



Stomping Ground's events encompass a wide range of art forms. Above is a selection of cakes decorated by locals at one of their 'Tea and Cakes' events.

## Stomping Ground brings art to communities

*Di Markham and Gemma Webb have set up a social enterprise which aims to bring together Cumbrian communities through art.*

Stomping Ground, set up in 2010, focuses on gathering and strengthening communities through increasing participation in the arts. This takes place through workshops where artists work with local people to create art.

These workshops can take many forms. During the Cockermouth Midsummer festival they set up a yurt in the memorial gardens and the community created decorations which were used to adorn the South Street Bridge, recently re-opened after the flooding. In December they ran an event in Whitehaven that saw locals decorating cupcakes whilst enjoying a cup of tea, showing that Stomping Ground's events aren't always based around traditional art forms.

Both ladies had previously worked in the voluntary sector running community arts workshops and events, and realised the importance of grassroots programmes to deliver the county council's vision of community cohesion.

"Cumbria has strong communities, and we wanted to add to this community spirit," says Di. "Some of our communities are aging due to the migration of young people away from rural areas, and this, along with other challenges, means that it is important to continue work in this area."

Di and Gemma received assistance from Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency (CREA) to start up under their Intensive Start-Up support programme. Di went on a 3 day business course, as well as seminars on subjects such as accounting, legal advice and website design.

Paul Warren, CREA Business Adviser for Eden, says, "we can offer advice on finance, marketing, business law, and much more. We wish Di and Gemma every success in their business and were glad we could help them."

The ISUS programme is part of Solutions for Business, the Government's package of publicly funded business support designed to help companies start and grow. The programme is funded by the NWDA and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is making a real difference to people and businesses in the Northwest. With €755 million to invest between 2007 and 2013, ERDF is enhancing the competitiveness of the region's economy by supporting growth in enterprise and employment. ERDF in the Northwest is managed by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA).