

A CELEBRATION of LEADER

Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER Programme 2014-2020

- ***£1.769 Million invested***
- ***137 NEW rural jobs created***
- ***60 Businesses supported***



The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas

**Meet the volunteers of the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands
LEADER Local Action Group**



Ross Lowrie - LAG Chair
Alex Wallace - LAG Vice-Chair

LAG Executives

Jean Orr, Julien Lake, Richard Waters, Angus Collingwood-Cameron, Guy Renner-Thompson, Iain Robson, Robert Brotherton, Philip Angier, Louis Fell, Ross Weddle, Carron Craighead, Simon Cox, Ian Moyes

LAG Members

Carole Moyes, Nic Best, Brenda Fordy-Scott

Working in Partnership with Northumberland County Council

A Note from the Chair

I welcome you to Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER Programme 2014-2020.

We're a community-led, local fund designed and delivered to support rural communities and businesses in the Northumberland Coast and Lowlands area. This booklet celebrates our achievements, highlights the great work that we do, and confirms that locally tailored and community led rural development really does deliver.

What is LEADER? Well, it's an EU derived funding approach with a French acronym which roughly translates as Liaison among Actors in Rural Economic Development.

But let me put it more simply, it's a really effective way of harnessing the knowledge, good will and experience within our area to create rural jobs and support rural communities. Local community expert volunteers create a Local Action Group (LAG) to work with our Accountable Body and Officer staff at Northumberland County Council. We support proposals, make funding decisions, and ensure the benefits are delivered for you.

What have we achieved? We've created more jobs and supported more businesses than we predicted we would: **137 jobs** and **60 organisations**. We've levered in **£2,473,299.43** of funding that will be spent in rural Northumberland.

But I urge you to look beyond the numbers, as impressive though they may be, because the real success of this programme is in its local people, whether they be the local entrepreneur with a great idea, the young apprentice keen to stay and work in the area, or the local volunteer who passionately believes in providing a better service to their rural community. We are a programme that has local people at our heart, where local needs are recognised, and where the community decides how best to meet those challenges.

My final word is for those community volunteers who make up the LAG. They bring this fund to life. They make LEADER unique and something to be treasured. Some have come and gone, some have stayed with us; all deserve our gratitude for the work they've put in to making Northumberland Coast & Lowlands a better place. They are all unsung rural champions, and I thank every one of them.

Ross Lowrie, Local Action Group - Chair

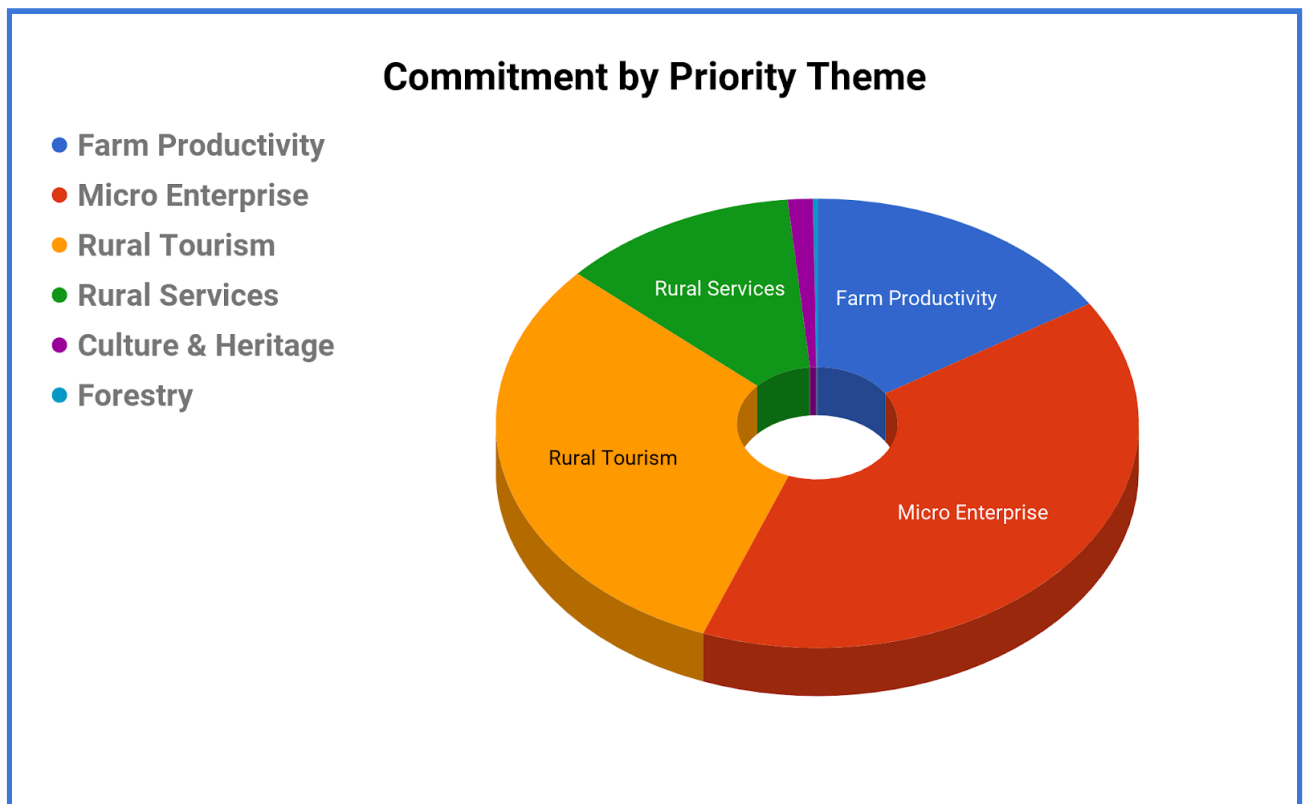
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ross Lowrie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Expenditure and Outputs

Programme Expenditure - Headline Figures

Number of projects supported	60
Number of Jobs created	137
Total project investment	£4,243,151.85
LEADER Grant awarded	£1,769,852.42
Private sector leverage	£2,473,299.43

Average **Grant** per job **£12,918.63**



Project Evaluation - Programme Facts & Figures

It has been a great pleasure to lead our Evaluation Team during the current LEADER programme, and I would like to express big thanks to my team colleagues: Jean Orr, Richard Waters, Carron Craighead, Ian Moyes, Carole Moyes and Ross Lowrie for their hard work and friendship throughout. ***Simon Cox, Evaluation Subcommittee Chair***



Evaluation Group - Key Outcomes

- **36 Evaluation Visits** completed which represent 60% of approved projects to date.
- **35 of the Evaluations have been “Satisfactory”,** and 1 “Satisfactory with reservations”.

Evaluation Recommendations

- Reduce LEADER paperwork and duplication which is a deterrent particularly for small grants and / or inexperienced applicants.
- ***Simplification of application process is strongly recommended***
- Improved process in managing grant claims - awareness that time between submitted claims and payment can have significant cashflow issues for beneficiaries and customer satisfaction

LEADER CASE STUDIES

Carroll's Heritage Potatoes
Farm Productivity
LEADER Grant £12,763.00
Outputs - 1 FTE

Carroll's Heritage Potatoes is based on Tiptoe Farm and now employs 9 FTE staff. Lucy and Anthony Carroll moved to Tiptoe Farm 31 years ago and for the last 11 years have been growing specialist heritage potatoes.

Carroll's Heritage Potatoes has developed into a very successful business within the fresh produce sector, marketing directly to a range of restaurants and specialist food outlets, throughout the UK. An export market is also being developed and Carroll's Heritage Potatoes are a flagship brand for the "Made in Northumberland" initiative.



"This is a great example of the LEADER programme supporting a successful Northumberland business who had the right business plan and drive to expand what is one of north Northumberland's great agricultural products."

Anne-Marie Trevelyan, MP

"The LEADER project has made a huge difference to our business."

Anthony Carroll



Coffee Roaster Expansion (Northern Edge Coffee)

Micro Enterprise

LEADER Grant £9,538.29

Outputs - 1.5 FTE



LEADER grant supported the purchase of a larger coffee roaster for a coffee roasting business based in Spittal, Berwick upon Tweed. This has allowed the business to increase capacity in roasting coffee and improve product consistency and quality.

“This larger roaster has allowed increased production and improved product consistency and quality which has direct benefits in freeing up time for other work, and allows them to highlight product freshness.”

“Work hard, keep focused and tenacity will pay off.”

Dan Inglis



Children's Play Area (Northumberland Country Zoo)

Rural Tourism

LEADER Grant £15,671.10

Outputs - 4 FTE



Northumberland Country Zoo have installed a large wooden play area at their family run animal park operating near Felton in Northumberland.

LEADER helped with the purchase and installation of a purpose built 'Adventure Land' playground which was installed ahead of the 2018 summer season allowing the business to attract an additional 38,325 day visitors and enabling 4 new jobs to be created.



"We are very grateful for this scheme as it enabled us to further expand what we can offer visitors who come to the zoo. The naturalistic play area has been extremely popular with families and will continue to be an important asset for years to come"

Maxine Bradley

Alnwick Rugby Club
Rural Services
LEADER Grant £49,198.57
Outputs - 2 FTE

The aim of the project was to secure the future sustainability of Alnwick Rugby Club by increasing income generation through a new kitchen for the clubhouse, and by developing the facilities available for camping and caravanning at the club.



“We are able to sustain employment and offer excellent facilities for the use of the many varied community groups and societies who use the club.”

Dennis Hetherington

The clubhouse kitchen is well equipped and designed and is now fit for purpose meaning the club can develop, diversify and explore new non-rugby revenue streams developing this valuable social hub for a wider community.



R Turnbull & Son (Dedicated Cutting Unit)

Micro Enterprise

LEADER Grant £33,688.00

Outputs - 3 FTE

By processing fresh meats in a dedicated cutting unit, the business has achieved increased efficiency and enabled production of retail packs of local Northumbrian meats and meat products for sale through their existing retail store in Alnwick town centre.



LEADER funding has allowed this 25 years established butchers business to expand, by converting a former bakery premises into a streamlined fresh meat production / dedicated cutting unit, complete with hanging rails, extra refrigeration, multiple process equipment ...

... recruiting local young people, providing training in the art of butchery using local meat, helping the passing of skills through generations via apprenticeship

... consequently they intend to open a second retail shop in an out of centre location. They are also very keen to promote 'Produced in Northumberland' branding.

"The LEADER grant allowed Turnbull's to develop our cutting unit with the latest

processing equipment, enabling us to produce meat and meat products using local produce, supporting our farmers and creating opportunities for the butchers of tomorrow through our apprentice scheme."



Mark Turnbull

Cresswell Village Hall

Rural Services

LEADER Grant £55,684.00

Outputs - 206 Rural Population benefitting

Development and improvement of the Village Hall in Cresswell. The hall currently has many local users for events and activities, but is keen to attract new customers. Within the village is a 15th century Pele Tower and the LEADER supported Village Hall will be the location for a Heritage & Education Centre where local schools and the wider community can learn about the pele tower and community archaeology projects.



“Cresswell Village Hall Association will be eternally grateful to the LEADER programme, the LEADER staff were great to work with & gave us help & support with the application & during the project.”
Michael Wright

“The hall is a fantastic facility ... light and airy ... the conservatory is an ideal place for my parents to wait whilst their children are in class.”
Rebecca Tait, Principal of Ballet Bleu Academy

With LEADER funding the Village Hall is now ready & equipped to fulfil its dual role as a community building open to all and as the Heritage & Education Centre for visitors to Cresswell Pele Tower demonstrating well LEADER's ability to work across Rural Services, Rural Tourism, and Culture & Heritage themes.



Silvermoor Swingers
Micro Enterprise
LEADER Grant £76,140.80
Outputs - 3.5 FTE

Silvermoor Equestrian Haylage Ltd received LEADER support in June 2017 to create a new healthy, entertaining, hanging forage block product for the equestrian market after the Equestrian Products Buyer for Countryside Farmers plc approached the business and requested them to develop a healthy snack for horses that could hang in a stable.



“... extremely passionate and enthusiastic about the project. They used the LAG application forms as a management tool ... helped them to clarify the goals they wanted.”

Simon Cox, LAG Executive

They have recently embarked on the development of a 5 year business plan and have appointed an interim Finance Director. In terms of further development of the business, they are also now looking at working with egg producers, and the hen feed market. This new venture will be called “Silvermoor Peckers”.



Learning from the LEADER Approach

LEADER'S strength is that it is supported by local volunteers with a wide range of skills and experience, the funding they help to allocate has been instrumental in allowing local businesses to expand and provide more jobs as well as stimulating new business start-ups, providing tourist facilities and supporting essential rural services. Providing benefits for local people and visitors alike.



Rural Northumberland needs to continue to benefit from Community Led Rural Development funding as we move into a post Brexit future.

- **If it ain't broke...** - retain community-led rural support for both upland and lowland areas, it's proven to work. Our volunteer group commits about 900 hours a year – for the cost of a sandwich and a cup of tea. This specialist support could not be replicated through any other route.
- **Mind the Gap!** – make decisions now to fund activity through a transition, otherwise key community infrastructure will be lost. This is an urgent issue, and existing structures need continuation funding whilst longer term decisions are made. We have a reserve list of projects in our LEADER area, which we could bring forward with transitional funding.
- **A place for Rural** – we need a Rural Prosperity Fund, either additional to, or carved out of, the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund. It should be administered by Defra, who have the remit for rural issues.
- **Maintain or improve levels of funding** - and ensure geographical spread is more complete for rural areas.
- **Strip back!** – LEADER will finish, but rural support must continue. Work with experienced community leaders to strip back EU derived bureaucracy, and keep only the best bits of the process

LEADER has served rural Northumberland well for many years. The skills, knowledge and experience of the volunteers and officers that support it has been key to its success.

Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER Projects

PROJECT	THEME	GRANT £	LOCATION
Alnmouth Huts	Rural Tourism	17,539.09	Alnmouth
Animating Alnwick Markets	Rural Tourism	15,984.07	Alnwick
Bertram's B&B	Rural Tourism	32,758.40	Warkworth
Carroll's Heritage Potatoes	Farm Productivity	9,662.80	Duddo
Unstumpable Trees	Forestry	3,600.00	Lesbury
Straw Pelleting Plant	Farm Productivity	87,380.00	Chathill
R. Turnbull & Son	Micro Enterprise	33,688.00	Alnwick
Carnaby's Cafe & Gift Shop	Rural Tourism	55,592.60	Brownieside
GMC HQ	Micro Enterprise	31,482.40	Berwick
Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival	Rural Tourism	5,719.20	Berwick
Rigg & Furrow	Micro Enterprise	32,124.63	Acklington
Aln Valley Railway	Rural Tourism	36,319.84	Alnwick
Scott's of Alnmouth	Micro Enterprise	36,276.71	Alnmouth
GPS System for Precision Farming	Farm Productivity	4,836.95	Longhorsley
Operation Cop Shop	Micro Enterprise	11,446.21	Amble
Northern Edge Coffee	Micro Enterprise	9,538.29	Berwick
Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre	Culture & Heritage	22,638.98	Hauxley
The Nursery at Whitehouse Farm	Micro Enterprise	£18,417.27	Morpeth
The Cookie Jar	Rural Tourism	64,182.30	Alnwick
Robotic Flail	Farm Productivity	16,800.00	Duddo
Craster Tourist Trail	Rural Tourism	7,458.40	Craster
Children's Play Area	Rural Tourism	15,671.10	Felton
Easington Organic Egg Laying Unit	Farm Productivity	41,157.16	Easington
Maden Eco	Micro Enterprise	46,120.33	Berwick
Smales Secure Storage	Micro Enterprise	66,118.38	West Allerdene
Alnwick Rugby Club	Rural Services	45,811.38	Alnwick
South Berrington Shepherd Huts	Rural Tourism	34,956.40	South Berrington
Cresswell Village Hall	Rural Services	55,683.64	Cresswell
Craster Playground Safety Surface	Rural Services	13,262.40	Craster

Precision Beef Farming	Farm Productivity	55,457.94	Lowick
Elite Gym	Micro Enterprise	24,637.30	Alnwick
Adderstone Mains	Farm Productivity	32,596.44	Adderstone Mains
Cattle Handling Hub	Farm Productivity	13,892.24	Earsdon
Longhoughton Community & Sports Centre	Rural Services	12,579.84	Longhoughton
The Masons Arms	Rural Tourism	78,868.08	Norham
Outfield Renovations	Rural Services	7,458.91	Warkworth
Acton Chase Glamping	Rural Tourism	59,054.27	Felton
Swarland Old Hall Glamping Pods	Rural Tourism	37,162.08	Swarland
Apex Health & Fitness	Micro Enterprise	23,083.06	Amble
Commercial Kitchen Refurbishment	Micro Enterprise	25,003.91	Alnmouth
Indoor Riding Arena	Micro Enterprise	73,450.32	Swinhoe
The Nut Roaster	Micro Enterprise	4,459.60	Swarland
Expansion of Celtic Crafts	Micro Enterprise	22,976.40	Holy Island
Pilgrims Roastery & Training Room	Micro Enterprise	17,889.02	Holy Island
Post Driver	Micro Enterprise	5,400.00	Berwick
Zero Tillage	Farm Productivity	17,298.00	Belford
Purchase of Still & Ancillary Equipment	Micro Enterprise	6,020.00	Alnwick
Community Transport Bell View	Rural Services	40,944.80	Belford
Credence Brewing	Micro Enterprise	13,053.16	Amble
The Joy of Care	Micro Enterprise	42,688.80	Ponteland
Education Centre for Displays	Micro Enterprise	20,951.00	Felton
Lesbury Village Hall	Rural Services	15,264.00	Lesbury
Longhorsley MUGA	Rural Services	18,504.58	Longhorsley
Berwick Rugby Club	Rural Tourism	39,748.95	Berwick
Amble Marina	Micro Enterprise	19,695.05	Amble
Morwick Farm - Raw Milk Vending Machine	Farm Productivity	5,148.40	Morwick
Holy Island Gin Distillery Expansion	Micro Enterprise	41,389.68	Holy Island
Preston House	Rural Tourism	36,810.00	Preston
Silvermoor Swingers	Micro Enterprise	76,140.80	Denwick
Development of The Nursery at Whitehouse Farm	Micro Enterprise	9,998.96	Morpeth
Total Grant Allocation		£1,769,852.42	

Postscript

“It has been both a pleasure and a learning experience being Vice Chair of this hard working group over the past 3 years. A pleasure as it has been most rewarding not just being able to financially assist individuals, groups and businesses but coming from the South East of the County, it has afforded me the opportunity to get to know our wonderful expansive County and its people better. And that has been my learning experience too, it has been most welcoming to see a number of applications from voluntary groups wishing to deliver better services and amenities for their residents and demonstrating how LEADER in partnership with local communities and business can bring real benefits at a local level.”

Alex Wallace, LAG Vice Chair

Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER
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