

It takes a village... Dunsop Bridge

Together an Active Ribble Valley >>>>>

Together
an Active
Future
>>>>>

- Farming Stronger for Longer
- Field nurses collaboration

Community & Businesses
crowdfunding for Play Library

- Creating Active Schools
- Opening community spaces

GP's
Signposting activities

SCHOOL

Investing in a
Community Champion

Parish Council
space for Hodder Play Library



It takes a village... why the Ribble Valley?

Population
62,000

Area
521km²

Average population
per square km

England: **434**

Ribble Valley: **106**

Bowland: **11**

Fuel poverty

England: **13%**

Bowland: **18%**

67%
of adults are
overweight
or **obese**

Over 65's

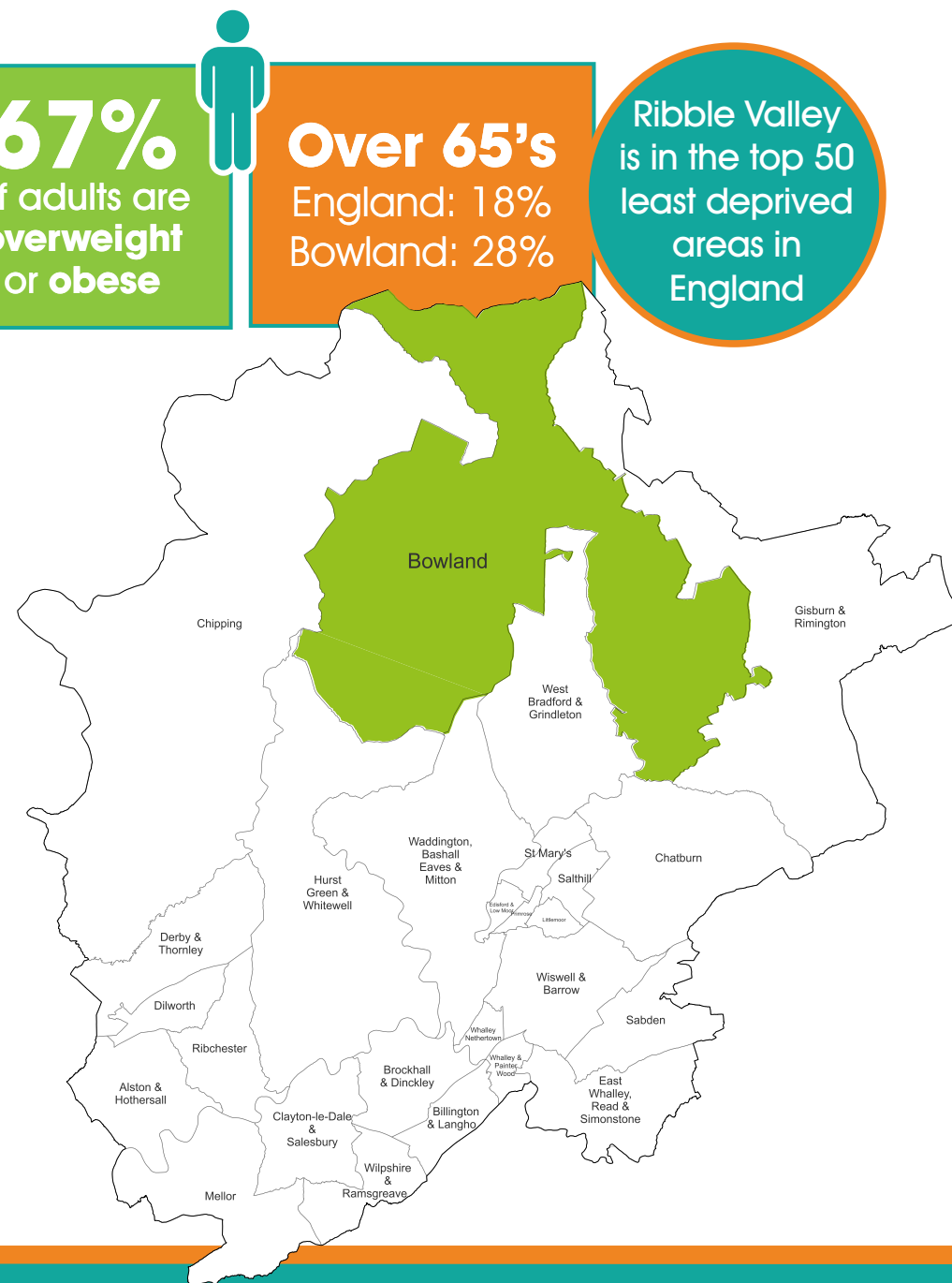
England: 18%

Bowland: 28%

Ribble Valley
is in the top 50
least deprived
areas in
England

The story of 'It takes a village...' takes place within the village of Dunsop Bridge. Together with the villages of Newton and Slaidburn they make up the ward of Bowland, known locally as The Hodder Valley. The Ribble Valley consists of 27 wards, with Bowland being the most sparsely populated. Bus services in the area are limited and the nearest town is over 10 miles away, making accessibility to physical activity options more limiting, costly, and time restricting. There is one GP surgery in the ward 5 miles from Dunsop Bridge, the nearest Sports Centre is 9 miles away and at least a 20 minute drive on unlit country roads - the journey is not easy in the winter months when you are more likely to need an indoor facility.

We set out with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the complex barriers to physical activity in a rural setting. We are testing an alternative investment approach, which is different to the 'traditional' approach of setting up sessions in a village, thinking that more provision is the solution. Due to low population and types of work (farming, rural jobs, fencing, walling etc) simply putting on events or classes, does not see a sustainable or adequate turn out. Yearly fluctuations due to the farming calendars, varied working hours, energy and trust is why a different approach is needed. Smaller, localised, almost a sympathetic nod to traditional village life (which is what makes it so wonderful). Through time and trust we have been able to talk, trial, and be patient, so that what is implemented will be sustainable. It is apparent that infrastructure and community play major roles within isolated rural villages. A big learning point has been conversation, by being in a place over organised meetings this has allowed a less threatening approach.



It takes a village... working together

How we did things differently...

By investing in a local champion, employed through a shared role model, who is passionate about physical activity, open to trying different approaches whilst being embedded within the community. Through building relationships, gaining trust and collaborating on ideas and outputs, the community champion lead the way for a 'whole village' contribution towards a positive culture of embracing new ways of being physically active.

Our successes...

Through the collaboration work some of the outputs of the invested time include:

- Schools using the Creating Active Schools framework to embed physical activity in the school day.
- The local school has opened up space for community use including storytime movement, summer fayre and picnic in the park.
- Local GP's signposting and referrals has led to members of the older population co-creating and participating in a weekly social and exercise class, Move Longevity, with our local champion.
- Reaching the farming community, a notoriously difficult community to gain trust with. Working with field nurses attending farming events for health checks, to distribute leaflets educating on the importance of physical activity relating to occupational related injuries.
- Parish council, local residents and businesses all contributed towards the 'Hodder Play Library', an accessible store of equipment to encourage physical activity in the area. This has encourage a new weekly rounders group, litter picking sessions, after school football, as parents participate in classes kids can use the equipment and space.

Our learning...

- This is a 'test and learn' of an alternative investment approach which is needed if we want to prioritise physical activity and raise the profile at a local level. If you want to embed a whole village approach, you need someone to drive this.
- Localised solutions are key in understanding the area and the community's physical activity barriers and motivations
- Co-collaboration to make the whole village feel embedded and included in the process
- A similar pilot was trialled in a different village but the local champion did not have physical activity at the forefront and it did not gain the same momentum.
 - Rural physical activity priorities are unique. Exploring physical activity and leading with a fitness professional has been hugely beneficial in uptake and gaining trust. We found other local schemes in towns have been more successful in taking an opposite approach, where physical activity has needed to be a bi-product through offering other incentives not directly focusing on physical activity.

“ I'm so thankful, this is exactly what I needed, and I'm really enjoying it ”

Move Longevity class participant
(set up through GP conversations)

Our next steps...

Now we have trialled Dunsop Bridge as a trailblazer, the next step is to bring in the expertise of an Active Village Workstream Lead to take our learning and scale up this work. Starting with two more villages, and by 2025 we hope to have created a network of Active Villages across the Ribble Valley.

“ I see people using equipment most days i've walked past. The council is very grateful for all your hard work ”

Parish Council



Watch our video here

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Future
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