

Admin Officer (Information)

From: Nicola Greenslade <Nicola@somersetcc.org.uk>
Sent: 08 January 2015 13:16
To: Town Council
Subject: Rural Community support funding under threat

Dear Ms Joy Norris

I am writing to ask you to join our urgent campaign to call on the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs not to withdraw funding for the ACRE Network of rural community councils (RCC's).

The Network, of which Community Council for Somerset is a member, is the only nationwide organisation with a dedicated rural focus; building community resilience, strengthening local enterprise and supporting the most vulnerable in our society. In addition, we are the sole network that provides advice to the 80,000 volunteers who keep England's 10,000 village halls alive.

We have been supported by Government investment for decades. Now, however, we have been advised by civil servants to expect **no further funding** from Defra.

If funding is withdrawn - which at present levels contributes just over 67% of our core unrestricted funding - we would be unable to maintain the central office functions which allow us to deliver our project work. One very important project area is Somerset Village Agents which I know you are aware of and have wholeheartedly supported. Our bid to expand county wide is currently being appraised by the Big Lottery Fund and every indication is that we will be successful. Without Defra funding we cannot maintain the important managerial, administrative, financial and HR functions which underpin our work and the project will not be able to proceed. This would have severe and far-reaching consequences for the vulnerable and isolated people of Somerset who rely on the Village Agents support, many of whom relied heavily on that support during last winters flooding crisis.

To pull the Defra funding now would fracture the Network, undermine decades of government investment and leave the most vulnerable in rural areas with nowhere to go.

Please show your support for Community Council for Somerset (CCS) by signing the ACRE Network online petition now at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/73418>

Please urgently write to Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR or email her at defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk to ask her not to withdraw funding from the ACRE Network. If you are able to give examples of how CCS has made a difference to you, your community or organisation, this would be very helpful.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



Keeley Rudd
Acting Chief Executive

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