



Celebrating Cumbrian communities in 2025

Tell us what you are doing in your community that makes life better for the people who live there. It can be a new project, or something you've been doing for some time. You can tell us about it on the [really simple form here](#).

Categories your work might fit in include transport, housing, community planning and community buildings. We'd love to hear from you if your work doesn't fit these four, or covers more than one category too!

We will share your successes in the press, on our website, on the radio, in case studies and at our AGM in the Autumn. So please [get in touch](#) if you have something you want to shout about.

We're still listening: Your rural issues and messages

Since completing our **Rural Issues Survey** we have been sharing and talking about the key messages, testing them out with a variety of communities and groups.

The [headlines of the survey](#) are that those responding, overwhelmingly, saw local affordable housing and transport as key challenges for people living in our rural communities and want to express those challenges to people in power. Poverty was a more complex picture, with many respondents recognising the hidden nature of poverty and its links with expensive travel and housing.

We will use these headlines to champion rural issues throughout the whole journey to Devolved Mayoral authority and we hope that you will too. If you would like us to talk with your group about the survey issues or campaigning messages, please [get in touch](#).

Meet Liam Ryan, Community Resilience Coordinator for Cumbria CVS

Liam recently joined Cumbria CVS as the new Community Resilience Coordinator. He's keen to introduce himself!

If you'd like to know more about him read our Guest Blog.

[Guest Blog](#)



Community Emergency Resilience Hubs Project: Do you support your community during emergencies and severe weather?



We're working with [Skelton Toppin Memorial Hall](#) to develop their role supporting local community resilience. Together, we're looking at how community buildings can be utilised as 'Community Emergency Resilience Hubs' during emergencies and severe weather. We know there have been many occasions where communities have come together over recent years, to provide support and shelter for each other - and village halls and other community buildings are often at the heart of this. Is this something you've been involved in? We'd love to hear your stories and ideas to help shape this project. If you're interested in working with us, we'd love to hear from you!

Please email Jozi Brown on jozibrown@cumbriaaction.org.uk or Bob Towers at bobtowers@blinternet.com. This work is funded by the [The Royal Countryside Fund](#).

And a quick reminder from *Electricity North West: Advice and tips to help you prepare for a power cut are available [here](#) and read about additional support available for vulnerable customers [here](#).*

Community Planning in Ireby and Uldale Parish: preparing for the Lake District National Park Local Plan



One of over 70 pictures from pupils at Ireby CoFE School, celebrating what they love about their place

On Saturday May 10, Ireby and Uldale Parish Council, working alongside ACT, held drop-in sessions encouraging residents to think about a [community led plan](#). Over fifty members of the community came to the Globe Hall in Ireby, to admire the art work that the children of Ireby CoFE Primary School had produced, to discuss issues, meet councillors and fellow residents and to enjoy delicious home-made cakes and biscuits with a cuppa (or two!). Read more from the Parish Council [here](#).

As part of our Collaboration Hub and Community Voice work with the Lake District National Park Partnership, ACT is offering to support communities to engage fully with the revision of the Local Plan. The Local Plan will set out to a large extent what will be built and where in the National Park for the next two decades, [so it's worth getting involved](#).

Thanks to [Sophie Martin](#) for helping the children produce such a thoughtful range of artwork for the Ireby conversation. Sophie will be drawing the ideas from the school and the community day together with input also from the Parish Council, members of the local WI and the Globe Hall Committee, over the next few months. Watch this space!



The Spark Bus tour that lit up West Cumbria

From **Dearham to Aspatria** and all the incredible places in between, the **Everyone Here Spark Bus Tour** has been nothing short of a celebration – of creativity, of community, and of connection. As the wheels on the bus finally roll to a gentle stop, one thing is certain: West Cumbria turned up and made magic happen. Read about this [Everyone Here](#) project [here](#).

Community Buildings News

£1.5 Million Boost Secures Future of Rural Community Spaces in the North

ACT is celebrating receiving a share of a further £1.5 million in funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, securing the next two years of the pioneering **Community Spaces Partnership**, in collaboration with Community Action Northumberland and Durham Community Action. [More details here](#).



News from Friends and Partners



Better transport – transport that is safe, accessible, affordable, reliable, integrated and green – does amazing things. It connects communities and brings people together; creates a thriving economy and revitalises local areas; it's good for our health and wellbeing; and it cleans up our air and tackles climate change. We think that's something worth celebrating!

[Better Transport Week](#), our annual celebration of sustainable transport will take place from **16 to 22 June**. The theme for the week is how **better transport can help connect communities and bring people together**. Support the [Campaign for Better Transport!](#)

Affordable Rural Housing: Opportunity in Changing Times

On 30 April 2025, at the historic Coram campus in London, policymakers, housing professionals, community advocates, and rural champions gathered for a landmark conference on one of the country's most overlooked crises - the chronic shortage of affordable homes in the countryside.

The event was jointly hosted by [English Rural](#) and [ACRE \(Action with Communities in Rural England\)](#), and featured a keynote address by HRH The Princess Royal, Patron of English Rural. [Read more](#).



Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation launch

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Public Consultation

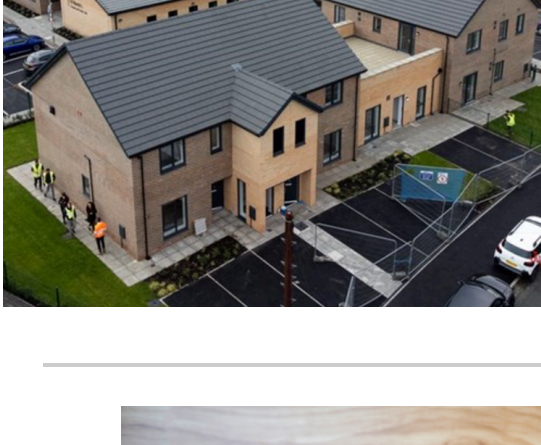
The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will help us all to take action to create more places where wildlife and people can thrive.

Watch our [video](#) and join the [current consultation](#).

Volunteer 'evacuees' required for Emergency Assistance Centre exercise!

Exercise Sanctuary will simulate the welfare response to local emergencies in place in Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness. It will involve the setting up of temporary Emergency Assistance Centres (EACs) in community locations. The practice exercises will take place at the Rugby Union Club in Penrith and the Carnegie Theatre in Workington. Both exercises will take place simultaneously on **Wednesday 2 July 2025 from 10am – 1pm**.

Our emergency planning teams would be very grateful for any volunteers from community groups or the public interested in supporting the exercise by acting as 'evacuees' (pretending to be evacuated from their home and needing support/assistance). Teas and lunch will be provided and the link to sign up to the exercise and attend either of the EACs is here: [Exercise Sanctuary Signup](#)



Grant funding of £3.2 million to advise churches on using land for housing

Churches hoping to build affordable homes for their communities on pockets of land that they own, or as part of schemes such as rebuilding parish halls, have been invited to apply for grants to pay for expert advice from a £3.2-million fund from the Archbishops' Council. The fund will run for five years. Grants of up to £25,000 are available. [Find out more here](#).



At Utility Aid, we are dedicated to ensuring the organisations we work with are not being overcharged for their energy. Our team of skilled analysts conducts thorough checks on invoices to ensure you are billed correctly and there are no overcharges.

We automatically investigate any issues and liaise with suppliers to get mistakes rectified. To date, we have successfully retrieved more than **£8 million** in overcharges for our customers. A common reason for overcharging is incorrect VAT. If you are unsure about the VAT you are meant to be paying, we have created some VAT guidance on energy use. [Click here to find out more!](#)

If you would like to speak to Utility Aid about your energy, either contact partnerships@utility-aid.co.uk or use this [contact form](#).

And finally...

If you find this information useful, please do share it with others. We'd love you to forward this email to friends and colleagues. You can also follow us on Facebook to keep up with our very latest news and views.

If you are not already an ACT supporter, why not join us? It's free and it means that we can keep in touch with you directly from time to time. You can [unsubscribe](#) at any time from all ACT mailings.

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