



Fact sheet: Parish Plans

What are Parish Plans?

A Parish Plan is an opportunity for your community to have a say in how your local area and services are managed to make sure that your community has a greener future. It can make a real difference, both to what you do within your community and to how you work with others to improve local quality of life.

Your Parish Plan can kick-start your own action to make a difference, and provides a way of influencing your local council, local service providers and planners. It is also a valuable document with important facts and figures about the needs of your area and the environment.

Some things a Parish Plan can do

Save energy

- Encourage the local council to ask developers to build houses which are more energy-efficient
- Set up a community group which promotes energy-saving ideas to people who live in the area

Travel wisely

- Encourage bus companies to increase their services to specific community facilities
- Set up your own community car-sharing scheme

Save our resources

- Encourage the council and recycling companies to provide more recycling banks
- Explore setting up a community composting scheme on an allotment

Shop ethically

- Encourage local shops or nearby farmers to sell locally grown fruit and vegetables
- Promote locally grown food to community residents and schools

Care for your area

- Encourage the council to target unattractive spots in the community for a clean-up
- Organise a community green up & clean up event to clear litter and improve parks

A Parish Plan brings together the views, needs and opinions of the whole community. It should be a holistic document, covering the social, economic and environmental issues of relevance to you and your neighbours. It sets out what is important, whether it's key facilities and services, or the distinctive local character of your area. A concise action plan prioritises the issues raised, and sets out how they might be tackled. All Parish Plans are different, as they are developed by each community in response to their own needs, using their unique skills and enthusiasm.



Parish Plans are a tried and tested tool now being used by over 3,000 parishes. Parish planning has proved itself as a successful way for rural citizens to make their voices heard and get things done locally. This can lead to improved relationships with your local council and other local service providers.

How to put together a Parish Plan

Vital to the success of a Parish Plan is the dedication of local volunteers, especially those in a Parish Plan steering group, who are willing to put in time, effort and commitment.

Help is available. Support is on hand from Rural Community Councils, and many local councils have parish liaison officers and other experts who can help.

The network of 38 Rural Community Councils offers a substantial amount of support for those doing Parish Plans and they can provide essential advice and information about funding. Experience shows that Parish Plans are better and more influential if the community makes use of the professional support available.

All the Rural Community Council web pages can be accessed from the following link www.acre.org.uk/zRCCNETWORK.htm Or telephone Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) on 01285 653477 to find out how to contact your local Rural Community Council.

Case study - Community action in Danby Village, Yorkshire

Danby village in North Yorkshire is one of the many communities in England to have benefited from producing a sustainable Parish Plan. The residents' commitment, combined with support from national, regional and not-for-profit organisations, have all contributed to the Plan's many successes. These so far include a new footpath to encourage walking to school, an investigation into affordable housing in the area, and a directory of local producers and services.

With the Plan finally published in 2003, work began in earnest. The community survey, which was carried out to help create the Parish Plan, had shown a high level of support and demand for local products. With this mandate, a local producer fair was organised and was attended by over 2000 visitors. An accompanying brochure was produced promoting the various local enterprises, from free-range organic eggs and honey, website design and dressmaking, to local painters and craftsmen.

A very strong renewable energy group has also formed with a commitment to reduce the community's impact on climate change through energy conservation and renewable energy technologies. It has drawn up an action plan to achieve a number of objectives including promoting insulation and the uptake of renewable energy, greening the village hall and the loos, and investigating small-scale wind energy.

Danby's Parish Plan can be downloaded in full from the Commission for Rural Communities database.