

FATHER JAMES MCDYER

My ideal was that we would start a whole community family here, everybody working for everybody else, but I was too idealistic in that matter. But the fact remains that by the few or by the many that local cooperation is probably the only way I know how to vitalise an isolated and a low resource community such as ours.

Conditions were quite awful when I arrived here because emigration was taking a massive toll of the people, to tell you the truth. When I saw what was happening I was as mad as hell because all the young people were being siphoned off and they were just emigrating in droves, and before very long this community would die, and being saddled with an elderly population, they were thus conservative. So when the opportunity came to have electricity brought into here, rural electricity, they refused.

So one of the first things I got busy on was to rectify that and there was no pipework up to any house, and by means of what they call the group water scheme we got practically all the houses here supplied, and also I kept up a drum fire of agitation about the roads. There was only one tarmacadamed road here. So we got all the spur roads tarmacadamed and that gave the people a certain amount of confidence, but that by itself would not hold people from emigrating.

[End of recording]