

New collaboration for Cumbrian food and drink sector

A group of Cumbrian companies from the food and drink sector have joined forces to open up new business opportunities and promote the finest food and drink the county has to offer.

Led by Warwick Bridge based Cows & Co, the Lakes Hamper Company is a collaborative initiative which brings together a selection of produce with specific objectives to develop export growth, support the artisan economy, protect and create employment opportunities and attract skills into Cumbria.

Seven companies have signed up as 'hamper members', including Traybakes and The Lakes Distillery, both of which have received regional growth funding support via Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. Other members are Appleby Creamery, Claire's Handmade, Bruce and Luke's Coffee, The Rum Story and Cows & Co.

The idea for the Lakes Hamper Company was devised following business to business discussions during 'Cumbria Day' at Westminster, the networking event sponsored by Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and organised by Cumbria's MPs. It resulted in a joint working arrangement between them which is seeking to develop and gain new partners.

Stuart MacLennan, director of Cows & Co explains: "Interest in food and drink produce from the Lakes and Cumbria continues to grow, and it offers us wider scope for collectively extending our reach throughout the UK and across international boundaries.

"All of our contributing members see great merit in working together in this way, especially with the recent attainment of World Heritage Status for the Lake District. A hamper has been presented to HRH Prince Charles and he was particularly impressed with the joint approach that underpins the model. There is already interest from Cumbrian businesses for using these hampers as corporate gifts and showcases for the county."

Earlier this year, The Lakes Distillery secured a deal to have three of its lines stocked on the shelves of one of the country's biggest retailers, Asda. Traybakes has also been serving up its produce for national outlets, including the Wimbledon Championships.

Director of Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership Graham Haywood adds: "It is great to see collaborative approaches such as this which promote innovation in food production, niche retailing and marketing for the food, rural and agriculture sectors in Cumbria.

"As well as continuing to offer a range of business support services and mechanisms for growth, we are keen to see more businesses develop peer to peer networks like this and come up with creative self-sustaining ideas."

For further details about Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, go to www.cumbrialep.co.uk

Ends

For media information please contact Karen Gardner at Osprey Communications on 015394 42436 or email karen@ospreycommunications.co.uk

Notes for editors

- Cumbria LEP provides a strategic lead for all activities contributing to the growth and vibrancy of the county's economy and where appropriate takes positive action, using the skills, capability and networks of LEP partners.
- The LEP is keen to work with all partners and stakeholders (private and public) to undertake actions, secure funding and implement initiatives to support sustainability and growth of Cumbria's economy.
- A copy of the Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan is available at: www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/