SKELSMERGH AND SCALTHWAITERIGG COMMUNITY PLAN 2009

SKELSMERGH CP
SCALTHWAITERIGG CP
Garnett Bridge
Potter Fell
Carl Crag
Selside
Garnett Plain
High Thorn
Watchgate Treatment Plant
Thornybank
Thornyslack Farm
Hollin Root Farm
Garth Row
Heights
Dry Lane
Strawberry Bank
Otter Bank
Edge Bank
Garnett Folds
Littlemire
Harry Bank
Tarn Bank
Chester Hag
Burton House
Stocks Mill
Bowbank
Coppice Howe Farm
Red Bank
Oak Bank Mill
Oakbank
Sprint Mill
Sprint Bridge
Weir
Burneside Hall
Burneside Heads
Must Hill
Lowgroves
Skelsmergh Hall Farm
Meal Bank
Appleby Road
A 685
Dodding Green
Helme Lane
Helme Bank
Laverock Bridge House
Quarry (disused)
Meal Bank Road
Far Rigg
Millcrest
Meadow Bank
Summerhouse
River Kent
Gilthwaiterigg
Ladyford
Oak
Burneside
The Todds
Carus Green
Kentrigg
Mintsfeet
Mint Bridge
Factory
Quarry (dis)
Benson Hall
Benson Knott
Hay Fell
High Jenkincrag
Paddy Lane
Park Head
Birds Park Farm
Broom Close
Greyhound Farm
Castlegreen Farm
Castle Hill
Kendal Castle
Sandylands
Offices
Fowl Ing
Hollin Crag
Birk Rigg
Sheepfold
Larchbank
Hill Fold
Hill Farm
Shepherd Green
Gilpin Bank
High Underbrow
Beetham Bank
Holme House
Gurnal Bridge
Garnett Bridge Road
Garth Row La
Barnsdale
Tenement Farm
Hall Rd
Saul Hill
Watchgate
Firtree Lane
Brackenrigg Side
Steel Croft
Bouthwaite
Bouthwaite Bridge
Poppy Farm
Quarry (dis) Browfoot
Crake Hall
Whitwell Folds
High Biggersbank
Low Biggersbank
Bank House
Mozergh House
Goodham Scales
New House
Broadthorn
Hipshow Farm
Patton Hall Farm
Oldfield Wood Fords
Aqueduct
Quarry (dis)
Old Field End
Candy Slack
East Above Park
Sch
Selside Hall
South Gateside
PO
FB
Weir
MS
Sch
Offices
Mus
Cem
Castle
Ch
Fisher Tarn Reservoir
Dockergarths Plantation
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SKELSMERGH AND SCALTHWAITERIGG COMMUNITY PLAN 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

Neither Skelsmergh nor Scalthwaiterigg are well-known but they are certainly not off the beaten track. Skelsmergh is astride the A6 - the main west coast road prior to the building of the M6 - and Scalthwaiterigg straddles the West Coast main line. Settlement is dispersed and it is easy to pass through without noticing local particularities. Yet some who have lingered have found reason to put down roots. Besides a nucleus of lifelong residents there are a substantial number of new arrivals who have settled for the long term and developed strong local loyalties. Traditional focal points of community such as the church, parish magazine and Skelsmergh Sports are still supported. An underused and aging parish hall was transformed when a new Community Hall Committee showed considerable dynamism in improving the premises, adding a field area and balcony and encouraging usage. Their commitment was rewarded with a £187,000 lottery grant for refurbishment in 2008. Another focus for long term improvement has been the establishment of new woodlands, led by the Tree Warden and supported by willing and energetic volunteers.

A record of adaptation to change and its management with care and forethought gives reason for confidence in the future. This plan is an important part of that ongoing process. It is based on consultations within the parish which gave everyone the opportunity to express their views. The plan sets out how our community would like to see the parish developing over the coming years. It contains the potential for everyone to contribute to the conservation of the things we appreciate and to introduce improvements to those aspects which are causing concern.

2. LANDSCAPE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Located four kilometres north of Kendal, Skelsmergh occupies an area bounded on the east by the River Mint, on the west by the River Sprint and on the south by the River Kent. Scalthwaiterigg is adjacent to Skelsmergh and lies to the south-east on the opposite bank of the Mint. It is rises on the east to the prominent bulk of Benson Knott (317m.) and Hay Fell. The undulating landscape forms a patchwork of neat, grazed fields bounded by hedges and dry stone walls with small farmsteads nestling comfortably in the folds. The woodlands are generally unmanaged but still provide good and varied wildlife habitat.

In the nineteenth century there was a significant manufacturing and industrial presence in the area with water powered mills at Oakbank, Scarfoot, Stocks Mill, Gilthwaiterigg, and three at Mealbank. They produced bobbins, snuff, dyes, cereal and woollen products. Many of the buildings remain and are still providing employment but on a lesser scale than in their heyday.

Largely consisting of a scatter of farms and small hamlets, the parishes are notable for having no single centre of population. Such concentrations as there are being located at Mealbank, Garth Row and Oakbank. The church of St John the Baptist and the adjacent Community Hall stand in isolation above the A6 and form a prominent landmark.

The names of our two parishes are of Scandinavian origin: Skelsmergh is composed of the Norse ‘erg’, meaning a dairy-farm or shieling and ‘Skjaldmar’, a personal name. Scalthwaiterigg consists of three parts: ‘skali’, a wooden hut, ‘thwaite’, a clearing in a wood and ‘rigg’, a ridge or, possibly, land cultivated in furrows. These and many other local names of Norse origin would have been applied to the area before the Norman Conquest by settlers making their way inland from across the Pennines or from Western Scotland, The Isle of Man and Ireland. Our place names have proven to be one the most durable and tangible inheritances we have from the past. Though it is not the function of the plan to detail the history of our area, it is fair to state that the area has shared directly in many of the events which have shaped our nation. From the turbulent days of the Border Raids, the long period of religious intolerance which ran from the Dissolution of the Monasteries until the Jacobite Rebellions and then the economic revolutions in agriculture and industry of the nineteenth century, the parishes have seen in miniature what was happening elsewhere on a grander scale.

Our landscape also tells a story, one which goes back millennia, bearing the unmistakable imprint of the last ice age in the form of the small rounded hills, 'drumlins' which crowd our landscape and in the litter of distinctive pink, Shap granite boulders, known as 'glacial erratics' which can be found in many local stone walls. These epic events of the past have left us a countryside which has since been shaped and refined by the stewardship of generations of farmers, enclosing the fields with walls and hedges, draining the wet areas and in the process creating the surroundings which our residents value so highly. Part of the purpose of this plan is to emphasise how much the history and geography of the area contributes to the distinctiveness of the two parishes and to their attractiveness as places to live.

One way in which to appreciate the diversity and interest of our area is to walk the extensive network of footpaths and bridleways which tell their own story of the past interconnectedness of the scattered hamlets and farms. They represent an excellent resource for casual walkers and may, in the case of the Dales Way long distance path, make a small contribution to the economy from tourism. The Rights of Way system provides access to most of the places of natural beauty and interest within the parishes and also affords vantage points from which to view the wider landscape of the Lakeland and Howgill fells beyond. Wainwright himself extols Sprint Force, below Oakbank, as a place of particular beauty. The tree-shaded bathing pools are a magnet in the summer months for local children who have dubbed the place 'Paradise'. What better recommendation can there be?

3. POPULATION

Both parishes are sparsely populated. According to the 2001 census there were 375 people living in 153 households with a mean age of 40. Many local people now travel out of the area for work; commuters and retired people have been attracted into the new housing developments in the area.

Only five holiday or second homes were noted in the 2001 census for the two parishes.

4. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Visitor Accommodation

The Dales Way passes across the parish from Garnett Folds to Sprint Bridge, bringing many hikers through the area. Cyclists pass along the A6 on the Lands End to John O'Groats route as well as less energetic tourists who explore the boundaries of the Lake District. Some bed and breakfast accommodation is available in the parish for visitors.

Skelsmergh Parish Church

St John the Baptist's church was built in 1871. Over the years it has been an important anchor for many Skelsmergh folk for their baptisms, weddings and funerals, as well as for weekly worship. Today it is part of the Beacon Team of churches which holds regular weekly services here. Other social and fund raising activities are held throughout the year. The church and churchyard are kept in excellent condition thanks to the efforts of a few stalwarts. With an ageing congregation and fewer young people it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the building and churchyard. The number of active churchgoers is declining but the church continues to provide a unique service in the community.

Skelsmergh Community Hall

The hall was built by public subscription and was completed in 1897. It was the final step of the local late Victorian religious revival that had built the church in 1871, Garth Row School in 1874, and the vicarage in 1876. Dances and 'socials', improvement classes and Sunday school, indoor sports and games such as badminton, births, weddings, funeral teas, public meetings and elections; all have served to bring people together and give the hall a special place in the hearts of our scattered community. It continues to be the only public meeting place in the parishes of Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg.

Skelsmergh Community Hall Management Trust was founded in 2002 and took a 28-year lease on the hall. Over the five years since its formation, the Management Trust has stabilised

and developed both the fabric and the use of the hall. Activities such as carpet bowls, table tennis and a reading group have brought in new people, who in turn have greatly invigorated the fundraising social events such as dinners, BBQs and dances, coffee mornings, ceilidhs and concerts.

A major refurbishment of the hall started in 2008. The aim is to create a 'zero carbon footprint' centre and a modern, warm, well-used hall to serve the people of our parish for a second hundred years.

The Parish Council

Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg parishes were combined in 2006. The Council meets four times a year, usually in the Community Hall where parishioners are always welcome to take part in the meetings.

The Parish Council has taken the initiative in promoting amenity by assuming management control of the riverside land at Gurnal Bridge (by licence from the Stevenson Trustees) carrying out tree planting and installing a seat there. Above Garth Row they have created the Parish Woodland which is used by both Selside Primary School and a local nursery as an open-air environmental classroom. The woodland also provides regular opportunities for volunteers to undertake outdoor work and is available at all times for quiet recreation.

Another scheme is currently under way at Coldharbour Quarry, a former borrow-pit, where locally grown native trees are being planted as a landscape feature. On the A6, south of Chester Hag, 21 oaks were planted to mark the millennium. All of these projects have benefited from grant-aid from a range of bodies to whom grateful thanks are due.

Grant-aid

Grants have been received from:

United Utilities (tree-planting); Cumbria Neighbourhood Forum (development of Parish Woodland); Friends of the Lake District (walling at Parish woodland & Coldharbour Quarry); The Hadfield Trust (access improvement at Parish Woodland); Voluntary Action Cumbria (Millenium Planting scheme and parish seat).

5. FARMING, OTHER BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT

Agriculture

As in past centuries, most of the land in both parishes is given over to farming but there have been profound changes over the last 50 years with the intensification and increased specialisation of agriculture. Agricultural employment is much reduced and farm size has increased.

In living memory there were 22 working farms, today only eight remain. Many farms have been sold off, the land let for grazing and barns left to await their next purpose.

Other employment

Despite its rural appearance the parish is home to a wide range of small businesses. The sites of former mills at Mealbank, Stocks Mill and to a lesser extent at Oakbank now provide premises for a variety of enterprises e.g. plant hire, joinery, car body repairs and a distribution centre. A significant number of residents are freelance home workers.

Businesses in the area include:

Consultancy	Mail order
Architecture	Computer related service
Ceramics	Retail
Sculpture	Horticulture

6. THE BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN AND THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process began with a public meeting held on 08.10.07 .A steering group of three was elected at the meeting, with a mandate from the Parish Council to proceed with the plan. Additional members to the group were co-opted later. The steering group met regularly.

We were assisted by representatives of Cumbria County Council (CCC), South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) and Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) and were grateful to receive funding towards the production of the plan through the Neighbourhood Forum and ACT.

Questionnaires for parishioners, children and businesses were distributed by team of volunteers to all households in the parish. Members of the steering group visited the Church Christmas Fair and a Coffee Morning to discuss the Community Plan and to gather views from our community. The progress of the Plan was reported regularly to the community through the Church and Community News and the Parish Council.

The Report of the Survey

The response to the questionnaire survey was good. 88 questionnaires were returned which represents a percentage return of 58%. Separate returns were also received from eleven children and young people and eight businesses.

The questions in the survey were grouped in the following way:

- Housing
- Transport
- Education
- Employment
- Community spirit
- Environment
- Planning

There was also scope for individuals to voice their own ideas and suggestions about the future of the community.

Summary of the findings

In our community there is a real appreciation of the countryside, the peace and quiet of our neighbourhood and a sense of security. Despite there being few local services, people enjoyed living in this attractive rural area. They appreciated the proximity to Kendal and being part of a friendly community.

The main issues which emerged from the consultation process were:

- Traffic noise and speeding on the A6 and the link road between Burneside and the A6
- Lack of affordable housing for younger people
- Increasing amounts of litter on verges and in lay-byes
- Lack of activities for youngsters in the parish
- Lack of good communications in the community: no website, slow broadband mobile phone difficulties
- Dependence on private car transport

The action plan which follows deals with these and other matters and will provide a guide for tackling some of the problems which residents have raised.

THE SKELSMERGH AND SCALTHWAITERIGG COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The Parish Council acts on behalf of the combined parishes of Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg which will be referred to as 'the parish' throughout this document.

To take forward the proposals in this plan, it is strongly recommended that a Parish Councillor should become a coordinator for each of the following action groups.

1. ENVIRONMENT

There is almost unanimity that we live in a beautiful place and that we want to keep it so. We value the traditional farmed landscape, and the underlying natural features together with the wildlife which inhabit them. We also value the public rights of way which allow us to enjoy these things at close hand.

Concerns about the effects of climate change and global warming were expressed by many people. The policy on sustainability will influence many aspects of the Community Plan. Litter disfiguring highway verges and lay-bys was also identified as a problem.

Policy

1. *The Parish Council will defend the natural environment and will encourage actions which help to conserve and enhance the appearance of the area.*
2. *The Parish Council will support the overall aim of responding to climate change and global warming concerns.*
3. *The Parish Council regards favourably opportunities to develop alternative sources of power e.g. wind, water and energy conservation (see Appendix1.)*

Actions

- Form an Environment Group which will lead projects on the environment and sustainability in the parish and report back to the Parish Council
- Identify and record areas of high environmental value such as the Rivers Sprint and Mint, Benson Knott, and Skelsmergh Tarn. Some are already protected by special designation, others could be recommended to appropriate authorities or identified on local map for future reference in the event of development proposals (see Appendix 2)
- Complete a survey of woodlands and ancient trees in both parishes
- Compile a simple botanical and ornithological survey of the parish with advice from Cumbria Wild Life Trust/Natural England
- Draw up a base-map condition survey of public rights of way/access land to provide a basis for future liaison with Public Rights of Way authority
- Work with the Parish Paths Initiative to improve rights of way in the parish through footpath survey, and grants for improvements
- Continue to manage and encourage the use of Parish land and woodland for landscape, wildlife, educational and recreational benefits, reviewing plans on a five-yearly cycle
- Pursue opportunities jointly with local landowners to conserve and enhance features of conservation value identified as above and use influence to secure financial support for projects e.g. tree planting supported by Friends of The Lake District
- Encourage high standards of landscape and environmental management and promote rural crafts (e.g. walling and hedging);
- Introduce a local award via Young Farmers or local shows e.g. a Skelsmergh/ Scalthwaiterigg Cup or prize for rural skills
- Compile a map of old field names and topographical features
- Investigate and encourage the development of hydro electric power on the Rivers Sprint and Mint.
- Investigate the development of wind power

ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANISATION & PARTNERS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIMESCALE
ENVIRONMENT			
1.1 Form an Environment Group to take forward the actions in this section	Parish Council	Regular meeting of group and reports to Parish Council Positive changes in local environment	Autumn 2009
1.2 Identify and record areas of high environmental value	Parish Council Environment Group Environment Agency SLDC Natural England	Information published on community website and in Church and Community News	Oct 2011
1.3 Complete a survey of woodlands and ancient trees	Tree Warden Parish Council Environment Group	Information published on website and in News	Oct 2010
1.4 Undertake a botanical and ornithological survey	Parish Council Environment Group Cumbria Wild Life Trust/ Natural England	Results in News and on website	Oct 2012
1.5 Draw up a condition survey of public rights of way	Parish Council Environment Group Parish Paths Initiative Cumbria County Council	Results in News and on website	Feb 2010
1.6 Improve rights of way	Parish Council Environment Group Parish Paths Initiative Cumbria County Council	Intact footpath signs, clear footpaths	Feb 2011
1.7 Manage and develop Parish land and woodlands	Tree Warden Parish Council Environment Group Parish Council	Flourishing, well-used woodlands	Review Oct 2014
1.8 Encourage high standards of landscape and environmental management and promote rural crafts	Parish Council Friends of Lake District Dry Stone Walling Association Young Farmers	Local events Local Award for rural skills	Oct 2012
1.9 Compile a map of old landscape feature and names	Parish Council Environment Group CCC Archives	Map published on website	Ongoing
1.10 Investigate development of hydro electric power on the Rivers Sprint and Mint	Parish Council Environment Agency SLDC	Results published on website	Jan 2011
1.11 Carry out a litter survey and clean up parish. Request information from SLDC about their responsibilities	Parish Council Environment Group SLDC Keep Britain Tidy	Regular litter clearing by South Lakeland district Council and volunteers	Oct 2009
HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC			
2.1 Form a **Highways and Traffic Group** to take forward the actions in this and the Transport section	Parish Council	Group meets regularly and reports to Parish Council	Autumn 2009
2.2 Contact CCC Highways to discuss: • Grayrigg road to Laverock Bridge Lane and HGVs • A6 to Burneside lane traffic management and traffic survey • Advisory 20mph speed limit through Mealbank	Parish Council Highways Group Cumbria County Council Highways	No HGVs along Laverock Bridge lane Slower, safer traffic on A6 to Burneside lane 20 mph speed limit signs in Mealbank	
TRANSPORT			
3.1 Establish a footway/ cycleway from Watchgate to Morrisons near or along A6	Parish Council Highways Group Cumbria County Council Highways Area Engineer, Safe Ways to School	Safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists along the A6	Oct 2011

ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANISATION & PARTNERS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIMESCALE
3.2 Organise weekly minibus from parish to and from Kendal	Parish Council Highways Group Cumbria Community Transport SLDC	SSaturday minibus transports to and from nodal points in parish to Kendal	Jan 2010
3.3. Discuss Park and Ride Scheme feasibility research with South Lakeland District Council	Parish Council Highways Group SLDC	Group report findings to Parish Council	March 2010
COMMUNITY			
4.1 Improve social contact and well being in the parish	Parish Council Community Hall Committee, volunteers Beacon Group	Flourishing and well-supported Community Hall	Review Oct 2010
4.2 Review activities for 11-18 year olds	Community Hall Committee		Autumn 2009
4.3 Encourage more involvement in community events	Community Hall Committee	Well attended local events	Ongoing
4.4. Create a welcome pack for newcomers to the parish	Volunteer group	Welcome pack available for distribution	March 2010
4.5. Investigate formation of local resource centre with information for farmers			Autumn 2010
COMMUNICATIONS			
5.1 Form a **Communications Group**	Parish Council	Enthusiastic Group meets regularly and reports to Parish council Positive changes in community communication	Autumn 2009
5.2 Set up Parish website	Parish Council Communications Group	Parish website launch! Community and Parish Council news, events and comment published regularly	Dec 2009
5.3 Support for the Community and Church News	Parish Council Communications Group News editors	Secular community and PC news and events published regularly	
5.4 Investigate improvement of broadband service	Parish Council Communications Group Commission for Rural Communities	Report on website	Ongoing
5.5 Investigate access to fibre optics, satellite, WiFi links and hub radio	PC Communications Group Commission for Rural Communities	Report on website	Jan 2010
5.6 Encourage greater use of Parish notice boards	Parish Council Communications Group	More current events on notice boards	Feb 2010
HOUSING AND PLANNNING			
6.1 Respond to applications for planning permission with due regard to Parish Council guidelines and South Lakeland District Council Local Plan	Parish Council South Lakeland District Council		Ongoing
6.2 Commission a housing survey to identify demand for affordable homes in the parish	Parish Council Rural Housing Trust	Results published on website and in Community News	Jan 2010

- Organise a litter survey to assess the most serious areas. Link with Keep Britain Tidy Campaign for advice about local groups clearing litter from lane verges, followed by organisation of local litter picking days. Contact SLDC to seek clarification of their responsibility with regard to litter collection from lay-bys on the A6, then to request a timetable for litter collection at these spots

2. HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC

A majority of respondents (65%) thought that there were significant traffic problems.

Three roads in particular are causing concern in our parish: the A6, the back road between the A6 and Burneside, and the link road between the A685 the Grayrigg road and Laverock bridge. Most people thought that excessive speed and noise were a problem on the A6. The back road to Burneside is dangerous, with speeding traffic. HGVs take an inappropriate shortcut down the link road following SATNAV directions.

The lack of a footpath down the A6 is an issue for people living at Kiln Croft and adjacent to the A6 north of Kiln Croft. Many residents cycle regularly but lack of cycle lanes and dangerous, busy roads are preventing them from cycling more often.

Policy

4. *We wish to secure sustainable transport and greater safety on the highways for all users.*

Actions

- Set up a Highways, Traffic and Transport Group to report progress at Parish Council meetings and lead the implementation of the following actions:
- Contact the Highways Agency to continue discussions about banning HGVs from the Grayrigg to Laverock Bridge lane
- Pending a decision being made on the Northern Relief Road, to contact CCC Highways Agency to discuss traffic management on the A6 to Burneside road and to request a Traffic Management Plan to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. This will include a request for a traffic survey to assess changes in density and speed of traffic; signs for passing places and a sign to establish priority to eastbound traffic at pinch point
- Contact Cumbria County Council Highways Agency to request an advisory 20mph limit through Mealbank

3. TRANSPORT

71% of respondents expressed an interest in using public transport if it was available, lack of such transport creates high dependence on private cars in the parish. Young people would be particularly interested in the introduction of a Saturday bus service to and from Kendal, as would other parishioners. 52% of residents use bicycles regularly but were very concerned about safety issues, heavy fast traffic and a lack of cycleways.

Policy

5. *The Parish Council supports the improvement of public transport links in the area.*
6. *It also wishes to encourage more cycling and walking by promoting the establishment of safe footways and cycleways.*
7. *The Parish Council will encourage a general policy of promoting a modal shift e.g. private car to bus, bike, walking or car sharing.*

Actions

- Establish a footway and cycleway from Watchgate to Morrisons near or along the A6. The section from Kiln Croft to Morrisons to be completed within 2 years of the adoption of this plan.

- Organise a Saturday minibus to and from Kendal picking up at population nodes in the parish
- Investigate the setting up of a Park and Ride Scheme at The Old Showground

4. COMMUNITY

People who responded to the consultation valued a sense of community and security in the parish. Some took advantage of the clubs and activities at the Community Hall, others chose social activities outside the parish. Many of the events are well attended

The age group for whom it was thought that more events and activities were needed was the 11-18 group. The Community Hall will play a vital role in continuing to provide a social centre for the area.

Policy

8. *The Parish Council will promote and support the establishment of a variety of social activities in the parish, in particular those at The Community Hall.*
9. *The Parish Council, in its role as a consultee local authority, supports the continuation of traditional agriculture in the parish.*

Actions

- The Community Hall Committee will be the focus for initiatives to improve social contact and well being within the parish
- Liaise with the Beacon Group to assist with community reinvigoration
- Investigate the formation of a local resource centre with information and advice for farmers.
- Review activities which could be provided for 11-18 year olds e.g. monthly disco
- Encourage more involvement by individuals in the parish to enhance a sense of security and community e.g. establish a First Responders Team
- Create a Welcome Information Pack for newcomers to the parish

5. COMMUNICATIONS

In a rural area such as ours, keeping in touch with neighbours and the community generally is very important. Many respondents mentioned their satisfaction with the Skelsmergh, Selside and Longsleddale Church and Community News but it is only delivered to a small proportion of the parish population. However for the 32% of our respondents who have no access to the internet, The News remains an important means of communication.

Policy

10. *The Parish Council wishes to improve communication for people who live in this rural area and to enhance everyone's access to the internet for personal and business needs.*

Actions

- Form an IT /Communications Group which will report to Parish Council
- Support the Community and Church News, by reporting on Parish Council meetings and advertising secular community events.
- Work closely with neighbouring parishes: Burneside, Selside and Longsleddale over matters of common concern
- Set up a parish website
- Investigate ways of improving the broadband service
- Link with Commission for Rural communities to investigate access to fibre optics, satellite, WiFi links and hub radio
- Encourage more general use of Parish notice boards

4. HOUSING AND PLANNING

The majority of people (61%) thought that more affordable housing was required . Almost half of those who responded thought that housing costs will prevent their offspring from setting up homes in the parish. Many people thought that young people who might have wished to remain in the parish are having to move away to find less expensive homes.

Policy

11. *The Parish Council recognizes that a rural community must respond to the need for housing for local families and that there must be provision at all levels in the housing market.*
12. *In response to the SLDC Local Development Framework, the Parish Council has submitted a set of general guidelines which are considered appropriate for this area (See Appendix 1).*
13. *The Parish Council welcomes new residential development appropriate and proportionate to the rural nature of the parish.*

Actions

- The Parish Council will respond to applications for planning permission on which it is consulted in accordance with its guidelines
- Commission a housing survey to identify demand for affordable homes in the parish

Acknowledgements

The Community Plan Steering Group

Russ Andrews
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John Owen

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APPENDIX 1

SKELSMERGH AND SCALTHWAITERIGG HOUSING AND PLANNING GUIDELINES

The following points are intended as a framework whereby the Parish Council will seek to guide and influence all residential development within the Parish. These guidelines are intended as an input to the SLDC Local Development Framework and are intended to span the same time period as the LDF i.e. to 2025.

Where appropriate, the Council's rationale behind guidelines is given in support of the policy.

- Skelsmergh & Scalthwaiterigg Parish Council speaks for both parishes. We welcome the opportunity to input into the SLDC Local Development framework. We acknowledge the duty imposed on SLDC to plan for 7000 new homes by 2025. As parishes, we have over recent years happily absorbed a significant number of appropriate new residential developments such as Kiln Croft (11 houses) and Meal Bank School House (3 houses).

  Policy: *Skelsmergh & Scalthwaiterigg P.C. welcomes new residential development appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the parishes.*

- Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg are truly rural areas, with population densities officially deemed 'super-sparse' and no single centres of significant population. Despite the relative proximity of Kendal and Burneside, both about 3 miles, the parishes are separate from and different to any other centres of population. The Community Plan reveals a strong desire in the parishes that they should remain distinctive and retain their rural character.

  Policy: *Any development should not significantly change the distinctive, rural and sparsely-populated nature of the Parishes, nor erode the sense of strong community, independent of Kendal and Burneside.*

- The infrastructure of the parishes is in keeping with their rural nature; there is no mains gas anywhere, mains sewerage is limited in reach and in capacity of the old sewers, electricity distribution is old, unreliable and unsightly, broadband and mobile phone services are intermittent as is TV reception, lanes are narrow and pavements non-existent. There are no significant public transport services, no schools and no amenities such as shops or pubs. Car ownership and ability to drive are essential to any 'modern' family living in the parishes. All of these factors make the parishes a relatively expensive and difficult place to live, especially for people of limited means and/or limited mobility.

  Policy: *Any development must be supported by an appropriate level of infrastructure. The P.C. will press strongly for appropriate 'Section 106' type of planning gain to support any new development. The P.C. will not support any development which will significantly erode the quality, such as it is, of infrastructure enjoyed by the existing population, nor will it support any development of a type, or for peoples, for which an immediate and comprehensive infrastructure of services is appropriate.*

- The nature of the parishes is that of small 'nodes' of residential development, often centred on a farmstead, scattered amongst 'rolling drumlins' of agricultural pasture and woodland. For the sakes of efficiency of service provision, neighbourly cohesion and visual amenity, the P.C. envisages that all new development should normally take place contiguous with existing residential developments.

  Policy: *All new development will normally be contiguous with and proportional in scale and character to existing residential development.*

- The nature of farming and industry within the parishes continues to evolve; small farms become unviable, agricultural buildings become inappropriate for their original use, industrial and public buildings become redundant. Such buildings are often then considered for conversion to residential use and become valuable in

providing for the natural increase of the incumbent population or to attract in new inhabitants who contribute to the life and vitality of the parishes. Over recent years such developments have proven much more beneficial to the life and prosperity of the parishes than developments for transient or temporary accommodation.

Policy: *The P.C. will be sympathetic to appropriate redevelopment and changes of use on 'brown-field' sites to permanent residential use, and will encourage such developments in strong preference to developments which attract temporary or transient inhabitants.*

- The P.C. is very aware of the latent and unmet demand for housing to enable parishioners to satisfy the wholly reasonable wish for their successor generations to live in the parishes and for themselves to remain in the parishes as their circumstances and housing needs evolve; old age, divorce etc. This unmet need was identified by 61% of respondents in the Community Plan research. However, the P.C. does not envisage itself becoming a pro-active provider of such housing.

  Policy: *The P.C. will encourage and prioritise residential developments intended to satisfy the housing requirements of existing resident families. The P.C. will encourage, but not initiate, initiatives, such as Housing Trusts, aimed at satisfying such demand. Naturally, all such developments will be subject to the same 'Planning Policy' scrutiny as any other development.*

March 2009

APPENDIX 2

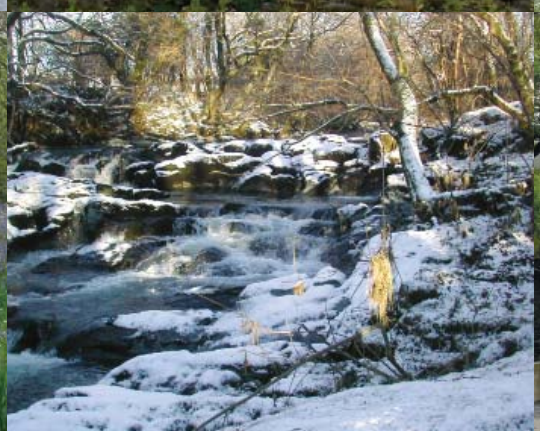
STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS AND PROTECTED SITES

South Lakeland District Council's Local Plan identifies two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) in our area:

- Skelsmergh Tarn
- River Kent Tributaries (Rivers Sprint and Mint)

The latter is also designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Dales Way
The Dales Way

FLASH

PUBLIC FOOTPATH
TO SKELSMERGH HALL