

# Viabile Rural Communities

*'You Name It,  
We've Got It!'*





...Up the High Street



This sunny Saturday in Tisbury



Sue, the hairdresser

# You Name It, We've Got It!

'Tis The Season'  
This sunny Saturday in Tisbury.

Paul takes us on a tour,  
First stop Beaton's Café,  
Bookshop, Gallery.

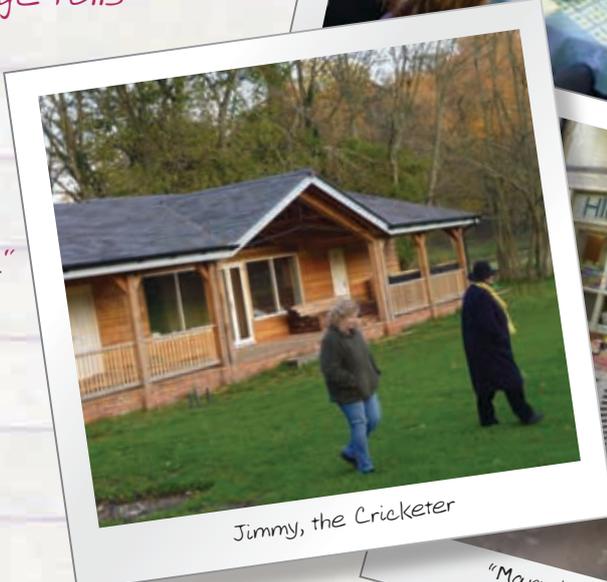
Up the High Street  
We meet Sue, the hairdresser,  
Cyril, the shoemaker  
Jimmy, the Cricketer.

In the Bennett Arms  
Welcomed by Alisdair,  
For a pint of Bedrock Bitter  
And home fattened sausage rolls  
It's not just a local thing.

At the top of the hill  
Is Heaton's,  
Ros gives us a look  
"Many hidden secrets here"  
I wouldn't dare disagree  
Dealers come  
From all over the world  
Looking for them.



It's not just a local thing



Jimmy, the Cricketer



"Many hidden secrets here"

## 14. Viable Rural Communities

*The low population density, the absence of large settlements within the AONB and daily commuting to the larger settlements on the AONB's periphery, all threaten the viability of remaining local services such as post offices, pubs, doctor's surgeries, village shops and village halls. Many services are not easily accessed from smaller villages and do not meet the demands of a growing elderly population. The Localism Act 2011 gives people more control over the development of their local area.*

14.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to viable rural communities:

- Sparsely populated with absence of any large-scale settlements, reinforcing a deeply rural 'sense of place' amongst AONB communities.
- Many parishes or groups of parishes are positively taking up the opportunity of producing Neighbourhood Plans.
- Several communities have developed a community run or 'on call' system of minibuss transport.
- Several community owned and run village stores are run either entirely, or mainly, by committed groups of volunteers.
- Community spirit is strong in many settlements, as demonstrated through participation in 'Village of the Year' competitions, development of parish archives, restoration of lost parish features and organisation of annual fetes, festivals or traditional events.

### Aim

14.2. We want communities that appreciate and care for the AONB; and their residents enjoy a high quality of life.

### Achievements to date

- **Rural Post Offices and Community Shops** - Advice and written support given to several communities to retain their Post Office services, whilst new community shops and the re-ordering of a rural church were funded through LEADER<sup>35</sup>.
- **Sustainable Development Fund** - Efficient and effective use of Sustainable Development Fund (see the following table and Appendix 25).

<sup>35</sup> LEADER is a delivery mechanism for the EU Rural Development Programmes and covers all of Europe. The French acronym, 'Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale', means integrated action for rural development. The 2009-2013 LEADER programme, and the money allocated to England provided rural grants for farm diversification, community projects and small businesses



## Eight year summary of the Sustainable Development Fund

Year	Total Fund (£)	No. of Projects	Total value of all Projects (£)	No. of firm enquiries
2005-2006	58,000.00	10	140,000	19
2006-2007	80,000.00	19	700,000	46
2007-2008	70,000.00	12	530,000	25
2008-2009	60,247.00	24	960,000	50
2009-2010	25,736.00	10	158,000	30
2010-2011	14,096.00	7	136,000	20
2011-2012	10,861.00	10	66,000	20
2012-2013	7,540.00	7	54,184	20
<b>Totals</b>	<b>326,480.00</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>2,744,184</b>	<b>230</b>

**Leverage of 1:8.4**

### Key Issues

- Influencing the planning system** - Local people want to influence the outcomes of the planning system. Neighbourhood plans, village plans<sup>36</sup> and village design statements are all ways for local people to get together and set out a vision for their area<sup>37</sup>. Communities need support in putting these plans together .
- Facilities and services** - People cannot always get to the facilities and services they want without using personal transport, which is not available to many. Money is in short supply leading to the closure of some local facilities and services. At the same time, some communities are growing and the lack of local amenities puts the sustainability of the community at risk.
- The young and elderly can feel cut off** - Few affordable homes, facilities and services in the AONB are for the young or elderly. This can lead to their isolation.
- Some communities can lack a sense of spirit or local pride** - Most people have to travel outside the AONB to schools, shops and work. Little time is left to build any sense of community. The lack of facilities, such as a village hall, can make the situation worse, as can the loss of a local church or village shop.

### The Issues Explained

- 14.3. Many people want to exercise their right to get involved in development decisions that affect them but, in practice, they have often found it difficult to have a meaningful say. The Localism Act 2011 gives people more control over the development of their local area through the creation of neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders. Support and encouragement is needed to enable communities engaging with the planning process and their local planning authority, to ensure that they meet statutory requirements and take account of all aspects of what makes rural communities viable.
- 14.4. This will include the wider landscape, environmental, cultural and historic aspects of their community area as well as the social and economic factors that may affect it. It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan process involves as wide a range of community interests as possible.

<sup>36</sup> Village plans have different names within the 4 counties eg in Hampshire they are Parish Plans or Community Plans

<sup>37</sup> These matters are set out earlier in greater detail in paragraph 5.4



- 14.5. Just over 33,000 people live in the AONB<sup>38</sup>, which averages 34 people per sq km. This is very low when compared to the average of 129 people per sq km for rural England. The lack of large settlements and work places within the AONB put the remaining local services at risk. There are not enough people to generate the income needed to cover the costs of providing these services. Post offices, pubs, surgeries, village shops and village halls may disappear. Some local people have low incomes. They need access to local facilities because transport costs are high. They cannot afford the cost of travel.
- 14.6. Access to housing and services in the AONB is worse now than it was in 2007. This is particularly true for the northern half of the AONB. In the southern half, the situation is now better than in 2007<sup>39</sup>.

**English indices of deprivation**

Scale runs from 1 (most deprived) to 32,482 (least deprived)

England average 2010	16,241
AONB in 2010	2,763
AONB in 2007	3,139

*Department for Communities and Local Government 2010*

- 14.7. Approximately thirty percent of the population living in the AONB is over 60 years of age and that figure rises to 32% in the southern half of the AONB (in the national population 21% are over 60 years of age)<sup>40</sup>. In-migration appears to be a result of those retiring here rather than people moving to the area to work, resulting in an imbalance in the age structure of most communities. Services may not be adequate for an ageing population.

**Population over 60 years of age**

30% in the AONB
32% in the southern half of the AONB
21% of the national population

- 14.8. The number of people living in the AONB has grown, particularly close to the southern boundary. This has led to a high demand for housing and rise in house prices. People with high incomes are moving into this area and commuting to work.

38 National Census 2011.  
 39 With reference to the English indices of deprivation 2010 - Department for Communities and Local Government.  
 40 National Census 2011.





## Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
<b>VRCA</b>	<i>Proactive and cohesive communities enjoy a high quality of life</i>	<b>VRC1</b>	Encourage and support communities to engage with the Neighbourhood Plan process and to take account of the wider landscape, environmental, cultural and historic aspects of their community area as well as the social and economic factors that may affect it.
		<b>VRC2</b>	Support community initiatives that promote sustainable lifestyles such as those embracing community shops or combined community facilities, appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, community woodlands, recycling and community transport that encourage and maintain the viability and diversity of rural community life.
		<b>VRC3</b>	Assist and/or advise local communities/groups, wherever possible, in drawing down external funding for projects that help achieve the objectives of the Management Plan
		<b>VRC4</b>	Work with partners to emphasise the need for more affordable housing in and around the AONB where that is consistent with the primary purposes of AONB designation
<b>VRCB</b>	<i>Communities understand, appreciate and care for the AONB</i>	<b>VRC5</b>	Engage more closely with parish councils and communities to inspire 'local champions' to improve mutual understanding and increase joint working on projects/activities/issues of shared interest
		<b>VRC6</b>	Encourage and work with partners to develop volunteer opportunities, activities and/or events that conserve, enhance and celebrate the AONB

(Additional Information: Viable Rural Communities Appendix 34)







“  
We take barley mash  
from the brewery,  
feed it to the pigs on the farm,  
and they come back as  
**sausages**”

*Alasdair Large, Keystone Brewery*