

## Partnership Conference

4th December 2009

Stoodleigh Court, Tiverton

# Sustainable and Resilient Rural Communities Conference



This major conference highlighted the value of partnership working and engagement with rural communities to an audience of key practitioners and influencers. The conference aimed to raise the profile of partnership working to support the Sustainable Communities agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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# Conference Report

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## Welcome



*Cllr Bob Buxton opens the conference*

Cllr. Bob Buxton, Chair of the Devon Towns Forum, welcomed the delegates and introduced the conference, the theme of which was intended to demonstrate and promote partnership working and joined up thinking. Cllr Buxton highlighted the conference as an example of partnership working as it had been organized jointly by the Devon Towns Forum and Devon Rural Network working together with the added support of the Carnegie UK Trust. Cllr. Buxton confirmed this approach 'provided additional scope and coverage of the issues whilst achieving efficiencies both in terms of cost and time and was commendable'.

**All of the conference presentations can be downloaded from the Devon Rural Network Website [http://portalstaging.devonline.gov.uk/drn/our\\_work/drn-resilience\\_conference.htm](http://portalstaging.devonline.gov.uk/drn/our_work/drn-resilience_conference.htm) or the Devon Towns Forum Website [www.devontownsforum.org.uk/meetingnotes.asp?Category=5](http://www.devontownsforum.org.uk/meetingnotes.asp?Category=5)**

### **Rev. Philip Wagstaff, Chair of the Devon Rural Network (DRN) Set the context of the day and gave an introduction to DRN and rural proofing development in Devon**

The Network was launched after the foot and mouth crisis, when disconnect between the relevant agencies was identified. DRN works to promote joined up thinking on rural issues, in partnership, and looks to support local development and inform discussion on change.

DRN aims to share the experiences of rural practitioners and the action groups within DRN are key to its work. This includes the policy steering group, which guides the work of DRN, and the development of Environment Devon and the Farming and Food Board.

Much of the focus of DRN is on policy and communications, to highlight the diversity of Devon and to provide a mechanism for getting information out. One component of this is the newsletter, which strongly illustrates what is happening in Devon and its resilience. DRN works to engage communities in rural consultation, and though it will never get this right, it will seek to get it as right as possible. The deepest skills and knowledge in Devon are often hidden and it is the story of people which needs to be expressed.



*Rev. Philip Wagstaff gives an overview of the Devon Rural Network*

### **RURAL PROOFING**

The self assessment has been developed following the Commission for Rural Communities relaunch of their national rural proofing toolkit, in May 2009. Rural proofing provides a tool for the exploration of policy and ensures that rural needs and issues are taken into account. There is no perfect policy, but the process can ensure that the right decisions are being made from the start.

There needs to be a transparency in the process of policy making, and it is important to remember that every rural community and its context are different.

The rural proofing self assessment, developed by DRN, is a tool to make good policy even better, and the process is based on a questionnaire, which is completed by the policy writer and submitted to the DRN rural proofing. A certification mark is then awarded to the policy, with a further star rating if the policy is deemed to be particularly effective in addresses rural issues. The objective of this process is to promote good quality policies in Devon.

DRN is a resource that can be used in the county, and it is how we use what we know that can make the activities of DRN more effective.

[www.drn.org.uk](http://www.drn.org.uk)

**Dr Kate Braithwaite MBE National Director for the Carnegie UK Trusts Rural Programme gave a presentation reflecting on the recent Rural Action Research Projects looking at Community led Planning, the launch of the Carnegie Rural Manifesto, and support for Community Land Trusts and Asset Based Community Development**

Dr Braithwaite started by outlining her experience of resilient communities, such as the shared experience between Cumbria and Devon relating to foot and mouth. She went on to give an overview of the principle of Carnegie's work, which included contributing to commission enquiries, including the Haskins report. Conversations had been held across the UK and Ireland and 3 key messages were highlighted:

- Regeneration – communities were forced to “win” resources which could be demoralising. The assets of communities needed greater recognition, and these existing assets should be built on
- Modelling what sustainable and resilient communities of the future might look like – their characteristics
- How can knowledge and innovation be transferred? Resources should be provided to enable communities to learn from one another

An evidence base had been built up through the Rural Action Research Programme, supported by the Big Lottery Fund, which engaged with 44 partners across the UK and Ireland, including the Devon Heartlands Community Forum.

The Rural Manifesto, which was launched in London during October 2009, is a digest of the findings from this research.



*Dr Kate Braithwaite MBE addresses the delegates*

### *Community led planning and Land Trusts*

Community led planning was a key theme in the manifesto, and 8 organisations at the local level (markets towns) had looked at this in greater detail. In total, 72 communities produced community action plans. There were strong views about the potential of planning, and an example of Pembrokeshire was given to illustrate this. The backing of LEADER programmes in this area meant that some communities were already on their third action plans, and the transformation of these communities was evident.

Communities can achieve 80% of the required actions themselves, and the best work had been carried out in true partnerships between local authorities and communities. The quality of plans had improved and the communities involved had moved beyond simple wish lists.

There was a menu of innovative techniques that could be used, and a lot of work was under way to link community led plans with strategic plans and local area agreements. There needed to be a consensus about where action points needed to be taken, and the necessary protocols for connecting plans identified.

There was a curse of short term thinking and short term projects in rural areas. These should be part of the infrastructure for rural support and mechanisms that delivered continuity were urgently needed. There was also a potentially damaging impact from communities and individuals becoming involved in volunteering without it ultimately leading to anywhere. The Devon Heartlands is a rich example of the type of work that can be achieved and illustrates the need for such programmes to be mainstreamed and properly integrated by the agencies.

The development of Development Trusts that can take on a greater role in service delivery could provide a mechanism to deliver in a more cost effective way services which were tailored to the needs of that community.

The emergence of community land trusts provides a route to deliver affordable housing, community renewables, workspace, employment, and other facilities. Community land trusts are defined in legislation and are held in perpetuity for the benefit of the community, and are leading the way in community innovation.

There is a programme in place for the next 2½ years to help develop community land trusts, advocating a holistic approach.

The ideal scenario is the development of communities that can generate their own income and relieve the grant dependence that many currently experience. One method for achieving this could be through using the Asset Based Community Development approach.

[www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk)

### **Trevor Cherrett, Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) gave a presentation on behalf of The Rural Coalition**

There is a patchy nature of bridging communities and government, both locally and centrally. Authorities do not always seem to meet up with statutory duties, and there are those who have a duty and those who wish to get on and do things. Those who are the team workers can bring these two differing attitudes together.

There needs to be a long term changing of policy and there is no reason why this cannot happen. There is a danger that it will be forgotten that spatial planning is the key gatekeeper, and there is an issue with sustainable planning. Planners are making thousands of villages unsustainable in the belief that only large towns and cities can be sustainable.

The Rural Coalition has been formed to highlight a direction of travel, with three messages:

- The policy level should not forget rural – rural proofing
- There needs to be a positive rural agenda (Rural White Paper 1993)
- There needs to be a bridging and engagement with rural communities

The future is rural!

However, there are also big challenges to overcome:

- Climate change – positive planning (PPS1)
- Demography and population change and growth
- Default planning positions
- Community level – NIMBY resistance needed to be defeated and the debate opened up

The CRC has published the Coalition statement in partnership with 67 other bodies. The next stage is to develop the document summary into a major detailed document for the next Government, and for all levels of government.

Great things are happening from the bottom up!

[www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk)



*Trevor Cherrett updates delegates on the Rural Coalition*

**Ciaran Lynch, Director of the Rural Programme at the Tipperary Institute (Republic of Ireland) gave a presentation entitled Integrated Area Planning**



*Ciaran Lynch shares his Integrated Area Planning Experiences*

Ciaran gave some background to the Institute, which was set up by the Irish Government to look at rural issues. Activities began to happen when governance and civil society worked together.

Previous work had highlighted a number of questions, not least how managers could operate on behalf of the owners rather than on behalf of the management. It is not enough to only consider the issues at election time.

Integrated Area Planning (IAP) discusses and recognises the relationship between economy, environment, and social elements in planning and includes data gathering.

IAP looks at the goals and objectives of a community and works to include the marginalised

and the unorganised! It provided an improved opportunity for communities to have their say, and brings a variety of ideas to the table. Community information was key.

There could be a distinction made between decision making and decision taking. The latter was taken between those who had the power to act, and there was a mis-match between these two processes. An explanation of reasons for not making or taking a decision is not always adequately provided.

There is a huge resource for decision takers to engage with communities, but everyone needs preparation and to know what is expected. There should be clarity in advance of what the information will be used for, and made clear that an input into a process is not the process itself.

There was a need to manage expectation and what is possible. The use of external facilitators is advisable. Using a stake holder to facilitate may subconsciously force them to defend their position. There is a huge range of techniques available to engage with people, without relying in huge meetings.

There is a need for a change in culture and training of other experts.

[www.tippinst.ie](http://www.tippinst.ie)

**Dr Juliet Rose and Dr Tony Kendle gave presentations on Community engagement in practice and the Eden Claylands Project**



*Dr Tony Kendle presents*

Dr Kendle gave some context to the Claylands Project, which is an eco-town in part of post-industrial Cornwall. The Project provides a good model for the problems the world is facing globally (80% decarbonisation) in the next 40 years due to increasing numbers of post industrial landscapes.

The Eden Claylands is one of the largest areas of derelict land in the EU, and is still classed as operational as reserves have only run out in the zone were mining is practical. Stopping mining is much more challenging than starting, due to the clean up and restoration that is required.

There is an additional issue in that the Claylands area is not recognised in any local or regional strategies or policies.

The eco-town has been one solution and a bid for a pilot project was submitted. Eco-towns need to be thought of in a different way and do not fit into traditional planning. The best ideas need to be brought to the table to make it work. The Government model is very urban centric and was recognised as being unsuitable for the claylands landscape. With this in mind six extensions have been made to existing claylands communities. The development has brought £1 billion of primarily private sector funding to this area, and has been so far driven by woefully short deadlines.

Dr Rose gave an overview of the Project's methods of engagement. Consultation was used as a validation and engagement was based around how communities can step up to a different world. The use of familiar environments to consult combined with run up events proved successful. There were five parishes, with seven events held with a fete like atmosphere.

The Project also wanted to have collective responses, which often differed to the views expressed from people sat at home. A chance to celebrate what communities had and achieved, with the opportunity to be more creative, was provided. Aerial maps were used as openers and to help with orientation, and a memory and photo archive has been developed to stimulate discussion. There were issues around the use of the word "eco-town" and its renewable energy connotations.

Consultation and development work was completed alongside the parish planning process. Development Trusts can be exploited to assist in this type of project and there is a need to look at what is good already.



*Dr Juliet Rose shares engagement experience*

[www.postmining.org/index.php?page=71](http://www.postmining.org/index.php?page=71)

## **Gill Westcott, of Transition Exeter gave an overview on the development of Transition Towns**

Since its conception, the transition movement has developed to include cities and peninsulas, as well as towns. There are two basic principles based on positive visioning and the challenges of climate change and peak oil.

Transition towns started as a student project in Kinsale, Ireland, and were seen as a way of meeting the challenge of future needs. The project looked at creating an energy descent plan and looked at the nature of the process to develop the plan. The plan was formally adopted by Kinsale Town Council.

The idea was then taken to Totnes when the project initiator, Rob Hopkins, relocated here, and the concept was expanded much further. There were new levels of engagement and the focus was on making life good without the resources we are used to.

Part of the development included a story telling project around news items for the future and the results can be seen on YouTube.



*Gill Westcott gives a history of the transition movement*

Transition is an awareness raising process, and seeks to provide good information to allow for informed decision making. There has been a steady reduction of world oil reserve estimates for the future, and solutions to this need to be sought sooner rather than later.

The process is one of inclusion and openness, including open space technology and working groups to focus on particular issues. Older members of the community are consulted with and their wisdom of when fossil fuels were not so heavily relied on could provide potential solutions.

Transition also seeks to network and build resilience, not only through coordinated planning but also with spontaneous groups. Open house events have been held to showcase renewable, and a local food strategy has been put in place. There has been a move towards relocalisation, with the implementation of a local currency and the retention of purchasing power.

There is a tendency to think more about economics; however there are inner and outer processes of transition which also focus on wellbeing and behaviour. There needs to be subsidiary and self organisation.

It is not purely about actions such as organic farming either – organic farmers are often not geared up for transport.

Transition holds a powerful element of community engagement and how this can be taken into decision takers and public institutions needs to be resolved. The next phase of the transition movement is to move it away from being seen as marginalised and make it mainstream.

[www.transitiontowns.org](http://www.transitiontowns.org)

**Cllr Andrew Leadbetter, Portfolio holder for workforce, performance and communications, representing Cllr John Hart Leader of DCC – Devon County Council**



*Cllr Andrew Leadbetter sums up the morning session*

Councillor Leadbetter summed up the morning session and paid tribute to the people working in Devon and in particular for the work of those featured in the conference. He assured delegates that he would take positive messages back to the Leader of the Council, Cllr John Hart.

Cllr Leadbetter stated the need to recognise service delivery in all parts of Devon, not just in large towns and Exeter.

The Audit Commission has requested that rural issues are a priority focus over the next year, and should include all elements of transport, service delivery, communities etc.

The new County Council Administration was also keen on communication and more information on rural proofing and engagement was requested.

[www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk)

**Karen Bridgford and Bob Paterson of the Devon Reinvestment Service gave an Introduction to the Community Assets Toolkit**

Karen gave a background to the Devon Reinvestment Service (DRS) and who its partners were [more information can be found at [www.devon.gov.uk/developingcommunityfacilities.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/developingcommunityfacilities.htm)].

The DRS partners professionals with community groups and has helped projects to the value of £10 million across Devon. The actual worth of these projects was closer to £100 million and this figure became higher still if the social aspects were also valued.

An overview of the toolkit was given [[www.devon.gov.uk/index/economyenterprise/regeneration/developingcommunityfacilities/drstoolkit.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/economyenterprise/regeneration/developingcommunityfacilities/drstoolkit.htm)], and the level of detail that is required. The toolkit includes a set of guidance notes, along with hints and tips, based on a colour coded "wheel of fortune". Each spoke of the wheel relates to a particular aspect of asset development and allows the user to quickly identify the relevant section, as the contents have been colour coded to match.



*Karen Bridgford showcases the Community Assets Toolkit*

Bob introduced a separate tool for financial planning and this looks at "space to place". One day intensive workshops could be made available to those who wished to look at this aspect of the toolkit in greater detail.

There was a huge amount of people trying to do extraordinary things to develop community hubs. There is a recognised need for sustainable business plans and professional guidance for volunteers to enable them to do this.

**Ally Rood, Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), gave an overview on the development of the Sustainable Rural Communities Toolkit**

The Sustainable Rural Communities toolkit has been developed by a number of partners in Devon, including the CRC, Devon County Council, Homes and Communities Agency, West Devon Borough Council, Torridge District Council and SWAN (South West network of rural community councils).

A seminar held in 2006 identified a need for a more sophisticated approach to planning for rural settlements. There was also national recognition for the need for the development of sustainable communities.



*Ally Rood speaks on the development of the Sustainable Rural Communities Toolkit*

The use of a place and its function can make it less sustainable. The toolkit provides a sustainability snapshot of a community to assess the impact of change on the future of the community, and has been designed for use with communities of populations up to 10 thousand.

The toolkit works best when local authorities and communities use the toolkit together, and it poses a set of questions for 8 characteristics. There is then a process of research and response.

The toolkit is a two stage process. Firstly there is an evidence base assessment, which is undertaken by the Local Authority. The second phase is community testing. The Local Authority shares its findings with the community, who can then give more qualitative evidence.

The toolkit has been designed for a variety of uses and contexts, and should be used for making joint judgements.

Include in the toolkit is a “judgement wheel”, which provides a quick visual summary.

Shropshire is taking the toolkit forward in a variety of ways and is adapting it for use in target towns.

More information can be found at [www.ruraltoolkit.org.uk](http://www.ruraltoolkit.org.uk).

### **Feedback from the workshops – 3 main points from each:**

#### **Workshop 1 – Applying the DRN rural proofing programme**

- If Devon gets the process right it can be used to influence wider government
- There is strong support to proceed from the draft assessment
- Who should be on the rural proofing group to provide credibility?

#### **Workshop 2 – Adopting the Integrated Area Planning Approach**

- It is very important to engage with Local Authorities at the start of the process and not wait until decisions have been made
- It is not a quick process and professionals must commit to it
- The nature of the process will be dictated by the nature of the community that involved
- There should be conscious efforts to include a broad range of the community – proactive steps for involvement

#### **Workshop 3 – Using the Sustainable Communities Toolkit**

- The key is to have a representative sample of community members, but this can be difficult
- Need to have trained facilitators

- It should be regularly refreshed and updated

#### **Workshop 4 – The Community Assets Toolkit, how it could work for you**

- The toolkit provides a negotiation tool for gatekeepers
- The toolkit has been created from public resource and open source – how can this be topped up, and a practitioners panel should feedback
- There needs to be a live feedback form and advice sheet if people get stuck

The people who take the time to come to events and conferences should be valued, and it is not just about who we are but who we might become.

#### **Cllr Paul Diviani – East Devon District Council and Devon County Council**



*Cllr Paul Diviani closes the afternoon session*

Cllr Diviani summed up the afternoon session and thanked the organisers and delegates for a great conference. He expressed how valuable the work of the Devon Towns Forum and Devon Rural Network was.

He reiterated that the issue of rurality and in particular Rural Proofing was central to addressing rural issues and that he would do all he could to support these important organisations. He also suggested that there was a strong need for implanting of rural champions to promote the work of rural organisations further.

The delegates and our speakers were thanked for attending and thanks were relayed to the Staff of Stoodleigh Court

The conference then closed.

## APPENDIX 1 – Devon Rural Network Annual General Meeting

### 9.30-10 am

The Chair of DRN, Rev. Philip Wagstaff, introduced the AGM and gave a background to the joint conference.

He outlined the history of the Devon Rural Network (DRN) and highlighted the work achieved over the last year:

- DRN was launched after the release of the Haskins Report, as a consequence of the foot and mouth crisis
- There was recognition for the lack of joined up thinking between the agencies and authorities in Devon
- A frame work was created to overcome this, and the Devon Rural Network was Devon's response
- DRN helps to champion rural issues
- DRN works with partners across the county, with a balance between action groups and information sharing
- There are 4-5 steering group meetings per year and 5 sub-committees – Management Group, Farming and Food, Sustainable Tourism, Rural Proofing, and Rural Voluntary and Community Services Group.
- The DRN has a Policy Steering Group to reflect the agenda, with work guided by the Management Group
- DRN had been operating for 6 years, since 2003, but the future was very unclear
- Information has been shared through a number of mechanisms:
  - Farming lobby pack
  - CRC enquiry into the uplands
  - Consultations
  - Post Offices and involvement in the Task Group
  - Newsletter and Dartmoor National Park news, which continues to develop
  - Involvement in the development of the Devon Brand
  - Sustainable Communities Toolkit development
  - Rural proofing
- DRN has worked with a number of partners:
  - Devon Towns Forum – the rural hinterland
  - South West Regional Affairs Forum
  - Universities of Exeter and Plymouth, and Duchy College
- Other work has included:
  - Monitoring of the Rural Strategy and Delivery Plan
  - Development of the rural proofing self assessment
  - Seminars organised – rural proofing and farm incomes



Discussion with attendees raised a several points:

- DRN should look for more towns to join
- DRN was vital in terms of unitary status, and also if unitary status was not upheld
- Look at contribution and membership fees – people would be more likely to read the newsletter if they have contributed to the Network

## APPENDIX 2 - Evaluation Summary

### Conference Feedback Analysis

Analysis of the feedback forms has shown that the event was very well received, and many appreciated the networking opportunities provided throughout the day.

Delegates were asked to rate each of the presenters, as well as the venue and other information provided. The results are reflected in the following table as percentage of response. There may be some discrepancies due to rounding.

	Poor	Average	Good	V Good	Excellent
Devon Rural Network Philip Wagstaff	-	10%	37%	37%	16%
Carnegie Trust UK Dr Kate Braithwaite	-	-	26%	37%	37%
Rural Coalition Process Trevor Cherret	-	15%	45%	25%	15%
Integrated Area Planning Ciaran Lynch	-	16%	37%	31%	16%
Community Engagement Dr Juliet Rode and Dr Tony Kendel	-	-	30%	25%	45%
Transition Towns Gill Westcott	-	16%	48%	26%	10%
Community Assets Toolkit Karen Bridgford and Bob Patterson	-	15%	50%	35%	-
Sustainable Rural Communities Ally Rood	-	30%	60%	10%	-
Venue	-	5%	21%	37%	37%
Lunch	-	-	30%	20%	50%
Market Place Displays	7%	26%	40%	20%	7%
Information Pack	-	12%	41%	35%	12%
Booking and Administration	-	5%	26%	37%	31%
Overall Satisfaction with Conference	-	-	15%	62%	23%

Delegates were also asked to rate the workshops they had attended. The results are presented in the following table, however please note that the response was not as strong on this part of the feedback form.

	Poor	Average	Good	V Good	Excellent
Workshop 1 – rural proofing New approach	-	-	25%	50%	25%
Workshop 2 – Integrated Area Planning	-	20%	20%	20%	40%
Workshop 3 – Sustainable Communities Toolkit	-	-	66%	33%	-
Workshop 4 – Community Assets Toolkit	-	-	-	50%	50%

Delegates were also asked for more general comments and feedback under three headings. Below is a selection of comments received. These will help to inform future events.

**What further action or learning has the seminar promoted you to do?**

“Apply Carnegie models to faith development and renewal in rural areas”

“So much more info ‘out there’ and so many successful models/community achievements. Need to use this expertise rather than wasting time ‘reinventing the wheel’”

“Realise that change takes time. Many/most of the delegates are working in public service with a heavy level of bureaucracy”

“Create personal toolkit using Mindjet software which can be online for community”

“Improving my community engagement skills”

“Explore more the good practise from around the UK and Ireland”

“Look at the toolkit websites”

“A number of useful ideas to follow up”

**Do you have other suggestions for future events or training?**

“Future proofing rural planning processes”

“Info to local community residents for participating in area-based annual or bi-annual community achievement events – pats on the back = empowerment for future – not navel gazing in an insular sometimes self-satisfied way”

“How statutory public service providers can work alongside and collaboratively with the third sector to create sustainable rural communities”

“More workshops less PowerPoint’s”

“Devon – wide transport and community needs – please invite Transition Town transport groups”

“Seminar with grant funding agencies giving advice on



*Networking over lunch*

what they can fund"

"More please – I am currently a human sponge!"

"Look forward to discussing further at Board level"

"Examples of how people create revenue streams master class"

### **Have you any other comments/observations**

"Where is the agenda about rural culture, values, social change etc dealt with? What is our social vision for the future of the countryside? E.g. what is our attitude to social diversity/incomers etc? A strength or a problem? How do we help people change/move on in their feelings and attitudes to what the countryside 'should' be?"



*Catching up over coffee*

"Events such as this are much more useful than nationally organised conferences. Great opportunity today for networking"

"It's great to have the opportunity to network with others involved in sustainable rural communities. Thank you!"

"Hope that local food was guiding principle. Would want organic where poss, given the topic of resilience"  
*[Stoodleigh policy is to source food that is locally grown and organic as a priority]*

"In future events please could prior publicity a) note if there is access to venue by public transport b) participant list c) suggestion to share transport where practical. Venue Good but with work to reduce footprint of travel it would be better"

"Great content, very good programme of speakers. The venue a bit limited – size of car park, room for displays, number of loos"

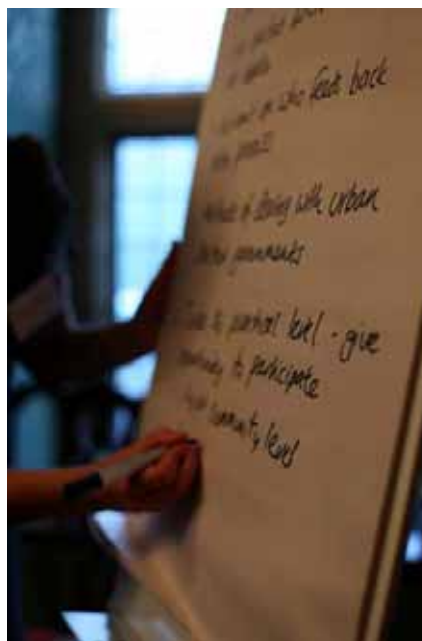
### **Other comments received**

- Just to thank you for and congratulate you on an excellent day on Friday. It was really excellent and nearly all the speakers gave me food for thought. I was particularly impressed with Ciaran.
- Thank you for the work you and your team put in to the conference on Sustainable and Resilient Rural Communities at Stoodleigh Court on Friday - it was certainly worth the long trip. I shall be visiting Hector Christie at Tapeley Park later this week and will be updating him on events then.
- I really enjoyed the conference and found it an inspirational event.
- Thank you for making us so welcome - we too enjoyed the day.
- Great conference last week. Well done. A lot to think about
- I did enjoy Friday – a good range of subjects covered, and probably the most impressive setting I have been to for a conference!
- I felt it was a worthwhile event to have attended, good time for networking, varied and interesting programme with just the right amount of time to a) absorb the information and b) move about in between. All that thrown in with a stunning establishment & location, serving excellent refreshment! What more can I say!!

## APPENDIX 3 – Workshop notes

### Additional Notes from Workshop 1 – A new approach to rural proofing

- What is the history of rural proofing?
- Concept of rural proofing – policy decisions and development of framework
- There are three main questions:  
Do we have the right concept?  
Is this the right course of action?  
Would you back it?
- Is it robust enough for use at higher tiers?
- There needs to be strategies for engagement at different levels
- All planning policies should be proofed, both urban and rural
- There needs to be a more integrated approach
- Flexibility of policy
- Focus on statutory requirements
- Higher profile for engagement
- Layers of issues – the number of checklists policy makers have to use
- Where are the decision takers?
  - policy in writing is important – greater validity
  - would need to be accepted as meaning something
- Greater danger of what is delivered to Devon regionally and nationally
- Responsibility to feed back to central government
- Should be recognised from the grass roots
- Who should make up the rural proofing group?
  - group available for advice at the draft stage
  - need to appreciate what is available while it is still there (i.e. loss of group through lack of funding)
- Risk of polarising debate
- No perfect description – 2 sides of the debate



- Reliant on who feeds back into the process
- Methods of dealing with urban centred governments
- Take to practical level – give an opportunity to participate:
  - at the community level
  - give goals
  - give weight – DRN can take this forward
- The workshop group agreed to be willing consultees

## **Notes from Workshop 2 Integrated Area Planning Facilitated by Ciaran Lynch**

- Ciaran made the point that IAP only worked where there was genuine commitment of planners and other professionals and that without this or if it was insincere no process would work.
- Communities had to be realistic and responsible
- IAP wasn't perfect but it did map out a good approach
- The MCTi and Parish Planning in the UK offered a similar process to IAP, but IAP was more explicit about the need for agency and planning officer buy-in and sustained commitment to the process and this had been lacking in some of the UK models.
- There were limits to what a plan should attempt
- Community Plans needed to be agreed with Planners at the beginning of the process
- Community Plans needed to remain the Communities Vision and not be shaped by what planners already wanted
- It was important for communities developing a plan to know about the local official position, strategy and policy documents for example
- There should be separate bits of a plan that are produced to a professional standard if they are intended to be adopted by planners, but this should not restrict the scope of the wider community plan that should contain the community's opinion and aspirations.
- IAP could be applied anywhere
- Its about getting the Planners to respect the community and visa versa



## Appendix 4 – List of Recorded Attendees (69 of 85)

Tim Beavon	West Devon Borough Council
Peter Berman	SW Association of Civic Societies
Steven Blood	Devon Heartlands Community Forum
Trever Bolshaw	Devon Conservation Forum
Dr Kate Braithwaite	Carnegie UK Trust
Karen Bridgford	Devon County Council
David Brown	High Bickington Community Property Trust
Ken Burford	High Bickington Community Property Trust
Cllr Clive Burnage	Dolton Parish Council Dolton Rangers
Cllr Bob Buxton	Devon Towns Forum
Jane Campbell	Mid Devon LSP and Mid Devon District Council
Trevor Cherrett	Commission for Rural Communities
Allie Clark	Teignbridge District Council
Dr Fern Clarke	Devon Towns Forum and Exe Valley Plan
Cllr Pepita Collins	Seaton Town Council and Devon Towns Forum
Leanne Crawford	Devon Rural Network
David Cushing	Devon Heartlands Community Forum
Valerie Cushing	Devon Heartlands Community Forum
Emine Dede	Community Council of Devon
Paul Delahoy	Devon Towns Forum
Cllr Paul Diviani	Devon County Council and East Devon District Council
Kate Doodson	South West Chambers online
Trevor Duffy	Townstal Community Partnership
Ali Eastland	Devon County Council
Cllr Peter Fleming	Honiton Town Council
Anthony Fry	Devon Conservation Forum
Inspector David Hammond	Devon and Cornwall Police
Peter Harding	Community Council of Devon
Kerry Hickman	DCC Youth Service
Heather Hillman	Devon County Council
Dan James	Exmoor National Park Authority
Dr Tony Kendal	Eden Project
Christopher Kirwin	Tavi and Devon Towns Forum
Max Laithwaite	Tavi

Cllr Andrew Leadbetter	Devon County Council portfolio for personnel and performance
Andrew Lightfoot	Devon County Council
Helen March	Devon Wildlife Trust
Julian Mellor	Wiveliscombe Civic Society
Rev. David Muir	Okehampton Deanery and Devon Heartlands Forum
Dominic Murphy	Creating Excellence
Kay Northcott	Devon Heartlands Community Forum
Robert Northcott	Devon Heartlands Community Forum
Steve Opie	South West Pound Limited
Phillip Padden	Transition Towns
Bob Paterson	Community Land Trusts
Robert Plumb	West Devon Borough Council
Gary Powell	Teignbridge District Council
Iris Pritchard	Townstal Community Partnership
Roland Pyle	Devon County Council
Ewen Rae	Devon Heartlands Community Development Trust
Ruth Robinson	Totnes Town Council
Ally Rood	Commission for Rural Communities
Angela Rose	Mid and West Devon Local Involvement Network
Dr Juliet Rose	Eden Claylands Project
Cllr Philip Skinner	East Devon District Council Rural Champion
John Skrine	Creating Excellence
Jane Smallcombe	Development Trusts Association
Sue Southwell	Community Council of Devon
Nicole Stacey	Devon County Council
Lisa Turner	Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Rev Philip Wagstaff	Devon Rural Network
Gill Westcott	Transition Exeter
Mark Williams	East Devon District Council
Debbie Williams	Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
Andy Wood	South West Regional Development Agency
Duncan Wood	Involve – Voluntary Action Mid Devon
Michael Woodcock	Cullompton Waldronds Preservation Trust
James Wyeth	Devon Conservation Forum and Tiverton Civic Society
Dr Richard Yarwood	University of Plymouth



*L-R Dr Kate Braithwaite MBE, Rev. Philip Wagstaff, Cllr Andrew Leadbetter, and Cllr Bob Buxton*



*L-R Ciaran Lynch, Dr Tony Kendle, Gill Westcott, Trevor Cherrett, Dr Juliet Rose*

