



25 January 2011

Contact: Paul Dixon, Regional Network Officer, ACRE 01285 653477

New guide helps rural communities generate energy and cash

With the continued rise in energy costs many people are finding it hard to make ends meet and to keep warm in the cold weather. Research by the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) has shown that there is a higher proportion of households in fuel poverty in rural areas and there is an even higher proportion when the household is off grid. [1]

However, a new guide published by ACRE working with partners the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), the CRC and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), provides ideas and inspiration for rural communities, helping them to consider the options available to them when setting up a renewable energy scheme. It advocates the need to think about energy efficiency of the homes in their area and promotes the role that Community Led Planning can have in identifying the wider needs of the community. [2]

Paul Dixon, Regional Network Officer at ACRE says: "Rural communities have a tradition of supporting themselves and of finding their own solutions to address the issues they face. This guide can help communities to consider their options; by signposting to agencies that can provide further advice and information."

The guide titled, [Get Generating: A renewable energy guide for rural communities](#), includes case study examples, a number of them supported by Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) members, highlighting communities that have succeeded in making renewable energy work for them. It provides an overview of community based renewable energy options for rural community groups, local councils and individuals. The guide is a starting point and signposts more detailed sources of advice, information and help for rural communities to get generating and take the next step in planning and delivering their own renewable energy developments.

For further details and case studies download: [Get Generating: A renewable energy guide for rural communities](#)

Ends

For more information, please contact Paul Dixon, Regional Network Officer, ACRE on 01285 653477, or email p.dixon@acre.org.uk

Notes to the editor

1. 28% of those households who are not on the mains gas network in villages and hamlets are in fuel poverty compared with the 13% who are on the mains gas network. The comparative figures for urban areas are 18% and 12%. **State of the countryside 2010, page 57**
2. Community Led Planning (CLP) is a step-by-step process that enables every citizen to participate in, and contribute to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their local area. Already undertaken by approximately 4,000 communities across England, it represents an unparalleled opportunity for people to take responsibility for making things happen locally, rather than waiting on others to do it for them.
<http://www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning>
3. **Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)** is the national umbrella body for the Rural Community Action Network, providing a focus for national advocacy and support for its member organisations and the rural communities they serve. ACRE works strategically with government and with a range of national third sector organisations to reflect a rural perspective in policy and practice. ACRE is nationally recognised for its expertise in ensuring rural community-led solutions are central to public policy debate and manages the delivery of programmes that directly benefit grass roots communities. For more information about ACRE and its work go to www.acre.org.uk
4. The **Rural Community Action Network** covers the whole of rural England through the work of 37 local member organisations, eight regional bodies and ACRE. The local member organisations are all independent charities, largely county-based. As local development agencies, RCAN members have been facilitating social change in rural communities for decades by providing tailored and comprehensive support to rural communities to enhance their quality of life and access to services. With a strong focus on local advocacy and brokering relationships between rural community aspirations and local government strategies, RCAN members enhance the role of community action and self-reliance in rural areas across the country.
5. **CPRE**, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, is a charity which promotes the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England. We advocate positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside. Founded in 1926, we have 60,000 supporters and a branch in every county. President: Bill Bryson. Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. www.cpre.org.uk
6. **CRC**, the Commission for Rural Communities is a statutory body funded by government to help ensure that policies, programmes and decisions take proper account of the circumstances of rural communities. The CRC is required to have a particular focus on disadvantaged people and areas suffering from economic under-performance. On 29 June 2010, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced that the Commission for Rural Communities is to be abolished during 2011.
7. **NALC**, The National Association of Local Councils represents the interests of town and parish councils in England - a total of around 8,500 councils. The councils NALC represent serve electorates ranging from small rural communities to major cities, and are all independently elected. NALC provides support and advice to our members directly through a network of county associations.