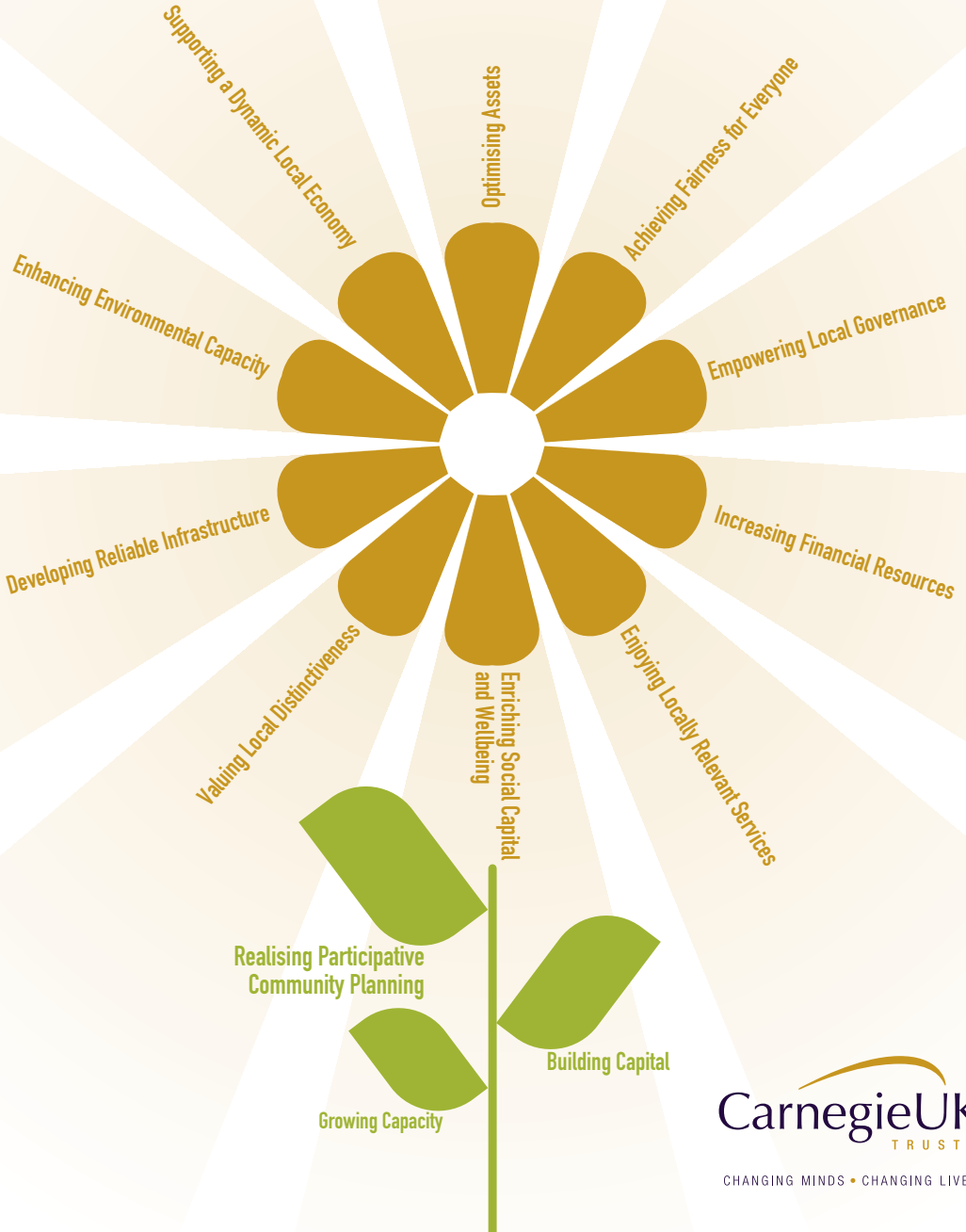


# A Charter For Rural Communities

## The Final Report of the Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development





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# FOREWORD

By Diana Brittan

## Challenge and Opportunity

Those who live in rural areas know all too well the frustrations involved; the inaccessible broadband, the deliveries which never arrive, the lack of affordable houses and the inexorable disappearance of shops, schools, post offices and pubs. The villages where the young people have already left, taking their skills and energy with them. Of course, to many people the attractions of the countryside outweigh these frustrations but for others there is no choice.

Some of these things can be pinned down by hard facts and figures; some are harder to explain. It is not easy to capture in words the impact of societal and demographic change on rural areas over the past decades. Nor is it easy to acknowledge that, to a large extent, those who live and work in cities are neither interested in nor engaged with the fate of their country cousins in that taken-for-granted land beyond their city limits. But care we all should.

It was against this backdrop and in the firm belief that a vibrant rural life is a vital component in an enduring, balanced and healthy society that the Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development came into being in 2004. The Commissioners' job, as they saw it, was to open urban and rural eyes to the capital assets of the countryside, and to give the people who live and work in rural areas the keys to a sustainable future. It was a radical change in policy for the Commission's parent, the Carnegie UK Trust, who had to move beyond their traditional focus on rural grass-roots funding to the bigger picture: an overview which identified the structural and systemic challenges in rural areas, examined the whole mechanism for sustaining rural life and proposed solutions.

Underpinning the process was the strong belief that rural communities themselves had to contribute to the solutions. Certainly there has never been such a comprehensive analysis of the issues. The Commission travelled the length and breadth of the UK and Ireland, asking questions and – most crucially – listening carefully to the answers. We consulted

the European Commission, government ministers, local politicians, parish councils, landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, development workers, social entrepreneurs. We talked at length with people in rural communities – young people, older people, migrant workers and many, many more. Our investigations revealed that people were apprehensive about the future, about change, about rural poverty and future economic opportunities, about public services in decline if not actually withdrawn, about the lack and cost of land for affordable housing and the related complexity of the planning system, about the impact of migrant workers on rural communities. Many felt very distant from local and national government and powerless to influence local decisions. Some of these trends are long-lived but we believe that their continuation should not be passively accepted.

At the same time we saw abundant signs of hope and transformation, often led by remarkable individuals and inspirational community organisations. We recorded this evidence too. Many rural communities, faced with a challenge, have initiated projects and schemes which are rejuvenating their lifeblood. Their variety was as wide as life itself, ranging from creating a local shop which became a hub to managing a community-owned forest. What all the schemes had in common were people: committed, community-minded, can-do people who wanted to carry on living where they were and understood what they had to do. The Commission members were particularly impressed by those whom we came to call 'fiery spirits' – those individuals with the drive and imagination to devise unique ways to preserve and grow their own community.

Out of such astonishing diversity and ingenuity, it is possible to draw out themes, and also to make the bold statement that rural life, properly supported and encouraged, can offer even urban societies a model for the future. It is a model which says that no matter where you live, or whatever constraints you face in terms of location or resources, you can, with the right support, create a vibrant, sustainable and equitable community, which should defy even the most destructive impacts of social, economic, political, technological and environmental change.

Rural communities are, we believe, the key to their own destinies, they are their own best assets; it is up to us merely to help them to bring out 'the greatness within'. In this report we outline in some detail a vision of dynamic, engaged, vibrant, sustainable rural communities and present a set of ideas for action.

The report, therefore, is addressed to a number of audiences. It is intended to influence political debate and the decisions made by governments at all levels over the coming years. It is addressed to organisations and institutions with an interest in the future of rural communities, inviting them to take a longer view and to widen their perspectives. We hope it will provide a set of resources for those already engaged in rural community development work in diverse settings. Most of all we want it to be a message of hope for any member of a community who ever had a good idea and wanted to follow it though.

There are many I would wish to thank in producing this final report. I owe a debt of gratitude to the Commission's first Chair, Lord Steel of Aikwood and to my fellow Commissioners who all brought to the Commission their expertise, experience and enthusiasm. I would like to thank Kate Braithwaite, the Commission's Director, Kirsty Robb and Charlie McConnell, the Chief Executive of the Carnegie UK Trust, for all their professional support over the past three years and for crafting together our ideas into this report. Finally, none of this work would have been possible if the Commission and its associated evidence-gathering Rural Action Research Programme had not been funded by the Carnegie UK Trust and the Big Lottery Fund



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Too often reports about the countryside focus solely on the negatives, forgetting the many advantages, which they offer. In fact, rural communities can be fantastic places to live, work and play. Many rural communities offer:

- Well developed community resources and valuable local assets
- Healthy environments for leisure, education and enterprise
- Strong social networks

But some rural communities do face many challenges:

- Depressed local economies for example in fishing and some agricultural areas
- An ageing population, with a shrinking skilled workforce
- Poor infrastructure, especially transport
- Overly complex planning
- Lack of affordable housing
- Complex and confusing funding 'cocktails' for local initiatives
- Pockets of extreme poverty

### **Planning for rural community futures**

The Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development over the past three years has undertaken one of the most comprehensive consultations on the challenges and opportunities facing local rural communities across the UK and Ireland in recent years. Our intention was to make a serious assessment of the state of the UK and Ireland's countryside communities today:

But it was more than that. We have looked ahead, to understand what might happen to rural areas in the future: a greater dependence upon the resources of rural areas for energy production and economic regeneration, set against continuing house price rises and an ageing population. Using 'futures' scenario planning, we have been able to develop recommendations in line with the challenges and opportunities that communities do not yet face, as well as those they do.

In light of our evidence gathering, we now present our *Charter for Rural Communities*. Our report and Charter are about the role that enterprising rural communities can play supported by the public, private and third sectors. The contribution of local communities to rural development has been under recognised for far too long.

### **Common Attributes of Success: Learning from Best Practice**

Looking to the future, we have sought to identify the essential ingredients of a thriving rural community of the future. They are:

- Community ownership and management of local assets
- Stronger local governance and effective community action planning
- Strong social networks founded on high levels of volunteering and skilled support

We have identified ten characteristics of the sustainable rural community of the future. Realistically, no one community is likely to display all these characteristics – but our fact-finding turned up many excellent examples of rural communities already displaying inspiring survival techniques.

Among the many cases which impressed us were:

Caithness Partnership- People's Panels  
 Tipperary Institute – integrated area planning  
 Plunkett Foundation 'The Store is the Core'  
 Sense of Place - place based education in Cornwall  
 Cae Post recycling in Powys

We saw many, many more.

## Can-Do Rural Communities

Based on these models of success we set out our ideas for action. We see central and local government, landowners, the Social Investment Bank, the Lottery distributors, Third Sector agencies, trusts and local communities working together to deliver these actions. These include:

- A major expansion in **community ownership** of local assets
- An enhanced role **for parish and community councils**
- A **Centre for Excellence** supporting rural community development policy and practice on the ground.
- Encouragement and assistance for local communities to **develop and manage their own services and to engage in community planning**
- A greater role for local communities in supporting **sustainable development.**

## Not just thinking – doing

Good ideas are worth nothing without the will to put them into action. For this reason the Commission is looking to the Carnegie UK Trust and others – central and local governments, regional development agencies, the private and third sectors and independent funders to support the proposals we present. They are challenges for local people too. Each has a vital role to play to realise the dynamic, vibrant and sustainable rural communities that can succeed.

The recommendations we make cover the short and medium time frame. We believe that with goodwill they could all be implemented within five years. Indeed some are already beginning to take place and we state where we are supportive of current policy and practice. Others are not yet on the radar and need to be.

Recent and pending changes in the governments of all of the countries and jurisdictions of the UK and Ireland provide the opportunity for new thinking. We hope that across the political spectrum there will be support for the agenda we present. We believe that as a result local communities across the UK and Ireland will be energised to play a much more central part in shaping their futures.



**OUR VISION AND IDEAS FOR ACTION**

## OUR VISION AND IDEAS FOR ACTION

### The Future Community in a Rural Setting

The Carnegie Commission has carefully considered extensive evidence on the state of rural communities today. We recognise and celebrate the rich diversity of rural areas, which range from the very remote to semi-urban. And we are aware that rural communities, like all others, face an array of significant challenges and opportunities likely to affect their future.

As a Commission, we undertook **'futures' scenario planning** to assess the impact on rural communities of such factors as:

Common Agricultural Policy reform

Depletion of fossil fuels

Climate change

Demographic change and migration patterns

House prices

Labour and skills shortages

Globalisation

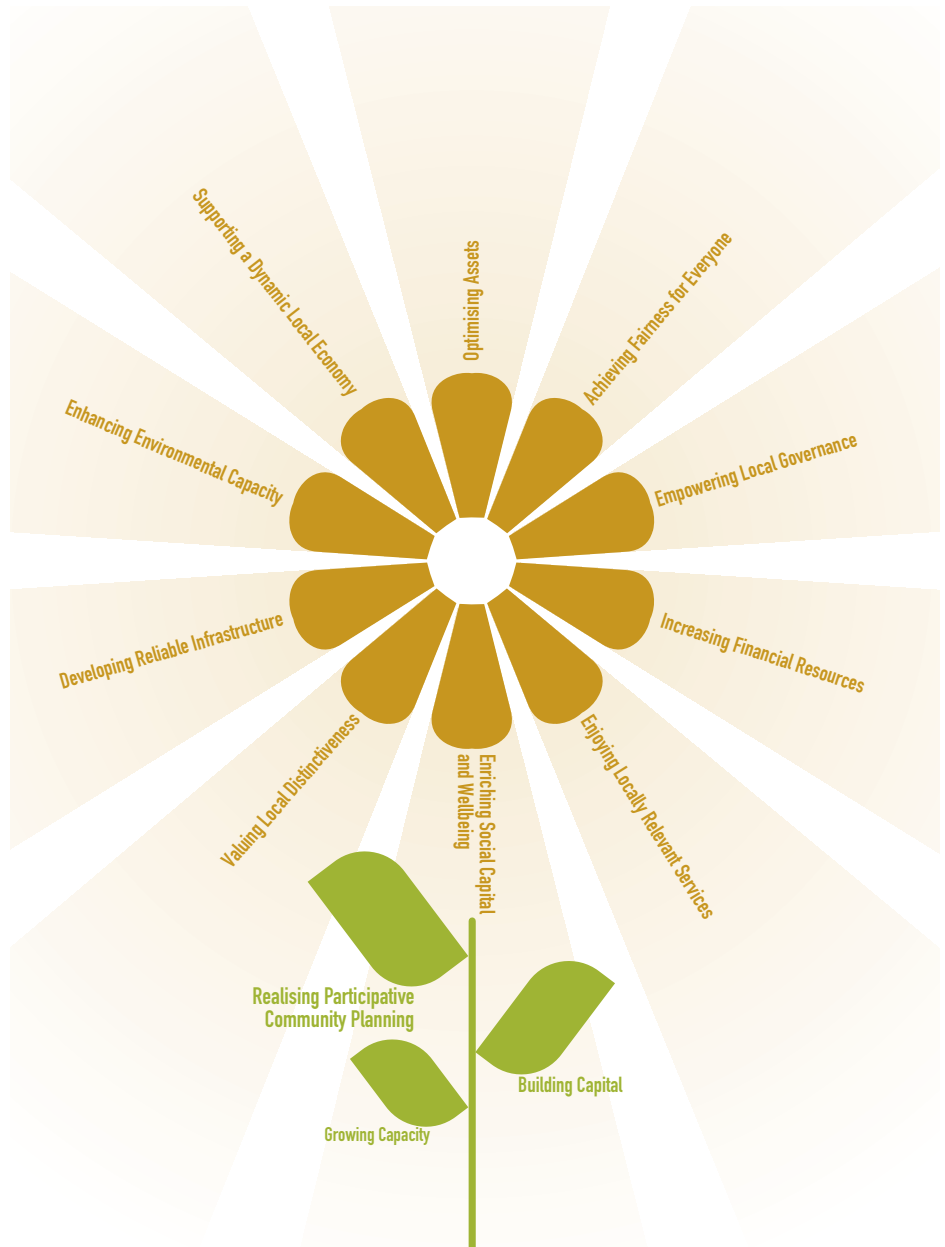
Information and Communication Technology

Against this possible 'futures' background, and in light of the concerns and hopes of the many people we met during our evidence gathering around the UK and Ireland, we present a model of the characteristics of the vibrant and sustainable rural community of the future. A community that can deal with change has the capacity not only to grasp today's opportunities and overcome today's challenges, but can also thrive in the uncertain and changing landscape ahead.

We suggest that the dynamic, vibrant, engaged, sustainable rural community in the future would display a number of interrelated characteristics:

- *Identifying, utilising and optimising assets*
- *Achieving fairness for everyone*
- *Empowering local governance*
- *Increasing resources for community benefit*
- *Enjoying locally relevant services*
- *Enriching social capital and well-being*
- *Valuing local distinctiveness*
- *Developing reliable infrastructure*
- *Enhancing environmental capacity*
- *Supporting a dynamic local economy*

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A VIBRANT RURAL COMMUNITY





We believe the model provides a good diagnostic for rural communities today, across the UK and Ireland, to see where strengths and weaknesses might lie in moving towards a robust and sustainable future and which should inform their community development. We explore each of the ten characteristics in detail. We would emphasise that the characteristics need to be seen **holistically**. They are **interdependent**, adding value to each other.

We also draw on the Commission's research to identify **Ideas for Action** to support each of the key characteristics. These actions are achievable, for they are already being implemented in the UK or Ireland by pioneering rural communities. Our case studies demonstrate this and many more can be found on the Carnegie UK Trust website [www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk)

The Commission believes that this good practice can and should be widely adopted. But it will not just happen. It requires the support of governments, regional and local authorities, third sector, educational and enterprise agencies, landowners and the private sector working as partners with local people to build vibrant, dynamic and sustainable communities able to deal with the challenge of change.

This report is about partnership. It is not however about rural development in general. That was not our remit. But it is about the role that enterprising local communities can play supported by the public, private and third sectors. The contribution of local people to rural development has been under recognised for far too long. Our Commission was established by Carnegie UK Trust to seek to rectify this in public policy and practice. We are convinced from the three years our Commission has been meeting, consulting, listening and from the research we have undertaken, that local communities have a vital contribution to make to tackling issues ranging from social inclusion, to the low carbon economy, from cynicism about our institutions, to wellbeing.

We believe our report contains some significantly important ideas.

Many are not original. Indeed all are based upon practical things that communities we have seen are doing and which we feel should be more widely adopted. What we have done is to bring these together and place them in the public domain, we hope to be supported. Carnegie did not set the Commission up to necessarily come to a consensus. Not all members of the Commission held the same views on all issues. Where we have a common agreement is that we are all convinced that people power works wonders.

Before considering the characteristics of dynamic, vibrant and sustainable rural communities which we have identified and the associated ideas for action we wish to recommend, there are however some pre-conditions.

The Commission consider that the transformation of rural communities will depend on the effectiveness of **three enabling factors**:

**a. Growing the capacity** of local people, agencies and professionals that support rural communities.

*Strong communities are places where the talents and skills of local residents are identified, valued and used and ample opportunities are provided for all to develop new **skills** needed to thrive in a changing world. These skills must be matched by the capacity of those of professionals who work with communities. Although the rhetoric of governments is encouraging a new localism and greater community engagement, without sustained investment in growing the capacity of all those who need to be involved in the process, these aspirations will not be fulfilled.*

**b. Enhancing community assets through building capital**

*Our model of sustainable community development places **asset building** at its heart. In an increasingly fragile world, rural areas should be recognised as resource rich; places where assets are stewarded for the nation as a whole. All rural communities contain assets, in the sense of money, buildings, land, landscape, culture and social capital. These need to be recognised and harnessed for public benefit alongside necessary public and private sector investment.*

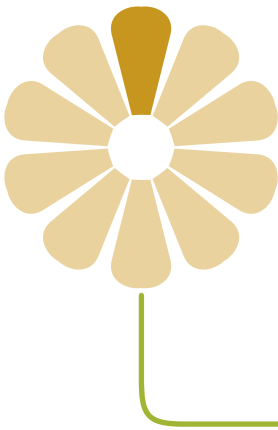
### c. Increasing the scope and quality of community planning

Effective **community planning**<sup>1</sup> provides a mechanism for the identification, design and delivery of services that are relevant, targeted and accessible. Communities that are strong are ones where residents and service users not only have an effective voice around the planning table, but also generate their own community action plans. It is for this reason that we believe it is essential to bridge a closer relationship between locally determined community action plans and wider strategies for developing and regenerating rural areas.

***Dynamic, vibrant and sustainable communities need creative people working together, assets to support their aspirations and agencies and local people collaborating to an agreed plan. All three are needed.***

**We now consider the ten characteristics of dynamic, vibrant and sustainable rural communities and present our ideas for action.**

<sup>1</sup> The term Community Planning has been introduced in recent years as a feature of public policy, which requires local authorities and other public and third sector partners to develop jointly their strategic plans and to involve local people in this process. Community action planning describes the identification of local priorities *by rural communities themselves*. We believe that our diagnostic model should be used to inform both Community Planning and community action planning. One of our key recommendations is to see a closer inter-relationship between community action planning and Community Planning.



## OPTIMISING ASSETS

**The vibrant rural community of the future will display an assets-based approach rather than concentrating simply upon needs, will use financial and other instruments to take ownership of community assets and will manage assets responsibly and actively over time for public benefit.**

### Why action is needed

In 2005 Carnegie commissioned a literature review and case studies of **Asset-Based Rural Community Development (ABCD)** around the world, together with a parallel review of the UK and Irish experience. ABCD has emerged globally as a rejection of deficit regeneration models, where communities have to demonstrate all the things they lack in order to win resources. It takes as its starting point the existing assets, particularly the strengths inherent in community associations and social networks, and mobilises these, alongside tangible assets such as land and buildings, to create new economic and social opportunities. So important are the social and human assets within rural communities, that we explore this in more detail in a later section. Our focus here is upon harnessing the tangible assets.

During our consultations across the UK and Ireland we became aware of a strong interest in harnessing rural assets more effectively to provide social and economic advancement for rural communities. The Quirk Review in England, published in May 2007, is the latest in a number of government reports that are highlighting the importance of community ownership of assets. Quirk recommends a major programme of awareness raising and capacity-building, and urges local authorities and other bodies to take a more corporate approach to their overall asset portfolio and their relationships with local communities.

In our visits, we saw clear evidence of the significant regeneration that occurs when local communities can access assets for community well being and public benefit. A focus on assets is not however to deny that rural areas also have needs. Asset Based Community Development

builds the capacity of people to participate actively in finding ways to meet them. ***A good motto is: 'use what you have to secure what you have not'.***

Transfer of public assets is already legally possible either at market value or at a discount. Clearly as this transfer is from one form of social ownership to another we would recommend the latter. We applaud the announcement of the UK government in May 2007 that local authorities should be encouraged to transfer unused buildings at a peppercorn cost to local communities. This is an important way in which local and other public authorities can support the development of social enterprises, providing them with a means of **generating a sustainable revenue stream.**

There are some people living in rural communities with considerable wealth who need to play a greater part in supporting sustainable rural community development. In our consultations with the Country Land and Business Association in England and sister associations and with individual large estates, we have identified a growing interest in asset-based community development and a keenness to make greater use of land and buildings for wealth and income generation for community benefit.

Some of the more inspiring examples are in the Western Isles of Scotland, where local communities, following the 2004 Land Reform Community Right to Buy legislation, have been supported by the Lottery and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to purchase land and buildings from private owners. In other areas we have seen productive partnerships developing between landowners and local communities, for mutual benefit. We strongly support these developments and believe that many more private owners would consider these options, if the asset ownership were **secure for the community in perpetuity.**

The acquisition of land and buildings by local communities is a serious undertaking and can present great capacity building challenges. We acknowledge the risks to communities when taking on substantial asset ownership. Ill prepared, this can be a very disempowering burden. Neither

should we assume that assets are always valuable. If you own a forest and the price of timber falls the asset may become a liability (however temporarily). **Active management of the asset** – e.g. contingency plans to use the forest for other purposes – is essential. Asset acquisition has to go hand in hand with appropriate support to enable rural communities to navigate the wide and increasing range of legislative and regulatory requirements.

The asset-based approach encourages the identification of assets that exist within communities but often remain hidden or unacknowledged by needs-based practices. It acknowledges the importance of physical and human/social assets, and in particular how these can be brought more effectively into community use. Many rural communities already own village halls and have run these facilities successfully for decades. We are now witnessing a growing interest by rural communities across the UK and Ireland in the acquisition of other assets.

Currently there are few community organisations however with the spare capacity and skills needed to prepare a firm proposition to funders and there is a need for funding streams to be established to provide working capital to cover the costs involved e.g. feasibility studies, surveyors' and legal fees. Another challenge is to find legal mechanisms to retain assets in a community over time – in effect to turn them into part of the growing capacity of the area.

A frequently raised issue is the **financing of community acquisition** of local assets and their development. We are confident that there is a significant demand in the UK and Ireland for support in developing projects such as community woodlands, amenity land around villages, community owned shops and post offices, multi-use buildings, children's play areas, renewable energy plants - whatever the community needs. There is however an urgent need to ensure financial mechanisms to support rural asset acquisition.

### **Scottish Land Fund**

The Scottish Land Fund, administered by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, has assisted 150 communities to acquire land and develop land-based projects since its launch in February 2001. In addition to the well-publicised projects such as the Isle of Gigha and Anagach Wood, a wide range of smaller projects has received assistance.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

One of the leading players in this work is the **Development Trust Association**, which brings together nearly 400 community development organisations that use enterprise and asset development in order to reverse social and economic decline. DTA members as a whole have already supported the transfer of £350m million of assets into community ownership, transforming derelict and underused property into facilities and services that people want, and at the same time generating income which can be reinvested into the community.

## Amble Development Trust

Thirteen years ago Amble in Northumberland was a coal mining and fishing area suffering from the decline of both its traditional industries. By the early 1990s unemployment was rising, the main town infrastructure & central area needed substantial work and there had been no significant investment in the area for some time. Amble Development Trust was set to tackle these problems and see how the spiral could be reversed. Achievements include the development of a former pub as the base for a wide range of local services including employment training, benefits advice and job centre services with space let to tenants and £1.3m investment in new office premises to meet demand for rented space & provide new community facilities. Amble Welfare provides community sports facilities following a gift of land and the opening of the Bread Bin as a local bakery owned and operated by the Trust and employing 7 local people.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)





It has been recognised in recent UK government publications that the lack of physical capital, primarily in the form of land and buildings and the income that such assets can generate, jeopardises both the contribution that community organisations make to sustaining local social and economic development and for disadvantaged communities in particular. Governments are now encouraging the transfer of a range of public and private assets into community ownership and we strongly support this. But to realise this transfer will require **a major commitment on behalf of governments and other funding bodies**. The experience of the still modest transfer to date in Scotland, if replicated across the UK and Ireland, would require funding support for communities to purchase assets of several hundred million pounds.

## Ideas for Action

### 1. Encourage the transfer of public and private assets into community ownership.

Asset-Based Community Development is now taking off in the UK and Ireland. We believe that this is an area with huge potential and could become the motor for the regeneration of many rural communities. The development of a sufficient critical mass of experience such that asset based approaches are deployed on a more comprehensive basis requires to be significantly supported by governments, regional development agencies and other funders. The **Lottery distributors** and the recently announced **Social Investment Bank**, have a key role to play in providing funding opportunities for communities to purchase assets that will in time sustain economic and social development.

**We call upon governments, regional development agencies, Lottery distributors, the Social Investment Bank and independent funders to enhance financial support for rural Asset-Based Community Development.**

## 2. Support the rural wealthy to transfer capital assets for sustainable community development.

We welcome the growing interest amongst the larger estates and country landowners in asset based community development. Governments and landowners' associations need to work together to create an enabling environment that encourages this.

**We call upon the landowners' associations in the UK and Ireland to enhance their promotion of asset based community development and to establish an advisory service to support their members.**

**We call upon governments to introduce measures to encourage asset transfer and which secures public benefit and community ownership in perpetuity.**

## 3. Enhance capacity building support at regional and local levels

Investment needs to be matched with a substantial programme of capacity building to ensure that assets are wisely managed in the long term. **The capacity challenge** for communities especially when acquiring buildings and land necessitates the provision of technical support. There is a need for Regional Development Agencies in England and their equivalents across the UK and Ireland to support a network of rural community technical aid services, building upon the model of Highlands and Islands Enterprise's Community Land Unit.

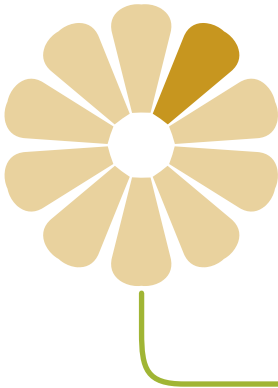
**We call upon all regional development agencies to establish specialist teams to support community asset transfer and ownership building upon the model of Highlands and Islands Enterprise.**

**4. Support learning exchange between rural communities and organisations engaged in rural asset based community development in the UK, Ireland and Internationally.**

Few community organisations or indeed community development staff have direct experience of Asset Based Community Development. This is a significant skills challenge, which will require investment. There is a need to build up a critical mass of experience within the UK and Ireland and overseas. We welcome the initiatives being taken by the Carnegie UK Trust, the Scarman Trust, the International Association for Community Development, the Community Development Foundation and others to support this learning exchange.

**We call upon the employers of community development staff to support learning exchange and training opportunities for community organisations and community development workers in asset-based community development.**

**We call upon the Carnegie UK Trust to support the national and international exchange of experience on asset-based rural community development.**



## ACHIEVING FAIRNESS FOR EVERYONE

**The vibrant rural community of the future will be open, diverse, inclusive, demonstrating a concern for equity and care for each other. It will work to redress and alleviate poverty and disadvantage.**

### **Why action is needed**

Central to any vision of a vibrant rural community of the future must be fairness for everyone. It is this fairness that enables the other characteristics of the community to be expressed and developed in ways that are sustainable and inclusive rather than short term and divisive. It is the strong view of the Commission that vibrant communities incorporate greater levels of equality, equity and diversity.

The Commission has identified significant inequalities and associated poverty across rural UK and Ireland. The evidence we have confirms that where there are problems, these are however predominantly a product of the failure of public and private sector delivery systems and of the socio economic structure of society and not of the individuals in rural communities themselves.

There are **longstanding and growing wealth and income divisions** in most rural areas. Despite recent announcements in the UK by the Agricultural Wages Board, low wages, particularly in the agricultural and food processing labour markets and amongst migrant workers and within the hospitality sector are a key feature of rural poverty.



### **Travellers Remembered**

Traveller's history is misunderstood and often ignored. Hostility, prejudice and ignorance blind the general population to the richness of Traveller culture. This collection of digital histories aims to shed light upon a different lifestyle. With the help of experienced media workers, children and young people (aged 10 - 22) from 25 different Traveller families in the West Midlands have recorded the personal reminiscences of their parents and grandparents, adding family photographs to bring the memories to life.

To find out more and to view these stories online, please visit:

[www.ruralmedia.co.uk](http://www.ruralmedia.co.uk)

Although the population of many rural communities is growing faster than that of urban areas, in-migration is composed mainly of older, more affluent people or by incoming migrant labour. At the same time there is an outflow of younger people, leaving in search of jobs and the educational and lifestyle opportunities of cities. Affluent incomers may be second homeowners, adding to the inflationary costs that prohibit many existing younger residents to even contemplate home ownership. For migrant workers the possibility of home ownership is negligible.

Indices of deprivation have been used by central and local government over many years to identify and target areas and groups in disadvantage, when allocating resources. Current indicators confirm that many of the disadvantages which poorer people face are multiple. Poverty impacts upon health and educational attainment. **Up to date data on the extent of rural disadvantage and poverty is essential to target limited resources** to secure positive outcomes for disadvantaged rural residents. However we are concerned that the indicators adopted by governments across the UK and Ireland do not focus adequately on rural needs, but depend on spatial factors e.g. distance from nearest hospitals, which can be unreliable proxies.

We have discovered many professionals - local police officers, health visitors and teachers for example, who are keen to work together to tackle disadvantage at a local level. However too often these **agencies work in silos**. We have found that different professions and agencies tend to look at issues such as rural disadvantage through the partial lens of their professional training. Disadvantage and social exclusion are far more inter-related.

We have identified evidence of increasing discrimination in the countryside. Minority ethnic groups, though small in overall numbers, feel isolated, not integrated and unsupported. There is growing evidence of hostility and exploitation towards incoming migrant workers. **Discrimination and prejudice** are not new phenomena; for generations gypsies and travellers have been a feature of rural life, where despite efforts to promote understanding and tolerance, discriminatory attitudes still remain. Our concern is to identify the contribution that rural community

development can play in building fairer communities. **Local community action cannot alone achieve social justice** and fairness. This requires other measures such as anti discriminatory legislation and redistributive taxation. However local communities in partnership with the public sector, business and third sector organisations can take action to create better-paid jobs, to combat discrimination, to improve welfare benefits take-up and to care for more vulnerable neighbours.

### **Benefits take up in rural areas**

Studies of disadvantage in rural Scotland and rural Cumbria found that the uptake of benefits was much lower than would have been expected, given the low incomes of many workers. Access to advice in towns was problematic, with benefit offices seen as highly intimidating quite apart from the social stigma of claiming. The culture of independence and self-reliance in rural areas would appear to be an important factor in the under-claiming of state benefits. There is a lack of anonymity in collecting benefits at the village post office.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

## Ideas for Action

### 1. Promote the take up of welfare benefits by eligible rural residents

There is considerable evidence to show that those on low and fixed incomes, such as pensioners, are unaware of their welfare rights. Evidence we have from community level **benefit take-up campaigns** in rural areas is impressive. Well publicised campaigns involving the village post office, health centres, local press and the Citizens Advice Bureau should be regularly supported by local authorities and appropriate government departments. It is essential that the stigma of welfare benefits particularly amongst older rural residents be countered.

**We call upon governments and local authorities to support local benefit take up campaigns.**

### 2. Adopt appropriate deprivation data to target rural inequality.

We have examined the rural deprivation indicators adopted across the UK and Ireland and conclude that they require review. There is an urban bias to the indicators currently adopted and **a masking of the scale of rural disadvantage** due to the spatial analysis adopted. As a result, rural communities generally do not feature and thus lose out in terms of targeted public investment. Data should be appropriate to a rural setting with indicators available at a parish or community council level.

**We call upon governments to publish revised rural deprivation indicators and to make the analysis available at parish and community council level.**



**3. Enhance expertise within rural communities and across a range of professions to promote collaborative working that addresses social inclusion.**

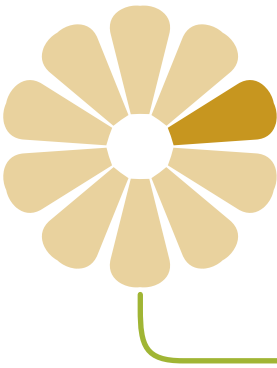
There is a need for shared training across public and third sector agencies alongside the provision of learning opportunities with community activists – i.e. learning and working together.

**We call upon national occupational skills councils, employers and training providers to review professional training competences to ensure that staff are more adequately prepared for collaborative working to address social exclusion in rural settings.**

**4. Reduce barriers between established residents and incomers through schools and community education.**

Schools and community education services have an important role to play in supporting young people and adults to address issues of xenophobia, religious intolerance and racism. We have seen several inspiring examples of formal and informal education programmes and community mediation programmes, particularly in rural Northern Ireland.

**We call upon governments, the Human Rights Commission, schools and community education services to give greater prominence to anti discriminatory education and community mediation programmes in rural areas.**



## EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

**The vibrant rural community of the future will have the capacity to play an active role in shaping its own future through a revitalised system of elected and participative governance at local community level.**

### Why action is needed

There is a **significant local democratic deficit** across most of rural UK and Ireland. For decades there has been a trend towards larger and more distant local authorities covering extensive rural areas and towards regional structures of governance. We have also seen a growing policy emphasis upon local authority partnerships with the private and third sectors and a call for greater consultation with service users and local community interests.

Whilst we see many advantages in the development of unitary local authorities and devolution to regional levels, this has had the effect of weakening the capacity of local communities themselves to make substantive decisions appropriate to their locality. It is time to rectify this serious weakening of community governance.

We have not looked at the issue of local government reform. However from the perspective of rural community development, we believe that a system of **elected and participative governance at local community level** needs to be introduced as a matter of priority where it does not exist and where it does, for example through parish and community level councils, strengthened. Enhanced community level democracy is not a guarantee of the vibrant, dynamic community and we acknowledge that in some instances it can lead to NIMBYism. But our experience is that this attitude tends to occur where local communities have inadequate information allowing fears to develop. The advantages of rejuvenating local democracy far outweigh the disadvantages.

Parish and community councils have huge potential but in general inadequately represent their communities to meet the challenge of change because of their lack of power and resources. **There is little local interest by the large majority of rural residents in most parish**

**or community councils.** Turnout at elections and public awareness as to what they do is negligible.

In England and Wales, parish and community councils do have duties and powers (including the power to precept i.e. to raise revenue from local taxation) but too many make little use of them. In Scotland, community councils have few powers, but work within a statutory framework. In the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland there are few parish councils and none has a statutory basis. We consider that new systems of elected governance at community level are an essential requirement for the revitalisation of democratic governance and should be introduced across the UK and Ireland.

Parish and community level councils are currently caught in a Catch 22 situation. Many people fail to vote because they are unaware of what the parish or community council could do. One way of addressing this would be for the **adoption of a single day for parish and community level council elections** within each country, as currently is the case with local authority elections.

There is also an important role for community-led organisations other than parish and community councils. In many areas, community associations, market town partnerships and development trusts attract far more local interest and involvement than parish and community councils. Precisely because they are *seen* to be doing things. These community-led organisations are a manifestation of community governance and we have seen many examples of inspiring and effective community regeneration led by them.

In spite of the introduction of community planning across the UK and Ireland, and the existence of an extensive repertoire of techniques and skills for encouraging public participation, we have great **concerns about the extent to which local community views are reflected in the strategic planning processes** led by local authorities and other agencies.

There **is a need to alter the power dynamic** and to strengthen the capacity of the local community to shape these processes and outcomes.

This requires greater effort on the part of agencies to engage local communities in the planning process, but also, critically, giving local communities themselves the authority to be the authors of their own local plan, a community action plan, which should in turn inform and influence the strategic council wide community plan.

### **Caithness Partnership**

The partnership is researching new ways of ensuring rural community engagement and buy-in to Community Planning activities through the Caithness Rural People's Panel. This is a virtual panel of 50 residents with contributions from people from their home via the Internet.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/community\\_planning](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/community_planning)



Community action plans would provide the means for rural communities to define local priorities themselves and thereby to influence the strategies of local authorities and other agencies. We have seen good examples of where a local parish or community council or a Market Town Partnership have developed sophisticated community action plans involving extensive public participation and where the plan has in turn influenced the local authority.



### **Tipperary Institute and PLANED**

Tipperary Institute has an impressive track record in the Irish equivalent of strategic planning – the Local Area Partnership. The Institute has developed a framework for community action planning, which incorporates economic, social and environmental dimensions. This is called ‘Integrated Area Planning’ for a defined geographical area and is being trialled in Co. Offaly.

In Wales, PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development) are widely recognised as a leading proponent of community action planning. In particular they have developed a wide repertoire of participatory planning techniques and have demonstrated over the last fifteen years just how effective the implementation of action planning can be by turning round the fortunes of small towns like Narberth.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/community\\_planning](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/community_planning)

There is a need for local authorities and other planning agencies to enhance their capacity to **engage with local rural communities and in particular those residents who may be less articulate, organised and rarely consulted**. This recognition is most advanced in Scotland and Wales. In Scotland for example the government has published guidance for community consultation and standards for community engagement in community planning and local authority community learning and development staff are employed to support public participation.

### **Community Planning in Powys**

The Chief Executive and senior staff at Powys County Council have demonstrated exceptional leadership in relationship to Community Planning. They convene a 'Leadership Group', which includes Powys Action with Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) as a key player in the community planning process as they have responsibility for the running of over 20 community forums in the county. Local people are able to express their views and promote ideas for action through these Forums.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/community\\_planning](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/community_planning)

## **Ideas for Action**

### **1. Introduce elected governance at local community level.**

There is a need to enhance the profile and powers of parish and community level councils, so that they play an increasingly important role in strengthening community governance and democratic revitalisation in rural areas.

**We call upon governments to establish, if they are not in place already, systems of elected governance at community level, with representatives elected every four years on a single voting day (as appropriate in each country).**

**2. Provide parish and community level councils with the power to precept where they do not have it.**

It is an important part of our vision for sustainable capitalisation and financing of rural activities for communities to have the freedom to raise money through taxation to support locally identified priorities. Parish and community level councils have negligible budgets and thus little capacity to finance their aspirations.

**We call upon governments to give the power of precept, where it does not exist already to all parish and community level councils.**

**3. Give parish and community level councils the duty to commission a community action plan every four years.**

Every market town and cluster of villages should produce a community action plan outlining local people's vision for their community and ways in which they believe that can be realised and funded. The commissioning of the plan should be the duty of the elected parish or community level council, but could be implemented on their behalf, with the clear requirement that there must be extensive community engagement.

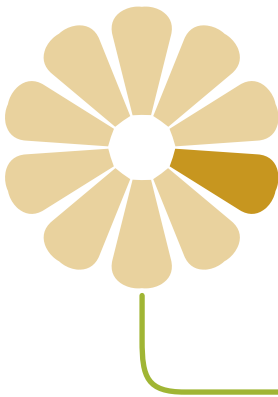
**We call upon governments to place a duty upon parish and community level councils to prepare and publish a community action plan every four years and a duty upon higher tier authorities to consider these plans in their own strategic planning.**

**4. Provide funding, technical advice and assistance to local communities to prepare community action plans and an entitlement to free training for parish and community level councillors.**

The process of producing a plan will cost money and be labour intensive for volunteer community representatives. We have highlighted the importance of ensuring effective community engagement, in particular by those who for one reason or another rarely participate. Parish and community level councils must be resourced to commission a genuinely participative plan. Professional rural community development staff should be employed to assist local communities in this process.

**We call upon local authorities to provide funding and other resources to enable parish and community level councils to access independent technical assistance and capacity building support so that a community action plan can be produced.**





## INCREASING FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The vibrant rural community of the future will have the capacity to access investment from the EU, central and local government, the business sector, lottery distributors and trusts and from a directly raised precept.

### Why action is needed

For many rural initiatives, communities have traditionally relied on local fundraising. Other projects have been dependent upon outside investment via grant funding. There will always be a need for continued grant funding but there is evidence to suggest that this will not be as easily available in future. We believe that in the future the emphasis will be upon earned income, or rather the capacity of communities to harness assets, including accessing investments from external sources, which have a potential for longer term income and wealth generation.

The funding scene for rural communities is a **complex canvas** with many schemes, each with their own application requirements. It is not uncommon for the process from application to approval to extend into years. Most funds are time-limited, generally less than three years. This does not encourage **long-term thinking**. An audit culture has over-dominated grant making. Funders need to take more risks with funding used as an investment rather than as a subsidy.

We have received evidence from rural communities concerned that **'funding cocktails'** often need to be drawn from several different sources. Small communities can incur serious cash flow difficulties when grant payments from funders are made in arrears. Whilst factors such as the imposition of VAT on village hall and other building projects for community benefit can add significant additional costs. Rather than empowering local community action, the seeking of funds can be a deeply disempowering process, necessitating huge amounts of volunteer time and technical understanding.

Responding to the requirements of funding bodies can distort locally identified priorities. We would like to see a closer relationship between

funders concerned to support rural community development and the aspirations and priorities of local people, as expressed in their community action plans. Funders will always have their own interests and priorities, and there will always need to be funding sources available for voluntary and community groups concerned only with their discrete needs and concerns.

The essence of rural community development approaches means that projects are shaped around priorities identified and articulated by the communities themselves. **There needs to be sufficient flexibility**, particularly in small and medium sized grant schemes, to allow the criteria of the funders to match the needs of communities. There will also always be a need for user-friendly small-scale grants, administered locally to support the involvement of new rural leaders and 'quick-win' projects.

### **Hertfordshire Community Foundation Key Fund**

Like many other Community Foundations, Hertfordshire operate a Key Fund. This is a small grants fund, designed to enable small, community-led organisations to make use of European Funds for local projects. Historically, these organisations have been excluded from European funding because of barriers such as a lack of match funding, payment in arrears, lengthy and complicated administrative procedures. The role of a Key Fund is to enable innovative responses to be achieved quickly. The Community Foundation co-ordinates local sources that provide part of the match funding.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

There is a need to provide **more sustained and co-ordinated investment** for rural community development in the future. Resources from a wide variety of sources – national agencies and central government, regional bodies, local authorities, Lottery distributors and independent trusts all support rural community development but currently there is little co-ordination between them.

Community Foundations are playing an increasing role in stimulating and supporting investment by rural residents and other funders who have the resources to support sustainable community development. In addition schemes based upon Industrial and Provident Society rules are encouraging investment by local people through the issuing of shares in co-operatively owned shops, pubs and other facilities. Community Development Finance Institutions are being established to supply capital and business support to individuals and organisations whose purpose is to create wealth in disadvantaged communities or under-served markets. Community Foundations, Community Land Trusts and Community Development Finance Initiatives are proving effective vehicles through which wealthy donors can express a long-term commitment to an area and its needs.

There is **a new spirit of philanthropy** and giving in the UK and Ireland. Carnegie UK Trust is currently working with the Office of the Third Sector, the devolved administrations and the Economic and Social Research Council to establish the UK's first Centre for Research and Development into Philanthropy and Charitable Giving. Philanthropic giving within and to rural communities is not as well developed as urban philanthropy. Organisations like the Institute of Philanthropy, Philanthropy Ireland and New Philanthropy Capital have an important role to play in promoting philanthropy more widely across rural UK and Ireland.

### **Wessex Reinvestment Trust**

Wessex Reinvestment Trust is developing a mechanism for raising finance from local investors. This could be in the form of equity investment, loans or bonds. The return to the investor could be in the form of a financial return, a social return, or a combination of the two. There may be an additional return for taxpayers by receiving tax relief on their investment if it is over £500.

Investors are likely to be those individuals or businesses interested in supporting local community initiatives that have a target of achieving long term sustainability.

A model, which is approved by both the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for Enterprise Investment Scheme tax relief is now being tested.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

We have highlighted already our belief that locally elected parish or community level councils should be empowered, where they are not already to raise money directly from taxation.

### **Ideas for Action**

#### **1. Simplify fund raising.**

Some grant making trusts and the Lottery distributors have developed application processes that are **user friendly** and we commend this, but there is still more to be done in widening access. Intermediary bodies such as Rural Community Councils and Councils of Voluntary Service have a vital role in supporting fund raising in rural communities, and in bringing a range of

funders and community organisations together.

**We call upon funders to make applying for funding, especially for small amounts, as simple as possible.**

**We call upon Carnegie UK Trust to initiate a rural funders' forum in each country.**

## **2. Support proven success.**

A problem for so many communities seeking grants is that they are often required to be innovatory. We would urge funders to encourage those undertaking community projects to take on the ideas and approaches that have proved to be successful elsewhere; in other words not to over-emphasise a need for originality in funding applications but to support programmes capable of responding to replication of proven success.

**We call upon funders to share information as to what works and does not and to have programmes capable of responding to replication of proven success.**

## **3. Recognise the long-term nature of rural community development.**

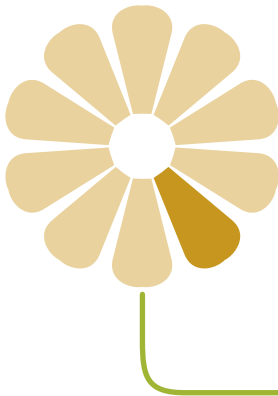
Because of the historic under-investment in rural community development, there is now a need for longer-term investment, preferably a minimum of five years. It is encouraging that bodies such as the UK Treasury, Welsh Assembly Government and Lottery distributors acknowledge that limited one to three year funding is an inappropriate way to support sustainable rural community development. We support these developments and urge other funders to do likewise. There is also an important role here for government departments concerned with supporting the Third Sector to encourage other government departments to consider longer-term sustainability in their funding programmes and delivery

**We call upon funding bodies to introduce funding opportunities for periods of longer than five years for rural community development.**

**4. Co-ordinate and improve targeting of rural community development funding.**

We encourage funders to support **community action planning** in order to ensure more effective targeting of funding to support priorities identified by local communities as a whole. The idea of **community budgeting** is being piloted in parts of the UK as a means for providing greater collaboration and co-ordination between funding agencies and involvement of local people in agreeing budget priorities at local level. We believe that community budgeting could have much to offer in this regard and would support further work in this area.

**We call upon funders to support community action plans and community budgeting as ways of targeting funds to address needs and priorities identified by local communities.**



## ENJOYING LOCALLY RELEVANT SERVICES

The vibrant rural community of the future will enjoy equity of access to essential services and have the ability to shape additional public, private and third sector services that are locally relevant.

### Why action is needed

It has been long recognised that there is a premium involved in the delivery of services to some populations (e.g. London weighting, the Barnett Formula in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Whilst universal entitlement to 'essential services' is supported in principle on grounds of social justice, this ideal is under threat from accelerating costs and the perceived efficiencies achieved through centralisation. The **withdrawal of many services from rural areas** has been well documented.

The guarantee that a service or utility will be provided is worth little without a corresponding commitment to quality standards. This approach has been common in education for some time. It is now spreading to other public services. Each service entitlement provided by the state needs to be accompanied by a statement of nationally or regionally agreed **minimum standards**. Governments have an important role to play in regulating essential services, such as the utilities or the spread of broadband provided by the private sector, to ensure universal standards.

When 'users' work alongside providers to design and deliver services we describe the process as '**co-production**'. We have explored the scope for co-production of services in rural areas and believe that rural communities can fulfil a number of different roles in relation to service delivery:

Planning and design – e.g. through 'planning for real'

Commissioning – e.g. a locally managed environmental grant scheme

Purchasing – e.g. parish contribution towards the cost of local police community support officers

Managing – e.g. village halls

Delivering – e.g. community transport schemes that ensure public service targets for access to services are met

Monitoring – e.g. local transport user committees

Evaluating – e.g. local focus groups in EU project evaluations.

We find this approach attractive as it provides a cost effective way of delivering services in rural areas, which might otherwise be lacking in viability. There also needs to be more creative thinking about how tenders are constructed and recognition of the value of small-scale local delivery against the financial benefits achieved by economies of scale.

Some agencies and professionals are reluctant to hand over or share a management and delivery role with service users and their support networks. Working closely with users and communities requires professionals to possess **skills in user engagement and partnership working**. In turn user and community groups require support and skills in service management and delivery.

### **Cheshire Disabilities Federation**

A key priority of the Department of Health in England is that eligible individuals can access and manage Direct Payments to take better control of their care. However, in rural areas it is often difficult for people in receipt of Direct Payments to be able to source and employ appropriate care providers and there are also physical barriers in accessing information and support in relation to managing Direct Payments, especially for the elderly and those with physical and other disabilities. Cheshire Disabilities Federation is researching informal 'peer' support networks amongst individuals in rural and isolated communities to overcome these barriers.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/service\\_provision](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/service_provision)



'Market-based' or purely commercial service providers are often simply unavailable in rural areas and **new service delivery mechanisms need to be developed** to address gaps in provision. There is great scope here for social enterprises in delivering social care, environmental, retail and leisure services. We have also witnessed many excellent examples of multi-functional community service delivery during our evidence gathering, for example where the village shop is utilised to provide a number of other services.

### **Plunkett Foundation 'The Store is the Core' and Atlantis Leisure, Oban**

'The Store is the Core' examines how village shops can be developed into multi-service outlets. The Plunkett Foundation is examining three community shops (Sulgrave in Northamptonshire, Uig on the Isle of Lewis and Killeen in Co. Mayo) and is keen to develop sustainable models for community shops that can be adopted by other groups. The public sector is examining complementary use of village outlets for their services.

The Atlantis project came about because of the concern of local people at the lack of indoor sports provision in the area and then deciding to do something about it. It was agreed with the Council that they should take over the Oban Swimming Pool and Oban and Lorn Community Enterprise Ltd was formed (a charitable company limited by guarantee). Since then the sports complex has been transformed and now includes a gym, sports hall, squash courts, café and outside facilities.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/service\\_provision](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/service_provision)

New technology and the combination of online services and **broadband access** can provide more efficient and convenient access to a range of services for rural communities. We predict that for many residents in rural areas, it will be some time before they can access faster broadband speeds, and thereby to access services such as video links with health professionals. But it will happen.

Rural communities have shown themselves to be highly imaginative in adapting to new technology, as evidenced by the number of community resource and information websites. But further steps need to be taken to ensure that vulnerable residents do not become part of the **digital divide**. We can see a need for a new generation of community enabler acting as cyber-therapist, helping the technologically challenged to become comfortable with IT.

### **Cybermoor**

Based in the highest market town in England, Cybermoor is an impressive pioneer of community broadband. This social enterprise is now examining the ways in which rural community members and public sector service providers can be encouraged to contribute content to community websites. This will present opportunities for public sector agencies to use community websites as a means of engagement and assessment of rural needs and for rural communities to influence delivery.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/service\\_provision](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/service_provision)

## Ideas for Action

### 1. Provide essential services to rural populations.

Rural communities by their very nature can encompass large areas with sparse populations, particularly those on the periphery of the UK and Ireland. We do not believe that such communities themselves should have to provide essential public services or utilities run by the private sector. However we recognise that the **cost of provision of non-essential services can be disproportionate to need**. In this regard we are keen to see complementary investment in alternative community co-produced approaches.

**We call upon governments and utility companies across the UK and Ireland to ensure the provision of essential services for all rural communities.**

### 2. Strengthen the co-production of public services and rural service delivery innovations.

Some public service agencies are experimenting with co-production. As yet, limited funding has been available from public and private sources to support this and there is a risk that the potential of co-production is undervalued. We believe that there is enormous potential in co-production and encourage service planners to invest in this.

**We call upon governments to support initiatives in the co-production of services.**

**We call upon local authorities and other service planners to identify and support co-production opportunities as part of the community planning process.**

### **3. Pioneer new service delivery mechanisms through third sector organisations.**

Similarly we support measures to create more opportunities for rural third sector organisations to compete for public service contracts. **Social enterprises play a small but vital role in service provision**, as well as generating local employment. The social enterprise movement is getting much stronger in the UK and Ireland, supported by governments, the Lottery distributors and independent funders. We welcome this development and call for further expansion. Social enterprises are a growing part of the economy, and there is a need to improve the quality and availability of tailor made advice for social enterprises from local enterprise support agencies.

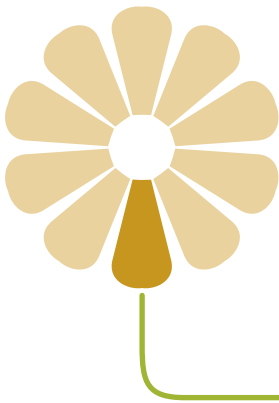
**We call upon public service providers to extend commissioning and procurement opportunities for social enterprises.**

**We call for local enterprise agencies to enhance support for social entrepreneurs and the development of social enterprises.**

### **4. Increase the development of multi-functional service delivery points in rural areas**

It clearly makes much sense to **optimise the use of community facilities** as multi service delivery points. The Commission has seen many examples of these and strongly endorses their development. They encourage different agencies to co-locate and thereby support closer collaboration. The opportunities and permutations are probably endless: primary schools as adult learning centres, the village hall as workspace, the farm as farm shop, 'the pub as the hub' and 'the store as the core'.

**We call upon public, private and third sector service providers to work together to create multi service delivery points in rural areas.**



## ENRICHING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND WELLBEING

The vibrant rural community of the future will display high levels of volunteering and social action, high social trust and neighbourliness, and a welcoming ethos that attracts people to remain or to move into the area.

### Why action is needed

The Commission has identified social capital as one of the most important assets that all rural community have access to. **Networks of civic engagement**, such as village associations, community festivals, sports clubs and cooperatives are essential manifestations of social capital. The stronger these networks, the more likely it is that members of a community will cooperate for mutual benefit. Social capital has some characteristics of other forms of capital in that it is a resource one can build up to draw on at a later date.

The Commission has observed rich social capital in many rural communities. For example, throughout the UK and Ireland there are thousands of agricultural shows, village fetes and shows run largely by volunteers. Each takes many months to plan and draws upon many skills within the community: livestock judging and handling, marquee erection, accounting, catering, publicity and promotion, front of house announcements, first aid, traffic management, programming, child care and weather forecasting!

It is the association of people working together that builds strong and caring communities. Groups of people come together because they share concern about an issue. Community action can provide an essential lifeline to vulnerable residents. Examples of rural community organisations performing this particular function include: luncheon clubs for older people, rural stress help lines, debt counselling and rural women's networks.

Vibrant communities are places where people young and old are encouraged and motivated to want to improve their community and enjoy doing so. **The role of the individual volunteer, the activist, the shaker**

**and doer (the 'fiery spirit')** is critical. As too is the collective capacity of the community group. Both need to be supported by community development and volunteer development organisations.

Incomers can bring valuable new ideas and energy, enriching the social capital of a community. But there are challenges associated with rapid population change. One example being the relationship of a settled community with migrant workers who are often living outside village communities in mobile homes. We have highlighted already our belief in the need for inclusion and diversity and to harness the talents of all.

### **SEEDS, an advocacy group for migrant workers' rights in Northern Ireland**

A major multi-cultural festival held in May 2007 marked the opening of a drop-in centre for new citizens arriving in this part of Northern Ireland. SEEDS was established to recognise the rights of migrant workers and to respond to their needs. The Mayor, Councillor Helen Quigley said "The fact that the centre is opened as part of the One World Festival celebrations made it a very special occasion for multi-cultural communities in our area. It sends out the right message to newly arrived citizens that we welcome them and are here to help and assist them in every way that we can.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)



Social capital has to be cultivated and invested in. This involves skills in building networks and community organising, as well as enhancing the dialogue between local people and external agencies. Rural community development as an approach to building social capital has long been recognised in public policy. However the vast majority of rural communities in the UK and Ireland still have no access to skilled community development expertise. We have identified local community volunteers (of all ages), professional community development workers and other professionals working in local communities as having a vital part to play.

All of these players have continuing learning and development needs. The opportunities and challenges for rural community development we have identified in this report highlight the importance of capacity building. Whether it be to run a community enterprise, to produce a community action plan, to harness new technology, to represent community interests, to engage in partnership initiatives, or to have the organisational capacity to challenge, ready access to learning and development support is critically important.

## Wildworks

Wildworks is a Cornwall based theatre company specialising in landscape-based works that involve communities in development and performance. The setting for the work is usually places that have great historical resonance for the communities, but are currently seen as without use. A disused tin mine is the setting for Souterrain; based on the epic story of Orpheus and Eurydice, Souterrain is a tale of love and adventure in the underworld so the theme resonates with this ex-mining community. Indeed the content of the drama comes from the lives & memories of those who live there.

To find out more, please visit:  
[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)





The Commission diagnoses a skills deficit in two respects: we have too few volunteers and professional staff with community development skills and approaches; and the skills they may have and which training providers, where they exist, are still training people for are inadequate for the current and future challenges. We believe that this must be remedied through enhanced and more diverse experiential learning opportunities.

## Ideas for Action

### 1. Strengthen social capital through investing in rural community development personnel.

From the paucity of labour market information that we have been able to identify there is **a clear supply shortage of rural community development workers**, with fewer than 1,500 trained rural community development workers in the UK and Ireland. From our evidence-taking sessions it is clear that they are overstretched in terms of the local communities they are able to assist.

**We call upon governments across the UK and Ireland to double the supply of trained rural community development practitioners.**

### 2. Review rural community development training and occupational standards.

Further and Higher education training providers, local enterprise agencies and the third sector will continue to have an important role in the provision of training for volunteers and professional community development staff. However we are especially keen to see an expansion in more accessible 'on the job' and open learning opportunities for people living and working in rural communities.

**We call upon the national Sector Skills Councils and**

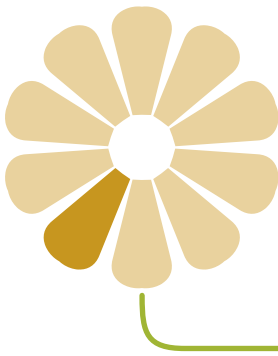
**professional endorsement and validation bodies to review rural community development occupational standards and training for volunteers and staff.**

**We call upon the national further and higher education funding councils to expand funding investment in local work-based learning opportunities for volunteer and paid community development staff.**

**3. Establish a centre of excellence to support learning and teaching in rural community development.**

We support the development of a centre for rural community development that can support learning and development across the UK and Ireland and increasingly internationally. It should support action research, promote innovative learning approaches and materials, network facilitating opportunities for communities and professionals to learn from each other and support the training of the trainers. *The diagnostic model at the heart of this report should inform its curriculum.* Finally, the centre should take to the road on learning journeys to visit communities, share and test knowledge and emerging practice, and encourage communities to learn from each other.

**We call upon Carnegie UK Trust to work with others to establish a UK and Ireland centre for rural community development to support policy and practice development.**



## VALUING LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

The vibrant rural community of the future will thrive on its local distinctiveness; the attractiveness of its landscape and culture encouraging people to stay in a place they love and to be welcomed into the area.

### Why action is needed

Participants at the Carnegie co-sponsored international OECD conference 'Investment Priorities for Rural Development' held in 2006 identified 'place' as an important opportunity for rural areas. Place may be an intangible, but it stands for a set of qualities that is already attracting investment and driving growth in an increasing number of rural communities today.

Unsurprisingly the all round **quality of the environment turns out to be a key selling point** for rural entrepreneurs. This feeds a virtuous circle in local communities: where this enterprising spirit already exists there are informal networks that attract even more businesses. So the features of an attractive rural community can now help to generate a dynamic local economy.

The concept of 'local distinctiveness' has proved to be a recurring theme in the work of the Commission. Local distinctiveness is described by the organisation Common Ground as being, '*characterised by elusiveness, it is instantly recognisable yet difficult to describe. It is simple yet may have profound meaning to us. It demands a poetic quest and points up the shortcomings in all those attempts to understand the things around us by compartmentalising them, fragmenting, quantifying, reducing*'. We visited diverse rural communities across the UK and Ireland: we can testify to the veracity of these insights.

Every rural area is different, with a unique package of attributes derived from its physical geography, landscape, natural flora and fauna and people's interaction with these factors over a very long period of time. In a world in which urban places appear increasingly homogenous, the distinctive characteristics and cultures of rural places are highly valued. Central is our relationship to the land: most of the rural areas in the UK and Ireland are not 'natural' landscapes. **They have evolved as a**

## result of our stewardship (good and bad) over centuries.

There is a risk that as fewer people actually derive their living from the land or the immediate rural area, so there will grow a disconnection between a community and its distinctive characteristics. We need to find new ways of connecting people and place and new means to provide effective land management relevant to future economic and environmental challenges. **Rural schools have an important role to play** in achieving this. The school can play a central role in the cultural life of a rural community. Schools have a responsibility to equip rural children and young people to continue to live and work in rural areas if they choose to do so.

### **Sense of Place in Cornwall**

This project is driven by teachers who wish to meet the educational needs of pupils living in Cornwall in an exciting and innovative way – in other words ‘Creative/Cross-curricular and Cornish’. For example, children can explore the life of Anne Glanville, a woman made famous by her rowing prowess in the 19th century. In the unit pupils find out about rowing boats and what it might be like to race on the water. Pupils learn some songs associated with rowing and are given opportunities to experiment with instruments and their different sounds, performing their musical compositions.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)



In the rural areas of Scotland, Ireland and especially Wales Gaelic and Welsh are very often the first languages. This is in part the result of positive policies by successive governments, reinforced in recent years by devolution and the availability of TV, radio and press in these languages. This strengthens distinctive traditions, but also ensures that communities are fully connected to the wider world.

Rural cultures have evolved over a long period, but they are not static. There is a dynamic new strand in folk music and community-based arts. New local food and drink products are being produced. There is an appreciation of vernacular buildings and a growing interest in contemporary eco-friendly construction in the countryside.

### **Celtic Neighbours**

Celtic Neighbours is a partnership between Voluntary Arts Wales, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Proiseact Nan Ealan (The Gaelic Arts Agency) and the Friends of Theatr Felinfach. This three-year project aims are to mobilise and facilitate cultural collaboration between groups working in their native languages in the three areas concerned, and to build up a sustainable pool of shared expertise, best practise and resources. It also aims to shift governmental and policy-makers' attitudes towards a greater understanding and valuing of everyday culture within these societies, and of the immense regenerative potential eager to be unleashed.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/remote\\_and\\_peripheral\\_areas](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/remote_and_peripheral_areas)



The Commission became aware of importance of local 'narratives' as a basis for distinctive local development. In Gaelic culture a 'Ceilidh' derives from the word meaning a visit and a house party. **Rural cultural landscapes and cultures across the UK and Ireland are being rediscovered as economically valuable recreation spaces.** The changing demands of a modern, mobile and increasingly affluent society will influence the way in which the countryside is seen and in turn present challenges and opportunities for tourism and leisure development. Local communities need to play a far more active role in determining such developments and in ensuring that the income generated enhances rather than damages community development.

### **Aviemore Destination Management Organisation**

The Aviemore and the Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation (ACDMO) Limited is Scotland's first private sector led destination not-for-profit management organisation whose activities are directed towards community benefits from tourism. The Company has evolved with the support of public sector and community interest groups. It is led by a group of Directors from local businesses driven by their corporate social responsibility. Destination management is recognised by the World Tourism Organisation as being a key to sustainable tourism development at the destination level.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/sustainable\\_assets](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/sustainable_assets)



## Ideas for Action:

### 1. Encourage place-based education as part of the school curriculum

Place-based education offers a means to develop the sense of connection to the land and community upon which an ethic of care and responsibility can develop. Place-based education uses the local ecological and socio-cultural setting to re-establish the connections between school and community. It aims to deliver better academic achievement, revitalized teaching, enhanced personal and social development, stronger communities, and improved environmental stewardship.

**We call upon governments, the curriculum development agencies, local education authorities and the teaching profession to support place-based education as a cross cutting feature of the primary and secondary curriculum in rural schools.**

### 2. Enhance Investment in cultural amateurs and community artists as catalysts for effective rural community development

Community and voluntary arts, drama and music are playing an important role in rural community development, with community artists devising some of the most exciting capacity building approaches we have seen. But the community and voluntary arts movement remains a poorly funded part of the overall cultural investment in both the UK and Ireland.

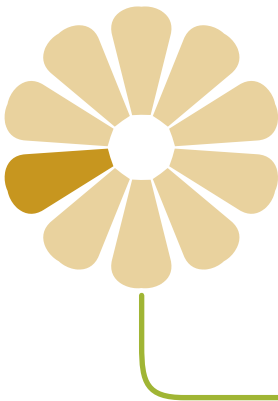
**We call upon governments and arts councils across the UK and Ireland to expend investment in rural community arts, particularly through the employment of cultural amateurs and community arts workers.**

### 3. Establish the economic value of distinctiveness

Distinctive landscapes, languages, arts, food and music present enormous opportunities for rural regeneration, which reinforces the characteristics that define a community. Visitors to rural areas are keen to learn about local customs and cultures. Indeed, they will be disappointed if their holiday is not enriched by such experiences. We envisage a key role for the community in managed tourist development and this should form part of community planning.

**We call upon governments, regional development agencies, tourist authorities, national parks and local authorities to enhance the community development dimension of tourism and leisure.**





## DEVELOPING RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The vibrant rural community of the future will play a role in the development of a reliable infrastructure including transport, broadband connectivity, energy and water, and a range of affordable housing to rent or buy.

### Why action is needed

Vibrant rural communities depend upon good roads, essential utilities, a mixed supply of affordable housing and modern communications. Most of this forms part of the wider regional and national infrastructure, managed at national or regional levels or shaped by the market. The consumption demands of urban areas (the urban footprint) have a profound impact upon infrastructure in the countryside, for example for water supply, energy generation, communications and the transportation of food. Two infrastructural issues in particular however were highlighted during our consultations. Transport and the related issue of access following the various rights to roam legislation, and affordable housing.

Over the past half century rural life has become increasingly dependent upon the motorcar. Public transport has been significantly reduced in rural areas since the nineteen eighties as a result of deregulation, leading to poor or non-existent bus services. The journey to work, to shop, to go to college or for a leisure activity is largely dependent upon access to private car ownership. For the old and for younger people this causes huge accessibility problems and in effect traps them within their village. Link to this what may be limited youth facilities and you often find the case of the bus shelter, for the infrequent bus service, becoming the only accessible youth facility. There are however many ways in which local communities can themselves play a role in developing local transport infrastructure. For instance, we have witnessed a huge range of innovative solutions devised by local people to overcome the absence of public transport, from community buses to car-pooling.

An issue, which also relates to health and road safety, has been the

opportunities that access legislation has opened up for the creation of new footpaths in the countryside. This is not just an issue of right to roam and access to the countryside for visitors and residents, but in some areas has provided the stimulus for rural communities to campaign for better off-road paths and cycleways connecting rural villages, in order to reduce accident levels on country roads and encourage children to cycle safely to school.

### **Wheels-to-work**

Wheels-to-Work is a moped loan scheme for people aged 16+ living in rural communities in Wiltshire who have been offered a job or paid vocational training opportunity but cannot take it up due to transport problems. The scheme works by loaning 50cc mopeds for up to 6 months along with a fully subsidised Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) test and safety equipment (helmet, jacket, gloves and a hi-viz vest) in return for a small fee of £10 per week (riders will be expected to meet their fuel costs).

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

When listening to rural communities however, the most often-quoted infrastructure concern is the **lack of affordable housing** to rent or to buy. The Commission was keen to find a contribution to this huge problem which communities themselves can play and which is consistent with our support for asset based community development. We believe that Community Land Trusts (CLTs), which are community owned and controlled enterprises, provide a vehicle for rural communities themselves to provide housing at costs that the less affluent can afford.

### **Stonesfield Community Trust**

Stonesfield Community Trust is a response by local residents to the shortage of affordable housing in this Oxfordshire village. Set up in 1983, the Trust has produced 15 affordable dwellings, workspace, a pre-school and a Post Office. A large amount of its initial borrowings has been paid off and it now looking at using its income to improve local youth services.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

CLT's are not the panacea for addressing the serious shortage of affordable housing and local communities can only make a limited contribution to this infrastructure problem. But local communities can make a contribution and need to be supported to do so. In this regard we also highlight community action planning as a process for auditing housing need and for identifying potential sites for low cost housing.

What is clear is that the market is failing low-income families in this regard and there are insufficient resources for public authorities and third sector housing associations to address rural housing need. We also believe that there is insufficient use made of existing planning powers by local authorities to allow for the building of sufficient affordable housing.

Planning regulations are not adequately allowing for the building of the scale of affordable housing to meet existing and projected need for those seeking to live and work in the countryside. We are not arguing here for a wholesale lifting of greenbelt and other planning restrictions; however we believe that there should be changes in this regard, in order to **release land and other buildings more easily to facilitate the development of affordable housing.**

We are keen to see planning authorities requiring that all new affordable housing be energy efficient and eco-friendly. We are interested in the ideas recently announced by the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer to build new eco-settlements. However we urge that there should not be an

overemphasis upon the construction of new villages or towns, but upon the expansion of eco-friendly affordable housing stock in existing market towns and villages.

### **Ideas for Action:**

#### **1. Enhance funding for communities to develop local access and transport infrastructure, including paths, cycleways and community transport schemes.**

The development of a community contribution to transport infrastructure needs to be identified within community action plans. Legislation opening up access rights in recent years has stimulated community action and we support this. But it has not been matched by the funding necessary to create or maintain such infrastructure. We are especially interested to promote solutions that rural communities can initiate, with support from local authorities and others, to alleviate access and transport problems experienced by children, older or disabled people.

**We call upon governments, regional and local authorities to adequately resource community managed transport and access initiatives within an integrated transport and access strategy.**

#### **2. Support low cost community led housing projects.**

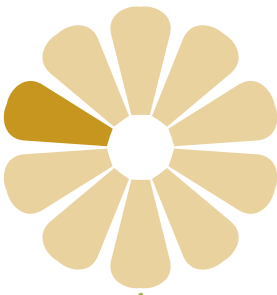
We believe that Community Land Trusts should play an increasingly important role in rural community development by buying, developing and holding land, housing and community buildings for the benefit of local people. CLTs require funding support for pre-development stage, the purchase of land when it becomes available and to fill gaps in development funding packages.

**We call upon governments to establish Community Land Trusts Facilitation Funds in each country.**

### **3. Revise planning legislation to allow for the building of affordable housing in rural areas.**

The escalating cost of housing is causing serious strains across rural UK and Ireland. Constraints in planning laws militate against the acquisition of land to build new affordable housing in rural areas, together with the lack of public sector investment necessary to enable housing associations and community led initiatives such as Community Land Trusts to build affordable housing.

**We call upon governments to revise planning laws to create more opportunities for the acquisition of land by housing associations and Community Land Trusts to build eco-friendly affordable housing.**



## ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY

The vibrant rural community of the future will adapt to the needs of a low carbon economy by reducing its carbon footprint, nurturing its biodiversity assets and reaping the potential of community owned renewable energy generation.

### Why action is needed

It is now clear that our current fossil fuel-based lifestyles must adapt to limit greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and thereby the harsher impacts of climate change. Major reductions will be essential to meet or go beyond the Government's target to cut the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by about 60 per cent from their 1990 level by 2050.

Current environmental concerns have also prompted a fierce debate about the relative impact of different forms of food transportation over both long and short distances. This has at the very least helped to raise consumer awareness of the environmental costs of their food choices. There are **new opportunities for food producers** and processors to collaborate in the building of local collecting and distribution networks. In the medium term, we expect large-scale retailers to develop more local distribution hubs, sourcing as much produce as possible locally. Rural communities need to be ready for these shifts in patterns of production and distribution.

There are new opportunities for the production of renewable energy and environmental resource stewardship. **Renewable energy is readily available** as locally sourced biomass from either woodland or forestry or from specific energy crops in many rural areas as well as wind, tidal or wave sources. The renewable energy can be used in community-based projects for either heat alone through district heating schemes or for combined heat and power generation.

The development of large-scale wind farms is splitting communities, particularly where there is perceived to be little community benefit. The Commission has visited community-owned wind farms which enjoy strong support and which generate ongoing income for community use. Here they are clearly seen as a community asset.

### **Isle of Gigha Community Wind Farm**

Gigha Renewable Energy Limited, a trading subsidiary of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust, established the UK's first grid-connected local community-owned wind farm in December 2004. This landmark project meets all of Gigha's energy needs, exporting the surplus to the mainland and providing an annual net income to the community of around £80,000. Community members were consulted at each stage through a series of meetings held throughout the development of the project. The Gigha community has named the turbines '*Creideas, Dòchas and Carthanna*'; the Gaelic names for '*Faith, Hope and Charity*'. The financial model for the project was based around a combination of grant funding, loan funding and equity, including an £80,000 shareholding through Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

The consequences of not taking action on the challenge of climate change are now being realised. This is an area where community action can make a difference through recycling, energy saving schemes and eco design. **There are also increasing opportunities for communities and local employers to develop 'green jobs' linked to sustainable development.**

### **Rural Communities Carbon Network/ ruralnet|uk**

This project will raise the awareness of the actions that rural communities can take in response to the climate change challenge. It builds on existing, isolated community action and will support other rural groups by providing access to an online panel of experts, good practice toolkits and a mentoring service linked to a small grants programme.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/sustainable\\_assets](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/sustainable_assets)

### **Ideas for Action:**

#### **1. Create employment related to renewable energy production and green living.**

The changing climate will present a range of new opportunities to rural areas, from the chance to develop under-utilised assets such as woodland to tourism development and eco-building design. We are concerned that we will not have a sufficient skilled workforce to meet existing international carbon reduction obligations and to maximise the opportunities provided by dispersed renewable energy production and green living, including organic farming and the construction of eco-friendly affordable housing, schools and other buildings.

**We call upon governments to work with employers and Sector Skills Councils to invest in developing a skilled workforce in rural communities to meet the new environmental challenges.**



## **2. Reward low carbon communities through the local taxation system and other incentives**

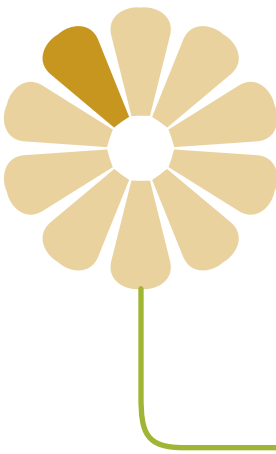
Rural communities have a real opportunity to present shining examples to the rest of society of new models of sustainable living, energy generation and efficiency, and the low carbon economy.

**We call upon governments and local authorities to reward low carbon communities through the local taxation system and other incentives.**

## **3. Adopt practical measures to enhance the capacity of rural communities to protect the environment and to adapt to a low carbon economy**

Energy companies, environmental organisations, schools, youth and community education services have a major role to play in developing environmental awareness and supporting practical community initiatives. These services need to work with local communities to identify environmental protection and low carbon projects as part of community action planning.

**We call upon local authorities and their community planning partners to support the capacity of local communities through technical advice and environmental awareness raising programmes.**



## SUPPORTING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

The vibrant rural community of the future will see farming integrated into a wider and more diverse rural economy, a breaking out of the low skills low wages loop - in part through the growth of local social enterprises and the entrepreneurial development of local assets.

### Why action is needed

While fewer people than ever are now directly employed in farming and fishing and the contribution of agriculture as a proportion of farming family income has fallen as either the farm buildings or family members have diversified into other activities, land management, agriculture and forestry are set to remain at the heart of many rural communities. Farmers and related occupations will remain responsible for the management of most of our countryside. Indeed, we believe that we are **on the verge of a farming renaissance** as land managers respond to new opportunities for food and energy crops.

We found **shortage of labour** to be common in rural areas throughout the UK and Ireland. Rural employers are increasingly recruiting migrant labour. Those seeking rural employment can find work, but it is frequently low paid, insecure, seasonal or part-time and requiring a low skill level. It is not uncommon for rural people to assemble an income from a number of sources - formal and informal.

Rural communities are often dependent upon small and, often, micro businesses. There are some concerns that much of the growth of employment in rural areas has been in the 'wrong kind of jobs'. Knowledge intensive sectors and occupations remain underrepresented. We also need to ensure that it is possible for young people to gain the skills to enable them to stay in rural areas if they wish. This all presents an important **skills and training agenda** for employers and training providers which needs to be addressed and financed.

Rural people tend to be self reliant, with a larger than average number of

self-employed. Many of these are sole trader enterprises and do not aspire to grow. We know that **rural families function often as an economic unit at household level**. Family labour may or may not be paid and in some ways this disguises the true viability of enterprises. Decision-making at household level can defy economic logic because of these complicated motivations. Extended family and kinship ties continue to be a powerful but little understood driver within the rural micro-economy, sustaining rural communities even during times of crisis.

### **New Economics Foundation**

Rural economic disadvantage is often associated with low incomes, where individuals struggle to construct a viable livelihood by engaging in a number of economic activities. New Economics Foundation is examining the most appropriate ways that these workers can be supported and their incomes strengthened and testing their ideas in Upper Teesdale, County Durham and Exmoor.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/sustainable\\_assets](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/rarp/sustainable_assets)

Top down economic development will continue to play an important role in the economic revitalisation of rural communities. The creation of new workspaces and incentives to encourage inward economic investment will always be necessary. We have stated earlier that we envisage huge new job opportunities through tourism, the green imperative, the building of eco-friendly affordable housing, schools and other buildings and by way of communities exploiting local assets more effectively for community benefit. **Individual and social entrepreneurs have a vital role to play**. The focus of our remit was to highlight the complementary role that local communities themselves can and must play, supported by the public, private and third sectors. Part of the challenge of community development is the identification and realisation of this potential through such mechanisms as local purchasing, hiring locally and freeing

potentially productive economic space.

### **Cae Post**

Cae Post is a pioneering charity and social enterprise that provides work and training for people with disabilities or who are disadvantaged in the job market. In partnership with Powys County Council Cae Post run a commercial scale recycling centre near Welshpool. They operate kerbside, bring-site and commercial recycling collections in Powys and beyond and work closely with local schools and communities to spread the message of social inclusion and sustainability. The social enterprise has a business manager who constantly looks for new sources of recyclable materials that enhance work opportunities for the supported volunteers, or for new avenues for the sale and reprocessing of sorted materials.

To find out more, please visit:

[http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the\\_commission](http://rural.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/the_commission)

## **Ideas for Action**

### **1. Enhance the provision of accessible training and small business development support.**

Economic diversification in agriculture, the predominance of small and micro businesses, the utilisation of community assets to create social enterprises, the construction of eco-friendly affordable housing, schools and other buildings, community energy projects and other local economic development initiatives, require quality business management and related skills training. This presents challenges to enterprise and development agencies and training providers, such as further education colleges to design and deliver appropriate and accessible programmes, and opportunities for local people, not least the young, to obtain new

forms of employment to enable them to remain in their area.

**We call upon enterprise agencies and training providers to deliver accessible training and small business development support in rural areas.**

**2. Support the development of community assets to generate jobs.**

Community economic development remains an under-developed part of rural economic development and requires to be taken more seriously. We have convincing evidence from pioneering communities across the UK and Ireland, which leads us to the strong view that this can make a much larger contribution towards supporting dynamic and sustainable local economies.

**We call upon enterprise development agencies and local authorities to support local communities in the identification of local assets with economic development potential.**



**A CHARTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES**

# A CHARTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

## OPTIMISING ASSETS

1. We call upon governments, regional development agencies, Lottery distributors, the Social Investment Bank and independent funders to enhance financial support for rural Asset Based Community Development.
2. We call upon the landowners' associations in the UK and Ireland to enhance their promotion of asset based community development and to establish an advisory service to support their members.
3. We call upon governments to introduce measures to encourage asset transfer and which secures public benefit and community ownership in perpetuity.
4. We call upon regional development agencies to establish specialist teams to support community asset transfer and ownership, building upon the model of Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
5. We call upon the employers of community development staff to support learning exchange and training opportunities for community organisations and community development workers in asset based community development.

## ACHIEVING FAIRNESS FOR EVERYONE

6. We call upon governments and local authorities to support local rural benefit take up campaigns.
7. We call upon governments to publish revised rural deprivation indicators and to make the analysis available at parish and community council level.

8. We call upon national occupational skills councils, employers and training providers to review professional training competences to ensure that staff are more adequately prepared for collaborative working to address social exclusion in rural settings.

9. We call upon governments, the Human Rights Commission, schools and community education services to give greater prominence to anti discriminatory education and community mediation programmes in rural areas.

## **EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

10. We call upon governments to establish, if they are not in place already, systems of elected governance at community level, with representatives elected every four years on a single voting day (as appropriate in each country).

11. We call upon governments to give the power of precept, where it does not exist already, to all parish and community level councils.

12. We call upon governments to place a duty upon parish and community level councils to prepare and publish a community action plan every four years and a duty upon higher tier authorities to consider these plans in their own strategic planning.

13. We call upon local authorities to provide funding and other resources to enable parish and community level councils to access independent technical assistance and capacity building support so that a community action plan can be produced.



## **INCREASING FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT**

14. We call upon funders to make applying for funding, especially for small amounts, as simple as possible.
15. We call upon funders to share information as to what works and does not and to have programmes capable of responding to replication of proven success.
16. We call upon funding bodies to introduce funding opportunities for periods of longer than five years for rural community development.
17. We call upon funders to support community action plans and community budgeting as ways of targeting funds to address needs and priorities identified by local communities.

## **ENJOYING LOCALLY RELEVANT SERVICES**

18. We call upon governments and the utility companies across the UK and Ireland to ensure the provision of essential services for all rural communities.
19. We call upon governments to support initiatives in the co-production of services.
20. We call upon local authorities and other service planners to identify and support co-production opportunities as part of the community planning process.
21. We call upon public service providers to extend commissioning and procurement opportunities for social enterprises.
22. We call for local enterprise agencies to enhance support for social entrepreneurs and the development of social enterprises.

23. We call upon public, private and third sector service providers to work together to create multi service delivery points in rural areas.

## **ENRICHING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND WELLBEING**

24. We call upon governments to double the supply side of trained rural community development practitioners.

25. We call upon the national Sector Skills Councils and professional endorsement and validation bodies to review rural community development occupational standards and training for volunteers and staff.

26. We call upon the appropriate national further and higher education funding councils to expand funding investment in local work-based learning opportunities for volunteer and paid rural community development staff.

## **VALUING LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS**

27. We call upon governments, the curriculum development agencies, local education authorities and the teaching profession to support place-based education as a cross cutting feature of the primary and secondary curriculum in rural schools.

28. We call upon governments and arts councils across the UK and Ireland to expend investment in rural community arts, particularly through the employment of cultural animateurs and community arts workers.

29. We call upon governments, tourist authorities, national parks and local authorities to enhance the community development dimension of tourism and leisure.

## **DEVELOPING RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

30. We call upon governments, regional and local authorities to adequately resource community managed transport and access initiatives within an integrated transport and access strategy.
31. We call upon governments to establish Community Land Trusts Facilitation Funds in each country.
32. We call upon governments to revise planning laws to create more opportunities for the acquisition of land by housing associations and Community Land Trusts to build eco-friendly affordable housing.

## **ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY**

33. We call upon governments to work with employers and Sector Skills Councils to invest in developing a skilled workforce in rural communities to meet the new environmental challenges.
34. We call upon governments and local authorities to reward low carbon communities through the local taxation system and other incentives.
35. We call upon local authorities and their community planning partners to support the capacity of local communities through technical advice and environmental awareness raising programmes.

## SUPPORTING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

36. We call upon enterprise development agencies and training providers to deliver accessible training and small business development support in rural areas.

37. We call upon enterprise development agencies and local authorities to support local communities in the identification of local assets with economic development potential.

In addition we make four key recommendations specifically targeted at the Carnegie UK Trust.

38. We call upon Carnegie UK Trust to work with others to establish a UK and Ireland Centre for Rural Community Development to support policy and practice development.

39. We call upon the Carnegie UK Trust to support the national and international exchange of experience on asset based rural community development.

40. We call upon Carnegie UK Trust to initiate a rural funders' forum in each country.

41. We call upon Carnegie UK Trust to publish an annual review over the next five years of the impact of the recommendations made by the Commission.



**APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX ONE

## The Capitals Framework

Capital	Definition	Examples in a rural context
Financial	Financial Capital plays an important role in the economy, enabling the other types of Capital to be owned and traded.	'Credits' in Local Exchange and Trading currency, shares in the community shop, a Community Land Trust, a local Community Foundation, credit union or access to banking facilities
Built	Fixed assets which facilitate the livelihood or well being of the community	Village hall, community owned shop, road, broadband connection, work space units
Social	Features of social organisations such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate co-operation for mutual benefit. Includes the sub-set of spiritual capital - that aspect of social capital linked with religion and/ or spirituality. Bonding social capital happens within communities and bridging social capital is when communities reach out to one another. Rural communities tend to have strong bonding social capital but less strong bridging social capital	Young Farmers Association promoting public speaking competitions, Women's Institute celebrating traditional home-making skills, Church organising home visits for the sick, the show committee, farmers' market

Human	People's health, knowledge, skills and motivation. Enhancing human capital can be achieved through education and training	'What you know' can benefit your community: e.g. Local historian, folk musician, botanist, skills of show committee members Local schools can encourage place-based education. This and other learning opportunities develop human capital
Natural	Landscape and any stock or flow of energy and material that produces goods and services. Resources - renewable and non-renewable materials.	These assets are particularly significant in a rural context. Water catchments, forests, coal, fish, wind, biomass, wildlife and farm stock. Landscape types such as arable farmland; chalk and limestone grassland; coastal areas; countryside around towns; field boundaries; lowland heath; meadows and pastures; orchards, uplands, waterside land
Cultural	Shaping how we see the world, what we take for granted and what we value	Festivals to celebrate significant local events Revival of indigenous language
Political	The ability of a community to influence the distribution and use of resources	Parish or community council, development trust, Local Strategic Partnership





## APPENDIX TWO

### Members of the Carnegie Commission

Dame Diana Brittan - Former Chair, Community Fund (*Chair February 2006-June 2007*)

The Rt. Hon the Lord Steel of Aikwood (*Chair July 2004- February 2006*)

William Thomson – Hon President, Carnegie UK Trust (*ex officio*)

Phil Barton - Director, RENEW – North West Centre for Regeneration Excellence

Graham Benfield - Chief Executive, Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Sarah Benioff - Chief Executive, Community Development Foundation\*

Seamus Boland - Chief Executive, Irish Rural Link

Sylvia Brown - Chief Executive, ACRE

Margaret Clark - Director, The Commission for Rural Communities

Gary Craig - President, International Association for Community Development

Niall Fitzduff - Former Director, Rural Community Network (NI)

Sir Ben N Gill - Former President, National Farmers' Union

Lord Christopher Haskins - Former Chairman, Northern Foods

Chris Higgins – Head of Enterprising Communities Team, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Avila Kilmurray - Director, The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland

The Rt. Reverend Michael Langrish - Bishop of Exeter\*

Charlie McConnell - Chief Executive, Carnegie UK Trust

Bhupendra Mistry - Carnegie UK Trustee

Professor Malcolm Moseley - Countryside and Community Research Unit, University of Gloucester

Tony Pender - Convener of the Rural Sub-Committee, Carnegie UK Trust

Jonathon Porritt – Director, Forum for the Future

Vanessa Potter - Strategy Complete

Melanie Reid - Journalist, The Times

Alison Seabrooke, Co-Chief Executive, Community Development Foundation

Dr Terry Stevens - Consultant, Stevens & Associates

Maura Walsh - Manager, IRD Duhallow Ltd

Sandy Watson – Former Chief Executive, Angus Council

\* Alison Gilchrist - Director, Practice Development, Community Development Foundation *deputised for Sarah Benioff whilst on maternity leave.*

\* Dr Jill Hopkinson -National Rural Officer for the Church of England *deputised for Bishop Michael Langrish.*

\* Beatrice Andrews, Senior Policy Advisor, Big Lottery Fund *deputised for Vanessa Potter*



**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Animateur:** people who organise the participation of local people in activities that help their community. Animateurs are recruited from the local community and can receive fees and training for a fixed time period

**Assets:** the assets and strengths of a community, ranging from buildings and land to social capital.

**Asset mapping:** An inventory or assessment of assets within a given community.

**Asset based community development:** the process of creating viable and sustainable communities building upon their assets

**Community action planning:** the identification of local priorities by rural communities themselves.

**Community budgeting:** the identification and co-ordination of spending by agencies in a defined geographical area.

**Community development:** the process of empowering local communities, (both geographical communities and communities of interest), which strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organisations and networks; and the capacity of institutions and agencies (public, private and non-governmental) to work in dialogue with citizens

**Community development worker:** A professional trained in community development.

**Community Development Finance Initiatives:** Locally run financial intermediaries with community development as their primary mission. They provide a range of products such as loan funds and micro-enterprise funds.

**Community Foundations:** charitable bodies managing funds donated by individuals and organisations, building an endowment and acting as the vital link between donors and local needs.

**Community Land Trust:** a mechanism for the community ownership of land and buildings by the local community.

**Community planning:** A collaborative planning process between agencies working in a local authority area, generally co-ordinated by the local authority, which is required to engage public participation in the planning process. Community planning is embedded in statute in most parts of the UK and Ireland.

**Co-production;** where communities and service users are active participants in the planning and delivery of services.

**Development Trust:** not for profit organisations engaged in the economic, environmental and social regeneration of an area.

**Digital divide:** the gap between those with access to and capacity to use digital and information technology, and those without this access and capacity

**Fiery Spirits:** inspiring individuals who work hard for their communities.

**Futures Scenario Planning;** a method for understanding the nature and impact of the most uncertain and important driving forces affecting our future.

**Indices of Deprivation:** primarily socio-economic measures of poverty and disadvantage drawn from the census and other sources.

**Industrial and Provident Society:** an organisation conducting a business or trade, either as a co-operative or for the benefit of the community, registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965.

**Intermediary Body:** an umbrella organisation such as a Council for Voluntary Service or Rural Community Council that works to support voluntary and community organisations in a given area.

**Low carbon economy:** Moving to a way of life where we are less dependent upon oil, gas and coal production,

**Market Town Partnership:** representatives from the community and partners from public, private and third sector who prepare and implement a plan for the town and the surrounding area.

**Participative planning;** a method that enables people to create a plan for the most desirable future of their community - a plan they carry out themselves.

**Place based education:** where learning emphasises the geography, ecology, sociology of a particular place.

**Precept:** the power to raise money through taxation

**Sector Skills Council:** employer-led, independent organisations that cover a specific occupational sector. They exist to increase opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of the workforce.

**Social capital:** the stocks of social trust and networks that people can draw on to solve common problems.

**Social entrepreneur:** someone who works in an entrepreneurial manner, but for public or social benefit.

**Social Inclusion:** reducing inequalities between the least advantaged groups and communities and the rest of society by closing the opportunity gap and ensuring that support reaches those who need it most.

**Social Investment Bank:** an independent not for profit financial institution using the capital from dormant accounts to develop the social investment market.

**Social enterprise:** a business with primarily social objectives, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners. Surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community

**Third Sector:** non-governmental, not-for-profit voluntary organisations.



**Carnegie UK Trust is keen to hear your views on this report. This can be done by registering onto our website and logging your comments - [www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk) or contacting us directly using the details below.**



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