



SHINING A SPOTLIGHT
ON RURAL COMMUNITY NEEDS

Shining a Spotlight on Rural Community Needs Report – May 2023



The Constance Travis
Charitable Trust





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Introduction

In collaboration with key stakeholders, Northamptonshire Community Foundation has carried out a comprehensive investigation into the pressing challenges experienced by rural communities in Northamptonshire. This report aims to shed light on the critical issues of rural poverty, food insecurity, and limited access to essential services. By presenting the stories and statistical insights shared by residents, as well as data from our partners Local Insight (OCSI) and surveys conducted by Northamptonshire ACRE, we seek to raise awareness and inspire action to address the hardships faced by rural Northamptonshire and build a dedicated funding programme to help address some of these issues.

This summary will highlight key findings from our Rural Poverty Report. The full report from Local Insight (OCSI) is [available on our website](#). Northamptonshire ACRE's full report is [available here](#).

Understanding Rural Poverty

Rural poverty is a stark reality that deeply impacts the lives of individuals and communities, manifesting in financial constraints, limited access to resources, and isolation. In this report, we focus on towns, villages, and hamlets with populations below 10,000, where the challenges are particularly pronounced.



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Limited Awareness and Access to Support

Around 60% of rural residents are unsure how to access support in their community, with only 9% mentioning food banks.

Lack of regular public transport, combined with up to 28% having no access to a car, hinders residents from accessing support services.



Financial hardship was mentioned by 40% of respondents when asked about the causes of food poverty in their community.

Unique Factors Impacting Different Demographics

Older people highlighted transportation challenges preventing them from reaching shops, while those with school-aged children mentioned financial hardship and the cost of food as contributing factors to poverty.

Rural residents in affluent areas may be less likely to seek help when in need.



Population and Deprivation

Rural areas in Northamptonshire are home to 31.4% of the overall population (237,815 people), with an older population compared to urban areas.

The indices of deprivation reveal income deprivation affecting more than 14,000 people in rural Northamptonshire.

Working-age residents claiming DWP benefits, children in low-income families, and pensioners with low income are significantly represented in rural areas.

Cost of Living and Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty affects 11.5% of households in rural Northamptonshire (over 11,000 households).

Domestic buildings with low energy efficiency ratings are more prevalent in rural areas, contributing to higher fuel poverty rates.

Food insecurity is also higher in rural areas, with a greater vulnerability score compared to urban areas.



Health and Education

Rural areas have a higher proportion of residents with limiting long-term illnesses, and accessing healthcare services poses challenges due to longer travel times.

Over 14,300 adults in rural Northamptonshire have no formal qualifications.

Rural areas experience longer travel times to educational institutions, making access to education more difficult.

Transportation and Connectivity

Rural areas have greater road distances to key services, such as GPs and schools.

Poor digital connectivity is prevalent in rural neighbourhoods, with higher proportions of premises having broadband speeds below the Universal Service Obligation.

Lack of car ownership is a significant issue in some rural areas, limiting access to essential services.

Economy and Employment

Rural areas face challenges related to lower job density and longer travel times to employment centres.

Approximately 17.3% of all residents claiming unemployment benefits in Northamptonshire are living in rural areas.

Certain rural neighbourhoods, such as Finedon, Rothwell, and Irthlingborough, have a higher proportion of unemployment benefit claimants.





Now find out how you can make a difference



Dear Supporters,

We hope you found our Shining a Spotlight on Rural Community Needs report useful and most importantly it has motivated you to want to do something about the challenges our rural communities are facing.

We think this report clearly highlights the pressing issues faced by rural communities in Northamptonshire. We believe that together, we can make a real difference and create positive change for our rural neighbours.

Rural Reminders

Nearly a third of the county's population resides in rural communities, encompassing rural towns and villages.

The indices of deprivation reveal income deprivation affecting more than 14,000 people in rural Northamptonshire.

Fuel poverty affects 11.5% of households in rural Northamptonshire (over 11,000 households).

The Urgent Need



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Rural communities often face hidden poverty and struggle with limited access to essential services. The cost-of-living crisis hits them even harder, with higher expenses for heating, housing, and transport. The recent energy crisis has exacerbated the situation, leading to an alarming rise in rural homelessness and food insecurity.

Our Solution

Northamptonshire Community Foundation, in partnership with local donors and organisations like Northamptonshire ACRE, is committed to championing and supporting rural communities. We have launched the "Shining a Spotlight on Rural Community Needs" match fund appeal to address urgent needs such as poverty, access to services, and community support through a dedicated funding pot.

Goals and Opportunities – Let's raise £200,000!

We have a remarkable opportunity to kickstart our efforts with a £100,000 match fund appeal, generously supported by the Constance Travis Charitable Trust. Every pound donated will unlock additional funds for grants to rural community projects throughout 2023 and 2024.



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How You Can Get Involved

Support our Work by Donating

Your contribution will directly fund projects that uplift and support rural communities. Contact our Head of Giving and Development, Dean Jones or our Donor Relationships Officer Katie Vickers to donate or pledge your support.

Attend Community Conversations

Join us in a series of engaging dialogues throughout 2023, where we will discuss local needs, community solutions, and the vital work being done to support rural communities.

Spread the Word

Help us amplify our message by sharing this report with your networks and encouraging others to support our cause. Together, we can create a groundswell of support for rural communities.





Impactful Initiatives

1. **Village Halls:** Village halls serve as crucial community hubs but often struggle with funding and resources. Your donations can support improvements such as updated facilities, enhanced technology, and better connectivity.
2. **Community Shops and Pubs:** Seed funding can kickstart the establishment and development of community shops and pubs, revitalizing local economies and fostering a sense of togetherness.
3. **Greening a community:** Support the creation of pocket parks, community orchards, and allotments, fostering sustainable food networks and promoting biodiversity in rural areas.
4. **Empowering Young People:** Help us provide mobile youth clubs, playground equipment, and digital support to ensure young people in rural communities have access to essential services and opportunities.

Supporting Local Community Groups

We aim to empower and support local community groups in their efforts to improve access to services in rural areas. By raising awareness, rural-proofing services, and providing direct funding and resources, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of those living in remote areas.

Together, Let's Champion the Rural

The findings of this report underscore the urgent need for collaborative action to address the challenges faced by rural communities in Northamptonshire. By tackling rural poverty, promoting food security, and improving access to essential services, we can contribute to a more inclusive and resilient Northamptonshire. Together, we can bridge the divide and empower rural communities to thrive.



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Case Studies

These are a few examples of projects based in rural areas across Northamptonshire that have previously benefitted from funding from Northamptonshire Community Foundation.

Crick Allotment Society Ltd

Awarded £1,500.00 from the Yelvertoft Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund to expand the existing mains water supply.

“This grant has made a significant difference to the Crick Allotment plot holders as the primary beneficiaries, but also to their families, many of whom also benefit from the opportunity to work on and enjoy their family members plots, but also from the produce. The grant has made a significant difference to those with limited mobility and our older plot holders, many of whom have already reported how much easier it is to manage watering themselves.”



Burton Latimer Town Council – Burton Latimer Community Managed Library

Awarded £30,000.00 from the Burton Wold Wind Farm Fund to support the running costs of the library which provides a range of services for residents and as a venue for other community groups.

“The grant has allowed us to continue to create a community hub in Burton Latimer. We have been able to work with groups providing mobility support, economic support, and emotional support. The grant has allowed us to focus on the needs of Burton Latimer residents and enabled us to bring local community groups, organisations, and businesses together. This was evident when we hosted a recent Job Fair where local business and job seekers attended. Working with DWP and local employers we met over 80 local job seekers.”



SNVB

Awarded £1,715.92 from the Family Food Aid Fund to provide supplies for breakfast and after school clubs at schools across South Northants and Daventry, supporting pupils at schools who are struggling to eat breakfast before attending school.



“The grant supported 30 children who were attending school having not eaten breakfast and their ability to concentrate was severely impacted. Our provision of breakfast and after school food boxes improved the position significantly.”

Wind Farm Funds

The Wind Farm Funds support a variety of educational, environmental, charitable, and general community amenity projects for several communities, located in the areas of Burton Wold, Yelvertoft, Winwick and New Albion. Northamptonshire Community Foundation is the fund's independent administrator.

Examples of Wind Farm-Funded projects

Organisation	Amount awarded	Project
Yelvertoft Pre-School	£1,325	To upgrade the old and worn bikes and trikes at pre-school with new ones specifically designed for pre-school children and that help with Early Years development
Clubs for Young People Northamptonshire	£6,900	To establish a fortnightly youth club in the Crick area to serve the young people in Yelvertoft and surrounding villages
Yelvertoft Parish Council	£17,898	To fence one boundary, renew an entrance gate and restore a second historic entrance enabling easier access to the Allotment Field for the King Georges field
Crick Scarecrow Festival Committee	£2,000	To fund costs of this year’s Scarecrow and Music Festival

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