

Plunkett Foundation News

13th February 2012

TV's Matt Baker adds his name to Village SOS national conference

We are delighted to announce TV personality Matt Baker is set to speak at the Village SOS national conference to be held on Monday 27th February at the Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Birmingham.

Matt's upbringing on his family's sheep farm in the Dales fuelled his love of the countryside and its people, and led to his becoming one of the most recognisable personalities with regards to rural issues. He will share his own experiences of rural life at the Big Lottery Fund's Village SOS national conference, which will draw on the widest range of experts from across the rural and social enterprise sectors to give communities the support they need to rejuvenate their villages by setting up community enterprises – from shops and pubs to local food and transport projects.

UK Chair of the Big Lottery Fund, Peter Ainsworth, will be joined on the day by leaders of the sector, including Plunkett Foundation's Chief Executive Peter Couchman, Co-operatives UK's Chair, David Button, Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE)'s Chief Executive Sylvia Brown and Locality's Chief Executive, Steve Wyler, all of whom are partners on the Big Lottery Fund's Village SOS programme which provides the most comprehensive support ever available to communities setting up community enterprises across the UK.

Says Matt: "I am delighted to be a part of an event that aims to inspire rural communities to set up their own enterprises. Around 19 local pubs close each week, and 400 village shops close each year; the effects of this, along with limited transport options, rural isolation and lack of employment opportunities for young people, can all strike at the heart of village life. The Village SOS national conference will be the biggest event of its kind to help communities revive their villages through enterprise, and I'm proud to be a part of that."

This free-to-attend event is the essential conference for anyone with an interest in rural communities and community enterprise. It will feature specialist workshops on topics like business planning and accessing finance, debates on issues facing rural communities and how they can be overcome, and the chance to have your say on what you need to rejuvenate your village.

Places are free but limited and the conference is booking up fast. To make sure you don't miss out, book your place at <http://www.villagesos.org.uk> or call 0845 434 9123.



Leading economist predicts era of 'Co-op Capitalism'

Leading economist Professor Noreena Hertz, who for more than two decades has made accurate predictions about economic trends, has named 'Co-op Capitalism' as the next economic era.

In a paper published by Co-operatives UK today, Prof Hertz states that 'the model of capitalism that was dominant for the past 30 years has clearly failed. It's time to embrace a new model of capitalism, Co-op Capitalism, for reasons of social justice but also enlightened self interest. Co-op Capitalism offers a new way forward that reconnects the economy with society and puts collaboration, community and the collective first.'

The paper highlights how other countries are growing because of a more collaborative relationship between the state, market, individual and society and highlights how businesses that embrace the co-operative ethic are weathering the economic downturn better than traditional ones. The paper can be downloaded from <http://www.uk.coop/coopcapitalism>.

Darlington Supporters United launches its campaign for community ownership

Last week saw the launch of Darlington Supporters United at <http://www.darlosupportersunited.com> and its campaign for community ownership of the football club.

DSU is a group of Darlington supporters' organisations and individual supporters who are investigating the viability of moving the club into community ownership with the help of support organization Supporters Direct. They are a community controlled organization which plans to take at least majority control of the football club to ensure it is run for the benefit of its fans and the community of the town. They join over 20 other clubs across the UK to pursue community ownership.

Search for the UK's favourite Lottery-funded project is on!

The National Lottery has begun its annual search for the UK's favourite Lottery-funded project with the announcement of the National Lottery Awards.

Lottery players raise £30 million each week for projects all across the UK, and the Awards highlight how that funding is transforming communities and changing lives. If you are involved in a project that has received Lottery funding and would like to celebrate the impact it has had you can nominate it at <http://www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/awards/> before the deadline of Monday 12th March.

Map reveals rural network areas

A map has been published to show the areas of England that will be covered by Defra's new farming and rural networks. The fourteen networks have been set up to identify and feed back local issues and concerns to the Government to help inform policy making, and were announced by Defra minister Jim Paice at the Oxford Farming Conference in January. To download the map and view the full list of the Rural and Farming Network groups visit the Rural Services Network, <http://www.rsonline.org.uk/news/politics/item/1688-map-reveals-rural-network-areas>.

Hill Holt Wood to run free short courses

Social enterprise Hill Holt Wood has announced it will be running free short courses for people inspired by their work.

The one-day courses, *Introduction to Environmental Conservation* and *Introduction to Green Construction* will take place at weekends between 9am and 3pm and are limited to eight places each.

Introduction to Environmental Conservation will take place on the following dates: 28th April; 19th May; 9th June; 23rd June, and 14th July. *Introduction to Green Construction* will take place on: 21st April; 12th May; 26th May; 16th June, and 7th July. For more information about the content of the courses and to book a place visit <http://hillholtwood.com/what-can-we-do-for-you/freecourse/>.



Local People, Local Food 24th April, Aston University, Birmingham

This one-day conference, delivered by Plunkett Foundation and supported by Making Local Food Work, is the first ever event bringing together Community Shops and Farmers' Market. Costing £35, the event combines interests relevant to both Community Shops and Farmers' Markets, including:

- Increasing turnover and profit;
- Recruiting and Managing volunteers;
- Display and Merchandising.

The event will bring to life the latest consumer research from Making Local Food Work – the techniques the supermarkets use, adapted and accessible to local food retailers for the first time. Understand more about why consumers choose local and how to persuade more people to make the switch. This event will provide real evidence and practical tools to help your enterprise combat the recession, plus lots of inspirational ideas and networking opportunities. For more information and booking details please visit <http://localpeoplelocalfood.eventbrite.com/?ebtv=C>

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