The Countryside Agency

Parish Plans

Guidance for parish and town councils

Working for people and places in rural England

The Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working to make:

- **the quality of life better for people in the countryside;**
- **the quality of the countryside better for everyone.**

The Countryside Agency will help to achieve the following outcomes:

- **empowered, active and inclusive communities;**
- **high standards of rural services;**
- **vibrant local economies;**
- **all countryside managed sustainably;**
- **recreation opportunities for all;**
- **realising the potential of the urban fringe.**

We summarise our role as:

- **statutory champion and watchdog;**
- **influencing and inspiring solutions through our know how and show how;**
- **delivering where we are best placed to add value.**

The Countryside Agency is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Defra is a major customer for our work.

To find out more about our work, and for information about the countryside, visit our website: www.countryside.gov.uk

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Parish Plans

Guidance for parish and town councils

This guidance complements the Countryside Agency publication 'Parish Plans and the planning system'

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Foreword

In the Rural White Paper – *Our countryside: the future*, we set out our agenda for the countryside. A countryside facing change. But change set into a context of reform, not only in how we govern, but also how we plan. This guidance for parish and town councils is an important step in helping local rural communities to take charge of their own destinies and also an opportunity to strengthen the first, and most local form of government we have in this country.

Village appraisals and village design statements have demonstrated the value in whole communities coming together to set out their vision and ways of achieving it. Parish Plans build on this experience. They can provide you with a blueprint for the future survival of your rural community. They are able to influence local strategic partnerships and the preparation of community strategies, and now there is a new opportunity for Parish Plans to form part of the bed rock of the new local development frameworks that will be prepared by every local planning authority to replace existing local plans. So Parish Plans are already influential and will become increasingly important.

You know what people need locally. You know what services your community values, and why and who in your community is not getting their fair share of support or even having their voices heard. Perhaps it's a shortage of affordable housing. Or perhaps the lack of transport to nearby employment or training opportunities, or the lack of social activities for young people. You know what existing skills, expertise and knowledge exists within your community to help yourselves. And you know what support and reciprocal arrangements you'd like to set up in partnership with your local authority and local businesses. You also know what you can do, and where you need the help of others to achieve action. Parish Plans will capture all this and lead to more vibrant rural communities.

As the elected leaders in your community you are well placed to lead your communities to help shape and run their own affairs. We urge you to seize this opportunity and give everyone in your community the chance to plan for their future.

Alun Michael
Minister for Rural Affairs, Defra

Chris Leslie
Parliamentary Under Secretary for Local Government,
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

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1. Introduction

An opportunity to shape your future

There is a revolution going on in local government and parish councils are at the core of it. The Government wants local communities to take more control of their own lives, to say what they want doing in their own neighbourhoods and to engage with other powers to get it done.

This means an opportunity for everyone in *your* community to make themselves heard. An opportunity for you to say if you want more open spaces, more effective public transport, affordable housing, better access to health care, a chance to buy local food at local shops, and to choose how your community helps everyone in it to relax and make the most of their social and leisure time.

A Parish Plan will help you find out what your local community wants and work out how to deliver it. It is in your interests to read on…

About this guidance

This Guidance is to help your town or village produce a Parish Plan. It explains what a Parish Plan is and what it could look like. It sets out the advantages of producing a Parish Plan, who needs to be involved and how the process can be tackled. Some aspects are considered in more detail in the accompanying resource pack.

You are advised to seek advice and help from your local rural community council (RCC) whose officers will be working with other parishes in your area and will be able to share their experience with you. Although parish councils, town councils and parish meetings can prepare a parish or town plan, throughout this guide, for convenience, we use the term "Parish Plan ".

Parish Plans and Vital Villages

Rural White Paper

Parish Plans were announced in the 2000 "Rural White Paper" which set out the Government's plans for the countryside. They are intended to develop previous work such as village appraisals and village design statements and set a framework for communities to plan their own futures.

In November 2000 the Government's Rural White Paper *Our Countryside – The Future* launched the concept of the parish and town plans whose purpose is to:

"… set out a vision of what is important, how new development can best be fitted in, the design and quality standards it should meet, how to preserve valued local features and to map out the facilities which the community needs to safeguard for the future."

Plans should "identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved."

Who is this guidance for?

The guidance is aimed primarily at parish and town councils. Once the decision has been taken to go ahead with a Parish Plan it should be made available to those involved in the detailed work.

How to use the guide

The guidance is in two parts:

1. The main booklet which explains the process of preparing the Parish Plan, from starting off to acting on the conclusions.
2. A resource pack which provides further information on a range of practical issues and helps to answer detailed questions you may have.

We suggest you read through the main guidance to get an overall picture of the process, then work through again in more detail as you go through the different stages. The resource pack provides further detail for different stages in the process. Throughout this booklet references to the resource pack are clearly highlighted by a flag in the margin. Other specialist publications are listed in the appendix and signposted at relevant points in the guidance.

2. What is a Parish Plan?

What is a Parish Plan?

Parish Plans are "holistic" or comprehensive in scope. They should set out a vision for how the community wants to develop, and identify the action needed to achieve it. They can include everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the community, from employment and playgrounds to the design of new buildings and protection of hedges and ponds. They can include any social, environmental or economic issues. **It is up to you, the community to decide, what is important to you.**

Parish Plans have the potential to influence a wide range of organisations and processes which affect the lives of rural communities. They should complement and help deliver local planning policies and frameworks but they cannot override adopted planning policy. They should influence local housing and land management strategies. They should also contribute to the way local services are managed and delivered.

A Parish Plan is a statement of how the community sees itself developing over the next few years. It:

- reflects the views of all sections of the community;
- identifies which features and local characteristics people value;
- identifies local problems and opportunities;
- spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future;
- prepares a plan of action to achieve this vision.

© Ian Sadler, Five Valleys Photography

Preparing a Parish Plan should give anyone the opportunity to discuss issues affecting the community.

Who decides?

The Parish Plan gives everyone a chance to say what they think about the social, economic and environmental issues affecting their community, and how they'd like to see it improved in the future. It is important that the whole community is involved in producing the plan, not just those people who usually come along to parish council meetings.

What's it leading to?

The Parish Plan needs to consider local problems and opportunities as a whole. It makes the links between these issues and sets out a broad vision for the future – where the parish wants to be in 5 or 10 years time. But achieving this vision will require action. This includes both:

- action which the parish itself proposes to undertake;
- policies, decisions and action carried out by other bodies which the plan might influence.

" We will set out the community's aspirations for its future over the short, medium and long term, to enhance the social, environmental and economic well-being of all its inhabitants. We will not be confined to projects within the powers of the parish council or the community to achieve on their own, and will identify those we need to persuade to assist us, and the criteria we need to meet to enable them to do so."

Somersham Parish action plan.

What does the plan look like?

There is no standard format for a Parish Plan and no prescriptive list of the subjects it should address. It is up to the community to set out its vision, decide which issues it would like to tackle, agree priorities for action and present the information in a way that is interesting and attractive to everyone.

A practical way to present the plan could be in two parts:

1. A detailed report explaining how the consultation has been carried out and conclusions drawn. It could take various forms, including photographs, documents, sketches or even a video.
2. A succinct action plan clearly setting out what needs doing, when, why, by whom and at what cost.

We've done all this before!

Many parish councils have had experience of producing a community-led action plan such as a village appraisal, a housing needs survey or a village design statement. A Parish Plan will bring all this together and create a basis for action in future. But it is important to review and consult the whole community to make sure the issues and actions identified in previous surveys are still relevant, especially if previous action plans were produced more than three years ago.

Summary

- Parish Plans are local, action-based plans which address a range of problems and opportunities affecting rural communities.
- They can include social, economic and environmental issues.
- The **whole community** should be involved in producing the Parish Plan, with the parish council taking lead responsibility.
- The Parish Plan must be **consistent** with related policies set out in the local authority's planning documents and local strategic partnerships.
- The plan should be based on information provided through **survey, research, consultation and community participation.**
- **A grant** to assist with the production of Parish Plans is available from the Countryside Agency. **Advice** and **help** with producing the plan and involving the community **are available** from the rural community council.
- **Parish Plans should identify actions** which can be taken forward by the parish council, by other individuals and groups within the community or by other service providers and statutory bodies. These should have a clear focus on Who? What? Why? How? When?

3. Why produce a Parish Plan?

It is Government policy to increase individual participation in public life and for public bodies to consult communities about the delivery of services. As part of this policy of "active citizenship" the Government wants to give more power to parish councils to decide what's best for their own communities.

If you as a parish council can show you are taking your future seriously, a Parish Plan might increase your chances of getting local authority support to enhance your parish's economic, social and environmental well-being.

It will give you the evidence to help inform policy-making by a range of organisations, from the local planning authority to police and health services. It will also help you to develop and maintain effective working relationships with all those outside bodies who provide services to your community, now or in the future.

Funding the production of your Parish Plan

Between March 2001 and March 2004 the Countryside Agency ran a demonstration project giving 1,000 rural communities the resources to produce a Parish Plan. The average grant request was for £3,200, with many excellent Parish Plans produced for much less. It was also proven that the less expensive Parish Plans, printed on home computers, were just as effective as the glossy magazine publications with photography.

When your plan steering group has calculated the cost of producing its plan, it is worth approaching your local authority, as many recognise the importance of local community planning and are able to offer support to communities undertaking this type of activity, if not in cash, in valuable support.

Parish councils can also precept to support this activity, or raise money in traditional ways such as jumble sales and coffee mornings.

Most communities that were involved in the Countryside Agency demonstration project reported that considerable new resources were attracted into their community as a direct result of the production of their plan, which far outweighed the original outlay.

Influencing local authorities & other service providers

Local authorities are continuously involved in drawing up and reviewing land use plans as well as deciding individual planning applications. A Parish Plan can potentially influence both these processes. It might do this by:

- identifying local needs for affordable housing or community facilities;
- producing a design statement for new development;
- identifying which open spaces are needed and valued for community use;

- in the longer term, in line with government proposals for a reformed planning system, there could be an opportunity to feed into the new Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) which are due to replace Development Plans. See *'section 12 Parish Plans and the statutory Planning System' in the resource pack.*

"People in our village used to think nothing could ever get better. Now we've got a bus and people come up to me and say "can we have it on Monday and Friday as well ?". We consulted them once - now they feel they can ask.

There's one old woman who hadn't been out on her own for five years. When the bus service started she spent three days going round and round the village. That bus has become a hotbed of social interaction!"

Jane Holden, Killamarsh Parish Council, Derbyshire.

Local authorities are also required to draw up 'community strategies', to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area. This is usually achieved through parish councils, involving representatives from public, private, voluntary and community bodies. The main aims of a community strategy are:

- to identify what sort of services, activities and support are needed;
- to make links between services and organise them better to avoid overlaps;
- to promote local people's involvement in planning and improving services in the areas where they live.

In addition, most county and unitary authorities have signed up to negotiate a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) with central government, comprising a dozen or so specific targets to improve local services such as health and police. LPSA authorities are encouraged to involve local partners, particularly through the parish councils and the community strategy, in drawing up and delivering these targets. A Parish Plan has the potential to influence LPSAs through such community strategies.

There are structures which exist to help deliver social and community services at ground level. A Parish Plan can help feed into these processes and give your village a real voice and influence in the wider community.

"We wanted to be more pro-active, not wait to have things imposed upon us. Higher levels of government have their own strategic plans, we wanted to match them."

Mark Bennett, Comberton, Cambridgeshire

Integrating the local economy

The economic life of rural communities is undergoing a period of change. Declining rural services, increasing traffic, a shortage of affordable housing, and a crisis in farming culminating in the Foot and Mouth epidemic require urgent attention.

Finding solutions to these problems is often difficult as one size rarely fits all. But a Parish Plan can help. By taking a holistic view of a

Countryside Agency/Andy Tryner Photography

Affordable housing, Portesham, Dorset.

community and its surrounding environment it provides an opportunity to find local solutions to local problems. For example, it could:

- identify a redundant farm building that might be developed into workshops for a new local business;
- encourage a local farmer or producer to sell their produce in the local shop or to local pubs, hotels and restaurants;
- persuade a local landowner to donate a parcel of land for a children's playing field or local nature reserve;
- develop and market an area for tourism;
- provide support for the increasing numbers of people working from home, eg. by building telecottages;
- support environmental conservation measures, such as protection of wildflower meadows.

The character of the countryside around a village is an integral part of its identity. It should be managed in a way that takes into account its aesthetic and economic importance to the village. *See section 13 'Introduction to landscape character' in the resource pack.*

Planning action that the local community can undertake itself

Many of the issues and opportunities identified by rural communities are things that local people could tackle themselves, given the right support and funding. Such actions will help foster a sense of ownership of the plan, too, for example:

- encouraging the setting up of a parent and baby group;
- creating a new play area and place for young people to meet;
- improving liaison with the police and establishing a neighbourhood watch scheme;
- reopening a closed village shop;
- providing community transport;
- calling for the establishment of quiet lanes where traffic and speed is restricted;
- protecting locally distinctive hedgerow or landscape feature;
- establishing a local food network;
- creating a local nature reserve.

"If I were asked "would I do it again?", I would!

It was certainly a worthwhile thing to do...people feel they have been consulted...it does pay a parish to do it and we will persevere with the district council and others to make sure it produces results."

Derek Chislett, Chalvington with Ripe, East Sussex.

Bidding for funding

Organisations offering grants to rural communities may want to see written evidence of need, community consultation and plans for implementing the project before they will consider offering funding. The Parish Plan could be used to provide this information and to accompany the funding bid.

"Perhaps the most positive outcome came from the supplementary sheet that went out with the questionnaire asking for volunteers. Lots of people offered to help with all sorts of activities- so that worked very well as a by product."

Derek Chislett, Chalvington with Ripe, East Sussex.

Community spirit

People who have taken part in similar projects, like village appraisals and parish maps, say it's a great way of bringing people together. It taps local talents and enthusiasms and helps foster a real sense of community. It can revive interest in local democracy and demonstrate the importance of the parish council in the democratic process. These benefits can often lead to fresh initiatives which otherwise would not have happened. They can also be hugely enjoyable as social and creative projects in themselves.

It's worth the effort!

Drawing up a Parish Plan offers a great opportunity to bring together everyone in the community to work together and decide where the parish is going in future. It will take time, energy and commitment. But it will be time – probably about 12 months – well spent.

Summary

Parish Plans provide:

- a way to influence decisions by other authorities;
- a basis for action by people in the parish;
- a route to winning funds for local initiatives;
- a boost to parish councils' standing.

4. Who should be involved?

Parish Plans belong to the community but to be most effective you need to make sure you have the co-operation and advice of everyone who might be affected:

- **everyone who lives or works or plays some part in the community;**
- **everyone who has an impact on what goes on in the community;**
- **everyone you hope to influence.**

The parish council

The parish or town council ultimately takes responsibility for producing and endorsing a Parish Plan, but this does not mean the parish clerk has to do all the work! Only the parish or town council can apply for funding from the Countryside Agency and they should be accountable for the final plan. However where a parish council does not exist a parish meeting group can apply. Ideally most of the work will be done by a steering committee and working groups, who should be drawn from all sections of the parish to ensure the plan represents the views of the whole community. The parish council's role is to support them in that work, and have a representative presence on the committee.

The community

Everyone in the parish should be given an opportunity to contribute their views and their skills, energy and experience to produce the plan. It is particularly important to include people who traditionally do not involve themselves in parish affairs, for example young people, senior citizens, less able-bodied people, people living in outlying areas, and people who work shifts or long hours.

Countryside Agency/Tina Stallard

It is important to ensure everyone in the community gets involved in developing the plan.

Include people who may have a common interest even though they are not members of a formal club or association - for example dog walkers, young parents, visitors.

See sections 8&9 'Involving the Community' & 'Consultation and information gathering techniques' in the resource pack.

The Countryside Agency

You should have a look at the Agency's website which carries information about other parishes that have applied for grants, and examples of completed plans.

" Be warned - consulting the community is like opening up a Pandora's box. Once you've started you may not be able to stop, people are so delighted to be asked, to feel empowered".

Jane Holden, Killamarsh Parish Council, Derbyshire.

Rural Community Councils

Rural Community Councils (RCCs) are working in partnership with the Countryside Agency to help communities draw up Parish Plans. The staff at your local RCC have wide experience of working with communities. They will be able to help you plan and organise the process of producing a Parish Plan. They will be able to advise you on the best ways of involving the whole community. They can also offer training in techniques and facilitation. In most instances this advice will be offered to you free of charge. If the RCC is unable to provide this help they will put you in touch with someone who can. *Rural Community Councils are listed in Appendix 1.*

The local authority

Speak to officers in the planning department at the district or county council or unitary authority, at the outset and tell them you intend to produce a Parish Plan. They may be able to help you interpret local planning policies and advise how to implement them at parish level.

See section 12 'Parish Plans and the statutory planning system' in the resource pack.

As you begin to develop the scope of your plan and identify the issues you wish to tackle, you should talk to other officers within the local authority such as officers in the housing or environment departments. They will be able to give you specialist advice and point towards other sources of information. They might also suggest some questions they would like you to research for them.

You should also make contact the district council officers responsible for the community strategy. They should be able to advise you on potential links between the Parish Plan and the community strategy.

A list of all the departments based at your district council, county council or unitary authority can be found in your local telephone directory. Make sure your local councillors on the district and county

councils (or unitary authority) are aware of your intention to produce a Parish Plan. They may have advice to give and may live locally and wish to be involved in the process of drawing up the plan.

The County Association of Local Councils

County associations assist the work of town and parish councils by providing legal and procedural advice on day to day issues. They also liaise with district and county councils to maintain a flow of information and effective joined up government. They may be able to give advice, organise training and put you in touch with other parish councils who have started to produce a Parish Plan. *Contact details can be found in Appendix 1.*

"Our community has pockets of deprivation, and the local authority were concerned. They wanted to do something and so did the parish council and community association, so the Parish Plan idea grew out of that. Plus the Primary Health Care Trust were already doing a survey, so we've planned a series of events to make sure we've got everybody's views."

Nicki Oliver, Wickham, Hampshire. Neighbouring parish councils.

Many issues affecting parish councils have a geographical basis, and may have implications for neighbouring parishes. You should talk to your neighbours early in the process of preparing a plan, and also at a later stage when the issues and action you wish to take become clearer. Find out whether they have done, or are doing a plan, and what issues might overlap with your parish.

You may wish to work in partnership with one or more neighbouring parishes.

Some parishes have worked together to produce their own 'chapters' in a joint plan; others have worked separately while supporting each other. Both methods allow the clusters to pull out 'common threads' which might be used to apply for larger pots of money, for example in co-ordinated transport schemes.

The advantages of this approach are:

- parishes can pool resources to buy expert advice for all in the group;
- shared resources might finance more sophisticated information gathering tools for all in the group;
- smaller parishes might benefit from linkage with bigger ones;
- promotes better co-operation between neighbouring parishes;
- if all plans are produced in the same format it might make them more useful to local authorities and other potential partners;

If working jointly you should be prepared to:

- allow more time to get things started;
- draw up a constitution as early as possible in the process;
- agree for one parish to act as 'banker';
- be clear about how the grants will be divided up;
- make sure the smaller parishes are fully involved at every stage.

Other organisations

All sorts of organisations will be able to offer advice on different aspects of community services, activity and features. Some may also be able to offer help, such as publicity, meeting places and consultation methods. They might also have useful documents and maps. Of course, they will want to promote their particular interests, but it is up to you to weigh up all the evidence.

Such groups might include the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), the National Farmers Union (NFU), local amenity societies, Planning Aid, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) or the Country Land & Business Association (CLBA). Appendix 2 contains contact addresses and telephone numbers for these and other organisations which may be able to help you.

Check: Have you contacted:

- ☐ Parish council.
- ☐ The community.
- ☐ The Countryside Agency.
- ☐ Rural Community Council.
- ☐ District or County Council or Unitary Authority.
- ☐ County Association of Local Councils.
- ☐ Neighbouring parishes.
- ☐ Special interest groups, societies and organisations.

5. Preparing the ground

Having made contact with everyone who might be involved, it's time to start thinking about how you're going to get things moving. Next steps are to:

- Get the community on board;
- Tell your local councillors and council officers about your plans;
- Find someone to help you;
- Set up a steering committee and agree a working protocol;
- Estimate the costs of the project;
- Identify sources of funding or help in kind.

Get the community on board

Before you start you need to make sure there is enough interest and enough people willing to help. The parish council may take the lead in proposing the idea of a Parish Plan, but the decision to go ahead needs to be made jointly with the community, and the community needs to be fully informed and involved right from the beginning. The key is plenty of good publicity. One way to do this might be for the parish council to organise and promote a special meeting, at which the idea of a Parish Plan is presented and explained.

The local Rural Community Council (*See Appendix 1*) may be able to give a talk at this initial meeting, and may advise you on how to publicise the event and encourage people to come along. Other organisations, like those mentioned at the end of Section 3, might also be willing to come and offer their views. Other ideas for telling people about the Parish Plan could be:

- articles in the local newspaper, parish magazine and other village newsletters;
- produce a leaflet or "flyer" and distribute to every household;
- write to and talk to all the groups, clubs and societies in the village.

At this stage, your aim is to gather community support and interest. Later on you will need to get residents involved in the practical projects, and to encourage people to come up with ideas, views and opinions. Through your early publicity and events, you may be able to start recruiting volunteers.

Note issues which people are starting to raise and make a list of skills and resources available to help produce the plan. Keep your eyes and ears open for people who have certain skills, interests, energy or spare time available and may be able to help in all sorts of ways. Don't be afraid to ask people to help.

Once the decision to proceed has been taken there are several key stages in getting the process under way.

Contact potential partners

Identify and contact all the people, authorities and groups who might be involved, including all those mentioned in Section 3 – the local authority, councillors, RCC, CALC, neighbouring parishes and special interest groups. They may be able to help with the process, or with making sure it achieves results. If you involve them from the start they are more likely to co-operate when you want to influence them.

Find someone to help you

It is very important that people in the community do as much of the work to produce the plan as possible. However it is advisable to get the help of an experienced community 'facilitator' who will be able to help you ask the right questions, plan your work programme, and point to further sources of information. The Rural Community Council should be able to help you find such a person, either from their own staff or from independent sources. Initial advice from the RCC should be free, although they may make a charge if you need more than two or three days of their time.

If you decide to pay for such advice see *section 5 'legal and technical issues' in the resource pack* which will help you draw up a contract.

Later, you may find it useful to "buy in" additional advice or expertise, for example from someone who can develop a detailed questionnaire or analyse more complex information (*See 'section 7 Contracting Consultants' in the resource pack*). You may wish to pay someone to write up the results of survey work and draft out the action plan. Again, it is best for this to be done by someone who lives within your community. You should *not* hand over the preparation of the whole Plan to an external consultant.

The philosophy behind Parish Plans is that communities are best placed to identify their own needs and tackle their own problems. You will get better results, and a stronger sense of community ownership if the plan is produced *by* the community *for* the community.

Set up a steering committee

You will need to set up a steering committee to do the detailed planning and co-ordinate the project. You may wish to start this at an open meeting, but be prepared to approach people personally and ask for help. Ask for volunteers through village newsletters, and through clubs and organisations.

Before you start it is advisable to write down agreed roles and responsibilities for the steering committee. This could be in the form of a constitution, or 'terms of reference'. It should clarify how money will be spent and what is expected of, and offered to, volunteers. This will help everyone to understand the nature of the task and the role that they have to play.

Countryside Agency/Peter Greenhalf

A steering group should represent a cross-section of the people in the community.

Be sure also to clarify the relationship with the parish council, which is ultimately accountable for any spending involved. *See Sections 3 and 4 of the resource pack for a specimen constitution and an example of terms of reference.*

When setting up your steering group the following are useful principles to adopt:

- involve the wider community;
- limit the size of the group to between 8 and 15 members, two or three of whom might be parish councillors;
- appoint a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. You might also consider allocating other tasks such as publicity, or volunteer co-ordinator, to individuals;
- make sure the group is a representative cross-section of the people in your community, including at least one person who is under 20 years of age;
- involve people with a range of skills and experience;
- be prepared to bring in new people and ideas as the project evolves;
- try to find a task for anyone who volunteers help.

The steering committee **do not** have to do everything themselves! You may decide to set up working groups to look in detail at issues the plan is addressing.

Estimate what you will need

It will be important at this stage to estimate in broad terms the money and person-power needed to produce the plan including:

- publicising and promoting your ideas and activities to the community;
- carrying out surveys, buying in specialist advice;
- organising meetings and events aimed at getting everybody involved;
- administrative support costs, stationery, postage, telephone calls;
- printing and distributing the final action plan.

No volunteer should be out of pocket unless they have agreed to donate their costs. You don't have to use special equipment or computer software to produce a Parish Plan – choose what best suits your purposes. But the final report and action plan should be word-processed and copied or printed.

See Section 5 'Guide to Budgeting' & 7 'Legal and Technical Issues' in the resource pack.

Identify sources of funding

To meet these costs, potential sources of financial and other support should be identified, including:

- local authority grants;
- local sponsorship (including help in kind, eg. photocopying);
- fundraising events eg. village fêtes/car boot sale;
- voluntary time – to be matched against financial grants;
- parish council funds.

"I was surprised how easy it was to fill in the forms, much simpler than some other grant applications we've had to complete!"

Derek Chislett, Chalvington with Ripe , East Sussex.

Check:

- ☐ **Everyone is on board.**
- ☐ **Contact potential partners.**
- ☐ **Identify a facilitator.**
- ☐ **Set up steering committee.**
- ☐ **Estimate costs.**
- ☐ **Funding sources.**

6. Developing the scope of the plan

Now you know who's going to be steering and helping with the project, and roughly what it's going to cost, you need to work up your ideas into a concrete proposal.

- **Choose your subject areas.**
- **Review existing appraisals, surveys and plans.**
- **Identify special designations such as AONBs, SSSIs etc.**
- **Sound out the community.**
- **Draw up a plan brief.**

You decide

Parish Plans can cover a wide range of issues. They can address any aspects of rural life - social, environmental, and economic - which are of interest or concern to the community. These will vary from parish to parish. The real challenge is to identify the action needed to tackle problems and take forward opportunities, and to know what you can do yourselves and where you need to forge partnerships with others to take action on your behalf.

Review existing appraisals

If you have produced other community-led action plans such as a village appraisal or village design statement in the past three or more years, you should review the information in it to check which issues and actions are still relevant and which could be rolled forward into the Parish Plan.

Consider related plans

When your plan is finished it may become part of a network of other plans or designations that have a bearing on the parish. Before you begin try and gather information about as many of these as possible and consider their relevance to your parish.

These might include:

- Community strategies, Local Transport Plans (LTPs), housing strategies.
- Local authority planning documents – district plan, unitary development plan.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) management plans.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) management plans.
- National Park Plans.
- Land Management Initiatives (LMIs).
- Agri-environment schemes such as Environmentally Sensitive Areas or Countryside Stewardship Schemes.
- Plans of major landowners like the National Trust, Forestry Commission and Water Authorities.

A list of these and their originating authorities can be found in Appendix 2. Relevant publications are also listed at the end of this guidance.

Consult the community

The steering committee should not make assumptions on behalf of the community. You need to involve as many people as possible in identifying the issues the Parish Plan could address. Some of the issues which cause concern may have already been flagged up at your initial meeting, or put forward as a response to publicity about the proposed Parish Plan. *See section 8 'Involving the Community' in the resource pack.*

Do a local skills & resources search

Find out what local businesses might be able to offer in terms of equipment, photocopying etc. Also ask around for volunteers and people with particular skills, such as:

- volunteers willing to do administrative tasks such as filling envelopes;
- door to door deliveries;
- artists or designers for creating eye-catching posters and leaflets;
- computer literate people to collect or collate information, work with websites;
- the local Volunteer Bureau might be worth consulting.

Countryside Agency/Andy Tryner Photography

Find out what skills volunteers have and use them to collate and manage your research.

Possible issues

Some of the issues you may wish to examine are listed below. This is not a comprehensive list, just some ideas to get you started.

Social & Community

Democracy - Does your parish council represent the community effectively? Do you have a say in things that affect you? Are some people left out or barred from some activities or facilities? Are young/old people encouraged to get involved?

Information – Do people know about social opportunities? Do you need a parish newsletter or magazine or more noticeboards? Is there a village website? Is the internet used as a communication tool?
People – Who are the people who make up the community? Where do they live and work?
Pubs – Who uses them? Could they be used for other purposes?
Village halls/community buildings – Who uses them? What facilities do they offer? Who could use them if they were improved or adapted in some way?
Volunteering – Is this encouraged? Is it given enough support?
Young & old people - You should also look at the needs of particular groups of people, for example pre-school children and their parents, teenagers, over 60s, people with hearing, sight, language or mobility difficulties, people who work shifts or long hours, ethnic groups.

Services

Ambulance/fire/police response rates – Are you adequately served by the emergency services?
Carers – People caring for sick or disabled friends or relatives may be isolated and need support or needs assessments.
Childcare – Is there an after school club? Demand for better childcare facilities?
Community information – Access to library services, village newsletter, web site, internet access.
Crime and safety – Neighbourhood Watch, community policing.
Education & training – Pre-school, primary school, secondary, vocational & adult education. Could the school be used for other purposes? Could more use be made of the school bus?
Health and personal care – Access to GP surgeries, drop-in clinics for the young and the elderly, chiropody, dentistry services.
Housing – Is there an adequate supply of rented and privately owned accommodation? Is it affordable? Do you need a housing needs survey?
Laundry facilities – For private or business use? Is there a dry cleaning service?
Lighting – Is there enough? Too much? Is it in a style sympathetic with the character of the village?
Public telephones – Are there enough and are they reliable?
Public toilets – Are there enough and are they maintained adequately?
Public transport – Who needs transport? Where do they live and want to go to? Consider doing a transport needs assessment, maybe with a view to accessing help from other Vital Villages schemes and tying in with the Market Towns Initiative.
Refuse collection/provision of litter bins – Is it collected often enough? Are there enough bins for public use?

© Tony Bartholomew

Lack of childcare facilities can often be an issue for parishes.

Economic

Employment needs and opportunities – What exists already? Is more needed? Is there a shortage of skilled labour? Does the community make the most of its home-grown skills and products, crafts etc.?

Food – Access to supplies and the origins; is it locally produced, are there delivery schemes? Is it fresh and of good quality? Are there organic alternatives?

New technology – Is there a public internet terminal? Faxing facility?

Not-for-profit enterprises – Are they adequately supported and promoted?

Recycling and energy efficiency – Are there recycling facilities? Are they well-used? Could homes and community buildings be made more energy efficient?

Retail services – Where do people shop? Which banks and post offices do they use? Can everyone get to them? Are services under threat of closure? Are there mobile services?

Land & environment

Built environment – Traditional and modern styles. Village form and layout. Opportunities and prospects for new development. Would a village design statement be helpful?

Historic sites and heritage features – Are they well managed, appreciated, promoted? Do they contribute to the quality of life in the village? Do visitor numbers create a problem or an opportunity?

Landscape – Are there local or national landscape designations? Has a Landscape Character Assessment been produced for the area? Could landscape be improved? Is it likely to change?

Parish assets – Historic buildings, places and features that might be used to promote local tourism/business.

Traffic speed and volume – Road safety, parking and access.
Wildlife and natural habitats – Which sites/species are important and why? Do people visit and appreciate them? How are important sites being managed?

Leisure

Access to the countryside – Is the Rights of Way network well signed, waymarked and maintained? Is there provision for walkers, horse riders and cyclists? Is it accessible to wheelchairs, people with pushchairs and others of limited mobility?
Children's interests - Are there safe and interesting places for children to play and explore?

Sport, recreation and social activities – What do people do in their spare time? Is there sufficient provision for all age groups and interests?
Visitors and tourism – Who visits and why? What are their accommodation, refreshment, transport and information needs?

In deciding the scope of your plan, take account of issues arising from all groups and individuals in the community, not just the ones with the loudest voices. Take particular note of the concerns of those whose voices are not always heard, such as the young and older people.

Every issue that has been suggested needs to be investigated to some degree, but you will have a better chance of sustaining interest and achieving results if you narrow them down to sensible proportions.

The steering committee needs to make sure this process is clear to everybody, so no one can accuse them of having their own agenda or ignoring suggestions. Think about your community's strengths and resources as well as its problems and challenges.

See sections 8 and 13 "Involving the community" and "Introduction to landscape character" in the resource pack for further ideas on developing the scope of your plan.

Draw up a plan brief

Once the scope of the plan has been agreed, the steering committee can prepare a more detailed brief which sets out:

- what kind of information is needed to produce the plan;
- how this information will be collected; *see section 9 'Consultation and Information Gathering Techniques' in the resource pack & chapter 7 in this Guidance – under 'Working Groups'*;
- how much it will cost and what sources of financial and other support should be approached;
- what, when and by whom the information-gathering tasks should be undertaken;
- what the final plan will look like.

Setting all this out in a plan brief will ensure that everybody involved in the project knows what is happening, who is doing what, why and when. Be realistic and keep it relevant.

Don't be too ambitious in the early stages of the project. Try to tackle some issues where you know you will be able to take action. This will give you some momentum throughout the project and when you start to implement your plan.

How long will it take?

You should attempt to produce your plan within a year of starting the process. If you take longer you might lose momentum. It may be difficult to keep people interested and informed.

Give some thought to what time of year you start the process. Do not hold public events and consultation exercises at the beginning of the school holidays for example, when many people will be away.

Check:

- ☐ **Have you chosen subject areas?**
- ☐ **Reviewed existing appraisals?**
- ☐ **Located relevant plans, designations and landscape character?**
- ☐ **Sound out the community – who's going to help?**
- ☐ **Drawn up a plan brief?**

7. Getting down to business – collecting information

Now you have decided the scope of the research, you know which other plans it might relate to and who's going to be involved you can start in earnest:

- **set to work with an open mind;**
- **get the views of everyone possible.**

Ground rules

You should have already agreed roles and responsibilities and adopted your terms of reference as advised in chapter 5. Some parishes have found it useful to give the process a name and logo, providing it with an instantly recognisable identity. You might decide to hold a competition to design the logo, as another way of engaging people.

It is a good idea also to agree how you are going to conduct the process – for example by agreeing an informal set of ground rules, which might include the following:

- start with an open mind;
- accept that different people will have different interests and priorities;
- accept some people have more time to spare than others;
- avoid jargon;
- be honest, and keep people informed about what you are doing;
- think boldly but be realistic;
- encourage people to work together;
- be flexible;
- work at a pace everyone can keep up with;
- remember a small, well researched plan will be more use than a hefty one that has focused on quantity rather than quality;
- keep a record of everything you do;
- enjoy it!

Working groups

Once you have identified the issues you wish to examine, you should set up a number of working groups. Each group may have different ways of collecting data and information, depending upon the subject they are investigating. There are many ways you can collect the information to inform your plan. You need to decide which will be best for the type of plan you want to produce and which will be most effective in engaging the people in your community.

You could discuss your ideas with the Rural Community Council Field Worker. Many communities have used household questionnaires as the

main method for gathering information to produce a village appraisal. Such questionnaires are tried and tested methods and usually form a good starting point. There are several different computer packages available to help communities collect and analyse information, and new ones are being developed all the time. The RCC will be able to advise and may have cost and licensing agreements with manufacturers.

The RCC Field Worker may also be able to tell you about other ways of finding out what people think about their village. Some parishes have used what are called 'visioning days' when people are invited to drop in to a village hall or meeting room and contribute to a 'wish-list' written up by residents on stick-its. Others have organised guided walks, where a 'facilitator' takes a group of people round the parish while participants point out what they like and dislike – and *would* like.

© Kippa Mathews

Frodingham Parish Plan involved the whole community with children helping to build their 'planning for real' model.

The important thing is for all parishioners to have an opportunity to contribute their views in a way that is comfortable for them. Not everyone feels happy writing things down, some don't like speaking in public, some might prefer to express themselves in photographs or drawings. Some people won't get involved until they feel the plan relates to them, or because it just sounds boring. Try and think creatively and above all make it fun.

See section 9 on 'Consultation and Information Gathering Techniques' in the resource pack for further ideas.

" This is your chance to have a say about the future of our village. We all want the best for the place that we live in and we can really make change happen (or not happen if that is what we want). The only real problem is that there has never been any collective view of what the people who live here desire. This is the purpose of this questionnaire....."

Somersham action plan, Suffolk.

Informal methods

Be prepared to go out and talk to people in their homes, in the village shop, the pub and other places where people get together. Tell them why you're asking the questions and make sure you write down or record anything they say. You might visit local clubs and societies and hold structured discussions using key questions as prompts.

Record everything you do

We recommend you keep a diary or scrapbook of the whole process, including drawings, pictures and any posters and leaflets you produce. Take photographs at meetings and consultations. Illustrations of the consultation process will show how you've involved everybody and will help to brighten up the final plan. It also helps to make the process more transparent, and shows you have been genuinely open and democratic. And it will enable you to keep track of where you've been successful and not, so others can learn from your experience.

Check:

- ☐ **Agree the rules for steering committee and working groups.**
- ☐ **Ask the views of everyone.**
- ☐ **Keep a record.**

8. Writing up and discussing your findings

You now have a mass of information gathered from existing sources and from your own research and consultation. The next task is to:

- **write it up into a readable draft report;**
- **discuss again with all who participated.**

Produce a draft report

Once you have gathered information from your surveys, questionnaires and discussions, the results should be analysed and written up in a way which:

- explains where your village is, with a map showing the parish boundary, population, history, people who live in it, recent changes;
- gives a key contact name and phone number or email address;
- sets out the context for the project;
  – why did you decide to do it?
  – who was involved?
  – how were people involved?
- sets out the findings of the research, consultations and discussions;
- identifies the issues which need tackling and the opportunities which could lead to action. You may wish to include a summary of the views put forward to illustrate the strength of feeling from residents on specific issues. This may help you identify priorities for action.

Countryside Agency/Tina Stallard

Information gathered should be written up as a draft report clearly setting out the key findings.

" The parish lies within Wealdon District and its boundaries are shown on the map. It lies between the A22 (just to the north) and the A27 (a quarter mile to the south). Despite the proximity of these main roads it retains its rural character. The landscape is flat with the South Downs very prominent some 3 miles to the south. The soil is a mixture of Wealdon clay and greensand, mainly grazed by sheep with, increasingly, turf being grown on a commercial basis ".

Introduction to Calvington with Ripe Parish Plan.

Present the report as an attractive, readable document

The steering group should appoint an editor. That person should take overall responsibility for ensuring the report is clear, accurate and inviting. In particular the editor should ensure the draft report:

- includes a large scale map or drawing of the parish;
- is all written in the same style;
- contains background information that can be understood by a stranger to the parish;
- shows how everyone in the community contributed to the process;
- includes some 'real life' experiences, with examples and quotes;
- uses simple language – no jargon or official-speak;
- is factual and objective – statements are supported with facts;
- is illustrated with charts, graphs, photos or sketches – (acknowledge copyright if applicable – *see Section 6 'Guide to likely costs' in the resource pack*);
- refers to local history, literary associations, culture, dialects;
- includes everything – however trivial it might seem to you – so everyone feels their contribution is valued;
- is clear about your committee's role. You are technical staff drawing together the results of a consultation - you don't have to defend everything in it;
- if a local organisation is involved, show results, such as "there's been a request for a short mat bowls club and the village hall committee has agreed to investigate".

Once the steering group is in broad agreement that the style and content of the issues report is about right, *go back to the community* to discuss your findings.

Discussing the findings

You have now written up the results of your research and surveys. You have also begun to identify their implications and possible action for the community. The next stage is to discuss these findings with two main groups of people:

- with the community

Producing your draft report is an important milestone in your project. Many people have worked hard and given a lot of time and enthusiasm to the project. It's worth promoting your efforts widely and celebrating.

This is a good opportunity to hold a special event. Consider having an open day, a conference or exhibition. Make sure the event is well

promoted. You may have to organise childcare and provide refreshments to encourage people to come. Organise workshops or discussion groups to discuss your findings and to propose further research or action if people feel this is needed.

It may be useful to bring in external speakers to help explain more complex issues or to answer questions. This could be a good opportunity to involve those people from other organisations whose help you need to tackle certain issues, for example local authority officers, rural transport advisors, land managers etc.

"More people than expected came to our feedback meeting. They liked to be asked, wanted to have their say in the future of the village."
Mark Bennett, Comberton, Cambridgshire.

- with the local authority & other partners

You may wish to organise a special presentation to local authority members and officers, or hold individual meetings with other organisations you need to influence. It is important to have a dialogue and build a constructive relationship. Do not expect people simply to accept and endorse your draft written report. You need to work in partnership to explore issues from all perspectives and agree on realistic action.

Check:

- ☐ **Write findings up as a readable report.**
- ☐ **Discuss with community.**
- ☐ **Discuss with partners.**

9. Producing the action plan

All your research is now in a single document, which you've discussed with the community and other partners. The next job is to translate those thoughts and wishes into action. This is the **key stage** in the Parish Plan process.

- **Decide what action is needed.**
- **Prioritise.**
- **Submit plan to parish council.**
- **Design & print.**
- **Distribute to community & partners.**
- **Celebrate.**

" It's given us a logical plan for the future. Instead of each month looking at what happens to be on the parish council agenda because it suddenly needs doing, we can do more strategic planning."

Mark Bennett, Comberton, Cambridgshire.

Planning the action

The steering group should take responsibility for drawing up policy and priorities and deciding what action is required. You may need to go back to the individual research groups to review the findings of the previous consultation exercise and develop the relevant action points.

You may find there are issues where you are still not clear about the course of action to be taken. You may need to identify the "action" as being a need to carry out further research or consultation. This is fine as long as you are clear about the reasons for this action.

Be creative in your thinking. If an action is to have a bottle bank in the car park but there's concern about broken glass on the parking area, you have two projects – one about getting the bottle bank and one about dealing with broken glass – better than no action at all.

Priorities, partners, payments

The parish council and steering committee should get together to decide which actions need to be done urgently and which can fit into a longer time-frame. You might want to split it into areas of activity, eg:

- high priority – Young people, traffic, housing, community safety;
- medium priority – Environment;
- lower priority – Leisure activities.

Consider who is going to work with you to achieve the results you want. This might be partners at the local authority, health or transport services, or groups or individuals from within the village or neighbouring parishes.

You need to work out how you're going to pay for the work, for example by tapping existing funding streams, applying for new grants, or volunteer effort.

Tips for effective action planning

Developing an action plan requires a methodical (yet innovative) approach. The following checklist of principles might help in carrying out the process.

- **Keep it simple!** A plan needs to be thorough yet simple enough for everybody to understand, especially those that haven't been involved in putting it together. Phrase it in such a way that if the first method doesn't work an alternative will be found.
- **Try to prioritise,** at least into high, medium and low priorities. This will help to identify which actions are needed most urgently.
- **Assign responsibility.** Unless an individual or a small group is given responsibility for making a particular action happen, it certainly will 'gather dust' as suggested above.
- **Set a timescale –** identifying a date by which an action should be carried out will help to ensure it is not forgotten and constantly 'put on the back burner'.
- **Break the action into stages,** defining alternative routes.
- **Build in a review process.** Although an action plan is produced and put on paper, things are actually constantly changing and ideally a plan should be constantly monitored and reviewed and in need of updating. It can be sensible to make one of your actions a specific review of the whole plan on at least an annual basis.
- **Involve Partners.** These days so much action requires a partnership approach with support which might come from within any of the public, private or voluntary sectors.
- **Try not to make the actions sound like accusations –** eg "the county council must…"
- **Be realistic and honest.** This means thinking through the resource implications and possible sources of finance – its no good having a 20 page action plan where 90% of actions can never realistically occur. Make clear if you know some actions are going to be more difficult to achieve.
- **Try and make the actions fun** and easy to carry out, eg. a village tidy-up day, where you can involve lots of people and perhaps get some media coverage.

Types of action

In practice there are various types of action. Thinking about these might help in deciding priorities, which partners will need to be involved and which are the most appropriate sources of funding. The main types of action are likely to include:

- **Low cost/no cost actions –** as the name implies, these are actions that can be put into practice very quickly without a lot of expense or organisation. They are important for the credibility of the process amongst local people as they very quickly show that the

plan/appraisal is not 'all talk'. Examples might include:
- organisation of local 'litter-pick days';
- working with local educational establishments to carry out local surveys eg. of some aspect of local wildlife or potential sites for play areas.

- **Strategic actions –** these will cover vital but longer-term issues that could have a major impact upon the local quality of life. This might cover such issues as housing or transport and will almost certainly involve the local authority(s) amongst other partners.
- **Issue based actions –** this area will cover key issues such as opportunities for young people or looking at crime and anti-social behaviour and will almost certainly have sub-elements that look at possible activities in more detail.
- **Facility based actions –** almost all communities will have opportunities for improvement in relation to the provision of or improvement of local facilities. This might include, for example a community centre, youth club, children's playground or the parish hall.
- **Location based actions –** as with facilities, most communities will have areas of land that are in need of improvement or maintenance or provide opportunities for development. This might include areas of wasteland, areas with potential for wildlife, allotments etc.
- **Support actions –** many groups or individuals will already be carrying out activities that need support either in terms of additional resources, grant aid, more information or physical help.

Get final approval of parish council & others

When the steering committee is satisfied with the content of the action plan, you may wish to take it back to the topic groups and even consult the community again. This will give people an opportunity to check details and make sure they agree with the overall message and priorities. Talk your action points through with other organisations which may have been identified as having responsibility for action.

If you are intending to have the land use planning parts of your Parish Plan considered for adoption as supplementary planning guidance, note that your final draft must be submitted to your local planning authority for approval through committee.

It is important to agree this process with your local authority early on and before the Parish Plan is printed as the final version.

It is the parish council who are ultimately responsible for the action plan, so you should make sure they are happy with the final draft. When you have this formal approval, you are ready to go ahead with design, layout and printing the final version.

"We will set out a plan for how we want the village to develop over the next 10-15 years. In that way, parishioners will have some control over what's happening."

Capt. Steve Gaunt, Pilling, Lancashire.

Polish the content, design and layout

The action plan does not need to be a lengthy or complex document. You should have put all your details and background information into the main report. But the action plan does need to set out clearly:

What is proposed	Why the action is needed	How will the action be implemented?	Who will be responsible for taking the action?	When will the action be taken forward?
Policy or proposal	What you are trying to achieve	• Specify tasks • Cost • Which people • Materials • Equipment	Parish council/community group/local authority?	Start date: Finish date:

An example of a model action plan is included in section 11 of the resource pack.

You might decide to produce a summary of your plan as a leaflet, booklet or poster. This will be particularly useful if you want to make a copy of the plan available to every household in the community but do not want to overwhelm everyone with the detailed report. There may be someone in the community with art, photography or design skills who can help you lay it out and illustrate it. Don't be afraid to be imaginative. Use colour, sketches, drawings or photographs. Include quotes from people to make it come alive.

A vision for the future

You might like to preface your action plan with a "Vision" for your community. This might be in the form of a written statement as below.

Bywell Parish Plan (Northumberland) sets out an overall vision for:

" a thriving, vibrant community with the opportunity for all residents, including children and young people, to be involved in social, recreational, life long learning and community activities."

Many communities have found it very effective, and have had great fun producing a map, diagram or picture of how they would like to see their community. *An example of a vision for a sustainable community in Sussex is on page 37.*

Distribute

- Consider giving every household in the village a copy of the action plan, or a summary leaflet.
- Neighbouring parish councils might like to see one too.
- The parish council should send the final version with a covering letter to all the people and organisations who have been identified in the action plan. Draw their attention to the action they are responsible for and suggest a meeting to discuss how the process can be started. Give them the name and phone number of someone from the community who will be their main point of contact.

- The RCC field officer and any other people who have helped with the plan will appreciate a copy.
- The local authorities involved, and other organisations who've played a part, should be copied in. Include all local authority departments who might be involved.
- Include your elected representatives – district and county councillors
- If you can send your plan electronically either on disc or as an email attachment that would be even better.
- Consider putting the whole document onto a relevant internet website.

Countryside Agency/Ann Katrin Purkiss

It is important to hold events that all members of the community can contribute to.

Celebrate!

It is a good idea to hold a special event to draw everyone's attention to the fact that the Parish Plan is completed. One really effective way to do this, and to start the process of implementing the plan is to have an event which tackles one of the actions identified in the plan. For example planting trees or bulbs, or organising a litter pick. Don't be shy about informing the local newspaper and radio about your celebrations. You may get some media coverage which will make everyone feel special and make the event more memorable. It will also encourage other communities to start the process of producing a Parish Plan.

Don't forget to include in your celebrations – either by invitation, or by a mention in publicity – the people and organisations who have supported or helped finance the plan.

Check:

- ☐ **Plan includes what, why, when, who, where.**
- ☐ **Prioritise actions.**
- ☐ **Check back with community and partners.**
- ☐ **Parish council approval.**
- ☐ **Design and print.**
- ☐ **Distribute.**
- ☐ **Celebrate.**

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Key to Sustainable Village

1. Build and Train: timber framed houses and flats built by young people who live in them. They were trained as they built, and now have NVQ qualifications including carpentry, plumbing and electrical work.
2. Village Centre
3. Workshops and Business Units
4. Telecentre
5. Minibus
6. Moped Pool
7. Local Recycling
8. Vegetable Box Scheme
9. Woodland Management
10. Community-owned shop
11. Solar Panels
12. Insulation
13. Nature Conservation
14. Clothes Fair
15. Car sharing
16. Local Exchange Trading Scheme
17. Weekly Market
18. Cycleway
19. Community Farm
20. Tools and Machinery Ring

10. Implementation, monitoring and review

Monitoring and review

The written work is complete and the action plan has been endorsed by the parish council. Now comes the most important part – making it happen:

- **Parish council adopts the plan as policy.**
- **Encourage the local authority and others to work on their action points.**
- **Steering committee or parish council allocates tasks to working groups.**
- **Open dialogue with partners and funders.**
- **Publicise and celebrate successes.**
- **Monitor and review progress.**

> " Compiling and agreeing the plan was an important initiative and key step. The challenge now is to implement this plan."
> Bywell Parish Council.

Formal adoption by parish council

By this time the parish council will be fully aware of the actions proposed, and will have agreed the final version of the document. If the plan is to influence local authorities and others it must now be formally adopted by the parish council as policy.

It sometimes happens that individual parish councillors, or the whole council, disagree with parts of the action plan. Every effort should be made to reconcile such differences when the plan is being drawn up, but parish councillors must recognise the plan represents the views of the whole community, not just the parish council.

If the parish council refuse to adopt the plan, the steering committee will have to identify which actions can be taken forward without the support of the parish council.

Parish council promotes the plan to the local authority

- The parish council should continue to work with officers at the local planning authority once the planning components have been adopted as supplementary planning guidance, to help its implementation.
- The local authorities should also be clear about the plan's relationship with the community strategy and how they help each other.
- The parish council should keep in regular contact with the steering committee and keep 'Parish Plan implementation' as a standing item on their agenda.

Steering committee reviews its role

The steering committee can be a key motivator in making sure the Parish Plan achieves results. Some members might leave and others join as people feel they have given enough of their time or if different skills and experience are needed. Try to draw in new blood, such as people whose hobbies or interests might be useful in implementing some of the action points.

The steering committee might also use the action plan to encourage local community action either on their own or in partnership with existing networks, such as conservation or food groups.

Activate working groups

One effective way of ensuring action does take place is to establish task groups, perhaps based on the working groups who were involved in producing the plan. They can take responsibility for action. They can monitor progress and feed back regularly to the steering committee and/or the parish council. It is a good idea to pick out some simple tasks from the action plan, to notch up some early wins.

"The offers coming through the questionnaire suggest we have goodwill and a willingness to get involved to benefit Somersham. Of course this enthusiasm means little without being mobilised into hands-on help and for that we need to get organised."

Somersham Community action plan report, July 2002.

Countryside Agency/Tina Stallard

Working groups can help you achieve key tasks quickly and encourage everyone to take responsibility for action.

Approach potential partners

Some of your action points might require collaboration with other bodies, like neighbouring villages, food producers or land managers. Remember also the organisations you've been in touch with along the way. Keeping up those relationships will reap dividends when you want to do something like start a new transport scheme, introduce more traffic control, or open a new facility for the village.

Approach potential funders

You should already have an idea, from drawing up the action plan, about how you're going to fund particular projects. Some are listed in *section 9 'Guide to Funding Sources' in the resource pack.*

Dealing with contentious issues

Some landowners might object if you plan to promote the use of certain footpaths, republicans will be unmoved by jubilee celebrations, and lovers of classical music won't support a village jazz festival. Every proposed action does not need the support of everyone with a stake in the community, but in drawing up proposals you need to show you have thought about the implications of your plans, and mitigated any problems. For example, good way-marking will help keep walkers from straying off the footpath, the Jubilee celebrations only need to be held once every twenty-five years, and the jazz concerts can finish no later than 11.00 p.m.

Publicise your achievements

Each time you complete a target in the action plan you should let everyone know about your success. Try and make each achievement special, for example with a publicity gimmick like breaking a bottle of champagne over your new community minibus. Write an article for the local newsletter, and inform the press. Let the papers know in advance so they can come and record the event. Take photos for your own records.

Check progress against targets

Whether action plan implementation is monitored by a steering committee or the parish council it is a good idea regularly to check how work is progressing. If the first attempt doesn't achieve results make a note of it and try again. If you meet obstacles try approaching the issue from a different direction. During the process record responses, even – or perhaps especially – if they are negative.

Remember, your action plan has the backing of the community, and has been drawn up after considerable consultation and consideration. As such it has authority and deserves to be treated seriously.

Monitoring and review

- The steering group, if you have one, should meet regularly, perhaps once every three months to review progress.
- Have "Parish Plan implementation" as a standing item on the parish council agenda.
- Report progress back to the community, perhaps through the parish newsletter, and make sure people know your achievements have come out of the Parish Plan.
- Consider having a village suggestion box for comments and queries.

- Publicise and celebrate achievements.
- Review when and why things don't go well and learn from your experiences.
- Aim to update the action plan as circumstances change.
- Think about writing a new Parish Plan after five years.

What if we fail?

It will sometimes happen that circumstances conspire to delay or prevent the publication of the final Parish Plan. The people leading the project may move away from the village, fall ill, or for other reasons be unable to maintain their commitment. Sometimes something happens to divert the interest of the whole community away from the plan; for example a major development proposal such as a road improvement scheme.

In this situation, we would urge you not to put the project on indefinite "hold", but to try and persuade someone else to take it forward. Understanding what went wrong is as important as knowing what went well, so others will be able to learn from these experiences, good and bad.

A final message from the Countryside Agency – Thank you!

Congratulations for all your hard work in getting this far. We're sure you'll be glad you stuck with it – and that feeling will increase as the Parish Plan continues to produce concrete results for your village.

Appendix 1: Rural Community Councils, County Association of Local Councils and Countryside Agency regional office addresses

Rural Community Council Offices

Community Action for Bath and NE Somerset, N Somerset and S Gloucestershire
Church House,
74 Long Ashton Road, Long Ashton,
North Somerset BS41 9LE
Tel: 01275 393837

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
The Old School,
Southill Road, Cardington,
Bedford MK44 3SX
Tel: 01234 838771

Community Council for Berkshire
Epping House, 55 Russell Street,
Reading, Berkshire RG1 7XG
Tel: 01189 612000

Buckinghamshire Community Action
Unit B, The Firs, Aylesbury Road,
Bierton, Bucks HP22 5DX
Tel: 01296 421036

Cambridgeshire ACRE
32 Main Street, Littleport, Ely,
Cambs CB6 1PJ
Tel: 01353 860850

Cornwall Rural Community Council
9a River Street,
Truro, Cornwall TR1 2SQ
Tel: 01872 273952

Cheshire Community Council
96 Lower Bridge Street,
Chester, Cheshire CH1 1RU
Tel: 01244 323602

Voluntary Action Cumbria
The Old Stables, Redhills,
Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0DT
Tel: 01768 242130

Derbyshire Rural Community Council
Church Street, Wirksworth, Matlock,
Derbyshire DE4 4EY
Tel: 01629 824797

Community Council of Devon
County Hall, Topsham Road,
Exeter, Devon EX2 4QB
Tel: 01392 382533

Dorset Community Action
Community House,
The Barracks, Bridport Road,
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1YG
Tel: 01305 250921

Durham Rural Community Council
Park House, Station Road,
Lanchester, Durham DH7 0EX
Tel: 01207 529621

Rural Community Council of Essex
Mackmurdo House,
79 Springfield Road,
Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6JD
Tel: 01245 352046

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
Community House,
15 College Green,
Gloucester GL1 2LZ
Tel: 01452 528491

Community Action Hampshire
Beaconsfield House,
Andover Road, Winchester,
Hants SO22 6AT
Tel: 01962 854971

Community First, Herefordshire & Worcestershire
41a Bridge St,
Hereford HR4 9DG
Tel: 01432 267820

Community First, Herefordshire & Worcestershire
141 Church Street, Malvern,
Worcestershire WR14 2AP
Tel: 01684 573334

Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire
Birchwood Avenue, Hatfield,
Hertfordshire, AL10 OPS
Tel: 01707 695500

Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council
14 Market Place, Howden,
Goole, East Riding of Yorkshire,
DN14 7BJ
Tel: 01430 430904

Isle of Wight
Rural Community Council
3 Langley Court, Pyle Street,
Newport, Isle of Wight
PO30 1LA
Tel: 01983 524058

Kent Rural Community Council
15 Manor Road, Folkestone,
Kent CT20 2AH
Tel: 01303 850816

Community Futures
15 Victoria Road, Fulwood,
Preston, Lancs PR2 8PS
Tel: 01772 717461/718710

Rural Community Council,
(Leicestershire and Rutland)
Community House,
133 Loughborough Road,
Leicester LE4 5LQ
Tel: 0116 266 2905

Community Council of
Lincolnshire
The Old Mart, Church Lane,
Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 7DF
Tel: 01529 302466

Norfolk Rural
Community Council
20 Market Place, Hingham,
Norfolk NR9 4AF
Tel: 01953 851408

Northamptonshire ACRE
The Hunsbury Hill Centre,
Harksome Hill,
Northampton NN4 9QX
Tel: 01604 765888

Community Council of
Northumberland
Tower Buildings,
9 Oldgate, Morpeth,
Northumberland NE61 1PY
Tel: 01670 517178

Nottinghamshire Rural
Community Council
Newstead Miners Welfare,
Community Centre,
Tilford Road, Newstead Village,
Nottinghamshire NG15 0BS
Tel: 01623 727600

Oxfordshire Rural
Community Council
Jericho Farm, Worton,
Witney, Oxon OX29 4SZ
Tel: 01865 883488

Community Council
of Shropshire
1 College Hill, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire SY1 1LT
Tel: 01743 360641

Community Council for Somerset
Victoria House, Victoria Street,
Taunton, Somerset TA1 3JZ
Tel: 01823 331222

Staffordshire
Community Council
Friars Mill, Friars Terrace,
Stafford ST17 4DX
Tel: 01785 242525

Suffolk ACRE
Suffolk House,
2 Wharfedale Road,
Ipswich,
Suffolk IP1 4JP
Tel: 01473 242500

Surrey Voluntary
Service Council
Astolat, Coniers Way,
New Inn Lane, Burpham,
Guildford, Surrey GU4 7HL
Tel: 01483 566072

Action in Rural Sussex
Sussex House,
212 High Street, Lewes,
Sussex BN7 2NH
Tel: 01273 473422

Tees Valley Rural
Community Council
3rd floor, New Exchange Building,
Queens Square, Middlesbrough.
TS2 1AA
Tel: 01642 213852

Warwickshire Rural
Community Council
The Abbotsford,
10 Market Place,
Warwick CV34 4SL
Tel: 01926 499596

Community First
Wyndhams, St Joseph's Place,
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1DD
Tel: 01380 722475

Yorkshire Rural
Community Council
William House, Shipton Road,
Skelton, York YO30 1XF
Tel: 01904 645271/2

National Association of Local Councils
109 Great Russell Street,
London WC1B 3LD
Tel: 020 7637 1865
Fax: 020 7436 7451
www.nalc.gov.uk
Email: nalc@nalc.gov.uk

County Associations of Local Councils

Avon
Church House,
74 Long Ashton Road,
Bristol BS18 9LE
Tel: 01275 394571

Bedfordshire
The Old School, Cardington,
Beford MK44 3SX
Tel: 01234 838771

Buckinghamshire
County Hall, Walton Street,
Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1HA
Tel: 01296 383154

Cambridgeshire
The Primrose Centre,
Primrose Lane, Huntingdon,
PE18 6SE
Tel: 01480 375629/630

Cheshire
Blue Bache Farm, Burleydam,
Whitchurch, Shropshire
SY13 4AW
Tel: 01948 871314

Cornwall
11 Walsingham Place, Truro,
Cornwall TR1 2RP
Tel: 01872 260096

Cumbria
The Old Stables, Redhills,
Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0DT
Tel: 01768 242130

Derbyshire
Agricola House, Church Street,
Wirksworth DE4 4EY
Tel: 01629 824797

Devon
County Hall, Exeter,
Devon EX2 4QD
Tel: 01392 382534

Dorset
Colliton Annexe, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 260972

Durham
The Council Offices,
Civic Hall Square, Shildon,
Co. Durham DL4 1AH
Tel: 01388 772563

East Riding &
Northern Lincolnshire
14 Market Place, Howden,
Goole DN14 7BJ
Tel: 01430 430904

Essex
Foakes House, 47 Stortford Rd,
Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1DG
Tel: 01371 879722

Gloucestershire
15 College Green, Gloucester,
GL1 2LZ
Tel: 01452 528491

Hampshire
St Thomas' Centre,
20 Southgate Street,
Winchester SO23 9FF
Tel: 01962 841699

Hereford
41a Bridge Street, Hereford
HR4 9DG
Tel: 01432 353492

Hertfordshire
2 Townsend Avenue, St Albans AL1 3SG
Tel: 01727 846121

Kent
15 Manor Road, Folkestone,
Kent CT20 2AH
Tel: 01303 248252

Lancashire
15 Victoria Road, Fulwood,
Preston PR2 8PS
Tel: 01772 717461

Leicestershire and Rutland
133 Loughborough Road,
Leicester LE4 5LQ
Tel: 0116 2662905

Lincolnshire
Church Lane, Sleaford,
Lincs NG34 7DF
Tel: 01529 302466

Norfolk
20 Market Place, Hingham,
Norwich NR9 4AF
Tel: 01953 851408

Northamptonshire
Hunsbury Hill Centre,
Harksome Hill, Northampton
NN4 9QX
Tel: 01604 706333

Northumberland
Tower Buildings, Oldgate,
Morpeth NE61 1PY
Tel: 01670 517178

Nottinghamshire
Minister Chambers,
Church Street, Southwell,
Notts NG25 0HD
Tel: 01636 816890

Oxfordshire
Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney OX8 1EB
Tel: 01865 883488

Shropshire
PO Box 484, Shrewsbury SY1 1WA
Tel: 01743 252744

Somerset
Victoria House, Victoria St,
Taunton, Somerset TA1 3JZ
Tel: 01823 331222

Staffordshire
15 Martin Street, Stafford
ST16 2LE
Tel: 01785 277499

Suffolk
Hill View Business Park,
Claydon, Ipswich IP6 0AJ
Tel: 01473 833713

Surrey
6 Bishopsmead Parade,
East Horsley, Leatherhead,
Surrey KT24 6SR
Tel: 01483 285595

Sussex
212 High Street, Lewes,
East Sussex BN7 2NH
Tel: 01273 476342

Tees Valley
New Exchange Buildings,
Queens Square, Middlesbrough,
TS2 1AA
Tel: 01642 213852

Warwickshire
The Abbotsford,
10 Market Place, Warwick CV34 4SL
Tel: 01926 410122

Isle of Wight
3 Langley Court, Pyle Street,
Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1LA
Tel: 01983 524058

Wiltshire
Wyndhams, St Joseph's Place,
Devizes, SN10 1DD
Tel: 01380 722475

Worcestershire
Station Approach, Malvern,
Worcestershire WR14 3AU
Tel: 01684 573334

Yorkshire
William House, Shipton Road,
Skelton, Yorkshire YO30 1XF
Tel: 01904 645271

Countryside Agency Regional Offices

North West Region
(Lancs, Cheshire, Gtr Manchester
& Merseyside)
7th floor, Bridgewater House,
Whitworth Street,
Manchester M1 6LT
Tel: 0161 237 1061

(Cumbria)
Haweswater Road, Penrith,
Cumbria CA11 7EH
Tel: 01768 865752

Yorkshire and the Humber
4th floor, Victoria Wharf,
4 The Embankment,
Sovereign Street,
Leeds LS1 4BA
Tel: 0113 246 9222

South East and London
(Hants, Isle of Wight, E&W Sussex,
Bucks, Berks, Oxon & London)
Dacre House,
19 Dacre Street,
London SW1H ODH
Tel: 0207 340 2900

(Kent & Surrey)
Sterling House, 7 Ashford Road,
Maidstone, Kent ME1 5BJ
Tel: 01622 765222

East of England Region
(Beds, Herts, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambs and Essex)
City House, 126-128 Hills Road,
Cambridge CB2 1PT
Tel: 01223 354462

East Midlands Region
(Leics & Rutland, Derbys, Notts,
Northants and Lincs)
18 Market Place, Bingham,
Nottingham NG13 8AP
Tel: 01949 876200

West Midlands Region
(Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire,
Staffordshire & Warwickshire)
1st floor, Vincent House,
92–93 Edward Street, Birmingham B1 2RA
Tel: 0121 233 9399

Strickland House,The Lawns,
Park Street, Wellington, Telford TF1 3BX
Tel: 01952 247161

North East Region
(Northumberland, Durham, Tyne & Wear
and Tees Valley)
Cross House, Westgate Road,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 4XX
Tel: 0191 269 1600

South West Region
(Glos, former Avon, Wilts & Dorset)
Bridge House, Sion Place,
Clifton Down, Bristol BS8 4AS
Tel: 0117 973 9966

(Cornwall, Devon and Somerset)
Second Floor, 11–15 Dix's Field,
Exeter EX1 1QA
Tel: 01392 477150

Appendix 2: Other sources of information and useful reading

Organisations

Action for Market Towns
Promotes the vitality and viability of small towns.
PO Box 299, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1UU
Tel: 01284 755567 Fax: 01284 761816
Website: www.towns.org.uk
Email: info@towns.org.uk

Architectural Heritage Fund
Grants and loans to charities towards the repair of historic buildings.
Clareville House, 26-27 Oxendon Street,
London SW1Y 4EL
Tel: 020 7925 0199 Fax: 020 7930 0295
Website: ahfund.org.uk
Email: ahf@ahfund.org.uk

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP)
ACoRP is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to provide impartial support, advice and guidance to anyone who is involved with rural/semi-rural rail services.
Brian Jackson Centre, New North Parade,
Huddersfield HD1 5JP
Tel: 01484 549737 Fax: 01484 544234
Email: train@platform8.demon.co.uk

Association of Historic Towns and Villages (ASHTAV)
Concerned with enhancement of small historic towns and villages.
Ashwood, Broadhempston, Totnes, Devon TQ 6BD
Tel: 01803 812626 Helpdesk: 01926 400717
Website: www.ashtav.org

Awards for All
Lottery Grants for local groups.
For application pack tel: 0845 6002040

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
BTCV helps volunteers take hands-on action to improve the rural and urban environment.
36 St Mary's Street, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire OX10 0EU
Tel: 01491 839766 Fax: 01491 839766
Website: www.btcv.org
Email: information@btcv.org

Business in the Community (Consultancy Service)
Social and economic regeneration.
137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ
Tel: 0870 600 2482 Fax: 020 7253 1877
Website: www.bitc.org.uk
Email: information@bitc.org.uk

Carnegie UK Trust
Charitable grant-giving body.
Comely Park House, New Row, Dunfermline,
FIFE KY12 7EJ
Tel: 01383 721445 Fax: 01383 620682
Website: www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

Charity Commission
Government department which aims to help charities use their resources more effectively and to provide advice.
Harmsworth House, 13-15 Bouverie Street,
London EC4Y 8DP
Tel: 0870 333 0123 Fax: 020 7674 2300
Website: www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Common Ground (Information and Publications)
Links people and place by focusing on locality.
Gold Hill House, 21 High Street, Shaftesbury,
Dorset SP7 8JE
Tel: 01747 850820 Fax: 01747 850821
Website: www.comonground.org.uk

Clients Advisory Service
(part of Royal Institute of British Architects RIBA)
66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD
Tel: 020 7307 3700 Fax: 020 7436 9112
Website: www.architecture.com
Email: cas@inst.riba.org

Community Development Foundation
Provides support for community initiatives and promotes best practice.
60 Highbury Grove, London N5 2AG
Tel: 020 7226 5375 Website: www.cdf.org.uk

Community Fund
(previously National Lottery Charities Board)
Distributes grants to charities.
St Vincent House, 16 Suffolk Street,
London SW1Y 4NL
Tel: 020 7747 5300
Website: www.community-fund.org.uk

Community Matters (Advisory service)
National umbrella body for multi-purpose volunteer-led community organisations.
Head Office, 8/9 Upper Street, London N1 0PQ
Tel: 020 7837 7887
Website: www.communitymatters.org.uk
Email: informationandadvice@org.uk

Community Transport Association
CTA operates a free advice and information service giving detailed answers to legal, technical, developmental and other questions.
Highbank, Halton Street, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 2NY
Tel: 0161 366 6685 Advice Line: 0161 367 8780
Fax: 0161 351 7221
Website: www.communitytransport.com
Email: ctauk@communitytransport.com

Council for the Protection of Rural England
CPRE is a campaign group for the protection of the English countryside.
CPRE, 128 Southwark Street, LONDON SE1 0SW
Tel: 020 7981 2800 Fax: 020 7981 2899
Website: www.cpre.org.uk

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Environment Action Fund EAF - National Awards:
c/o DEFRA, 6/G9 Ashdown House,
123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE
Tel: 020 7238 6000 Fax: 020 7944 6559
Website: www.defra.gov.uk

EAF (Regional Grants - advice)
Civic Trust, The View, 6th Floor,
Gostins Building, 32-36
Hanover Street, Liverpool L1 4LN
Tel: 0151 709 1969 Fax: 0151 7092022
Website: www.civictrust.org.uk
Email: all@civictrust.local.net

Development Trusts Association (DTA)
(Advisory Service)
To help and support creation of new development trusts.
20 Conduit Place, London W2 1HZ
Tel: 0845 4588 336
Website: dta.org.uk

EAGA Partnership
Grants for energy efficiency measures.
2nd Floor, Eldon Court, Eldon Square,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7HA
Tel: 0191 230 1830 Fax: 0191 230 1823
Website: www.eaga.co.uk
Email: enquiry@eaga.co.uk

English Heritage
Responsible for protecting historic buildings, landscapes and archaeological sites.
23 Saville Row, London W1X 2ET
Tel: 020 7973 3000 Fax: 020 7973 3001
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Nature
Government Agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and natural features throughout England.
Northminster House, Northminster Road
Peterborough PE1 1UA
Tel: 01733 455000 Fax: 01733 568834
Website: www.english-nature.org.uk
Email: enquiries@english-nature.org.uk

Entrust
Sole regulator of the landfill Tax Credit Scheme.
Suite 2, 5th Floor, ACRE House, 2 Town Square, Sale, Manchester M33 7WZ
Tel: 0161 972 0044
Website: www.entrust.org.uk

Foodlink (East Anglia Foodlink)
- a not-for-profit co-operative representing all the constituents in the sustainable food chain.
49a High Street, Watton, Norfolk, IP25 6AB
Tel: (Clive and Rosemary) 01953 889 200
Tel: (Tully) 0845 3303 965

Friends of the Earth
26-28 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JQ
Tel: 020 7490 1555

The Foundation for Sport and the Arts
Grant-giving body funded by Littlewoods and Vernons.
PO Box 20, Liverpool L13 1HB
Tel: 0151 259 5505 Fax: 0151 230 0664

Funder Finder
Develops and distributes software to help individuals and not-for- profit organisations in the UK to identify charitable trusts that may provide funding.
65 Raglan Road, Leeds LS2 9DZ
Tel: 0113 243 3008
Website: www.funderfinder.org.uk

Groundwork UK
A leading environmental regeneration charity.
85/87 Cornwall Street, Birmingham B3 3BY
Tel: 0121 236 8565 Fax: 0121 236 7356
Website: www.groundwork.org.uk
Email: info@groundwork.org.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund
Distributes lottery money for heritage projects.
7 Holbein Place, London SW1W 8NR
Tel: 0207 591 6000

Inforurale and Ruralnet
An online, relationship-based peer support network.
Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2RR
Tel: 01203 690691
Website: www.ruralnet.org.uk
Email: info@ruralnet.org.uk

Lloyds TSB Foundation
Grants for registered charities for social and community needs,education and training.
PO Box 140, St Mary's Court, 20 St Mary at Hill, London EC3R 8NA
Tel: 020 7204 5276
Website: www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk

National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)
NACVS supports its members by providing information, advice,training and a range of other services.
3rd Floor Arundel Court, 177 Arundel Street, Sheffield S1 2NU
Tel: 0114 2786636
Website: www.nacvs.org.uk

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
Provides information and advice to voluntary organisations.
Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL
Tel: 020 7713 6161 Fax: 020 7713 6300
Website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
Email: ncvo@ncvo-vol.org.uk

The National Trust
Owns and manages much countryside and coast, as well as historic buildings.
36 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW3 1LQ
Tel: 020 7222 9251
Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

National Youth Agency
Supporting and improving work with young people.
17-23 Albion Street, Leicester, LE1 6GD
Tel: 0116 285 3700
Website: www.nya.org.uk
Email: nya@nya.org.uk3

New Opportunities Fund
Lottery distributor created to award grants to health, education and environment projects throughout the UK.
Heron House, 322 High Holborn,
London WC1V 7PW
Tel: 020 7211 1800 Info line: 0845 0000 121
Fax: 020 7211 1750/1/2/3/4
Website: www.nof.org.uk
Email: general.enquiries@nof.org.uk

Open Spaces Society
This society exists to protect common land and public rights of way.
25A Bell Street, Henley-on -Thames,
Oxfordshire RG9 2BA
Tel: 01491 573535 Fax: 01491 573051
Website: www.oss.org.uk
Email: hq@oss.org.uk

Planning Aid (Royal Town and Country Planning Institute)
26 Portland Place, London W1N 4BE
Tel: 020 7636 9107

ProHelp
ProHelp (under the Business in the Community umbrella) is a mechanism whereby voluntary and community groups in need of professional expertise are matched up with a professional firm willing to give advice free of charge.
BITC, 165 Whiteladies Road, Bristol BS8 2RN
Tel: 0117 923 8750

Ramblers Association
Aims to promote rambling, protect rights of way, campaign for access to country and defend the beauty of the countryside.
2nd floor, Camelford House,
87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW
Tel: 020 7339 8500
Website: www.ramblers.org.uk

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RSPB runs 150 nature reserves in the UK.
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL
Tel: 01767 680551
Website: www.rspb.org.uk

Shell Better Britain Campaign
Enabling effective action for community based sustainable development by providing grants, information and building a network of groups sharing experience and good practice.
King Edward House,135A New Street,
Birmingham B2 4QJ
Tel: 0121 248 5900 Fax: 0121 248 5901
Website: www.sbbc.co.uk Email: info@sbbc.co.uk

Sport England
Aims to lead the development of sport in England by influencing and serving the public, commercial and voluntary sectors. Also distributes lottery grants for sport.
16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0QP
Tel: 020 7273 1500 Fax: 020 7383 5740
Website: www.sportengland.org.uk

SUSTRANS (Sustainable Transport)
A charity that works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic.
35 King Street, Bristol BS1 4DZ
Tel: 0117 926 8893 Fax: 0117 929 4173
Website: www.sustrans.org.uk
Email: info@sustrans.org.uk

Transport 2000 (Advisory Service)
Promotes and encourages sustainable transport.
12-18 Hoxton Street, London N1 6NG
Tel: 020 7613 0743 Fax: 020 7613 5280

The Tree Council (UK)
Promotes the planting and conservation of trees and woods; disseminates knowledge; acts as a forum for relevant organisations.
51 Catherine Place, London SW1E 6DY
Tel: 020 7828 9928 Fax: 020 7828 9060
Website: www.treecouncil.org.uk

Village Retail Services Association (ViRSA)
Works with small rural communities to assist them to keep or revive their retail facilities especially the shop and post office.
The Little Keep, Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1SQ
Tel: 01305 259383 Fax: 01305 259384
Website: www.virsa.org
Email: virsa@ruralnet.org.uk

The Wildlife Trusts
The Wildlife Trust campaign for the protection of wildlife and habitats.
The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Notts. NG24 1WT
Tel: 01636 677711 Fax: 01636 670001
Website: www.wildlifetrusts.org
Email: enquiries@wildlife-trusts.kix.uk

The Woodland Trust
The UK's leading charity dedicated solely to the protection of our native woodland heritage.
Autumn Park, Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL
Tel: 01476 581111 Fax: 01476 590808
Website: www.woodland-trust.org.uk
Email: enquiries@woodland-trust.org.uk

Publications

Publications that can introduce you to more techniques and methods:

Knowing and Surveying Your Community
An information sheet produced by the Shell Better Britain Campaign providing useful tips on different methods and how to chose the method that suits your parish.
Shell Better Britain Campaign,
King Edward House, 135a New Street
Birmingham B2 4QJ
Tel: 0121 248 5900
Website: www.sbbc.co.uk

Community Work Skills Manual
A large guide that can be purchased from the Association of Community Workers. It contains a selection of best practice, ideas and techniques written by community workers for people who are active in their communities, including a section called "Getting to know a community".
Association of Community Workers,
Stephenson Building, Elswick Road,
Newcastle, NE4 6SQ
Tel: 0191 272 4341

The Community Planning Handbook by Nick Wates
A comprehensive how-to-do-it handbook on public involvement in planning and design which features best practice information on effective methods. A vital reference for practitioners, policy makers and students throughout the world. Tips, checklists and sample documents help readers to get started quickly, learn from others' experience and to select the approach best suited to their situation.
Earthscan Publications,
120 Pentonville Road, London, N1 1JN
Tel: 01903 828 800 (Littlehampton Book Services)

People Make the Difference: Good practice for involving residents in rural regeneration
A good practice guide containing suggestions of how to achieve success in rural regeneration. Section III, entitled "Involving residents - best practice inaction ", describes methods with case study examples, that you could use to collect information for your Parish Plan.
People make a difference(CAX 43)
Countryside Agency Publications,
PO Box 125, Wetherby,
West Yorkshire, LS23 7EP
Tel: 0870 120 6466
Website:www.countryside.gov.uk

Hear by right: setting standards for the active involvement of young people in democracy
A guide to good practice in working with young people, produced by the Local Government Association in partnership with The National Youth Agency.
Local Government House, Smith Square,
London SW1P 3HZ
Tel: 020 7664 3000
E-mail: info@lga.gov.uk
Website: www.lga.gov.uk

Countryside Character
Produced by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Countryside Character
Produced by the CPRE.

Web sources

The New Economics Foundation has produced a useful booklet which tells you more about a range of methods for involving your community in decision making: Participation works! 21 techniques for participation in the 21st century. This is currently out of print, but canbe downloaded from www.neweconomics.org

Quality of life capital is a tool for maximising environmental, social and economic benefits as part of any land use planning or management. It looks at the benefits that areas or features provide for human wellbeing and provides a systematic and transparent evaluation framework. This internet website includes a number of participative techniques and practical hints and tips about how they areorganized. Details on www.qualityoflifecapital.org.uk

The Planning Portal is a new website which offers everyone a chance to find out about how change in the environment of England and Wales is managed and the part we can all play in a brighter future for our countryside, villages, towns and cities.
The portal is for use by everyone. It avoids technical language wherever possible. Major parts of it will inform the general public and other sections will be especially useful to people with a professional interest in need of detailed information and university students.
Website: www.planningportal.gov.uk

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University of Gloucester
Parish Clerks and Councillors
ACRE
Planning Aid
Countryside & Community Research Unit
The Children's Society
National Youth Agency
Community Development Foundation
Vision 21, Gloucestershire
County Association of Local Councils

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