



## The Community...

Fulbrook is a village of nearly 500 inhabitants. It has no village green or centre as such with its roads and lanes running like branches off the trunk of the A361.

Fulbrook possesses one Church, one Pub, a Children’s Play area, a stream, which the village is named after but which happily doesn’t flood, an occasional bus service, a number of off-road footpaths and dry stone walls and a website.

Although it has no formal village centre Fulbrook is well served by an active Parish Council and associated Amenities Group and many other social groups and activities within the village. In 2011, with the encouragement of ORCC and the backing of the Parish Council, a Steering Group of volunteers started developing a Community Led Plan for Fulbrook.



## Getting Started

### March 2011 - Annual Parish Meeting

The idea of a Community led Plan was introduced at the annual meeting and willing volunteers asked to come forward.

*“At this first meeting no one rushed forward to join a steering group . It takes time for people to warm to the idea and the first meeting you’re going in cold. People need to be able to chat about it at the pub and read about it.”*

*Gillian Kay, Fulbrook Parish Council Chairman*

A lot of work was carried out by Gillian, to encourage people personally with strong or multiple skills to consider forming a steering group.

### May 2011– Village Plant Sale

Fulbrook set up a Post-it Note Consultation at their village plant sale asking people what they liked about living in Fulbrook and what they would like to improve. The results of this helped inform the questionnaire and direction of the steering group.

### September 2011– Village Meeting

The results of the consultation at the plant sale were published in the Fulbrook Newsletter and a meeting held to encourage a steering group to form.

### KEY FACTS:

**County: Oxfordshire**

**District:  
West Oxfordshire**

**Population: 500**

**Plan Complete: 2013**

*“There is a lot of reliance on good will, time and expertise. Volunteering takes time, people take holidays and at certain times (Christmas) things can take longer. Time in kind and voluntary activity is hard to quantify”*

Gillian Kay - Fulbrook Parish Council Chairman

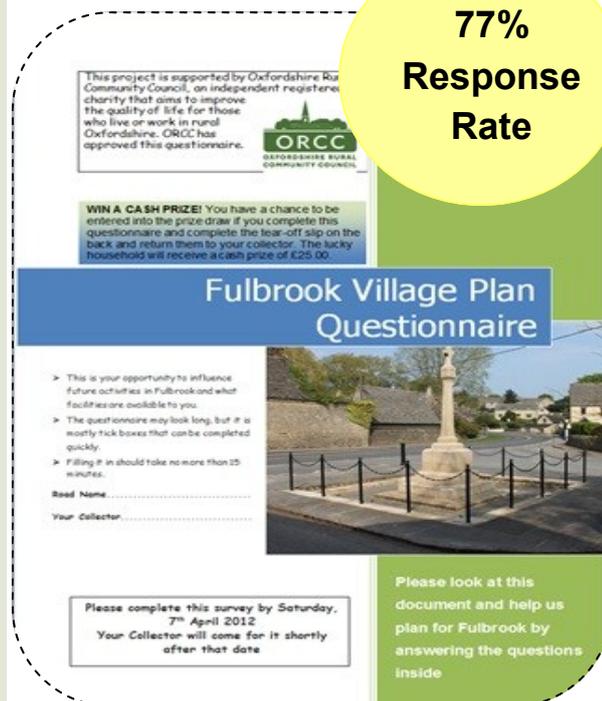
# Community Led Plan Case Study - FULBROOK

## Role of the Steering Group

Early on the Fulbrook Steering group discussed at length how best to develop the plan and how best to consult with the village. On reflection, the scoping of the topics and methodology to be used probably took longer than necessary. Nevertheless, the steering group were very successful and took on the following characteristics:

- **No named chairperson**, but a couple of experienced people willing to take on leadership roles to give a good steer on what was needed and give substance to the plan
- **Good cross section** of ages and geographical spread across the village
- **Individuals allocated areas** right through the process, including analysis, right through to bringing the plan together and presenting the final results to the community.
- **One editor to keep to the same style.** Although contributions and discussions were made as a group, the questionnaire and plan was pulled together by key people in the group to keep it consistent.
- **A dedicated fundraiser** or someone with time to negotiate conversations with printers and other people who may be able to keep costs down.

77%  
Response  
Rate



***“Use of technology helped us communicate quickly and efficiently as a steering group between meetings and to post regular updates on the village website.”***

Bob Tivey - Fulbrook Community Led Plan Steering Group Co-ordinator

## The Questionnaire

- A lot of care was taken over developing the questionnaire. Discussion of the choice of topics and practicality of developing action plans to address issues was raised and was important to ensure the relevance and focus of the questions asked.
- The questionnaire was drawn up in Word with Excel sheets to ensure the analysis was built into the process from the start and 4 sub-groups tackled 7 topics.
- Formatting the questionnaire to make it attractive (use of photos) and easy to respond to was very important and the steering group wished there has been a read-made practice model available to help with this.
- One member of the steering group co-ordinated the distribution and collection using volunteers who normally take round the village newsletter. A photo was added to the questionnaire to make it more inviting.
- Collectors went back a number of times and made a special effort to have contact with householders.

***“Knowing that your neighbour delivered the questionnaire makes it harder to throw it in the bin!”*** John Harrington, Steering Group member and Fundraiser

# Community Led Plan Case Study - FULBROOK

## Pulling the final plan together

- To spread the effort of analysing the results, the steering group split into sub-groups of pairs putting those with IT skills with those who were less confident. This meant it was easier to input the results and less work than if it fell to one person.
- The group experimented with different ways of prioritising actions but overall kept focus on what could be realistically achieved with the resources available in the village and making sure specific actions were placed on identified groups or 'village champions' to take things forward.
- The group decided early on that it wanted to produce a good quality document that people in the village would want to read and keep. This meant that effort had to be put into raising the funds from local community charities and others and to obtaining competitive quotes from local printers.
- It was really useful to get an independent check of the draft plan. In this instance contact was made with someone who was involved with the Fulbrook Appraisal a number of years before and it was useful to be able to use this resource.
- The Village annual meeting was set as a target date for completion of the plan and presentation to the community - a clear deadline to aim for.
- Formatting the final document, including creative use of photographs, took time and required good IT. Proof reading skills came in useful too.

***“Use what you have... consider being flexible with your meeting venue - we started out in a meeting room at the back of the church for the initial public meetings, then used the pub for our results presentations in September where there was a great turnout! Similarly we found after a while that steering group meetings worked better in individual member’s homes.”***

Bob Tivey - Fulbrook Community Led Plan Steering Group Co-ordinator

***“ A lot of preparation went into putting a presentation together for the community (with the steering group working in pairs on each subject matter) this gave a clear and lively message to the community.”***

Bob Tivey - Fulbrook Community Led Plan Steering Group Co-ordinator



*Fulbrook Community Led Plan Steering Group*

***“ We really enjoyed it and had fun!”***

Bob Tivey and Gillian Kay

## Keeping in Touch with the Community

Once the plan was completed, Fulbrook distributed a copy to every household in the village and published it on the village website <http://fulbrookvillage.net/fulbrook-village-plan> A meeting was also held in the Fulbrook meeting place where the final plan was presented to the community with a visual presentation and a call for volunteers to help take the actions forward.

***“Doing a Community Led Plan is a good community building exercise - it’s about ‘having a voice’ and there were some unexpected results.”***

Gillian Kay - Fulbrook Parish Council Chairman

**55% of people attending the final meeting of the Community led Plan volunteered to help take actions**



## Key actions underway...

- Fulbrook Welcome Pack for new residents reinstated
- Friends in Fulbrook started - a residents mutual help network
- Support for wildflower regeneration on verges and hedgerows
- A Christmas Craft fair is being planned at the Carpenters Arms
- An E-swap shop for Fulbrook Freecycle is being prepared
- Improvements to the village website with automated mailing lists, more use of photographs, updated village information and plan action progress reports.

## ORCC Website [www.oxonrcc.org.uk](http://www.oxonrcc.org.uk)

Find out who we are and what we do by visiting our website for news and events, publications, funding information and links to other useful organisations.

To find out more about Community Led Planning contact Alan Foulkes

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