



NEWS

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Hidden Britain
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TOURISM PROJECT SET UP IN RESPONSE TO FMD OUTBREAK

Hidden Britain was set up in response to the 2001 FMD outbreak to help rebuild the economy and community in areas of Cumbria that were badly hit by the disaster.

Hidden Britain is run by the Arthur Rank Centre charity - it provides the support, funding, knowledge and tools for communities to set up their own sustainable tourism / regeneration projects, using the tourism assets available in their local area.

A pilot of the scheme was run in Cumbria from 2002-2004 in which 10 communities set up successful projects. Here's what was said about the scheme by an independent report:

‘Very successful community development and sustainability has taken place in some of the HBC projects in which I was involved, with the overall project providing a wealth of ideas and funding.’

HBC Pilot Project Evaluation Report, Lake District Peninsulas Tourism Partnership Officer

‘It worked, in terms of rural regeneration... We need more of it.’

HBC Pilot Project Evaluation Report, CREA

‘The project has been incredibly effective in terms of rural regeneration.’

HBC Pilot Project Evaluation Report, Voluntary Action Cumbria

‘All groups have achieved tangible outputs and there has been a clear impact on the rural economy in a number of areas in terms of increased visitor numbers and job development.’

HBC Pilot Project Evaluation Report, Elspeth Godwin, Voluntary Action Cumbria

‘We received tremendous help and support from the HBC Cumbria project. It has been a lever to a number of other grants, enabling Low Furness HBC to gain substantial sums of money for further projects. We feel the HBC is now fully sustainable and there is a genuine focus for the partnership between church, community and school.’

Hidden Britain Low Furness, founding member

The scheme was rolled out nationally and today has 30 centres in Cumbria, Bedfordshire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Kent, Hampshire, East Sussex and the Isle of Wight. The scheme is marketed to tourists through its website: www.hidden-britain.co.uk.

Ends

Notes for Editors

1. Hidden Britain is a regeneration project to develop community owned and led tourism initiatives, run by the Arthur Rank Centre (www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk). It aims to encourage tourism, discover lesser-known areas of the countryside and provide a different and more meaningful experience for the visitor.
2. The initiative has 30 existing centres in the North West, East of England, the West Midlands and the South East, with many more fledgling projects under development.