



CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES

# **A Minority View**

New Approaches for a New Decade:  
A Scoping study of Border Communities

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# A Minority View

## Foreword

This work, commissioned by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, is a scoping study designed to identify the views of representatives from organisations or bodies whose membership is drawn from minority border communities, principally from Protestant unionist and loyalist communities. This work should not be seen in isolation but as part of a wider exercise and as part of ongoing work of the Centre for Cross Border Studies.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

This report summarises some of the key issues, challenges and potential responses raised by a number of influential members of the Protestant Unionist and Loyalist communities in the border regions of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The results of this work cannot be examined using any standard quantitative analysis tools. The consultation process allowed the interviewer some latitude in exploring some of the issues raised. It is to be expected, therefore, that such an exercise qualifies as a scoping study only and undoubtedly the results can lead to more questions. Having said that, readers will see that respondents raised some important issues that cannot be justifiably ignored by reference to the limitations of such a study.

The individuals who kindly gave up of their time and professionalism are not being named in this report to preserve confidentiality. However, they did have some key common attributes. Without a doubt they exhibited a keen sense of responsibility to do what they can to support any initiatives that will offer practical assistance to overcome some of the difficulties and challenges raised during the consultation process. It was obvious that the consultees were clear that any solutions required a pluralistic approach and acceptance across all of society.

Each consultee was a member of an organisation or group with significant influence. It is good to report that within such a small group there were representatives from a broad range of the community. These included members of the clergy and laity, male and female representatives as well as the views of some who have significant experience of the conflict, together with a consultee who has no practical memory of the years leading up to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. In addition, there were representatives from both the Republic of Ireland and from Northern Ireland.

It is important to understand that the points raised by the respondents have not been weighted in any way nor have they been prioritised. The typeface in italics are the words of the editor. The text in bullet points represents the views of the consultees.

## The Themes of the Consultation.

The aim of the exercise was to explore four themes, namely:

- What are the significant challenges facing the Protestant Unionist and Loyalist communities in the border areas?
- How are these challenges currently being addressed?
- What specific support is needed?

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<sup>1</sup> This work forms part of the Centre for Cross Border Studies' project, "New Approaches for a New Decade? A Scoping Study of Border Communities", which was generously funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund.

- What groups or organisations should be involved in delivering solutions in the border area?

Each section of this report deals with these areas in sequence.

## **Section 1: Challenges facing the Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities in the border areas.**

*One of the clear conclusions of the consultation in general is that there are more challenges than solutions.*

### **Constant Unease and Isolation**

*Almost all of those participating in the consultation process referred to the level of stress, at times, and of unease, all the time, felt by the Protestant Unionist and Loyalist (PUL) communities on the border area.*

*Another aspect of the general unease within the PUL communities on the border is the often-repeated sense of isolation felt by Protestant farmers in the border areas.*

*More than once was the opinion expressed that it appears that the UK is loosening ties with Northern Ireland. The issue of perception is important because respondents generally felt that the Good Friday Agreement is paramount in the context of securing Northern Ireland as part of the UK until mandated otherwise by an appropriate referendum.*

- There has never been a time when the PUL community has been at ease since 1921.
- There has been instability due to politico-economic reasons, violence at times and now political instability coupled with uncertainty over Brexit (the NI Protocol), Covid and a general lack of leadership. Of course, these issues have had an impact across all communities, but this is felt more prominently in peripheral areas along the border.
- Almost by its very nature this section of the community has lived in a permanent state of stress – “existential stress”.
- The isolation and unease may be due to the opinion that the PUL community feel that they are tolerated but not valued within a community. To feel valued they need a stake and not just *a place apart*.
- People generally feel safe and the peace process has eased the pressure. However, threat to general safety is a big issue for smaller isolated PUL farmers and communities. It is not the same kind of worry that they had in the past but there is general uneasiness about the future.
- Perception itself is adding to the pressure on the Unionist communities particularly in the border areas. Accordingly, there is increased uneasiness, almost verging on fear, that Northern Ireland’s position within the United Kingdom is under threat. This is the dominant view of the minority communities. This is not an issue facing the PUL border communities only.
- There appears to be on the face of it more momentum or movement towards a united Ireland. There is fear of a united Ireland which, following the Good Friday Agreement, should not be the case.
- Many people question whether Westminster cares about Northern Ireland, its people and its position as part of the United Kingdom. Some do care, of course, but their voices are not heard loudly enough.

- There is clear uncertainty about the border. The questions, “Are we allowed to cross the border?” and, “Are you stopped when crossing the border to go to Asda”, have not been asked of me for years.
- Many farmers have land on both sides of the border. They want to know, “How do we manage this and what do we do now?”
- The threats [made by dissident loyalists] in Larne are adding to the uncertainty.
- Following the Good Friday Agreement, the border issue disappeared but now it has reappeared.
- The outstanding issue is that the community feels threatened and constantly under pressure. It is a consistent low-level threat to traditions and a way of life. Perhaps it is more perception but it seems that the PUL community does not get a fair crack of the whip. For example, the investment in Casement Park seems excessive. It is probably a worthy project deserving of support but there is little similar investment in grassroots PUL communities.
- There is no trust at the moment between Northern Ireland and Westminster with ministers saying there would be no border on the Irish Sea while Border Patrol boats are berthed in Belfast docks.
- Politicians are increasing the fear and uncertainty as they pursue a personal agenda for their own benefit.
- There are pockets of isolated communities such as those in Roslea [Fermanagh] on the border with Monaghan border where there are farms held by older farmers who feel isolated with a sole sense of connectivity only through the local churches.
- It is important to make the case for the isolation of the minority Protestant population in the Republic of Ireland. With the declining percentage of Protestants in the Republic of Ireland the position is exacerbated, particularly in rural areas.
- Away from the centre of the populations the border communities suffer from poor infrastructure although it is accepted that this is not only felt by the PUL communities.
- Invest NI spends nothing in Fermanagh and Omagh. “invest NI spends nothing in Fermanagh and Omagh”.
- The overwhelming feeling is this minority community tend to live with their heads down and with the consequent loss of their identity.
- Because of economic realities a primary school in Belleek may have to close. There will be a price to pay for the pandemic and there will be a claw back of funding for education, school budgets and other services. Closure all this school and others disproportionately affect the Protestant communities and contribute to the isolation of the Protestant community.

## The Legacy of the Past

*A number of respondents referred to the legacy of the past in different terms. Not surprisingly from the unionist communities the perception was overwhelmingly concerned with a recognition of the anguish, hurt and isolation caused by many years of violence perpetrated on the unionist community. However, it was also felt that the past should not be a shackle preventing collaborative approaches to addressing the key issues.*

- Some of these communities are unable to forget the past. Nobody is encouraging them to do so either.
- There has been a shadow and a sorrow that hangs over the PUL communities on the border.
- There is actual ignorance of the events that have been faced by the Protestant community in the border regions. The statistics tell a story which is not well understood - in excess of 100 members of the security forces were murdered 72% of whom were murdered while off duty. 95% of these crimes remain unsolved. Many of these [murdered men] were farmers, fathers and only sons and the conclusion, which is hard to avoid, is that the murders were part of a campaign for territory and land ownership. A failure to hold onto farmland ensures that the land is put up for auction and sale with the inevitable result that, overtime, the land freezes out a Protestant community.

“There has been a shadow and a sorrow that hangs over PUL communities on the border”.

## Leadership

*Time and time again during the consultations the issue of leadership within the minority community was raised. There is no doubt that the lack of genuine leadership throughout the PUL communities is felt keenly. This was not solely expressed in the context of local issues but at the top levels of politics in Northern Ireland.*

- Political leaders are so busy arguing with each other they have forgotten about the peace and reconciliation needed in their own communities.
- The various minority communities in the border area need leadership.
- People in positions of influence within the PUL communities often do not have the skills and are therefore not capable of doing their job correctly. “They are just not up to the job”. There is a mismatch between the talent that politicians have and the expectations of the role and position that they hold.
- The politicians have not handled the Brexit situation very well. The DUP appears to have panicked in response to the TUV.

“They [political leaders] are just not up to the job”.

- Politicians have reacted by responding to the outliers of the political spectrum to the detriment of the middle ground.
- The appointment to the role of Brexit spokesperson has been given over to an outlier within the DUP. This is the wrong message to send and shows poor leadership.
- Brexit and the NI Protocol should not be seen as a plot to get rid of Northern Ireland as part of the UK. Northern Ireland's position is safe within the Good Friday Agreement. Brexit is not a plot it is just badly mishandled.
- Within the unionist parties there is no Blue Sky thinking
- The politicians must do their jobs. They are not doing their work for the people. There is too much focus on their own agendas.
- If the politicians do not lead by example how do they expect the communities to get it?

### **Low Capacity**

*Linked to the issue of leadership is the apparent low capacity within constituted groups and within the PUL community in general which in turn leads to failure to organise themselves to address issues of concern and to take advantage of whatever funding is available.*

- There are too many large gaps in these funding streams i.e. a peace project finished in 2020 and there is no follow up to these. So, the two communities come together and work on a fantastic project and achieve great things but when the funding goes, so too does the relationships built. Very rarely do these projects come back together in the next tranche of funding.
- The low capacity and lack of leadership within some PUL Communities needs to be addressed and support is required.
- The impact of the low level of capacity within the PUL communities develops over many years and resentment grows as nationalist appear to thrive.
- It seems that the people who shout the loudest get the benefits of whatever support is available and this generally is not within the PUL communities.

### **Retention of Talent**

*A number of respondents referred to the migration of young talented intelligent members of the PUL community who go to University and seldom return. This issue, of course, is evident in other parts of Ireland North and South but is particularly significant in the border areas where employment opportunities are thinner. This perpetuates the lack of capacity and leadership across the border communities. The peripherality, lack of appropriate infrastructure, businesses and employment opportunities may well exacerbate this issue.*

- Often the communities had nurtured and educated their young people who leave and never return to their communities.

- Consequently, Orange Order groups are full of ageing men who focus without ambition on small issues - such as the reconstruction of local halls – to the detriment of the significant fundamental systemic issues facing the unionist Protestant and loyalist communities.

### **The Greening of the West**

*The concept of the “Greening of the West” was expressed commonly, in different ways, during the consultation process. Reference to the proliferation of Irish language road signs, the apparent growth of organisations such as the GAA and the construction of memorial stones and tributes to former Republican combatants were also raised.*

*There was genuine admiration, bordering on envy, for the ability of the GAA to galvanise community support for its projects and agenda coupled with a wistful sadness that the Unionist community cannot summon up the widespread buy-in for similar cultural endeavours.*

*However, it was also felt that the resentment to the issues listed above also perpetuated the marginalisation of the PUL communities.*

- The memorials and tributes to the former IRA members is very insulting to the IRA’s victims and families and they just have to ‘suck it up’ - “The hurt and pain that people feel feeds into the problem”.
- There is a loss of Protestant identity. Impacts of things such as the proliferation of Irish names on the road signs suppresses a cultural identity.
- In order to get dual language road signs you only need 15% of the population to sign up, and this can be established easily.
- The signage reinforces the isolation of these minority communities.
- Unionists particularly on the border feel aggrieved that no serious efforts were undertaken to secure convictions of members of the Garda who colluded with the IRA during the conflict. The Smithwick report made uncomfortable reading for the Gardai and the Irish government but there were no prosecutions and no sense of accountability.
- “We don't put the work in to secure grants in the same way as those from the nationalist community and the GAA”.
- Typically, the PUL communities don't have the confidence or the capacity to succeed in building the type of social and cultural infrastructure in the same way as those from the nationalist community.

### **Brexit and the NI Protocol**

*Opinions about Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol were varied with some respondents claiming that the PUL communities on the border are pragmatic and travel across a fairly porous border*

*taking advantages of whatever economic benefits are to be had from one side of the border or the other.*

*Others expressed the view that the Brexit scenario, as unfolding with the Northern Ireland protocol, is far from the state of affairs that the community voted for and has been disastrous for Northern Ireland. There were no genuine attempts to express a prophetic vision of what the likely outcome might look like but certainly all opinions expressed varying degrees of concern over the uncertainty as the impact of Brexit emerges.*

- Reference the Northern Ireland protocol - people are pragmatic rather than energised.
- The media is fixated about the border poll. In reality the political constitution position has not changed, and the position of the majority is safe because of the Good Friday Agreement. However, there is no doubt that there has been an increase focus within the media about the potential for a border poll. Taking this into consideration alongside the growth of the Irish language and signage reinforces this view within the PUL community.
- The implication is that fear has increased and trust has decreased.
- Brexit is the major issue. Many of the Protestant community voted for Brexit but this has not turned out well. The Irish Sea border issue made the future of Northern Ireland to appear as if its constitution is in jeopardy and this has raised uneasiness and fear.
- Whether this is a real fear or not is difficult to say but certainly the people did not vote for a border on the Irish Sea. There is a remote fear that violence will return.
- No one wants to go back to the bad old days. Although, there does not seem to be any real concerns about security in the border area for the moment.
- It is now over 20 years since the Good Friday Agreement was signed and there is little sign of real stabilisation for the unionist communities in the border areas.
- Brexit poses new challenges such as the Green Card requirements.
- "I live in Fermanagh and I'm married to a farmer and have been 10 years in the diocese in the Republic of Ireland and have experienced no difficulty travelling backwards and forwards across the border. Perception on the other hand is different. Parishioners have asked me about freedom of crossing the border".
- The focus appears to be on the shelves in the supermarkets which is a temporary issue.
- The economic impact of flags and emblems is very significant. For example, when the flags and emblems go up the sale of gas and coal at local stores goes down by 25-30%. This is replicated across all areas and the reason is that people will not travel to buy even cheaper fuel because of the flags and emblems in the area.
- There are many couples with husbands or wives working on different sides of the border. That has not had any practical difficulties since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

- The unionist community on the border have not paid much attention to the Northern Ireland protocol
- “Kicking the issue of the protocol is absurd government policy” and when the legal challenges are out of the way and the supply chain sorted, then more work can be done.

## **Covid**

*However temporary, the issue of Covid and its impact on all community, not surprisingly, was raised by most respondents. Respondents from the border area expressed concerns about the impact of having two different policies for containing the virus. Some respondents were moved to suggest that an all-Ireland response would have been more logical while others, conscious of the two systems, ignored the cause while accepting the reality of the confusion it caused to the communities. Some respondents reflected that Covid was proving more of an issue than Brexit while accepting that the pandemic was, although significant, temporary in nature.*

- The Northern Ireland Protocol and Brexit is not a significant issue on the border at the moment where the focus is more on Covid. People are more inclined to shop locally rather than cross the border for cheaper groceries and fuel because of Covid.
- The fact that there are separate Covid responses on either side of the border actually give a reality to the border which did not exist in the minds of people who readily cross the border as part of their normal everyday lives.
- During lockdown within the same diocese some church services were running while others were cancelled because of the different rules on either side of the border.
- There is a definite frustration and people need things explained.



## Section 2: How are these challenges currently being addressed?

*The impact of Covid has been felt keenly by those working with Community Groups in the border areas. Those active in the community were fairly upbeat concerning some of the work that they are doing but all of the respondents were less than complimentary of the totality of the initiatives shown to address the identified needs of the PUL communities on the border.*

- Not a lot is being done to help these communities and address the concerns of the PUL communities in the border areas. To a degree the Orange Order helps in some parts of the border communities but the impact is not significant.
- There is very little being done at the moment to support these communities in the border areas. There is lip service only.
- A general weak acknowledgement that there are issues to be addressed but nothing is being actioned.
- Because of the pandemic these challenges are put on the long finger and there is not much work being carried on at this time.
- Nothing is being done.
- The politicians are not doing the work for the people that they are supposed to do. They focus on their own agendas.
- In some border areas there are low levels of community development projects and low participation in volunteering. These areas have not had the experience of participating in Cross Border/Cross Community projects so they have not seen the benefits that these projects can bring to communities.
- Some communities who have participated in the Peace Projects have seen significant improvement in relationships between cross communities in all ages.
- Recently 3 border church groups have registered with the Public Participation Network (PPN) in Monaghan. They have attended online meetings and training events. They have been successful in receiving local authority funding. This was a big deal for some of the groups. Now they want to be more integrated and can see the benefits of networking with other organisations.
  - These church groups will only realise the benefits of being a part of what we do when it is safe to meet in public and they can network with other organisations. They are keen to share their heritage with others also. The PPN is building their confidence in being a part of something where nothing matters only community development.



### **Section 3: What specific support is needed?**

*There were wide range of opinions expressed on the subject of what support is required to address the needs of the PUL communities in the border areas. These ranged from local initiatives to those of a more strategic nature. The solutions invariably involved a pluralistic approach to address the peripheral nature of the border areas with a view that the separateness of the border communities is not felt at government level.*

“Final note: Please make sure that something happens on the ground for these communities”.

*A number suggested that capital investment is required to address peripherality and impact on the imbalance of investment in the greater Belfast area compared to other regions. This type of intervention might include the provision of physical spaces for collaborative work.*

#### **The Role of Nationalists and Integration**

*Consultees clearly understood the need for nationalists to be involved in the delivery of all interventions. The issue of integration was raised a number of times in the context of solutions being based on a pluralistic approach.*

- PUL communities need to commit themselves to all parts of society and integrate more with the nationalist community to protect themselves. They need to demonstrate their willingness to engage and become part of a normal civil society. This means putting themselves in the frontline.
- This type of initiative will help to build capacity and from this confidence and capacity can also be built so that it is a positive cycle of development.
- Success at integration can, not only build confidence in your own community, but also gains you respect from other members of the community and this in turn helps to establish a healthy respect for a diverse pluralistic society. It is important that the PUL communities do not sit in the corner.
- There is a definite need for Nationalists to offer reassurance to the PUL communities in terms that are loud and clear.

#### **Brexit and the NI Protocol**

*The suggestions listed below are not solely confined to the problems of the border PUL communities but they represent a perspective that seems to address some of the fears that the PUL communities on the borders have identified. The views should not be considered a common theme of the consultation.*

- The joint EU Working Group needs to be re-established but significant local consultation is needed to address the democracy deficit within civil society.

- The UK relationship with the EU is strained but there is no reason why Northern Ireland should not develop its own relationships - perhaps by setting up an office in Brussels.
- The Northern Ireland voice needs to be heard in the EU.
- Whatever the future between UK and the EU the protocol is here to stay and the [NI] relationship with the EU should be made to be a beneficial one.

The Northern Ireland voice needs to be heard in the EU

A working relationship with Northern Ireland can be built with the EU by the simple expediency of saying "Let's work together", rather remaining a "stone in the EU shoe".

### **Funded Community Projects**

- In some border areas there are low levels of community development projects and low participation in volunteering. These areas have not had the experience of participating in Cross Border/Cross Community projects so they have not seen the benefits that these projects can bring to communities.
- Some communities who have participated in the Peace Projects have seen significant improvement in relationships between cross communities in all ages. However, there is a lack of space for sharing the learning of their experiences.
- What is really needed is a significant effort backed up with resources. A paid worker for two years to work across the border is of no use.
- There is a lot of funding available to groups but it is up to community volunteers to apply for this.
- Public sector agencies should be supporting groups with this funding and not leave it to low capacity groups to do this.
- There is lots of funding available but there are too many large gaps in these funding streams i.e. peace project finished in 2020 and there is no follow up to these. .

### **Dialogue**

- There should be safe places created to bring politicians together to start building up trust again.
- Open meetings should be about addressing the concerns all the communities.
- There has to be support for the political leaders in terms of education training etc. to ensure that they understand their roles in securing a peaceful cohesive stable community acknowledging both sides of the cultural and religious divide.

- Political leaders and church leaders need to be more proactive and vocal in encouraging their communities to open the dialogue.
- Churches can offer more work on integration and greater understanding.

### **Other**

- The issue of peripherality in the border areas should be addressed with EU structural funds and peace monies.
- Some communities are lacking in infrastructure also so there is nowhere for them to mix with other communities.
- The Common Travel Areas are now being defined and this is to the good as long as there are no tax implications
- What is needed is a calm logical and sensible approach to be made loud and clear to address fear.
- An entrepreneurial approach can help in the border areas with the consultation of the EU and using the Peace Funds



#### **Section 4: What groups or organisations should be involved in delivering solutions?**

*There was no clear consensus from those consulted as to who should take the lead in delivering solutions to address the needs of the period communities along the border.*

- Some Protestant communities are very reliant on the church for their social life and Church leaders need to be encouraging their parishioners to become more involved in wider society.
- The nationalist community need a spirit of generosity to break the mentality of singular identity communities.
- Political leaders, church leaders, public sector agencies, education system
- Political and Church leaders should be encouraging and opening up the dialogue.
- It appears that the attitude of the churches has shifted away from acting as chaplains to the [their own] tribes and are adopting more ethical approaches to support broader community welfare.

#### **The Churches**

- Churches can be seen as honest brokers increasing morale and offering reasoning about ethical and common issues.
- The churches groups need to be involved as long as they are willing to work together.
- Church groups should be given the resources to address these issues.
- Political leaders and church leaders need to be more proactive and vocal in encouraging their communities to open the dialogue.
- The churches should be involved. Some churches now have big halls, cafes and community meeting rooms. Both Protestant and Catholic churches can take a more common approach.
- Organisations like Saint Vincent de Paul, working across all churches, help to bring things together and these groups could also be involved.

In order to deal with myths, we {Ministers] used to go round the schools with our colleagues from the other main churches explaining the work that we do and how that we do it and what we have in common.

We did this in the secondary schools to address the confusion the differences in a religion can bring about. This type of programme will not run under the constraints created by Covid but might be worth starting up again.

#### **Self Help**

*Another common recommendation was that the PUL communities should step up and take responsibility for the lack of amenities and support for their own communities. With the acknowledged low capacity this seems an unlikely outcome without additional capacity building programmes. Nevertheless, the points made appear valid and need to be recognised in this report.*

- Border communities need to adopt a mindset which does not include them being inside a bunker.
- The onus is on the PUL sections of the community to do something themselves. There is no point in whinging about this they have to put in the work do the paperwork etc.
- Physician heal thyself - the Protestant community has to learn educate and work hard to develop their own capacity to address these issues - a bottom up approach.

### **The Orange Order**

- The Orange Order has proposed a Good Neighbours programme to help to develop capacity within the PUL communities on the ground, in the context of an integrated pluralistic society. It should start on a localised basis and then incorporate wider audiences.

“You can use the loyal orders to a degree but the agenda must not be set by the loyal orders but must have a wider framework”.

“There is a definite need to build the capacity so that organisations such as the Orange Order can help to build bridges and address the myths about the organisation”.

- The solutions should not be developed solely by organisations such as the Orange Order but by a wider group which will have credibility. It is a fact that the Orange Order on its own would not garner widespread support.
- It is accepted that despite their best intentions many people in the PUL community don't really understand the importance of building trust and relationships across all communities. Unlike other areas of Northern Ireland The Orange Order in Fermanagh is active in building relationships and trying to develop capacity.

### **Programmatic Interventions**

- There is a need for a programme organisation or group to drive the work to turn the vision into reality with people on the ground. Development officers should be tasked with a specific brief and agenda to deliver the benefits. It is essential that the right persons are employed to do this work.
- This should be a significant funded role aimed at building capacity and involving women and young people and people who can step up into leadership roles.
- The initiative should be driven by an organisation that is not constrained by excessive rules or rigid structures.
- The entire organisation would soon collapse if it was not widely supported by groups such as all of the churches and representatives from all sides of the community.

### **Women's Groups**

- There is no doubt about it that women occupy more of the middle ground where they dominant in terms of percentages.

- I have worked with many peace initiatives and involved many women's groups and often it is the first time the women's voices have been heard they women's groups are very influential in quiet ways they are wives, mothers, nurses, teachers, grannies and they should be funded to do this work.
- The Irish Country Women's Association is very active in cross community work in Leitrim and can do more if supported.
- The Mothers' Union with strong links to the Church of Ireland and similar organisations in other churches may also help.
- The women's networks have died.

### **Young People**

- Younger voices from both sides of the community appear more strident. It appears that the common attitude among younger people is that the older people have mucked things up and can't agree therefore we'd takeover. And not in a good way
- There is particular concern about the youth in the area who have no sense of history of the troubles and outside school may be influenced by some of the prominent storeys in the press. Need to be involved to address this history deficit.

### **The New Irish**

*The prospect of getting the New Irish communities involved as honest brokers to support initiatives to help the PUL communities on the border was not universally raised by consultees, but the idea merits inclusion in this report.*

- A possible group to help might be the New Irish. They should be valued for their contribution and their impartiality being recruited from both North and South with an honest broker role.

### **Other**

- There is no obvious cultural body that represents all of the communities in the border areas. Those bodies that do exist all seem to be split according to cultural divides whether it is in a sporting context or otherwise. For example, Northern Ireland farmers who joined the Ulster Farmers Union or the Young Farmers Association are all Protestants while the Catholic farmers tend to join the Irish Farmers Union
- The unionist politicians have no credibility within academia and in fact mistrust universities, ostensibly treating them as Catholic or nationalist institutions. Think tanks within the University might provide opportunities but unionists need to trust them more.
- Potentially the community groups can help. There are good groups along the border in Kesh and Pettigoe with good equipment and good heritage trails which could be replicated in other areas such as in Cashel and Kiltyclogher and in Garrison and Rossinver

- Successful programmes such as the 'Women Along the Border' project which was supported by the Leitrim County PEACE IV Partnership and which worked with women along the Fermanagh Leitrim border can also help on a local basis.
- There has been a big change in the last 10 years with the movement away from networks delivering the community work. More and more the sports clubs are taking on the role of community work with the GAA, Running Clubs, Soccer and Rugby Clubs taking on grants for distributing food parcels and other mainstream community services at a higher level. These sports club venues are also used for meetings.