

Rural England Community Interest Company

Business Plan 2015-2016

Purpose

Rural England CIC was established in 2014. As a CIC it is a not for dividend organisation with any surpluses re-invested in meeting the Company's Objectives. It is Registered with Companies House and is VAT Registered.

Our mission is to build the strength and resilience of rural England by helping to inform and engender better rural policy making. We will do this by encouraging informed debate, providing independent research and evidence, supporting informed information exchange and building a network that draws together all those who seek to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of rural England.

The prime focus of the company is on research to further the understanding of issues affecting people, businesses and communities in rural areas of England that will provide objective evidence to influence policy and policymakers.

Our key target audiences include government departments, MPs, the Rural Coalition and the extensive networks of our stakeholders including the private and voluntary sectors.

Board

The Board of Rural England is made up of the following individuals:

- Graham Biggs (Company Secretary)
- David Inman
- Brian Wilson
- Jane Hart
- Jo Lavis
- Holly Jago
- Andy Dean

The Board are responsible for ensuring the company meets its objectives, operates within its available budget, seeking additional financial contributions, stakeholder liaison and organising all relevant meetings.

Stakeholder Group

The Board is advised by a wide ranging Stakeholder Group consisting of the following (as at 7/12/15):

- Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE)
- Age UK

- Arthur Rank foundation
- Big Lottery
- British Youth Council
- Countryside Alliance
- Calor Gas Ltd
- Countryside and Community Research Institute, University of Gloucestershire
- Country Land and Business Owners Association
- Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
- Farming Community Network
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Local Government Information Unit
- Locality
- National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- National Association of Local Councils
- National Farmers Union
- National Trust
- National Federation of Women's Institutes
- National Parks England
- National Association of Voluntary and Community Associations
- Plunkett Foundation
- Prince's Countryside Fund
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Rural Services Network
- Town and Country Planning Association
- Women in Rural Enterprise
- National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs
- Former commissioners / officers from the Commission for Rural Communities:
 - Professor Sheena Asthana
 - Margaret Clark CBE
 - Alison McLean OBE
 - Sue Prince OBE, DL
 - Professor Mark Shucksmith
 - Professor Michael Winter OBE

One member of the Stakeholder Group is elected as chair each year (currently Alison McLean OBE) and the group will meet at least twice per annum.

Priority Actions

Three specific pieces of work have been agreed as the priorities for 2015 and 2016 as follows:

1. A State of Rural Services (SoRS) report. The aim is to produce this report every 2 years as the key resource for the company. The SoRS report will review a range of key rural

service areas (public, private and voluntary), depending on the level of resource available, and identify specific areas which warrant further detailed research – over time the reports will be able to track both changes and impacts. This report will be a key product in demonstrating the value of the CIC and encouraging growth in financial contributions.

2. A key report every two years on a topic of national significance. The subject of this report for 2015 and 2016 has been agreed as “Rural Vulnerability as Affecting Older People.”
3. Development of our networks. Specifically, we will seek to establish ‘Sounding Boards,’ hosted by the Rural Services Network, covering rural business and young people.

Additional actions will be added to the company’s portfolio as resources are secured. A separate “Wall of Support” document has been produced which outlines some of the possible future priorities for action. This document will be reviewed regularly by the Stakeholder Group to ensure its continued relevance.

Summary of targets for 2015 and 2016

- Secure a cumulative total of £50,000 p.a. funds
- Complete the first SoRS report
- Complete the first specialist report on ‘rural vulnerability as affecting older people’
- Promote the availability of both reports through national launches, stakeholder networks and direct dissemination to key policy makers.
- Establish a standalone website for Rural England hosting both archive publications of the CIC and providing links to relevant current research across Rural England partners
- Gain access to at least 100,000 contacts across rural England through development of RSN networks.
- Agree the priorities for 2017 based on the SoRS report findings
- Identify additional funding opportunities for specific areas of work
- Operate within the available budget

Finance

The company has identified three key sources of income to finance its operations:

1. Sponsorship – grants from a small number of commercial and other organisations who share the objectives of the CIC (typically a minimum of £5000).
2. Contributions – small financial contributions from a wider range of commercial and other organisations (typically £500).
3. Grants – individual grants will be sought as specific opportunities arise. Members of the Stakeholder Group will be encouraged to consider the potential utilisation of the networks of member organisations when drawing up research proposals of relevance to the company. For example, the 25,000 strong network of individuals across rural

England accessible through the Rural Services Network could add significant value to evidence gathering and results dissemination.

At the end of 2015, £25,000 had been successfully raised to kickstart the work of the company, including sponsorship from Calor and First Buses. The target is to raise a further £25,000 by the end of 2016. Additional in-kind support will be pursued via the Stakeholder Group.

The Directors will ensure that the costs associated with generating income are reflected in the budget of the CIC.

BUDGET	Estimate	Estimate
	2015/16	2016/17
<u>INCOME</u>	£	£
Balance Brought Forward		7195.50
VAT Received		
Support Income from Calor	11000.00	11000.00
Support Income from First Group		7000.00
Supporters Group Income	3500.00	11000.00
One Off Grant Received	500.00	
Transfer from RSN re 2015/16*	9385.00	
TOTAL INCOME	24385.00	36195.50
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Vat Paid		
Insurance	524.00	524.00
Rural City Media - Graphic Design Support	250.00	
B Wilson State of the Rural Services Report	5700.00	5700.00
J Hart Vulnerability of Rural Older People Report etc.	3750.00	3750.00
J Tasker Rural Vulnerability Service		3000.00
A Dean - CIC Support & Sponsorship		
Attainment	1500.00	1500.00
Travel and Subsistence	2400.00	2400.00
RSN Back Office Support	1200.00	1200.00
Provision for Report Launch/publication		2000.00
Provision for Rural Panel Project	2000.00	6000.00
HMRC VAT PAYMENT		
Accountancy Fees		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	17324.00	26074.00
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD/UNALLOCATED	7195.50	10121.50

Summary

Priority Action	Target	Budget £	Lead
State of Rural Services report	Complete report by autumn 2016	11,400 + share of launch costs budget of 2,000	Brian
Rural Vulnerability report	Complete report by Spring 2016	7,500 + share of launch costs budget of 2,000	Jane
Sounding Boards	Establish Business and Youth Sounding Boards by December 2016	RSN Staff time in lieu of benefits arising for the RSN	David / Andy
	100,000 contacts by December 2016		
Operational actions	Secure £50k funds	£1500 + %age of extra income generated	David / Andy
	Launch website by May 2016	1100	David