

Press Release....Press Release...Press Release....Press Release.... Press Release....Press Release

For release: 16th January 2009

Sussex rural community projects receive vital funding.

Rural community development charity Action in rural Sussex (AirS) has announced the names of 3 organisations who have been awarded grants totaling £17,900 for 'community benefit' schemes under this years COMMA fund.

Northchapel Village Hall Trust, Northchapel, Chichester, West Sussex are to receive £3,500 for improvements to their flooring.

Hampers Green Community Centre, Petworth, West Sussex are to receive £7,500 to enable them to replace their heating system.

Westfield Community Drop-In, Rother, East Sussex are to receive £6,900 to develop their community drop in centre.

COMMA, the Community Aggregates Fund, aims to compensate communities affected by quarrying, by supporting community-based projects in their area. ACRE and AirS are delivering the grants on behalf of Defra, funded by the aggregates levy on quarries¹.

All applicants produced detailed plans showing how their initiative would benefit their community. The final 3 successful projects in Sussex range from providing community drop in facilities to improving community building facilities.

Jeremy Leggett, Chief Executive of AirS said:

"AirS is delighted to support these projects in Sussex that will directly improve the lives of people in these communities. These community assets are very important to rural communities, providing for essential community needs and this funding will help maintain and improve local facilities and services. We are pleased to play our part in the COMMA fund. We are looking forward to repeating the process in 2009 and 2010 and being able to support even more community projects".

Notes to editors:

1. Defra has commissioned ACRE to deliver a further three years of funding with finances drawn from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. The grants programme has funding to distribute in 3 stages: 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 and focuses on supporting community projects in settlements affected by quarrying.
2. Applications were made via one of the 23 RCAN members in whose areas the fund is applicable. For Sussex this is Action in rural Sussex
3. Five essential conditions must be satisfied for projects to be eligible:
 - The community where the project is based is/has been affected by aggregates extraction or transportation of aggregates
 - The proposed project is within 10 kilometres of an aggregates extraction site, either current or disused
 - The proposed project must benefit the whole community or section of the community, not an individual
 - The applicant must be a community organisation, a charity or a parish council
 - All project works funded by COMMA grants this year must be capable of completion by the end of June 2009.

4. Further information about the fund is available on the ACRE website at http://www.acre.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment_comma.html, from Defra <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/aggregates/funding.htm> or from your AirS www.ruralsussex.org.uk local RCAN member (or Rural Community Council).
5. ACRE is the national umbrella body of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN), which operates at national, regional and local level in support of rural communities across the country. The 38 Rural Community Councils at local level have a collective membership of over 12,000 organisations, providing advice, tools and resources to generate effective community action.
6. The Rural Community Action Network is the collective name for the 38 Rural Community Councils throughout England their eight regional bodies and their national umbrella body ACRE. RCCs are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, which support and enable initiatives in rural communities.
7. For further information about the COMMA fund please contact ACRE on 01285 653477.