Our response to COVID-19

Our charity exists to support people in rural Leicestershire and Rutland to build connections, tackle issues and overcome disadvantage.

The coronavirus epidemic continues to present us with some of the most significant challenges our community has faced in modern times. As the restrictions on our daily lives change over the coming months, we will be directing our time and resources on reaching out and helping those in our rural communities who have become disproportionately disadvantaged, isolated or disconnected.

We are taking time to carefully plan our next steps and to adapt to a new normal for our charity. A normal that is focussed on strengthening social resilience and built up from the amazing acts of neighbourliness, kindness and community spirit happening organically in every street across the whole of rural Leicestershire and Rutland.

Some steps we are now taking include:

- **Home working –** our team will all continue to work from home as much as possible. Our systems mean that we are all contactable as normal by e-mail and telephone. We have also introduced the use of Microsoft Teams and Zoom across the team enabling us to host and participate in online meetings and events.

- **COVID secure workplace** – we have followed Government guidance to make wide ranging changes to our workplace designed to minimise the risks coronavirus for our team and the people we work with. This has allowed us to re-open our office for essential tasks and to carefully re-start some of our work outside in the community.

- **Community outreach** – we are completing a phased, safe and socially distanced re-introduction of work out in rural communities. Until guidelines change this will be restricted to targeted outdoor activity around our Rural Coffee Connect Van.

- **Same impact different approach** – we are developing a new programme of online training, awareness raising and engagement activities which we plan to roll out as we move through the summer. Initially these will be focussed on some of the indirect impacts of COVID-19 on rural areas including suicide, loneliness and cyber-crime.

Sam Howlett

Executive Director

Kevin Butcher

Executive Director

1st June 2020