

‘Villages and Communities Together Project’

A case study of working with rural-urban fringe communities

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Outline

- Overview of the Project
- Project outcomes – key highlights
- Issues facing rural-urban fringe communities
- Support needed for rural-urban fringe communities
- Benefits of rural networks for community groups
- Working with rural businesses
- Localism & Planning reforms – opportunities for rural-urban fringe communities
- Taking things forward – meeting the future needs of rural-urban fringe communities

Overview of the Project

- The Villages and Communities Together Project provided advice and support to rural communities and business across the north east Peak area, including:
 - Advice, support & signposting to funding for community groups
 - Events & Training for community groups and voluntary organisations
 - Engaging with small rural businesses
 - Facilitation of rural networks
 - Support for Parishes and Members
 - Communications to connect isolated rural communities
 - Providing a single point of contact across authority boundaries and removing barriers to accessing opportunities

Funding, Management & Staffing

- A partnership project between the Peak District National Park Authority & Sheffield City Council's Northern Community Assembly
- Additional funding from EPIP – East Peak Innovation Partnership
- Managed by a steering group - Members & officers from both SCC and PDNPA
- Staffed by 1 part-time officer, (Dec 09-Jun 12), NCA
- EPIP grant: + 1 part-time officer, Aug 11 – Jun 12, north east Peak area



Area

The project supported people living and working across the north east Peak area, including:

- Sheffield's Northern CA
- Penistone east & west
- Denby Dale & Kirkburton.

FACT: 14,093 hectares of the city of Sheffield lies within the National Park



A very diverse area!



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Project Outcomes ... some highlights!

Supporting Villages & Community Groups:

- Bolsterstone
- Worrall
- Midhopestones
- Stocksbridge 50+
- Storrs
- Steel Valley
- Low Bradfield
- Thurgoland
- Ringinglow
- Whitley
- Millhouse Green
- Ewden Valley

Example: Midhopestones community support



- Village meetings
- New action group formed in Upper Midhope
- Action Plan developed
- Highways walkabouts

Village Walkabouts

Ringinglow –
footpath
improvements

Midhopestones -
Village planting
day



Rural Network Meetings

Opportunity for isolated rural community groups to network, share issues and ideas & access training and 1-to-1 support from partners:



RuralActionYorkshire
Enabling Your Rural Community



- Dungworth, Mar 10 – Local Food
- Stocksbridge, Jun 10 – Rural Strategy
- Bolsterstone, Dec 10 – Community Services
- Grenoside, April 11 – Community Events
- Worrall, Oct 11 – Fundraising
- Chapelton, Tankersley & Silkstone - Localism



Villages and Communities Together



Local Food Projects

Sheffield Food Festival 2010



Bradfield Farmers Market

Runs every 3rd Saturday of the month, Bradfield Village Hall



Community Grant Scheme, 2010

Small grants (max. £2000) for community groups:

- Dungworth Village Hall – Wind Turbine
- Bolsterstone Community Group – Heritage Interpretation Board & Village Hall energy audit
- Bradfield Walkers are Welcome – Walk Leader Training & set up of steering group
- Worrall Community Association
– Storage facility for Village Hall



Villages a

Connecting Communities

- **E-Newsletter** – keeping residents, community groups and businesses up-to-date about local community events and funding opportunities. Produced every 3-4 weeks and sent to over 250 community contacts
- **Community Events** – Supporting fundraising events, Christmas markets, Jubilee celebrations, Feedback Events
- **Website** – Project & events info
- **Training** – Green Technology Workshops, Funding Workshops



Supporting Parishes

- E-Brief – Quarterly newsletter
- Attending meetings to provide advice and support
- Training and support on the Localism Act – Briefings on Localism, Community Rights and Neighbourhood Planning:
 - Bradfield Parish Council, April 12
 - Stocksbridge Town Council, May 12
 - Ecclesfield Parish Council, May 12
 - Bamford Parish Council, April 12
 - Langsett Parish Council, June 12

Plus further training sessions on Localism Neighbourhood Planning across South Yorkshire, supported by Rural Action Yorkshire – Dinnington, Silkstone & Armthorpe

Supporting Rural Businesses

- Small Grant scheme for rural businesses – awarded £5,000 in grants, provided 1-to-1 support to 18 rural businesses
- Work with Business Link/ Solutions for Business
- Enterprising Mums
- PDNPA Live & Work Rural programme support

Example: Food & Tourism Event, Feb 12

- Bringing together tourism providers with local food producers
- Green cleaning workshop
- Local food producers marketplace



Partnership Working – Strategic influence

- PDNPA actively engaged in the development of Sheffield City Council's Rural Strategy, 2010-13 and Sheffield's Green and Open Space Strategy, 2010-30
- Jointly pursued improved broadband connectivity for rural communities
- SCC engaged in PDNPA's Eastern Moors Partnership initiatives and Nature Improvement Areas
- Sustainable Development Fund– co-ordinated by PDNPA, and many projects targeted towards north Sheffield to support rural fringe communities

Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Projects – Examples in North Sheffield:

- Bradfield Tools Exhibition
- Walkers are Welcome initiative
- Bradfield in Bloom
- Young people and minority ethnic communities
- Sheffield Conversation Club
- Wood Lane Countryside Centre
- The Steel Valley Project
- Adventure Network
- Sheffield Wildlife Trust
- Dungworth Wind Turbine and village hall website development

What happened next??

- EPIP funding ended summer 2012 and Village Officers departed
- BUT ... Partnership working continues between Sheffield, Barnsley and the Peak Park Authority
- Project review and evaluation undertaken ...

Feedback... What worked well

- Networking opportunities – meetings & events
- Information about funding opportunities
- Regular communications – newsletter
- Facilitation of peer support/ business links
- Strategic links to raise profile of rural issues
- Additional support for areas traditionally excluded
- Single point of contact for cross-boundary issues
- ‘Independent’ advice and support
- Personal relationships developed and trust built
- Legacy – community groups & networks ongoing

... and what didn't work so well

- Short term = lack of consistency and impact
- Too little a resource spread over too wide an area
- Lack of one-to-one support for community groups

Issues facing rural-urban fringe communities

- Lack of strategic focus/ inconsistency in political support
- Lack of funding and 'on-the-ground' resources
- Pockets of deprivation masked
- Poor accessibility to services, continually declining
- Cuts in funding to voluntary sector
- Increasing pressure to manage more services locally
- Lack of support in implementing Localism

Support needs of rural-urban fringe communities

- Funding to maintain & grow community infrastructure
- Opportunities to connect isolated communities eg. facilitation of networking, communications
- One-to-one support for community groups eg. support with funding bid applications
- Support with strategic issues: 2-way dialogue between policy-makers & rural communities
- Support for new rural enterprises
- Support from multiple organisations, providing an informed, well-rounded offer to groups
- Opportunities for groups, organisations & Parishes to work together

Localism & Planning Reforms – Opportunities for rural fringe communities

- Localism grounded in rural communities
- Formalising existing community powers
- Community Right to Bid – retaining community assets
- Community Right to Challenge – more efficient local service provision
- Neighbourhood Planning – shaping local development
- Re-igniting interest in community-led planning

Example: the benefits of rural networks

- ... for community groups, voluntary organisations and small businesses
- Sharing issues and challenges
 - Inspiration for new ideas
 - Working together to develop joint solutions
 - Keeping up to date with funding opportunities and changes in legislation/ local policy
 - Tackling fear of isolation

Taking things forward ...

Support currently available to rural communities:

- Sheffield's Northern Community Assembly - targeted community development work in High Green
- PDNPA - dedicated 'Community Planning Officer'
- Barnsley's South West Community Partnership
- SYFAB, Together for Regeneration, VAB & VAS, EPIP
- Rural Action Yorkshire

Critical: Understanding support needs of rural-urban fringe communities, to re-ignite projects and initiatives, **as and when funding arises**