



## Parish planning for rural communities

Listening to residents and shaping the future of your village.

### The challenge

Rural communities often know that things are changing, but it can be difficult to understand what local residents really want or how to bring people together around a shared vision for the future.

Parish councils frequently hear individual concerns about housing, transport, community facilities, the environment and local services.

Without a structured process it can be hard to gather balanced views, involve a wide range of residents and turn ideas into clear priorities.

A Parish Plan provides a practical way to bring the community together, understand what matters most and identify actions that will strengthen the village in the years ahead.

### Our approach

We provide practical, independent support to help communities develop a Parish Plan that reflects the voices of local residents and creates a clear action plan for the future.

We can help you to:

- Design and deliver community surveys and consultations
- Facilitate workshops and engagement events
- Support local volunteers and steering groups
- Analyse responses and identify shared priorities
- Develop a clear Parish Plan and community action plan

Our support can be tailored to suit the size and capacity of your community. Some parishes want support throughout the whole process, while others need help with specific stages such as engagement or analysing survey responses.

### Why Cambridgeshire ACRE

As the rural community council for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Cambridgeshire ACRE specialise in community development and engagement, helping villages bring residents together to identify shared priorities and take practical action.

We combine strong local knowledge with experience of supporting parish councils, volunteer groups and rural partnerships across the county. Our role is independent and supportive, ensuring communities feel confident, heard and able to shape their own future.

## Case study: Community planning support in Witchford

Witchford Parish Council wanted to develop a community-led Neighbourhood Plan that would guide future development in the village and reflect local priorities. Cambridgeshire ACRE was engaged to provide independent support throughout the process, working alongside the Parish Council and its Steering Group over several years.

We helped the group shape a shared vision for the village, supported community engagement activities and helped translate local priorities into a structured plan. This included facilitating discussions, supporting consultation activity and helping the group bring together local knowledge, evidence and the views of residents.

The project helped the community progress from early discussions about the future of the village to a clear plan informed by community engagement and local evidence, strengthening confidence that the final document reflected the priorities of residents and the wider community.

## What you can expect

- Clear scope and agreed deliverables
- A structured and inclusive community engagement process
- Practical support for parish councils and volunteer groups
- Professional analysis of survey responses and feedback
- Transparent pricing

Cambridgeshire ACRE members receive a 10 per cent discount on consultancy services.



## Who we work with

We work with:

- Parish councils
- Village hall committees
- Community groups and charities
- Rural partnerships and networks
- Local volunteer groups

Our work ranges from small villages with a few hundred residents to larger rural communities.

## Start a conversation

If your parish is considering a Parish Plan, we would be happy to talk through the options and help you decide what approach might work best.

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