



ACTion
with communities
in cumbria

Annual Review 2012/13



ACTion with communities in cumbria champions community and rural issues



ACT champions community and rural issues

ACT'S work focuses on helping people and communities achieve their aspirations. We are particularly active in rural areas among communities affected by disadvantage whether this be economic, social, or physical. We provide practical advice and support and deliver training. Through a variety of partnerships we are also able to represent the interests of communities locally, regionally and nationally, bridging between local people and the agencies and authorities that impact on their daily lives. ACT helps to raise awareness of local needs and to improve the relevance and responsiveness of services.

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Registered in England as Voluntary Action Cumbria

Charity Number 1080875

Company No 3957858

Cover photo: David Harrison, Aira Point, Ullswater. Inset Photos L-R: Orton & Tebay Walks & Cycling Guide launch, Emergency Planning Event, Business & Learning Futures in Eden event (photo: John Burrows), Community Health & Wellbeing Programme launch.

Visit our website at: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk



Contents

ACT's Mission	1
Chair's Introduction	2
ACT Champions Community and Rural Issues	3
ACT supports communities to Plan for their Future	5
ACT supports communities to Develop their Projects	7
ACT supports communities to Work with Others	9
ACT supports communities to Influence and Change Policy	11
Resources for Communities	13
ACT Staff	14
ACT Trustees	15
Looking Ahead	16
Finance Report	17

Chair's Introduction

In an era of great challenges for society it is worthwhile revisiting what it is that we at ACT really value. The four organisational values that underpin ACT's work are:

- Excellence and professionalism
- Impartiality and integrity
- Community action and inclusivity
- Environmental responsibility

These values inform the way in which ACT operates, ensuring our services are efficient, meet required standards and assist local communities to develop. Throughout this report you will see how we put these into practice. This is what makes ACT a principled and effective partner, working for the future of sustainable communities in Cumbria.

I want to take this opportunity to celebrate the support of our Patron James Cropper who has retired this year. He has been our Patron for over twenty years and we thank him for his long term support and wish him a long and happy retirement. Building on James's past support, we are exploring how the role of Patron can support our organisation in the future.

I hope you find this report informative and like me, take heart from and celebrate the many achievements of Cumbrian communities.

Des O'Halloran - ACT Chairperson



ACT Champions Community and Rural Issues:



Martin Telford, Citizens Advice Allerdale, speaking at a Cumbria Rural Forum to discuss Welfare Reform.

Cumbria Rural Forum

Is the Forum for discussing rural issues, sharing best practice and taking action in Cumbria. The Forum is facilitated by ACT and managed by representatives of the Forum membership. Chairperson Ian Soane says "The Forum is successful due to the high quality and range of presenters, and good participation of members. This year focussed on a range of issues affecting those in poverty in rural areas."

Impact of Welfare Reform upon Financial Inclusion

A joint event with the Cumbria Financial Inclusion Forum, supported by Derwent and Solway Housing, this provided an opportunity for those working in the area of welfare to share their concerns about how welfare benefit changes may affect vulnerable people across Cumbria. 40% of income deprived people, housing and council tax benefit claimants, social housing tenants and incapacity benefit claimants in Cumbria live in rural communities.

Participants concluded that the overall effect of the changes could be to undermine the sustainability of rural services and facilities, making it yet more difficult to maintain balanced or socially sustainable rural communities. This issue will be revisited in 2014.

How Rural Communities Address Energy Costs

This event focused on what individuals can do to save money in the face of rising fuel costs, and encourage discussion of the issue in their community. Rising fuel costs is of particular concern to rural residents because of their greater reliance on expensive, off-mains fuels.

From the presentations and workshops delegates recorded many discussion points and advice to take back to their communities:

- Conserve energy first, using simple steps, insulation and draught proofing, making better use of heating controls and turn off stand-by appliances.
- 500 jobs would be created if Cumbria's woodland were to be properly managed.
- There is scope to promote energy efficiency and the bulk purchasing of wood and oil at community level.
- Over 80% of homes have never switched energy supplier. In many cases switching will save money.

Rural Briefings of all events are on the ACT website.



David Prentice & Lorraine Smyth launch 'Taking the Brrr out of Cumbria',
Photo: Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency



November 2009 Flooding in Keswick, Photo: Mike Gormley

Emergency Planning

The Cumbrian floods of 2009 were, for many individuals and communities, a life changing event. No longer could such extreme events be pigeonholed as 'rare' and only happening to somebody else. One important response was the development of a Community Emergency Planning toolkit by ACT and partners which asks the question: 'How would my community survive the first 48 hours of a serious emergency?' and provides a method that any community can follow to help them prepare for emergencies.

The Ten Step Community Emergency Plan distills current Cabinet Office and Cumbria County Council guidance. We are indebted to the work of the Keswick Flood Action Group, and the field-testing of the resource by Melbreak Communities (Lorton, Blindbothel, Loweswater and Buttermere). Throughout, the work was supported by the newly formed Community Resilience sub group linked to the Cumbria Resilience Forum, and co-chaired by ACT.

The Ten Step Community Emergency Plan was launched at a 'Power for Change' conference in May 2012 and is available on the ACT and County Council websites.

Community Planning

Assisting communities to make the localism agenda real, ACT has continued to support them in producing Community Led Plans (CLPs). This is a step by step process that can empower communities to take action to improve their areas. ACT offers a range of services to those developing CLPs including guidance sheets and other resources, workshops, grant funds and advice by phone and email.

In the past year we have focused on reviewing and improving CLP resources and have obtained funding from Eden and South Lakeland district councils to establish CLP grant funds in those districts. We have also delivered training to councillors in Eden and South Lakeland.

A number of communities in Cumbria are producing Neighbourhood Plans, which focus on land use planning, and others are exploring whether this is the right option for them. ACT has been helping communities to understand the difference between Neighbourhood Plans and Community Led Plans when making the decision to start either type of Plan. There are over 100 Cumbrian CLPs, all available on our website.



Barton Community Led Plan Consultation at Parkin Memorial Hall
Photo: Cyril Wilson.

ACT Supports Communities to Develop their Projects



Tebay & Orton Tourism Group and ACT's Annie Hamilton-Gibney research local walks.

Tebay & Orton Local Distinctiveness

This three year project, funded by the Rural Development Programme for England and coordinated by ACT has now come to an end. The aims of the project were to provide training and facilitate events for the communities of Tebay and Orton Parishes, to raise awareness of, and pride in, the cultural heritage of the area.

Project Achievements:

- Boost to local pride and knowledge.
- Local tourism businesses supported and strengthened through networking opportunities and the production of marketing materials.
- Supported the Friends of Tebay Church group to develop a new community facility (The Hub) in the church vestry, and a church heritage guide.
- Development of the Lunesdale Archaeology Society; training for members; heritage days with archaeological digs at the Roman Fort, Low Borrowbridge Farm; and education materials for Tebay Primary School.
- Written and video case studies and guidance sheets, also available on the ACT website.

Grants and Project Support

Health and Wellbeing Programme

This year saw the start of the Community Health and Wellbeing programme, covering Eden and the Keswick area. It provides support for community groups to develop sustainable projects which improve health and wellbeing in their areas. ACT provides support to the groups to develop and monitor their projects and apply for a grant fund administered by Cumbria Community Foundation. This project is funded by Cumbria County Council Adult Social Care and Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group.

BASIS

ACT has supported community groups and village hall committees to improve their governance by understanding and updating their governing documents. Business planning advice has supported communities to develop their projects, and groups have also been given practical advice and support to obtain funding. Delegates from village hall committees attended training to focus on trustee roles and responsibilities and share best practice on running a community building effectively.



Tirril and Sockbridge Community Area received funding to develop the communal area for all ages. Photo TASCA



Car parking challenges in Wasdale, Photo: National Trust

Whole Valley Planning

Whole Valley Planning, was initiated by ACT and partners in Borrowdale following the devastating floods of 2009. Another community-based valley planning initiative, prompted by extreme visitor management and car parking challenges, began in Wasdale in 2012. Here, the approach was similar to Borrowdale, with ACT mediating community and agency planning. In Wasdale, a development plan for the valley was commissioned which offers opportunities for collaborative working for the next 5 – 10 years.

Ullswater was selected to be a full pilot for this approach in 2012. The first gathering took place in February 2013, attended by 82 residents and agency support officers. Eight key areas of work were identified including: Management of the Environment – maintaining the balance; Water – A common-sense approach; Employment & Economy – employment-led sustainable development; and Heritage – Ullswater heritage is special and needs to be protected, developed where appropriate, and communicated more widely.

Our partner the Lake District National Park is continuing this work with the local communities in these areas.

Credit Unions – supporting rural communities with financial accessibility

Credit Unions are locally managed by and for their members. They provide secure savings, affordable loans and free life insurance. To their members they offer a safe place to save, and an affordable place to borrow.

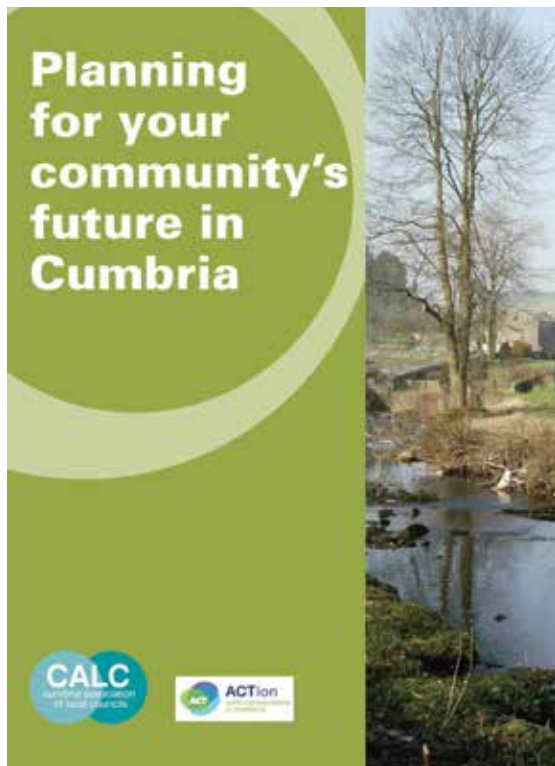
ACT ran a Seminar with the Cumbria Rural Forum Business Group, the six Credit Unions and two study groups serving the people of Cumbria. The Seminar looked at good practice in reaching rural residents, including increased collaboration with others working in rural areas and widening the availability of online services.

Credit Unions are promoting their services through Schools, Churches Together in Cumbria, MP's and local councillors. Local word of mouth is also very important. Cumbria Rural Forum and ACT Members and Supporters are encouraged to promote Credit Union services in their community. For more information visit the ACT website or: www.cumbria.gov.uk/community/residents/credit_unions.asp



Credit Unions in Cumbria

Visit our website at: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk



Neighbourhood Planning guidance produced by ACT and Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC).

Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act 2011 introduced statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England. The Act enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and is intended to give local people more of a say in the development of their community.

In order to reduce confusion in communities about Neighbourhood Planning, ACT produced guidance, in partnership with CALC, setting out the differences between Neighbourhood Planning and Community Led Planning and how the two can fit together.

It also provides a step by step guide to developing a Neighbourhood Plan. 'Planning for your community's future in Cumbria' is available on the ACT website.

The guidance has been endorsed and welcomed by planning authorities across Cumbria and forms part of ACT's work with the Lake District National Park Partnership where ACT and CALC lead on the Vibrant Communities strand of the Partnership Plan.

Community Transport Roadshow

ACT and the Cumbria Community Transport Forum (CCTF) highlighted a range of Cumbrian Community Transport solutions at this national Community Transport event in Carlisle. Communities were encouraged to build on existing schemes such as these to address rural transport issues:

- Cumbria County Council – Voluntary Car Schemes, Rural Wheels, and new minibuses programmes in each district.
- Cumbria Community Transport Project – countywide brokerage scheme.
- Fellrunner Buses – 15 years service in Eden.
- The Northern Fells Minibus – running alongside other community support services.

A number of challenges were also identified such as: recruiting younger people, both as volunteers and passengers; the technical and legal challenges for volunteers involved in transport; reduced funding; and the need for more publicity for existing schemes.

ACT will continue to work with CCTF, supporting them to influence and deliver community transport in Cumbria. More information is available on the ACT website.



Northern Fells Group Minibus, Photo Northern Fells Group.

Resources for Communities



Various ACT resources

ACT is continually looking at ways of delivering effective support to communities. Over the years we have developed a wide range of resources including Guidance Sheets, Toolkits, Workbooks, and both written and video Case Studies, to share best practice and useful information. These cover a range of subjects including:

- Community Led Planning, Neighbourhood Planning Emergency Planning etc.
- Effectively running a community building.
- Getting started, setting up a new group, choosing a structure and other governance issues.
- Community Exchanges, Local Distinctiveness projects, Community Energy projects etc.

Through our national umbrella body, Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), ACT also has access to a wide range of additional resources, including detailed Village Halls Information Sheets. We also signpost to specialist advice from other organisations such as governance information and model documents from the Charity Commission.

ACT Staff



ACT employs a mix of Development Officers, Project Officers and Support Staff to deliver our work.

During this year we said farewell to Jeff Downham, Carl Glynn, and Annie Hamilton Gibney. We wish them all the best for the future. We also welcomed Alice Sandells, our new Business Administrative Apprentice, who joined us in January 2013.

Photo: ACT staff at our offices at Redhills, near Penrith.

Back row L-R: Annie Hamilton-Gibney, Carl Glynn, Hellen Aitken, Claire Hudson, Jeff Downham, Dani Hudson.

Front row L-R: Julia Wilson, Lorraine Smyth, Alison Gerke, Claire Watters.
(Graham Reed, Terry McCormick, Alice Sandells were unavailable)

What communities say about us...

"We receive a lot of advice, ideas and information, which is of a great help in our isolated community"

"True community engagement, helping communities realise their true potential and strengths"

"Professional, experienced and down to earth staff who are always welcome in our communities"

"ACT brings communities, businesses and agencies together and is open to listening to all points of view."

"Our hall would not be what it is without ACT's help"

"ACT is a valued source of information"

Visit our website at: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

ACT Trustees



ACT is a membership organisation and a company limited by guarantee. ACT has a Management Board of no less than eight and up to twelve individuals, who are called trustees. They are elected annually at the ACT AGM usually in September.

Profiles of our Trustees and President are on the ACT website. The ACT Board would like to thank all our funders, members, supporters and staff for their support in 2012/13.

Photo: ACT Trustees at our 2012 AGM at Rockcliffe Village Hall.

Back row L-R: Morag Lloyd, Ian Soane, Des O'Halloran (Chairperson), Jolyon Dodgson (President), Euan Cartwright, Alan McVie.

Front row: Carl Bendelow, Lorraine Smyth (CEO), Liz Clegg. (Ron Munby was unavailable)

ACT's Funders in 2012/13

- AON
- Big Lottery
- CALOR
- Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group
- Cumbria Community Foundation
- Cumbria County Council
- Cumbria Fells & Dales – RDPE
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Eden District Council
- Lake District National Park Authority
- Natural England
- NWRCC
- South Lakeland District Council

Looking Ahead

ACT champions community and rural issues. We do this through: providing information to frame and affect how others do things with and for communities in Cumbria. ACT works strategically with partners; and locally, assisting communities to achieve their aspirations.

In this coming year we will be developing our services as follows:

- April 2013: Launch universal, free advice service. Any enquiry to ACT will receive a dedicated response, including referral if appropriate.
- July 2013: Launch new ACT Website. This will provide easier access to the large range of resources and examples of activities communities across Cumbria have undertaken.
- Sept 2013: Monthly rural engagement events, an opportunity for communities and agencies to

discuss community and rural issues, sharing best practice in how to address them.

- Autumn 2013: Launch – “State of Cumbria” Report. This will detail, with statistics, challenges and opportunities for Cumbrian rural communities.
- Ongoing: Social Enterprise support working with Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership and Wingspan Consulting. We can provide free support to community groups to improve their income opportunities and practice.

We also hope to affect the delivery of the Rural Growth Network, work with rural surgeries on maintaining services and promote the DEFRA Rural Proofing Guidelines.

We have a busy and challenging year ahead. Come and join us as a member or supporter!



Lorraine Smyth
ACT Chief Executive Officer



Visit our website at: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

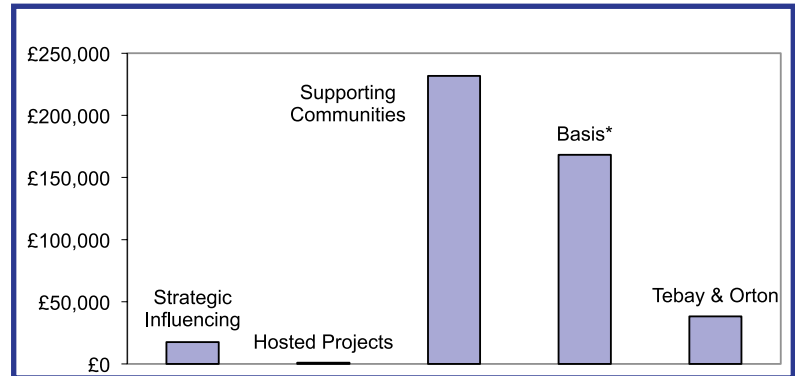
Finance Report

Against the backdrop of limited resources and uncertainties over funding, underpinned by the national economic recession, it has continued to be difficult to plan or develop services. The year has been very challenging and resulted in a small deficit of £7266 for the 2012/13 financial year. Trustees, managers and staff continue to work to establish robust plans for the future of the organisation and to provide it with a diverse income base that will support continued activity appropriate to the Charity's objects.

Project Delivery

The following chart is a representation of the types of delivery work undertaken by the organisation relative to the costs of the activity.

Strategic Influencing	£17,626
Hosted Projects	£917
Supporting Communities	£231,800
Basis*	£168,293
Tebay & Orton	£38,329
	£456,965



*Basis is a partnership project with Cumbria Youth Alliance and Young Cumbria £89,910 of the grant goes to these partners. £78,383 is used to manage the project, improve ACT's sustainability and provide a variety of advice to community groups on governance & sustainability.

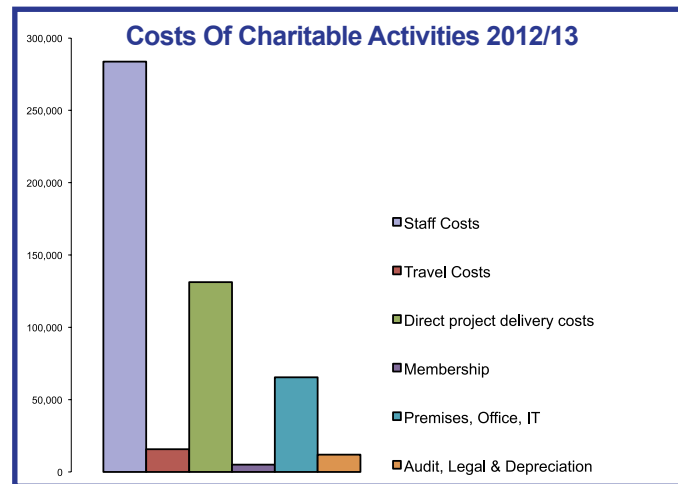
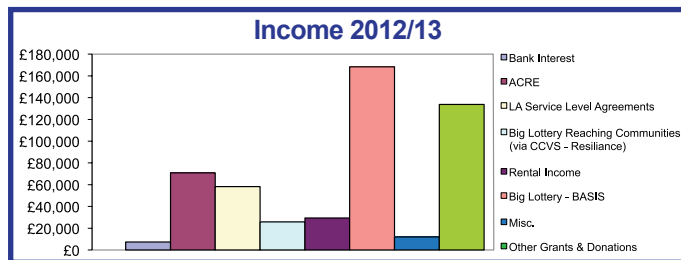
Finance Report

Income

	2012/13	2011/12
Bank interest	£7,384	£8,384
ACRE	£70,894	£81,023
LA Service Level Agreements	£58,250	£53,625
Big Lottery Reaching Communities (via CCVS - Resilience)	£25,844	£31,002
Rental Income	£29,423	£46,440
Big Lottery - BASIS	£168,293	£172,450
Misc.	£11,962	£9,583
Other Grants & Donations	£133,760	£143,572
	£505,810	£546,079

Costs Of Charitable Activities

	2012/13	2011/12
Staff Costs	£283,663	£300,067
Travel Costs	£15,752	£20,381
Direct project delivery costs	£131,175	£140,681
Membership	£5,095	£5,229
Premises, Office, IT	£65,431	£63,383
Audit, Legal & Depreciation	£11,960	£15,225
	£513,076	£544,966



If you have been inspired by this annual review then you can:

Visit our website to find out more about what we do and how we can help your community.

Follow us on Twitter: to receive regular news and information about community and rural issues.

Join us: by becoming a free ACT Supporter or paid ACT Member.

Become a Trustee: we are recruiting trustees with the enthusiasm and commitment to help us manage our work.

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