Natland Parish Plan

March 2004

A Natland Parish Council Project

supported by
The Countryside Agency

Cumbria County Council
Community Economy and Environment

South Lakeland District Council

Voluntary Action Cumbria

Foreword

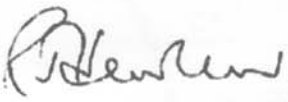
The purpose of the Parish Plan is to make Natland a better place for those who live there. It seeks to identify issues of local concern and proposes actions to tackle them.

It is primarily a document expressing Parish Council policy, but, because of its limited powers, the Parish Council will need to use the Plan as a means of influencing other organisations that provide services to Natland and plan its development, such as the District and County Councils, to help accomplish our aims. Natland based organisations and individuals will also be involved in achieving goals that are important to them.

In 1981, the initiative for a similar, but more limited, exercise came from the District Council's Chief Planning Officer: the Parish Council published *Natland into the Eighties* in April 1983. This time the Government is the driving force, using the Countryside Agency's 'Vital Villages' initiative, of which parish plans are a major element, as one plank of its radical project to modernise local government.

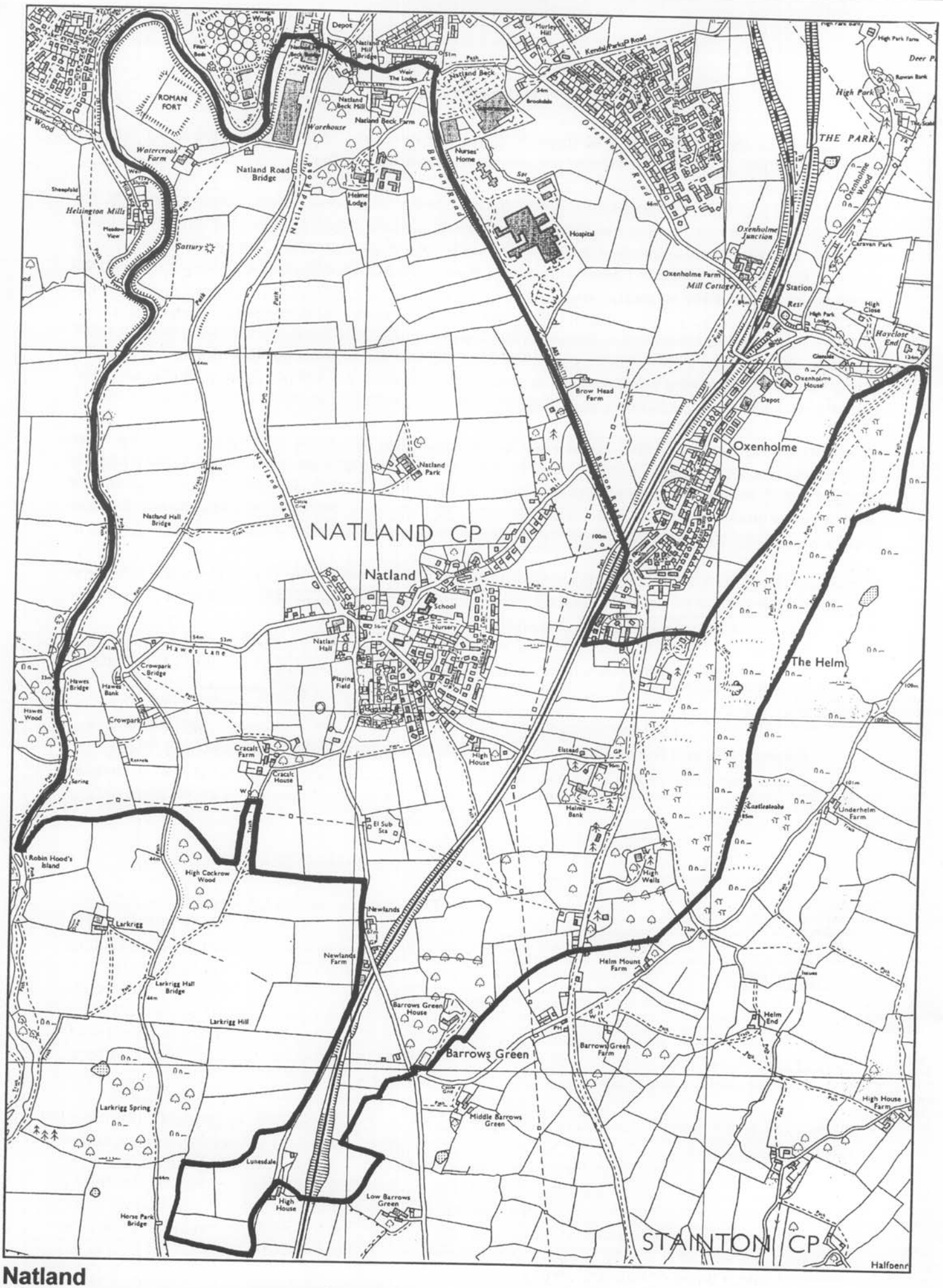
A distinguishing feature of this latest Plan is the effort that has gone into finding out what most people really want for their Parish. The principal message is that they want things to stay broadly as they are. If we are to maintain the character of our parish, though, by protecting its appearance and services and improving them where we can, then we must be ready to adapt to the external forces for change that may both threaten us and provide opportunities in the future.

The Parish Council thanks the Steering Group members for their efforts in producing the Plan, and appeals to the people of Natland for their support in pursuing the proposed actions.



Richard Hewlett
Chair of Natland Parish Council

Barry Evans
Chair of Natland Parish Plan Steering Group



Natland

This map has been prepared by South Lakeland District Council for use in connection with Natland Parish Plan **Feb 2004**

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Chapter 1
THE PARISH AND VILLAGE OF NATLAND

The Parish

The Civil Parish of Natland (see map) covers 892 acres of open countryside to the south of Kendal on the east bank of the River Kent. It extends from the river over the gently undulating fields of the valley-side, cut by the line of the old Lancaster to Kendal Canal, to the sudden steep slope of Helm, where it rises to 185m above sea level, providing a fine viewpoint. Helm is an outcrop of the Silurian rock that makes up much of the southern part of the Lake District. The Kendal to Burton road runs alongside the junction of the Silurian rock and Carboniferous Limestone that underlies the village and the rest of the Parish, under a layer of boulder clay. Water drains through the limestone by a system of caves and other fissures, from which it emerges as springs at the riverside and elsewhere in the lower land.

The part of Helm within the Parish is common land, and this includes the woodland on the west side of Burton Road which is known as Little Helm. The remaining open land consists of fields surrounded by the hedges and drystone walls of five livestock farms. The grassland is all improved so that wild flowers are largely confined to Helm and the sides of the road into Kendal, where meadowsweet and wood or meadow cranesbill still make a colourful approach to the village in summer. Signs of occupation of the Parish in earlier times are provided by the earthworks on the summit of Helm, which could well be a small Iron Age fort as relics of that period have been found there, but which may also have been used by the Romans in connection with their fort at Watercrook at the northern tip of the Parish. The fort was occupied from the 1st century to the 4th century AD. It extended over four acres and is the most important archaeological feature in the Parish. It has been the subject of several excavations, and findings of Roman artefacts continue to be made. Nearby is Natland Mill Beck. There had been a corn mill on this stream since 1200, but in 1935 the mill was converted to also generate electricity for a time. The mediaeval landscape of the Parish is preserved by the common land on Helm and by groups of long, narrow fields which can be seen on the map and perpetuate the pattern of arable strip cultivation adjacent to the village and to Mill Beck, with the deer park (Natland Park) in between. The characteristically funnel-shaped droveway down which animals would be herded from Helm Common can be recognised in the alignment of walls converging through High House Farm onto the village green.

The Village

Natland village stands at the centre of the Parish. The original settlement probably stood at the crossroads of the low route down the valley with the track down to the ford on the River Kent. The kink in the lane as it approaches Hawes Bridge shows where it originally went straight across a ford. This could well have been the Bodelforde recorded in the *Domesday Book* in 1086, the location of which is uncertain but which seems to have been near Natland. Before this, Norse settlers had left their mark – the frequency of Norse roots in local place and field names suggests settlement in the area. The English Place Names Society gives the derivation of Natland as the Old Norse *Natislundr,* that is, 'Nati's wood', *Nati* being either a mythological name or a proper name and *lundr* 'a small wood, a sacred grove'. The earliest recorded use of the name is in 1164.

Natland Hall Farm, where permission was granted for a chapel in 1246, is probably the oldest known site in the village. Natland Abbey is not a monumental ruin but a former farmhouse, which in the 14th century was an agricultural community and sub-branch of Furness Abbey. From 1674 until the spring of 1683, the Dissenter Richard Frankland held his Academy in Natland. In 1682 it had about 20 students. The Natland Academy was famous in its time, but it is not known which building it occupied. Three centuries ago Thomas Machell visited Natland on horseback and recorded that 'there was a little chapel lately rebuilt and a delicate plain level green with houses about it, of which three or four are very good houses'.

The attractive green is still very much the centre of the village (see further below), along with the Church (dated 1910, being the fourth to be built in the village), the Village Hall and the Post Office, which was a pub, 'The Farrier's Arms', in the 19th century. At that time there was also a smithy near the green. The village school was situated next to the Church from 1825 to 1967, when it moved to its present site. The Ecclesiastical Parish includes Oxenholme, so the Church and school serve that village too. St Mark's Home, originally for orphans of the Carlisle Diocese, was opened in 1844, and Barrows Green House became a Barnado's Home in 1947. The lanes through the village originally crossed the green, and were becoming worn by traffic until they were closed off at the instigation of the Parish Council in 1962 and the green was restored as a safe play area for children. The Lancaster to Kendal Canal was constructed in 1822, but the part running through the Parish went out of use in 1947. The proposed restoration of this section has considerable implications for Natland and the surrounding area. The railway line was built through the Parish in 1846 and led to the development of Oxenholme as a railway village. The Garden Centre is a long-standing Natland business, indeed Natland's only large business, which attracts many visitors.

The Parish has been almost untouched by industrial development, and there was little residential building in the village until after the Second World War. The first post-war development was Park Close in 1947. Abbey Drive followed in the 1960s, after the connection of Natland to the Kendal sewerage system, and the rest of the estate was completed in the 1970s. The current phase of development is about to reach its conclusion with the houses opposite Park Close. The change in population may be illustrated by the following statistics:

	Houses	*Residents*	*Occupancy*
1901	50	325	6.5
1961	107	351	3.3
1998	325	740	2.3

This has been accompanied by demographic change. Many of the new residents are retired persons. Others live here but drive to work in Kendal or elsewhere. Conversely, people drive to Natland to visit the Church and Garden Centre, and many children are brought to the school and to the Village Hall pre-school group from Kendal and Oxenholme by car. This increase in traffic, added to by people driving through Natland to and from Kendal, inevitably has an impact on the village. Nevertheless, the residents, old and new, value the character of the village and want it to be retained. This is one of the main issues addressed in the Plan.

Natland village green

Although the village green is not geographically the centre of our village, it is the focal point for much of the life of Natland.

Crossing the green, following the lines of the old crossroads, leads people to the shop and Post Office, the school, the Church and the Garden Centre. The first morning visitors are a group of dog owners, who meet at around 7 am to exercise their pets; this group was driven to use the green when foot and mouth restrictions barred them from the fields and footpaths around the village. They treat the green with respect, valuing the facility.

By 8.40 am the green is surrounded by cars delivering children to St Mark's School and, later, the play groups in the Village Hall. For a few minutes the toddlers race around, enjoying the freedom of a stretch of grass. After 9 am the stream of newspaper seekers arrives, meeting and greeting on the green, then it is the turn of those waiting for the mid-morning bus to Kendal, enjoying a rest on the Inglesfield memorial seat in fine weather. During the course of the day more parents and children visit the Village Hall, which is also the venue for the Monday Club catering for senior citizens. In the evening the green becomes the focus of more activities, with meetings in the Church and a range of indoor sports in the Village Hall – table tennis, badminton, bowls and other social meetings – indeed, on weekdays the Hall is in almost constant use.

Other visitors to the green include walking groups assembling for the day's adventure and art groups attempting to capture the views of the Church or the cottages. Wedding parties take advantage of the green as an attractive open area for their photographs, often taking the full party of perhaps a hundred guests assembled under the oak tree. That same tree is a challenge to the youngsters of the village: boys and girls alike aim to reach the top! Large groups of children of all ages use the green in the evening, at weekends and, of course, during the holidays. Football, rugby, cricket, golf, cycling and conker matches take place, each in its season. The picnic table and benches are well used by visiting cyclists, walkers and parents waiting for children. A memorial seat to Pearson Charnley, whose good offices on the Parish Council led to the removal of the crossroads, has recently been added. The school finds it ideal as a marshalling area for children training for their cycling proficiency test; sometimes an art class will come to sketch in summer too.

The green is in the ownership of the Lord of the Manor, Mrs Hornyold-Strickland, but its day-to-day management is in the hands of the Parish Council. The Council's job is to ensure that the green is not misused and to maintain the turf. Cutting the grass and the outlying verges costs over £1,000 a year. In 2004 it is proposed to replace the worn turf in the area where the village November 5th bonfire always took place until the late 1960s. This, together with the application of chemical feed to improve the grass, will cost nearly £500.

Natland is known for its village green – house-seekers are impressed by it. In the Millennium Year 2000 it was the centre of our celebrations, and for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 many residents assembled on the green for a village photograph. A link with the past, our care for it today will ensure its place in Natland's future.

Chapter 2

THE PARISH PLAN – BACKGROUND

Why a Parish Plan for Natland?

Natland Parish Council commissioned this document as a result of the UK Government's November 2000 Rural White Paper, *Our countryside; the future*, which sets out plans for the countryside and contains guidance for parish and town councils.

These councils are the basis of local democracy and the White Paper encourages them to say what they want to be done in their own neighbourhoods and to require other tiers of local government to take note of their wishes. National Government provided funding to enable parish plans to be produced. These form part of the Countryside Agency's 'Vital Villages' initiative through which advice and funding may be provided to rural communities. The Parish Council wished to take an active part in this exercise of local democracy.

When did it begin and who created it?

At the Parish Meeting in the summer of 2002, the Council announced the possibility of a parish plan for our community, provided that a separate group could be found to undertake the project with Parish Council representation. Volunteers, who immediately recognised the desirability of using this opportunity to protect and enhance what we have, offered their services and formed the Parish Plan Steering Group. The first meeting took place on Monday, 22 July 2002 in the Village Hall.

Group members brought a variety of skills and personalities to the task, with a common determination to canvass opinion from residents, businesses and organisations, to identify their wishes for the future of Natland Civil Parish, and to produce an authoritative report and action plan. Relocation and ill health caused some changes in the group but new members were quickly found.

The Parish Plan Steering Group. *Front:* David Peters, Stan O'Connor (Adviser to Steering Group) *Back:* Barry Evans, Audrey Ireland, Mavis Moffat, Ann Parnham, Neil Robinson, Larry Walters, Colleen Harrison

How was it done?

With the help of interim guidance, contained in a Countryside Agency document, the Steering Group developed a budget of £6,258, including the value of substantial voluntary time contributions. The Rural Community Council Regional Office in Penrith approved this and offered a grant of up to £4,694 (75%). The remaining 25% was covered by voluntary time and a grant of £313 from Natland Parish Council.

A questionnaire was devised and, in January 2003, distributed to all 353 dwellings, to businesses and to a further 12 parish organisations, clubs and societies. Analysis of the responses showed 217 returns (a 62% response rate) from residences and businesses, which gives notable credibility to the whole project. Returns were also received from:

1st Natland Guides
Natland & Oxenholme Pre-School and Toddler Group
Natland & Oxenholme Women's Institute
Natland Village Hall Committee
St Mark's Mothers' Union
St Mark's Church of England Primary School Governors
St Mark's Church Parochial Church Council
St Mark's Church Youth Group
St Mark's Church Families Group

This also ensured that users of village facilities, though not necessarily resident, were given the opportunity to express their views.

What was discovered?

The highest levels of response related to the following issues:

1. 99% feel that Natland should seek to maintain its character as a village;
2. 85% want no more housing development;
3. 71% are concerned about parking;
4. 69% are concerned about traffic.

The Village Shop (99%), the Village Hall (96%), the Church (99%), the school (98%) and the Parish Council (75%) all scored well in the survey of satisfaction with the principal community institutions. The Group communicated these results, and relevant comments made in the responses, to the organisations through meetings or in writing.

The Parish Plan also addresses other matters, which are of concern to fewer respondents but still merit consideration. These are set out in Chapter 3, 'Our Findings and Thoughts'.

What else happened?

In March 2003, a parking survey that covered the green, the school and the shop, confirmed weekday peaks at the school and around the green and at the Village Hall. The maximum number of vehicles parked in the centre of the village at any given time was 38 on a Sunday morning. It has even been known for cars to be parked on the green itself.

The Steering Group's Chairman and the Clerk to the Parish Council, also a Group member, attended, by invitation, the Stainton Parish Plan meeting on 28 March. This neighbouring parish had embarked on its project before Natland. Its work was at a more advanced stage, so the visit provided a learning opportunity. The Group also obtained copies of completed local parish plans so as to benefit from the work of other parishes.

To help development of the plan the Group met with Anna Miller, Development Planning Officer, and David Sykes, Regeneration Officer, of South Lakeland District Council on 14 May 2003. A similar meeting with Nick Raymond, Area Engineer for Cumbria County Council, was held on 7 July 2003. Heather Gardner, our District Councillor, attended the first meeting and Alan Bobbett, our County Councillor, the second. Both meetings were valuable in enabling the Steering Group to gather information and share ideas and opinions relating to issues raised by the questionnaire. These contacts aided further discussions and research with both authorities.

How did we show the Parish what we found out?

In June 2003, the Group published a newsletter to keep parishioners informed about the plan. This highlighted the main issues raised and announced an open day exhibition on 29 July in the Village Hall. The event was also publicised in the St Mark's Church parish magazine and in the 'Community News' column of the *Westmorland Gazette.*

The Exhibition

One hundred and ninety-two people attended the exhibition, including representatives from Sedgwick Parish Council and Stainton Parish Council, and the two South Lakeland District Council Officers who had previously met the Steering Group. The exhibits included competition entries by local schoolchildren on 'What I Like/Don't Like about Natland' and photographs of Natland past and present. Drawings of the houses to be built in the last major commercial housing development planned for Natland in the current round of District Council '10-year plans' were also displayed.

Displays of statistical analysis informed the local community about the issues identified by the questionnaire and some possible solutions to the problems posed. Visitors were invited to make further written comments on post-it notes fixed to the displays, or on the comment forms provided. Sixty-five suggestions were received; all were considered and some have been used in developing the Action Plan.

Visitors at the Exhibition

There were also 30 expressions of appreciation for the exhibition, including the following from officers of South Lakeland District Council:

> The Parish Plan Steering Group must congratulate itself on the fantastic exhibition. A well presented and well informed event that I have enjoyed being part of. Continued dialogue with the District Council is essential. (Anna Miller, Development Planning Officer)

> Congratulations on the display and commitment to consulting with the community of the Parish. This stands the final plan in good stead when discussing proposals with the District Council and other authorities. I hope that interests and issues can be converted into good projects – we will be able to advise here. (David Sykes, Regeneration Officer)

What other community events kept people interested?

Senior Natlanders attended a 'Tea Party' in a Steering Group member's home on 22 May 2003. Not all of the 18 invited guests are still resident in the Parish so some had not met for many years, but all enjoyed getting together over tea and home-made cakes and cookies. They brought a number of interesting photographs of old Natland for use in a Parish Plan event, as well as fascinating knowledge of the heritage and development of the area. The Steering Group members present enjoyed hearing about social aspects of the Parish's past – so much so that the Group proposed a public meeting in the Village Hall so that others might share this information.

Senior Natlanders at the Tea Party

In October 2003, the idea that took root at the 'Senior's Tea Party' came to fruition and we invited members of the public to hear about 'Natland Remembered' from four of the 'Fifty Club' (an informal grouping of parishioners resident for more than 50 years). About 120 people attended a most enjoyable evening and demonstrated that an interest in the community is still strongly in evidence. Displays of photographs, old and new, of the Parish and its people were exhibited, and an update on Parish Plan progress was given. The Chairman took the opportunity to remind those present that the success of the Parish Plan proposals would require the support of the whole community, not just that of the Parish, District and County Councils.

Natlanders have shown a good deal of interest in our activities. The support received from the residents and businesses of our Parish has been first class and very much appreciated. This positive spirit gives us confidence that we will all have good reason to be proud of Natland in the future, and the impetus to do all we can to sustain and enhance the Civil Parish of Natland.

Chapter 3

OUR FINDINGS AND THOUGHTS

In Chapter 2 we highlighted our investigations based on the household questionnaire, approaches to village organisations and to local authorities, and the open day exhibition. Here we tell you the findings of those investigations, what we think the issues are, what possible actions might be available and which of them deserve, in our view, to go into the Action Plan.

Where percentages are quoted, they refer to household questionnaire responses.

Maintaining Natland's village character

In response to the opening question in the questionnaire, 99% agreed that Natland should seek to maintain its character as a village. That character stems from a combination of the appearance of its natural and built environment and the state of the facilities and amenities that serve its community.

Environment

1. HOUSING

Findings
85% of those responding to the questionnaire want no more housing in Natland. South Lakeland District Council told us that the next 10-year plan (at that time being drawn up) will restrain residential development in Natland. There will be no change to Natland's existing development boundary and only 'affordable' housing will be permitted as infill within it.

Issues
The main issue is how to achieve strict control of housing development in order to preserve Natland's character as a village and the rural appearance of the Parish.

Actions
This will require the active and timely involvement of the Parish Council as consultee in preparing the new Local Development Framework which is to replace the 10-year Local Plan. We need to explore how the Parish Plan might feed into the Local Development Framework through being recognised by the District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Both these points must be given the highest priority in this and future Action Plans.

2. TRAFFIC

Findings
There is much concern about traffic congestion (by the shop, the green, the school, the Church and on Helm Lane), about the volume and speed of traffic (on Oxenholme Lane, Helm Lane, Sedgwick Road and Natland Road in particular), and about lorries driving through the village.

Issues
These are primarily the effects on road safety of the volume of traffic and the way vehicles are driven.

Actions
A 20 mph speed limit might be introduced in the village, although this may require some physical 'traffic-calming' measures. More warning signs might be useful, e.g. 'pedestrians in road ahead', 'accompanied horses or ponies'. Better maintenance of signs and road markings should also help. Other suggestions, such as speed humps, a one-way system or more restrictive regulation of access, may be impracticable, undesirable or unenforceable.

We feel that there is a risk of overreacting to perceived danger by introducing physical measures that would be detrimental to the character of the village. Provided any traffic-calming and signing is minimal and unobtrusive, only the 20 mph speed limit and better maintenance of signs and road markings should be pursued in the Action Plan.

3. PARKING

Findings

71% of respondents are concerned about parking and several problem areas were identified. A village car park is suggested (the preferred site being beyond the Village Hall access road). But Cumbria County Council will not help financially and the District Council is unlikely to assist. A covenant on Natland Park Farm land prevents its sale, but not its lease or rent. There is some concern about footway (pavement) parking, particularly on the east side of the green. We failed to unearth the alleged covenant that might prevent it. Advisory white road markings have been effective at the corner by the Church.

Issues

These are mainly the obstruction and congestion caused by parking at the school, the Church, the shop, the Village Hall, around the green and up Helm Lane. Parking on footways is also an issue.

Actions

Ask the County Council to add to existing advisory white road markings where they might be of benefit. But we feel that placing 'keep clear' road markings at the Post Office corner and introducing yellow line waiting controls enforced by the District Council wardens anywhere in the village would be going 'over the top'. We also feel that clamping down on the anti-social practice of footway parking by police enforcement would be excessive. Polite requests should be tried first. The Parish Council could use its powers to create a village car park on a suitable site, but where to put it is a problem.

4. ROADS AND FOOTPATHS

Findings

This is not a matter of huge concern, but several minor points arose. The County Council is reluctant to use its own mud-on-road legal powers because they are costly and time-consuming. Instead, it prefers to rely on a 'local embarrassment' factor. Farmers need planning consent to widen gateways.

Issues
The lack of a footway along Natland Road is a problem, but the County Council says that money for this (from National Cycle Route funding) will become available only if the footway is shared with cyclists. Mud left on the road by farmers' operations can be a problem at times.

Actions
The Parish Council has been pressing the County Council for some time for a footway along Natland Road, and in October 2003 resolved that it should take the form of a shared use footway and cycleway. Although the Steering Group feels that the highway verge environment is valuable and its loss would be regrettable, the creation of the footway/cycleway is accepted by the Steering Group as a Parish Plan action. The Parish Council should continue to appeal to farmers about mud on the road and damage to verges when turning. Ask the County Council to create a passing place (no parking) on Helm Lane between 'Dalegarth' and 'Fernhill'.

5. STREET LIGHTING

Findings
25% are concerned about street lighting. But various suggestions for more lights were balanced by concern about light pollution and dislike of yellow lamps.

Issues
Should the Parish Council extend and/or improve its footway lighting system? How should the wishes of adjacent residents be balanced against the benefits to road users? What lighting system is appropriate?

Actions
Leave it to the Parish Council to identify feasible sites, then conduct a local opinion poll. Explore the possibilities of paying individual premises to provide exterior lighting in specific locations where a need is identified.

6. FLOODING

Findings
45% are concerned about flooding, but there were relatively few comments or suggestions.

Issues
Natland's highway drainage system is inadequate and will not be significantly improved by the County Council scheme to divert water overflowing from the field by St Mark's Fold.

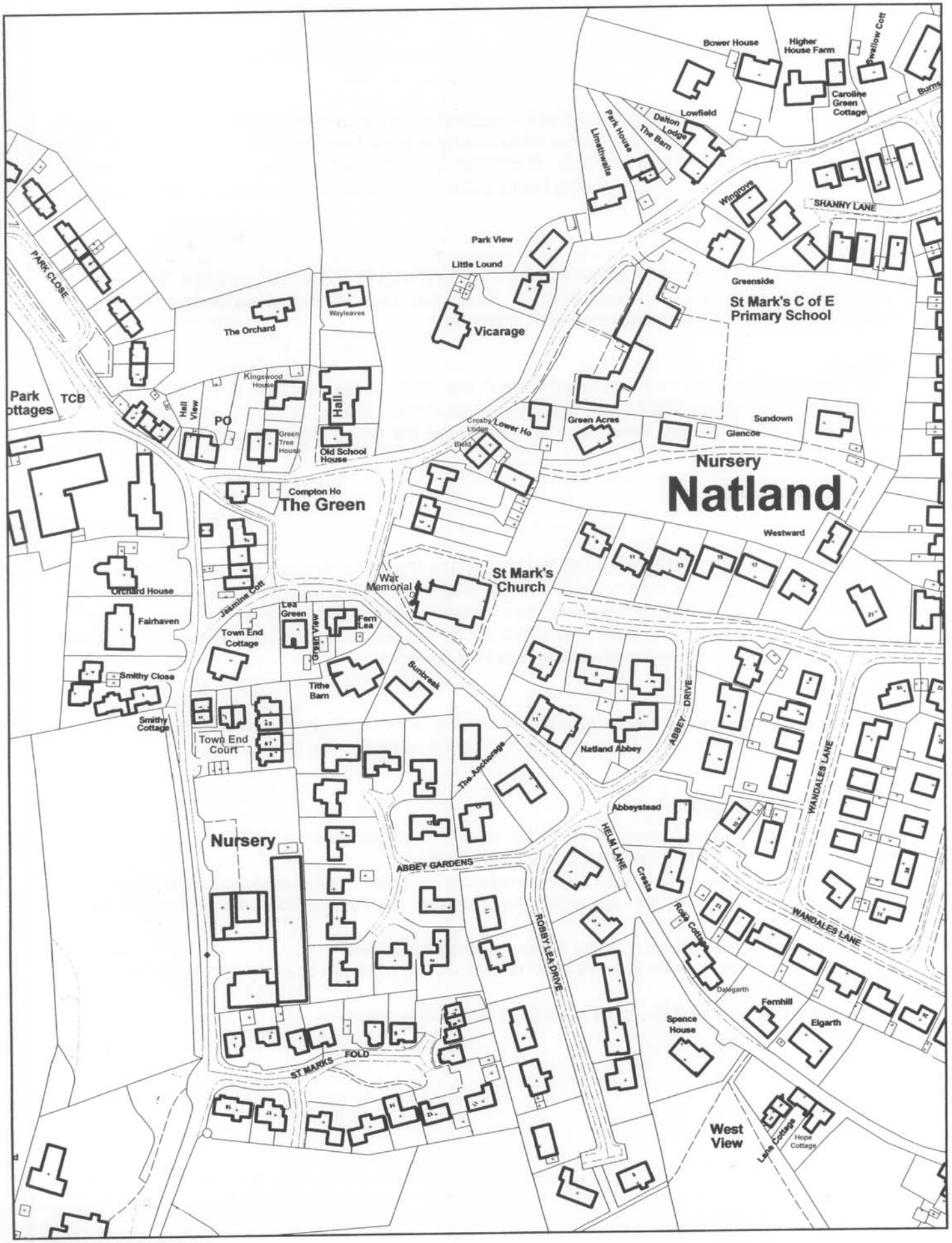
Actions
The Parish Council should maintain pressure on the County Council Area Committee via the local County Councillor for comprehensive improvement to highway drainage.

7. VILLAGE HALL ACCESS AREA

Findings
Questions of ownership, status, rights and responsibility for this area are complicated and may be disputed. The access is the worst eyesore in the village.

Issues
How to transform the area's physical appearance from a rough track to a properly finished approach and parking area. How to resolve uncertainties about the legality of vehicular use.

Actions
Ask the Parish Council to act to resolve these issues urgently, liaising with the Village Hall Management Committee, the District Council, the Lord of the Manor and adjoining residents.



Natland

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8. VILLAGE GREEN

Findings

Few commented on this. Presumably there is general satisfaction with the way it is maintained and managed by the Parish Council. Recent measures have been taken to protect the green with more kerbing, and to block traffic with bollards. The Parish Council would have more management options available if it owned the land, including being better placed to legalise parking on the Village Hall access area.

Issues

The area adjacent to the Village Hall access road (see above) is the main problem. The safety of the *Wellingtonia* is also an issue. Vehicles sometimes park on the green despite its being a punishable offence. Dog fouling can still be a problem.

Actions

The Parish Council should seek to acquire title to the village green land from the Lord of the Manor if an opportunity arises. The Parish Council must be vigilant and act to protect the green from any abuse by users or drivers. Temporary 'no parking on the green' signs should be put out when problems are expected.

9. HELM COMMON

Findings

Few commented. The land is owned by the Lord of the Manor but is managed by the Commoners, who combine to let their pooled rights to a single tenant, which may affect Helm's appearance. The process leading to a public 'right to roam' has begun. Further changes being contemplated by the Government could have a considerable effect on the way in which Helm is managed. The Parish Council is currently considering what to do about Little Helm.

Issues

Maintaining public access. How to increase awareness of its status and history. Achieving optimum appearance in the landscape. Preventing unauthorised vehicular use. Dog fouling.

Actions

The Parish Council should:

i) discuss the management of the Helm with the Commoners,
ii) continue supporting the 'right to roam' proposal,
iii) develop a conservation plan for the whole 'right to roam' area in conjunction with the owner, Commoners and other local authorities, including the District Council and Stainton Parish Council,
iv) consider the provision of more seats and/or picnic tables,
v) consider providing an interpretation plaque on the trig point to mark Iron Age and Roman significance,
vi) encourage citizens to report unlawful driving to the police.

10. WATERCROOK ROMAN FORT

Findings
This did not feature in the questionnaire responses, but it is part of Natland's heritage.

Issues
Protecting the archaeological remains and increasing awareness of them.

Actions
The Parish Council should look out for opportunities to draw attention to the Fort, including providing historical and interpretative material, possibly in conjunction with the canal restoration project.

Foundations of the Roman Fort shown by crop marks in a 1949 Cambridge University aerial photograph

11. RESTORATION OF THE LANCASTER TO KENDAL CANAL

Findings
Although not raised by the questionnaire, this is potentially the biggest issue facing the Parish. The cost of basic restoration is estimated currently at £55m. A significant element of its funding is to come from the private sector. There is a strong possibility of a marina development in the Parish, driven by private enterprise.

Issues
The canal restoration in itself is probably not an issue. The question is how to control ancillary development so that it does not damage the Parish.

Actions
The Parish Council (and residents) needs to keep abreast of proposals by attending public presentations, etc. The Parish Council should urge the District Council to produce a development brief for the canal corridor and any associated development (such as marinas, shops, pubs, hotels, etc.). The Parish Council should seek early and meaningful consultation with British Waterways and the District Council (and any other relevant bodies) throughout the whole project. Voters should seek the views of candidates for the 2004 District Council elections about these issues (this can also apply to several other Parish Plan issues). The new Natland Road canal bridge may provide an opportunity to sort out existing eyesores and rubbish dumping in that area. These actions fall within the Parish Council's routine business rather than the Action Plan. The subject is of such importance that it should engage the continuing attention of the whole Parish Council rather than be left to a Working Group.

12. DOG FOULING

Findings
There is some concern about a few remaining persistent offenders. Prosecutions can be instigated if witnesses come forward. District Councils can issue fixed penalty notices.

Issues
Persuading all dog owners to 'bin it'.

Actions
The Parish Council should maintain publicity, including a leaflet campaign, to all households. Residents should confront offenders and come forward as witnesses if all else fails. Other suggestions, such as the use of dog wardens, supplying cheap, throw-away cameras to provide evidence by recording incidents, and organising a clean-up, are not felt to be feasible.

13. LITTER

Findings
The level of comment was low. Presumably behaviour is generally good and some people pick up what others drop.

Issues
There are some concentrations outside the village: on highway verges (Natland Road, Burton Road); the old road at Dilly Bridge by Watercrook; and farmer's fencing at Little Helm.

Actions
Ask the Parish Council to consider restoring the annual spring litter hunt, or at least to organise some *ad hoc* work gangs for 'hot spots'.

Community

14. SHOP/POST OFFICE

Findings
There is a very high level of satisfaction (99% excluding 'don't knows'). This is probably the most important element in the village's infrastructure, but there is concern about its long-term future. The Post Office part of the business is vital to the shop's viability. One needs determination to assert one's right to receive benefits and make payments in cash.

Issues
How to encourage greater use before we lose the shop/Post Office.

Actions
The Parish Council should set up a small support group in concert with the postmaster/shopkeeper. Seek discussions with the Post Office about how to maintain or improve that part of the business. Also contact the Rural Community Officer (Voluntary Action Cumbria) for advice.

15. VILLAGE HALL

Findings
There is a very high level of satisfaction (96% excluding 'don't knows'). Several suggestions were made regarding recreational activities. There is real concern about parking problems and the state of the approach road (see '3. Parking' and '8. Village Green' above). Some people say that they are unaware of events (see '25. Publicity' below).

Issues
The issues are parking, the state of the access area, publicity of events, unmet demand and licensing restrictions.

Actions
Leave it to individuals to get together to promote the activities they want (if they can obtain bookings – the Hall is used frequently). Other issues are addressed under '3. Parking', '8. Village Green', '19. Pub' and '25. Publicity'.

16. PARISH COUNCIL

Findings
The level of satisfaction is high (75% of all respondents, with 20% 'don't knows'). There is some indication of a need for more publicity about what the Parish Council is doing. The current Government campaign to persuade parish councils to achieve Quality Parish status should lead to better performance, even if no extra functions are taken on. The requirements of Quality Parish status include publishing a newsletter at least four times a year and providing local people with a synopsis of the annual report.

Issues
Better publicity about what the Parish Council does is desirable. There is always room for improvement and the Parish Council should not become complacent.

Actions
Encourage the Parish Council to achieve Quality Parish status. Publish adequate information prior to the 2004 elections with the aim that all councillors shall be elected.

17. SCHOOL

Findings
There is a very high level of satisfaction (98% excluding 'don't knows', of whom there were many). But there is also some concern that the school should not grow any larger because of the traffic problems it generates. Many pupils come from outside the Natland and Oxenholme catchment area. Having peaked at 172, the school was reduced to about 155 pupils in September 2003 and will stabilise at around 130 – 140 in two to three years. Church Aided School status gives control of staff appointments to the governors rather than to the Local Education Authority, but means that the school has to obtain 10% of its funding from the community.

Issues
Keeping the school the 'right' size. Keeping within budget and finding any extra funding needed (i.e., managing the school as a business).

Actions
At present these are issues for the governors to deal with.

18. CHURCH

Findings
A very high level of satisfaction (99% excluding 'don't knows'). There was a suggestion that the *Parish News* should publicise secular events more often. We understand this is now happening.

Issues
We are aware of no issues other than parking problems related to Church functions (see '3. Parking' and '8. Village Green' above).

Actions
No action is required.

19. PUB

Findings
Some people feel that the community lacks a place for informal socialising. Sedgwick Cricket Club accommodates a private registered club which operates a bar on match days and Friday evenings. There is a covenant on Natland Village Hall that prevents the sale of alcohol but not its consumption.

Issues
Can a viable pub be created without the traffic, noise, smells and visual intrusion normally associated with commercial hostelries?

Actions
Contact bodies such as Enterprising Communities for advice on an innovative, community-based solution. Investigate how to create a facility based on the private club model rather than a commercial pub.

20. RECREATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES

Findings
Several suggestions were made, covering a wide range of activities.

Issues
Should enthusiasts be expected to organise themselves, or should activities be facilitated by existing bodies (such as the Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, etc.)?

Actions
Leave it to the enthusiasts to initiate.

21 . YOUNG PEOPLE

Findings
The majority of suggestions related to providing play areas and recreation facilities. Despite occasional problems with vandalism and other inappropriate behaviour (mainly by teenagers from outside the Parish), the governors are happy to allow the school playground and field to be used by the children of the (Church) Parish outside school hours.

Issues
Is there a real need for more facilities than there are at present (the village green, school facilities, Village Hall, provision in Kendal)?

Actions
At present no action is proposed.

22. THE ELDERLY

Findings
There was a significant response about transport/mobility problems. Community Transport South Lakeland operates a scheme with volunteer drivers to help those whose needs are not met by public transport (buses, trains and taxis).

Issues
There is a lack of awareness of the local community transport scheme, but could it undermine Natland's already fragile bus service?

Actions
Publicise the scheme operated by Community Transport South Lakeland.

23. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Findings
Comments were few except in relation to the elderly – see above.

24. CRIME AND DISORDER

Findings
Some concerns were expressed about burglary, and also problems relating to Appletree children at large in the village without supervision. There were some requests for a more visible police presence. There is a Neighbourhood Watch scheme covering Natland village.

Issues
There appear to be no major issues.

Actions
The Parish Council should continue monitoring Appletree incidents and seek better supervision (if required) by raising the issue with the licensing and regulating authorities.

25. PUBLICITY

Findings
There were several comments on the perceived lack of publicity about what the Parish Council was doing and village events generally. Publicity can be via notice boards (Parish Council, shop, Village Hall), the *Westmorland Gazette* (in the 'Community News' section) and the *Parish News*, which is happy to publicise secular events. Also the Parish is compact enough for 'flyers' to be distributed. E-mailing may be only a partial solution in the foreseeable future.

Issues
How to expand the use of the above publicity media.

Actions
The requirements of Quality Parish status (see '16. Parish Council' above) cover the Parish Council's own publicity. Otherwise, leave it to the initiative of those wishing to publicise their events and activities. The Parish Council should establish, develop and maintain a Parish website.

Chapter 4

THE ACTION PLAN

Chapter 3, 'Our Findings and Thoughts', outlined what we found out, what we think the issues are, and what actions might be taken to address those issues.

Although several *possible* actions may be mentioned, only those felt by the Steering Group and the Parish Council to deserve their support are shown on the Action Plan Tables below as *proposed* actions for implementation.

Action Plan Table 1 is a summary of the proposed actions from Chapter 3 shown against each of the 25 topic headings.

Action Plan Table 2 shows the Parish Plan actions in a little more detail. These are the proposed actions that remain after removing those which the relevant bodies (Parish Council, school governors, Village Hall Committee, etc.) have already taken on board or will be dealing with as routine business.

The next stages will be as follows:

- The Parish Council will formally adopt the Parish Plan as policy.
- Working groups will be set up by the Parish Council (village car park, Village Hall access and village green acquisition, Helm management, pub, shop support group, litter). Other volunteers will be needed for tasks best done by individuals (e.g., Parish website, possibly organising litter clean-ups).
- Progress with the Parish Plan will be reported each year in the Parish Council's Annual Report, delivered to every household before the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting. Development of the proposed Parish Council newsletter and a website could provide the means for more frequent reporting.

Action Plan Table 1 – The Total Picture

No.	Topic	No Action	Leave action to others as 'routine business'	Parish Council to take on as 'Parish Plan Action'
1	Housing		PC – represent Parish view as local plan consultee	
2	Traffic		PC – seek better sign maintenance	introduce 20mph village speed limit
3	Parking		PC – ask for road markings where beneficial	create village car park; discourage footway parking
4	Roads and Footpaths		PC – reduce mud on road and verge damage	create passing place on Helm Lane; create shared use footway/ cycleway on Natland Road
5	Street Lighting		PC – extend where needed	
6	Flooding		PC – press CCC for better road drainage	
7	Access to Village Hall			make access/parking area acceptable and legal
8	Village Green		PC – provide temporary signs to deter parking	consider objective of acquisition
9	Helm Common		PC – seek to enhance and protect from abuse	seek greater community control/ influence using new legislation; formulate conservation plan
10	Watercrook Fort	(except as part of 11)		
11	Canal Restoration		PC – monitor proposals and respond to them	
12	Dog Fouling		PC – publicise the issue	
13	Litter			organise regular and *ad hoc* clean-ups
14	Shop/Post Office			encourage greater use and set up support group
15	Village Hall		Village Hall Management Committee	
16	Parish Council		PC – become a 'quality parish'	
17	School		Governors	
18	Church	yes		
19	Pub			create informal drinking and socialising facility
20	Recreation and Leisure	yes		
21	Young People	yes		
22	The Elderly	(except as part of 23)		
23	Public Transport		PC – publicise community transport scheme	
24	Crime		PC – monitor Appletree	
25	Publicity		PC/Parish News/*Westmorland Gazette* correspondent/ event organisers	develop a parish website

No.	Topic	Action/Object	How Tackled?	Priority	Partners	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Resource implications
2	Traffic	introduce 20mph village speed limit	PC request to CCC	medium	CCC	3 years	PC then CCC	none to PC
3	Parking	create village car park	PC to set up working group to investigate sites and approach owner	high	possibly Village Hall Management Committee	5 years	PC	considerable – start saving
		discourage footway parking	issue publicity	high	none	3 months	PC	low
4	Roads and Footpaths	create passing place on Helm Lane	PC request to CCC	high	CCC	2 years	PC then CCC	possible CCC contribution
		create shared use footway/cycleway along Natland Road	PC request to CCC	medium	CCC Sustrans	5 years	PC then CCC	low to PC
7	Access to Village Hall	make access and parking area acceptable and legal	PC to set up working group to investigate	high	VHMC SLDC Landowner Development Co.	5 years	PC	considerable – start saving
8	Village Green	consider acquisition	PC to set up working group (same as 7?)	low	none	5 years	PC	low – we hope
9	Helm Common	seek community involvement in management via a conservation plan	PC to discuss with owner and Commoners; set up working group?	medium	Commoners owner SLDC Stainton PC	3 years (after right to roam decided)	PC	difficult to predict may be ongoing and significant
13	Litter	organise clean-ups	PC (working group or keen individual)	low	village organisations	6 months, then regular	PC	very low (equipment from SLDC?)
14	Shop/ Post Office	encourage greater use	PC to set up a support group	high	the Post Office the shopkeeper	6 months	PC	none known
19	Pub	create a place for socialising	PC to set up a working group	low	village organisations	1 year	PC	could be high – shareholders?
25	Publicity	develop a parish website	PC to find a keen individual	high	possibly Cumbria Assoc'n of Local Councils	6 months	PC	low

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