



Villages Together

Costed Vision, Action Plan & Legacy Statement

Delivery Years – April 21 – March 23

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Summary

In 2012 the villages of Puriton and Woolavington were awarded funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The area comprises 3,840 residents most of whom live in detached and semi-detached housing with some terraced. Both villages have large open spaces with playfields and also have a range of community buildings including village halls. The villages are separated by a main road, with no footpath or cycle route and poor lighting.

Our Big Local became known as The Villages Together Big Local and is overseen by our Partnership, which comprises eleven residents. The Locally Trusted Organisation, which is responsible to Local Trust for financial management, is SHAL – a community-based provider of social housing with 742 homes across Somerset.

To date, the Villages Together Partnership has worked hard to understand the needs and opportunities in the area, which have been included in two previous plans submitted in 2015 and 2018. In that time, we have supported a range of projects which:

- Tackle loneliness.
- Support young people – including Dreamscheme and the skate park.
- Helped improve community facilities.
- Allocated a range of community grants.
- Ran a number of communities events.

Building on our work to date, over the past four months we have focused our attention on developing this plan, which also includes a costed vision and legacy statement. We have undertaken surveys of residents and we ran a number of workshops – held via Zoom – to enlist the support of partners, to think about our legacy, and to examine our new big local programme. We consider that our original vision is still appropriate:

“Puriton and Woolavington will become two thriving Polden villages, where people are happy to live in an environment that meets the needs of everyone from new-born babies to the oldest residents.”

This plan captures the views of the residents and a new way of working with partners across five main priorities:

- Improving local facilities.
- Environmental and accessibility improvements.
- Community activities.
- Supporting families; young people and older people.
- Making projects happen.

The projected spend over the period of the action plan of £522,000 will be delivered through working with partners and making the most of what already exists to maximise our impact and visibility. We are particularly keen to build local capacity and to kick start or enhance activities which can become sustainable. We also want to be more pro-active to deliver our priorities and to this end are recruiting a new co-ordinator and administrator.

Quote from Vanda Crow, Chair of Villages Together

We are pleased to submit this plan which has been produced following focused effort over a period of four months. We have forged new partnerships to deliver key projects, have attracted new members to our board, and we are now sighted on the delivery of our programme which will achieve our legacy of:

‘A networked community of residents and good neighbours who have positivity and pride in their area. Two linked villages united by the quality of their environment and useable and attractive green-space and community facilities.’

1. Introduction – Our Partnership and key partners

Background to the Big Local programme

In 2012, Villages Together was told that it had been awarded funding from the Big Local programme. Supported with a £200m Big Lottery Fund investment and managed by Local Trust, Big Local is helping 150 small urban and rural communities across England to make their areas even better places to live. Each Big Local area has a total allocation, including investments, of around £1,199,500 of Lottery funding to spend over the period to March 2026, enabling residents to identify priorities that matter to them and take positive action in response.

Our Big Local Partnership

The Villages Together Big Local partnership comprises eleven people from the two villages encompassed within our Big Local area. Whilst it is possible for Big Local partnerships to include partners, our partnership comprises only residents – and we have an equal representation from each village. Partnership members do, however, have affiliations with some key local organisations including Woolavington and Puriton Parish Councils.

The partnership is chaired by Vanda Crow and there is a Vice Chair Alan Sharp. Meetings are supported by the Big Local Rep – Sophie Cowdell – and sometimes two representatives of the Locally Trusted Organisation. The constitution for Villages Together has an upper limit of 15 members and decisions are taken by a majority vote.

Our Locally Trusted Organisation

Our Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO) is SHAL, which is a community-based provider of social housing with 742 homes across Somerset. They provide safe, warm, and affordable homes to a decent standard for people who are homeless or in housing need.

In its capacity as LTO, SHAL provides Villages Together with financial management and support around contracted matters. SHAL also acts as the employer for the workers. Funds are drawn down from Local Trust according to the expenditure schedule in the Big Local Plan. They are then dispersed by SHAL in accordance with their standard procedures. SHAL is a supportive LTO, whose chief officer is keen to help Villages Together achieve its ambitions.

Working with Partners

Our overall aim in this plan is to focus on working closely with key partners to help us deliver projects which meet our priorities. Through working in this way our intention is to maximise the impact and reach of our Big Local programme. Partners who have expressed a desire to work with us include Gravity, the schools, and parish councils.

2. The Context

This section provides the context within which our plan has been prepared and includes Local Trust requirements our understanding of our area – people and place. It also highlights opportunities for our Big Local to maximise its impact through working with developers to embrace planned changes in the area.

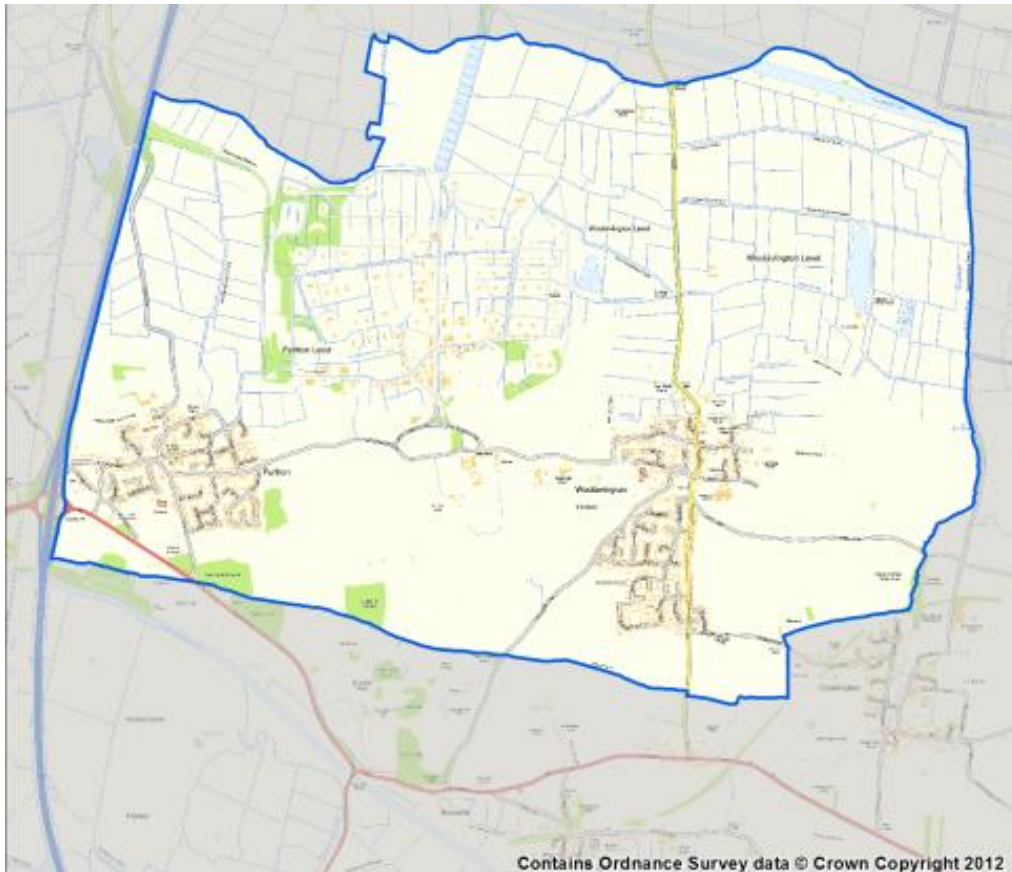
Local Trust requirements

Big Local is managed across England by Local Trust. While the programme is designed to be resident led and non-prescriptive, there are some requirements of each partnership. In particular, each area must have a Big Local Plan; a guide and action plan that a partnership follows, shares, and uses to guide expenditure and get others involved. Any new Big Local Plan should incorporate:

- An **action plan** setting out the goals and activities for the next funding period. This includes a plan of priorities and action (what will be done, how it will be done, who will be involved, what resources are needed, and how these resources will be used well).
- A **costed vision** setting out, in broad terms, how the remaining funds will be used over the rest of the Big Local programme. This describes what we want to have achieved to make a lasting change linked to a broad or 'indicative' budget. This is useful in costing each of the priorities using the remaining funding in the period to March 2026.
- A **legacy statement** setting out what we hope to leave behind after our Big Local money has been spent. This briefly sets out the impact that Big Local will have had on the community by the end of the Big Local programme in 2025/26. It addresses what will remain in the area after the Big Local funds have been spent and how we will aim to ensure lasting change.

Our people and place – needs

Puriton and Woolavington are villages in the Sedgemoor area of Somerset. The villages are 4.5 miles away from their closest town, Bridgwater.



People

Local Insight data shows that the joint population of both villages is 3,840 people and almost predominantly white British, which is a decrease since the last report (4,087), although the substantial build programme in both villages is projected to increase the population, possibly during the period of this plan.

Compared with England and the South West, there are comparatively more people aged 65 years and older at 28.5% compared with 21.8% in the South West and 18% in England.

None of the neighbourhoods in this Big Local area feature in the most deprived 20% of areas in England. One of the most significant findings from a scrutiny of the Local Insight data is the number of children in 'out of work' households, which – at 125 – is 19.9%, compared with a South West average of 11.5%. To explore this further, the data for both villages was compared, which revealed that the number of Woolavington children in relative low-income families was 94 or 19.3%, compared with 15.9% for the Villages Together area as a whole; with 67 children – 13.8% – in absolute low-income families compared with 11.9% for the Villages Together area as a whole.

Environment

Most of the housing comprises detached and semi-detached housing with some terraced. The majority 1,322 (79.8%) is owner occupied with 551 rented, largely with a social landlord.

Both villages have large open spaces with playfields. The villages are separated by a main road, with no footpath or cycle route and poor lighting. The M5 is very close to Puriton and, whenever the motorway closes, the whole area – including Woolavington – becomes completely gridlocked.

Community Buildings

As well as all our lovely open spaces, we have two shops and a Post Office in Woolavington and a butchers, hairdressers, and Post Office in Puriton – all of which we value and are keen to support. Puriton also has the Puriton Inn. The 37 Club lies between Puriton and Woolavington. Both villages have a village hall, and Puriton has a sports centre; Woolavington a pavilion on the playing field. The Clist Room is in Puriton and there is a communal hall in Woolavington.

All venues are popular within their neighbouring communities and offer a broad range of activities and opportunities for all ages.



Schools

Both Puriton and Woolavington primary schools are now academies and part of the same trust – the Clevedon Learning Trust. As a result, both Head Teachers work closely together, and the schools are working together more and more.

Our opportunities – existing and planned changes

There are significant development proposals in our Big Local area, which will commence during the period of this plan. We identify them here since they are predicted to provide opportunities to work in partnership, as well as helping to inform where our Big Local efforts are likely to have maximum impact.

Housing Development

There are plans for two separate sites in the village of Woolavington – one for 125 homes to the north of Cossington Lane, and one for 95 homes on Woolavington Road. The plans include 30% affordable housing, plus public open space, a new vehicular access point from Woolavington Road, as well as surface water mitigation and attenuation.

There are also plans to build houses on the eastern edge of Puriton, which will fill the gap between existing built development and the new Gravity link road, currently under construction.

Gravity Enterprise Park

The Gravity Enterprise Zone and ‘internationally renowned’ smart campus is predicted to help create around 4,000 high quality jobs. The development is located between the villages of Puriton and Woolavington on the former Royal Ordnance factory site. Gravity’s plans are to provide a destination for international investment, whilst creating social value in Sedgemoor through creating jobs, training, and connections to wider opportunities.

As part of the development, Gravity is constructing a link road to connect the new enterprise zone and smart campus with the M5, via a new junction south of the A39 (Puriton Hill). This road will also connect the villages. There will be eight metres of screening planting along the site’s eastern boundary, providing a buffer between the site and the link road.

Gravity is working closely with the local community and plans to provide a number of benefits to the villages. A significant part of this will be the improvement of connections between Puriton and Woolavington – with a proposal to provide a safe and attractive route for walking and cycling; schemes to reduce traffic speed and to improve highway safety within and between the villages. The proposed walking and cycling path will be the first off-road route between the two villages, and to the 37 Club.



New native trees will be planted along the route to further enhance the area. The path will be lit at night, and dog waste and litter bins will also be incorporated. Gravity has a commitment to provide health and wellbeing – including gym and sports facilities – including 4G pitches, which could be made available.

Improving connections between Puriton and Woolavington also underlines Gravity's commitment to support Villages Together and our community-driven initiatives to improve the villages as places to live and work.

3. Preparing our new VT plan

This priorities and projects included within this plan have been informed by the experience of the Villages Together partnership to date and draws on a local consultation with residents and additional workshops conducted via Zoom with both residents and partners – as identified below.

Learning from our previous plan

We have supported some worthwhile projects over the period of our last plan to help tackle loneliness, support young people, and community facilities. We also provided community grants and supported a number of events. Although Covid interrupted delivery, nevertheless our spending was considerably lower than forecast.

Over this period, we have developed our skills and knowledge and have learnt:

- The value of social media – and we were pleased to receive 152 responses to our survey.
- The value of enabling smaller groups to develop and potentially become sustainable with financial support.
- It can be challenging to deliver projects ‘on the ground’, and we acknowledge how important a paid worker is to implement our programme – as well as the importance for the worker to have the support of the partnership.
- The importance of working in a ‘cross village’ way; as a partnership that helps strengthen the connections between the villages, and the importance of agreeing common objectives.
- Communication is key. We need to get better at being ‘seen’ in and by our communities. Although we have successfully managed to hold meetings online via Zoom, and are now using WhatsApp as a communication tool, we recognise that communications should be further enhanced within our community, with partners, and with each other.
- We do not have all the answers to some of the complex issues in our communities and so we need to engage partner organisations to help.
- We need to rethink how we support our community buildings, taking on board feedback from outside funders and community buildings committees.
- Translating ideas into projects in a transparent way involves time and effort. A strong community worker is pivotal to the success or failure of our work. This can be a difficult role to navigate, and so we see the benefit of strong employer support from our LTO to ensure progress is made.

The survey

To ensure this plan is informed by residents in both villages, the partnership undertook a survey. This was conducted using Facebook over a three-month period from November 2020 to January 2021 and was advertised by Facebook. There were 152 respondents, with 49 respondents from Puriton and 103 from Woolavington. In addition, 20 people stated they would like to become involved in delivering the programme.

During this plan process contact has been made with some residents who have expressed an interest in becoming involved – and 4 people subsequently took part in workshops to prepare this plan. The survey was completed by people of all age groups – but no-one from the under 18 group responded – and the partnership recognises the need to engage with this group over the next year.

The survey addressed questions pertinent to this plan:

- What you would improve in their neighbourhoods

The ranked themes were:

1. Environmental improvements.
2. Community activities.
3. Youth engagement.

- What are the three things you would prioritise for focus by the Villages Together Big Local.

The ranked themes were:

1. Improving local facilities.
2. Community activities – to bring people together.
3. Support for families, older and younger people.
4. Help to alleviate mental health.
5. Community Transport.
6. Environment.

Other notable themes included: jobs & training, community safety, arts and creativity, and business skills.

The partners event

We recognise the need to work with partners to deliver our new plan. To this end, a Zoom workshop event was organised, which encouraged partners from key local organisations to attend, including schools, Gravity, the police, village halls, and the parish councils. The purpose was to bring residents, community partners, and key local organisations together to reflect on the strengths in the local area, the key issues and challenges, and to generate ideas for projects that we might jointly develop to meet community aspirations and needs.

The overall aim was to discuss how we can work together to make things better, using the significant resources at our disposal.

Discussions built on the survey results and considered potential activities that would contribute to the emerging themes, which could:

- Kick-start long-lasting and sustainable initiatives.
- Be an opportunity to extend current activities or to pilot projects.

Discussions confirmed our identified priorities and provided project ideas for inclusion in our plan:

- Talking cafes – as opportunities for people to come together; to meet and talk – addressing mental health.
- The possibility of a central hub – for Citizens Advice, etc., and an opportunity for people to get together.
- Improvements to village halls and sports centres.
- Linking with existing activities, which could be brought into the villages.
- Building on projects for younger families, like Dreamscheme, and activities for older children – focusing on how these can be provided, especially in upper Woolavington.
- The aim is to unify the two villages – and having community events.
- Also accessing through transport – a community mini-bus.
- Work with Gravity on footpath and last mile solutions.
- Improvements to sports facilities, the playing fields, Puriton sports centre, and the pavilion in Woolavington.
- Improvements to the pump track and the nature reserve.

Workshops with residents and partnership members

Legacy Workshop

To the end of our Phase 2 plan, we have spent approximately £270k – which is only a small amount of our total allocation from Local Trust. As part of this plan's preparation, we participated in a workshop to consider 'the legacy' that the partnership wishes to see for the area. This was a useful exercise; helping us to consider what we want to leave behind and would feel most proud about. This thinking helped us to refine our 'Legacy Vision'.

Testing the priorities and budget workshop

Existing and potential partnership members, together with our LTO, attended a workshop held on 6th February. At this event, the priorities and proposed ideas were explored further; we tested the emerging priorities and discussed how we would best deliver to maximise impact and ensure transparency in decision making.

We were particularly keen to identify those projects that could be implemented relatively quickly; especially those that could be the catalyst for sustaining long-term improvements for our community. An output from this workshop is our costed vision.



Here are some quotes from our workshops:

"We want to debate things – but also get some activity going. Some quick wins. Converting ideas into tangible activities."

"Let's get some milestones for the next year or two to work towards."

"We need to work together and form partnerships with key organisations."

"Engaging with existing groups in the community and sign-posting people to existing activity and help."

"They [Puriton and Woolavington] are villages and generally in villages people want to get more involved."

"Let's have some quick wins and look at what we can build on."

"Let's get both communities working together."

4. Our Legacy and Costed Vision

Our legacy statement

We hope to create a united Villages Together area benefiting from the opportunities generated by our Big Local programme. We aim to be the catalyst of sustained improvements and to achieve our summary legacy statement.

‘A networked community of residents and good neighbours who have positivity and pride in their area. Two linked villages united by the quality of their environment and useable and attractive green-space and community facilities.’

We aim to achieve this through focusing on activities that could serve the community well in the long-term and are important foundations for other projects to flourish. We consider this will be achieved through:

- Developing strong links with partners; in particular, those providing services to our community – such as schools and a host of voluntary and community organisations such as Mind.
- Working in conjunction with developers to maximise the long-term benefits of proposals for our community – and, in particular: Gravity, the councils, and other developers, including those developing housing.
- Being the ‘seed investment’; giving residents the skills and networks to change and adapt.
- Linking people together and to activities in their communities such as walking groups, coffee mornings, volunteering; we aim to address those issues that lead to loneliness, isolation, and mental health problems.

In summary, we want our legacy to be about people, partnerships, and participation – as well as places and projects.

Our priorities and how we will meet the Big Local outcomes

Our Priorities

To deliver our programme and contribute to our legacy, we have determined four main priorities, each of which includes a number of important projects.

1. Environmental Improvements and Linkages
2. Community Activities and Events
3. Family and community support
4. Improving local facilities

Plus, we have an additional, overarching, fifth priority:

5. Making Big Local Happen in Villages Together.

Our Way of Working

Through the preparation of our plan, we have discussed the principles behind its delivery.

- Building local capacity – encouraging local residents to get involved, form self-help groups (such as walking groups), engage with local organisations – will be fundamental to our way of working.
- Working with partners is crucial to our delivery arrangements. In this way, we consider we can maximise our impact and visibility. Where possible, we aim to combine resources to make the most of what we have.
- Making the most of what already exists – through signposting and helping to access.
- Helping to kick-start or enhance projects that can become sustainable.

How this will achieve the Big Local outcomes

Projects and activities within each priority will contribute to the four BL outcomes and are emphasised in our action plan within the next section.

1. Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
2. People will have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future.
3. The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises.
4. People will feel that their area is an even better place to live.

Our Costed Vision

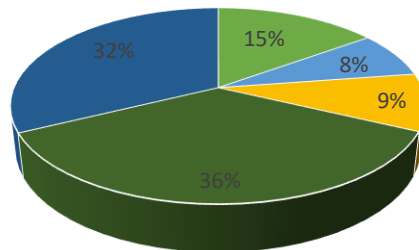
We estimate that we have £896,000 to March 2026. To achieve our vision, we consider the most realistic option is to enable spending to Autumn 2025 – though with a run out over the final year. We have determined a total allocation for each of our five priorities, as well as spend for the plan period. The total spend for each of the priorities is shown in the table and diagram below.

Local Priority/Theme	Apr-21	Oct-21	Apr-22	Oct-22	Plan Period to Mch 23	Est Total - All years to Oct 25
		1-6mths	7-12mths			
Environmental Improvements & Linkages						
Green space improvements - bulbs, trees, nature conservation.		7500	7500	7500	22500	£40,000
Park improvements including green gym & play equipment	7500	7500	7500	7500	30000	£40,000
Connecting Path & links in villages	15000	2000	2000	2000	21000	£30,000
Community transport project & fun community activities.		6000	6000	6000	18000	£25,000
Sub Total					91,500	135,000
Community Activities and Events						
Community Grants	5000	5000	5000	5000	20000	35,000
Maximise availability of existing activities.	1000	1000	1000	1000	4000	6000
Community Events & celebrations	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	12,000
Fun community activities -		5,000		5,000	10,000	15,000
Sub Total					42000	68,000
Family and community support						
Services for people with poor mental health	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	12,000
Support for families	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000	30,000
Managing isolation - for all groups	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	14,000
Activities for all age groups especially young and older people	15,000	2,000	3,000	2,000	22,000	28,000
Sub Total					58,000	84,000
Improving local facilities						
Enhancing existing community facilities		100,000		100,000	200,000	300,000
Maximise use of 37 club & Bitham Walk		5,000		5,000	10,000	20,000
Sub Total					210,000	320,000
Making Big Local Happen - Core Funding						
Project co-ordinator & Administrator	27,500	27,500	27,500	27,500	110,000	275,000
Office base						
Partnership development & assessment training	1,500	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,500	6,000
Communication & publicity	2,000	2,000	1,000	1,000	6,000	8,000
Sub Total					120,500	289,000
Totals					522,000	896,000

Environmental Improvements	135,000
Community activity & events	68,000
Family support	84,000
Commuiity Facilities	320,000
Making projects happen	289,000
	896,000

Villages Together Costed Vision

- Environmental Improvements
- Community activity & events
- Family support
- Commuiity Facilities
- Making projects happen



5. Our Villages Together Action Plan

Introduction – ‘our plan on a page’

Following identification of priorities and key projects, we built our programme through an interactive development workshop – at which we discussed:

- The nature of the different projects for each priority.
- How each would be delivered, e.g. through our project worker, in partnership, bringing in or commissioning extra help.

From this discussion we have determined an allocation of spend against each of our priorities, which informed our costed vision. The resultant ‘plan on a page’ is included as Appendix 1 – our key projects and what action we will take to delivery are identified below.

Priority 1: Improving the environment and linkages

Need – Improving the environment emerged as a clear priority in the survey of residents and in workshop discussions. Improving opportunities for people to actively benefit from different types of environment was also thought to improve mental health, which responds to the increasing value given to local environments during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Environmental improvement is considered in the widest sense to also include traffic calming measures and footpaths to encourage walking and to link the two villages.

Objectives – To create an attractive useable and varied environment to meet Big Local outcomes 1, 3, & 4. To provide ease of movement via connecting paths and a community transport project.

Project ideas

- Green space improvements to include bulbs, trees, natural areas, and – potentially – community allotments.
- Park improvements, including a green gym and play equipment.
- Connecting path and links in the villages.
- Community transport initiative.

Partners – Gravity (providing connecting path and village improvement plan), landowners, village hall committees, conservation groups.

Overall estimated costs to March 2026

Local Priority/Theme	Apr-21	Oct-21	Apr-22	Oct-22	Plan Period to Mch 23	Est Total - All years to Mch 26
		1-6mths	7-12mths			
Environmental Improvements & Linkages						
Green space improvements - bulbs, trees, nature conservation.		7500	7500	7500	22500	£40,000
Park improvements including green gym & play equipment	7500	7500	7500	7500	30000	£40,000
Connecting Path & links in villages	15000	2000	2000	2000	21000	£30,000
Community transport project & fun community activities.		6000	6000	6000	18000	£25,000
Sub Total					91,500	135,000



Priority 2: Community activities and events

Needs – Residents are keen to participate in community activities and enjoy meeting and being with neighbours. Activities that connect and participation in events also helps us to respond to our community's needs, isolation, and loneliness – all made much worse during Covid-19.

Objectives & Outcomes – To create a networked community of residents and good neighbours to meet Big Local outcomes 1, 3, & 4.

- To enhance access to existing activities and events.
- To provide events / carnivals for residents.
- To encourage individuals and groups to organise and run community activities.

Project ideas –

- Community Grants.
- Maximising availability of existing activities.
- Community events and celebrations.
- Fun community activities.

Partners – All local organisations, village halls, playgroups, etc.

Overall estimated costs to March 2026

Local Priority/Theme	Apr-21	Oct-21	Apr-22	Oct-22	Plan Period to Mch 23	Est Total - All years to Mch 26
		1-6mths	7-12mths			
Community Activities and Events						
Community Grants	5000	5000	5000	5000	20000	35,000
Maximise availability of existing activities.	1000	1000	1000	1000	4000	6000
Community Events & celebrations	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	12,000
Fun community activities -		5,000		5,000	10,000	15,000
Sub Total					42000	68,000

Priority 3: Family and community support

Needs – The survey and Local Insight data highlighted the need for a range of activities to support families. This priority includes activities for all groups – young people and older people as well as family learning opportunities. One of the most significant findings from a scrutiny of the Local Insight data is the number of children in ‘out of work’ households, at 125, is 19.9% compared with a south west average of 11.5%.

To address local needs, this priority incorporates support for struggling families, including a food bank, cookery demonstrations, and advice from Citizens Advice. Covid-19 has also increased the level of isolation and loneliness, leading to mental health issues. We are also aware that young people are subject to particular pressures and hence, we aim to continue the Dreamscheme project and work with schools.

Objectives & Outcomes – To enable local people to access services which improve their sense of belonging, create connections, and reduce isolation. Contributing to Big Local outcomes 2, 3, & 4.

Project ideas –

- Services for people with poor mental health.
- Support for families – including family learning opportunities, food bank, a community pantry – linking to cookery classes and a simple cookbook – and access to targeted debt relief and budgeting guidance through links with Citizens Advice and the local credit union.
- Managing isolation, linked to the proposed community ‘talking café’.
- Activities for all age groups, with a focus on activities for young people and very old.

Partners – Villages together aims to work closely with local service providers.

Overall estimated costs to March 2026

Local Priority/Theme	Apr-21	Oct-21	Apr-22	Oct-22	Plan Period to Mch 23	Est Total - All years to Mch 26
		1-6mths	7-12mths			
Family and community support						
Services for people with poor mental health	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	12,000
Support for families	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000	30,000
Managing isolation - for all groups	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	14,000
Activities for all age groups especially young and older people	15,000	2,000	3,000	2,000	22,000	28,000
Sub Total					58,000	84,000

Priority 4: Improving local facilities

Needs – The opportunity to improve local facilities – including village halls, sports venues, and play equipment – is a long-term ambition. The aim is to maximise community use and also to ‘stretch’ our money through supporting match funding.

Objectives & Outcomes – The aim is to help maximise community access and use of the facilities within the two villages and also the 37 Club and Bitham Walk. This priority will contribute to all the Big Local Outcomes; especially 1, 3, & 4.

Project ideas –

- Community facilities improvement fund – to give all venues the opportunity to make enhancements through making applications to this fund.
- Maximise use of the 37 Club and Bitham Walk – e.g. to host the proposed community ‘talking café’ and other services, including Citizens Advice – to be explored further.

Partners – All local organisations, village halls, playgroups, etc.

Overall estimated costs to March 2026

Local Priority/Theme	Apr-21	Oct-21	Apr-22	Oct-22	Plan Period to Mch 23	Est Total - All years to Mch 26
		1-6mths	7-12mths			
Improving local facilities						
Enhancing existing community facilities		100,000		100,000	200,000	300,000
Maximise use of 37 club & Bitham Walk		5,000		5,000	10,000	20,000
Sub Total					210,000	320,000



Priority 5: Making Villages Together happen

Needs – Employing staff will be vital to facilitate the delivery of our programme. We intend to enable our board, including new members, to work together as a ‘team’ and are keen to resource ‘away-days’ and support training for all members.

Objectives & Outcomes – To ensure Villages Together has sufficient staff time to implement the programme; maximising resident and partner involvement – supporting all four Big Local outcomes.

- To maximise the impact of our programme.
- To communicate effectively with the community.
- To support review of our projects and programme.

Project ideas –

- Employment of project co-ordinator and administrator.
- Partnership development and assessment training.
- Communication and publicity.

Overall estimated costs to March 2026

Local Priority/Theme	Apr-21	Oct-21	Apr-22	Oct-22	Plan Period to Mch 23	Est Total - All years to Mch 26
		1-6mths	7-12mths			
Making Big Local Happen - Core Funding						
Project co-ordinator & Administator	27,500	27,500	27,500	27,500	110,000	275,000
Office base						
Partnership development & assessment training	1,500	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,500	6,000
Communication & publicity	2,000	2,000	1,000	1,000	6,000	8,000
Sub Total					120,500	289,000

6. Delivering our priorities

Our approach to delivery

Through the preparation of our plan, we have discussed the principles behind its delivery.

- Building local capacity – encouraging local residents to get involved, form self-help groups (such as walking groups), engage with local organisations – will be fundamental to our way of working.
- Working with partners is crucial to our delivery arrangements. In this way, we consider we can maximise our impact and visibility. Where possible, we aim to combine resources to make the most of what we have.
- Making the most of what already exists – through signposting and helping to access.
- Helping to kick-start or enhance projects that can become sustainable.
- Encouraging own fundraising to match fund and stretch our resources.

We have learnt that we need to be more pro-active, and we will adopt specific approaches to deliver our priorities and to ensure we are able to implement our plan.

Grant Funding

We have included two grant funds within our plan. One to improve our local facilities; the other being the continuation of our community grants programme. We recognise the need to have a sub-committee to appraise projects for approval – to ensure both funds are operating efficiently and transparently. The degree and level of appraisal adopted will be proportionate to the amount of money involved.

- We will undertake appraisal training.
- We will consider bringing in a specialist to assist with the appraisal of the potentially larger grants applications for improving local facilities.
- We will ensure our grant funds applicants also seek match funding, whenever possible.

Working in Partnership

Partners are key to delivery in our Big Local area. We aim to build on the links we have made to date – with Gravity, schools, the parish councils, and others – to maximise our impact, either by delivering projects together or by supporting them to deliver what they do best.

Delivering Big Local – staffing

We realise that a staff resource will be crucial to delivering our plan. We have accounted for the equivalent of a full-time post and are already recruiting to this role.

Reviewing – Measuring & Evaluating Outcomes

At the outset of any projects we support, we will consider how they will be monitored, including the contribution of any of our partners. We will be explicit about our expectations of the grant and we will investigate taking up the Local Trust ‘Measuring Change’ offer. We want to be able to feedback to the community regularly – demonstrating our impacts and the value of us all working together.

We will review our plan every year – to check our progress, our spend, and how well we are addressing our priorities and the four Big Local outcomes.

We will continue to learn by considering all the monitoring information. We will adjust and amend projects and will be bold enough to stop projects if they are not progressing as planned, or in a meaningful way for our community.

We will share what we learn and what progress we make with our community and partners.



Villages Together

APPENDIX 1 – VILLAGES TOGETHER ACTION PLAN – OUR PLAN ON A PAGE.

See enclosed spread sheet with details of our individual projects and programme.