

countryside communities

'Ensuring that England's rural communities receive their fair share of funding.'

'17 per cent of the 1,683 most educationally deprived English wards are rural'

'around one in four people live in rural areas'

'rural wages are an average 12 per cent lower than urban wages and rising more slowly'



The
Countryside
Agency

**COMMUNITY
FUND**

Lottery money making a difference

Introduction



The Community Fund – meeting the needs of those at greatest disadvantage in society and

improving the quality of life in the community.

If you had a Lottery money cheque for £10m to spend, what would you do with it?

The possibilities are endless if, like Community Fund, your mission is to relieve poverty, overcome isolation and boost deprived communities. Of course we'd like even more money to give away, but unfortunately our budget, as with the other Lottery distributors, is limited and likely to shrink over the next few years.

We are, however, earmarking an extra £10m over the next five years to support projects that will improve the lives of people in some of our poorest rural areas.

The grants packages range from just under £1 million for one area of Lincolnshire to almost £2.5 million in the Dover area.

Eight England areas are being targeted in our *Countryside Communities* initiative. They have been chosen because, despite their high levels of deprivation, they haven't received the 'fair share' of funding they should have had in the past.

Throughout the five-year lifespan of this initiative we will advise voluntary groups and other organisations on how to apply for grants to fund their projects.

It could be for a village playgroup, a dial-a-ride service, mobile chiropody or keep-fit sessions for older people in the village hall. We're confident the list of ideas will be endless.

The *Countryside Communities* initiative is in addition to the on-going **fair share** programme which we are running with the New Opportunities Fund and which targets 77 deprived areas – both urban and rural – throughout the whole of the UK.

We welcome the opportunity of working more closely with charities, voluntary bodies and other organisations in these eight areas, and look forward to the day, five years from now when we can say 'we really have made a difference'.

**Diana Brittan, Chair,
Community Fund**



Over a quarter of the population of England live in rural areas. Three million

of these people suffer poverty and low income. Unemployment, inadequate housing and local amenities, lack of education and training and inaccessible services affect people in the countryside as well as people in urban areas.

In rural areas the problems are often hidden. Rural deprivation is not concentrated on estates

where the problems are physically easier to see. We also know that the rural voluntary sector is under resourced, lacks capacity and relies more heavily on volunteers.

We are delighted that Community Fund has recognised the needs of people living in the countryside and has set aside funds specifically to help these districts which have received less in awards from the Fund than elsewhere. Although Community Fund has already made a valuable contribution to community projects in the

countryside this initiative will help tackle some of the inequalities that have arisen. The *Countryside Communities* initiative reflects our aim of empowered and enabled rural communities, able to influence the decisions which affect their daily life and to take action to meet local need. We welcome the opportunity to work with Community Fund to help local people achieve the aspirations they have for their communities.

**Ewen Cameron, Chairman,
Countryside Agency**

The Countryside Communities initiative

The Countryside Communities initiative – what is it?

The *Countryside Communities* initiative aims to ensure that England's rural communities receive their fair share of funding. Community Fund and the Countryside Agency will work together at national and local levels to maximise funding opportunities for deprived rural areas which have not had their fair share of our funding. This is a spin-off from Community Fund's **fair share** initiative, run with the New Opportunities Fund, which already targets 77 deprived areas in the UK.

Community Fund has earmarked £16.2m over the next five years to fund local groups in eight rural areas. *Countryside Communities* will inform people living in the countryside about the availability of Lottery and Countryside Agency grants for local projects and aims to increase the number of grant applications from rural areas.

Why does the countryside need this initiative?

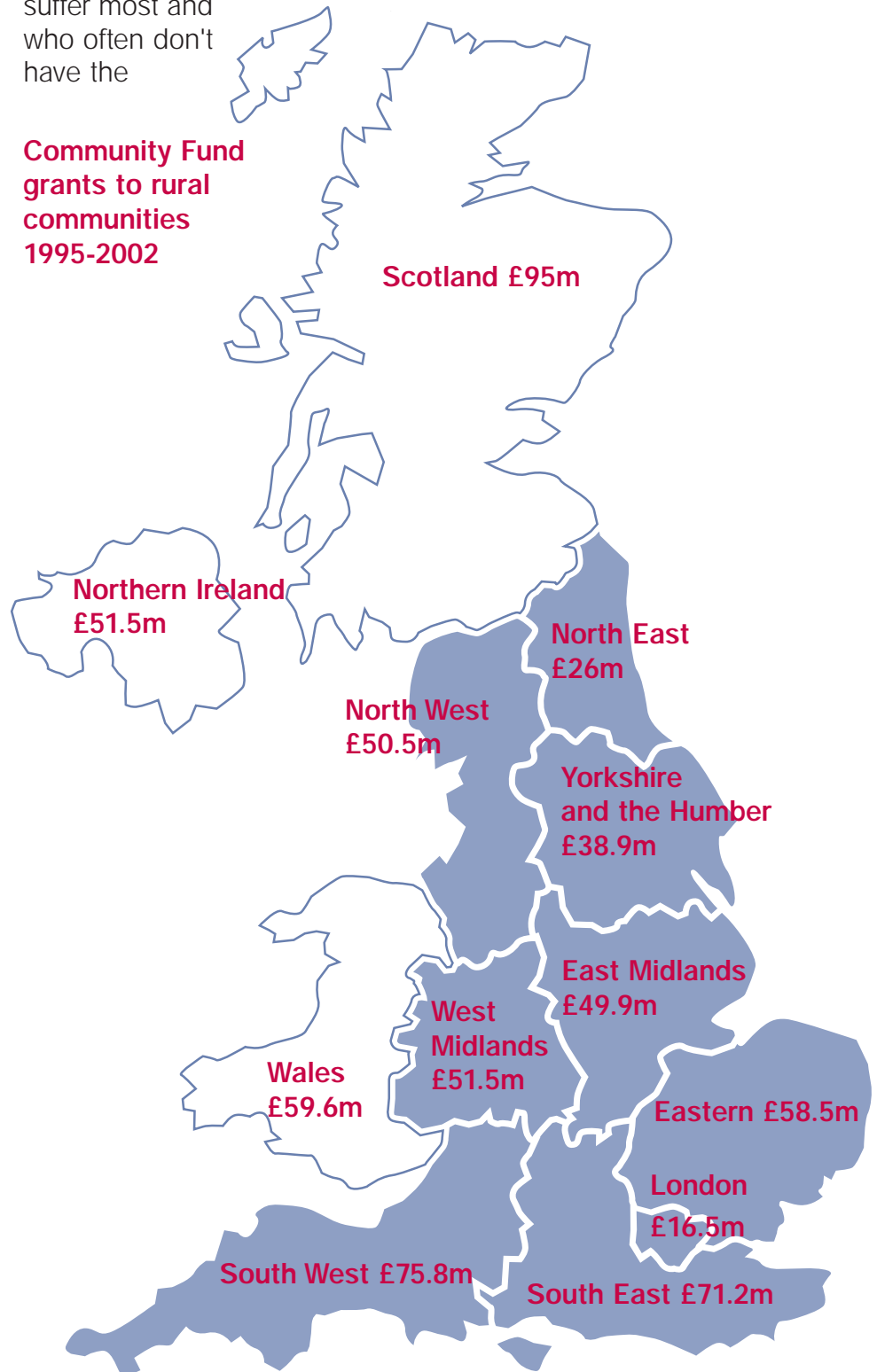
While social deprivation and poverty is more usually associated with inner city estates, it is also a reality of rural life. One in four people who live in the countryside, live in poverty.

Unemployment, low income, inadequate housing and local amenities, lack of education and training opportunities and limited services and public transport all affect rural areas. These problems often outweigh the

advantages of living in a close-knit community and an unspoilt environment. It is essential that additional funding is available for those local projects in communities who suffer most and who often don't have the

means to apply for grants. At the same time local groups, who often operate in relative isolation and who could benefit from this money, need to know about it and how to apply for it.

Community Fund grants to rural communities 1995-2002



£645m to rural communities so far and counting!

Community Fund

Community Fund works with charities and voluntary groups to get Lottery money to the people who need it most. Since Lottery funding began, 12,243 projects rural areas have benefited from £645,018,972 – 28 per cent of the total amount of grants awarded.

Examples of the types of project that have benefited so far:

- village halls and neighbourhood meeting places;
- community transport and mobility schemes;
- support and counselling services for vulnerable groups;
- day-care provision and drop-in centres;
- care services for terminally ill people; and
- food and fuel-poverty initiatives.

Village halls and community centres – at the heart of rural communities

Community Fund recognises the value of village halls and its support is often crucial to their survival. In the past seven years it has awarded £109,801,735 to the building, extension and improvement of 2,271 village halls. However, the pot of money Community Fund has available for funding village halls is decreasing, because funding is limited and likely to shrink.

Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency is committed to improving the life of people living and working in rural areas. It also aims to make

the countryside accessible to everyone.

The Agency seeks to influence central, regional and local government policy through research, sharing good practice and devising innovative solutions tailored to rural circumstances. It funds a number of programmes that support rural communities. To build the capacity of the voluntary sector in rural areas and encourage communities to take action to meet locally defined needs, it supports the network of 38 Rural Community Councils (RCCs). It is setting up a network of community development workers, hosted by the RCCs, to work with small communities in the countryside.

One in ten people in England live in villages. They can benefit from funding from the Countryside Agency's Vital Villages programme. This has a budget of £60m over three years to help people identify problem areas within their villages and deliver their own solutions. The programme aims to support 1400 parish plans, to enable 3,500 communities to improve local services through Community Service Grants and for 2,000 parishes to have transport schemes by 2005. The Countryside Agency encourages local communities to take the lead in identifying local priorities and working to address them. At the same time, market towns face their own challenges. To respond to these, the Market

Towns initiative puts control back into the hands of communities by providing self-assessment health checks to establish what people think of the environment, economy, and community aspects of their town and develop an action plan, with other partners, to meet these needs. Initially the Agency has targeted 140 towns but it hopes that eventually all 1,000 of England's market towns will have carried out a health check.

Other Countryside Agency schemes, such as the Local Heritage initiative, Walking the Way to Health and Doorstep Greens, help communities celebrate local distinctiveness and contribute towards building the capacity of community groups.

The Countryside Agency welcomes the *Countryside Communities* initiative because it gives communities the chance to be more involved in identifying local problems and priorities and in finding solutions for themselves.



How did we decide which deprived areas to target?

The *Countryside Communities* initiative is just one of ways in which we are tackling deprivation in rural areas across England.

In identifying areas on which to target our efforts, Community Fund use a robust methodology which combines data on disadvantage (using the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 (IMD), a standard measure used by the Government and Local Authorities) and Lottery funding per head.

fair share

Under the joint **fair share** initiative with the New Opportunities Fund, Community Fund has already targeted the

100 most deprived districts that have received less than the median amount of funding per head from Community Fund. There are nine rural districts included in the 100 most deprived, although three have already had their 'fair share'.

The amounts to be awarded are the amounts it will take to bring each area up to a projected median per head over the period of **fair share**. This means Community Fund is committed to awarding over £5 million to the six areas in chart A below.

Countryside Communities

On top of these areas, *Countryside Communities* will

target the eight areas in chart B. The methodology for identifying them was similar to **fair share** and was agreed between Community Fund and the Countryside Agency. We will specifically target rural parts of the districts identified.

As well as the eight named areas, we are also committing £2.2 million to strategic initiatives, such as information sharing and capacity building across rural areas in England. The total amount to be committed to *Countryside Communities* is therefore £16.2m. This is £10 million more than Community Fund would otherwise have expected to spend, based on past patterns.

A. Rural areas award commitments

Region	Local Authority District	to March 2005
Eastern	Waveney*	£1,546,000
Eastern	Tendring*	£691,000
East Midlands	East Lindsey	£1,098,000
North West	Ellesmere Port and Neston*	£766,000
North West	Lancaster	£3,000
South East	Thanet*	£1,325,000
Total amount to be awarded		£5,429,000

B. The eight Countryside Communities areas

Region	Local Authority District	(to March 2007)
South East	Shepway	£2,006,074
South East	Dover	£2,454,519
Eastern	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	£1,889,177
Eastern	Fenland	£1,248,034
Eastern	North Norfolk	£1,989,036
East Midlands	Boston	£995,619
East Midlands	West Lindsey	£1,337,908
South West	Sedgemoor	£2,056,864
England-wide (Strategic Grants)		£2,241,798
Total amount to be awarded		£16,219,029

Mid Devon District Citizens Advice Bureau

'There was a very great need before and that's grown daily since Foot and Mouth, so we're grateful to Community Fund for the grant which will enable us to address that need.'

The economic and emotional problems besetting many rural communities in the aftermath of the Foot and Mouth outbreak have added to an already heavy workload for Mid Devon District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Far from disappearing once the crisis vanished from the daily news agenda, the problems have multiplied. While farmers were in the front rank when the horrific outbreak occurred and their businesses crashed in a

most public way on the burning pyres, other businesses are now, quietly, being caught up in a 'rolling snowball' effect. Farm machinery firms, hotels, local shops, workers living in tied cottages – they're among those now being hit by unemployment as business after business collapses.

The economic backlash means more people are falling into the poverty and benefits net and it's

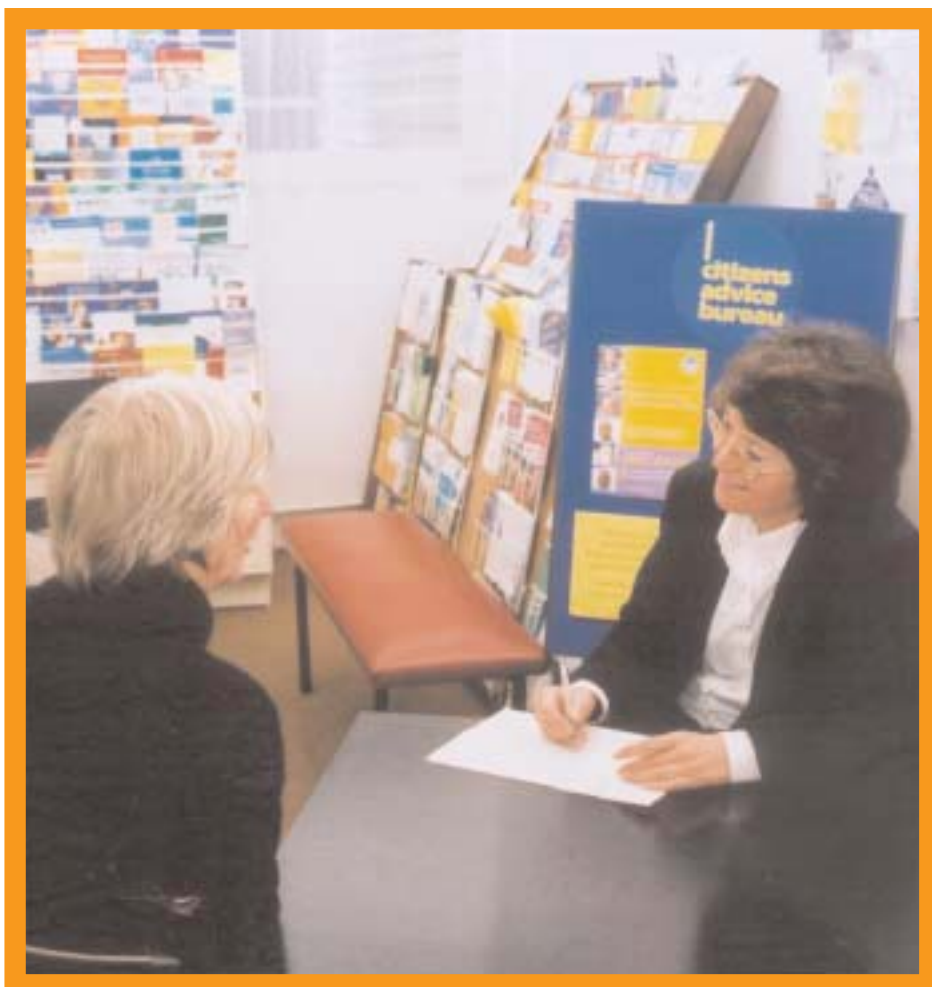
all but overwhelmed the CAB.

'There's a huge extra need on top of our normal case load,' says Linda Wilkinson, Manager of the Mid Devon CAB. 'People need help with debt, unemployment and filling in benefit forms. But if they're stuck in the rural hinterland they can't just drop into our offices for help.'

Home visiting is the answer, and a two year grant of £59,161 from Community Fund has enabled them to employ a full-time outworker since January, pay her transport costs and six hours administration time.

'She's working flat out to cope with the 25 to 30 extra contacts each week and the need will go on forever – it's a mushrooming problem,' says Linda Wilkinson. 'There are people living in pockets of poverty in otherwise prosperous rural areas. They're barely existing at basic survival rate and we need to raise awareness of what benefits they're entitled to.'

'The need will go on for ever – it's a mushrooming problem.'



Ley of the Land – West Devon Environmental Network

‘Our aim is to secure our young people’s future and encourage them to stay in their own area. One project we run addresses the problem of actually getting to work. We provide low-powered motor scooters which they can borrow for six months.’

Job prospects are bleak for young people living in scattered, isolated communities in West Devon. How can they possibly make a decent living if, say, they live in the middle of Dartmoor, and they have neither job skills nor the transport to get them to

work? Their only recourse is to migrate to the towns to live and work so depriving the community where they grew up of its young blood.

That’s where the West Devon Environmental Network

(WestDEN) comes in. It provides employment, training advice and support to young people in isolated rural areas. Now their work is expanding, thanks to a three year grant from Community Fund of £149,680. With it they’ve set up a new project to provide training and employment opportunities in sustainable land industries. Through ‘Ley of the Land’ 100 16-30 year-olds will be trained each year in a range of rural skills such as basket-weaving, forestry, horticulture, agriculture and dry stone wall building.

Says WestDEN Director Oz Osborne: ‘We have a mixture of unemployed and employed people on the courses. Those already in work could be part-time farm workers wanting new skills to improve their job prospects, others may need additional skills to secure their employment, particularly if they work in micro businesses such as craft-based tourist outlets.’

‘Thanks to this grant we can do something very practical about isolation and social exclusion.’



Branching Out – Littleport near Ely, Cambridgeshire

'The woodwork trainees made it using huge pieces of oak and using old fashioned methods. When it was finished the whole village turned out for a barn raising ceremony. They were so proud – it gave them a real sense of achievement.'



horticulture, woodwork and administration to environmental management, communication skills and sport and leisure.

And the trainees are branching out, too. Their experiences in the classroom are being put to practical use in the community.

'We encourage them to be as independent as possible,' said Sue, 'and working in a community-based setting helps them to find their way around and manage their day. The horticulture team maintains village footpaths, hanging baskets and grassed areas. The woodwork team makes garden furniture and does a lot of work with local schools, building shelves and sandpit covers. Eight picnic sites along the river now have picnic benches made by our woodwork team.'

Their pièce de résistance, though, has been a new cart barn which was designed and built by the students out of oak using old fashioned methods. It is now used as a museum.

Branching Out – it's a wonderful pun on all the work that goes on in this training centre for people with learning difficulties. The organisation itself has been branching out, thanks to a recent Community Fund grant of £138,601 over three years. This was their second grant and has helped pay for an extension to house extra woodwork and horticulture classrooms, the salaries of new training and support staff as well as recruitment, training and running costs.

The centre is so popular it attracts trainees from an area stretching across

'There is a huge demand for our service.'

Cambridgeshire and further afield from Norfolk and Suffolk.

Training Manager Sue Wiggins said: 'The new building has been vital to increasing provision. There's a huge demand for our service and because we're full we already have a waiting list for next year.'

Branching Out is now running 72 different courses and has expanded from 22 students a week to 42. Courses range from

The ORBIT shuttle – run by Project Cosmic, East Devon

'The reaction we get when we roll into a village is terrific – the shuttle gets everyone looking, and everyone thoroughly enjoys the courses.'

A mobile space shuttle – tail fins and all – is in regular orbit around East Devon, but nobody even bats an eyelid. The ORBIT shuttle – 'On the Road Broadening IT' – is actually a mobile classroom towed by a Land Rover and operated by Project Cosmic (Centre for Ottery St Mary's Internet Café). Its mission is to 'boldly go', taking information communication technology training across Devon and Somerset and particularly into the rural communities of both counties.

Like a space capsule it's entirely self-sufficient, with its own power generator and satellite dish so it's linked to the Internet. As well as having two or three trainers and ten workstations on board it carries another ten laptops so additional IT classrooms can be set up in village halls.

Community Fund has made a grant of £212,772 over three years to Project Cosmic to run ORBIT. The funding pays for the trainers and helps update the equipment each year.

'The funding we get from Community Fund means we can



offer our courses to people either free or at very reasonable cost,' explained Chairman Peter Brewer. 'Although the bulk of the capital funding came from the Regional Development Agency and East Devon Council, the Lottery grant has made the courses affordable.'

The ORBIT shuttle goes out in response to requests from organisations; out-of-school clubs, youth clubs and

community groups, and after a year on the road has already trained 1,200 young people. This year their target is to train 1,400.

'Taking a mobile unit out and about is a very effective way of giving people living in remote areas access to IT.'

Teesdale Village Halls Consortium, County Durham

'The grant has enabled us to put on many more activities than we had previously and add a depth of activity we hadn't had before. A lot of things need to keep happening at our village halls because if people stop using them they will die – and be gone forever.'

A consortium of 30 village halls serving hamlets and villages stretching the length and breadth of Teesdale is set to expand its work, thanks to a £73,026 grant from Community Fund.

The Teesdale Village Halls Consortium caters for well over 150 organisations running virtually an A-Z of activities, from arts to yoga – taking in desktop publishing, toddler groups, education classes, and over 60s' clubs along the way.

The grant is being used to employ a development worker who will help organisations using the halls to manage themselves better. Volunteers from hall-user organisations will be offered courses giving them the skills and confidence to manage their halls on a level comparable with the private

sector. The consortium is also launching a range of health-based training courses, such as a mother and baby course and first aid. The grant will help meet

the cost of a newsletter which is distributed to all the village halls and other interested bodies, and help cover office costs.

'We could never have helped as many rural communities increase the viability and sustainability of their community buildings without the help from Community Fund.'



A dozen common myths about Community Fund grants

1. There's a limit to grants for each area. You've already made two near here so it's pointless putting in an application.

There are no limits for particular areas. If we need to prioritise an area, such as one of the eight in the *Countryside Communities* initiative, because we're not receiving enough applications from that area, we'll put more effort into our information and outreach work there to encourage more applicants to come to us.

2. You think certain parts of the country are prosperous so you don't fund them.

We were set up to tackle disadvantage and improve the quality of life in the community. Every region has pockets of disadvantage, eg homeless, single parents, older people with chronic illness or disabled people.

3. We're just ordinary people with no qualifications and no office so we won't get a grant.

We make it a priority to fund as many small organisations as we can. They are often closest to the community and best placed to meet needs. They may not be a charity but do need to have a constitution and a bank account and be set up for community benefit or a charitable purpose. We could even help them find an office to work from.

4. We're on our own when it comes to applying.

We have staff who are specially trained to provide information to applicants and to clarify points on the application form with them. Applicants should call their local Community Fund office.

5. We don't know if our project will work, but if we apply for a grant and it doesn't work there's no chance of further money.

An applicant could ask us to fund a feasibility study to assess the need for the project and how it could best be delivered. If it's viable we could then fund the project itself. Several applications can be made by one organisation as long as they're for different projects.

6. You can't re-apply for a year after you've been rejected.

You can re-apply immediately. We explain to unsuccessful applicants why they didn't get a grant, but also pointing out the strong points of the application. Councils for Voluntary Service and other organisations can help groups in that position. Contact your local Community Fund office to find out the nearest one to you.

7. If we're always asking for help and advice it'll reflect badly on us.

We'd rather groups took time over getting their application right first time.

8. Getting a grant from Community Fund means we lose our independence.

It's quite the opposite. We want applicants to tell us what their local need is and how they propose to meet it. We monitor every grant to see the group is achieving what they set out to achieve, we don't try to influence their work.

9. You never meet running costs, only capital costs.

We meet the running costs of projects. We fund far more revenue than capital.

10. You only give part of what's needed for a project, we have to find the rest.

We can fund 100 per cent of the costs of the project, although we are unlikely to make many grants over £300,000.

11. You've got to use the right jargon on your form to be successful.

We don't want forms full of politically-correct terminology. We want applicants to describe their projects in their own words.

12. Paying a consultant to fill out the form is the best way to get a grant.

We want groups to tell us what they're planning in their own words. Groups sometimes feel a project planner or consultant can diminish the control they have over the project.

Got a project in mind?

Community Fund is one of the largest grant-makers in Europe. In the past seven years we have given £2.3 billion to 49,000 charities and community groups.

As Lottery income falls, our grants budget will fall from £287m in 2001-2002 to an estimated £213m from 2004 onwards. That money will have to work harder than ever and will be targeted at projects helping

those in greatest need.

In our new Strategic Plan for 2002-2007 Community Fund has set the following funding priorities: children and young people; disabled people and their carers; older people and their carers; people in areas disadvantaged by social or economic change, whether urban or rural; black and minority ethnic communities;

and refugees and asylum seekers.

What is a project? A piece of work carried out over and above the day-to-day activities of the organisation. Community Fund doesn't normally fund 'core activities', though we can support a group wishing to extend its core activities. We may give grants for extra staff or the running costs of a project.

Five steps to a good application

1

Show us the need for the project. Applicants must give evidence of the need they're addressing and show the project is a good way of meeting that need.

4

Give evidence of good management. A good management will be in touch with users/the community and have skills to deliver the project. It will have procedures in place for electing a management committee and conducting meetings, finances, and equal opportunity employment procedures.

2

Planning the project well. Community Fund needs to see a project plan showing: how the project will happen, the aims to be achieved, the resources needed, an action timetable, responsibilities of those involved, how it will be evaluated.

5

Show how the project will make a difference. The project must fit with Community Fund's aim of meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged people, it should make a difference to the lives of users or the way the organisation operates. How will it be evaluated? Has market research been done?

3

Costing the project accurately. How was the cost arrived at? Give budget headings, how a staff salary structure was worked out and quotes for capital items.

Applications for village halls or community centres

Applying for funding for a village hall or community centre is complicated and time-consuming, so before they apply we offer groups the chance to discuss their application.

Applicants should carry out an audit of local views on the need for a hall and read Community Fund publications: *Before you apply*, *Guide to eligibility* and *Property applications*.

The applicant should ask two crucial questions:

- How will the building meet the needs of those at greatest disadvantage in the community?
- Does the project follow standard building practice as set out in the guidance booklet?

Community Fund is more likely to fund projects that will offer a

range of activities for people of all ages. They should meet the needs of people who don't have private transport, offer health and advice services and meet local concerns such as crime prevention and isolation.

More details about applying and application forms are available on the Community Fund website at: www.community-fund.org.uk or phone **0845 7919191**.

Give us the money...

We asked some major organisations working in the eight target areas three questions. Here are their answers.

Q: What do people in rural areas want?

Crispin Davies, Director, Kent Rural Community Council – 'Funding for community buildings and for increasing the number of volunteers.'

David Smith, Chief Executive, Community Council for Somerset – 'Schemes to develop a new generation of community leaders.'

Lorna Sambrook, Head of National Policy Co-ordination, ACRE – 'Funding to improve community facilities and

services. Advice on developing projects and activities.'

Tony McMahon, Chief Executive, Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution – 'The farming community wants prompt payments of subsidies and benefits.'

Q: What is lacking today?

DS: 'Services and a spirit of community. Well-supported community development work would help deliver alternative services.'

LS: 'The cost of facilities and services in rural areas means there's heavy reliance on the voluntary sector. Community development workers are so stretched, some communities aren't benefiting.'

TMcM: 'Confidence that Government is interested in their plight.'

Q: What can the Community Fund do to alleviate the problem or supply what is lacking?

CD: 'Help organisations build rural capacity.'

DS: 'Recognise that rural deprivation goes beyond official statistics.'

LS: 'Long-term funding to organisations which help communities to help themselves.'

TMcM: 'Commission a study into speeding up the system of paying subsidies and benefits.'

Putting Community Fund on the map

In 1998 Community Fund commissioned research to map the major flows of funding to voluntary and community groups working to tackle deprivation in England. By comparing these patterns of funding from different sources with different levels of deprivation in each part of the country, they hoped to learn more about how effectively they, and other funders, were targeting funding at areas in greatest need. The summary of the findings covers the years 1998/9 and 2000/1 and is thought to be a unique resource. The results of the

survey are useful in many respects and will assist Community Fund to understand more about its grants in each region and demonstrate the relevant significance of Community Fund grants and that of other funders in addressing deprivation. The research shows that Community Fund grants help rural areas, but these sometimes have high dependence on Community Fund because of lack of funds from other areas.

Funding sources

The six main funding sources covered by the research

overall were:

- Community Fund;
- Trusts and Foundations;
- European Social Fund;
- Single Regeneration Budget;
- Other central government funding; and
- Local authorities.

This research will be published in a summary findings document early 2003. The full report will be available on the Community Fund website. For further details contact vandna.gohil@community-fund.org.uk

Further information

For more information on this initiative or Community Fund publications please visit our website:
www.community-fund.org.uk

For more information on Countryside Agency publications please visit:
www.countryside.gov.uk

Other helpful websites:

Vital villages:
www.countryside.gov.uk/vitalvillages

Market towns:
www.countryside.gov.uk/market-towns

Local Heritage Initiative:
www.lhi.org.uk

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE):
www.acre.org.uk
ACRE can also provide a list/contact details of all Rural Community Councils.

Action for market towns:
www.towns.org.uk

National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS):
www.nacvs.org.uk

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO):
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
www.defra.gov.uk

If you have a project in mind and think that *Countryside Communities* could help you, here's how to find out more;

- request a *Countryside Communities* publication from your local Community Fund or regional Countryside Agency office, addresses are available on the websites listed below;

- visit our websites:
www.community-fund.org.uk
or
www.countryside.gov.uk

- phone Community Fund enquiries line 020 7747 5299

Contact your regional Countryside Agency office, details of which are available by phoning the Countryside Agency information line – 01242 521 381

Community Fund regional offices:

Corporate Office

Phone: 020 7747 5300
Minicom: 020 7747 5347
Fax: 020 7747 5220
Email: enquiries@community-fund.org.uk

East Midlands and Strategic Grants Office*

Phone: 0115 934 9300
Minicom: 0115 948 4436
Fax: 0115 948 4435
Email: enquiries.em@community-fund.org.uk

Eastern

Phone: 01223 449000
Minicom: 01223 352041
Fax: 01223 312628
Email: enquiries.ea@community-fund.org.uk

South East

Phone: 01483 462900
Minicom: 01483 568764
Fax: 01483 569893
Email: enquiries.se@community-fund.org.uk

South West

Phone: 01392 849700
Minicom: 01392 490633
Fax: 01392 491134
Email: enquiries.sw@community-fund.org.uk

*The location of this office will change late in 2002. Visit our website for the latest information about all our office locations.

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