

# Community Led Planning Cambridgeshire Cottenham Parish Plan

## KEY FACTS Cottenham

County: **Cambridgeshire**  
 District: **South Cambridgeshire**  
 District Council  
 Households: **2,600**  
 Plan completed: **Spring 2004**



Cottenham

## Introduction

Located on the edge of the Fens, six miles north of Cambridge, Cottenham is a large village with a population of approximately 6,500. It took the community around 12 months to complete their plan.

In 2003 Cambridgeshire ACRE contacted the Parish Council regarding Community Led Plans. Following this initial discussion about the process and benefits of Community Led Plans the Parish Council held a public meeting on the subject and it was agreed that a plan would be beneficial to Cottenham and the process was started.

## 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.



Welcome to Cottenham



Cottenham Library



# Cottenham COMMUNITY LED PLAN

## The process

Cambridgeshire ACRE introduced Cottenham Parish Council to the idea of Community Led Plans, they:

- Gave advice on how to undertake a Plan and the benefits that can result.
- Advised on possible funding streams and costings for undertaking a plan so the community were fully aware of the process, advantages and costs associated with producing a Community Led Plan.

Following a review of the information and a public meeting, Cottenham Parish Council felt a plan would be beneficial. A steering group of 12 members was formed and a further 85 volunteers were involved in:

- Distributing and collecting the questionnaires, which had a response rate of 60% from the community.
- A draft plan was also distributed for feedback and contributions fed into the final plan.
- The chair of the steering group was also a District Councillor therefore the Local Development Framework was considered when the plan was produced.

## Impact of the plan and its actions

The plan has helped the Parish Council consider priorities for the community and has provided a focus for on-going actions. The process also proved that it was possible to get a large number of volunteers involved in community activities which led people to believe that it would be possible to host the Fen Edge Family Festival, and this event has proved to be a great success.

There have been links with some external agencies, such as the Police Force, to address issues such as traffic laws, speeding and so on.

Lack of funding has been the most significant barrier to actions being completed; those requiring minimal spend have been completed but those requiring significant financial input are on-going.

## Local Authority engagement

Whilst there was no intention to exclude the Local Authority, the question of bringing them on board did not arise.

### Quote from Community

"The community consultation was very worthwhile and the task was very enjoyable for all concerned."

PARISH PLAN COMMITTEE MEMBER

## Benefit to Local Authority

Plans are used to influence service planning and feed into the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### Quote from Local Authority

"Greater multi-agency input at an earlier stage of the process would be beneficial and could lead to more achievable Action Plans being created."

PARTNERSHIP MANAGER,  
SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Key learning for others

To achieve a high response rate, ensure that as many people as possible are involved in the process and keep the entire village/community updated.



Cottenham village sign

## Further information

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

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