

Community Led Planning Essex

Helions Bumpstead Parish Plan

Introduction

Helions Bumpstead is a small village in Essex, close to both Suffolk and Cambridgeshire borders. The village population is approximately 440 and retains a local public house, post office and village hall.

A group of local residents recognised Parish Plans were becoming more widely used and thought it would be a good way of involving the wider community in local projects. The community undertook a Village Appraisal in 2002-03, which was the basis for the Parish Plan in 2003-04. They have recently revisited the plan and produced an Update Interim report in 2008.

What is Community Led Planning?

Community Led Planning is a structured process, undertaken by local community members to create a vision for their community. The vision will encompass social, environmental, cultural and economic aspects of life, celebrating the positive and highlighting needs through the development of a detailed action plan.

The plan and its actions:

- Involves and includes everyone in the community.
- Maps out services and facilities currently available in the community.
- Discovers what issues and opportunities people feel need addressing.

Support provided

Valuable support, assistance and guidance on developing your Community Led Plan is available from your county Rural Community Council (RCC). For the East of England these are Beds RCC, Cambs ACRE, RCC of Essex, CDA for Herts, Norfolk RCC and Suffolk ACRE.

KEY FACTS Helions Bumpstead

County: **Essex**
District: **Braintree District Council**
Households: **174**
Plan completed: **Original 2004**
(Updated 2008)



Helions Bumpstead



Helions Bumpstead Village Hall before



Helions Bumpstead Village Hall after



Helions Bumpstead COMMUNITY LED PLAN

The process

The village hall management committee originally approached the Parish Council along with other village organisations from which a core committee of 6 people was formed.

- The plan had a wide ownership due to numerous community groups being involved (some members wearing more than one 'hat').
- The group undertook local publicity and 'door knocking'. The group had a 91% response rate to the original appraisal questionnaire in 2002 and 81% to the refresh questionnaire in 2007.
- The steering group held a number of public meetings with villagers, the Parish Council, Rural Community Council of Essex, Braintree District Council and Essex County Council before finalising the original action plan.

More recently, in respect of the refreshed action plan, the group meet with Braintree District Parish Plans Support Group to discuss feasibility of partnership actions and the potential support available.

Impact of the plan and its actions

The action plan is monitored by the Parish Council, who have developed a grid system to monitor the actions. In addition, there is a recording of grants that have been awarded for projects, arising from the plan to date this totals more than £81,000. Other affects and actions to the community include:

- The Village Hall refurbishment allowing daily use by a variety of groups.
- To work with BT in order to improve its broadband services.
- To work with Essex County Council Highways to implement speed restrictions.

Local Authority engagement

Throughout the whole process the community received significant advice and support from both Braintree District Council and Essex County Council. In 2008, Braintree District Council set up a member-led Parish Plans Support Group which co-ordinates the support available to Parish Plan groups and assists communities with the delivery of their actions.

Quote from Community

"There is greater awareness of things that need doing in the community and confidence that improvements and actions can be achieved. The community has become far more proactive and independent".

CURRENT CHAIR OF THE REFRESHED PARISH PLAN

Benefit to Local Authority

Community Led Plans are referred to in the 'Draft Strategy for People and Places in Braintree District to 2025', the consultation document for the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Strategy recognises the importance of Community Led Plans in providing evidence and representation of local communities' needs and priorities and also their role in delivering improvements in facilities and services. Groups are encouraged to present appraisal findings to the Braintree District Parish Plans Support Group who will then assist in the development of an action plan and taking some of the actions forward.

Quote from Local Authority

"Communities are better placed to identify their own needs and prefer to take ownership of their priorities. However there will be actions that they will need help with and the Local Authority is well placed to co-ordinate and advise on issues relating to partner organisation activities".

LOCALITY CO-ORDINATOR,
BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Key learning for others

Make your questions as specific as possible. If you have an objective in mind and a number of options that you need to seek an opinion on, make sure to include questions about them. It will help in providing evidence to grant funders of the need and support for particular projects.

Further information

This Case Study was produced by Rural Action East in collaboration with Rural Community Council of Essex as part of research undertaken into CLP on behalf of the Regional Empowerment Partnership for the East of England. We would like to thank Helions Bumpstead Parish Council and Braintree District Council for making this Case Study possible.

Contact

Rural Community Council of Essex
Threshelfords Business Park, Inworth Road
Feering, Essex CO5 9SE

Tel: 0844 477 3938

Fax: 01376 573524

Email: rcce@essexrcc.org.uk

Web: www.essexrcc.org.uk

Web: www.helionsbumpsteadparishcouncil.gov.uk

