

PRESS RELEASE

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Date: 12th April 2010

'OVER THE HILL?'

A new campaign, highlighting the challenges faced by older people in rural areas, needs to hear from communities that are already addressing the problems of the rapidly greying countryside.

Launched by The Rural Media Company and funded by the Nationwide Foundation, the "Over The Hill?" project want to know about any initiatives and innovative approaches that are being used to improve housing and rural services and that are helping to avoid financial exclusion.

From rural warden schemes to co-operative living, projects aimed at the older generation are starting to spring up and we want to promote the best ideas in line with the Government's new ageing strategy, keeping the needs of rural older people firmly on the national agenda.

The three year campaign will record common and pressing problems that people in later life are experiencing in sound and pictures. Successful new approaches to these problems will be featured in a film and campaign booklet and a TV drama will reflect the hidden trials and tribulations of retiring in the countryside.

The Rural Media Company is working with Age UK, Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and BBC English Regions; to reach a wide audience and lobby policymakers.

Ambassador for the project, Elinor Goodman, former Political Editor of Channel 4 News and now a Commissioner of the Commission for Rural Communities says, "„Over The Hill?" is a an imaginative way of drawing attention to the social time-bomb facing rural areas. There is a disproportionate and growing number of older people in the countryside, some of whom are already living in considerable deprivation. This project will help local communities, the public and policy makers face the issues and focus on real solutions."

If you have a inspiring project or idea please contact me Vey Straker on **01432 344039** or email veys@ruralmedia.co.uk or write in with your details.

Release ends

Notes to editor

- **Over The Hill?** is supported by the Nationwide Foundation.
- **The Nationwide Foundation's Investor Programme** aims to tackle financial exclusion affecting disadvantaged groups and address housing issues & 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
- **Elinor Goodman** was for 23 years Political Editor of Channel Four News. She chaired the independent Affordable Rural Housing Commission, is currently a Commissioner for the Commission for Rural Communities, and a freelance journalist specialising in rural and political issues.
- **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.ageconcern.org.uk

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