

COMMUNITY CLIMATE RESILIENCE PROJECT

Project overview



INTRODUCTION: This gives an overview of a project to raise the resilience of local communities in response to the climate crisis and other pressures, which is being funded and led by members of the Network for Social Change.

SUMMARY: After successful completion of Year 1 in September 2025, Network members have donated funds for Year 2, and it is hoped that the project will continue for at least Year 3. Key elements of the project include:

- A Community of Practice involving members of several frontline community groups: this group makes funding decisions on pilot projects and ensures the project is engaged with the key issues.
- Funding a range of pilot projects, mostly run by community groups, and then replicating them and sharing the knowhow.

The Year 2 budget is circa £190K.

ORGANISATION: The Network for Social Change is a collection of individuals who come together to fund projects on issues including environment, social and labour justice, and human rights, in the UK and beyond (<http://www.thenetworkforsocialchange.org.uk>). Projects such as this one are developed and led by a small group of Network members. In this case, we have created a core group which includes a part-time Project Coordinator, Rebecca Gibbs of [Scottish Communities Climate Action Network](#) (SCCAN), plus part-time staff from [ACORN](#), SCCAN and [Tipping Point](#). This means that in Year 2, we have two new partner organisations:

- **ACORN**, a ‘community based union of working people’, which began with a few local residents trying to tackle slum housing in their neighbourhood but has quickly developed into a national organisation with thousands of members and branches across the country. Their significance has already been recognised by Network in previous funding.
- **Tipping Point** (also previously funded by Network), an experienced group of community organisers supporting climate action by grassroots groups across the country.

CONTEXT: This project aims to increase substantially the capacity of local communities across the UK to sustain themselves and adapt in the face of mounting disruption from climate change and other factors. Our plan is designed to achieve proof of concept for a number of initiatives early on, and to share them on a wider scale in Years 2 and 3, potentially helped by other funders. We recognise that the scale of the climate crisis, and other systemic issues such as social and economic injustice, cannot be rectified by any

project, but it looks clear that strengthening the *social infrastructure* of local communities is one of the most effective interventions which is realistically achievable.

The project plan has built on three main sources:

- *Scoping Study*: The core group commissioned this from Roman Paluch and Sean Irving of Cooperation Hull. The fieldwork in Spring 2024 included extended interviews with representatives from 28 community groups, from which a valuable outline emerged of the kind of challenges, drawbacks, strengths and needs to be found across a range of organisations.
- Extensive conversations with a range of organisations and individuals involved in this sector.
- Research and pilot projects initiated by Alan Heeks since 2014 through the [Seeding our Future](#) project.

YEAR 2 PLAN:

A. Overall project aims:

1. Fund effective and replicable community-led pilot projects that can strengthen communities' social connections and their resilience to rising climate disruptions and the polycrisis.
2. Evolve cost-effective ways to propagate successful pilot projects among other local community groups.
3. Contribute to the evolving connections between local community groups generally.

B. Work Plan:

- i) **Research:** in collaboration with the Community of Practice, identify and assess relevant models and best practice (e.g. most suitable models of community engagement and development, comms that are crisis resilient, food storage and emergency distribution that work with and without local authorities, conflict resolution models, working in the misinformation age etc. etc.).
- ii) **Development:** drawing on the research, and inputs from CoP members, create designs for pilot projects, find and brief people to implement and evaluate.
- iii) **Networking:** this is vital to enable:
 - Collaboration with other initiatives in the sector, e.g. Lifehouse - Collapse Preparing Communities, Climate Majority Project, etc.
 - Communication and dissemination using regional and/or national gatherings, a 2-monthly newsletter and the creation of a 'poolkit'.
 - Identification of potential co-funding partnerships.
- iv) **Community of Practice:** to continue to support and to expand.
- v) **Projects:** support the development, running and evaluation of around 6-12 new pilot projects, and initial steps to propagate some of the successful ones.

vi) **Funding:** explore co-funding opportunities to scale up the reach of the project, especially to support additional pilots, and wider propagation.

STAYING CONNECTED: We will be setting up an email list for occasional updates, and a database of local community resilience groups. If you'd like to join either of these lists, let us know at the email below. Contacts from potential co-funders are also welcome. This overview is also accessible on Network for Social Change's [website](#). You can contact the core group on communityresilience99@gmail.com.