

You've finished your Community Plan, what next? After celebrating the launch, it's time to start implementing those actions you've worked so hard to identify.

Where to start

Send the document to everyone that can help you achieve your actions. Take advice from ACT and your district and county council to find out who you need to send it to in the various Planning, Highways, Community Transport, Environment departments. It's better if you include a covering letter that draws the attention of the addressee to the section of the plan that requires their support, rather than sending the same generic letter to everyone.

Getting Help

Some Local Authorities have a dedicated officer to help you implement your plan, such as the Lake District National Park Authority. Use them! Other Authorities have an agreed "protocol" that outlines how they will deal with your plan and provide you with support – speak to ACT for more details on those areas that have agreed protocols or are developing them.

Use existing support. For example, ACT run Implementation Workshops and Cumbria County Council can set up Neighbourhood Forum meetings to address local issues, so get help in bringing together the Local Authorities and agencies to look at your plan.

Come to ACT Networking meetings, Cumbria Association of Local Councils meetings and Neighbourhood Forums. Speak to other parishes; identify which parishes have similar issues – and how have they dealt with them. ACT and other bodies can usually provide advice, but it is always worth learning from other groups' experience to find short-cuts and avoid pitfalls.

Too much to do and too little time?

Some Action Plans can require a full-time team to implement and Parish Councils are not always set up to meet those demands. If there is a clear need to make things happen, it is easier to get voluntary help. Think about applying for funding to support the implementation (contact ACT for guidance on this). There is more likelihood of success if you collaborate with neighbouring parishes.

Benefits of collaboration

You are unlikely to be the only community facing a particular problem! For example; are your neighbours on the same bus route or will the closure of the local shop affect all those within a ten mile radius? If so, think about bringing communities to work together as a cluster. Even if neighbouring communities don't have plans that highlight the same needs, they are still likely to have the same concerns and there will be a parish council or community group in place that can work with you and provide mutual support.

Making it real

Allow time to move things forward with your Parish Council or the responsible group. Turn big actions into long term projects, with an identified group to follow them up. For example, if there are no local play facilities you could set a new group involving parents and other village representatives. This group could identify a site, budget costs, potential users (based on Community Plan information), and speak to ACT about resources and funding for the project

Communication

- Keep people informed so that people don't feel like nothing is happening.
- Use a website, newsletter, notice boards and the local press, to highlight the actions you're tackling, and how you're approaching them.

Keep Track

- Review your Action Plan regularly to keep track of what's been achieved
- Check to see if anything is missing, or if an action is no longer relevant.
- Review dates and report on progress.

Communicate again!

- There is help out there to help you implement your Action Plan, continue to build on relationships with officers and agencies started earlier in the process
- Keep them informed on progress as well as when you need support.

Collaboration

- Do your neighbours have the same problems as you?
- Neighbouring parishes can support each other
- Stay close to other groups in your community

Community Planning Successes:

Below is a selection of some of the achievements resulting from the implementation of Community Plans (also known as 'Parish Plans') over the years:

Caldbeck (2005)

- Housing Needs Survey
- Parish Website: www.caldbeck.org.uk
- Undergrounding of telephone cables
- Formation of Red Squirrel Conservation Group

Dalston (2005)

- Annual festival
- New Community Recreation Centre
- Improved access to Dalston Station

Dentdale (2008)

- Established new allotments
- Raised money to refurbish children's playground
- Successful community litter-picking group

Howgate Cluster Plan - (Lowca, Moresby, Parton) (2003)

- Major improvements to the Back Lanes in Moresby
- Field path opened at Church Brow
- Successful Youth Club in Parton

Irthington - (Brampton & Area cluster Plan) (2005)

- New 30mph speed limit through Newby West
- Secured funding to upgrade stiles to kissing gates on public footpath and cover cost of promotional leaflet developed with the local school

St Bees (2006)

- Refurbishment of children's play equipment
- Working with Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnership, CCTV camera installed to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Parish Council negotiated fee with Copeland District Council to maintain local car park as a free service
- Water supply provided to allotments
- Community Groups' information available on St Bees website: www.stbees.org.uk

Wetheral (2005)

- Youth Shelter in Cotehill
- 40mph signs on A69 in Warwick-on-Eden and purchase of Speed Indicator Device for key areas in the Parish
- Village Hall Development Officer funded to assist halls with becoming more sustainable
- Parish Council website: www.wetheralparishcouncil.org.uk
- Environmental interpretation panels installed along the river bank in Wetheral

Witherslack (including Mealthop & Ulpha) (2004)

- Successful Youth Group
- New Community Land Trust set up - purchased local pub from large chain and sold lease to local operator
- Community Shop Cooperative
- Quarterly Newsletter and Community Website: www.witherslack.org

Useful websites

www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

www.acre.org.uk

www.thirdsectorcumbria.org.uk

More information

ACT Development Officers can offer further support and advice. A range of additional Guidance Sheets are also available on our website.

For a list of strategic contacts in the various authorities, contact ACT.

Cumbria CVS can help with funding information; for more details visit the Third Sector Cumbria website (see Useful Websites)

For more information please contact us at Action with Communities in Cumbria on Tel: 01768 840827 or visit our website: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

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