



Village SOS

Big Lottery is sponsoring support for communities across the UK to help reverse rural decline through enterprise. The Village SOS Active campaign will use a national advice line to promote expert support for rural communities.

Village SOS is a campaign by the Big Lottery Fund <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk> which is being delivered with rural communities charity the Plunkett Foundation, in partnership with Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), Co-operatives UK and Locality. It was launched alongside BBC1's six-part series, Village SOS. The campaign provides expert help and guidance, via a dedicated telephone Advice Line, to people inspired to set up and run their own community enterprises. These can include shops, pubs, broadband services, transport schemes; in fact, anything which benefits the community.



As well as the Advice Line, the campaign includes a website www.villagesos.org.uk which has downloadable materials such as start-up guides, 'How to...' documents for different kinds of enterprises and templates to help people write business plans or market their enterprise. The website also includes a networking area, giving communities a space to share their ideas and inspire each other.

Big Lottery Fund has also held a competition for 250 community enterprises to win between £10,000 and £30,000 to kick start their business. Those enterprises selected to go forward in this competition are also receiving support via the Advice Line.

RCAN members are also available to provide dedicated support to any community which is thinking about developing a social enterprise in their area. Check out the VSOS website www.villagesos.org.uk, contact the Advice Line on 0845 434 9123 or find your local RCAN member here: [About RCAN](#)

For more information, please contact [Helen Mardell, Programme Manager](#).

[Village SOS Link](#)

Village SOS National Conference, Birmingham, 27 February 2012

The Conference attracted over 300 delegates from across the United Kingdom, including representatives from local & national government, support organisations and enterprising communities. ACRE Chief Executive Sylvia Brown successfully encapsulated the challenges and opportunities afforded by Community Rights in her speech to delegates. She went on to feature prominently in the conference debate (What is the future for Rural Communities?) and on the Question Time panel, which responded to a plethora of points from the audience. Earlier in the day, the workshop on Community Led Planning presided over by ACRE Director of Policy and Research, Nick Chase, was a sell-out and offered an opportunity to showcase ACRE's recently launched CLP Toolkit. Deborah Clarke's Masterclass on Village Halls also generated significant interest, as Management Committees strive to find enterprising ways of sustaining their Hall.



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