

Slide 1: Front Cover

Welcome to Annual Review of ACTion with Communities in Cumbria for 2019-20.

I am Lorraine Smyth, the Chief Executive of ACT, and I will be taking you through this short presentation on behalf of my dedicated trustees and excellent staff team.

Slide 2: Welcome

We are a company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity, Trading as ACTion with Communities in Cumbria known as ACT for short

Slide 3: ACT's Mission

We have been working for over 70 years, supporting communities to;

- Plan for their future with over 50 groups exploring and developing Community, Neighbourhood and Resilience plans each year.
- Supporting over 200 projects each year to develop their ideas to meet community need.
- Very few activities happen without some partnership working and we provide a link and interpretation where needed to assist communities in local and strategic situations.
- And, we share experience, encourage good practice and advocate for change with and for the people we work with.

Slide 4: The year in numbers

We provide free support to every enquiry, assisting communities to reach the best support possible. at both local and national level.

I will allow these figures to speak for themselves.

2nd build

As you can see, communities make full use of our services.

Our core purpose is championing rural and community issues.

Slide 5: Influencing and changing policy

Major projects allow for delivery in communities while also creating evidence and opportunities for change. Rebuilding Together was a significant partnership with Cumbria CVS and Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) Cumbria has been challenged by extreme weather events and major incidents over the last few years. Communities have a significant role to play in planning, response and recovery activities.

2nd build

As a partnership we worked with Individuals, Households, Communities, Organisations and Systems, to build resilience. This work has proved its value in the Covid 19 pandemic.

Resilience work is now a part of our support programme of planning for the future.

Slide 6: Planning for the future

Frequently, this work supports communities with very local plans, however we also assist wider area and strategic planning exercises with community engagement, involvement and our experience. Our role in this process was about assisting the community voice to be heard on the 13 specific qualities of the area.

2nd Build

Here is Katie with the 'washing line' of special qualities that we asked people to rank to inform the development of this 5 year statutory plan

3rd Build

The Parishes meeting challenged misconceptions about the role of the AONB and built better working relationships for the future. We also had a historic interpreter showing the local area's Scandinavian roots and activities at one of our public consultation events.

Slide 7: Supporting Project development

We work with over 200 projects each year, many of which are very local and specific to a rural community. This year we also developed a Community Led Housing Hub for Cumbria.

This initiative is part of a national network of local advice bodies, which builds relationships with experts in this field who have experience of working with communities, to help local housing be community owned and appropriate for the local area. We have worked at grass roots and strategic levels to support activity which will improve understanding and eventually lead to more local and sustainable homes.

2nd Build

Here is Fran our Housing Hub Manager, with Jo Lavis the national ACRE Rural Housing Advisor and Phil Roberts, who is working to provide a locally owned and managed housing solution for young people in Keswick, at the launch of the CLH hub in Glenridding. ACT's commitment to a housing policy will drive this work.

3rd Build

You can see the full policy on our new dedicated website, which will be a long term resources for communities who want to address the enduring issue of local affordable housing in Cumbria and Lancaster

Slide 8: Working with others

There are over three hundred community buildings in Cumbria

We support management committees to run their halls with: robust governance; sound finances; clear business planning; community engagement; awareness of their local context; and demonstrating that they meet local community need with compelling evidence

Building longer term sustainability is an ongoing challenge for these community assets that we will continue supporting communities to address

Our events cover issues such as Insurance, Neighbourliness, inclusive buildings, funding and national news, as an example, we ran a workshop on how to make community buildings Dementia friendly.

2nd Build

Some of ACT's best work is when we facilitate people to help each other, as in the Village Halls Network on Facebook , which to date has over 200 members

3rd Build

Here is Hellen at the Houses of Parliament with Simon, the Barrow MP, Tom from the Watson Institute in Carlisle, David from Kirkby in Furness and Fran from Hunsonby, representing Cumbria at the launch of ACRE's Village Hall week and funding scheme, which brought £266,000 into Cumbria.

4th Build

And Hellen - our Community Buildings expert, with the Hunsonby Team, receiving their `hallmark award in front of their village hall which as you can see, was being renovated at the time!

Slide 9: ACT Staff

Under normal circumstances the committed staff team work from our offices in Penrith, although at the moment of course, we are all working from home.

2nd Build

When we're in the office, Dani's dog, Bailey, helps us, and many of our visitors enjoy our work environment.

Slide 10: Looking Ahead

Our work is about local community support and strategic influencing. The issues we work on are those that communities raise with us, and these have changed little over the years

Community buildings have never been more needed. Even though many of them are closed due to the pandemic, they are still providing a focal point for local communities

2nd Build

We make every effort to support people to make a difference locally, and they are kind enough to give us good feedback on our services.

We work with many organisations, including Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria Social Enterprise partnership, Local authorities and national partners, to make life better for rural Cumbrians and communities. In the coming year this will be more challenging than ever.

In March we entered a new IT relationship with the David Allen Company, just in time for lockdown. Their support has been invaluable with the necessary remote and homeworking arrangements, which are going remarkably smoothly.

Slide 11: Financial Report

No annual review would be complete without a view of the finances so here they are. Our audited accounts are available from the office and of course are also with the Charity Commission.

This has been a successful year with a small surplus.

2nd Build

We have some secure core funding and Alan keeps us focussed on efficient financial management, while ensuring we use resources effectively to meet our purposes.

Slide 12: Funders

We are grateful to both local and national funders who enable us to assist communities to meet local needs and aspirations.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Carlisle City Council who provided our IT support for many years.

2nd Build

And particular thanks to South Lakeland District Council who have a five year service level agreement with us, which helps ACT to plan for the future.

Slide 13: Support ACT

We have over 1,400 supporters, please join us - its free and you can have one of these excellent windows stickers!

More seriously, it also helps us to evidence need to funders so that we can keep working with Cumbrian communities for years to come.

Slide 14: Back Page

That's all for this year's annual review, thanks for watching! And if you like what you have seen, please tell others and visit our website for lots more information, resources and examples of the excellent work communities achieve.