

Barbon Parish Council

Parish Plan

2011

Prepared by Barbon Parish Council,
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1. Introduction

The original Parish Plan was published in 2005. At the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council held on 24th May 2010 it was agreed that a revised Plan should be prepared to provide a basis for actions to be taken by the Council itself and other agencies and groups within the village. It will also bring benefit to us all by clearly establishing our considered views in negotiations about policy proposals from higher authorities, such as South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and other bodies.

In order to update the plan, a survey of the views of every household was undertaken in September 2010, by circulating a questionnaire. These were collected and carefully analysed. The resulting Draft Plan was circulated to all households and other interested bodies and individuals in January 2011 with a request for written comments on it to be sent to the Clerk. These comments were reviewed by the Council but no changes to the contents of the Plan were required.

This Plan was formally adopted by the Council at a meeting held on 7th March 2011 with the intention that this Plan be reviewed at each Parish Council AGM, with a check of actions against targets and updates to the Plan made as circumstances dictate.

The survey was most successful, with 97 (2005 – 102) out of 116 (2005 – 114) households in the Parish responding to the questionnaire. This represents a very high response rate of 84% (2005 – 89%). In addition there were 10 (2005 – 9) houses that were empty at the time of the survey or which were being used as a holiday let.

The following trends are apparent from the figures in the Appendix on page 10:-

- **The population of the village is getting older**
- **There are less employed people**
- **There are less children**
- **There are more retired people**

Though no less than 4 families with children left the village during the summer of 2010, which will have had an effect on the results.

In addition 12 “Young People and Children’s Questionnaire” responses were received from the 27 individuals who were aged 18 or under living in households for which an adult questionnaire was completed – a response rate of 44%. This enabled our young people to say what they liked about Barbon and what makes it special to them, what they didn’t like and what they would like to change to make their life better.

The Council were encouraged to learn that 49% of individuals regarded Barbon as the best place that they had lived, with a further 41% rating Barbon as really good with only 9% rating the village as adequate and 2% as not very good.

Many people commented positively about the location, the people and their friendliness, the community spirit, the beautiful scenery, the pace of life, the quiet and tranquillity, the number of activities in the village hall and church and the fact that it was off the beaten track with no main road running through the village.

A number of main points stood out from the responses:-

- **the provision and spreading of grit salt in the village**
- **the problems of dog fouling**
- **the value of the shop and post office to the village and its survival into the future**

Whilst the Parish Council has been instrumental in the preparation of the plan, its powers limit what it can do. At all times the Council needs to bear in mind the cost of any activities it undertakes. If the Parish Council did more, the precept for parish expenses, that residents pay as part of their Council Tax to SLDC, would have to increase.

The plan is divided into the following sections:

- Actions which the Parish Council should take itself and policies which should guide it.
- Actions which residents can take for themselves.
- Actions which other groups in the village can take.

2. Parish Council Actions and Policies

There were just four areas relating to the infrastructure and environment within Barbon with which at least a third of respondents were dissatisfied. These are described in 2.1 to 2.4 below.

2.1 Condition of the road network overall

The majority of comments related to the number of potholes that had been identified but which, at the time the questionnaire was done, had not been filled in. This work has now been done which has led to a significant improvement in the condition of the road network overall. Your Parish Council will continually monitor the state of the roads in conjunction with our Highways Steward to try and ensure all required repairs are attended to in a timely manner, subject to cash being available within the Cumbria Highways Budget.

2.2 Road drainage

In trying to determine why this was such a problem it was discovered that Cumbria Highways did not actually have a map showing the location of all the drains in the village! Since the survey was done your Parish Council has now prepared such a map and the Cumbria Highways contractor who does the work has been given a copy, which he now works to, and will continue to do so in the future. The contractor is scheduled to visit Barbon to clean out the drains twice a year. Your Parish Council will continually monitor the work done to ensure that all drains are cleaned out to reduce the incidence of road flooding to a minimum.

2.3 Provision of grit salt in the winter

- a) As every resident will appreciate we live in a rural area which, apart from the A683, will not receive a regular visit from the Cumbria Highways grit lorry to spread grit directly onto our roads.
- b) Cumbria Highways do however supply salt in piles at intervals along the “main” road into Barbon from Hodge Bridge through the village and up Church Brow as far as the cattle grid at the start of Barbondale which includes the salt bin by the War Memorial. Neither Cumbria Highways nor your Parish Council has the resources to spread this salt onto the public highway however, so it is up to residents to do this.
- c) In early December 2010, during a period of heavy snow and icy conditions, your Parish Council took advantage of an offer by Cumbria Highways to supply a bulk quantity of grit salt which was transferred by your Council into bulk bags and deposited in a number of locations around the village and in other places in piles. The primary focus was to try and provide salt where it was needed most i.e. on slopes and near road junctions. Again it is up to residents to spread this salt onto public

highways and pavements. Your Parish Council will request additional bulk supplies of grit salt in the future in periods of prolonged icy weather conditions.

- d) Your Parish Council is also in negotiation with Cumbria County Council to try and get some more permanent salt bins in places where they are most needed, though Cumbria Highways will only keep them filled with salt if they are on a route where they already supply piles of salt i.e. on the “main” road through Barbon.
- e) If there is no supply of salt near you the Parish Council would encourage residents to fill a bag or bucket, but ONLY if this salt is spread on public roads or pavements within Barbon Parish.
- f) Salt supplied by Cumbria Highways is NOT to be used on private land (see 3.4 below).

2.4 Dog fouling

This is a continuing problem over which the Parish Council has little control. However the Council would appeal to all dog owners to take their responsibilities seriously, and remind them that paths, bridleways, roads and verges are used by others including children for recreation purposes (see 3.1 below). As this is a potential health hazard, and an ongoing problem, the Council may have to consider further measures that can be taken.

A majority, and often an overwhelming majority, of respondents were satisfied with all other areas relating to the infrastructure and environment within Barbon though a number of points expressed are worth highlighting – see 2.5 to 2.10 below.

2.5 Road Signs

Your Parish Council is working with Cumbria Highways to get them :-

- a) To get a crossroads warning sign erected on the northbound A683 with the junction with the road that goes to the Golf Club.
- b) Erect warning signs at each end of the road that goes past Low Bank House and Park House preventing large and heavy vehicles using this narrow road as a through route.

2.6 Street Lighting

A significant number of respondents expressed the view that the level of street lighting provided was either about right or should be reduced. There was only one request for a (single) additional light. Your Council are not presently proposing to make any changes to the provision of street lighting.

2.7 Grass Verges

- a) The standard of grass verges came under a lot of criticism in the original survey carried out in 2005. Since then your Parish Council has taken over responsibility for verge strimming within the village which is done by a local contractor. This has led to a marked improvement in the state of the verges.
- b) Cumbria Highways are still responsible for the verges on the A683 including the road junctions however and your Parish Council is trying to improve the quality of this work which is currently being done at an unacceptable standard.
- c) There were a few requests in the survey for more wild flowers in the verges. Your Council will explore ways of doing this, though the nettles would need to be killed off first, which may take two to three years to do.

2.8 Traffic Speeds

Since the 2005 survey new Barbon signs have been erected at all major entry points to the village that request drivers to "Please Drive Carefully". Residents are expected, at the very least, to set an example by driving at appropriate speeds through the village. It was pleasing to note from many of the responses to the children's questionnaires, that the children felt that the village was a safe environment to be in as far as vehicles on the road were concerned. Your Council do not seek to introduce speed limits or physical traffic calming measures.

2.9 Car Parking

- a) As a result of the 2005 survey a sign has been erected on the verge by Barking Mad requesting visitors to park at the Village Hall or at the Hodge Bridge lay-by and this appears to have helped. Other avenues to direct car parking will be investigated.
- b) A number of respondents to the 2010 survey commented on:-
 - Car parking in the area of the War Memorial which, in the words of one respondent, "is getting crowded"
 - The loop road running from Malt Kiln Cottages past Town End and Brookside to Ashmeadow "is easily blocked" which reduces "access for emergency vehicles"

Residents who park their cars in these areas are encouraged to do so responsibly so as not to cause an obstruction and to avoid parking near road junctions.

2.10 Litter

Your Council do not believe that providing more bins in the village or at Hodge Bridge or Barbondale is the solution to litter problems. The actions of residents who pick up litter and dispose of it properly are appreciated and to be encouraged – as one respondent said it "all depends on the Wombles".

A number of other areas were also raised in the responses to the survey - see 2.11 to 2.22 below

2.11 Bus Service

- a) Many respondents would like more bus services but realistically, in the present economic climate with local Councils under a great deal of pressure to reduce costs, we will be lucky to keep the one bus a week on Thursday mornings to Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh, as the rural bus subsidy that supports this service may be cut.
- b) Cumbria County Council are to introduce an A2B Now travel card scheme for 5-18 year olds in South Lakeland that will run from January 2011 to March 2012 whereby young people can travel at most times for up to £1 for a single journey or £1.80 return, with a card which will cost £5 and can be obtained at local libraries. This could allow teenagers a degree of independence as buses from Kirkby Lonsdale go direct to Kendal and Lancaster (the journey only has to start in South Lakeland) and from Sedbergh go to Kendal and Kirkby Stephen. More details can be obtained from www.cumbria.gov.uk/a2bnow or call 01539 713180. Unfortunately this card will not also be able to be used as a "proof of age" card to allow access to other services.

2.12 Mobile Library Service

This now calls at the Village Hall on Thursday's at 2pm approximately once a month. The dates that the mobile library will call will be advertised on the Parish Council notice-board.

2.13 Notice-boards

The 2005 survey highlighted the fact that the notice-boards around the village could be improved. Since 2005 new notice-boards have been put up at Barking Mad, to replace the “barn door”, at the Village Hall and for the Parish Council, on the wall of the Old Smithy. All are well used and help to inform residents what is going on in the community.

2.14 Web site

The Parish Council will post meeting agendas and minutes and also a copy of the Parish Plan on the website <http://www.barbon.org.uk> together with other information of use and interest to residents and the wider community.

2.15 Broadband

A majority of respondents were satisfied with their broadband service but clearly both its speed and reliability needs to be improved. Your Council has appointed Councillor Roger Groves as our “Broadband Pioneer” to be involved in a project, initiated by Tim Farron MP, to bring high-speed broadband to South Lakeland.

2.16 Digital TV Reception

For a small minority of Freeview box users, the number of channels they can receive is disappointingly low. One resident has tried connecting his freeview box to an aerial that points to a different transmitter – this increased the number of channels available but the picture quality is very poor. Your Council is working to improve this service for the benefit of all residents.

2.17 New Housing Development

As in 2005, your Parish Council is fully aware of the range of strongly held views on this subject.

- a) However, respondents were generally in favour of the building of low cost houses to meet a local need for such properties for both young people / families and also older people currently living in “tied” accommodation
- b) Respondent’s views were inconclusive on whether new houses should be built as infill in the gaps between existing houses in the village due to the need to know what specifically would be proposed. Respondents were generally not in favour of building new houses outside the village
- c) Your parish council will continue to examine all new housing proposals carefully and will take the above views into account in arriving at a recommendation to SLDC’s Planning Department.
- d) A report will be prepared by Cumbria Rural Housing Trust on the results and recommendations arising from the Housing Needs Survey that was also carried out in September 2010.

2.18 Industrial Development

The Parish would welcome modest scale proposals in principle. However in each case the Council will need to take into account very carefully and in detail many factors including the position in the village, appearance, the traffic involved and the screening required. Each development will need to be judged on its merits and local needs.

2.19 Wind Farms

The vast majority of respondents were against the idea of a wind farm being located on any of the fells and hills around Barbon.

2.20 Water Turbine

Residents are generally in favour of this idea to use the power from the water in Barbon Beck to generate electricity. As a Council we need to find out more and to keep abreast of developments in technology and available grants.

2.21 Allotments

No less than 13 households said they would like an allotment and a further 6 may want one. As a first step a local landowner needs to come forward with an offer of a suitable plot of land. A similarly sized area of allotments was recently established in Dent which has proved to be very popular and is working well. If anyone has a suitable site, ideally close to a water supply, that they would be willing to rent to a "Barbon Allotments Association", can they please make a Parish Councillor aware?

2.22 Possible extension to the Yorkshire Dales National Park boundary to include Barbon

Views of respondents on this subject were inconclusive with a significant percentage not being sure whether or not it was a good idea. If this proposal is progressed, more details of what it would mean for Barbon will hopefully become apparent.

3. Self-Help Action by Residents

3.1 Dog Fouling.

This is predominately caused by residents' dogs. The elimination of this problem is the responsibility of each dog owner in the parish, who must contemplate the effects of not cleaning up after their dog on other residents and visitors and their children, the potential danger to livestock, and the risks of a £1,000 fine! It would be appreciated if people were to pick up any dog mess that they find in a suitable bag and dispose of it in an appropriate bin.

3.2 Sharing Transport

Willingness to do this was recognised as a benefit by many in the village. It is important to continue this and we are sure many are aware of the need to give this service when called upon.

3.3 Grass Verges

Where possible residents should cut back the grass verges and hedges on their road frontages, particularly if they impede the safe passage of vehicles or pedestrians or hinders the safe parking of vehicles.

3.4 Salt Spreading

Unlike the winter of 2009/10 when we quickly ran out of salt which then took weeks to be replaced, so far this winter we have already received three deliveries of salt (by 9th December 2010) but when icy road conditions return it is necessary for volunteers to arrange to spread this salt where required. Informal schemes are probably appropriate. Salt supplied by Cumbria Highways is only to be spread on public roads and pavements. Any salt spread on privately owned roads and paths should be purchased by residents from a DIY store, builders merchant or other stockist.

Over recent years, there have been concerns about the liability of people who spread salt and clear snow in public spaces. The advice from the Government as communicated by Cumbria County Council is as follows: "The law is clear and there is no liability unless it is done in a completely negligent and reckless manner.

(Cumbria County Council) encourage the public to use the salt heaps and grit bins to help keep the public highways safe and usable.” If the heaps and bins are running low call their Highways Hotline on 0845 609 6609 to get them topped up.

3.5 Re-cycling Schemes.

A number of residents called for the introduction of a doorstep collection scheme for cardboard and plastics. Your Parish Council is not aware of any plans for SLDC to do this so residents need to recycle such products at centrally located sites which are generally near to supermarkets.

3.6 Litter.

As stated in 2.10 above, the actions of residents who pick up litter and dispose of it properly is appreciated and to be encouraged. Incidences of fly tipping should be reported to the helpline at SLDC on 0845 050 4434.

3.7 First Responders.

The Kirkby Lonsdale and District First Responders cover a wide area that includes Barbon, Middleton and Casterton and helps to address the fact that we live in a rural area with the nearest ambulance being based in Sedbergh and the nearest hospital, with a full range of facilities, in Lancaster. They are always looking for more recruits in order to improve the service in the area.

3.8 Local Services

Many residents commented on how important the local services of the Barbon Inn, Shop, Post Office, Village Hall, Church, Mobile Library, Public Telephone and Bus Service are to the quality of life in the Parish. It is self evident that residents must use them or lose them!

4. Actions that other Groups in the Parish could take.

4.1 Village Hall

The Village Hall carried out its own survey in early 2010 which asked a number of detailed questions about its activities and service to the community. The main request from this was for a tennis court to be located at the Village Hall and work is progressing to provide this. If planning permission is obtained this should be available for use in mid 2011.

This questionnaire gauged resident’s needs in a variety of areas which the village hall is probably best placed to service. Namely:-

- a) The provision of a café open during the day was a popular request. As a partial solution to this maybe the village hall could host a regular coffee morning though it would need a volunteer(s) to organise it.
- b) To provide computer classes and also a computer with internet access. If anyone is interested we need to better understand what you might be interested in doing. Initially we could run classes on photography, word processing and excel spreadsheets. If there are sufficient numbers interested the village hall may also provide a broadband internet access.
- c) A list of what goes on in the village hall would be useful so people can see what regular activities they could join

The main request arising from the 2005 survey was for a play area for children which has since been provided and continues to be well used by both children and grandchildren of residents and visitors. It mainly caters for

younger children however, not teenagers, though the tennis court, which will have the facility to be used for other sports, will help this age group.

Your Parish Council is also in the process of applying for grant funding to provide a picnic area for the use of visitors and residents. If successful it is planned to site this by the play area and behind the village hall.

4.2 Shop and Post Office

The present shopkeepers are due to retire in November 2012 and they are currently trying to sell the business to a private individual(s). If this is unsuccessful the responses to the survey showed that there may be enough people willing to volunteer to both help manage a Community Shop and to help to man a Community Shop as a volunteer. Only 1% of respondents did not feel it was important that the shop remains open and only 4% did not feel it was important that the post office remains open.

5. Conclusion

The preparation of this plan has been beneficial for the Parish Council and has led to a review of its working procedures and priorities for action.

Overall, we trust that this plan will provide a concise document that can be used as a basis for action and policy for some years to come. We look forward to maintaining the lovely environment that is so widely enjoyed at the moment, with the enhancements as outlined above.

It is intended that this Plan be reviewed at each Parish Council AGM, with a check of actions against targets and updates to the Plan made as circumstances dictate.

A copy of the Plan has been posted on the website <http://www.barbon.org.uk>

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APPENDIX

The age and employment profiles of the Parish were found to be as follows:

Age profile	0-5	6-11	12-18	19-40	41-65	65-80	Over 80	Total
2010	4(2%)	7(3%)	16(8%)	17(8%)	93(44%)	59(28%)	15(7%)	211(100%)
2005	12(5%)	13(5%)	14(5%)	36(14%)	115(46%)	51(20%)	9(4%)	250(100%)

Number of years family has lived in Barbon (NB Question not asked in 2005)

	0-5	6-11	12-18	19-40	41-65	65-80	Over 80	Total
2010	26(27%)	23(24%)	12(13%)	19(20%)	10(10%)	3(3%)	3(3%)	96(100%)

	Full time employment	Part time employment	Self employed	Housewife / househusband	Semi retired	Retired	Full time education	Under school age	Not employed nor in full time education	Total
2010	36 (17%)	9 (4%)	32 (15%)	12 (6%)	9 (4%)	86 (41%)	25 (12%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	211 (100%)
2005	51 (23%)	24 (11%)	37 (17%)	13 (6%)	Not asked	66 (30%)	25 (11%)	Not asked	4 (2%)	220 (100%)

Employed	Within Barbon Parish	Within 10 miles of Barbon	Further afield	Total
2010	29(36%)	15(19%)	36(45%)	80(100%)
2005	39(35%)	24(22%)	47(43%)	110(100%)