

Parish Plan

Meeting with ACT

The Policy Working Group met with Helen Aitken from ACT on 1 August 2018. Helen took the group through ACT's experience of supporting Parish Councils with community led planning.

She advised that community led plans are local, action based plans which address a wide range of problems and opportunities facing communities. They can include social, economic and environmental issues and give everyone in the community the chance to be involved.

She explained that it is a process which enables local people to work together to consider their needs for the future and to develop an action plan to help achieve their shared ambitions. She explained that this was a process that could take up to 16 months.

The process would lead to the production of a Community Led Plan, a document setting out what local people value, and what they would like to change. This should include a description of the community, an explanation of the process, results from the consultation and a clear action plan.

The grant that was available could contribute up to 50% of the cost of producing the community led plan (up to a maximum of £500).

The Reflections of the Working Group

After Helen left the group reflected on what she had outlined. It was a lot longer and a much more involved process than I had understood or advised you as Clerk. It was also a lot broader than a plan which covered the duties and responsibilities of the Parish Council. Members agreed to reflect on this and for it to be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

ACT's advice was that the first 4 months would be spent on:

- Involving the wider community and finding out if there is general support for the project.
- Contacting the local authorities – Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council
- Establishing a Steering Group which has wide representation from the community.
- Nominating a steering group member to liaise with local authorities.
- Putting together a programme of activity and a budget.

This advice starts with involving wider community and finding out if they are supportive. I recommend starting with a short questionnaire that goes to every household and key stakeholders (local businesses, schools, other community organisations) and asks what they think and at the same time asks what their key concerns/aspirations are for the Parish. Helen suggested launching at a community event but there is nothing suitable. I would design the questionnaire in consultation with Policy Working Group; Members would need to help with distribution; and the aim would be to have an analysis of the results available for the Parish Council Meeting on 21 November 2018 gives 8 weeks to publish, distribute, analyse results and produce report.

Hazel Broatch
Clerk