

Factsheet 2

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland



Sharing & Exchanging Information

Sharing and exchanging information is key to the work of the Rural Network for Northern Ireland. We will share and exchange information in a number of ways.

These include:-

- A dedicated website www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk
- Newsletters, publications and fact sheets
- Events, meetings and visits

This Fact sheet provides information on the 'Village SOS' initiative from the Big Lottery Fund and the BBC.

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland will focus on 'Village Development' as part of a planned series of thematic groups. LAG representatives will be invited to participate in themed activities designed to support and enhance the delivery of the Village Renewal measure.

Please Note: This factsheet is for information purposes only. For further details please contact the Big Lottery Fund, www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

VILLAGE focus

Rural Northern Ireland has a highly populated countryside with many distinct small villages. These villages provide a natural focus for provision of services in rural areas, such as schools, churches and shops and the strong sense of belonging and local identity provides a firm foundation for regeneration activities.

Village Renewal is an integral part of the NI Rural Development Programme and offers the opportunity to create an integrated approach to regeneration to meet the needs of the local community. This fact sheet looks at the Big Lottery Fund and BBC 'Village SOS' initiative which provides further opportunities to develop ideas and share good practice at a village level.

Village SOS

What is Village SOS?

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) is working in partnership with the BBC on a new initiative entitled 'Village SOS'. Together, they will offer rural villages across the UK a chance to access Lottery funding to support enterprise, thus benefiting their community and creating opportunities for the local area and its community. Also on offer is the opportunity for local people to showcase what their village is doing on BBC Television.

What will be supported?

Village SOS will ultimately support 6 villages across the UK. It is

anticipated that 3 villages in England and one each in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be supported (these estimates are based on current population size within each region).

What kind of projects?

Support will be offered to projects that are an 'enterprise' and will benefit their community. The initiative is not just about developing an asset such as a village hall or providing a service, though these could be parts of an overall project. BIG will offer grant awards of between £100,000 and £400,000 to the successful villages. Capital and/or revenue costs are eligible.



What else is happening?

In addition to the funding element, BIG and BBC are seeking to raise awareness, across the UK as a whole, of the strength and diversity of rural areas; and a better appreciation of rural life through exposure on the BBC television programme and development of a dedicated website. This website will support community enterprise projects by offering learning and support including case studies, toolkits, good practice and signposting to other initiatives. There is also the possibility of an 'ideas pot', which may offer small amounts of funding to those villages inspired by the programme.

How to apply?

A two-stage application process has been launched on BBC *'The One Show'* at the start of June 2009. Those successful in reaching Stage 1 of the process will be 'matched' with a 'Village Champion' who will work closely with the village to develop their enterprise and devise a Business Plan. It is anticipated that approximately

18 villages across the UK will get through to this stage. Stage 2 application forms and business plans will then be submitted with those successful being filmed over 12 months by BBC for a 6-part prime time show due to air in Spring 2011.

Who can apply?

Community based organisations representing the interests of rural villages may apply. Within this Programme, rural villages are defined as having a population of up to **3,000**. Organisations must be constituted for Stage 1 of the process and if successful at Stage 2 must be established as a Village Trust by the time of the full award.

What are the timescales?

Applications for Stage 1 will be accepted up to 12 noon on 14 August 2009. Villages will receive their decisions in November and a 'Village Champion' will be chosen for each of the villages. Stage 2 application forms and business plans will then be submitted by March 2010 with final decisions agreed and filming due to commence in May 2010. The TV shows are

due to be broadcast in Spring 2011.

To find out more...

For further information contact the BIG helpline on 0844 8888 677 or visit: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

News You Can Use

Do you have information worth sharing? Help us to contribute to the transfer of information sharing and best practice within and across the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme.

For further information please contact:-

Telephone: +44(0) 28 8676 6980
Email: info@ruralnetworkni.org.uk
Web: www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is a member of:
UK National Rural Network:
www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/uknationalruralnetwork

And European Network for Rural Development:
www.ec.europa.eu

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland has also established links with the National Rural Network for Ireland: www.rdsu.ie



The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is managed by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC) through the Agri Rural Form as part of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

References and links to any external websites or publications shall not be taken as an endorsement by the Rural Network for Northern Ireland of the opinions expressed or services provided by those sites and publications.