



Five year strategic plan 2024 – 2029

ACT is the rural and community development
charity for Cumbria

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria
champions community and rural issues



ACT's vision is that no one should be
disadvantaged by where they live

Registered as Voluntary Action Cumbria

Registered in England: Company Number 3957858 Charity Number 1080875

ACT's Five-Year Strategic Plan 2024 - 2029

Summary:

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) is the rural community development charity for Cumbria and part of a national network supporting rural communities.

Our mission is to champion community and rural issues so that no one is disadvantaged by where they live.

1. Introduction

This document sets out the strategic direction that the charity will pursue for the period 2024 – 2029. It will guide ACT's operational business plan.

The strategy is informed by:

- consideration of economic and political trends;
- active engagement with communities and partners;
- the experience and insights of our trustees and staff;
- and discussion with people in local authorities throughout Cumbria.

2. Service scope

ACT is the community development organisation and rural community charity for Cumbria. As a community organisation, ACT has been owned by the people of Cumbria since 1948 and plays a key role in providing facilitation to help communities achieve their aims.

ACT, because of its specific range of skills and services, offers a range of services to community groups, charities, businesses, and local government to help communities identify, articulate, and address their needs.

ACT is well placed to help communities tackle disadvantage, promote well-being, build community sustainability, and assist people who face disadvantaged because of where they live. We do this in the following ways:

- As an impartial and apolitical organisation, ACT can bring diverse partners together to agree ways to move forward and can support them to do so.
- ACT is accountable to members and supporters from community groups, charities, public authorities, and local businesses of Cumbria.
- ACT is a member of the rural community charity network – Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), which enables the organisation to transfer knowledge and share best practice.

In this, our seventy sixth year, ACT continues to be a catalyst for community involvement. Everything we do is fundamentally based upon principles of partnership working, engagement with networks and grass roots community development support to achieve our objectives. Community Development is a process where people come together to act on what is important to them. Local groups use their skills and experience

to make positive change, starting with the belief that everyone should have equal access to health, wellbeing, justice, wealth and opportunity.

Community development supports communities to:

- Use their own assets to improve community life.
- Work together with public bodies to improve how services are run and how decisions are made.
- Develop a fairer and more inclusive society with strong communities at the heart of decision making.

In pursuit of our mission, and providing impartial facilitation, ACT will enable communities to:

- Plan their futures by supporting community-led planning in all its forms.
- Develop and sustain projects which support the delivery of community activities.
- Work with others to build effective relationships which can better achieve change.
- Influence policy by raising awareness of issues that affect the resilience and well-being of communities and rural life in Cumbria.

ACT will manage internal business effectively by:

- Continually reviewing the impact and social value of what we do.
- Maintaining the highest quality standards.
- Maximising opportunities to maintain and further diversify funded work, reinforce partnership relationships, and make effective use of resources.

The four organisational values that underpin ACT's work are:

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

These values sit alongside our Statements of Principle, which you can view here:

<https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/about/statements-of-principles>

3. Understanding the needs of Cumbria

The effectiveness of ACT's work is based on our understanding of how the rapidly changing world we live in impacts Cumbria. This understanding is informed by evidence continually gathered from many sources, including research as well as the activity and experiences of communities themselves.

We use this evidence to influence policy makers and those allocating resources so that people in Cumbria may have fairer access to opportunity.

ACT's considerable involvement with and commitment to our national network ACRE enables influence from local sources to be heard at national level.

ACT champions community and rural issues so that no-one is disadvantaged by where they live

4. What ACT offers

ACT helps people and communities realise shared aspirations for their area as thriving and vibrant places to live.

ACT assists communities to identify solutions and deliver their own priorities in inclusive and sustainable ways by:

- Raising awareness of local needs and opportunities.
- Providing practical advice, support, learning opportunities and facilitation.
- Delivering information and campaigns on issues of importance to rural life in Cumbria.
- Assisting with the planning and management of change, and implementation of investment programmes.
- Sharing our understanding on the interests of communities locally, regionally, and nationally through a variety of partnerships to form a bridge between local people and the agencies and authorities that impact on their daily lives.

ACT will offer its services to all Cumbrian communities to help develop concepts of localism, and place-based development.

ACT will provide partners with an informed picture of life in Cumbria that can be used to shape public policy, create new business opportunities, direct investment programmes, devise services to support vulnerable people and manage natural assets.

For further details or to discuss how ACT can work with you, please contact:
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