



# EU Rural Cooperation Fair 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September Edinburgh

## Community Development

#### Our understanding:

- It's difficult to split community development projects between 'headings'
- Life in rural areas often involves complex livelihood choices

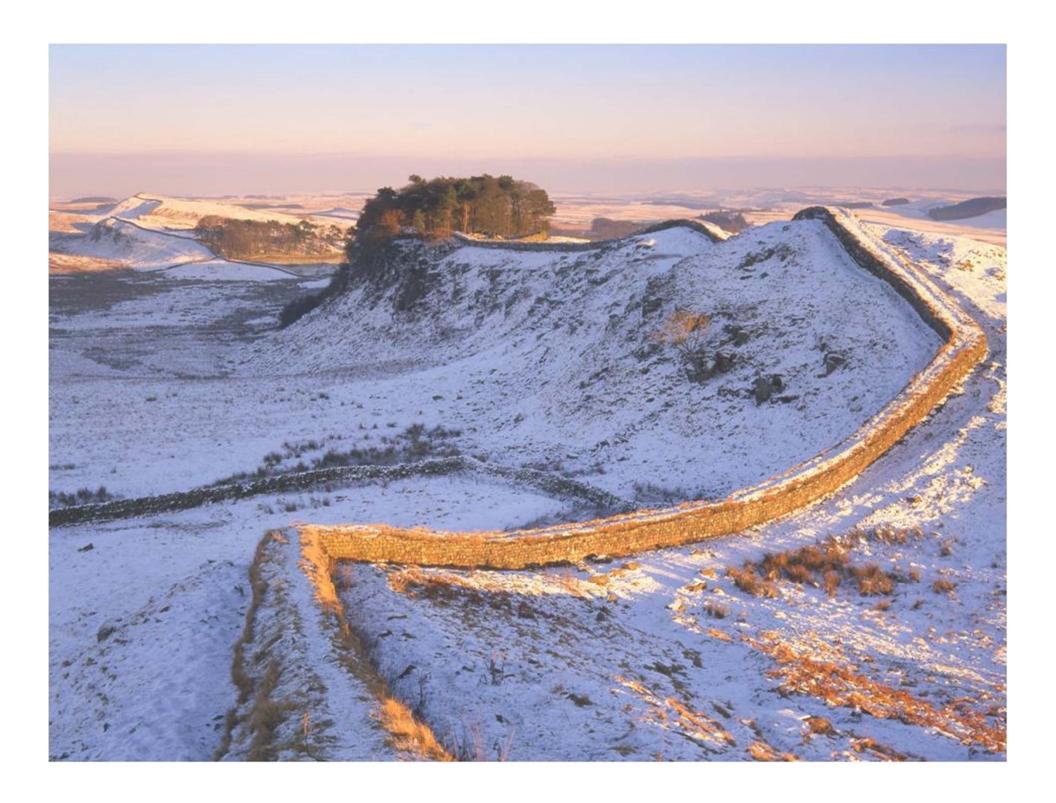
## Our Community - Northumberland











#### Our Community

 Complex community structures and complex livelihoods ...

...lead you into making all sorts of networks

• We <u>cooperate</u> every day with our neighbours, with our family, with the shopkeeper, with the people we do business with.

# What Opportunity does Leader give us?

- o Leader is a just an approach.
- But one with a strong theoretical underpinning
- It encourages us to cooperate a natural thing for people living in rural areas
- o Why does Leader encourage us to cooperate?
  - To achieve a 'joined up' approach
  - To harness local knowledge and explore new ideas
- o We are challenged to think beyond simple interventions.

#### Our experiences of cooperation

 Sparked off by our commitment to Leader principles, and by the personal links and experiences within our Local Action Group

 In order to support a forestry project we contacted the Swedish Rural Network and the Swedish Forestry Commission

o It all got out of hand from there!

#### What we have done?

- o 12 forest contractors visited Sweden
- Reciprocal exploratory visits with Leader Linne area and a partnership agreement with that LAG
- Three NULAG members attended Swedish
  Rural Parliament
- Motala visited Northumberland with an exciting social services project
- o Innovative Umbrella Project for study visits
- Basketry and Hippotherapy study visits... To hopefully lead to transnational cooperation

Sweden



#### What we got out of it

 We think cooperation needs to be mutually beneficial, transparent and equitable

If it's all those three things it can be:

- energising
- a creative environment,
- sustainable

## Challenges met and lessons learned

 It takes time... We have personally invested a lot into preparation

 We think it's about projects cooperating but links between LAGs are also important as Leader is about leaving a legacy – to continuously improve our work with community development

 Strong and successful community development relies on linking and working with communities elsewhere

#### Conclusions

 If you are involved in community development you have to make efforts to understand your own community – we think Leader is a great tool to help you do that

o We cooperate every day – think globally, act locally!

o Cooperation has to be mutually beneficial, transparent, equitable... and fun!