

DENTDALE

Parish Plan



A Plan for Dentdale

Survey Report and Community Action Plan

Dent and Dentdale

Dentdale is in the south-east corner of Cumbria, between the Yorkshire border and Sedbergh. Administratively in Cumbria, geologically and historically it is part of the Yorkshire Dales, and it lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It has sweeping expanses of fells; is well wooded with field systems bounded both by hedges and walls. Buildings are largely in stone, in traditional style.

The village of Dent is the main settlement, with smaller hamlets at Gawthrop and Cowgill and many free-standing farmsteads along the Dale. Unlike the valleys to the north and the south, all the roads in the Dale have sections that are single track with passing places, some of them for most of their length. Together with the narrowness of the streets in Dent village and the bridge at Stonehouse towards Dent Head, this prevents coaches and large lorries from accessing large parts of the Dale. Dent station, the highest mainline station in England, is located on the Settle-Carlisle railway, some 3.5 miles up the Dale from Dent village.

Population

The present estimate is 700 (2001 census: 675) with an older age profile than the region or nation. There are 397 households (376 in 2001 census) of which over 20% are second homes or holiday lets. There is a shortage of affordable housing for local people wanting to continue living in the Dale.

Economy

The largest single employer is Lyon Equipment, supplying equipment to the leisure, industrial and emergency service sectors. Other principal areas of economic activity are farming and building construction, and a number of artists and craftspeople find markets both locally and more widely. In recent years, a growing number of residents are professionals who work wholly or partly from home. However, the issues of access described above, together with limited building availability and variable broadband and mobile phone coverage mean that opportunities to create new businesses and employment may be more limited in scope and smaller in scale than in other places.

Farming

Farming in the Dale is primarily sheep and cattle rearing. Since the foot-and-mouth crisis of 2001 farmers in the Dale have faced a period of real adversity, with declining incomes and increasing costs; and there is widespread concern for the future, with implications for the maintenance of the environment as well as the livelihoods of the farm families.

Education

Dent Primary School currently has 36 children on the roll. Secondary education is provided in Sedbergh or Kirkby Lonsdale.

Community, Leisure and Recreation

The community has a strong commitment to voluntary action, with groups such as the Women's Institute, Over 60s and First Responders. There are several charity foundations, two Anglican churches and two Methodist chapels, whilst courses at Dent Meditation Centre explore spiritual experience from worldwide sources.

Active leisure groups include a choir and drama group, which meet in the Memorial Hall, the central meeting point for the Parish.

Football and cricket clubs use the village playing field; there is a small gym; and the half marathon Dentdale Run and two fell races attract athletes from a wide area.

The Dentdale Show and the Dent Gala are held in August and numerous fundraising events take place throughout the year.

A Plan for Dentdale

Building the Plan the process

Getting started

In March 2007 the Parish Council initiated a project to develop a Parish Plan for Dentdale at a public meeting attended by around 100 residents. A steering group for the project was formed in June 2007 with the aim of producing a sustainable plan for Dentdale that:

- safeguarded Dentdale's distinctive character
- reflected the views of its residents
- met the economic, environmental, social and cultural needs of the community

A number of working groups concentrated on background research, publicity, events, liaising with key groups (e.g. business community, farmers, children, young people, Over 60s), developing the questionnaire and writing the report.

Gathering data

Dentdale Show A stand at the Dentdale Show in August 2007 was well attended, with 34 pieces of formal feedback received, including a high proportion of visitors.

Local Businesses Of the 60 local businesses identified in Dentdale, 15% were represented at two meetings held in November 2007, and some other businesses provided their comments subsequently through one-on-one meetings with steering group representatives.

The Farming Community The views of 23 farmers and their wives were gathered through informal discussions at a 'pie and pint' evening in December 2007 at Whernside Manor.



Gathering opinions at the Dentdale Show

Over 60s Members of the steering group made a number of presentations to the Over 60s group in Dent, offering to help with completion and collection of surveys if required.

Residents' Questionnaire A questionnaire was hand-delivered to all households in Dentdale in January 2008. Its format enabled statistics as well as free-text responses to be gathered from individuals or households, and it could also be completed electronically on the Dentdale website.

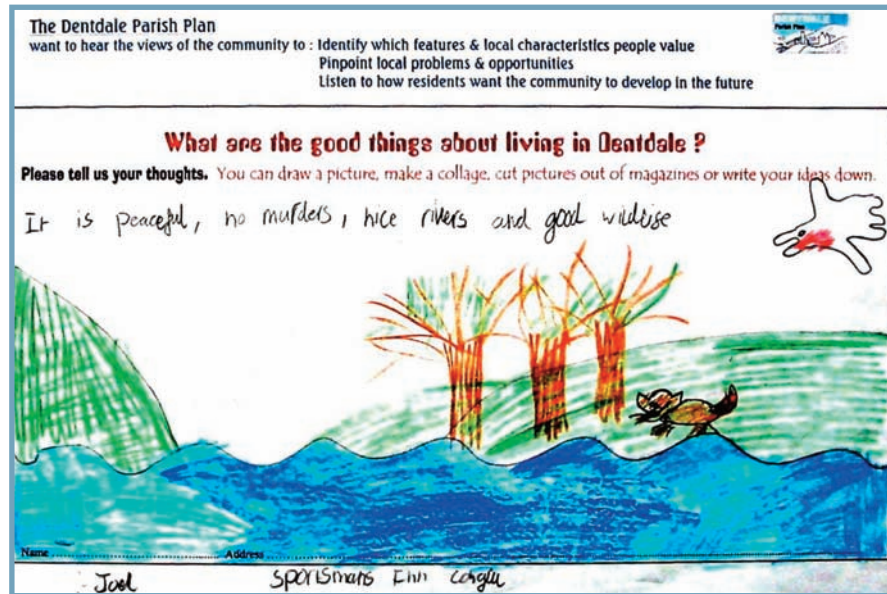
Questions covered :	Likes and Dislikes	Attitudes to Change
	Facilities & services	Environmental issues
	Leisure and recreation	Refuse and Recycling
	Transport	Dent Parish Council
	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)	

Collection points were made available throughout the Dale, and many surveys were collected by volunteers directly from households. **Of 387 questionnaires distributed 212 were returned – a response rate of 55%.**

Gathering Data

Children and Young People

105 surveys were distributed in the autumn of 2007 to young people, children at school, nursery and preschool, and parents of children under 6. The over 11 year olds were asked to contribute to a 'graffiti wall', whilst children in Dent Primary School were asked for their views as part of their group work and homework, and by volunteers who went into the school to talk to all the children in groups and ask them to draw pictures. Supervisors at the Preschool nursery talked to the children and asked them to draw pictures as well, and the parents of toddlers were asked for their views. Prizes were awarded to each age group.



What Joel liked about Dentdale



What Emily wanted for the future

Feedback

The progress of the Parish Plan was described in a series of articles on the Dentdale website, in the Lookaround magazine and in The Westmorland Gazette. In May 2008, the results of the questionnaire and consultation were presented to 75 residents who attended a public meeting in Dent, at which there was an opportunity for discussion and volunteers were invited to join a series of Community Action Groups to help implement the plan.

A Plan for Dentdale

Residents' Questionnaire Profile of Respondents

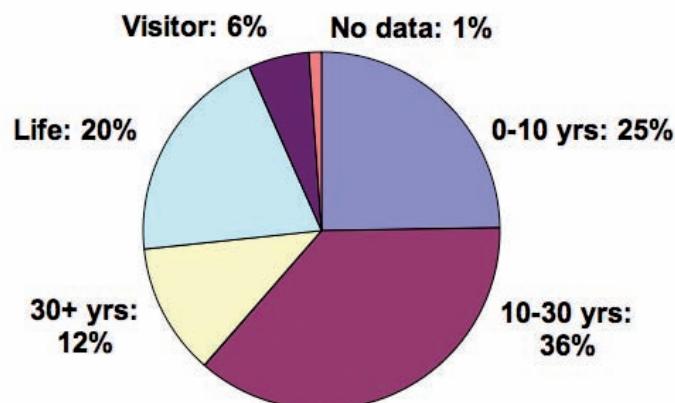
The questionnaire asked for some personal information as well as people's opinions, to establish if the respondents were a cross-section of the Dale's population as a whole. As shown below, the gender finabalance of respondents was very similar to the 2001 census figures:

	Questionnaire	2001 Census
Male	47%	51%
Female	50%	49%
No information	3%	0%

Age comparisons with the 2001 census were not possible, but 49% of respondents were aged 0-60, and 48% were over 60. Again, 3% did not provide information.

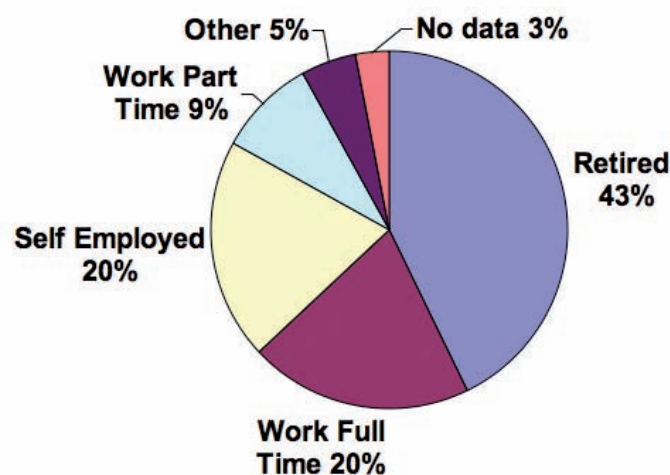
The chart below shows the length of time respondents had lived in Dentdale. 32% of them had lived here all their life or for more than 30 years, whereas 61% had lived here for 30 years or less.

Length of Residence



The Status chart shows the proportion of respondents in work and in retirement. 49% were working, compared with 43% who had retired.

Status

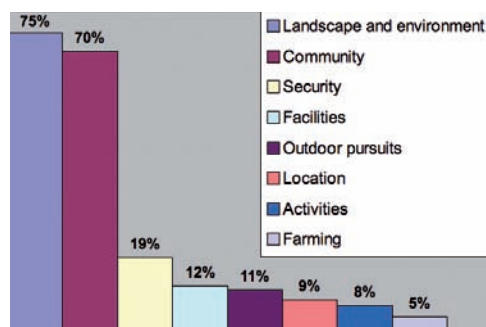


Survey Results

What people like about Dentdale

The first question in the resident's questionnaire was designed to provide the opportunity for respondents to say what they valued most about living in Dentdale and therefore what needed to be preserved. People's fondness for the Dale came over strongly, with both the landscape and the community as clear favourites. Comments included:

- "Remote, unblemished, spectacular part of England."
- "A proper living village with shops, school & pubs."
- "A safe, secure and clean place to bring up a family."
- "Regular events for the community & smaller groups."
- "Excellent social atmosphere."
- "I just think this is the best place on earth!"



What residents like about Dentdale
Note: Total percentages do not add up to 100, as people liked more than one thing each

Economy and Business

31 residents (14.7%) made comments in their questionnaires about the economy and business, and comments were also collected from local businesses. There was considerable agreement between the two groups on the following points:

- It is vital that Dentdale has a thriving economy to provide jobs, support farming and retain young people
- To achieve this, there is a clear need for more full-time and fulfilling local jobs

Both groups also felt that this won't just happen – the area needs to actively attract businesses to come here. Suggestions on how to achieve this included encouraging entrepreneurs and small businesses such as IT companies and businesses similar to Lyon Equipment to move into the community, possibly by providing financial incentives for them to do so. The availability of good supporting services such as mail deliveries was seen as a key requirement however, and several barriers to businesses were identified such as:

- increased fuel costs
- increased internet shopping
- the local cost of living and housing locally
- the shortage of quality accommodation, restaurants and other supporting services

In addition, there was some support for closer co-operation between members of the business community.

Farming

Views were collected from the farmers' meeting and from the questionnaire. Farming was seen as central to Dentdale, because it both creates the landscape and embodies the rural way of life. The hospitality and slower country ways, with time to stop and talk, were highly valued by residents, and the farmers identified strongly with the Dale – as they said, they know how it works and have been committed to it full time, in many cases for generations.

A Plan for Dentdale

Survey Results

Farming continued....

However, the future of farming was seen as uncertain, and the following concerns were expressed:

- Inadequate food prices and grants mean that farming is becoming uneconomic
- Young people face an uncertain future in farming which could result in farmers' children leaving and, as one person put it, the "death of the village".
- The isolated nature of the life, which makes effective protest or action difficult
- A feeling of being misunderstood by authorities such as DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and YDNPA, who are regarded as interfering. There is seen to be a need to "get them on our side"

A number of suggestions were made about how things could be improved with the aid of Government intervention, grants and help from YDNPA, DEFRA and others. These included:

- Introduction of a farmers market
- Review of food prices
- Encouragement of traditional farming methods
- Use of land for purposes other than farming
- Renovation of old farm buildings
- Encouragement of outdoor pursuits on the land
- More social events similar to one held at Whernside Manor

Tourism

44 respondents (21%) made comments about this in their questionnaires. Whilst there was concern about the impact of visitors on the Dale, their importance to the local economy was also recognised. The main themes expressed were:

- the need to maintain and grow the number of visitors to support the local economy. Businesses need to put effort into advertising the Dale to attract visitors and then to get them to return
- concern at the level and quality of services that are currently provided for visitors, with particular mention of the opening hours of the cafes and the reduction in the number of B&Bs
- the wish to prevent the Dale from becoming a museum for visitors at the expense of the locals. The number of visitors, especially at the campsites, needed to be controlled to prevent over saturation and to keep a flow throughout the year. The rowdiness of some visitors was also a concern

Housing

Sensibly sized, affordable housing for locals (appropriate for families – locals & incomers, young people, tradespersons and the elderly), to rent or buy was a major concern for all age groups, but the effect that a lack of such housing had on the whole community was also a worry. One person summed up why such housing was wanted: so that "young people can continue to live here for jobs, housing and using school and stores so Dent can continue as a vibrant village". For the elderly the need for accessible sheltered housing was raised.

Second homes and holiday homes and people moving to the Dale to retire were seen as a major cause for the lack of accommodation for locals. Many properties appeared empty for much of the year and thus did not bring income to benefit local businesses or children for the school. As one person put it, Dentdale "loses its charm if too many houses stay empty/businesses close".

Some respondents suggested penalty charges for those owning second homes and holiday cottages whereas others felt that encouraging owners to contribute more to the social and financial aspects of the community was the way to go.

In summary:

- 32% of respondents were concerned about the lack of affordable housing
- 29% were concerned about the effect of second homes and holiday cottages

Survey Results

Community Facilities

The facilities identified in the questionnaire were:

Pub	Café/Tearoom
Dent Stores	Dent Post Office
Mobile trader	Internet grocery shopping
Dent Memorial Hall	A place of worship or spiritual well-being

259 comments were made about community facilities, with multiple comments made in several cases.

Shops and Post Office 122 people (58%) expressed deep concern about the threat of the loss of the Post Office and Dent Stores. Typical comments were “Dent Stores and Dent Post Office both serve a vital role in the life of the community”, and “without these it would become a ‘ghost’ community with no heart”. When this is allied to the reported profile of use (65% of respondents using the Post Office at least weekly, 55% Dent Stores) this concern clearly reflects real sentiment in the community. (Note: the questionnaire was completed before the announcement of the closure of the permanent Post Office counter and its replacement with an outreach service.)

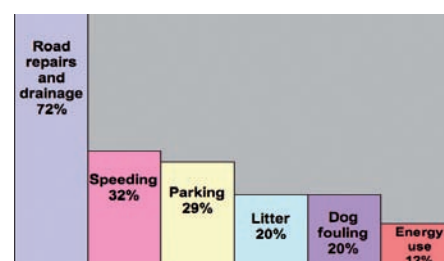
Cafés and Tearooms There was substantial criticism of the access issue with regard to the cafés and tearooms, specifically about opening hours. Some 30% of all respondents made comments about this subject. The thrust of the comments were that the cafes were not open at the times when locals and visitors would wish. Although the cafés already work together to try to ensure that at least one of them is open each day, the perception of some respondents to the questionnaire was that they did not; 16 people said they wanted the cafés to co-ordinate their opening times.

Pubs 41 people (19%) criticised the pubs, compared with 8 people (4%) who made positive comments. Most of the criticism concerned quality of service, food, décor and attractiveness. Often this was contrasted with previous years, when the welcome and the food/service were felt to have been better. The positive comments stressed the importance to the community of retaining the pubs, and expressed support for the organised social events that they put on.

Memorial Hall 25 people (12%) commented on the Memorial Hall and 18 of them wanted improved facilities. “A new village Hall could offer more than the Memorial Hall” was a comment that summed up their views, as many of them felt that the community would benefit considerably from having a more up to date community centre. Barbon’s village hall was cited by several people as an example of the kind of building they wanted.

Environment

196 (93%) commented about the environment in their responses to the questionnaire, which contained a list of topics as prompts.



Percentages of residents commenting on different aspects of the environment

Highways

Road maintenance and drainage were mentioned by 153 people (72%), particularly potholes and the lack of any clearing of gullies or drains of debris, especially hedge clippings. The Dent to Sedbergh road was singled out as being in a particularly poor state. The suggestions made to rectify the issues included reinstating the role of a local lengthsman.

Whilst it is likely that the very high level of concern was partly because the questionnaire coincided with a period of heavy damage to the Dale’s roads, the response did show a great deal of public dissatisfaction about the issue.

Speeding vehicles were seen as a problem by 67 people (32%), and the speed limit in The Laning was singled out as not being observed by everyone. It was felt that local roads could not safely tolerate the speeding traffic, and a number of suggestions were put forward – could the speed limit of 20mph be extended to the whole Dale? Could it be reduced in the village to 10 mph? Could there be greater enforcement?

A Plan for Dentdale

Survey Results

Highways continued....

Parking 62 people (29%) made comments about parking. People felt that it was inconsiderate to park in the centre of Dent generally, and at the junction of The Green and Flintergill. Although people would not wish to see yellow lines painted in Dent, there was a feeling that parking on the cobbles was problematic and that parking should be in designated areas only. A small number felt the cost of parking was too great resulting in visitors parking anywhere to avoid payment; but the free permits for residents were appreciated.

Road gritting was commented on by 19 people (9%); they felt that the gritting which did take place was well done; but there were concerns about the lack of gritting on the back road between Dent and Cowgill, and on the Barbon / Gawthrop road.

Road width (comments from 16 people): Given the Dale's narrow roads, respondents wanted large vehicles to be limited or discouraged from using the roads, perhaps by better signage at both ends of the Dale.

Conservation

Energy conservation attracted comments from 26 people (12%). These included a range of suggestions, predominantly about the use of wind turbines and solar panels. It was felt that the YDNPA did not encourage energy conservation – they should be “rewarding good practice”, and certainly relaxing planning rules to include the erection of wind turbines and solar panels, as well as allowing double glazing on listed buildings. Overall, there was a strong sense in the respondents of the need for a positive effort to be made by the community as well as by formal bodies, to be a greener environment – as one person put it, a “flagship Dale – with modern technologies, turf roofs and community transport”.

Public Nuisances

Litter and the dumping of rubbish was commented on by 43 people (20%). A number of specific areas were identified – Dent Head viaduct, the Dales Way, Stonehouse Bridge and lay-bys. Many also identified the litter in the river and in the grass verges. Walkers were felt to be the culprits by one respondent, farmers by a number of others. A suggestion of a local community litter walk was put forward.

Dog fouling A similar number of people (42) commented on dog fouling – especially on the car park, The Green and the Playing Field. It was suggested that dog owners should be encouraged to clear up after their dogs, and also that fines be introduced to tackle the issue.

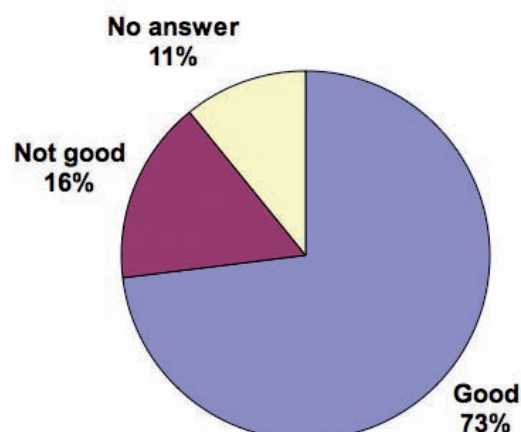
Noise and light pollution 12 people (6%) commented on noise, with two specifying aerial traffic. With regard to lighting, 3 people felt that this was increasing as a problem, but a request for better street lighting in Dent drew the most responses.

Off-road vehicles 8 people (4%) made comments, identifying Flintergill as a problem area.

Refuse and Recycling

The questionnaire asked if people felt the present refuse collection and recycling services were good or not, and by a ratio of 5:1, respondents said they were good.

In addition, 155 respondents (74%) made comments about the service, and of them 80 people (38%) said they wanted plastic and cardboard recycling in Dent. The bin men were generally praised – but there was concern about a perceived recent lowering of standards. There were some complaints about the way collections are organised, mostly about the unsightliness of the wheelie bins and blue boxes. 20 people (9%) wanted to revert to weekly collections of household waste, particularly in the summer.



Opinions of refuse and recycling services

Survey Results

Services

Health Services Generally, the comments about health services were positive, but some negatives stood out – particularly related to well-known national and local issues about the NHS. In an area with a high proportion of older residents, comments were also made about Home Care services: they were valued by those with experience of them, but almost all who mentioned them said they were hard to obtain.

Whilst 37 people (17%) expressed satisfaction with GP services in Sedbergh and Hawes, 32 people (15%) were dissatisfied with the out-of-hours service (which was provided by Baycall at the time of the questionnaire), and there were a number of requests for evening & weekend services from the Health Centres.

41 people (19%) made comments praising the quality of service received at Westmorland General Hospital and expressing deep concern at the threat to acute services there. This was coupled with concern at the ability of the Ambulance service to respond to calls from the parish, and expressions of support for the importance of the air ambulance service.

18 people (9%) were concerned at the lack of local access to NHS dentistry for new patients.

Education 50 people (24%) wrote about the Primary School in Dent, expressing both strong satisfaction with it and real concern at any possible risk to its viability if numbers should decline. In fact, its prospects are good in the immediate future, for several reasons. Numbers are projected to rise over the next few years; it is too far for young children to travel to the next nearest primary school; and since the school is Voluntary Aided, it is very unlikely that the Bradford Diocese would allow it to close.

The Child Care and Nursery services were also highly valued by respondents to the questionnaire, though three people would like them to be extended.

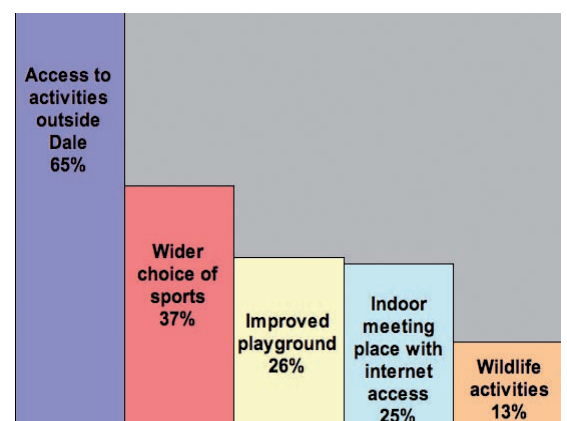
Police and Fire Service 21 people (10%) made comments about these two services. Whereas satisfaction was expressed with the Fire Service, there was concern at the level of police presence and time to respond to calls.

Communications and Utilities 21 people (10%) made comments about mobile phones and broadband, expressing particular concern at the lack of mobile phone coverage in the upper part of the Dale. A small number of people also mentioned patchy broadband coverage, and a few were concerned about the unreliability of the electricity supply.

Young People

Young people were consulted in a number of ways to obtain their views about the Dale and what they would like to see in the future. In all, 52 children gave the parish plan their views out of 131 children recorded in the 2001 census – a response rate of 40%.

Many of the children liked the peace and quiet of living in Dentdale and appreciated the beautiful surroundings. They liked both having space and living in a small place where they didn't get lost. Children overall thought people in the Dale were friendly. The younger children liked the village green and enjoyed the play equipment on it. They also mentioned many aspects of wildlife they enjoyed such as deer, the river and foxes. A number of children aged between 8 and 10 expressed appreciation for the services that were available such as the shops, the youth club and local events. Older children appreciated the low crime rate, lack of pollution and tourism that helped the economy.



What young people want

A Plan for Dentdale

Survey Results

Young People continued....

Activities beyond Dentdale Lack of transport was a major issue for the children surveyed as it excluded them from other opportunities that the Dale could not provide, such as clubs and the theatre. 65% of those surveyed wanted better access to clubs and outings currently not available without transport. Young people in Dentdale wanted 'more fun'. This was born out by responses to the residents' questionnaire – 69 adults (33%) said there are not enough activities for young people in the Dale. They raised issues of costs, the lack of things for young people to do and the lack of a concerted plan from the community to make it a better environment for them. "People complain about youths gathering in the centre but they need to be offered something as an alternative".

Access to Sport The older the children became, the more they wanted access to active sports. 37% of them wanted access to better sporting facilities, including an all-weather floodlit pitch, go-karting and racing tracks, swimming and caving clubs.

Playground Equipment The most important improvement for primary school children was an upgraded playground, which 26% of them asked for. They wanted something bigger and better than the present one on The Green, fenced off from dogs, with a play car, a tractor, a better climbing frame and much more adventurous equipment.

Indoor Meeting Place 25% of the young people surveyed wanted an indoor place to meet other than the school hall. They wanted access to the internet and to a library, and to be able to take part in activities such as craft work, photography and beauty classes.

Wildlife activities 13% of the children wanted a range of things connected with wildlife: a pond, places to play hide and seek, a wildlife hide, activities to encourage wildlife in the Dale, and an area for ferrets.

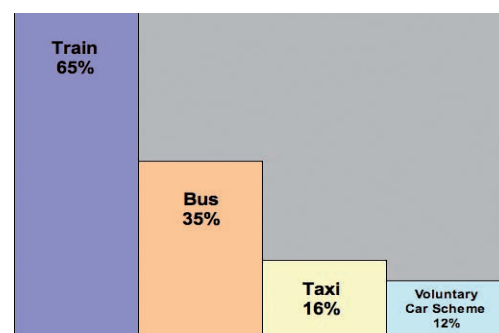
Transport

141 people (76%) made comments about public transport, which indicates how important its lack is perceived to be. It is clearly relevant to a number of other concerns people have, including access to community facilities, opportunities for young people, and access to services and leisure activities. However, whilst half the respondents called for increased or improved transport, half also stated that they used their own car. Several visitors remarked on the lack of buses and trains and felt that improved transport, particularly in the summer, would encourage more visitors, especially walkers.

Bus services There was general concern that the bus service did not meet residents' needs. As one person put it, "Buses only on a Wednesday during the week is not a transport system". 58 people (27%) wanted changes to the bus timetable or routes, for such purposes as:

- shoppers to get to Kendal
- social visits to cinema and restaurants
- visits to GP and hospital
- getting to work or school
- transport for young people, non-drivers and elderly
- traffic reduction

There were also calls for improvements in the integration with the trains, and for buses from Dent to be co-ordinated with other bus routes to provide a more flexible and useful system.



Percentage of people using different types of public transport, excluding car use

Two respondents suggested a slightly different approach: one person suggested the community should run a summer tourist minibus for people to come to Dent, and the other suggested the feasibility of a community minibus should be explored.

Survey Results

Transport continued....

Train services 32 people (15%) commented on the train services, with the majority requesting an early and late train for commuters, in the main, to Leeds. The idea of a 'request stop' at Dent Station was suggested and, as with the responses about the bus service, there were calls for buses or a cheaper taxi service to integrate with this system.

Car schemes, community transport and taxis Of the 23 people (11%) who commented on car schemes, the majority supported the use of the Voluntary Car Scheme, Rural Wheels and car sharing – although the existing schemes were not widely known. The 4 respondents who commented on taxis all felt they were too expensive, especially from the station.

Leisure and Recreation

113 people (54%) made comments about leisure and recreation in Dentdale. Of these, 77 people (37%) made positive comments about the facilities, saying they were good for the size and situation of the community. Some who had reservations were prepared to travel to more distant facilities.

Sport and Fitness

49 people (23%) expressed a view on sports facilities.

Playing Field Most of the 29 people (14%) who commented on the playing field were happy with the present arrangements for football and cricket, and 10 people thought the ground should be extended. 15 people wanted better facilities in the pavilion such as electricity, water and toilets.

All-weather playing surface Flooding of the existing playing field was identified as a problem, and 15 people (7%) requested an all-weather playing surface to address it. They also wanted to use an all-weather surface for other sporting activities such as tennis, netball and basketball, and to have floodlights to enable winter use. The area below the car-park was suggested as a site.

Swimming 10 people (5%) wanted facilities for swimming. Whilst most recognised that a public swimming pool in Dent was unrealistic, negotiating for the use of facilities in Sedbergh or Casterton and organising the transport was felt likely to be more successful.

Badminton and bowls 4 people requested badminton in Dent, as currently six Dent players go to Sedbergh to play. 3 people wanted to be able to play bowls.

Outdoor pursuits 18 people (9%) made comments about this, and most saw walking as the main outdoor pursuit in Dentdale. Others mentioned cycling, walking the dog and running as their outdoor pursuits of choice. The stiles were felt to be a problem for elderly walkers and more seats would be welcome. Signage was considered good but sometimes difficult to see.

Gym All 14 people (7%) who commented on the Gym were satisfied with it, and one person asked for a "pay-as-you-go" tariff as an alternative to an annual fee.

Leisure Pursuits

Community activities 20 people (9.5%) made comments about community activities. Most saw community activity as happening in the Memorial Hall and the type of activity they expected to see included Over 60's club activities, films, drama and dances; some wanted more adult education. Others saw the pub as the provider of community activities in the form of regular quizzes, fancy dress and bingo. New ideas for community activities included a Rural Women's Network, a bridge club and a babysitting circle.

Other leisure facilities 5 people found the Yoga and Meditation Centre excellent and 3 praised the Heritage Centre. On the negative side, the lack of adult education provision, an ice rink and cinema films was mentioned, and the library service to Upper Dentdale was considered to be poor.

Gardening and Allotments 7 people wanted a gardening club to share ideas and allotments in Dent for those with small gardens.

A Plan for Dentdale

Survey Results

Local Government

Dent Parish Council

123 people (58%) made comments about the Parish Council. Many thought that the Parish Council did an excellent job and made efforts to keep its public well informed through the use of Dentdale.com and Lookaround. The awarding of grants to local projects and the decision to take over the management of the car park and the development of a parish plan were all approved of. Altogether, there were five times as many positive comments as negative ones.

Links with other bodies 31 (15%) of people commented on the relationship between Parish Council and other local authorities, and many of them wanted the Council to have more collaboration with South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority so that all branches of local government were working together to achieve a sustainable future for the Dale.

Communication 24 people (11.4%) commented on communication issues. Despite the communication in the 'Lookaround', open meetings, minutes being available on request as well the full minutes being on the Dentdale web site some people were unclear about the outcome of meetings. Eight people said they were not sure what the remit of the Parish council was; suggestions included a published list of roles and responsibilities and a quarterly newsletter.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

The strength of feeling about living in a National Park was indicated by the fact that **154 people (73%) made comments about the relationship with the YDNPA**. The Authority did not come off well: the vast majority of residents saw it as a hindrance, describing it as "remote", "bureaucratic" and "restrictive". Often, their unhappiness about the Planning Department affected their view of the Authority as a whole. At the very least, the responses displayed a lack of understanding, and indicated that the YDNPA has a serious problem with its relationship with one of its communities.

Planning 57 people (27%) wanted a more consistent planning department that engaged with local people and was willing to show more flexibility and understanding of the Dale. Although it was understood that the Planning Department was necessary to conserve the Dale, it was perceived as putting a brake on improvement and innovation instead of supporting people in their attempts to understand the process. There were calls for reform of how it managed its planning role in the community; particular matters of concern were:

- the difficulties farmers had in converting barns
- perceived policy inconsistencies regarding plastic windows
- the use of modern technology in listed buildings

The one positive note was that the YDNPA Clinic in Sedbergh was considered excellent by some respondents.

Housing Issues 44 people (21%) commented on housing issues. Most felt that the authority should be pro-active in enabling affordable housing for young families and for the elderly, as well as taking action to discourage second homes. 26 people felt barns should be able to be converted for local occupancy by young people.

Sustainable Communities 31 people (15%) raised the issue of support for a sustainable community. They wanted the YDNPA, to work with Dent Parish Council to find ways to encourage small businesses as a means of making the community's future more secure. 18 people wanted this to be a priority, and felt that the YDNPA should give a lead on this should to develop an active policy for sustaining the community.

Relationships with local people 21 people (10%) commented on the often poor relationship between local people and the Authority. Most thought they did not listen to local people and were not sympathetic to local needs. As one put it, "The YDNPA should be more conscious of its charter obligations to promote the welfare of the park's residents."

Survey Results

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority continued....

Environmental Issues 12 people (6%) expressed the view that the YDNPA were not concerned about renewable energy or micro generation, and the planning process seemed to block modern technology or conservation attempts, except in very limited circumstances.

The Ranger Service This and the planning surgeries were the only areas of the Park's activities that received no negative comments.

11 people (5%) made comments and suggestions, including:

- Continue to maintain the paths and stiles
- Improve drainage around bridges and improve bridleways
- Improve the rights of way with better way markings
- Supervise more closely the treatment of trees and hedgerows
- More nature walks and talks would be well received
- Consider more wheelchair friendly footpaths

Visitors

A number of visitors were among the 34 people who made written comments at the Dentdale Show in August 2007. Although statistically small, this group of comments gave an insight into the way some visitors viewed the community. Many of the themes raised were similar to those identified by the residents' questionnaire:

- fewer holiday homes
- more affordable homes for local residents
- no car parking on the cobbles
- longer opening hours for the cafés
- lack of facilities for young people

and one part-time resident made the interesting observation: "How would full time residents like part time residents to contribute?"

Two issues stood out as being of particular concern:

Transport to and from the Dale A better bus service into Sedbergh and Kendal was seen as being of benefit to both visitors and residents, and earlier and later train services to Dent would encourage greater use of public transport, particularly with regard to employment. As one person put it, what was needed was "proper integrated public transport for the Dale with a daily bus service."

Local Services Visitors in particular expressed strong views about the importance of retaining the village shop. One person had thought about the problem of maintaining local services if there is not enough local support to guarantee profitability, and suggested "combining all the disciplines: mixed goods shop, post office, Internet café, facilitating online ordering for people not wired up. If this cannot be achieved profitably by a business then consider a co-operative venture."

A Plan for Dentdale

Community Action Plan

The Community Action Plan below sets out how the issues raised in the survey will be tackled. It has been discussed with South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Voluntary Action Cumbria and Tim Farron MP in order to ensure that its proposals have the maximum chance of being achieved.

The implementation will be phased over a five year period, and although the Parish Council has overall responsibility for this, its success will require both assistance and funding from external bodies, as well as the continued involvement of the residents of the Dale through a network of Community Groups.

Topic	Action	Date for Completion
Economy: Businesses, Farming and Tourism	Promote available development funding and support for businesses, farming and tourism	2010 onwards
	Set up a business development programme to encourage new businesses to locate to Dentdale	2013
	Seek ways to support the Dentdale Show	2009 onwards
	Investigate demand for regular meetings of local farmers	2009 onwards
	Devise additional ways of promoting Dentdale to visitors	2009 onwards
	Negotiate with mobile phone companies and broadband providers to improve local coverage	2009
	Research appropriateness of support networks, such as Rural Women's Network	2009
Housing	Identify land and existing buildings suitable for future affordable and local needs housing	2012
	Work with others to meet future requirements for affordable and local needs housing	ongoing
	Lobby appropriate bodies to find ways of reducing proportion of second homes and holiday cottages	ongoing
	Set up network of second home and holiday cottage owners to develop closer involvement of owners with rest of community	2009 onwards
Environment Conservation	Explore potential for local exemplar projects	2010
	Set up local conservation promotion programme	2009
	Negotiate for plastic and cardboard recycling facilities	2012

continues overleaf

Community Action Plan ...

Topic	Action	Date for Completion
Environment: Highways	Work with the Highway Stewards scheme and monitor it to improve the response to repairs and flooding	2010 onwards
	Consider appointing a Parish handyman, possibly in conjunction with other neighbouring parishes	2010
	Work with the police and Cumbria Highways to reduce speeding in The Laning and elsewhere	2011
	Explore possibility of speed restriction on all roads in the Dale	2009
	Work with Cumbria Highways to repaint parking bays around The Green and introduce parking restrictions at junction with Flintergill	2010
	Negotiate no parking on Dent village cobbles with Cumbria Highways	2011
	Designate some, but not all, of the pieces of land opposite the Sun Inn and opposite Dent Stores for residents' parking	2011
	Negotiate with Cumbria Highways and NYCC to maintain width warning or restriction signs in the Dale	2010
	Negotiate gritting of additional roads	2009
	Monitor implementation of new cutting regime for road verges	2008 onwards
	Identify verges that contain self seeded saplings and report to Cumbria Highways for removal	2009 onwards
	Report to Cumbria Highways any future instances of roads not swept after cutting	2009 onwards
Environment: Public Nuisances	Discuss survey results about litter with South Lakeland District Council to secure suggestions and support	2009
	Form volunteer group for community litter-picking	2008 onwards
	Liaise with pubs and others to reduce noise as required	Ongoing
	Review street lighting in Dent	2009
	Seek guidance about measures to combat noise and light pollution	2009
	Continue work of identifying and implementing further ways of tackling dog fouling	2009 onwards
Community Facilities	Provide support to Post Office outreach service	Ongoing
	Support efforts to secure the future of the village shop	Ongoing
	Review survey results with pubs and cafés	2008
	Review Survey Results with Memorial Hall Committee	2009

A Plan for Dentdale

Topic	Action	Date for Completion
Services	Lobby NHS trusts and others for improvements to GP out-of-hours services, Ambulance Service and access to NHS dentistry	2009
	Lobby for improved access and range of home care services	2009
	Investigate demand for sheltered housing provision for the elderly, and seek commitment to meet it	2009 onwards
	Attempt to establish closer working relationship with police	2009 onwards
Young People	Provide an evening indoor meeting place for young people, separate from school	2011
	Ensure all young people have access to internet facilities	2011
	Improve children's playground equipment in Dent	2011
	Investigate need for children's playground facilities in other parts of the Dale	2010 onwards
	Increase provision of activities for young people both outside and inside the Dale	2011
	Set up programme of wildlife related activities for young people	2011
Transport	Lobby for changes in bus timetables and routes	2013
	Lobby for earlier and later trains to and from Dent	2011
	Publicise the Voluntary Car Scheme and recruit more drivers	2010
	Research feasibility of a community minibus and a car-pooling scheme	2009
Leisure and Recreation	Investigate demand for additional sporting facilities, including improving the existing playing field, and feasibility of all-weather pitch	2009
	Consider which facilities can be shared with neighbouring communities, including swimming pools	2011
	Set up and publicise opportunities for residents to play bridge on a regular basis	2009
	Arrange meetings of gardeners to explore areas of common interest	2008
	Investigate demand for and feasibility of providing allotments	2009
	Encourage and support the formation of a baby-sitting circle	2009
	Ensure we are getting the best available mobile library facilities	2010

Community Action Plan ...

Topic	Action	Date for Completion
Local Government	Publish a regular Dent Parish Council newsletter	2010
	Work with other local Councils to achieve common objectives and to implement the Parish Plan	2010
	Explore with the National Park ways of improving its relationship with Dentdale residents	2008 onwards
	Develop with the National Park a proactive approach to supporting Dentdale as a vibrant and sustainable community	2008 onwards
	Support the work of the National Park Ranger Service, including the development of projects with young people	2009 onwards

For more information on the Parish Plan please contact:

The Secretary
Dent Parish Plan
Holme Hill
Cowgill
Sedbergh
Cumbria LA10 5RG
e-mail: dentpp@btinternet.com

Acknowledgements

Dent Parish Council gratefully acknowledges the support of the following in drawing up this plan:

The residents of Dentdale for completing the survey

The farming and business community for their input to the plan

The children and young people of Dentdale for the creative input to the plan

The team of volunteers who helped with delivering and collecting of surveys, manning the stall at the Dentdale Show and numerous other ways

The numerous volunteers who gave of their time at various stages in the development of the plan

Dez Metcalf for designing the Dentdale Parish Plan logo and the illustration of Dentdale

The Parish Plan Steering Group and members of the working groups

**and the following organisations
for their support with funding and expertise:**

- The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority,
- Cumbria County Council
- South Lakeland District Council
- Voluntary Action Cumbria
- Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale Neighbourhood Forum



A Plan for Dentdale



illustration : Dez Metcalf
www.frontrowgraphics.co.uk
courtesy of
Dent Heritage Centre