

“The coaching put us on the right footing”, says Alan, “and helped us to form the idea of the Community Interest Company as a way to achieve our goals”.

building bridges across the community

A local radio station has been created in South Holland District to bring to life the social networks vital to a thriving community.

Only the second ever radio station in the country to be granted Community Interest Company status, this community driven media initiative aims to provide an ‘interactive entertainment facility’ particularly addressing the needs of the minority ethnic groups and young people in the area, who, according to Rosanna and Alan the founders of South Holland Radio, are desperately isolated.

Rosanna and Alan, both fiercely passionate about the state of their community, want to do something to break the barriers that are faced by people in their area, particularly with the lack of public transport and communication.

They feel it is important that “everyone in Lincolnshire has the opportunity to put forward their opinion, and intend to broadcast in 5 different languages in an attempt to bring together the divided communities, championing community issues and breaking down the communication barrier. “We have to bridge this gap”, says Rosanna, “it doesn’t matter the colour of your skin or your background, everyone here is equal”.

Rosanna and Alan have both experienced long and exciting careers in broadcasting, and moved to the South Holland area several years ago. They became involved with a community group that had been considering a community radio station for some time, but who lacked the necessary skills or experience to pull it together.

The initial meeting between Rosanna, Alan and Mike, the Local Alchemy coach, and several other community institutions brought about the “tipping point to action” says Alan. “By getting all these people involved it opened up opportunities to us that were not open before”.

Some core funding to develop their ideas further was accessed through the Alchemist Fund, which helped to support the group in the initial stages and move it towards action.

Currently broadcasting on broadband, and looking to move into a recently acquired, renovated railway station in Spalding and to begin transmitting on FM to the surrounding areas, South Holland Radio is already reaching out to the community.

Alan is planning a whole raft of community projects to build into the operation of the radio station, including the ‘South Holland Helping Hands’ project to train local people in broadcasting, to engage newly arrived individuals in their languages, and to install an internet café in the building to be used for IT training and communication with families abroad.

