

Acomb Community Led Plan

2023 -2033



Aiming to be a community that supports the needs of its 21st Century residents in a sustainable way that protects and enhances the rural character of Acomb Parish.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY LED PLAN (CLP)?

The CLP is a working document formed by the views of the community of Acomb. It aims to point the way towards meeting the needs of the community to achieve lasting and sustainable benefits for Acomb residents and businesses.



Its objectives are:

- To focus on what is important to the people living and working in Acomb Parish
- To identify possible ways to address a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues identified within the community
- To provide a clear action plan for the community of Acomb to work in partnership with the Parish Council and County Council, local interest and user groups, such as Action4Acomb and the WI, and external bodies as required. (e.g. Environment Agency)

Achievement of these objectives will enable the community of Acomb to influence decision makers, deliver projects, secure funding as well as bringing local people together with a common purpose.

Action4Acomb (A4A) was established to create, monitor and review the CLP in partnership with other key organisations such as the Parish Council. The previous Community Led Plan (CLP) covered a five-year period and expired in 2020. However, the impact of covid restrictions delayed the work necessary to revise and refresh the plan. A new village wide survey has now been undertaken, the findings of which have been fed back to residents through a series of open meetings. It is now possible to roll the plan forward.

For the CLP to be meaningful and lead to successful outcomes for the community, effective partnerships need to exist, principally between the key groups and bodies involved in its delivery. Partners have been consulted on the contents of this plan and have contributed to its details.

Most importantly, this plan represents the views and opinions of the people of Acomb. They have had a voice through a Parish-wide questionnaire and the availability of several open-door events in advance of the final launch of this CLP.

While the aims and ambitions expressed in this plan are not binding on any individual or group, it should be remembered that these are reflections of the views and ambitions of Acomb residents.

However, there remains a significant need for people to volunteer their time, expertise and energy to help fulfil the future aspirations of Acomb. Each of the many groups and activities currently taking place across the village depend on this.

If you wish Acomb to be a better place to live, and to see its cultural and historical legacy preserved for the future, please explore the many opportunities identified here and make yourself available.

Examples of some Achievements/Key Successes over the period of the previous CLP



Adoption of Acomb Neighbourhood Plan by NCC in 2019 providing additional protection against future development

Introduction of 20mph speed limit throughout the village, installation of interactive speed signs, and installation of other traffic calming measures (rumble strips, speed bumps)



Improvements to the visual appearance of the A6079 through bulb planting



.... and



Tidying up the signage into Howford Lane



Installation of a new barrier on the Hexham Old Road



Improvements to the children's play area



Renovations to the Pavilion



Ongoing flood management and defence-works



Creation of community web site and Facebook group

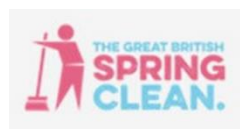


Volunteer Support Network established during covid lockdown

Monthly Community Café set up by Acomb WI



Creation of Acomb Little Library



Annual Spring Clean



Annual Carols Rounds the Tree

Significant changes to Acomb since the last CLP was produced:

- Loss of Post Office and shop
- Completion of Birkey Heights & the infill development behind The White House
- Reduction in bus services post-pandemic

The Cornerstone of the Acomb CLP

The responses to the 2021 survey suggest that the three pillars of the first CLP still hold true:

1. Protect and Sustain (*the natural and historic environment*)
2. Improve and Renew (*infrastructure*)
3. Support and Co-Operate (*Community spirit and engagement*)

87% of respondents to the 2021 questionnaire said that the surrounding countryside was the main reason they liked living in Acomb, as well as village life and the proximity to Hexham.

Therefore, there is a need to continue to:

- Monitor any developments/plans that may threaten the rural nature of the village or conservation area
- Protect and enhance the countryside and heritage around us
- Sustain the cornerstones of village life and vitality
- Encourage residents and visitors to care for the local environment
- Improve connectivity with Hexham both for non-car users and to reduce car borne journeys
- Find ways to further support the growing number of home workers

Among the active groups in the village that can contribute in their different ways are:

- Parish Council and Trustees
- Action4Acomb
- Acomb Women's Institute

The three cornerstones of village life remain true as Acomb looks to its future:

PROTECT AND SUSTAIN

To preserve and conserve the natural environment of Acomb, to enhance habitats and biodiversity, and meet the climate emergency; to better understand the historic environment of Acomb and the measures needed to protect it.

SUPPORT AND CO-OPERATE

To maximise the benefits of cultural activity to the social and economic wellbeing of the community; to further the contribution of young people to the community.

IMPROVE AND RENEW

To maintain and enhance facilities and services, encouraging networking, and improving communications and promotion; to improve the economic viability of shops and businesses in Acomb in order to enhance the socio-economic sustainability of the village; to determine a housing policy for Acomb, based on current and future needs, both of the community and of the environment; to promote and campaign for a functioning and integrated transport system, suitable for the 21st century and the environment, with an emphasis on the needs of a rural community.

For details of abbreviations, organisational descriptions and contacts, please go to Appendix on Page 16.

Protect and Sustain Action Plan

Objectives: To preserve and conserve the natural environment of Acomb, to enhance habitats and biodiversity, and meet the climate emergency; to better understand the historic environment of Acomb and the measures needed to protect it.

No	Proposal	Detail/ Agenda	Lead Partners	Timescale	Outcome indicator
1.1	Monitor closely any developments or plans, ongoing or new, which might threaten the rural nature of the village and its environs with specific reference to the conservation area	Keep the Neighbourhood Plan at the forefront of decision making.	PC	ongoing	Number of approved/declined planning applications for new building
		Raise residents awareness of any public consultations on developments or plans that impact on the village	PC, A4A	Determined by specific consultation periods	Number of times planning applications are brought to the attention of local community
		Provide a forum to empower residents' concerns to be raised and heard	A4A	As and when needed	
1.2	Protect and enhance the countryside around us, including designated areas e.g., SSSIs, public access areas and common land	Manage and maintain the wildflower areas on the playing fields	CCSC	Annual work programme	Outline Activity report presented to Annual Parish Meeting
		Manage and maintain the community orchard on the Gaps	CCSC	Annual work programme	As above
		Identify areas for new tree planting	CCSC	Ongoing	As above
		Survey registered common land within the parish to assess potential for public access and/or nature conservation	EVA	Ongoing	Recommendations prepared for public consultation and liaison with PC
		Raise awareness of SSSIs in Acomb in consultation with Rural England	EVA	Ongoing	Publicity prepared and posted on local social media

No	Proposal	Detail/ Agenda	Lead Partners	Timescale	Outcome indicator
1.3	Encourage individual residents to take action to conserve, preserve and enhance the natural and historic environment, and to meet the challenges of climate change	Contribute to volunteering events that inform residents of the groups currently working across Acomb, aiming to raise awareness of where additional volunteers will be helpful	A4A	Ongoing	A4A feedback to Parish Meeting and AGM
1.4	Encourage, promote and support cooperation between all groups, through joint initiatives, and sharing of information, with an emphasis on increasing volunteering and promoting environmental action	Through the Annual Parish Meeting bring together all active groups and organisations operating in Acomb to provide updates and exchange information	PC	Ongoing	Feedback to Annual Parish Meeting
1.5	Review and refresh records of heritage features, historic buildings and structures in Acomb as well as any buried archaeology, townscapes and landscapes, gardens, ancient woodlands, green spaces and landscape features, local place names, customs, traditions, memories and oral histories that are important to the sense of identity identified by Acomb residents.	Identify an independent group of volunteers to take forward this work.	A4A	May 24	Feedback to Annual Parish Meeting
		Volunteer group to undertake initial identification of local links, individuals and organisations that can inform and help develop this work.	Project Volunteer Group	Ongoing	Project Volunteer Group to publish progress and developments through local social media and other means at regular intervals
		Volunteer group to identify key outcomes for project and project objectives, with timescale, and seek external funding for specialist assistance to seek project aims (e.g., Historian in Residence)	Project Volunteer Group	Ongoing	As identified by Project Volunteer Group
1.6	Encourage local residents to engage in maintaining and improving the visual condition and cleanliness of the Parish.	Dog fouling	PC/A4A	Ongoing	Reduce number of complaints and promote means of lodging complaints through local social media. Maintain annual litter pick event.
		Fly tipping			
		Litter picking			

These are some of the things people said about protection and sustainability for Acomb:

"Dog poo all the way up to the school is really bad!"



"Dog fouling is the biggest issue – it's everywhere."

"Weeds growing in road gutters and outside of houses growing over pathways."



Branches of trees growing over pathways."



"Unnecessary lighting – need to preserve dark skies."



"Developing residents. Helping those who live on the outskirts of the village ground source heat pumps."



community ground source heat pumps for Acomb and use oil to heat their homes financially to install



"Would help to have more local recycling, in particular tetrapak and more plastic options."



"Without action to deal with the climate emergency all other ways of improving the quality of the village will be academic."



"Promote hydrogen cars/refuelling stations – that is the future, not electric."

Community wind turbine to provide battery storage in a hub for



the village."

"Provide local



allotments."

2. Improve and Renew Action Plan

Objective: To maintain and enhance facilities and services, encouraging networking, and improving communications and promotion; to improve the economic viability of shops and businesses in Acomb in order to enhance the socio-economic sustainability of the village; to determine a housing policy for Acomb, based on current and future needs, both of the community and of the environment; To promote and campaign for a functioning and integrated transport system, suitable for the 21st century, and the environment, with an emphasis on the needs of a rural community.

No	Proposal	Detail/ Agenda	Lead Partners	Timescale	Outcome indicator
2.1	Improve connectivity with Hexham and surrounding settlements for non-motorised users	Publicise local bus services	PC/A4A	Ongoing	Feedback from bus users
		Actively campaign to retain a bus service if it is at risk	PC/A4A	Ongoing	Meeting minutes and feedback to Annual Parish Meeting
		Campaign for better links between bus and rail services	PC/A4A	Ongoing	Meeting minutes and feedback to Annual Parish Meeting
		Work with neighbouring parishes to develop safe routes for non-motorised traffic between settlements	PC	Ongoing	Feedback at Annual General Meeting
		Ensure schemes are put forward for inclusion in the local transport plan (LTP) to achieve the aims of the CLP	PC	Ongoing	LTP reflects the views of residents
2.2	To slow traffic down and make Acomb's roads safer	Seek alternative means for traffic management that are compatible with a rural setting, through liaising with Northumberland County Council	PC, NCC	Ongoing	Minutes of PC meetings
		Monitor effectiveness of speed camera, interactive signs and 20mph speed limit on traffic calming	PC	Ongoing	Minutes of PC meetings

No	Proposal	Detail/ Agenda	Lead Partners	Timescale	Outcome indicator
2.3	Improve the link with the main village centre	Provide way markers to village centre and its facilities	PC	Ongoing	Installation of signs denoting location of Village Hall, village centre, playing field
		Continue to monitor crossing points on A6079 for non-motorised users wishing to access Waters Meet and the old mine site	PC	Ongoing	Installation of pedestrian crossing signs if required
2.4	Improve visual appearance of A6079 and promote as being part of the village	Eradicate only such vegetation that impedes use of pavements or sight lines for traffic in order to preserve species habitat	NCC	Ongoing	Programme of works
		Explore options for the creation of bespoke signs for the village	A4A	Ongoing	Assess viability, options and funding opportunities for bespoke design and creation of Acomb Village signs
		Reinstate use of petrol-driven strimmers by volunteers	A4A	Ongoing	Locate strimmers, seek new volunteers and ensure appropriate training
2.5	Ensure evidence-based flood defence strategies are maintained to manage flash flood events	Continue to monitor flood plan and review annually	Flood Group/EA	Ongoing	Feedback to annual parish meeting
		Maintain links with external agencies	Flood Group	Ongoing	Feedback to annual parish meeting
2.6	Manage/Improve facilities to support the creation of an active, vibrant and inclusive community	Village Hall	Trustees	Ongoing	Feed-back to community at annual parish meeting
		Pavilion/Playing Field	Trustees	Ongoing	
		Churches	Local Ministers	Ongoing	
2.7	Improve the profile of shops, businesses and facilities in Acomb, promoting their use to help encourage longer-term sustainability	Explore the creation of a business partnership group to liaise across business interests in Acomb	A4A	Ongoing	Feedback to Annual Parish Meeting
2.8	Housing	Housing needs kept under review	PC	Ongoing	Neighbourhood Plan

These are some of the things people said about improvement and renewal for Acomb:

"Access to Hexham is very important for services and transport."

"Facilities for the more vulnerable are available in Hexham but not accessible for those who have no transport or have mobility difficulties."

"Getting the bus to Hexham is hard as the transport has been reduced."



"Speeding traffic past the school, especially large farm vehicles/It is scary that cars speed up Main Street/Far too much traffic up and down Garden House Bank/Since speed bumps on Garden House Bank, traffic down Orchard Avenue is really bad!"

"Crossroads at north end of village needs improvement. Visibility for pedestrians and traffic is atrocious"

"The A6079 through Acomb and towards the A69 needs resurfaced as it is very uneven with potholes and becoming dangerous. Additionally the edges and hedges are overgrown which makes visibility poor, especially at the bottom of Garden House Bank where the signposts are fully covered by hedges and shrubbery."

"I think some of the footpaths bordering the very busy A6079 are inadequate in terms of width for pedestrians, and this means that residents and pedestrians are potentially at risk from traffic."

"The road end out of Millersfield is lethal to both drivers and pedestrians alike."

"Since the speed bumps installed in Garden House Bank a lot of traffic using Main Street, Orchard Avenue and round the Methodist Chapel now."



"Drains ... need to be kept clear so water can enter drains before it gets into village."

"Problem areas include: inadequacy/poor maintenance of road drains and gullies to deal with surface water flooding, especially in extreme rainfall events. Identification of vulnerable residents who would need assistance in the event of a flood. Delays in the development of natural flood management in the upper catchment."



3. Support and Co-Operate Action Plan

*Objectives: To maximise the benefits of cultural activity to the social and economic wellbeing of the community
To further the contribution of young people to the community*

No	Proposal	Detail/ Agenda	Lead Partners	Timescale	Outcome indicator
3.1	Provide support for those in need within our community	If required, re-establish community wide volunteer network	A4A	As required	Update at Annual Parish meeting
3.2	Improve the opportunities for meeting and socialising in the village	Community cafe	WI	Ongoing	Update at Annual Parish meeting
		Film club	A4A	Ongoing	Update at Annual Parish meeting
		Chapel coffee morning	Meth. Chapel	Ongoing	Update at Annual Parish meeting
		Craft and craic	WI	Ongoing	Update at Annual Parish meeting
		Youth Club	PC	Ongoing	Update at Annual Parish meeting
		Seek opportunities for additional social activities across the village that use community assets and reach diverse residential groups, as required	All	Ongoing	Update as/if required
3.3	Plan for social events to provide opportunities to bring residents together	Annual and ongoing programme of events published on Acomb noticeboards and through local media/social media	A4A/Trustees	Ongoing	
3.4	Ensure ongoing refurbishment and maintenance of the principal village assets; Village Hall, Pavilion & Playing Field	Proactively engage and communicate with the community	Trustees	Ongoing	Trustees feedback to community
3.5	Support and co-operate with Acomb First School and Little Oaks to develop stronger community links	Establish and maintain communications and co-operation with the school and nursery	All	Ongoing	School and Nursery to identify how the community can support them and feedback to Annual Parish meeting
3.6	Continue to improve communication about village life and activities	Raise awareness of all the groups, clubs and organisations that are active in the village and ensure residents know how to access this information	A4A/PC	Ongoing	Posters Parish Newsletter Local Social Media The Courant (Village Notes)

These are some of the things people said about support and co-operation in Acomb:



"Ensure all social media platforms are up to date and relevant."



Acomb Parish Council

"Perhaps a village flyer to households with all the links to the sources of information."



"More paper-based info. Not everyone is on the internet."

"The village hall is very tired and an uninspiring place to meet."

"Overall, the village has good facilities for a village of its' size.

Refurbishment would be useful and I believe this is in hand. However,

I would want to give my informed consent to any expenditure or reconfiguration through proper consultation..."



"More sport and fitness generally in the village hall and in the park."

"Photography Club? Repair and mend club? Radio and SWL Club? Men in Sheds."

"Walking Club (Easy Walks)"

"Whist Drive, Bridge for Beginners, Line Dancing, Flower Arrangement, Jewellery Making"



Next steps

The Plan belongs to the community and it is for the community to take forward and deliver.

It is now up to residents of Acomb, individuals and groups, public and private bodies, to mull over and discuss the Plan, its proposals and implications, and plot the way ahead.

A4A as the Steering Group for the CLP recommends that groups and individuals report back on different aspects of the Plan on an annual basis so that progress can be formally monitored and the action plan be reviewed and updated as needed.

Finally, it is recommended the Plan is subject to full revision every ten years.

Full details of the community questionnaire, including analysis, data and resident's comments, are available in the A4A document library at website: www.action4acomb.co.uk and on the community web site: www.acomblocal.co.uk

APPENDIX OF ABBREVIATIONS, ORGANISATIONAL DESCRIPTIONS and CONTACTS

APC: Acomb Parish Council **A4A:** Action4Acomb **CCSC:** Climate Change Sub-Committee **EA:** Environment Agency **EVA:** Environmental Volunteers Acomb
NCC: Northumberland County Council **SSSI:** Site of Special Scientific Interest **WI:** Women's Institute (Acomb) **LTP:** Local Transport Plan

ACOMB PARISH COUNCIL: A parish council has statutory authority to make decisions on behalf of the people in the parish and has an overall responsibility for the well-being of its local community. It is the level of government closest to the community and is invariably the first place people will go with concerns or ideas. For this reason they are a vital part of any community. Their work falls into three main categories: representing the local community, delivering services to meet local needs and striving to improve quality of life in the parish. Parish Councils raise their funding through a portion of the overall Council Tax households pay annually; this is known as a 'Precept'.

Climate Change Sub-Committee: A sub-committee of the Parish Council tasked with contributing to NCCs overall target of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.

Local Transport Plan: APC contributes through NCC to the Regional Transport Plan outlining the future maintenance and development of transport issues across the North East.

Acomb Neighbourhood Plan: Acomb's NP is a statutory part of the decision-making process for land allocations and planning application decisions made at local level.

ACTION4ACOMB: A constituted not-for-profit community group established to steer the production of a Community Led Plan. Although not a statutory body, A4A is able to apply for external funding to assist in taking forward projects or activities that will contribute to furthering objectives in the CLP.

ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERS ACOMB: The combined groups of the School Common Action Team and the Acomb Footpath Group. Their work includes making Rights of Way reports to NCC, doing small scale interventions to improve Public Rights of Way in and around Acomb, and working with Acomb First School and Little Oaks Nursery to ensure the School Common is suitable for Forest Schools and other outdoor education.

ACOMB WOMEN'S INSTITUTE: The WI seeks to create a world where women come together to learn, share skills and work together to become active citizens, influencing change to improve lives in their local, national and global communities. Acomb WI runs an annual programme of events for members and provides support to the community through a variety of active and fund-raising activities.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY: The EA is sponsored by the UK government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with responsibilities relating to the protection and enhancement of the environment in England, especially issues related to rivers and flood alleviation.

TRUSTEES: The Village Hall, Playing Field and Pavilion are each registered charities governed under the sole trusteeship of Acomb Parish Council. The legal responsibilities of trustees of Registered Charities is defined in specific legislation and subject to the oversight of the Charity Commission.

ACOMB PARISH COUNCIL: www.acombpc.co.uk www.facebook.com/acombpc.co.uk/ Email: griggbill@gmail.com Tel: 01434 634397
 [Acomb Neighbourhood Plan](#) [Transport Plan - Transport North East](#)

ACTION4ACOMB: <https://action4acomb.co.uk> email: action4acomb20@gmail.com Tel: 01434 608042

ACOMB WOMEN'S INSTITUTE: <https://acomblocal.co.uk/acomb-womens-institute/>