

‘Healthcheck for Broughton Astley’



Action Plan Summary

The Rural Centres Project

The Rural Centres Project is a scheme designed to help communities of larger settlements in Leicestershire develop projects that will regenerate their local area. The Project is supported by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership, the Countryside Agency, Leicester Shire Economic Partnership, the Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland) and local authorities. Broughton Astley is one of four settlements that was selected to participate in the project, which will be supported until 2007.

What is a Healthcheck?

The healthcheck process was formulated by the Countryside Agency to assess larger rural settlements and their surrounding hinterlands. It was developed for use in Market Towns specifically, but the model was flexible enough to be used as a basis for action in Broughton Astley. The healthcheck is a process by which the local community examines the 'health' of the settlement itself to:

- identify the economic, environmental and social strengths and weaknesses of a rural centre and its surrounding countryside
- identify the impact of changing local circumstances
- provide a sound basis for creating an action plan for revitalisation of the local area

The Countryside Agency provides a 'toolkit' for completing a market towns Healthcheck. This consists of a 'snapshot' and a series of worksheets relating to different aspects of the settlement. These are divided between four themes: Environment, Economy, Transport & Accessibility, and Social & Community. Completing the 'snapshot' and worksheets highlight the strengths and weakness of the settlement, and provides a basis for the community to develop projects for an 'Action Plan', a series of projects that will tackle the issues raised by the Healthcheck process.

The process has been supported by a Rural Centres Project Manager who has worked in conjunction with a local Steering Group, a band of willing volunteers that has helped to research information, form project ideas, develop the Action Plan and publicise the Healthcheck. The Project Manager will work with the Steering Group to develop the Action Plan projects, source funding and build capacity so that the group will evolve into a self sustaining and self supporting body.

The Healthcheck Process

The Healthcheck for Broughton Astley took place over a period of 15 months beginning in September 2002. The main stages involved in the process were:

- Informing the local community and gaining commitment from individuals, businesses and community groups wanting to be involved in the process.
- Holding a public meeting to inform and gather residents' views on the project and potential areas of action in the village.
- Identifying members of the community to be part of a local 'Steering Group' to work on the healthcheck.
- Defining the project boundaries.
- Completing a 'snapshot' of the village outlining the current socio-economic situation in Broughton Astley .
- Completing worksheets, through local knowledge, research and involvement of key local agencies and organisations.
- Conducting a postal questionnaire survey of residents' perceptions of Broughton Astley. Based on the results of this survey, we also undertook another survey of local residents views on the issue of Transport.
- Conducting a local business survey
- Conducting a youth survey
- Compiling all the information gathered to produce a Vision and Action Plan for Broughton Astley.

The Vision and Action Plan outline the current situation in the area, highlight problems or areas for improvement and provide a framework for future action to improve the parish for those living in, working in and visiting the area.

- Consulting on the draft Action Plan.
- Launching the Healthcheck and Action Plan report.

At all stages of the process it was sought to:

- Work to compliment (rather than duplicate) and support existing schemes, particularly the work of the Parish, District and County Councils.
- Build on previous research and community consultation

A Vision for Broughton Astley:

The Steering group developed the following Vision Statement, based on their findings from the community:

'Broughton Astley, a popular location, has the potential to be a great place to live. The balance between the number of residents and the range of facilities available will be improved. Improved community spirit, safety, tidiness, public transport and vibrant retailing will over the next three years be addressed by the Action Group to reinvigorate Broughton Astley.'

Four further Vision Statements were developed for each of the Healthcheck sections:

Environment Vision

To achieve, by sustainable means, a clean, litter-free, pleasant and diverse environment in Broughton Astley.

Transport and Accessibility Vision

To achieve a high level of connectivity- available, publicised and convenient to all- within and between Broughton Astley and nearby train stations, villages, towns and cities. To work with our partners to achieve the safest possible roads.

Social and Community Vision

To achieve, over time, a strong sense of community spirit and community participation within Broughton Astley. The balance between high quality facilities/services and the number of people in the settlement needs to be improved.

Economy Vision

To assist Broughton Astley in retaining and attracting a healthy variety of shops, appropriate to the needs of local residents. For both business and resident communities to co-operate together across economic, environments social and transport fronts for the benefit of Broughton Astley and its visitors.

The Steering Group developed a number of Action Plan projects after further consultation with the community:

Environment Projects:

- Creation of a wildlife garden in St Mary's churchyard
- Management of the brook and surrounding environment
- Promotion of a cleaner village environment
- Creation of Village Gateway signs for Broughton Astley

Transport & Accessibility Projects:

- Improved opportunities for the safe use of bicycles
- Improved bus stops throughout the settlement
- Improved traffic flow in the Main Street area

Social & Community Projects:

- Improved community facilities
- Improved volunteer opportunities
- Improved youth facilities
- Improved availability of Dentistry services
- Improved facilities for dog-owners within the village

Economy Projects:

- Promotion of shopping facilities in the village
- Re-establishment of a Chamber of Trade
- Survey and co-ordinate a business plan for the greater inclusion of local retailers in Broughton Astley's hinterland.
- Produce a leaflet promoting local shops, services and produce

The Action Plan should be seen as a living document which is open to change, influence and opportunity. For each project, timescales and key partners have been given. These will, of course, be open to changing circumstance and should not be seen as set in stone. The drive and enthusiasm of the community, for specific projects, will have a great influence on how, and when, they are delivered. The Steering Group will work with the Rural Centres Project Manager to identify possible sources of funding for the projects.

The Rural Centres Project in Broughton Astley would not have been possible without the following individuals:

**Joan Beeson
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If you would like to get involved with any of the Action Plans or would like to join the Broughton Astley Healthcheck Steering Group, please contact the Rural Centres Project Manager on 01162689711 swocha@ruralcc.org.uk

Copies of the full report are available from the Rural Community Council. Call 01162689711 for details. Further copies are available to view at the Parish Centre, Station Road, Broughton Astley.

Photo of St Mary the Virgin Parish Church kindly supplied by Broughton Astley Parish Council

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