



the coalfields
regeneration trust



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Further Information

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Communities that Work!



changing the face of coalfield communities



Communities that Work! is a new approach to delivering a range of activities and services, in response to community need while at the same time addressing the issues of worklessness, lack of confidence and low skills. Working in partnership, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust will contribute to achieving the Communities that Work! goal – to make coalfield communities a better place to live, work, learn and enjoy.

communities that **work!**

Changing

During the 1980s and 1990s, the majority of the UK's mines suffered closure, leaving only a few pits still operational. The effects of these closures have been devastating – not just on those who lost their jobs, but also on their families and the wider community. With the loss of a primary industry, many towns and villages have seen the withdrawal of a whole community infrastructure, a sharp decline in the local economy, and a corresponding sharp rise in the social problems associated with deprivation.

Despite the difficulties they face, there are many existing and potential community activists and volunteers in coalfields neighbourhoods with the drive and vision to achieve real positive change – provided they receive the appropriate support.

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust was formed as an independent charity in 1999 to give that support, and is the only regeneration agency dedicated to the social and economic regeneration of coalfield communities.

The Trust provides more than grant-aid. In many cases considerable support is needed to help community groups turn a good regeneration idea into a successful working project. This development support is provided by the Trust's Regeneration Managers, who work closely with each group to ensure that their project is strong and viable before a grant application is submitted.

By combining a special understanding of coalfield issues with an ability to forge ongoing relationships, build capacity and take measured risks on projects that other funders would not consider, the Trust has become a unique and indispensable force in the regeneration of the UK's coalfields communities.

Listening

The first step in the Communities that Work! programme is listening to local residents. The Trust engages with local people by carrying out independent community consultations in order to gather the experience and perceptions on the issues that really matter.

From these consultation events we know that a great sense of community spirit and pride exists within former coalfield areas. But although concerns vary from one community to another the key issues include:

- A sense of fear among older people and a perceived lack of youth service provision has led to a mutual sense of suspicion between different generations
- The need to improve community facilities and to engage with a greater number of residents, many of whom feel alienated within the community
- Persistent barriers to a better quality of life, such as a lack of social networks, affordable childcare, and limited employment offers, have restricted the aspirations for the future.



Responding

In response to residents views and within the context of worklessness and limited opportunities, the Trust has set out an ambitious plan in each area to address these challenges. The Communities that Work! plans set out a range of activities that will meet the needs of local residents through improving community facilities, removing barriers to employment and raising the aspirations of the community as a whole. These activities are designed around the specific needs of each coalfield community.



Taking action

The key ingredient to the success of the Communities that Work! programme is the commitment and drive from all partners – the Trust, local residents, service delivery agencies and the wider community sector. By working together in each area and addressing the specific issues within each community, the Communities that Work! programme will make a real and lasting difference to the people who really matter – and each community will be a better place to live, work, learn and enjoy.

Transforming

Looking forward over the next few years, the Communities that Work! programme will make a lasting difference. In each area the Trust will work alongside residents and delivery partners in order to:

- Reduce the levels of worklessness
- Removing existing barriers to opportunity
- Raise the aspirations of the community as a whole, in particular the younger generation.

For further information on the Communities that Work! programme please contact info@coalfields-regen.org.uk