

Company no. 3336101  
Charity no. 1061568

**Action with Communities in Rural  
England**

**Report and Audited Financial Statements**

**31 March 2026**

# **Action with Communities in Rural England**

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**For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Reference and administrative details

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Status</b>             | The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 19 March 1997 and registered as a charity on 26 March 1997.                                          |                                                                                            |
| <b>Governing document</b> | The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. |                                                                                            |
| <b>Company number</b>     | 3336101                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                            |
| <b>Charity number</b>     | 1061568                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                            |
| <b>Registered office</b>  | Godfrey Wilson Limited<br>Chartered accountants and statutory auditors<br>2nd Floor - South<br>One Castle Park<br>Tower Hill<br>Bristol<br>BS2 0JA                                  |                                                                                            |
| <b>Honorary officers</b>  | James Blake<br>Sally Jane Colthup<br>Helen Susan Dovey<br>Gavin Parker                                                                                                              | Chair<br>Vice Chair (from November 2025)<br>Vice Chair (until November 2025)<br>Vice Chair |
|                           | A full list of the trustees serving during the year and up to the date of this report can be found on page 17.                                                                      |                                                                                            |
| <b>Chief executive</b>    | Corinne Pluchino                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                            |
| <b>Company secretary</b>  | Corinne Pluchino                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                            |
| <b>Bankers</b>            | Lloyds plc<br>14 Castle Street<br>Cirencester<br>Gloucestershire<br>GL7 1QJ                                                                                                         |                                                                                            |
| <b>Solicitors</b>         | Stone King LLP<br>13 Queen Square<br>Bath<br>BA1 2HJ                                                                                                                                |                                                                                            |
| <b>Auditors</b>           | Godfrey Wilson Limited<br>Chartered accountants and statutory auditors<br>2nd Floor - South<br>One Castle Park<br>Tower Hill<br>Bristol<br>BS2 0JA                                  |                                                                                            |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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The trustees present their report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

#### ACRE's purpose and vision

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the national charity for rural communities. Our vision is for rural communities that are thriving, inclusive and sustainable, with the support they need to ensure equitable outcomes for everyone. We also believe they have a vital part to play in helping to address some of the most significant challenges facing everyone in society, wherever they live, including the need to increase growth to fund high quality services, promote a just and effective transition to net zero and deliver the urgent restoration of the natural world.

We are the only national charity speaking up for rural communities as a whole and this gives us a unique perspective. Our purpose is to achieve positive change for people living in rural communities, and particularly those facing the greatest needs and challenges as a result of where they live. We work closely with our network of 37 member organisations, who work with communities in rural areas across England. Together we campaign for change, enable local action and unlock support for those in greatest need.

Our objects are to **promote any charitable purpose to improve the conditions of life of people and communities in rural areas in England and Wales**. As the national body of the ACRE Network, ACRE also works with and supports its member organisations to build their capacity and resilience and to share best practice and innovation, so that each member can respond to the needs of their rural communities, enable them to take action and support those in greatest need.

Our vision is underpinned by behaviours which support five values:

- Responsive – responding and listening to the needs of members and beneficiaries;
- Innovative – testing and developing new approaches;
- Collaborative – working with others to achieve results for our members and beneficiaries;
- Empowering – enabling members and rural communities to take action; and
- Solution focused – achieving results that make a difference.

#### Launching our new strategy

One of the key moments of the last year occurred in July, when we launched our strategy for 2025-30, *Rural Ambition: enabling communities to thrive*. It builds on the work of the previous five years but also marks a change in focus and pace. It was published at a time of immense economic, societal and environmental flux, but is optimistic and ambitious because we believe there are opportunities as well as unresolved challenges in the countryside.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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Drawing on our members' experience we identified the five most important issues facing rural communities which will be the focus of our work during our strategy period:

- Increasing the availability of affordable rural housing that meets local needs;
- Improving access to public transport and reliable mobile and digital networks;
- Addressing loneliness and isolation in remote communities;
- Improving access to public services and particularly healthcare; and
- Addressing fuel poverty, access to energy and supporting a fair transition to net zero.

To help deliver these changes we will speak up more boldly, build new alliances and work more actively with our network so we can make an even greater impact together. We will also invest in becoming a more resilient organisation, and support our members to do the same, and are clear that the collective power of our network is essential to achieving our goals.

Our new strategy sets out our theory of change and our ambition for the next five years: **by 2030 we will have helped to improve the quality of life for rural communities and supported those in greatest need.** In order to deliver this we will focus our external activities in three areas:

- Campaigning: We will raise awareness and understanding of rural issues and work to ensure public policies support thriving rural communities;
- Enabling: We will increase the opportunities for rural communities to make their voice heard and take action to shape their future; and
- Unlocking: We will ensure equitable access to investment, essential services and opportunities for growth – particularly for those most in need.

By 2030 there will be positive economic, social and environmental changes for rural communities. There will be more housing available that is appropriate, sustainable and affordable so that young families can remain in the areas where they grew up and local businesses are able to recruit and expand. Essential power and communications infrastructure will be improving so it is more reliable and resilient, and can support future technological innovation so that rural communities can benefit in full. More people will be confident using digital technology to access essential services and make new connections to help address isolation. Rural communities will be recognised for the contribution they make to the transition to a net zero economy and supporting nature's restoration. New resources will be available to help local people improve the facilities and services available in their communities, which meet their needs and help them to unlock their future potential. We will assess our progress by monitoring the economic, social and environmental progress being made in these areas.

To deliver our overarching ambition we need to ensure that we are resilient, capable and adaptable. We have identified four pillars to shape the way we work internally, to ensure we have a solid foundation for our strategy. They will ensure that we have the right resources, a resilient network and compelling communications. We will:

- Create a robust financial model so that we can plan for the long-term, develop our organisation and take advantage of opportunities to increase our impact;
- Work with our members in new ways so that we can increase our collective influence and enable rural communities to flourish;
- Invest in raising the profile of rural communities and focus on the issues where we can make the biggest difference; and
- Build new relationships and alliances so that we can achieve more change, more quickly.

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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#### **Turning our strategy into a plan of action**

Our strategy is underpinned by an annual business plan setting out operational objectives for the year, which in turn informs team member objective setting and performance management. In 2025-26, the first year of our strategy, we identified three overarching aims:

- To continue to deliver and develop our existing programmes designed to enable and support rural communities;
- To draw up and begin delivery of cross-cutting plans in key areas including policy and public affairs, profile raising and external communications, and network communications and support;
- To launch our new strategy and build the foundations needed to help us deliver it in future years including investing in team and organisational development and income diversification.

2025-26 was the foundation year for our strategy and we undertook a series of reviews to help turn our new strategy into tangible action plans. The key developments are summarised in this report.

#### **Our funders and sponsors**

Our work is made possible by the engagement and generosity of our funders and sponsors. We are extremely grateful to the following for their financial support during the year:

- ACRE members
- Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Environment Agency
- Hallmaster
- Norris and Fisher
- Utility Aid
- MHCLG and the Lloyds Bank Foundation - funders of NAVCA project.

We are also very grateful to the supporters of our annual Village Hall Advisers Event, without whom the event would not be possible: Utility Aid, Hallmaster, SRS Ltd, ARC Thermal, Total Floor Care and Creative Spark.

#### **How our activities deliver public benefit**

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in deciding activities the charity should undertake. ACRE delivers public benefit by working to alleviate disadvantage and achieve positive change in rural communities throughout England, both directly and in partnership with our network of member organisations. Our theory of change, which can be found on our website, sets out how we deliver this benefit, by campaigning, enabling local action and unlocking support for people most in need at national level, and supporting and developing our network to do the same at local level. Our activities include research and development, policy development and advocacy, building coalitions, managing national programmes and services, and distributing grants and funding. Our work with our network includes capacity building and training, co-designing programmes and services and sharing best practice and innovation. The impact of our work and the public benefit that has been delivered over the last year is summarised in this report.

### **ACRE's Key Activities, Outputs and Outcomes in 2025-26**

#### **Introduction**

We fulfilled our objective to continue to deliver and develop our existing programmes while also beginning the strategic shifts to enable us to deliver our overarching ambition and provide greater support for the ACRE Network. Our total income increased from £5.03m in 2024/25 to £5.05m in 2025/26. We also began work in new areas. Over 85% of our total income was distributed to the ACRE network and directly to rural communities to enable local activity and support those in greatest need.

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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##### **Campaigning**

Rural areas are often perceived as being idyllic places to live and work but in reality the picture is much more complex. Ten million people live in the English countryside but these communities are often poorly understood and ignored in policy development. As a result they have inequitable access to essential infrastructure, services and jobs, making it harder for people to secure the resources and support they need and realise the potential of the rural economy. ACRE is committed to changing this.

We were very pleased to be invited to join Defra's Rural Taskforce in 2025 and to attend a series of workshops with a cross section of government departments. It created a valuable forum to give the rural perspective on economic development, housing, transport, healthcare and crime, and we look forward to the Government's final report. We have been making the case for this model to be used again, to enable departments that are making policy to gather practical, first-hand experience to help them ensure their objectives will be achieved in rural areas.

We met the Minister for Farming & Rural Affairs, Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP, with ACRE Network member Community Action Suffolk, when she visited Suffolk in March. It was a valuable opportunity to brief her on the ACRE Network's expertise and impact in rural areas across England. We also continued to widen our engagement with parliamentarians across the political spectrum, to raise awareness of the top five issues impacting rural communities, and the potential for growth if the right enablers are put in place. We were invited to give oral evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Business and the Rural Powerhouse for its inquiry into Devolution and Rural Communities in March.

We welcomed the Government's 10 Year Health Plan for England: Fit for the Future, and particularly the commitment that "care should happen as locally as it can" and the concept of the neighbourhood health service. We are now focused on ensuring this ambition is delivered in a way that makes a positive difference for people living in market towns, villages and remote areas. We also worked with other organisations to ensure rural affairs were given greater consideration in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026. We were very pleased that the final legislation has included 'rural affairs and coastal communities' as a specific area of competence for Strategic Authorities.

We also moved rapidly to engage Government after the outbreak of conflict in Iran, which resulted in the price of heating oil doubling within 48 hours. An estimated 1.5 million (26.5%) of rural households are off the gas grid, and dependent on more expensive alternatives such as heating oil or Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG). We welcomed the rapid emergency financial support announced by the Government, but had concerns about its size, scope and accessibility. We presented our own proposals to support rural communities in the short term, and ensure they are treated equitably with households that are on the gas grid and which benefit from the energy price cap. We also put forward proposals to help encourage them to move to cleaner energy in the longer term.

Our work was underpinned by a new integrated approach to policy, public affairs and communications and we will build further on this in the coming year. We contributed to 11 policy consultations, encompassing energy and fuel poverty, planning and affordable housing development, rural transport and access to communications and postal services. We also started implementing one of the key themes in our strategy: to build new relationships and alliances beyond the traditional rural affairs sector. We held introductory meetings with national organisations specialising in health and social care, including national charities and policy advisers, and will continue to develop these relationships.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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##### Enabling

The ACRE Network has over a century of experience in enabling local communities. At a national level, in addition to seeking to shape the policy environment, ACRE gave advice and support to our members, and helped to manage and deliver nationally funded programmes that are delivered locally.

**Delivering change in rural communities** – ACRE and the ACRE network were awarded funding by Defra in 2022-23 to enable ACRE members to help support the delivery of government priorities in rural communities. The Local Action Grant (LAG) builds on funding awarded in previous years and supports vital local activities ranging from increasing digital inclusion to building social infrastructure to supporting the transition to net zero. In 2025/26, Defra confirmed it would continue the fund for a further year, pending longer-term announcements linked to the spending review. ACRE received £1.71m, of which £1.63m was distributed to our members.

The LAG plays a vital role at local level for two reasons. It allows ACRE members to engage in discussions at a strategic level locally on the issues impacting rural communities as well as using the resources on specific issues and projects. This has been particularly important over the last year as the early stages of local government reorganisation have begun to take effect. Secondly, both these areas of work enable ACRE to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the front line which can be used to inform national policy making.

We were therefore very pleased to learn in February that, following the Spending Review in 2025, funding would be continued for the next three years, subject to annual ministerial approval, until 2028-29. We will be using this news as an opportunity to review and update the way that we collect and present data about the impact of the ACRE Network. We will introduce a new reporting framework so that we can provide more information on the outcomes achieved in local communities and tell our collective story as effectively and accessibly as possible with new and existing audiences.

**Supporting Village Halls and Community Buildings** – There are over 10,000 village halls in England, the vast majority of which are run by volunteers committed to providing a place where local people can meet, build relationships and access important services. Community buildings support an increasingly wide range of activities, many of which are designed to address urgent unmet needs. These range from warm hubs in winter, for individuals experiencing fuel poverty, through groups designed to combat loneliness, to community health services and advice on accessing other public services.

ACRE's Village Halls Service operates by supporting our network colleagues, working at county level, who in turn work with local community buildings. We provide ongoing advice and support, issue guidance on governance and management issues, and monitor and contribute to public policy and legislative changes that might impact village halls. Over the last year we delivered seven online sessions for our members, on subjects ranging from DBS outreach and crowdfunding to custodian trusteeship.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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In recognition of our expertise, ACRE was asked to join the Home Office's advisory panel on the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, commonly known as Martyn's Law. The panel was appointed to help draw up guidance for public buildings on implementing the Act. The new legislation impacts community buildings with a capacity of more than 200. Statutory government guidance was published in April 2026. ACRE is now developing tailored guidance for village halls as part of our information resources. Last year we began a comprehensive update of our village hall information sheets, which are a vital resource for local organisations, and will complete the full set by the end of 2026. This is a major undertaking as we need to ensure all the contents are up to date with current legislation and good practice and many require specialist input.

**Funding for Village Halls** – ACRE also continued to manage several schemes funded by Defra designed to enable village halls to access capital funding. The largest of these was the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund. Launched in 2023, the fund was extended for a final year with up to £750K available (as opposed to £1.5m the previous year). ACRE continued to manage and distribute the fund on behalf of Defra. Two hundred and one applications were received, and 60 grants were awarded following a rigorous review process by an independent awards panel. Most of the grants went to projects to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings, ranging from new roofs, windows and insulation to solar panels and batteries.

ACRE also administers The Rural Community Buildings Loan Fund on behalf of Defra. In 2025-26 we offered 12 new loans totalling £254K. There are 26 village halls currently in the process of repaying their loans. ACRE continued to provide support for loan recipients and reported quarterly to Defra on the fund.

**Building community flood resilience** – ACRE was one of six founding members of the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership (RFRP). Launched in 2024, it was established to improve collaboration, deepen understanding of vulnerabilities, and support rural communities and agricultural businesses in building their resilience to present and future flood risks and coastal erosion. The other members are the Environment Agency, National Farmers Union (NFU), Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA), Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and Natural England. ACRE's role is to represent rural communities and to share information and resources with our members.

During 2025-26 we have focused on two areas. We continued to develop the ACRE RFRP Community of Practice for ACRE members working to promote flood resilience in rural communities. In addition to creating a forum for members to learn from each other and share best practice, we identified issues where the RFRP could support rural communities, including the provision of a clear set of good practice guidance, in an area where there are a huge number of publications and reports, and the need for improved coordination and support for local flood action groups. We are also very grateful to the many external speakers who joined us to share their experience, including David Goff from the National Flood Forum, Violaine Drapeau from Communities Prepared, Andrew Maliphant from The Great Collaboration, Jon Vangorph, Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership and Rebecca Lewis from British Red Cross.

Our second key area of activity focused on Parish Councils. In July 2025 we began by launching a survey to assess their experiences of flooding, the steps taken to reduce risk, and the kind of help they need to strengthen resilience. We were immensely grateful to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), who helped us to distribute the survey. The response was fantastic – we had nearly 600 responses over eight weeks – which gave us a rich picture on the ground and where extra support could make a real difference.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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More than three-quarters of respondents reported that their area had experienced flooding at some point, highlighting just how widespread the issue is across rural communities. Nearly half of councils have already identified flood risk as a priority within their local plans, which shows growing awareness and commitment to resilience planning. As a result we have built a closer working relationship with NALC and are taking forward a joint programme of work into the next year.

#### Unlocking

ACRE is committed to ensuring more equitable access to investment, essential services and opportunities for growth in rural areas, particularly for those in greatest need. One of the most urgent gaps is a lack of affordable rural housing.

**Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) Programme** – Funded by Defra, the programme was originally launched in 2023 to build Rural Housing Enabler capacity across England to support the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs. ACRE was appointed by Defra to co-ordinate and manage the programme and it completed its second full year in 2025-26. RHEs are specialists in understanding the opportunities and challenges facing affordable rural housing, and focus on engaging local communities, bringing key stakeholders together, and helping to identify solutions and drive developments forward to completion.

The RHE Programme is delivered through our network of member organisations in 34 counties across England, which delivered activities to meet the specific circumstances in their local areas. The total fund available in 2025-26 was £2.23M of which £1.92M was distributed to the network locally. The remainder funded a programme of training, support and development, plus rigorous quarterly reporting, which was delivered by ACRE. We were delighted to learn in February that the RHE Programme will be funded by Defra for a further three years subject to annual ministerial approval.

In 2024-25 we commissioned an independent evaluation from CCRI, the Countryside and Community Research Institute, into the RHE Programme and its effectiveness. The report concluded that RHEs played “a unique and valuable role in supporting the progression of quality affordable rural housing schemes that benefit residents’ health and wellbeing and support sustainable and resilient rural communities” and that ACRE’s management of the programme delivered clear benefits. The evaluation included Social Return on Investment (SROI) modelling to explore the value of the RHE role in relation to community engagement and building trust between potential registered providers, local authority personnel, landowners, and rural communities, especially in the early phases of initiating an affordable housing scheme. Based on case study evidence, the model indicated an overall Benefit-Investment Ratio (BIR) of £3.30:£1, meaning for every £1 invested over the time period there is an estimated £3.30 generated in social outcome benefits.

In April 2025, we were very pleased to co-host a conference with English Rural about affordable rural housing. It was attended by HRH The Princess Royal, government officials, landowners and planners and included a spotlight on the work of RHEs. We have also invested in dedicated external communications support for the programme, to ensure the urgent need for affordable rural housing and the vital role that RHEs can play in helping to deliver it are more widely understood. We secured coverage in several key housing publications, and individual members have been able to build their communications skills through training and bespoke toolkits in order to promote their work at local level. We have also worked with the RHEs to use new technology to support their work, including a bespoke land identification platform and better access to housing data.

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

**For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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#### **Our four supporting pillars**

To deliver our ambition we need to ensure we are resilient, capable and adaptable. Our strategy identifies four supporting pillars that will provide vital foundations on which to build our strategy. Over the last year we have begun work on building a plan of action for each pillar, including gathering feedback from our members and conducting research, to inform our activities.

#### **Strengthening our financial and organisational resilience**

The ACRE team is essential to delivering our vision and our ambition for the next five years. During the year we appointed four new colleagues to replace those who had retired or moved to the next stage in their careers. We used this as an opportunity to ensure our organisation had the right structures, skills and capacity to deliver our strategy. One of the conclusions of this review was the creation of a new role. Funded from our reserves, the Director of Delivery is focused on overseeing the execution of our programmes within ACRE, in partnership with our members, and supporting the future development and sustainability of the ACRE Network.

We introduced a new planning and performance management process in 2025-26 to enable team members to set their objectives and identify the training and development they need to support their work more clearly. We also left our office accommodation so we could redirect the costs to supporting our charitable work. We will invest more in training and development for our team in the coming year, focusing not just on individuals but also how we can work together more effectively as a unit, particularly given that we are now wholly home based.

A vital step in ensuring we are able to support our members and drive positive change for rural communities in the future is to ensure we are financially resilient. Our strategy commits us to developing new and more diverse income streams and to helping our network to do the same. We greatly value our relationships with all our existing funders, many of whom have supported us for many years, but we also need to look to the future to ensure we are resilient in a highly fluid and unpredictable world.

As a first step, last year we invested in external expertise to undertake an audit of the income generation landscape and the possible opportunities available to us. This formed the basis of a new income generation plan, which sets out the strategic approach we will take, the resources required and the expected returns over the next three years. This is a major endeavour and we will be investing from our reserves in the skills and capacity we need to get started.

#### **Working with our network**

The ACRE Network's 37 members are at the heart of our work and are integral to our strategy. Our members' knowledge and experience on the ground give us a unique insight into what is really going on in rural communities, and we are able to draw on this when we engage with policy makers, advisers and stakeholders. All our activity is designed to support them and their beneficiaries, as well as our own, both directly and indirectly. Our members continue to deliver essential support in rural communities in an increasingly fluid environment which is becoming ever more challenging. They face an immensely difficult financial environment alongside major organisational upheaval in local government and healthcare structures. Their ingenuity, resilience and determination to continue to enable and unlock support for local communities is inspiring.

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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In addition to the work programmes we have already described, we continued to support our members in a wide selection of areas, ranging from policy briefings and analysis to supporting local parliamentary engagement to convening meetings for our members so they could share insights and best practice. We provided information and training sessions on the new local government funding settlement, strategy development and business planning. In November colleagues met at the ACRE Chief Executives' annual conference in Nottinghamshire, on the theme of Making an Impact in a Rapidly Changing World. Speakers including David Skaith, Mayor of York and North Yorkshire, and Jonathan Owen, Chief Executive of NALC.

One of the key issues emerging for our network is the impact of the Government's devolution and local government reorganisation agenda. Last year we began work with NAVCA on a project to help voluntary and local infrastructure organisations work with the emerging unitary and strategic authorities being created as a result of local government reorganisation and devolution. This project is funded by MHCLG and the Lloyds Bank Foundation of England and Wales, and has provided practical tools and guidance, as well as forums where members could meet with other local organisations to discuss developments in their areas. This work continued in 2026/27.

We also began work with a Defra research fellow to evidence how community led approaches can address rural policy challenges. The researcher worked with two of our members, Community Action Northumberland and GRCC (Gloucestershire Rural Community Council) to evaluate the impact of two projects they were delivering in their communities. This was followed by opportunities to share learning and good practice through several events and workshops, which were attended by over 80 ACRE Network colleagues. In addition, ACRE secured £70K of additional income for network members during the year to help deliver different projects to support rural communities.

#### **Raising the profile of rural communities**

Our strategy sets out our plans to increase understanding of rural issues and speak up more boldly in support of rural communities. This will include gathering insights into the lived experience of individuals and building a network of rural campaigners. We will be developing these plans in more detail during 2026/27. We are also keen to celebrate local communities and what they are able to achieve together. One of the best examples of this is Village Halls Week which takes place every year in March.

In 2026 we focused on the theme of connecting communities to health and wellbeing. We were delighted that Ashley Dalton MP was able to launch the week's events in her constituency at Parbold Village Hall in Lancashire. The week focused on the role that community buildings play in providing a place for preventative and community care locally and the potential they have to do even more. We believe they could play an important role in helping the Government to deliver its commitment in the 10 Year Health Plan for England that "care should happen as locally as it can" and be reintegrated into "the social fabric of places".

We also continued to plan for the future of the ACRE archives, which provide a unique social history of rural England. We developed an archives strategy and have been in discussions with the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading University about providing a permanent home for the archives. We hope to take this forward over the next twelve months. We are very grateful to the volunteers who generously provide their time and expertise and help us to drive this work forward and raise the funds needed to support it.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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##### **Building new relationships and alliances**

ACRE places enormous importance on the relationships we have with other organisations and working in partnership is core to delivering our strategy. We continued to work closely with the Defra Rural Affairs Team, both to share the experiences and insights from our network and to contribute to national policy discussions and consultations. We value this relationship and the opportunity it brings for dialogue on a wide range of issues.

We continued to provide the secretariat for, and to be an active member of, the Rural Coalition. The coalition comprises twelve national organisations who subscribe to a vision for a living and working countryside in England. In July we welcomed a new Chair, Mark Pragnell, who replaced Margaret Clark CBE who had held this role since 2016. We also continued to contribute to the National Energy System Operator (NESO) Advisory Forum as representatives of rural communities.

We were very pleased to be invited to join the Steering Group for a new research project into rural philanthropy in the UK being conducted by IVAR (Institute for Voluntary Action Research). Growing the Field: Rural Philanthropy in the UK is focused on understanding how grant-making is currently serving rural communities and what needs to change so we are able to meet future socio-economic needs. Working with partner bodies, it will set out an approach to establish a new field of study and practice on rural philanthropy in the UK. ACRE also engaged with a wide range of other third sector partners over the last year which are too numerous to list here. We would like to thank them all for their generous support and willingness to collaborate with us.

##### **Financial review**

###### **Basis of preparation**

- The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities;
- Incoming resources are recognised once the charity has entitlement to the resources, it is certain the resources will be received, and the monetary value of the incoming resources can be measured with sufficient reliability;
- Resources expended – liabilities are recognised as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category; and
- Grants payable are payments made to third parties in furtherance of the charitable objectives of the charity.

The directors report a net increase in total resources of £30,759 (31 March 2025 a net decrease of £38,813). The closing fund balances at the 31 March 2026 were £605,157.

The statement of financial activities (SOFA) shows that the total incoming resources for the year were £5,049,252 compared with £5,033,650 for the previous year.

During the year ACRE received £4,271,153 restricted income and £778,099 unrestricted income. A list of the restricted funds is included in note 18. All incoming resources for the year have been secured specifically to advance the charity's strategic objectives.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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##### Reserves policy

In September 2025 the Directors reviewed and updated our reserves policy. The updated policy states that ACRE must hold reserves equivalent to six months' of average operating expenditure, which is currently around £200K. The Board reviews the policy annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in the charity's financial position or risk profile. The reserves level is reported to trustees at each Board meeting and is reviewed as part of the annual budget setting process. The Directors confirm that ACRE is in compliance with the agreed reserves policy.

The Directors can also designate other unrestricted funds to ensure that ACRE can continue to operate effectively, meeting its anticipated liabilities and the development needs of the wider ACRE Network as it continues to focus on enhancing outcomes for end beneficiaries.

|                                            |          |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|
| At 31 March 2026, the total reserves were: | £605,157 |
| Restricted funds:                          | Nil      |
| Designated funds:                          | £5,576   |
| General funds:                             | £599,581 |

##### Principal funding sources

ACRE's principal funding for 2024-26 came from a number of sources:

- 'A grant in aid' agreement from Defra, over 95% of which was directly allocated to local organisations to deliver work at a county level;
- Membership fees paid by the ACRE members. This funding was used to support ACRE's key themes of activity;
- Rural Housing Enabler Programme funded by Defra, over £2.2M available during 2025-26; and
- Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund Programme funded by Defra, £0.75m allocated to support village halls.

##### Funds held as custodians

###### Defra investment in the ACRE Network

A further year of investment to enable the ACRE Network to deliver support to rural communities within the key Defra priority themes was secured. The investment in support of rural communities through ACRE members amounted to £1,633,000 during the year. ACRE, as the national umbrella body of The ACRE Network, was the accountable body for these funds.

##### ANPAC

ACRE has held funds on behalf of the National Parks Residents Association (ANPAC) for use only as designated by them. The Association did not draw down from this fund during 2025-26.

##### Rural Communities Buildings Loan Fund

ACRE administers the Rural Communities Buildings Loan Fund on behalf of Defra. This fund previously known as the Village Hall Loan Fund has been in existence since the 1930s.

##### Rural Coalition

ACRE undertakes the secretariat for the Rural Coalition. The funds from the Rural Coalition are carried forward to activity planned for 2026-27.

##### Platinum Jubilee Grant Fund

ACRE administers the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Grant Fund on behalf of Defra.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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#### Plans for future periods

##### Key objectives for 2026-27

The coming year will be the second year for our strategy *Rural Ambition: enabling communities to thrive*. Last year was a foundational year, when we focused on gathering feedback and conducting research to help us develop our plans for action. In year two we will start to focus on delivering new initiatives to help us achieve the strategic shifts we wish to make as well as ensuring that our core work continues. Our overarching aims for 2026-27 are:

- To continue to deliver and develop our existing programmes e.g. Defra Local Action Grant, RHE Programme, Village Halls Service, Rural Flood Resilience Partnership (RFRP);
- To reinvigorate the way we report on ACRE and the ACRE Network's impact and use this to raise our profile, build new partnerships and secure new income;
- To find new ways to enable, support and connect the ACRE Network and work with our members to co-design and begin to pilot new projects to address unmet rural needs; and
- To implement plans so we can reinforce two key supporting pillars: raising the profile of rural communities, and diversifying and growing our income and helping our members to do the same.

A key theme of the year will be to test and learn new activities and ways of working. We want to try new things, evaluate their impact for our members and our beneficiaries, and to use the findings to inform our plans for the third year of our strategy period.

#### ACRE's Governance and Development

ACRE's strategy provides a clear direction and framework for our activity over the next five year period. It is designed to ensure that ACRE is able to maximise its impact during what is likely to be a continued period of rapid and often unpredictable external change, but also where there is a clear opportunity to promote and unleash the potential of rural communities. We will also build our own resources and increase our resilience so that we can support our members more effectively to do the same.

We were delighted that Margaret Clark CBE agreed to continue as ACRE's President. Her immense knowledge of rural affairs, and her willingness to provide her advice and support, is hugely valued and greatly appreciated. We have seen changes to our trustee board. Charles Coats, Sue Dovey and Sarah Morland stood down from the Board at the AGM in November 2025 after many combined years of dedicated service. We are very grateful to them. We were delighted to welcome Nora Corkery, Chief Executive of Devon Communities Together and Rita Lawson, Chief Executive of Tees Valley Rural Action to the Board at our AGM in 2025 to the board as member trustees.

ACRE conducted a governance review in 2023-24 and we continued to implement the recommendations for action. We strengthened our financial governance in 2024/25 by appointing a finance sub-committee of the Board which is now well established. It is currently chaired by the ACRE chair and we continue to seek a Treasurer. We were not able to recruit one from our membership last year and so will recruit externally during 2026/27. We created a new governance sub-committee in January to focus on several issues designed to strengthen our wider governance. It began a review of our Memorandum and Articles of Association and an updated version will be presented for approval by our members before our AGM in November 2026.

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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The governance sub-committee also reviewed and established clear, transparent processes for introducing new members to the ACRE Network. We were, in common with all our members, immensely saddened when Warwickshire Rural Community Council closed during 2025-26 after over eight decades of dedicated service to the county. ACRE is committed to ensuring that rural communities continue to be supported in Warwickshire. Our first priority was therefore to put interim arrangements in place to deliver the RHE Programme and village halls service in the county. We then began work on putting permanent measures in place, following the new processes agreed by the Board, and expect to make an announcement in late 2026.

The trustees would like to end their report with two items of thanks. Firstly, to our funders for their continued support for our work with rural communities across England, without which this vital activity could not continue. Secondly, to the ACRE team members, for their ongoing dedication and hard work during another year of great change, and without which ACRE would not be able to deliver its objectives for its beneficiaries or its members. Thank you to them all.

### **Structure, governance and management**

#### **Organisational structure**

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is a company limited by guarantee (number 3336101) with a Board of Directors elected at general meetings by its 38 members, and in accordance with the Articles of Association adopted on 18 June 2014 and amended on 29 November 2016 and 27 November 2018.

#### **Governance**

The board of directors is responsible for the governance and the management of ACRE. The ACRE board consists of not less than six trustees but (unless otherwise determined by ordinary resolution) shall not be subject to any maximum. The chair is elected at the AGM by the members. All directors have an induction into the organisation. In line with ACRE's governing documents the board is refreshed on a regular and systematic basis with members serving a maximum of seven years without a break of at least one year.

During the year all directors gave of their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity and any instances where directors have received benefit from the charity for specific services, as permitted under clauses 4 (2) and 4 (3), are set out in notes 6 and 22 to the accounts.

#### **Management**

The chief executive retains responsibility for operational decisions and for delivering the organisation's strategic objectives and operational plan. The staffing structure has focused on retaining capacity to support the operational and leadership requirements of the organisation as we move from one strategy period to the next. Some changes have been made to roles and responsibilities within the team over the last twelve months to ensure we are ready to deliver our new strategy. As part of this evolution, we have replaced some external contractors with permanent employees to ensure stability and improve the return on our investment.

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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##### **Risk management**

The directors are committed to a regular review of the major strategic, business and operational risks which ACRE faces, with a view to ensuring that appropriate systems and procedures are in place to minimise these risks. In September the ACRE Board undertook a thorough review of the risk register following the publication of our new strategy. It will now be reviewed every six months with quarterly updates on key priorities for action. A key area of focus during the year has been improving our cyber security in line with good practice, and putting additional mitigations in place to prepare for potential periods of prolonged staff absence.

Our new strategy is also designed to address some of the risk we face directly, including the need to put a plan of action in place to ensure our long-term financial resilience. The confirmation of ongoing grant funding from Defra and other funders, combined with the current healthy level of unrestricted reserves, provides a reasonable level of confidence and reassurance that any challenges will have a manageable impact on the organisation's performance and longer-term financial position while we put our new income generation approach in place.

##### **Register of interests**

All Board members complete an annual declaration of interests in compliance with the Conflict of Interest Policy. This is updated as required during the year. Board members are required to declare any related interest in decisions at the start of all Board meetings, or thereafter if relevant topics arise.

##### **Related parties and connected organisations**

ACRE receives membership subscriptions from its members. In addition, ACRE works with members on joint initiatives. During 2025-26 a total of £1,633,000 was committed to members through the Defra/ACRE Investment Programme.

Whilst some of the directors elected are also directors or chief executives of ACRE members, within an ACRE context they have no influence over business transactions between members and ACRE.

##### **Remuneration Policy**

ACRE recognises that the delivery of its mission and strategic priorities is largely dependent upon the skills, knowledge and experience of its staff. It is therefore committed to ensuring that the staff are provided with appropriate remuneration to encourage and enhance performance and, in a fair and responsible manner, are rewarded for their contributions to the success of the charity. The salaries of ACRE staff are reviewed on an annual basis in line with our policy. Directors consider this information alongside the affordability for ACRE to inform and adjust salaries and remuneration accordingly.

Where appropriate, ACRE employs freelance contractors to undertake specific activities for the organisation. These include impact evaluation, programme development, communications and income generation and governance support. Directors ensure that whilst the associated remuneration is sufficient to attract individuals with the skills, experience and competencies required, rewards are also benchmarked against sector averages for similar activity and levels of responsibility.

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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##### **Grant-making policy**

ACRE administers grants on behalf of other charitable trusts and government organisations that further the charity's objectives. The grant-making processes are agreed with the funders from the outset. Grants are paid on respective merits and follow transparent and rational processes. ACRE's unrestricted funds are not used for grant-making purposes, unless by resolution by the directors. Arrangements are in place to segregate grant-making decisions ensuring conflicts of interests are avoided in the governance of ACRE.

##### **Fundraising policy**

ACRE does not engage in any direct fundraising from members of the public and does not employ fundraisers. However, the directors are aware of the fundraising requirements and the code of fundraising practice and ensure that the charity is compliant with the code in all its fundraising activities.

##### **ACRE members at 31 March 2026**

|                                                     |                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Action with Communities in Cumbria                  | Cornwall Rural Community Charity                   |
| Action Hampshire                                    | Devon Communities Together                         |
| Action in rural Sussex                              | Dorset Community Action                            |
| Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity              | Durham Community Action                            |
| Cambridgeshire ACRE                                 | GRCC Community Action in Gloucestershire           |
| Cheshire Community Action                           | Humber & Wolds Rural Action Northamptonshire       |
| Community Action Isle of Wight                      | ACRE                                               |
| Community Action Norfolk                            | Kent ACRE                                          |
| Community Action Northumberland                     | Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire             |
| Community Action Suffolk                            | Rural Action Derbyshire                            |
| Community Council for Somerset                      | Rural Community Council of Essex                   |
| Community Development Action Hertfordshire          | Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland) |
| Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire | Community Resource (Shropshire)                    |
| Community First Oxfordshire                         | Support Staffordshire                              |
| Community First, Wiltshire and Swindon              | Surrey Community Action                            |
| Community First Yorkshire                           | Tees Valley Rural Action                           |
| Community Futures, Lancashire                       | West of England Rural Network                      |
| Community Impact Bucks                              | YMCA Lincolnshire (incorporating Community Lincs)  |
| Connecting Communities in Berkshire                 |                                                    |

##### **Statement of responsibilities of the trustees**

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

#### The Directors

Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

| Number of Board meetings attended during the year |                                  |     |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| James Blake                                       | Chair – Elected November 2022    | 5/5 |
| Charles Coats                                     | Retired November 2025            | 2/3 |
| Sally Jane Colthup                                | Joined February 2024             |     |
|                                                   | Elected Vice Chair November 2025 | 4/5 |
| Caroline Cotterell CBE                            | Joined November 2024             | 5/5 |
| Sharon Davis                                      | Joined November 2024             | 3/5 |
| Helen Susan Dovey                                 | Retired November 2025            | 2/3 |
| Andrea Graham                                     | Joined November 2024             | 5/5 |
| Garry Jones                                       | Joined November 2023             | 4/5 |
| Sarah Morland                                     | Retired November 2025            | 3/3 |
| Gavin Parker                                      | Joined February 2023             |     |
|                                                   | Elected Vice Chair November 2023 | 4/5 |
| Francis James Webster                             | Joined November 2018             | 5/5 |
| Nora Corkery                                      | Joined November 2025             | 2/2 |
| Rita Lawson                                       | Joined November 2025             | 2/2 |

## **Action with Communities in Rural England**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2026**

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Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2026 was 37 (2025: 38). The Directors have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

#### **Auditors**

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as auditors to the charitable company during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 9 September 2026 and signed on their behalf by



James Blake - Chair

## **Independent auditors' report**

### **To the members of**

#### **Action with Communities in Rural England**

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##### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Action with Communities in Rural England (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2026 which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and the related notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

##### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 6 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

##### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

##### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

## **Independent auditors' report**

### **To the members of**

#### **Action with Communities in Rural England**

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In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

#### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

#### **Responsibilities of the trustees**

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out in the trustees' report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## **Independent auditors' report**

### **To the members of**

#### **Action with Communities in Rural England**

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##### **Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The procedures we carried out and the extent to which they are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, are detailed below:

(1) We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, and assessed the risk of non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Throughout the audit, we remained alert to possible indications of non-compliance.

(2) We reviewed the charity's policies and procedures in relation to:

- Identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations, and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- Detecting and responding to the risk of fraud, and whether they were aware of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
- Designing and implementing internal controls to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud.

(3) We inspected the minutes of trustee meetings.

(4) We enquired about any non-routine communication with regulators and reviewed any reports made to them.

(5) We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and assessed their compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

(6) We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected transactions or balances that may indicate a risk of material fraud or error.

(7) We assessed the risk of fraud through management override of controls and carried out procedures to address this risk. Our procedures included:

- Testing the appropriateness of journal entries;
- Assessing judgements and accounting estimates for potential bias;
- Reviewing related party transactions; and
- Testing transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. Irregularities that arise due to fraud can be even harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

## **Independent auditors' report**

### **To the members of**

#### **Action with Communities in Rural England**

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A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

#### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charity's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*William Guy Blake*

Date: 9 September 2026

**William Guy Blake ACA**  
**(Senior Statutory Auditor)**

For and on behalf of:

**GODFREY WILSON LIMITED**

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

2nd Floor – South

One Castle Park

Tower Hill

Bristol

BS2 0JA

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2026

|                                    | Note | Restricted<br>£  | Unrestricted<br>£     | 2026<br>Total<br>£           | 2025<br>Total<br>£    |
|------------------------------------|------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Income from:</b>                |      |                  |                       |                              |                       |
| Donations and legacies             |      | -                | 49                    | <b>49</b>                    | 203                   |
| Charitable activities              | 3    | 4,271,153        | 769,229               | <b>5,040,382</b>             | 5,021,987             |
| Investments                        |      | -                | 8,821                 | <b>8,821</b>                 | 11,460                |
| <b>Total income</b>                |      | <u>4,271,153</u> | <u>778,099</u>        | <u><b>5,049,252</b></u>      | <u>5,033,650</u>      |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>             |      |                  |                       |                              |                       |
| Raising funds                      |      | -                | 9,359                 | <b>9,359</b>                 | 9,361                 |
| Charitable activities              |      | <u>4,310,264</u> | <u>698,870</u>        | <u><b>5,009,134</b></u>      | <u>5,063,102</u>      |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>           | 5    | <u>4,310,264</u> | <u>708,229</u>        | <u><b>5,018,493</b></u>      | <u>5,072,463</u>      |
| <b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>  |      | (39,111)         | 69,870                | <b>30,759</b>                | (38,813)              |
| Transfers between funds            |      | <u>1,385</u>     | <u>(1,385)</u>        | <u>-</u>                     | <u>-</u>              |
| <b>Net movement in funds</b>       | 6    | (37,726)         | 68,485                | <b>30,759</b>                | (38,813)              |
| <b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>    |      |                  |                       |                              |                       |
| Total funds brought forward        |      | <u>37,726</u>    | <u>536,672</u>        | <u><b>574,398</b></u>        | <u>613,211</u>        |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b> |      | <u><u>-</u></u>  | <u><u>605,157</u></u> | <u><u><b>605,157</b></u></u> | <u><u>574,398</u></u> |

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 18 to the accounts.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2026

|                                              | Note | £                         | 2026<br>£                    | 2025<br>£             |
|----------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Fixed assets</b>                          |      |                           |                              |                       |
| Tangible assets                              | 9    |                           | <b>3,430</b>                 | 231                   |
| Mixed motive investments                     | 10   |                           | <u>-</u>                     | <u>878</u>            |
|                                              |      |                           | <b>3,430</b>                 | 1,109                 |
| <b>Current assets</b>                        |      |                           |                              |                       |
| Debtors                                      | 11   | <b>946,785</b>            |                              | 319,268               |
| Cash at bank and in hand                     |      | <b><u>1,022,281</u></b>   |                              | <u>1,112,047</u>      |
|                                              |      | <b>1,969,066</b>          |                              | 1,431,315             |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                           |      |                           |                              |                       |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year | 12   | <b><u>(1,367,339)</u></b> |                              | <u>(858,026)</u>      |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                    |      |                           | <b><u>601,727</u></b>        | <u>573,289</u>        |
| <b>Total net assets</b>                      | 17   |                           | <b><u><u>605,157</u></u></b> | <u><u>574,398</u></u> |
| <b>Funds</b>                                 | 18   |                           |                              |                       |
| Restricted funds                             |      |                           | -                            | 37,726                |
| Unrestricted funds:                          |      |                           |                              |                       |
| <i>Designated funds</i>                      |      |                           | <b>5,576</b>                 | 24,878                |
| <i>General funds</i>                         |      |                           | <b><u>599,581</u></b>        | <u>511,794</u>        |
| <b>Total charity funds</b>                   |      |                           | <b><u><u>605,157</u></u></b> | <u><u>574,398</u></u> |

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the trustees on 9 September 2026 and signed on their behalf by



James Blake - Chair

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2026

|                                                          | 2026<br>£        | 2025<br>£        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Cash used in operating activities:</b>                |                  |                  |
| Net movement in funds                                    | 30,759           | (38,813)         |
| Adjustments for:                                         |                  |                  |
| Depreciation charges                                     | 961              | 462              |
| Impairment of investments                                | -                | 2,122            |
| Proceeds from disposal of mixed motive asset             | 872              | -                |
| Loss on disposal of mixed motive asset                   | 6                | -                |
| Dividends, interest and rents from investments           | (8,821)          | (11,460)         |
| (Increase) / decrease in debtors                         | (627,517)        | 112,565          |
| Increase / (decrease) in creditors                       | 509,313          | (93,484)         |
| <b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>             | <b>(94,427)</b>  | <b>(28,608)</b>  |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>             |                  |                  |
| Dividends, interest and rents from investments           | 8,821            | 11,460           |
| Purchase of fixed assets                                 | (4,160)          | -                |
| <b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>         | <b>4,661</b>     | <b>11,460</b>    |
| <b>Decrease in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b> | <b>(89,766)</b>  | <b>(17,148)</b>  |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year   | 1,112,047        | 1,129,195        |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>  | <b>1,022,281</b> | <b>1,112,047</b> |

An analysis of changes in net debt is shown in note 20.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

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#### 1. Accounting policies

##### a) General information and basis of preparation

Action with Communities in Rural England is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is Godfrey Wilson Limited, 2nd Floor – South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Action with Communities in Rural England meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

##### b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

##### c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of provision of services is deferred until criteria for income recognition are met.

##### d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item, is probable and the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

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#### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

##### e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity: this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

##### f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

##### g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

##### h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated based on an estimate of staff time attributable to each activity as follows:

|                       | 2026  | 2025  |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Raising funds         | 2.1%  | 1.7%  |
| Charitable activities | 89.4% | 88.1% |
| Governance costs      | 8.5%  | 10.2% |

##### i) Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Fixtures and fittings | 3 years straight line |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £500.

##### j) Mixed motive investments

Mixed motive investments represent the charitable company's partner interest in Cirican LLP, which the trustees consider to have the dual objective of both financial return and furtherance of charitable objects. The investment is carried at fair value through the income and expenditure account. The LLP is an unquoted investment vehicle and a degree of judgement is required in assessing the fair value. At initial recognition the fair value is deemed to be the transaction amount. A review for impairment is carried out annually.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

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#### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

##### k) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

##### l) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

##### m) Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

##### n) Conduit funding

Conduit funds are monies received for third parties and do not belong to the charity. The incoming funds and outgoing payments are excluded from the Statement of Financial Activities. Any conduit funds in hand at the year end are shown as creditors in the accounts.

##### o) Financial instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

##### p) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SoFA.

##### q) Operating leases

Rental charges are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term.

##### r) Grants payable

Grants which have been authorised and paid are included as expenditure in the SoFA. Grants which have been authorised but not yet paid are accrued in the balance sheet and are included within creditors.

##### s) Accounting estimates and key judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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#### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

##### s) Accounting estimates and key judgements (continued)

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are described below:

##### Mixed motive investments

As described in note 1(j) to the financial statements, mixed motive investments are carried at their fair value. However, the current investment is an unquoted investment vehicle and a degree of judgement is required in assessing its fair value.

#### 2. Prior period comparatives: statement of financial activities

|                                                              | Restricted       | Unrestricted   | 2025<br>Total    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
|                                                              | £                | £              | £                |
| <b>Income from:</b>                                          |                  |                |                  |
| Donations and legacies                                       | -                | 203            | 203              |
| Charitable activities                                        | 4,364,759        | 657,228        | 5,021,987        |
| Investments                                                  | -                | 11,460         | 11,460           |
| <b>Total income</b>                                          | <u>4,364,759</u> | <u>668,891</u> | <u>5,033,650</u> |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>                                       |                  |                |                  |
| Raising funds                                                | -                | 9,361          | 9,361            |
| Charitable activities                                        | <u>4,455,211</u> | <u>607,891</u> | <u>5,063,102</u> |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                     | <u>4,455,211</u> | <u>617,252</u> | <u>5,072,463</u> |
| <b>Net income / (expenditure) and net movements in funds</b> | <u>(90,452)</u>  | <u>51,639</u>  | <u>(38,813)</u>  |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 3. Income from charitable activities

|                                                | Restricted<br>£  | Unrestricted<br>£ | 2026<br>Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Defra - Rural Housing Enabler fund             | 1,918,614        | 222,881           | <b>2,141,495</b>   |
| Defra - ACRE network agreement                 | 1,631,691        | 80,309            | <b>1,712,000</b>   |
| Defra - Platinum Jubilee Village Hall fund     | 720,848          | 67,428            | <b>788,276</b>     |
| Membership                                     | -                | 191,967           | <b>191,967</b>     |
| Defra - Research Project                       | -                | 85,000            | <b>85,000</b>      |
| Environment Agency                             | -                | 52,800            | <b>52,800</b>      |
| Rural communities buildings loan fund          | -                | 20,000            | <b>20,000</b>      |
| Conferences                                    | -                | 14,893            | <b>14,893</b>      |
| Norris & Fisher                                | -                | 11,500            | <b>11,500</b>      |
| Utility Aid                                    | -                | 10,000            | <b>10,000</b>      |
| Rural Coalition                                | -                | 5,000             | <b>5,000</b>       |
| NAVCA - LGR Project                            | -                | 4,176             | <b>4,176</b>       |
| Hallmaster                                     | -                | 2,000             | <b>2,000</b>       |
| Other                                          | -                | 1,275             | <b>1,275</b>       |
| <b>Total income from charitable activities</b> | <b>4,271,153</b> | <b>769,229</b>    | <b>5,040,382</b>   |

#### Prior period comparative

|                                                | Restricted<br>£  | Unrestricted<br>£ | 2025<br>Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Defra - ACRE network agreement                 | 1,633,000        | 79,000            | 1,712,000          |
| Defra - Platinum Jubilee Village Hall fund     | 1,130,000        | 88,312            | 1,218,312          |
| Defra - Rural Housing Enabler fund             | 1,601,759        | 195,683           | 1,797,442          |
| Membership                                     | -                | 193,179           | 193,179            |
| Environment Agency                             | -                | 39,600            | 39,600             |
| Rural communities buildings loan fund          | -                | 20,000            | 20,000             |
| Utility Aid                                    | -                | 17,000            | 17,000             |
| Conferences                                    | -                | 13,347            | 13,347             |
| Action with Communities in Cumbria             | -                | 5,000             | 5,000              |
| Norris & Fisher                                | -                | 5,000             | 5,000              |
| Rural Coalition                                | -                | 951               | 951                |
| Other                                          | -                | 156               | 156                |
| <b>Total income from charitable activities</b> | <b>4,364,759</b> | <b>657,228</b>    | <b>5,021,987</b>   |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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#### 4. Government grants

The charitable company received government grants during the year, defined as funding from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), to fund charitable activities. The total value of these grants is shown below. There were no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in the current or prior year.

|                                            | 2026<br>£        | 2025<br>£        |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Defra - ACRE network agreement             | 1,712,000        | 1,712,000        |
| Defra - Platinum Jubilee Village Hall fund | 788,276          | 1,218,312        |
| Defra - Rural Housing Enabler fund         | 2,141,495        | 1,797,442        |
| Defra - Research Project                   | 85,000           | -                |
|                                            | <u>4,726,771</u> | <u>4,727,754</u> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 5. Total expenditure

|                                                | Raising funds<br>£ | Charitable<br>activities<br>£ | Governance<br>costs<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ | 2026 Total<br>£  |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Staff costs (note 7)                           |                    |                               |                          |                    |                  |
| Direct costs                                   | 6,146              | 267,794                       | 25,596                   | 77,153             | 376,689          |
| DEFRA grant to ACRE network (note 16)          | 117                | 241,886                       | 19,807                   | 29,396             | 291,206          |
| Platinum Jubilee Village Hall grants (note 16) | -                  | 1,631,691                     | -                        | -                  | 1,631,691        |
| Rural housing enabler grants (note 16)         | -                  | 749,923                       | -                        | -                  | 749,923          |
| Overheads                                      | -                  | 1,921,431                     | -                        | -                  | 1,921,431        |
| Loss on investments                            | 428                | 23,360                        | 1,655                    | 22,104             | 47,547           |
|                                                | -                  | -                             | -                        | 6                  | 6                |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                               | 6,691              | 4,836,085                     | 47,058                   | 128,659            | 5,018,493        |
| Allocation of support costs                    | 2,640              | 115,019                       | 11,000                   | (128,659)          | -                |
| Allocation of governance costs                 | 28                 | 58,030                        | (58,058)                 | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                       | <b>9,359</b>       | <b>5,009,134</b>              | <b>-</b>                 | <b>-</b>           | <b>5,018,493</b> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 5. Total expenditure

##### Prior period comparative

|                                                | Raising funds<br>£ | Charitable<br>activities<br>£ | Governance<br>costs<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ | 2025 Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Staff costs (note 7)                           | 5,045              | 258,839                       | 29,952                   | 75,729             | 369,565         |
| Direct costs                                   | -                  | 129,698                       | 33,151                   | 57,280             | 220,129         |
| DEFRA grant to ACRE network (note 16)          | -                  | 1,633,000                     | -                        | -                  | 1,633,000       |
| Platinum Jubilee Village Hall grants (note 16) | -                  | 1,107,745                     | -                        | -                  | 1,107,745       |
| Rural housing enabler grants (note 16)         | -                  | 1,711,966                     | -                        | -                  | 1,711,966       |
| Overheads                                      | 289                | 15,231                        | 1,123                    | 13,415             | 30,058          |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                               | 5,334              | 4,856,479                     | 64,226                   | 146,424            | 5,072,463       |
| Allocation of support costs                    | 2,514              | 128,985                       | 14,925                   | (146,424)          | -               |
| Allocation of governance costs                 | 1,513              | 77,638                        | (79,151)                 | -                  | -               |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                       | 9,361              | 5,063,102                     | -                        | -                  | 5,072,463       |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

##### 6. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

|                                         | 2026<br>£ | 2025<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Depreciation                            | 961       | 462       |
| Operating lease payments:               |           |           |
| ▪ Property                              | 9,617     | 14,246    |
| ▪ Other                                 | 627       | 1,215     |
| Trustees' remuneration                  | Nil       | Nil       |
| Trustees' expenses                      | 1,391     | 3,159     |
| Auditors' remuneration (excluding VAT): |           |           |
| ▪ Statutory audit                       | 8,500     | 8,250     |
| ▪ Prior period under accrual            | -         | 1,800     |
| ▪ Other services                        | 9,859     | -         |

In common with other charities of our size and nature we use our auditors to assist with the preparation of the financial statements. Our auditors also provided bookkeeping and registered office services during the year.

Trustees' expenses represents the payment or reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs totalling £1,391 (2025: £3,159) incurred by 8 (2025: 11) trustees relating to attendance at meetings of the trustees.

##### 7. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

|                       | 2026<br>£      | 2025<br>£      |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Salaries and wages    | 303,317        | 257,320        |
| Social security costs | 29,207         | 8,715          |
| Pension costs         | 22,574         | 16,969         |
| Freelance staff       | 21,591         | 86,561         |
|                       | <b>376,689</b> | <b>369,565</b> |

During the year there was a shift from reliance on freelance staff to employed staff as agreed by the board and as part of our plans to deliver our new strategy.

In the prior period, termination and redundancy payments totalling £17,969 were included within salaries and wages costs. No such payments were made in the current year.

1 employee earned between £70,000 - £80,000 during the year (2025: one employee earned between £60,000 - £70,000).

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

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##### 7. Staff costs and numbers (continued)

The key management personnel of the charitable company comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive, Finance Manager, Director of Delivery and Head of Policy and Public Affairs (2025: Trustees, Chief Executive, Finance Manager and Executive Director).

Total employee benefits including pension contributions and freelance staff costs paid to key management personnel during the year totalled £193,019 (2025: £121,023).

|                     | <b>2026<br/>No.</b> | <b>2025<br/>No.</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Average head count: | <b><u>7.8</u></b>   | <b><u>5.8</u></b>   |

##### 8. Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

##### 9. Tangible fixed assets

|                                            | <b>Computer<br/>equipment<br/>£</b> |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Cost</b>                                |                                     |
| At 1 April 2025                            | <b>6,220</b>                        |
| Additions                                  | <b><u>4,160</u></b>                 |
| At 31 March 2026                           | <b><u>10,380</u></b>                |
| <b>Depreciation</b>                        |                                     |
| At 1 April 2025                            | <b>5,989</b>                        |
| Charge for the year                        | <b><u>961</u></b>                   |
| At 31 March 2026                           | <b><u>6,950</u></b>                 |
| <b>Net book value<br/>At 31 March 2026</b> | <b><u><u>3,430</u></u></b>          |
| At 31 March 2025                           | <b><u><u>231</u></u></b>            |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

##### 10. Mixed motive investments

|                           | 2026<br>£ | 2025<br>£  |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Investment in Cirican LLP |           |            |
| At 1 April                | 878       | 3,000      |
| Impairment                | -         | (2,122)    |
| Proceeds from investment  | (872)     | -          |
| Loss on disposal          | (6)       | -          |
|                           | <u>-</u>  | <u>-</u>   |
| At 31 March               | <u>-</u>  | <u>878</u> |

During 2020, ACRE made an investment of £3,000 into Cirican LLP. The objective of Cirican was to enable ACRE and those members who are involved in Cirican to tender for larger national research contracts that play to the members' skills and experience, for both financial return and furtherance of charitable purposes. Cirican LLP was closed in the year, and remaining funds were returned to investors.

##### 11. Debtors

|                                                                | 2026<br>£      | 2025<br>£      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Trade debtors                                                  | 575,648        | 67,624         |
| Loans to rural community buildings under loan scheme (note 14) | 350,711        | 246,261        |
| Prepayments                                                    | 7,857          | 2,231          |
| VAT debtor                                                     | 10,463         | 2,152          |
| Other debtors                                                  | 2,106          | 1,000          |
|                                                                | <u>946,785</u> | <u>319,268</u> |

Amounts due after more than one year included in:

|                                                      |                |                |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Loans to rural community buildings under loan scheme | <u>304,850</u> | <u>192,974</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|

##### 12. Creditors: amounts due within 1 year

|                                               | 2026<br>£        | 2025<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Rural community buildings loan fund (note 14) | 700,000          | 700,000        |
| Trade creditors                               | 44,608           | 23,166         |
| Taxation and social security                  | 5,001            | 5,851          |
| Other creditors                               | 28,970           | 21,690         |
| Accruals                                      | 45,118           | 19,986         |
| Conduit funding (note 19)                     | 5,740            | 5,740          |
| Deferred income (note 15)                     | 33,775           | 23,637         |
| Grant commitments (note 13)                   | 504,127          | 57,956         |
|                                               | <u>1,367,339</u> | <u>858,026</u> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 13. Grant commitments

|                                           | 2026<br>£          | 2025<br>£          |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Grant commitments at 1 April              | 57,956             | 167,137            |
| Grant commitments made (note 16)          | 4,303,045          | 4,452,711          |
| Grants disbursed                          | <u>(3,856,874)</u> | <u>(4,561,892)</u> |
| Grant commitments outstanding at 31 March | <u>504,127</u>     | <u>57,956</u>      |

#### 14. Rural community buildings loan fund

Rural community building loan fund administered by ACRE on behalf of DEFRA:

|                                                                      | 2026<br>£        | 2025<br>£        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Funds advanced by DEFRA at 1 April 2025 (note 12)                    | <u>700,000</u>   | <u>700,000</u>   |
| Loans to rural community buildings:                                  |                  |                  |
| Outstanding at 1 April                                               | 246,261          | 294,751          |
| Loaned during the year                                               | 254,313          | 100,000          |
| Repaid during the year                                               | <u>(149,863)</u> | <u>(148,490)</u> |
| Outstanding loans at 31 March (note 11)                              | <u>350,711</u>   | <u>246,261</u>   |
| Bank deposit on hand at 31 March 2026 less interest payable to DEFRA | <u>349,289</u>   | <u>453,739</u>   |

#### 15. Deferred income

|                          | 2026<br>£       | 2025<br>£       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| At 1 April 2025          | 23,637          | 12,192          |
| Deferred during the year | 33,775          | 23,637          |
| Released during the year | <u>(23,637)</u> | <u>(12,192)</u> |
| At 31 March 2026         | <u>33,775</u>   | <u>23,637</u>   |

Deferred income in the current period relates to income relating to the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership and the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund received in advance. Deferred income in the prior period related to Village Hall Advisors training event and Corporate Sponsorship income received in advance.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 16. Grants payable

During the year, ACRE made the following grants to institutions:

|                                                     | 2026<br>£        | 2025<br>£        |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>DEFRA grants to ACRE network</b>                 |                  |                  |
| Action Hampshire                                    | 44,675           | 44,675           |
| Action in Rural Sussex                              | 47,395           | 47,395           |
| Action with Communities in Cumbria                  | 49,265           | 49,265           |
| Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity              | 35,840           | 35,840           |
| Cambridgeshire ACRE                                 | 44,180           | 44,180           |
| Cheshire Community Action                           | 39,500           | 39,500           |
| Connecting Communities in Berkshire                 | 34,840           | 34,840           |
| Community Action Isle of Wight                      | 33,840           | 33,840           |
| Community Action Norfolk                            | 50,995           | 50,995           |
| Community Action Northumberland                     | 42,405           | 42,405           |
| Community Action Suffolk                            | 45,310           | 45,310           |
| Community Council for Somerset                      | 44,060           | 44,060           |
| Community Development Action Hertfordshire          | 38,065           | 38,065           |
| Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire | 43,930           | 43,930           |
| Community First Oxfordshire                         | 39,640           | 39,640           |
| Community First, Wiltshire and Swindon              | 41,095           | 41,095           |
| Community First Yorkshire                           | 69,720           | 69,720           |
| Community Futures, Lancashire                       | 44,240           | 44,240           |
| Community Impact Bucks                              | 39,000           | 39,000           |
| Lincolnshire YMCA Ltd (Community Lincs)             | 49,030           | 49,030           |
| Cornwall Rural Community Charity                    | 45,670           | 45,670           |
| Devon Communities Together                          | 53,145           | 53,145           |
| Dorset Community Action                             | 41,255           | 41,255           |
| Durham Community Action                             | 42,585           | 42,585           |
| GRCC Community Action in Gloucestershire            | 39,220           | 39,220           |
| Humber & Wolds Rural Action                         | 41,965           | 41,965           |
| Kent ACRE                                           | 12,383           | 12,383           |
| Northamptonshire ACRE                               | 40,280           | 40,280           |
| Rural Action Derbyshire                             | 44,200           | 44,200           |
| Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire              | 40,580           | 40,580           |
| Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland)  | 49,300           | 41,200           |
| Rural Community Council of Essex                    | 46,875           | 46,875           |
| Community Resource (Shropshire)                     | 40,135           | 40,135           |
| Support Staffordshire                               | 42,405           | 42,405           |
| Surrey Community Action                             | 38,735           | 38,735           |
| Tees Valley Rural Action                            | 34,235           | 34,235           |
| WRCC (Warwickshire Rural Community Council)         | 28,226           | 37,635           |
| West of England Rural Network                       | 36,325           | 36,325           |
| Kent ACRE                                           | 37,148           | 37,148           |
|                                                     | <b>1,631,691</b> | <b>1,633,000</b> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 16. Grants payable (continued)

|                                             | 2026<br>£      | 2025<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Grants</b> |                |           |
| Arborfield Village Hall                     | 10,805         | -         |
| Austwick Parish Hall                        | 2,141          | -         |
| Bardsea Malt Kiln Village Hall              | 20,083         | -         |
| Beaumont Parish Hall                        | 59,813         | -         |
| Beckley Village Hall                        | 2,766          | -         |
| Belchamp St. Paul                           | 13,971         | -         |
| Bradfield Village Hall                      | 41,720         | -         |
| Brayford Village Hall                       | 15,000         | -         |
| Bucklesham Village Hall                     | 2,000          | -         |
| Chaffcombe Village Hall                     | 2,000          | -         |
| Chapmanslade Village Hall                   | 8,000          | -         |
| Charltons Memorial Community Trust          | 9,155          | -         |
| Churchill & Sarsden Village Hall            | 16,500         | -         |
| Claverham Village Hall                      | 4,435          | -         |
| Commonmoor Community Fund Ltd               | 2,000          | -         |
| Cowden Village Hall                         | 17,187         | -         |
| East Boldre Village Hall                    | 68,300         | -         |
| East Keswick Village Hall                   | 9,301          | -         |
| Elham Village Hall                          | 2,002          | -         |
| Farrington Gurney Village Hall              | 8,500          | -         |
| Grange Methodist Church                     | 5,000          | -         |
| Hilton Village Hall                         | 17,933         | -         |
| Holme Lacy Village Hall                     | 13,560         | -         |
| Hoveton Village Hall                        | 10,368         | -         |
| Instow Village Hall                         | 12,939         | -         |
| Ketteringham Village Hall                   | 16,500         | -         |
| Lamberhurst War Memorial Hall               | 10,000         | -         |
| Longborough & Sezincote Village Hall        | 3,840          | -         |
| Markington Memorial Institute               | 5,000          | -         |
| Marsh Recreation Ground and Village Hall    | 47,240         | -         |
| Moretonhampstead Parish Hall                | 9,179          | -         |
| Nancegollen Village Hall                    | 23,869         | -         |
| Newington Village Hall                      | 8,100          | -         |
| Newton Solney Village Hall                  | 10,000         | -         |
| Ogbourne St. Andrew PCC                     | 24,700         | -         |
| Peasenhall Assembly Hall                    | 4,000          | -         |
| Portman Village Hall                        | 2,200          | -         |
| Rumburgh & St. Michael Village Hall         | 22,904         | -         |
| Saltwood Hall                               | 11,178         | -         |
| Scaleby Village Hall                        | 11,309         | -         |
| Sherfield English Village Hall Trust        | 3,000          | -         |
| Shipton Gorge Village Hall                  | 15,290         | -         |
| Sub total                                   | <b>603,788</b> | -         |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 16. Grants payable (continued)

|                                                         | 2026<br>£      | 2025<br>£      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Grants (continued)</b> |                |                |
| Sub total brought forward                               | 603,788        | -              |
| Shutlanger Village Hall                                 | 5,000          | -              |
| Soudley Rec Ground & Village Hall                       | 12,134         | -              |
| Sturminster Marshall Memorial Hall                      | 2,024          | -              |
| Sutton Veny Village Hall                                | 3,545          | -              |
| Talkin (Reading Room & Library) Village Hall            | 13,517         | -              |
| The Hempnall Trust                                      | 2,146          | -              |
| The Market Hall                                         | 2,250          | -              |
| Thrussington Village Hall                               | 4,750          | -              |
| Tysoe Village Hall                                      | 7,500          | -              |
| Umbourne Village Hall                                   | 12,151         | -              |
| Walkhampton Memorial Hall                               | 5,000          | -              |
| Wappenham Village Hall                                  | 4,729          | -              |
| West Moors Village Hall                                 | 9,147          | -              |
| Westmill Village Hall                                   | 32,751         | -              |
| Witherslack Village Hall                                | 10,635         | -              |
| Without Walls                                           | 3,550          | -              |
| Woodgreen Village Hall                                  | 3,476          | -              |
| Worth Matravers Village Hall                            | 11,830         | -              |
| 1st Albrighton Scout Group, Shropshire                  | -              | 4,000          |
| 1st Coddington Scout Group, Notts                       | -              | 4,613          |
| Acland Memorial Hall, Berkshire                         | -              | 10,718         |
| Aldersholt Village Hall, Dorset                         | -              | 3,068          |
| Alveston Village Association, Warwickshire              | -              | 2,280          |
| Anslow Village Hall, Staffs                             | -              | 3,000          |
| Arnesby Village Hall Trust, Leics                       | -              | 4,500          |
| Badwell Ash Village Hall, Suffolk                       | -              | 13,082         |
| Baylham Village Hall, Suffolk                           | -              | 33,682         |
| Beeding & Bramber Village Hall                          | -              | 10,500         |
| Bradden Village Hall, Northants                         | -              | 5,000          |
| Broad Oak, Sussex                                       | -              | 3,809          |
| Cardington Village Hall, Shropshire                     | -              | 2,286          |
| Chatton Village Hall Trust, Northumberland              | -              | 5,000          |
| Child Memorial Village Hall, Sussex                     | -              | 2,112          |
| Chittlehampton Village Hall, Devon                      | -              | 75,000         |
| Claughton Memorial Hall                                 | -              | 4,885          |
| Clipston Village Hall, Northamptonshire                 | -              | 45,407         |
| Coaley Village Hall, Gloucestershire                    | -              | 20,000         |
| Coddington Village Hall, Notts                          | -              | 5,000          |
| Combe Florey Village Hall, Somerset                     | -              | 2,196          |
| Coronation Hall Mary Tavey, Devon                       | -              | 7,500          |
| Cross in Hand Village Hall, Sussex                      | -              | 9,800          |
| Sub total                                               | <b>749,923</b> | <b>277,438</b> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 16. Grants payable (continued)

|                                                                          | 2026<br>£      | 2025<br>£      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Grants (continued)</b>                  |                |                |
| Sub total brought forward                                                | <b>749,923</b> | 277,438        |
| Crowhurst Village Hall, Sussex                                           | -              | 11,318         |
| Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall, Somerset                     | -              | 2,077          |
| Denmead War Memorial Hall, Hants                                         | -              | 4,770          |
| Dundry Village Hall, North Somerset                                      | -              | 8,500          |
| Dunnington Village Hall, Yorkshire                                       | -              | 3,193          |
| East Coker Village Hall, Somerset                                        | -              | 17,386         |
| East Cowton Village Hall, Yorkshire                                      | -              | 22,000         |
| East Woodhay Village Hall, Hampshire                                     | -              | 2,671          |
| Ellen Hinde Hall, Oxon                                                   | -              | 4,000          |
| Everton cum Tetworth Village Hall, Beds                                  | -              | 4,728          |
| Farndon Community Centre, Cheshire                                       | -              | 34,000         |
| Five Ashes Village Hall, Sussex                                          | -              | 3,186          |
| Freshford Village Memorial Hall                                          | -              | 4,500          |
| Garthorpe Village Hall, North Lincolnshire                               | -              | 14,909         |
| Graveney & Goodnestone Village Hall, Kent                                | -              | 3,421          |
| Grindleford Playing Fields Association / Grindleford Playing Field Trust | -              | 3,251          |
| Hale Village Hall New Forest, Hants                                      | -              | 5,000          |
| Halse Village Hall                                                       | -              | 3,230          |
| Helsington & Brigsteer Village Hall, Cumbria                             | -              | 4,000          |
| Hesketh Bank CC, Lancashire                                              | -              | 3,960          |
| Hillesley (Hopkins Hall), Glos                                           | -              | 2,190          |
| Hoghton Sports & Social Club, Lancashire                                 | -              | 20,700         |
| Holbeach Reading Room, Lincs                                             | -              | 2,893          |
| Holmbury St Mary, Surrey                                                 | -              | 8,363          |
| Holme Village Hall, Cambs                                                | -              | 3,774          |
| Holwell Village Hall                                                     | -              | 4,739          |
| Horam Village Hall                                                       | -              | 2,200          |
| Indian Queens Victory Hall, Cornwall                                     | -              | 2,440          |
| Keelby Village Hall Committee                                            | -              | 3,035          |
| Kentford Community Hub, St. Marys PCC                                    | -              | 5,000          |
| Layer Marney Community Hub, Essex                                        | -              | 7,524          |
| Little Aston Village Hall, Staffordshire                                 | -              | 39,000         |
| Liverton Village Hall, Devon                                             | -              | 3,252          |
| Lopen PCC, Somerset                                                      | -              | 4,000          |
| Loxton Community Hub, North Somerset                                     | -              | 20,000         |
| Madley Parish Hall, Hants                                                | -              | 5,000          |
| Maiden Bradley Village Hall, Wiltshire                                   | -              | 9,224          |
| Malborough Village Hall & PFA, Devon                                     | -              | 2,314          |
| Sub total                                                                | <b>749,923</b> | <b>583,186</b> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 16. Grants payable (continued)

|                                                         | 2026<br>£      | 2025<br>£      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Grants (continued)</b> |                |                |
| Sub total brought forward                               | <b>749,923</b> | 583,186        |
| Mark Community Centre, Somerset                         | -              | 4,891          |
| Martin Village Hall (Blandford), Hampshire              | -              | 26,400         |
| Nash Mills Village Hall, Hertfordshire                  | -              | 12,581         |
| Neen Savage Parish Hall, Shropshire                     | -              | 3,667          |
| Old Pool Bank Village Hall, Yorkshire                   | -              | 2,783          |
| Orleton Village Hall, Hants                             | -              | 2,327          |
| Osmotherley Village Hall, Yorkshire                     | -              | 2,108          |
| Papplewick & Linby Village Hall, Nottinghamshire        | -              | 3,212          |
| Par Bay Community Trust, Cornwall                       | -              | 7,644          |
| Piddinghoe Village Hall, Sussex                         | -              | 31,571         |
| Plumbland Village Hall                                  | -              | 3,080          |
| Plumley Village Hall, Cheshire                          | -              | 2,240          |
| Potten End Village Hall                                 | -              | 2,740          |
| Ramsey Community Centre, Cambridgeshire                 | -              | 60,000         |
| Ripley Village Hall                                     | -              | 5,000          |
| Ruan Minor Village Hall, Cornwall                       | -              | 22,800         |
| Ruskington Village Hall, Lincs                          | -              | 2,300          |
| Seghill Colliery Institute, Northumberland              | -              | 11,000         |
| Shadforth Community Association, Durham                 | -              | 2,781          |
| Shurdington Village Hall, Glos                          | -              | 2,521          |
| Silchester Village Hall, Hants                          | -              | 5,000          |
| Slapton Village Hall                                    | -              | 4,742          |
| South Hanningfield Village Hall, Essex                  | -              | 2,904          |
| South Milton Village Hall, Devon                        | -              | 3,401          |
| Springthorpe Village Institute, Lincs                   | -              | 2,000          |
| St. Days Enterprise Centre, Cornwall                    | -              | 11,000         |
| St. Mary's Appledore PCC, Devon                         | -              | 2,020          |
| St. Andrews Community Hall, Lancashire                  | -              | 24,000         |
| St. Mary's Church Room, Sole, Kent                      | -              | 55,612         |
| St. Piran's Village Hall, Cornwall                      | -              | 4,513          |
| Stannington Village Hall, Northumberland                | -              | 8,064          |
| Starkholmes Village Hall, Derbyshire                    | -              | 2,150          |
| Staverton Village Hall                                  | -              | 2,320          |
| Stokeinteignhead Village Hall, Devon                    | -              | 2,000          |
| Stretton Priory Centre, Staffs                          | -              | 4,278          |
| Stutton Village Hall, Yorkshire                         | -              | 18,618         |
| Swardeston Village Hall, Norfolk                        | -              | 12,314         |
| Swimbridge Jubilee Hall, Devon                          | -              | 3,617          |
| Teigngrace Parish Charity, Devon                        | -              | 4,484          |
| The Barnetby Village Hall, Lincolnshire                 | -              | 5,000          |
| Sub total                                               | <b>749,923</b> | <b>972,869</b> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 16. Grants payable (continued)

|                                                         | 2026<br>£      | 2025<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Grants (continued)</b> |                |           |
| Sub total brought forward                               | <b>749,923</b> | 972,869   |
| The Grand Pavilion, Derbyshire                          | -              | 4,072     |
| The Hill in Millom Village Hall, Cumbria                | -              | 3,707     |
| The Institute, Kelvedon                                 | -              | 5,000     |
| The Institute, Ottery St. Mary, Devon                   | -              | 2,211     |
| Theale Village Hall, Somerset                           | -              | 10,182    |
| Thurgoland Village Hall, Yorkshire                      | -              | 3,980     |
| Titchfield Village Trust, Hampshire                     | -              | 5,000     |
| Trimdon Grange Community Association, Durham            | -              | 3,960     |
| Uplyme Village Hall, Devon                              | -              | 3,579     |
| Weston with Gayton Village Hall, Staffs                 | -              | 2,024     |
| Willey & District Village Hall, Shropshire              | -              | 2,125     |
| Wilsford Village Hall, Lincs                            | -              | 2,206     |
| Winchcome Community & Arts Hub, Glos                    | -              | 3,634     |
| Winchelsea New Hall, Somerset                           | -              | 4,224     |
| Winsley Church Hall, Wilts                              | -              | 4,834     |
| Wolvey Village Hall, Warwickshire                       | -              | 54,477    |
| Woodbury Village Hall, Devon                            | -              | 2,400     |
| Wookey Church Hall PCC, Somerset                        | -              | 3,356     |
| Woolfardisworthy S&C Hall, Devon                        | -              | 2,943     |
| Worton & Marston Village Hall, Wiltshire                | -              | 14,500    |
| Sub total                                               | <b>749,923</b> | 1,111,283 |
| Repaid grants                                           | -              | (3,538)   |
|                                                         | <b>749,923</b> | 1,107,745 |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 16. Grants payable (continued)

|                                   | 2026<br>£        | 2025<br>£        |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Rural Housing Enabler Fund</b> |                  |                  |
| ACRE member in:                   |                  |                  |
| Bedfordshire                      | 52,450           | 36,475           |
| Berkshire                         | 60,740           | 48,607           |
| Buckinghamshire                   | 57,749           | 39,869           |
| Cambridgeshire                    | 57,941           | 57,941           |
| Cheshire                          | 58,407           | 58,408           |
| Cornwall                          | 61,496           | 61,496           |
| Cumbria                           | 50,800           | 50,800           |
| Derbyshire                        | 54,738           | 58,912           |
| Devon                             | 61,334           | 61,335           |
| Dorset                            | 52,519           | 49,860           |
| Durham                            | 57,740           | 47,322           |
| Essex                             | 56,935           | 61,487           |
| Gloucestershire                   | 61,489           | 43,052           |
| Hampshire                         | 61,499           | 34,822           |
| Herefordshire                     | 60,060           | 58,697           |
| Hertfordshire                     | 59,397           | 43,850           |
| Humber & Wolds                    | 60,160           | 60,308           |
| Isle of Wight                     | 54,231           | 48,544           |
| Lancashire                        | 61,430           | 61,163           |
| Leicestershire                    | 54,780           | 54,780           |
| Norfolk                           | 60,249           | 54,194           |
| Northamptonshire                  | 56,917           | 55,822           |
| Northumberland                    | 53,172           | 46,420           |
| Oxfordshire                       | 56,681           | 46,343           |
| Shropshire                        | 58,919           | 51,205           |
| Somerset                          | 55,598           | 57,076           |
| Staffordshire                     | 57,901           | 47,622           |
| Suffolk                           | 42,461           | 23,208           |
| Surrey                            | 60,389           | 54,791           |
| Sussex                            | 60,419           | 60,289           |
| Warwickshire                      | 35,526           | 42,075           |
| WERN                              | 60,001           | 34,020           |
| Wiltshire                         | 48,936           | 43,970           |
| Yorkshire                         | 58,367           | 57,203           |
|                                   | <b>1,921,431</b> | <b>1,711,966</b> |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 17. Analysis of net assets between funds

|                                    | Restricted<br>funds<br>£ | Designated<br>funds<br>£ | General<br>funds<br>£ | Total<br>funds<br>£       |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets              | -                        | -                        | 3,430                 | <b>3,430</b>              |
| Current assets                     | 538,777                  | 5,576                    | 1,424,713             | <b>1,969,066</b>          |
| Current liabilities                | <u>(538,777)</u>         | <u>-</u>                 | <u>(828,562)</u>      | <b><u>(1,367,339)</u></b> |
| <b>Net assets at 31 March 2026</b> | <b><u>-</u></b>          | <b><u>5,576</u></b>      | <b><u>599,581</u></b> | <b><u>605,157</u></b>     |
| <b>Prior period comparative</b>    |                          |                          |                       |                           |
|                                    | Restricted<br>funds<br>£ | Designated<br>funds<br>£ | General<br>funds<br>£ | Total<br>funds<br>£       |
| Tangible fixed assets              | -                        | -                        | 231                   | 231                       |
| Investments                        | -                        | 878                      | -                     | 878                       |
| Current assets                     | 117,372                  | 24,000                   | 1,289,943             | 1,431,315                 |
| Current liabilities                | <u>(79,646)</u>          | <u>-</u>                 | <u>(778,380)</u>      | <u>(858,026)</u>          |
| <b>Net assets at 31 March 2025</b> | <b><u>37,726</u></b>     | <b><u>24,878</u></b>     | <b><u>511,794</u></b> | <b><u>574,398</u></b>     |

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 18. Movements in funds

|                                      | At 1 April<br>2025<br>£ | Income<br>£      | Expenditure<br>£   | Transfers<br>£ | At 31<br>March<br>2026<br>£ |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds</b>              |                         |                  |                    |                |                             |
| Big Lottery Safeguarding             | 3,961                   | -                | (3,961)            | -              | -                           |
| DEFRA rural communities              | -                       | 1,631,691        | (1,631,691)        | -              | -                           |
| DEFRA PJVH fund                      | 29,075                  | 720,848          | (749,923)          | -              | -                           |
| DEFRA RHE fund                       | 1,432                   | 1,918,614        | (1,921,431)        | 1,385          | -                           |
| National Parks Residents Association | 2,787                   | -                | (2,787)            | -              | -                           |
| National Village Halls Forum         | 471                     | -                | (471)              | -              | -                           |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>        | <b>37,726</b>           | <b>4,271,153</b> | <b>(4,310,264)</b> | <b>1,385</b>   | <b>-</b>                    |
| <b>Unrestricted funds</b>            |                         |                  |                    |                |                             |
| <i>Designated funds:</i>             |                         |                  |                    |                |                             |
| ACRE Network review                  | 4,000                   | -                | (4,000)            | -              | -                           |
| ACRE Network members                 | 20,000                  | -                | (14,424)           | -              | <b>5,576</b>                |
| LLP Consultancy (Cirican)            | 878                     | -                | -                  | (878)          | -                           |
| <i>Total designated funds</i>        | <b>24,878</b>           | <b>-</b>         | <b>(18,424)</b>    | <b>(878)</b>   | <b>5,576</b>                |
| General funds                        | 511,794                 | 778,099          | (689,805)          | (507)          | <b>599,581</b>              |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b>      | <b>536,672</b>          | <b>778,099</b>   | <b>(708,229)</b>   | <b>(1,385)</b> | <b>605,157</b>              |
| <b>Total funds</b>                   | <b>574,398</b>          | <b>5,049,252</b> | <b>(5,018,493)</b> | <b>-</b>       | <b>605,157</b>              |

#### Purposes of restricted funds

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Big Lottery Safeguarding | The National Lottery Community Fund provided funds for a project that will promote good safeguarding practice to village and community halls throughout England. ACRE used the 38 ACRE Network members' contacts and reach into rural communities to signpost and share resources. Advice and examples of best practice have been shared helping hall committees to better understand their responsibilities, put in place proportionate policies and procedures, and have confidence to deal with safeguarding issues as they arise. |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

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#### 18. Movements in funds (continued)

##### Purposes of restricted funds (continued)

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DEFRA rural communities              | The investment delivers support to the end beneficiaries of the ACRE Network, ensuring that rural communities have the technical support and advice needed to survive and thrive. The grant is distributed through ACRE to its 38 members, full details are available on the ACRE website. |
| DEFRA PJVH fund                      | DEFRA Platinum Jubilee Village Hall (PJVH) fund is a grant fund provided by DEFRA to support the modernisation and improvement of rural community buildings.                                                                                                                               |
| DEFRA RHE fund                       | DEFRA Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) fund is a £2.5m programme funded by DEFRA creating a new network of Rural Housing Enablers (RHEs). RHEs are specialists who help rural communities consider the need for affordable housing locally.                                                     |
| National Parks Residents Association | ACRE holds funds on behalf of the National Parks Residents Association for use only as designated by the Association.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| National Village Halls Forum         | The National Village Halls Forum closed and a decision was taken to pay funds remaining in the bank account to ACRE for hosting and support work undertaken by the new Village and Community Halls Network.                                                                                |

##### Purposes of designated funds

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACRE Network review       | The ACRE Board designated funds to support the research, review and modernisation of its services.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| ACRE Network members      | The ACRE Board designated funds to support a strategic review of ACRE member services in order to identify the best and most sustainable way of safeguarding such services for end beneficiaries in the future. This has been increased with a transfer from general funds this year.        |
| LLP Consultancy (Cirican) | The ACRE Board designated funds to underpin 'Cirican' the ACRE Network Consultancy vehicle, established to capitalise on members' extensive experience and understanding of rural issues, and to generate an income stream to advance ACRE's charitable aim of supporting rural communities. |

##### Transfers, gains and losses

This consists of the transfer of proceeds from the Cirican LLP investment from designated to general funds, the loss on disposal of the investment as outlined in note 10, and a transfer of funds relating to an overspend on a restricted fund.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 18. Movements in funds (continued)

##### Prior period comparative

|                                         | At 1 April<br>2024<br>£ | Income<br>£      | Expenditure<br>£   | Transfers<br>between<br>funds<br>£ | At 31<br>March<br>2025<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds</b>                 |                         |                  |                    |                                    |                             |
| Tudor Trust                             | 1,500                   | -                | (1,500)            | -                                  | -                           |
| Big Lottery Safeguarding                | 3,961                   | -                | -                  | -                                  | 3,961                       |
| DEFRA rural communities                 | -                       | 1,633,000        | (1,633,000)        | -                                  | -                           |
| DEFRA PJVH fund                         | 6,820                   | 1,130,000        | (1,107,745)        | -                                  | 29,075                      |
| DEFRA RHE fund                          | 111,639                 | 1,601,759        | (1,711,966)        | -                                  | 1,432                       |
| Coyler Ferguson Kent ACRE               | 1,000                   | -                | (1,000)            | -                                  | -                           |
| National Parks Residents<br>Association | 2,787                   | -                | -                  | -                                  | 2,787                       |
| National Village Halls Forum            | 471                     | -                | -                  | -                                  | 471                         |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>           | <b>128,178</b>          | <b>4,364,759</b> | <b>(4,455,211)</b> | <b>-</b>                           | <b>37,726</b>               |
| <b>Unrestricted funds</b>               |                         |                  |                    |                                    |                             |
| <i>Designated funds:</i>                |                         |                  |                    |                                    |                             |
| ACRE Network review                     | 4,000                   | -                | -                  | -                                  | 4,000                       |
| ACRE Network members                    | 15,000                  | -                | -                  | 5,000                              | 20,000                      |
| LLP Consultancy (Cirican)               | 3,000                   | -                | (2,122)            | -                                  | 878                         |
| <i>Total designated funds</i>           | <b>22,000</b>           | <b>-</b>         | <b>(2,122)</b>     | <b>5,000</b>                       | <b>24,878</b>               |
| General funds                           | 463,033                 | 668,891          | (615,130)          | (5,000)                            | 511,794                     |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b>         | <b>485,033</b>          | <b>668,891</b>   | <b>(617,252)</b>   | <b>-</b>                           | <b>536,672</b>              |
| <b>Total funds</b>                      | <b>613,211</b>          | <b>5,033,650</b> | <b>(5,072,463)</b> | <b>-</b>                           | <b>574,398</b>              |

#### 19. Conduit funding

|                                       | 2026<br>£    | 2025<br>£    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Funds held at 1 April                 | <b>5,740</b> | 5,740        |
| Amounts received                      | -            | -            |
| Adjustment to correct closing balance | -            | -            |
| Funds held at 31 March                | <b>5,740</b> | <b>5,740</b> |

ACRE receives and disburses funds on behalf of The Rural Coalition. The balance held at the year end date is included in other creditors.

## Action with Communities in Rural England

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2026

#### 20. Analysis of changes in net debt

|                                 | At 1 April<br>2025<br>£ | Cash flows<br>£ | At 31<br>March 2026<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Cash                            | 1,112,047               | (89,766)        | 1,022,281                |
|                                 | 1,112,047               | (89,766)        | 1,022,281                |
| Loans falling due within 1 year | (700,000)               | -               | (700,000)                |
| <b>Net debt</b>                 | <b>412,047</b>          | <b>(89,766)</b> | <b>322,281</b>           |

#### 21. Operating lease commitments

The charity had operating leases at the year end with total future minimum lease payments as follows:

|                     | Property<br>2026<br>£ | 2025<br>£    | Equipment<br>2026<br>£ | 2025<br>£    |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Amount falling due: |                       |              |                        |              |
| Within 1 year       | -                     | 7,123        | -                      | 1,215        |
| Within 1 - 5 years  | -                     | -            | -                      | -            |
|                     | <u>-</u>              | <u>7,123</u> | <u>-</u>               | <u>1,215</u> |

#### 22. Related party transactions

In the current year, six (2025: five) of ACRE's trustees were also Directors or Chief Executives of ACRE member organisations (one of whom retired in the year).

During the current and prior year, ACRE received membership fees and conference fees from, and distributed DEFRA grants to its member organisations. A full list of members is included in the Trustees' Report, and a list of grants distributed is included in note 16.

In addition, during the current year, ACRE paid fees to ACRE member organisations for providing consultancy services to village hall committees, supporting them with applications to the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund. In the year, ACRE paid a total of £6,250 such fees to 5 ACRE members who also have a Director or Chief Executive who is an ACRE trustee. Fees were paid at the same rate available to other ACRE members.

Cirican LLP is a commercial research partnership of which ACRE is a member. ACRE invested £3,000 in the partnership in 2021. In the prior year, this investment was impaired by £2,112, resulting in a valuation as at 31 March 2025 £878. Cirican LLP was dissolved in the current year, and funds of £872 were returned to ACRE.