



EUROPEAN
RURAL
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

Press Release

March 2, 2021

The European Rural Community Alliance (ERCA) elects a new President and Board

ERCA was established in 2008 as a pan-European alliance of the rural village/ community movements. ERCA links and support the rural movements, promotes cross-sectoral, place-based rural development and raises the voice of rural people to influence public opinion and rural policy at EU and national levels. ERCA is also a founder organiser of the European Rural Parliament, in co-operation with national partners in 40 countries and 7 pan-European networks. During the coming period, ERCA will be working more closely with local communities to exchange ideas and experiences on important issues, and supporting the ERP, including managing the ERP Mid-Term Event in spring 2021 and contributing to the development of the 5th ERP Gathering in Poland in 2022.

We are delighted to announce that Mr. Tom Jones was elected as the new ERCA President by the General Assembly on February 25, 2021. He succeeds Mr Staffan Nilsson. Tom, a farmer and rural activist in Wales UK, is a former member of the European Economic and Social Committee EESC, where he was their rural expert. He hopes to contribute his wide experience to the work for the villages in Europe on the Board of ERCA.

"... I firmly believe in the contribution of rural heritage to economic and social renewal. I am a strong and committed advocate of the national rural parliaments and of the European Rural Parliament, whose organizers I highly value. The voices of rural peoples must be heard when we build bridges between the country and the city to achieve a sustainable green agreement. An agreement that saves the wealth of the rural environment, gives people structure and economic and social hope, while at the same time using opportunities to contribute to global challenges. We are rural, plural rural! "

The new Board comprises the following people:

van Essen, Ben	Dutch National Village Association (LVKK), Netherlands
Gorman, Maria	Irish Rural Link, Ireland
Halhead, Vanessa	Scottish Rural Action (SRA), UK
Jones, Tom	Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), UK
Laukkanen, Reena	Finnish Village Association, Finland
Nilsson, Staffan	Rural Sweden (HSSL), Sweden
Schuetz, Frank	Brandenburg Village Movement - Network of Lively Villages e.V., Germany
Šetkienė Virginija	Lithuanian Rural Communities Union, Lithuania
Shucksmith, Mark	Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), UK

Registered address:

European Rural Community Alliance
c/o Hela Sverige ska leva
Stortorget 7, 1 tr.
SE-111 29 Stockholm / Sweden
Website: www.ruralcommunities.eu
Email: vanessa@duthchas.org.uk