



The Lakes Parish Plan

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The Lakes Parish Plan

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Our Parish Plan is a detailed description of how our community sees itself developing over the next few years. Its key aims are:

- To reflect the views of all parts of our community
- To identify what we most value in our parish
- To identify local problems and opportunities for improvement
- To spell out how we want our community to develop in the future
- And last but not least, to set out a realistic and achievable plan of action to achieve this community vision.

Our Parish Plan is the culmination of over 12 month's effort by a large number of local volunteers. Their work has been totally independent from all local government and statutory bodies (but with much help and encouragement from them).

Our Parish Plan has given us a unique opportunity to have our say on many vital social, economic and environmental issues affecting our community.

We urge you to do all you can to support its implementation and success.



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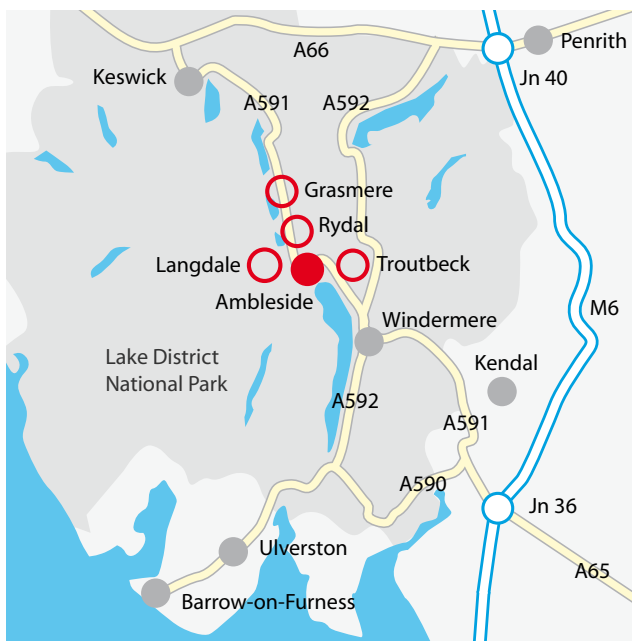
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Introduction

The Lakes Parish is one of the most beautiful and celebrated parts of the English Lake District, situated at the northern end of Lake Windermere in the heart of the Lake District National Park.

There are five wards in the Parish; the town of Ambleside at its centre, and the four smaller wards of Troutbeck, Rydal, Langdale and Grasmere which lie separately from each other in the beautiful surrounding valleys.



Although small-scale industries like charcoal, wool, and quarrying were once important, the Parish has been almost untouched by major industrial developments. Farming and tourism have long been the only major industries, and with hill farming now in economic decline, tourism has become the largest employer.

Tourism is long established in our Parish. It first came to the Lakes in the eighteenth century, popularised by major poets such as Wordsworth

and Coleridge. Soon after, the arrival of the railway at Windermere in 1847 led to a rapid growth in popular tourism from England's cities, and at the same time many large Victorian houses were built around Lake Windermere and throughout the Parish as weekend and summer retreats for northern industrialists.

After the Second World War there was further residential building, this time in small council estates to serve the working populations of Ambleside, Grasmere and Langdale. Private houses were built on small estates across the Parish during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, but since then building has been greatly restricted by National Park planning laws.

With the continued growth of car-borne tourism, many of the Parish's large Victorian houses were converted to hotels. Other smaller properties were turned into B&Bs, sold as second homes, or let as holiday rental accommodation. Many of these second homes and rental properties are left unoccupied for weeks or even months at a time.

An unusually high proportion of our residents are retired. Others commute to Kendal and Lancashire, or work from home. However, for the declining number of people who work locally, houses have become almost impossible to buy – wage levels in tourism and farming are amongst the lowest in the country, whilst house prices are amongst the highest!

These demographic changes have resulted in school closures in our smaller villages. Only Ambleside, Grasmere and Langdale have primary schools. Older children are served by state secondary schools in Troutbeck Bridge, Conistown and Keswick; but sadly most of our young people then leave the area after completing their education.

The growth of tourism has had an impact on many other aspects of life in our Parish. It's caused a

huge increase of traffic, and it's brought us endless outdoor equipment shops. It does however create employment, and has greatly enhanced many of our countryside and cultural amenities.

We are proud to live in one of the most beautiful places in the world. We place immense value on our communities' way of life. The key objective of our Parish Plan is to preserve them both.

How We Produced Our Parish Plan

The whole process started in the summer of 2004 when public meetings were held in all five Wards to gather local support for this unique opportunity to have a say in the future of our Parish. 'Working Groups' of volunteers were formed in each Ward, and several volunteers were nominated from each Ward to form a Parish 'Steering Group'.

Working Group members came forward from every section of our community, contributing a wide range of experience, skills and local knowledge. Throughout the project we have been helped by advice and support from Voluntary Action Cumbria (and funding of expenses from the Countryside Agency).

As a first stage, each Ward canvassed opinions from all parts of their communities. Methods varied in each Ward, but all involved some form of initial questionnaire or open forum. The excellent response to all these initiatives provided us with many good ideas for our Ward Plans, and also formed the basis for a second, more detailed, Parish-wide questionnaire.

All of the individual Ward Plans were produced independently by each Working Group, based on their detailed analysis and discussion of the community consultations. Each individual 'Ward Plan' includes a detailed description of these discussions, along with their finally-agreed 'Ward Action Plans'.

As you would expect there were many similar concerns raised in all five Ward Action Plans. To ensure that all these Parish-wide issues can be tackled jointly we have gathered them together in a 'Lakes Parish Action Plan', keeping all those issues which are unique to individual Wards in their own appropriate 'Ward Action Plan.'

What follows below is a description of all these issues which were common to every Ward in the Lakes Parish.

Highways Maintenance

Connecting minor roads are vital for getting to work and accessing services in our rural Parish. In summer our roads are under great pressure from the volume of visitors' cars, and in winter bad weather often poses different problems, particularly for our outlying villages.

Residents across the whole Parish are concerned that too many potholes are left too long before being mended, and that problems often recur due to poor repair work.

Troutbeck and Langdale suffer the most in winter when poor gritting makes access difficult in snow. Grasmere and Ambleside both want more gritting on side roads and residential areas, where cars can be marooned even in the slightest snow fall. Residents in Ambleside asked for pavements to be gritted – these can be just as vital for residents without cars.

Maintaining roadside verges is a concern across the whole Parish. In many narrow lanes, overhanging branches and overgrown verges can reduce visibility to dangerous levels. Fallen drystone walls are also a concern; the debris from walls actually narrows already tight roads.

The Steering Group feel that working together as a Parish, the Parish Council should be able to put pressure on Cumbria County Council to improve the maintenance of our roads.

Speeding Traffic

Every Ward identified speeding traffic as a major issue affecting the safety and tranquillity of our whole Parish.

In Rydal, traffic management is an overwhelming concern. There is no speed restriction on the very busy A591 that splits the village in half, and there are several tight corners with double solid white lines where speeds over 40 mph are hazardous to vehicles and pedestrians.

Most of the Wards in our Parish acknowledge in their Plans that speed limits are rarely policed. Residents don't want any more speed limit signs, or to increase the number of different speed limits. Nevertheless residents would like to see speeding traffic reduced.

The Steering Group would like the Lakes Parish to work with the Police and Cumbria County Council to

look at alternatives to reduce speeding traffic and to enforce speed limits to make our roads safer.

Public Transport

Buses are the only form of public transport in the Lakes Parish. The service varies widely between villages, and is often designed to meet the needs of visitors rather than residents. The bus service is not popular with residents, and cars are the most widely used form of transport to Windermere, Kendal or further afield for work or shopping.

There is a frequent bus service that connects Grasmere, Rydal and Ambleside in the summer, but this is reduced drastically out of the summer season. Similarly Troutbeck has a very limited service, and Langdale has an irregular connection to Ambleside taking children to the Lakes Secondary School.

Bus fares are strongly criticised by residents across the Parish; daily use of the service is simply not affordable for the majority of residents. Prices would have to be reduced significantly to persuade people to use buses instead of cars.

Residents in Langdale and Grasmere would like later evening buses to make it possible to socialise in Ambleside and beyond. Young people are often particularly isolated by the lack of affordable transport, and older people and those without cars also rely on public transport to attend doctors, dentists and hospital appointments.

Residents are generally pragmatic about the likelihood of Stagecoach (the bus service provider) drastically reducing fares or increasing the frequency of service, as they recognise that usage is not high enough to make cheap fares viable. For this reason the Steering Group have decided to investigate and help to promote other community transport services to better meet the needs of our residents.

Recycling

As a popular tourist destination, the Lakes Parish generates a large amount of commercial and domestic waste. Landfill sites in the County are nearly full. Our public amenity and recycling facilities are increasingly under pressure from increased demand as more people become concerned about our local and global environment.

The Lakes Parish currently has several community recycling banks for cans, glass and paper. The majority of respondents across the Parish feel that these facilities are insufficient, as they are difficult to access without private transport, and they do not recycle a wide enough range of materials, such as plastic and cardboard.

Residents in all our Wards said that they wish to recycle more, yet there was a varied response to the South Lakeland District Council's (SLDC) plan to introduce domestic kerbside collection scheme in 2007. Many residents are concerned about how suitable the scheme is for our Parish. Our high number of holiday homes could reduce the scheme's effectiveness, and we could be swamped by blue plastic boxes. We support increased recycling, but we would like to discuss the scheme with SLDC before its introduction, to help make sure that it is implemented in the most appropriate and effective way for our Parish.

The Civic Amenity Site in Ambleside, run by Cumbria County Council, provides our whole Parish with limited recycling and disposal facilities, from 8 am to 4 pm on Sunday to Wednesday only. The staff at the site are helpful, but often extremely busy, and there is little signage to explain what can be disposed of and where. There is strong support from residents to extend the site's opening hours, and to significantly improve its facilities and signage.

Litter and Dog Fouling

We are justifiably proud of our villages and lanes. Their beauty enhances our own quality of life – and we also rely on this to help attract tourists, so litter and dog fouling are important issues for all five Wards in the Parish.

However, most of our respondents said that litter and dog fouling are isolated to a number of 'hotspots' where visitors struggle to find the appropriate places to dispose of their waste.

In Ambleside, Rydal and Grasmere the fields alongside the A591 suffer from carrier bags, plastic bottles and wrapped dog mess thrown over walls from cars or by walkers. In these locations the farmers have a constant battle to try to keep their fields litter free and safe for livestock.

Along the lake shores of Rydal and Grasmere bins are often full or too few, and waste ranges from disposable nappies to barbecues, beer cans and

bagged dog mess. In Langdale and Troutbeck these problems are related to roadside verges, lay-bys and alongside popular walking routes.

We think that litter and dog fouling need to be tackled in a number of different ways. Each of our Wards plans to organise community tidy days to pick up litter. Parish-wide, an education campaign, similar to EnCam's 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign is planned to raise awareness. Finally we want to work with SLDC to help ensure that the dog fouling laws are properly enforced.

Public Toilets

Many residents and business owners believe that public toilets are a fundamental service for visitors and residents alike. Some residents also asked for longer opening hours and more frequent cleaning.

However, a number of public toilets across the Parish have recently been closed or are under threat, and this has provoked very strong feelings amongst the communities involved.

All five Wards in our Parish wholeheartedly support keeping existing public toilets open. People are still not sure who is responsible for funding them, or indeed who should be, but this must be agreed and their long term future guaranteed.

The Steering Group agrees that the only action that can be identified at the moment is to support our Parish Council's efforts to keep our toilets open.

Health Services

Concerns were raised about health service provision, in relation to the difficulty in travelling to the services rather than about the quality of the services offered.

Although the number of people who find it difficult to get to health services is relatively small, the impact for those individuals is significant and can be distressing. With an ageing population, we need to ensure that our services are not further reduced.

We believe our best action is to support our local Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust and to communicate to them the concerns and difficulties facing residents. Sometimes this may simply be a case of encouraging the Morecambe Bay PCT to improve their publicity about existing and future services.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is a national problem, but it is particularly acute in the Lakes Parish where housing stock is under additional pressure from second homes, holiday homes and incoming retirees. Our National Park status means we have strict planning regulations, and so land availability is very limited. Although wage levels in our Parish are well below the national average, our house prices are now some of the highest in the country.

These soaring house prices, expensive rents and limited job prospects, inevitably result in the departure of large numbers of our young people, often to be replaced by incoming retired people. This results in an increasingly ageing population.

There are no easy solutions to these affordable housing problems. The Lake District National Park Authority's new planning policy is to grant permission in future only for homes which are affordable to local people. However this will still be insufficient to meet our Parish's housing needs, and we think that more emphasis should to be placed on the existing housing stock to help reduce the problem.

Although support for affordable housing is strong across the whole Parish, a large number of residents do not want to see the visual quality of their village degraded. This is often made apparent when communities object to planning applications for affordable housing schemes.

SLDC have already made some encouraging advances through the shared equity scheme administered by Impact Housing, which enables local first-time buyers to buy a house on the existing open market. Under the scheme, Impact Housing buys between 30 and 50 per cent of the property and the buyer purchases the rest. This year the scheme has had a limited amount of money to invest and has capped the maximum price of the property at £170,000; a figure which we believe is still insufficient to buy a property in most of the villages in the Lakes Parish.

Each of the Wards in the Parish is at a different stage in relation to affordable housing. Several of them have formed Affordable Housing Groups, which are working closely with local authorities and developers to try to address these problems. Jointly with the Parish Council we can only seek to support the provision of affordable homes, engaging with

and supporting the organisations who are working to solve these problems.

Youth Facilities

Many of the young people who responded to our questionnaires feel that there is not enough for them to do in the Parish. Requests were made for youth clubs, skate parks, internet cafes, and 'somewhere to hang out' with their friends.

Each of the Wards in the Parish has described their own individual needs for youth facilities in their Ward Plans. However we think there is also an opportunity to create some central youth facilities in the Parish, especially if community transport can be improved to allow our young people to travel independently to them.

Residents of the Parish are not always clear about what facilities and activities are currently available for young people. Therefore the first step in the Lakes Action Plan is to audit what facilities exist already, in conjunction with existing youth providers and local young people.

Local Services

Finally, during the process of consulting with our communities in questionnaires and open days, we found that there are many excellent services and facilities that residents do not know about.

We would like to work with the Parish Clerk to promote an up-to-date and accessible Lakes Parish Directory – of local services, information sources, facilities, events and activities – so that Lakes Parish residents can be better informed, and to help our whole community get even more out of living in this wonderful area.

What Happens Next?

All the 'actions' which have been agreed during our Parish Planning process are summarised in the joint 'Lakes Action Plan' and five individual 'Ward Action Plans' which are included with this document.

To give each action the best chance of success, we have set some initial target time scales, suggested possible partners, and nominated some organisations to monitor progress.

In many cases there are existing organisations, such as the Lakes Parish Council, who we hope will continue to take responsibility for taking forward these actions.

However, we believe that we will not have effectively completed this Lakes Parish Plan Project if we do not maintain an on-going interest to ensure that these actions are implemented.

We have therefore proposed the formation of a new 'Lakes Parish Plan Action Group', made up of nominated Ward representatives (similar to the Steering Group), to be responsible for tracking progress on key actions in the Lakes Parish Action Plan and reporting back to Parish residents.

It is envisaged that the Parish Plan will be updated by the Lakes Plan Action Group together with the Parish Council in about 2 years time.

Our Thanks

To the members of the Lakes Parish Plan Steering Group: Harry Allen, Dawn Allonby, Tony Ashton, Elwyn Bradshaw, Michaela Blackburn, Bev Dennison, Gilly Hodgkinson, John Hodgkinson, Tony Lawrence, Margaret Lewis, Brian Liddell, Paul Markland, and Liz Wilson.

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To Michaela Blackburn, Margaret Lewis and Brian Liddell for writing the Lakes Plan, and Brian Liddell for design and production.

How Can You Help?

If you would like to comment on any of the issues in this Parish Plan, or help with the implementation of any of the actions, please contact:

Michael Johnson
Parish Clerk
The Lakes Parish Council
The Old Court House
Church Street
Ambleside

Tel: 015394 31656

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Establish a Parish Plan Action Group	- Ensure that there are representatives from each Ward in the Parish - Plan a programme of meetings	High	Neighbourhood Forum	3 months	Lakes Plan Steering Group	
Improve recycling facilities for the Parish - To include plastic and cardboard - Ensure kerbside collection plans are communicated to the community	Engage with SLDC to extend recycling facilities and publicise kerbside collection plans for the parish	Medium	SLDC CCC	2 years	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Reduce dropping of litter	- Organise village tidies - Find out responsible organisations for educating campaigns - Work with Tourist Information Centres to raise awareness of visitors	High	LDNPA EnCams Tourist Info Centres Schools & Youth Groups WI Groups Chambers of Trade SLDC & Parish Council	Ongoing	Lakes Plan Action Group	Gloves, bin bags, litter pickers etc
Reinvigorate the Anti Dog-fouling campaign	- Find out the responsible organisation for anti-dog fouling campaigns - Lobby responsible organisation to re-start campaign and enforcement	High	SLDC EnCams CCC Parish Council	18 months	Lakes Plan Action Group	Campaign materials
Improve maintenance of highways, including: - Extending winter gritting & snow clearance to more secondary roads - Maintenance of dry stone walls - Maintenance of road surfaces - Extend gritting to some pavements in central Ambleside	Organise campaign to press CCC to improve road maintenance	Medium	Highways Agency CCC SLDC Landowners and Farmers LDNPA	2 years	Parish Council CCC	
Support provision of affordable homes	- Engage and support organisations that are responsible for providing affordable homes - Lobby MP on behalf of Wards	High	Housing Associations LDNPA SLDC Tim Farron MP ODPM South Lakes Housing Housing Charities & Churches	3 years	Parish Council Affordable Housing Groups Lakes Plan Action Group	

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Reduce speeding traffic	- Raise awareness of the issues at the Neighbourhood Forum - Engage with Police and Cumbria CC to investigate ways to enforce speed limits and reduce speeding traffic	High	Police CCC Young Cumbria Neighbourhood Forum	3 years	Parish Council CCC Lakes Plan Action Group	
Promote community transport services	Find out details and help promotion and communication of services available	Low	SLDC Morecambe Bay PCT Community Transport South Lakeland Children's Centre Neighbourhood Forum	1 year	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Keep existing public toilets open	Support Parish Council to keep toilets open	High	Parish Council SLDC Grasmere Traders Chamber of Trade	Ongoing	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Support Morecambe Bay PCT to maintain and improve access to health services in Parish	- Discuss with Morecambe Bay PCT plans for dental, out of hours services, mental health services and care in the community - Ensure better promotion and communication of future plans	Medium	CCC Morecambe Bay PCT South Lakes Strategic Partnership Tim Farron MP	Ongoing	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Expand youth facilities and improve promotion of existing facilities	- Audit existing youth provision and find out what additions the young people would use - Promote youth provision through a Lakes Parish Directory	Medium	Young Cumbria Cumbria Youth Alliance Millennium Volunteers Local youth groups	2 years	Lakes Plan Action Group Local youth groups	
Support and liaise with the Children's Centre	Ask to be kept up to date on developments	Medium	Children's Centre	Ongoing	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Work with Parish Clerk to update the existing Lakes Parish Directory of local facilities, services and activities	Audit existing facilities, services and activities. Produce booklet	Low	Parish Clerk Libraries Local service providers	3 years	Lakes Plan Action Group	

Key: CCC = Cumbria County Council, FLD = Friends of the Lake District, LDNPA = Lake District National Park Authority, NT = National Trust, PTC = Primary Care Trust, SLDC = South Lakeland District Council, VAC = Voluntary Action Cumbria.



Introduction

Ambleside is the largest of the five wards which make up the Lakes Parish. The other wards are Troutbeck, Langdale, Grasmere and Rydal, which surround Ambleside.

Although there are many similarities between the five wards, each has differing needs and pressures. Ambleside is by far the most urbanised of the wards and provides many of the essential services for the surrounding villages.

Geographically, Ambleside is situated about a mile north of the head of Lake Windermere, sitting on the river Rothay, surrounded almost on three sides by Lakeland fells. To the north is Fairfield, to the east is Wansfell and in the west is Loughrigg.

Ambleside's economy is derived mainly from tourism, but in the past it has also been associated with industry. Charcoal was produced at Ambleside, which was used in smelting the iron ore of Furness and west Cumbria. Timber works produced bobbins for the textile industry, machine tools were produced in Ambleside, and quarrying and mining for slate and stone still happen today.

We have a fluctuating population of just less than 3,000, affected by temporary residents working in the tourist industry and students attending St. Martin's college. The town is a popular retirement area and the number of older people is increasing; it is also a popular location for second homes. This has severe impacts on house prices and there is concern that young people are leaving because they are unable to buy their own homes.

There is a wide range of services available to the residents of Ambleside, although some feel that the businesses are too focused on visitors rather than the residents. There are a large number of pubs, shops, cafes and restaurants, a post office, library, three banks, a weekly market, and a building society, a school, church, fire station and two large

car parks. The town is on a central bus route, which runs regularly in summer and also benefits from quite a large number of community activities, societies and clubs.

The feeling of community and the beautiful surroundings were cited by many respondents to our first questionnaire as the best things about living in Ambleside. In general residents are proud of long standing traditions like Ambleside Sports and Rushbearing and welcome new community events such as the Christmas Lantern Parade.

How We Developed Our Plan

To ensure that the Ambleside Parish Plan reflects the ideas and opinions of everyone, two questionnaires were circulated. The first questionnaire, named 'Stop the Clock' was circulated in October 2004 and was available from the library, tourist information centre and sent to specific groups, we received 218 responses from a wide variety of age groups. It asked three simple questions:

- What do you like about Ambleside?
- What do you dislike about Ambleside?
- And what would you like to see change about Ambleside?

The information gathered from these three questions helped to inform us what issues the residents of Ambleside thought were important. The questions and subjects in the second questionnaire were based entirely on the information gathered from the residents of the Lakes Parish. The second questionnaire, sent to every household as an insert in the Parish Magazine, was the same across the whole parish. We received 215 responses to the second questionnaire:

- 35% male
- 65% female

- 2% age 7-16
- 2% age 17-24
- 5% age 25-35
- 20% age 36-50
- 25% age 51-60
- 46% age 61+

Almost 50% of respondents were retired, 15% self employed and 27% employed; none were unemployed.

The balance of responses to the second questionnaire does not reflect the demographics of the area. Some additional consultation may be needed for the actions to ensure that they represent the needs of the whole community.

Environment

The beautiful surroundings were cited as one of the best things about Ambleside. A number of people expressed concerns that Ambleside is beginning to look 'tired' and untidy which may affect the attractiveness of the area to visitors.

Dog Dirt Foulina

56% of respondents commented that dog fouling was a major concern and that owners don't clean up after their dogs. Residents feel that the 'poop-a-scoop' initiative has been abandoned and that fines are not enforced. Several areas such as Nook lane and Rothay Park were cited as being particularly bad.

Litter and Rubbish Dumping

Half of all people responding to the questionnaire are concerned about the amount of litter dropped in the village. Several respondents commented that South Lakeland District Council don't sweep the litter up enough and that more litter bins are required around retail outlets and in Rothay park to reduce the problem.

Although a large number of people are concerned about litter in the village, it is worth noting that on the whole we do not have a large litter problem and that the problem tends to occur in certain 'hot spots'.

The limited opening hours of the tip were blamed by some for fly tipping and it was suggested that there is demand for a service to remove large waste items from residential addresses, for example, old cookers and sofas.

Noise Pollution

19% of respondents felt that noise pollution is an issue in Ambleside. Although this is not a large percentage of responses, we recognise that late night noise pollution can cause particular distress to the residents involved. This problem could increase if opening hours are extended due to recent changes to licensing laws, therefore we feel that it is worth monitoring for changes in the future.

Other Environmental Comments

Several respondents were concerned that some commercial properties, particularly public houses, are 'over-lit.'

14% of respondents were concerned about the state of repair of dry stone walls. Residents feel that this makes the village look untidy and unattractive to visitors. Specific examples are the roadside on the A591 into Ambleside and up the Kirkstone pass from Edinboro to the Kirkstone Inn.

A small number of respondents felt that Rothay park should be better looked after and that many things could be done to improve it, for example maintaining the toilets, increasing the amount of facilities in the play area and keeping the grass cut.

Recycling

As a tourist destination with a large number of small businesses, recycling is a key issue in Ambleside. A lot of waste created by the tourist industry is not recycled as they do not form part of the government recycling targets for the district council.



Ambleside's Civic Amenity

56% of respondents thought the recycling facilities available were inadequate. Currently paper, cans

and glass are recycled at the Ambleside's Civic Amenity, 51% would like to have plastic recycling available and 37% requested cardboard recycling facilities.

47% of respondents would like to see kerbside collection introduced in Ambleside, 45% were happy with community recycling banks. South Lakeland District Council has plans to introduce kerbside recycling in Ambleside in 2006/07.

The future plans for recycling in the area are currently not well communicated by SLDC to the whole community; therefore there is a lack of understanding and a feeling of frustration by some members of the village.

The limited opening hours of the Civic Amenity were raised as a concern by many of the respondents as it is only open 8 am to 4 pm, Sunday to Wednesday. It is felt that this is insufficient to serve the needs of Ambleside and the surrounding communities. There were several requests to extend the hours and days that the Civic Amenity is open.

Services

When asked about services, 61% of replies were concerned about the public toilets and 18.5% about the police service with 7% indicating concerns about the health service.

Quite a number of replies said that Ambleside was a very pleasant to live in but some commented that it had begun to have a run down look and would benefit from improved seating, flower beds and hanging baskets.



Ambleside's Closed Toilets At Rothay Park

Public Toilets

The overwhelming reply was to keep all the public toilets in the village open, with particular reference to the ones in Rothay Park. These toilets have recently been re-opened due to financial support from the Parish Council and the South Lakeland District Council.

Many critical comments related to the closure of the toilets in an area which was supposed cater for tourists.

Police Patrols

The second highest comment concerned the need for more visible foot police patrols as opposed to a vehicular presence. The opening hours of the Police Station was cited and the procedure of having to ring Kendal Police Station to contact the police was also raised.

Health Services

A number of replies mentioned elements affecting the health service which included:

- The need for a NHS Dentist in the village
- The need for a minor accidents centre
- The out of hours doctor service should be centred on Ambleside
- Improving the public transport system to Kendal Hospital especially at weekends

Shops

The outstanding responses of 51% were for a reduction in the number of outdoor clothing shops. 15% wished to see a larger supermarket and 20% commented upon the high price of goods.

Despite the strong response regarding the number of outdoor clothing shops, there is little that can be done about it as shops do not need planning permission to change from one type to another, for example from a food shop to an outdoor clothing shop. This means that the planning authority can not take any action to restrict them.

Comments were also made about the need for cheaper places to eat, no expansion of 'A' boards, shops that deliver or goods that can be ordered on the internet.

Affordable Housing

14% of respondents are currently in need of accommodation in the village; this percentage may appear low but may be affected by the small number of young people who responded to the questionnaire.

21% of people who responded to the questionnaire know someone who has left the village because they are unable to find suitable accommodation. The majority of people leaving the village are between the ages of 20 – 30. The main reason given for leaving is the cost of buying property.

There is strong support for building homes for young people, rented accommodation and family housing in the village and a number of potential sites were suggested for housing development. The old Browns garage in the centre of the village, the old gas works on Blue Hill and the field near Loughrigg Meadow were the most common suggestions. The Parish Plan group have done no research into who owns the suggested sites or whether they are willing to put them forward for housing development.

Ambleside does not have a completed housing needs survey. This is a survey to show accurately how many people in the village are in need of accommodation, what type of accommodation they need (flats, houses, rented or to buy) and what they can afford.

Due to the restricted amount of suitable development sites in the village and the pressure to provide affordable housing for residents, some development is likely to be outside the development boundary. The Lake District National Park Authority require a housing needs survey to prove the level of housing need before affordable housing schemes will get planning permission. Therefore getting a housing needs survey completed for the village has to be a priority before the housing problems can be tackled.

Parking

Parking for residents and visitors is a significant issue in Ambleside. Local businesses rely on visitors and residents being able to stop in the village to use the facilities. It appears that both residents and visitors are frustrated by the lack of parking available and the disc parking scheme. The parking situation must be improved if the village is to

continue to be a thriving tourist destination and a desirable place to live.

The majority of respondents thought that there was inadequate long stay, short stay, residents and off road parking available.

The disc parking scheme in Ambleside has received a lot of criticism from people responding to the Parish Plan questionnaire.

The main issues raised were:

- The disc parking system is not explained clearly, which discourages visitors from stopping in the village.
- The one hour parking restriction is considered insufficient for shopping and eating in the village and can deter people from stopping.

Two main suggestions were made by people responding to the questionnaire:

- Increase the length of stay to two hours.
- Improve the signs and explain the scheme more clearly.

Residents are frustrated by not being able to park near to their homes and by the lack of residents only parking. There is a noticeable conflict between resident and visitor parking on the residential estates and Kirkfield, Castlefield and Greenbank were mentioned on a number of occasions as having particular difficulties.

The main issues raised were:

- Visitors parking on the residential estates to avoid costly parking charges (often while out walking for the day) therefore reducing the parking available for residents near their homes.
- Residents in the centre of the village having inadequate free parking near their homes.

Miller Field car park is seen as improving the parking situation in Ambleside and there were a number of requests for it to be open all year round.

Over night parking for visitors is difficult, Bed and Breakfast owners often have to buy expensive permits for their customers.

A limited number of respondents suggested that there should be another car park built on the edge of the village to improve the situation; others were

opposed to this and would prefer to see car use reduced instead.

Public Transport

Of the people surveyed 80% said that their main form of transport is their car. 35% of respondents felt that the public transport facilities did not meet their needs. 53% said that they would use public transport if the service was improved.

Buses are the only form of public transport in Ambleside. There is a frequent bus service in the summer running from Grasmere to Ambleside and Bowness. The bus service to Kendal and other more rural locations is less frequent. All services are reduced significantly in winter.

The main issues raised were:

- The bus fares are too expensive.
- The timetable is reduced too much in winter.
- Buses to outlying villages (Hawkshead, Langdale, and Coniston) are too irregular.
- The step from the pavement onto the buses is too big for some elderly or less able-bodied people, making it difficult to board the bus.
- Some of the buses are too big for the country lanes and often appear old or badly maintained, which may have implications for the amount of pollution that they emit.

Suggestions made by respondents for improving the problems were:

- Let children use their bus passes at weekends and evenings.
- Reduce the fares to encourage more use by visitors and residents.
- A minibus service to the estates in Ambleside, like there is in Kendal.
- Introduce 'kneeling buses' or raise the pavement to make the buses easier to board.

Road Maintenance

41% of respondents felt that their roads were maintained adequately, 49% felt that they weren't (10% didn't respond). However, this question did provoke a lot of written comments about the state of the roads and pavements in the village. There were a number of appreciative comments about the

newly resurfaced A591 through the village but also strong feelings that the rest of the village could do with similar treatment.

There is particular concern that the deteriorating appearance of the village may deter visitors in the long term.

The majority of the comments received about road maintenance were regarding the state of the surface of the roads and pavements. The main issues raised were:

- The number of potholes on the side streets. Nook Lane, North Road, and Church Street were named repeatedly as having bad potholes.
- Poor repair work to the potholes and leaving minor maintenance jobs too long so that the problems turn into major jobs.

Suggestions for improving the problems were:

- Improve monitoring of minor roads for maintenance needs and repair minor problems before they get worse.
- Make more people aware of the hotline for reporting problems, therefore increasing pressure on the County Council to address problems.



Ambleside's Roads

There were a smaller number of comments received about the need for more gritting in the village. The main issues raised were:

- Fisherbeck, Kirkfield and other residential areas suffer from a lack of gritting when it snows – grit bins are seen as ineffective.
- Pavements in the centre of the village are not gritted and can be dangerous.

Suggestions for improving the problems were:

- Grit more of the residential areas.
- Grit pavements in the centre of the village.

Speed Limits And Road Safety

37% of respondents feel that the speed limits in Ambleside are a problem. 28% feel that speeding traffic is a problem. The majority of concerns from respondents were regarding the 20 mph speed limit and cycle lanes at Waterhead.

The main issues raised were:

- Many residents feel that the cycle lanes are dangerous as they are too narrow and encourage cars to pass where the road is not wide enough.
- The speed limits are not sufficiently policed and therefore are ignored by most drivers.

Suggestions for improving the problem:

- Remove the cycle lanes and change the speed limit back to 30 mph; or
- Police the speed limit.

Speed limits on the A591 were another concern. The main issues raised were:

- The variety of speed limits on the A591, which confuse drivers.

Suggestions for improving the problem:

- Reduce the number of changes in speed limit along the A591.



Waterhead 20 mph Speed Limit And Cycle Lanes

Pedestrian Safety

26% of respondents feel there are a lack of safe places to cross the road in Ambleside.

There were a number of places identified by several respondents as difficult to cross, especially for the elderly and less able-bodied:

- Lake Road, near the White Lion and the Post Office.
- Lake Road, near Youngs' furniture shop.
- The bottom of Wansfell Road.
- The corner next to the Gable Hotel.

Suggestions for improving the problem:

- Install zebra or pelican crossings; or
- Look at other options for traffic calming at these locations.

Other Traffic Issues

There is a lot of opposition to the traffic island outside the Wine Bar on Lake Road, with a number of claims that it is confusing and dangerous.

Suggestions for improving the problem:

- Remove or move the island
- Add road markings to lead into chicane.



Lake Road Chicane

Some respondents mentioned a relief road or bypass for Ambleside. This issue is not directly addressed by the questionnaire; therefore it is difficult to judge what the real desire for an Ambleside bypass is.

A small number of responses raised the issue that there are too many heavy goods vehicles driving through Ambleside. There is a permit system in operation but some residents suspect that it is not observed or enforced.

There were a small number of complaints about the lack of lighting on the residential estates.

Community

The sense of 'community' and friendly people were the second most popular responses when asked what the best things about Ambleside are. There are a large number of local organisations and societies, covering a wide range of interests and hobbies.

The promotion of some activities and services in the Parish could be improved. A Lakes Parish Directory might help to promote the wide range of events taking place in the whole Parish.

Youth Facilities

There was strong support for increasing the amount of facilities available to young people. The overwhelming return was for a youth club which was open all week supported by a full-time youth worker. Other concerns were about the costs of youth activities, like the cinema.

Respondents are concerned that young people will get into trouble if there is not enough for them to do. There were also concerns raised that some older residents are intimidated by large groups of young people who appear to 'hang about' on the street. A possible solution to this issue is to improve the relationships and interactions between the younger and older residents in the village.

There is a new community centre in the process of being built in the grounds of St Mary's church which should provide the location for some of the activities requested through the questionnaire.

The Centre will include a youth clubroom, space for arts based activities for adults and children, and a space for voluntary organisations who can not find suitable space elsewhere in Ambleside. It will be fully accessible throughout for those with wheelchairs or mobility problems.

Our Thanks

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And of course to all the residents of Ambleside who completed the questionnaires.

The Action	How It Will Be Tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Form Ambleside Plan Action Group	Promote through the Neighbourhood Forum and other communication channels	High	LDNPA Ambleside Civic Trust Neighbourhood Forum	6 months	Ambleside Plan Working Group	
Reinvigorate the 'anti dog-fouling' campaign	- Work out responsible organisation - Lobby to re-start campaign and enforcement	High	EnCams SLDC CCC Parish Council	12 months	Ambleside Plan Action Group	
Reduce dropping of litter	- Organise 'Village Tidy Days' - Find out responsible organisations for educating campaigns - Work with Tourist Information Centres to raise visitor awareness	High	Schools LDNPA Ranger EnCams SLDC Tourist Info Centres Chamber of Trade Parish Council	12 months	Ambleside Plan Action Group	
Support the provision of some affordable housing in Ambleside	- Get housing needs survey completed for Ambleside - Support organisations responsible for providing affordable homes	High	LDNPA Cumbria Rural Housing Trust SLDC Parish Council Registered Social Landlords Local Developers	12 months	Parish Council	Funding for Housing Needs Survey
Improve disc parking system and parking for residents	- Discuss concerns with SLDC - Work with SLDC to improve explanations of parking scheme	High	SLDC Parish Council Chamber of Trade Ambleside Civic Trust Cumbria Tourist Board	12 months	Parish Council	
Improve local bus service	- Work with local authorities to communicate concerns to Stagecoach - Lobby Stagecoach to increase winter bus timetable and reduce prices - Explore whether children's bus passes can be extended	Medium	CCC Stagecoach SLDC LDNPA	2 years	Ambleside Plan Action Group	

The Action	How It Will Be Tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Improve transport for residents struggling to access essential services	Work with local authorities to explore car sharing and 'Dial A Ride' schemes	Medium	Community Transport SL CCC SLDC LDNPA	2 years	Ambleside Plan Action Group	
Improve Amblesides's road surfaces	Organise campaign to press Cumbria CC to take responsibility for gritting side roads and pavements in village centre and to fill potholes	Medium	CCC Local County Councillor Parish Council	12 months	Parish Council	
Reduce the number of speed limits on the A591 and change the speed limit at Waterhead	- Investigate rationalising speed limits with Cumbria CC and Police - Consult with village on options	High	Rydal and Grasmere CCC Police Local County Councillor	2 years	Ambleside Plan Action Group	
Explore options for traffic calming in the town	- Investigate with Cumbria CC and Police - Consult with village on options	Medium	CCC Police Local County Councillor	3 years	Parish Council	
Remove the traffic island outside Pippins on Lake Road or improve road markings leading up to chicane	Inform Cumbria CC of strength of concerns and try to find suitable solution	High	Parish Council CCC Police	12 months	Parish Council	
Improve local NHS services	- Work with Morecambe Bay PCT to explore different options - Lobby for a NHS dentist for Ambleside - Lobby for out of hours service based in Ambleside - Explore viability of minor accident centre	Medium	Local County Councillor Morecambe Bay PCT South Lakeland Strategic Partnership	2 years	Ambleside Plan Action Group	
Keep the public toilets open at the Market Cross & Rothay Park	Support SLDC and Parish Council	High	Parish Council SLDC	6 months and ongoing	Parish Council	
Establish study into long term environmental improvements to the village	Work with South Lakes Development Trust to copy Windermere and Bowness pilot scheme	Medium	Ambleside Civic Trust Lakes Market Towns Initiative FLD Cumbria Tourist Board Chamber of Trade	3 years	Ambleside Plan Action Group	

The Action	How It Will Be Tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Improve local recycling facilities	• Work with SLDC to publicise kerbside collection plans • Communicate local support for plastic recycling to SLDC • Explore affordable recycling facilities for small businesses	Medium	SLDC Lake District Tourism and Conservation Partnership Chamber of Trade	2 years	Ambleside Plan Working Group	
Increasing the opening hours at the tip	• Discuss and progress with CCC	High	CCC Parish Council	12 months	Parish Council	
Restrict the number of new outdoor shops	• Discuss concerns with LDNPA and lobby for planning policies to restrict number of new outdoor shops	Low	Parish Council LDNPA Chamber of Trade	3 years	Ambleside Plan Working Group	
Support local shops and services so that they are not lost	• Local campaign to encourage people to use local services	Low		3 years	Ambleside Plan Working Group	
Expand facilities/activities for young people	• Investigate what facilities young people would like to have in the village • Explore funding for a full time youth worker • Investigate ways to improve relationships between old and young residents • Integrate more young people into local organisations and societies	Medium	Young Cumbria Cumbria Youth Alliance VAC Local Youth Organisations	2 years	Ambleside Plan Working Group	
Support the development of the St Mary's Centre	• Help to communicate with community	Medium	Parish Council St Mary's Centre	12 months	Ambleside Plan Action Group	
Improve publicity for Ambleside events and associations	• Help to promote sources of information on local events	Medium	Library Ambleside Online Parish Magazine Westmorland Gazette	12 months	Parish Plan Working Group	
Monitor late night noise pollution	• Record number of complaints • Discuss concerns with Police • Monitor number of license extensions	Medium	Parish Council Police SLDC	12 months	Parish Council	
Raise awareness that there is a community policeman	• Help police to promote that there is a community policeman	Low	Parish Council Police	12 months	Parish Council	

Key: CCC = Cumbria County Council, LDNPA = Lake District National Park Authority, NT = National Trust, SLDC = South Lakeland District Council, SL = South Lakes, VAC = Voluntary Action Cumbria.



Grasmere Ward Plan

Introduction

When William Wordsworth said “the loveliest place man hath ever found”, little did he know the pressure that this would bring on this beautiful valley. Set in an amphitheatre of mountains right at the centre of Britain’s most picturesque but vulnerable landscape, our village is seen by many of the thousands of visitors as the quintessence of an English picture postcard village.

Tens of thousands of words have been penned about the mountains, the woods and the myriad of streams and waterfalls that fall into the beautiful lake from which the village takes its name, but never before, have the community of this village, had the chance to have such a wide scoping look at the pressures on the village, our community, its problems and express its vision for its immediate future.

Geographically Grasmere is the most northerly ward in the Parish and is also at the northern edge of the South Lakes administrative area. Although the village was established earlier our village church was first mentioned in 1203 and still has parts dating from the 14th century. Grasmere remained the centre of the parochial parish until Ambleside expanded in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Grasmere was an important part of the Lake District’s woollen industry, helped of course by having an abundance of soft water for washing and treating the wool. Trade in and out of the valley was difficult without properly constructed roads but in 1770 a turnpike road was completed and brought easy access to wheeled traffic. The arrival of the romantic poets around thirty years later and the publication of their works shortly after brought the new industry of scenic tourism. Fine houses for affluent industrialists and landowners began to be built. With the coming of the railways to Windermere in 1847 an ever increasing number

of tourists spurned the building of fine hotels, guest houses and many smaller houses. These buildings were built at a time when skill, pride and finance came together and have given the village a legacy of stone buildings that display fine Victorian design together with some of the districts’ best stonemasonry.

Tourism was now changing Grasmere’s economy, catering for visitors and for the newly established local gentry was taking precedence over agriculture. Stage coach tours and later the advent of the motor car put Grasmere firmly on the tourist map. Wordsworth and his contemporaries had unconsciously through their writings, had placed a permanent advert for the village right round the world. Today hundreds of thousands come here to visit our village and Dove Cottage the Wordsworth’s former home. Literary association aside, the village is the geographical centre of the lakes and as we have some of the best walking in the Lake District, our popularity with ramblers now makes us the number one village to visit in the area.

Grasmere has a character all its own, not only because of its beautiful setting and literary associations. It still has a strong community rooted in a long tradition, but is under threat now from social and economic changes. Nowadays Ambleside has a much larger population and many more amenities. The whole area is largely dependent on tourism, but Grasmere is often referred to as a “the honey-pot” village. Business rates are high and the temptation to exploit its reputation needs to be checked if its unique character is to be preserved. The 2001 census returns show a leaching away of the young and a growth of second homes, both of which threaten a balanced community.

Statistics

The 2001 census gives the population of the Lakes Parish as 5,127 with Grasmere being defined as

having a population of 1,567 but looking expressly for the statistics relating to the Grasmere valley and its population rather than the Grasmere ward (this includes both Rydal and the Langdale valleys) proved very difficult. We believe that the resident population of Grasmere valley itself is around 700. There are 486 households in the valley approximately 2-250 holiday homes/second homes and apartments, 17 Hotels, 20 guest houses, 3 holiday hostels, 4 pubs and 1 important museum. Service shops include a post office, pharmacy, a general store, newsagents and a bakery. There are numerous shops servicing the tourist's needs.

A detailed statistical breakdown of the Parish questionnaire results relating to Grasmere will be produced separately and will be available on written request.

Reasons For Doing Our Parish Plan

- Our Parish Plan is a bottom up look from our community's perspective of our village and Parish.
- It will provide a platform for a published community voice.
- It is a reflection of how we, as a community see ourselves.
- This is our chance for us in the community to show how we want to develop in the next few years, and in turn identify the acts needed to achieve that vision.
- It will help us to define and identify our local problems and our opportunities.
- We hope that it will provide the necessary statistical and written evidence to funders.
- We hope that it will in future increase our chances of getting local authorities support to enhance our parish's economic, social and environmental well-being.
- Our Parish plan is an in depth look at our own community at a level and from a perspective that the local authorities could never achieve.
- We hope that it sets out a clear statement of our communities, needs, concerns and what we see as opportunities.
- We intend it to show that we value our environment, the quality of our built heritage, our local customs, characteristics and the village's literary associations.

- We hope that the plan will encourage better community communications and improve our ability to work together.
- Although unintended we hope that plan will effectively mark a moment in time for future generations.

Why A Separate Plan?

The Lakes Parish is divided into five separate wards: Ambleside, Rydal, Troutbeck, Langdale and Grasmere. Each of the wards are so very different from each other, in population, service needs, visitor pressure, commercial needs and in so many other ways that it seemed from the outset that Grasmere's voice and vision could be swallowed up or diluted in the finished Lakes Parish plan. Historically Grasmere was the centre of the Parochial Parish and until the 1930s Grasmere had its own Urban Council. We felt that looking at our own needs first and in depth it would then be easy to take forward the common threads into the Lakes Parish plan.

Our ward plan is based on our findings from the 'Know Your Grasmere Community Day', the results of the working groups meetings, our village suggestion boxes, the Parish Plan questionnaire and countless personal meetings and telephone calls. Over the last 12 months the Grasmere Steering Committee have held and attended countless meetings from Neighbourhood Forums right through to the National Rural Affairs Conference. Our research has taken us on many journeys from the complexities of planning negotiations to the social problems of our ageing community; it has been a totally exhausting, but very rewarding experience.

We hope that this resume of our findings is accepted as a fair and true reflection of our community, its needs wishes and concerns.

Information Sources

The questionnaire could not, and did not set out to encompass everything that residents felt strongly about in the Lakes Parish. Although the Grasmere steering group tried hard to get a Parish perspective as well as a Grasmere one, many of the issues raised and visions given in the returned questionnaires proved to be very pertinent to Grasmere itself rather than the Parish. Our first public meetings raised enough issues and willing volunteers with specific interests for us to form six

sub groups to look deeper into the issues raised. These were housing, amenities, business, youth, environment and care in the community. All groups did their own research into the concerns, needs, fears and visions of the community's future. This was done both through meetings and person to person consultations. One of the first realisations that the steering group found was although the residents were aware of the various clubs, charities, trusts and organisations operating in and around the village, some people did not know the faces behind them nor did they know who did what, who ran what or who organised the various clubs and activities. It also became apparent that some people had inaccurate knowledge about the purpose and aims of the above. This set the seeds for what subsequently became the community day, which the steering group called 'Know your Grasmere.'

'Know Your Grasmere' Day

Grasmere took the opportunity to celebrate its diversity in December 2004 with the "Know your Grasmere Day" organised by the Parish Plan steering group. Representatives from the National Trust, Grasmere Village Hall, The Reading rooms, Churches together, The Friends of Grasmere Charity, Grasmere Sports Ltd. Guides and Brownies, Great Cross, Rothay and the Greens Trusts, The Women's Institute, Church fellowship, Lakeland Housing Trust, The Bowling Club, Peak Taekwondo club, Grasmere village Society, POGS (parents of Grasmere School), The Parish Council, SLDC Community transport, First Responders, Grasmere Players, Parish Magazine, The Grasmere Traders Association, RAOB (The Buffs club), The New Parent and Toddler Group and youth groups, Lake District National Park Authority and The Wordsworth Trust all gathered together for a day in the village hall to explain their organisations, raise funds, attract new members and to put faces behind their names.

Almost 400 people attended the event and the day proved an excellent opportunity for all the groups working on the Parish Plan to engage with a wide cross section of the community on issues that affect the village now and in the next 5-10 years. Residents also welcomed the unexpected opportunity to meet our new Community Police Officer.

This day gave the Grasmere groups working on the plan a big insight into how well villagers communicated with each other, how much they knew about their own village and how the

community saw its future. It helped everybody put faces behind the organisations names, it dispelled myths and misconceptions about what people did in various clubs and organisations, it gave the clubs a chance to get support and new members. It gave the community the chance to see the plans for the new affordable housing at Great Cross, to see and discuss the refurbishment plans for the Village Hall, to demonstrate just what the first responders did, the Peak Taekwondo did, the Grasmere players did etc.



The 'Know Your Grasmere' Community Day was held on 7/12/04

For the steering group working on the Parish Plan it gave us opportunity to engage with all the communities' organisers and talk to the wider community about the issues in the Parish that concerned them. We were able to talk and illustrate to the widest possible cross section of the community about the Parish Plan process in a relaxed and social atmosphere.

Grasmere Traders decided to do a business questionnaire of their own to add a further perspective to the plan. This was followed by the Parish wide questionnaire, almost 600 of these were distributed by hand and 240 or 40% were completed and returned which we consider to be a very good response. With such a good percentage returned, means that it can be taken as a good and accurate snapshot of how the Grasmere community sees itself. The results from our Parish questionnaire were professionally collated and percentages were produced to give us better statistics to work on. Comments received on the "Know your Grasmere Day" along with the comments received from the suggestion boxes placed around the village are not included in the statistical information obtained from the Parish Plan questionnaires. But to leave out these

valuable additional comments from the written consensus of opinions would be wrong as they all add to the general picture. These comments have been mentioned throughout this document either separately or as an aggregate to add weight either for or against an issue.

Grasmere Village & Sustainability

Grasmere residents have a very strong sense of place and are very proud of being able to live in such a beautiful environment. While the Parish Plan questionnaire did not expressly ask what people value, comments received revealed a very strong sense of value of the things around them. When people express concern about things like light pollution of the night sky or the public toilets, what they were unconsciously saying is:

“We care about it, and let’s look after them.”

Grasmere village is now under the most enormous commercial pressures. Spiralling property prices and high business rates have forced shop owners to look for stock with ever bigger profit margins, mass produced goods with lower tickets price and higher turnover figures. These facts, combined with national changes in shopping patterns, makes it very difficult for the traditional service shops to compete. However contrary to the national decline in villages of this size, Grasmere has, thanks partly due to the support of our visitors, managed to retain its post office, village shop, newsagent, baker, and a pharmacy.

Tourism is now one of the biggest single industries in the world and Grasmere is both an important national and international tourist destination. To compete in this market place, it forces our tourism businesses to provide a constantly improved accommodation. These improvements, extensions and conversions to the commercial properties in this village are all now putting more pressure onto the wider community. The holiday home and the second home market in Grasmere has seen a huge rise in the last 20 years and now seriously threatens the balance and sustainability of our community as we know it today.

Change, there will be, and change there must be if we are to live in today’s world, but changes to our village in relation to planning must be carefully controlled and monitored. Although not perfect and often criticized, the Lake District National Park Authority Planning Dept has been very effective in controlling unwelcome or ill conceived

developments. Without their efforts the village would be a far less pleasant place to live in, work in, and visit.

Over the last twenty years things in the valley have changed dramatically, farming patterns have changed, traditional fell farms have been lost, a unsustainable amount of village homes have been lost to the second home and holiday cottage industry. Speculative building has changed the look of many a corner in the village.

Grasmere village has always maintained a very strong character with its very traditional buildings but in recent years the intense spiral of commercialism is now changing the look of the village from being smart rural vernacular to town twee. Long standing visitors and residents have commented about the enormous increase in things like commercial advertising signs, ‘A’ boards, banners, pavement obstructions etc. Some of these may be seen as acceptable elsewhere in today’s society, but many are not welcome and can degrade the overall look and ambience of the village. Some of these changes have been slow, incremental and unfortunately unregulated, but others can be sudden brash introductions from less sensitive parts of the country; all can be unconsciously damaging to the very thing that a large percentage of people come to Grasmere for, and that is to enter a saner and less commercial world!



Cottages In The Village

There are now signs that things may be changing with the LDNPA having new planning legislation. They now have full time planning enforcement officers and have at last created a community planning department. Justification for new build houses for instance will now only be allowed if it fills a gap in the proven local need.

Issues Related to Housing

Our returned questionnaires showed 38 people stated that they needed housing of their own but only 14 people stated that they were on South Lakes District Council's housing lists, 9 wanted starter homes, 7 wanted to rent, 6 wanted co-ownership and 4 wanted sheltered accommodation.

Countless articles, surveys, strategies and local government documents have been written about housing needs in Cumbria and some have focused on Grasmere as having special affordable housing needs. It is no point reiterating their findings in great depth here in this Parish Plan for this is our chance as a community to say this is how we see our community and housing needs. We do need to set the situation in context however.

Incomers to Grasmere are now mainly property investors or more affluent retirees. While the village has seen an increase in the number of young children recently, the number of resident families of a child bearing age is falling. We believe that around 90% of houses that come up for sale within Grasmere are being bought by 'outsiders'. This leaves the possibility of inward migration by working families to be almost impossible. Potential development sites can meet strong local opposition especially when sites alter or affect adjacent or nearby retirement homes. It has been suggested that potential sites for affordable housing in private ownership may be even more difficult to obtain now that any new build has to be for proven local need; because the speculative value of the land has been reduced, it will also reduce the reason to sell.

The questionnaire revealed that the majority of those who left the village were seen to be younger people in their 20's to 30's and a few later in life. The younger ones left for reasons 1. Cost of buying (75.6%) and 2. Lack of rented property (46.7%) and the senior people left because of shortage of affordable or suitable smaller homes that were accessible to the village centre or in line with their needs.

South Lakeland's residents average earnings are around £16,000 per year (2002 figures) and statistics taken from the 2002 housing needs survey in Grasmere showed that 28% of households have incomes below £10,000 with 60% earning under £20,000 which is well below the national average. Without a financial windfall, Grasmere residents with average earnings would need to secure a mortgage equal to nearly 9 times

their annual income! We can see by this small analysis that there won't be any form of a balanced community in Grasmere to sustain unless there is a 'U' turn.

The loss to the community of mature youth can be often attributed to higher education leading them towards specialist careers for which there are few job opportunities locally. There's a need to increase the variety of job opportunities with higher wage earning capacity other than those in the tourism industry, in order to give a better life chance to local people and encourage them to stay here.

Grasmere has according to the same affordable housing needs survey, over 40% of residents employed in the hotel and catering sector; this combined with a further high percentage connected to the indirect servicing of this sector, means that there is a very high dependence on tourism as was well illustrated in the Foot and Mouth knock on effect in 2001. With 46% of homes being 2nd or holiday homes, combined with the large percentage of resident semi retired and retired people, this now leaves Grasmere with a rising imbalance in the community.

Demand for holiday homes or a second home has fallen heavily on the 1 – 3 bedroom properties which are the very homes that the young and employed of the community need. Loss to the community of much of its social housing stock under the 'right to buy' scheme of the 80's and the now nationally disproportionate house prices we have in Grasmere has left us with a large affordable housing need. This creates a paradox where we have some of the highest house prices in rural England and yet some of the lowest wages nationally.

A survey of the housing needs situation in Grasmere was done in 2002 by the Cumbria Rural Housing Trust and showed that 22 households were in need of affordable housing within the next 12 months. A further 5 households were in need of affordable housing within 3 – 5 years. It recommended 22 affordable homes between the years 2002 and 2007. Four flats have since been built at Highfieldside (Badgers Court) and three houses are being built by the Great Cross Trust. Five further new dwellings have received planning permission at Knott Houses farm. Three of these have now been started. This will have meant that over £1,000,000 has been found for affordable housing in the valley since 2002. This often quoted

affordable housing needs survey uses the 1,567 individuals ward figure (this includes Langdale and Rydal) as the basis for its statistics; it states that 15.1% of the population is in the 20-29 year old age group. We believe this figure distorts the true figures in relation to young adults in the valley as it will include many of the young hotel staff and probably some students and others working at the Wordsworth Trust etc..., most of these would not be seen as part of the legitimate market for affordable housing need by South Lakeland District Council.

In the Parish questionnaire 99 people commented on what they thought were suitable potential housing sites, many of these suggestions were duplicated but all will be investigated for feasibility at a later date by the group working on affordable housing in Grasmere.

Below is a selection of points from the affordable housing group's files:

- Grasmere has exceptional and specific problems in finding building sites when compared with other Lakeland villages. Reasons include: physical site limitation, flood plane restrictions, permitted development boundaries, lack of acceptable sites (as seen by the owners as unavailable for affordable housing,). Land with possible commercial potential etc.
- We could not find any forward planning for the needs of the community in the future. As ours is an increasingly ageing population many of us will have to move out of the village or the Parish to find suitable accommodation due to the lack of any or very small number of single storey homes on the flat or because we have very few suitable other properties available in the village. This is further compounded by the slow turn round of properties.
- Through conversation at meetings and at 'Know your Grasmere Day' it transpired that some people did not want to rent social housing but would prefer if it were ever possible to purchase a shared equity in a property of their own.
- We could not see any forward planning by SLDC at present for key community workers who may need accommodation in the Parish. We understand that this issue may now be under investigation by the South Lakeland Strategic Partnership.
- Strong emphasis is given to new build to resolve the affordable housing shortage while we need a quicker acquisition process in place when built properties or when larger properties suitable for division into units come up for sale.
- There are occasions when larger properties suitable for division come on the market or owners just wish to divide but not move on. Under the new proposed legislation division of these properties will be very difficult. We see no reason for this to be, provided that the development has a 106 local occupancy conditions within the agreement that assures local occupancy in perpetuity.
- The new legislation will help to stabilize the growth in speculative build and will help to ensure that all new homes built are for genuine local need but with new build being extremely difficult and expensive we must continue to look at every avenue to satisfy the proven need.
- It is difficult to see how even when the present proven need for housing is met as to how the community could re-balance itself, without more incoming young families. We need more children in the village to be a truly sustainable community.
- The very slow turnaround of properties in the social housing and privately rented sector gives 'a no hope' message to many newly formed family households and single employed people still living with parents. Couples who have no dependent children or expected baby can also have a no hope feeling. This can indirectly give a bad family planning message!
- People in tied/provided accommodation can often feel insecure and can be bound to their jobs in order to maintain family stability. In addition people in tied accommodation fear, or can feel awkward/embarrassed if their health means they can no longer continue their job they were employed for. Retirement can also bring similar difficulties.
- Many of our local young people go onto higher education and do not wish to return to continue living under their parents' roof. Under the present housing allocation system operated by SLDC, local single people are so disadvantaged that they often just move away before re establishing themselves. Given this situation it is difficult to see how we can retain our young people and/or re-balance our community.
- For those willing or able to enter into a 50/50 shared equity agreement the ceiling is set at present for SLDC equity schemes at £170,000. This means that at present until the £ ceiling is

raised the scheme is a non starter as property in Grasmere is now impossible to find under this figure.

- We believe that there may well be some hidden demand for housing in the village. There may well be now or in the future a situation that when older people struggle on to maintain their property, but would like to move to a smaller or more suitable property. Their belief that there are no properties available can often prevent them even making initial enquiries.
- We need a better housing option facilitation services for those who are becoming frail. They will need help to adjust their lifestyles and find alternative accommodation in our village or the Parish. For instance this may not always mean new build; it could be that provision could be made to help them subdivide their own houses that could then be let for local occupancy.
- The following comment was received by the steering committee:

The accent is at present to provide affordable housing for today's needs and it is right to do so. However we must keep in perspective that we live in an ageing community and little or no attention has been given as to addressing the needs of our community in the future. Therefore would it not be sensible that any sites for building and or converting properties in the flat and central areas of the village should be retained or acquired for those of us that may have care and mobility considerations in the future? Otherwise many of the older generation will have to leave the village and their community just because we have no sheltered or other housing that would meet their needs".

- To house only people in the greatest need, as the Council does, will not re- balance our community. The community must work together with all the relevant bodies to find solutions to providing the following types of housing:

1. Affordable housing for sale.
2. Shared ownership.
3. Social rented housing.
4. More secure tenancy private rented housing.

There are immense difficulties in meeting the needs of the community in relation to affordable housing. The solutions are not as some might think simple, such as just build some more houses in this

or that field. There are webs of many things that must come together, financial, land acquisition, planning negotiations, flood plane restrictions, etc... Even though the problems of provision are not insurmountable, they do demand considerable energy to achieve results. We feel that this web of complexities needs to be better understood by those interested and those in need.

Our action plan will include we hope, innovative ways that we may change this situation and will call upon the whole community to help the group working on affordable housing to change this situation.

See the end of this Plan for a list of consulted publications and for the fully expanded version on Grasmere's affordable housing needs please consult the Grasmere Affordable Housing Group on 015394 35055.

Community Buildings

179 said the village hall could be improved. 47 others thought it couldn't. 170 respondents gave us written comments.

A very large percentage of the returned questionnaires commented on the question regarding community buildings. There were two questions covering the village hall and the improvement of the community life in general and they will be dealt with together, as so many comments on the improvement of community life involved using the village hall in a wider and more creative manner than is currently done now.

170 people gave written comments upon the village hall and felt the hall could be greatly improved. There was a strong consensus of opinion that we need access for the disabled, better insulation and heating that is not so expensive to run in the future, improved toilet facilities, a smaller room or two for small group meetings and smaller functions/activities, a room for the youth of the village, comfy seating, improved catering facilities, flooring to be improved, loop system for the deaf, efficient day time black out, and the cellar brought up to standard for meetings for other group users. It was also suggested that the hall could be divided up so different groups could use the hall at the same time.

A further 83 people commented on how the community life in general could be improved, many of these suggestions involved the use of the

village hall for educational, social, recreational and sporting purposes for the benefit of the whole community. With its close proximity to the Park (Broadgate Meadow), it was suggested that it would be highly valued by sports groups who could use the hall for changing and showering if facilities allowed it. Quite a large number wanted to see the revival of the badminton club and was mentioned several times during the "Know your Grasmere" day and on the comments sheets given out then. Dances / ceilidhs and other social events were considered very beneficial in bringing the village community together.

In terms of social and recreational get togethers, many villagers suggested more village socials, a summer fete, a local history club, a badminton club, a gym, ceilidh nights, a youth club, summer barbecues, aerobics/keep fit/ yoga, general meetings and educational activities. There are a number of thriving social groups/clubs and organisations working in and around Grasmere that would like to use the hall but the heating, access, inadequate toilets and the condition of the floor really does restrict groups who would like to use it all year round:

Requests were also received by several people to look more seriously at the possibility of providing either paid contract parking on a restricted basis or for daytime parking for business staff.

Public transport

The questionnaire showed 86.3% rely upon cars to get about. 26.2% use buses. 10.3% cycle, 5.6% use taxis, 3% use another means of transport to travel and a further 48.5% who said they walk but this is probably just in the village. It was then interesting to see the next response to the question as to whether the public transport facilities in the Parish served our needs. 29.5% said it did, whilst 39.3% said it didn't and 31.7% said it was not applicable which suggests that they do not even contemplate using public transport at all. Finally people were asked if they thought the public transport facilities were inadequate to pen their comments and 100 people out of 240 did so.

Fuller details from the comments are below, but very briefly 61 people noted that the bus service was just too expensive, 44 people said they wanted a more frequent service with a service earlier and later than currently available including those needing to get to school, work and back. Lack

of disabled access on buses was noted by some people, 3 people said the bus stop was too far to walk back home with heavy shopping etc and 3 people felt that a community/mini bus would serve their needs better and 1 person commented that taxis were a cheaper option for 2 or more people.

Those teenagers who wished to socialise with their school friends in Keswick, Ambleside and Windermere felt that because of the cost and limited evening services, they were somewhat trapped in Grasmere until they or their friends could drive. Costs for those on low incomes were seen to be far too high for them to use the services for anything more than an emergency or to attend an inconvenient appointment. Consultations with tourists also resulted in similar views especially in regard to cost of single bus journeys.

Sample comment: "A family travelling on a bus needs a mortgage!"

Several people said that they could not afford to use the services for transport to and from their place of work but would if the services were more reasonable. This is backed up by the statistics when asked 'would they use public transport if the service was improved?' a resounding 135 people said yes as opposed to 65 saying no. Looking at the responses to the questionnaire regarding bus services it was almost a unanimous opinion that the cost of the services did not seem to have any relation to the distance travelled:

Sample comment: "I wouldn't need a second car if I could get to work on time."

In order to illustrate the relative costs, here are the fares for some local journeys with the approximate distances. It is interesting to see that it costs the same (£7.50 return) to travel from Grasmere to Keswick (12 miles) as it does to travel from Grasmere to Kendal (21 miles approx), or onto Lancaster from Grasmere also for the same price (40 miles). It was interesting to note that the first bus to leave Kendal does not go any further than Grasmere!

This is a great pity for the children who attend school at Keswick as it gets to Grasmere at an ideal time for it to continue onto Keswick which would just about enable the Grasmere children to get to school on time. That would save 2 to 3 full cars travelling to and fro per day. Both the parents and the children who attend Keswick School expressed strong wishes for a better timed morning bus

service to Keswick School. The cost of a mini bus has been explored but without subsidies was seen to be financially impractical.

The fact that Stagecoach is the only company to run the local bus services was seen to be a unhealthy situation from a price and competition point of view. Many felt that the 555 and 556 services in summer to the South were good but felt that a later return evening service would be useful. Although services in summer to the North, Keswick and beyond were seen to be fairly adequate, many people expressed wishes to see much later evening services to enable evening socialization and meetings.

As Grasmere is “deep rural”, at the northern tip of the administration area for the SLDC, access to evening functions, events or concerts and return by bus is impossible. It should be noted that the winter services are seriously limited. It was queried as to why Stagecoach could not use smaller buses more often at quieter times.

Requests for a bus shelter at the Prince of Wales Hotel for passengers travelling southwards have been suggested from local residents and visitors to the village. This bus stop is the main express bus stop to London and the South and as there is no other natural shelter nearby passengers often have to stand in the rain and have to then continue their journey in wet clothes.

From a sustainable transport viewpoint, the cost and timing and frequency of the present services can only said to be unsatisfactory as they do not meet the community’s needs. It seems that until there are radical changes to the public transport system both in cost and in provision in the Lakes Parish any attempts to move dependency away from car use will be futile!

Cycling

Cyclists visiting the Lakes have expressed that better consideration should be given to the carriage of cycles on all public service bus routes and although outside the remit of the Lakes Parish Plan, the provision for cycle carriage on trains to Oxenholme and Windermere is limited and very unsatisfactory. There are no cycle hire or repair facilities in Grasmere.

While the Grasmere residents welcome the idea of the proposed national cycle route through Grasmere, Red Bank is widely seen as a very

unwise route. The mix of a narrow road bounded on both sides by high stone walls together with steep ascent/descent and several blind corners and a surface that in the autumn and winter can often be covered with leaves. This coupled with the fact that the road is used by a large amount of walkers is not seen by those with local knowledge to be a safe or suitable route. Other parts of the proposed route are not as contentious but have still raised many concerns. We hope that Sustrans and the Highways dept will take note of local knowledge well before finalising plans!

Cycle stands would be a welcome addition to the village facilities.

Taxi And Minibus Services

While the present service providers seem to satisfy demand on the surface, comments were received by the steering committee from accommodation providers that a more open and progressive approach to marketing their services could expand their businesses. Many local people and tourists would be a lot less reticent to use their services if estimates of costs to and from various well known points were more transparent. It was suggested that by using systems like the computer based route master could give quite accurate mileage distances; these in turn could provide a good base line for giving an up front estimates of costs of intended journeys.

Suggestions were also put forward to look at ways that fare concessions already in place in other areas of the country, such as family rail/bus cards or extended senior citizens cards etc... could be used in different ways on all types of public transport for Lakes Parish residents.

Street Lighting

Comments revealed that there are areas where lighting is inadequate including Broadgate Meadow, Tanner Croft, Easedale Road, Village Hall to White Bridge, Red Bank Road, around St Oswald Church, Wayside Church to Benfield, Oakbank to Swan Lane, Stock Lane and Town End to Village .Not only was the street lighting seen to being inadequate or non existent in some areas but the light that was provided was often stated to be the wrong type or lighting the sky to much.

Gritting Of Roads

This brought several comments asking for side roads to be gritted. But many specific requests were made for estates to be gritted where retired people live.

Road Surfaces And Lay-bys

84 particular comments on road maintenance with no compliments here for maintenance, with potholes and poor surfaces cited in most of the village roads/lanes. The overall picture is that potholes are left far too long before they are attended to and the stitch in time gang was needed more often. Several roads were seen as needing total resurfacing.

While it was observed that the major roadside gullies were cleaned mechanically any other drains were left until they were blocked.

Roadsides and roadside maintenance was seen to be of a very poor standard generally with drains left uncleared for years, overhanging branches not cut back, roads unswept and vegetation including trees growing out of roadside walls.



A poorly maintained lay by on the A591

Dunmail Raise lay by for instance has not been swept or maintained for several years. Many people called for better maintenance as so often little jobs are left until major work is required. The system of "lengths men" was mentioned several times in the comments and they are sorely missed by those who remember them.

Misunderstanding of who is responsible for what when referring to roadsides, roadside walls and verges is seen to be in need of clarifying with the general public. Many people think that the roadside walls are all owned by and are the responsibility of the local authorities when in fact most are owned

by and are the responsibility of the adjoining land owners.

Road Works

The A591 it is often seen as a ransom strip and in certain parts there is not an alternative road south. Traffic lights on temporary works often need better monitoring especially at weekends or when long stretches of road are being repaired. This often gives visitors a bad impression leading them to believe we always have traffic problems in the South Lakes.

Policing

While the statistics show Grasmere to have a very low crime base, the question regarding policing revealed that there is widespread dissatisfaction with both the level of and the style of policing in the village.

Comments in the returned questionnaire include "Never see one," "The only time you see one is at the Grasmere Sports or the Rush bearing," "What policeman", "Never seen one on foot" etc...

Although the appointed community police man has only been in post for a few months and he is only allowed a few hours of time dedicated to the village, many comments were received that a more visible presence either on foot or on bicycle would be much appreciated.

Speeding Traffic

Traffic policing issues featured in a very large number of returned questionnaires.

Respondents complained about excessive speeding (there were 40 comments received about speeding limits) and driving standards on the A591 not only within the 30-40 mph but right from The Prince of Wales to the top of Dunmail Raise. Joyriding motorcyclists and some other motorists especially on Sundays totally disregard both speed limits and many road markings. Motorists travelling both north and south are using Dunmail Raise section of this road to vent their frustration. Motorbike speeding occurs every weekend with no apparent police regulation of motor cycle speeds. Eight People used exactly the same comment when referring to Dunmail Raise and stated that "Dunmail is a Racetrack!"

Speed limits

26.2% of respondents thought speed limits were a problem but 50.6% said speeding traffic was a problem! 25.6% had various concerns regarding heavy traffic.

While 5 respondents thought the 20 mph limits were 'unnecessary' or 'too slow'. Others came forward with a variety of opinions and comments. Many said it did not work, had not made any, difference or that signs were just not observed.

Traffic speed around the village gave many concerns. Some comments mentioned local young drivers!

- Comments on the speeding issues within and around the village point to "too little to no effective Policing".
- Speeding in Stock lane, some of the comments point to the drivers the as being principally Grasmere villagers!
- Comments were received that parking restrictions in Townend are not observed.
- Church bridge parking needs defining.
- Coaches are still passing through the village, contrary to the coach restrictions.
- The unloading from vehicles around the school entrance and especially around the morning school opening times is causing concern.
- The unloading of large vehicles is seen as a problem in the whole centre of the village especially when several do it at the same time.
- Several comments were received in relation to "too many HGVs". HGV restrictions do not seem to be fully observed on the A591. There seems to be an increasing number of these HGV vehicles travelling through.

A very large number of responses to the questionnaire brought forward the fact that minor anti social offences are hardly ever policed at all. It is difficult to see how policemen can address the widespread litter dropping and dog fouling issues which upset so many people. Please see the action plan re the New clean neighbourhood and environments Act.

Recent changes to the licensing law are giving great concern. Should any late night licenses be approved, fears are that any late night

noise, disturbances and other issues would be very difficult to police in this village. While the establishments themselves may well profit from the extended hours, the effects on the community and the late night peace in the village would well be very unwelcome.

Concern about under age drinking in the park seems to be another area that caused concern but the writer has been informed by the police that this issue has been addressed and was confined to non resident youths.

Parking issues

Parking sparked off a lot of heated feeling and produced 115 comments in this section of the questionnaire. 53 people felt that parking was inadequate in the village. 53 people commented that visitors were taking over what has in the past been accepted as residential parking. Many people commented that visitors are now parking on residential estates and in narrow side lanes. Very much on the back of this 47 people thought that some form of residents only pass would be useful. 11 residents said car parking charges were too expensive, 5 residents made specific requests for parking for the disabled near the shops and essential services. One person suggested extending the existing bus lay by for this purpose.

Attempts to justify the raising of car park charges to encourage people to be less dependent on cars appears to have upset tourists causing them to tour the village to look for on street parking in residential areas to park for free.

This is seen to have had a knock on effect upon residents who are in turn denied parking places close by to their homes or being able to park close to essential local services such as the small supermarket, pharmacy, newsagents and doctors for up to half an hour. Some tourists have now resorted to parking in lay bys for long periods to avoid expensive parking fees. It was suggested that a SLDC or LDNPA day car park ticket for all car parks would be better for tourists in the area and could reduce some of the problems mentioned above.

There were 100 people who wanted residents only parking and or a residents pass of some sort. This they felt would help to restrict visitors from parking in residential areas. The problem has specifically increased recently up Easedale Rd since the building of Badgers Court on what was the old

car park. Tourists drive up expecting to park there to start their walk and when no car park is found, they just park in the residents parking spaces. This is extremely annoying for the residents who are already handicapped by lack of sufficient parking.

College Street parking also gave rise to several comments. Although the street is one way people still drive out of the street the wrong way. Remarking of the parking bays in the opposite direction would seem to be a simple solution.

Blatant abuse of the disabled parking bay for all day parking was seen to be 'not on'. Correct signage has been requested for some time.

Residents on College Street also requested a residents parking bay.

With regards to Broadgate, residents are asking for 30 mins parking to be enforceable all year round to allow everyone access to the essential local facilities of the pharmacy, supermarket, newsagent and doctors. This would then stop visitors and tourists parking all day from October thorough the winter to Good Friday blocking out access to residents who just want to be able to pop to the shops:

"Residents living too far out to walk to shops cannot find anywhere to park during the season."

From a sustainability point of view and viability of these service shops, it would be preferable that residents should not be discouraged from using their local services and essential facilities by unsatisfactory parking regulations.

Other comments included the following:

Parking on Church Bridge is seen as an accident waiting to happen.

Others mentioned extending the disk zone from Ambleside to Grasmere.

Vehicles unloading near the school entrance were giving great cause for concern.

There are requests for sign saying "No overnight parking" to stop the number of overnight caravans and camper vans parking overnight in the A591 lay bys.

Recycling in Grasmere

Out of 240 responses 63.2% thought that recycling was inadequate 36.8% thought it was adequate. When asked what they would like to recycle 68.9%

wanted cardboard 75% wanted plastic, 39% wanted rags and wool etc.

Grasmere recycling site is at the rear of the Wordsworth Hotel and is there by the courtesy of the management. The site has a segregated bottle bank, paper bank and can bank. The site is appreciated and well used by a percentage of the community but like other sites of a similar nature it suffers misuse. The recent erection of traffic barriers has led to misunderstandings as to the access to and from the site. The site is freely available and accessible to the residents of Grasmere, the only restriction is the inconvenience of obtaining a token from reception to operate the barrier.

This site is a recycling site and not a public amenity refuse disposal site and as such does not meet the needs of the community as revealed in the parish questionnaire.

135 people requested cardboard recycling. This demand for cardboard recycling is from both the domestic and the business sector. While there are private contractors who will collect large volumes, Grasmere has many smaller businesses who would aggregate the smaller quantities but a site for community collection will be difficult to find in Grasmere. A site for cardboard at Ambleside may be possible if the present amenity facilities were re organized. The site would have to be enclosed and undercover for fire reasons.

Requests for green waste disposal have been noted but demand may shortly be satisfied with an SLDC scheme.

Many other people requested facilities for clothes, shoes, books and videos etc... but the quantities that Grasmere could produce for the recycle bank providers may not be viable in Grasmere but banks at Ambleside would be.

Many of our senior citizens and people who are car less who would be willing recyclers feel frustration that access to recycling is restricted for them. This may change when SLDC bring in the blue box recycling scheme in 2006/7.

This scheme will give some relief to some willing recyclers but it is known to have many problems and is inefficient in many respects. As Grasmere have so many holiday/second homes it is very difficult to see how the scheme will operate and the last thing that Grasmere residents want to see

is blue boxes left out all over the village. Detailed communication regarding just how SLDC's curbside recycle scheme will operate in Grasmere is felt to be overdue as it would be preferable to try and sort out any problems long before they manifest themselves on us.

Civic Amenity Site At Ambleside

Although this site is under the direction of the County Council, it is run by a contractor for the council, but the site still contains the Parishes main bottle, paper and can banks, these are still governed by SLDC's administration. The results are that the bottle banks, paper and can banks remain locked away from public use except for between the hours of 10am-4pm on four days of the week.



Recycling at Ambleside's Amenity Site

The restricted number of days that the amenity site is open cause's much public frustration and big pressure peaks for the staff. They in turn find it difficult to monitor how things are disposed of. Staff at the site are, both willing and helpful but receive a daily dose of verbal abuse when trying to control what is being disposed of.

The reason for this appears to be largely due to poor signage, lack of public information regarding restrictions on what people can or cannot dispose of. There are no official written scales of charges, small commercial tipping advice or clear advice as to what one as a private individual may or may not tip, or indeed how much one can dispose of.

There is no clear written advice on tyres, white goods, large items, electrical goods, excess garden pesticides, old paint; controlled waste etc. The oil bank also has no signage or conditions for use.

Grasmere Sustainable Communities Group has had two very useful and positive meetings with recycling officers from both the SLDC and CCC. We have now been informed that signage, facilities and opportunities for recycling a wider variety of articles will be improving over the next couple of years but pressure for more days to access the site will need to be maintained.

Environmental Issues

Concerns expressed in percentage terms out of the 240 questionnaire responses were dog fouling 60%, litter 54.2%, walls 24.7% verges 23.7%, footpaths 24.7% light pollution 21.1% noise, 17.9%, Parks and common land 8.4%.

On the question of roadside wall maintenance many people were upset that walls had been left to degrade with no care or understanding of their maintenance. Young trees allowed to grow out of or against the base of walls were seen to be leaving the problem to the next generation and to be a lack of duty by both the wall owners, SLDC and the CCC.

Dry stone walls around the village and along the main road are indeed falling into disrepair and there were a number of specific references made to the state of these walls, notably along the main road, along the Lake shore and near Penny Rock Corner, on the left, going north just beyond the mini roundabout. People commented that the wall repairs generally are taking too long.

"Walls in village lanes and along boundaries were deteriorating and buckling in many places and could be a major concern in future" was one comment.

Several people commented that walls were being used as receptacles for litter which is only ever removed by caring locals.

People also expressed concerns in regards to walls being left un-repaired after accidents but as this often involves legal matters and insurance claims it can be a long wait for compensation to be paid out. Unfortunately many walls left damaged after minor accidents go unreported to the owners, this often unfairly leaves the owners with large un-compensated expense to put the walls back.

Roadside Verges And Footpaths

Several comments mentioned untidy verges. Concerns and suggestions included lack of trimming

and insufficient maintenance, litter being left unpicked and then being chopped up by grass cutters, spreading the litter even further.

Vehicles parked on some of the grass verges and made them muddy and unsightly. Safety sightlines at junctions and entrances were not always kept clear.

Surface Water Drains

Many comments were received in the questionnaire and further comments were passed to the steering group separately.

Roadside and footpath drains are often left un-cleared until surface water causes problems and then those people sent to clear them have little local knowledge, this in turn often leads to more extensive and expensive drainage restoration. Drains left unchecked and minor roads that are never swept for years or only swept up leaves in a mechanical way were seen to lead to many roads to hold unnecessary surface water and often leads to flooding. This surface water is often described as being due to exceptionally heavy rain when in reality it is really due to poor maintenance!

Hedges And Trees

Many people expressed concern about overhanging trees and hedges. While these may not be apparent to an absent landlord, or owner, it is very apparent to pedestrians, cyclists and indeed everybody who uses the road/path and many people would like to see a better and quicker way to get the offending branches removed.

'A' Boards And Portable Signage

'A' boards were seen to be a troublesome feature blocking footpaths, causing hazards to those in wheelchairs and those with pushchairs when it forced them onto the road in order to get past. Further comments were given that boards were proliferating on the sides of roads directing people to various businesses in and around the village. Some people objected to portable signs and 'A' boards outside businesses (well over thirty at the last count) some of which were often on the highway and some where the land may belong to the businesses, but all could cause a danger to the public especially when it forced them into the roadway. The recent proliferation of commercial advertising banners also came into strong criticism.

Broadgate Park

The park is a very much loved and big asset to Grasmere; it is very popular with both residents and visitors. The youth and children made it very clear in their meetings that it does only in part fulfil their needs.

Many ideas were received as to just what the children wanted, these included a netted kick around area, bike ramps, a netball court, tennis court, basket ball court, skate board area, etc. An open sided shelter with a light inside was requested so that they can all meet somewhere out of the rain. This idea of an open sided but roofed shelter was also seen as a good idea by parents for picnics and people wishing to shelter from our frequent rain showers. It does seem absurd that living in one of the wettest places in England, that our public park has no shelter from rain at all. Several people mentioned in the comments about there being no toilet facilities near the park. Further comments on the possible future connection to the village hall facilities can be found under the village hall.



Broadgate Shops

The play area was given a few mentions in that it is partially rubberized and partly just muddy grass which was not considered very satisfactory because as one mother explained

"The play area in Broadgate Park is a mud bath and very dangerous after rain. The former rubber chippings were stated to be much better, less of an eyesore and more practical, the apparatus gets muddy, slippery and so do the children". It was considered by a number of parents who discussed the issue at the parent and toddler group that it should all be rubberized in the play area for safety

considerations and to prevent the children getting so filthy.

The park is used in summer evenings by school groups visiting the youth hostels nearby and is seen as a much appreciated village tourist asset.

Negative comments were all related to dog fouling and dogs been exercised off leads. Requests were made for more litter or dog poo bins in the park.

Wordsworth Garden

Although only established for a couple of years this is now proving itself to be a very popular place for tourists and is a classic example of how when a well led village community group with a good vision and business plan can not only make a garden that is self sufficient, but one that can be enjoyed for free by the many tens of thousands of visitors that Grasmere has every year.



Wordsworth Garden

The charity through its surplus income from the garden is now helping to support financially many of the village's charitable trusts including the Lakeland Housing Trust which seeks to provide further affordable housing for Grasmere residents. It is a great asset and a wonderful addition to the village's amenities.

Footpaths

The village centre footpaths are in places non existent and are often not wide enough for wheelchair users and pram pushers and concerns received applied to the safety of pedestrians who used the village centre as though it was a

pedestrian only area. It has been commented that in particular areas near the shops in Broadgate and in Stock Lane where there are a lot of "A" signs and footpath obstructions, pedestrians, wheelchair and pushchair users are forced into the road in order to continue along the footpath.

Concerns were expressed that the footpath alongside the A591 is not being maintained properly and has weeds and small trees growing through the tarmac.

References were made for more monies to be provided to the National Park for footpath repairs.

Dog Fouling

114 responders were concerned about dog dirt fouling (60.0%).

50 written comments were made explaining the concerns of dog fouling with respect to need for dog poo bins and dog fouling notices along village footpaths. A request was made for a dog warden to catch offenders. There were many concerns for the children being vulnerable from the dog fouling in the park and on route to school. Riverside footpath and the footpath along Easedale Road and around Highfield Side were particularly prone to dog fouling.

Whilst many dog owners are responsible in clearing up dog fouling, many aren't, especially if they feel that they are not being observed. This seems to be a big problem in areas like the off road footpath along Easedale Road where a hedge screens dogs and owners from view.

Many people requested specific dog poo bins to be placed in troublesome areas on the footpaths and in the park; however these specific bins would be expensive to empty as they have to be treated as clinical waste. Many people were frustrated by the total lack of any enforcements of the current legislation relating to dog fouling. Although many dog owners do remove fouling, it is obvious that a percentage of these dog owners are not prepared to carry it to a litter bin. Many comments were received about doggy poo bags being thrown into fields, into hedges, verges and indeed anywhere they feel it can't be seen or they as dog owners can't be seen doing it! As the bags do not degrade, the poo bags are then exposed once the vegetation dies back leaving a further long term litter nuisance. This litter is often then left unpicked by the council or left until the village

society or other residents remove it. Dog poo and the disposal of dog poo bags is seen as a serious problem but as nobody wants to carry dog poo very far. Until "Gucci" produces something like a fashionable Poouchi bag for carrying it, the problem will probably be with us for some considerable time! The danger to farm animals and wildlife from this and other litter is also of concern.

Litter

According to the questionnaire 103 people out of 240 thought that litter was a problem in the village and 44 people took the trouble to write and explain this further, in addition a number of people discussed this issue at the "Know your Grasmere Day" with the steering committee and also within the business questionnaire.

Hot spots where litter is regularly a problem are not always obvious. Justifiable concerns were received in regard to litter from many places where there are never any council collections. Bottles, drinks cans, traffic debris, barbecue rubbish and dog poo bags are all being thrown over walls into fields. Litter is not an occasional incident at these places but a regular and ongoing occurrence. Unless there is a solution found, it can only lead to resentment of visitors presence when farmers and landowners have to clear it all up all the time. Fields along Broadgate, Easedale Rd, Stock lane, along the A591 and fields around the lake all suffer in various degrees.

General street litter is not in large seen as a locally produced problem but as a visitor debris problem. Rubbish stuffed into walls, in hedges and other places where collection is difficult or never done brought several strongly worded responses from villagers. The use of grit bins as rubbish bins brought requests for litter bins to be provided at the same place. Chewing gum embedded into footpaths appears to be an increasing issue especially around the park and on Broadgate.

Better designed bins (animal proofed) were requested when the present bins are replaced. Some commented that bins needed more servicing at peak times like bank holiday weekends, half terms etc... and others asked for more strategically placed bins, especially at the start and end of footpaths. Those mentioned specifically included Easedale Road, the Lakeshore, riverside walk, A591 lay by and at the bottom of Red Bank.

People suggested a total of 14 possible sites for bins including some near to the churchyard.

From the comments received an audit of litter bins as to the amount of use and positioning was overdue. Work practices were also commented upon and more than one person suggested that collections should be made in an evening before the birds have had a chance to pull litter out and make a mess.

Litter stuffed into walls really did annoy residents. Visitors in large do care but once litter starts to gather especially in out of the way places it appears to breed unless removed immediately. Many responders mentioned that they personally took the trouble to remove general litter, often on a regular basis. Other responders asked for more community litter sweeps.

Much concern has been voiced at the amount of litter and the type of litter found in and around the lake shore all of which comes from the village or from visitors around the lake. Bread trays, beer crates, plastic containers, polythene sacks, and drinks bottles and cans, some of which must come directly from waterside commercial properties, but a large proportion of smaller rubbish can be directly related to our visitor's carelessness. Grasmere Island has been mentioned as been long overdue for a litter sweep.

Despite the efforts of the National Trust, LDNPA and some caring Grasmere residents regularly removing litter, the problem is slowly getting worse especially in areas not covered by the councils. Many people expressed opinions in relation to authorities working better together to collect litter instead of CCC, SLDC and others working separately.

Light Pollution

40 responders were concerned (21.1%). 17 strongly written comments were received with regards to the light pollution in and around the village. The lights people complained most about were mostly floodlights, lights illuminating commercial buildings and festooned lights under building eaves; others cited that a lake shore hotel beamed light right across the lake and stopped the night sky being reflected in the lake. Another commented that if anywhere, should be floodlit; it should be the church at Christmas.

Festoon lighting under commercial property eaves raised hackles. One person stated that it is not

Christmas all year round! Others said "Grasmere is not Blackpool!" Several commented that it should not be allowed in a conservation area.

With 40 people finding light pollution a concern and 17 people penning comments in detail on this issue plus many more verbal comments at the "Know your Grasmere Day", it is clear that many would welcome stronger planning laws governing this aspect of our lives. We are indeed fortunate in this village to have retained until recently a wonderful night sky. Many people have stated that it seems a shame that a few commercial properties with self interest are spoiling the night sky for all of us.

Noise Pollution

34 respondents were concerned, and 18 people gave us written comments.

With regards to noise pollution, primary complaints were the low flying jets, local hotel staff creating disturbances at their residences, motor bikers and private fireworks displays held by hoteliers. Firework displays are often held without any warning to residents in nearby properties. The displays always seem to consist of a good proportion of bangers... This was seen to be a lack of consideration for children asleep in bed, local residents, other people's visitors, pets and wildlife.

On the topic of low flying jets which is much hated by many residents, children and visitors it is felt that there has not been much of a reduction in low flying exercises. The main complaint was that they not only pick the best weather days to spoil our peace, but occasionally fly at night long after the children have got to sleep! Unfortunately these flights are still seen as an important part of our air defence system training.

Traffic noise, particularly motorbikes on the A591 featured in several comments in the questionnaire and verbally at the "Know your Grasmere Day". Unfortunately there is little national or local legislation in place to limit general traffic noise but community lobbying for it is likely to bring a better response than individual's complaints.

Although late night noisy party revelry is not usually a feature of Grasmere, when it does, it certainly upsets people. Residents fear that applications for variations to hoteliers existing licenses may well bring about late night and early morning street nuisances including noise.

The other complaints were in relation to non local hotel staff creating disturbances in their residences.

One very commendable point noted that not one single comment or complaint was received in the returned questionnaires in relation to noise made by our local children or youths. "Well done to them!"

Utilities And Services

A total of 251 responders expressed concerns over many sections of the questionnaire.

Toilets

There is a lot of heated feeling about the threat of the toilet closure right across the board from residents to businesses in the village to visitors to Grasmere. All felt that toilets were an essential service. In the Parish Plan questionnaire 116 people cited the possible closure of the toilets as of concern and out of these people, 95 people followed this up with written comments. This shows quite clearly how residents think.

The 33 out of 80 businesses who responded to the Business questionnaire were split in opinion as to who should pay for the provision of the toilets with 16 businesses that the SLDC should be responsible, 10 saying it was the responsibility of the LDNPA, and 6 believed users should pay. Resident villagers cited several complaints apart from protesting against the possible closure. The toilets should be open for longer hours, need more regular cleaning and servicing at busy times. People were suggesting that a higher charge was put on the use of the toilets to cover the cost of maintaining them.

Others thought we need more toilets as the current toilets, especially by the Stock Lane car park are insufficient for the visiting coach passengers. Coach visitors interviewed said that they had spent more time queuing than looking around the village due to insufficient toilets at Stock Lane car park! For our 10,000's of visitors to find that there are inadequate toilets facilities available on arrival must be the worst possible welcome. As the Stock Lane toilets serve one of the main car parks and our only coach park, they are indirectly vital to the village's economy.

For our coach borne visitors, closure of these toilets would be a disaster, as many of them have neither the time nor the physical ability, to find the other toilets, (in College Street), which are several

hundred metres away. Coach companies will simply not stop in Grasmere and this will in turn affect the turnover and viability of the very high rate paying businesses in the village. For our other visitors it may well be, not just a great inconvenience but a message 'let's not stop or shop'.

Sewage And Drainage Systems

With 28 references to main sewerage and 18 more in depth comments from the questionnaire it would appear that concerns have not been totally addressed with the recent upgrade of the sewage works by United Utilities. The main area of concern appeared to be Red Bank Road area where there are about 20 to 24 properties currently on septic type tanks. While a few properties still have mains foul water drainage problems, several improvements into the ingress of surface water into our historically bad main foul water drain have been made. We believe investigations and improvements to the system will continue well into the future.

The new sewage plant has resolved much of the poorly regulated effluent outfall into the lake. As a direct result the Lakes water quality and ecosystems have improved. The condition of the lake bed should now improve but much more slowly. Although the United Utilities Company and the Environmental Agency strive to improve the outfall into the lake through the water treatment works, little has been done at looking at what arrives at the plant.

We have now been informed that later this year there will be a scheme similar to the Still Waters Partnership that is now in place at the Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite catchments. This will be probably a much wider and more scoping look over several years at everything that affects Grasmere lake water and all the other Lakes in the southern lakes catchment's area.

Mains Gas Supply

13 were concerned about mains gas supply (8.2%).

Several requests were made through the questionnaire comments. More people requested mains gas connection. It appears that unless there is seen by United Utilities Company, a high volume of connection it is likely each property requesting it would have to pay for a share of the installation.

Youth in Grasmere Village

The overwhelming responses to this question from the youth and children alike are very similar. Suggestions have been made for the local park to include an adaptable hard surfaced area that could be used for tennis, basketball, skateboarding, rollerblading and BMX biking with portable ramps for the skateboards and BMX being securely stored at the Village Hall or in a purpose built storage unit.

Also seen to be very important was the development of a Youth Club for all ages providing, a means for outings to cultural events, swimming pools, theme parks etc, a safe and warm meeting place for children to hangout, chat and play games and for social & sports events to be organized. Grasmere Youth Club is in the early stages of development but requires more input from parents to make it a success!

Some people felt that better use could be made of local buildings, such as the Village Hall, for concerts and social evenings and of the Grasmere Sports Field to help young people develop their interests in sports.

Several teenagers said they would like to see an internet café in the village where they could meet with friends.



A Village Tradition – The Rushbearing

Young people would like to have a bus pass or reduced fare on weekends or alternately a reduction in admission charges to help them enjoy more distant facilities or the access to one of the SLDC's minibuses, which they know is possible via the Midas Scheme but this unfortunately requires a volunteer driver to train and take a test to be able

to drive them. An integrated and more frequent bus service, especially in the evenings has been widely requested.

Low cost housing is an issue for everyone in the village including young people who have said they would like to live here in the future but cannot see it being very difficult because of the housing problems associated with living in a beautiful and therefore popular part of the country.

Parents & Toddler Group

In November 2004 Grasmere Parent and Toddler Group was set up. It is for children aged 0 – 5 yrs accompanied by a parent or carer. It has 6 – 10 children attending. It aims to provide a safe, supportive, educational and social environment. It has close links with Cumbria Sure Start and Pre-school Learning Alliance. The group currently runs one afternoon a week. It is based at the Old School House next to the primary school. They have use of two ground floor rooms, kitchen and upstairs toilet.

They have received funding and grants from Cumbria Community Foundation, South Lakeland District Council and The Kelsick Foundation. They have also done fund raising of their own, for example: a sponsored toddle, East of England Choir singing in St Oswald's Church and a Stork Sale and Coffee Morning.

Over the next 5 – 10 years the organisers would like the group to be supported and hope that the number of children attending will grow. They want to increase the number of sessions available and also want to see the introduction of pre-school provision, i.e. nursery with day care facilities or crèche thus enabling more parents to return to work. The Parents and Toddler group will work closely with the new Children's Centre rural pilot. For the building they want to put in a ground floor toilet with disabled access and baby changing facilities, more storage space, and develop the rear yard for the children to play outside.

Grasmere CE VA Primary School

Grasmere CE VA Primary School is situated in the heart of Grasmere and is attended by village children as well as children from outside of Grasmere. Presently there are 40 children on roll.

The staff and governors would like the roll to continue to grow, attracting all of the children who currently live in the village as well as those

who could commute from the surrounding area. The staff and governors are aware of the need to promote the school positively within the village of Grasmere as well as within the County. The head teacher sees this role as primarily down to everyone who lives in the village as well as staff and pupils. This is a school to be proud of with excellent academic results and a particularly impressive range of creative and sporting opportunities.

Currently, pre-school children who live in Grasmere (0 – 4) attend day care facilities and receive nursery provision in Ambleside. If pre-school children attend nursery/day care outside of the village it is more likely that they will remain there for the rest of their schooling. It is the head teachers desire that all pre-school children who reside in Grasmere may have a nursery/day care option within Grasmere school. This may mean a new build which could also provide for the youth of the village after school and in the holidays.

The school building is currently in need of major repair. The heating system is very poor and the plumbing, decoration, storage facilities are not even adequate. It is the head teacher's belief that the school needs a great deal of money spent on it in order that the children may have pride in the building and their work. This will be the main focus of the work of the governors for the next three to five years.

The head teacher would like to see the school flourish at the heart of the community and become a safe and comfortable resource which may be used by all ages and by different groups in the village.

Care in The Community

Social life here in Grasmere is plentiful, varied and engaging for those who care to join the various clubs and activities around the village. This social life is unconsciously very much part of the care in the community as faces and people are soon missed.

There are many other things that happen on a weekly, regular or annual basis these range from the much appreciated weekly Age Concern lunches to the annual Buffs Christmas party. Many of these things however are often run by the same few people year after year and there is always room for new willing hands to spread the work load.

A wide variety of responses were received in the Parish questionnaire. Many of these related to the villages geographical position in relation to accessing the various services. Rural Wheels Volunteers Service and Community Transport South Lakeland provide voluntary car schemes in our area and there is minibus hire for community groups. We found that community transport services operated by SLDC and CCC were not fully known about or used by the wider community.

We are very fortunate to have a good caring community here in Grasmere with strong neighbour relationships. Most of the locals and long established residents are well integrated into the community with local friends and take part in many of the social activities in the village, but we feel that there may be a few more recent retirees to the village who may not have made the same connections, possibly a greater emphasis will have to be given in the future to bringing in those people; this could well lead to unrecognised loneliness in our community. With this in mind we feel that it is important to engage with people as soon as possible if they do come to settle in the village.

We are very lucky compared to many other areas that there is a greater flexibility in seeing the doctor comparatively quickly compared to other areas in the Country. Doctors find it very time consuming but people would still like a doctor on their doorstep when they need one. Some people especially the elderly cannot walk far and those with young children are particularly handicapped when needing to see the doctor and or nurse in Ambleside. The timing of appointments on the limited days in Grasmere is not always very easy especially for children at school and or people at work.

With the round trips to Westmorland General Hospital, Kendal being 40 miles, Barrow 70 miles and Lancaster 80 miles, attending appointments, to receive treatment or visit friends or relatives at any of these hospitals brings problems but for those in Grasmere without their own car transport, can be very worrying and expensive. A volunteer Car transport system is in place and works well but details of the service are not known about in the wider community.

Several people expressed wishes that we had a resident or at least an appointed doctor based here in the village.

Comments regarding the Grasmere surgery and its use included that it could be used more and offer other services like chiropody; minor treatment services or Citizens Advice/Consultations type services and perhaps more frequent surgery days. Other suggestions included using it as a base for the Community Policeman.

Appointments at Ambleside surgery were seen by some to be difficult for people due to bus transport timing. Car parking at Ambleside Health Centre also brought comments regarding the number of spaces available. Health visitors in the village were appreciated and their services were seen to be good. Health Centre information and the appointments system seems to work well.

Some people did not like the weekend service done through a telephone steering system and administered from a remote location.

Our research also found that people's opinion of services and the access to facilities changed radically when they became car less. The once vision of living in a rural utopia could easily be reversed and become a rural open prison.

We see it as important that the community's needs in the future are thought about today and not just when it's too late to plan for it.

Grasmere's First Responders

We are very fortunate that the Cumbria Ambulance Service provision of emergency medical services in Grasmere is supported by members of the Grasmere Community First Responder Trust. Formed as a charitable trust in 2001 and active since 1 February 2002, the Grasmere First Responders are called out by Ambulance Control to medical emergencies in Grasmere to provide cover while an ambulance is on its way. The group has 18 first responders (1 July 2005) who have been trained by Cumbria Ambulance Service in basic life support, defibrillation, and oxygen therapy. The first responders attended 70 callouts between 1 February 2003 and 31 May 2005 for a range of medical conditions including heart attacks, chest pains, breathing difficulties, choking, fainting and unconsciousness.

While there are many national and County agencies are all striving to provide services for those in need ,we feel that a special mention should be given to the Cumbria Rural Citizens Advice Bureau and the part they have played and is playing in the welfare

of those residents of Grasmere and the adjacent valleys.

There is still considerable anxiety that there are a number of local citizens who through a lack of understanding relating to 'Benefits' may well be losing valuable entitlements to their income; this applies particularly to the elderly and those on disability benefit. The CRCAB is willing to carry out an 'audit of income' should any person in the area of the Parish Plan feel they are failing to claim their rightful benefits. Surveys are free as are the general services of the CRCAB. Local offices can be found in both Ambleside and Windermere.

Grasmere Businesses

As a "honey pot" location Grasmere is perceived to be an idyllic place and businesses here are keen for the presentation of the village to reflect this image. Welcoming visitors and ensuring they are provided with adequate facilities is the primary aim of Grasmere Traders.

Inexpensive parking, access to well maintained toilets that are open all year round, clean and litter free streets are all seen to be important and some Grasmere Trades Association members are, along with the Parish Council and SLDC paying to keep the toilets open during the main season.

Many Traders are concerned about the following issues:

Large coaches are driving through the village and some feel coach spaces should be made available at the north end of the village as some visitors from the south end car park may not make it through to that end of the village.

Pedestrian signs at various points may help visitors find their way around the village more easily, along with new updated maps at the car parks which were promised by LDNPA but have not yet been done.

Litter bins should be emptied more frequently and updated to provide bird proof bins.

A major concern is itinerant traders, who, it is felt, would not be what most visitors would expect to find in a village like this and who do not pay business rates, therefore are not trading on a level playing field as those businesses who do.

Business rates are deemed to be excessively high, especially at the Stock lane end of the village,

and coupled with high rents this can mean the difference between success and failure for some businesses.

Businesses would like to see a proper recycling scheme introduced within the village. Grasmere Trades Association are encouraging all business people to work together to tackle issues such as those already mentioned and actively trying to enhance the presentation of the village by offering businesses hanging or wall baskets to place outside their premises.



Dove Cottage (Wordsworth's Former Home)

Commercialism in the Village

To a visitor visiting Grasmere for the first time Grasmere is Grasmere, but for many long standing residents over the last 30 years the retail commercial face of the village has changed considerably. Most of the businesses have changed hands or at least management. Shops have been converted from former villagers residences and commercial properties have expanded and extended to the very limit of their property.

Small B & B's have become fully fledged hotels with cafes and large outside seating areas even when local opposition and refusals for permission by the Parish Council and the LDNPA have gone against them.

Proliferation of signage has gone totally unregulated with temporary signs, boarding, banners and sale signs appearing all year round. Many businesses will justify their position by pointing out the high rents, business rates, high property costs or saying that if others can do it, I can do it. Some

of these changes are slow, but the speed and the incremental changes have been considerable over the last few years.

Whilst the results of this must bring the commercial sector financial gain, this style of retailing has changed the ambience of the village centre. Many comments received in the questionnaire at the 'Know your Grasmere Community Day' and suggestion boxes wished for a less intensely visible style of retailing.

The Parish Plan questionnaire contains a lot of requests for more service shops, including a larger variety of fresh fruit, vegetables, fresh fish and meat than currently on offer in the general store, a butcher, ironmongers/DIY, haberdashery supplies and a takeaway. These were all featured several times in the questionnaire responses. Many had hoped the Co-op would expand, open for longer hours as well as extend their current range. Unfortunately at the time of writing it had been refused planning permission which was a blow to the Co-op and the community. Many residents expressed wishes that they would like to see a reduction of 'anorak & outdoor clothing' shops and less touristy gift shops.



A Village Society Project – A New Village Bus Shelter

Tourism Surveys & Consultations

Please refer to the appendix of the Grasmere plan for our visitor's views and visions.

Grasmere Village Society

Grasmere Village Society was founded in 1977 and it has a membership of nearly 250. It is a strong and well organized society. It takes an interest in all matters that affect the village. Many of the committee members take a specialised interest in affairs related to community issues, planning, lake shores, affordable housing issues or environmental concerns.

Over the years it has provided many things in the village from bus shelters to seats for the village green. Its members maintain many village features from the war memorial to the drinking fountain. Since its formation it has fought hard and continues to fight hard to protect the village from out of character developments that would change the village. There are meetings held monthly to discuss issues that may or will affect the village.

Village Notice Boards

The village has several well used notice boards for non commercial notices and further private notice boards for the village Hall events and the Grasmere Players etc. The job of keeping them tidy usually revolves around those who use them.

Parish Magazine

The village has an excellent parish magazine produced 10 times a year. It is distributed free by a valued and willing band of village volunteers to almost every house in the valley. Topics are very varied and cover all Church events, obituaries, local events and Grasmere news it encourages personal contributions and articles and gives, weather for the previous month, etc. A recent addition is an information page giving useful local trades, services and important local telephone numbers. Another addition is an insert called the Grasmere Green Pages which is encouraging the community to be more sustainable and environmentally minded.

Public Information

The main public information is in the National Park Information Centre. This could be said to be for visitors 'our front desk'. At the time of writing, the future of this centre is under review by the National Park. It is hoped that it is retained in Grasmere. The centre not only provides information, but a booking service for businesses. While there were no specific comments received in the questionnaire, people have more than once requested the

provision of a table and chair to enable people to consult maps or view plans.

Websites & Electronic Media

Grasmere has at present no community owned website but is heavily represented on many tourism related sites. The most popular local community website is Ambleside Online. This is an excellent website covering all local information, news, history, Parish Council Minutes, adverts, for sale/wanted public postings, weather links, local postcards, photographs. It is very highly ranked with many search engines.

Grasmere is now fortunate to have broadband services and it is hoped that as the community becomes more ITC literate the benefits will lead to more home working and to the prospect of giving businesses the chance to compete on a level playing field with city businesses. This should in the next few years relate to a wider range of job opportunities and higher incomes for local people.

TV & Radio Reception

While traditional radio reception can only be regarded as limited. Broadband and digital will bring a new era of quality reception for everybody. We hope that the transition to digital TV does not leave us in a black hole once it arrives. Concern has been expressed regarding the repeated loss of signals following bad weather. Providers are well aware of this and we can only hope that as equipment is replaced it is more weather resistant.

Farming

The Grasmere village has over the last 200 years seen tremendous expansion and changes. From being a sleepy hollow in the mountains almost totally dependent on agriculture to a vibrant tourist honey pot village where farming and land management, on which the back of the whole tourist economy rides is seen as not of much a high priority to the economics of the area when in fact it underpins the whole economy. The work of our farmers and land managers is difficult enough without visitor pressures.

Over the last two generations the economics of sheep farming have plummeted and while the Government and its agencies call for farm diversification, little attention seems to be paid to the fact that while one can diversify farm buildings, in this area we cannot diversify land use.

While sheep farming remains a very large part of land use around us, the economics of traditional sheep farming have changed with fewer farms carrying larger flocks, the scale is now moving towards ranching where the term gathering is used more rather than shepherding.

While financial returns remains so low it is vital that some financial support is given to farmers to help them maintain the traditional landscape we love so much. The best help we can as a community can give them is by understanding their farming practices and needs. This is especially applies when they are moving animals on the fells and along roads and by showing patience and understanding when they are using tractors or moving stock along the roads.

There are fears within the farming community that the new act of parliament basically called "the right to roam" will be taken too literally by visitors.

Local Authority Relationships

The Neighbourhood Forums provide an excellent platform for the community to raise issues and concerns with various officers from the local authorities. It is also an excellent way for other local organisations to explain their policies in more depth, or just explain what they do or what they intend to do in the future. The simple process for small community grants is much appreciated and has enabled many small projects in the area to go forward.

The Lake District National Park Authority has recently undergone big internal structural changes and has now formed a community relations department. One of the aims of this department is to foster sustainable communities within the Park. This will be the fostering of sustainable development and the promotion of economic development and regeneration, affordable housing and in turn improve social well being. This will not be achieved unless it is a real two way working partnership. The authority has invited all members of the Lakes communities to engage with them in plan and policy making and it is now up to us to engage with them at every opportunity. The draft statement of community involvement is available at Ambleside library, on the web at: www.lake-district.gov.uk or from the National Park offices in Kendal.

The plan has been written up the following community wide consultation, a Parish questionnaire and countless meetings. Where

necessary comments have been resumed and written to reflect the majority opinion some responders to the questionnaire may feel that their views have not been expressed and written into the plan, the steering group wish to assure responders that their views, opinions and suggestions have been fully assessed and noted. A full file of anonymous Grasmere residents' comments can be viewed on written request.

The publication of 2005 Lakes Parish marks the start of several projects. It contains the community vision and an action plan for our future. It is hoped that the plan will bring a wider community awareness of the pressures on our village and the wider Parish. Please see our action plan.

Consulted Publications On Housing

- Affordable Rural Housing Survey – an opportunity for business, by Business in the Community, June 2003
- Cumbria Rural Housing Trust – Rural Housing Strategy for Cumbria 2003 – 2005, by Cumbria Rural Housing Trust parts 1. 2. 3. 'Sustain our Rural Communities'
- Lake District National Park Housing Development – Interim Policy Statement Nov '03
- A Shared Vision for the Future - The Community Strategy for South Lakeland 2004 – 2024 by South Lakeland Strategic Partnership. Pages 28-31
- Village Homes for Village People - Building a future – How Parish Councils can provide affordable Housing. Published April '04.
- Housing: An Effective Way to Sustain our Rural Communities – Part 111: Rural Housing Needs Toolkit
- Housing Market- Preparing for Change (a study of 6 areas including Grasmere).
- Grasmere Housing Needs Survey March 2002 Summary and Key Findings CRHT March 2002.
- Grasmere Parish Plan Questionnaire.
- SLDC Council Housing Allocation Policy, SLDC Website.
- Cumbria and Lake District Joint structure plan 2001-2016
- SLDC – Housing Application Form by South Lakes Housing 04/03
- Lake District National Park Authority Local Plan by Lake District National Park Authority Publication No. 01/99/LDNPA.
- Investing in People and Land – Sowing the Seeds for Rural Regeneration by Karl Dayson, Bob Paterson and Pat Conaty; published by A Countryside Agency and University of Salford 2001.
- SLDC's and Cumbria CC's websites and many other more distant websites.

Expanded Plan Also Available!

In order to fit within the Lakes Parish Plans budget and the set time scales, it has been necessary to condense the Grasmere Ward's Research.

We hope to make a fully expanded copy available in the near future.

For further details please ring Grasmere Parish Plan Steering Group on 015394 35055

This plan has been written up by Mr BP Dennison with typing assistance from Mrs JP Dennison Drake.

For and on behalf of the Grasmere community, June 16th 2004 –July 25th 2005.

Acknowledgements

The Grasmere Ward Steering group would like to thank every body in the village that has helped us with this Parish Plan. The individual groups that held meetings: Parent and Toddler Group, Youth, Business, Housing, Amenity, Environment and the Care in the Community group, the willing volunteers who distributed and collected the questionnaires, The Parish Magazine distributors, editor Lianne Sanders and the Rev Butland.

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The Parish Clerks, M Presland and M Johnson, Voluntary Action Cumbria and their community officers.

SLDC officers in the Finance, Housing, Rates, Community, Environmental and Policy departments.

Cumbria CC officers, Cllr E Braithwaite MBE, Cllr V Rees, L Harwood OBE (Lakeland Housing Trust), Cumbria Rural Housing Trust.

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The final thanks must go to all those people who took the time to fill in the questionnaires and anyone else that we have inadvertently omitted.

Grasmere Parish Plan Steering Group

Bev Dennison, Tony Lawrence and Lianne Brooks Sanders.

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Village Hall: - Disabled access and toilets - Renew and improve heating - Upgrade fire protection - General improvements and refurbishments	- Village hall committee to seek funders - Raise funds through social events	High	Wide variety of funders and the Grasmere community	ASAP 1-5 years	Hall committee	Many, total masterplan £300,000
Affordable housing: - Provide for proven need - Seek possible sites - Seek ways to re-balance community	- GVS Working as a supportive partner with SLDC - RS Landlords - Charitable trusts	High	Local authorities Local charities Corporate and private partners	ASAP ongoing	GVS Affordable Housing Group LDNPA SLDC CCC	Vast and incalculable
Youth: - Look at feasibility of having a Parish youth leader - Provide youth centre and club - Provide youth transport - Increase sport and entertainment facilities	- Leaders to look towards parents for more support - Millennium volunteers	Med High	CCC SLDC Parish Council Millennium volunteers?	12-18 mths	Existing youth leaders	Not Known
Parent and toddler group: - Refurbishment of centre - Seek ways to make it sustainable	Existing organisers to work with CCC and Sure start	High	Local authorities Sure Start Children's Centre Project	12-18 mths	Parents Cumbria County Council	Not Known
Primary School: Provide new heating, plumbing, toilets and decorating etc	- Community events - POGS events, and Church charities	High	Church charities Kelsick CCC Others	1-3 years	School Governors	Unknown
Recycling: - Work to get better Parish recycling facilities including a wider range of banks - Longer opening hours at Ambleside. - Seek site for Community composting etc	- Lobby for change and additional facilities - Find additional suitable site for Grasmere	High	CCC SLDC LDNPA Grasmere Sustainable Communities Group	1-3 years	GSCG GVS	Unknown
Care in the Community: Formation of a Grasmere befriending group	GV Society to look at forming the group	Med	GVS Age Concern Social Services Churches Together	1-2 yrs	GVS	Not Known

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Traders Issues: - Work together to resolve toilets, coach traffic, litter, recycling and other issues - Seek a closer working relationship with The Market town's initiative.	- Grasmere Traders Association and others to work with LDNPA and all other authorities - Ask for a meeting in the Village	High High	Grasmere Traders LDNPA SLDC Grasmere Sports Police Highways CCC	1-4 yrs 1-5 yrs	LDNPA Grasmere Traders	Dependent on the issues taken forward
Environmental issues: - Knotweed and balsam problems - Village and valley roadside maintenance. - Lake Water Quality - Litter removal - Light pollution etc	- Grasmere Sustainable Communities working together with GVS, SLDC & LDNPA - South Lakes Still Waters Partnership - Community litter picks - Britain in Bloom awareness campaign	High Med Low Med Med	Sustainable Communities Lake District Still Waters Partnership Eden LA21 FLD LDNPA, SLDC, CCC	1-5 yrs	Still Waters Partnership GVS CCC SLDC GSCG	Knotweed £10000 Over 3 yrs Cost of lengths per person Or village caretaker + backup costs?
Litter & Dog Fouling: - Seek provision of anti fouling signage - Public Bag it And Bin it awareness campaign - Provide more litter bins - Employment of Parish enforcement officer	Ask Parish Council/SLDC to look at a new anti dog fouling campaign and better enforcement of regulations under the new Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act	High	General Public Parish Council SLDC	6-18 mths	GVS SLDC Parish Council	SLDC or Parish Council cost of enforcement officer
Public Transport: - Work with Local Authorities and communicate local concerns and wishes. - Lobby for improvements to existing services	Seek meeting with Cumbria County Council Transport Group and lobby them to seek service improvements. Push for more radical changes	Med	CCC SLDC FLD	1-5 yrs	GVS Grasmere Sustainability Group	Not Known
Parking: - Change existing regulations, additional car parking - Better signage - Relining - Changes and improvements to disabled parking etc	GVS to consult with SLDC, CCC	Med	SLDC CCC	0-5 yrs	Grasmere Village Society SLDC CCC LDNPA	Not Known
Roadside maintenance: Improve maintenance of verges, walls, roadside trees, footpaths etc	GVS to consult with CCC and SLDC	Med	CCC SLDC Parish Council	0-4 yrs	Grasmere Village Society	CCC and SLDC to advise

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Highways Maintenance: Improve road conditions including potholes, resurfacing and gritting etc	Grasmere Village Society & Parish Council to lobby for improvements	Med	CCC	0-3 yrs	GVS CCC	Not Known
Light and noise pollution: Reduce the problems and bring a greater community consciousness through the Parish magazine	- SLDC - GVS - GSCG	Med-High	SLDC LDNPA Dark Sky's Org Lobby MP	1-5 yrs	National Government SLDC under new Environment Act	Not Known
Police and policing: - Seek a more visual presence - Seek stronger enforcement of speed limits - Seek closer relationship with community working towards 'our policeman' image	Parish and District council to liaise with Police Authority	Med	Parish Council District Council	1-2 yrs	GVS	Not Known
Street lighting: Seek general improvements	- SLDC - CCC - Parish Council	Med	SLDC	1-4 yrs	CCC SLDC Parish Council	Not Known
NPA and Communities concerns re excessive visual retailing: Seek ways of reducing over commercialisation	Grasmere Traders & LDNPA working towards clearer understanding of each others' position	High	Grasmere Traders LDNPA	6 mths-2 yrs	All commercial enterprises LDNPA	Not Accessible

Key: CCC = Cumbria County Council, CWT = Cumbria Wildlife Trust, FLD = Friends of the Lake District, GSCG = Grasmere Sustainable Communities Group, GVS = Grasmere Village Society, LA21 = Local Agenda 21, LDNPA = Lake District National Park Authority, NT = National Trust, ODPM = Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, PTC = Primary Care Trust, SLDC = South Lakeland District Council, SL = South Lakes, VAC = Voluntary Action Cumbria.



Langdale Ward Plan

Introduction

The Langdale ward is one of 5 wards that make up the Lakes Parish of South Lakeland District Council, the other 4 wards are Ambleside, Grasmere, Rydal and Troutbeck.

Langdale means "long valley" and the ward starts at Skelwith Bridge, progressing up the valley to the villages of Elterwater and Chapel Stile and then on to the head of the valley a distance of 5.5 miles. From the head of the valley the road rises steeply to Blea Tarn and then down into Little Langdale and eventually down to High and Low Colwith. Also within the ward are the hamlets of Loughrigg and High Close.



Looking up Mickledon with Pike O'Stickle on the right

The Langdale valley has been inhabited and worked since Neolithic times with the remains of an axe factory on Pike O'Stickle at the head of the valley beyond Stool End Farm. The Langdale Pikes – Pavey Ark and Harrison Stickle dominate the Great Langdale valley, while Lingmoor Fell divides the Great and Little Langdales.

Other industries within the valleys are farming and slate quarrying, both now on a smaller scale due to mechanisation which has vastly reduced the number of men and women required to carry out the same tasks as even 50 years ago.

The actual number of farms has also declined as much of the land has been amalgamated to produce more viable businesses, as the small holdings would not have survived as they were. Another extinct industry is the making of gunpowder, with the 35 acres estate between Elterwater and Chapel Stile now housing a luxury timeshare complex with hotel and country club facilities. This brings us to the growing industry of tourism.

A large proportion of the homes in the Langdale ward are second/holiday homes, this creates a two fold problem – on the one hand we do not want so many second/holiday homes that it pushes up the house prices beyond local peoples reach, but on the other hand it brings tourists into our community and hopefully brings in some income via the shops and creates some employment. Getting this balance right is a problem.

Construction of the Parish Plan

Back in the spring of 2004 there was a meeting in the Beehive Room at St Martins College at Ambleside to discuss the formation of a Parish Plan for the Lakes Parish. Members of the public and parish councillors from all 5 wards were invited to discuss how this would be put together. After a public meeting in Langdale School which only attracted 7 people - 2 people agreed to work towards the formation of the Parish Plan. In November 2004 the initial questionnaire was sent out by post to 228 homes listed on the amended electoral role. Additional questionnaires were left along with the collection boxes in the Coop in Chapel Stile and Maple Tree Corner Shop in Elterwater. May we just take this opportunity to publicly thank Jeremy, Steve and Liz and all their members of staff for kindly overseeing the collection of the questionnaires.

We asked 3 simple questions "what do you like about Langdale", "What do you dislike about

Langdale” and “what would you like to change about Langdale”. From 228 questionnaires sent out we had 38 returned. We then collated the responses and these responses helped us to formulate a general questionnaire to send out to the 5 wards. This questionnaire was distributed in March 2005. Again we posted out 228 and of those 228 we had 58 responses which were again collected via the boxes in the Coop and Maple Tree Corner.

Community

From the questionnaires it has shown that Langdale has a need for family housing. Of the people that have left the village nearly all were in the 17-24 age group. Most people have expressed that the problem with any new build would be the lack of suitable land and in obtaining the required planning permission. The cost of renting and buying property is the largest problem.

When asked what things you would like to see provided for youth in the community – the biggest suggestion was to have a part-time youth worker to help with the 10-18 age group.

Environment

Off road vehicles and motorbikes using the bridleways and light pollution were both mentioned. With regard to parking over 50% of respondents said there was inadequate parking – inappropriate parking on verges and on the common are the worst areas. Litter bins are not emptied enough there are not enough bins in some areas. Bins for dog dirt would be useful.



Langdale Village Hall with public toilets in the foreground

Buildings

Generally the feeling of most people (80%) is that the local community buildings are sufficient for the community's needs. The most concerning issue is the threat of closure of the public toilets.



The Cooperative Store in Chapel Street

Traffic and Transport

When asked the question “Do public transport facilities serve your needs” the majority of people were not affected as they own/use a car. However 35% believe that bus services can be improved and the majority believe that public transport is expensive and the timetable does not serve their needs ESPECIALLY in the evening. This is not just affecting young people as the majority of people that responded to the questionnaires were in the retired age group. “Would you use public transport if services were improved” 70% said that they would use public transport if it was improved.

The 4 main issues that came out with regard to traffic and transport were – heavy traffic (51%), off road driving (44%), speeding vehicles (51%) and poor street lighting (36%). A large number of comments were expressed by residents about traffic and road maintenance, specific items will be taken through to the parish plan for action.

Services

When asked if the shops in your village fulfil your needs, 70% said yes and 30% said no – the biggest points made for improvement would be lower prices and a greater variety of fruit and vegetables.

Regarding other services those without a car have some difficulty getting to health services, the main

service people have difficulty accessing is a dentist and then leisure facilities.

A couple of people have suggested setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme.

A better/more frequent and a late night bus service would be advantageous.

A children's play area would be very desirable in the Langdale ward for locals and visitors – this has been looked into previously but the main problem is gaining accessible land for a facility.

It was suggested that a skills bank or LETS scheme would be useful in Langdale.



Maple Tree corner shop in Elterwater

60% of respondents felt that recycling facilities were inadequate. All types of recycling facilities were required especially plastics. 70% of respondents would prefer community recycling banks.

The 3 main responses to 'concerns about utilities or services' were:

- Public toilets – threat of closure – they must be kept open.
- Mains gas – a lack of – people would use it if available.
- Police service – visible presence of police officers and response time were the concerns.

Road Repairs & Maintenance

Roads are marked out for repairs, but they tend to just patch instead of fully resurfacing the roads. The patches do not last very long, and the gutters are also very rutted and dangerous.



Patches on the B5343 between Skelwith Bridge and Elterwater

Parking



The common – with and without parked cars



Cars parked on the junction at Dog Kennel Corner, narrowing the junction and impeding vision

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all the respondents who took the time to fill in the questionnaires to enable Elizabeth Wilson and Dawn Allonby to put together the Langdales ward plan for the parish plan.

The Action	How It Will Be Tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Monitoring	Resources
Public Toilets	Avoid closure	High	SLDC LDNPA Parish Council	Ongoing	Parish Council	None for immediate action, but maybe to retain for future
Bus Service	Improve timetable to include later bus service and lower prices		CCC Stagecoach	12-24 mths		
20 mph Speed Signs	- Possibly just have them either side of the school - Reduction in length of zone and marking of the road		CCC School	6-18mths		
Heavy Quarry Traffic	Enter into talks with quarry		Quarry Parish Council	3-6 mths for talks 18 mths for possible change	Local Councillor	
Off Road Vehicles on Bridleways	Look into if hierarchy of trails was experimental and chase up results	Low	LDNPA CCC Neighbourhood Forum	6-18 months		
Litter Bins & Dog Dirt	Increase number and increase collection rate	Low	SLDC LDNPA	3-12 months	Parish Council	

Key: CCC = Cumbria County Council, LDNPA = Lake District National Park Authority, SLDC = South Lakeland District Council.



Rydal Ward Plan

Introduction

The hamlet of Rydal is a mixed community covering a wide spectrum of age groups and backgrounds, including employed, self-employed and retired people.

There are also an increasing number of families with children of school age.

A high number of properties are holiday homes but those who live here permanently do need accommodation in the village.

As far as the Village Society is aware there is nobody resident in the village that is currently on a Council waiting list. For many years younger people from Rydal have been forced to seek accommodation elsewhere as they were unable to find affordable premises to rent or buy; these young people were usually in the 18+ to late 20's age group.

Buildings

The cost of property in this area is extremely high and, with the exception of property owned and let by Rydal Estate there is no rented property available. Latterly those properties becoming available through Rydal Estate have been the larger and more expensive with high rents and short leases.

Services

There are no shops in the village and, because of its unchanging nature; both freeholders and tenants who have chosen to live here would wish to preserve the unique character of the area.

The community has no difficulty in getting to any of the necessary amenities because the residents have a community commitment, which ensures the elderly and vulnerable are cared for.

For many years the Rydal Reading Room was a central resource for village meetings and various societies. Although the Reading Room still exists it is no longer available as a community resource.

There is a strong community spirit and researches have shown that we are able to use facilities at The Bishop Bully Barn, Rydal Hall or The Badger Bar at the Glen Rothay Hotel. It is not felt, given the size of the community, that there are enough children or young people to require provision for a Youth Club or similar and it is envisaged that young people will find this need met and have the company of their peers through after school activities. The main forms of transport used in this community are car, motorbike and walking.



Rydal c1909 – unchanged except for litter!

The public transport services do not meet the needs of those who live here being both infrequent, slow, extremely expensive and unreliable. However, was the service to be improved villagers would most certainly support a reliable and affordable public transport service.

There is only one car park in Rydal and consequently both long and short stay parking often inconvenience residents. The failure of visitors to observe notices about parking has given rise to

considerable anxiety about access for emergency vehicles in certain parts of the village.

Traffic

The overwhelming concern of the villagers is that of traffic management. The main concerns being as follows: There being no speed restriction of any kind in Rydal we are constantly alarmed by traffic travelling at speeds in excess of 50 mph on a twisting, double lined stretch of the A591.

Since the death of Bronwen Nixon, late owner of the Rothay Manor Hotel, who worked tirelessly for many years and eventually succeeded in getting a weight restriction on heavy goods vehicles passing through Ambleside, Rydal and Grasmere, there has been a steady increase in the number of heavy goods vehicles passing through the village, as the weight limit no longer seems to be monitored.



Road damage at the top of Rydal Hill, January 2005

The lack of a speed limit and the volume of traffic, commercial and tourist, with no safe place to cross the road gives cause for concern.

Those who visit the village and arrive by service bus from the south have to cross the road at an extremely perilous place where visibility is poor.

There are no road signs to warn motorists of these hazards. The maintenance of roads is not adequate in that there are two un-adopted roads, the state of which leaves much to be desired.

This also raises concern about children crossing the road to catch or alight from the school bus. It is felt that an extra street light on the northbound side of the main road would greatly aid safety for both pedestrians and motorists.

The Transport and traffic issues the people of Rydal would wish to see addressed are those of speeding traffic and heavy goods vehicles, many of which do not need to pass through Central Lakes as part of their journey.

Environment

Recycling is something we feel strongly about but there exists no adequate method of disposing of glass, aluminium, cardboard or textile.

It has been suggested that we might ask if it would be possible to have boxes which could be collected when the household refuse collection takes place and a kerbside collection would be favoured.

Certain environmental issues concern those who live here; pruning and removal of branches etc, that overhang roads and footpaths and growth from verges.

The lack of litterbins and the resulting problems of picnic waste, nappies and dog mess. Disposable nappies do not degrade and threatening to fine those who allow their dogs to foul is only workable if bins are provided into which dog litter can be placed.

We have a constant problem of visitors 'parking' plastic bags containing dog litter over garden walls, behind farm walls or hanging it from trees where the plastic takes an age to degrade.

Fishermen leave large amounts of litter including cans and fishing line on the lake shore, thus endangering water birds.

Many of the houses have no mains sewerage and rely on septic tanks, there are no public toilets and it is generally felt the provision of these could only add to litter and waste problems.

Action Plan

The action plan for Rydal is as follows:

- Traffic and Street lighting (A591) to be developed as a part of the combined Lakes Parish Plan strategy.
- Other issues identified within this document to be monitored and pursued by the Rydal Village Society which was formed independently, as a result of the Lakes Parish Plan initiative.
- At the time of writing, further developments are planned at Rydal Hall, which may well have an impact upon both traffic congestion and parking issues. This will be monitored by the Village Society on an ongoing basis.
- Property in the village continues to be sold at increasingly high prices much of this becoming holiday accommodation (two further examples being recorded during the compilation of this report.) Whenever possible the Village Society will raise the issue of affordable housing with any agencies who may be able to advise. The formation of the Village Society is therefore a timely event.

Our thanks

To the Rydal Working Party members: Pam & Keith Coates, Sue Davenport, Nick & Anne Fecitt, Judith Furniss, Cathy & Jonathan Hodgson, John & Gilly Hodgkinson and John Pickering.

And to all the residents of Rydal who have given us their support and suggestions to help in the compilation of this Parish Plan.



Troutbeck Ward Plan

Introduction

Troutbeck is one of the five wards which make up the Lakes Parish of the South Lakes District Council, and this document is Troutbeck's contribution to the Lakes Parish Plan.

The other wards in the Lakes Parish are Ambleside, Langdale, Rydal and Grasmere. Although Troutbeck has many similarities with these other wards, it is geographically separate and has many real differences in scale, demographics, needs and priorities.

Geographically the Troutbeck ward is a long triangular area along the western side of the Troutbeck valley, falling between the Trout Beck (river) on one long side, the slopes of Wansfell on another, and running all the way down the valley to the shores of Lake Windermere.



Troutbeck's main tourist attraction is the National Trust's Townend House

Most of this area is grazing farmland and woods along the valley bottom, populated by a few scattered farms, cottages, larger houses, and the village of Troutbeck itself. Almost every building in the Troutbeck valley is over 100 years old, and many are over 300 years old. The whole valley lies within the Lake District National Park. Most of the

village is a Conservation Area and there are many Listed and National Trust owned buildings.

The surrounding landscape is exquisite. The peaks of Yoke, Ill Bell, Froswick and Thornthwaite Crag rise steeply to over 2500 feet to dominate the head of the valley, and the Trout Beck runs through woods and farmland to plunge through steep ravines just before entering Lake Windermere at the foot of the valley.

Within the whole of Troutbeck ward there are about 260 properties. In the most recent analysis around the main village itself we counted 105 houses, of which 42 were second-homes or holiday cottages, and 63 were full-time residences. Several of our second-home owners have visited Troutbeck for decades and make an active contribution to the village community. But many are landlords renting their holiday homes to weekly visitors. Long-term rental housing within Troutbeck village include 5 properties owned by the Holehird Trust, 3 by Lakeland Housing Association and 7 by private landlords, one large house converted to student flats, and in the Troutbeck valley there are 6 tenant farms mostly owned by the National Trust.

The village of Troutbeck itself is really a collection of tiny hamlets strung out for about one and a half miles along the old valley road. It is a truly unique village, full of vernacular architecture in an unspoilt valley setting. It has three traditional pub/hotels, a well-used and recently refurbished village institute, one church, about six B&Bs, and a highly-regarded village shop and post office. The village shop and post office provides many vital services such as banking and essential groceries for many village residents, and is widely regarded as the heart of our village. Although highly popular with tourists, Troutbeck has no official car parks, tourist shops or cafés; many visitors arrive on foot via its network of footpaths and bridleways.

Visitor attractions in the Troutbeck valley include 7 hotels, one Youth Hostel, a National Trust Property at Townend, and a large caravan park at Limefitt which is highly visible but just outside the Troutbeck ward on the opposite side of the river.

There are no schools, and the only visible industries are farming and tourism. Broadband is recently available, and a number of residents do some or all of their work from home. Just three buses a day bypass the village centre during the summer tourist season only; however, by car or taxi Troutbeck is just a few minutes away from supermarkets, shops, doctors, schools, and many high quality tourist and cultural attractions.

Troutbeck's permanent population includes both the traditional Cumbrian community and many 'new' residents who have moved to Troutbeck because of its beauty and tranquillity. Of our survey respondents, 52% were over 65 years of age, 34% were 51 to 64, and 13% were 36 to 50. Only 15% were employed, 23% were self-employed, but over 57% were retired. We have counted about 20 children living in the Troutbeck valley.

There is a long-established and integrated sense of community in Troutbeck. Some local families have lived in Troutbeck for several generations, and many 'new' residents have lived here for over 25 years. Almost everyone knows each other in the village, public meetings are well attended, and the Village Institute hosts many popular social events.

However the farming industry is in economic decline, and property values in the whole of Troutbeck are now well beyond the reach of local people. Affordable housing, the increase in numbers of second homes, an aging population, and the lack of younger families are all major concerns.

A love of the countryside and the community were mentioned in almost every single response to both our questionnaires. Conservation of Troutbeck – as a real village and as a place of beauty – is the primary objective at the heart of our Parish Plan.

How We Developed Our Parish Plan

Troutbeck's Parish Plan has been written and agreed by a working group of 11 people representative of all sections of the Troutbeck community. This committee was nominated by a public meeting held in the Village Institute on 12 July, 2004.

To ensure that the Troutbeck Parish Plan is based on the ideas and opinions of everyone in Troutbeck, two questionnaires were circulated; the first in November 2004 went to all recipients of Troutbeck Parish Magazine and to customers of the village shop, and the second in February 2005 went to every household in the Troutbeck ward. The first questionnaire received 57 responses telling us what people thought was best in Troutbeck and how it could be improved, whilst the second, which was compiled by the Lakes Parish Plan Steering Group and less specific to Troutbeck, attracted 55 responses.



Conservation of Troutbeck is the primary objective at the heart of our Parish Plan

Environment

Conservation of the landscape and environment were cited by 74% respondents to our first questionnaire, many mentioning that they wanted to retain Troutbeck's peace and tranquillity and lack of commercialism.

Many people in the first questionnaire mentioned (without prompting) their concerns about over-development and light pollution at the caravan park at Limefitt. Firstly in our Parish Plan we want to find out more about how Limefitt had been allowed to develop to its present size, and to press the LDNPA to restrict further increases. Light pollution, also from Limefitt Park, now dominates the otherwise almost completely dark valley at night, and we want to voice our concerns to both the Environment Agency and to Limefitt's management.

Several people complained about another other eyesore: a long term builders' dump in the village itself, and we agreed that we make the LDNPA aware of Troutbeck residents' concerns.

Several positive suggestions were made to improve Troutbeck's appearance. 31% of respondents in the second questionnaire complained about litter. The suggestion of volunteer village tidy days would be an excellent way of tidying our lanes and verges, and also reinforcing our community spirit. Other good positive ideas we'd like to include in our plan include a switched light outside the Village Institute to make it safer to walk to parked cars during events, and suggestions for litter bins at lay-bys on the A592.

We particularly liked the idea of improving the appearance of Troutbeck's many wells, and visitor seating areas. To ensure this is done in a sensitive way (and to attract funding) we plan to ask Nature and Heritage conservation agencies to help us produce a Troutbeck-wide plan.

4x4 vehicle and motor cycle use causing noise and erosion on the Garburn Pass 'road' was a concern for several people in both questionnaires; we plan to support the LDNPA's efforts to control these.

Finally, several people complained about the unannounced erection of new communications masts on Applethwaite Common, visible from much of the Troutbeck valley. We plan to ask the LDNPA to advertise all future 'landscape-sensitive' planning applications at a central point in Troutbeck.



"Please grit our lanes in winter, fill our many potholes and trim our overgrown hedges"

Buildings

60% of respondents to the first questionnaire mentioned the need for affordable housing, yet 55% also mentioned the need to preserve Troutbeck's buildings or appearance. A number of suggestions were made for sites for affordable housing and there was also strong support for the conversion of existing buildings.

Following our surveys there have been two well-attended public meetings with the LDNPA, housing associations and National Trust to progress the redevelopment of the old school site and to investigate potential village infill sites. A planning application for the old school site is imminent, and a new Affordable Housing Action Group is to be formed. We will continue to support their work.

There were many other suggestions for restricting second homes and attracting families to Troutbeck – unfortunately most were either unfeasible or illegal! Perhaps the one positive way we can influence these is to continue to show the world that Troutbeck is a wonderful place to live in, not just to visit.

Traffic

Suggestions for car parks at the Church and Village Institute were well supported. Many however were also concerned at the feasibility and conservation impact of a new car park at the Institute. We concluded that the present highly dangerous on-road parking at the Church makes this a much higher priority.

Speeding in Troutbeck is clearly a major concern, highlighted by 51% of the responses in the second questionnaire (in spite of a proliferation of confusing speed limit signs throughout the village). Various suggestions were made to slow down traffic, and faced with the real possibility of a serious accident soon, we think we have to investigate all options.

Three other popular suggestions were made for Troutbeck's traffic in our questionnaires: "please grit our lanes in winter, fill our many potholes, and trim our dangerously overgrown hedges". We hope that we can find a way to persuade Cumbria County Council to increase funding and priority for these.

Lastly several people made an excellent suggestion to build a protected footpath from Jesus Church to The Queens Head on the A592. We agree that this would make safe a highly dangerous yet popular walk for both visitors and residents.

Services

There was strong support for toilets in Troutbeck (43% of respondents to the second questionnaire). But there are also strong opinions against, and conflicting ideas on their location and servicing. After much discussion we felt that there was little

feasibility of finding an acceptable location or the money to build and service these.

Almost as many people in the second questionnaire 'ticked the box' for mains sewage in Troutbeck (36%). And after a 5-day electrical supply failure across much of Troutbeck in January 2005, we think that we must maintain pressure on United Utilities and the Environment Agency to install mains sewage and to improve our electricity supply.

There was some concern and support for alternative and improved re-cycling facilities for Troutbeck. However we've learned that SLDC intends to implement kerbside household collection of some recycled waste in 2007, and we feel we should wait until we know more about this initiative.

Community

We've already highlighted the importance of community spirit in our village. Over 62% of our respondents praised this (together with the Village Post Office, the Village Institute, and Jesus Church) in our first questionnaire.

There are a large number of activities in Troutbeck during the course of the year. An excellent suggestion was made to strengthen our community: a comprehensive list of events, activities and contacts to be circulated or posted at the Village Institute in order to attract more participants to an even wider range of events.



We plan to sensitively restore and develop Troutbeck's many wells and seating areas

Finally, but possibly most importantly, we plan to investigate and form a 'Village Association'. At present there is no Troutbeck-based group which could take responsibility for many of the actions identified in this Parish Plan. This new body would replace the Parish Plan Working Group initially to

progress the Troutbeck Parish Action Plan. Longer term it would work alongside all existing Village committees (such as the PPC, Village Institute Committee, Social Committee, Women's Institute etc) to meet the long-term needs of the whole Troutbeck Community.

Our Thanks

To the Troutbeck Parish Plan Working Group members: Harry Allen, Tony Ashton, Susan Black MBE, Jill Guy, Ken Halliday, Rachael Halliday, Margaret Lewis, Alan Mitchinson, Peter Renison, Brian Liddell, and Doreen Westmoreland.

And of course to all the residents of Troutbeck who have given us their support and suggestions and who have completed our two questionnaires.

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Responsible	Resources
Restrict further Limefitt Caravan Park development	- Investigate current planning limits - Discuss concerns with LDNPA	High	LDNPA	Ongoing	Village Association	
Reduce Limefitt Caravan Park light pollution	Discuss concerns with LDNPA and Limefitt management	High	LDNPA	12 mths	Village Association	
Improve unsightly private land in village	Discuss concerns about builder's dump with LDNPA	Medium	LDNPA	12 mths	Village Association	
Tidy the village	Organise volunteer 'Village Tidy Days'	Medium	CWT FLD	Ongoing	Village Association	
Improve outside lighting during events at Village Institute	Install new light	Low	Institute Committee	12 mths	Institute Committee	Capital grant
Provide litter bins & emptying service at lay-bys on A592	Discuss & progress with SLDC	Medium	SLDC	2 yrs	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Improve village wells and seating areas	Develop ideas, produce plan & seek funding for sensitive improvement	Medium	VAC FLD CWT	12 mths	Village Association	Seek funding
Reduce 4x4 & motorcycle noise & erosion on Garburn Road	Monitor vehicle use & support LDNPA's efforts to control 4x4 and motorcycle access	Medium	LDNPA FLD	2 to 3 yrs	Village Association	
Publicise all 'landscape-sensitive' planning applications	Ask LDNPA to post all such planning applications (eg for communications masts visible across the valley) at Village Institute	Medium	LDNPA Parish Council	Ongoing	Village Association	
Provide safe parking at Jesus Church	Investigate all options with Church managers for on- or off-road parking	High	Jesus Church CCC	2 to 3 yrs	Village Association	
Reduce speeding on village lanes	Investigate with CCC and police & consult with village residents on all options	High	CCC Police	2 to 3 yrs	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Establish winter gritting on village lanes	Organise campaign to press CCC to take responsibility or fund winter gritting of village lanes	Medium	CCC SLDC	12 mths	Lakes Plan Action Group	Funding for gritting by local farmer?
Improve surfaces on village lanes	Survey lane surfaces and organise campaign to press CCC to fill potholes	Medium	CCC	2 to 3 yrs	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Improve visibility on village lanes	Survey lane verges and hedges and organise campaign to press CCC to trim & tidy more regularly	Medium	CCC SLDC	1 to 2 yrs	Lakes Plan Action Group	
Build protected footpath on A592 from Jesus Church to Queen's Head	Investigate feasibility & potential funding including experience of other parishes	High	CCC NT	2 to 3 yrs	Village Association	
Install mains sewage	Maintain pressure on United Utilities & Environment Agency	Medium	Environment Agency Lakes Neighbourhood Forum	5 yrs	Village Association	

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Possible Partners	Timescale	Responsible	Resources
Improve reliability of electricity supply	Organise campaign to maintain pressure on United Utilities	High	United Utilities	1 yr	Village Association	
Improve information on Troutbeck events & associations	Organise & circulate an events/activities calendar & contact list	Medium	Church Magazine	6 mths	Village Association	
Form a Troutbeck Village Association	Investigate how we can form & run an effective village association	High	VAC	6 mths	Parish Plan Working Group	Set-up grant

Key: CCC = Cumbria County Council, CWT = Cumbria Wildlife Trust, FLD = Friends of the Lake District, LDNPA = Lake District National Park Authority, NT = National Trust, SLDC = South Lakeland District Council, VAC = Voluntary Action Cumbria.

The Lakes Parish Plan

How Can You Help?

If you would like to comment on any of the issues in this Parish Plan, or help with the implementation of any of the actions, please contact:

Michael Johnson, Parish Clerk, The Lakes Parish Council, The Old Court House, Church Street, Ambleside.
Tel: 015394 31656

The Lakes Parish Plan

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2005