



News

WHEN thinking about who is best placed to help a project develop, grow and flourish I feel lucky that as part of Village SOS we can call upon the skills of an impressive network of **Village SOS Mentors**. These are volunteers who truly have 'been there' and 'done it'.



It is always fascinating to learn from other projects and rural experts. Listening to how a project overcame a sticking point on a funding application; or how another successfully consulted with young people locally; or what were the benefits of one group taking ownership of their local church – it is this knowledge that offers real benefit to others.

Village SOS aims to promote how other projects work, picking their brains and sharing their

experiences. We actively encourage groups to go and visit others, meet them in person and learn from them. The ethos of community-to-community learning is right at the heart of what we want to achieve and we want you to become a part of the process. Please **sign up** now and join the campaign.

Chris Cowcher,

WHAT IS VILLAGE SOS?

Village SOS is a £1.4m Big Lottery funded learning, outreach and engagement campaign that will inspire rural communities across the UK to start social enterprises. It is led by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), supported by its Network of 38 rural community councils; Wales Council for Voluntary Action; Rocket Science, Senscot and Forth Sector in Scotland, and the Rural Community Network in Northern Ireland.

Sign up to keep in touch!

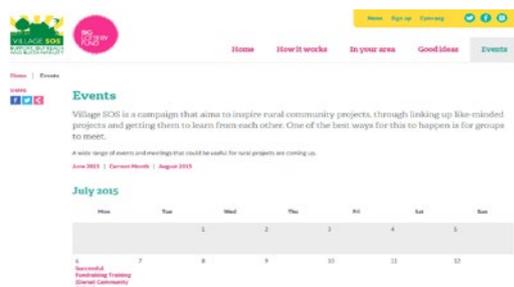
- Receive a fortnightly email with news, events, funding sources and community project updates.
- Receive our monthly newsletter.
- Be invited to join the Big Lottery Fund's online community.
- Get a copy of the 96-page 'How to create a successful community enterprise' book, featuring stories from VSOS community projects.



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Mentor training...

New volunteers who are signing up as a Village SOS Mentor are invited to attend one of our training sessions in Cheshire, Wrexham, Leicester and Edinburgh in September 2015. **Click here** to find out more.



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The Big Lottery online Community!

All members of the Village SOS campaign are invited to join the Big Lottery's online Community. The online Community is a new customer focused section on the Big Lottery website where members can ask questions, share and learn from each other. There is a dedicated **Village SOS group** which you can sign up to and start networking with others, learning about their projects, get expert advice and share your knowledge and experience.

At the heart of the Village SOS campaign is an ethos of learning from each other. Doing this in person is not always easy or practical, so we hope that you will help to make the online Community a vibrant place full of conversations, stories, advice and questions.

To get going on our community you will need to **register**. It's really simple and only takes a moment. Once you are a member you can edit your profile and tell other community members a little about yourself and why you are here.

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COULD YOU BE A VSOS MENTOR?

Robert Burns in that evocative poem of less hygienic times "To a louse" uttered the immortal phrase "O would some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us"

If you have ever thought about how you might share your stock of expertise with others this concept describes how you might do it through Village SOS.

Village SOS is a Big Lottery funded campaign designed to help rural residents wanting to do something useful in their own backyard. The role of the VSOS Mentor available to help each community in this process is to "hold up a mirror" to the idea and help the community navigate the first part of any project lifecycle

– getting their project from idea to plan.

This Village SOS campaign operates across the UK and provides an opportunity for mentors to work in a range of different settings, applying their knowledge of similar projects to different places. This process gives some people a real buzz. It not only challenges mentors them to think in different ways about what they have learned in the past, but provides a new lens through which to review their previous experience.

Have a read of my **blog** on the Village SOS website [www.villagesos.org.uk] to find out more about this role.

By Ivan Annibal, Rose Regeneration

Keep in touch

Visit our website at www.villagesos.org.uk

Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/VillageSOS

Follow us on Twitter [@VillageSOS](https://twitter.com/VillageSOS)

For more details, contact VSOS Community Manager **Chris Cowcher** on **01285 653477**. c.cowcher@acre.org.uk

Sign up!

To become a member of the Village SOS campaign, please [click here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COUNTRY PARTNERS

