



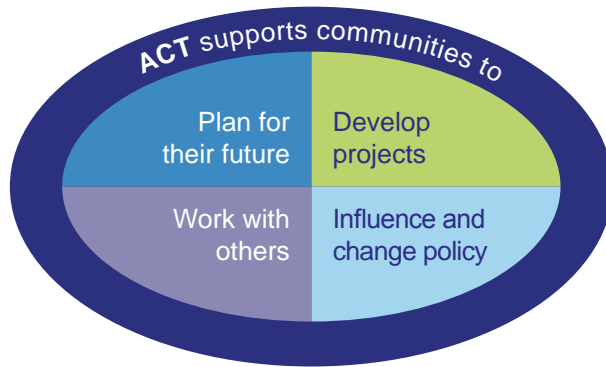
ACTion
with communities
in cumbria

Annual Review 2013/14



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: Derwentwater - Steve Carter. Inset Photos L-R: Big Energy Saving Week information at Nicholforest Village Hall, Bolton Exchange 5th birthday celebrations, Community Led Planning training at Calderbridge, Community Buildings Event in Penrith

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

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Chair's Introduction

Many thanks to the staff who left us this year, we were sorry to see them go and wish them all the best. ACT is operating at a more sustainable level as a consequence, together with investment from the BASIS project, and other changes our Chief Executive, Lorraine Smyth, has made to the organisation.

Our dedicated team continue to deliver community development and other activity such as Community Led Planning and community buildings support.

- ACT is now more visible in partnerships and communities and we are investing in working with others,
- ACT is focusing on sparse, rural and community need, using a targeted approach to deliver our support offer
- ACT is using a new evidence base to inform our work: The State of Rural Cumbria Report (pg 12)

The reduction in resources available for community work does not reflect demand on the ground, where the needs of Cumbrian communities are self-evident. The future is challenging but we are ready to face it with clarity of focus, determination and optimism.

Des O'Halloran - ACT Chairperson



ACT Champions Community and Rural Issues:

1

CONNECT with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



2

BE ACTIVE Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



3

TAKE NOTICE Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters.



4

KEEP LEARNING Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.



5

GIVE Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.



Evidence shows that building these actions into your daily life can add 7.5 years to your life!

The Five Ways to Wellbeing. ACT presented, with partners, on 'Keep Learning' at the Ageing Well Conference

State of Rural Cumbria Report

Published by ACT in December 2013, the report provides information on some of the complex challenges facing rural communities. We used the information to focus on the issue of Rural Disadvantage, in the spring 2014 edition of our ACT Gazette newsletter.

The report shows how the 52% of Cumbria's population who live in rural areas fare in terms of: access to, and distance from services; a breakdown of ages of population; economic and health factors affecting their wellbeing. The report helps ACT to target our work and policy makers to understand the potential impact of their initiatives.

Ageing Well Conference

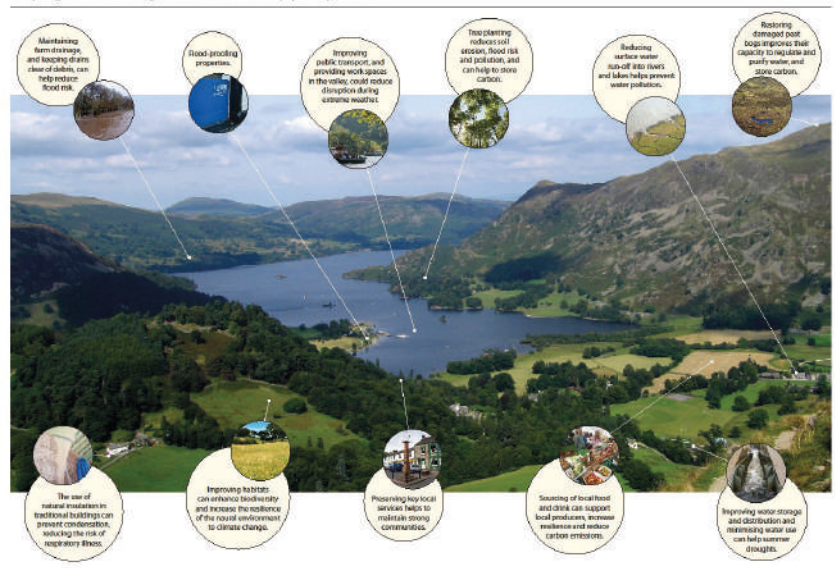
The Cumbria Leaders Board held a partnership event, in April, to address the health and wellbeing challenges of an ageing population in Cumbria. ACT presented on behalf of the Cumbria Community Learning Partnership, showing videos of adult learners in Copeland who participate in learning through the Workers Education Society. The learners encouraged others in advanced years to discover more about 'everything' and share their knowledge.

Climate Change Model

This project was delivered with the Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) and members of the community in the Ullswater Valley. It produced a model that informed Defra's approach to climate change and helped the community to prioritise environmental issues it wanted to address as part of the Ullswater Valley Planning pilot. The LDNPP and the community will be working together to deliver against the issues identified.

Full guidance available here: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/ResourcesPublications/ResearchOtherPublications

Adapting to climate change in the Ullswater Valley: priority actions



Rural Proofing Cumbria County Council's (CCC) Budget Proposals

This was undertaken by the Cumbria Rural Forum Business Group, using the Defra Rural Proofing Toolkit. The results were used by CCC in their equality impact assessment of the budget proposals. This work provided a uniquely rural and community focus to inform the Council's policy development. Defra's Toolkit was useful in providing a framework for considering a range of issues in the public policy context. The toolkit was developed with support from the Rural Community Council Network.

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

ACT Supports Communities to Plan for their Future



'Beaumont Parish Action Plan' Launch event - July 2013

Community Led Planning

ACT continues to support communities with Community Led Planning (CLP), a step by step process giving everyone in the community the opportunity to be involved in producing a shared action plan for the future. Also known as Parish / Village Plans, these can cover a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues - anything which the community feels is important.

ACT provides a range of guidance and support, including grant funding, to help communities through each stage of the process. In areas where funding restricts the level of direct support we can offer, we have delivered 'Community Led Planning - From Start to Finish' workshops, providing a full package of support materials and discussing in detail some of the more challenging stages in the process.

CLP can also form the foundation for other types of community planning including Neighbourhood Planning, a similar process, led by the community, but which focuses solely on spatial planning issues i.e. the use of land and buildings. Unlike CLP, Neighbourhood Planning is a statutory process involving external examination and assessment.

Planning for a Fresh Start

This year ACT had an opportunity to build on previous work we've done with farming women and the Rural Women's Network. We held an event for women that featured a personal development session and looked at access to training through the Cumbria Growth Hub.

The funding for this work has come through Defra and the European Regional Development Fund and was aimed at women interested in different life experiences and starting businesses.

We used the funding to offer a free workshop to any women interested in making a change in their lives. The workshop encouraged participants to reflect on what they'd achieved so far, to identify their skills and values and to plan goals for the future. Further events are planned for south Cumbria from April 2014. Comments included:

"Has made me realise that age isn't going to hold me back"

"This is the first time I've defined what my 'dream' really is"

"Very inspirational, thanks"



Fresh Start workshop in Ambleside - March 2014

ACT Supports Communities to Develop their Projects



ACT Community Buildings Event - Oct 2013

Community Buildings Support

ACT continues to provide a countywide Community Buildings Service, offering support to the many volunteers who run community buildings and village halls in Cumbria. Support available was greater in South Lakes and Eden where ACT holds district council service level agreements which fund this work with community groups.

This year, ACT ran the first of our Community Buildings Events. These free countywide events give anyone involved in running a community building the opportunity to learn more about various topics including: diversification and income generation; environmental health requirements; success with grant applications; and governance issues. The events are very popular and provide a valuable opportunity to meet with other volunteers, share experience and best practice.

This year ACT worked with 81 Community Buildings from across Cumbria, which is around a quarter of the total number of halls in the county. As a member of the national network ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), this support includes access to specialist national Village Hall guidance across a range of subjects.

Community Health & Wellbeing Programme

The Community Health and Wellbeing Programme ran in Cumbria from June 2012 to May 2014 and consisted of support and grant funding to voluntary and community groups to develop projects that would result in improvements in health and wellbeing.

The Programme, covering Eden District and the Keswick area, was funded by Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group and Cumbria County Council Adult Social Care. Support to the community groups was provided by ACT and the £300,000 grant fund was managed by Cumbria Community Foundation.

34 projects received funding, between £500 and £25,000. ACT's evaluation indicated encouragingly that overall the Programme helped to:

- Reduce isolation
- Reduce reliance on core services and traditional providers
- Support projects which were sustainable



Fitz Park BMX track, Keswick - supported by the Community Health & Wellbeing programme

ACT Supports Communities to Work with Others



Lead partners and funders in these initiatives

Neighbourhood Care Initiative

This partnership project, managed by Cumbria Third Sector Consortium and funded by a grant from Cumbria Community Foundation, aims to assist people aged sixty five and older to remain independent and in their own homes for as long as possible, using and developing community based support rather than relying on public services. ACT's role has been to work with the East and West delivery groups to discuss the principles of Asset Based Community Development, where communities and individuals design and deliver their own solutions.

Social Enterprise Start Up Support

In partnership with Wingspan Consulting, ACT delivers social enterprise support in Cumbria. The contract provides up to 12 hours consultancy support to new and developing social enterprises with business planning, governance and other needs. We also refer these emerging businesses to the Cumbria Growth Hub so they can make best use of the many business development opportunities currently available. The value of social enterprise development to rural Cumbria has been well proven over the years with projects such as Growing Well, in the south of the county, which had initial support from ACT.

Claife Traffic Management

In Autumn 2013 the parish of Claife in South Lakeland published a Community Led Plan. One of the main concerns for local residents was traffic management. This sparsely populated parish borders the western shore of Windermere and has a high volume of visitors and coaches using its narrow roads, particularly in the summer months.

To start to address some of the issues raised in the Community Led Plan, ACT offered to facilitate a meeting between local residents and agencies. The meeting in September 2013 brought together representatives of the community and Claife Parish Council along with the local County and District Councillor, and officers from Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park Authority and the National Trust.

The meeting built consensus on what the main traffic problems were and started the process of agreeing actions to tackle them.

ACT's experience is that independent facilitation often makes it easier to find solutions, particularly when several parties with different views are involved.



Participants at Claife Traffic Management meeting - Sept 2014

ACT Supports Communities to Influence and Change Policy



Cumbria Tourism's Richard Greenwood at the Solway Tourism Initiative event

Supporting Local Income Generation

ACT is working with Cumbria Tourism to agree a way to support community groups wanting to improve visitor services and welcome across the county. In March we met with partners in the Solway Coast area to discuss actions that the community could take to bring more visitors to the area, to sustain and improve local incomes.

Solway AONB, Allerdale District Council, Silloth Tourism Action Group, Maryport Town Team Initiatives, and local businesses considered the support they currently receive and what they could do locally with their own resources.

The participants agreed they could coordinate their activities and make use of the stunning local environment, and recent capital improvements like the new cycleway along the coast.

Cumbria Tourism's Richard Greenwood explained the environmental and resource limitations but also agreed to support the Solway initiatives and to investigate a Cumbria Tourism Community Membership offer so that local groups can benefit from the range of support and marketing that is available, such as the western lake district website, www.western-lakedistrict.co.uk.

Evidence Based Work

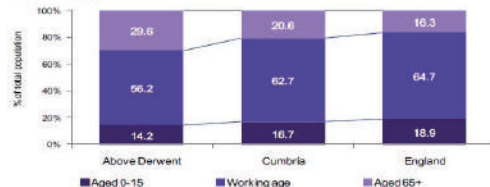
In December 2013 ACT produced The State of Rural Cumbria Report, drawn together using information from a series of Cumbrian Parish Profiles. The Parish Profiles have been created by the Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion and Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). Each profile contains a wealth of hard data from the 2011 Census and other Government sources, showing the 'rural share', and providing an easily accessible set of information for community use.

The data provides an evidence base which can help to back up what a community may already know about the needs in their area. Parish and Town Councils, community groups, and others can use the information to show how their projects address these needs, and how targeted support from local authorities, grant funders, and other agencies can make a real difference to those who need it most.

The reports can also act as a starting point for further discussions within communities helping those involved in Community Led Planning, and others, to identify local needs and the opportunities to develop local solutions.

How many people live locally? 1,200 49.3% male; 60.7% female	How many households? 515	Children under 16 170 14.2% (England average = 13.9%)	Working age adults 675 56.2% (England average = 61.7%)	Older people over 65 355 29.6% (England average = 18.3%)
Lone parent families with children 10 8.0% of all families with dependent children (England average = 24.6%)	Single pensioner households 80 15.8% of households (England average = 12.4%)	People from Black or Minority ethnic groups 45 3.7% (England average = 20.2%)	People born outside the UK 50 4.2% (England average = 13.6%)	Dependency Ratio 0.78 England average = 0.66

Population by age



Source: Census 2011 (table KS102EW)

Example of data available in the Parish Profiles - Taken from Above Derwent parish in Allerdale.

Full reports available here:
www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/ResourcesPublications/ParishProfiles

Resources for Communities



Updated ACT website - new layout adapts to fit different devices: mobile phone, tablet, or computer

ACT is continually looking at new ways of delivering effective support to communities. With a reduction in the number of delivery staff, the additional resources we produce to support our work with groups, and the way they can access this information, guidance, and examples of best practise, have become increasingly important.

This year we have updated our website to make accessing these resources even easier. With the increase in mobile browsing, ACT's new website layout adapts to fit any device: mobile phone, tablet, or computer. The site has also been re-configured to make it easier to find what you're looking for, and an events calendar and Twitter Feed have been added.

In addition to new case studies and guidance sheets, a series of workbooks have been produced, covering a wide range of subjects from 'Getting Going', to 'Policies and Procedures', 'Sustainable Funding', 'Robust Business Planning', 'Developing Your Budget', 'Marketing', 'Working with Volunteers', and a 'Questionnaire Design Guide'.

ACT Staff



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

As certain projects came to an end this year, the number of ACT's delivery and support staff reduced accordingly. During the year we said farewell to Alison Gerke, Graham Reed, Terry McCormick, Claire Hudson and Claire Watters. Following her time with ACT as a Business Administrative Apprentice, Alice Sandells successfully secured full time employment. We wish them all the best for the future.

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

Back row L-R: Julia Wilson, Hellen Aitken, Dani Hudson

Front row L-R: Graham Reed, Lorraine Smyth, Alison Gerke

(Missing from photo: Claire Watters, Claire Hudson, Alice Sandells, Terry McCormick)

What communities say about us...

"The only organisation that provides cohesive rural support across Cumbria"

"Invaluable support over a lot of years"

"ACT informs us about how to plan with our Community"

"Represents communities and community activity"

"Provides valuable information for a wide range of organisations in the rural area"

"The advice and support is readily available, advice is well researched, accurate and right up to date"

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 2013/14.

Photo: ACT Trustees

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

Front row: Carl Bendelow, Lorraine Smyth (CEO), Liz Clegg.
(Ron Munby, Sue Castle-Clarke and Ian Payne were unavailable)

ACT's Funders in 2013/14

- AON
- Allerdale District Council
- Big Lottery
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Copeland Borough Council
- Cumbria Community Foundation
- Cumbria Community Learning Trust
- Cumbria County Council
- Cumbria Fells and Dales (RDPE)
- Cumbria Third Sector Consortium
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Eden District Council
- Eden Locality Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group
- European Regional Development Fund
- Hadfield Trust
- Lake District National Park Authority
- National Trust
- South Lakeland District Council
- Threlkeld Activities Association
- Workington Town Council

Looking Ahead

The key challenges ACT will work on with communities and rural people in 2014-15 are:

- How to maintain and improve wealth
- How to affect and improve health and wellbeing
- How to improve access to services

These are not new, but in the coming election year we need to clearly represent the challenges we know rural areas face, and promote the work of communities who aim to address them.

There are currently many opportunities for enterprise and small business development. We need to ensure that more marginalised communities are able to take advantage of them. We will continue our Fresh Start programme for women and promote more entrepreneurial solutions in community initiatives to address challenges in this area.



ACT will encourage community groups to be part of the solution for those people who need support to live a full life in their community. Participation is widely recognised as a useful ingredient in a healthy life. Community Exchanges, Village Hall events, recreation projects, and sharing experiences are all part of how vibrant community life can assist individual health and wellbeing.

And finally, regardless of the opportunities available, if rural people and communities cannot access them due to travel, technology or capacity challenges, ACT will offer support. It is, as always, about working smarter, not harder. The work of CLP (Community Led Planning) groups highlights all these issues, providing information for action locally and to lobby for change. We will continue to assist communities to design their own future, create a positive agenda, and articulate their case.

More for less is the challenge we all face. We can address it together.

Lorraine Smyth
ACT Chief Executive Officer



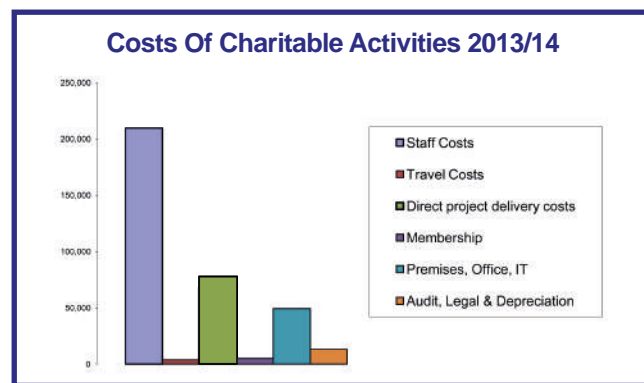
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Finance Report

This year has been very challenging and resulted in a deficit of £24,517 for the 2013/14 financial year. Trustees, managers and staff have made significant changes to ensure that the future management of the organisation is more sustainable and appropriate to the Charity's objects.

Costs Of Charitable Activities

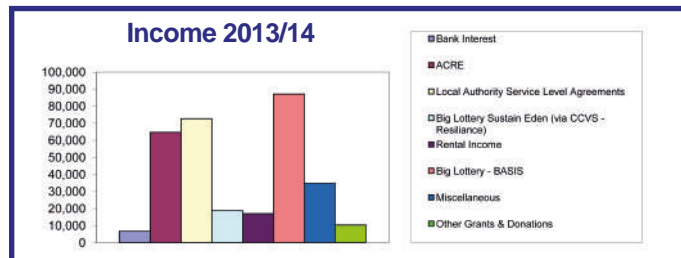
	2013/14	2012/13
Staff Costs	£209,669	£283,663
Travel Costs	£3,711	£15,752
Direct project delivery costs	£81,072	£131,175
Membership	£5,115	£5,095
Premises, Office, IT	£49,247	£65,431
Audit, Legal & Depreciation	£13,110	£11,960
	£361,924	£513,076



Finance Report

Income

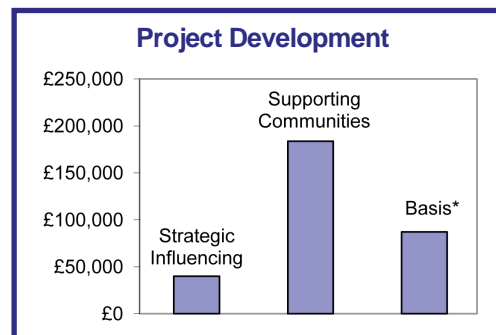
	2013/14	2012/13
Bank Interest	£6,618	£7,384
ACRE	£64,586	£70,894
Local Authority Service Level Agreements	£72,628	£58,250
Big Lottery Sustain Eden (via CCVS - Resilience)	£18,647	
Rental Income	£16,981	£29,423
Big Lottery - BASIS	£87,020	£168,293
Health and Well Being	£24,703	
Miscellaneous	£35,882	£11,962
Other Grants & Donations	£10,342	£133,760
Totals	£337,407	£479,966



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	£39,859
Supporting Communities	£183,742
Basis*	£87,020
Totals	£310,621



* Basis was a partnership project with Cumbria Youth Alliance and Young Cumbria which finished in July 2013.

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

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.

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

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



TWITTER

Follow us @ACTCumbria

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