

Media Release

For immediate release – Friday 19th January 2018

Lurgashall Village Hall Awarded Highly Respected Hallmark Awards in time for #VillageHallsWeek

Lurgashall Village Hall in West Sussex has been awarded prestigious Hallmark Quality Awards in both Administration and Health and Safety Compliance by peer assessors on behalf of Action with Communities in rural England (ACRE).

This is a huge achievement for Lurgashall Village Hall as it was on the verge of closure 12 years ago due to lack of use and an expiring lease. Hard work by the local community, together with support from Action in rural Sussex's Village Halls and Community Buildings Advisory Service led to the negotiation of a new lease, as well as the raising of funds which covered the costs of a refurbishment and installation of a new kitchen and heating system.

Now used regularly for a wide range of activities including a luncheon club, pilates classes, meetings of local organisations and for children's birthday parties, this village hall is now truly at the heart of the Lurgashall community.

Sue Lambot, Booking Secretary at Lurgashall Village Hall, said *"The first time we undertook the Hallmark award in 2011 it really helped raise our game. Now it's a doddle to maintain it. I would thoroughly recommend it to other committees"*.

Continuing to say *"The hall buzzes at the luncheon club and afternoon teas and that is what the hall is all about – creating and being at the heart of the community"*.

Hallmark is a Quality Assurance scheme specifically designed for Village Halls which provides 3 levels of award, each Hall may be rated from Level 1 to Level 3 (the highest level of award).

The scheme seeks to:

1. Reward and establish good practice;
2. Encourage improvement in established customs and procedures;
3. Gain recognition for obtaining good standards in the management of your hall.

This is a timely award for the village hall as the 22nd January sees ACRE's first ever #VillageHallsWeek. An annual celebration of the 10,000 village halls and other community buildings, which exist at the heart of England's rural communities.

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Notes to editors

- **Hallmark Quality Award:** For more information, please visit <https://www.ruralsussex.org.uk/what-we-do/village-halls-community-buildings/hallmark/>
- **#VillageHallsWeek** is a new initiative starting in 2018. ACRE and the ACRE Network will run an annual celebration of the village halls and other community buildings, which exist at the heart of England's rural communities. The aim of the week long campaign is to champion the diverse range of buildings which make up the 10,000 strong network and promote the sheer volume of services they offer.
- **AirS** is an independent charity that exists for all people living in rural areas of Sussex but especially those who are at risk of isolation and/or disadvantage, and for whom rural life brings an additional challenge and cost to their daily lives.

AirS' services include support for Children & Families (COPES), Affordable Housing, Neighbourhood & Community Planning, Community Land Trusts, Village Agents & Village Care, Community Buildings Advice & Support and Advocacy for rural communities.

Established in 1931, we are staffed by a highly experienced and dedicated team who are committed to helping people overcome the challenges caused by their rural location. Our vision is for a thriving, economically active rural Sussex full of choice and opportunities for everyone, regardless of their circumstances.

Part of the ACRE network of rural councils, our work is funded by members' subscriptions, donations and legacies. In addition, some of our services receive grant funding from trusts, foundations and the public sector.

For more information visit: www.ruralsussex.org.uk or follow us on Twitter: @ruralsussex