

# Southern Upland NEWS

Newsletter of the Southern Uplands Partnership

#14 Winter 2004

## ART IN THE LANDSCAPE

*The South of Scotland can boast some innovative projects to attracting visitors having set art in the rural landscape, here we review some of the surprises that can be found, or are planned, for walkers.*

### HIDDEN ART BRINGS VISITORS TO GALLOWAY

Galloway Forest Park has another big feather in its cap to attract visitors.

For three years Forestry Commission Scotland and the Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association worked hand in hand to bring a number of amazing art installations to the forest.

The art is in place for everyone to find and it has certainly raised a few eyebrows with visitors. It's not every day that you come across a 50 metre wide Labyrinth deep in the forest!

Key to the project was the involvement of local artists and contractors. Such an important project needed a special local flavour and the chosen artists put their skills to very good use and created some thought provoking masterpieces.

Rena Tarwinska of Forestry Commission Scotland was keen that the project brought other benefits to the area:

"We are always keen to give visitors a welcoming and memorable experience in the forest. These stunning works of art certainly provide a different atmosphere at each part of the forest.

"Increasingly, Forestry Commission Scotland is providing a vital role in supporting rural economies through 'green' tourism as it's a valuable way of boosting visitor numbers. It also fits in well with Galloway's rural lifestyle.

"We've already had local accommodation providers giving us positive feedback that the project is a big hit with tourists and we aim to build on this.

Visitors to the Galloway Forest Park can find the following hidden art:

- 50 metre wide labyrinth which winds along the landscape and ends with a calm water feature
- a series of carved stone heads built into a sheep fold
- an eight metre spire made of red-earth tiles
- a carved granite otter along a popular river bank
- various gunmetal seats attached to trees and with patterns of pinecones for decoration

The project was funded by the Scottish Arts Council Lottery Fund in an effort to stimulate adventurous arts projects in different settings other than the big cities.

There's a colourful leaflet and map identifying the locations of all the art installations. These are available in any of the forest visitor centres or alternatively phone Galloway Forest District on 01671 402 420 or email [galloway@forestry.gov.uk](mailto:galloway@forestry.gov.uk).

*continued over.....*



*The Eye, Colin Rose.*

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, rural housing and local food production. The "Southern Upland News" is the newsletter of the SUP. The SUP also has a website [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk) and employs a project manager who is based in the Borders and a project officer based in Galloway. Core funding is provided by the three Local Authorities as well as SNH and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Funds are also raised through membership subscriptions and project management fees.



*The Qorum, Matt Baker.*

**Also in this issue – MSP and MPs views: Wind farms and community benefit: Fuelwood seminars: Farm Venture Groups: Partners News – Solway Heritage: Directors comment and Project update.**

## Directors Comment - The Big Challenge

Find yourself amongst a group of farmers these days and there is a high probability that the discussion will include the current European Union's (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform deliberations. At an individual level such reform may precipitate fear or optimism; disadvantages and opportunities; winners and losers. At a regional, national and European level the proposals will cause change.

Southern Scotland will be included in the agricultural change. Whereas quotas tended to both maintain and limit levels of production, in future the "market" will have a greater influence on crop areas, numbers of livestock and levels of intensity. Just how the final CAP Reform legislation and the "market" will influence farmers to allocate their scarce resources (capital, labour, land and management) is open to some speculation.

CAP reform will accelerate change. I anticipate that farms will tend to either have greater focus on production enterprises (including environmental/public goods that will receive increased encouragement) or concentrate on systems that produce, manufacture and sell direct to the consumer. Global competition will impact all farms, not least because Australia, New Zealand and South America can produce almost every commodity product that we can - more cheaply and they too are into niche marketing.

In Southern Scotland, capital will continue to replace labour; the numbers of workers and managers in agriculture will continue to decline, and businesses will continue to expand were possible to spread fixed costs. The family farm will remain under pressure and more will disappear. New challenges are certainly ahead, for land is an opportunity to produce, protect or provide something on this crowded island. The big challenge for Southern Scotland in the new era will be to develop land uses that are both sustainable and profitable.

Robert H B Hall

*Art in the Landscape continued-*

## Striding Arches

The final go ahead for major arts project in Dumfries and Galloway by artist Andy Goldsworthy has just been awarded by the Scottish Arts Council.

Striding Arches is a work by internationally acclaimed environmental artist, Andy Goldsworthy. This is to be the first major piece of public art by the artist to be installed in Dumfriesshire.

Andy Goldsworthy's initiative to site his work in the region has resulted in a truly collaborative project for the local organizations and agencies involved. The Cairnhead Forest Trust, with its strong community roots, responded to the artist's concept with enthusiasm. Their ongoing partnership with the Forestry Commission Scotland brought the national agency into the project, and, together with Scottish Natural Heritage, whose concerns are with the interpretation of and access to the natural environment, the partnership extended. Both Solway Heritage and Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association have worked together on previous projects, and the combination of the built heritage and artists creation in this project make this a natural partnership; financial support from Leader +, the Community Regeneration Fund, the Robertson Trust and Landfill Tax reflect the many facets of the project.

Striding Arches celebrates and interprets Dumfries & Galloway's unique landscape through a multiple installation of world-class environmental sculpture linked with an innovative educational facility called the Byre. The project proposal originated several years ago from a wish by the artist, who has lived locally in Dumfries & Galloway for over 20 years, to assist with regeneration in his home area of Nithsdale.



*The Byre, starting point for visitors to the Stirling Arches.*

The project is for a series of three grand sandstone arches, approximately four meters high, sited in specifically chosen high points around the natural amphitheatre of the Cairnhead glen head. Another arch will be built into the Byre whilst maintaining the original character and features of the building, creating a sculptural form in itself. The arches, to be sited on the tops of Mullwhanny, Martour and Black Hill, will help to create a path network to encourage public access to the Cairnhead Forest and Glen and create links with the Southern Upland Way, which skirts the edge of Cairnhead Forest.

Andy Goldsworthy has a huge international following for his work. Galleries in the UK, France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and both East and West Coast USA represent him. His work is published in five different languages and books distributed by publishers all over the world. He is a pioneer artist in making art in landscape that is based on his very close personal relationship with the land, making this project unique as it is to be situated in his local area.

The Byre, located in the heart of Cairnhead Forest with views down the picturesque Cairnhead Glen, also creates a strategic link between the Southern Upland Way and the village of Moniaive. The Byre will act as a starting point, indoor and outdoor interpretation/educational space and meeting point for individuals and groups visiting the other arches in the Glen and for walkers taking a detour from the Southern Upland Way.

## Treasures on the Southern Upland Way

The Southern Upland Way is an ambitious coast-to-coast walk but it embraces many enticing shorter walks. To get you out on them, the *Waymarks* project offers the alluring possibility of hidden treasure.

Specially minted coins, the *waymarks*, are the treasure. Hand-made by John Behm and his team at Abbey Saint Bathans, they are little works of art in lead and copper. Their designs relate to the archaeology, history or wildlife of their hiding places. Stowed in artist-made kists in variety of forms from a great iron chest, to a pair of feet, to, enigmatically, a poem, the *waymarks* are there for the taking. Take one home and reflect on the history of making beautiful things that it encapsulates.

The word ULTREIA (On with your quest!) on a waymarking post suggests a kist is imminent. Keep your eyes skinned. You won't have to dig. Look at the website for more information: [www.waymarks.org.uk](http://www.waymarks.org.uk)



*John Behm, Lead Artist of 'Waymarks' shows one of the minted coins to be found by walkers.*

# Project Update . . .

## South Scotland Countryside Trails/Tweed Trails

This is an innovative partnership project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage and the EU South of Scotland Objective 2 Programme. It will create an integrated network of 325kms of multi-use paths across southern Scotland. The total cost of the 3-year project is estimated at £762,750, of which £218,000 represents development and implementation of routes in Dumfries and Galloway, and £544,750 in the Scottish Borders. Funding has been secured from EU South of Scotland Objective 2 Programme, Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forest Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Landfill Tax. Local community groups and individuals, together with British Horse Society Scotland (BHSS) at national and local level, are making significant in-kind contributions through participation in project steering committees, negotiation of access agreements, erection of signage, route monitoring and maintenance.

The aim of the project is to provide high-quality routes (old railway routes or drove roads) which can be used by walkers, riders and cyclists and which will be easy to maintain.

By developing a network of routes across rural south Scotland, visitors will be encouraged to venture into the countryside. Remote farms and communities will be encouraged to develop new businesses to cater for them – through provision of accommodation, food, luggage transfer and other support services for walkers, riders, horses and cyclists. Equestrian tourism is an undeveloped niche as yet. Tweed Trails is helping local businesses and communities capitalise on the rich tradition of riding and horse handling skills in the South of Scotland.

This project is now at the half-way point and we have recently reviewed progress. While we are slightly behind schedule – this is largely due to a couple of major issues which have recently been resolved – we are confident we will be able to catch-up during the next few months. Solway Heritage are now working on the “missing link” which will connect the Ae forest routes through to the Borders network. We hope to have information on the routes available later this year in leaflets and on the Tourist Board websites.

## Biodiversity on the Edge - Black Grouse in South Scotland

The initial phase of this project is nearing completion thanks to a Project Planning grant from Heritage Lottery Fund and contributions from Scottish Borders Council, RSPB, SNH, Forestry Commission Scotland and support from Dumfries & Galloway and South Lanarkshire Councils and the Game Conservancy Trust. Once the proposals are finalised, a bid will be made for implementation funding from HLF and the Making Tracks scheme.

## NATURE-BASED TOURISM

There is a lot happening in this area and to review where we are the SUP is hosting a seminar on 18th February at the Tinto Hotel in Symington. We hope to have input from some of the existing Making Tracks projects, from the consultants who recently reviewed the NBT resource, from the Tourism and Environment Forum, and from one or two local initiatives. If you would like to attend please get in touch with the office. The event will be free to members.

## SUW 2005

Proposals for a big celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> birthday of the route have been put back a year to allow the partners to collect data on current users of the route and their economic impact (or lack of it). It is now proposed that we spend this year working up a really strong case and then celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday in 2005. Funding for the necessary research is currently being secured.

## Equestrian Tourism

Funding has now been secured from British Horse Society Scotland, VisitScotland; South Lanarkshire Council, SED&G, Scottish Borders Council and British Riding Clubs Area 1 to commission market research into the nature of the equestrian tourism market – specifically looking at those who would be interested in bringing their horses to S Scotland and riding the routes that are being developed. This work will be managed by the Scottish Borders Tourist Board and we hope the results will be available in May.

## Fuelwood Seminars in Southern Scotland

### SMALL SCALE WOOD-FUELLED HEATING SCHEMES

Small scale wood-fuelled heating schemes have a great potential for providing low-cost heating, creating markets for low-grade timber and providing jobs in rural areas. Fuelwood is suitable for heating individual houses or groups of homes up to village halls, workshops and small schools, as well as bigger buildings.

Two one-day seminars on community-scale heating schemes are being organised in spring 2004 - one in the Borders in March, the other in South-West Scotland in May.

The seminars focus on the practicalities of setting up and running fuelwood schemes - from the different types of equipment available to grants for renewable energy schemes. Each seminar includes a visit to a fuelwood heating scheme.

### NON TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS

Woodlands produce a lot more than just timber. In other countries, a whole range of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as edible fungi, wild fruit and other products are harvested, providing employment and bringing income to woodland owners and rural communities. At last, we're starting to realise the great potential for producing NTFPs from Scotland's forests and woodlands.

A two-day seminar on NTFPs will be held on 24-25 April in the Borders. It will cover harvesting, processing and marketing of a range of NTFPs, including fungi, fruit and foliage. There will also be presentations about rearing unusual livestock (including chickens and pigs) in woodlands, as well as a visit to see the practicalities of NTFPs.

For information on these seminars contact Nick Marshall, Reforesting Scotland on 0131 554 4321

*The SUP has long been concerned that the south of Scotland is becoming forgotten by those in authority and invisible to those planning to visit Scotland - left behind socially, economically and environmentally compared to other rural areas, especially the Highlands and Islands.*

*For this edition of the newsletter we asked MSPs and MPs across the regions to tell us their current key priority in addressing the low profile of Southern Scotland. Here is what they had to say.*

Transport has to be the key priority for the south of Scotland. We must ensure the rail-link is re-instated to Cairnryan when Stena move from Stranraer. We must re-examine the case for the Dumfries - Stranraer line, to encourage freight, especially timber, from road to rail and to enable those tourists without cars to visit the area. The Waverley line to Galashiels must be extended to Hawick and Carlisle.

With the Executive now claiming to be promoting healthy transport, now is an excellent time to promote the Southern Upland Way. The network of walks and cycle routes must be better publicised for visitors.

Better bus services will allow people in remoter areas to travel to work. Business needs, first and foremost, a mobile workforce. South of Scotland has one of the lowest-paid workforces in the country; they need a reliable, regular and affordable bus service to connect them to what jobs there are.

**Chris Ballance, MSP**

Member for South of Scotland, Party - Green

Current Select Committees - Enterprise and Culture; Audit (Committee Substitute)



To a certain extent, I have to disagree that the South of Scotland is becoming increasingly forgotten, and increasingly invisible to those planning to visit Scotland. The doom and gloom messages which some people put out about our locality being left behind does nothing to help our area.

We should never forget that the Highland and Islands area has been well organised for many years in making its case in a number of different forums and our locality is still trying to play "catch-up".

My current key priority has never changed. I believe in seizing every opportunity to promote the positive aspects of our area including it being the ideal place to visit, live, and set up business. Figures show that numbers visiting the area are on the increase, and return visitor numbers are rising due to the positive experience which people are having when they come to the area.

Let's be more positive about ourselves and the area in which we live!

**Russell Brown, MP**

Member for Dumfries, Party - Labour

Current Select Committees - Regulatory Reform; Joint Committee on Consolidation of Bills, Etc.

PPS to Baroness Amos as Leader of the House of Lords



My whole motivation for entering the world of Scottish politics was to try to ensure fairer representation for the South of Scotland in a world in which reference to 'rural Scotland' too often referred to areas North of the Highland line. In the run up to the election last May, I floated the idea that Scotland's third National Park should be the Galloway National Park. I have received considerable public support for the idea, but have to say that I am somewhat disappointed in the reaction of the public bodies which can only be described as conservative -with a very small c- in the extreme. Nonetheless, I remain an optimist, and believe that there is considerable merit in the initiative. Certainly, nothing could more effectively raise the profile of that part of Scotland which it is my privilege to represent.

**Alex Fergusson, MSP**

Member for Galloway & Upper Nithsdale, Party - Conservative

Committees - Standards; Environment and Rural Development (Committee Substitute)

The implications of sparsely populated areas inevitably directs national media interest away from rural areas such as the South of Scotland, this based predominantly on circulation factors. That apart I do not agree with the "low profile" label certainly within the Scottish Parliament.

Particularly in the South West I feel more could be done to publicise the attractions of the area in Tourist terms. Controversially I have long supported an Area Tourist Board that would embrace the South West in a way which would cover Dumfries and Galloway along with Ayrshire. The Burns Heritage trail provides one common interest but road networks and the wonderful scenery with all of its attractions for close scrutiny cements common interest.

**Phil Gallie, MSP**

Member for South of Scotland, Party - Conservative

Committees - European and External Relations; Public Petitions (Committee Substitute)

For my own part I lived for many years in Galloway, then East Lothian and have fought campaigns in the Borders for over a decade, representing the South of Scotland from my Galashiels office for 4 years. The key issue in the entire South of Scotland I believe is the transport net-work, for without these communication arteries, the South cannot thrive in good social and economic health. I have campaigned hard for the reinstatement of the Borders Railway and would wish to see other rail-routes re-introduced. What about the "Paddy" line for instance? Rail with good road links for me is the vision. Rail links that take goods off rural roads and bring tourists to our beautiful countryside. Rail links bringing businesses and younger people from our congested cities to live with their families, enjoying quality of life and introducing much needed new blood to an ageing population.

**Christine Grahame, MSP**

Member for South of Scotland, Party - Scottish National Party

Committees - Health (Convener)

Readers feedback is welcomed, please write to

The SUP at Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels, TD1 3PE or email [floramcdowall@sup.org.uk](mailto:floramcdowall@sup.org.uk)

It is vital that Southern Scotland fully exploits the opportunities offered by green industries. The recent announcement by the Scottish Executive approving the new windfarm at Hadyard Hill in South Ayrshire will benefit the area's economy, creating up to 100 local jobs during its construction, as well as helping to increase the amount of energy we produce from renewable sources.

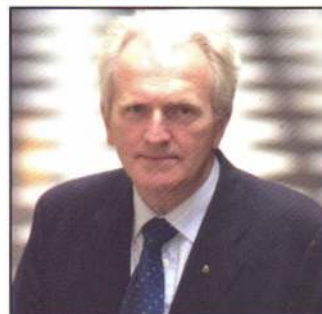
The Scottish Executive is committed to the dispersal of public sector jobs across Scotland. I believe that Southern Scotland is ideal for the small scale relocation of public sector jobs and I will actively work to ensure that the area is considered by the Executive in future relocations. This would create jobs within the area and boost the local economy.

Broadband is vital for businesses, voluntary organisations and individuals in rural communities. I have campaigned to highlight the benefits of broadband and to encourage more people to register an interest. Several of the towns and communities within my constituency have already secured broadband access and many others are working towards the trigger levels set for their exchange.

**Cathy Jamieson, MSP**

Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, Party – Labour  
Posts – Minister for Justice

Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders have a lower profile within Scotland and abroad than the Highlands and Islands. For historical and other reasons, such as being almost twice the size of the South of Scotland, the latter tends to impinge more on the consciousness of people and of government. This impacts on the success of tourism, which is the biggest industry in the South of Scotland, and also is important in informing government when it makes decisions on issues such as relocation of government jobs and so on. The most important thing which I believe the South can do is to make sure that the various agencies within its two component parts unite within their own two areas to much more vigorously raise the profile of the issues which they feel are important. The Highlands and Islands has done this well over the years and we must learn from what they have done.



**Alasdair Morgan, MSP**

Member for South of Scotland, Party – Scottish National Party  
Committees – Enterprise and Culture (Convener); Subordinate Legislation; Standards (Committee Substitute)

As a South of Scotland MSP, I am very familiar with the challenges confronting local communities across the region. Many local people are rightly concerned that policymakers based in the Central Belt are ignoring southern Scotland, preferring instead to equate a rural agenda with the needs of the Highlands and Islands.

One of the most important challenges for our rural and remote communities is to develop our transport and communications infrastructure so that local businesses would be able to access vital export and labour markets. It would also allow visitors to visit our towns and villages more easily, which would be of huge benefit to local tourism.

Infrastructure projects that need attention and investment include the Borders rail link and important trunk roads like the A7, A75 and A76. It is also imperative that the broadband network is brought to rural communities, which have so much to gain from the opportunities that this technology would make available to local people.

**David Mundell, MSP**

Member for South of Scotland, Party – Conservative  
Committees – Local Government and Transport; Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Bill; Finance (Committee Substitute)

As a first step, I think we need to know more about how 'outsiders' perceive the South of Scotland. Does the South of Scotland actually have its own identity in the way that the Highlands do, or are the various regions such as Dumfries and Galloway seen as separate identities? Research on this would help inform us about what needs to be addressed in order to promote the area effectively. There also needs to be debate about the benefits of collaboration between the regions within the South of Scotland which in the past may have seen themselves as being in competition with each other as destinations for tourism or business location. A balance has to be struck regarding what can be achieved together and the individual needs of these regions.

We must ensure that we portray a positive image of the South of Scotland when we are raising its profile, concentrating on assets and opportunities. Capitalising on our strengths will be my priority both for the South of Scotland and for Dumfries and Galloway.



**Elaine Murray, MSP**

Member for Dumfries, Party – Labour  
Committees – Finance; Education

The South of Scotland has plenty to offer, not least the fantastic opportunities for attracting tourists. Wonderful scenery, warm hospitality and a strong sense of tradition make it the ideal place for foreigners to get a taste of Scotland. The benefits of tourism to both the national and local economies cannot be underestimated, and it is vital that we do everything possible to encourage visitors to return year after year.

In attracting European tourists, one of the things which I feel is often neglected is the importance of modern language learning. In rural communities it is not always as easy, but in the age of new technologies, hope is on the horizon that would not have been there ten years ago. The Executive and the Parliament, working together with local communities can maximise these opportunities, and I look forward to seeing more progress on this in the coming year.

**Irene Oldfather, MSP**

Member for Cunninghame South, Party – Labour  
Committees – European and External Relations (Convener); Procedures (Committee Substitute)

It is hard to address the issue of the profile of the South of Scotland in such a few words but one of the most important things that we must do is develop better political co-operation. This is being done at council level and the South of Scotland Alliance are forging ahead with partnership working for the region. There still needs to be progress at a parliamentary level. For example, when I raised a Member's Debate in the parliament on European aid for the South of Scotland, the first time this had been debated in the Parliament I was attacked for doing so by other South of Scotland MSPs. There must be issues that there can be political consensus for the benefit of the region and where there are, there must be a unified approach to get the best deal.

**Jeremy Purvis, MSP**

Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, Party – Scottish Liberal Democrats  
Committees – Finance; Environment and Rural Development (Committee Substitute)

# PARTNERS UPDATE



## SOLWAY HERITAGE

Happy New Year to all readers of the SUP Newsletter from Solway Heritage. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee of happiness at Solway Heritage but it will certainly be a busy 2004. That said, happiness will greatly increase if the bid for a Townscape Heritage Initiative, known as a THI, for Annan is successful. A THI seeks to restore and refurbish the historic heart of a town centre as part of an economic regeneration process, using funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund as the basis but also requiring match funding. The latter is normally provided from the owners of the buildings, the local authority and the local enterprise company. The application process is very demanding but the final submission has now been made and the outcome anxiously awaited. Given that Solway Heritage made a very successful job of a similar project at Wigtown, a £2M project recently all but completed when the County Buildings were re-opened last September, hopes are high.

Another project a long time in the making has now started for real. The New Year sees the employment of the first two staff to create the Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resource Centre. There are several such centres around the UK and their role is to gather all sorts of environmental information, which can then be made available to the public or the many organisations involved in planning and looking after our environment, be it the local authority, a national statutory organisation or a local group with an interest in the environment. The first stage is to get the information on to a computer database and Mark Pollitt (ERC Manager) and Nicola Stringer (ERC Assistant Manager) are now employed to do just that.

Finally, Solway Heritage is adding a bit of continental flair to its activities this year. The New Year has brought Céline Koch from France to join the Company for eight months.

### CAP Reform Meetings

The end of 2003 and 6th January deadline for input to consultation on CAP reform saw the SUP host productive meetings on behalf of SEERAD and WWF and SNH looking at different aspects of CAP reform.

"The Role of Agriculture in Delivering Environmental Benefits" was the theme for the seminar Chaired by SUP Director Mary Ann Smyth for WWF Scotland and SNH in Castle Douglas on the 5th December. Twenty-five invited delegates met for presentations followed by lively and wide-ranging discussion. Environmental, agricultural and other commercial interests were represented and four main points of consensus were found:



Paul Neison (SEERAD) and Adam Harrison (WWF) Scotland.



Mary Ann Smyth (SUP) and Prof. John Rodwell (University of Lancaster).

1. Diversity of land use is the key (also diversity of scale, ownership, habitats and species).
2. Farmers need to be able to choose support post reform from a wide menu of options.
3. These options must recognise that a few farms will be intensive and specialise in food production while many are extensive, effectively specialising in providing public benefits such as nature conservation.
4. Regional strategies should be available so that additional incentives can be offered to farmers who agree to provide certain public benefits in preferred geographic or ecological zones.



Helen Fenby (Cream O' Galloway) and Anna Johnson (D & G NSA Officer).



Chris Miles (SNH) and Alastair Sim (SEERAD).

Full notes on the discussion can be found on the SUP website – [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk)

Reports from the SEERAD meetings in the Borders and Dumfries & Galloway will be available on the SUP website in due course.

The SUP would like to thank all those attending for their input.

### Coming Up – The Spring Newsletter

The theme for the Spring newsletter, due out in May, is Nature Based Tourism (NBT). News on efforts being made to develop sustainable new businesses based on the rich natural heritage we have across the South of Scotland.

If you would like to contribute a short news item about your business, or views, please email these to [floramcdowall@sup.org.uk](mailto:floramcdowall@sup.org.uk) to arrive no later than 12th April.



## COMMUNITIES SEEK INFORMATION ON WIND FARM BENEFITS

With Government targets set to increase renewable energy production from the current 12% to 40% by 2020, and a number of wind farm developments already underway in southern Scotland and many more in the pipeline, local communities across the region are having to get involved. Those with proposed sites on their doorsteps are looking for information about potential community benefits.

Once a wind farm has been approved, a "community benefit" fund can be established at the discretion of the developer as a goodwill gesture. This fund can then be used for community projects and may also help the community to match money available from other sources.

The Highland Council, which reports an "explosion" of interest, has a stated commitment to maximising community benefit in its region. Highland Council's view is that the current levels of community benefit should be raised in the light of current profit levels from renewable energy trading. These profits are a result of recent UK Government policy attaching a premium to the price paid for renewable energy and making it a requirement on generators to produce a minimum percentage of output from green energy.

Before the premium was introduced community benefit contributions from wind farm development in Highland were £1,000 - £1,150 per megawatt per annum. The Highland Council now believes that a much higher rate is justified and has proposed a sum of at least £4,000 - £5,000, or its equivalent equity, per megawatt per annum. A report for Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and The Highland Council into the balance between profit and investment associated with renewable energy development has recently been completed and can be viewed on The Highland Council website.

Scottish Renewables, Scotland's forum for the renewable energy industry, is aware of the concerns raised within local authorities and the media about claims of excessive levels of profit being made by developers and is working on an approach to community

benefits. The DTI will also be commissioning work on community benefit from renewables in the near future.

Maf Smith of Scottish Renewables points out "The renewables market is very favourable at present, but while the market is buoyant, analysts note that this is unlikely to last and the renewables sector is still a risky area to invest in." As a result the cost of borrowing to develop a renewables project can be high, meaning that schemes have higher operating costs and lower profit than might be initially expected.

While some press articles have quoted profits of up to £175,000 per megawatt per annum Scottish Renewables state that such figures do not account for all of the development and operation costs of renewable projects and confuse turnover with profit. With the current industry benchmark of £700 - £1,000 per megawatt to the community Scottish Renewables estimate that typical 50 megawatt wind farm could see a community receive over £1m across the expected 25-40 year operational lifetime of a project. Scottish Renewables say energy developments are inherently risky and negotiations should be carried out between communities and developers on a case-by-case basis using models which relate to levels of risk.

The Southern Uplands Partnership has been asked by rural partnership groups to follow progress on community benefit funds. Feedback from a small survey of Community Councils previously involved with community benefit funds show more information on existing schemes would have been useful to them.

Community Councils with an interest in this issue are reminded that they can apply for free membership of the Southern Uplands Partnership for 2004. This will ensure that they are sent copies of SUP newsletters with any updates on this topic and other rural development issues.

For further information about membership please contact the Southern Upland Partnership on 01750 725 154 (Scottish Borders) or 01644 420 808 (Dumfries & Galloway) or visit [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk)

For further information see:

IPA/Brodies report to Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar & The Highland Council

"An evaluation of alternative/renewable energy schemes"

[www.highland.gov.uk/cx/pressreleases/2004/jan04/ipa.htm](http://www.highland.gov.uk/cx/pressreleases/2004/jan04/ipa.htm)

The Highland Council's community toolkit

"Could your community benefit from renewable energy development?"

[www.highland.gov.uk/minutes/headquarters/renewing/reports/5nov03/ren23-03.pdf](http://www.highland.gov.uk/minutes/headquarters/renewing/reports/5nov03/ren23-03.pdf)

Scottish Renewables briefing notes

"Renewable Energy & Community Benefit" and "Financing Renewable Projects"

[www.scottishrenewables.com](http://www.scottishrenewables.com)

## FARM VENTURE GROUPS IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

The Borders Foundation for Rural Sustainability (BFRS), was formed in 1997 by land-managers with a collective expertise in rural diversification. The results of its audit (2002), into the economic and environmental contribution of land-based communities (in addition to farming and forestry), to the Scottish Borders, provided a wealth of information and confirmed the interest in sustainable rural development through farm diversification.



Clifftop Discovery Tours, a collaborative group enterprise.

As tends to be the nature of disaster, the onslaught of Foot and Mouth Disease catalysed opportunities for change. Requested by the Scottish Borders FMD Recovery Group, BFRS initiated its Farm Venture Groups (FVGs) which now involve some 30 farm holdings and 40 individuals at various stages of exploring in collaborative groups opportunities for alternative enterprises on their farms and in their communities.

FVGs work on the principle of self-motivation and group ownership of ideas, successes and risks. BFRS simply light the 'touch-paper' of innovation and enterprise within these groups, fan it a little and then leave the groups to their own resources and skills. It is an exercise of gentle enablement in a business environment fraught by complexity and regulation.

For further information contact Denise Walton, Director, The Borders Foundation for Rural Sustainability, Tel. 01890 781328.

*It has been brought to our attention that the work undertaken at the Moffat Well, mentioned in our Themed Towns article in the last newsletter, was initiated by Moffat and District Community Council. The Community Council was assisted in the project by the Upper Annandale Young Farmers, Dumfries and Galloway Council and also a local contractor. Apologies for the error.*

# 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](http://www.sup.org.uk) and complete the form on-line.

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**Subscription category Rate** please tick box:

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If you would like to pay by standing order please contact the office for the necessary form.

**Please make cheques payable to the SOUTHERN UPLANDS PARTNERSHIP.**

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**GIFT AID** You can increase the value of your subscription or donation (by 28p in every pound) if you pay income or capital gains tax in the UK. By signing and dating below, you will enable the Southern Uplands Partnership to claim back the tax on your subscription or donation under the Gift Aid Scheme.

Signature ..... Date .....

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## 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**

The Southern Uplands Partnership  
Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels TD1 3PE Tel: 01750 725154 e-mail: [piptabor@sup.org.uk](mailto:piptabor@sup.org.uk)

