

# Acomb's

# Community Led 5 Year Plan – 2015 to 2020

<b>An Introduction</b>	Page 02
<b>Section 01 Protect &amp; Sustain</b>	Page 06
<b>Section 02 Improve &amp; Renew</b>	Page 11
<b>Section 03 Support &amp; Co-operate</b>	Page 21
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	Page 24

**Action4Acomb (A4A)** is the name of the Community Led Planning Group which was set up to help the people of the Parish to identify and develop ways to improve the life of the community through the production of an Acomb Community Led Plan. Anyone living or working within the Parish is part of A4A. A constituted committee has been formed to support the activities and projects of A4A with the guidance of Community Action Northumberland.

### Local People...Local Priorities

Since A4A formally came into existence in October 2013, a great deal has already been achieved through the creation of A4A Action Groups, working with the local community, the Parish Council, and Partner Agencies in response to what have been identified by local people as local priorities.

This has been captured in a variety of ways:

- Parish Council open meeting in April 2012
- early follow up consultation with established groups including visiting Acomb First School to hear from the children
- open meetings about key issues – flooding - the Approach to the Village (A6079) Parish Questionnaire to all households
- developing a Community Led Plan.

### A great deal has already been achieved:

- A Flood Group with a coordinated Flood Plan and Flood Wardens
- Establishing the Citizen Science Project
- A revived Acomb Women's Institute
- Establishing a youth club and summer activities
- Setting a new tradition with an annual Village Christmas Tree and Carols event
- Initiating a dog fouling campaign
- Instigating an Approach to the Village Action Group
- Successfully applying for Grant funding to support taking forward action
- Enhancing village communication through variety of ways... website... Facebook...notice boards
- Drawing up a questionnaire, distributing and analysing

**but still, there is more to be done... meeting the needs of the village's older population...**

### How did it happen?

Acomb Parish Council extended an invitation to all residents to a public meeting in April 2012 to take forward and lead on a Community Led Plan.

**"Community-led plans work best when the community takes charge of it – 'by the community...for the community'..."**

Acomb Parish Council circular, July 2012

**"It is important that the Parish Council is NOT the lead body in deciding what the village wants.....how it is done....and who's going to do it....!"**

Acomb Parish Council circular, July 2012

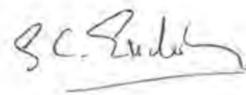
### What is a Community Led Plan?

- **It focuses on what is important to the people living and working in Acomb Parish**
- **It addresses a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues identified by local residents**
- **It provides a working document with a clear action plan for the community of Acomb to work together with Partners – Parish Council, County Council, Environment Agency and others - to influence local and national decision making and achieve real change to benefit Acomb residents**
- **It provides a structure for finding resources, applying for funding and gaining external support for projects to improve facilities and services for Acomb residents**
- **It helps to bring the community together with a common purpose**

### Council support for the CLP

**"Acomb Parish Council endorse in principle the community led plan and will operate and assist in its implementation as necessary."**

Charles Enderby



### An early success...improving the Bus Service

In May 2012, Northumberland County Council wrote to parish councils informing them that a review of supported bus services was to be undertaken and that savings had to be made. As the review affected bus routes serving Acomb, many bus users were concerned that the village might lose some of its services.

In response, an informal group of bus users was formed and with help and support from Acomb Parish Council, a survey of residents, including those who did not use the buses regularly, was conducted.

The survey asked people to say what would make them more likely to use the bus and about why they needed the service. There was considerable interest and concern about the issue and **131** replies to the survey were received.

The following is a brief summary of the findings:



People said they used the bus:		People said they would use the bus more if:	
to shop in Hexham	75%	they knew when the buses ran (better timetables)	68%
to get to medical appointments	59%	if buses went to Hexham Hospital / Health Centre	51%
because its better for the environment	55%	if buses went to Hexham Supermarkets	50%
to connect with buses to Newcastle /Metrocentre	52%	if buses were more frequent	47%
to connect with trains to Newcastle /Metrocentre	42%	if buses were more regular (better spaced)	44%
because they do not have a car (50 people*)	38%	if buses were more reliable (kept to timetable)	33%
to visit family and friends	26%	if buses were more accessible (no steps)	32%
because its cheaper by bus	25%	if fares were lower	17%
to get to work, college or school	21%		
to get to get to other places	18%		

**64% of people who use the bus everyday and 52% of people who use the bus more than once a week do not have a car.**

Northumberland County Council (NCC) found the survey very helpful and attended a meeting of the Acomb Parish Council to discuss possible options. Following Acomb's lead similar surveys were conducted for Humshaugh and Chollerton Parish Councils.

In 2015, NCC undertook a further review of the bus services it supported. Revised services were introduced operated by Go-NE. The bus user survey indicated that more people would be willing to use the bus if the service was improved. The revised services are now more frequent, more regular, reliable and accessible and timetables for the routes serving Acomb are available. The 882 route now also serves the supermarkets in Haugh Lane.

**What happened next...?**

In the following 18 months, a small group of residents, met with several existing groups and held open meetings to both verify and understand what local residents wanted. These were the areas/themes (Figure 01) that emerged which were used at a later stage to both inform the Parish questionnaire that was distributed to all households and also the Action4Acomb website:

[www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk)



Fig. 01 Acomb word cloud

**Most importantly.....**

In the month of November 2014, in order to ensure that everyone in Acomb Parish could have their say, every home received a copy of the Parish questionnaire which had been prepared by A4A Committee members, supported by David Penn, a previous local resident, based on what residents had told us.

It is the questionnaire findings that have informed Acomb's Community Led Plan. It is now also being used as evidence towards preparing [Acomb's Neighbourhood Plan](#) (NP). The findings are being made available on A4A website, <http://www.action4acomb.co.uk> with a hard copy at the Village Hall and Post Office.

The questionnaire was hand-delivered to all Acomb Parish residents by volunteers who also did a door to door collection leading to a 56% response rate. This has been analysed, and was fed back to the Parish Council and the community in 2015.

Quotes that appear in this document are all residents' comments, taken directly from the questionnaire unless attributed otherwise. In the questionnaire, people said they liked living in Acomb.

**88% of those respondents to questionnaire said that they always or usually felt safe living in Acomb.**

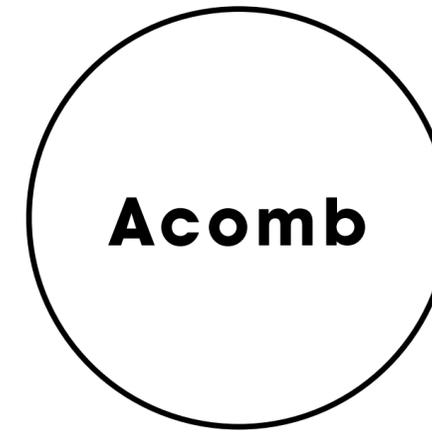
***"Friendly village where most people look out for neighbours and friends."***

***"Good access to main roads and good rail links."***

***"There is still a sense of community ...and we are surrounded by great countryside."***

***"Attractive village within a pleasant rural environment, close to Hexham for all its amenities."***

***"...still a place where you feel safe..."***



**A Well Balanced Village Plan**

**01 Protect & Sustain**

- Cornerstones of Acomb village life
- Rural and village environment
- Conservation area
- Links with Hexham

**02 Improve & Renew**

- Road safety
- Road maintenance
- Drains and sewers
- Flood defences
- Sports Pavilion

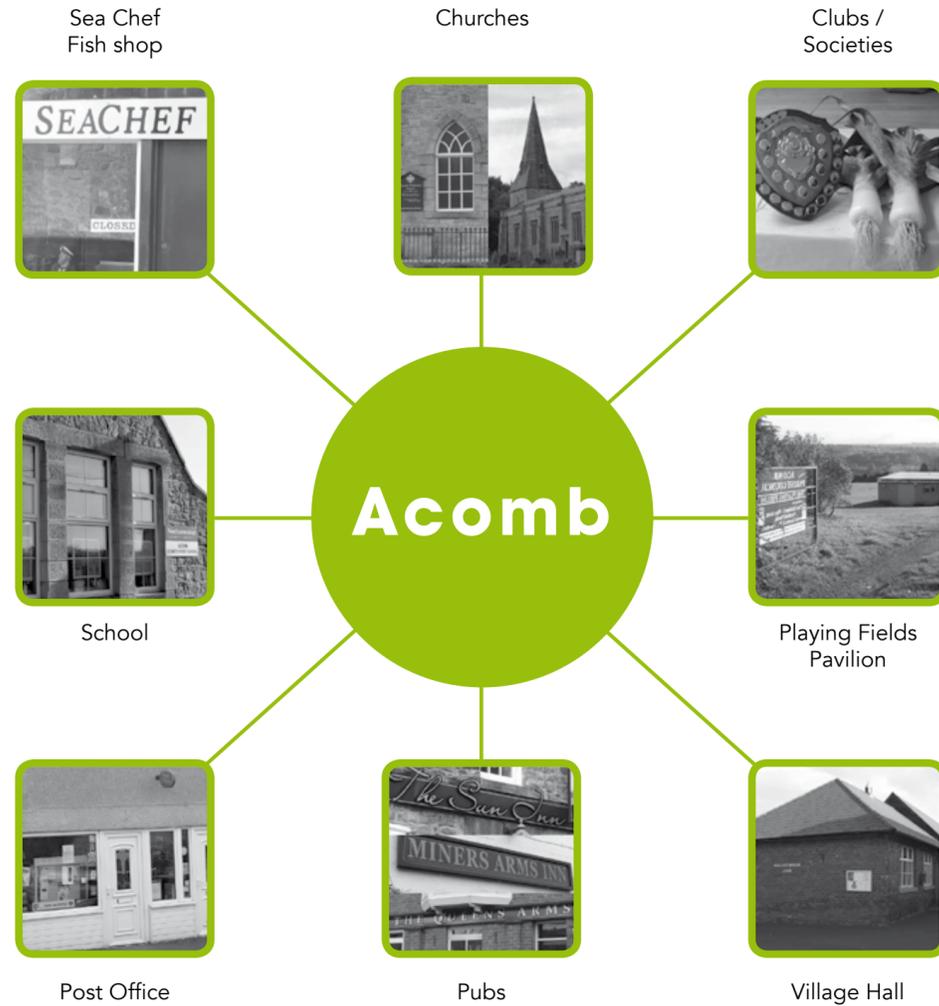
- Community life
- Youth work
- Support for those in need
- Communication

**03 Support & Co-operate**

**It is important to protect and sustain what you have said that you value:**

As a community we need to protect and build our local rural environment in the context of the [Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy](#), which is now not due to be published until the summer of 2017.

## Cornerstones of Acomb Village Life



### What you most value...

The results of the Autumn 2014 questionnaire were very clear that the two most valued aspects of Acomb were its rural setting and its nearness to services in Hexham. Acomb has the best of both worlds. As part of Acomb's Community Led Plan, we need to ensure that we protect our rural environment.

### What's already happening?

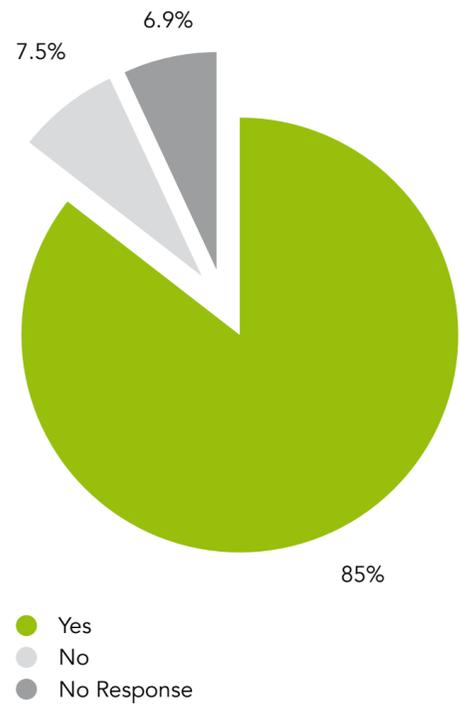
- Existing Cornerstones of Acomb village life were identified in the questionnaire findings.
- An already established Footpath Group monitors and clears bridleways and footpaths, reporting any issues, as required.
- There is a real pride in living in Acomb and 85% of those who responded to the questionnaire stated that they would recommend living in Acomb (see Figure 2).
- Identified areas of concern have included the amount of litter in particular parts of the village and also the reporting of dog fouling. Awareness raising about dog fouling and the increased number of litter bins has shown some limited success. Only 29% questionnaire respondents thought that there had been an improvement with 44% who were not sure and a significant 22% who did not think there was any improvement. Previously NCC have provided free poo bags and delivered to the Post Office for residents to request. Over the past year, the provision of free bags has ceased.
- Main Street is a conservation area. However, only 44% of questionnaire respondents were aware of this.
- Bus surveys have been conducted leading to tangible improvements in the services (see results of 2012 survey).

### Next steps:

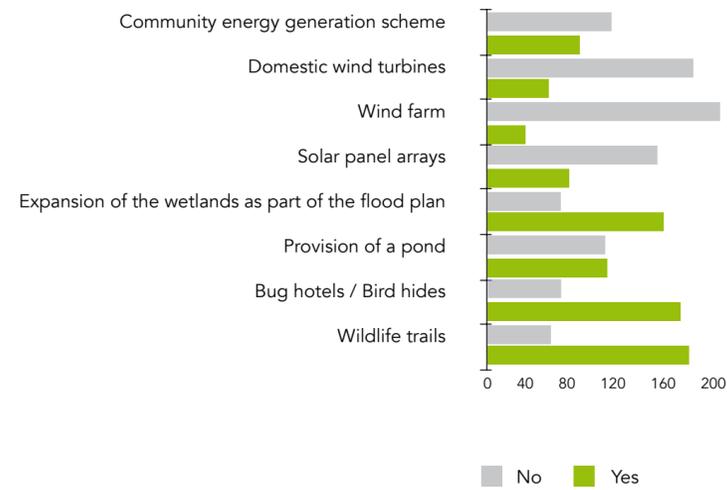
**There is a need to continue to:**

- monitor closely any developments or plans, ongoing or new, which might threaten the rural nature of the village or conservation area and ensure our views and suggestions are heard by the appropriate bodies (see Figure 3).**
- protect and enhance the countryside around us**
- it is important to sustain the Cornerstones of the village to support the vitality of the village.**
- recognise that there is a significant minority of self employed who work from home, more so than other comparable villages in Northumberland and increasing according to the Census data (Figure 4). Superfast broadband is an essential requirement for those working from home, only 9% who responded to the question, 'How do you rate the following services in Acomb' stated that Broadband was excellent within the village.**
- encouraging residents and visitors to care for the local environment.**
- publicise local bus services and be aware of any planned changes which might limit access to Hexham, given the number without a car living within the village.**

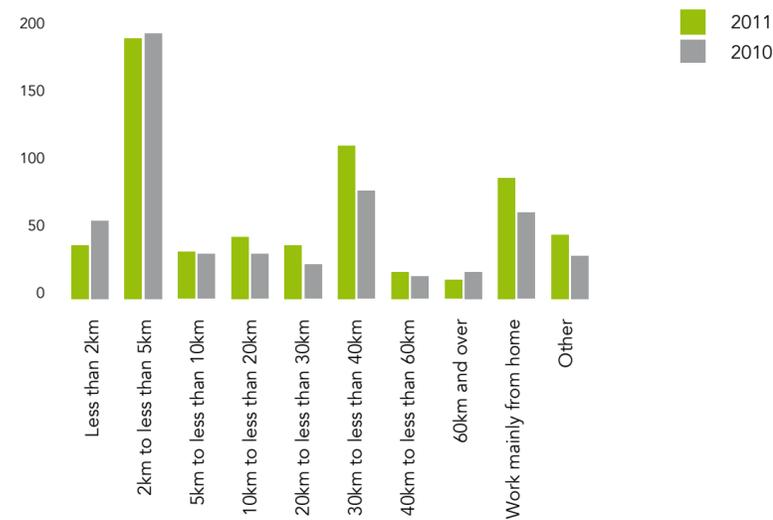
**Fig. 02**  
Would you recommend Acomb to family and friends as a place to live?



**Fig. 03**  
Which of the following would you like to see in the countryside around Acomb?



**Fig. 04**  
Distance travelled to work from Acomb 2011 census data.



Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
<b>Rural and village environment</b>					
Monitor closely any developments or plans, ongoing or new, which might threaten the rural nature of the village	Forming a clear collective vision for our neighbourhood	High	Local residents NP Steering Group A4A NCC Acomb Footpath Group	PC	NP Steering Group planned open event in May 2016 to share early progress towards a clear, collective vision inviting contributions from the community, leading to an agreed vision for our neighbourhood.
	Raising residents awareness through various forms of communication of any ongoing or new developments or plans that may threaten the rural nature of the village	High	Local residents NP Steering Group A4A PC NCC Acomb Footpath Group	A4A	Already matters of concern have been raised with good effect e.g. Garden House Bank housing development proposals
	Responding through local campaigns and bringing to the attention of Acomb Parish Council, any concerns	High	Local residents NP Steering Group A4A NCC Acomb Footpath Group	A4A	Already matters of concern have been raised with good effect e.g. Garden House Bank housing development proposals
Monitor conservation area	To acknowledge the views of residents, as acquired through the Parish Questionnaire (Nov 2014) and ensure they continue to be taken notice of by the appropriate bodies	High	Local residents A4A PC NCC Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Historic England	PC	Early development of the NP Steering Group.  Parish Questionnaire findings have been shared with NP Steering Group.
Protect and enhance the countryside around us	To support the existing Footpath Group in undertaking this important voluntary role in a more visible way, reporting to the PC	Medium	Local residents A4A PC NCC NP Steering Group	PC	Long established group who have undertaken clearing and monitoring of paths and bridleways, reporting to the Area Countryside Officer.
	To respond to what local residents have said, when asked in the questionnaire 'what they would like to see in the countryside around Acomb'	High	Local residents A4A PC NCC NP Steering Group Footpath Group	PC	Early development of the NP Steering Group.  Parish Questionnaire findings have been shared with NP Steering Group

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
Encouraging residents and visitors to care for the local environment	To continue dog fouling awareness campaigns on regular basis and monitor if working	Low	Local residents Acomb 1st School A4A PC NCC Existing Acomb Village Groups	PC	Previous campaigns including involvement of Acomb 1st School
	To increase the number of litter bins, as identified by local residents	Low	Local residents A4A PC NCC Existing Acomb Village Groups	PC	Bins purchased and installed by the PC following the identification of areas to be covered.
	To encourage local residents to report incidents of dog fouling to the relevant department at Northumberland County Council - 0845 600 6400	High	Local residents A4A PC NCC	A4A	Information included on website, posted on Facebook and periodic information in Acomb News in the Hexham Courant and in the PC Newsletter.
	To request the PC to support the purchase of poo bags to be made available at the Post Office for residents to collect	Medium	Local residents A4A PC NCC	A4A	Previously provided by NCC on request and advertised as being available. Now no longer being provided by NCC.
	To set up regular Parish campaigns to tackle litter and fly tipping in conjunction with existing national campaigns.	Medium	Local residents A4A PC NCC	A4A	Nil to date though evidence of local residents picking up litter e.g. Garden House Bank
Retain Bus Service to ensure links with Hexham to meet the needs of residents - particularly those residents without a car	Publicise local bus services	Medium	Local residents A4A PC County Councillor NCC	PC	Successful campaign previously, supported by local survey
	Continue to ensure current level of bus service provision is maintained and reviewed periodically	High	Local residents A4A PC NCC	PC	Successful campaign previously, supported by local survey
	Actively campaign to retain a service should the service be at risk	High	Local residents A4A PC County Councillor	PC	Successful campaign previously, supported by local survey

In various public consultation meetings and in [the 2014 questionnaire](#), you have said very clearly what improvements and renewal Acomb needs:

### A better Approach to the Village (A6079) and an overall village safety plan

*"..all the traffic does is come flying through the village – slow down to the speed camera and then speed away again."*



#### These concerns were expressed:

- the number and speed of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) and other traffic along the A6079 and travelling through the village
- the appearance of A6079 requires improving to make it less urban and in keeping with the village as a whole
- people have difficulty crossing the A6079
- pavements are too narrow, both along the A6079 and other parts of the village and parked cars on pavements cause problems for pedestrians
- Cross Banks/Morrison Terrace is a very difficult junction which people fear to use
- there is poor visibility at the Queen's Arms crossroad due to parked cars obscuring the view
- Garden House Bank, due to the restrictions and pinch points at both the top and bottom of the road and varied usage, leads to potential dangers for all users
- parking at the school and on Main Street causes danger to children and other pedestrians

#### What's already happening?

- The Approach to the Village Action Group has been established with involvement from local residents and other partner agencies. The three public consultation events with the community on proposals for the Approach to the Village were supported by Philip Barker, Landscape Architect, Director of Glenkemp Landscape Architects, who worked with us on a voluntary basis. The [plan](#), with recommended solutions to make improvements, was revised after each event.
- Working with Robin Watson Sign and Design and local businesses to erect improved commercial signage at the entrance to the industrial estate.
- Meetings have been held between the Parish Council, School Head and Governors with Northumberland County Council Highways Department with proposed plans to implement 20 mph, resolve the parking outside the school and improve and make safer pedestrian access to and from the school.
- Further proposals have been put forward to make Acomb Village a 20 mph zone excluding the A6079. A survey has been conducted on line via [www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk) The results have shown that the majority (74%) responding are in favour with 20% who do not want the proposal.

#### Next steps:

- Continue to liaise with Northumberland County Council (NCC) Highways Department to address the traffic issues raised.
- Liaising with Acomb Parish Council and NCC to achieve a village 20 mph zoned area in keeping with the views expressed in the local on-line survey.
- Investigate the cost and funding streams for installing interactive speed signs to the village entrances (A6079) to deter drivers to go over the current speed limit of 30 mph (the A6079 is excluded from the proposed 20mph village zone).
- Work in collaboration with Acomb Parish Council to have the Speed Camera activated 365 days a year, not just 73 days (20% of the year).
- Liaise with haulage companies and to work together towards a safer A6079.
- Consider the possibility of the diversion of HGVs away from the village working in conjunction with Wall village.
- Improve the appearance of the Approach to the Village. There are plenty of actions to take forward, for example: planters and wildflower planting and willow hedging to promote the rural character of the road. It was felt that it is important to make road-users aware that this is a village road and an integral part of the village, not just a way through.

## Ongoing flood management and defences

### What is causing the problem?

- The steep catchment of both the Red Burn and the Birkey Burn causes flash flooding in heavy rain conditions
- Lack of roadside gully maintenance contributes to surface water flooding

*“Acomb has the gold standard of Flood Groups.”*

Guy Opperman, MP acknowledged at a Tyne Valley Flood Group meeting, March 2016.



### What's already happening?

- Acomb has a Flood Plan and 14 Flood Wardens.
- Informing local residents about the Plan– where sand bags are stored - how to contact the Lead Flood Warden – 07702 539736 - how to report drains and gullies or blockages in the burns through a variety of ways – cards through doors in those areas at greatest risk, on the Website, Facebook, notices, 'Acomb News' in the Hexham Courant, Parish Newsletter.
- The Flood Plan has been modified in response to experience of recent flood events and at its annual reviews.
- In view of the risk of flash flooding, the Environment Agency has commissioned a modelling exercise to study stream flow characteristics in response to rainfall with a view to constructing flood mitigation measures.
- Some of the Flood Wardens and other interested volunteers are working with PhD student, Eleanor Starkey at Newcastle University who has given her time generously towards setting up a [Citizen Science Project](#) to provide collective data on rainfall and resultant stream behaviour along with any further evidence, for example, photographic. Through the successful grant funding application, LEAF, equipment has been installed to support the data and act as early alerts to probable flash floods e.g. HydroMotes. This will provide a longer term understanding of catchment behaviour and flood risk in order to complement the work of the Environment Agency.
- There are on-going communications with NCC Departments about the maintenance of drains, gullies and sewers.

### Next steps:

- Continue to review the Flood Plan in light of future flood events as well as annual reviews to make it a continual workable document.
- Data gathering and feedback through the involvement of Citizen Science volunteers and other residents, captured on a shared Dropbox folder.
- Establish sources of funding through the Environment Agency and other sources.
- Working with local farmers and landowners on catchment-wide modifications for flood alleviation.
- Hear the outcomes of the long awaited report, adopt and install recommended Modelling Exercise proposals in collaboration with local residents.
- Encourage a good working partnership with NCC Departments towards addressing the current gullies and sewers maintenance and structural problems.
- Encourage local residents to report blocked gullies and sewers to the [relevant NCC department](#).

## Views expressed about the Village Hall and the Pavilion

### These are the main issues that arose from the questionnaire:

- residents want more village-based activities and feel that there are no suitable buildings.
- there is a lack of awareness about available facilities (see Figures 5 and 6).
- there is perceived neglect and lack of maintenance of the buildings.
- there is a lack of good, modern facilities, for example, suitable storage, Wi-Fi, electric sockets, kitchen facilities.



Consequently, both buildings are underused.



Fig. 05

How often do you or members of your family use the following facilities?

### Sports

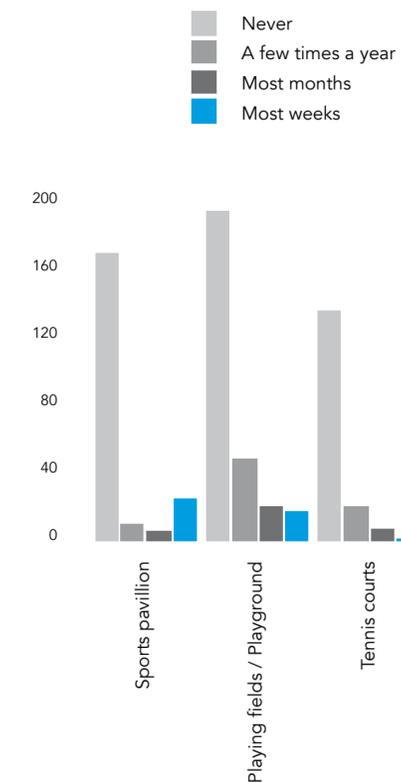
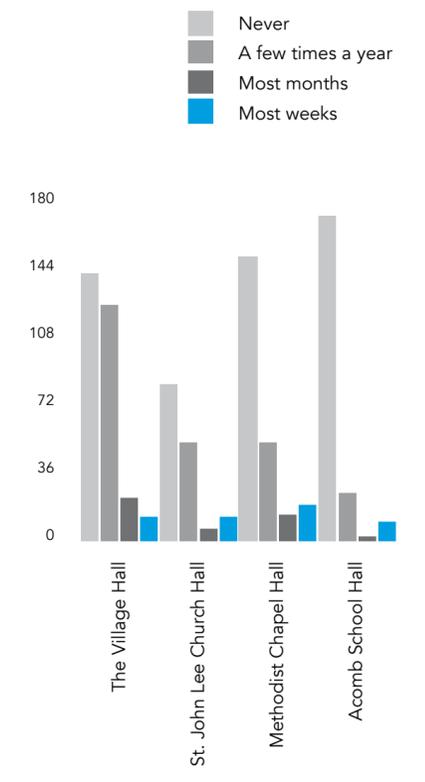


Fig. 06

How often do you or members of your family use the following facilities?

### Venues



### Next steps:

#### Future considerations for the village hall and pavilion...

- do nothing
- retain the village hall as it is but renovate the pavilion
- renovate both the village hall and the pavilion
- renovate the village hall and build a new sports pavilion
- build a new village hall incorporating a new pavilion on the playing fields, with suitable access and parking
- Other options

#### Other considerations...

- the pavilion is in such a 'poor condition as to make it unsuitable for renovation' according to a [Outline Appraisal](#) conducted free of charge in February 2015 by Jenny Gillatt, Local Architect, Mosedale Gillatt Architects.
- it would be necessary to fundraise and/or apply for grant funding (Bardon Mill's new hall, completed in 2013, cost in the region of £500,000).
- there may be difficulties of access to the field from Main Street.
- the potential, due to the proposed new housing development on Garden House Bank, for there to be future opportunities to access Section 106 funding to support pedestrian links to the playing fields with other parts of the village, should this development be passed.
- the question of management and land-ownership of the current pavilion and village facilities.

#### There are significant benefits from a new-build pavilion/village hall:

- the creation of a community hub, if located together on the playing field, with good access and renewable/sustainable energy options, for all age groups within the village. A café has been suggested by several residents.
- a new building could increase income generation to benefit the village.



Bardon Mill Village Hall

### Housing and Planning

#### These concerns were expressed:

- the village is large enough
- road structure is unable to cope
- parking problematic in the village
- infrastructure cannot support more housing

56% said no to more housing - 15% said yes but with conditions. Fig.07

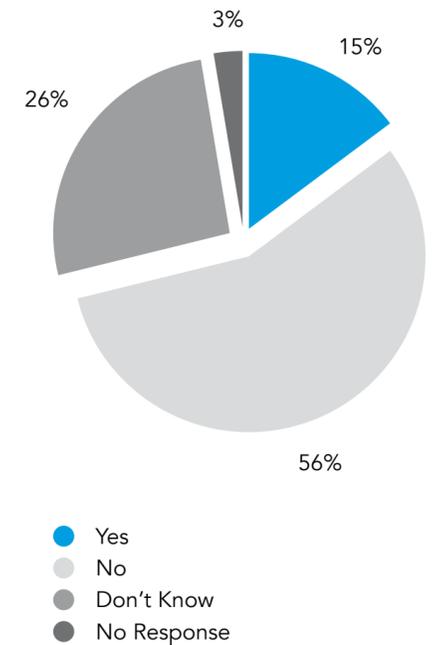
#### Those who said "Yes" put forward conditions:

- There needs to be an **assessment of housing needs**
- Planning proposals required to be **well planned**: safe roads, space for children to play
- **More facilities for the elderly**: sheltered accommodation lacking

*"Road structure would not cope with increased housing development. Integrity of village could be affected e.g. existing planning to change Byre at Pant"*

*"Acomb does not have the infrastructure to support additional housing. There is also potential increased traffic congestion"*

Fig. 07 Do you think that Acomb needs more housing?



#### What's already happening?

##### Garden House Bank Development proposals – 15/03825/FUL

- in response to local residents views, a campaign was initiated by A4A who distributed a proforma letter around the village for those who wished to complete and return to NCC Planning Department with the date of a Public Meeting called by the Parish Council along with information, both on the A4A Face Book and Website.
- the public meeting called by the Parish Council was well attended with a Housing Development representative from NCC in attendance to answer questions raised and with opportunity for attendees to view planning proposals.
- Large number of residents (71) submitted objections to NCC Planning Department, based on concerns about access and increased volume of traffic and the effect on road safety, increasing risk of flooding, loss of village character and lack of housing needs assessment

##### The Parish Council has commenced work on a Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

- a website has been developed <http://acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/>
- This Community Led Plan has helped to inform the Neighbourhood Plan with the following priorities identified from the consultation meetings and the 2014 questionnaire:
  - any new development should consider the requirements of the village and its infrastructure – roads, drains, sewerage, increased flow of traffic and parking.
  - flood management and prevention are crucial.
  - adequate lighting should ensure safety as well as enhance the conservation area and respect the natural environment.
  - the conservation area should be monitored and preserved.
  - village venues currently need updating or replacing to enable a wider range of activities – consideration of future development options is needed.

- residents have said 'no' to renewable energy.
- small businesses are seen as acceptable development in the village.

#### What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan deals specifically with land use planning in a designated area

It provides an opportunity for our community to shape any development in our Parish following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. A NP will become a formal part of the decision making process for land allocations and planning application decision making. County Hall cannot simply 'have regard' to them, they must adhere to them. They have statutory weight and status. However, there is a prescribed and robust process to go through to get a Neighbourhood Plan adopted.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
<b>Approach to the Village A6079 and an overall village safety plan</b>					
To slow traffic down and make Acomb's roads safer	Consider alternative means for traffic management through liaising with Northumberland County Council Highways Department to address the traffic issues raised	High	Local residents A4A with Approach to the Village Action Group PC NCC Highways County Councillor Businesses Acomb 1st School	A4A*	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group formed, inviting relevant partners to meetings to make the A6079 safer  Pledge by County Councillor to contribute to funding to making A6079 safer  Proposal to make Acomb Village 20mph, including the area immediately outside the school, with support from residents  Acomb 1st School approached to involve the children in designing signs for erecting on A6079
Work in collaboration with Acomb Parish Council to consider reviewing Local Transport Plan (LTP) priority to achieve LTP funding for A6079		High	A4A with Approach to the Village Action Group PC NCC Highways	PC	Agenda item at PC meetings
To investigate cost, funding streams for installing interactive speed signs, north and south of A6079, excluded from 20mph village zone		High	Local residents A4A PC County Councillor NCC Highways and other departments	A4A*	Tabled at PC  County Councillor assured funding
Work in collaboration with Acomb Parish Council to have the current Speed Camera activated 365 days, not just 173 days per year		High	Local residents A4A with Approach to the Village Action Group PC NCC Highways County Councillor	A4A*	PC requested increased camera activity
Liaise with haulage companies		Medium	A4A PC County Councillor	PC	Nil to date
Enquire of NCC whether there is a realistic option to divert HGVs away from the village		Low	Local residents A4A PC Acomb 1st School NCC Highways County Councillor Businesses	PC	Nil to date

A4A\* = A4A approach to the village action group

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
To slow traffic down and make Acomb's roads safer	Liaison between Acomb Parish Council and NCC to achieve a village 20 mph zoned area in keeping with the views expressed in the local on-line survey	High	Local residents A4A PC Acomb 1st School NCC Highways County Councillor Businesses	PC	Meetings held between school and NCC  Survey conducted on line  NCC mapping of proposed area
Improve the link with the main village centre	Provide way markers to the village centre and its facilities	Medium	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents PC, NCC	A4A*	Agenda item at PC.  Site visit with NCC officer to identify signage improvements
	Improve the visual qualities of boundary treatments to commercial/industrial sites to the west of A6079	Medium	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents Industrial Units PC, NCC	A4A*	PC has been approached to support the proposed action.
Promote the semi-rural character of the A6079	Improve the visual quality of signage to the Industrial Estate through working with Robin Watson Sign and Design to erect improved commercial signage at the entrance to the Acomb Industrial Estate with the cooperation of businesses	High	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents Industrial Units PC NCC	A4A*	Costings provided by Robin Watson Sign and Design  Negotiations with Industrial Units re: ladder board sign costs  NCC planning department to issue notice for removal of current signs
Help outsiders (to the village) see A6079 as part of the village	Remove 'urban clutter' e.g. old signage	Medium	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents Industrial Units PC NCC	A4A*	PC approached to support the proposed action. Joint site survey conducted with the NCC Highways.
	Rationalise the parking arrangements along the west side of A6079	Low	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents PC NCC	A4A*	Explored cost of feasibility study for surface covering but proved too costly  Determine who owns land running adjacent to A6079 and Morrison Terrace
	Eradicate excessive invasive vegetation on the road verge involving NCC	High	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents PC NCC	A4A*	NCC started process of eradicating
	Promote access to the country parks and riverside walks with better signage and slowing traffic down through a variety of means	Medium	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents PC NCC	A4A*	PC has been approached to support the provision of improved signage.

A4A\* = A4A approach to the village action group

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
Help outsiders (to the village) see A6079 as part of the village	Improve the visual appearance of the Approach to the Village with planters, wildflower planting and willow hedging to promote the rural character of the road.	Medium	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group Local residents PC NCC	A4A*	Nil to date
	Establish "Acomb in Bloom" initiative to involve the whole community.	Low	A4A Local residents PC Established local groups	A4A	Nil to date
<b>Ongoing flood management and defences</b>					
Ensure defence strategies based on evidence are adopted to manage flash flood events	Continue to review the Flood Plan in light of future flood events as well as annual reviews to make it a workable document	High	A4A Flood Action Group EA Local PC Council Emergency Services NCC Tyneside Flood Initiative	A4A	Annual Flood review each March completed involving A4A Flood Action Group and EA Flood Plan reviewed following each flood event, appropriate changes made Updated documents disseminated to flood wardens Trash screens installed on the Red Burn Proposed planned installation of camera at trash screen, Morrison Terrace, to alert EA at flash flood events 2 further Flood Wardens recruited, total 14.
	Nominate a volunteer to take on role of Citizen Science Project Lead to ensure sustainability of project through recruiting new volunteers, that LEAF fund is spent as per Project criteria, sharing learning as a group of volunteers, update website	High	A4A Flood Action Group (FLAG) EA Local PC Council Emergency Services NCC Tyneside Flood Initiative PhD Student	A4A	Flood Wardens visited Haltwhistle to learn from a similar project Local Project in place supported by PhD student Volunteers recruited Equipment bought and distributed, with river gauges installed Website pages developed on A4A website Training provided with training cards to support

A4A\* = A4A approach to the village action group

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
Ensure defence strategies based on evidence are adopted to manage flash flood events (cont.)	Revisit school and local charity to encourage involvement, providing relevant support and training	Medium	A4A FLAG Citizen Science Volunteers PhD Student Acomb 1st School Daybreak Charity	A4A	Changing circumstances and other priorities have stalled involvement
	Request EA to take on the responsibility of maintaining and updating equipment e.g. HydroMotes in long term	Medium	A4A FLAG Citizen Science Volunteers PhD Student PC	A4A	Extending life of Hydromotes using Grant funding
	Data gathering and feedback through the involvement of Citizen Science volunteers captured on shared Dropbox folder	High	A4A FLAG Citizen Science Volunteers PhD Student Other residents	Citizen Science Lead Volunteer	Website pages developed on A4A website Training provided with training cards to support
	Establish sources of funding through the Environment Agency and other sources to take forward recommended catchment-wide modifications for flood alleviation	Medium	A4A FLAG EA PC NCC Tyneside Flood Initiative	A4A Flood Action Group	Await feed back from EA modelling report and economic assessment
	Work with local farmers and landowners on catchment-wide modifications for flood alleviation	High	A4A FLAG EA, Parish Council Local landowner Intermediary NCC Tyneside Flood Initiative	A4A Flood Action Group	Early approaches made with local landowners working with Charles Enderby as Intermediary in the establishing of the Citizen Science Project
	Communicate with local residents via social media at the time of flash flood events	High	A4A FLAG	A4A Flood Action Group	Successful medium at time of crisis to share information
	Adopt and install recommended Modelling Exercise proposals	High	A4A FLAG EA PC PhD Student Local landowner Intermediary NCC Tyneside Flood Initiative	A4A FLAG	Planned meeting to report back on Modelling Report, June 2016
	Encourage a good working partnership with NCC Departments towards addressing the current gullies, drains and sewers maintenance schedule and structural problems to reduce level of surface water	High	A4A FLAG EA PC Local residents Local landowner Intermediary NCC Tyneside Flood Initiative	A4A FLAG	Work undertaken early 2016 to clear ditches along Main Road beyond Salmon Wells  Planned meeting July 2016 to review drain clearance schedule and find solutions to identified problems

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
cont.	Encourage local residents to take responsibility in reporting blocked gullies and sewers	High	Local residents A4A FLAG NCC EA	A4A FLAG	Publicity sent out through Village Notes in Courant, Facebook, Acomb Parish Newsletter
<b>Village Hall and the Pavilion</b>					
Improving village facilities to accommodate a vibrant community	Resubmit questionnaire findings to Acomb Parish Council relating to village facilities	High	Local residents A4A PC NP Steering Group	A4A	Parish questionnaire findings shared with both Acomb PC (June 2015) and NP Steering Group (November 2015) Pavilion Appraisal Report shared with Acomb PC Brief survey conducted at public event to launch this CLP
	Local residents encouraged to consider future options for Pavilion, Village Hall and surrounding areas through a local survey	Medium	Local residents Local groups A4A PC NP Steering Group	A4A	Parish questionnaire to all residents within the Parish (56% return) shows that the local venues are underused and no longer fit for purpose
	Dependent on preferred option identified through survey, follow up with one of the following actions: 1. Do nothing 2. Retain the village hall as it is but renovate the pavilion 3. Renovate both the village hall and pavilion 4. Renovate the present village hall and build a new sports pavilion 5. Build a new village hall incorporating a new pavilion on the playing fields, with suitable access and parking	Medium	Local residents Local groups A4A PC NP Steering Group	A4A	At the CLP public meeting, May 2016, a straw poll identified that 35% wanted to incorporate the village hall and pavilion together, in the playing fields
	Establish the legal position regarding present site of village hall before considering any actions.	Medium	Local residents Local groups A4A PC NP Steering Group	PC	Nil to date
	Establish an action group to set up fund raising events and/ or apply for grant funding according to survey results	High	Local residents A4A PC NP Steering Group	A4A	Nil to date
	Initiate a future management and social committee for venues, either current or for any new builds	Medium	Local residents A4A PC NP Steering Group	A4A	Nil to date

In various public meetings and in the 2014 questionnaire, you have said that we all need to support and co-operate with each other.

### What's already happening?

- following a survey conducted with young people by a local Youth Worker employed by Hexham Youth Initiative, a weekly Youth Club for the age group 8-13 years has been established with a monthly Youth Group for 13 plus years.
- youth activities are programmed during the summer holidays. (Photo 01)
- talking to Acomb First School children provided valuable information as to what they valued in and around the village.
- surveys and feedback from those children and young people who have participated in the youth activities has been informative too, towards meeting the needs of this group within Acomb's population.
- Blast from the Past, a partnership project initiative between A4A, Groundwork and Hexham Youth Initiative. Enabling young people to learn more about their local heritage, achieving new skills and sharing their findings with local community groups involving the older population in the village
- Acomb Women's Institute has been re-established (Photo 02) <http://www.action4acomb.co.uk/events/acomb-wi/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/Acomb-Village-Womens-Institute-680255978714947/>
- an annual Christmas event has been established – Carols round the Tree.
- a review of the bus service has already been undertaken (see 2012 Bus Survey)
- extra notice boards – at the Post Office – and planned at the bus stop near the old police house.
- established Action4Acomb website <http://www.action4acomb.co.uk> and <https://www.facebook.com/Action-4-Acomb>
- regular submissions to Acomb News in the Hexham Courant and Parish Council Newsletter
- collaborating with the local pubs and Acomb First School to disseminate information



Photo 01

**Only 37%, of those who completed the questionnaire, felt that there was enough information about what was happening in Acomb.**



Photo 02

### Next steps:

- aim for more joined-up thinking across organisations and businesses to assess the need for activities and support for those in need within our community who may be new mums, elderly, disabled, vulnerable and/or lonely.
- improve the meeting and social facilities in the village (see Improve and Renew).
- plan future social events to provide opportunities to bring people together.
- improve communication of activities via the Hexham Courant and the Parish Newsletter, [www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk), Notice Boards, Newcomers' pack, distribution of flyers.
- support and sustain existing and future youth activities, listening to what young people want.
- continue to ensure the current level of bus service provision is maintained or improved and reviewed periodically.
- monitor closely any developments or plans, ongoing or new, which might threaten the rural nature of the village or conservation area and ensure our views and suggestions are heard by the appropriate bodies.
- protect and enhance the countryside around us.
- cornerstones of the village – industrial estate.
- encouraging residents and visitors to care for the local environment.
- publicise local bus services and be aware of any planned changes which might limit access to Hexham.

**24% of the population are over 65 years, with 11% over 75 years. Conversely, there is 16% of the population under 15 with 6%, 0-4 years.** (Source: 2011 Census data)

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
<b>Support for those in potential need</b>					
Provide support for those in need within our community; who may be new mums, elderly, disabled, vulnerable, and/or lonely.	Consider the needs of identified groups within the village, working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations through planned events and providing outreach contact to those who are housebound, learning from good practice elsewhere.	Medium	Local residents A4A Social Services Health Services ISOS Vol organisations Acomb Village WI Churches PC	A4A	Parish Questionnaire findings (Nov 2014)  Visiting existing groups in 2012/13
	Form appropriate action group(s) with local residents involvement and lead	Medium	As above	A4A	Continue to offer transport to the Christmas Carols around the Tree.
	Work towards joined-up thinking across statutory and voluntary organisations with involvement of local residents to achieve this	Medium	As above	A4A	Contact with other areas to explore their successful outreach provision and other activities to support identified groups.
	Provide support and activities in response to a further needs analysis, with achievable outcomes	Medium	As above	A4A	Example of a working partnership with Hexham Youth Initiative to take forward provision for young people
Improve the meeting and social facilities in the village	<b>See Improve and Renew</b>				
Support and sustain existing and future youth activities	Working in partnership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure grant funding</li> <li>Continue to listen to what young people say they want</li> <li>Improve facilities to accommodate youth activities (see Improve and Renew)</li> <li>Succession planning with opportunities for young people and residents to volunteer their time towards local youth work</li> </ul>	High	Young people A4A Hexham Youth Initiative Ground Works Churches Acomb 1st School	Hexham Youth Initiative	Surveys conducted by Hexham Youth Initiative  Weekly youth club for 8-13yr olds extended to working with those 13 + with monthly club  Awards for All grant funding secured
	Innovative ways of working with existing and future partners to enhance Acomb young people's experiences	High	Young people A4A Hexham Youth Initiative Ground Works Churches Acomb 1st School History Society	Hexham Youth Initiative	Working collaboratively with Groundwork North-East to take forward Blast from the Past Project

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Partners	Lead	Progress
<b>Village cohesion through village events</b>					
Plan for social events to provide opportunities to bring residents together	Forming a collaboration in conjunction with existing groups to plan events linked to a social committee for venues (see Improve and renew)	Medium	Local residents A4A Churches Village clubs and societies Acomb 1st School Pubs Acomb Village WI	A4A	Re-established Acomb WI have put on successful social events
Support and cooperate with the Acomb First School to develop stronger community links.	Engage with Acomb 1st school to develop additional community events and collaboration.	Medium	Acomb 1st School PTA Governors Local residents A4A Churches Acomb Village WI	Acomb 1st School	Mutual website links established. Scarecrow events initiated by school, extended to include the wider community. Improved publicity recommended. Reviving the Parent and Toddler group within Little Oaks Nursery Involvement and support with annual Carols around the Tree
<b>Improved Communication</b>					
Continue to improve communication about village life and activities	Use a variety of ways to share information, encouraging groups to advertise their activities in existing : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village Notes in the Hexham Courant</li> <li>Parish Council quarterly Newsletter</li> <li>Action4Acomb website <a href="http://www.action4acomb.co.uk">www.action4acomb.co.uk</a></li> <li>Action4Acomb Facebook <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Action-4-Acomb">https://www.facebook.com/Action-4-Acomb</a></li> <li>Notice Boards</li> <li>Posters</li> <li>Leaflet drops</li> </ul>	High	Local residents A4A Local Media PC Churches Village clubs and societies Post Office Local Pubs	A4A	Parish Questionnaire findings identified this as a problem  A4A Website and Facebook established at an early stage of the formation of A4A  PC have provided extra notice boards  Existing use of all suggested ways with variable success  Good support from variety of partners
	Develop a Newcomer's to the Village Pack through developing an action group to take forward and review and update periodically		Medium	A4A New and existing residents PC Acomb 1st School Churches Village clubs and societies	A4A

## Final Words...

This ambitious 5 Year Community Led Plan is already coming together. Based on the findings of the Parish questionnaire, it is what local residents have said they want for Acomb Parish. In the last two years, grant funding has been successfully applied for and along with our Partners, early outcomes have been achieved that are already making a difference for Acomb residents.

There is still more to be done. We can be ambitious and we can be successful in realising those ambitions. However, to get there, more people need to be actively involved. Your contribution may be very small – distributing flyers, supporting a one off event – or more substantial – becoming a member of A4A Committee or one of the Action Groups. Whichever, your involvement would be valued and most welcome.

In progressing this Community Led Plan, a well advertised public event was held on 14 May 2016 with its purpose to share the content of the Plan and gain approval from residents that the Plan reflects what was said in the Parish questionnaire 2014, prior to it going to print.

**“Very well-balanced plan – excellent and informative displays.”**

**“I have seen a lot of Community Plans... I think this is the best ...Well done A4A. Good Work.”**

**“...good plan that takes villagers into consideration.”**

This Community Led Plan will be made available in paper form and also on A4A website, see below.

**If you require a large print version, an extra copy, or wish to be involved, please contact:**

**Michael McElroy**  
**Chair of Action4Acomb Committee**  
**Mobile: 07500 123676**

or via  
Action4Acomb website:  
[www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk)  
providing your name and contact details  
or visit :  
[www.facebook.com/Action-4-Acomb](http://www.facebook.com/Action-4-Acomb)

**This Community Led 5 Year Plan – 2015 to 2020, should be reviewed annually, taking into account what residents have said within the [Parish questionnaire \(2014\)](#). However, there will be a need to build on the questionnaire findings, using further methods – visiting identified groups, linking with statutory and voluntary organisations, etc - to gain a greater understanding of what particular groups of residents (e.g. older population) want and need, in order to implement actions.**

### Abbreviations

<b>A4A</b>	Action4Acomb
<b>A4A*</b>	A4A Approach to the Village Action Group
<b>CLP</b>	Community Led Plan
<b>EA</b>	Environment Agency
<b>FLAG</b>	Flood Action Group
<b>HGV</b>	Heavy Goods Vehicle
<b>LEAF</b>	Local Environment Action Plan
<b>PC</b>	Parish Council
<b>PTA</b>	Parent Teacher Association
<b>NCC</b>	Northumberland County Council
<b>NP</b>	Neighbourhood Plan

## Acknowledgements

This Community Led Plan and the progress to date would not have been possible without the following:

Local established groups who in the very early days shared their views, concerns, passion and Acomb's history  
Residents who completed the questionnaire and attended public meetings to share their views about specific areas of concern  
Volunteers who delivered the questionnaire to all within Acomb Parish households and then collected them  
Flood Wardens who have volunteered their time and efforts day and night  
Citizen Science - Eleanor Starkey, PhD Student, Newcastle University and those who volunteered to participate in the Project  
James Neasham, Project Engineer, Envirowatch Ltd who has supported the installation of the Citizen Science equipment  
Methodist Chapel for providing a venue for meetings  
St John Lee for their annual involvement with the Carols around the Tree  
Acomb First School with supporting distribution of information and hosting feedback events  
Paul Baker, Acomb Post Office for putting up notices and providing a base for collection  
The Public Houses – Queens Arms, Sun Inn, Miners Arms - for supporting by putting up posters  
Catherine Laidlow, Acomb Village Correspondent for the Hexham Courant  
Acomb Parish Council  
Charles Enderby for supporting the Carols around the Tree by donating an annual Christmas Tree  
Terry Robson, County Councillor for Hexham West and Acomb  
Community Action Northumberland for the early support towards establishing A4A as a constituted group  
Hexham Youth Initiative and local volunteers who have made youth activities happen and engaged with Acomb's Young People  
Groundwork North East for their local involvement with young people and more recently, leading on the Blast From the Past Project  
Action4Acomb Committee members, past and present, and also all Action Group members  
David Penn, Research Consultant, former resident of Acomb, whose support and dedication since the inception of the Community Led Plan has been invaluable, including undertaking the bus survey which influenced the subsequent tendering process  
Andrew Samual, Community Engagement Officer, Flash Flood North Team, EA for his skills establishing Acomb's first Flood Plan draft  
Philip Barker, Landscape Architect, Director of Glenkemp Landscape Architects  
Jenny Gillatt, Architect, Mosedale Gillatt Architects provided a Pavilion Outline Appraisal  
Peter Rodger, Web Design Consultant  
RW Sign and Design for offering the materials towards the proposed ladder sign  
Howford Recycling planned to dig the ground for the ladder sign  
Acomb WI for their support providing refreshments at various events  
Grant Funding sources – LEAF – Community Chest – Awards for All – Heritage Young Roots – Rothley Trust – Acomb Parish Council

**NORTHUMBERLAND**  
Northumberland County Council

  
**Leaf**  
Local Environmental Action Fund



**Community  
Chest**



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

**The Rothley Trust**