers who do the full 212 miles in one go. However, marketing parts of the route, in a similar way perhaps to marketing Munros – so that the sections can be done over a period of years – would increase usage and bring more local benefits. Another key aspect of the project is to package the lengths of SUW with other path networks and to look at opportunities to include cyclists and horse riders where this is appropriate. It is also hoped that a greater degree of co-operation and co-ordination between accommodation providers and local businesses can be developed so the visitor can be assisted to have a really positive experience.

Access News and Issues

Who Is Responsible?

The **Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003** received Royal Assent in February, but the rights of responsible access will not be exercisable until there is an approved Code – around Spring 2004. The public consultation period on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) closed on 30th June. Did you tell SNH your views on what is “responsible behaviour”?

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 required SNH to draw up a code to define “responsible behaviour”, and to consult widely on it before passing it to the Scottish Parliament for approval. This is important because the Act introduces “a statutory right of responsible access to most land and inland water in Scotland”. The role of SOAC will be similar to the Highway Code – it will attempt to define what is (and is not) “responsible behaviour” for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those who own or manage the countryside.

In what has probably been the largest public consultation exercise it has ever run, SNH has tried to get as many comments from the public as possible, so that the resulting code is as good as we can possibly make it.

The full code will be a big, complex document – it is after all, attempting to define what people should do or not do in a wide variety of situations. To make it easier to understand, a number of sub-codes will also be produced – providing advice to dog-walkers for example, or to farmers or cyclists. A high profile education campaign is planned, aimed at specific target audiences – and it is expected to run for many years.

So what is it likely to mean locally? Some have raised fears of a “flood of townies” inundating the countryside, while others have warned that nothing would change without the necessary funding.

The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle – there will perhaps be a steady rise in the number of people



5 – Cyclists at Glentress

walking and riding in the countryside, as they gain confidence in the new legislation, and improvements to local path networks start to become more obvious. There is, after all, a lot of money becoming available to make improvements to existing paths and to signposting them – either directly through the Local Authorities, or through European and Lottery grant schemes. Both the Area Tourist Boards and the Enterprise Companies correctly see these visitors as an important source of money and jobs.

And what sort of people will they be? Well, I don't see the cities suddenly emptying once the legislation comes into effect, sometime around next Easter! They will probably be similar to the ones we see now – mostly local people, or those who would like to be locals! Of course there will be some educating to do – but we need to do that anyway – and we will be talking to an audience which wants to behave responsibly.

The vast majority of walkers, cyclists and horse riders want to behave responsibly, but sometimes they don't understand what to do. SOAC will attempt to define it, but it will also be an opportunity for us all to explain to visitors about the countryside and what is “responsible behaviour.” A friendly word over a gate can be more effective than a fancy leaflet.

In a way, it will be all of us who are responsible.

Horse Riders and the Access Legislation

The new Access Legislation is probably the most important piece of legislation ever to affect horse riders in Scotland. Whereas many walkers presumed they already had a right of access to the countryside, horse riders and cyclists were very uncertain about their rights. The challenge to the British Horse Society is now to get the message across about responsible access. At the moment, BHS(Scotland) is undertaking an education programme, grant aided by Scottish Natural Heritage, in preparation for the implementation of the Land Reform(Scotland) Act in about a year's time. A big effort is being made to get as many horse riders as possible to respond to the draft Scottish Outdoor Access code which is currently out for consultation until 30th June. It is going to be vital to reach as many riders as possible to inform them of the responsibilities which go with the coming right of access. It is also hoped to help land managers with information on the provision of safe access for horse riders. BHS does not pretend that this will be an easy task as horse riders sometimes just do not think what harm they may be doing when riding across land. Part of the reason for this has been that in the past there have been few safe off road routes for horse riders and they have maybe sometimes been less than responsible when trying to find somewhere to ride away from the public roads. The Core Path Network will be of great importance not only to local riders but also will have great potential in the development of equestrian tourism across the South of Scotland and further.



6 – Riders at Langholm

The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003

The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 gained Royal Assent on April 22nd, and will come into force in six month's time, from October 22nd 2003.

Dog fouling regularly tops lists of what people consider to be the unpleasant things in everyday life. The Act now firmly places the fault with the human owner or minder of the dog, rather than with the dog! From October, in Scotland it will become an offence for a person in charge of a dog to fail immediately to remove the faeces if the dog has defecated in a public place, unless the landowner has consented. A 'public place' is defined in this Act as any place which is open to the air to which the public has access, and gardens, yards, stairs, courts, back greens, closes and passages if open to the air on at least one side. There are certain exceptions. The act for some reason does not apply to agricultural land. Working sheep dogs, forces and police dogs, and dogs for blind or disabled people are exempt.

It is interesting to note a tie-in from this Act to the new access legislation under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, since the latter now provides clarity over places 'to which the public has access'. There is also a connection through the underlying principle of responsibility, and this could be seen in relation to the Code as one aspect of having a dog under 'proper control'.

The Dog Fouling Act requires local authorities to authorise one or more persons to issue fixed penalty notices, and the police and those authorised persons will be able to issue these when they have reasonable grounds for suspecting the offence has been committed. Local authorities will have to now consider whom they will authorise for this function. It might presumably include relevant people such as park wardens and groundsmen, possibly even rangers, and is not necessarily restricted to council staff.

More than 'Thirty Nine Steps'. The John Buchan Way.

The John Buchan Way, a 13-mile walking route from Peebles to Broughton, was launched on in May, at Broughton Place. The route has been named after the author and politician who has strong links in the area. It follows old rights of way across some of the Borders most spectacular countryside from Bank House in Peebles, a former Buchan family home, over Cademuir Hill and The Glack down into Stobo and then towards the Broughton Heights before descending into the village. The work was funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Regional Development Fund and co-ordinated by Scottish Border Paths. The route has been made possible thanks to the landowners along the way, and hard work of local contractors. It is hoped the route will be used by locals and visitors who want to walk and stay in the area. It is also hoped that the new route will attract more people to Broughton and walkers are always welcome to visit the John Buchan Centre.

Outdoor Access in South Lanarkshire – UPDATE

The appointment of the Council's second access development officer, Philip Glennie, has resulted in a significant increase in the level and scope of access activity throughout South Lanarkshire.

The consultative draft South Lanarkshire Access Strategy, which was completed earlier in the year, sets the vision for outdoor access over the next 5 to 10 years. The document has been prepared with the active involvement of access users, landowners and managers, agencies and organizations. The strategy identifies 10 "Access Action Zones", several of which impact on the SUP area, and proposes a variety of specific actions to promote and develop opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding. Copies of the strategy are available free of charge from S Lanarks Council.

As required by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act the Council has established an Access Forum. The group which has met several times since its establishment at the beginning of the year provides an opportunity to discuss access issues. Membership includes representatives from the National Farmers Union, Forestry Commission, Scottish Landowners Federation, British Horse Society / South Lanarkshire Horse & Pony Access Group, Sustrans, Ramblers Scotland, Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society, Association of Local Voluntary Organisations, FWAG, SNH, Paths for All Partnership, SL Disability Forum. The forum is particularly keen to hear from communities with good ideas on how outdoor access can be improved within their area

A number of access improvement projects have been started. In Biggar a joint project has been undertaken with the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society to upgrade and sign a number of paths known as the "Biggar Country Paths Network". A second phase to this project is currently in development and involves joint working with the Tweed Trails initiative to upgrade the multi-use access link between Biggar and Broughton. A good example of cross-boundary partnership working. In and around Douglas work has been undertaken in partnership with Douglas and Angus Estates and the Douglas Valley Rural Activities Partnership to promote walking and cycling access for both visitors and local residents. The aim of this project is to stimulate the economic health of the area through tourism development and improve the physical health of local residents by encouraging the adoption of active life style changes.

If you would like further information on these or any of the other walking, cycling and horse riding projects underway in South Lanarkshire contact the access development officers on tel. 01698 455125 or 455938.

Making it pay

– new approaches to access developments

Clifftop Discovery Tours

Six farmers with coterminous boundaries who altogether own 15 miles of East Berwickshire coastline intend to offer guided tours in a Landrover over their land beginning from the NTS car park at St Abbs Head. The tour will incorporate a brief visit to Pettico Wick, as well as several miles of coastline to the north. Routes will vary according to weather and group interests and in order to avoid wear and tear on any single route but the standard tour will cater for up to 8 adults and last around 2.5 hours including refreshments and loan of binoculars. Tours of a longer duration and/or to cater for specialist interests can be arranged.

The applicants have formed a limited company to deliver the tours and will employ one of the landowners as a guide with his wife acting as secretary/administrator. Each of the applicants has existing diversified interests which stand to benefit from the new venture. The company will promote the tours at St Abbs and will also make links with the Seabird Discovery Centre, local boat trips and appropriate (mainly upmarket) hotels in the region. Uniquely, the group have also agreed to abide by a written code of conduct for their tours which outlines their intentions to observe local environmental, wildlife, landscape and amenity interests. A Making Tracks grant was approved in April 2003 to assist with business start-up costs, promotion & signage and the purchase of equipment for loan / use on the tours.

Ettrick Marshes Project

This project aims to provide a range of new and enhanced visitor facilities, access routes & interpretation with the intention of establishing the Ettrick Marshes as a high quality nature-based visitor attraction. The marshes form a unique environment in a remote part of the region and the changes proposed should allow for additional car parking, short, circular routes and viewing points to help make the area more attractive to visitors. Enhancements to the infrastructure will be complemented by new road signage, the production of a map/leaflet, the training of local guides & an events programme. The project is led by Borders Forest Trust and there is close involvement with local farms, accommodation providers and other businesses in the promotion and development of the site as well as by members of the local community. A Making Tracks grant of was approved mainly for associated capital works, labour and management charges.

Eskdale Prehistoric Trail

In tandem with the previous project which is only 18 miles from Eskdalemuir, this new circular trail will link 9 sites of archaeological interest in Eskdale & 2 in the Meggat Valley (north of Bentpath). The former range from 3,500 year-old stone circles to Iron Age hill forts. The latter include Thomas Telford's birthplace & local industrial heritage plus a path to a former antimony mine.

The trail will be fully signed with brown tourist road signs & the sites & walks with fingerposts. Interpretation and car parking will be provided at sites where it does not currently exist. Visitors will be guided around the trail with the help of a new leaflet/map on which local farm-based and other accommodation providers will advertise. Development of the trail will include training of local guides and awareness raising for accommodation providers – both to be provided by a local, farm-based enterprise & Jane Brann, the D&G Council Archaeologist – in the local natural heritage as well as the archaeological interest. The initiative will link to Langholm Walks events, already promoted by Langholm Initiative who are leading the project, as well as the Ettrick Marshes project and the Samye Ling Monastery.

Galloway Red Kite Trail

Launched last month the Red Kite Trail uses roads and tracks around Loch Ken to complement the RSPB's Red Kite release programme which is re-introducing 45 pairs of red kites into the region. The project will create new viewpoints, a footpath to the release site, and a feeding station with bird hide – all with interpretation and education opportunities. It also links already established attractions such as the RSPB's Ken-Dee Marshes Reserve and Forest Enterprise's Raiders' Road and Clatteringshaws Wildlife Visitor Centre.

Tweed Valley Osprey Project Revisited

Nature-based tourism in the Borders has been given a significant boost recently by the launch of the Tweed Valley Osprey Project near Peebles. This project, which harnesses the support of a range of different organisations, demonstrates how a partnership approach can be the catalyst to make innovative ideas a reality.

Forest Enterprise is the lead partner and is wholly responsible for the technical side of the project. The owner of Kailzie Gardens is a farmer with 450 acres farmed in-hand at Kailzie and further holdings in Dumfries & Galloway. The Tourist Board proposes to use webcam pictures of the birds on their website. Similar facilities are likely to be provided by the Peebles Hydro Hotel & the newly developed MacDonald Cardrona Hotel. Wildlife viewing opportunities will be further enhanced at Kailzie through the provision of new bird hides, a flight pond and additional CCTV links to nesting garden birds & ducks. Altogether, these new facilities are intended to draw in additional visitors to the area. Funding from Making Tracks (itself funded by VisitScotland & EC's Leader+ Programme for the Scottish Borders), matched by input from Forest Enterprise, Kailzie Gardens and Scottish Natural Heritage, with additional in-kind support from Tweed Forum, SAMH, Lothian and Borders Police, the RSPB and the Scottish Borders Raptor Study Group, has enabled ground-breaking technology to be used to send live TV footage from an osprey nest at a secret location in the Tweed Valley Forest Park to two Osprey Visitor Centres, one situated at Kailzie Gardens and the other at Glentress.

Both offer a 'bird's eye view' of the pair of ospreys and their young family, from the hatching of the eggs (the third chick hatched on Saturday 7th June) until their departure on their migration to West Africa in September. It is hoped that the Glentress Visitor Centre will serve an additional purpose as the focus for encouraging greater community involvement in the development of the newly-appointed Tweed Valley Forest Park.

The Visitor Centres are open from 10am to 5pm every day of the week. There is no charge for viewing, but visitors are encouraged to put donations into a 'golden nest box', which will help ensure that these majestic birds have a healthy home to return to year after year.

For further information contact Sarah Oakley Community and Environment Ranger, Forest Enterprise

Response on the last edition from Clovenfords CC

"I would like to advise you of the Clovenfords & District Community Council's support for the SUP and of our wish to become members. It was voted that we should pay the £20 subscription and a cheque for £20 should be with you in due course. There was however some concern raised about the Partnership which is not intended as criticism. The Newsletter tends to portray the all rosy picture of sustainable development and our concern is that the Partnership appears to progress matters at face value without looking into issues in sufficient depth to truly represent the wider interests of those living in the Borders.

For example: Renewable energy is very much supported. However, the development of most windfarms to date, I understand, has been ad hoc with schemes arising in an opportunistic manner with no strategy presented by the Scottish Executive nor guidance given from the Council. There are also issues as to whether the National Grid can support this type of development, who is paying for the upgrades and who is profiteering. The reports and claims that windfarms encourage tourism is particularly suspect and as the subject becomes more and more emotive, with the 'anti' campaign growing, we consider that the SUP should be making a case to the Council and Executive for a sound rationale in assessing proposals to achieve well located windfarms. Our concern may stem from the Broadmeadows proposal which, if approved, will be in full view of a population of over 500 people during every daylight hour, not just while passing through.

The Community Council has in the last couple of years discussed 'affordable housing' with the Council, Eildon Housing, the Rural Housing Service and have also heard a presentation by the Tweed Valley Ecovillage Group. Difficult to pin this one down, but I believe the view is that the holistic approach taken by the Council and associated groups is starting to address the low cost housing matter in a more cost effective, socially inclusive and fair way. We agree that the project objectives are commendable, but suggest that the SUP should look to the Council and Executive to progress the development of environmentally sensitive development within it's policy rather than what appears to be support for ad hoc projects which may or may not have the public support.

As previously stated this note is not intended as criticism, rather caution that not everything is as green as it may appear. Closing note - keep up the good work!!"

SUP response:

"We very much welcome the support of Clovenfords Community Council (and the annual subscription) and we note your comments re the newsletter.

You will be aware that the SUP is a very broad-based partnership and it is very difficult to take a firm line on most issues - wind-farms being an obvious case. You may have read the soapbox bit in an earlier edition in which John Elliot called for a much more proactive approach to be taken by local authorities and communities in deciding where wind-farms should go - rather than responding to the pressures exerted by developers as and when they arrive.

The line we have been taking is that renewable energy and wind farms are not the same thing - there are other sorts of renewable energy which we need to take seriously - biomass being the most obvious in S Scotland.

We are trying to stimulate a reasoned debate and it is good that your CC has expressed a view.

The affordable housing debate is also complex - the issue being affordable to who and for how long? We agree that this is a matter for SBC and the Scottish Executive although there are some interesting models out there of Charitable Trusts buying up housing for letting to local people - or selling with repurchase clauses.

The rural housing debate is slightly different and we think there is a need to be more flexible if we are to keep rural communities vibrant. There is a case to be made for appropriate new housing in rural areas - providing it is of suitable design and quality. S Scotland is increasingly littered with characterless boxes which say nothing about our history, geology, landscape or culture. If the future of the Borders is as a place for people to come and walk, ride, cycle, fish, watch wildlife, while we also produce food and trees (and maybe energy) we should be doing all we can to ensure that the Borders is as attractive and unspoilt as possible. At present we seem to be at risk of fouling our own nest!! Which takes us back to the wind-farm debate....."

Membership

The Southern Uplands Partnership is a membership organisation and depends on subscriptions for a significant part of its core funding. Members elect the Directors, receive regular newsletters and play a major role in determining priorities.

If you are not a member, please consider becoming one. If you sign and return the Gift Aid declaration it allows us to get extra support from the Inland Revenue.

To apply for membership either use the form below or visit www.sup.org.uk and complete the form on-line.

Membership category please tick box: Individual member ☐ Group member ☐

Subscription category Rate please tick box:

Individual waged per year £10 ☐ Individual unwaged per year £5 ☐ Individual life £100 ☐

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Please make cheques payable to the SOUTHERN UPLANDS PARTNERSHIP.

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Return to: The Southern Uplands Partnership, Freepost SC05012, Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels TD1 0BR

The Southern Uplands Partnership

The Southern Uplands Partnership was established as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status in 1999, with the aim of promoting sustainable land-use in the Southern Uplands of Scotland and thereby keeping people living and working here.

Company No 200827 Charity SC029475

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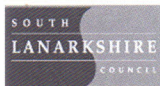


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