



Askam & Ireleth Parish Plan 2003 - 2008

 **Vital
Villages**

Funded by



 **The
Countryside
Agency**

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The Residents
of Askam and Ireleth Parish

Tuesday, 04 March 2003

Dear Resident

PARISH COUNCIL PLAN 2003 - 2008

I am certain that anyone reading the Askam and Ireleth Parish Plan will immediately recognise the tremendous amount of work that has been undertaken to produce the plan.

What is also very clearly evident is the amount of partnership working that has contributed to the plan. This is only created by the determination of all involved to work in co-operation with others for the benefit of the local community.

I believe it to be a truism that we achieve far more by working together than we could ever achieve working in isolation. I feel the Parish Plan provides evidence of this. The Plan is both ambitious and I feel realistic. It outlines hopes and aspiration for the local community that are deliverable and offer real and genuine improvements for local residents.

The fact that it has been produced by local people on behalf of local people does, I feel provide a sense of ownership for the community.

I take this opportunity to wish all well in the implementation of the Parish Plan and offer my support whenever or however it may be required. I also take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved in the production of the plan for a job very self evidently well done.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon John Hutton MP





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been produced to capture and reflect the requirements of the parish of Askam & Ireleth. Funding for this 'Parish Plan' has been received from the Countryside Agency through the 'Vital Villages' funding stream, the Parish Council and in-kind support from local residents.



Askam & Ireleth are located in the southwest corner of Cumbria on the Furness peninsula in the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness.

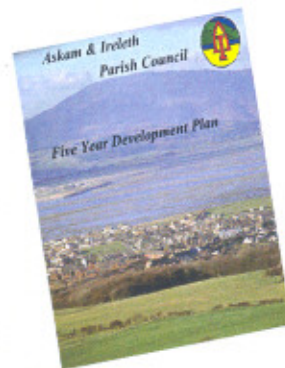
**"Where there is no vision, the people perish."
(Proverbs 29:18)**

'In May 1987 a motley mix of three former Councillors and five complete novices from Askam and Ireleth sat around a table in the Community Centre, signed the acceptance papers, and legally became a new statutory body named Askam and Ireleth Parish Council.

'So began a fifteen year odyssey that has seen council business transformed from a tentative talking shop unsure of its way to a highly professional team able to deal with complex environmental issues and very relevant parochial "tea cup dramas" in equal measure. Aware from the outset that our parish consists of seven demographically exclusive communities, namely Askam, Ireleth, Roanhead, Greenhaume, Greenscoe, The Lots and Paradise. As such the Council has endeavoured to shape its development plans and thinking to encompass the disparate views of these distinct communities. As Chairman it gives me immense pleasure to present the **"Askam and Ireleth Parish Plan 2003-2008"**. Whilst this plan is a continuing step in the right direction, there will always be more community work for this and future Parish Councils and members of the community to undertake. So I commend this plan in the hope that more community members will grab the vision and get involved in the regeneration of our community.'

Alan Jones
Chairman, Askam and Ireleth Parish Council

This five year Parish Plan builds upon and replaces the existing Five Year Development Plan, which has been reviewed during this process. The previous objectives, where still appropriate, have been incorporated. This plan will be used to direct the future focus and direction of the regeneration activities in Askam & Ireleth, primarily through the action plans contained in the implementation section.



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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AIPC	Askam & Ireleth Parish Council
AIRP	Askam & Ireleth Regeneration Partnership
BBC	Barrow Borough Council
CA	Countryside Agency
CCC	Cumbria County Council
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
DART	Dalton Area Rural Transport
DSS	Department of Social Security
FLAG	Furness Line Action Group
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NOF	New Opportunities Fund
NWDA	North West Development Agency
OAP	Old Age Person
RAZ	Rural Action Zone
RDP	Rural Development Programme
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

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REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Document	Reference	Issue
Askam & Ireleth Parish Council Five Year Development Plan		
Local Transport Plan 2001/2 – 2005/6 Annual Progress Report 2	LTP	July 2002
Youth Shelters and Sports Systems – A Good Practice Guide. Published by Corporate Information, Thames Valley Police TVP 460 (2/2002)	YSSS	Second Edition
Building the Future Programme, Heart of Barrow		
Askam and Ireleth Plan (1987), Barrow Borough Council		1987
Cumbria Structure Plan, Cumbria County Council		
Local Plan Review 2002-2006, Barrow Borough Council		2001
Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan		



1.BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. HISTORY OF SETTLEMENTS

Askam and Ireleth are unusual partners, in many ways complete opposites.

Askam is situated on the eastern side of the Duddon Estuary and is a community a little over 130 years old.

Ireleth, by contrast, is probably a Norse settlement, a small farming village nestling on the side of moors above the Duddon Estuary, with feudal strips known colloquially as 'Dales' and mentioned in the Domesday Book. It lay on the route to Cumberland across the treacherous Duddon Sands. Marsh Grange at Dunnerholme was a Furness Abbey farmhouse and was once the home of Margaret Fell, who went on to marry George Fox, founder of the Quaker movement.

Askam rose from Ascombe Marsh in 1864, as Wakefield MacKinnon and Co began construction of a blast furnace and Bessemer converter, an iron mining Klondike using the rich veins of haematite ore which was easily smelted using the techniques recently developed by the great ironmasters like Henry Bessemer. A large influx of people arrived and needed housing, so rows of terraced housing were built. Of this influx a large element were Cornish miners. This presence is evidenced by the surnames of the local people and some of the place names. In the rush to accommodate people, the houses went up but the roads didn't always follow, as the need for housing took precedence.

At its height, Askam had facilities like a cinema, gas works, bakehouse and an array of different churches. The future looked bright.

What went wrong? Economics! Like lots of boom towns, the full promise was not fulfilled, with iron and steel technology improving to allow the use of cheaper, lower grade ore. Jobs disappeared and people sought their fortune across the globe in Australia, America, South Africa, etc. The Ironworks closed in 1919, although the site offices near Steel Street were used for a variety of different purposes until the 1960s.

The landscape was left with the scars of this aggressive activity. Signs of the mining can still be seen today by visiting the southern side of the Lots. The Ironworks and its slag bank have been redeveloped into what is now the Parklands housing estate.

Below are the remains of the blast furnace base as it was circa 1980 prior to final reclamation. (In the background is the slag heap produced from the early 1960's iron recovery work.) Today this is the north side of the Parklands Drive/Wakefield Street junction.



Below left: Twenty years ago this was the 'furnace field', bounded by the slag bank at the Steel Street end. Today (right) this has been filled in and is where Turnstone Crescent now stands.



All that remains of the Ironworks site today is the slag outcrop running out into the Duddon Estuary and known locally as the 'pier'.

1.2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Askam & Ireleth were, until 1974, part of Dalton Urban District Council. In 1974 we were subsumed into the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness in the new County of Cumbria. In May 1987 a Parish Council was formed for Askam & Ireleth.

Under the stewardship of Barrow Borough Council, planning policy has targeted in-fill development of small sites, along with the major housing developments on Abbey Heights (80 houses), Parklands (250 houses) and Estuary Park/Headlands (approximately 80 houses).

Councillors of all tiers, County, Borough and Parish, work together collectively for the benefit of the parish.

1.3. VILLAGE STRUCTURE

Askam is built upon a salt marsh and the physical layout of the village relates to the way the land was split into parcels of land called 'Lots' and sold in the 19th century under the 1810 Enclosures Act. The initial terraced housing has, over the years, been augmented by in-fill development to complete sections left as a result of difficult ground conditions.

Duke Street in Askam is the main thoroughfare linking all the major streets in Askam to the railway line and hence over it and towards Ireleth.

Ireleth, as discussed earlier, is an ancient settlement and its structure relates to its principal activities, farming and a route over the 'Duddon Sands' into Cumberland. Saves Lane was on this route. Ireleth Road is now the primary route through Ireleth, but it is likely that this was part of the opening up of Ireleth with the creation of Askam.

The principal buildings within Askam & Ireleth are:

- 1) St Peter's Church
- 2) Railway station and signal box
- 3) Co-op on Duke Street



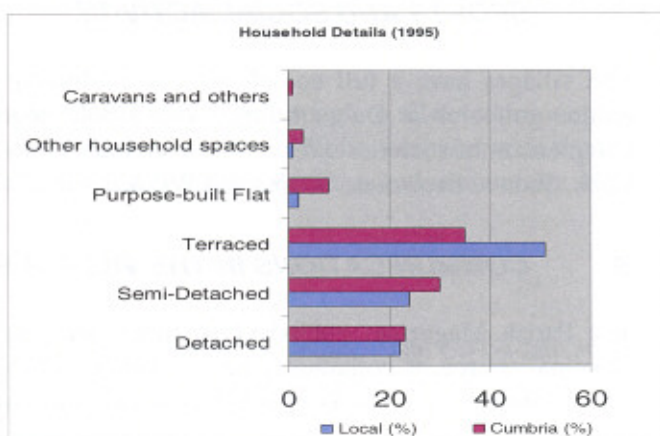
1.4. VILLAGE PROFILE

Askam & Ireleth are one of the few major population growth areas in Cumbria. From the 2001 census, the villages have seen an 18.7% increase in population to 3430 over a 10 year period. This should be viewed against a 3.8% reduction in Barrow Borough as a whole in the same period. This growth places additional pressure on the villages' existing infrastructure and services.

The following statistics and graphs are extracted from the County Council data from 1996, which is currently the latest available.

For Askam & Ireleth, the local perception is that deprivation is being masked by the large new housing estates. The number of terraced properties within the parish is one indicator towards this, as is the number of properties being let to tenants (including DSS) and also the higher than normal figure for single parents (7.7% against a Cumbria average of 6.7%).

Household Details (1995)	No:	Local (%)	Cumbria (%)
Detached	266	22	23
Semi-Detached	288	24	30
Terraced	617	51	35
Purpose-built Flat	20	2	8
Other household spaces	9	1	3
Caravans and others	5	0	1



Population Age Structure (1995)	No:	Local %	Cumbria %
Aged 0-14	570	19.1	18.1
Aged 15-29	678	22.7	20.5
Aged 30-44	657	22	21
Aged 45-59	536	17.9	17.5
Aged 60-74	377	12.6	15.4
Aged 75-84	142	4.8	5.8
Aged 85+	29	1	1.7



1.5. VILLAGE LOCATION

Askam & Ireleth are conveniently located – near and yet far enough away, 6½ miles, to the main employment centre of Barrow-in-Furness, with good modern road access to the Park Road and Channelside areas.

The attractive, generally '*rural*' setting of the villages, alongside the Duddon Estuary, was cited in many questionnaires as being a strong selling point for the villages. The superb panoramic views and opportunities for outdoor recreation combine to make attractive features.

1.6. THE PEOPLE

In the questionnaires, 'What's good about Askam & Ireleth?' produced the response from many that the people are very friendly and welcoming. It's nice to hear that the small village warmth and welcome is still alive and this community spirit is something which we need to build on to take the community forward.

We do need to market the community facilities and groups to our new residents. Perceived barriers must be broken down if this large group of people is to be fully integrated and add a diversity of talents and experience to help the enrichment of the whole village.

Ways to implement may be via a 'What's on Night' where the local clubs and organisations promote themselves. It may be worth considering a village diary and an update to the community directory.

1.7. SPORTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY

The villages have a full complement of traditional sports like cricket, football, rugby league and a unique golf club at Dunnerholme, with a hole upon the top of Dunnerholme Rock. Socially, a full complement of societies exists. These include Town Band, Old Tyme Dancing, Karate, History Group, Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, Guides and Women's Institute.

1.8. COMMUNICATIONS IN THE VILLAGES

The Parish Magazine, published 10 times per year by the Vicar and his team, was identified as a principal source of community news. Other comments suggested that notices in the local shops and village library served to let people know what was going on.

The local website, www.askam-ireleth.org.uk was not identified by anyone as a source of information. This situation needs to be rectified and more current information and news added to it by encouraging the local groups to start using it.

1.9. PRIOR REGENERATION ACTIVITY

In the seventies the newly formed Borough of Barrow-in-Furness surveyed Askam & Ireleth to determine a district plan. This plan, produced by the then Borough Engineer, has been the basis of much of the intervening planning policy. Some of the recommendations were not fully implemented and are still valid today.

In the late nineties the Parish Council produced a Five Year Plan to identify and address the major issues present within the villages. Barrow Borough Council supported this plan with a £30,000 per year funding stream for five years. Over these years, the villages will have seen the best part of £1,000,000 invested to regenerate the community and its infrastructure. It is a sign of the extent of the problem that existed in Askam & Ireleth that significant issues still need to be addressed.

The partnership, which has been responsible for the delivery of the Parish Council's Five Year Development Plan, is the organisation which has produced this new Parish Plan. The partnership will have a limited life, in that the completion of the major issues identified in this plan will justify the winding up of the partnership.

1.10. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

It is expected that the partnership, with its good record of achievement, will be the delivery mechanism for this plan, with Askam & Ireleth Parish Council as the principal sponsor.



2. ECONOMIC

2.1. BUSINESSES

Within Askam & Ireleth are a variety of businesses. The major firms are Urofoam (see section 2.7 – Duddon Valley Centre) and Furness Brick and Tile. Smaller companies include Furness Cars and Commercials and Diddy's Sandwiches. Other businesses include 7 pubs and 2 clubs, a petrol station and three businesses relating to car sales.

The main future for the villages is as a dormitory feeder for the major employment centres of Barrow and Ulverston. The recent announcements of large job cuts, over 1100, at both BAE Systems and GlaxoSmithKline, mean further inward investment will be needed to help attract new industries into the area.

Strategically, for Askam & Ireleth and Furness as a whole, the improvement of the A590 road link to the M6 motorway is critical for the long term viability of the existing and any future businesses which locate in Furness.

In terms of future development, the site occupied by Urofoam is large enough to allow additional use as it currently employs less than 20% of the previous K Shoes workforce. Work continues with the owner of the site to identify the best usage for the site, both in terms of business and community benefit. A 20,000 square feet unit is available on the site.

2.2. SHOPS

Askam & Ireleth as a large village has several shops, most grouped together. The Co-op late shop on Duke Street is separate from this cluster and is by far the largest. Other shops include:

- Petrol Station and General Store
- Butcher and Fish Shop
- General Provisions (2)
- Fish and Chip Shop
- Off-Licence
- Bakery
- Post Office



Several questionnaires expressed the desire for a chemist's shop to be available in Askam. This needs to be carefully considered against the impact on the Doctor's surgery, which is a self-dispensing practice. The desire for a chemist needs to be mitigated by the Co-op or another shop being persuaded to carry additional health and beauty products.

Questionnaires also expressed concern that the Duke Street shop fronts would benefit from a shop front improvement programme and that the number of shops is diminishing, having lost a wool shop, bookmakers, cafe and a hairdresser in the last few years. It may be worth the Borough Council investigating support via a business rate reduction. These initiatives should be investigated as part of the 'Building the Future' programme.

It may also be worth investigating why these businesses failed and then, if appropriate, consider buying a single large premise and then sub-let to tenants who could then run a business which wasn't viable in its own dedicated building. This 'mini-market' would not have to allow tenants to compete against existing shops but complement them.

2.3. COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

The new Askam 'Kids Zone' wraparound nursery and after school club is a good example of a community business. The opportunity may exist for a business to be created using the Rugby Club gym.

2.4. TRAINING

Surprisingly, perhaps, given the number of training courses that have already been provided, the need for continued local training, particularly IT related, was identified in a significant number of responses. Additionally, it was suggested that a dedicated local venue be set up to support this training.

This request came from across the community and should be viewed as a lifelong learning situation, giving people the ability to work with modern IT equipment. Vocational training will potentially allow them to move up the job ladder or actually secure a job. Within the 'Building the Future' programme, the 'Heart of Barrow' Board should look holistically at the scope of its employment schemes so as to help stimulate opportunities in the local job market for the whole of the Borough.



The main types of training courses suggested were related to IT, computer skills and numeracy/literacy skills.

2.5. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Until recently, a part-time rural employment service (7 clients employed, 50 supported, along with 10 businesses and start-ups) was provided in Dalton, Askam & Ireleth, however this has folded. Work continues to restore this service.

2.6. TOURISM

Askam & Ireleth's location on the edge of the Duddon Estuary offers the real opportunity to encourage eco-tourists to visit the internationally important RAMSAR Nature reserve and also enjoy the wildlife in a superb panoramic setting. The estuary supports a wide range of wildfowl. Apart from its year round residents, the estuary provides a vital stopping off point for thousands of migrating birds transiting between the Arctic and Africa. The estuary has inspired the poets William Wordsworth and Norman Nicholson.

To support this tourism, additional bed and breakfast accommodation will be required.

The **owner** of the Urofoam site has also identified the opportunity for a Duddon Visitor Centre as being the means to bring and develop tourism into Barrow Borough. An outline of the scope of this site, but potentially subject to alteration, is described below. (Planning permission has been approved – with restrictions.)

2.7. DUDDON VALLEY CENTRE

The **owner's** original outlines for the site's development are listed in the following sections. This is broadly supported by the Parish Council.

'A Scheme for redeveloping a large factory site to provide a vibrant centre for Culture, Tourism and Manufacturing Business Development in the South Lakes'

The site is an 85,000 square feet site in partly wooded surroundings, near the railway station, in the centre of Askam & Ireleth. Currently it is partly occupied by Urofoam – a manufacturing company (www.urofoam.co.uk). The factory was a former 'K' Shoes factory, which closed in 1997 with the loss of 252 jobs.

The vision encompasses:

- 1) Establish a **major visitor attraction** with a target in excess of 200,000 visits per year, within part of the excess factory space.
- 2) Small manufacturing business start-up units with full on-site business support infrastructure, shop windows for the products, sales development assistance and mentoring to accelerate the growth of the new businesses to maturity.
- 3) A community-based 'Resource Centre' serving and addressing the needs of two main constituency groups, older/retired and young school age people.
- 4) To landscape the front and rear areas of the factory grounds to make them attractive assets, sited as they are in the centre of Askam & Ireleth. The front area will include additional car parking space. This development will have a positive impact on the appearance of the central section of the villages and builds upon the previous environmental enhancements that have taken place in recent years.

Further details on items 1–3 are provided below.

2.7.1. Visitor Attraction

The area suitable for development measures approximately 11,000 sq ft. The centrepiece would be a major 'Art Gallery' – over 5,000 sq ft concentrating on Contemporary Art, from all around the UK. With provocative and thought-provoking work, the gallery will be promoted as a destination for visitors from all over the Northwest and, particularly significant, another large wet-weather attraction for Furness. The floor space and the building's construction lend themselves to this application, giving a layout which will be largely unique outside city centre galleries. This will give artists producing large format work the opportunity to show a full collection.

Interactive displays using modern computers and print technology will enable visitors of all ages to produce their own works on computer and output them immediately. The gallery exhibitions will be constantly rotated, some being commercial in nature and some not, to provide a constantly changing scene and thereby a reason for repeat visits!

The scarcity of Modern Art venues in the Northwest and Furness (the nearest is in Kendal) will mean that some form of introductory and educational programmes will have to be established to allow newcomers to the subject to learn and benefit.

Other features may include:

- A section for more conventional Lake District art featuring local artists, of whom there are many of high calibre
- High quality retail support outlets linked to products manufactured or created on the site (like Colony Candles) demonstrating Cumbrian arts, craft, leather ware and specialist local foodstuffs
- A specialist indoor plant centre, concentrating on cacti, bonsai trees and unusual plant types
- A cafe supplying a narrow range of high quality drinks and snacks
- A local heritage display focusing on the history of Furness and the Duddon Valley area
- Factory tours demonstrating the moulding and shoemaking processes that take place currently in the factory – with additional opportunities to view the operation of any new business start-up units where appropriate

The site is on one level making disabled access convenient.

2.7.2. Business Development Centre (modular, up to 20,000 sq ft)

Appropriate businesses, either at the start-up stage or early in their development, will be offered factory space. They will have full bookkeeping support and business advice from Urofoam staff. Their products can be promoted via Urofoam's national sales network and they will have the opportunity to show their products within the Visitor Centre element of the site.

The type of businesses that would be supported would be manufacturing based, ideally with product ranges compatible with Urofoam's markets, as the assistance in sales development is seen as a valuable contribution to a new business situation. The businesses chosen for this scheme would be those that have the capacity for future growth.

2.7.3. Community 'Resource Centre'

To evaluate the potential demand for a centre to provide:

- a) Non-academic based learning and experience, focused towards the needs of older people, either retired or by choice not in full-time employment.
- b) A learning/interpretative centre based around the local Sites of Special Scientific Interest, with particular emphasis on the work of English Nature and the National Trust at Sandscale Haws. The centre would relate to the wildlife conservation and the diversity of the habitat in the Duddon Valley and Estuary and also allow eco-tourism to be sensitively promoted.



3. ENVIRONMENTAL

3.1. OVERVIEW

Askam & Ireleth sit on the eastern shore of the Duddon Estuary, a significant tidal expanse and the home for a huge population of wading birds and uniquely at Roanhead (Sandscale Haws), home to approximately 12% of the UK population of Natterjack Toads.



The coastal fringe from Dunnerholme in the north to Roanhead (as shown above) in the south is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Sandscale Haws site at Roanhead is owned and managed by the National Trust with a dedicated local warden.

Askam, with its ad-hoc development and then its slow decline of iron ore mining and smelting (the Ironworks was not reclaimed until the 1980s) still suffers from both pockets and large areas of under-used and derelict land which need to be reclaimed in some form. The other consequence of Askam's development is that it has areas of land where the landowner is unknown.

The Parish Council wants to encourage a more environmentally acceptable approach to the use of allotment 'Pens'.



The landscape itself has adapted to the ravages of industrial exploitation, with eighty years of neglect allowing nature to reclaim the land for itself. If you saw this view at the turn of the last century you would have seen Woodhead pit. Today it shows how nature has recovered the area into a unique habitat.

The focus groups identified the following areas of land which need to be improved:

- Derelict mine workings to the south of the Lots (b)
- Beach Street/Sharp Street (c)
- Gateways to the villages (in part j)
- Land on Dalton Road alongside the railway line (g)
- Lots Social Club land (a)
- Commonhest (h)
- Old Whinfield Allotments (d)
- Field between cenotaph and bus stop toilets (e)

3.2. SITE LOCATIONS



3.3. ACCESS TO THE LOTS BEACH AND SANDSCALE HAWS (A)

As part of a deliberate management policy, the size of the car park at Sandscale Haws has been limited to 20 parking places. This, however, does create a problem as it is very quickly filled and there is no local overflow parking available.

We can create the provision of overflow car parking at the Lots which would have the following benefits:

- a) Provision of car park and toilets would encourage walkers/cyclists to park at Askam and walk through to Sandscale overland or along the beach as a nice easy walk of about 2 miles
- b) Improve utilisation of Lots sports field and playground area
- c) Help to reduce traffic flow on Hawthwaite Lane and also nuisance/illegal car parking

This proposal is also endorsed by the National Trust. It also fits within the objectives of the 'Building the Future' programme.

3.4. LAND SOUTH OF THE 'LOTS' (B)

This land, although now farmed, was mined for iron during the boom period of Askam in the 19th century. The land in many places still shows the scars of this activity and in places needs sympathetic regeneration. The coastal strip of land around Black's Pond (formerly an air shaft for Woodhead Pit) is a SSSI and needs to have an active management plan put in place by the landowner.

3.5. POCKET PARKS

These small sites tucked away around the village (examples being Beach Street and Harris Street) are part of the work undertaken by the Parish Council to improve the general aspects and look of land around the community. This work can continue on an ad-hoc basis when sites are identified and the Parish Council has funds available to implement. The areas of land around the Duddon Inshore Rescue building and Duddon Road car park are candidate sites.

3.6. LAND ALONGSIDE THE RAILWAY LINE ON DALTON ROAD (G)



The site, as a gateway to the villages, is badly overgrown and to the passing visitor through the village badly detracts from the excellent work that has taken place over the last few years. The site, which is owned by the 'railways', needs to be cleared and then either properly maintained or sublet as a few allotments. It would also be incredibly beneficial if this site could have a pavement along its length.

3.7. BUS STOP FIELD (E)

This site has been identified by many residents as being of value to the community and there is a desire that this should be reflected in the local Borough Plan. The site, it is felt, could be the ideal venue for a future community facility, sited as it is between the bus stop and the local cenotaph. The suggestions for this site include a new community facility and/or a recycling area with car park, a bus turning area and a youth shelter.



3.8. COMMONHEST, SAVES LANE (H)

The Commonhest is the original common, but is currently badly overgrown. It is also the site for a children's playground. This site needs to have the trees thinned out and a management plan drawn up.



3.9. LAND BETWEEN BEACH AND SHARP STREET (C)

The site has been the subject of several attempts to implement comprehensive improvements. In 1976, this area was identified by Barrow Borough Council as being a site to be considered as a General Improvement Area. The imperative for the site is still a viable land management plan, if its SSSI designation is not to be lost and it is not then to be subject to wholesale housing development.



The Parish Council did try to broker a land swap to bring the SSSI into local ownership and allow limited development on the Duke Street end of the site. This scheme was opposed by a vocal section of the adjoining local community, but the silent majority did not get involved and so the Parish Council withdrew from the scheme.

Because of the 'laissez faire' attitude of the landowners, some of the residents who live in the vicinity of the site and have unrestricted and unfettered use of the land, express the wish for the status quo to be maintained. However, as the amount of open 'brown space' in Askam is diminishing, the pressure to develop this land will increase. For the owner of the SSSI section, the impending designation as a 'Special Area of Conservation' will also require that the owner adequately conserves the habitat.

This still remains a critical issue for the future of Askam if the site, which could be an excellent public amenity, is not to be lost and so a solution still needs to be found. The site is suitable for inclusion in the countywide Derelict Land Improvement Schemes and should be progressed by the landowners.

3.10. LAND ALONGSIDE THE NEW ROAD (F)



Whilst in some terms purely cosmetic, it is perceived as detracting from the wider improvements that have been made in Askam. This strip of land is poorly maintained and completely overrun. Older residents say that in the past the Borough cut and maintained this entire expanse of land and this would improve it now. However, it would also leave it vulnerable to increased dog fouling. It would also help if this scheme was scoped into a wider village gateway improvement programme, encompassing the Lots Road as well.

3.11. OLD WHINFIELD ALLOTMENTS SITE (D)

This site, by Askam Village School, was for over 60 years the main home for the villages' allotments. Sadly, an error allowed the site to be returned from a local authority lease to the private landowner. Finally, the landowner cleared the site of all the allotments and sold it to a local housing developer as part of their land bank. Within the villages, this site is still considered as the best place for allotments and therefore this site should be ultimately preserved as allotments for the villages. The site is now badly overgrown and neglected.

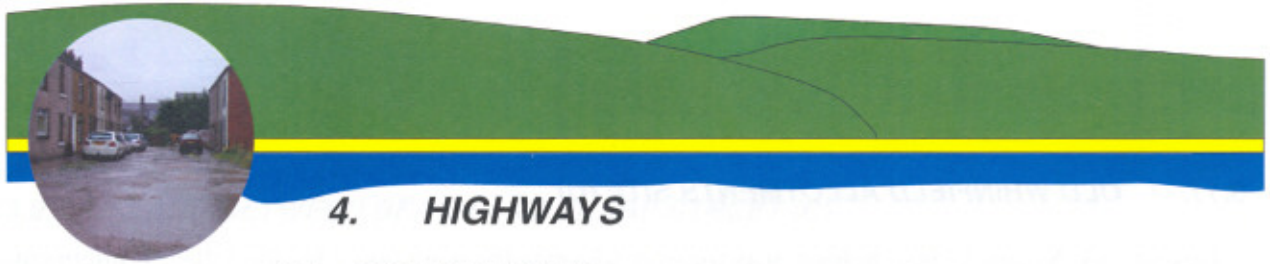


The Parish Council has the right to request a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire a site for allotments under section 25 of the 1908 Smallholding and Allotments Act. This request can be channelled through the local district council, but all costs would be borne by the Parish Council. A further needs analysis should be conducted first and the level of funding support that the Borough Council would offer should be established. (No District Council provided allotments in Askam & Ireleth.) Additionally, negotiations should be held with the landowner to see if a sale at a fair price can be achieved without the need for a CPO. However, during a previous discussion with the landowner, they indicated a preference for retaining ownership. If in public ownership, the site would be suitable for inclusion in the countywide Derelict Land Improvement Schemes.

3.12. GENERAL ASPECTS AND GATEWAYS TO THE VILLAGES

The entrances to the villages have superb views of the Lake District National Park and the Duddon Estuary. However, it may be time to renovate these gateways if eco-tourism is likely to be encouraged; given their currently 'run down' feel, the adage that 'first impressions last' is important. The suggestions for improvements include:

- 1) Railing painting
- 2) Hedge cutting
- 3) Realignment and widening of Lots Road
- 4) Strategic signs at Paradise, along with a viewing area
- 5) Improvement to corridors like Dalton Road, Ireleth Road and New Road
- 6) Land to the rear of the Temperance Hall and the pathway to St Peter's School



4. HIGHWAYS

4.1. UNMADE ROADS

Askam is probably best known for the issue of unmade roads. Ironically it wasn't meant to be like this. Our Victorian forefathers had a grand plan with a complete grid of streets and even squares. The rapid rise and fall, combined with poor geology, allowed only a partial implementation before the boom was over. Consequently the villages, particularly Askam, were left with well over a mile of unmade roads.

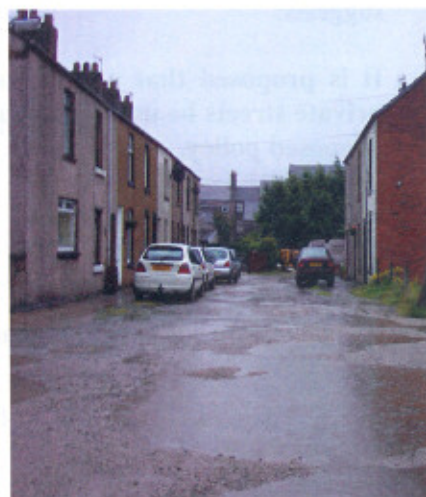
Over the years, roads have been adopted with significant good work from the County Council and other funders. This is a difficult issue with no easy solutions and several roads still need to be made up and adopted. The major roads are shown and listed below (many back streets are also unmade).



LOCATIONS OF UNMADE ROADS

4.1.1. *Extent of the Problem*

The extent of the problem and suffering caused by unmade roads can be seen in the following pictures of Lord Street and John Street respectively. In summer the residents suffer from dust and in winter, puddles. In the case of both John Street and Lord Street these roads do provide/support access to public facilities, the Community Field and Rugby Field in the case of the former and access to and from the Library and pedestrian access to the Band Hall and Rugby Field for Lord Street.



For a scheme to succeed it must have the full and committed support of the residents. Without this, adoption is unlikely to happen.

4.1.2. *Rough Estimate of Costs*

Road	Length (m)	Area (sq m)	Estimated cost (£)
Askam View	85	690	70,380
Duddon View	35	280	26,880
John Street	110	900	91,800
Lord Street	85	784	80,000
Marsh Street	110	950	96,500
Steel Street	60	490	49,980
Total			415,540

Using £102/m² (based on Sandy Lane costs – 2002)

Some success has been made in recent years, with significant funding from the County Council along with additional funding from the Borough and Parish Councils and, most importantly, the residents themselves. However, this progress has now been stalled due to the pressures on the County Council Highways budget. Of these schemes, Duddon View and Marsh Street are potentially the lowest priority and in fact Duddon View may be self-financing as both sides of this road have terraced properties.

In the 2002 Local Transport Plan Report (LTP), chapter 5, item 86, For Making up of Private Streets, it suggests:

It is proposed that a previous resolution of the County Council regarding the making up of private streets be used as the basis of a policy in the next LTP. Views are invited on the following proposed policy.

HN24: Private Street Works The Council will contribute up to 50% of the cost of the works required to bring a road up to an adoptable standard:

- The road is a through road
- There is a high density of development along the road
- The road has a derelict appearance with a significant visual impact
- The road is prominent in the landscape

Making up private streets has benefits for the safety and convenience of users and more generally for economic development.

For Askam & Ireleth, the rigorous implementation of this policy would mean that only Lord Street/Back Crossley Street, a revised and combined John Street/Crossley Street and the completion of Steel Street, as a route to the beach and Duddon Inshore Rescue, would be viable schemes as through roads.

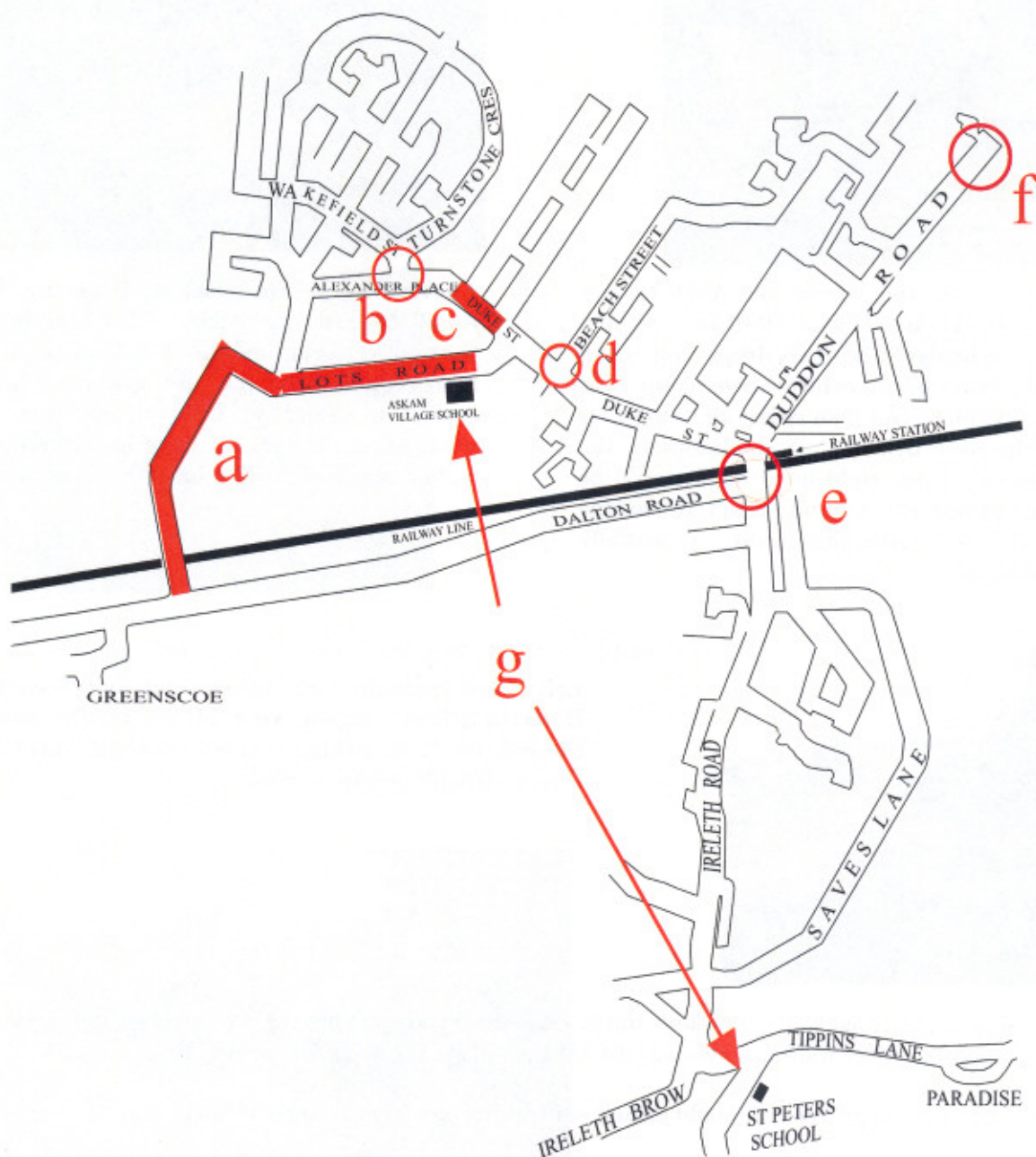
We need to influence the County Council policy makers to review the prioritisation of the adoption of unmade roads within the parish, in relation to their budget.

4.2. HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

During consultations the following roads have been highlighted as being in need of improvement:

- a) Lots Road from Askam School to the junction with the A595
- b) Junction of Wakefield Street/Alexander Place
- c) Duke Street between Sharp Street and Steel Street
- d) Road junction at Beach Street/Duke Street
- e) Dalton Road (A595) junction with the railway crossing
- f) Flooding on Duddon Road near the toilets and car park
- g) Parking provision at both schools and visibility onto A595 at Ireleth School

4.2.1. Location of Road Improvements



4.2.2. Lots Road from Askam School to the junction with the A595 (a)

Since the 1990s, with the advent of the Parklands estate, the use of this road has increased dramatically. Today we are left with a road suffering from subsidence, with no pavement and being elevated at the Lots Bridge to allow a crossing of a non-existent railway line. In short, a road designed for Victorian needs serving the 21st century. The road is very narrow, with bad visibility and unnecessary gradients. For many residents it is the shortest route to the main road (the A595) and, therefore, the one they use.



Above: The route from the A595 crosses the Cumbria Coastal Railway at the 'White Bridge' and then drops to a sharp right-hand bend, before opening up to a passing place and then rising up to the Lots Bridge (see below). As a minimum, the removal of this right-hand bend would be of great benefit. As a minimum, the bridge needs strengthening and potentially widening.



Above: View of road looking from the 'Lots Road' towards the A595. This is a throw-back to Victorian design of Askam when the road connection to the Lots was via a bridge over the railway line which fed the Ironworks. Today, we have an unnecessary incline combined with a bad 90 degree bend.



Left: View from the Lots bus stop (at New Road/Lots Road junction). Again, view of the incline looking towards the 'Lots Bridge'. In wintry conditions this is a very difficult section of road.

At this point the road splits, with Lots traffic (includes Parklands) turning off onto the New Road and the rest of the village traffic continuing past Askam Village School before joining Duke Street.

Any large scale improvement should include car parking provision at Askam Village School.

4.2.3. Junction of Wakefield Street/Alexander Place (b)



This junction is the main feeder from the Parklands estate into Askam itself. It is the route to the shops and the school. The junction suffers from a very tight bend onto a narrow section of road, with the Wakefield Street gradient to Alexander Place being significant, particularly in ice and snow. Damage to walls has been caused by cars slipping across the junction.

View of junction from Alexander Place towards the 'Lots'.

4.2.4. Duke Street between Sharp Street and Steel Street (c)



The majority of Duke Street has been resurfaced following the repair of the main sewer. However the section of Duke Street between Sharp Street and Steel Street is still pitted and needs to be surfaced.

View of Duke Street looking towards Sharp Street junction.

The section of resurfaced roadway can be seen where the road markings start. The puddled and pitted section of roadway which still needs to be improved is in the foreground.

4.2.5. Road junction at Beach Street/Duke Street (d)

This road junction is at the end of the row of shops and now feeds an entry/exit from the 'Headlands estate'. It suffers from congestion due to parking being permitted very close to the junction on both Duke Street and, particularly, Beach Street. This junction will need to be looked at closely if the Beach Street/Sharp Street site is ever developed.



View of junction from Beach Street looking towards Duke Street.

4.2.6. Dalton Road (A595) junction with the railway crossing (e)

This junction is easily congested when trains arrive and depart and also at other busy times of the day.



The turning bay from Ireleth over the railway crossing has also narrowed the road on the railway line side of the road. This has exacerbated the problem, with overgrown trees and vegetation forcing pedestrians further into the roadway, as this section lacks a pavement and a suitable crossing point for residents walking from Dalton Road into Askam.

4.2.7. Flooding on Duddon Road near the toilets and car park (f)



The highway at Duddon Road near the toilets floods very easily as the highway seems to lack suitable drainage.

4.2.8. *Parking provision at both schools and visibility at Ireleth School (g)*

The modern trend for parents to drop off their child at school has placed an increased amount of pressure on the roads around the schools. In bad weather this is greatly increased. Parking provision at both schools is very limited, four off-road spaces at Ireleth along with spaces on the road side for another 10 cars and no off-road provision at Askam School with road side parking for 20-30 cars in the immediate vicinity. This parking causes congestion of the bus route.



View of Moor Road outside Ireleth School viewed from junction with the A595. Roadside parking normally takes place on the right-hand side.



Lots Road outside Askam Village School. On a busy school day this road can be very easily blocked. The widening of the road and provision of a footway should increase safe walking to school.



This is the driver's view of the A595/Moor Road junction. This is the boundary of Ireleth School and just round the corner is the 30 mph speed limit sign. For the driver, this junction can be very intimidating as the visibility is very limited.

4.3. *STREET LIGHTING*

There is a general feeling that the lighting in areas like Duke Street is inadequate. It creates an air of apprehension for the older members of the community when faced by large groups of youths. For some it even prevents them from going out at night.

Additionally in Ireleth, the type of lighting standard is considered to be out of keeping with the Ireleth conservation area.

The Parish Council has agreed to commission a survey of street lighting in Askam & Ireleth which would form the basis of any proposal for improvement.

4.4. ROAD SIGNS

There are problems with the following signs or the lack of them:

- a) Playground warning sign needed at Harris Street and 'The Headlands'
- b) 'Look Left' and 'Look Right' signs should be painted on the tarmac at the crossing on the Lots road at its junction with Duke Street, to make it safer for the younger school children
- c) Sign on A595 near the railway crossing to highlight the location of the village shops/public conveniences



4.5. LOTS ROAD FOOTWAY

As discussed earlier, this road is a route for people walking to Dalton and also the way which some children use when walking home from secondary school if they have missed one of the limited number of buses which connect Askam and Dalton.



Shown left is a typical situation of parents pushing a pram with two vehicles travelling in different directions. As stated earlier, this road suffers from bad visibility and the lack of a pavement exacerbates this situation.



5. HOUSING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

5.1. TYPE AND MIX

Askam & Ireleth has a vast mix of housing stock from the £20,000 terrace to the £250,000 executive home. On the whole, there is no distinct characteristic except for the use of 'slate grey' roofs.



An area identified as being lacking was sheltered housing for older residents, with the existing provision at Whinfield Place being inadequate. Future planning policy should, if possible, address this issue.

5.2. DEVELOPMENT CORDON AND FUTURE PLANNING POLICY

Askam has seen a huge increase in new homes over the last 15 years. The community is reluctant to accept additional housing development within Askam & Ireleth, as it will be detrimental to the character of the villages.

For future planning policy, the following concerns of local residents should be looked at closely:

- 1) Existing development cordon to be retained except at Askam View, where current cordon including the field should be moved to exclude the field
- 2) Bus stop field identified as a strategic site for future community benefit
- 3) Old Whinfield allotments area to be returned to allotment use
- 4) SSSI areas to be preserved
- 5) Any future small/medium-sized development on the 'Lots'/Lots Road to include the provision for the strategic realignment and widening of the Lots Road
- 6) Planning policy to be used to support the making up and adoption of roads
- 7) 'Slate Grey' roofs to be considered the norm
- 8) The villages need to remain as a working village, so an increase in the number and variety of shops and businesses is needed. The Urofoam site should be the focal point for industrial development.
- 9) Any new developments should give a high priority to the type and mix of housing and should be highly focused on sympathetic integration into the existing surroundings. New developments should also be leveraged to improve/create informal open space and play areas.
- 10) The Ireleth conservation area needs to be enforced, with replacement doors and windows retaining their original scale and details

The following features are important to the topography and landscape of the parish:

- 1) The Duddon Estuary and Lakeland hills
- 2) The Dales, though not entirely natural, are an important part of the history of the area. We need to ensure that there is adequate provision to protect these historic fields.
- 3) Dunnerholme Rock
- 4) Askam Wood, known locally as 'Birds Wood' and the open fields that surround it
- 5) The open fields north of Saves Lane. This may in future be designated a wildlife area for birds.



6. VILLAGE LIFE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

6.1. COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Within the villages there are several community assets. These include:

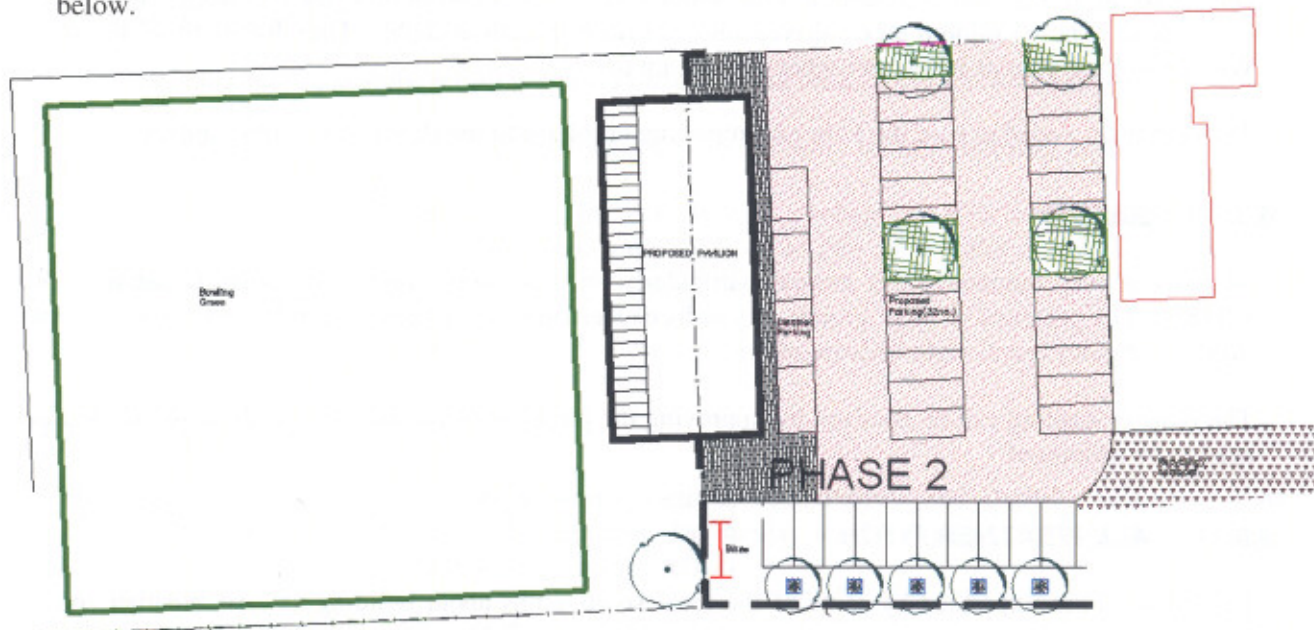
Rankin Hall	Temperance Hall
Band Hall	Community Centre
Duddon Road Church Centre	Ireleth School Community Sports Hall
Rugby Club	Football Club
Duddon Sports and Social Club	

These facilities support a variety of groups and activities in the villages. The challenge for those responsible for all these buildings is to keep them up and running and used, in the light of impending disabled access legislation.

The Community Centre will shortly be used as the venue for a 'wraparound' nursery and after school club. This will increase the use of the building and also justify significant renovation and modernisation work. A recent dilapidation survey of the Community Centre indicated it required £11,000 spending to correct immediate issues with the fabric and structure of the building. Additional work will be required to improve the building for this increased daily use.

6.2. COMMUNITY FIELD

The Community Field is the central site in the village used for recreational sport and play. It currently supports the excellent community-built bowling green and a new play area and skate park, completed during a phase I improvement. Phase II of this scheme includes the removal of the old scout hut, with its asbestos roof, and the building of a new car park and bowling pavilion/store. This building will also help serve the new play area. An initial overview of the main phase II development is shown below.



6.3. LITTER AND DOG FOULING

A common complaint from many residents is the amount of general litter and dog fouling that is present around the villages, particularly Duke Street. Residents expressed the desire for effective deterrents/cleansing.

The Parish Council has been providing free bags for dog owners at a few premises around the villages to encourage the irresponsible dog owners to become more community spirited. Suggested sites for additional litter bins were:

- a) *Avocet Crescent (Pier end)*
- b) *Dalton Road – periodically along the length of the road to the Lots Road*
- c) *Lots Road*
- d) *New Road*
- e) *Duddon Road*

6.4. POLICING

Askam no longer has its own 'bobby'. It now shares an officer with several other villages from Broughton Mills in the north to Aldingham in the south. We are, therefore, left with 'cavalry' policing, i.e. Police rush into the village in response to an incident.

Residents felt that this was poor. They would prefer to see occasional foot patrols as a means of creating and emphasising a police presence and also as a means of giving the officers a public face, helping to generate a safer community. During the last few months Askam & Ireleth have seen an increased police presence on some weekend evenings and this has helped. The proposed Mobile Police Station is also a welcome start to addressing these issues.

The problems expressed about underage drinking and potential use of drugs require a more pro-active policing approach if these types of problems are to be 'nipped in the bud'. Prevention is better than cure. Like all things, this is a general issue with today's society and in this case the proper supervision of children. These children aren't driven into Askam & Ireleth at night. They live here all the time. Why don't their parents know/care what they are up to?

The community need to help the Police by reporting problems to the Police when they happen.

6.5. SAFETY

Sections of the community feel unsafe, particularly on dark winter nights in poorly lit areas of the villages. The presence of large groups of youths exacerbates this situation even further. Some people even avoid going out at night because of this.

The issue of lighting can be resolved by improving the poorly lit sections. The needs of the youth also need to be addressed.

6.6. ALL WEATHER PITCH

Interest has been expressed by some of the local sports clubs about building an 'All Weather' pitch. Further investigative work is required to see if this scheme is viable and sustainable.



7. TRANSPORT LINKS

7.1. OVERVIEW

The Parish Council supports the use of public transport as a means for ensuring that rural communities are not isolated. This is particularly important for youth and elderly who may not have access to a private car.

7.2. BUS

The principal bus services for Askam & Ireleth are as follows:

X7 Barrow to Millom (occasionally only as far as Kirkby)

D1 Dalton – Askam Runabout Transport (DART) linking Askam Station to Dalton Station via South Lakes Wild Animal Park

School Bus service linking Askam & Ireleth to the various local schools, primarily to Dowdales School, Dalton

The X7 is typically a 1 hour service during the daytime, with a more sporadic service in the evenings. The last bus back to the villages is 11.20 pm.

During the school holidays this bus service is extensively used in the mornings and it has been known for the bus to be full by the time it reaches the 'Lots' and unable to take all the waiting passengers, the unfortunate 'passengers' having to wait another hour for the next bus.

The DART bus only runs in the summer (April to October) and has been funded by the NWDA, local Parish Councils and South Lakes Wild Animal Park.

The concerns raised during the consultation process were as follows:

- 1) Lack of a bus link to Dalton
- 2) Early morning (night shift) return journey around 8.30 am back to Askam from Barrow
- 3) Special transport connection to/from Dowdales School (Open evenings/Saturday mornings)
- 4) Transport link from Askam to Furness General Hospital, probably as selective deviations from the normal X7 service at peak time morning/afternoon or as part of a wider Askam/Dalton/Barrow linked service
- 5) Increased bus services 10 am – 2 pm to Barrow

7.3. TRAIN

The railway service uses the Cumbria coastal route between Barrow and Carlisle, although certain services only run as far as Millom or Workington. No Sunday service is provided. The Parish Council is a member of the Furness Line Action Group (FLAG).

7.4. GREENWAYS

The desire to see more work and recreational cycle routes through Askam from Kirkby to Barrow has been already identified as part of the Furness Greenways demonstration project. This still seems a popular view and some workers are already informally using the Lots to Roanhead section. This desire must be set against the need to deliver a 'value for money' scheme.

7.5. FOOTPATHS

The villages have an abundance of footpaths and some of these offer the opportunity for excellent and unparalleled views of the Lake District and Duddon Estuary.

A local group, affiliated to the Parish Council, was formed to survey the local footpaths and also produce guides. However the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak curtailed their activity. This work to produce footpath guides must be restarted.

Within the village there are still several routes where the rights of way need adding to the definitive rights of way map. The path from Beach

Street to Lord Street via the Band Hall car park is one such route.

Additionally, a circular route could be created by an extension and improvement of two public footpaths at Nook Lane, Paradise and Moor Road.





8. YOUTH

8.1. OVERVIEW

Askam & Ireleth have an abundance of sporting groups: cricket, golf, rugby league, football, etc. Each tends to have its own purpose built facilities. In most cases these clubs also support youth/junior sections which are the future life-blood of the clubs. Whilst these organised activities offer some focus, Askam & Ireleth is very poorly equipped to provide access to activities for young people to develop their interests outside school.

There is limited opportunity to offer the young people what they really want: their 'own space' unfettered and probably unsupervised. This is probably the traditional problem that faces communities and, therefore, this is a challenge that we must try to address.

Apparently, the latest research by the Home Office indicates that the average age of offending starts at 13½ for boys and 14 for girls, with a peak age of 15. If no provision is made for this group then they will meet in places where the rest of the community may feel it is unsuitable, probably play areas and, in Askam's case, somewhere dry where they can meet (Duke Street toilets/Bus stop shelter).

Recently, a problem with underage drinking was identified and discussions have taken place with the major players (Police, pubs, off-licences, secondary school and Parish Council). This is part of the reason why the issue of youth has such a raised priority within the community.

In the previous 5 year plan, the major youth issue was boredom. Young people cited having nowhere to go and limited opportunities for indoor sports for girls. The latter part of this may now have been addressed with Ireleth School having gained a Community Hall capable of holding badminton and short tennis. The comments on boredom and 'nowhere to go' still remain. It is a consistent theme through the questionnaires completed by our youth, the main points relating to 'lack of facilities' and no space of their own.

Some of Askam & Ireleth's youth are disaffected and causing anti-social behaviour. No single initiative on its own will solve these issues, however 'prevention is better than cure', and a raft of actions need to be implemented together. For any of these schemes to work they need to be owned by the youth themselves.

8.2. YOUTH CLUB

The Parish Council supports a youth club running on a Thursday night for 2 hours. This is run by a part-time youth worker employed by the County Council's library service with support from some dedicated local volunteers, without whom the club could not continue. Attendance at the Club is in excess of 25 children and some weeks is up to 50. A youth advisor liaises between the youth club and the Parish Council.

8.3. YOUTH SPACE

The issue of a venue for youth has been discussed at a few Parish Council meetings and this is still under review. History shows that if no suitable place is provided the youth will use what existing facilities are available, i.e. playgrounds and bus stops and, in the case of playgrounds, little respect is shown for the play equipment and it is more likely to be damaged than 'played on'. The youth tend to congregate around their 'own' place, the bus stop opposite Askam Co-op.



Effectively the 'bus stop' is a teenage shelter, as it has been for several generations of Askam youth. The picture opposite shows a typical winter night. The previous attempt to use the old scout hut failed because it was deemed unsuitable without significant investment.

The following analysis is from 'Youth Shelters and Sports Systems – A Good Practice Guide'.

The benefits of a youth shelter for the youth include:

- A place to go that is non-confrontational
- Facilitates young people's development by learning about independence and socialising
- Develops involvement and pride in their neighbourhood
- Is a constructive rather than destructive experience
- Reduces boredom if associated with a sports facility
- Removes a possible first step towards crime
- Team games provide a physical outlet for emotions and energy
- All round visibility allows users to feel safe

The benefits of a youth shelter for the community include:

- Reduced damage, graffiti, crime and fear of crime
- Enhanced community harmony
- Children's play areas remain undamaged and useable
- Reduced maintenance costs

8.4. 'BUILDING BONDS'

The congregating of young people at night has also been identified, possibly unfairly, as intimidating for a section of the community, especially more elderly people. In some cases it has deterred people from going out. It is also apparent that some young people when challenged by older elements of the community tended to respond in a foul and abusive manner.

We need to try and create bonds between the youth and the OAPs. The recent, extremely enjoyable and well presented, intergenerational arts project combining both of these groups may be a potential avenue for this, as is the suggestion of inviting small groups of OAPs to Dowdales School for a visit and food prepared by young people.



8.5. FOCUS OUR YOUTH: 'A DREAMSCHEME'

'It's dead boring here.' 'There's nothing to do in Askam.' 'We just bod about.'

These were consistent messages from our youth. So how do we improve the situation, as we can't provide a youth club every night and indeed the youth club does not fulfil the needs of all the youth. The answer lies elsewhere.

And what is a 'Dreamscheme'? And why is it appropriate for Askam & Ireleth?

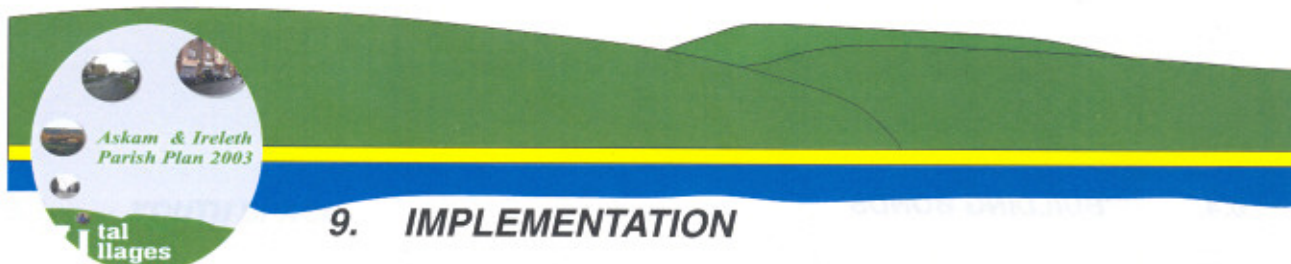
A 'Dreamscheme' is based around the concept of WORK:POINTS:TRIPS and is implemented by a small local group.

The first 'Dreamscheme' was devised and developed on Sheffield's Flower Estate between 1995 and 1998. In these three years, one hundred young people were involved in community projects. Work projects included environmental, social, creative and personal development tasks. This allowed young people to earn points that could be spent on pleasurable and sporting activities of their choice.

Young people grew to become part of the solution to the shared problems that urban life on a dysfunctional housing estate presented. The scheme provided a new sense of belonging and enabled the young people to serve the community. The Rt. Hon. David Blunkett said the following of the 'Dreamscheme':

'The scheme offers a positive way forward which is not only using the energy of young people in a way that is beneficial to them, but also creates a new sense of purpose for the community who start to believe that improvements can be brought about, behaviour changed and problems overcome.'

Since its start the 'Dreamscheme' has moved on and the model has been tested in other places like Manchester. It has also been successfully run in Cumbria at places like Wigton. Crime and vandalism have dropped and in return the youth have ownership and involvement in their own community.



9. IMPLEMENTATION

9.1. OVERVIEW

The general feeling was that the community needs to be more sustainable and 'finish off' its infrastructure. The improvements that have taken place over the last few years are very welcome and have shown that nothing is impossible. However, we still have some way to go to '*complete the job*'. They have also created an expectation that further improvements, particularly road adoptions, will come forward in the near future. This will be primarily down to the priority that the schemes have with the major funder, Cumbria County Council.

The hole created by the closure of the K Shoes factory in Askam has never been fully filled and the impending job losses at the BAE Systems shipyard in Barrow, GlaxoSmithKline in Ulverston and the closure of the K Shoes factory at Kendal will bring further pressure on the villages. It is certain that these 1100 plus job losses will have a detrimental impact on Askam & Ireleth.

Within the context of the continued uncertainty that surrounds the long-term employment prospects at the major employers, it is important to try and develop the economy in a variety of different ways to reduce the reliance on these major employers. This will be mainly directed by the major agencies like Furness Enterprise and the Urban/Rural Regeneration Agencies.

For Askam & Ireleth, its superb location is a selling point that needs to be carefully exploited, primarily through tourism and leisure. Its untidy industrial past needs to be transformed via environmental improvements into a clean and tidy rural village in keeping with this magnificent setting.

These improvements must not destroy the uniquely Askam features like 'Pens' as these are still a part of the heritage and culture which must be preserved. However, these should be in appropriate locations which in turn coexist with the SSSI and help preserve this unique environment.

The villages need to integrate 'newer' residents and still retain the friendly, warm nature of village life that is present today.

The following tables define the action plans to help take the community forward in the next five year period.

Theme	Economic Development			
Issue	Potential Solutions/Actions	Outputs	Funding Sources	Coordinator(s)
Industrial Development	Old K Shoes factory is only partly occupied. Potential for site to be fully utilized needs to be determined in conjunction with the site owner. Existing business usage will be more secure if more of the factory space is filled and used. Actions depend heavily upon the owner	Assessment of potential uses for the site (may be Duddon Valley Centre outline) Letting of the 20,000 sq feet unit	Site Owner, RAZ, NWDA, BBC, CCC	Site Owner, FE, Statutory Authorities
Training	Continue to promote and develop the community via lifelong learning, particularly day time Investigate the feasibility of a 'Resource Centre' to provide the infrastructure for this training and also a cyber cafe for the local youth Consider a partnership with a local educational/training organisation	2 training courses offered per year Resource Centre feasibility study completed	RAZ	AIRP
	Survey businesses to re-evaluate current needs	Updated training needs analysis	RAZ	AIRP
Employment Support	Review Rural Employment service to determine if worthwhile and, if it is, procure/develop employment service support into the villages to help unemployed/ jobseekers improve their prospects	Service provided	RAZ, New Visions	All
Shops	The number of shops along the main Duke Street section is diminishing and some of the remainder would benefit from a facelift. Potential schemes: a) Shop front improvement programme b) Investigate Rate reduction support c) Shop local campaign d) Promote shops via sign on A595 e) Investigate if a 'mini-market' could be set up	Campaign launched December 03 2 shops improved 2006		AIRP

Theme	Economic Development			
Issue	Potential Solutions/Actions	Outputs	Funding Sources	Coordinator(s)
Eco-Tourism	Continue development of footpath guides, so that additional routes are developed and promoted to encourage increased tourism and potentially revenue into the local economy Work to increase Bed & Breakfast provision	5 new footpath guides produced Increased capacity for stay-overs	RAZ, CA, New Visions	AIPC
	Develop 'Greenway' link(s) through the villages	Improved access to the countryside, route to work	CA	Furness Greenways, AIRP
	Provide 'Lots' access centre to allow walking access to the nationally important Sandscale Haws nature reserve without detrimental impact on the site	New car parking and toilets facility	New Visions, RAZ, CA	BBC, AIRP
	Investigate the viability of a Pony Trekking business in the parish			
Community Centre	Improve the building structure and facilities in the community centre to allow increased use of the building –for a Childcare Facility	Upgrade facility – Childcare initiative supported	RAZ, CA	AIRP
What's On	Help market community businesses to the community via update to the Community Directory/Open Night	Increased use of assets	RAZ, New Visions	AIRP
Rural Transport	Bus transport to the nearest town is sporadic and special connections are required to support access to out-of-school activities, hospital services and shopping	New Rural Transport initiative	CA, RAZ	AIRP

Theme	Environmental Improvements			
Issue	Potential Solutions/Actions	Outputs	Funding Sources	Coordinator(s)
Site Improvement Programme	Improvement of identified sites	Programme of agreed site improvements agreed	RAZ, NWDA, BBC, CCC	
Gateway Improvement Plan	Improve the village gateways to create a clean and well-kept aspect, as first impressions last	Gateway Improvement Plan Strategic signage to highlight attractions/facilities	NWDA, New Visions, RAZ	All
Allotment Survey	Survey community to determine the demand and support for creating a new large allotment site	Assessment of demand for new allotments Help reduce pressure on SSSI		AIRP, AIPC
Road Adoption	Several unmade roads still need to be adopted. Road adoption has a significantly positive impact on the general feel and appearance of the villages, in turn helping to create a better and more attractive village infrastructure for local residents and visitors alike	1 viable road scheme identified and taken forward to CCC	RAZ, CCC, BBC, AIPC	AIRP
Lighting	Quality of lighting needs investigation from both an efficiency and deterrence viewpoint	Lighting Survey	BBC Crime & Disorder Partnership	AIPC
Litter/Fouling	Increase the number of Litter Bins Provide dog waste bags Organise a 'Tidy up your Community' campaign Run an annual beach clean	Reduction in Litter/Fouling	AIPC	AIPC

Theme	Highways			
Issue	Potential Solutions/Actions	Outputs	Funding Sources	Coordinator(s)
Improvement of Lots Road	Lobby for the strategic realignment and straightening of the Lots Road as a 'Safe Way to School', village gateway	Safer road	CCC, RAZ, New Visions	AIPC
General Road Improvements	Press Highways Authority to implement a rolling improvement programme to resolve highlighted issues	2 schemes implemented	CCC	AIPC
Road Adoption	Several unmade roads still need to be adopted. Road adoption has a significantly positive impact on the general feel and appearance of the villages, in turn helping to create a better and more attractive village infrastructure for local residents and visitors alike.	1 viable road scheme identified and taken forward to CCC	RAZ, CCC, BBC, AIPC	AIRP
Street Furniture	Replacement of damaged benches with themed Parish benches	Civic Pride Matched theme	AIPC CCC BBC	AIPC

Theme	Youth			
Issue	Potential Solutions/Actions	Outputs	Funding Sources	Coordinator(s)
Dreamscheme	Engage the local youth by launching a Dreamscheme	1 part-time post created Improved community spirit	RAZ, CA	AIRP
Teenage Shelter	Provide youth with their own outdoor space in an - unobtrusive location	Identify a suitable site and a funding strategy for the shelter	CCC, AIPC	AIPC
Teenage Education	Provide Peer Training on drink and drugs	Reduced anti-social behaviour		
Integrated Community	Foster better links between the youth and older citizens through occasional visits to Dowdales School	Occasional visits to Dowdales		AIPC
	Improve Parish Council links to youth via a Youth Council	Setting up of a Youth Council		

Theme	Community Facilities			
	Potential Solutions/Actions	Outputs	Funding Sources	Coordinator(s)
Police Presence	Lobby Police to provide a COPs service in Askam	Reduction in crime	Crime & Disorder Partnership	AIPC
Community Field Phase 2	Complete the final phase of the scheme, to provide a new car park, repair railings and bowling pavilion on the site	Enhanced and improved facility Removal of a derelict and run down building	RAZ, BBC, Landfill Tax	AIRP
All Weather Pitch	Investigate the viability, location and structure to support this facility	Feasibility study	Lottery, RAZ	AIRP, Clubs
Funding Support	Help retain/develop community groups through funding support and advice	5 groups supported		AIRP

9.2. PROPOSED TIMEPHASED IMPLEMENTATION AND INDICATIVE COSTINGS

Scheme	Cost £ (K)					
Year	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Totals
Community Centre Improvement	50					50
Training Schemes	12	12	12	12	12	60
Dreamscheme	25	25	25	25	25	125
Road Adoption		80			100	180
Allotment Survey						0
Allotment Acquisition					90	90
Shop Local Campaign	2					2
Community Field Phase II		150	150			300
Shop Front Improvement Programme			20	20	10	50
Investigate Shop Rate Reduction						0
Footpath guides	1	1	1	1	1	5
Environmental Site Improvement Programme				100	100	200
Gateway Improvement Plan				100	100	200
Lighting Survey	1					1
Lighting Improvement			25	25	20	70
What's On						0
Greenway			125	100		225
Lots Beach Tourist Access Site			120			120
Rural Transport Initiative		8	8	8	8	32
Evaluate a Resource Centre						0
Business Training Needs Analysis						0
Duddon Valley Centre Feasibility		15	5			20
Duddon Valley Implementation			150	150	200	500
Review Rural Employment Service						0
Rural Employment Provision		4	4	4	4	16
Project Officer	12	12	12	13	13	62
Teenage Education		3			3	6
Integrated Community	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
Teenage Shelter				12		12
Street Furniture	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5		2
Mini Market				50	100	150
All Weather Pitch				100	50	150
Totals	104	311	658	721	836.5	2631

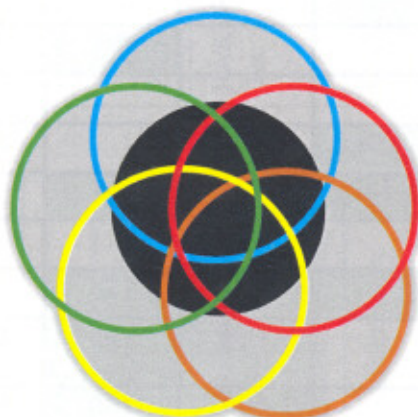


A. ANNEX A – METHODOLOGY

A.1. METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The methodology employed for this report has been to conduct an open day/evening and interviews with focus groups.

The focus groups were constructed so we could get a broad sense of what was wanted in the village. That older people do not always want what younger people want is a case in point and we hoped to get a picture of village life from these distinct viewpoints.



The groups were kept apart so as to keep this clear, distinct, undiluted message. Hopefully, in the middle, there is a common set of issues/aspirations, etc. The picture opposite, with each circle representing a different group, is indicative of the coverage of views, with the black circle intended to indicate the core views and the grey 'petals' also catching the undiluted views of each focus group.

Also by creating groups of common interest we hoped that if a real issue came up we may already have a group of people who are more likely to be motivated to do something about it.

A.1.1 Open Day

The open day event was held in the Community Centre on the main street and the residents were invited to express their opinions on a range of topics. These questions are shown in Annex B.

A.1.2 Focus Groups

Elder Citizens

Councillors

Clubs

Youth

Mother & Toddlers

The youth of secondary school age were surveyed, with the support of Dowdales School, to determine their aspirations. The questions asked are shown in Annex B.

The Parish Council's existing 5 Year Plan was also reviewed and re-appraised to see what issues were still valid and still in need of addressing and incorporating into this plan.

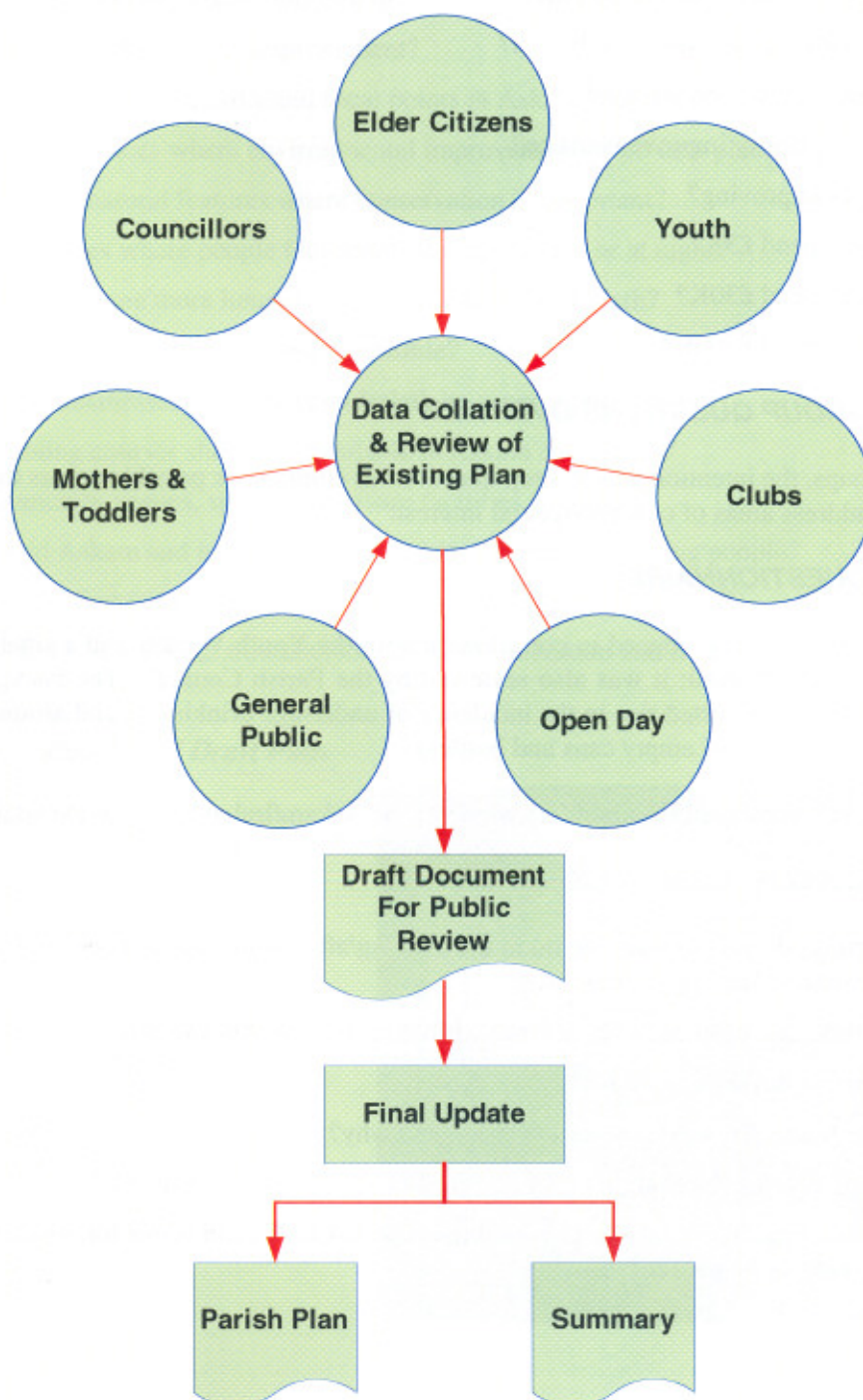
A.1.3 General Public

The questionnaire was made available, via the Parish Magazine, to the whole community to solicit their views and aspirations.

A.1.4 Report Process

The information from these groups has then been collated and compiled into the appropriate sections of the report. The draft report was then circulated for review before completion.

The report will be supplied to every household in the form of a summary (Annex C) and the complete report issued to larger organisations and placed in public places around the villages.





B. ANNEX B – QUESTIONNAIRES

B.1. OPEN DAY/EVENING FOCUS POINTS

For the Open Afternoon/Evening, the Community Centre was hired and the event which ran from 3 – 7 pm was open to general public. As well as specific areas of interest to our residents, general discussions also took place.

B.1.1 Open Day Questions

The following questions were posed:

- 1) What do you like about Askam & Ireleth?
- 2) What do you dislike about Askam & Ireleth?
- 3) What additional facilities do we need?
- 4) What should our priority improvements be?
- 5) What land needs improving?
- 6) How would you spend £3K?
- 7) How would you spend £30K?
- 8) How would you spend £300K?

B.2. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS OVERVIEW

For the Focus Groups, the intention was to keep questions as common as possible across the groups but to allow them to address areas of concern/special interest.

B.3. YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRE

The youth questionnaire was produced in consultation with the Youth Worker and a small focus group of children at Dowdales School; it was also reviewed by the Parish Council. The background to this questionnaire related to a reported rise in the incidence of under-age drinking in and around the villages (most notable by the amount of empty cans and bottles).

The questionnaire was then used to survey the whole of the Askam/Ireleth youth at Dowdales School.

B.3.1 Youth Questions

- 1) What sort of things do people your age do in the evening/after school around Askam/Ireleth?
(Organised activities, meeting friends, etc.)
- 2) Do you think there is a problem with underage drinking/drugs in Askam/Ireleth?
- 3) How would you solve these problems?
- 4) What's good in Askam/Ireleth for your age group and why?
- 5) What's not good in Askam/Ireleth for your age group and how do we change it?
- 6) What facilities do you think could be provided to make Askam/Ireleth better for young people living there? How could this be paid for?

B.4. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OTHER FOCUS GROUPS

For other focus groups a cross section of the target group was sought and they were invited to a meeting to determine their opinions and objectives. This process allows our plan to be representative of the views across the whole community. To stimulate the meetings a wide breadth of questions were posed and the answers recorded.

B.4.1 Focus Group and General Public Questions

- 1) What do you like about Askam and Ireleth?
- 2) What do you dislike about Askam and Ireleth?
- 3) How can we improve Askam and Ireleth?
- 4) What should be the priority improvement?
- 5) What are the main landmarks and focal points in Askam and Ireleth?
- 6) Are there any places where environmental improvement could take place?
- 7) Are there any natural features where conservation is important?
- 8) Are there places where people feel unsafe during the day or at night?
- 9) Do you want to see more house building in Askam and Ireleth?
- 10) Is public transport convenient and accessible?
- 11) How could businesses in Askam and Ireleth be supported?
- 12) What training courses should be available in Askam and Ireleth?
- 13) Are community venues, sports and leisure facilities adequate?
- 14) How could Askam and Ireleth be improved for children and young people?
- 15) How do you find out about events taking place in Askam and Ireleth?
- 16) How would you spend £3,000/£30,000/£300,000 in Askam and Ireleth?

B.4.2 Review of Draft Plan

An afternoon session was held in the community centre to review the draft plan on 31 January 2003. The comments raised from this session were reviewed and the plan updated accordingly.

The final draft of the plan was reviewed by the Parish Council.



Parish Plan 2003 - 2008

Summary

This document provides a summary of the new Parish Plan.

This Parish Plan has been compiled over the last year via a series of community consultation events and questionnaires. It aims to build upon the very successful Five Year Development Plan and continue to improve our community for the benefit of all.

The last Five Year Development Plan helped bring in almost £1,000,000 into Askam & Ireleth for schemes ranging from unmade roads and playgrounds to computer courses

Priorities

- 1 Economic regeneration
- 2 Unmade roads
- 3 Youth facilities
- 4 Environmental improvements
- 5 Transport improvement programme
- 6 Sporting and leisure facilities

Targets

Economic Development

With the current job uncertainty at the major employers we need to try and stimulate investment into the area as a means of creating alternative job opportunities

We also need to help retain and support our local businesses and aim to bring forward a shop front improvement programme.

Further rounds of Computer and IT training will be provided.

Unmade Roads

Some real headway has been made in this area with the adoption of Fallowfield Road, Sandy Lane and Saves Lane but the job is still unfinished and we need to continue progressing road adoption schemes.

As always, this will not be easy, **but** it can be done with all the parties working together - residents County, Borough and Parish Councils

The following leaflet was distributed around the community.



Funded By



The
Countryside
Agency

Youth Facilities

The new Play area and Skate park on the community field has provided a much needed facility for our youth.

We are aiming to provide a 'Dreamscheme', a project which reward community spirit among young people.

Continued support for the youth club

Positive interaction with older people in the community.

Environmental Improvements

Improved approaches to the villages

Tidy up open space

Allotment provision survey

Encourage civic pride

Transport Improvement Programme

Road infrastructure improvements

Improved bus link to Dalton, Furness General Hospital and other specified destinations

Continued funding for the Dalton Askam Runabout Transport (DART) bus.

Sporting and Leisure Facilities

Community Centre refurbishment

Phase II of the Community Field development

Footpath improvements and guides

Way Ahead

Our community still needs a significant investment to correct major problems like unmade roads. The cost of these projects is far greater than can be funded by any single organisation. This plan will be used to apply for grants and access funding from outside bodies.

Funding has been sought from the Rural Action Zone to allow the continued funding of a part-time project officer who can pursue these schemes for the benefit of the whole community. Funding for this purpose has already been committed by the County, Borough and Parish Councils

Copies of the full Parish Plan are available for reading at Askam Library.

Alternatively you can borrow a copy from the Clerk to the Parish Council, Mrs J. Donnelly, Tel 468841.

Published by Askam & Ireleth Parish Council