

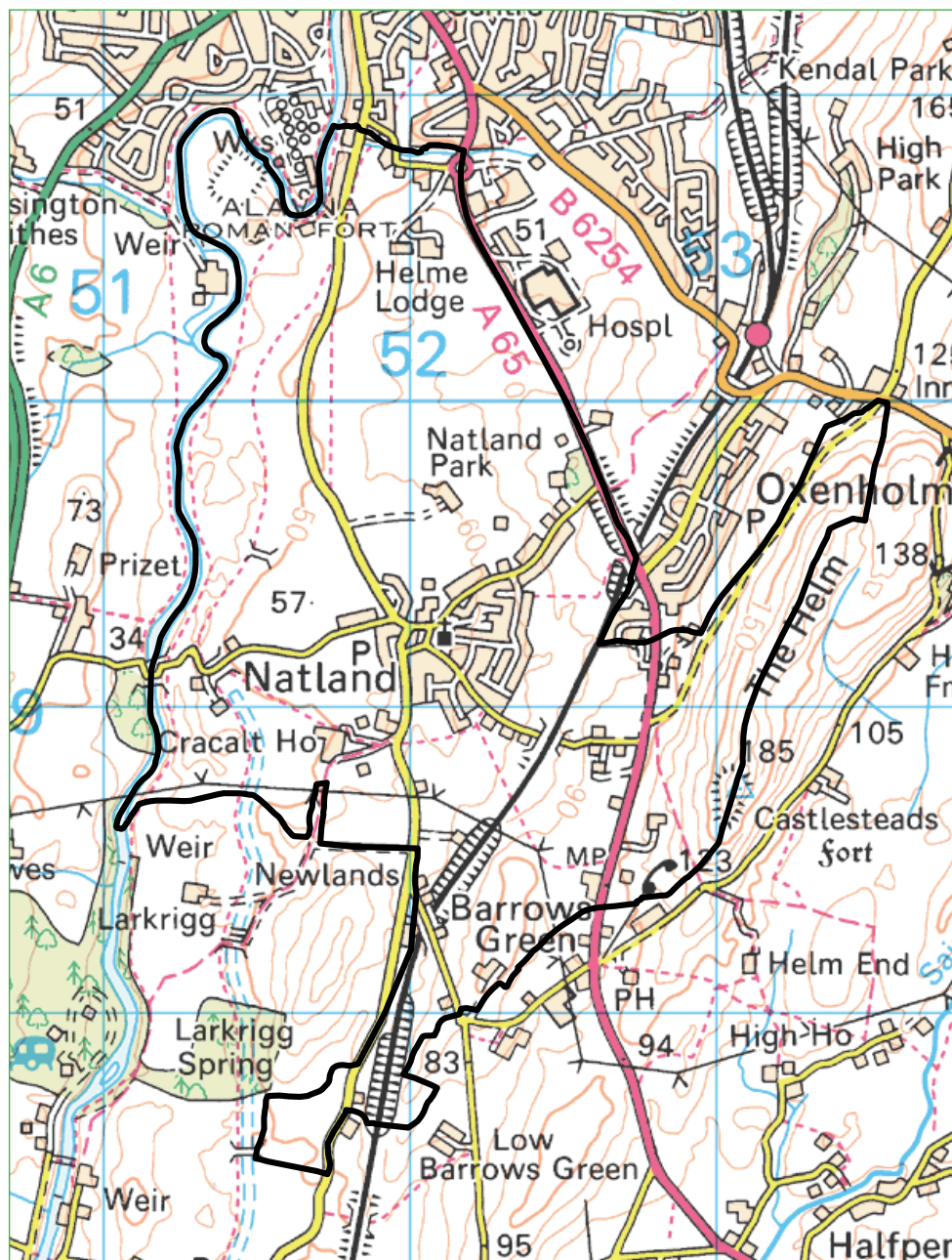


Natland Parish Plan 2014

Summary Report and Action Plan



THE BOUNDARY OF NATLAND PARISH



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JUDITH ROBINSON

This is your Plan. Its centrepiece is an Action Plan (included at the end of this document). This translates the hopes you expressed for the future of the Parish of Natland into a list of actions. The Action Plan is an agenda for action for the parish over the coming years, which has now been adopted by Natland Parish Council and will be carried out under their supervision.

Some of the actions are already in hand and the views you expressed simply reinforce the decision to act. Other actions will require an input of time and effort to achieve success. Others still might be described as aspirational with no immediate prospect of achievement;

but the action remains a long-term goal.

This is a **parish** plan in the sense that it reflects views expressed by people in the parish. Of course, you did not all speak with one voice so there has, inevitably, been some selection, but we have tried to represent the majority view in our recommendations.

After the May 2012 Annual Parish Meeting, Natland Parish Council resolved to update the existing parish action plan (from 2004) to reflect current circumstances and issues. The Council called a public meeting in September 2012 at which volunteers were sought to form a Steering Group to carry forward a review of the plan.

This booklet is a summary of the full **Natland Parish Plan 2014 Report and Action Plan**. The full report contains details of responses to some questions and also explains the Steering Group's decisions to exclude certain issues raised by residents in the questionnaire from the final action plan. It is available to download as a PDF from natlandnews.blogspot.co.uk and as a printed version from the Parish Council on request.

The first meeting of the Steering Group took place on 6 November 2012. A budgeted project plan was prepared and funding for the review was obtained from South Lakeland District Council via the South Westmorland Local Area Partnership and Action with Communities in Cumbria.

The Steering Group met regularly throughout 2013, with additional meetings of subgroups working on particular tasks such as the questionnaire. The outcome of the review is the Parish Plan 2014 Action Plan which was adopted by the Parish Council on Monday 25 November 2013.

THE PARISH

The resident population of Natland parish as at the March 2011 census was 796 comprising 365 households, with a further 20 or so non-resident households (mainly second homes).

In comparison with national figures, the parish has a disproportionate number of older adults, and those adults of working age are disproportionately aged 40 or over. In March 2011, 100 (12.6%) residents lived in single-person households and 82 of these were people aged 55 or over.

The church parish extends over a larger area than the civil parish of Natland, and includes parts of south-east Kendal – in particular Oxenholme. This is St Mark's School catchment area and it sustains a viable primary school at the heart of Natland.

THE PROCESS

The aim of the parish plan consultation was to seek views from as many people as possible in the parish and to engage with all relevant stakeholders. With this in mind, the review of the Parish Plan was undertaken in 6 stages.

1: Tell Us What You Think

The first step was to issue a short questionnaire asking respondents to state one thing they liked about Natland, one thing they disliked about Natland and one thing they would like to change. The questionnaires were available in the church, the post offices in Natland and Oxenholme and in the village hall. In addition, the Head Teacher of St Mark's School kindly arranged for pupils to take home a copy of the questionnaire. People were encouraged to respond online or put responses in boxes at the post office, the school, the church and the village hall.

There were 103 responses, of which 86 were from residents. In addition, pupils from each year represented on the School Council completed a questionnaire.

The responses showed that people particularly **valued** the village infrastructure (the school, the shop, pre-school, the church, the village hall and the green), the peaceful, rural atmosphere, the location of the village (close to the station, the motorway, the hospital, the superstores and Kendal), the strong sense of community and the village's physical separation from Kendal.

People **disliked** inconsiderate parking, the amount of traffic, the volume of new residential development, the poor state of the roads, inadequate parking provision and the lack of pavements. **Changes** that people particularly wanted to see were the provision of a safe walking/cycle route to Kendal, speed restrictions through the village, restrictions on parking, the provision of a car park, improvements to pavements and the provision of a play park for children.

The outcome of the short questionnaire was portrayed by the Steering Group in a poster display which was mounted at the Quiz Evening in the village hall on 9 February 2013, the village Art Exhibition in the village hall on 9 and 10 March 2013, at the Summer Fete on 8 June 2013 and in the school. Information was also posted on the Natland website and a small display was mounted on the village green bus shelter. Further responses were invited.

2: The Household Questionnaire

This first stage of consultation helped the Steering Group to identify what people considered to be the main issues facing the parish and formed the basis for a detailed household questionnaire.

The Group received helpful guidance in drafting the questionnaire from Carl Glynn and Julia Wilson of ACT (Action with Communities in Cumbria) and Emma Nichols of South Lakeland District Council. The questionnaire was tested on several people before being delivered to



ALISON BLAKE

all 385 households in the parish. It was also published via the Natland website and people were encouraged to respond online if they preferred. Completed questionnaires could be returned to the village shop/post office, but members of the Steering Group also undertook door-to-door collection.

There was a very encouraging response. 235 completed questionnaires were returned, including 25 online. The responses were analysed and the principal findings are summarised below.

3: Interviews with key institutions

One thing which came through both questionnaires very clearly was the extent to which people used/valued the school, the village hall, the church and the shop and post office. Interviews were therefore conducted with the Head

Teacher of St Mark's School, the Village Hall Management Committee, the Vicar of St Mark's Church and the proprietor of the shop/post office to identify what could be done to help these key institutions, what more they could contribute to the community and what challenges they faced. The Chair of the Parish Council was also interviewed.

4: The Action Plan

The responses to the two questionnaires, particularly the Household Questionnaire, coupled with the outcome of the interviews with key institutions, provided the Steering Group with enough information to attempt a first draft of an Action Plan.

A poster display of the draft Action Plan was prepared and all households were invited to 'drop-in' and see the display in the church on 5 September. 65 people attended the drop-in session. The poster display was subsequently made available to view in the school, a version put up on the village green bus shelter and a summary was provided on the Natland website. People were invited to comment on the draft and it was subsequently revised in the light of these comments.

5: Consultation with stakeholders

The revised draft Action Plan was then the subject of consultation with the following key stakeholders:

- Natland Parish Council
- the County Councillor and District Councillor for the parish

- the County Council Area Engagement Officer
- the District Council Community Engagement Officer/Parish Liaison Officer
- the Vicar of St Mark's Church
- the management committee of Natland & Oxenholme Village Hall
- the Head Teacher of St Mark's School
- the proprietor of the village shop and post office
- members of the Natland website team (Stephen Baker and Don Shore)
- neighbouring parish councils (Kendal Town Council, Helsington, Sedgwick, Stainton).

6: The Final Plan

The responses to the consultation with key stakeholders led to some further revisions to the Action Plan. The Steering Group then drafted the narrative to accompany and explain it. The revised Action Plan was then presented to the November 2013 meeting of Natland Parish Council for adoption.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

To those familiar with the parish, the findings may hold few surprises. Indeed, in some cases, they replicate the findings of the 2004 Parish Plan. This is because, notwithstanding the best efforts of the Parish Council and others, some of the concerns such as parking problems, volume of traffic, inadequate road network, lack of pavements and so on, are not capable of speedy resolution



JUDITH ROBINSON

and continue to be an issue. That does not mean we should stop campaigning to resolve them. If anything, the findings of the Steering Group reinforce the work which the Parish Council has been doing.

Tackling traffic problems

Not surprisingly, the great majority of people travel to Kendal most of the time by private car. Walking, cycling and travel by bus are also fairly significant.

The number of people who said they would make use of a footway/cycleway along the Natland Road to Kendal suggests that it would be strongly supported. 35 would make daily use of it, 82 would make weekly use of it and 72 would use it less often. 44 respondents said they would never use it. The proposal for a 20mph speed limit within the village received strong support with 173

respondents in favour and 28 against. The Steering Group recommend that the Parish Council explore these options further with the County Council.

There was considerable support for certain new stretches of footpath or pavement within the parish, if they were to be established. The creation of any new lengths of footpath will require the prior agreement of relevant owners and occupiers. The Steering Group recommend that a Traffic and Footpaths working group consider whether, and if so how best, to take this forward. Of the suggestions for other lengths of pavement, Oxenholme Lane was top of the list, followed by the Sedgwick Road from the post office to the turn off to Cracalt House. Such suggestions present obvious difficulties given the narrowness of the roads but the Steering Group recommend

that the working group should explore what progress may be possible.

The support for traffic calming measures was more variable and the response is considered in more detail in the full version of the Parish Plan Report. A number of respondents suggested the use of a speed indicator device (SID). The Parish Council has already arranged for shared use of a SID which will be used for up to four weeks each year at entrances to the village and data from this can feed into consideration of the case for a reduced speed limit within the village.

Support for measures to improve parking in the village was also variable; and there was strong opposition to the introduction of a one-way system through the village. Both these matters are discussed in more detail in the full version of the Parish Plan Report.



CATHERINE MINAHAN

Housing development in Natland

Many respondents expressed concern about the continuing expansion of the village. For reasons given in the full version of the Parish Plan Report, it is unrealistic to expect a total ban on further housing in the parish. However, the response to the Household Questionnaire showed strong support (186) for maintaining green gaps between Kendal and Natland and between Oxenholme and Natland.

Respondents (184) also wanted the traffic implications of future development on the local road network to weigh more heavily in decision-making, a response which was supported by Sedgwick Parish Council as it was felt that more development in Natland could cause an increase in the volume of traffic travelling through Sedgwick. And there was strong support (150) for the proposition that the scale and design of future development should maintain or enhance the character of the village.

The planning authority, in its consultation response, suggested that these matters should be incorporated into a Neighbourhood Plan if they are to make any significant impact and this suggestion has been conveyed to the Parish Council for consideration. In the meantime, the Steering Group recommend that the Parish Council continue to raise these issues, when appropriate, as material considerations when responding to the planning authority on planning applications.

As regards the need for particular types of housing in Natland, the response suggests this is a matter which the Parish Council and the local housing authority should keep in mind when considering proposals for further development.

Community life in Natland

The responses, extracted from 231 questionnaires, showed that the noticeboards at the shop, the village website and the parish magazine are all important means of communication about what is going on in the village. So too is word of mouth. The *Westmorland Gazette*, roadside signs and the publicity banner on the green were among the other means identified. However, 216 (93.5%) respondents included at least one of noticeboards, parish magazine or parish website in their response, so co-ordinating news and information to all three of these is key. Most (11) of the other 15 respondents relied solely on word of mouth.

The Steering Group felt that the time was right to revive the Parish Council's earlier initiative of a 'Parish Directory' giving information about the organisations operating within the parish and to make a printed directory available to all households (and the same information clearly available on the Natland website for residents who are online). Consideration will need to be given to how best to keep it up-to-date. There was also strong support for reviving some sort of 'welcome', perhaps in the form of a 'welcome letter', for new residents.



JEREMY ROWAN ROBINSON

People said they made regular use of the church, the post office and the village hall. However, the interview with the proprietor of the shop and post office suggests that there would be merit in making people more aware of the range of goods and services available and in encouraging people to support the facility. This could be achieved by an entry in the Parish Directory and through publicity in the website and the *Parish News*.

Very few households said they made use of the playing field or the adventure playground at the school and many were unaware of its availability. Discussion with the Head Teacher of the school indicated that he is willing to explore ways of raising awareness of the availability of these facilities to young children out of school hours.



ARCHIE BEATTIE AND PEARSON CHARNLEY, PROUD RECIPIENTS OF NATLAND'S BEST KEPT VILLAGE AWARD AT A CEREMONY IN BARROW IN 1993.

There was widespread support for the suggestion that there should be some form of interpretative panel in the centre of the village telling visitors about aspects of the history of Natland and the Steering Group recommend that a working group be set up to research, plan, design, cost and obtain funding for this. The question 'how do you think leisure facilities in the village could be improved?' produced an imaginative response which is considered further in the full version of the Parish Plan 2014. The response also suggests that some residents are not aware of what facilities and what activities are available in the village and reinforces the case for reviving a village 'Directory'.

One of the successes of the 2004 Parish Plan was the introduction by the

Parish Council of an annual litter pick. The Household Questionnaire sought to capitalise on this by asking what support there might be for organising a group of volunteers to coordinate and carry out maintenance and other jobs in the village throughout the year, including the litter pick. The response was encouraging and the Steering Group recommend developing a process to facilitate such volunteering in the parish – perhaps initially through the Natland website, but also using the noticeboards and the *Parish News* to maximise involvement.

A number of changes or extra features were proposed for the village website by respondents and these have been passed to the editor to consider. It is likely that some of the actions proposed in this Plan, such as the revival of the Parish Directory and the setting up of several volunteer working groups, will necessitate further changes to the website and options will be discussed with the website team.

Internet access

We asked households how often they used the internet and what they used it for. It is clear that the internet is an increasingly important source of information and communication in the parish. However, most of the 13% (31) minority who do not use the internet indicated that they were not interested in using it. This needs to be borne in mind for communication within the parish.

Of those who use the internet, most use it for contact with family and friends, leisure activities and shopping. Others use it for study, working from home and voluntary activities.

Quite a large number of respondents (108) expressed dissatisfaction with the speed of internet access and the Steering Group recommends that a working group of volunteers be set up to look at ways of getting better access.

Affordable energy for Natland

Two questions were directed at matters relating to energy. The first asked about the level of interest in an oil-buying collective. Most respondents indicated that they did not use oil for heating but a few expressed an interest in such a scheme. The second question asked what support there might be for a parish energy scheme using different forms of renewable energy.

In view of the level of interest, the Steering Group recommends that a

working group of volunteers be set up to consider the matter of a village energy scheme further.

What have we missed?

73 people responded to this section of the questionnaire. It is not possible to list all the responses here. Many used the opportunity to reinforce answers to earlier questions. Several emphasised the importance of Natland retaining its village character. Other issues included:

- traffic problems on the Helm
- dog fouling
- the demand for allotments
- the future of Home Field
- the excessive use of white lines around the green
- the provision of a covered bus stop
- a reduction in street lighting to prevent light pollution
- an increase in street lighting to promote safety
- a dedicated cycleway alongside the A65



Some of these issues, such as the Helm, allotments, white lines around the green and the use of the Home Field, have already been the subject of discussion by the Parish Council, while others, such as the need for more or less street lighting, were in conflict with each other. Some, such as the plea for a dedicated cycleway alongside the A65, lacked a sufficient mandate to warrant action.

Taking action together

One of the really encouraging results of the Household Questionnaire was the number of people who said they would be willing to join one or more of several working groups to progress various matters arising from the Plan.

There is, of course, nothing new about members of the community being willing to help out in community affairs and the parish has been fortunate in attracting the services of dedicated volunteers to support the Parish Council, the village hall and the church. What we are hoping to do as a result of the response to the questionnaire is to build on this experience. Several more indicated a general interest in helping to take action together. The names and contact details will be passed to the Parish Council to take forward.

THE ACTION PLAN

The actions listed in the table opposite are very largely a response to the 'Findings and Recommendations' described in the preceding section and summarised in the second table.

Some of them, such as the 20mph speed limit within the village, are derived from the Plan process but are also actions which the Parish Council have been actively pursuing. They appear in this Plan because they are clearly a current issue for respondents and reinforce the mandate that the Parish Council has for action now and for the life of this Plan.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Now that the Parish Council has adopted the Action Plan, it's down to all of us to make sure that the things that we have said we want to see happen, do happen.

Over the course of its meetings in 2014, the Parish Council will be starting to progress the actions listed in the Action Plan. These include setting up the working groups which have been proposed on: Traffic and Footpaths, Community Energy, Broadband and the Interpretative Panel and also setting up a process to publicise specific volunteering opportunities in the parish regularly through the Natland website, the noticeboards and the *Parish News*.

We already have a good list of people who have said they would like to be involved in one or more of these activities but the Parish Council will always be looking for more people to help look after Natland, including new parish councillors. Please keep checking the website, noticeboards and newsletter to find out how you can help.

NATLAND PARISH ACTION PLAN 2014: Action Points					Partners	Timescale
No	Action	Related to Issues	How?			
A1	Facilitate/support volunteering in the parish	1.1, 3.3	Co-ordinate volunteer opportunities to help with parish maintenance and in support of VH, church and school. Set up process for publicising opportunities regularly through website/noticeboards/Parish News		Website team/ church/VH/ school	1 year
A2	Revive Parish Directory	1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6	Produce new leaflet as an online and paper document, deliver hard copy to all households and new residents, update periodically online and redistribute hard copy as necessary (no more than once a year) and with welcome to new residents		Village organisations and activity groups	deliver with Annual Report in April 2014
A3	Refresh and expand website	1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6	Discuss options with website team: to help promote key village information (eg Parish Directory content); volunteering information and village calendar; ideas to promote further social activity		Website team	1-2 years
A4	Facilitate better use of Parish News and village noticeboards	1.3, 2.2, 2.5	Look for volunteer Noticeboard Manager, promote Parish News more widely, set up mechanism for inclusion of key website content in both		Shop/website team/church	1 year
A5	Interpretative panel in village centre	2.4	NPC to set up Interpretative Panel working group to consider design and funding			1 year
A6	Coordinate use of village facilities	2.6, 4.2	Maintain village calendar on website, consider online booking system for church, school, village hall, manage parking including exploring out-of-hours parking at the school		Village institutions/ website	1 year
A7	Register Village Green as asset	5.1	Apply to SLDC		SLDC	1 year
A8	Explore creation of shared footway/ cycleway along Natland Road	4.3	NPC to discuss options with CCC		CCC, Sustrans	Ongoing
A9	Introduce 20mph limit in village	4.1	NPC to request from CCC		CCC	Ongoing
A10	Explore options for safer roads, including speed limits (A65 and Natland Road), more pavements, and A65 crossing points	3.4, 4.4, 4.5	NPC to set up Traffic and Footpaths working group		CCC	1-2 years
A11	Facilitate wider reporting of Highways issues	3.3	Promote on parish noticeboards and website			immediate
A12	Oppose inappropriate development	5.2, 5.3, 5.4	NPC to continue to apply agreed principles. Consider the option of developing, or being part of, a Neighbourhood Plan.		SLDC/ neighbouring parishes	Ongoing
A13	Maximise broadband coverage	3.1	NPC to set up Broadband working group			1 year
A14	Minimise community energy needs	3.2	NPC to set up Community Energy working group			1 year

NATLAND PARISH ACTION PLAN 2014: Findings, responses and action points – by theme		
No	Finding	Suggested response
Action points		
Theme 1: Parish Institutions – protecting, maintaining and strengthening		
1.1	Parish Institutions are valued by community but would welcome wider support to continue to thrive	Promote volunteer involvement to protect, maintain and strengthen Natland's physical environment, community facilities and community life.
1.2	The role and services provided by village institutions and the challenges they face could be better publicised.	Raise community awareness of the role and needs of each major organisation.
1.3	Shop and Post Office are important assets for the community but they are at risk if not well-used.	Raise awareness of the facilities available through the Post Office. Encourage the community to support the Post Office and Shop.
Theme 2: Community Matters – information, communication and social activities		
2.1	New households need initial signposting to information about the community and its organisations	Produce a welcome letter to accompany a copy of the Parish Directory for all new households.
2.2	Clear and reliable, regular and advance information on all community events is important to residents.	Make better and more coordinated use of website, Parish News and noticeboards at PO and at redundant bus stop.
2.3	Use of school field and adventure playground as safe play areas for village children needs to be clarified.	School to clarify the position; raise awareness within community of play facilities available at the school.
2.4	Support expressed for information on features of interest in the Parish to be publicly displayed, particularly for visitors.	Consider creation and erection of an interpretative panel(s) on or near the Village Green.
2.5	Parish Council's role in community affairs could be better understood by the community.	Include appropriate information in the Parish Directory and on website. Regularly report decisions from PC meetings on website and in Parish News.
2.6	Both church and school would welcome greater use of their buildings by community groups. Availability of venues for local events could be more easily accessible and coordinated	Publicise details for all venues on website and in Parish Directory. Consider options for online information on facilities and booking availability.
Theme 3: Infrastructure – local resources and parish maintenance		
3.1	Desire for faster internet access across the parish.	Maximise high-speed broadband coverage.
3.2	Support expressed for alternative energy schemes	Investigate possibility of community build.
3.3	Perceived reduction in Local Authority provision as regards some aspects of parish maintenance.	Investigate and monitor options for community energy schemes. Investigate availability of grants for installing energy efficiency measures. Promote wider reporting of highways issues.
3.4	Scope for additional footpaths identified, including shortcuts.	Supplement statutory provision by coordinating volunteers for minor tasks, such as the existing annual litter pick.
		Investigate feasibility of additional routes.
NATLAND PARISH ACTION PLAN 2014: Findings, responses and action points – by theme		
No	Finding	Suggested response
Action points		
Theme 4: Traffic, footpaths and parking – improving the village for walkers, cyclists and motorists		
4.1	Perception of excessive traffic speeds on roads through and to Natland	Make use of Speed Indicator Device (in hand) Explore possibility of 20mph speed limit within village. Explore possibility of a 40mph speed limit on Natland Road.
4.2	Need for overflow parking for events held at the church, school and the village hall.	Explore with the school the potential for school car park to be more widely available for events held outside school hours. For popular events ask organisers to encourage car sharing.
4.3	Safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists on Natland Road. Residents expressed interest in an off-road footway/cycleway.	Re-iterate to CCC (highway authority) the local need and support for combined footpath/cycleway alongside Natland Road, and explore options.
4.4	Safety risks for pedestrians on village roads without pavements. Particular suggestions, including a pavement extension from school to Long Meadow Lane.	Liaise with CCC to assess the feasibility of any further pavements.
4.5	Safety risks when crossing A65, both at Helm Lane for walkers and cyclists using National Route 70, and at Helmside Road – which discourages residents from walking rather than driving.	Liaise with County Councillor and with Highway Authority to assess feasibility of installing safe crossing points. Also consider feasibility of extending 40mph speed limit to south of Barrows Green crossroads.
Theme 5: Village Identity - preserving the character of our parish		
5.1	Widespread desire to preserve the character of the parish, particularly the village centre.	Register key features of the Parish eg the Village Green as 'assets' under the new legislation.
5.2	Expressions of support for preserving green gaps between Kendal and Natland and between Oxenholme and Natland.	Natland PC to continue to aim to preserve these green gaps when responding to potential new development proposals.
5.3	Need to consider the consequences of new development on an inadequate road network.	Natland PC to continue to do this when responding to potential new development proposals.
5.4	Desire that scale and design of any limited, new development should respect the character of Natland village.	Natland PC to continue to have regard to these concerns when responding to potential new development proposals.

NATLAND PARISH PLAN 2014: STEERING GROUP

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* Martin Jayne and Andrew Gill withdrew from the Group before completion of the Plan.

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Rev Angela Whittaker, Priest-in-Charge, St Mark's Church, Natland

Carl Glynn and Julia Wilson, Action with Communities in Cumbria

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