




# CDAHerts

bringing together people  
and communities



## 2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan

[www.cdaherts.org.uk](http://www.cdaherts.org.uk)

A Company Limited by Guarantee in England & Wales No 3712283

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# Foreword

We are delighted to present our Strategic Plan – shaping a future where togetherness enhances lives. Our commitment to fostering, connecting and serving our rural communities has never been stronger, and this plan reflects our determination to making a sustainable difference.

The ongoing cost of living crisis, has led to various challenges emerging, with connections between neighbours weakening. Hectic stress filled lives, diminishing community spaces, and the reliance on digital platforms for everyday tasks has seen isolation increase and health, particularly mental health deteriorate.

Compounded with rural infrastructure becoming stretched or disappearing altogether, and current environmental changes, the challenges facing our rural communities have never been greater.

As CDA Herts marks 55 years of service to the communities of Hertfordshire, the production of this plan is both timely and significant.

Together, we are not just building a plan; we are shaping a legacy of collaboration, resilience, and enablement.

Let's turn this vision into a reality, by fostering healthy sustainable connected communities.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.



Kevin Poulton  
CEO

Jodie Deards  
Chair



# Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire is a county in the East of England, just north of London. It's known for its mix of charming countryside, historic towns, and excellent transport links, making it a popular spot for commuters who work in London but prefer a quieter lifestyle.

The county is filled with rolling green hills, woodlands, and picturesque villages. Areas like the Chiltern Hills (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) stretch into the west of the county.

**St Albans** is one of the county's most historic cities, once a major Roman settlement (Verulamium). It has a stunning cathedral, a vibrant market, and significant Roman ruins.

**Hertford** and **Ware** are lovely riverside market towns with medieval charm.

There is a range of housing — from traditional cottages and period homes to modern developments. It has a reputation for being safe, clean, and relatively affluent, with good schools and a strong family-oriented vibe.

**Leavesden Studios** (home to the Harry Potter films) and the Warner Bros. Studio Tour is a major attraction.

The affluent communities unfortunately can hide pockets of deprivation and isolation.



In 2022 the rural population of Hertfordshire was around 128,584 (12%)

# Who we are



## Our Vision

To see a thriving, resilient and happy Hertfordshire, that harnesses the power of local neighbourhoods to drive positive change.

## Our Mission

To foster healthy sustainable, connected communities across rural Hertfordshire.



# Who we are

CDA Herts is a unique, diverse and award winning charity which supports communities across the **whole of Hertfordshire**, with a proven track record built up over 55 years.

Our supporting communities work focusses on people's health, wellbeing and the environment they live in. Our projects allow pro-active community orientated self-care, bridging the gap between the Health and the community.

We facilitate Community-led Planning and Rural Housing across the county, offering advice and support in creating a Parish, Town, Neighbourhood or Green Infrastructure Plan.

The only charity in Hertfordshire that is part of the ACRE\* national network of Village Hall Advisors providing information, advice and support to charitable village hall committees.

Adopting the Asset Based Community development philosophy our projects and services offer opportunities that allow people to drive the change in making Hertfordshire a better place to live.

Our Digital Learners project epitomizes this approach with a friendly informal drop-in format. Where neighbours help neighbours with their digital journeys and preventing isolation through social engagement, adding to the health of the communities



\*ACRE, Association of Community for Rural England.

# Who we are - Values

## Connectors

We keep people at the heart of all we do, believing connection is at the heart of success and happiness and self-worth.

## Enablers

We actively foster growth, empowerment and positive change. Creating the space for communities to do more by themselves.

## Sustainable

We build sustainable projects, services and communities; and will increase our own environmental sustainability and deliver green initiatives.

## Collaborative

We believe great ideas come from working together with our communities. Using a wide range of partners, we will co-design projects and services to meet real needs.

## Innovative

We embrace fresh thinking and creative solutions to meet the evolving needs of our community. By staying open to new ideas and smarter ways of working, we make our impact deeper and more meaningful.

## Transparent

We operate with honesty and openness, ensuring our community, donors, and partners always know how decisions are made and where resources go. We share our successes, our challenges, and our lessons learned—because trust is built on honesty.

# Connected Communities

**We will play a leading role in helping Hertfordshire's rural communities thrive, being great places in which to live, work and belong.**

**To achieve this, we will:**

- Establish *Rural Support Networks*, to enable more communities to meet the support needs of their residents.
- Map and promote rural communities using “Asset Based Community Development” methodologies.
- Encourage and support people to take action on community-based projects that they are passionate about.
- Work with targeted communities to increase community cohesion through the provision and promotion of bespoke groups and activities.



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**To help us achieve these we will work with....**

- Local Authorities
- Town & Parish Councils
- Voluntary, Faith, Community and Social Enterprise organisations
- Citizens, residents and communities



# Connected - Digital

## We will connect people to online services

### To achieve this, we will:

- Work with people in Hertfordshire to help them become more digitally included, to teach and equip them to access online services that improve their health and wellbeing.
- Focus on teaching and improving skills related to getting online and browsing the internet, staying safe, searching and saving information, communicating with others via email, voice and video, carrying out transactions (like shopping or ordering prescriptions) and how to search for and verify information as safe and reliable.
- Grow our *Rural Digital Learners* programme, enabling more users and volunteers to access our programme.
- Establish funding to continue providing the people and technology needed for the programme to continue.



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### To help us achieve these we will work with....

- Local Authorities
- Town & Parish Councils
- Voluntary, Faith, Community and Social Enterprise organisations
- Citizens, residents and communities

# Healthy & Active

**We will promote and facilitate health and wellbeing for individuals and communities.**

**To achieve this, we will:**

- Work with partners to promote targeted projects to improve health and wellbeing. With projects such as *Healthy Villages* and *Active Villages*.
- Support the health priorities of our Integrated Care Board and work with our partners to achieve positive outcomes for our communities.
- Actively engage stakeholders including volunteers, residents and communities to ensure their voices are heard and incorporated into decision making.
- Establish a Social Prescribing offer to meet the needs of targeted communities.
- Undertake continuous quality improvement and collaborative research initiatives to contribute to evidence-based initiatives for the communities we serve.



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**To help us do this we will work with....**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ➤ Primary Care Providers                     | ➤ Herts Sports Partnership             |
| ➤ Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise | ➤ Sport England                        |
| ➤ Local Authorities                          | ➤ Sport Governing Bodies               |
| ➤ Integrated Care Board                      | ➤ Schools & Educational Establishments |
| ➤ Patients and Communities                   | ➤ Citizens, residents and communities  |

# Rural Infrastructure

**We will play a leading role in protecting, developing and promoting Hertfordshire's rural Infrastructure**

**To achieve this, we will:**

- Provide a support service to more - and a wider variety of - community buildings; enabling them to become key hubs for community life.
- Facilitate the production of community-led plans, helping communities identify and implement their priorities for local green infrastructure, housing and other community facilities and Infrastructure.
- Work to provide a range of suitable community energy solutions.
- Offer advice on how residents and community buildings can become energy efficient.
- Develop our *Community Transport* project so it becomes financially self sustaining.



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**To help us do this we will work with....**

- Local Authorities
- Town & Parish Councils
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise
- Utility Companies
- Citizens, residents and communities
- Landowners
- Housing Associations and Local Builders
- Boiler, Insulation and Solar Panel Installation companies

# Sustainability

**We will create more opportunities for more people to access, engage with and benefit from their local environment.**

**To achieve this, we will:-**

- Advance the Hertfordshire Community Energy initiative
- Develop our Green Social Prescribing service, with long term projects and seasonal activity programmes.
- Create a Green Wellbeing directory, partnering with more providers.
- Promote more conservation volunteering opportunities.
- Support and encourage more community gardens.
- Encourage communities, residents, schools and businesses to take part in community cleanups.
- Promote and enable the use of renewable energy projects.
- Explore providing an Ecological Consultancy service.
- Investigate feasibility of providing services to reduce waste by recycling and repurposing.
- Play an active role in the work of Local Authority Environmental Partnerships.



**To help us do this we will work with....**

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ➤ Local Authorities                            | ➤ Citizens, residents and communities |
| ➤ Town & Parish Councils                       | ➤ Landowners                          |
| ➤ Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise   | ➤ Schools                             |
| ➤ Environment Agency, Energy & Water Companies | ➤ Businesses                          |

# Sustainability – CDA Herts

**We will be a cleaner and greener charity; reducing our carbon footprint and increasing our environmental sustainability.**

**To achieve this, we will continue to:**

- Make our offices more energy efficient.
- Become a paper free charity.
- Reduce, re-use, repair and recycle more.
- Examine our working practises to reduce carbon footprint.
- Prioritize partnerships with suppliers who share our commitment to environmental responsibility.

**To help us achieve these we will work with...**

- Staff, Board Members and Volunteers
- Landlord
- Suppliers
- Partners



# Community Businesses

**We will establish commercial interests to provide more resource back into our charitable projects. To achieve this, we will:**

- Establish community businesses with new ideas for income generation.

**We will support the local economy with jobs, volunteering opportunities and services. To achieve this, we will:**

- Make our businesses great places to be.
- Further develop our Volunteer induction and training.
- Market our opportunities locally.

**We will promote local produce and suppliers. To achieve this, we will:**

- Create strong networks with local providers.
- Enable small businesses to use our platform.

**To help us achieve these we will work with...**

- Local Authorities
- Town & Parish Councils
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations
- Local producers and creatives
- Citizens, residents and communities



# Our People & Partners

## **We will be a people-centred employer. To achieve this, we will:**

- Put staff wellbeing at the heart of all we do.
- Invest in training and development.
- Listen to our people, act on feedback and respond and celebrate our achievements.

## **We will be a collaborative partner ensuring we get the best outcomes for all. To achieve this, we will:**

- Deliver our projects to the highest standard.
- Communicate effectively with all partners.
- Develop new partnerships for mutual benefit.
- Develop our service to act as a host for others.
- Listen to our partners and respond to their feedback.

## **To help us achieve these we will work with...**

- Our Staff, Board Members and Volunteers
- Local Authorities
- Town & Parish Councils
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations
- Health Sector representatives
- Citizens, residents and communities





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and communities



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