

Community Plan Summary

1 Background Allithwaite Upper parish lies at the southern boundary of the Lake District National Park (LDNP) adjacent to other rural parishes and Grange-over-Sands. A 'village appraisal' took place internally in 1992, and LDNPA completed a service checklist in 2005. There is a planning presumption against any development in the parish at present. However, changes in the planning system mean that the Community Plan will become part of the new Local Development Framework, an important planning document guiding future decisions. The Plan contains the community's vision of its future, which is consistent with the LDNPA 'Vibrant Communities' Vision for 2030.

2 Portrait.

2.1 The parish is part of the 'Lake District Peninsulas'. It comprises some 15 farms and the small villages of Lindale, High and Low Newton, which are connected along the west-east road route of the A590. The parish lies 2 miles from Grange-over-Sands, and ten miles from the M6 motorway to which it is linked by the dual carriageway A590. Lindale was bypassed in 1977 and High and Low Newton in 2008.

2.2 The 2001 Census recorded 824 people, comprising a lower number of young people, 16-24 years, than the Cumbria average. 378 households were counted in the Census, compared to 456 in our 2007 survey. The Electoral Register for 2006 indicates 682 voters, 525 in Lindale and 157 in Newton. The 2001 Census data showed a high level of car/van ownership and owner-occupied properties. Only 13% of properties were available for renting in 2001. In 2007, our parish survey indicated approximately 17% of second homes/holiday-let properties.

2.3 The underlying ancient slaty rocks have created three north-south landscape types; the Cartmel valley, Newton Fell and Winster valley, with a small outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone on the western edge of the parish. The scenery is varied and attractive, and is greatly valued by residents and visitors alike. Slate walls and buildings form a very strong component which contributes to the local character. There are outstanding views north to the Lake District fells and south over Morecambe Bay.

2.4 Broca Cave is the oldest known archaeological site in the parish, and Castle Head Hill may have been the site of a hill fort in Iron Age, Roman and the Dark Ages. The early parish was described as 'hamlets with small farms', with agricultural work being supplemented by working in local woods and quarries. Charities were set up progressively from 1700 for the poor of the parish.

- 2.5 John Wilkinson, the ironmaster, began the Industrial Revolution at Lindale, smelting iron at Wilson House, and launching the first iron boat. He built the Castle Head mansion, drained the tidal Winster valley with cast iron pipes and designed his own iron obelisk, which now has Listed Building status, as do Lindale Church and the Webster Mausoleum in the churchyard. The Websters were architects well known in the Kendal area, who designed Lindale Church and School, and built Eller How Mansion.
- 2.6 The history of the parish has been strongly influenced by the development of roads. An early coaching road crossed Newton Fell via Tow Top and descended into High Newton. The turnpike road came later to Lindale, and wound its way across the mosses into 'Townend'. The route continued from the 'Bottom House' up steep rocky slopes, past horse troughs to the 'Top House', on past Burnbank Farm to the coaching halt at Low Newton. From here the old road kept at a lower level before climbing to High Newton. In the 1930s a much wider road was cut into Newton Fell between Low and High Newton. A 1970s proposal to bypass both High and Low Newton and Lindale resulted in the building of the Lindale bypass only, which was completed in 1977.

3 Community Life

- 3.1 Employment reflects both long established occupations, such as farmers, woodworkers, stonemasons, haulage, and newer enterprises such as car dealerships and antiques. Businesses vary from moderately large through small employers to many self-employed and people working from home. There is a strong entrepreneurial spirit.
- 3.2 There are no health services within the parish
- 3.3 Limited housing stock is a problem. Properties are expensive, being about ten times the average income. Areas of Lindale have locally very high percentages of second homes/holiday lets.
- 3.4 Service facilities within the parish are limited, with one shop and Post Office, 2 pubs and a guest house, school and church in Lindale, and one pub, café/ antique shop in High and Low Newton. Both villages have village halls, which host events for the community. Other clubs and societies, such as Lindale Sports Club, Bowling Association and Book Club also contribute to community spirit and activities.

4 Process

- 4.1 The Community Plan process began in September 2006, following which a Steering Group was set up. This conducted a short open-ended questionnaire at the end of 2006 in order to survey community opinions and to identify issues of concern. The resulting ideas, together with possible solutions, were presented at meetings and summer consultation events in 2007 in Lindale and High Newton. In a final Priorities Survey late in 2007, the community was asked to show its support (or otherwise) for a series of

over 30 issues previously identified. In addition, respondents were asked to identify their own 10 top priorities for action. Individual, face-to-face business surveys were used to validate community views about employment issues and local businesses. Views of young people have been more difficult to gain.

5 Results

5.1 The 2006 survey showed that residents like the spectacular landscape and the feeling of open space, easy access and peace and quiet of the parish. Suggestions for future improvements were grouped into traffic and safety, services and housing, sustainability/environmental, village character and promotion of village events/social inclusion.

5.2 A 73% response from the 2007 Priorities Survey makes us confident that issues in the Plan have strong support from the community. The issues, which were identified as highest priorities, ranging from 44% to 35% of respondents, were for additional kerbside recycling of cardboard and plastics, support for public transport, maintaining existing services, restricting second homes, and more affordable houses for young, local people. Maintaining existing services was supported by 96% of households, and increased availability of affordable housing by 74%. Other issues included the need for a parish Web site, identified particularly by those in the remoter areas of the parish. The businesses surveyed described themselves as providing services to the community; they had supported community activities, and were willing to become involved in future projects. The issues are presented in four categories, namely Business and Employment, Green Villages and Environment, Services and Housing, and Traffic and Safety, which correspond closely with the four categories identified by Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC) in their guidance to parishes.

6 Business and Employment. There was overwhelming support from the Priorities Survey for developing local employment opportunities. One solution to address this priority is that the Parish Council should identify a Business Co-ordinator, and set up a Joint PC-Community-Business Forum to explore mutual community-business links; the Forum would conduct further, more specific and detailed surveys as necessary.

7 Green villages. The highest priorities expressed by the survey were: maintenance of the rural character; more kerbside recycling; priority to reduce unnecessary light pollution and ensure darkness at night; enhanced energy efficiency and local energy generation; and planning for climate change and possible fuel shortages in the future. There was also strong support for managing the village halls as examples of good environmental

practice, and for greater availability of local and seasonal food. Litter, dog fouling and availability of more allotments were of lower priority, while setting up a community orchard was given the lowest priority.

- 8 Services and Housing.** The topmost priority was to maintain existing services, especially the Post Office service in Lindale. Housing issues, including second homes, affordable housing, houses for rent, and effective Local Occupancy Orders, were also very high on residents' list of priorities. More activities for young people, support for Lindale Church and information about local walks and routes for bikes and horse riders were also supported.
- 9 Traffic and Safety.** The highest priority was seen as supporting bus and rail transport, managing the footpath networks and enforcing speed limits. Junctions with the A590 trunk road need to be made safer. Parking issues were a lesser priority. The issue of smaller and fewer road signs was being tackled by the de-trunking of the 'old' A590 in Newton. There was least support for creating a more obvious centre for Lindale village.
- 10 Future Vision** From the wide range of issues identified through the consultation process, a future vision for the parish has been drawn up, which incorporates the wishes and aspirations of the community. The key features for a vibrant future are to ensure that the parish is 'family-friendly', that the essentially rural character of the parish is retained, and that new developments in line with community aspirations for the 21st century are enabled by the planning process.
- 11 Next Steps.** Development of the parish Web site is crucial, for information and advertising of events and services, and for publishing a Parish Information Circular. A key to the successful implementation of the action plans is the setting up of a Management Team and a number of specialist sub-groups to move the Plan forward. To obtain funding for the wide range of initiatives discussed, the PC is strongly recommended to appoint a 'funding and grants officer' (or similar role) to explore sources of new funding. Although such a role would require initial pump priming, the post would gradually become self-funding. It is expected that the Plan will be implemented in partnership with neighbouring councils.
- 12 Review of Progress** on the Plan should be made annually at the Annual General Meeting and reported via the new web-based Parish Information Circular.