

Dentdale is in the south-east corner of Cumbria and lies in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It has an estimated population of 700 and has 397 households, of which over 20% are second homes or holiday lets.

The main village is Dent, around six miles from Sedbergh, with smaller settlements, Gawthrop, Cowgill, and many scattered farmsteads.

Background

Dentdale's Community Plan was initiated by the Parish Council and started in June 2007 when a steering group and working groups were formed. There was widespread support for the plan following a public meeting in March 2007 attended by around 100 residents.

The Plan was published in November 2008. A number of people from the original steering and working groups have stayed involved with the project and are overseeing its implementation.

The Learning

The community has made rapid progress with implementing their plan due to the commitment of the people involved. They have benefited greatly from building relationships early on with local councils and other agencies who can help to deliver actions or signpost them to support and funding.

The group has had particular challenges supporting economic development in the area. Their experience has been that funding is often directed towards larger scale projects and job creation and isn't suitable for some of the small scale projects they hope to tackle.

However, a social enterprise to promote tourism has recently been formed in the Dale, and the commitment to economic development in the Plan has enabled the Parish Council to support it.

What has been achieved?

• Allotments

Within a year of the Plan being published allotments have been established in Dent thanks to a local farmer leasing land to a newly formed Allotment Association. The Association established interest among local people, contacted landowners with suitable sites, and fundraised to cover the costs of making the land suitable for allotment use. The Plan demonstrated the support for allotments in the area. Out of 30 plots 26 have been leased already and planting has started.



• Litter Picking Group

A volunteer group has been established to clear litter along valley roads. Each person takes responsibility for a particular stretch of road in the winter (in summer vegetation covers the roadsides) and the group holds weekend blitzes on litter hotspots. South Lakeland District Council has supported the development of the group and provided high visibility jackets and other equipment. The group, which operates as a sub-committee of the Parish Council, covered by their insurance, has also persuaded the Environment Agency to take action on some long-standing cases of fly tipping.



Playground Refurbishment group with local children at the old Children's Playground in Dent



New Children's Playground in Dent

What has been achieved? (cont.)

• Playground Refurbishment

In just six months a new volunteer group has raised £34,000 of their target of £40,000 to redevelop Dent's children's playground. Local children have been involved in the new design from the outset.

The group will oversee the installation of the new equipment and responsibility for maintenance will be taken on by South Lakeland District Council who own the playground. Having playground refurbishment as an action in the Plan has legitimised the project and demonstrated community support to funders.

• Newsletter

The residents' survey carried out for the Plan showed that while most people supported the Parish Council, others felt they did not know very much about it. By including the introduction of a Parish Council newsletter in our Action Plan, it was possible to obtain funding for the first four editions.

• Second Home Network

Attempts are being made to include second-home owners in community life by arranging meetings between them and residents and establishing a newsletter for them. A number of them have contributed to fundraising for the allotments and playground. Securing the involvement of second and holiday home owners in the community was also an action in the Plan.

Contact Details

If you would like more information about activity in Dentdale, please contact Jock Cairns, Chair of Dentdale Parish Council on Tel: 01539 25655 or Email: jockcairns@btinternet.com

A copy of Dentdale's plan is available to view at www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

If you would like more information about starting a Community Led Plan in your area, please contact ACT on Tel: 01768 840 827 or Email: info@cumbriaaction.org.uk

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