

**Update Number 1
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0845 838 8598

www.ruraldirect.org.uk

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**The Rural Direct Team is here to help YOU**



Rural Direct is a dedicated service provided jointly by SCVO and the Crofters Commission which was launched in June 2008 by Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead (left).

We offer advice, support, and technical expertise to help groups in rural communities access a range of funding opportunities to develop their communities.

We can guide your community group through the application processes for a variety of funding programmes. We can support you in developing and writing the best possible funding applications and help you understand and identify the range of other funding opportunities available.

Rural Direct is a free service available to constituted community groups in

rural areas throughout Scotland. We will help you in the ways that best suit you and your group's needs. We can offer one-to-one support by phone or in person, surgeries, information and training workshops or funding road shows. If you are holding a funding event we'll be happy to join you and may be able to help with organisation and promotion.

You can contact the service by calling 0845 838 8598.

All calls will be charged at local rate so give us a ring and let's discuss how we can work together.

You can also email your query to [ruraldirect@scvo.org.uk](mailto:ruraldirect@scvo.org.uk).

Read more about how we can help your rural community by downloading the [RuralDirect leaflet](#).

## What is the SRDP?

The SRDP (Scotland Rural Development Programme) is a cocktail of economic, environmental and social measures designed to develop rural Scotland. Designed to help deliver the Government's strategic objectives in rural Scotland it brings together Scottish, European and UK funding. Further information and guidance on the depth and breadth of the Programme can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Rural Scotland, covering 98 per cent of the land area and 20 per cent of the population, is an integral part of the country's economy, environment and culture. The Government's aim is to promote development in rural areas and empower communities so that their particular views and circumstances are reflected in government policies and priorities.

## Where does Rural Priorities fit in?

Rural Priorities is one of the funding strands of the SRDP. Rural Priorities can provide financial support to a range of activities that will deliver benefits to rural communities. Rural Priorities has been set up to contribute to the key outcomes of the SRDP. These are:

- Business viability and competitiveness
- Water quality
- Adaptations to mitigate climate change
- Biodiversity and landscapes, and, most importantly
- Thriving rural communities

Your community may be interested in improving local services, starting a social enterprise, extending a local footpath network, managing local woodlands or even leading the preparation of a collaborative development strategy. All these, and more, can be funded through Rural Priorities.

Grant support is currently available at 50% of the project cost for most community based activities. The current list of grant levels is available [here](#).

You can view the specific priorities for each of the 11 regions by clicking the interactive map available [here](#).

For further details, please see the Rural Priorities information leaflet which can be downloaded [here](#).

You can find out about how Rural Priorities applications are submitted and assessed by selecting [How it Works](#) from the Rural Priorities web pages.



## What about LEADER?

**LEADER** is a further, complementary, funding stream within the SRDP. It is a development of a long standing European fund aimed at promoting economic and community development within rural areas. LEADER is a bottom-up method of delivering support for rural development through implementing a local rural development strategy.

Support will be aimed primarily at small-scale, community driven projects that are pilot and innovative in nature. LEADER is managed and delivered at the regional level. There are currently 20 LEADER programmes in Scotland. Further information and local contacts are available [here](#).

## Do I live in a rural community?

Most of the elements of Rural Priorities are targeted at rural communities based in or around settlements of less than 3000 population. The General Register for Scotland (GRS) has published a full list of settlement populations. You can check here to find the official population of your town or village on the [GRS site](#).

You can also look at the [maps provided by the General Register](#) to see the boundaries of Scotland's settlements. Those areas outside defined settlements are all eligible for Rural Priorities funding.

## Meet the Team

Rural Direct is delivered by SCVO's Rural Team.

[Barbara Love](#) co-ordinates the service and supports communities in Grampian, Moray and Tayside

[Sheila Fraser](#) supports communities in Fife, Forth Valley, Lothian and Borders

[Ian Mathieson](#) works with communities in the Clyde Valley, Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway

Other team members are Rural Information Officer [Sandra Hogg](#) and Rural Direct Administrator Liz Syred and the service is managed by SCVO's Head of Rural Policy Norman MacAskill .

The support service in the Highlands and Islands is currently under review following the transfer of many of the development functions of the Crofters Commission to Highlands & Islands Enterprise.



## The key role of your local CVS

Rural Direct was developed to support rural communities in accessing a range of funding, but with particular emphasis on the new funding streams available under the Scotland Rural Development Programme. It is a national service delivered locally, and is intended to complement and add value to existing sources of funding information, in particular local Councils for Voluntary Service

(CVS). The Rural Direct team aim to work closely with local CVSs to provide the best possible service to rural community groups.

You local CVS should be your first point of contact for general information on funding and other matters relating to running your organisation. You can find your local CVS by using the clickable map on the [CVS Network home page](#).

## First things first - Get a BRN

Before applying for Rural Priority funding your group will need a Business Registration Number (BRN). Once you have a BRN it remains valid for all time, so if you think you might be applying for any SRDP funding in the future it is worth applying for your BRN now.

The [Land and Business Change Form](#) (the application for a BRN) looks a little daunting but for most community groups the majority of answers are "not applicable" and can be ignored. We have prepared a step-by step guide to completing the form which is available [here](#).

## Rural Priorities Funding Training

The Rural Direct Team have designed a half day training session for CVS development staff, council funding officers, LEADER co-ordinators or individuals who are assisting community groups access Rural Priorities Funding.

The training session will:

- Consider the difference between LEADER and Rural Priorities funding,
- Identify the key processes before submitting a SRDP, Rural Priorities application and
- Analyse a case study application and consider how the assessment criteria would be relevant to community projects.

If you are interested in attending or would like to organise a training session in your area (with a minimum of 5 participants) please contact the Rural Direct team by emailing [ruraldirect@scvo.org.uk](mailto:ruraldirect@scvo.org.uk).

## Village halls research

The final report of a new comprehensive research study on community facilities in rural Scotland has been published. The findings will help support informed debate about the future of these vital community hubs.

Further information is available through the [Village Halls web site](#) news page. You can find out more about the main findings from the research in [Community facilities in rural Scotland: a study of their use, provision and condition](#), and the final report is available for download [here](#).

## Keep up to date

The key information resource for rural communities is the [Rural Community Gateway](#). The Gateway has been running since 2003, and has built up a strong reputation as a source of accurate, unbiased and comprehensive information on issues relating to Scotland's rural communities. It also includes enlightening and entertaining features like the annual [Photo Competition](#). You can join the Rural Gateway and sign up for regular email updates [here](#).

## **Rural Priorities success for Angus Hall**

**Eassie, Nevay, Kirkinch and Balkeerie are small hamlets in Angus, just on the border with Perthshire. Their community has pulled together and is well on the way to replacing the ageing but much loved village hall and creating a community hub fit for the 21st century. Debra Ritchie tells us about their project, a winning application to the SRDP Rural Priorities and gives some useful tips for success. [Read more...](#)**

## **Coming next...**

**The next issue of the Rural Direct update will include news of successful applications from voluntary organisations and community groups, details of how applications are assessed and further details of the skills and experience of the Rural Direct team members. If there's anything else you'd like to see in it, [get in touch](#).**

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