New Award for Rural Resilience Press Release

Contact information:
info@ruralcommunities.eu

Release Date
15 October 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Announcing the Michael Dower Award for Rural Resilience

In memory of Michael Dower, who was a champion of rural development across Europe, organisations from across the UK and wider Europe have come together to develop the Michael Dower Award for Rural Resilience. The new award has been established to celebrate and recognise the efforts of communities and individuals dedicated to improving rural life across the continent.

The **Michael Dower Award for Rural Resilience** will honour those who embody these values in their efforts to address the economic, environmental, and social challenges facing rural areas today. The award recognises individuals and communities who take action to build a more sustainable and inclusive future for rural Europe. Additionally, the award will foster the exchange of ideas, practices, and mutual learning among applicants and the wider public, promoting rural resilience beyond local, regional, and national borders. For more information, click here.

Supported by contributions from Michael's family, friends and colleagues from across Europe, this award aims to continue his mission to strengthen and uplift rural areas across Europe, while fostering collaboration and rebuilding fractured connections.

Vanessa Halhead, Coordinator of the European Rural Community Alliance and long-term colleague of Michael said, "We are delighted to be involved in the development and launch of this Award. Michael was a dynamic force in promoting sustainable and resilient rural community action across Europe and beyond, during his lifetime. We hope the Award will continue his legacy by supporting and inspiring rural actors for many years to come."

The first Michael Dower Award for Rural Resilience will be presented at the next European Rural Parliament in 2025. Further details regarding the date and location will be announced. Applications are open to both individuals and communities, with a deadline of **14 February 2025**.

Michael Dower (1937–2022) was a dynamic leader and passionate advocate for rural communities and sustainable living. His impressive career included roles as the manager of the Peak District National Park, Director General of the Countryside Commission, and a Professor at the University of Gloucestershire. He was a key figure in pan-European rural development, leading several pan-European rural networks and instrumental in the development of the European Rural Parliament.

The award was founded by the ***Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI)*** at the University of Gloucestershire (UK) – where Michael Dower worked – and the ***European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL)***, a Brussels-based, non-profit association that fosters community-led innovation to revitalise local communities across Europe. For all organisations involved in the award, click here.

For more information, including the application process and eligibility criteria, please visit: www.michaeldoweraward.eu.

ENDS