



Focus on...

GRCC's Village of the Year 2014



Village of the Year In Touch Award - Tetbury



Village of the Year Community Led-Planning Team Award - West Dean

HOW GRCC CAN HELP YOU

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council is a registered charity which has been working in the county since 1923 and has a long-standing knowledge of rural issues both locally and nationally. GRCC is a member of ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England). If you need advice or information about affordable housing, transport, the environment, parish planning, older people, village halls, shops and post offices or health and social care please contact GRCC to speak to one of our specialist advisers on 01452 528491 or visit our website at www.grcc.org.uk. GRCC is dedicated to enriching the lives of people living in rural Gloucestershire by supporting them through change and by enabling them to determine and develop their own communities by:

- Supporting, advising and consulting with the people who live and work in rural areas, to identify their needs and to develop local projects;
- Working in partnership with local, regional and national statutory and voluntary organisations and the rural communities.

G RCC has been privileged over the years to showcase some of the most innovative and wonderful examples of how communities work together for the benefit of all and in particular the individuals who make it all happen. This year has been no exception and on these pages, we showcase the winners of each category together with the overall winner and runner up.

Overall Winner - Dymock

When trying to decide the overall winner, the judges went back to the strapline for the competition; 'Celebrating Community Life'. Whilst all villages visited demonstrated this in varying degrees, they felt two in particular stood out.

Winner - Dymock, Forest of Dean

Deciding on this year's winner gave the judges a real headache, as so many good examples were presented to them on their visits. However, in the end they were unanimous in agreeing that, due to the breadth and imagination of their community projects, one village was a clear winner. This community has joined together for the benefit of all. No one person is wholly responsible for their success. Building on their successful celebration of the Diamond Jubilee in 2012



Village of the Year Growing Great Futures Award Bromsberrow

they have managed to keep the momentum going. Their half marathon, mini Olympics, 1950s tea party, pram race, fete and music festival involve the whole community. This is encouraged by an imaginative ticket pricing. It's all free if you are under five or over 80. It is not the events themselves that captured the judges' imagination, but the way funds raised have been used to support and encourage all sections of the community in reaching out to others.

Runner Up - St Briavels, Forest of Dean

One community had come together to raise a very large sum of money, used to rebuild and reinvent their Assembly Rooms. The

project has turned a previously barely used building into a village hub which now offers a very wide range of services and activities benefitting all sections of the community.

The village also supports many other community owned and run assets, a community cafe, local produce market, wind turbine and others too numerous to mention. The judges found a true sense of a community working together.

Advice Team Award - Dymock, Forest of Dean

GRCC was looking for a community project that's made a real difference. It could be an affordable housing scheme, community

orchard/allotment, community trust, recycling initiative, community shop, pub or hub, community run services, community building, energy saving scheme or any other initiative.

In selecting the winner of this category the judges looked for a project that, as well as making a difference, showed originality and community spirit. The winners built upon their 2012 Jubilee celebration to produce a festival which is growing by the year, now boasting two stages; one for general bands including nationally known performers, and another where local groups can demonstrate their musical and poetry talents. This event has raised increasingly large sums of money for community projects and shows every sign of continuing to grow.

Community Led-Planning Team Award - Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End

GRCC was looking for a community that involved people in making decisions about their future

Whilst visiting the villages, the judges were shown several examples of community plans, either completed or in progress. One stood out as an excellent demonstration of how a whole community can be involved in such an enterprise. Neighbourhood Development plans are an

important innovation and a number are in progress throughout the county, but the winner came across as well ahead of the field. They have held a number of very well attended and professionally run consultation events, The committee includes members from business, residents, community organisations and local schools. Their emerging vision for the area includes the promotion of the area as a tourist hub and the development of a large site within their neighbourhood for the common good. They expect to present their completed plan to the community in a referendum in the coming months.

Growing Great Futures Award - Bromsberrow, Forest of Dean

GRCC was looking for initiatives involving children and young people. The winner of this category was a small community on the edge of the county who, finding their local amenities in decline, decided to do something about it themselves. They rented space in an industrial unit and set up a community shop. From the start, a conscious decision was made to include the young people of the community in its development, by involving the local primary school and encouraging young volunteers. Set up as an Industrial & Provident Society, the shop is now developing into more of a social hub

with a thriving cafe area which has become a popular meeting place. The team of committed volunteers who seem to be willing to turn their hands to anything includes a number of young people whose efforts are much appreciated.

In Touch Award - Tetbury, Cotswolds

GRCC was looking for a community that both supported older people and regarded them as an asset. Many of the communities the judges visited were making efforts to improve the lives of older people, but none better than the winner of this category. Their community has three day centres for older people providing lunches and activities during the day. In August a special effort was made to help those older people unable to get away to have a 'Holiday at Home'. The scheme runs over two days and provides a real mini break for people; with transport from their homes, meals, activities and entertainment. The idea, organised by Churches Together in the area attracts many volunteers from all parts of the community who give their time and effort to make it a success.

For more information on the work of GRCC and Village of the Year, please visit the website at www.grcc.org.uk or call the team on 01452 528491.