

# The Village Hall Outreach Officer Project

# Project Evaluation

Margaret Kirk  
September 2006



Humber & Wolds  
Rural Community Council  
*We'll work with you to make the difference locally*



# Evaluation of the Village Halls Outreach Officer Project

Margaret Kirk Project Officer

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## **Introduction**

There have never been many grant funding opportunities for village hall management committees to obtain grants for refurbishment or new-build projects for their halls. The Rural Enterprise Scheme (R.E.S.) administered by DEFRA was one of a small number of funding sources available and yet it became evident that few management committees were choosing this funding opportunity. A fundamental and essential requirement of the application process for the scheme was the production of a Business Plan or Project Proposal. The existing Village Hall Advisory Service, provided by Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council (H.W.R.C.C.), realised that the preparation of such a document was proving to be a daunting exercise for many management committees. This realisation explained why there were so few applications to R.E.S.

It was decided therefore to apply to R.E.S. for grant funding to enable H.W.R.C.C. to employ a Village Hall Outreach Officer to assist management committees with the preparation of Business Plans/Project Proposals.

## **Aims of the Project**

The aim of the Outreach Officer project was to assist village hall management committees with the preparation of business plans to include with their applications for R.E.S. funding. Working as part of the team of Village Hall Advisers at H.W.R.C.C., this also included providing village hall management committees with information, advice and support.

The Outreach Officer project started in February 2004 and was funded by DEFRA's Rural Enterprise Scheme (R.E.S.) and The Lloyds TSB Foundation until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006. This was a 15-hour per week post.

## **Evaluation Methodology**

Evaluation of the project has been carried out quarterly when completing claims for the grant and again when preparing end of year reports for DEFRA.

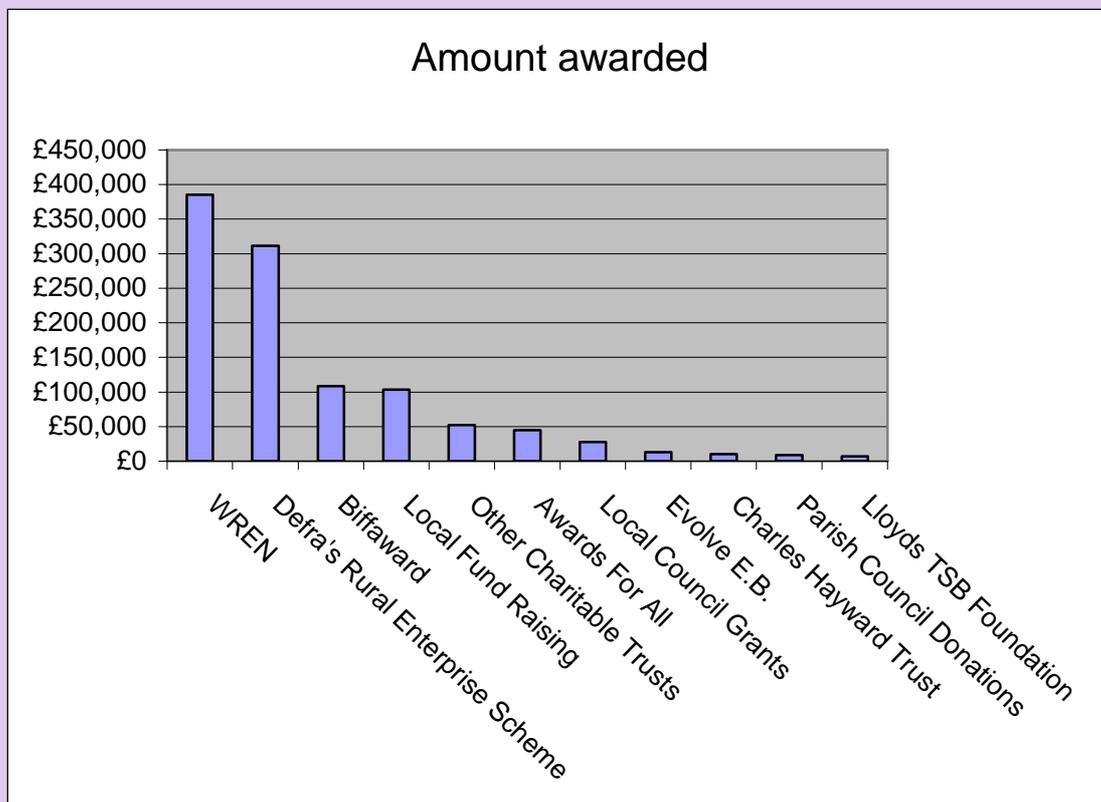
Client Feedback forms (Appendix 1) have been used to make a more formal assessment of the project and have assisted with the production of this report.

## Summary

It is clear from the response from management committees that the help and support provided by the Outreach Officer Project was both valued and needed.

Projects to improve accessibility and energy efficiency in village halls will take time as building works are carried out and completed in the coming months. The tangible benefits will not be seen for some years as management committees evaluate the difference their projects have made in terms of numbers of people using the hall and a reduction in running costs. However, committees from village hall projects that are now completed have already noticed a significant increase in the activities at their halls.

The groups receiving Outreach Officer support with their applications have received £1,071,989 towards their Sustainability Projects . This includes over £310,000 from R.E.S. and the remainder from match funding, including local fund raising and donations. This is a significant amount of money coming into the Humber and Wolds region (East Riding of Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire).



William Stephenson Memorial Hall  
Althorpe



The newly refurbished  
Flamborough W.I. Hall

Habrough Village Hall



## Promotion of the Project

Initial promotion of the project was through an article in “Humbrella”, the H.W.R.C.C.’s bi-monthly newsletter. An article was also included in “Hallo” the bi-monthly newsletter for village hall committees produced by the Village Hall Advisory Team at H.W.R.C.C. and distributed with “Humbrella”.

The Outreach Officer was provided with a list of village halls that had received Building Audit Reports from the Sustainability Project Officer. An introduction letter was sent to 32 management committees between April 2004 and January 2005. The letter explained what help and support the Outreach Officer could provide if they were considering grant applications to carry out any recommended improvements to the hall.

The Outreach Officer attended the following events around the region to publicise the project:

- Seminar and Workshop at Newport Recreation Hall 22.02.2005
- Seminar and Workshop at Market Weighton Village Hall 26.04.2005
- Seminar and Workshop at Wilberfoss Village Hall 17.05.2005
- Funding Maze in Scunthorpe 2004, 2005 and 2006
- Funding Fair in Driffield 2004
- Funding Fair in Goole in 2006
- H.W.R.C.C. Road Show 2004 and 2005
- Howden Show 2004
- Village Hall Conference 2005

## Targets and Outputs

When the original application to R.E.S. for the funding of an Outreach Officer was completed, a target of 29 village hall applications was suggested. This figure equated to one application per month, from the production of the business plan template in April 2004 to the end of the project in September 2006. As the project developed the targets changed.

From May 2004 to the end of December 2004 a total of 4 village hall applications for R.E.S. funding were received. On average the application process had taken 4 months to complete. It was soon realised that the original targets had been unrealistic and some of the following factors that could affect timescales had not been taken into account:

- The Community Consultation exercise
- Architect's plans/drawings where required
- Structural surveys where required
- Feasibility studies where required
- Planning permission where required
- Obtaining estimates/quotes from contractors
- Match funding applications where required
- Local fund-raising
- Finding the means to bank-roll the start of the project until claims could be made

Other unforeseen factors into why applications could take a considerable length of time were:

- Only one committee member being responsible for the application process. It became evident that where the workload was distributed amongst a few willing committee members the timescale was reduced.

- The Outreach Officer was only available 2 days a week, as this was a 15-hour per week post. This time restraint sometimes caused delays in answering enquiries from committees and created difficulties with the time-tabling of visits to halls.

When completing the end of year report 2004 it was agreed with the Rural Development Service (R.D.S.) representative that the targets be reduced to 22 village hall applications.

At the end of the second year a further 6 applications had been received but had taken on average over 9 months from initial contact visit to completion of the application (a considerable increase from the first year).

R.D.S. informed the Outreach Officer that the scheme would hold the final panel meeting in July 2006. Applications for this final panel meeting would have to be received by R.D.S. staff for assessment by June 2006. This reduced the project delivery time by 3 months. The scheme (R.E.S.) was showing signs of being oversubscribed and budget restrictions could affect panel decisions. R.D.S. also recommended that any village halls who were only just beginning their projects or village halls who may not meet the new deadlines, should be signposted to other funding organisations. They could nonetheless be included in to the output totals for the project. The Outreach Officer suggested that in view of these restrictions the project's targets be reduced to 12 applications.

A letter was sent to all management committees, who were working towards an application to R.E.S., setting out the panel dates for 2006 and the deadlines for receipt of applications. These committees worked incredibly hard to meet the 2006 deadlines and a further 6 applications from village halls and 1 application from a rural museum were received following Outreach Officer support. Two other committees who could not meet the final deadline applied for WREN Landfill Tax Credit funding.

***Comment from the Outreach Officer Feedback Form:***

**“The Outreach Officer made us believe that we could achieve our objectives.”**

## Completed Applications

Nafferton Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Boynton Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Althorpe William Stephenson Memorial Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Flamborough Women's Institute	Successful R.E.S. application
Middleton on the Wolds Village Hall and Reading Rooms	Successful R.E.S. application
Bonby Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Habrough Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Barmby Moor Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Barmston and Fraisthorpe Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Sutton on Derwent Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
Wold Newton Village Community Centre	Successful R.E.S. application
Millington Village Hall	Successful R.E.S. application
South Burn Museum	Successful R.E.S. application
New Ellerby Methodist Church Hall	Completed application-withdrawn before final panel meeting
Newport Recreation Hall	Completed application-withdrawn before final panel meeting
Kirton on Lindsey Jubilee Town Hall	Completed application-withdrawn before final panel meeting
Yapham Parish Hall	Completed application-withdrawn before final panel meeting
Atwick Village Hall	Successful WREN application
Bainton Village Hall	Successful WREN application



Barmston and Fraisthorpe  
Village Hall

Millington Village Hall



Wold Newton Village  
Community Centre

## Outputs

- 63 Village Halls were contacted to offer the assistance of the Village Hall Outreach Officer service.
- 40 management committees were provided with the business plan templates, information and other aids to help them complete applications for R.E.S. funding.
- 32 management committees have completed their community consultation and the results analysed.
- 17 applications for R.E.S. funding were submitted to DEFRA.
- 13 were successful applications.
- 4 management committees had to withdraw their applications for various reasons.
- 2 Village Halls were advised to apply to WREN when R.E.S. became over-subscribed. Both applications were successful.
- 3 Village Halls received support with future WREN applications.
- 13 Village Halls are still receiving support with grant funding applications for sustainability projects.
- £311,414 has been received in grant aid from R.E.S.
- £621,050 has been received in grant aid from other funding organisations and charitable trusts to be used as match funding for some of these projects.
- £103,321 has been raised in local funds, in-kind contributions, private donations.
- £8,637 has been donated by Parish Councils.
- £27,567 has been donated by other sources e.g. local councils.

## Delivery of the Project

The Outreach Officer Project followed on from the Village Halls Sustainability Project. The Sustainability Project began in January 2003. The project's aim was to advise groups on how to increase access in the building by complying with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. By creating a building accessible to everyone there was the potential to increase the numbers of people using the facilities. The project also looked at ways of reducing running costs by improving energy efficiency in the hall. A combination of increasing the usage of the hall and reducing running costs would provide the management committees with an increased cash flow. This could be used for future maintenance and continued marketing of the hall resulting in a sustainable building. The Sustainability Project officer provided the committees with a Building Audit report following site visits. Thirty-two committees who had received an audit were contacted by the Outreach Officer to offer assistance with the next stage of improving their halls.

The improvements to access and introduction of energy saving measures were to form the essential elements of a village hall refurbishment and sustainability project. Other elements of the project could be obtained from the local community themselves, following the carrying out of a community consultation exercise. The Outreach officer could assist at every stage of this consultation process. This exercise provided evidence of the need for the project to go ahead and also highlighted particular improvements to the building that the committee could consider, such as improved toilet and kitchen facilities. Popular activities that could be held in the hall were also identified through the community consultation.

Armed with this information the committee could then carry out an options appraisal and make informed decisions as to what improvements were required. Some projects were extremely modest whereas others involved quite substantial extensions and even new-builds. Once committees had obtained estimates or quotes for the work to be carried out, the Village Hall team at H.W.R.C.C. would help them identify possible sources of grant funding.

Where R.E.S. was a suitable funding source the Outreach Officer would then contact the management committee and meet them to discuss the application process. At this initial meeting with the committee a presentation would be delivered. This would explain the help and

support the group could expect with the production of a business plan to accompany the R.E.S. funding application and any other match funding applications that also required a business plan.

The amount of support each committee obtained varied according to the committees' abilities and the size and complexities of the project. Some committees required information and answers relating to quite technical questions, others simply needed encouragement and reassurance. They all had the satisfaction of knowing the Village Hall Outreach Officer was available whenever they required assistance.

The following aids were produced by the Outreach Officer to assist committees with the complexities of applying for grant funding.

- A "Steps to Consider" document was provided to committees to outline various steps that they would need to take before they were ready to apply for funding (Appendix 2). As they worked their way through these stages they would obtain information that could be used in the Business Plan/Project Proposal.
- A template for the R.E.S. Business Plan/Project Proposal was approved by DEFRA's Rural Development Service (R.D.S.) as a useful aid to completing the Business Plan in the format required by R.E.S.
- An example Project Proposal was produced using a fictitious village and village hall. This gave committees a "Blue Peter-here's one I did earlier" example of a completed Project Proposal. This particular aid received excellent comments on the Client Feedback forms.

***Evaluation question from the Outreach Officer Feedback Form:***

Did you find the Business Plan /Project Proposal template very useful, useful, or not very useful?

**80% thought the template was very useful and 20% thought the template was useful.**

Did you find the Kirk Village Hall Model Project Proposal very useful, useful, or not very useful?

**86.66% thought the Model was very useful and 13.33% thought the Model was useful.**

**Comments from the Outreach Officer Feedback Forms :**

**“ Without the backup of the Outreach Officer the form filling would have been daunting.”**

**Case Study (1)**

Nafferton Village Hall had a high ceiling with no insulation and the main hall took a long time to heat up. The boiler was noisy and inefficient. For 30 years the committee had talked about installing an insulated suspended



ceiling but had decided against it because badminton was played in the hall. When it became clear the boiler needed replacing and the cost of oil was increasing, they decided it was time to act.

To everyone's surprise, installing the suspended ceiling has not stopped badminton being played. Switching to gas, installing two boilers to provide heat to different parts of the building and siting the boilers above the stage have not only contributed to energy efficiency but has given the Village Hall some much needed room.

**Comments from the Outreach Officer Feedback Forms:**

**“ By offering advice , support and encouragement the Village Hall Outreach Officer made me feel I was not alone. She was just a telephone call away. An excellent service.”**

## Case Study (2)

Boynton Village Hall is a modern, single storey, attractive, comfortable and accessible building in the village of Boynton in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The management committee, led by the chairman were and still are an enthusiastic pro-active group. The group first contacted the Outreach Officer in June 2004. At that time a member of the Village Hall Team was working with the group to form a new management committee, adopt a model governing document and register the charity with the Charity Commission. The Outreach Officer visited the old hall and listened to their plans for the future.

The old village hall was an unused World War 2 wooden nissen hut. It had no heating system or running water and was situated at the top of a steep ramp at the side of a lane in the village. The group planned to demolish the old hut and build a new modern and accessible hall for the local community. They already had architect's drawings and estimated they would need around £100,000 in grant aid to pay for a new hall. They displayed the plans in the old hall and invited members of the community to view them and pass any comments. This was the first "new build" project the Outreach Officer was involved with and it appeared to offer excellent value for money.

As part of a short-term action plan the first thing the group was advised to do was to carry out a community consultation, to find out what community opinion was in regard to having a new village hall. They were supplied with an example questionnaire to adapt for their needs. This was then installed onto a laptop computer. The computer could be used to input the data from the completed questionnaires and the computer software was then able to analyse the results and produce a report. The group could now use this report to help them carry out an options appraisal. They were advised to obtain as many letters of support from interested new user groups and members of the community. It was very important that the group consider energy efficient measures as part of their project. They also had to apply for planning permission and to register the land with the land registry. Bearing in mind the results of the community consultation, Disability Discrimination Act and energy efficiency they could then make informed decisions about what facilities and services the new village hall should have.

The group were then in a position to look at funding opportunities. As the village is located close to both a WREN landfill site and a Biffa site, it was suggested that they should apply to both these funding schemes and also



Defra's Rural Enterprise Scheme. The Outreach Officer provided the group with the business plan template that had been produced to help groups prepare a business plan for R.E.S. and as other large funders also accepted the template's format there was no duplication of work. The chairman worked hard on the business plan with the help of other committee members. A projected cash flow is required in the business plan and as part of long term planning the group had to consider how they would continue to market the hall to ensure a steady increase in user groups. By considering energy efficiency they could show that the running costs were being kept to a minimum. A combination of an increased income and low running costs would provide the group with a disposable income to spend on future maintenance and continued marketing of the hall. This would result in a sustainable situation.

The issue of finding a third party contributor to the two landfill schemes was discussed. The chairman contacted East Riding of Yorkshire Council to find out if they were eligible to apply for Commuted Sums (Section 106 funds). The group successfully received £10,000 and could use part of this grant as the 11% contribution required in third party funding to the WREN application of £48,854 and the Biffaward application of £17,437. They applied to R.E.S. through the "Fast Track system". This was available to them as the amount requested was below £15,000. This system enabled applications to be assessed and a decision made hopefully within four weeks. A request for an amount over £15,000 has to be discussed at a panel meeting. The community themselves held a variety of imaginative fund raising events and contributed £3,000 to the project. They also applied to Awards For All for a sum of £5,000 for kitchen equipment, tables and chairs. They received £270 from local donations.

All documentation and evidence of need was collated and included with the business plan and completed applications. The applications were all successful and the community themselves decided to demolish the old building in a community ceremony. They held a huge bonfire to send the old building off in style. A member of the management committee who owned a digger lowered the site and a local building contractor, whose estimate had impressed the group, began the work. The new hall was erected in record time and lovingly decorated and fitted with soft furnishings by local people.

In total this group raised £96,262 in grant aid, £3,270 in local funds and £4,800 in in-kind contributions.

To bank roll the project it was suggested the committee apply to ACRE's Village Hall Loan Fund for a short term loan until claims and payments from funders were received. ACRE can approve loans up to £20,000 although higher amounts can be considered. The loans incur interest if they are used but no redemption charges are incurred for early repayment of the loan.

This was an amazingly successful and enjoyable project to be involved with. It brought the whole community together. The chairman of the committee felt that part of their success was due to decisions being made by only four or five people which helped speed up this process. With the projected surplus cash flow the group will be able to cover the cost of future maintenance and continued marketing of the hall. As the population of Boynton changes in terms of age and needs, then the activities available at the hall will also need to change.

The new hall is accessible, energy efficient, comfortable and a safe environment for the community of Boynton. It is used for a wide variety of activities and is booked almost every day of the week.



**The Old Village Hall**



**The New Village Hall**

***Comments from the Outreach Officer Feedback Form:***

**“With the help of the business plan template it was made very easy to complete our own. Due to the excellent information provided we felt that along with the Outreach Officer’s guidance we successfully produced our own business plan. She could not have helped us any more. The service was first class.”**

**“We had no idea as to what was involved in applying for grant aid. Had it not been for H.W.R.C.C., we feel that we would not have had the confidence or knowledge to apply for the grants. There have been many visits to us and numerous phone calls and faxes which have enabled us to get as far as we have now.”**

## **Outcomes - (The Benefits from the Outreach Officer Project)**

**R.D.S.** had the benefit of receiving high quality R.E.S. applications from the village halls in our region. This Project may have enabled them to reach their own regional targets and fulfil their required outputs.

**Match Funders** have also benefited from receiving high quality applications from the village halls in our region, where they have been selected as a source of match funding for the village hall projects. The Outreach Officer Project may have enabled them to reach their own regional targets and fulfil their required outputs.

**H.W.R.C.C.** has had another member in the Village Hall Team. Although the Outreach Officer has had a specific project to focus on, the officer has played an important part in the team. The H.W.R.C.C. offers a “one stop shop” service to the village halls in the Humber and Wolds region and the officer has been able to answer enquiries and pass on information to management committees. The Outreach Officer has taken part in workshops, delivered presentations at the Village Hall Conference, attended funding fairs and funding mazes, taken part in the H.W.R.C.C. Rural Road-shows and helped to produce the bi-monthly newsletter dedicated to village hall management committees.

**The Village Hall Management Committees** have had support, help and encouragement from the Outreach Officer to complete their applications for funding to improve their community buildings. They have demonstrated real capacity building. Their confidence and skills have grown and developed during this process. Although they have received support and aids to assist them, it has been their own efforts, their decisions and the following of correct procedures that have led to some amazing successes. They have achieved things they thought were impossible at the onset of their projects.

**The Local Communities** whose village halls have had successful grant applications now have improved facilities to take part in educational and social activities. These are facilities that more urban areas may take for granted. By providing the community with a venue that is accessible to everyone, safe, comfortable, hygienic and energy efficient the management committees are helping to reduce rural isolation and social exclusion in their own local community. By having a mutual goal for their neighbourhood, these communities have been brought together.

**Local Contractors** have benefited from the successful village hall applications for funding. The building projects are carried out by local builders, electricians, architects, joiners, plumbers, painters and decorators etc., often providing additional work for some labourers in the Region.

**Regional Economy** - As a result of the Outreach Officer Projects the successful village halls have been awarded £311,414 in R.E.S. grants. With the addition of successful match funding, local fundraising and donations the totals increase to £1,071,989.

**Environmental Benefits** - The sustainability projects undertaken by the village halls have included the introduction of energy saving measures and water saving initiatives. These measures will help to reduce the amount of energy and water being used by the village hall and ultimately reduce the hall's running costs. This also has a positive impact on the environment as any building projects must now consider climate change and consider ways of sustaining the earth's resources.



Barmby Moor Village Hall  
East Riding

## Conclusion (Findings and Recommendations)

### Findings

- The Outreach Officer Project has been a successful project.
- Comments from the Feedback Form indicated that 66% of those questioned would not have applied for R.E.S. funding without the assistance the officer provided.
- The application process and the production of the business plan was too daunting for some management committees to undertake. All Village Hall Committees should have equal access to funding opportunities regardless of abilities and time restraints.
- The application process took several months and in some cases almost two years to complete. Several committees were unable to meet the deadline for the final panel meeting. These committees still require support and signposting to other funders.
- The committees from Village Halls that have been refurbished have noticed an increase in the number of groups and individuals hiring the hall. However this information and any reduction in running costs should be monitored over the next few years.
- The reasons why some committees had to withdraw their applications was where match funding was not in place already and difficulties finding an acceptable way of bank rolling the project.

#### ***Comments from the Outreach Officer Feedback Form:***

***“ Without the Outreach Officer’s assistance and encouragement we would not have attempted to apply for the grant”***

## Recommendations

- The outcomes from Village Hall Sustainability Projects should be recognised and valued by funding bodies. Facilities, often taken for granted by people in more urban areas, are valued and desperately needed by communities in rural villages. If these buildings are lost they are lost forever, therefore it is vital that funding organisations grasp the opportunity to help preserve these essential rural assets.
- Funding should be given to organisations like H.W.R.C.C. to enable them to continue providing much needed outreach support to village hall management committees considering funding applications.
- Application processes could be simplified or customised for community building applicants, particularly for requests for smaller amounts (less than £15,000). This could be achieved without compromising on the information needed to establish value for money and the viability of the project.
- The committees who received the assistance of the Outreach Officer but were unable to meet the final deadlines for R.E.S., should continue to receive support with applications to other funding bodies.
- Monitoring should be carried out at all Village Halls where committees have been successful with their funding applications. This monitoring should record the increase in numbers using the hall and any reduction in running costs (taking into account the recent price increases in energy supplies). The outcome from this monitoring should demonstrate that the hall will be sustainable in the future and what impact the refurbished building has had on the lives of the local community.
- Where an applicant requires match funding, the application should not be deferred until the match funding is successful. This can create a “stand off” situation as other funders impose the same condition. It would be more reasonable to make a conditional award.
- Management committees often have difficulty bank-rolling projects until claims are made. If funders paid contractors’ invoices on the applicants behalf (as the Landfill Tax Credit Schemes do) or issued part of the grant on receipt of signed contracts, then the need for bank-rolling could be abolished.

**HUMBER & WOLDS RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**VILLAGE HALL OUTREACH OFFICER FEEDBACK FORM**

The Humber & Wolds Rural Community Council seeks to improve the services it provides to its beneficiaries and your feedback on recent contact with us will help us to assess our performance and quality.

Completing this form will not result in unsolicited communication unless you give your permission.

Please use the following to express your information.

<b>Organisation</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	

In order to complete your application for Rural Enterprise Scheme funding administered by defra, you were asked to produce a business plan/project proposal. The Village Hall Outreach Officer provided you with information and aids to help you with your application and business plan/project proposal. Would you kindly indicate below if these were useful to you by adding your comments under the relevant headings written below?

	<b>Very useful</b>	<b>Useful</b>	<b>Not very useful</b>
<b>Advice on how to create the Project Proposal</b>			
<b>The Business Plan/Project Proposal template</b>			
<b>The Kirk Village Hall Model Project Proposal</b>			
<b>The floppy disc containing the Microsoft Word and Excel documents and tables</b>			
<b>The Kirk Village Hall example application forms Part 1 and 2</b>			

**Would you have considered applying for R.E.S. funding without the assistance of the Village Hall Outreach Officer?**  
**Were you treated with respect and courtesy?**  
**Were you offered further help and assistance if you required it?**  
**Were your needs fully met?**  
**Would you use our service again?**

Yes	No

**Which section of the business plan/project proposal did you find the most difficult to complete?**  
**Please write your comments below.**

**Do you have any suggestions how the service provided by the Outreach Officer could have been improved? Please write your comments below.**

**What difference did the assistance of the Village Hall Outreach Officer make to you?**  
**Please write your comments below.**

**Are you aware of the full range of services provided by the Rural Community Council?**

**Yes                      No**

**Would you like to receive more information about the Rural Community Council?**

**Yes                      No**

**If you have raised issues of concern may we contact you for more details or to discuss the matter personally?**

**Yes                      No**

**Thank you for completing this Village Hall Outreach Officer Feedback Form. You should have been sent a SAE for returning it to the address given. If however this has not been provided please post the form to us, tick the box below and your costs will be reimbursed.**

<b>SAE not provided</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------	--------------------------

**For the attention of Mrs. Margaret Kirk  
Humber & Wolds Rural Community Council, 14 Market Place, Howden, Goole, East Riding of Yorkshire. DN14 7BJ. Tel: 01430 430904.**

**Registered Charity 505489**

## **Steps you should consider to lead you to a Village Hall Sustainability Project**

- 1. A Building Audit** – Looks at the existing building, its current facilities and services and suggests ways these can be improved in order to make the building accessible for all and more energy efficient.
- 2. Community Consultation** – The most effective way of proving there is a need for your project is to consult your community. This exercise helps you find out what your community need, what opinions they have and is essential to any application for funding.
- 3. Options Appraisal** – Combining the Buildings Audit recommendations, the Community Consultation analysis, any professional advice you have received and the committee's "wish list," you can now carry out an options appraisal. Things to consider could be – a) Do we leave things as they are at present? b) Do we refurbish/extend the building? c) Do we demolish the building and build a new one? Whatever you decide remember to be realistic and put yourselves in the funder's shoes.
- 4. Decision Making** – Your project should aim to provide your community with a building that is a safe, comfortable, hygienic environment, and accessible to all. You should now know what work needs doing to create sustainability. Sustainability is achieved when a combination of attracting more users and reduced running costs, as a benefit of the project, result in an increase in profit. This increase enables you to cover future maintenance costs and continued marketing of your building to attract more users.
- 5. Things to consider** – Based on what your project involves, you may need planning permission, architect's plans, compliance with building regulations, or a feasibility study. You will need estimates or quotes from at least two contractors and will have to clarify with customs and excise whether V.A.T. will be zero-rated.
- 6. Funding Sources** – Based on how much funding is required and the location of the building, there are several different funding sources. All have different criteria for you to consider and quite different application processes. We can help you decide which funding organisation would be suitable to your project.

**The Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council  
Village Halls Advisory Team can help with all of the items  
listed above. You are not alone, we can advise and  
support you every step of the way.**



This report is published by Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council ©2006, an independent local charity working to support rural communities in the East Riding of Yorkshire, North and North East Lincolnshire. Founded in 1975, it aims to strengthen community life by offering information, advice, support and training.



Humber & Wolds  
Rural Community Council

*We'll work with you to make the difference locally*

Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council

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