

MEDIA RELEASE

Date: Monday 8 January 2018

“Vital local service kept alive by dedicated volunteers”

The ACRE Network, England’s largest network of rural community support organisations is running the first ever **#VillageHallsWeek**, starting Monday 22 January 2018. This is a week-long celebration to say a collective “thank-you” to all volunteers who work tirelessly to keep community buildings and village halls open for the benefit of residents living in rural communities.

ACRE and the ACRE Network are encouraging volunteers managing England’s 10,000 halls to use **#VillageHallsWeek** on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to promote the wide range of activities and services provided in their hall. Groups and individuals using the hall can share photographs, stories and networking events with others during **#VillageHallsWeek** to demonstrate the valuable role of the volunteers in keeping these community-hubs alive and thriving.

Richard Quallington, Executive Director of ACRE said **“These community assets are the heart of rural areas. They provide a space to host vital services, which can then be accessed locally. There are 10,000 village halls in rural England where you get health services, use child care facilities, take part in sports and recreation, attend social events, buy stamps and get money out at post offices, browse local archives and borrow books from the library. The ACRE Network has worked to support this network of assets, worth £3bn and run entirely by volunteers for the past century. We are delighted that those who give up their time, for free, to run these facilities will now have their week in the spotlight. Join us for #VillageHallsWeek and add your voice to the celebrations”**

It is hoped that this week of celebration will also inspire others to support their own hall, or even volunteer to help it. Members of the ACRE Network, as the first point of contact for volunteers involved with village halls, will also be running events during **#VillageHallsWeek** visit www.acre.org.uk to find out more.

Attachments:

- #VillageHallsWeek briefing paper (containing information about events being run by ACRE Network members during the week)

Social media accounts:

- #VillageHallsWeek on Twitter via [@VillageHalls_Wk](#)
- #VillageHallsWeek on Facebook via [@ACRE_National](#)
- #VillageHallsWeek on Instagram via [@acrenational](#)

Contact details:

- **#VillageHallsWeek Contact:** Chris Cowcher, ACRE Community Manager
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Notes to editors:

- ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) is the national body for the 38 ACRE Network members. We speak up for rural communities on the national stage and deliver projects that enable our communities to find innovative solutions to the challenges they face.