

Appendix 4: Rural Action Derbyshire Overview Report 2021-22

Rural Action Derbyshire aims to improve the quality of life for Derbyshire residents, by empowering people in rural communities to take action to address disadvantage, become more sustainable and increase local control.

The charity has eight key areas of activity:

Wheels to Work and Wellbeing - helping people get to work or training

Financial Inclusion - working with partners to help address financial disadvantage

Community Oil Buying Scheme - helping 'off-gas' properties have access to affordable heating oil

Village Halls Support - providing expert advice for the volunteers that run village halls and community buildings

Rural Domestic Abuse Awareness - raising awareness around rural domestic abuse, including free training for people working or living in Derbyshire

Suicide Awareness Training - with funding from Public Health at DCC, providing free training for frontline workers dealing with vulnerable people

Food Poverty - working with groups around the county to address food poverty and support food banks.

Digital Inclusion - helping to reduce the county's digital divide

Within South Derbyshire grant funding contributes towards the provision of:

- Village Halls and Community Buildings Support
- Community Oil Buying Scheme and fuel poverty work
- Support for rural community project development eg warm hubs
- Support for core activities such as development, promotion and fund raising to improve sustainability and widen reach into rural communities

Edited Extract from Annual Review 2021- 22

The team at Rural Action Derbyshire have worked tirelessly to attempt to stem the tide of people struggling to make ends meet. We have secured additional investment into our work around food poverty to pilot the first phase of community pantries and expand our Healthy Holiday programme with funding secured from Derbyshire County Council. We have made 81 awards of cash or white goods to Derbyshire residents suffering severe financial hardship, totalling more than £15,000.

We launched an Oil Bank in 2021 in response to rocketing heating oil prices, which saw the cost of a minimum order more than double from around £225 to more than £500 in a matter of months. We supported 6 people who could not afford to pay for oil, leaving them without heating or hot water.

We are proud of our success in persuading the media to cover our campaigns to raise awareness of the financial crisis in rural areas. We have highlighted rural hardship on BBC Countryfile, to an audience of 6m people, and on BBC Radio Derby and BBC East Midlands Today, where we have spoken about financial and food insecurity.

We will continue to campaign with our national network, Action for Communities in Rural England, for a cohesive and comprehensive national rural strategy that recognises the need for investment in rural areas if they are to thrive as inclusive, diverse and sustainable communities. We will also seek to influence local policies to address rural disadvantage and work to provide opportunities for people to flourish.

Our Commitment to Diversity

We have joined 19 other charities across Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire to form the Anti Racist Alliance. Through this, we have agreed to a set of Anti Racist principles, and have pledged to go beyond a zero tolerance approach to racism and to commit to positive action to become and remain a proactive anti-racist organisation.

Our Year in Numbers

- 15 e-bulletins were sent to community buildings' committees during a period of great uncertainty
- 25,000 meals were provided to vulnerable children during school holidays
- Our 4 pilot community pantries have offered affordable meals to 720 vulnerable households
- We provided 45 people with bikes and mopeds, helping them to access work and training opportunities
- We provided rural domestic abuse awareness training to 100 people and The Willows Short Film on rural domestic abuse was distributed on YouTube by Rural Media - and received over 13,000 views in the first 10 months
- We helped to lower oil prices by up to 70% for our Community Oil Buying customers