

Mourne Mountains Landscape Partnership

Group Conversations held in between smaller café discussions:

Comments have not been attributed to the people making them apart from some responses Tara made during the discussion.

Initial thoughts, feeling and reactions to the ideas on the wall.

Clarity needed on access to land, property, ideas and information. E.g. if a bus stop is proposed is there a right of way or permissive path connecting it with the High Mournes?

Tara (response): Nothing will be created or suggested which would take people where they cannot go.

Projects could be gathered within broad themes; for instance granite from formation and geology through to industrial process, oral history, modern industry and artistic use for the purposes of presenting the LP to committees, councils etc.

What happens afterwards? The project must lead somewhere, it cannot be a one off.

Tara (response): Audience development plan and adequate training are required and planned so that the project will be sustainable. The capital works will be there long after the project, for instance the Narnia trails in Rostrevor.

Projects like this enable things to happen, for years project may have been there but the fact that it can now be kick-started with this funding and the interest is there will ensure the continuation.

For example if there were an archaeological trail it would usually be carried on by the local ELB, because it has been implemented and will roll on thanks to the educational facility it provides.

I think that we need to think about having the basic infrastructure in place first of all. More and more tourists are being brought in without having the amenities to deal with the numbers.

This project has the potential to bring in 1.5 million over four years with a range of projects and a large number of people behind them. I feel that combining the projects as was suggested earlier can sometimes result in the people behind them being lost. It is important to remind those involved that they belong to something bigger. Perhaps with regular email updates and reminders. I also think it's important to look at the international dimension, what is being done in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

Mourne Mountains Landscape Partnership

Dogs on the mountain are a problem, and access issues. Tourists need to be managed. The cars need to be off the roads and in car-parks. Farming is changing, food is scarcer, building trade has collapsed and there are a lot more youth at home. Branding of Mourne blackface sheep is needed.

People going into the Mournes certainly need to be sympathetic, education is required.

This project has a fundamental arrogance. The moment you step over the red line shown earlier you are in private land. The archaeological trail in the High Mournes will demand that people access private land.

Tara (response) Can you give me an example? (no example given)

Why are the homeowners of Mourne not here, why have they not been invited?

Tara: The event was publicised in all the local papers

You should be writing to people individually to tell them it is going on. What about the stiles on private land are you going to take them away?

Café conversation 2: Which projects excite, appeal, are of interest to you and why?

Oral History - if it is lost, it has gone and that would be very sad. Trails and walks should open the Mournes to everyone.

Granite trail

Archive what has been done already, what is being done at the moment and what should be done. Collection of oral histories and crafts.

Festivals, arts and crafts, storytelling. The Nautilus Centre is always asked to show people where their relatives may have lived. Why is Killeel and the Mourne Plain excluded? What does it mean?

Tara (response): People are connected beyond red lines. Capital wise all works must take place within the red line. However participation and festivals can happen outside line.

Tourists and visitors want to be able to call into local pubs and hear music. Traditional music has almost died out. Comhaltas which teaches music is not grant aided. Would like to look at how to turn this into an economic tourism project where old and new tunes are recorded and new musicians are created- this would pull in the tourists. Celtic Fusion and Fiddlers Green is like the patchwork mentioned earlier, connecting all the arts.

Mourne Mountains Landscape Partnership

Legends and stories are of interest to the tourists. There is some storytelling through Fiddlers Green, but almost died out. This landscape project might get people more interested. We could get local people authorised as Blue Badge guides. It's really important that local people tell local stories, perhaps we need to train them in:

- gaining confidence
- storytelling
- train mountain guides in stories and folklore

We also need to engage with schools to make them aware of history and folklore. Use a mountain location for experiential learning, not the classroom.

Need to Keep tourists in the area for longer – having a local Irish pub with trad sessions would do this. Lack of local pubs in Mourne.

Could the LP create a leaflet which lists all the places of interest and times of different events in the Mourne area, coordinating sessions in pubs etc?

The projects need to be inspiring for young people. They don't know how the people of Mourne lived years ago – stoking the fire, making butter etc. Need to have a clear insurance policy when it comes to events and activities with young people.

Café conversation 3: Discuss any further considerations or concerns you have, either on specific projects or the Landscape partnership scheme as a whole?

Landowners need to know exactly what is in it for them – there must be an economic benefit. The project needs to be sold – outcomes and aims and explain how an economic benefit can be made.

We have explored the economic benefits and tourism aspects, but I think we need to remember that this scheme will establish links between local communities with heritage and that tourism benefit is a by-product.

We talk about biodiversity, but nothing specific. We should be specific about focus and pick up on a few iconic Mourne species.

- Peregrine
- Irish Hare
- Grouse
- Black Guillemot

New skills to preserve old Mourne cottages would help.

We could create a centre of excellence for all the traditional skills.

More trees please.

Mourne Mountains Landscape Partnership

The use of electronic for information needs to be explored, also for the entertainment and engagement of young people.