

JOB DESCRIPTION



- Job Title:** Community Building Adviser, West Sussex
- Team:** Community Buildings
- Reports to:** Senior Community Buildings Adviser
- Based at:** Based at our office in Lewes but hybrid working from your registered home address is possible.
- Contracted:** Full time (35 hours per week), part time considered.
- Manages** No direct reports, collaborates extensively with team members and the communities we serve

About us

Action in rural Sussex (AirS) support mainly rural communities across Sussex to be vibrant and diverse places in which to live and work. Our aims are to:

1. Reduce the incidence and impact of disadvantage and poverty on people living in rural areas.
2. Increase the capacity of rural communities to manage change for the benefit of all their members.
3. Inform and amplify voices of rural communities to influence rural policy

What we do

AirS offers a range of services and projects in line with these aims, including the community buildings service, community-led housing, community planning, and our Making It Happen and Lost Woods projects. The Community Buildings Service which supports village and community halls and other community buildings across Sussex is one of AirS' longest running services.

Village and Community halls form a vital part of thriving communities, especially in rural areas. They provide inclusive, accessible and local community spaces in which an enormous range of wellbeing, exercise, educational, and recreational activities take place, as well as the delivery of services such as NHS clinics and surgeries, Post Offices and libraries. All of this contributes to community wellbeing and health, helps overcome isolation, reduces car travel and its impact on the environment, and strengthens community cohesion.

Most community halls are charities, run by volunteer trustees, often with much enthusiasm but sometimes little experience of running a community venue. AirS' Community Buildings Service supports trustees in understanding all the requirements for running halls safely, legally, sustainably and for the benefit of communities. We also support trustees to manage

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their village hall charity effectively and in line with Charity Commission rules. Finally, we help halls to fundraise to improve, update and extend their facilities, or even build a brand-new hall.

Job purpose

The main purpose of this role is:

1. To support community building trustees and managers, mainly in West Sussex, to manage their facilities effectively and meet the needs of their local communities.
2. To promote the community halls service to community buildings who can benefit from it.
3. To help raise the profile of community spaces and their importance to the lives of local inhabitants and communities.

Scope:

The position will be largely based at our Lewes office but will involve travel across mainly West Sussex.

The role will initially be split between communications, information and administrative functions (approximately 2 days per week) and providing advice to community halls. The role offers an opportunity to build specialist skills in charity governance and management of community buildings and would suit someone with a long-term commitment to supporting halls and helping develop ideas for expanding and widening the community buildings service. Applicants with a background in infrastructure service delivery or supporting Parish Councils are particularly welcome.

The postholder will be responsible for:

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1. Developing the format and finding and producing content for a Community Buildings e-bulletin and the general AirS newsletter
2. Updating and developing the Community Building pages of the AirS website using (currently) Wordpress, and developing and maintaining the social media presence of the service
3. Keeping our online subscriber portal up to date and help develop any new content needed, including researching, collating and formatting information
4. Being the first point of contact for subscribers and potential subscribers, and supporting them to access our online forum and portal and providing information and signposting.

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5. Keeping accurate and up to date records of work with halls using our CRM database and contribute to reports for funders and AirS Board of trustees as needed.
6. Organising quarterly Sussex Community Buildings Advisory Group meetings, send out agendas and keep minutes
7. With the senior adviser, developing and delivering a programme of training workshops and networking events to increase knowledge, capability and information sharing amongst community building trustees and committees.
8. Provision of advice, support and assistance on governance, legal, funding and operational matters to community buildings and facilities, mainly in West Sussex but also in East Sussex where required. This will involve providing support by email, via our online forum, over the telephone and at meetings (which can take place out of office hours).
9. Making contact with relevant organisations in West Sussex and attending networking meetings of relevance to community buildings in order to gather information, eg emerging funding opportunities, and raise awareness of the community buildings service
10. Sharing knowledge and experience with other rural community councils, including the South-Eastern network and via the ACRE online forum, and attend the annual ACRE adviser training event.
11. Any other duties consistent with the overall purpose of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications & Skills, Knowledge and Experience

1. Evidence of the legal right to work in the UK.
2. Good level of education to at least 'A' level or the equivalent
3. Experience and aptitude for producing lively, accessible copy for website, newsletters and social media.
4. Knowledge of the management of community buildings, including legislative and other requirements, or willingness to learn
5. Knowledge of charity governance, eg trustee roles and responsibilities, governing documents, managing conflicts of interest (training can be given on the specifics of village hall charities and their governance)
6. Experience of working with volunteer trustees, eg as part of delivering infrastructure services to charities, and an understanding of their motivations and the challenges they face

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7. Experience of delivering training to adults
8. Experience of working with Parish Councils and an understanding of how they operate would be an advantage
9. Knowledge of West Sussex – geographical, demographic, networks and key stakeholders
10. Qualifications in areas related to the management of community buildings would be welcome, eg health and safety and fire risk assessments, first aid, PAT testing
11. To be able to fulfil the community travel element of this role, you must be able to drive and have access to a vehicle. As a result, the role requires you to hold a current driving licence and demonstrate the vehicle you use is appropriately insured for business use (a mileage allowance is payable in line with HMRC guidelines).

Personal qualities you must be able to demonstrate:

1. Commitment to and enthusiasm for community halls and appreciation of their important role in local communities
 2. Ability to form good relations with work colleagues, community hall trustees and parish councillors and clerks, external suppliers, and AirS trustees
 3. Attention to detail and a commitment to providing accurate, timely and relevant advice
 4. Ability to learn quickly and assimilate sometimes complex new information, eg changes in regulations relating to community buildings, and communicate this in a clear manner, including producing written information
 5. Strong verbal and written communicator
 6. Good presentation and facilitation skills
 7. Highly organised and able to establish priorities and manage workload to meet the requirements of the service
 8. 'Can do' approach to work and ability to problem-solve.
 9. Willingness and ability to work flexibly as and when reasonably needed, including occasional evenings
 10. Self-confident IT skills to effectively use Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Microsoft forms), ebulletin software (currently Mailchimp), Wordpress, social media and the AideCRM database (training on the last of these will be given)
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