

Our place

South Holland

Lincolnshire

Population: approx 95,000

Plant a seed and help it grow

South Holland is a rural district where agriculture, food production and shift work are central to daily life. Many residents experience challenges associated with rural isolation, limited public transport, restricted access to facilities, and unequal investment and opportunities.

The forgotten Fens

Our work has shown that while Spalding is benefiting from significant investment, the impact is not being felt equally across the district's villages. Communities report feeling forgotten, disconnected, and overlooked. A reliance on a small number of volunteers, coupled with fragile community infrastructure, creates significant risks to future capacity, continuity, and sustainability. Our focus will be on supporting these underserved rural communities, alongside a district-wide approach that responds to the needs of South Holland's large shift-working population.

Communities told us

- Some residents feel 'forgotten' and disconnected.
- Poor conditions of paths and roads are preventing people from walking and cycling.
- Residents need hyper-local opportunities responding to the realities of rural communities
- Residents need better access to opportunities, information and support closer to home.
- Children and young people need access to more relevant opportunities to be active in safe, trusted spaces that enable them to thrive.
- Residents want to feel more connected to their communities and gain confidence to participate in activities.

48% of children not meeting recommended activity levels

67% of adults classified as overweight or obese

12% of adults report they 'often' or 'always' felt lonely

34.9% of adults in South Holland are inactive (Active Lives data)

Inputs & enablers

- South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
- Sutton Bridge and Long Sutton Parish Councils
- Westmere Primary School and Long Sutton University Academy
- Lincolnshire YMCA
- Lincolnshire County Council Active Travel and Public Rights of Way teams
- Lincolnshire County Council HAF team
- South Holland Agri-Food businesses
- Parkwood Leisure
- National Governing Bodies including Lincolnshire FA
- Public Health
- Active Lincolnshire place and core team
- Sport England place investment
- Connectivity with wider investment streams and programmes

Our work

Place: Long Sutton East and Sutton Bridge, Long Sutton West, Gedney and Holbeach Hurn

Theme 1: Embed everyday movement in rural places and spaces

- Strengthen community capacity and leadership by supporting organisations, champions, volunteers and local leaders to build capacity and sustain physical activity opportunities.
- Embed community voice by enabling residents to shape priorities, influence decisions and co-design local solutions.
- Improve awareness and connectivity by working with partners to strengthen communication, signposting and access to local physical activity opportunities (District wide).

Theme 2: Create positive experiences for children and young people

- Co-design opportunities with children and young people to ensure their voices shape local physical activity provision.
- Develop safe, trusted places by working with partners to activate parks, green spaces and community assets.
- Improve access to local opportunities by reducing barriers such as transport, affordability and limited rural provision including facilities.
- Strengthen community connections through inclusive opportunities that build belonging, wellbeing and intergenerational relationships.

District Wide

Theme 3: Support shift workers to be more active

- Build shared insight by working with employers and partners to understand the impact of shift work and influence workplace practice.
- Create active workplaces by supporting employers to embed movement, wellbeing and social connection into everyday working life.
- Share learning and influence change by using evidence from local employers to inform wider practice across the agri-food sector and beyond.

Theme 4: Systems leadership & collaboration

- Strengthen systems leadership by building the skills, confidence and capability needed to tackle inequalities through place-based working.
- Build collaborative partnerships by bringing together leaders, organisations and communities to align priorities and coordinate action.
- Share learning and evidence to strengthen decision-making, influence investment and maximise collective impact.
- Influence place-based change by working with partners to improve walking, cycling and connectivity across rural communities.

what will change

Short Term (within 12 months)

People are informed and connected; children and young people enjoy more relevant opportunities; employers and partners are more engaged.

Medium Term (1-3 years)

More people are active; social isolation reduces; wellbeing improves; local leadership, ownership and intergenerational connection grow.

Long Term Impact (3+ years)

Physical activity is embedded in everday community life; inequalities reduce: communities are healthier, more resiliient and empowered to substain change.

Shared Outcomes

- 'Forgotten' communities brought into the system.
- More people make use of local spaces and opportunities, countryside access becoming easier, safer, more visible, and more appealing.
- Children/young people feel listened to, supported and connected.
- Shift workers accessing opportunities that fit around work and family.
- Communities feel a stronger sense of pride, belonging and ownership.
- Partners work together around shared goals, insight and resources.
- Sustainable community capacity and capability.