

ORCC



Supporting
communities in
rural Oxfordshire



ABOUT US

VILLAGE HALLS

VILLAGE SHOPS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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About Us...

ORCC is a charity that brings together people who care about rural life. In all we do, we focus on 'helping people to help themselves'. Over our lifetime, Oxfordshire has changed, yet some problems – housing, transport, availability of services – have never gone away.

There are new challenges too – the ageing population, rising fuel prices, climate change, and increasingly centralised services. And in future, the pool of volunteers – who have always done so much to contribute to village life – may shrink as people work for longer.

www.oxonrcc.org.uk

... Founded in 1920, we are the oldest RCC in the country.



But Oxfordshire's villages are alive and well, and with ORCC's help, run nearly 300 village halls, around 70 community transport schemes, more community-run shops than any other county, while many are busy with parish plans and small affordable housing schemes for local people. Add to this an endless list of clubs and societies, fetes and events – the perfect recipe for strong, thriving and caring places to live.

Village Halls...

Our Village Halls Adviser helps hall committees with everything from effective marketing ideas to energy saving, from legal requirements to funding opportunities. Regular newsletters, briefings and area meetings help volunteers to keep up to date with everything they need to know about how to manage their halls and meet local needs as well as they possibly can. Our adviser is available to answer individual queries and will make site visits where necessary.

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There are almost 300 village halls in Oxfordshire, all owned and run by local communities.



Village Shops...

The Village Shops Development Worker provides advice and support to rural shopkeepers. This includes advice on business development, regular fact sheets and newsletters, and information about grants to improve shop facilities. Villages that have lost their shop are helped to explore options such as community-run shops, while volunteers already involved in running community shops are provided with regular opportunities to meet up with one another to share their experiences.

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“ORCC has provided continuous support, offering fantastic advice on setting up a shop, legal and financial help, plus links with other community projects.”

Affordable Housing...

The Rural Housing Enablers work with parish councils and other local groups to promote affordable housing schemes in their villages. These are usually small schemes on 'exception sites', where special rules mean that houses will always be given to people with a local connection. We help with local housing needs surveys, finding possible sites for new affordable housing, linking with planning officers and generally 'trouble-shooting' when there are any hold-ups in the process.



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“This scheme has worked really well. It’s enabled so many village people to be able to stay. And that’s brilliant.”

Community Led Plans...

In any community, change is inevitable. Community led plans (sometimes called Parish Plans) give local people a way of saying what kind of changes they want for their village and to decide on what is most important to them. ORCC's Community Development Workers help local residents to consult their communities and draw up an action plan. They provide information, community visits and events to help local people develop the skills they need – with a strong emphasis both on including the whole community and on having fun!

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“ORCC's guidance and advice gave us a great start. Their enthusiasm and continued encouragement was fantastic.”



Rural Transport...

ORCC has a team of 3 staff working on transport, reflecting the fact that 'getting there' is so important to rural communities. The Community Transport Advisers help local people to set up and manage community transport schemes with advice on getting started, consulting local people, getting funding and complying with all the legal requirements. A Directory of Community Transport Schemes is published annually (available free of charge from ORCC). We also help communities to carry out transport needs surveys, which help local authorities and bus operators to better understand what is needed.

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Over a year it is estimated that more than 1,000 volunteer drivers make over 30,000 journeys helping people to get where they need to be. This is calculated to save the 'public purse' over £300,000.

The **Disability and Access officer** provides accredited 'MIDAS' training to people providing community transport for people with mobility impairments. He also supports 'Transport for All', a group that presses for improvements to disabled access.

The **Community Transport and Accessibility officer** works closely with local and statutory authorities, bus operators and other groups when plans for rural bus services are being considered. He represents the particular needs of rural communities and works to find creative ways of meeting their needs and influencing the way that transport services are provided.

Market Towns...

Oxfordshire's smaller market towns have been working hard to hold their own against competition from outside – whether supermarkets, internet shopping, or bigger shopping centres. ORCC has worked with several of them to do a 'Market Towns Healthcheck' (a bit like a large scale community led plan) which has helped local 'town partnerships' to work out how to make their towns more attractive to shoppers and visitors. Faringdon, Kidlington, Carterton, Wallingford, Wantage/Grove and Thame have all successfully attracted funds for major projects such as new community buildings, street furniture and signs, town centre wi-fi, and improved landscaping.

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Since doing its Market Town Healthcheck, Faringdon has won a number of awards, including at national level.

Rural Policy...

Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South East and almost half its population lives in rural communities. Part of ORCC's job is to make sure that decision-makers at local, regional and national level know about the ways in which policies and services will affect rural people. We do this by working in partnership with local authorities and other public bodies, and by responding to consultations when changes are planned.

www.oxonrcc.org.uk



How do I find out more about ORCC?

- Through our regular magazine, the **ORCC Review**
- In our bi-monthly **Bulletin**, (village newsletter editors are very welcome to copy its contents to use locally)
- Through the range of regular **Newsletters** and **fact sheets** that we produce
- All of these and more besides can be found on the ORCC website – **www.oxonrcc.org.uk**
- You can ring us on **01865 883488**, email us on **orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk**
- Write to us at **ORCC, Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney, Oxon OX29 4SZ.**

www.oxonrcc.org.uk

... Improving the quality of life for those who live or work in rural Oxfordshire.



How to support ORCC...

We welcome members from across rural Oxfordshire. Being a member means you can have a say in the way ORCC is run by having a vote at our AGM, discounts on events, and at the same time you are helping us to deliver (or expand!) our services.

You can join ORCC as:

- **An individual**
- **A business** (membership includes a free advert in an ORCC publication).
- **A community organisation**

For details of current membership fees, see www.oxonrcc.org.uk or Tel: **01865 883 488**

Name:
.....

Address:
.....
.....

I would like to join ORCC as **an individual, a community organisation, or as a business** (please delete as appropriate)

I enclose a cheque for:

Additional voluntary donations are always welcome.
.....



Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Registered office:

Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney,

Oxon OX29 4SZ

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