

Start Action Yourself Now! - Supporting information

Calling all Town and Parish representatives

Whether you are a Town or Parish Councillor, School Governor, Village Hall Trustee, Church Warden, GP, Community Nurse, Carer, Small Business, Village Volunteer or Resident please take the time to have a look through this information and see if this scheme can support the ideas you may have for your Town or Village.

The importance of a community hub

A Village Hall is a necessity in times of crisis. These invaluable community hubs are largely overlooked, and seen as venues that host, children's birthday parties, uniformed groups and the WI, with a few exercise groups thrown in for good measure. However, these small but mighty spaces, as we all know, can offer our communities so much more.

Village and Community halls are a lasting legacy of the First World War, when there was a national drive to develop social and educational provision in rural areas. The building or improvement of a Village Hall was quickly seen to be the most effective way of bringing all interests in a village together.

Today community hubs can be located in a variety of spaces, whether it's the Church, Pub, School, Shop, Post Office, Cricket Pavilion, Village Green or Playing Field. Having a central space where the community can come together is essential.

The need for social action

The last five years have thrown a plethora of crisis at society. From a pandemic which highlighted the large numbers of people across our communities who are isolated and lonely, to the resettling of refugees displaced by conflict, and a universal cost of living crisis, which has forced people to switch off their heating and skip meals. The need for communal spaces, to bring us together, is greater now, than ever before.

Support for community volunteers

Community Hubs don't run themselves. Whether built 100 years ago, or 30 years ago these spaces, regardless of what form they take, need a dedicated team of volunteers to keep them maintained and running. They all have their own unique quirks and foibles. We understand managing these facilities can be a thankless task with an overwhelming list of jobs to do before you even try to get people through the door.

RCAN is acutely aware of these issues and knows how hard it is for management committees to get the local community to engage, as the commitment and availability of volunteers is declining, putting pressure on the same volunteers to pick up the slack.

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RCAN has recognised the need for rural communities to access additional support for their communities to address these issues. We have been successful in receiving a grant through Broxtowe Borough Council's Shared Prosperity Fund, to support a scheme whose mission is to create or revitalise 10 community facilities in the Borough of Broxtowe and inspire more social action in the towns and villages where those facilities are based.

Applications welcome

Start Action Yourself Now! aims to create Social Hubs, that will provide opportunities for residents, businesses, community groups and all users, to work together for the good of their local area.

Each organisation will receive bespoke support from RCAN's rural officer. They will work alongside community volunteers, offering them the support they need, from the inception of your project to its delivery.

This scheme is open to applications of interest from organisations from any Town or Village in Broxtowe, whether you have a community facility or not.

How can we help?

Asset of community interest

- Do you want to turn a community asset into a communal space? Whether it's the church, pub, a redundant barn or shop or shipping container, could they be repurposed to host a community service, activities, or events?

Existing community facilities

- Do you need help getting an existing community facility back on track. Are your policies and procedures up to date? Do you have your governing document to hand? Does your facility meet statutory and building management responsibilities. Do you need help creating an income strategy and business plan? Is your facility sustainable? Do you have a succession plan in place? Does your committee have a vision and does your community share it? Are you working effectively with other key organisations in your village?

Improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of your facility

- Have rising energy prices impacted your facility? Would you benefit from identifying areas in your building where you can improve its energy efficiency and help reduce running costs? Would you like to look at how you can ensure the long term sustainability of your building, by reducing its carbon impact and ensuring it is fit for purpose for future generations? Perhaps you want to look at how you can improve the external environment of your facility, help increase

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biodiversity, introduce green spaces, rain water harvesting, bike racks and seating.

Bringing the community together

- Do you need help bringing the community together but just don't have the capacity to do it? Perhaps residents want to start a sustainability group but don't know where to start? You may have been considering running a regular community café to help support members of the community who find it hard to get out, or there has been interest in implementing an annual calendar of events to help recognise the seasons and bring the community together? What do you think is missing?

Start Action Yourself Now!

We believe that creating and improving public spaces, working with representatives from key organisations and listening to the needs of residents is a solid starting point to bringing a community together.

We can help you with practical support, helping establish community need, through advocacy, a needs assessment, good practice examples, tool-kits, training, volunteer recruitment, resources, a physical presence, network and peer support, income generation, funding advice and marketing and advertising strategies.

If this sounds like something that your community could get on board with, please get in touch. Organisations will be required to commit to the Start Action Yourself Now! scheme for the duration of your project but a further year's free access to RCAN Membership is included in the scheme to support project legacy and long-term sustainability.

Apply now!

Contact:

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