



M A R K E T I N G

W A R W I C K S H I R E

**The Green Guide – understanding and marketing to
rural audiences for large and middle scale venues**

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2) Introduction

a) Aims of the study

This study aims to examine ways in which arts organisations – middle and large scale – interact with audiences living in rural areas of England. To ascertain if a different marketing approach is adopted to reach these markets and to measure the effectiveness of Networking and Transport schemes as marketing tools within this sector. It will also examine barriers to attendance amongst this group as perceived by the arts sector – through research and intuition – and identify examples of best practice in overcoming these.

The study has drawn on the experiences of venues – large, middle and small scale – Local Authorities and Regional Arts Boards. Information has also been sought from other appropriate industry sectors such as transport providers, funders and national organisations with a particular knowledge of rural England. However, it is not a definitive study or 'How To' guide for marketing to rural audiences, instead, The Green Guide is a snapshot of current practices in the arts sector, an identification of perceived barriers to attendance and an examination of some proposed solutions.

b) The Rural Context¹

According to the Countryside Agency² rural areas are those wards or postcode sectors that are outside settlements of 10,000 people or more.

Approximately 1 in 5 of the English population lives in a rural area, the equivalent of 9.3 million people or 20% of the population of England. From the perspective of the Arts sector, this is a significant number of potential (and current) audiences.

What is more, the rural population is growing with an increase of 6.9% in the 10 years to 1991, compared with only 3% growth across the population as a whole.

For these sound business reasons alone, it could be considered vital that the arts examine and address this market segment, irrespective of the additional issues of social inclusion and access for all.

With small businesses as its backbone, the rural economy is as diverse as the national economy, with a similar mix of industries and services. Working styles however, are quite different with a greater percentage of people working from home, being self-employed or part-time. Unemployment rates for rural districts are below those for England as a whole.

The picture of rural communities is one of growth and entrepreneurial spirit, with low unemployment, high levels of self-employment and increasing population – as much from within as through in-migration. However, the levels of provision tell a different story.

Many people living in rural England have limited access to a range of basic services within their own community. This is often exacerbated by a poor public transport infrastructure, proving particularly problematic to certain groups of people. The problem is compounded by the lack of local authority funding per head for rural counties compared with urban/ suburban districts while in reality, delivering services to rural districts is likely to cost more because of the geographical spread – leading to greater fuel / maintenance / staff costs.

Service Provision in rural areas

In 1997 the Rural Development Commission undertook a study of services to rural areas. It was found that:

¹ State of the Countryside The Countryside Agency 1999

² Countryside Agency is the statutory body working for people and places in rural England. This organisation replaces the Rural Development Commission.

75% of rural areas had no daily bus service

61% of rural parishes had no recreational clubs for older people

96% had no day care for disabled people

91% had no residential care for disabled people

68% had no youth club / young people's club

In addition to identifying this serious lack of service provision, the RDC recognised that these groups – elderly, young and disabled people – are those least likely to have their own transport to access services elsewhere. An additional group of parents with young children was also identified, where often the family transport is used by the wage-earner. The overall age breakdown of people living in rural areas is:

57% are aged under 45, with 43% are over 45.

Breaking this down further, 18% are over 65 and 30% are 24 and under – the two most excluded groups accounting for 48% of the rural population.

Transport

Those who live in rural England travel greater distances than urban dwellers and rely more heavily on cars to do so. They make the same amount of journeys but travel 1.4 times as many miles than their urban neighbours.

Where public transport services exist they are limited. In the same 1997 study it was found that:

44% of parishes had no service before 9am

77% had no service after 7pm

93% of rural parishes had no rail service

Two outcomes of this lack of public transport services can be seen:

1. Car ownership is higher in rural areas than across the country generally with 84% of households owning a car and 38% having more than one (69% / 25% nationally). Amongst low-income households, those living in rural areas are twice as likely to have a car as similar households in large towns / cities.
2. Community Transport is expanding – in 1997, 21% rural parishes had some form of community mini-bus / social car scheme, 15% had a dial-a-ride scheme.

In spite of the practical solutions outlined above, there still remains 22% of the rural population of England who do not have access to a car.³

Recreation

In spite of the challenges presented by a poor or even non-existent transport infrastructure and limited resources per capita, rural communities are still lively places, structured for the dissemination of information and participation in community life.

59% of rural parishes have a women's institute / mother's union

45% have a village newsletter

74% have a church newsletter

³ Council for the Protection of Rural England
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93% have at least one public notice board

There are approximately 8900 village halls and similar community buildings in rural England (excluding Churches) although how often they are used and what for has not been examined by this report.

Summary

The overall picture of rural communities gained from the above research is a positive one. They are places where unemployment is lower than the national average within a healthy mix of industries and services with flexible working patterns, there is a broad range of age groups represented and an entrepreneurial spirit. Problems such as a lack of transport, poor recreational facilities and dissemination of information are currently being solved by the community itself through initiatives such as community transport, local groups, clubs and societies, local newsletters, and notice boards.

3) Research Findings

a) Reaching Rural Audiences

For the purposes of this study, AMW undertook questionnaire research with large, middle and small scale venues across the country. The venues were selected using MapInfo, a mapping software package, which enabled us to select venues within rural⁴ areas.

In all, 780 venues were mailed with a self-completion questionnaire and freepost response envelope. The response rate was 9.6%

The key findings from this research are detailed below.

How important are rural audiences?

53% of respondents approximated that they attracted 50% or more of their audiences from rural areas.

81% of respondents considered rural audiences to be important or very important in terms of ticket income but only 8% specifically addressed rural audiences in their marketing strategy and 20% specifically considered the needs of rural audiences when campaign planning.

57% considered rural audiences important or very important in meeting funding requirements and 75% considered them important or very important for community relations.

While many considered rural audiences important for a range of reasons, only 20% had ever carried out research to verify this.

Of the venues which indicated that 50% or more of their audiences live in rural areas, (53%, 25 organisations), only 9% (4 organisations) actively segment their audience into rural and urban during campaign planning, and only 7% (3 organisations) have a section in their marketing strategy which directly relates to rural audiences.

Overall, it appears that venues consider rural audiences to be important but do not actively segment or target them, even those venues for whom people in rural areas make up a significant proportion of their audience.

Further to the questionnaire research, AMW carried out some in-depth telephone interviews with both venues which actively target those living in rural areas and venues which do not. The telephone interviews were to ascertain how venues are actively targeting rural audiences and amongst those which are not, what the reasons are.

⁴ As defined by the RDC (see section III.B)
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10 venues participated in the telephone research and were asked the following questions:

For those who are actively targeting rural audiences:

1. What do you currently do differently to target rural audiences?

Responses included:

Print distribution in rural areas

Coverage in rurally based publications, both advertising and editorial

Direct mail to rurally based groups

Outreach in the form of talks to rurally based groups such as Women's Institutes and Young Farmers about the work of the arts organisation

Using existing patrons to distribute posters and brochures around their rural communities

Both groups, those who do target and those who do not:

2. From the venue viewpoint, what are the barriers / difficulties in targeting rural audiences?

Lack of resources was the most quoted barrier to targeting rural audiences separately from other audiences. Many organisations equated targeting with print distribution and noted that to distribute information in rural areas was both expensive and time consuming – two resources arts organisations do not have.

Another related point was that population within rural postcode sectors is lower than in urban sectors, therefore the return on investment is lower and less attractive.

Getting rural audiences to want to attend urban venues was perceived as a problem with one organisation, particularly as transport links are poor.

Lack of understanding of the needs specific to rural audiences was perceived to be a barrier for one organisation which felt that the level of detailed information gathered from attenders was inadequate

3. If resources were unlimited, how would you most effectively target rural audiences?

Responses to this question varied covering:

The inclusion of more detailed transport information in print such as timetables / parking / costs etc

Establishing a network of village contacts across the county to act as ambassadors for the venue, who would undertake promotional work and be responsible for organising group trips.

Having access to other venues' experiences to get ideas of what works and what does not

Provide transport – especially for the young and old who need it most

Door to door distribution which is more effective

Employing a distribution person to work specifically for the venue

Developing outreach and education work including the time and resources to programme talks for community groups about the venue and its product

4. Would you prefer an independent or a collaborative project?

All venues consulted said they would prefer to work on a collaborative basis although for different reasons, for example because of lack of staff time in-house or because collaboration offers a greater choice to the customer. It was also mentioned that it depended on who was involved and what the initiative was as to whether collaboration was the best solution.

5. If you were to work collaboratively, which partners would you seek to work with?

Most stated that they would seek to work with other arts organisations, although some recognised the value of working with the public and voluntary sector to tap into other networks. It was feared by some that non-arts organisations would have conflicting priorities which might jeopardise the initiative.

Some identified that working with transport providers would be essential as would working with commercial organisations such as restaurants / pubs to provide a more attractive package for rural audiences and therefore a greater incentive to attend.

6. What role would you like ACE to play in the development of rural audiences?

Responses to this question were:

Resources – to fund outreach work on a long-term revenue basis rather than project;

To fund a distribution post

To be more flexible in funding criteria and allow the venue to choose how they develop audiences with less emphasis on product and more on audiences and audience research to help venues understand their rural audiences thus enabling them to implement long-term strategies

To introduce longer timescales and lead times for project funding

To lobby for an improved public transport infrastructure – although this was recognised as a wider social issue it was recognised that it would impact heavily on the arts and that the arts constituency as a whole could be a significant force

Not to patronise rural audiences but to recognise that they are equally sophisticated as their urban counterparts

To be more aware and involved at grass roots level (RAB's were included in this view)

To provide a mentoring role with better dissemination of information held and advice on who to approach for information not held by ACE

Funding to be more focussed on empowering communities

Barriers to attendance

Respondents were asked to list up to five barriers to attendance. Many considered transport as one of these. Other barriers mentioned included:

Lack of awareness of venue and/or access to information about product available

Cost - of tickets and/or additional expenditure such as transport, programmes, drinks and babysitter

Disabled access at the venue

Lack of interest / inertia

Personal security depending on location of venue

Perception of venue

Competition

Transport as a barrier

As can be seen in section III.B.2 above, The Rural Development Commission (as was) identified transport in rural areas to be in severe shortage. From the questionnaire research with small, middle and large scale venues, many considered transport to be a major barrier to attendance.

28% of respondents have conducted research into whether transport is a barrier to attendance at their venue. The findings of these research projects indicated that transport is often a barrier, especially in the evenings, but also that transport related issues cause difficulties.

Cost – of significant distance to be travelled on top of the ticket price.

Distance – may be considered too far for those with their own transport.

Location – venue is too far from bus / train station

Fear – of car crime when having to leave a car in an urban area.

Parking – hassle of finding safe, cheap and convenient parking.

Timing – dislike of driving at night, inappropriate timing of scheduled services.

Weather – wintry weather conditions can make travel treacherous.

Competition – for those who have transport and are willing to use it to attend arts events, they have a broad choice of venues, perhaps broader than someone living in an urban area close to a specific venue.

Reaching rural audiences – overcoming barriers

Having identified major barriers to attendance – either through research or intuition – the respondents were asked what steps/strategies they employed to overcome them.

From the questionnaire research, some respondents have attempted to overcome some of these identified barriers by;

Employing car park security

Offering free parking tokens

Re-scheduling performances

In the case of reaching those without transport, some venues have been proactive in trying to set up a contract with a local bus service provider or getting involved in local authority politics to lobby for an improved transport infrastructure.

In addition to projects devised specifically to overcome identified barriers, 15% of the sample outlined audience development projects they had undertaken to reach rural audiences. These

included a telemarketing project to reactivate lapsed attenders, a programme of daytime events for older people who found travelling at night problematic and programming in a rural setting to extend the reach of the venue's work.

Section IV.C 'Best Practice' below outlines a further range of specific projects which have been implemented to reach rural audiences across the arts constituency. These examples of best Practice illustrate a range of marketing initiatives and creative ideas tailored to the needs of rurally based customers, attempting to overcome the identified barriers to attendance.

Reaching Rural Audiences – core activity

As part of the venues' core activity, a variety of methods are used to target rural audiences:

| | Number of respondents |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Leaflet Distribution | 25 |
| Direct Mail | 24 |
| Advertising | 19 |
| Press coverage | 11 |
| Radio | 9 |
| Posters | 9 |
| Word of Mouth | 2 |
| Outreach | 2 |
| TV | 1 |

As can be seen from the list of methods above, the majority of venues undertake promotional activity which will target both rural and urban audiences simultaneously. Only 4 respondents used outreach and/ or word of mouth networks which would be area specific.

b) Transport - other sectors

Community Transport Association

The Community Transport Association (CTA) is the national representative of voluntary sector transport operators covering the whole of the UK. Over 10 million passengers per year are served by community transport schemes including mini-buses and voluntary car schemes. The CTA provides information, advice, training and support for all those involved in this sector.

In 1997, they launched a Rural Transport Initiative in recognition of the particular problems faced by those living in rural areas. The scheme, managed by a full-time rural transport officer for England, exists to assist new and existing community transport schemes in rural areas through publications, training, research and information exchange. They offer practical help in establishing and sustaining appropriate schemes and securing the necessary funding.

Community Transport schemes offer a sustainable alternative to traditional services, which in commercial terms, can be impractical in large rural areas such as Cumbria. In an article in *The Guardian*⁵, Jenny Meadows, director of the CTA recognised that lack of access to transport can be a major block to participating in many activities fundamental to a full life, the schemes which the CTA advises recognise and address this block.⁶

⁵ see appendix C for the full article

⁶ *The Guardian* Wednesday 1st December 1999 'Welcome Aboard'

Because the schemes are run largely by volunteers and are non-profit making, they are more flexible – often providing door-to-door services – and closely meet the needs of different community members at an affordable price.

Community Transport schemes vary across the country both in terms of how they are funded and who they have been established to serve. They range from mini-bus brokerage schemes available for hire to groups, small voluntary car share schemes and conventional scheduled services.

Many are funded through the County Council, the Rural Community Council and / or the Rural Transport Development Fund managed by the Countryside Agency. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) is very committed to community transport schemes and also has a disability unit that deals specifically with accessible transport options. It has recognised that there are many vehicles, perhaps owned by individual organisations, which are currently underused and that there is an opportunity to integrate those vehicles into a broader transport scheme as a more responsible alternative to funding new vehicles.

While the CTA provides advice and support to a wide range of schemes across the country, not all schemes approach CTA, others are established independently through their local authority.

Wheels to Work

This scheme, piloted in Herefordshire and Shropshire in 1995/96 loaned mopeds to 16-25 year olds living in rural areas to enable them to access jobs more easily. Transport is often a particular issue for this group as they are unlikely to be able to afford their own vehicles and must rely on parents / others for transport where there is no appropriate public service. The scheme has since been replicated in other geographical areas across the country such as Warwickshire.

c) Best Practice

This section examines a range of practical initiatives and organisations that challenge the barriers to attendance identified above through their use of networking and/or transport.

Touring, Outreach and the National Rural Touring Forum (NRTF)

The village hall, church and school have traditionally been a focal point for rural life. Crucially, because those buildings are regarded as part of the fabric of village social life they afford a familiar and informal space in which local people can enjoy the arts. In recent history, many local authorities amongst other funders and policy makers, have recognised the need to make the arts truly accessible to all their constituents by consistently supporting a rural touring scheme for their area. This has provided one means of countering social, geographical, economic or psychological barriers to the arts and the view that “the arts are not for us”. Community development is another important aspect of the work of many schemes.

“It brings Art to the people rather than taking people to the Arts” (Sleaford, Lincs.)

The National Rural Touring Forum is the national charity that forms the umbrella body for a number of rural touring schemes across the country. The membership of the NRTF has fluctuated since the mid-90’s from 34 schemes in 97/98 to 31 active schemes in 98/9, rising back to 34 in 99/00 and growth looks set to continue with a further 2 new schemes starting in 1999.

NRTF is run by two professional administrators, in conjunction with a Board of Directors/Trustees. The Forum, like the schemes it represents, aims to bring arts to local people in rural communities right across Britain. Mainly working in village halls and small centres the Forum began in 1994 and now meets regularly. Their aims are to recognise village halls as a natural focus and often preferred venue for performances and other activities by those who value their community. Some schemes, like Take Art! In Somerset, have a broader remit and run a touring scheme as part of a larger rural arts development programme. Most organisations receive funding from District Councils, County Councils and Regional Arts Boards; the level of support varies significantly from area to area.

The first rural touring scheme started in 1981 in SE Wales. Each rural touring programme varies in terms of geographical cover and legal status. The general principal policy of each rural touring scheme is that they serve as partnerships with local people in rural communities, who in effect become the local promoters. Most schemes act as brokers, providing brochures or 'menus'. It is the rural promoter that chooses the 'act' because they sell the tickets and promote the event. The rural touring schemes operate on the 'bottom up' principle – empowering local people to choose their own arts activities, rather than imposing choices on them. As will be seen later in this study, the 'bottom up' approach is becoming the favoured way of working within central government. (see section VI.A). Furthermore, the promoters take a percentage of the box office proceeds and fundraise through other activities, such as running raffles or selling food, so the whole community can benefit from the event. The scheme offers financial assistance for the event and promotion, for example by supplying contracts, posters and tickets, and contacting the press.

Responsibility of finding an audience generally lies at a local level and so audiences reflect the local population because of the informal, familiar and local nature of the event. Therefore a cross-section of people are attracted, some of whom may not attend a region's art centre or theatre, thus effectively and consistently reaching new audiences.

The idea of access and partnership is increasingly being picked up by funders and policy makers alike. The schemes serve overlapping areas of policy for both local authorities and public arts funders. Businesses and grant giving charities are also beginning to see opportunities in this area of work – one local scheme successfully negotiated a three-year sponsorship deal with Royal Mail. As the number of schemes grows, so more and more performing companies and artists are realising that rural touring represents a new and viable means of working.

Recent research of the individual scheme directors has shown that:

- 86% of touring schemes operate within an area which has medium to little opportunity for local people to experience arts activity
- Across the NRTF schemes the average capacity of audiences in attendance is 69%.
- 22% of all earned income is kept by promoters.
- All rural touring schemes employ at least one part-time paid member of staff. It is estimated that there are 61 people working in the central co-ordination of rural touring schemes and 25 volunteers.
- There has been a gradual increase in the numbers of schemes since 1981, including three new projects in 1995 and a further 2 in 1999.
- Each scheme has on average 34 active promoting groups (which represents 1,076 active promoting groups across the country)
- In 1998/9 it is estimated that 2,093 performances took place in rural venues by small and very small scale companies in all conceivable art forms attracting a total audience of 152,000 many of whom were infrequent or new attenders of arts events (source: Research NRTF / Arts Marketing Warwickshire 1999)
- In 1998 / 9 the financial turnover of the rural touring schemes was estimated as £1,147,405 (source: NRTF / Arts Marketing Warwickshire 1999)

Initial research also found that promoters share similar demographic characteristics. The promoters rate the rural touring scheme highly, and in particular view the training they are given as valuable. However promoters would like to be offered a greater diversity of shows.

Importantly the research found that there were issues surrounding audience / programme development, which can be hindered by lack of time on the promoter's behalf and a fear of poor ticket sales. Also promoters perceptions of their audiences are that they are not prepared to pay as much for a production which they perceive to be challenging, so promoters are keen to keep prices low, but some find it difficult with the payment structures imposed by the scheme. Promoters find it difficult to delegate, which has potentially damaging consequences when a promoter stops operating.

In addition to the National Rural Touring Forum and its member schemes, other touring activity in rural areas includes outreach work from larger arts organisations e.g. the Northern Sinfonia, who work in smaller orchestral groupings in rural churches and school halls. The common factor with rural arts touring is that the arts experience is shared by the community who know each other well, in a space which in some sense belongs to them and so attempting to remove some of the barriers to arts access. People can attend regardless of social, geographical, economic or psychological barriers, which may exist in arts attendance with other, more formal, venues.

Arts Express

Funded through the first year of New Audiences, Arts Express was a combined transport and networking scheme. Concentrated in North Warwickshire - an entirely rural area where arts attendances are low, the project was managed by AMW.

It was a collaborative project amongst the Royal Shakespeare Company, Warwick Arts Centre, The Belgrade Theatre, Warwick Arts Society and Live & Local.

An outreach worker was employed to identify existing networks across the north of the county and to make contact with key decision-makers within rural communities. The way in which the outreach worker interacted with groups varied according to their needs. Some were given a formal presentation about the scheme while for others the technique was very informal and a case of the outreach worker joining in with their activity while chatting to them about Arts Express.

The project offered groups free transport to arts events at any one of the participating venues. The transport and tickets were organised centrally to make the scheme as easy as possible to use.

The scheme worked in partnership with the local Rural Transport Brokerage Project – a community transport initiative and a local commercial firm. The transport was organised to give the most flexibility, often returning people to their homes after the trip.

Promotion was primarily through word of mouth although supported by printed promotional materials and press coverage.

Depending on the needs of the group and their confidence to attend, an Arts Express representative would accompany them on the mini-bus. Some groups were also incentivised through value-added options such as backstage tour and a post/pre performance discussion.

433 attendances were generated through the scheme with 3 groups attending more than once. Feedback from scheme users was very positive and even those who had access to transport thought the scheme beneficial as it was easy to book and easy to use. Some noted that perceived distance to the venue would have prevented them from attending independently but the opportunity to have someone else responsible for taking them, finding parking and returning them home made it a viable option. It was also a way of attending alone without feeling uncomfortable.

The project ended with the end of the funded period and further funding is currently being sought to build upon its success.

Eastern Angles Theatre Company - Putting Down Roots

The aim of the project was to attract new audiences to Eastern Angle's spring production of *Days of Plenty* by working in selected market towns across 4 counties of East Anglia (a total of nine venues, mainly schools, town halls and community centres), where they were able to offer enhanced benefits of: a choice of performances (2 or 3 night stays); a special raked seating system supplied by the Royal Shakespeare Company; free transport from outlying villages and towns; a related education programme offering a range of workshops.

Over 1,500 new attenders were attracted. The Company also felt that practical barriers of availability of work linked to transport had been dealt with and audiences had been offered a wide choice of performances. The total number of attenders was 1,612 with a mean average of 179 people per performance representing a 58% capacity. In addition they undertook education workshops for primary and secondary school students, youth groups and older people.

Positive feedback, gathered through evaluation forms, which had a 60% response rate, included comments referring to the free transport, physical comfort and improvements, as well as the artistic quality of the work. Quotes referring to the quality of the work were "it was brilliant...really captured the imagination of the young people". Primary schools, sixth forms, youth groups and senior citizens all had positive things to say about the project and the way

that it had been structured with at least 30% of the sixth form participants also attending the production.

The very successful free transport element of the scheme has subsequently been repeated and looks as though it will become a regular aspect of the company's visit.

InRoads

During this project Arts Marketing Hampshire worked with three venues in Basingstoke and Newbury who wanted to develop attenders and non-attenders in rural areas, in particular addressing their transport needs and other barriers to attendance.

Their range of programming includes virtually every kind of live entertainment; working together enabled the widest possible appeal. Having visited a range of possible locations and following analysis of the venues' databases, two areas in the Newbury/Basingstoke 'hinterland' with different profiles were identified:

- Aldermaston - a relatively low level of bookers for any of the three venues
- Kingsclere - a higher level of bookers, but with little crossover between the venues.

The InRoads project used a Community Representative for each village and the jobs were advertised in the local papers. Based on existing District Publicity Assistant (DPA) schemes, the Community Reps were employed by Arts Marketing Hampshire to work on behalf of the three venues. Their remit included:

- networking in and around the village
- advocacy on behalf of the venues
- becoming the familiar point of contact for the venues within the village
- increasing the profile of the venues within the village, print distribution etc.
- maintaining and increasing local knowledge
- feeding back to the venues on behalf of the village
- carrying out research for the project generating interest in launch events
- organising potential transport schemes
- liaising with the local publications (press, parish magazines etc.)
- maintaining contact with the village VIPs, groups, parish councillors etc.

Due to the nature of the scheme, the Community Reps needed an ability to motivate themselves, and possessed the right interpersonal skills to make a good, positive impression at first meeting. In both cases proved to be one of the main reasons for their success.

For this project it was decided that door-to-door research would be carried out within the villages A random sample of 100 addresses in each postcode sector was compiled, together with some 'reserve' addresses. During November and December, the Community Reps conducted this research with the following aims:

- to test awareness of the three venues and determine which, if any, the residents attend;
- to gain an idea of which factors may prevent attendance at any of the three venues;
- to determine what may encourage future attendance;
- to test out reactions to specific initiatives, including transport initiatives.

Some initial analysis was carried out in December/January to inform decisions on ticket offers and transport initiatives in time for the village launch events that followed.

Arts Marketing Hampshire considered that the InRoads project was successful in meeting its aims:

- increased attendance at all three venues from both villages
- appointment and work of the Community Representatives
- venues working in collaboration
- greatly increased profile and awareness of the three venues
- good level of media interest locally, regionally and nationally
- successful and over-subscribed launch event in each village
- positive feedback and response from village residents
- substantial research undertaken into rural audiences
- removal of barriers to attendance (price/access)
- transport initiative reaching all three venues
- creation of mailing list for InRoads information
- chance to test new marketing techniques and initiatives

In January 1999, a launch event 'Going Live' was held in both villages, an opportunity to 'take the venues into the villages', giving the local residents a chance to meet key staff from the venues, and for the venues to find out at the 'sharp end' the views and opinions of these communities. Although entry to the Going Live events was free, tickets were produced to keep control over numbers. As with all free ticket events, not all of them get used, so more tickets were issued than the available capacity. Both events were over-subscribed. Transport was provided for those who could not get there independently. The focus of the evenings was a presentation by Arts Marketing Hampshire and the venues, explaining the scheme and announcing ticket offers and transport initiatives. Packs were given out which contained venue guides and discount vouchers, season brochures from the venues and details of the proposed transport schemes.

Following the initial research findings, and in consultation with the venues, ticket offers were set up to encourage people to attend one or more of the venues, in particular a venue to which they had not been before.

This in some cases removed the price barrier completely with tickets reduced to £1 with a voucher. The vouchers were included within a venue guide leaflet, which included basic details and Going Live packs, alongside the season brochures. Community Reps also mailed out and distributed information. In total, 85 vouchers were redeemed, with an almost even split between the three venues.

The initial research findings indicated that transport was an issue for some people - but the response was different in the two villages:

- In Kingsclere, 29% of respondents said they would be more likely to attend if a transport scheme was available; a further 15% said maybe they would. Of these two groups, an overall 93% said they would use it two or three times a year if it became permanent.
- In Aldermaston, only 7% of those responding to the questionnaire said a transport scheme would make them more likely to attend, and 31% said maybe it would. Of these two groups, 96% said they would use it two or three times a year if it became permanent.

It was clear from this that Kingsclere would probably yield the better results from a transport initiative, and this indeed proved to be the case. The research investigated possible transport options, and the results were cross-tabulated with show preferences to give an indication of (a) what kind of scheme might work, and (b) for what kinds of performances.

A mini-coach scheme was set up, and during February and March 1999, one trip per month to each venue from each village was planned (a total of six trips per village). Pick-up points for the mini-coaches were agreed. A range of performance types was chosen (drama, comedy, music) in accordance with both the research, and the venues' programme at the time. A transport voucher was included within the Going Live packs, and this enabled people to use the mini-coach free. For those without vouchers, the charge was £3. Of the 42 people who used the transport scheme, 19 used vouchers and 23 paid.

In Kingsclere, four of the six trips eventually ran. This reached all three venues (Watermill twice). In Aldermaston, just one trip actually ran (Watermill). As well as the indications from the research, Arts Marketing Hampshire demonstrates that there were many reasons for this difference, but including the fact that residents were unwilling to drive to a pick-up point, and there was much less desire to be part of a communal experience. For those who did use the transport scheme, it proved very popular.

The marketing campaign revolved around the work and personalities of the Community representatives, using a combination of advocacy, persuasion and enthusiasm. Arts Marketing Hampshire reports that this reaped rewards for the profile and image of the venues - and the wider arts community. Both Going Live events were over-subscribed, and suggests that the networking and print were effective. The InRoads scheme gained much media interest from parish magazines up to BBC Radio 3.

The proposed activities for future development include:

- continued employment of the Community Representatives;
- increasing the InRoads mailing list - reaching as many people in the villages as possible;
- maintaining contact with those on the InRoads mailing list - sending new packs, evaluation forms and another ticket offer encouraging them to introduce new people to the venues;
- running 'nurturing' evenings for key village influencers at two of the venues;
- arranging mini-coach trips from the villages to the venues according to demand.

English National Ballet - The Ballet Bus

Provision of a transport scheme was one of the main recommendations within Forum 28's marketing audit undertaken by AMCO (now known as Developing Audiences for the North). This project built on transport schemes previously undertaken in urban areas by English National Ballet including London and Manchester.

The Ballet Bus ran on April 6 and April 7, 1999 when English National Ballet performed at Forum 28 in Barrow-in-Furness with a mixed bill. There were two evening performances and one matinee. The day-to-day administration of the project and elements of the marketing campaign were under taken by a Regional Coordinator who, worked with a group of Local Representatives.

The scheme provided a free bus service from four outlying areas making pre-arranged stops on route to collect more passengers, to Forum 28 in Barrow-in-Furness. These areas were Millom, Kendal, Ambleside and Lancaster. There was also a local bus route, which began its pick-ups in Ulverston and a bus with facilities from patrons with disabilities. In total 17 bus journeys were made ferrying 546 patrons to and from the theatre.

The original project used existing Box Office data to set a realistic target of 1000 patrons to use the Ballet Bus. This was to allow for some people dropping out, some buses not being full and also to ensure that people who would have attended anyway and were eligible for the scheme are not excluded from using the service.

Leaflets were produced which included information on the performance, how to use the scheme, the offer, booking form, a timetable and how the scheme was funded. Folio posters were also produced which highlighted the performances and the scheme. Letters and leaflets were sent to previous patrons of Forum 28 including lapsed attenders and to contacts developed by the Regional Co-ordinator and Local Representatives.

Distribution was undertaken by the Regional Representative and the Local Co-ordinators, as well as Forum 28. This focused on the designated routes of the Ballet Buses. Display adverts were placed in the North West Evening Mail (in-kind sponsors of the scheme) and other local newspapers including Westmoreland Gazette, North West Evening Advertiser, Lakeland Echo and The Lancaster Guardian. A radio advert was also made and played in the local station Bay Radio. The local press was kept informed about the scheme via the Company, the venue and the Regional Coordinator.

Patrons who wished to apply to the scheme made their bookings either by telephone, in person at the Box Office or via the Regional Co-ordinator / Local Representatives. Patrons paid for their tickets for the performance, which were £10, £8 or £6 but were able to book free seats on the Ballet Bus. The venue then sent out a confirmation pack, which included a covering letter detailing where and when the bus would collect them, a Forum 28 Season brochure, an ENB postcard, a sheet briefly explaining the history and background of the Company and information on the ballets. On board a member of staff talked to all patrons, giving them a background to the Company and on the ballets themselves.

The total number of people who used the Ballet Bus was 546. The company felt that this was lower than anticipated, however the performances sold out. There was a high demand for the Ballet Bus, but the work of the Regional Coordinator and the Local Representatives also helped to raise awareness about the performances around the county, which attracted people for whom transport was not a barrier to attendance.

After the performances the venue and the Company received a lot of positive feedback - in phone calls and letters from all those who had used the scheme. There was a positive atmosphere on the Ballet Buses and in the performances. Many people were first timers and commented on being made to feel special. For many Ballet Bus patrons this was their first visit to Forum 28. Many of them commented positively about the venue saying that they hadn't thought of coming before but would definitely return.

Due to the success of the Ballet Bus scheme, the coach hire company subsequently arranged their own trip. They took 40 passengers (some of whom had used the scheme and some who had not) from Barrow-in-Furness to Manchester to see English National Ballet's performances of Swan Lake at the Manchester Evening News Arena.

Comments from those who used the service demonstrate a wide variety of reasons why the provision of transport in this rural area removed the barrier, which was stopping them from attending:

- Those with no transport of their own would not have been able to get to the venue easily. The further away from Barrow they lived the more problematic was the use of public transport.
- Those with cars felt uncomfortable or unsafe driving themselves long distances using the winding roads of Cumbria, particularly after nightfall
- Single people felt that they could attend with confidence. The Ballet Bus journey meant they were part of a group. It was an opportunity to meet and talk to new people. They would not have come as a single person if they had to make their own way to the theatre.
- Many people had considered attending ballet before, but the provision of free transport had taken away the hassle and therefore the barrier that had stopped them from attending previously. Additionally there is poor parking provision close to the theatre.
- Families who may have made their own way by car were able to use the Bus, which enhanced their overall experience. The Reps made it a 'special' event for them by telling them about the Company, the ballets, showing them ballet shoes and explaining how they are constructed.
- For some it allowed them to have a drink at the bar as part of their evening's entertainment without having to worry about driving.

The venue reported that there was a marked increase in sales for other shows in the run up to and on the days of the English National Ballet performances. Many of those booking were newcomers who had 'discovered' the venue through the Ballet Bus scheme. The venue felt that the scheme proved that there was a demand for organised transport schemes and provision of transport would help to increase their attendance figures. They intend to run arts buses in the future, possibly with patrons paying a nominal sum to use the service.

The venue feels that the work of the Regional Co-ordinator has proved the case for the appointment of an Audience Development Officer and they are currently investigating the establishment of such a post. There was a network of contacts developed during the scheme and these have all been left with the venue to use when running future projects and schemes in the area.

The North West Evening Mail acted as an in-kind sponsor providing free advertising space and extended editorial coverage, which raised their profile within the community. The large quantity of leaflets / booking forms and posters produced meant that the county was flooded with Ballet Bus information. Thought was given to the information and design of booking form and leaflet and people commented that the information was clear and the booking form straightforward to complete. Patrons appreciated the personal contact with the Local Representatives — this helped make the difference as to whether they would book or not.

English National Ballet has recorded a number of lessons learned from this project, which could be useful for other organisations considering this approach to audience development:

- effective allocation of resources, including staff, has to be considered with the planning, as it may not follow an even pattern
- planning has to allow sufficient time to administer schemes of this nature, particularly if they are integrated with other partners, in this case, local reps, coach hire, venue and company
- effective communication and appropriate information is paramount to success, for example, producing a step-by-step guide.

Step 1: Phone Forum 28 to check availability. Step 2: Complete the booking form etc.

- a project requires sufficient time for more contact and distribution of information, particularly if a networking approach is a key element of the campaign
- the performances took place during the school Easter holidays; a lost opportunity to attract school groups.
- booking procedures need to consider issues such as unaccompanied travelling for children and the implications this may have under current legislation for such schemes in terms of extra resources and costs
- building in a realistic 'buffer' of people who might not arrive in the event, or making sure that cancellation information and contacts are clearly communicated are part of the information process within the Ballet Bus
- research with new attenders is valuable, but consideration should be given to the value of exploring motivators and de-motivators amongst non-attenders, so that similar schemes can be tailored and refined to meet audience needs on a local level
- the total experience, including that on board a bus needs to be considered, including music, video and refreshments

The Anvil, Basingstoke

The Anvil, with a view to increasing their rural audiences, carried out a mailing exercise in selected postcode areas of rural Hampshire. The selection of postcodes was partly through personal knowledge of the area.

Approximately 50,000 packages were distributed through Royal Mail. The package that was delivered included;
current brochure

freepost envelope to join The Anvil's mailing list.

The limitations of the project were:

No way of targeting those that may be interested

No way of excluding those that were on the existing mailing list.

The Anvil considered this to be one way in which publicity could be distributed, while only using a limited amount of resources. The project was funded by an A4E award which was matched by funding from Hampshire County Council.

The project cost approximately £4050 in total. This included £1400 for printing cards, which were designed in house, £2200 paid to Royal Mail and about £450 for Freepost returns. By designing the cards in house costs were reduced and the venue also had an existing Freepost licence, so did not need to be specially set up.

Approximately 2,400 responses were received (a 4.8% response rate), so producing one of the largest single additions to the mailing list. More importantly, the project produced attenders. Approximately £45,000 worth of tickets have been purchased through the 2,400 people. The largest concentrations of responders, categorised by postcode were:

RG27 9 – 9.4%

RG26 3 – 6.4%

GU34 5 – 5.3%

SO24 9 – 5.2%

The project also generated responses from another 110 areas, however the above represent the postcode sectors from which the most responses were generated as a percentage of the total respondents.

Interestingly, it was noted that these people took longer to make their first purchase than many other groups (around 12 months before the first purchase) and that they attended a broad mix of arts, not just mainstream events. The Anvil intends to continue monitoring the ticketing history of this group to see if their tastes develop and sales increase. No special marketing has been carried out for this group of attenders, other than the new season brochure being mailed to them.

The Concerts Coach, Shropshire

Shropshire is a particularly rural county and has few arts venues. There is no theatre because Telford is now considered a separate authority. Venues include The Music Hall in Shrewsbury, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Wrekin Sports Hall and a school drama studio in Oswestry. Arts activity targeting rural audiences is undertaken by Arts Alive, the rural touring scheme, Pentabus touring theatre company and Shropshire Music.

Significantly, Shropshire is home to The Concerts Coach – a transport initiative established over several years by Derek Wharton. He recognised the lack of opportunity to access arts events within the region and organised a regular coach to events across the country. What started as a small scheme to overcome a practical problem, has grown into a semi-professional group-booking scheme. The Concerts Coach is an example of best practice and has been used as a model for several similar schemes. The County has in the past subsidised transport but does not currently do so.

The Hall For Cornwall⁷

This is a new venue, opened in November 1997, with a brief to provide a theatre for the people of Cornwall. There is a resident population of less than one million. The economy is supported by agriculture and tourism and wages are 25% below the national average. Public transport is geared towards school and work, and often bus services are non-existent beyond 7pm, for example the last local train from Truro leaves at 8.30pm.

Truro's population is less than 15,000, so The Hall has to view the whole of Cornwall as a catchment area. Since opening, 34,700 Cornish residents have bought tickets (recorded in August 1999). One hundred of these, who have only booked once, were phoned by The Hall to see their reactions to the venue. This research identified a number of issues, but also three categories of attender:

⁷ From 'Travelling to the Arts – Catchment for Cornwall'; *Arts Business*, January 31 2000
THE GREEN GUIDE - MAY 2000 © AMW

1. Remote (over 40 miles away) = 78,000
2. Rural (district population of less than 10,000) = 109,000
3. Urban (district population of more than 10,000) = 283,000.

In 1999 it was decided to concentrate on the rural category in terms of research and developing audiences. Key barriers to attendance were identified as:

- No public transport for evening performances
- Problems with private transport (e.g. parking in Truro)
- Limited public transport for daytime performances
- Limited experience of theatres
- Lack of information.

The solutions implemented in the following twelve months were:

- A coach service for groups, paid for from the box office
- Increased direct mail beyond Truro
- Increased distribution points
- Increased distribution by volunteers in rural districts
- Transport information included in all print
- Promotion of the box office as an information service, as well as an outlet from which to purchase tickets.

Most of these solutions were funded through existing budgets.

A further transport project being run by a dance group working within the venue, received New Audiences funding. The project aimed to build on the success the venue had experienced encouraging large groups through transport schemes and sought to attract smaller groups. Groups of five could take advantage of the scheme where they were requested to pay just £1 for the whole group's transport. However, the project was less successful than the one for larger groups. This is thought to be because groups are often smaller or larger than five.

After six months there was a 13% increase in the rural audience and over 20% of people living in rural areas had visited The Hall at least once. This meant that the audience had grown by over 24,000 in 1999.

Alongside audience development a positive result has been a growing dialogue between box office staff and the audience. Customers are delighted to be asked about their situation and box office staff have increased their knowledge of the audience.

Future work will focus on the issue of transport with discussions between the main service provider, Cornwall County Council and The Hall.

Leighton Buzzard Theatre

Leighton Buzzard Theatre is currently nearing the end of a three-year District Council funded project. They see rural areas as a priority for development. However the main aim of the project has been to create a programme of daytime events, for those active, retired people that find it difficult to attend in the evening. The *55+ programme*, as it has been named, has involved some cross-over between daytime and evening events, but generally the daytime events are not repeated in the evening.

Workshops organised as part of this project have all been sold out and the only problems have been continuing to meet demand and to find workshop leaders. There has been less of a response for live events, which the focus groups found was because people feel quality will be lower or amateur during the daytime. People believe that little money is going to be spent on programming for daytime events. Also there is a feeling that visiting the theatre is an evening activity. Leighton Buzzard Theatre hopes to overcome this in the future by stressing in all publicity that the events are of an equal quality as evening events.

So far questionnaire research has provided positive responses, as have the focus groups. People were particularly pleased that their views were being taken into account. The focus groups were made up of about ten people, specially invited at the end of each season.

The *55+ Programme* has now enjoyed four seasons and there is undoubtedly great enthusiasm for the project from the local community. The Theatre aims to continue this initiative based upon the positive feedback from customers.

The evaluation process identified a number of facts about who the attenders were and the geographical areas they came from, as well as booking habits and the frequency of attendance. The project saw a steady growth in both the number of people on the mailing list and the number of bookers. Of the 320 people who had booked for a *55+* event; 60% were current attenders, 19% were lapsed bookers (who have attended but not in the previous year) and 21% were new customers. Not surprisingly almost 80% of the customers come from the LU7 postcode area. This encompasses the Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and the surrounding villages, so approximately 35% of customers come from rural areas, where they believe that transport is a major barrier to attendance, particularly in the evening.

The Theatre felt that by offering a daytime programme they have overcome this barrier to a greater extent, although they are aware that people who rely on public transport can still be restricted by infrequent services. Ultimately the only way this can be overcome is, they think, for the Theatre to provide a form of transport.

Pricing has been kept deliberately low, to remove cost as a barrier. A number of promotional techniques have been used during the year to reduce further restriction in terms of who sees the publicity material. The most effective method seems to have been the mailing out of the Theatre's season brochure and the *55+* newsletter.

A number of recommendations were identified from the evaluation of the *55+ Programme*. These included modifying the aims of the project to increase frequency and new attenders, to continue to develop the cinema programme, expand the number of workshops, expand the number of events held in the lounge and be more selective about the type and timing of events. It was also concluded that the *55+* events need to be highlighted in the Review brochure, the distribution procedures should be developed and stronger links need to be created with local relevant groups and the local media.

Malvern Theatres group coach

Malvern Theatres group coach is available for groups 45 or more. When a group books tickets for over 45 people they are asked whether they would be interested in having a coach booked for them, which will pick them up and drop them off after the performance. The scheme covers any groups in the area classed as the 'Three Counties'.

The scheme is mainly self-funding, because the Theatre offers the coach in lieu of the group 20% discount. If the group number is between 19 and 45 they only get offered the 20% discount (and if groups are less than 19 they qualify for different discounts).

The project has now been running for approximately ten years, and in that time many hundreds of groups have used the service. Often, up to five coaches will be used for a matinee performance, with the main scheme users being elderly people and schools. Other users include community groups and universities.

Over the past ten years some of the rules for the project have changed, but the main criteria remains that the coach service is only available to groups above 45.

New Perspectives – Ticket to Ride

New Perspectives is a touring theatre company, often working within the rural touring network. With sponsorship from Sainsbury's, they have established a taxi service for people who would otherwise be unable to attend their events. The aim of the project, *Ticket To Ride*, is to develop audiences for New Perspectives's shows. The company believed that the scheme would enable them to reach more people, because often their audiences are elderly and have no access to private transport. These attenders also need to feel that the transport provision is safe and reliable.

The scheme relies upon a partnership between the theatre company and the local promoter. When a date is confirmed with a promoter, New Perspectives contacts them with information about the scheme and who is eligible to use it. The promoter then identifies potential attenders who meet the criteria within the community, approaches them with information

about *Ticket To Ride* and, once sold a ticket to the show, passes their details on to the theatre company.

New Perspectives organises local taxi firms – on the advice of the promoter - and pays for journeys to their performance for any attenders within three miles of the venue who need the service.

The response rates have been varied across areas however the company has received positive feedback from scheme users, with many people saying they would not have attended if the scheme had not been available.

South Hill Park Arts Centre

South Hill Park Arts Centre has used Arts Ambassadors in Bracknell, Ascot and Windsor. The venue recruited people who have lived in the area for a while and who already have established contacts and play an active part in the community, for example a teacher or councillor, to represent the venue to their communities. The ambassadors work on a voluntary basis, although expenses are covered and they also get complimentary tickets.

The Arts Ambassadors' role includes distributing leaflets and posters, as well as organising talks and taster sessions by Arts Centre staff. Complimentary and half-price tickets are then offered to people to encourage them to attend the venue.

An additional project has also been developed called 'New Neighbours' which aims to attract new-comers to the area to arts venues. The Arts Centre pays £100 to belong to the scheme which is co-ordinated by an independent company which recruits and trains volunteers, paying only expenses. The volunteers change occasionally, and when they do someone on the marketing team at The Arts Centre invites them in to explain a little bit about the Centre and the productions. The Arts Centre also offer the ambassadors complimentary tickets so that they are well-informed about the venue's work.

The co-ordinating company prepares publicity packs which include information on local schools, shops and services. They are distributed by people living in each community, who are asked to visit new-comers to the area. The Arts Centre includes in this pack their current brochure and complimentary tickets (subject to availability).

This low cost option of distribution contributes to a number of extra ticket sales. The Arts Centre generally believes the project to be a success, with approximately five known responses a month, out of the 200 that are often distributed.

The Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds

The Theatre Royal conducted a project during 1999 with the aim to take the Theatre's work out of the building and into the rural community. The production used, staged in two village halls, was *The Zoo Story*. Following the success of this they are carrying out a new project, using the production *Duet for One*. The performance is also being mounted in the Theatre Royal, so it is clear there is no reduction in quality for village halls. They have been invited to return to the two villages that took part last year. In addition they are working in another 4-5 locations, aiming to provide a good geographical spread.

Last year audiences averaged between 50 and 60 people. This year they want to add education work to the programme, particularly because the play deals with disability. However rather than imposing ideas on to the villages, they are tailoring activity to the communities needs, as with the NRTF model.

While developing new and existing contacts the Theatre is aware that it must speak to the correct people or group within each community. The District Council has given some guidance on which villages may be suitable. Three of the villages already had children's drama groups run by the Theatre, so the project utilised these contacts. The Theatre was invited to work in one village by the Parish Council and such links are vital for support.

With experience it is hoped that the venue should be able to identify the ideal village contacts for future projects. Members of the project team have also spent time touring around the villages to see which look appropriate. This has highlighted that some halls were not suitable for the events, for example, village halls with no blackout facility.

The project uses local contacts to help distribute posters and leaflets. In one village the main contact is the local postmistress, who has agreed to take the leaflets out while delivering other things. Additionally the Theatre may use their usual distribution person to carry out further distribution in these villages.

The Local Borough Council has been very supportive and has increased funding, due to the extra number of villages being used. The Theatre is also hoping for District Council funding, because of the education aspect of the project. Furthermore, the venue has submitted an application to Suffolk County Council's fund – *Arts for All*, which prioritises access to the arts, although there has been no feedback from this application as yet. Unfortunately the regional arts board currently has no funding for which to apply.

Additionally, the venue has gained sponsorship from a local transport company, providing the company with a positive PR opportunity. Prior to this the company had had some bad press coverage, due to ineffective time-tabling of rural buses. The company made the association that transport is often seen as a barrier to attendance.

An avenue, in sponsorship terms, that the Theatre has not yet explored is funding from any groups connected with disability, due to the nature of the play. A small amount of money has been also allocated from the theatre's box office. However, even with all this extra investment the project is still anticipated to make a loss.

Evaluation last year was carried out in the form of post-show discussions, questioning audiences about their attitudes to the performances and the events in general. It is anticipated that this method will be used again this year. Representatives from the local councils, arts organisations and other bodies are also invited to the events and to give their views on the project.

Overall, the Theatre believes that it takes time to build up a reputation. Therefore they are interested to see audience figures for those halls which they are using for the second year. Ultimately though they want each community to have ownership of the project to fully adopt the 'bottom-up' approach, rather than imposing activities on the village.

d) Prioritising and Funding the work

The above examples of best practice gained funding from a variety of sources including local authorities at District, borough and county levels.

Through research with Local Authorities and Regional Arts Boards several funding schemes have been identified which are specifically aimed at rural areas or prioritise rural areas as part of their criteria however, most funding sources emphasise access rather than differentiating between urban and rural audiences.

In addition to funding through the more formal arts channels, two projects were also successful in attracting commercial sponsorship. Other sources include grant-making trusts and foundations with a community focus for their funding programmes. All are outlined in this section with more detailed contact details in the appendices, although this is by no means an exhaustive list.

Regional Arts Boards

Each Regional Arts Board (RAB) has its own funding priorities that are regularly appraised.

Following de-centralisation, RAB's are now responsible for recommending the allocation of Small Scale Capital Lottery resources. Criteria for applications appropriate to this study include:

- to enhance and extend the touring and distribution of work in rural areas

- projects that benefit rural or urban areas with identified needs in respect of deprivation and social exclusion.

From email and telephone requests for information, we have identified the following priority areas and funding sources:

(please note: for the purposes of this rural study London Arts Board has been excluded)

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Eastern Arts Board | |
| Contact: | Liz Wilson |
| Prioritising rural areas: | Much of the area is rural so these areas are considered a priority. The strategy has recently changed, from specifying rural areas as a main concern, to them being thought of as an integrated part of a strategy that mentions a number of new sections. Networking in this region has been strongly developed, because it has worked well in the past (see below for example projects). |
| Relevant funding sources: | Sources include New Audiences, as well as their own internal grants. |
| Criteria: | The criteria generally gives priority to areas that need regeneration, and areas classed for example as Objective 2. |
| Example projects funded: | The main projects that EAB have funded include the local rural touring scheme, Rural Arts East. This covers Norfolk, Suffolk and now Cambridge, and they consider it a main provider of the arts in rural areas. Other projects that are funded are those run by Eastern Angles Theatre Company and Wingfield Arts. Both of these also utilise volunteer promoters and run programmes throughout the year for rural areas. |
| East Midlands Arts Board | |
| Contact: | No information available |
| Prioritising rural areas: | |
| Relevant funding sources: | |
| Criteria: | |
| Example projects funded: | |
| Northern Arts Board | |
| Contact: | Richard Bliss |
| Prioritising rural areas: | Northern Arts Board has identified that distance, be it physical, social or psychological, as a key barrier to developing audiences and therefore "the tyranny of distance" has become the focus of this Regional Challenge package. This package addresses two main areas; Teeside and Rural Isolation. The suggestion is that barriers of distance are not felt exclusively by those in rural areas, although over 70% of the region is rural, with poor public transport. There is also a lack of capital provision in some areas and opportunities for young people are particularly limited. A number of the projects that aim to challenge rural isolation are listed below. |
| Relevant funding sources: | Use has been made of new audience development funds, A4E awards and also their own regional funds. |
| Criteria: | Projects must aim to overcome the barrier of distance, either in Teeside or in isolated rural areas. |
| Example projects funded: | Provision includes the North Pennine Rural Touring Scheme, which has a clear target of young people, with its Young Promoters Group. Cleveland Theatre Company orchestrated Take Off 98, which is a festival of key strategic importance in developing opportunities for young people. This project aims to broaden access for people suffering from rural isolation. The NTC Touring Theatre Company has also offered an extended tour of a proven new writing production. The Eden District has no dedicated performance arts facilities, so a project called Eden Arts aims to bring a range of arts events to venues which will be attractive to young people and traditional non-attenders. This has also involved working with a number of established partner organisations. Other activity includes work at Abbot Hall, Jack Drum Arts, work run |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | by Cumbria County Council to coincide with the National Year of Reading and Generator, which is a project taking live music to rural areas. |
| | |
| North West Arts Board | |
| Contact: | Maureen Jordan |
| Prioritising rural areas: | Priority not given to rural areas, the main way they are catered for are the local rural touring schemes. |
| Relevant funding sources: | Have funding schemes to set up networks but not specific to rural areas. Funds generally treasury provided, set aside specifically for rural touring schemes with an audience development aspect. |
| Criteria: | Only for venues and promoters, with the goal of audience development. They are particularly interested in young people and areas, which suffer from social exclusion. |
| Example projects funded: | Primary arts provision for rural audiences are the rural touring networks; Lancashire and Cheshire. These rural touring schemes also have a young promoters scheme – thus attracting further funding. NWAB is also undertaking a feasibility study about rural arts, although it is not yet completed. |
| | |
| Southern Arts Board | |
| Contact: | Joanne Day |
| Prioritising rural areas: | Currently in the process of writing the strategy, which they hope will include some priority for rural areas. The deadline for the strategy to be completed is October 2000. However rural areas have previously been prioritised in earlier SAB strategies. |
| Relevant funding sources: | They are unsure of the funding of rural areas at present, it may be part funded by ACE, social exclusion funding or regional challenge funds. SAB's internal funding is divided into two categories: Core and Development. The first relates to organisations that fulfil a significant regional role, whereas the second covers more specific purposes. The specific funds advertised may change slightly from year to year, in line with the changing focus of the annual plan. |
| Criteria: | To gain Core Funding, organisations must have aims that are close to those of SAB and they must fulfil a significant regional role. This represents a close and long-term working relationship, where SAB is willing to contribute towards all types of running costs of the organisation. This fund is not open to application. Development Funding, as mentioned above, is for areas such as commissioning new work, bursaries and residency programmes, arts marketing and audience development. Neither of these funds is designed to support capital projects – a new building for example, but they are open to both organisations and individual artists. |
| Example projects funded: | None currently specific to rural areas, however in the past they have completed a number of projects and carried out some research into rural arts development. This entailed a number of pilot projects, including a rural touring scheme. |
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| South East Arts Board | |
| Contact: | Rob Marshall |
| Prioritising rural areas: | Rural areas not specifically prioritised |
| Relevant funding sources: | None specifically for rural areas / communities |
| Criteria: | N/A |
| Example projects funded: | N/A |
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| South West Arts Board | |
| Contact: | Ruth Bint |
| Prioritising rural areas: | Support through action : financial assistance for artists and arts |

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| | <p>organisations which operate in rural areas such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaford Centre • Take Art • Artsreach • Prema Arts Centre • Villages in Action • Restormel Arts • Photographers at Duckspool <p>Seven basic strategies underpin their approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing opportunities for artists to develop their work within rural areas 2. Increasing opportunities for rural communities to enjoy and participate in artistic activity within their locality 3. Improving standards in the production, presentation and exhibition of the arts 4. Developing networks which support the touring and distribution of artistic activity 5. Encouraging initiatives which target areas of little or no activity 6. Exploiting the opportunities offered by the Lottery to improve arts provision in rural areas 7. Building partnerships with regional, national and European agencies across both public and private sectors |
| Relevant funding sources: | Funds include Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP) and Small Scale Capital Lottery Scheme. |
| Criteria: | <p>Funding is divided into basic categories;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long term grant aid to regionally significant arts providers and agencies • project and development funds, including support for promoters and touring. |
| Example projects funded: | <p>Those listed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to organisations that deliver a wide range of arts development services in rural areas, such as Artshape in Gloucestershire, the Beaford Centre in North Devon and North Cornwall Arts • Support to over thirty arts centres, promoters and exhibition venues across the South West • Support to professional touring companies such as Orchard Theatre Company, the Bournemouth Orchestras and Kneehigh Theatre • Investment in projects that raise the profile of arts in rural areas, such as Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail and the New Milestones public art commissions in rural Dorset • Support to local networks and consortia that improve the touring and distribution of artistic activity • Development Workers, stimulating new artistic activity at a local level • Award schemes and production funds to support the commissioning and creation of new work • Training bursaries for individual artists • Also offer information service, advice, newsletters, Lottery 'surgeries' and joint initiatives |
| West Midlands Arts Board | |
| Contact: | Claire Carter |
| Prioritising rural areas: | Within WMA's 1998 – 2002 corporate strategy, Arts in Rural Areas is a priority |
| Relevant funding sources: | <p>2 x Leader II European funded schemes (a European fund specifically aimed at assisting local communities in rural areas) have been implemented however, both expired at the end of 1999 and as yet, a replacement fund has not been found.</p> <p>Rural projects are currently being funded by the Grass Roots Arts Fund, which is part of the New Audiences initiative set up to bring new audiences to the arts and to take new art to audiences. In</p> |

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| | <p>particular, it is designed to support those who usually have few opportunities to get involved in the arts. It is dedicated to funding arts projects involving professional artists that take place in rural areas. Funds of between £150 - £2000 can be applied for and must be equally met by partnership money.</p> |
| Criteria: | <p>Sustainability and / or long term benefits. The GRASS fund, as mentioned above, only applies to rural areas (meaning a settlement of 10,000 people or less) and must be matched by equal funds. The other condition is that it should include people who have not had any arts involvement or who have never been involved in the specific art form.</p> <p>WMA is keen to support projects that address social issues, celebrate cultural diversity, benefit young people or involve disabled people as artists or participants. The fund is available to any organisation (including voluntary, community and not-for-profit groups), but not for activities in schools which take place as part of regular work during the school day.</p> |
| Example projects funded: | <p>Practically, WMA delivers its strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing arts and media touring in rural areas • Increased support for rural touring companies i.e. Rural Media Company, Craftspace Touring, Ikon Touring, & rural touring schemes • The Village Arts Fund – first launched in 1992 for small voluntary groups within rural communities. These groups were recognised as having limited access to the funding system so this scheme was set up. • The Community Arts Development Fund (Leader II) ensures communities living in rural areas have access to the arts both as participants and audience. It also aims to enhance the social, educational, environmental and economic well being of the area and those communities within it (ended Dec 1999) • The Creative Enterprise Fund (Leader II) supports and invests in arts practitioners and providers, and is open to SME's and individuals (ended Dec 1999) |
| Yorkshire Arts | |
| Contact: | Pam Pfrommer |
| Prioritising rural areas: | <p>Yorkshire Arts has corporate priorities for 2000/2001 which include targeting areas of low arts provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “areas of the region where, for a range of historical, social and geographical reasons, access to the arts is comparatively limited by the lack of facilities and provision. Key priority areas include East Yorkshire, Northern Lincolnshire, parts of South Yorkshire and isolated rural areas, particularly North Yorkshire”. • Also projects that counter social exclusion and deprivation which are likely to include areas of major industrial decline and change such as former coalfield, steel and fishing areas, parts of South Yorkshire, East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire. <p>The policy means that rural areas are provided for in their strategy, because they overlap with some areas that have a high level of social exclusion. The policy therefore is not geographically reliant, but instead depends on lack of provision and therefore need. YA is currently undertaking an audit on geographical reasons for lack of provision.</p> |

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| Relevant funding sources: | Sources include regional, national and European funds, including finance from the Arts of Council of England. (This is also an Objective 1 area, so further European funding will be available.) |
| Criteria: | YA is changing the procedures from this financial year. All staff are assigned to a team, which works with one of the corporate strategies, two of which are outlined above in the prioritising of rural areas section. Teams then bid from a central pot of RAB money. Their aim is to place funds strategically. |
| Example projects funded: | Due to the changes outlined above no projects have yet been funded, although proposals include funding a Development Officer post and literature projects in the rural area of Hull. Most of these constitute a three year funding commitment. |

Local Authorities

For the purposes of this research, AMW compiled a letter requesting specific information from a range of local authorities. The information we requested is outlined below:

- *An overview of rural arts provision in your area*
- *Sources of funding available for rurally-based arts / audience development projects*
- *Criteria for funding*
- *Details of Networking and / or transport schemes to develop audiences*
- *Knowledge of any research into barriers to attendance amongst people living in rural areas*
- *Knowledge of other practical projects to develop audiences in rural areas*

19 Local Authority officers were mailed and many were followed up with a telephone call. The section below contains information from the 10 of those contacted who provided information.

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| Shropshire County Council Contact: Gill Levick | |
| Rural arts provision: | Venues include The Music Hall in Shrewsbury, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Wrekin Sports Hall and a school drama studio in Oswestry. Other arts activities, targeting rural audiences include Arts Alive, Pentabus Touring Theatre Company and Shropshire Music |
| Funding sources: | SCC used to have an Open Access Arts Budget, which enabled them to supply annual, as well as permanent, grants. Now funding includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Audiences • 'Arts for Everyone' • District Council grants. Funding is structured strategically and aims to work in partnership with other funders. |
| Funding criteria: | Funding is restricted to strategic providers, which include Arts Alive and Pentabus. These organisations must provide a countywide service. SCC consider the criteria to be quite flexible and broad. |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | Shropshire is also home to The Concerts Coach – a transport initiative established over several years by Derek Wharton. Derek recognised the lack of opportunity to access arts events within the region and organised a regular coach to events across the country. What started as a small scheme to overcome a practical problem, has grown into a semi-professional group-bookings scheme. The Concerts Coach is an example of best practice and has been used as a model for several similar schemes. Disability Arts Shropshire (DAS) have recently gained |

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| | funding for a rural touring project for cabaret, which also involves transport and has drawn on the example of Arts Express – an AMW project funded through New Audiences based in North Warwickshire. |
| Barriers to attendance: | Transport has been seen as a barrier and hence The Concerts Coach was created. DAS also have New Audiences funding to employ a networker, who is bringing 'DAS to your doorstep'. The aim is to research the barriers that are stopping people attending arts events. |
| AD projects: | Audience Development has been a consequence of a number of projects, although it has not been the main aim. SMAC 2K has been aiming to get disability arts included in main stream arts events, such as the standard local Festival circuit. A bi-product of this has been Audience Development, even though the initial aim was to encourage new art. This cross-over has been considered one of the most exciting parts of the scheme. |
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| Gloucestershire County Council Contact: Helen Owen | |
| Rural arts provision: | The County Arts Strategy Funding Criteria prioritises rural and isolated communities. In particular, three funded projects meet these criteria (Dr Fosters, Forest Artworks and Prema Arts Centre), however other arts provision includes the local rural touring scheme and specific projects by The Everyman Theatre. |
| Funding sources: | Within Gloucestershire there is a fund (GRASS) aimed specifically at rural communities. This is funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, and operated by rural arts providers who act as agents on behalf of the foundation. Small grants are available (up to £500), which cannot be used to pay artists fees. |
| Funding criteria: | The criteria are rather restrictive, therefore the fund has lasted longer than the intended three years. |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | The Everyman has experimented with transport schemes: 1. As a follow up to outreach work offered by the Education Department, a free coach was offered to get the groups to see the show after participatory workshops. 2. They have also organised a free coach for schools to see the Panto. They are keen to reinstate this project if funding could be found. Neither of these transport projects would be sustainable however without sponsorship. |
| Barriers to attendance: | It is believed that transport is the main barrier to attendance, although realise this may vary within each rural area. |
| AD projects: | See above. |
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| Norfolk County Council Contact: Marie Martin | |
| Rural arts provision: | Main part of their rural arts provision is the regional rural touring scheme, Rural Arts East. The County Council believes that the arts are an effective tool for community consultation, rural and urban regeneration and social inclusion. |
| Funding sources: | Rural Arts East is partly funded by the County Council. In the past these have been small grants, but the County Council is in the process of writing a new |

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| | <p>strategy so currently unsure how funds will function.</p> <p>Under the former strategy, project funds, which were designed for small groups, were often applied for and allocated to rural groups. These provided up to £500 and were given out annually.</p> |
| Funding criteria: | The funds are divided into provision for performing arts, visual arts and music. They could not be used for capital projects, curriculum based work or to buy tickets for events. |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | Rural Arts East – rural touring scheme. |
| Barriers to attendance: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk is a sparsely populated area, so distance is an issue. • Villages often contain a high percentage of elderly people, who do not like travelling at night. • Public transport is also poor in such areas, and usually non-existent in the evenings. • If ticket prices are high, this can act as a barrier for people who do not often attend events and they possibly need to be even lower if the performance is to be held actually in the village. • The County Council also commented that each village is different and so barriers to attendance can vary. |
| AD projects: | None currently, but as mentioned above the County Council is putting together a new policy which may include such projects. |
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| Durham County Council Contact: Patrick Conway | |
| Rural arts provision: | DCC has worked with a number of arts organisations in partnership, including the Sinfonia. They have used local libraries, churches and similar halls to bring the arts nearer to the communities they are intending to reach. |
| Funding sources: | Sport & Arts funding, regeneration budgets and European funding |
| Funding criteria: | No information available |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | No specific transport schemes |
| Barriers to attendance: | No in-house research has been undertaken |
| AD projects: | |
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| Staffordshire County Council Contact: Ros Shippides | |
| Rural arts provision: | <p>The main source of rural provision is Live & Local, the rural touring scheme in the region, and this involves about forty villages.</p> <p>There is also a scheme with Craftspace Touring taking contemporary work out into rural and community venues. This has been very successful and is now going into its second phase.</p> <p>The Arts Policy Review has however moved the County away from distinguishing between Urban / Rural, rather instead talking about community arts and developing audiences amongst groups who are isolated for whatever reason (not just geographical location).</p> |
| Funding sources: | The Arts Grants scheme totals £16,800 for the county. It is open to both rural and non-rural arts projects. There is no specific provision for rural projects, but they are given priority whenever possible. Individual grants can be up to £1000, however most are £250 - £500. |
| Funding criteria: | No specific provision for rural areas |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | There have been no transport initiatives for the arts. However libraries are looking at transport for library |

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| | users, which may be something that arts organisations can tap into. This is at concept stage at the moment. |
| Barriers to attendance: | The County Council has not carried out research into barriers to attendance since 1996. |
| AD projects: | One public art project – <i>Making History</i> – which aims to increase access. It intends to place temporary public art, so taking arts to rural areas. This is part of the Lottery Millennium Festival project and is being run in conjunction with the local college. Staffs CC also currently has submitted a new bid for a project called 'Handmade 2'. A continuation of 'Handmade', which aimed to tour contemporary crafts to locations like village halls, but also semi-urban areas. |
| Cambridgeshire County Council | |
| Contact: Steve Hollier | |
| Rural arts provision: | This area includes four rural districts, but there is only adhoc support for rural activity. Rural Arts East provides a major part of the provision, working with 24 venues. They aim to market this scheme as a community event, because this makes it more popular than taking an activity into the community. They, like other rural touring schemes, consider that the bottom up approach is the most effective. There is also work with Jazz East, a local organisation, although they do not always use local performers. |
| Funding sources: | Cambs CC has submitted funding applications to the regional arts board and recently made an unsuccessful A4E application. |
| Funding criteria: | Not available |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | The rural touring scheme is the main method of reaching rural communities. |
| Barriers to attendance: | None identified |
| AD projects: | |
| Derbyshire County Council | |
| Contact: Jackie Brumwell | |
| Rural arts provision: | Derbyshire CC is in the progress of working with East Midlands Arts to look at rural provision and funding. They are also aware that 'Arts Service' is currently starting research on rural provision, mainly examining rural touring. |
| Funding sources: | Main funding sources are from within the County Council |
| Funding criteria: | Not available |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | |
| Barriers to attendance: | Research currently being done in the area |
| AD projects: | |
| Suffolk County Council | |
| Contact: Jayne Knight | |
| Rural arts provision: | As the whole area could be classed as rural, then all of the arts provision could also be classed as rural! Rural arts provision includes working with Eastern Angles, Wingfield Arts, Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds and Suffolk Dance. |
| Funding sources: | The County Council runs a small grants programme, and funding has also been attracted from EDRF and other national sources. |
| Funding criteria: | |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | None identified |
| Barriers to attendance: | Transport is considered one of the barriers to |

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| AD projects: | |
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| Cornwall County Council Contact: Jennifer Lowe | |
| Rural arts provision: | The arts provision is a mix of building based arts. There is no rural touring scheme as yet, although there was a pilot. Geographically there is an imbalance, for example within the visual arts there is a reasonable provision in the west, although in the east there is little. The main new provider of other art-forms is The Hall in Truro although there are smaller venues in Penzance and Camelford. |
| Funding sources: | Most funds come from South West Arts or the Council and District authority. However funds are limited, and they are currently looking how to change this. Other funds include ERDF and ESF |
| Funding criteria: | As stated above funding is currently being re-evaluated. |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | None specified |
| Barriers to attendance: | Cornwall CC is not aware of any relevant research and have in fact been asking for some form of statistical research to be carried out. The only research to be carried out has been by the Tate, a few local festivals and looking from the point of few of tourists not the native population. |
| AD projects: | See the Best Practice section for Audience Development project at The Hall. |
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| Cheshire County Council Contact: Nicky Duirs | |
| Rural arts provision: | Cheshire CC is currently having a study into rural arts provision carried out, which is due towards the end of April 2000. This is further to work done as part of a rural touring network covering 12-13 villages. The Lottery funding attracted for this is due to run out next year, however, they are intending to extend the project to build upon the work that has been done through the Lottery funded project. |
| Funding sources: | There is a dedicated rural arts fund, the source being The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. It has assisted them to help groups in rural areas set up their own arts projects. The grants range from £50 - £500, given to rural community groups and help projects that involve creative activities in any artform. There are also small grants available from the County Council, which are for community groups, but these need not specifically live in rural areas. |
| Funding criteria: | Projects must be one-off, which work on a small scale and aim to get adults working together on creative activities. |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | Rural touring project mentioned above. |
| Barriers to attendance: | They consider the barriers to be those that are usually mentioned, including transport. Another barrier they had experienced was a lack of access to spaces within rural areas, for example either there were no halls or those that existed were overused already, so there was no way in for new users. |
| AD projects: | Not aware of any other projects |
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| Essex County Council Contact: Esther Rowland | |
| Rural arts provision: | Provision includes the rural touring scheme; Rural Arts East, some amateur, semi-professional and |

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| | professional arts organisations, and Eastern Angles Theatre Company. There are however few building-based arts organisations to act as a focus for the arts locally. |
| Funding sources: | County, regional and national level funding, including a grant scheme 'Fostering the Arts' (for organisations) and another for 'Talented Individuals' |
| Funding criteria: | The individual artist, arts organisation or event must be based within the District or have demonstrable impact on residents from the District. |
| Networking / Transport schemes: | <p>A number of District Councils have mailing lists of arts contacts who are sent information on events, funding schemes and other arts organisations. Arts Directories are also being compiled in some areas of all contacts.</p> <p>Transport initiatives also include 'Viking Community Transport' and 'Dengie Link'.</p> <p>The 'Dengie Link' covers rural areas without a current bus service. People call in and the bus is then diverted from its normal route to collect passengers. The whole of the area is covered by four different services.</p> <p>The 'Viking Community Transport' scheme operates in two parts. The first is a social car scheme, operated by volunteer drivers, for people who have restricted mobility, live in isolated areas, whose needs are not met by existing timetables, require an escort with them, and those that can't access public transport. People pay an annual registration fee, then pay journey fares to the driver. Journeys must be booked at least 48 hours prior to the travel date and are dependent on the driver being available. The other part of the scheme is a minibus brokerage for hire by any non-profit making group within the Maldon District.</p> |
| Barriers to attendance: | Some research into arts provision was undertaken as part of the consultation for the Leisure Strategy in 1997. This will be re-addressed for the new Cultural Strategy, which will be launched in 2001. It has been suggested that it is difficult to offer sustainable arts initiatives in different art forms for varying audiences across the geographical spread. |
| AD projects: | A further project carried out last year was called, 'Made in Britain'. This project encouraged Black and Asian poets to work around the County. It mostly centred around the larger towns in their libraries, but some work was done in rural areas. The aim is to develop this into a literature festival, by building on the work in the initial project and continuing to work with the same poets. |

From the information gathered, it is clear that work being supported in rural areas by Local Authorities is broad and varied. The prioritisation of rural areas varies from one LA to another and in some cases has dropped off the agenda in recent years or been incorporated into different strategy strands.

Funding for arts provision in rural areas is piecemeal with some LA's relying on in-house sources while others are actively attracting external monies. The ability of a Local Authority to attract further funding will depend not only on staff time and inclination or even policy but eligibility of the region for such funds as ERDF.

Of the arts provision which has been quoted – both support for professional arts activity and grants schemes for community groups – Local Authorities appear to champion the 'bottom-up' approach with many offering financial support to NRTF schemes and project ideas which come directly from the communities. This is in line with the view of Central Government as can be seen in section VI.A. The majority of rural arts provision quoted takes place in rural

communities – either as outreach from a building based organisation or activities where the onus has been on the community to programme / participate. Little mention is made of encouraging rural residents to attend venue-based organisations.

Rather like the research findings from the arts organisations, transport is considered a barrier to attendance by those working in Local Authorities, however, few transport schemes were mentioned by LA officers and those that were, were not funded through the council. Essex County Council quoted two community transport schemes that were not exclusively arts related but were available for that use. It is likely that other counties have similar schemes that the arts constituency could tap into, were they known about.

When asked about Networking projects, those LA's who support them, quoted their local NRTF scheme which relies upon the informal social networks within rural communities to promote arts events within village settings. (see Best Practice, section IV.C.1 for further information)

Not-for-Profit

A number of not-for-profit funding organisations have similar interests, in particular social welfare and the arts. The **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation** has also done a number of rural projects. Their programmes have included dealing with arts for adults outside formal educational settings, encouraging participation in music for non-professionals, projects which link arts with science and technology and those that support professional artists. Grants rise up to £5000, but may only be available for registered charities and tax-exempt organisations.

The **Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust** has similar interests, with priority being given to under-served groups and places, and new audience development. Grants can be used to cover revenue, capital or project expenditure and range from £250 - £250,000. This Trust is also keen to support projects in less advantaged areas that have practical impact and local support (WMA Bulletin, Jan 2000). Likewise the **Pilgrim Trust** includes social welfare and the arts as their interests. They offer support in three specific areas in the arts, including "projects which aim to widen access to theatre, music, museums and other arts, particularly for young people".

The **Baring Foundation**, looks at funding work that supports more than one art form, with an aim to increase access to the arts in locations where access is limited. They are also interested in development work and partnerships between arts organisations and community groups. There are some constraints for applying for funding including that the total budget must not exceed £20,000.

Individual and small trusts vary according to locality and time. Those relevant to rural arts funding include:

The John Jarrold Trust, whose current beneficiaries include Norwich Playhouse,

The Ashe Charitable Foundation which favourably considers applications where links occur between more than one of their areas of interest. The two areas relevant to this research are 'arts' and 'social welfare'.

Commercial

Funding criteria from commercial organisations often varies over time. Those that are particularly interested in the arts and rural communities include the **Ford of Britain Trust**, the **Lloyds TSB Foundation** for England and Wales and **Marks & Spencers** plc.

The **Ford of Britain Trust**, especially look to fund local communities, while **Marks & Spencers** plc aim funds generally at social welfare projects, with priority being given to organisations which raise awareness and enthusiasm across all sections of society. The **Lloyds TSB Foundation** for England and Wales also generally aim to improve quality of life. A main funding division includes 'social and community needs', and arts projects are considered within this category. An example included in the guidelines is a project which promotes participation in and access to the arts. Donations are mainly on a one-off basis, but some long term projects have been take on in the past. Grant amounts range from £300 to £10,000, but the organisation must be a registered charity.

Sainsbury's has also funded arts initiatives as illustrated by the Ticket To Ride scheme in section IV.C – Best Practice.

From the examples of best practice, only one project attracted commercial funding. The project was specifically a transport scheme and the sponsor, a local bus company. Further information on commercial sources is available from A & B (formerly ABSA), whose core business is to develop links between the commercial sector and the arts.

European Funding Sources

Two main sources of European funding, which have benefited the arts in the past are:

1. Structural Funds (including ERDF and ESF), and
2. Cultural Funds (including Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Rapheal)

The most appropriate are the Structural Funds, which are allocated on the basis of social and economic need (e.g. deprived rural areas). Parts of Anglia and Lincolnshire have been viewed as eligible for funding under Objective 5b, which is for areas affected by rural decline, also LEADER II, both of which are new funds from 2000. Objective 5b states that the funding should help develop those rural areas affected by serious development difficulties and the purpose of European funds is to combat regional disparities.

A recent addition to the European portfolio of funds is Culture 2000. This is a community programme for a period of 5 years with a total budget of 167 million EUR. The fund grants support for cultural co-operation projects in all artistic and cultural sectors. The objectives of the programme are the promotion of a common cultural area characterised by both cultural diversity and a common cultural heritage. Culture 2000 looks to encourage creativity and mobility, public access to culture, the dissemination of art and culture, inter-cultural dialogue and knowledge of the history of the peoples of Europe. The programme also views culture as playing a central role in social integration and socio-economic development.

For more information visit the website: www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/culture2000_en.html
Or the European Information team at your local authority.

4) Meeting the Brief

In the outset of this study, questions were raised which are outlined below with appropriate responses. Some of the questions covered in this section have been answered elsewhere in the report, however this section provides an overview of the answers sought in the brief.

1. Is the development of a marketing approach which targets rural areas of significance to middle and large scale arts venues?

The study also incorporates small-scale venues, many of which draw their audiences specifically from rural areas, such as the schemes on the NRTF (as outlined above in Best Practice, section IV.C).

From the questionnaire research undertaken with venues, 53% of respondents approximated that 50% or more of their audiences are drawn from rural areas. Furthermore, over half the respondents considered rural audiences to be 'Very Important' or 'Important' in the following categories:

For ticket income (81%)

For meeting funding criteria (57%)

For community relations (75%)

However, while venues clearly rate rural audiences as important, only 8% have a specific section within their marketing strategy focusing on rural audiences and only 20% actively segment rural from urban audiences during campaign planning.

When asked how often venues tailor elements of the Marketing Mix to meet the needs of rural audiences, approximately half or more of the sample said 'Never':

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| Price | 58% |
| Product | 56% |
| Promotion | 42% |
| Place | 63% |

In conclusion, while audiences from rural areas appear to be important to venues, little is being done to target them specifically.

2. If so, how do these approaches complement/interact with other regional rural arts activity?

From the sample, it became apparent that very few organisations undertake marketing activity specific to audiences in rural areas, although they are considered important. Other regional rural arts activity, therefore, is quite separate from what venues are doing which, for the most part, is traditional promotion through the usual channels.

Most of the work being undertaken with support from Local Authorities and /or Regional Arts Boards concentrates on activity taking place in rural communities rather than encouraging access to venues. In this way, the marketing activity undertaken by venues lies parallel to other regional rural arts activity but does not interact with it.

It could be argued, however, that both approaches – whether in a village setting or arts venue – serve to achieve the same goal of audience development through exposure to the arts of those living in rural areas. During the course of the study, no research has come to light investigating the broader and longer term results of specific projects, for example, if those attending / participating for the first time then continue to attend / participate and begin to actively seek arts activities as a result of their exposure, either in their own community setting or through a venue-based audience development project.

While venues are able to evaluate the longer term implications of their own projects through interrogation of their own box office systems, this information is limited as it only records attendance patterns at a particular venue and does not take into consideration other arts opportunities. A lapsed attender might be a frequent attender elsewhere.

With this limitation, and the scarce resource of staff time, there appears to be very little interaction amongst arts activity targeting rural audiences and from the questionnaire responses, there is also very limited knowledge of other initiatives across the country amongst venue staff.

3. How do venues approach rural audiences?

Overall, from the questionnaire research undertaken with a range of small, middle and large scale venues, it appears that most venues do not approach rural audiences any differently from other audiences.

Identifying segments of the rural population which have audience potential

The ways in which venues identify areas of the rural population which have audience potential is varied and ranges from organisation to organisation. One admitted to restricting their marketing to the database only while others have used Mosaic and prospect locator.

Of the respondents the most quoted method was the use of current database information which included attendance data, postcode analysis, drivetime information and shared mailing lists with other organisations. These semi-scientific methods were often coupled with local socio-economic knowledge and informal word of mouth networking.

Joint second to these methods was using ACORN / TGI information. Although the above have been quoted, further information about how they are used and how effective they are in achieving aims was not given.

Methods for identifying segments included:

Local Knowledge

Mosaic / Prospect Locator

Sharing lists with other venues

Leaflet Distribution pick-up rates

Word of mouth

Networking with schools, village groups and societies

Local advertising

Using Media information on their own target markets

Identifying barriers to attendance

Respondents named a range of barriers they feel audiences from rural areas face in accessing arts activity, some were based upon anecdote and intuition while others were supported by research.

Many considered transport a barrier, however other issues mentioned included:

Lack of awareness of venue and/or access to information about product available

Cost - of tickets and/or additional expenditure such as transport, programmes, drinks and babysitter

Disabled access at the venue

Lack of interest / inertia

Personal security depending on location of venue

Perception of venue

Competition

Organisations were also asked if they had carried out research into whether or not transport is a barrier to attendance, this will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

Targeting rural audiences

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked two questions about reaching rural audiences:

What methods do you use to target rural audiences

What strategies do you employ to overcome barriers to attendance.

Overall, the methods used to target rural audiences are traditional promotional tools, only 2 respondents considered Outreach as a part of their marketing mix with

the same for Word of Mouth. As can be seen in the sections above, venues do not tend to treat rural audiences any differently from other audiences and promote to all in the same ways.

A variety of methods are used to target rural audiences:

| | Number of respondents |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Leaflet Distribution | 25 |
| Direct Mail | 24 |
| Advertising | 19 |
| Press coverage | 11 |
| Radio | 9 |
| Posters | 9 |
| Word of Mouth | 2 |
| Outreach | 2 |
| TV | 1 |

However, in addition to the above everyday activities, 15% of the respondents claimed to have implemented an audience development project in the last 3 years. These included:

Projects attached to particular shows

Attracting young people

Attracting people from rural areas

Reactivating lapsed attenders

To inform daytime programming

To create a database of audiences according to interests and segment them accordingly in future campaigns

The projects were evaluated through either quantitative or qualitative methods:

Box Office data on response rates

Focus Groups

Post-show discussions with audiences and staff

Informal discussions with local hosts / promoters

Once evaluated, the respondents were asked what steps they took to either continue or build upon the project.

Repeat project in different area / on bigger scale

Incorporate tested activity into core marketing activity (i.e. telemarketing)

To continue project if further funding can be found

Unable to continue once funding had ceased

With regard to addressing barriers to attendance, venues are more creative and proactive and appear to work much harder to meet customer needs than they do when targeting audiences during their core marketing activity.

Some quoted methods include:

Outreach work or employing others to undertake outreach (such as an NRTF scheme)

Involvement in local politics and committees to lobby for improved public transport

Providing clearer information about travel and parking including maps

Providing a greater quantity of information spread across a broader area, more readily available to people living in rural communities

Timing events to coincide with existing transport links and/or cheap parking time periods

Setting up free coach, car share, subsidised transport schemes, partnership with local transport providers

Seeking increased funding to reduce ticket prices

Providing parking vouchers for free / cheap parking

Seeking funding for a car park security guard

4. Is transport provision a key consideration for venues in their rural marketing approach?

As can be seen from the research findings above, many venues consider transport to be a barrier to attendance for people living in rural areas, however, it is not true to say that venues prioritise transport provision as a key consideration.

A few venues make some provision regarding transport such as improved information to customers, parking tokens and even some transport schemes (as outlined above). Some venues are also active in lobbying for improved public transport infrastructures.

In summary, venue staff are aware of the issues surrounding transport and attempt to counter the barriers where possible but do not prioritise this activity within their marketing.

5. What evidence is there that lack of transport is a significant barrier for rural audiences?

From the RDC research in 1997 public transport in rural areas was found to be very limited with 77% of parishes having no bus service after 7pm, and 93% of parishes with no rail service at all. The study also revealed that while car ownership is necessarily high in rural areas (84% of households compared with 69% of households in urban areas) there still remains 22% of the rural population with no access to a car.

From our research with venue staff, of those who responded, 28% claimed to have carried out research into whether transport is a barrier to attendance. As is outlined above, many respondents considered transport to be a barrier to attendance but also considered other issues to be equal barriers.

Research findings were informed by audience surveys, customer comments and complaints or staff knowledge of the public transport timetables.

Overall, their findings were:

Better late night public transport is needed

Better road access to the venue

Improved parking required

Transport was particularly troublesome for over 55's during the evening

Transport which matches performance start and end times is needed

Cost of travel can be prohibitive

The prospect of driving late at night can be off-putting

Traffic, parking and time it takes to travel to the venue are barriers

Distance of the venue from the bus stop is too far

One respondent noted that attitudes varied from village to village – this is worth noting, as often rural areas are treated as one homogenous mass while in reality they have very different characters. Also, their location and socio-economic profile will inform their attitudes.

6. Are venues employing a networking approach to rural marketing and what case studies/examples of good practice exist?

Of the sample, only 7% have worked with / employed Networkers or Arts Ambassadors, while 13% have used Voluntary Community Workers or Other Outreach workers.

Overall, venues do not appear to be employing a networking approach to rural marketing based upon the information given by questionnaire respondents. However, when asked for examples of best practice, most quoted specific and non-specific networking projects.

Many quoted the NRTF and the work of its various schemes as well as Arts Ambassadors schemes as examples of best practice in marketing to rural audiences. Others quoted transport / bus schemes, the wide dissemination of publicity information and incorporating rural touring into programming activity. A full outline of examples of best practice can be seen above in section IV.C.

7. How cost effective is rural networking marketing, particularly if it utilises a transport element, in reaching potential audiences?

We have not been able to answer this question as detailed budget and target information has not been offered by any of the venues which have employed such methods.

8. What sources of funding, if any, are available for networking development and transport schemes?

From the requests for information made to RAB's, LA's and specific venues it became apparent that projects are funded in a variety of ways. No funding sources are specifically designed for networking development, however more general funding can be gained for such schemes (outlined below).

Funding for transport schemes is available, although it is often not arts-specific. Advice and assistance to secure the necessary funding can be obtained from the Community Transport Association (CTA). The funds that they outlined were from general County Council funds, the Rural Community Council and the Rural Transport Development Fund, which is managed by the Countryside Agency. Again, transport schemes are not excluded from applying to other less specific funds.

9. How do venues currently fund such work?

Those organisations which have undertaken audience development projects targeting rural areas have done so with the financial aid of:

A4E award
Existing funds
New Audiences
Local Authority funding
RAB funding
Other grant-making / trust bodies

10. What aims do funders have in supporting such work?

The aims of the funding bodies were rarely disclosed during our research. LA's and RAB's have included in their aims a need to help regeneration in rural areas, in the same way LA's fund inner city areas. Funds are given to areas where there is rural deprivation, but also social exclusion. They are generally aiming to both increase opportunities to artists in these areas and also increase possibilities for rural communities to enjoy and participate in artistic activity within in their locality. Staffordshire County Council identified that there has been a move from distinguishing between rural and urban, but instead to address groups who are isolated for whatever reason.

Aims of funders other than LA's and RAB's include improving social welfare and supporting projects in less advantaged areas by non-profit organisations, and aiming to improve the quality of life by some commercial organisations.

5) The Marketing Environment

While considering the current / past level of venue commitment to marketing specifically to rural audiences, it is important to consider the environment in which they are operating. A study of this environment and the recent changes within it will also influence the level and focus of future activity.

Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors affecting marketing to rural audiences.

a) Political

Department of Culture, Media and Sport

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport is a central government department with the remit to 'improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, and to strengthen the creative industries'

The department works to 'bring quality and excellence in the fields of culture, media and sport; make these available to the many, not just the few; raise standards of cultural education and training; and help to develop the jobs of the future in the creative industries.

The Department in partnership with others, works to:

create an efficient and competitive market by removing obstacles to growth and unnecessary regulation so as to promote Britain's success in the fields of culture, media, sport and tourism at home and abroad;

broaden access to a rich and varied cultural and sporting life;

ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve excellence in the areas of culture, media and sport and to develop talent, innovation and good design;

maintain public support for the National Lottery and ensure that the objective of the Lottery Fund supports DCMS' and other national priorities; and

promote the role of the Department's sectors in urban and rural regeneration and in combating social exclusion.

In carrying out these objectives the Department will:

seek maximum value for money in using our human and financial resources, through applying the principles of efficiency among and effectiveness in its sectors and in encouraging partnership with others.

In 1999 Chris Smith announced a challenge to the arts world to increase participation in the arts in the UK, from half to two-thirds of the population over the next ten years. The DCMS has outlined ten goals for the arts to help achieve this mission:

Excellence

Innovation

A thriving arts sector

More consumption of the Arts

More participation in the Arts

More relevant training for the arts sector

Better use of arts in education

Combating social exclusion and promoting regeneration

Improving public perceptions of the Arts

Promoting British culture overseas

The work of DCMS is undertaken through regional partners, these include the Regional Arts Boards (which also represent the Arts Council, Crafts Council and British Film Institute), Area Museums Councils, Regional Tourist Boards, regional offices of English Heritage and the English Sports Council.

In each region, there is an informal grouping of representatives from each of these partners which form the Regional Cultural Forums of Consortia

Through the establishment of the DCMS and its range of funding programmes to meet the above ten goals, the environment in which the arts operates has changed. The level of support, both financial and political, is greater and the perceived and actual value of the arts is heightened.

Through greater levels of funding, opportunities to test new audience development initiatives – in this context, those targeting rural audiences – have been far more possible.

Regional Cultural Consortia

To establish a stronger regional focus for all DCMS policies and programmes Regional Cultural Consortia have been established in each of the English regions outside of London, led by strong local Chairs. DCMS staff have been appointed to each of the regional Government Offices to improve communication between the central department and the regional partners and interests. Ministers and senior officials are also undertaking more regional visits around the country to highlight the regional dimension of the DCMS.

As detailed above, these Regional Cultural Consortia bring together representatives from regional agencies working in the arts, heritage, museums, tourism, libraries, sport and archives, and from the local government, as well as others including individuals

from the creative industries. The Consortiums are expected to draw up a strategy that sets out the future of culture in their region. They are meant to provide a strong voice for culture in the region and encourage a 'joined-up' approach to the delivery of regional cultural services, providing a forum for representatives from different areas of the cultural industries to exchange ideas and information.

Regional Cultural Consortiums and Regional Tourist Boards work closely with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). The RDAs were established in April 1999 to draw up an economic strategy for their regions. In preparing, these RDAs must take into consideration the regional cultural and tourism strategies.

Best Value – A Brief Outline of the Key Issues

Best Value legislation, taking effect in April 2000 means each local authority needs to show continuous improvement in cost and quality, in its services (including the arts). These services will be measured through economy, efficiency and effectiveness and aims to provide accountability for the local people and means that the authority is responsible to central government. The aim is to codify, formalise and standardise existing practice, with a view to publicising achievements. The audit commission will have the power to inspect Best Value performance plans / reviews and to intervene in failing authorities by;

Ordering amendments to plans

Externalise services

Hold local enquiries.

There is an aim to have a five year cycle of Best Value reviews, on a 'worst first' basis. Also annual Best Value performance reviews will provide a summary of an authority's corporate / service objectives, performance indicators (PI's), standards or targets. There will be no extra money given to local authorities to help them ensure Best Value. If services do not give Best Value then resources will be redistributed.

There are four C's included within the Best Value legislation;

to Challenge why and how a service is being provided

to Compare – Invite comparison with other arts service providers (performance indicators and benchmarking)

to Consult with local tax payers, service users and the wider business community

to embrace fair Competition as a means of securing efficient and affective services

Best Value will be addressing the needs of the arts, by emphasising the instrumental effect of the arts, as opposed to the intrinsic effects, and the way the arts can address 'cross cutting' issues of: Public Health, Community Safety, Social Exclusion, Environmental Sustainability, Regeneration, Life-long Learning. Impact will be measured against a number of Best Value criteria, including; user, community, public, educational, sustainability and strategic outcomes.

The Social Exclusion Unit - Policy Action Team 10 (PAT 10)

In 1997 The Social Exclusion Unit was established by the Prime Minister with the remit of helping to improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'.

The unit is staffed by a mixture of civil servants external secondees from areas with direct experience of social exclusion such as the probation service, housing, police,

local authorities, the voluntary sector and business. The unit reports directly to the Prime Minister and is located within the Cabinet Office.

In 1998, the unit's report on neighbourhood renewal was published giving a detailed picture of the concentration in poor neighbourhoods of a range of interlocking problems such as high levels of unemployment, crime, ill-health and education. The report showed how the gap with the rest of the country had widened and set out a range of issues on which urgent policy work was needed.

As a result, the unit established 18 Policy Action Teams to work on solutions, whose combined work would form a national strategy - *The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* – in Spring 2000.

Areas covered by the PAT's include: Jobs, Skills, Business, Neighbourhood Management, Housing Management, Neighbourhood Wardens, Unpopular Housing, Anti-social behaviour, Community self-help, Arts and Sport, Schools plus, Young People, Financial Services, IT, Learning Lessons, Joining it up Locally, Better Information.

Policy Action Team 10 is the team which has a particular remit for Arts and Sports, championed by Kate Hoey, Parliamentary under Secretary of State and Minister for Sport.

The remit of PAT 10 was to report on⁸:

Best practice in using arts, sport and leisure to engage people in poor neighbourhoods, particularly those who may feel most excluded, such as disaffected young people and people from ethnic minorities;

How to maximise the impact on poor neighbourhoods of Government spending and policies on art, sport and leisure.

Its goal was to draw up an action plan with targets to maximise the impact of arts, sport and leisure policies in contributing to neighbourhood regeneration and increasing local participation.

Key findings:

Participation, and the provision of services to support participation, in arts and sport, can help address neighbourhood renewal by improving communities 'performance' on the four key indicators of health, crime, employment and education.

There are various distinctive contributions which the arts and sport have to offer to tackling the causes of social exclusion. These can be summarised under the headings of: growing industries, engaging and strengthening local communities, and an emphasis on people, not buildings or places.

In addition to the well-established benefits to physical health, regular moderate intensity exercise can contribute to greater self-esteem, improved mental well being, and, in certain circumstances, improved mental acuity. Play promotes children's development, learning, health, creativity and independence; and a number of schools have worked successfully with play to improve children's learning.

However, these significant benefits are frequently overlooked both by some providers of arts and sports facilities and programmes and by those involved in area regeneration programmes.

Barriers to be overcome include:

Projects are often focused on the requirements of particular funding organisations or programmes rather than on the needs of those on the receiving end;

⁸ Summary of the report by Policy Action Team 10, The Social Exclusion Unit
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They are often funded on a short-term basis, whereas a longer period will often be needed for sustainable benefits to accrue;

Arts and sports bodies tend to regard community development work as being both an 'add-on' to their 'real' work and as a lesser form of activity;

Other bodies involved in regeneration tend to regard arts and sport as peripheral; regeneration projects tend to focus on changing the physical environment, and to pay insufficient attention to building individual and collective 'self-help' capacity building within the community;

There is a lack of available evaluated information about the regenerative aspects of arts and sports community development projects and information in accessible formats about facilities/funds available to community groups and people/groups at risk of social exclusion.

Schools could play a more important role in developing the habit of participation in arts and sports

Links between arts and sports bodies and the major organisations involved in area-based community regeneration schemes are often poor.

Key principles

Principles which help to exploit the potential of arts/sport in regenerating communities include:

Valuing diversity: People have a basic right to explore their own culture and identity in terms and forms which they choose and determine. This diversity should be recognised as a profound strength, and a rich source of ideas and practice which the whole cultural sector may draw upon. Whether in sport, art or approaches to local development, the diversity of community activity can often provide breakthroughs which more established and better-funded parts of the sector struggle to find.

Embedding local control: One of the major benefits of participating in cultural or sporting activity is the opportunity to build local organisational skills and capacity. Community-based sports and arts projects can be managed centrally, but they will tend to have less impact and be less sustainable, as well as finding it harder to secure people's commitment. A model which offers control by those who are involved, albeit in partnership with funding agencies, local authorities and other stakeholders, is likely to have much deeper impact on those involved and the wider community.

Supporting local commitment: The benefits of arts and sports projects are inseparable from the act of participation and engagement. One of the most difficult roles for the state, whether locally or nationally, is to find ways of supporting this type of local cultural activity without interfering with it, and especially without creating dependency. The most effective initiatives are those where local enthusiasm and voluntary commitment can be matched appropriately by the support of local authorities and partners in the voluntary, educational, cultural or business sectors.

Promoting equitable partnerships: All community-based arts and sports projects involve partnership of some kind, but the way they are conducted varies widely. The test of fair partnership is whether there is an equitable distribution of risks and benefits among all those involved.

Defining common objectives in relation to actual needs: It is essential that projects are undertaken by people and organisations who have shared - or at least not incompatible - objectives, and that they are articulated and understood by those involved. Since these objectives should relate directly to local needs, in many cases this is best done by bringing together all the stakeholders to agree an initiative's objectives jointly.

Working flexibly with change: One of the great weaknesses of the arts and sport funding systems is a tendency towards inertia arising from the difficulty of changing existing patterns of support. Once buildings, organisations and staff are in place, they tend to displace as the primary focus of concern the objectives they were intended to meet, or the communities they were intended to serve. At local level, it is vital to retain a degree of flexibility so that new

responses can be offered to new situations. This needs to be built into the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating outcomes.

Securing sustainability: The development of community-based arts and sports activity has been severely hampered by a lack of sustained commitment and resourcing, whether at local or national levels. This is an argument not just for more money, but more importantly for the development of systems of support for services, not projects. A regime which offers only short-term projects and part-funding is inadequate. New programmes should normally be planned for at least a 5-year timescale, although they will not necessarily require funding for that length of time.

Pursuing quality across the spectrum: Community development work is properly seen as part of the task of sustaining high quality in the arts and sport, rather than as a distinct or even opposed activity. Community development work should not be conceived in terms which stigmatise or condescend to those in the neighbourhoods concerned. The aim is to give everyone the opportunity to develop their talents and broaden their horizons and to strive for best practice in delivering services enable people to develop their skills. The more that happens, the better for arts and sport across the board.

Connecting with the mainstream: It is essential not to isolate arts and sport community development initiatives, either from the rest of policy in the social inclusion and community development agenda or from mainstream arts and sports development. Sustained success in the cultural and sporting realms will be experienced only where initiatives are firmly connected with successful programmes addressing the other causes and symptoms of social exclusion. Policy which fails to make effective use of cultural and sporting issues will inevitably underachieve. The time is right to connect arts and sport policy with the mainstream.

Key recommendations

Funding bodies,

Funding bodies should develop and publish an action plan to promote access to arts and sport for ethnic minority and disabled citizens.

All funding organisations should consider some form of dispensation allowing advance or prompt payment for voluntary organisations.

Funding bodies should make external evaluation and the means to carry it out integral to funded projects and programmes.

Local authorities,

Wider regeneration strategies and other strategies adopted by local authorities to improve an area's performance in the four 'key indicators' of health, crime, education and employment should explicitly consider the role which their cultural, leisure and tourism capacity can play.

Local authorities should map/assess culture and leisure provision and expenditure geographically (eg ward by ward) and according to the social, ethnic and professional background of users. There is a clear need for better information and analysis of expenditure and outcomes in this area.

Local authorities should seek to improve value for money from their assets/facilities as a whole by ensuring the widest feasible use of them (eg school arts and sports facilities out of school hours).

Government Departments,

Government departments in charge of area based schemes should incorporate the best practice principles outlined above into their guidance to avoid imposing solutions on the communities they are intended to serve. They should require applicants to state what consideration they have given to the contribution arts and sports can make, both to regeneration generally and to meeting objectives in the health, education and other fields.

The DCMS (and DTI through the Business Link network) should encourage commercial culture and leisure industries to invest in talent throughout society.

The DfEE, Department of Health and Home Office should encourage health/education/crime reduction organisations to consider ways in which arts and sport can help them achieve their aims.

The DCMS should ensure that the Government Regional Offices and the new Regional Development Agencies, DCMS regional cultural consortiums and Regional Chambers involve culture, leisure and tourism organisations in plans for regeneration.

Others,

The report has identified a number of area-based schemes which would particularly benefit from closer links with arts and sport. These are: European Social Fund and Regional Development Fund grants; Single Regeneration Budgets; New Deal for Community 'Pathfinder' Areas; Health Action Zones; Employment Zones; Education Action Zones.

The Arts Council for England and Sport England should provide a positive response to the report showing how they will: develop stronger partnerships with other agencies; consider novel funding arrangements for community groups; and involve the voluntary sector.

National Lottery distributors should consider together the best ways to fund community-run multi-purpose 'community venues' in areas with poor access to facilities, which can be used flexibly to meet local needs rather than a more narrowly conceived facility to provide arts or sports facilities alone.

Within the first draft of the final strategy report, *Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal*, new funding schemes to implement the recommended changes have been outlined.

New deal for Communities

£800 million over 3 years to support this programme which seeks to provide funding for the intensive regeneration of small neighbourhoods. The scheme will support plans that bring together local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and business in an intensive local focus to tackle problems such as:

Poor job prospects

High levels of crime

A rundown environment

No one in charge of managing the neighbourhood and co-ordinating the public services that affect it.

The key to New Deal for Communities is that it is flexible and very local. Bodies like housing associations, schools and voluntary organisations will be given the chance to lead regeneration programmes. All bids will need to involve and engage the community and have strong leadership.

The programme will start later this year in 17 pilot or pathfinder areas, selected because their problems are severe, with more areas being allowed to bid in later years.

Criteria:

To get funding, an area will have to provide a clear statement of:

What's wrong and what needs to change

How it will be achieved, drawing on lessons learned elsewhere

Who will do what

Who is in charge of making it happen locally

Sure Start

This programme is to support young children in deprived neighbourhoods. It will be based on proven experience that investment in early childhood can help later performance at school, prevent truancy and reduce risk of unemployment, drug abuse and crime.

Local partnerships and organisations will be able to bid for money from a Children's fund for schemes that bring together services to support the developmental and emotional needs of young children and families. Funding will be particularly targeted on 0 – 3 year olds and services will include childcare, primary healthcare, play and support for families.

Sure Start funding will amount to £450 million over three years.

Single Regeneration budget

Now in its fifth year, this scheme has been allocated £700 million over the next three years for new schemes (existing schemes are funded in addition to this sum). The scheme has been revamped to concentrate on areas of severe need, to give greater support to community development and involvement and to complement other initiatives such as the New Deal for Communities and area based initiatives like Employment Zones, Education and Health Action Zones.

SRB schemes will be targeted on larger areas, covering on average 25,000 people.

Health, Education and Employment Zones

The Government has been implementing a series of 'Zones' to encourage new ways of working in education, health and employment targeting areas of intense social exclusion. Many zones will cover the same areas as current programmes.

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) was a result of the former Departments of Environment and Transport being merged into one, in 1997, following the General Election. The main aim of this was to achieve a more integrated approach to policy on these issues.

"The aim of DETR is to improve the quality of life by promoting sustainable development at home and abroad, fostering economic prosperity and supporting local democracy."

The objectives relevant to this research include the aims:

To promote efficient and integrated transport services across different modes and reduce road traffic growth, in order better to meet the mobility needs of the travelling public and industry.

To enhance opportunity in rural areas

The DETR spends around £13 billion in pursuit of its policy objectives, and by 2001/02 this figure is planned to rise to nearly £15.5 billion.

The Government has also produced a White Paper on the Future of Transport, with an aim to develop an integrated transport system. They wish to do this by increasing personal choice through improving the alternatives. They acknowledge that the car will remain important, so the existing road network must be improved, they want to persuade people to use their cars a little less – and public transport a little more.

In terms of rural specific strategies the main conclusions of the work is the need for a strategic approach to managing local traffic, so they work as part of a wider

consideration of traffic and transport. The Countryside Commission has carried out a number of demonstration projects that the Government has recognised. These included projects in Cumbria, Surrey and Dartmoor. These projects incorporated traffic calming, protecting a quiet country lane, providing increased public transport information, reducing speed limits and producing cycleways and schemes. The Commission is also setting up a Rural Traffic Advisory Service later this year.

DETR action in rural areas

The White Paper states that many rural areas are poorly served by public transport. 20% of rural settlements are estimated to have a bus service with fewer than four return journeys a day and no evening or weekend service. The Rural Bus Partnership fund of £45 million a year nationally marks a development in support for public transport in rural areas. The 1999 DETR Annual Report also emphasises that it aims to cut dependence on the car and instead promote cycling and walking, and also improve bus services, especially in rural areas. The Department claim they have already distributed new support for rural bus services, innovative bus-related projects, and for community-based projects to meet rural transport needs. Taxis and private vehicles are important in this integrated public transport system. Their objectives are generally aiming to enhance opportunities in rural areas.

Transport in rural areas has been looked at in Cornwall from the point of view of the need to increase access for the mobility-impaired and the over 65's. As a result, four Super Low Floor (SLF) buses have been introduced. The entrances of these buses are much lower, enabling wheelchair users and those who have difficulty walking easier access to public transport.

One year after the SLF buses were introduced the findings were:

over three-quarters of all passengers expressed a preference for them over traditional vehicles.

Approximately one-third of passengers said they now took more journeys on the service, 1 in 6 stating the reason to be the improved buses.

Passengers with pushchairs and senior citizens were noted to have benefited most – two of the groups identified by the Rural Development Commission as having greatest need for public transport in rural areas.

It has helped drivers to keep to the timetable and by using a specific group of drivers it has led to improved relationships with passengers contributing an increased feeling of security.

b) Economic

The Changing Funding System

The funding system has recently undergone significant changes with the de-centralisation to the English regions of funds and decision-making.

Increasing emphasis is being placed upon combating social exclusion and community involvement, in line with other national and local government policy (see Best Value).

Some RABs are concerned with rural arts development issues and have established strategies and funding priorities for their development. The situation is fluid at the moment, but it is anticipated that the English arts funding system will be giving greater priority to Rural Arts and Audience Development issues in future with attendant funding opportunities for all scales of arts organisations.

Financial Viability of Rural Transport

Transport has been identified throughout the research process amongst all groups consulted as one of the barriers to arts attendance. However, the expense of providing transport services in rural areas precludes many commercial companies from doing so.

As has been identified, people on low incomes living in rural areas are more likely to have private transport than those on comparable incomes in urban and semi-urban areas. There are, of course, many who do not have access to private transport. However, these are likely to be people on very low incomes such as elderly, young and disabled people. So, while there is a demand it is amongst groups who are least likely to be able to pay commercial rates.

The growth of community transport schemes indicates a recognition that the existing demand should instead be met through subsidised and voluntary services.

c) Social

Community Transport Schemes

Over 10 million passengers per year are served by a range of community transport schemes around the country. The schemes, often set up by community members in association with their Local Authority, are more flexible than commercial services and more closely tailored to meet a need within the host community. Such is their growth rate that the DETR has recognised their value and is fully supportive of the Community Transport Association – the umbrella body for such schemes.

The growth of such schemes offers people in rural areas far more flexibility and many more options for spending their leisure time. They also offer an opportunity for arts organisations who feel they have little or no influence over existing commercial public transport to provide at the very least a point of contact for their customers in rural areas – or perhaps to work in partnership with such schemes and plan venue-specific services.

On discussion with the CTA Rural Transport Officer for England, their eagerness to work in partnership with the arts has become clear as their aim is to provide affordable and flexible services to enable people living in rural areas to lead full lives.

Demographic Changes

As can be seen from the RDC research outlined in section III.B.1 above, the rural share of the population is growing with an increase of 6.9% between 1981 – 1991, compared with a total population increase of 3%.

In addition to rurally specific population changes, there are nationwide trends such as the ageing population with over 20% of the population projected to be over 60 by the year 2011. This is particularly relevant to transport needs as the elderly has already been identified as a group for whom availability of rural transport is a serious issue.

d) Technological

New Technology

With more people living in rural areas working from home, new technology such as internet and email could play a valuable role in reaching those customers. Through the ability to reach individuals and establish two way communication, the internet and email provide new opportunities to shape services to meet the needs of the customer more closely.

It also provides new sales and promotion channels which have the capacity to be interactive and to provide a range of information.

The negative side of the Internet – while it will be valuable in many ways – is that it represents a threat on leisure time.

6) Summary and Recommendations

a) Summary

From the information gathered in this research, it can be seen that venues consider rurally based audiences to be important but that they are not, on the whole, treating them any differently from audiences living elsewhere.

Staff at venues are aware of the range of barriers which exist for people living in rural areas but little action is being taken to address these as a part of core activity although project work has been undertaken by some.

While transport has been identified as a barrier to attendance, it is quite separate from arts organisations' core activity and is not easily overcome. It is also only one of many barriers, implying that transport alone cannot overcome non-attendance. From the examples above in Best Practice, networking has been an integral part of transport projects and has been seen to reap rewards. However, the employment of an outreach worker is a significant investment which might preclude many arts organisations from using this method.

Networking has been proved to be an effective audience development tool through examples such as the NRTF, In-Roads and The Ballet Bus. The personal contact with a representative of the venue provides an improved level of service for customers as well as helping to overcome reservations about feeling uncomfortable or unwelcome at the venue. Building a relationship with customers is the first step in generating loyalty which is a long-term investment for the arts organisation.

Venues are still relying upon traditional methods of information dissemination and promotion which can be easily incorporated into their overall campaign planning.

While some organisations have implemented audience development projects targeting the rural sector, follow up is limited. The projects tend to be resource heavy and therefore unsustainable.

Integration between initiatives targeting rural communities is very limited and there is currently no central resource to disseminate examples of best practice. Information on successful projects is shared informally although this inevitably leaves gaps of knowledge which can lead to organisations 'reinventing the wheel'.

Villages are very different in character and the same solution will not necessarily fit all.

b) Recommendations

With an overview of the current situation and the broader context in which the arts organisations are operating, it is possible to make some recommendations to take rural arts marketing forward:

The arts constituency to tap into the existing network of community transport schemes for mutual benefit. For further details of schemes within specific areas contact Keith Potter, CTA Rural Transport Officer for England 01579 342042

Many arts venues are widely using traditional promotional methods to reach rural communities. In its research the RDC identified that many people living in rural communities also work from home. There is potential to begin using new technology to reach individuals in rural communities such as email listings and web communities.

From the rural research (RDC) the shape of rural communities can be seen to include a range of local networks made up of local group / clubs and societies. This is a valuable resource for arts organisations to tap into to disseminate information about their product. Lack of information has also been identified as a barrier to attendance.

45% of rural parishes have a village newsletter, 74% have a church newsletter and 93% have at least one public notice board. These are a valuable resource for arts organisations to disseminate information and build profile in rural areas.

Develop a central resource for arts professionals to access information about initiatives around the country from which new projects can be devised and mistakes can be avoided.

Dissemination of information about the work of other sectors/organisations within rural areas such as The Community Transport Association, Countryside Agency, Rural Community Councils etc, to encourage partnerships and an easier route into local communities for the arts through existing professional networks.

Investigate examples of good practice in other industries around customer service and relationship building, for example, Personal Bankers in the Financial Services sector, with a view to implementing a similar structure within arts organisations to generate loyalty amongst customers

Finally, it is recommended that further investigation takes place, broadening the study to include small scale. This study has merely touched upon the work of small scale venues via the NRTF and has not considered touring companies. It is inevitable that those working in rurally focused organisations with very limited resources will be able to offer a valuable insight into developing audiences and promoting the arts to rurally based customers.

7) Appendices

a) Consultation

| Name | Organisation & Address | Contact |
|--|---|--|
| Keith Potter | Community Transport Association 1 Holman Road Liskeard Cornwall PL14 3UT | 01579 342042 (tel & fax) |
| VENUES (contacted by telephone) | | |
| David Porter | NRTF | |
| Matthew Cleaver | The Anvil, Basingstoke | |
| Sally Semple | The Hall For Cornwall | |
| Lois Wright | Leighton Buzzard Theatre | |
| Fred Moroni | Malvern Festival Theatre | |
| Emma Killick | New Perspectives | |
| Emma Cooper-Hammond | South Hill Parks Arts Centre | |
| Matthew Sanders | The Theatre Royal | |
| Esther Blaine | Countess of Huntingdon's Hall, Worcester | |
| Gale Pettifer | City Hall, Salisbury | |
| Rachel Greaves | Chard Guildhall | |
| Steve Cowton | Alnwick Playhouse | |
| Denise Coates | Forest Arts | |
| Lawrence Smith | Solihull Arts Complex | |
| RAB'S | | |
| Liz Wilson | Eastern Arts Board Cherry Hinton Hall Cherry Hinton Road Cambridge CB1 4DW | 01223 215355 (tel) 01223 248075 (fax) info@eastern-arts.co.uk |
| Jill Johnson | East Midlands Arts Board Mountfields House Epinal Way Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 0QE | 01509 218292 (tel) 01509 262214 (fax) info@em-arts.co.uk |
| Richard Bliss | Northern Arts Board 9-10 Osborne Terrace Jesmond Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE2 1NZ | 0191 281 2866 ext 148 (tel) 0191 281 3276 (fax) richard.bliss@northernarts.org.uk |
| Maureen Jordan | North West Arts Board Manchester House 22 Bridge Street Manchester M3 3AB | 0161 827 9242 (tel) 0161 834 6969 (fax) nab@norab.demon.co.uk |
| Joanne Day | Southern Arts Board 13 St Clement Street Winchester SO23 9DQ | 01962 855099 (tel) 01962 861186 (fax) info@southernarts.co.uk |

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|---------------------------|--|--|
| Rob Marshall | South East Arts Board 10 Mount Ephraim Tunbridge Wells Kent TN4 8AS | 01892 515210 (tel) 01892 549383 (fax) info@seab.co.uk |
| Ruth Bint/Maggie Bolt | South West Arts Bradninch Place Gandy Street Exeter EX4 3LS | 01392 218188 (tel) 01392 413554 (fax) ruth.bint@swa.co.uk maggie.bolt@swa.co.uk |
| Claire Carter | West Midlands Arts 82 Granville Street Birmingham B1 2LH | 0121 631 3121 (tel) 0121 643 7239 (fax) info@west-midlands-arts.co.uk |
| Pam Pfrommer | Yorkshire Arts 21 Bond Street Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF13 1AX | 01924 455555 (tel) 01924 466522 (fax) info@yarts.co.uk |
| LOCAL AUTHORITIES | | |
| Gill Levick/Sally Tunge | Shropshire County Council Column House Shrewsbury SY2 6NW | 01743 255078 (tel) |
| Helen Owen | Gloucestershire County Council Quayside House Gloucester GL1 2HY | 01452 425079 (tel) 01452 425042 (fax) |
| Mari Martin | Norfolk County Council Norfolk Arts Service County Hall Martineau Lane Norwich Norfolk NR1 2DH | 01603 222222 (tel) 01603 222422 (fax) |
| Patrick Conway | Durham County Council County Hall Durham DH1 5TY | 0191 386 4411 (tel) |
| Ros Shippides/Nigel Singh | Staffordshire County Council Shugborough Milford Stafford ST17 0XB | 01889 881388 (tel) |
| Steve Hollier | Cambridgeshire County Council Shire Hall Cambridge CB3 0AP | 01223 717111 (tel) |
| Jackie Brumwell | Derbyshire County Council County Hall Matlock DE4 3AG | 01629 580000 (tel) 01629 585279 (fax) |
| Jayne Knight | Suffolk County Council Framlington Library The Old Courthouse Bridge Street Framlington IP13 9BA | 01728 724793 (tel) 01728 723725 (fax) |
| Jennifer Lowe | Cornwall County Council County Hall Truro Cornwall | 01872 322000 (tel) |

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| | TR1 3AY | |
| Nicky Duirs | Cheshire County Council County Hall Cheshire CH1 1SG | 01244 602836 (tel) |
| Esther Rowland | Essex County Council Cultural Services PO BOX 47 Chelmsford CM2 6WN | 01245 436133 (tel) 01245 436841 (fax) |
| Helen Ellis | Viking Community Transport Room 15, St. Cedd's House Maldon District Council Offices Princes Road Maldon Essex CM9 5DL | 01621 843164 (tel & fax) |

NB. A further range of venues responded by questionnaire, for reasons of space these have not been included in the above list however their valuable contributions have been included in the overall report.

b) Funding Sources

| Trusts / Foundations | Companies | European |
|---|--|--|
| The Baring Foundation 60 London Wall London EC2M 5TQ 0171 767 1348 | Marks & Spencer plc Community Involvement Programme Michael House Baker Street London W1A 1DN (0171 935 4422) | Tim Grange - EC Contact Point Officer The International Arts Bureau 4 Baden Place Crosby Row London SE1 1YW (0171 403 0777) iab@mcm.com |
| The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 98 Portland Place London W1N 4ET 0171 636 5513 | Ford of Britain Trust Room 1/661 Ford Motor Company Ltd Eagle Way Brentwood Essex CM13 3BW (01277 252551) | |
| The Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust 7 Cowley Street London SW1P 3NB (0171 227 5400) | Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales PO Box 140 St Mary's Court 20 St Mary-At-Hill London EC3R 8NA (0171 204 5276) www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk | |
| The Pilgrim Trust Fielden House Little College Street London SW1P 3SH (0171 222 4723) | | |
| The John Jarrold Trust Messrs Jarrold and Sons Whitefriars Norwich NR3 1SH (01603 660211) | | |
| The Ashe Charitable Foundation c/o Binder Hamlyn 17 Lansdowne Road Croydon CR9 2PL 0181 688 4422 | | |

Welcome aboard

Martin Jones on a bus service that is run entirely by volunteers

Wednesday December 1, 1999

The first time Mike Graham drove the Fellrunner he had to stop the bus and get out to help clear a flock of sheep from his path. A little later, the bus had to drive across the hoses from several fire engines which were busy putting out a barn fire. Finally, he had to negotiate his way through a herd of young bullocks before finally making it into Carlisle. As he brought the bus to a halt, a passenger approached him and said: "I like coming with you. It's exciting!" "The ethos of service provision in rural areas has to be different," says Graham, who is now chair of Fellrunner, a community bus service run entirely by unpaid volunteers. "The Eden Valley has a population density of 22 people per square kilometre. In some London boroughs, that figure can be as high as 11,000. It's simply a different world. Our running costs are about 70% less than they would be if we were to use paid drivers. In an area like Cumbria, it is difficult to make a regular bus service pay. It would simply not be sustainable to maintain the services we run if we had to pay people."

Community buses, running to published timetables and using unpaid drivers, are only one form of community transport, however. Long before anyone in the mainstream transport world would have considered that disabled people were part of their business, community transport projects were offering a range of services designed to enable older and disabled people to play a fuller part in society. "Door to door" services, using either the cars of volunteers or specially adapted minibuses able to take disabled passengers including those in wheelchairs, offered a wide range of trips. That might be for shopping or going to a day centre, the bingo, the cinema or just to visit Aunt Mabel at the opposite end of town.

Women, often afraid to use public transport, particularly at night, have benefited from Women's Safe Transport services. "Door to door" services are often used by nurses and other women regularly working unsocial hours, but they also provide the opportunity for girls and women to go out for the evening free from the fear of attack.

Not all community transport is aimed at individual travellers, though. Community development has always been a strong part of the ethos and many community transport projects specialise in providing minibuses at affordable prices to other local charities and community organisations. With transport a highly regulated area and safety a major concern - especially for groups with vulnerable members, such as children, older people or adults with disabilities - the presence of a nearby community transport project can mean many groups are able to extend their horizons without getting bogged down in the hassle of owning their own vehicle.

Jenny Meadows is director of the Community Transport Association, which provides advice, information and training to community transport organisations across the country. "What all these initiatives have in common is a recognition that lack of access to transport can be a major block to participating in many activities fundamental to a full life," she says. "We are strongly committed to the notion of a vibrant public transport network, but sometimes something different is needed. Our members have a pretty good record in finding out what is lacking in communities and developing transport services that help plug that gap." If community transport has been operating in glorious isolation for much of the last 20 years - highly valued at a local level and largely ignored by national government - there are strong signs that things are beginning to change.

The government's series of funding initiatives for rural transport is likely to see at least £10m going in support of community transport over the next three years, while the national lottery is becoming almost as big a funder as the traditional grant-giving local authority. Meadows believes that the future for community transport lies in being seen as part of the wider transport mix.

She says: "We've always been well regarded, but what has changed is the realisation that if this country is to develop a public transport system which is available to everyone then community transport must be seen not as a marginal activity but as a major partner. If local authorities, commercial companies and community transport continue to work more closely together, we can expect some encouraging results."

• Martin Jones is press officer of the Community Transport Association.