

Making a CASE for rural services in Cornwall

Rural communities across Cornwall are being urged to bid for funds to create innovative and sustainable ways to 'grow their own' essential local services.

At a time when services in rural areas such as post offices and village shops, rural transport and access to healthcare are under threat, a £7m+ Community And Social Enterprise (CASE) grants and advice programme has been launched across the South West.

The CASE programme, funded by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) through the South West Regional Development Agency, will help create or develop community and social enterprises which can 'grow their own' local services.

To help voluntary and community groups through the application process, a free support and advice service called 'Making a CASE, Making it Happen' has been set up.

In Cornwall, Nikki Mills of Cornwall Rural Community Council is the CASE Adviser to contact for advice and information about the grant fund. Across the South West, there are seven Rural Community Council CASE Advisers available to help in each locality.

Talking about the free support service Nikki said: 'Along with my colleagues across the region, I am here to give voluntary and community organisations the best chance to develop the sort of innovative and sustainable projects which are most likely to receive funding to provide essential services.'

We're looking for strong, enterprising ideas to provide local services which can run as a social or community enterprise, so it is sustainable and benefits people living in rural areas. These services could include rural community shops, 'multi use' rural community facilities, access to childcare or even renewable energy projects which benefit the whole community.'

Ian Hague, RDPE Delivery Manager, said: 'To give community organisations the very best chance of receiving funding, we're encouraging potential applicants to contact their local CASE Adviser first at Rural Community Councils across the South West, to get the help they need before filling in an application form.'

We believe the Rural Community Councils are in the best position to offer this support and to reach as many rural organisations as possible and we're delighted to be working in partnership with them.'

For more information about the grant funding or how to apply please contact the Cornwall CASE Adviser, Nikki Mills, Rural Services Manager, CRCC nikki.mills@cornwallrcc.org.uk or phone 01872 273952 or visit www.swan-network.org.uk/

- Photo - South West CASE advisers and other RDPE colleagues at a recent regional facilitation meeting

