

AIMS OF THE OXFORDSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ORCC)

Overall aim:

To improve the quality of life for those who live or work in a sustainable rural Oxfordshire

Specific aims

- a) Empower communities and the people within them to identify the issues that affect their lives and to find their own solutions to them.
- b) Facilitate effective rural community action initiated and led by people themselves
- c) Increase empowerment, equality and inclusion for everyone in rural communities
- d) Facilitate opportunities for people to participate in community activities and local democratic processes
- e) Increase opportunities for people to live in their home community
- f) Enable improved provision of local services and facilities, such as retail and post office services, community halls, community news and information media
- g) Promote improved means of accessing services which cannot be provided locally including promotion of transport provision and viable local service centres such as market towns
- h) Raise local awareness of opportunities to promote sustainable living
- i) Influence policies and programmes at national, regional and local level to take more account of the needs and views of people living or working in rural communities

Outcomes

- Stronger and more sustainable, vibrant and active rural communities across Oxfordshire through:

More community needs assessments and community action

- Local needs, including minority needs, are identified in more rural communities
- There are more community projects achieved to address identified local needs and improve community life and facilities and sustainability
- There are more community initiatives to draw local needs to the attention of the responsible outside agencies
- Rural community groups find it easier to achieve these outcomes successfully
- More people are involved in decision making, both within and outside their communities, about the issues which affect their and their neighbours' lives

Increased social inclusion

- Community leaders and organisers of community activities are more aware of and engage in good inclusive and sustainable practice
- There are more inclusive events and activities available in communities
- There are more community projects to improve services and care for disadvantaged individuals/groups
- External service providers are more aware of good inclusive practice in delivering services in rural areas
- Service providers are more creative and collaborative in delivering services in order to reach socially excluded groups

Increased social capital and cohesion

- Increased social capital and cohesion within rural communities through opportunities to participate in community activities

More mixed and balanced communities

- More lower income households are able to live in their home community

Improved access to services

- Services and facilities are retained in communities currently served and are provided in a way that meets local needs and addresses sustainability
- The services available are extended and improved
- More rural communities have local access to a service or facility
- More volunteers are willing and have confidence to get involved in running local activities, services and facilities
- There is more accessible, affordable and sustainable public or community transport provision for members of rural communities who need it to access services that cannot be provided locally
- Local service centres, such as market towns, offer an improved range of services
- The quality of life and the ability of vulnerable members of rural communities to live independently and manage their affairs is improved

Improved strategic awareness of rural community needs

- National, regional and local policies, programmes and services reflect the needs of people in rural communities and produce improvements to their quality of life

Activities

1. Promote local involvement in community action planning and community project development and facilitate the engagement of outside agencies in local community action planning projects
2. Provide awareness raising information and examples of good practice on how to promote social inclusion in rural communities
3. Provide awareness raising information and examples of good practice on how to promote sustainable living in rural communities
4. Promote awareness among members of rural communities of opportunities for providing and improving local services and facilities (including community halls, retail and post office services, affordable housing, community transport)
5. Provide a support service for key local action groups, service and facility providers such as:
 - Parish Plan groups
 - Community hall committees
 - Village shopkeepers and community shop committees
 - Parish councils interested in promoting affordable housing
 - Community newsletter editors
 - Community transport schemes
6. Facilitate opportunities for networking and information-sharing among and between these groups and other members of rural communities interested in promoting community activities and projects
7. Contribute to the achievement of more units of affordable housing in villages by facilitating project development by partners such as the members of the Rural Housing Partnership
8. Listen to and respond to requests by rural communities