

## EU Funding in Action in Somerset

Last week Molly visited Somerset to hear first-hand how EU funding has helped support two projects that bring multiple benefits to the county.



First stop was Glastonbury, where Molly heard about GRAIL, a European Union sponsored research project, designed to develop and examine the importance of religious and cultural routes and how they might act as a catalyst for regional development and improve local tourism.

The project aimed to develop a Pan-European tourism route based on the legend of the Holy Grail. The study identified the challenges and opportunities posed by the development of tourism routes in general and the Grail Route in particular. It considered the problems posed by the complexity of the subject matter; different interpretations of the Grail in European literature; the fact that there are different contenders for the title of the 'Holy Grail' and the possibility of there being not one, but several routes based on different cultural and spiritual perceptions of the Grail.

The project team (led in the UK by [Dr Paul Fidgeon from the London School of Hospitality and Tourism](#) but including collaboration from academics across Europe) went on to produce a tourism atlas of Grail activity in Europe, used this to devise a website and ran a series of training seminars with key emblematic places along the route. In December the route was launched at an international conference on the Holy Grail in Spain. This was attended by politicians, representatives from the church, community groups and other related stakeholders.

Glastonbury features prominently on the route, and Molly met with Cllr Jon Cousins (Mayor) and Cllr Emma George (Deputy Mayor) to hear how they hope Glastonbury will benefit from this project, which should result in increased in-bound tourism to the town.

It was also a great opportunity to congratulate them both on their recent election as Mayor and Deputy Mayor to Glastonbury Town Council, pictured here in the Town Council chamber with Molly.



Next stop was a fantastic organisation called [Edventure Frome](#). Edventure is a school for community enterprise – run by and for the local community. Their mission is to inspire, train and support diverse, unemployed young adults (18-35) to create sustainable livelihoods locally and to help build a more resilient, sustainable and fair community.

Edventure is not a typical school. There are no exams and people do not leave with a formal qualification. They do not require academic qualifications to get involved. At Edventure Frome they believe that people who want to set themselves up as self-employed, start a business or lead change in their career learn best through practical experience and from others who do similar work. Participation usually starts with a 10-week intensive course, built around active participation in a real local community project.



Edventure Frome has received funding from the European Social Fund, and Molly heard how the project only really got off of the ground thanks to EU Funding and partnerships through Erasmus Plus.

You can read more about how EU Funding benefits the South West, including a visit to Taunton's £2.5m sustainable construction resource and learning centre for the South West (the Genesis Centre) [here](#).