

PRESS RELEASE

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New 'Show & Tell' research exposes myth of the rural idyll

The Government's Rural Advocate and Chair of the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) will be speaking in support of research conducted by The Rural Media Company and University of Bristol's School for Policy Studies, at an event at the British Midland Institute, in Birmingham on Tuesday 18th March.

The Rural Media Company and the University of Bristol's School for Policy Studies have recently undertaken innovative research to demonstrate what it is like to live on a low income in a rural area. The Research called 'Show and Tell Multimedia Testimony on Rural Poverty', which was funded by the Big Lottery, has used film to enable research participants to describe their own lives and experiences. These hard-hitting testimonies reveal that the commonly held perception of the rural idyll, ie a haven for second homeowners and middle class, wealthy commuters, can be challenged.

A spokesperson for the CRC said:

"We are pleased to be supporting this research helping the voices of disadvantaged rural people to be heard. There are over 928,000 rural households living below the official government poverty threshold of £16,492 household income per annum, but rural disadvantage is scattered and it can be overlooked because of a prevailing perception of the countryside as affluent and idyllic. The personal testimonies to be shown at the conference will provide an important reminder of some the realities of rural living and the need for policies that better reflect the nature of rural disadvantage.

Participants describe what it is like just trying to get by and how this means that they are forced to go without many things, which most people take for granted, for example adequate diet and access to basic services and utilities.

Jane Jackson, Director of Production at The Rural Media Company said:

"This research has important messages which we hope will be heard by those that make and develop policies affecting rural communities. The use of film has produced powerful and sometimes shocking testimonies, which we hope

will be listened to and used to develop understanding of the diversity of rural communities”

The findings of the research and the DVD showing research participants testimonies will be launched at the British Midland Institute in Birmingham on 18th March, 2-4pm.

A second event will be held in Hereford on 26th March at the Bishops Palace, 4-6pm.

The Commission for Rural Communities is sponsoring the events. For more information, please contact The Rural Media Company on 01432 344039.

Release ends

Note to Editors

- Based in Herefordshire and established in 1992, **The Rural Media Company** uses media and communications - film, video, photography, journalism, graphic design and the Internet - to produce high-impact moving image and new media work. The Rural Media Company is a key client of the Regional Screen Agency, Screen WM, and regularly wins awards for its innovative, socially aware media work. Please see www.ruralmedia.co.uk
- **The Commission for Rural Communities** is the government’s rural watchdog and provides campaigning and advocacy on behalf of rural communities. It’s role is to provide well-informed, independent advice to government and ensure that policies reflect the real needs of people living and working in rural England, with a particular focus on tackling disadvantage. Please see www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk
- **The School for Policy Studies at Bristol University** was established in 1995. The school aims to link policy and practice, theory and action, via research disseminated through undergraduate, postgraduate and professional study programmes, seminars, conferences and consultancies. Please see www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/information
- For photographs or more information about the **Show & Tell** research, please contact Jane Jackson, Director of Production, The Rural Media Company on 01432 344039

www.ruralmedia.co.uk