



PRESS RELEASE

Issued 19 May 2008

Cumbrian experience an inspiration for others

THE Prince of Wales is the first to receive a copy of a DVD looking at how rural communities in Cumbria are adapting to the loss of vital services.

And as public consultation on the Post Office closures comes to an end, Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC) release the DVD worldwide, free of charge via their website.

The documentary highlights the impact of the loss of vital services for rural communities. As well as a download version, 100 hard copies are being sent to key service providers - including the Post Office - to raise awareness of the effects of rural service loss and highlight the real impact their decisions have on rural communities and people in Cumbria.

Ambassador for Cumbria, Eric Robson, who presents the film "A Loss for Everyone" said: "This project could have been seriously depressing. But, and I really shouldn't have been surprised, what shines through is the resilience and creativity of local people who are finding their own innovative solutions to the problems caused by service reduction or withdrawal. My money's on them"

The DVD showcases the successes communities have achieved in the face of declining rural services, such as the community owned shop in Nenthead, the post office in the Punch Bowl Inn in Crosthwaite, and the Crosthwaite Exchange.

Part of the wider Sustainable Rural Services project, the DVD includes interviews with Dr Stuart Burgess, the Government's Rural Advocate, Rob Hindle, regional expert in rural services and Roger Roberts, VAC Chief Executive at the 'From Rhetoric to Reality: A Future for Rural Services?' conference held in Melmerby.

Dr Stuart Burgess said: "I was delighted to have the opportunity to chair VAC's conference on rural services and to make a contribution to the DVD that's being launched today.

"Access to services is a key factor in the vitality and sense of community within rural areas and it is important that government's policies reflect the social benefits that local

services contribute and recognise the increased cost of their provision in remoter communities.

“I hope this DVD will help inspire rural communities in Cumbria, and elsewhere, to develop creative solutions to ensure the continued provision of key services and share what they have learned so other communities can benefit from their experience”

Funded by Defra’s Rural Social and Community Programme, VAC have been compiling information for the initiative over a two year period, talking to people in isolated areas of Cumbria, where services have been cut.

The DVD, additional reports and guidance are available to download via the VAC website www.ruralcumbria.org.uk/community/ruralservices.html or on request by contacting VAC on Tel: 01768 840827

- Ends -

VAC holds copyright of the ‘Loss for Everyone’ DVD and gives permission for you to broadcast extracts or use on your website. Visit www.ruralcumbria.org.uk/community/ruralservices.html or contact VAC for a hard copy.

Further press information available from:

Roger Roberts, Voluntary Action Cumbria – Chief Executive
Tel: 01768 869535 or Email rogerroberts@ruralcumbria.org.uk

Dani Hudson, Voluntary Action Cumbria – Admin Officer
Tel: 01768 869511 or Email: danihudson@ruralcumbria.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Voluntary Action Cumbria

- VAC is Cumbria’s Rural Community Council and a registered charity.
- VAC is working with people and communities to improve the quality of life in rural Cumbria.
- VAC is an independent organisation able to work with a wide range of partners on an open and equitable basis.
- Established in 1948, for 60 years VAC has been supporting communities that are socially, economically and environmentally vibrant where the needs of all are considered.
- To find out more information, please visit VAC’s website: www.ruralcumbria.org.uk