

Barbon Parish Council

Parish Plan

2005

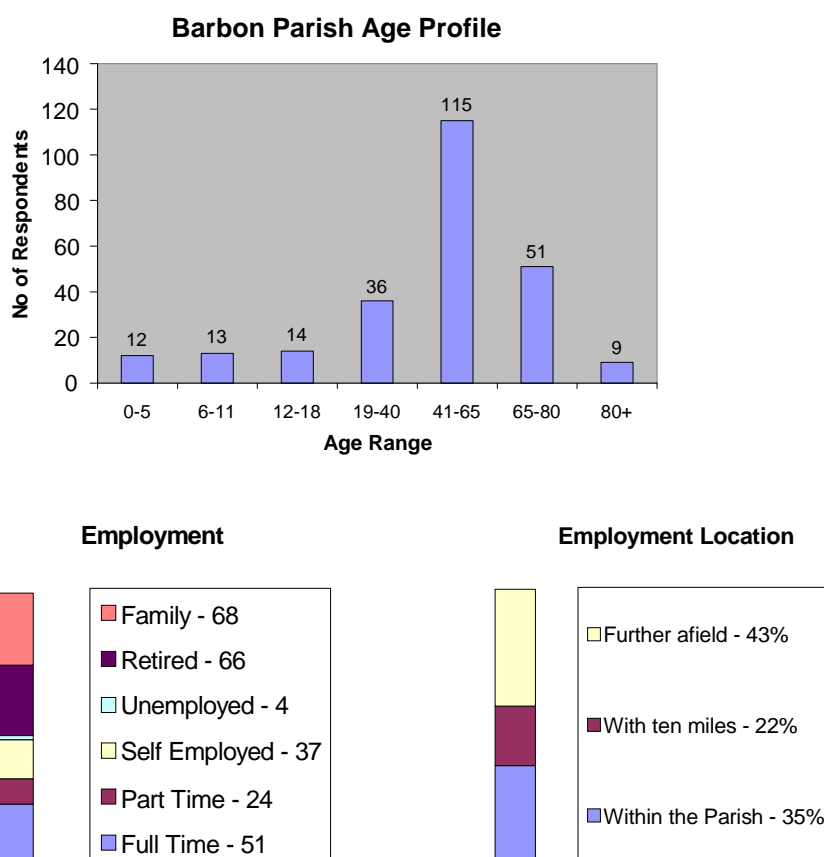
Prepared by Barbon Parish Council,
15 September 2005.
Published by Barbon Parish Council.
© Barbon Parish Council, 2005

1. Introduction

Production of this Parish Plan was decided upon at the meeting of the Council on 26th February 2004. The aim was to describe the Parish and how it would like to see itself developed. This will 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 the North West Regional Assembly. In addition the plan can provide a basis for actions to be taken by the Council itself and other agencies and groups within the village. It will also help the Council to become a 'Quality Parish Council', a status which is viewed as desirable by the government.

In order to prepare the plan, a survey of the views of every household was undertaken in June 2004, by circulating a questionnaire. These were collected and carefully analysed in the autumn. A summary of these responses was published in January 2005. This Draft Plan was approved at the Council meeting on July 7th 2005 and then circulated to the Parish for consultation with a request for written comments. One comment only was received. This concerned road safety. It did not change the thrust of the plan but, as a result, a small change was made. Final review took place at the Parish Council Meeting on 15th September 2005, after which the plan was published. It was decided not to circulate it again, for reasons of cost, because the change had been small and because of its availability on the web.

The survey was most successful, with 102 households out of a maximum of 123 houses in the Parish responding to the questionnaire. The age and employment profiles of the Parish were found to be as follows:



The Council were encouraged to learn that the overall view of life in the Parish was rated excellent by 101, good by 87, adequate by 10 and poor by no-one.

A number of main points stood out from the responses -

- the need for better advertising of events of all kinds in the village,
- the need for a playground with facilities for children,
- the value of the Post Office to the village,
- the problems of dog fouling – which was the only negative issue.

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. This plan is therefore in four parts:

- 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.
- Actions which the Council will encourage external authorities to take.

2. Parish Council Actions and Policies

2.1 Better Advertising of Events and Activities

A large notice board for this purpose has been installed on the front of the Village Hall. Anyone wishing to post notices about their events will need to get in touch with the appropriate person in the Advertising Contacts List mentioned below. Other notice boards exist and will continue to be used, notably at the Village Shop, and the Parish Council official board on the Old Smithy. Our “Around Kirkby Lonsdale” correspondent has kindly agreed to keep a diary of events and to post them in the ‘AKL’ newsletter. The Womens Institute, the Backdoor Club, the Barbon Inn and the Church are all prepared to circulate news of Barbon events and activities when appropriate. An up-to-date list of whom to contact for advertisement purposes and giving deadline dates will be maintained on the Village Hall notice board.

2.2 Public Transport

This is limited to one bus a week to Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh and a school bus, taxi services and the Community Minibus. Given the level of car ownership or access to cars, this is probably the best we can hope for. We will seek to establish whether or not some residents might be eligible for vouchers towards the cost of public transport.

2.3 Litter and Rubbish

We will arrange for more litter bins to be provided and emptied, subject to cost.

2.4 Dog Fouling

This is a persistent problem over which the Parish Council has little control and so is mainly covered in Para. 3.1 below. Periodic pleas for improvement have worked only temporarily. We will improve the advertising of the £1,000 fine for allowing dogs to foul public highways and byways, and follow this up by reporting incidents to the police whenever possible in a zero tolerance approach. Plans are afoot to give Councils power to impose fines themselves and also Dog Control Orders. We will be considering the implications of this in due course. We will make arrangements for the supply of plastic bags for collection of dog dirt in suitable locations for a trial period and will also consider other practical actions which could perhaps help dog owners to avoid fines. However the Council would like to appeal to all dog owners to take their responsibility seriously, and remind them that paths, bridleways, roads and verges are used by others including children for recreation purposes.

2.5 Grass Verges

These are a common cause for complaint by residents in South Lakeland. Despite four letters of protest from the Parish Council in the previous two years there has been no improvement in the state of verges. We have great concern over their appearance, which, at the time of writing, is disgraceful. This is particularly important in regard to road safety especially at road junctions. We will increase pressure on Cumbria County Council to improve matters and, if they fail in this respect, we will consider taking over this responsibility and organise a subcontractor to carry out verge maintenance. This could be an additional charge on the Council Tax, which we must endeavour to avoid. The general policy on verge maintenance is currently under review by Cumbria County Council.

2.6 Street Lighting

This is the responsibility of South Lakeland District Council, although all costs they incur in Barbon are specifically charged to parishioners by an addition to our Council Tax. The Parish Council has been gravely dissatisfied by the service provided in recent years and the very high costs incurred – especially in connection with the new light in Moorthwaite Lane. For the last eighteen months it has been seeking to have the damaged light on Beckgatehead repaired without success, and for the two unpopular sodium lights to be replaced with more pleasant alternatives and we will continue to pursue these actions in conjunction with our District Councillor.

2.7 Winter Ice and Snow Clearance

The Council has requested that an additional salt bin be provided on the hill near to Box Tree on the Main road into Barbon. In the event of winter problems, spreading the salt will generally remain a volunteer activity.

2.8 Traffic Speeds

The Council will investigate possible traffic slowing measures, but will not seek to introduce speed limits or sleeping policemen. The recent erection of signs at village entrances may have helped. Residents are expected, at the very least, to set an example by driving at appropriate speeds through the village.

2.9 Parking

Efforts will be made at sensitive locations to direct cars and coaches to parking areas at Hodge Bridge and the Village Hall, though on occasions these may not be available. Discreet yet visible signage, jointly arranged, will be required. This could be provided at the Council's expense.

2.10 New Housing Development

From the many survey comments, the Parish Council are acutely aware of the range of views in the parish – many of them strongly held. We conclude that a limited number of developments would be acceptable, but generally the designs should be in keeping with the present styles in the village. In addition there should be a presumption in favour of the development of low cost housing which would be available to local people. Generally, building works should be driven by local demand for key local workers. The Council will need to consider carefully all proposals for infill development and, in principle, will be opposed to significant ones.

2.11 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.

2.12 Wind Farms

From the survey the Council are clearly aware of the strong opposition to any proposals for developments on the nearby fells.

2.13 Village Hall Grounds and Playground Equipment

The Village Hall grounds exist for the benefit of the Parish and the Council will endeavour to work with the Village Hall Committee to assist with the cost of their development and maintenance. In particular it may be able to help in sourcing grants towards the costs of playground equipment, having established the feasibility of such a proposal and the cost of the insurances required.

2.14 Policy on Other Issues

The survey raised a range of other issues on which residents often had diverse views, such as the desirability of a caravan site, and the need to monitor problems that can arise from the presence of Travellers and others at Hodge Bridge. As each issue comes before the Council, it will take account of the views expressed in the survey and decide each point on its merits.

2.15 Quality Parish Council

The Council will continue to review the costs and benefits of gaining this qualification for the village.

2.16 Web Site.

A web site has now been established for the Parish Council. Its address is - www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/barbon

This site provides all recent notices, minutes, planning applications and other information. To access it, go to the address above and click on **Local Council** in the top menu bar.

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, - especially those who enjoy being able to walk their dogs off the lead - who must contemplate the effects of not cleaning up after their dog on other residents and visitors and their children, and the risks of a £1,000 fine!

3.2 Sharing Transport

Willingness to do this was recognised as a benefit enjoyed 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 look after the grass verges and hedges on their road frontages.

3.4 Salt Spreading

When icy road conditions arrive it is necessary for volunteers to arrange to spread salt where required. Informal schemes are probably appropriate.

3.5 Re-cycling Schemes.

The volume needed to be recycled can often be significantly reduced by residents composting all their green waste in situ.

3.6 Neighbourhood Watch.

This exists for the benefit of the community and should be reviewed and publicised. The Council will encourage someone to act as chief co-ordinator.

3.7 First Responders.

Both Barbon and Casterton parishes are planning to start First Responders Groups. To be viable more volunteers are urgently needed for initial training.

3.8 Local Services

Many residents commented on how important the local services of the Inn, Shop, Post Office, Village Hall, Church, Chapel, Library, and Bus service are to the quality of the Parish. It is self evident that residents must use them or lose them! Equally all will wish to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the Parish.

3.9 Other Activities

Many additional activities were proposed in the survey. The Village Hall and its grounds may now provide an excellent base for these to take place but if they are to materialise, individuals in the Parish must take the necessary initiatives.

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

4.1 Village Hall

The Village Hall provides a location and central focus where a great proportion of the different activities and services available in the village can take place. It is therefore a key element in Parish affairs and social life. To maximise its benefit to the Parish and the health of its finances it needs to be open and used as long as possible every day.

Interest has been expressed in additional activities that now have to be sought elsewhere, such as Yoga classes, Badminton, and Choral singing. These activities will only take place if someone decides to organise them, but the Village Hall can help by making its facilities easily available. Of particular interest is a play area for children; the Parish Council might be able to help in arranging the provision of equipment for this. Use of the hall as drop-in centre for various groups, such as parents with young children, should be encouraged. The possibility of encouraging the use of the hall for medical and similar services such as periodic visits by a district nurse or chiropodist, or as drop off point for medicines should be investigated. It would be very advantageous if, when not needed for other purposes, the car park could cater for walkers and other day-time visitors to the village. As stated above, all these possibilities will need initiative from individuals and groups and/or help from the Village Hall Committee.

4.2 Barbon Inn

The monthly Barbarians lunches are much appreciated by many, as are the Quiz nights. The Inn should be encouraged to continue these activities.

4.3 Shop and Post Office

The importance of these to the village was widely recognized. The Post Office - the most important factor - needs to be used whenever possible to assist it to remain viable. The shop is seen as providing many services and as more than just a place to shop.

5. Actions the Parish Council will press other Authorities to take.

The Parish Council will use its influence to endeavour to maintain existing services enjoyed by the Parish. In particular, the Shop/Post Office should be retained and all support given to increase its business. The full range of its services should be permanently advertised. We should ensure that the Mobile Library keeps coming. We shall press for the early provision of the 'Freeview' digital terrestrial television service from the Kendal transmitter. BT has now provided broadband services from the Barbon exchange. We shall arrange opportunities, from time to time, for the Police Service to explain their current arrangements. The presence of our Community Police Constable at each Parish Council meeting will be advertised. Above all the Parish Council will continue to promote the Parish's interests to all other local authorities.

6. Conclusion

The preparation of this plan has been beneficial for the Parish Council and has led to a review of its working procedures. All relevant decisions will of course continue to be taken in public. The amount of literature that we have to digest, arriving from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, DEFRA, the Countryside Agency, the North West Regional Assembly, Cumbria County Council and others, increases annually, with many documents needing careful scrutiny before we can prepare our response. It may be necessary to make each Councillor responsible for reviewing one section of this correspondence and for informing all other Councillors of matters relevant to the Parish found in it.

Overall, we trust that this plan will provide a concise document that can be used as 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 will be maintained on the Council web site.

oooooooo00000000oooooooo