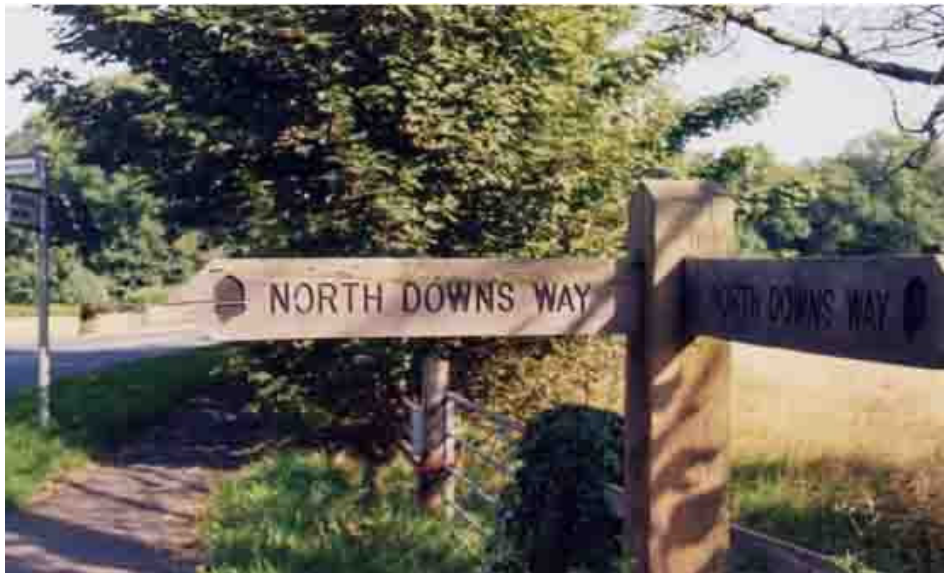


FINAL REPORT ON RURAL ACCESS TO SERVICES PROGRAMME (RASP)



1st September 2008 – 31st March 2011



INTRODUCTION

The main aim of the Rural Access to Services Programme (RASP) was to help people living and working in rural areas access services in new and innovative ways, which are economically and socially sustainable. It was a South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) initiative and in Surrey's case there was a grant pot of £211,810 available during the period 1st September 2008 and 31st March 2011.

Surrey Community Action was the catalyst and made the bid to SEEDA which whilst different from other bids in the South East was successful in receiving the grant money.

The funding was available for capital projects and all applications needed to be for amounts between £5,000 and £20,000. The Panel that was set up to agree the grants was very flexible about what it would or would not fund, the members of which represented all sections of the relevant communities. It actively encouraged innovative projects that simply would make a difference to the lives of people living in rural communities. The organisations represented on the Panel were:

Federation of Small Businesses
Waverley Borough Council
Surrey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Surrey Chambers of Commerce
Surrey Community Action (Chair)
Surrey County Association of Parish and Towns Councils
Surrey CVS Network
Surrey Economic Partnership
Mole Valley District Council
Tandridge District Council

A rural community was seen as an area that had a population of below 5,000.

GRANTS

On 1st September 2008 a Rural Access to Services Grants Officer took up his post, working two days per week. He published a leaflet and distributed this as widely as possible including to rural Parish Council's. The updated version of this leaflet can be seen in Appendix 2.

The leaflet produced a number of applications and the first year's allocation of £48,258 was spent on four projects all with high need and with sustainable outcomes. These were:

Normandy Mini Bus Appeal	£10,000 towards the purchase of a new accessible vehicle
Leigh Parish Council	£5,000 to purchase 'The Stump' a new playground facility
Strood Green Shop	£20,000 towards the costs of opening a new shop
Ewhurst Parish Council	£9,758 towards the overall cost of a new sports pavilion

Apart from Normandy all of the above have been the subject of a Case Study and these (along with the other 9) can be seen in Appendix 3

Normandy's Mini Bus can be seen on the next page:



YEAR 2 - 1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010

For this year the Panel had £81,714 to distribute as grants and they found that as more people heard of the fund more applications arrived. The Grants Officer made a visit to each project and then wrote an assessment on each and presented this to the quarterly Panel. The Panel then either accepted or rejected these recommendations although in some cases the Grants Officer did not make a recommendation and so the Panel made up their mind whether or not to offer a grant.

The grants made for this year were as follows:

Milford Day Centre	£10,000 towards an accessible vehicle
Ewhurst Parish Council	£9,757 second tranche towards building
Bletchingley Play Project	£8,500 towards the refurbishment of the village playground
St. Albans Community Hall Hindhead	£5,000 towards the new kitchen
Frensham Parish Council	£5,000 towards accessible toilets in the village hall
E Surrey Rural Transport	£13,000 to help the rural bus service in the south of Mole Valley
The Arbuthnot Hall (Shamley Green)	£7,000 towards alterations and refurbishment of kitchen
St Martin's Lower Bourne	£20,000 to help Lower Bourne buy the Church Hall
The Grafham Room	£3,184 residue to help the building of a small extension

A picture of The Arbuthnot Hall's project can be seen on the next page:



The East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership's newest vehicle is seen above. This continues to help people in the more isolated villages in the south of Mole Valley and below the Mayor of Waverly opens St Martins Hall, Lower Bourne



Year 3 - 1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011

The Panel had a total of £81,838 available for projects. In this year it was acknowledged that some of the grants might be under the £5,000 lower limit set out in the original agreement. It was important to judge each application on its merits.

In the year an unusual application was received. This was from Waverley Borough Council and at the time it was because all planning applications were going to be put on computer and so Parish Councils needed to have equipment for the public use. Whilst the planning system was changed, for some Parish Councils the equipment was still useful and 4 Parish Councils received £1,000 or under (see below).

The grants made in the final year were as follows:

Shere Parish Council	£5,000 towards rubber matting at Peaslake's Playground
Grace & Flavour CIC	£5,000 to purchase tables and benches
Churt Village Hall	£5,000 to help towards updating and installing accessible toilets
Puttenham First Responders	£5,000 to purchase 2 sets of equipment for life saving
Godstone Play Park	£5,000 towards refurbishment of the village playground
Waverley HOPPA	£15,000 to help purchase a new accessible vehicle
Felbridge Village Hall	£6,500 to help with re-wiring
Albury Parish Council	£9,500 towards the refurbishment of the village hall
Dunsfold Community Shop	£16,000 towards the purchasing the village shop

Farnham District Scouts	£3,000 to help purchase and install a climbing tower
Frensham Village Shop	£2,078 towards moving the shop into a permanent premises
Holmwood Village Hall	£1,700 to help the installation of new double glazing units
Chiddingfold Parish Council	£860 to purchase computer equipment and a projector
Ewhurst Parish Council	£1,000 to help purchase computer equipment
Hascombe Parish Council	£700 towards buying computer equipment
Witley Parish Council	£500 to help purchase computer equipment

Grants for the 2.5 years of the programme were spread throughout the rural south of the county although no applications were received from Reigate and Banstead areas in spite of specific targeting. However within this area the majority is more urban.

Whilst more grants were given to the Waverly Borough Council area this was because the area covered is largely rural and also more applications were received from this area. The spread is as follows per Borough/District Council area:

Council	No. of Grants	Totalling
Tandridge District Council	4	£33,000
Reigate & Banstead District Council	0	0
Mole Valley District Council	3	£30,200
Guildford Borough Council	6	£34,500
Waverley Borough Council	16	£114,110
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TOTALS	29	£211,810

CASE STUDIES

In the original contract from SEEDA it was agreed that 12 Case Studies would be published and these have been completed and can be seen at the end of this report.



Above can be seen the accessible vehicle purchased by East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership for use in the rural areas in the south east of the County. Below can be seen a view of Grace and Flavour in West Horsley a project that demonstrates how communities can work together for the good of all local people.



CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that RASP has been a successful grants programme that has helped many communities. All in all 29 grants were given and all of these projects have been brought to a positive conclusion.

In some cases the projects that have been given money have seen an increase in their staffing; in others staff have been retained. Many playgrounds have been helped to revitalise their usage because new and modern equipment has been installed. Also many community halls have been helped to refurbish their facilities which, in turn ensures greater usage. Transport in rural areas is always a problem but a number of grants have helped a little with this ongoing situation.

Three shops have been helped which ensures they are viable and indeed increasing their contribution to rural life. All these shops use local goods and farmers and other producers are therefore helped as a knock on effect.

I place on record my thanks to the Panel who looked at all the applications. I thank Surrey Community Action for their help and support during my employment. Needless to say I wish a further programme could come on stream and being the eternal optimist I am hopeful that in a couple of years or so the Government will see the benefit to the community.

Peter Gooch

Rural Access to Services Programme

Grants Officer

March 2011

