

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Wise up to rural ageing!

Friday 1st October is UK Older People's day and Herefordshire's communications charity the Rural Media Company is working to keep the issues facing older people firmly on the local and national agenda.

According to Herefordshire Council figures, around 58% of those people who are of retirement age in Herefordshire live in rural areas. In general, rural areas are ageing faster than urban areas.

Hereford based The Rural Media Company has recently been awarded £300,000 over three years by the Nationwide Foundation to work on a project entitled *Over the Hill?*

Head of Production at Rural Media, Jane Jackson said, "Many older people aspire to a retirement in the countryside but the rural idyll is often shattered by the reality of trying to access the services that they need." She went on to say, "*Over the Hill?* will highlight some of the key issues for policy makers and the wider public – particularly with regard to rural older people's housing choices and the avoidance of financial exclusion."

The project has begun by exploring some of the innovative approaches that have been developed nationwide to deal with these challenges, such as a community led extra-care housing scheme in rural North Yorkshire and a demand led community transport strategy in Lincolnshire. These will be compiled into a DVD to be distributed throughout the UK to rural local authorities and parish councils.

Later this year, older people from across Herefordshire and surrounding rural counties will be invited to give their views on the approaches highlighted in the DVD: Do they like them? Would the ideas work in their communities? If not, why not?

To lobby policy makers and ensure as wide an audience as possible for the findings, The Rural Media Company is working closely with Age UK, Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), and the BBC.

Further information is available from Jan Bailey at the Rural Media Company: janb@ruralmedia.co.uk or 01432 344039. Alternatively, please visit the *Over the Hill?* webpage: www.ruralmedia.co.uk/over-the-hill-question.

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Notes to Editors

- **The Rural Media Company** www.ruralmedia.co.uk is a national media education, production and development charity based in Hereford. It receives support from ScreenWM, Elmley Foundation and Herefordshire Council.
- ***Over the Hill?*** is supported by the Nationwide Foundation.
- **UK Older People's Day** – further information is available at <http://fulloflife.direct.gov.uk/index.html>.
- **The Nationwide Foundation's Investor Programme** aims to tackle financial exclusion affecting disadvantaged groups and address housing issues and homelessness among vulnerable groups in the UK. They focus such support on survivors of domestic abuse and specific groups of disadvantaged older people. www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk.
- **Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)** is the rural community charity and the national arm of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN). ACRE is also the national champion of community led planning, a process that enables local people in a rural community to come together, explore local needs, issues and opportunities and develop a vision for their own future. Crucially, community led planning challenges communities to identify what part they can play in finding solutions and making it happen. www.acre.org.uk.
- **Age Concern and Help the Aged (UK)** have joined together to form a single charity, Age UK, dedicated to improving the lives of older people. The charity is driven by the needs and aspirations of people in later life. They support all people over 50 in the UK, ensuring that they get the most from life. They aim to re-shape our ageing society so that later life is a time of security and opportunity for all. They provide vital services to help older people in the UK to live independent, active lives as well as supporting a range of different international work around the globe. They campaign on issues like age discrimination and pensions, and work to influence public opinion and government policy about older people. They also carry out and fund a wide range of research on older people and ageing. www.ageuk.org.uk.