

The role of the Area Partnership Rural Voices Rural Choices, is to provide a voice for the views and interests of the rural communities in the Lewes District and aims to identify priorities for action that will bring benefits to the quality of life for people in rural areas.

Main Achievements Jan 2006 – Aug 2008

Transport & Traffic

Lewes District Transport Group

As a result of Parish survey (undertaken Dec 2005), **a Lewes District Transport group started up in May 2006, to address and resolve transport issues that had been identified by young people and the Parishes.** This group has subsequently met twice a year and has included representation from various ESCC transport departments, Coach and Bus Transport operators, Lewes District Senior's Forum and Chailey School Council. This project is on-going. (See notes of some issues raised at the last meeting held 19 May)

Minibus Audit

A minibus audit was carried out and the Rural Transport Partnership directory was distributed to Lewes District Parishes.

SID Machine

In order to have safer roads and slower traffic, RVRC purchased a Speed Indicator Device which is being shared by the villages and is being used more regularly once volunteers in relevant villages have been trained.

Community Transport Scheme

RVRC applied to the Seedcorn Fund to fund a Community Transport Scheme in the areas of Iford, Swanborough & Kingston for the amount of £5000. The aim of this scheme is to reduce dependency on private car usage and provide people in Kingston, Iford and Swanborough alternative access to main public transport routes during out of bus service hours. **£5000 was awarded in June 2008**

Children & Young People

Chailey School – transport event

Worked with students of Chailey School to 1) identify transport issues that young people confront in rural areas and 2) to host an event to present the questionnaire findings. The event was held at Chailey School in **March 2006**. This was a very good example of young people's full participation in the consultation process and in planning/hosting the event. The issues raised at this event were linked into the Lewes District Transport Group (see above).

Barcombe Youth Shelter

A youth shelter was installed in Barcombe village so that young people have an independent place where they can socialise together, unsupervised. With support from development worker, Barcombe Parish Council **received funding** for this project from **Viridor Credits, the Sussex Police Joint Initiative Fund and Lewes District Council Rural Local Action Team**, coming to a fund of around **£7000**. Kingston also initially applied to **Awards for all (£3500)** to install a youth shelter however returned the money as decided not to go ahead with the youth shelter.

Mapping Exercise – of existing Children’s Activities

The development worker worked with individual parishes in Lewes District and carried out a mapping exercise to identify existing activities for children and young people in Lewes District.

Consultation Exercise – South Heighton

As a result of the above exercise, South Heighton was identified as an area where there were gaps in childrens’ activities. So undertook a survey and consulted with young people in Denton School (who live in South Heighton) to identify need. Feedback results of survey to Parish Council and youth worker in S. Heighton.

Youth Awareness Events

Youth awareness events were held at Ringmer Community College Nov 2007 and Chailey School March 2008 (Priory School Nov 2008) aiming to 1) promote awareness about the services of organisations that work with young people 2) consult with young people about what activities they would like and 3) promote awareness around specific health issues e.g alcohol and drug misuse. **Grants awarded to RVRC** for Ringmer event were:- **Social Inclusion grant £550 and Rural Lats grant £500** and for Chailey event:- **ESDWPCT grant £500 and Rural Lats grant £500**. (See notes of outcomes that came out of the Chailey Event)

Communication Networks

RVRC Logo

Worked with Hrs Graphics designers to create a recognisable logo for RVRC.

Extend Membership

Widened Rural Voices Rural Choices membership to Youth Parliament, Rural Villages Project and Bluebird Community Transport.

Environment

Identifying Funding

Worked with Westmeston Jubilee Trust to try and identify funding for the third stage of a footpath project between Westmeston/Ditchling.

Applause Rural Touring Project

Worked in partnership with Applause Rural Touring and applied for Awards for All Funding (£8000) to support a community arts project in the villages of Lewes District. **Grant of £8000 awarded in August 2008.**

Total grants awarded:- £25,550

Specific Outcomes from the Chailey Event

- Barcombe who are thinking about setting up a youth club found out important information from the other two youth clubs represented (i.e Chailey Youth Club & Hamsey, Cooksbridge & Offham Youth) that will further help them in the process of setting up.
- East Sussex Driving Awareness made links with Hamsey, Cooksbridge & Offham Youth and discussed the possibility of a safe rural driving project involving young people at Plumpton College.
- Hamsey, Cooksbridge and Offham Youth made links with Starfish and are going to hold a music event during the Summer holidays.
- Wave Leisure increased their membership so found it a valuable event for promoting their service to young people.
- RVRC distributed 200 questionnaires (153 responses) to find out if there is a need to hold any after-school activities that are not already in place and if there are any transport requirements that are preventing students from participating in after-school activities. Majority students were keen to see more sports, drama, art and music after school. 50% of students said that lack of transport prevented them from participating in after-school activities, two thirds of these live in Lewes District. This information was made available to members attending the Transport Issues meeting on 19 May e.g ESCC Passenger Transport, Local Partnerships for children and Countryliner. Consequently, ESCC passenger transport are thinking of putting an extra journey of the 121 bus on to meet the needs of students appropriately.
- Act on It achieved fantastic results from their consultation exercise with young people and this information will link into the Double Measure project e.g Chailey Youth Club have requested information about this project and are going to promote to their members
- Report of the Chailey Event has been circulated to Parish and Town Councils in relevant areas. Rural Voices Rural Choices are aiming to link in to the proposed Safe Rural Driving Project that Hamsey, Cooksbridge & Offham Youth are involved in.
- RVRC & Lewes Town Partnership are jointly going to work with Priory School and the school council to hold a youth awareness event in the Autumn. Priory are keen to do this.

Lewes District Transport Forum

Main issues raised from the 19 May meeting:-

- Kathy (who works with care groups and other older people in Lewes District) reported that many people are finding that they cannot use their free bus passes in the Lewes District, because of the new system of 9.30 a.m start. Many people have to travel prior to 9.30 because of the infrequency timing of buses in rural areas (not like buses in town areas which are more frequent).
- Charging for duplicate Freedom Tickets and Travel Permits is for several reasons. Firstly, to cover the costs of producing new tickets which are now plastic 'credit card' type. The cards are more durable but are more costly and we have to have two special printers to produce them. Secondly, a charge may deter fraud as Freedom Tickets, in particular, could be quite valuable if sold on to those who don't qualify for free transport. Finally, charging for duplicates does encourage more care to be taken with them.
- Local Partnerships for Children set up 18 months ago, 22 across the County (Ringmer LPC and Chailey LPC) and the aim is to pull together different services to address various needs of young people, children, their families and carers. Members of LPC include different representatives from ESCC childrens' services, health, voluntary sector providers, social services and housing. The rural LPCs have raised the complexities of rural transport.
- Local Partnerships for Children pointed out that within the extended schools agenda, Chailey School would need to deliver after school activities by 2010. There needs to be forward planning and the 121 diverted to meet transport needs of students in relation to after school activities.
- Air Quality Management area – Fisher Street – Station Road. Assess extent of exhaust fumes which affects air quality. There is a working group who have been working on various initiatives to try and find ways to prevent people from driving through Lewes e.g signage, cycle maps, walking buses, public transport.