

## **The Rural Community Support Society — The VIC**

The Rural Community Support Society is an independent charitable organisation which is based at The Old Forge in the heart of Herstmonceux. You probably know it by the name of its building — the Village Information Centre (the VIC).

The original Information Centre was opened in 1998 as a result of a joint initiative led by Reverend Osborne (Free Church) and Reverend Francis (All Saints and St Mary Magdalene). In 2003 a charitable trust was created — The Rural Community Support Society — which now manages the Centre. In 2011 the Old Forge was purchased and donated to the Society by Peter Sangster.

Today the Society is still serving the community, responding to needs and forging links between service providers and people in and around Herstmonceux. The Old Forge is still an Information Centre where information and advice is provided and posters and leaflets can be displayed — but it is also a resource for local clubs, societies and businesses — with a meeting room, photocopier, laminator and other equipment. The recently decorated meeting room is free subject to availability and approval for non-profit-making organisations serving the community within the parish of Herstmonceux.

The Society also provides small grants to local clubs and societies.

In March we were fortunate to receive a grant from the ‘Local Connections’ fund (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in partnership with the National Lottery Community Fund). We now have Wi-Fi, a Zoom account and a computer – and clubs, societies and individuals can use the equipment at the VIC for meetings, talks, quizzes and anything else that helps to keep people connected.

Although the VIC has been closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, it has recently re-opened for three days a week and we hope to get back to five-day opening in due course. We are always on the look-out for volunteers, so please get in touch if you can offer a few hours of your time.

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