



Connecting Communities
in Berkshire

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2026-2030

Helping Berkshire communities thrive

www.ccberks.org.uk



Collaboration and Community

Warm, informed & connected communities

We provide practical, independent advice to help people understand and manage their energy and utility costs. Through one-to-one support and community outreach, we help households reduce bills and make informed energy choices. Our Oil Club also brings people together - particularly in rural, off-gas communities - to bulk buy heating oil, securing lower prices and making heating more affordable.

Looking ahead, we aim to reach more vulnerable households to improve safety and wellbeing, help residents make confident energy-efficiency decisions, and support lower-carbon living through accessible advice and community action.

Affordable Housing:

We help communities to tackle their biggest challenge: affordable housing. Whether it's facilitating new community-led housing developments for local people, bringing empty homes back into use or influencing local planning, we support communities to help young people remain in the community they grew up in and help key workers and others employed locally to live near where they work.

Village Halls:

We're the only county-wide support service for village halls and community buildings in Berkshire. For over 30 years, we've helped volunteer committees keep their halls thriving - safe sustainable, financially secure, and energy efficient. But we don't stop at bricks and mortar. We help bring these spaces to life - running fitness classes for all ages, supporting vulnerable families with energy costs and weaving adult learning into everything we do.



Our Approach works



21st Century Halls: Building Resilient Community Spaces

We are delivering a transformative 5-year National Lottery-funded programme supporting village halls across Berkshire to become sustainable, resilient, energy-efficient community hubs for the 21st century. We work with volunteer management committees to upgrade ageing buildings, reduce running costs, improve accessibility, and future-proof these vital community assets. We help halls navigate net-zero transitions, secure their own grant funding, developing income streams that keep them viable for decades to come. The result is thriving community spaces that are financially secure, environmentally responsible and genuinely accessible to everyone in their village. The National Lottery trusted us to deliver. We proved what's possible when you invest in community-led change with expert support. Now we're ready to evolve that model.



“The project helped us prioritise energy-efficiency improvements, funding opportunities and a phased delivery plan. Since 2022, we have completed major upgrades including insulation, LED lighting, a new boiler, radiators and doors, We will use it as a continued guide for longer-term improvements”.

Mary, Trustee - Shaw-cum-Donnington Village Hall





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Proud ACRE Partners

VISION We're part of the ACRE Network - one of 38 independent charities working together across England, directly aligned with Government priorities through DEFRA.

This connection means we punch above our weight.

Our work maps to their key rural priorities: digital skills and inclusion, affordable energy, rural health and wellbeing, transport connectivity, and social enterprise development.

This alignment ensures our local experiences are heard within the Government. Local partners and funders know they are working with a local organisation with national reach, ensuring their investments go further.





**Connecting Communities
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Why we're here

VISION

For all communities in Berkshire
to be strong, resilient,
sustainable, and able to take
control of their own futures.

BELIEF

Most communities already know
what they need - our job is to help
them recognise it,
mobilise it, and use it to ensure
that no-one is disadvantaged
because of where they
live.

RESULTS

When communities thrive,
everybody thrives: better
health, stronger
connections, safer
homes, and real
opportunities for everyone.



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What our community is telling us

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Young people and key workers can't afford to live where they grew up or work. Affordable homes are being lost faster than they're being replaced - especially in rural areas.

ENERGY & FUEL POVERTY

Off-grid homes paying through the nose for heating oil. Families choosing between heating and eating. Everyone needs help transitioning to renewable energy.

ISOLATION

Making connections and friends can be challenging. Some communities have too few events to bring us together. Young families feel cut off. Older people go days without seeing anyone.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

GP surgeries miles away. No outreach services. Long waits. Rural communities face a postcode lottery for basic healthcare.



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What's next in 2026

This year we're developing a new business plan, taking us to 2030: sustainable, resilient, and focused on where we can make the biggest difference.

- We're piloting innovative approaches to tackling social isolation, testing what works before action
- We're being tough on ourselves: reviewing all our work to see what's still relevant, what's working, and what needs to change.
- We're building new strategic partnerships - where we can add real value to each other's work
- We're listening more, increasing engagement with communities across Berkshire to understand what's truly needed.
- We're planning the next phase of our National Lottery-funded village halls programme - building on what we've learned to keep community spaces vibrant and future-ready.





Our Five Pillars for Vibrant Communities



COMMUNITY

Vibrant communities have a broad mix of activities and groups that reflect a wide range of interests. Opportunities for social interaction support multi-generational, thriving and inclusive communities



SERVICES

Vibrant communities have access to all the services and facilities that underpin good mental and physical health, delivered where possible using an outreach approach within the community, reducing the need to travel



CONNECTIONS

Vibrant communities have access to digital services and transport that enables good communication and facilitates access to services that are delivered in neighbouring areas and further afield. Support with transportation is available to those people who can't independently access services.



SUSTAINABILITY

Vibrant communities have access to homes that are affordable and appropriate to their needs. Homes should be energy efficient and available to people with a local connecting to the community. Local people have access to appropriate advice and guidance.



YOUR ROLE

Vibrant communities support local businesses and employment with a range of opportunities available to those wishing to be economically active. Volunteering is encouraged, with a role for everyone interested in supporting others.



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How We Make Change Happen

We don't just provide services.
We work at three levels simultaneously -
and that's what makes us effective.

1

Strategic Influence

Senior relationships with local authorities, government bodies, and major funders. This gives us intelligence, visibility, and the ability to advocate for communities that are often overlooked.

2

Community Networks

Deep, trusted relationships at grassroots level. People across Berkshire know us, trust us, and tell us what's really happening. This insight drives everything we do.

3

Systems Impact

Our rural housing work combines hands-on local partnerships with research and policy influence. We don't just solve individual problems - we change the systems that create them.

We work on all three levels - connecting what's happening on the ground with what needs to change at the top.



Our impact over 50 years

Since 1973, we've been getting things done across Berkshire.
Here's what communities have achieved with our support:

Village Halls Supported

For over 30 years we've delivered advice, training, and practical help to volunteer committees

103

Affordable Homes Built.

Instrumental in delivering homes in Wargrave, Chaddleworth, Hungerford, and Woolhampton - keeping local people in their rural Berkshire communities

Supported Berkshire Parishes with at least one housing needs survey

35

40

Frontline workers have received training

1097

Fuel Poverty

Supporting people to save money on their household energy bills

£20k

Groups have received energy advice sessions

391

Adult Learning

supporting people to develop new skills and confidence

2000



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Why Us?

We've been doing this for over 50 years.

What makes us different is that we work at all levels. We have relationships with local authorities and government bodies at the top, and deep trust with communities at grassroots level. We don't just solve individual problems - we change the systems that create them.

We're lean. Every pound goes toward supporting communities. We're honest - if something isn't working, we say so. And we're passionate about ensuring no one in Berkshire is disadvantaged because of where they live.

If you want to invest in community development that actually works, let's talk.



How can we help each other?

Communities

If you're part of a community group, village hall committee or local initiative, we're here to support you. Please contact us today to learn more about our advice services, training programme, networking opportunities and practical help.



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Wyvols Court, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield
Reading, Berkshire RG7 1WY

www.ccberks.org.uk
admin@ccberks.org.uk

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Funders and Partners

Do you share our vision for strong and resilient communities? Do you want to invest in grassroots community development that actually works? Would a partnership with us add value to your own mission? If yes, please contact us today.

Individuals

Do you live or work in Berkshire? Your voice matters to us and your insights can guide our work. Please join CCB today - membership is free. Learn more about what we do and the opportunities our members have to influence our work. Together we're stronger.

