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PRESS RELEASE

Somerset Village Agents were finalists for the Prince of Wales Award!

Community Council for Somerset's, Somerset Village Agent Project were one of the five finalists for the Prince of Wales Award, which will be presented at the Bath and West Show on Wednesday 27th May, 2015. This is in recognition of the Village Agents work across the county and during / after the Somerset flooding last year.

Village Agents Audrey Mansfield and Kate Symonds went to the awards to represent the team. Although the Village Agents were not the final winners they were chosen from a large group of applications across Bristol, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire and it was a great achievement to make to the top five.

Somerset Village Agent Manager Jinny Uppington said: "We are thrilled to be finalists and shortlisted for such a prestigious award, gaining recognition for the teams' hard work across the county. Village Agents work tirelessly to make a positive difference to people's lives, and it is wonderful for the team to make it to the top five alone and to be acknowledged in this way."

Somerset Village Agents support the communities they live in, working at the very heart of those communities being the eyes and ears on the ground. Working with individuals and groups and responding to community need, they were really put to the test when the Somerset Levels and Moors flooded along with flash flooding across the county.

Somerset Village Agents supported over 470 people during the Somerset floods and the support still continues today: emotional, physical and practical. The issues that were faced by the Village Agents and residents varied from financial advice, relocating families, pets, post to arranging medical appointments and most importantly emotional support to those who lost so very much.

The Village Agents became an intrinsic part of the community's flood recovery and at a recent event when the community were asked to name a good thing that came out of the flooding people responded by saying having a Village Agent by their side.

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Issued: 28/05/15

Media contact: Nicola Greenslade – Communications / Project Officer

Victoria House, Victoria Street, Taunton, TA1 3JZ

Tel: 01823 331222 Email: info@somersetccc.org.uk Website: www.somersetccc.org.uk

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Registered in England & Wales No. 3541219, and is a Registered Charity No. 1069260



Tel: 01823 331222

Notes to editors:

The Somerset Village Agent project is a project of CCS and now covers half of the county. The project uses paid, part time, highly trained individuals living in the parish 'clusters' they support. They help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely individuals and statutory and/or voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs.

Village Agents offer a signposting and referral service with a difference

Village Agents work with all ages dealing with a wide variety of issues, although a considerable number of their clients are elderly and involves social care issues. Helping to solve these problems may, ultimately, help the elderly to remain living independently for longer. Village Agents also have the role of helping to shape services by feeding back to the appropriate body information about gaps in service e.g. transport provision. They can also motivate and support a community to respond to a local need by working together to address issues e.g. by helping them to set up a coffee morning for a group of lonely people or start a volunteer car scheme.

CCS supports people who live and work in Somerset communities. We do this through a range of diverse projects which bring together people who care about local community life in Somerset. We focus our energy on helping you and your community.

See [our work](#) to see what projects are running across Somerset.