

Glaphorn's submission to the 2019 Competition

Glaphorn Parish Council and the Glaphorn Village Hall Management Committee, both of which are members of Northamptonshire ACRE, had been aware of the competition for a number of years but had never considered entering – the prospect was too daunting! It was only when the invitation to participate in the 2018 competition was received by the Village Hall committee that an application began to be seriously considered.

Through discussion we realised that, although ours is only a tiny village, we already had many facilities, organizations and groups to be proud of. We were also aware that the sense of community here in Glaphorn is unique. We knew that our village is special, so we decided to go for it!

We realized that to do our submission justice would take time, thought and effort so we decided not to enter in 2018 but to use the upcoming 12 months to promote the project, assemble a submission team, compile an inventory of all our existing facilities and to reflect on what else could be provided to enhance the quality of life in the village for all our residents.

The project was headed up by members of both the Village Hall Management committee and the Parish Council. We held an initial meeting to which we invited a wide range of village residents and representatives of all our existing groups and organizations – this became the core of our submission group.

At subsequent meetings, using the ACRE guidelines, we drew up a comprehensive inventory of all our current facilities, activities and services and then discussed and reflected on what else could be provided to benefit our residents.

As a result of these discussions a number of initiatives emerged which have proved to be very popular and beneficial:

The Parish Council acquired a licence from a local housing association to develop a long-neglected piece of land at the heart of the village into a pocket park. A subcommittee was formed to carry the project through and work is due to commence in October.

A Green Team was established to carry out environmental projects such as tree and bulb-planting schemes, footpath and ditch clearance and railing painting.

A Tech Team was set up to help residents with computer and TV problems.

The Handy Andy Team carries out small one-off jobs such as furniture moving, waste disposal runs and simple DIY.

New leisure and social activity groups have emerged and are now thriving.

The whole process turned out to be really good fun!

Lots of villagers got involved and contributed in many different ways. People gave very freely of their time, energy and ideas.

We simply could not believe our success when the results of the competition were announced. We knew we had worked hard over the 12 months and we felt we had a reasonable chance of winning the Best Newcomer award. But to win Best Small Village and the overall Best Village categories was beyond our wildest dreams! The delegates to the awards evening were both thrilled and speechless and we couldn't wait to get back to Glaphorn to share the great news with all our fellow villagers.

The awards have been an inspiration! We are all so proud to see our trophies and certificates on display – fitting tributes to our amazing community spirit.

Advice for future applicants:

Go for it!

You will be amazed at what your village has to offer when you start to think about it! The project will encourage you to reflect on what else could be on offer to make your village a great place to live and work in.

Get as many people involved as possible – it takes the pressure off the few and it creates a real feeling of belonging and contributing.

Involve your children, young people and the elderly in all your discussions.

Follow the ACRE guidelines for your submission – they provide a simple but comprehensive framework to follow for the project.

Enjoy the whole process!