

## Rural Informatics Project

# Participant Information Sheet

### Project: Rural Informatics in CELL

The [Centre for Digital Citizens](#) (CDC) is a joint project between Newcastle and Northumbria Universities addressing the emerging challenges of digital citizenship. In this project researchers from the CDC are working in collaboration with [REDACTED] with the aim of exploring how citizens and communities can be a part of the design of innovative technologies that work better for them. The intention is not to design technology for people but to design it with people.

### What is the purpose of the research?

The aim of our research is to explore the way that people use digital technologies and online platforms to share information within non-urban communities such as villages and coastal towns. The research has a particular focus on how online activity has changed during the Covid-19 pandemic and associated social restrictions, such as social distancing and the closure of public spaces such as town halls and community centres. We are interested in how community groups and resident groups have adapted to new ways of carrying out activities and sharing information and how online activity has supported people during the pandemic.

### Who is doing the research?

The research is being conducted by Dr Ian Johnson and Dr Vasilis Vlachokryiakos from Newcastle University, as part of a larger research group exploring how citizens and communities can be part of the design of digital technologies called the Centre for Digital Citizens, a collaborative project between Newcastle University and Northumbria University.

### Why am I being asked to take part?

The aim of our project is to improve access to information and connectivity for people across the four villages to [REDACTED]. We are therefore looking to

include the voices, opinions, and experiences of a diverse group of people from a range of backgrounds, with a variety of experience in the villages, to help ensure that different perspectives are taken into account in the design of any new digital infrastructure.

## What will I be asked to do?

In the first part of the study, we will ask you questions about the ways you have been using technology before and during the pandemic and in the second part, we will invite people to take part in a design workshop to discuss some designs we have for potential new technologies that could support communication in the villages.

## What will happen to my data?

With your consent, we will record the interviews and design workshops. We will store this data safely in accordance with the provisions of the GDPR and the UK Data Protection Act 2018. Any information provided by you in the context of this study will be stored securely and confidentially. We may use transcriptions of recorded data in research publications in the future, however, we will take care to separate all personal details and make sure that your information remains anonymised.

## What are the benefits of taking part?

Participation will give you a chance to discuss your concerns and ideas about access to information and services in the area and have direct input into the development of digital social innovation that supports residents and organisations in the community

## What are the possible risks of taking part?

We don't anticipate there being any disadvantages or risks of taking part in this research.

## Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Yes, you can stop taking part in the study at any time and without reason given to us.

## Who can I contact with questions or complaints?

For questions about the project, get in touch with Ian ([Ian.Johnson2@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:Ian.Johnson2@newcastle.ac.uk)) or Vasilis ([vasilis.vlachokyriakos1@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:vasilis.vlachokyriakos1@newcastle.ac.uk)). For questions about the CDC and the wider project contact: Rachel, CDC Centre Manager ([rachel.pattinson@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.pattinson@newcastle.ac.uk)).

If you have any questions about cell   
[enquiries@cell-biglocal.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cell-biglocal.org.uk)