



 An operating division of the CountrySide Agency

Community Empowerment Awards – Regional Winners

Media Release

14 August 2006

Today, 14 August 2006, 17 local councils across England have been recognised for their outstanding achievements through the Community Empowerment Awards, sponsored by the Commission for Rural Communities in association with the National Association of Local Councils.

In its first year, the Community Empowerment Awards invited entries to highlight the good work which town and parish councils carry out every day in the fields of young people, older people, housing and Gypsies, Travellers and migrant workers.

Judges made up of experts within neighbourhood governance looked for projects which encouraged participation and really engaged with the local community, as well as helping understand and build excellent community relations.

Cllr Ken Cleary, chairman of NALC said, “At this time when the profile of town and parish councils are more prevalent in the minds of central government and other key decision makers than at any other juncture in the past, these best practice champions will help to provide others with the tools to assist in the day to day workings of councils, and enable to sector to meet the challenges of empowering communities and citizens.”

Jaki Bayly, head of best practice at the Commission for Rural Communities added, “This is just the beginning of what we are hoping to achieve. The winners of these awards will now assist in establishing education networks across the country to enable best practice to be shared throughout the first tier. This will enable a case book of real projects to be available to benefit any council beginning a new scheme”

The 17 regional winners will now go forward to the national competition. With the national winners being announced at the NALC annual conference and exhibition. The regional winners will also be available to provide advice and

share their experiences at a session highlighting their achievements on 22 September 2006.

The winners are:

Young People

Great Coxwell Parish Council
Awre Parish Council
Sawtry Parish Council
Hutton le Hole Parish Council
Blakelaw and North Fenham Parish Council

Older People

Leigh on Sea Town Council
Yate Town Council
Dunstable Town Council.
Eastwood Town Council
Penwortham Town Council
Great Aycliffe Town Council

Housing

Hyde Parish Council
High Bickington Parish Council
Martley Parish Council
Cawthorne Parish Council
Slaley Parish Council

Gypsies, Travellers and migrant workers

Bishops Stortford

Notes for Editors

1. The National Association of Local Councils is the national representative body for 10,000 community, parish and town councils throughout England and Wales. In all, there are over 100,000 community, parish and town councillors throughout England and Wales. These councillors, who serve electorates ranging from small rural communities to major cities, are all independently elected. The councils have powers to raise their own funds through council tax. Community, parish and town councils provide employment for over 25,000 staff while their annual expenditure exceeds £400 million. Together, they can be identified as the nation's single most influential grouping of grassroots opinion-formers. Over 15 million people

- live in communities served by 10,000 community, parish and town councils nationally - this represents up to 30% of the population. Over 150 new community, parish and town councils have been created since 1997.
2. The Community Empowerment Awards sponsored by the Commission for Rural Communities are designed to recognise, reward and share the experiences of best practice as performed by parish and town councils in England. The essential criteria for success in the awards are where parish and town councils show in their projects: engagement and participation, understanding and building community relations, sustainability, facilitation, identification of issues and needs, and action.
 3. The Commission for Rural Communities as an independent statutory body operating as a distinct division of the Countryside Agency, across three main roles:

Rural advocate: the voice for rural people, businesses and communities.

Expert adviser: providing evidence-based, independent advice to government and others.

Independent watchdog: monitoring and reporting on the delivery of policies nationally, regionally and locally.

See also the website: www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk

4. NALC's Annual Conference and Exhibition will be held in Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, 22-24 September 2006. The theme of the conference is 'Driving expertise: empowering local communities'. For further information visit www.nalc.gov.uk

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