



Bassenthwaite Parish Community Plan

BASSENTHWAITE COMMUNITY PLAN

Introduction

The main purpose of this Plan is to draw together the views of the people of Bassenthwaite about the area they live in and to summarise appropriate action which local residents could take to meet their aspirations and remedy deficiencies. Such action will often involve other public authorities. Community Plans are increasingly used to inform the local approach to planning issues and the provision of services and it is hoped that the Plan will prove useful in this context.

This Plan also attempts to present information about the parish which is not always readily available in the hope that the document may be a source of interest and reference.

The Plan relates to the civil Parish of Bassenthwaite and is primarily concerned with the people who live in it and their views, rather than with the official views of organisations or groups. However, some information about these bodies within the parish and outside it is included where relevant.

Assembly of the Plan has been led by a small Steering Group appointed by and acting on behalf of parishioners but it is the result of wide consultation (described in Appendix 2) and it has benefitted from input from many local residents. It is hoped that the document will be seen as accurately reflecting the views of the people of Bassenthwaite and that it will be felt to be owned by them.

Gillian Forsyth, Alistair Brewis, Keith McMillan

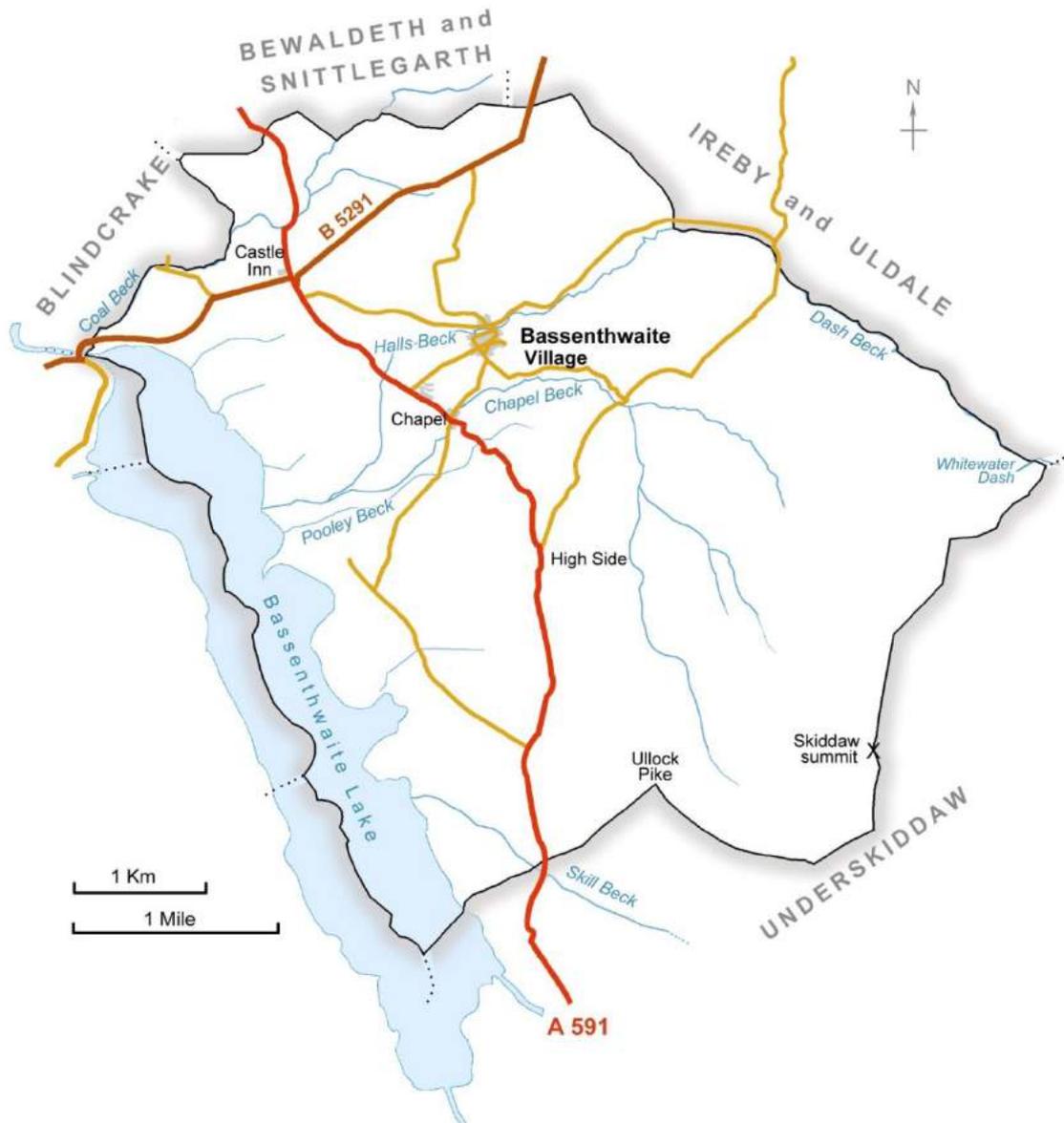
February 2014

Note: The Localism Act came into force in April 2012 just as work was starting on this plan. The act allows local communities to produce 'Neighbourhood Plans' putting in place planning policies for future development and growth of the area. Provided it fulfils a number of strict requirements concerning both the content and process, a Neighbourhood Plan can be accepted by the relevant planning authority and brought into legal force to determine planning applications and guide planning decisions in the neighbourhood¹. The present plan, which is fuller than most parish plans, approaches the requirements for a new style Neighbourhood Plan but it is not aiming to achieve its legal status. Nevertheless it is hoped that it will form a useful source of reference when planning decisions affecting the parish are made.

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PART 1: AN OUTLINE OF THE PARISH OF BASSENTHWAITE

Bassenthwaite is a small rural parish in the most northern part of the Lake District National Park. It lies within the borough of Allerdale which is one of six districts within the County of Cumbria. The parish covers an area of about 2,700 hectares measuring roughly four miles by five miles to the north and west of the summit of Skiddaw. The parish boundary is shown in the map together with the names of the neighbouring parishes.

History

North Lakeland shows quite extensive evidence of ancient human activity from the Bronze Age onwards and there are nearby earthworks dating from the Iron Age and Roman times. However, the earliest feature to be seen within in the parish itself is probably the Church of St Bega which has stood on its own near Bassenthwaite Lake since the seventh century. Most of the structure visible today is the result of Victorian restoration but the interior contains features dating back to about 950². Cumbria and the North West was colonised by Vikings during the 10th century. In addition to a

developed farming culture which featured Herdwick sheep, they brought with them the Norse language which has left an indelible mark on local dialect and place names. The name Bassenthwaite evolved from an earlier name Bastunthwaite which was probably already an old name when it was recorded in the 12th century and which means "Bastun's clearing". In the early medieval period the name appears to have referred to the general area and was taken as the title by the lords of the manor whose seat was based on the site of Armathwaite Hall. On the

death of Adam de Bassenthwaite in the early 14th century the manor was divided between his two daughters and each part placed under the supervision of a constable. The two constablewicks were High Side and Low side. High Side is still an identifiable area today in the south of the parish but the name Low Side is no longer used. The ownership of the two parts of the original manor passed down generations of the two sides of the family and then, after confiscation by the crown, to relations of the Earl of Derby who, in time, sold out to the tenants. The collection of dwellings which grew up on the site of the present village of Bassenthwaite was known variously as Halls, Hause and Hawse perhaps reflecting its original ownership by and direct subservience to the manor hall. A directory published in 1883 describes the village of Hawse and as recently as fifty or sixty years ago some older residents still referred to the village by that name. Halls Beck runs through the Village and two of the village farms bear the name. The lake is recorded as Bastunthwaite Water in the earliest records and then became known as Broadwater in the 18th and 19th centuries before finally becoming established as Bassenthwaite Lake. From earliest times farming was the basis of the local economy and from it evolved industry related to wool production. From the 12th century onwards there

were several fulling mills in the two main becks where wool cloth was cleansed and thickened before being stretched and sun-bleached on hooked tenter frames (hence tenterhooks). There are echoes of the industry in local names such as Tenterhill, Tenter Field and Bleach Field. Mining was a source of employment in the nineteenth century with antimony being produced at Robin Hood and barytes being mined from a drift in Burthwaite. The parish corn mill was close by and another mill was situated in the village near the bridge. During the eighteenth century when many of the present stone buildings were erected there were still numerous small farms in the village itself with many houses having an associated small barn perhaps with one or two cows or a horse. In time small farmers took up more specialised trades and the area became remarkably self-sufficient. By the end of the 19th century there were carpenters, sawyers, shoemakers, tailors (two), coopers, two blacksmiths, and a baker. Even 60 years ago there were two taxi/car repair businesses, a joiner, a tailor, a builder, a cobbler and shoemaker, blacksmith, a shop and a post office/shop. Today there are still three working farms within the village reflecting the early pattern but few of the regular needs of the residents are provided nearby and many local people are employed outside the parish.

The People of Bassenthwaite

Numbers of residents

In 2011 the census recorded 480 people living in the parish. The population is typical of many small rural parishes in Cumbria and similar to that of others nearby (Embleton and District, Ireby and Uldale, Blennerhasset and Torpenhow, Threlkeld) and larger than the adjoining parishes of Blindcrake, Underskiddaw and Bewaldeth and Snittlegarth.

Age of Bassenthwaite residents

Compared with the populations of Cumbria and of England, the 2011 census showed that Bassenthwaite had strikingly fewer children as a proportion of the local residents and a correspondingly higher proportion who are of retiring age shown in Figure (Fig.) 1. The same pattern is seen in neighbouring Embleton and District and in Underskiddaw. The questionnaire survey results confirm the age profile for the community, with almost half (46%) of all households completely 'retired'. There is a slightly higher proportion of retired households in the village itself and a correspondingly greater

proportion of working households elsewhere in the Parish.

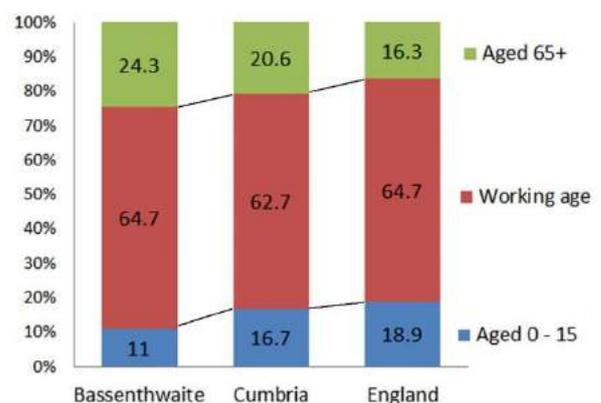


Fig. 1. Percentage of the population in three age groups (Census 2011).

Number of households and non-permanent residences

The 2011 Census recorded a total of 185 households in the parish. In May/June 2013 there were 217 addresses within the Parish (Allerdale Borough Council). The discrepancy between this figure and the number of households recorded in the census (185) seems to be due to the

difference between the definitions of household and address. In the course of preparing this Plan each address was visited by a volunteer who lived close by and was familiar with the area. It was the

assessment of the volunteers that 59 of the addresses were either holiday homes, second homes or currently empty – leaving 158 addresses which were taken to be permanent homes.

Employment, local industry and occupations

Employment

The proportion of the Bassenthwaite population (aged 16 – 74) in full-time employment is close to the national average as is the proportion of people in part time employment but there is a higher proportion of self-employed individuals in the parish (17.5%) than in England as a whole (9.8%)². The 2011 Census records 45 people in the parish working from home (11.7 % of those aged 16 – 74 compared with 3.5% for England as a whole).

Farming

Farming is a prominent feature of the parish. Its character has changed markedly in the last 50 – 60 years and is still evolving. Up to the end of WWII it was usual for each farm to cultivate all ploughable land in a rotation of four years: cereal crop, root crop, (both for animal feed), then grass pasture for two years. At that time there were at least 34 working farms in the parish; today the number is less than half that figure and virtually every field bears grass. The plough is used rarely and then only in preparation for reseeding with grass. Today's higher quality grassland produces grazing for more animals than before as well as high quality silage which has replaced both the hay and root crop components of winter feed. Milk was previously the mainstay of most farmers' income. Farms would typically have a small herd of mixed Shorthorn and Fresian cattle centred on perhaps 12 milking cows with beef featuring as a by-product. There might be 50 to a hundred sheep. Today no milk is produced in the parish. Some local farmers produce beef, favouring Limousin cattle but, for most, the main focus is on sheep production. Working horses were still in use within living memory but already being replaced by tractors. Mechanisation and the move to silage production has allowed the rapidly declining number of people still working on the land to manage larger areas of grassland and to harvest the winter feed very rapidly during short periods of suitable weather. The arrival of the quad bike has played a vital role in the changing pattern by allowing individual farmers to cover a greatly extended area rapidly and to handle a larger number of animals. A further increasing influence on local farming has been the concept of

environmental stewardship whereby farmers are offered financial support in return for working in ways which protect the environment and landscape. As the number of working farms has diminished, the homestead of the original farm



has often become a private residence or holiday accommodation and the land sold or rented out. In the farms that remain, wintering animals are generally housed in large modern steel-framed buildings whilst the traditional lakeland stone-built barns and out-houses are used for small-scale storage or, increasingly, converted to tourist accommodation. Today's farmers often manage an extensive mixture of owned and rented fields on unconnected sites, some of which may be outside the parish. The post-war period has also seen striking diversification of occupation and income with farming families commonly taking on secondary jobs, perhaps connected with transport, forestry or the building trades, and earning an increasing proportion of the family income from activities related to tourism. The price of land for sale or rent is high and this makes it difficult for new entrants to farming unless they succeed to a holding – whether owned or leased.

Tourism

The increasing importance of tourism to the local economy has been apparent from at least the end of the second world war. The 2011 census records 'Accommodation and Food' as the largest employment sector for Bassenthwaite residents. The retail trade is one of the next largest of the identifiable sectors and this too is likely to reflect the economic importance of visitors to nearby Keswick and Cockermouth. There are four hotels in the parish (Armathwaite Hall, Castle Inn Hotel,

Ravenstone Manor, and Ravenstone Lodge) and one public house (Sun Inn) situated in the village. The Lake District Wild Life Park at Coalbeck is a popular attraction as is Mirehouse with its historic associations with renowned poets and its attractive grounds. Significant caravan parks are: Robin Hood Park, High Close and Trafford's near Chapel. The last has a small shop which is closed during winter months. Bassenthwaite Lakeside Lodges are situated at Scarness beside the lake. There are numerous holiday homes in the parish

and many farms and private houses provide B&B accommodation.

Other rural occupations

Park Wood, Robin Hood Wood (both privately owned) and Dodd Wood (managed by the Forestry Commission) are coniferous plantations subject to infrequent periodic harvesting but they are too small to bring significant employment. There is a sawmill business situated at Robin Hood.

Spaces and Natural History Resources used by the public

The Village Green

The green is owned by the Parish Council which oversees its maintenance. It is used as an informal



recreation and play area and is the focus of well-attended parish-wide summer festival-style events and the annual children's Sports Day. It is used on a weekly basis by Bassenthwaite Primary School for games lessons and on other occasions as a base for "Forest Friday" sessions which involve outdoor learning from the local environment. It features a fine avenue of mature lime trees.

The Beck Edge

The Beck Edge comprises a grassed strip between the beck and the road on the village side and a



more steeply sloped wooded strip on the opposite side with a footbridge and the remains of an old

ford connecting the two. The Beck Edge below the footbridge on the village side and the area roughly enclosed by two footpaths leading up from the footbridge on the opposite side are owned and managed by the Parish Council. The area is used by children, parents and others for sitting, playing on swings and watching ducks.

Bassenthwaite Common

The area of open fell on the flank of Skiddaw between the fell wall and the parish boundary is Bassenthwaite Common. It reaches the summit and takes in the peaks of Carlside, Longside and Ullock Pike. It is owned jointly by the Bassenthwaite Commoners, a group of six local landowners with property close to the fell. The grazing rights on the common are divided up into a several hundred stints. Each stint currently entitles the holder to graze four sheep or half a horse. Over recent years grazing has become less intense as a result of the Environmental Stewardship scheme which provides funding to farmers in return for reducing the number of sheep on the fell.

The common, like most open fell areas in Cumbria, is designated open access land and thus open to the public for walking, running, climbing and watching wildlife subject to certain general restrictions⁴.

Forestry

Dodd Wood

Dodd Wood is privately owned but leased to and managed by the Forestry Commission. It lies mainly in Underskiddaw but the northern part falls within the parish. Dodd Wood is mainly mixed coniferous plantation and is criss-crossed by well-used paths offering interesting walks, spectacular views and access to the fell above. The paths, though not rights of way, are freely open to the public on a permissive basis.

Park Wood

Park Wood is crossed by two footpaths and is designated as open access land. It is also designated as 'Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site' (PAWS) and there are plans to gradually remove the dense coniferous cover and to encourage re-colonisation by native broadleaf species⁵. The eastern end of the wood still has remnants of ancient woodland. Previously owned by the Forestry Commission, it is now in private ownership. Robin Hood Wood which adjoins Park Wood to the west is privately owned but is crossed by a footpath.

Other woods

Other woods are shown on Ordnance Survey maps. They are in private ownership and not accessible to the public except by the footpaths which pass through some of them.

Bassenthwaite Lake

Bassenthwaite Lake is a typical ribbon lake lying in the same glacially eroded valley as Derwentwater with which it was once connected. It has the largest catchment of any Cumbrian lake and the highest rate of flushing but, despite this, it is subject to the effects of pollution – particularly those caused by phosphates. This is mainly derived from farming (from fertilisers and run-off from areas housing stock) and from domestic waste, most of which inevitably comes from Keswick. High phosphate levels encourage the growth of troublesome blue green algae⁶. Measures are in hand to reduce pollution from both sources and also to reduce the addition of silt to the lake which causes problems particularly

for spawning fish. Despite these challenges, the lake and its shores and the associated wetland and woodland areas remain a rich natural history resource. The lake, together with some sections of the shoreline, is designated as a National Nature Reserve and classed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is further designated as a SAC which is a similar European Union indicator of biological importance. Natural England, another Government body, has an advisory function in relation to wildlife and monitors SSSIs. It also administers the Environmental Stewardship Scheme which provides funding to farmers in return for effective environmental management⁷. The lake is owned by the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) which also owns some of the shoreline areas. Boating and fishing on the lake is controlled by the LDNPA which issues permits. Anglers are also required to have an Environment Agency rod licence. Public access within the parish for launching boats is limited to a narrow path at Scarness which is owned by the Parish Council.

Water courses

The Environment Agency has responsibility for controlling water quality in the lake and the contributing watercourses. It oversees the control of water extraction and drainage and sewage in the whole of the lake catchment. It also has responsibility for advising on erosion and other issues affecting watercourses – in particular those related to flooding and has undertaken some measures to reduce the risk of this in relation to Halls Beck.

Roads and other rights of way

Roads in the parish

The A591 runs north to south through the parish; the B5921 runs east to west, and they cross at Castle Inn. All other roads in the parish are effectively single track lanes although small vehicles can pass on limited sections of some of them. Footways are almost totally absent from the sides of both the main roads and the minor ones and most roads lack significant verges which could offer refuge to pedestrians. Public footpaths follow little-used routes so most journeys on foot inevitably mean walking in the roadway.* The proximity of hedges to the road edge means that overgrowth quickly causes problems for all road users. The majority of residences in the parish (161 out of 217 or 74%) depend on these narrow

lanes for access. Responsibility for maintenance of roads and pathways lies with Cumbria County Council Highways Department. Problems can be reported using a hotline: tel. 08456096609. Serious emergencies like fallen trees can be reported using the hotline in office hours and otherwise via the police.

Footpaths and Bridleways

There is a network of about 20 miles of public footpaths and bridleways within the parish. Two picturesque long distance walks traverse the parish – the Cumbria Way and the Allerdale Ramble – and the shorter St Bega's Way⁸ ends within it. Footpaths and bridleways can be identified by reference to an Ordnance Survey map and a more detailed Definitive Map is maintained by Cumbria County Council⁹. Responsibility for the surface of footpaths and bridleways in the parish lies with the Lake District

* A notable exception is the permissive path beside the A591 along the edge of Dodd Wood.

National Park Authority (LDNPA). The landowner is required to keep the right of way open and useable and is responsible for gates, stiles etc. In practice the LDNPA works closely with landowners in sharing the work of ensuring that footpaths are in good condition. Where there is a problem, eg with obstruction or overgrowth of vegetation, the

LDNPA normally looks into the matter. Grazing by cattle and other animals is permitted on land crossed by a right of way but bulls of dairy breeds are banned and other bulls are only permitted if accompanied by cows and heifers. Guidance is published by the Health and Safety Executive¹⁰.

Buildings used by the public

The Parish Room

The original hall was built in 1908 for a group known as the Skiddaw Humane and Friendly Society. It was bought by Mr Hartley of Armathwaite Hall and given to the people of the parish. It is now owned by the Parish Council. Responsibility for "provision and management of a village hall" is devolved to the Parish Room



Committee which manages its own finances and has charitable status. The committee is elected every year, a proportion being directly elected by residents of the parish at the Annual General Meeting and the remainder being appointed as representatives by the Parish Council and certain other local organisations. The Parish Room is used for a wide variety of social and recreational activities including fitness-related, craft, musical, dancing, dining and theatrical events. The cost of maintenance is met by income from events and from letting out the hall for activities as short-term accommodation for visiting groups and for private functions. The building stands on its own in School Road between the village and the main road but it is tightly hemmed in between field and roadside so that parking is limited to a handful of vehicles. The main spaces within are a reasonably sized hall and a large kitchen. The committee regards the basic provision as functional but well below the standard provided in other parishes. A small toilet/shower area is in need of significant upgrade. Options for this and the overall improvement of the Parish Room are being actively investigated.



The Church Room

A chapel of ease was built on this site in 1471 after parishioners successfully petitioned for a place of worship that was more convenient for most of them than the church of St Bega by the lake. In 1800 it was completely rebuilt in its present form and used as a church until 1878 when St John's church was completed. It then took on the



function of a church hall. A school was run in the tiny building attached to the east end of the hall. The Church Room is a Grade II listed building and stands on the edge of the road right at the corner where School Road meets the A591. There is no surrounding land to allow parking or off-road access. The interior comprises a modest sized hall, a very small kitchen area and a basic toilet facility. A variety of mainly church-related small events have taken place in the Church Room over the years. The PCC holds its regular meetings in the room and other local groups such as the WI, the Mothers' Union and Bassenthwaite Urban Saints also meet there. It is also used for regular soup lunches and to serve tea after some funerals.

St John's Church

The church was built to a high standard of workmanship in freestone and oak at the expense of Mr Boustead of Armathwaite Hall and cost £5,500. It stands within a sizeable graveyard on a picturesque site in full view of Skiddaw. In addition to the standard church services, marriages and funerals, the church has been the focus of occasional

special parish events such as a flower festival and a craft festival. There is no facility for off-road parking.

St Bega's Church

The ancient origins of the parish church of Bassenthwaite are described above. Standing alone in an outstandingly picturesque setting by the lake, the church is in demand as a place to be married. Services are held in the church at least twice a month. The church is always open and receives visitors from all over the world. Occasional recitals are held in the church. Access is by half a mile of rough track and approach by foot rather than car is encouraged.

The Methodist Chapel and Sunday School Room

Early Methodist worshippers met in various farmhouses in the area until the Chapel was built in 1866. Located close to the green, it comprises a simple, light, carpeted place of worship with pulpit, communion rail and moveable seats. There is a built-in overhead digital projector. The Sunday School Room which adjoins the chapel was added in 1937. It is about 20 feet square and with a small adjoining kitchen and a basic toilet. Access is by

steps from outdoors and from the chapel but it can be used separately. The Sunday School room



and facilities are used to support village sports and other celebrations on the green. WI committee meetings, small events, and coffee mornings are held there and in the chapel.

The School and School Hall

Bassenthwaite Primary School is described below. It has a modern airy hall built in 2006 which is used as a refectory and as a sports and activities area. There is an attached modern kitchen. The hall is available for hire out of school hours. Occasional events which involve the local population have been held in the hall.

Local Organisations

Bassenthwaite Primary School

The school is based on an original Victorian building which has been developed and added to so that it is now a bright, spacious and well-maintained complex of learning and recreational



areas. It has well-equipped computing facilities and a modern dining/sports hall built in 2006. The school is owned and financed by Cumberland County Council (CCC) Education Department and is not a Church School. It is governed by a Board of Governors which meets in full session four times a year and more frequently in committees. The Board is responsible to the Department for Education. The eleven governors are designated

as appointed by staff, parents, the community or the local authority (CCC). The staff currently comprises 2.5 teachers, two part-time teaching assistants together with part time administrative, cooking and caretaking staff. The current roll is 31 children of whom 16 live in the parish. The number in the last seven years has varied between 30 and 49. The maximum number of pupils that can be accommodated is 49 (a limit set by the floor area rather than by staffing level) which means that the annual intake at age 4 -5 is limited to seven children. In 2014 there will be ten leavers so the roll is due to fall. The catchment of the school (where parents are able to choose the local school for their child) matches closely the parish boundary. The children from outside the parish come from a variety of nearby parishes. Not all of the children aged 5 to 11 who live in the parish attend the school. In Bassenthwaite, as in many rural localities with small schools, there has been long-running general concern about the ability to maintain the number of pupils at a level which would safely avoid consideration of closure. There is no available information about what that level might be. The development of nursery facilities is seen as the single most effective means of increasing the attractiveness of the school.

The Board of Governors would like to strengthen links with the residents of the parish and to be championed by them. Shared events and shared running of a minibus are two ideas being considered.

The Anglican Church

The boundaries of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Bassenthwaite are, for practical purposes, the same as those of the civil parish. The church of St Bega is owned by the diocese and that of St John by the people of the parish, as is the Church Room, although the precise legal ownership of old buildings may be difficult to determine. They are certainly managed by, and in the custodianship of, the Parochial Church Council (PCC). This has 12 members which are elected by residents in the parish who are on the church electoral role (i.e. those who are baptised and members of the church). The duties of the PCC are to ensure that services are carried out (in consultation with the clergy) and to maintain the fabric of the churches and care for the churchyards. It appoints two churchwardens. A summary of its proceedings is displayed in the porch of St John's Church. The PCC is responsible to the parish at large but its performance and the upkeep of the churches are assessed during periodic visits from the



Archdeacon on behalf of the Diocese of Carlisle. Two members of the PCC serve on the Binsey Team Council which has two members drawn from each of the nine parishes served by the Binsey Team Ministry and acts as an advisory body to the PCCs and the team clergy. Each parish is, however, managed independently by its PCC. The Team clergy are appointed by the diocese, with input from the parishes, and the stipends are completely funded by the parishes served by the Team, according to their size, without any contribution from central church funds. The cost of maintaining the church buildings and supporting the Team ministry places a significant burden on Bassenthwaite PCC and members of the church so that the PCC monitors closely the

use of its facilities and all calls upon its funds. In addition to its role as a focus for worship, the church looks out to the community to celebrate enjoyment in life, it offers support during difficult times and it provides certain specific facilities. Every resident of the parish has the right to be baptised in the church, to be married in the church and to be buried in the graveyard. The Binsey Team Ministry publishes a valued monthly magazine (Binsey Link). This focuses on the work of the ministry and activities in the churches in the group but also carries general information about other activities and events taking place in each of the nine parishes. In the last year it has begun to carry short reports from Bassenthwaite (civil) Parish Council. It is distributed free to every household in the parish.

The Methodist Church

The Chapel in Bassenthwaite is one of five within the Keswick and Cockermouth Circuit which is one of 11 circuits making up the Cumbria District. There are at present two full time ministers in the circuit. Services are now most often led by trained and accredited lay preachers who are sometimes required to preach at chapels other than their nearest. In Bassenthwaite successful combined services have been held with Anglican churchgoers during mid-winter months and these joint services now occur from time to time in other seasons. The chapel is owned by the Methodist Church of Great Britain and run by a committee which meets twice a year and appoints Stewards who oversee maintenance or take on other roles such as treasurer. Maintenance costs of the chapel are borne by local members of the church who currently number about thirty. For many years a successful youth group has been run by local church members. Previously known as Bassenthwaite Crusaders, it is now called Bassenthwaite Urban Saints (BUS) and it has weekly evening meetings during term time. About 10 children attend who are usually aged from 7 to 13 although the age range fluctuates and has sometimes been as high as 11 to 16. Two or three local families bring small children to Sunday School.

Other Groups

Other long established local groups include Bassenthwaite Women's Institute, one of the oldest in the county, and the Mothers' Union. The annual children's Sports Day is organised by the Sports Committee which also arranges a Guy Fawkes fireworks display at the School. Parish-

wide summer events such as Scarecrow Festivals and national celebrations are arranged by ad hoc committees formed for the purpose at open

meetings. Other groups which form for recreation, exercise and special interests are listed in Appendix 1 together with contact details.

Local Government

Cumbria County Council

The County Council is elected every four years and has 84 members each of which represents a division of the County. Most members are elected with support from political parties. Bassenthwaite is served by the Councillor for the Bothel and Wharrels Division. Cumbria County Council (CCC) provides services including children's services, adult social care, highways and transport, waste disposal, the fire service and others. It is responsible for most schools but not for academies which now comprise about half of the 37 secondary schools. The tax is collected by the relevant District Council which in Bassenthwaite's case is Allerdale Borough Council. It works with the six District Councils in the development of a shared community plan for Cumbria and the local delivery of some of the services. The cost of providing the services is met by the CCC component of the Council Tax which is about three quarters of the total.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria

Another county-wide service, Cumbria Constabulary, is now overseen by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria. The cost of providing policing forms a separate component of council tax currently amounting to 13% of the total.

Allerdale Borough Council

This intermediate authority has responsibility for a different range of services from those of Cumbria CC but it undertakes the local delivery of some county-wide services. The Council comprises 56 members who are all elected every four years (next election 2015) by 31 wards in proportion to their size. Bassenthwaite falls in Boltons ward. The main office is in Workington but there are local offices in Keswick and Cockermouth. The principal services handled by Allerdale BC include housing, environmental health, refuse collection and recycling, open space management, street lighting, pest control and development of tourism. Planning relating to Bassenthwaite is devolved to the Lake District National Park Authority but building controls are dealt with by Allerdale BC. The cost of the Allerdale BC services currently accounts for about 13% of the total council tax.

Bassenthwaite Parish Council

Parish Councils were created by Act of Parliament (Local Government Act) in 1894 and Bassenthwaite Parish Council (PC) was set up soon after the law was passed and has minutes of meetings going back to 1894.

Working of the Parish Council

The number of councillors depends on the size of the parish and Bassenthwaite has nine who are all elected simultaneously every four years (next election 2015). Any adult living in the parish can put their name forward at election time to be a councillor but if there are nine or fewer candidates then they are automatically elected. If there are vacancies then the council will co-opt others (by advertising) to make the number up to nine. The chairman of the parish council is elected by the councillors once a year in the first meeting following the Annual Parish Meeting.

Bassenthwaite PC usually meets on the first Thursday of every month (apart from January and August) in the Parish Room. The agenda for each meeting is published in advance allowing anyone with an interest in any agenda item to attend the meeting to either just listen or to put their point of view. At the Annual Parish Meeting any resident may attend and raise any topic that they want to bring to the PC's attention.

Support and external links

The PC employs a Parish Clerk to assist it in arranging meetings, minute taking, financial transactions (including accounts), liaising with Allerdale BC, Cumbria CC and the LDNPA and also with legal matters. Bassenthwaite is a member of CALC (Cumbria Association of Local Councils) which provides help on many matters where there is a doubt as to the action proposed. An organisation called the Derwent7 consists of Keswick town council and six parish councils nearby. It meets quarterly, usually with just one representative from each council, in order to discuss matters of common interest such as transport, housing and broadband services. The group can have greater influence than individual councils, for example with bus provision. Although there is no direct representation of the PC on district or county councils (see above), these bodies do hold meetings through the year with

the parish councils to discuss topics that affect parishes.

Powers and responsibilities of the Parish Council

A parish council (PC) has the power to raise a tax to fund its business known as the Parish Precept. It is collected by Allerdale BC as part of the council tax and appears as a separate item on the council tax bill. In 2013 – 2014 the Bassenthwaite Parish Precept totalled £4,528 which would account for between £20 and £25 of an average council tax bill in the parish. The Parish Precept is due to rise in future years to an average of around £30 per household as Allerdale passes some highly localised costs down to the parishes. The other powers of a PC are quite numerous although many are irrelevant to Bassenthwaite¹¹. They include, either in whole or part, the ability to provide: a village hall, recreation grounds, children's play areas, playing fields, control of litter, provision of cycle and motorcycle parking and the encouragement of tourism. It has powers to contribute towards expenses of cemeteries. The Parish Council has a duty to provide allotments and is required to take appropriate

action. The PC is the registered owner of the Parish Room, the Hearse House (a small storage building adjoining the Church Room), the Village Green, the Pinfold (a small paddock at Kiln Hill) and of several small pieces of land in the village notably either side of the beck where the children's play equipment is. The PC arranges the insurance for the buildings and pays the water rates and council tax for the Parish Room. The PC has devolved management of the Parish Room to a committee (see above). The maintenance costs of the parish room are funded by this committee by means of fund-raising events and the letting of the room.

The Parish Council and planning

The Parish Council must be notified by the LDNPA of all planning applications (and proposed changes to rights of way) in the parish. The council can respond in one of three ways: (1) No objection – which is a neutral stance, (2) Support – which means that the PC is actively in favour or (3) Object with reasons – indicating that the PC is against the application. The LDNPA planners note the PC position but do not have to abide by it

PART 2: THE VIEWS OF THE RESIDENTS OF BASSENTHWAITE

Sources of Information

The consultation process which led to the development of this Plan is described in Appendix 2. The most important element in the process was a questionnaire which was delivered to every occupied property in the parish in May/June 2013. The questionnaire is available on request. The open meetings, discussions and consultation that took place, both during the development of the questionnaire and later when the results were available, all contributed opinion and qualitative information. However, the questionnaire survey results remain the principal source of the views of parishioners expressed in this Plan. Some features of the questionnaire survey need highlighting. Firstly, the forms were completed anonymously and, secondly, where views (as opposed to facts) were sought, each question was answered in a way that represented the overall view of the household. Lastly, many questions were un-cued and free comment was encouraged.

Response to the questionnaire survey

Of the 217 properties in the parish on the Allerdale address list 59 (27%) were assessed by volunteers familiar with the neighbourhood to be holiday homes, second homes or vacant.

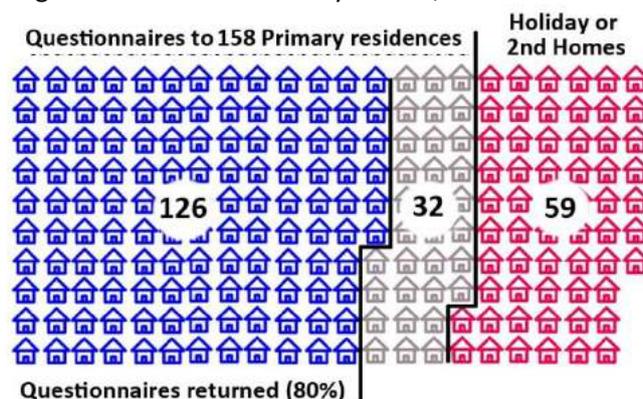


Fig 2. The 217 addresses in the parish showing holiday or 2nd homes and the survey response.

Responses to the questionnaire were received from 80% of the remaining occupied addresses (Fig 2) providing a good level of confidence that the results are representative of residents' views. Information about the age make-up of households and the proportion of retired households is given in Part 1.

Note: Where a percentage figure is mentioned in the sections below this refers to the percentage of all 126 households that returned a questionnaire unless otherwise stated.

Living in Bassenthwaite

How long and where?

The questionnaire survey showed (Fig 3) that about half of households had lived in the parish for more than 20 years which suggests a relatively static local population. On the other hand about 1 in 8 households have been in the parish for less than 5 years which represents significant movement.

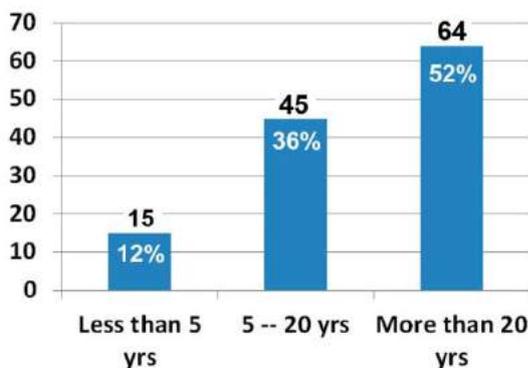


Fig. 3. Number of households that have lived in the parish for the duration shown.

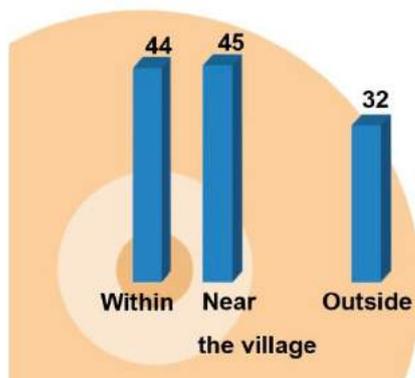


Fig. 4. Number of households and where they say they live.

The questionnaire survey found that, of the 121 households responding to the question, 44 said they were in the village, 45 considered that they were close to the village and 32 outside the village (Fig 4). The responses to some of the questions which follow were sometimes different in these groups.

Good features . . .

The questionnaire started by asking households to complete the statement "We like to live in Bassenthwaite because . . ." The answers suggest that most residents enjoy living in the Parish, with many commenting favourably on the peace and natural beauty of the area (57% of all questionnaires returned) and on the friendliness of neighbours and sense of good community (40%). This last was particularly mentioned by those living in the village. There were significant numbers of comments also from people who had grown up in the parish and also from those who appreciated the low crime rate and safe environment.

. . . and shortcomings

The next question asked households to add to "We would be happier in Bassenthwaite if . . ." Top of the list of desires (17% of households) was having a shop nearby, closely followed by the pub being more integrated into village life*. Other large groups of suggestions focused on fewer holiday homes and more affordable housing, better bus services, measures to improve road safety, and improvement to a range of village amenities. Those living in the village expressed greater concern about the general cleanliness of the environment, dog-fouling and misuse of the village green. There was also a significant level of comment recognising the sometimes conflicting needs of different elements within the community, such as residents, farmers, families and visitors, and the wish for more respect of others' needs.

ACTIONS: *Later sections deal with these issues..*

* Management of the Sun Inn has changed hands since the survey.

Parish Amenities and Activities

Parish Amenities

Several questions in the survey related to venues and amenities within the parish.

1. Importance of amenities

The questionnaire asked households how much importance they attached to preserving various amenities within the Parish and displayed a list of 13 of these. The results (Fig 5) indicate that the primary school and the village green are seen as the most important to the community, closely followed by the Parish Room, the pub, St. Bega's Church and the becksides area, all of these being rated 'very important' by more than 60% of households. St. John's Church was the next most important, while the other amenities listed – the seasonal shop at the caravan site, mobile post office, Methodist Chapel, mobile library, the Church Room and the public telephone box – were thought less important. Residents living outside the village generally attached less importance to all of the amenities, suggesting that they were less involved in community life or that the amenities were less useful to them.

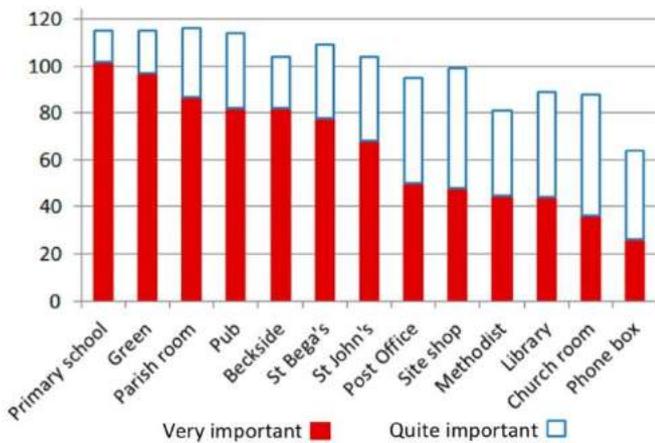


Fig. 5. Number of households rating the amenities very important or quite important

Given the opportunity to suggest other facilities that were important to preserve, several households mentioned bus connections and several offered rights of way. There were 11 other amenities mentioned but each had less than five supporters and most were solitary suggestions.

2. Use of venues

The questionnaire survey also collected information about usage of the six public meeting places in the Parish (Fig 6).

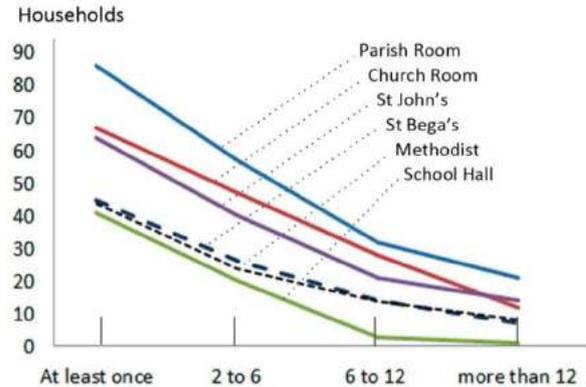


Fig. 6. Number of times amenities are visited in one year

The Parish Room is the most widely used with 84% of households using it at least once a year and 1 in 6 households using it more often than once a month. The Church Room and St. John's Church are next most widely used, with approximately 40% of households using them at least once a year. In contrast, over half of households never use the School Hall. Once again, households living outside the village were less likely to use the facilities.

3. Quality of facilities of venues

Households were asked for their views on the quality of facilities at the different venues (Fig 7). The two most used venues – the Parish Room and the Church Room – were shown in sharp contrast.

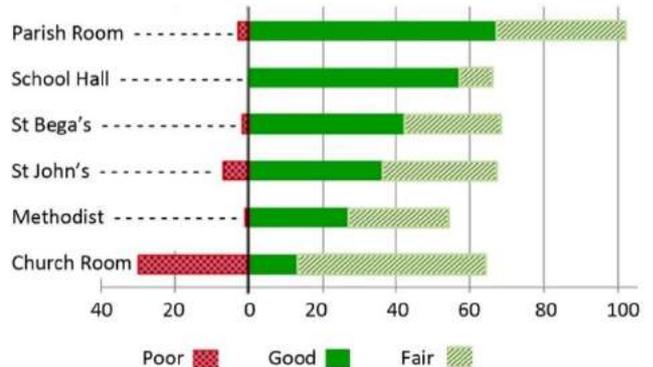


Fig. 7. How households rated the facilities at venues in the parish.

The Parish Room received the highest rating and the Church Room the lowest. Even so, the Parish Room facilities were only rated in the top category ('Good') by just over half of households. A quarter of all households rated the Church Room facilities as 'Poor', significantly worse than the other five

venues. The School Hall facilities were rated highly by those households that felt able to comment.

4. Improvements to the facilities and availability of venues

Suggestions for making the venues more pleasant to use or more easily available were few in number and related predominantly to the need for more car-parking, better heating and general modernisation including improved toilet arrangements. The suggestions were directed towards the individual venues roughly in proportion to their use, although no suggestions referred to either the School Hall or the Methodist Chapel.

Responsibility for the venues lies with different bodies which are independent of each other (see Part 1). It is noted that the Parish Room Committee has recently commissioned an expert Option Appraisal to assess the scope for improving the facilities. The Parochial Church Council has the functioning of the properties for which it is responsible under constant review.

ACTION: *The information in paragraphs 1 – 4 and un-published detail may be helpful to the responsible bodies but it does not prompt specific recommendations here.*

5. Enabling improvements

Households generally indicated they would support fund-raising for improvements, with the majority (66%) saying they would support fund-raising events and almost half expressing interest in 'hands-on' voluntary work. One in 4 households were in agreement with increasing the Parish Precept to contribute towards costs, while smaller numbers were prepared to make direct financial contributions or to provide trade or professional skills.

ACTION: *The level of general support reported here will be helpful to the bodies responsible for the amenities and to the Parish Council. Steps should be taken at the launch event and at the time of doorstep delivery of this Plan to identify volunteers willing to offer practical help.*

6. Number of venues

It had been suggested early in the consultation process that the parish might not be able to support six different public meeting places and the questionnaire asked respondents whether the number should be reduced and invited comments. Approximately 40% of the households in the survey (60% of those who answered this question) indicated that the number of meeting places should be reduced (Fig 8).

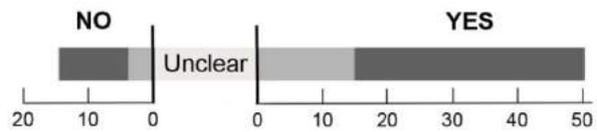


Fig. 8. Should the number of public meeting places be reduced? Showing the number of responses definitely in favour or against, together with responses which implied being in favour or against (shown in grey).

Specific recommendations were fairly equally divided between keeping the Parish Room, disposing of the Church Room and increasing community use of the School Hall (10 or 12 comments each).

ACTION: *Because ownership and responsibility for the venues lies with different bodies, no action can be proposed on the basis of this expression of opinion. The information may be helpful to the responsible bodies nevertheless.*

Parish events and activities

Households were asked which events they liked most, which they disliked and what sort of events they would like to see. The parish activities enjoyed by most residents were the large annual, sometimes outdoor community events such as the Scarecrow Festivals, the Craft Festival, the Royal Wedding and Jubilee celebrations, and other events on the Village Green. The Senior Citizens' Christmas Lunch, Harvest Festival and Boundary Walk were also frequently mentioned. As these are the largest events, the result is not surprising. However, appreciation was also expressed for a wide range of other activities, including the W.I., food events, concerts, classes and lectures. Particular mention was made of Arts Out West events. Suggestions for possible new events ranged from more classes or clubs to barbecues and music on the village green to ceilidhs and whisky-tasting! A few dislikes were recorded which followed no particular pattern.

ACTION: *The responses give general encouragement to the groups organising events (particularly summer festivals) but do not suggest that there are large gaps in the types of event being mounted in the parish or that any particular type of event should be avoided.*

Outdoor areas

The Village Green

In the survey the great majority (over 70%) of households said they were satisfied with the care and maintenance of the Village Green. Suggestions for improvements were at a low level (5 – 7%) although sometimes strongly expressed.

They mainly related to provision of play equipment, grass cutting, pollarding of the lime trees and problems with farm animals, vehicles and dogs on the Green.

Responsibility for the Village Green lies with the Parish Council, which owns it, and care of the Green is frequently on its agenda. The council regularly receives suggestions relating to the Green and welcomes the views of residents.

ACTION (1): *The high level of approval suggests no need for action. The few detailed suggestions should be forwarded to the Parish Council.*

Churchyards

Approximately one quarter of households stated they were concerned about the upkeep of the churchyards in the parish (Fig 9).

However, over a third believed the wider community should support the PCC with this, with a voluntary working group and financial support from the Parish Council being the most popular suggestions.

Responsibility for the church graveyards in the Parish lies with the PCC. The survey points to a sense of community responsibility for their

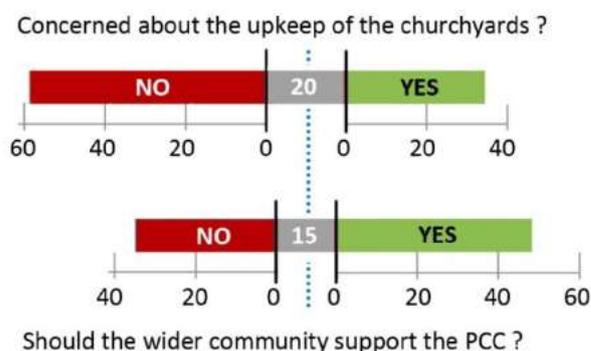


Fig. 9. Upkeep of the churchyards (numbers indicating 'Don't know' in grey).

upkeep which extends beyond the normal church-going community. The Parish Council would have a responsibility to care for closed cemeteries if they existed.

ACTION (2): *A joint working party should be formed by the Parish Council and the PCC to explore options for improved care of the graveyards through harnessing volunteers and, if appropriate, providing financial support.*

Housing in Bassenthwaite

Holiday homes

The questionnaire survey found, as already reported, that 59 out of 217 addresses (more than a quarter) were holiday homes, second homes or vacant. Comments in the open ended questions of the survey show that the high proportion of holiday and second homes is a source of concern to many local residents because this reduces the number of available houses for those seeking permanent residence and the high prices that they command in this desirable area make it difficult for young local residents to purchase a local home. However, it has also to be recognised that many of the houses let for holiday use are owned by local residents and form a key element in their income. The proportion is not known.

Responsibility for determining the use of a residence as a holiday or second home lies solely with the owner. However, local parish and town councils are discussing whether changing the use from permanent residence to holiday accommodation might be brought within the influence of planning regulations. The Lake District National Park Partnership has tried to initiate proposals for legislation which might give planning authorities powers of this sort by invoking the Sustainable Communities Act of 2007. This Act aims to reverse the process of decline in local

services and cohesion in communities often referred to as "Ghost Town Britain".

ACTION (3): *The Parish Council should continue to participate in such discussion and promote the views emerging from the present survey within the Derwent 7 Group and directly with the Planning Department of the Lake District National Park Authority.*

Affordable Housing

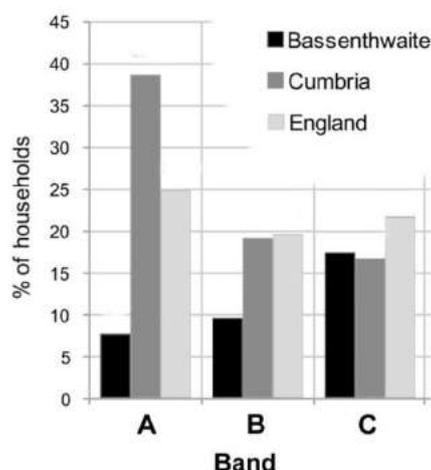


Figure 10. Percentage of houses in the lowest Council Tax bands A to C

The questionnaire survey confirmed the general concern about the shortage of affordable housing in the area making it difficult for those wishing to enter the housing market. The shortage is illustrated in Fig 10. A much lower proportion of houses in the parish fall into the three lowest Council Tax bands¹² compared with Cumbria and England as a whole. The survey revealed that there is significant local support for measures which aim to address the issue (Table 1). Over half of all households agreed that there should be more new houses in the Parish for young couples and young families and a similar proportion indicated that that new housing should have local occupancy clauses

Local occupancy clauses for new housing	73
More new houses for young families	72
More new starter homes for young couples	69
Need for long term rented accommodation	52
Need for sheltered housing	22
No more homes should be built in the parish	14

Table 1. Affordable housing. Number of households agreeing with statements.

Background. The link between a high proportion of holiday and second homes and a shortage of affordable housing is recognised as a major threat to the well-being of communities throughout the Lake District. The threat to the well-being of “a village” is said to become significant when the proportion of holiday or second homes exceeds 10% of the total housing stock. The Lake District National Park Partnership’s Plan 2010 – 2015 includes a section on Vibrant Communities which explores the issue¹³. The LDNPA planning policies already restrict new housing developments to those with a local connection and those taking up employment in the area. It is already the policy of the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) to give priority to provision of affordable housing in the Northern Distinctive Area of the Park¹⁴. The Authority would require evidence from a housing needs survey before giving planning permission to any new scheme. The Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2010 – 2015 expresses commitment to ensuring that communities have

access to a variety of housing types and tenures so as to meet identified needs and it offers help to increase land acquisition for new sustainable housing whilst respecting local character. It is the declared practice of the LDNPA Planning Department to take into account local views as expressed in community plans when considering developments so the support for provision of affordable housing expressed here may itself be useful. Starting the process of providing new affordable housing usually requires the coming together of an interested landowner and a Housing Association. Availability of land for new housing is very limited due partly to the strict planning regulations within the National Park. Experience within the parish has shown that there is reluctance on the part of local landowners to explore new uses for land. The Butts Meadow development of about 15 years ago is a notable and successful exception.

Responsibility for housing provision lies with Allerdale Borough Council but this is worked out in the district as a whole rather than within a particular parish. The precise need within the parish for housing does not seem to be known. Cumbria Rural Housing Trust is a charity which researches housing needs in rural areas and campaigns for these needs to be met¹⁵. It has carried out surveys in over 200 parishes in the county but not so far in Bassenthwaite.

ACTIONS: (4). *The Parish Council should inform the LDNPA Planning Department of local support for measures which might encourage provision of affordable housing locally and use the views expressed here as evidence.*

(5). *The Parish Council should invite Cumbria Rural Housing Trust to conduct a survey of needs in the parish and take advice on best strategy for meeting the needs.*

(6). *The Parish Council should continue to work closely with the Housing Department of Allerdale Borough Council in exploring options for addressing the needs identified by survey.*



Crime

It has already been noted that in the questionnaire survey, residents spontaneously mentioned the low crime rate as one of the reasons they enjoyed living in the parish.

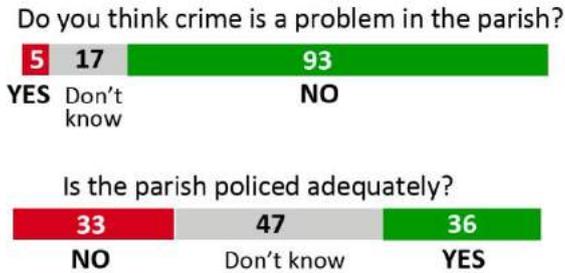


Fig. 11. Perceptions of crime and policing.
(Figures represent numbers of households)

When prompted on the issue, 73% of households said that crime was not a problem within the Parish. Opinions were divided as to whether the

Parish was adequately policed, but over half of households indicated that they would like to see occasional patrols by Police Community Support Officers and there was some interest in re-launching the Neighbourhood Watch (42%) and Farm Watch (32%) schemes. Thirty households would like more information on how to contact the police.

ACTIONS: (7). Steps should be taken to re-start the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. A volunteer convener to be sought at the launch event or before. Another volunteer convener should be sought amongst the farming community to assess the support for re-starting Farm Watch. (8). The request for more patrols should be passed to the Police Community Support Team. (9). The Police Community Support team to be asked to provide cards indicating current best practice for contacting the police according to circumstances.

Environmental Concerns

The questionnaire asked whether residents thought any of five issues were a problem anywhere in the parish and asked for explanations.

Dog fouling	43
Litter	27
Agricultural waste	25
Trees	16
Fly tipping	9

Table 2. Environmental concerns.
Number of households citing problems.

Dog fouling

This emerged as the most widespread concern (Table 2) with individual comments principally relating to fouling by loose dogs and the consequent danger to children, especially in community play areas. Fouling was a particular concern in the village itself, where it was mentioned by over half of the households.

Responsibility. The prime responsibility lies with dog-owners since the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act of 2005 made it illegal to fail to remove faeces deposited by a dog on any land open to the air and to which the public have access. The PC has powers to provide appropriate litter bins and signage. Allerdale BC employs dog wardens. Both the BC and the PC are able to issue Dog Control Orders.

ACTIONS (10). A letter should be sent to all households reminding residents of the need to scoop poop and the aim of a poop-free parish. (11). The Parish Council should provide anti-fouling signage in relation to the main problem areas. (12). The Parish Council should arrange to provide dog litter bins in relation to the main problem areas and for their future regular emptying. (13). The Parish Council should consider enforcement of the law regarding dog-fouling in cases of serious offending through Dog Control. Orders¹⁶ (in conjunction with Allerdale BC).

Litter

Litter was a concern for more than 1 in 5 households, both within the village and outside, particularly litter in hedgerows and along Winding Gate and School Lane.

ACTIONS: (14). Arrange litter-picking days by volunteers, perhaps monthly. (15). Parish Council to review provision of litter bins at strategic points in the village and the arrangements for emptying.

Agricultural waste

Comments about agricultural waste were principally about animal and farm mess on roads and black plastic. In many cases, this was linked to issues previously referred to concerning different elements in the community respecting the needs of others.

Responsibility. The Highways Act 1980 makes it an offence to deposit anything on the road which is a nuisance or danger. The farmer must take all

possible precautions to avoid depositing mud and to clear up afterwards. In practice this is a clearer requirement when danger is involved whereas what is considered a nuisance may depend on circumstances and expectations.

Action. *No specific action is proposed in this Plan. This is a matter of farming and non-farming residents being aware of their needs respectively to carry out a farm business and to live in a reasonably clean environment.*

General

Parishioners' own suggestions for improvements to the environment were few in number and related mainly to the provision of a footpath along the A591, which is discussed in the section on Roads, and to working to improve the appearance and general tidiness of some properties and barn areas within the parish.

Communications

Broadband and use of the internet

The increasing importance of internet access was clearly illustrated in the results of the Parish survey:

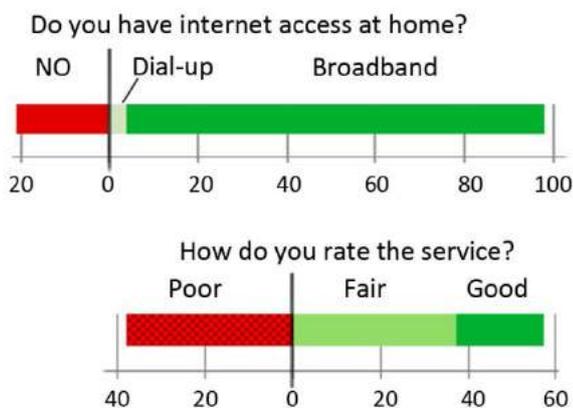


Fig. 12. Number of households with internet access and how they rate the service

Over three quarters of households had internet access, mainly using broadband. However, few (16%) rated the broadband service as 'Good'. Over a third (35%) of all households stated that the internet was important to their business in Bassenthwaite, perhaps reflecting the high level of self-employment in the Parish. There was wide agreement that households would use the internet more if the service was better and some interest both in learning more about the internet and in the possibility of using the School's computer facilities. The performance of local broadband services emerged as one of the top three concerns identified by discussion groups at an open meeting to discuss the survey results. Informal discussion revealed download speeds of under 1 Mbps to be common with most around 2 Mbps and only one of about 4 Mbps.

Review of the scope for Action: In common with many rural areas, Bassenthwaite has a mediocre broadband service. For most people, broadband is delivered by telephone line (operated by BT Openreach) with the broadband service itself available from a range of internet service providers (including BT). The speed and

reliability of the service depends largely on the quality of the connection to the exchange (for much of the parish this will be the exchange at Brathay Hill via the green cabinet opposite Castle Inn). Distance is important and service will be best near Castle Inn, along the main road and in the village. Service is generally poorest in remote homes on the far side of the parish.

'Connecting Cumbria' is a collaboration between Cumbria County Council and BT which, by applying government and EU funding, aims to make "Superfast Broadband" (at least 24Mbps) available to 93% of the population (with an improved but relatively basic service of at least 2Mbps available to the remaining 7%). This is achieved by replacing copper cables with fibre optic cable. Coverage in urban areas will be near complete but, within a rural area such as Bassenthwaite, the proportion falls to around three quarters because the fibre optic cable (which is due to be installed in this area some time in 2014) will only be laid as far as the green cabinet with the existing copper wires being used for the final section. The Superfast service will normally be restricted to properties within 1½km of the cabinet (as the cable runs rather than as the crow flies) with speed decreasing with distance. Thus the pattern of quality of service is likely to be similar to that available now but faster all round. Existing alternatives to the BT network are mobile data networks (not viable in many rural areas because of patchy coverage and a comparatively weak signal) and satellite (expensive). The Derwent7 group has started to explore the possibility of a bespoke offering possibly along the lines of commercial domestic 4G service set up for the Northern Fells broadband project. However, it is unclear whether there would still be any funding for such a project and local fund-raising would probably be needed. Until there is more detail about what speeds will actually be available round the parish it is difficult to predict what benefit or level of interest there would be in such a supplementary project.

Media

The importance of Binsey Link to the community was evident, with approximately 4 out of 5 households citing it as their source of information on local events. Parish noticeboards were used by about half of households. The possibility of a specifically Bassenthwaite newsletter attracted a mixed response, with no clear feeling emerging as to whether this would be desirable. Answers to a question on the best means of encouraging attendance at events were again topped by Binsey Link (78%) followed by posters on notice boards, word of mouth, delivered fliers and announcements at other events. There was some interest (40%) in re-launching the parish website, principally as an information hub for events and activities, but also as a resource for visitors, a

platform for local businesses and a means of displaying old photographs and other local history archives.

ACTION (16): *A new Parish Website should be established and run under the auspices of the Parish Council. The major task in running a Parish Website is the business of keeping it up to date and useful. The Parish Council should devolve responsibility for this to a small Website Group of 3 – 4 volunteers rather than one individual. Two volunteers have already come forward. The initial start-up and the on-going hosting will incur a small cost which should be met from the Parish Precept.*

Getting about in Bassenthwaite

Car use

The 2011 census showed that there were 297 cars or vans owned or available to residents of the parish – an average of about two per permanent home - with only around one in ten households without car or van transport. This pattern of car ownership is typical of other truly rural parishes in Cumbria and reflects the dependence on car transport shown in the questionnaire survey where 120 out of 126 households reported using a car at least once a week (Table 3).

Car / Motorcycle	120
Bus	30
Cycle	23
Taxi	4
Voluntary car scheme	3

Table 3. Methods of transport used at least once per week

Bus use

In the survey, only 1 in 8 households considered the bus service to be 'Good', while just under half rated it as 'Fair'. When asked what changes would encourage greater use of the bus service, most mention was made of a more frequent (29%) or extended hours (12%) service, or the service coming into the village or closer to housing. About half of the addresses in the parish are more than 400m from the main weekday bus route. Only one service (73) using a small bus comes through the village and that on Saturdays only.

Background. The parish is currently served by the 554 service from Carlisle to Keswick and by

the X4 which runs from Cockermouth (and beyond) to Keswick. The Cockermouth to Keswick service is split between the X5 which runs down the west side of the lake to Braithwaite and the X4 which comes over Ouse Bridge to Castle Inn and then south through the parish on the A591. Services are infrequent and often leave a very short or rather long time in Keswick or Cockermouth. Furthermore, the 554 and X4 often follow each other immediately. In 2011 Stagecoach threatened to withdraw the X4 service. There was strong objection from within the parish and the decision was deferred when parishioners resolved to use the bus more. The future of both the X4 and the 554 services is considered insecure.

Responsibility for supporting rural transport lies with Cumbria CC but whether or not particular service runs is entirely a matter of whether a bus operator considers it commercially worthwhile. Cumbria CC supports the Bus Pass (at an annual cost of £3m for Cumbria) and subsidises selected bus services to remote rural areas. Some of the local services running through the parish (e.g. late evening) are subsidised in this way. However, as the budget is shrinking and Bassenthwaite is not regarded as being particularly remote, there is a risk of service reduction or even withdrawal.

Action. *The only action which could secure or increase bus services is more intensive use of the buses. This is well understood by parishioners and a matter for individuals.*

Roads

The condition of the roads in the Parish attracted a high level of comment in the Parish survey (Table 4) which is perhaps to be expected in an area where three quarters of households are dependent on single lane roads for access.

Poor road surface	66
Speed / safety	39
Verges and hedges	27
Water on road / flooding	27
Inadequate gritting	12
Lighting	10
Miscellaneous	6

Table 4. Concerns about roads

Road maintenance

The main issues of concern to residents were pot holes and damaged road surfaces (46%). This was particularly a concern for households situated outside the village.

Responsibility for maintenance of all roads and pavements lies with Cumbria County Council (CCC). The Parish Council receives regular reports on road maintenance from one of the councillors with specialist experience and may urge action. It is open to members of the public to report defects.

ACTION (17): Advise parishioners how to notify road defects to Cumbria County Council via Appendix 1 and the proposed new website.

Verges and Hedges

The problems of overgrown hedges and verges also attracted mention (21%). This was mainly seen as a safety issue, both for drivers pulling out from junctions and for pedestrians in narrow lanes having to step back into hedgerows when vehicles pass. An equally important issue was lack of adequate drain clearing and flooding on roads. Inadequate gritting was mentioned by about 10% of households but ice may not have been in people's minds in May / June 2013. There were also some comments about erosion of verges due to HGV and logging traffic.

Responsibility for maintaining hedges lies with the landowner. Where there is a road safety issue this may be reported to the Highways Department at CCC (using the hotline above) which will then progress the matter.

Lighting

Street lighting was mentioned as a 'concern' by less than 10% of households and these were equally divided between those wanting more lights and those finding the existing lights too glaring. However, obtrusive light which either keeps people awake through a bedroom window or impedes vision of the night sky was a source of concern to emerge elsewhere in the survey and at an open meeting. Significant support (38%) was expressed for the suggestion that street lighting in the Parish should be modernised to promote 'Dark Skies' (where absence of glare allows the stars to be seen). This is a matter of adapting the design of lights so that they shine downwards and not upwards.

Responsibility for the street lights in the parish lies with Allerdale B C.

ACTIONS: (18). Information about how to report faulty street lighting appears in Appendix 1 and should be shown on the new Parish Website.

(19). The Parish Council should join with other local councils in pressing Allerdale BC to adopt best modern practice with regard to "Dark Skies" lighting design.

Road safety

Excessive speed of traffic on the roads of the Parish was the subject of considerable concern, with traffic speed on the A591 being mentioned by 1 in 6 households and a similar level of comment about vehicles driving too fast through the village and along the lanes. Almost all roads in the parish lack footpaths and a high proportion are almost completely lacking in verge space so pedestrians walk in the roadway itself. In addition most roads are narrow and hedged so the concerns relate to a potentially serious problem.

ACTION: (20). Parish Council to progress discussion with Cumbria CC Highways Department over measures to increase safety of the A591 and in particular the Chapel crossroads.

Pedestrian route from Butts Meadow to Chapel.

The need to provide a safe pedestrian route between Butts Meadow, where a number of young families live, and the Chapel area emerged as a key issue in the questionnaire, in meetings and during consultation. This is the route taken by parents, children (including pre-school children in pushchairs) to both the Primary School and St John's Church. It is also used by significant numbers of adults. At the moment, this route involves walking on the A591 in the road with passing traffic

restricted only to the national speed limit. Approximately half of all households supported the idea of lobbying for improved cycleways and pathways along lanes and the A591.

Background. There have been previous unsuccessful attempts to secure a footpath alongside the road. Obstacles to progress include lack of space, presence of underground cables along the route and expense. There is a public footpath across fields from Winding Gate to



School Lane which might be considered a viable alternative route. However, comments from the Parish survey and from other meetings suggest that considerable improvements to the path, in terms of surface, protection from animals and replacement of stiles with gates, would be required in order to make it properly accessible by young families and children.

ACTION (21): *The Parish Council should establish a working group to focus on major improvement to this footpath across the fields. This should include landowners, LDNPA, parents and other users of the route. The group might need to examine sources of funding if extensive work was found to be necessary.*

Car parking

General concern about car parking as a problem was revealed in relation to the church and various

Parish Council

The questionnaire survey included some questions about the Parish Council. Households in the village were most likely to be satisfied with the work of the Council (58%). Those living outside the village were less sure of the work of the Council and, generally, there was a feeling that communication between the Council and parishioners could be improved. This included both dissemination of information from Council meetings (which at the time of the survey was only available via Parish noticeboards) and the

venues in the parish (see above). It was also mentioned under road safety, being selected by 38% of households from a list of possible desirable improvements, and it figured in the open sections of some other questions.

At present it is not possible to propose remediable action. Approaches to landowners proposing possible sale of land adjacent to the various venues have been universally unsuccessful.

Rights of Way

Rights of way in the parish are roads, byways, bridleways, or footpaths¹⁷. The Questionnaire asked about people's use of the last two. The results show an extremely high level of usage of Rights of Way with almost 70% of households using them at least once a month. Mention was made of the poor state of some paths and there were specific concerns about the paths in Park Wood and those giving access to Bassenthwaite Lake. Other issues raised by a small number of households were: problems with animals in the fields crossed by paths, signage, and replacement of stiles with gates. It should again be noted that approximately half of all households supported the idea of lobbying for improved pathways and cycleways along roads in the Parish.

Responsibility for footpaths is shared between the landowner and the LDNPA (see Part 1). A significant amount of work has been done on footpaths in recent years, especially the replacement of stiles by gates.

ACTION (22): *A group of volunteers should be established which would walk all of the footpaths and bridleways in the parish on a regular basis and report on conditions to the Parish Council and LDNPA. Two volunteers have emerged who will convene a group. A Public Enquiry is under way to resolve the problem of the path leading uphill from Holly Bank which ends blindly in a quarry.*

seeking of the views of parishioners by Councillors.

ACTIONS: *The present document will provide each household with a summary of the responsibilities and working of the Parish Council (see Part 1).*

(23). *The Parish Council now publishes a summary of its business in Binsey Link.*

(24). *The minutes of Council meetings should be published on the new Parish Website.*

Other possible improvements

Towards the end of the questionnaire, households were invited to indicate support against a list of eleven ideas for improvement. Some of these have already been mentioned in previous sections. All were fairly well supported, albeit by

Lobby for cycleways / pathways	60
Promote dark skies	48
More car parking	46
Develop sports / recreation	44
Drop – in centre	43
Provide parish allotments	33
Purchase community minibus	30
Exchange library	27
Pre-school nursery	26
Conservation area/working group	24

Table 5. Support for ideas that the community might work towards.

less than half of the households. The full list is shown in Table 5.

The three ideas attracting the most support were: provision of cycleways and pathways, promotion of dark skies lighting and provision of more car parking. A number of households also spontaneously proposed the provision of some type of community shop or cooperative venture.

ACTION (25): *Volunteers should be sought, for example, at the launch event for this Plan, who would take forward individual proposals.*

Anything else?

A last question inviting households to comment on any matter that had not been covered in the questionnaire yielded a very small response none of which suggested the need for action.

Young people in Bassenthwaite

The 2001 census recorded 61 children aged 0 to 15 years living in the parish. In 2011 the number had fallen to 52. This represents just 10.8% of the population in the parish whereas for Allerdale as a whole the age group makes up 16.9% of the total. Neighbouring parishes also had below average numbers of under 16 children.

In the households who responded to the questionnaire, children aged 0 to 16 made up 44 of the 297 residents, almost 15% of the total number.

There were 23 children under 11 years of age, which averages approximately 2 per year group, compared with 21 aged 11 to 16 years, which represents 4 per year group. This age profile suggests that, unless new families with young children move into the Parish, the number of children will continue to decline.

Views of young people

The parish survey included a Young Person's Questionnaire to be completed by children and young people aged 8 to 20 years. A total of 18 questionnaires were returned representing 38 young people. The results showed that, like older residents, they appreciated living in a beautiful place with a friendly community, although they would like it even more if there were better outdoor recreational facilities – play areas and bike

or skate parks were mentioned. Their recreational activities were predominantly sporting, with both team and individual sports listed. But in almost every case sport pursued outside the parish. Other activities included Scouting and Guiding, dance and drama, and Bassenthwaite Urban Saints (BUS), this last being the only one available in the parish. Their suggestions as to activities which they would like to see in the parish were diverse, ranging from cooking to mountaineering, a natural history club to a disco. The only consensus was that they would like to have more sporting, athletics or biking facilities available.

The young people were also asked for their views about the becksides play area. This again showed a wide diversity of opinion over whether the old swings should be replaced or some different equipment installed. It should be noted that, as the questionnaire did not seek responses from those under 8 years, these results may not reflect the views of younger children.

ACTION (26): *The use of the becksides area and the provision of play equipment there and on the village green are the subject of active discussion in the Parish Council. Replacement of all existing equipment is being considered. The views of residents are being sought.*

CONCLUSION

Taken overall, the evidence from the consultation process suggests that the residents of the Parish of Bassenthwaite like living where they do and have relatively few serious concerns about those aspects of the parish that they share with others. The high response rate and the care taken in completing the questionnaire forms suggests an encouraging general level of interest in maintaining the good features of Bassenthwaite life and correcting blemishes. The questionnaire survey nevertheless brings into focus a few issues about which many people evidently feel strongly, for example dog fouling and the condition of roads or which raise serious safety issues for relatively few like the call for a footpath on the A591. This Plan proposes action to deal with a number of specific issues with a view to improving matters fairly soon. In some parish matters, where decisions lie in the hands of other organisations, action is not proposed directly but the collected views may nevertheless encourage locally approved outcomes. In terms of forward planning, Bassenthwaite residents evidently wish to see the cherished quiet scenic character of the parish maintained. But they are at the same time sensitive to the need to maintain balance in the community – as evidenced by their sympathetic views on affordable housing and the needs of young families and their concerns related to the number of holiday homes. It is hoped that, in addition to providing a snapshot of the parish as it is in 2013 – 2014 and proposing some more or less immediate actions, this document may help to guide future developments in a direction that will match the wishes of the people of Bassenthwaite.

Reviewing the Plan

It is the intention of the Steering Group and of the Parish Council that the progress of the Plan should be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Parish Council and a report presented to the Council three months after launch and again one year after launch with a view to taking appropriate action.

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- 8 Downing R, St Bega's Way. A short Long Distance Walk. 2008
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- 10 The LDNPA ranger for the area (February 2014) is Peter Barron tel. 017688 71404.
- 11 See: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais17ew.pdf Cattle and Public Access in England and Wales. HSE Information Sheet.
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- 13 Valuation Office Agency 2011.
- 14 Lake District National Park Authority. Partnership's Plan 2010 – 2015. Part 3c: Vibrant Communities; Section 3.8 Housing.. Via: www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/aboutus/partnership
- 15 LDNP Local Development Framework 'Core Strategy' October 2010, Policy CS04 p 27. See: www.lakedistrict.gov.uk
- 16 Cumbria Rural Housing Trust. See: www.crht.org.uk
- 17 Dog Control Orders. DEFRA, via: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/legislation/cnea/index.htm
- 18 See: www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/public-rights-of-way

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Sounding Board Members: Chris Beaty, Mary Brewis, Kate Calvert, Derek Cannon, Kate Clark, Stefan Escreet, Margaret Green, Marlene Jackson, Grace Mitchell, Helen Reb, Peter Richardson,

Other advisers: Ruth Barnes, Peter Barron LDNP Ranger, Robert James, Guy Lee, Martyn Mawson, Harvey Moore, Peter Richardson, John Stephens, Thomas Trafford, Mavis Thompson, Nicole Towler.

Representatives of Organisations: **Bassenthwaite Primary School:** Sara Royle, Kate Clark, Derek Cannon.

St John's and St Bega's Churches: Peter Streatfeild

Women's Institute: Margaret Green

Methodist Chapel: Marion Beckham

Parish Room Committee: Gillian Forsyth

Bassenthwaite Urban Bus: Marion Beckham

Parish Council: John Stephens, Keith McMillan

Sports Committee: Paul Clark

Questionnaire Volunteers: Heather Armstrong, Isobel Bowe, Alistair Brewis, Mary Brewis, Kate Calvert, Verena Cannon, Kate Clark, Gillian Forsyth, Marlene Jackson, Guy Lee, Grace Mitchell, Peter Richardson, John Stephens, Alison Trafford.

APPENDIX 1: Useful contacts

Police: Emergency only (people injured, threatened or in danger, crime in progress, offender nearby) – ring 999. All non-emergency calls: ring 101.

Cumbria County Council: The Courts, Carlisle CA3 8NA Tel: 01228606060 Email: info@cumbria.gov.uk
Highways Hotline: 0845 699 6609 to report all road and pavement related problems and exposed wiring related to street lights. In emergencies out of hours the police should be called (eg fallen tree on a road).

Allerdale Borough Council: Allerdale House, Workington CA14 3YJ Tel: 01900 702702

Email: enquiries@allderale.gov.uk Enquiries and reports (eg of fly-tipping or faulty street lighting) can also be made at offices in Keswick and Cockermouth. Reports of faulty street lighting should note the number marked on the lamp post.

Bassenthwaite Parish Council: For current contact details see Parish notice boards (Village Green, Parish Room and Castle Inn) or visit <http://councilportal.cumbria.gov.uk/parishcouncils> and select 'Parish Councils'. Meets in the Parish Room on the first Thursday of each month except January and August.

Parish Room Committee: Chairperson: Gillian Forsyth Tel (017687) 76359

Bookings: Alison Trafford Tel (017687) 76393

Parochial Church Council: Chairman: Rev Peter Streatfeild. The Vicarage, Bassenthwaite, Keswick CA12 4QH Tel: (017687) 76198 Email: vicar@binsey.org.uk

Binsey Link communications: Tel 016973 21277 Email: binseylink@binsey.org.uk

Bassenthwaite Methodist Chapel. Bookings: Alison Trafford Tel (017687) 76393

Bassenthwaite Primary School. Head Teacher: Sara Royle. Tel: (017687) 76365

Email: adminbassenthwaite@keswick.cumbria.sch.uk.

Chair of School Governors Lindsey Armstrong Tel (017687)76127.

Environment Agency: see: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

North West Region, Northern Area Office: Ghyll Mount, Gilian Way, Penrith 40 Business Park, Penrith CA11 9BP Enquiries: 0370 8506506. EA Rod licences obtainable at Keswick Tourist Information Centre (see below), on-line via: www.postoffice.co.uk/rod-fishing-licence or by phone: 08448005386

Lake District National Park Authority: .see: www.lakedistrict.gov.uk

Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal LA9 7RL tel: 01539 724555

Planning applications with plans may be viewed at www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/planning.

Local Distinctive Area Park Management Ranger: Peter Barron: Tel: 017688 71404

Email: pete.barron@lakedistrict.gov.uk also: Tourist Information Centre, Moot Hall, Keswick CA12 5JR Tel: (01768) 72645 Email: KeswickTIC@lakedistrict.gov.uk

Boat permits for Bassenthwaite Lake available from Keswick Information Centre.

Useful contacts (continued) : Other Local Groups

Bassenthwaite Group Fuel Order: Claire Webzell Tel: (017687)76840

Bassenthwaite Rotary: Gareth Mendus Tel: (017687)76427 meets Mondays 7.15 pm Pheasant Inn Bass Lake.

Bassenthwaite Sports Committee: Paul Clark Tel: (017687)76581

BUS: Leader, Gordon Pickering Tel:(01687)76549 Mondays during term 6.15 – 7.30 pm in the Church Room

Friends of Bassenthwaite School (FOBS): Lindsey Armstrong Tel (017687)76127.

Gardening Group: Convenor, Helen Reb Tel: (017687) 76222.

Indoor Bowls: Meets Tuesday 7.30 to .30 pm Sept – April in the Parish Room.

Mothers' Union: Doreen Mattinson (017687) 76320. Meets 1st Tuesday of the month 2 – 4 pm Church Room.

Scottish Country Dancing: Marlene Jackson Tel: (017687)76054. Meets Monday 7 – 9 pm in the Parish Room.

Upholstery: Helen Reb Tel: (017687) 76222. Meets Wednesday 7 to 9 pm Sept – April in the Parish Room.

Wednesday Walkers: Edna Wood Tel 01697320630. Meets every Wednesday 9.30 am on the Village Green.

Women's Institute: Margaret Green Tel: (017687)76175. Meets 2nd Thurs of month 7.30 pm Church Room.

Yoga: Tracy Hughes Tel: 01697478215. Meets Thursday 10.30 am to 12 Midday in the Parish Room.

APPENDIX 2: Consultation Process and Development of the Plan.

Production of a Parish Plan was proposed in the Parish Council and followed up by councillors within the Parish Room Committee in early 2012 leading to the preparation of a draft questionnaire in April 2012. A first public meeting was held in May 2012 which led to formation of a Steering Group. After extensive advertisement a second better-attended public meeting was held in July 2012 which resulted in the formation of an advisory panel (which was named the "Sounding Board") and an agreed plan of action. The questionnaire was revised in meetings of the Steering Group and through consultation with the Sounding Board, representatives of local organisations and others. The proposals for a survey were adopted by the Parish Council in April 2013 and funding agreed. A grant was obtained from ACT Cumbria in May. The questionnaire was distributed and returned by early June and analysis then took place until interrupted by a summer break. The results of the survey were presented to the Parish Council in September and to an open meeting of residents in October. At the open meeting discussion groups were formed and priorities discussed. Subsequently, meetings were held with representatives of organisations and individuals and early outlines of the report were prepared in November. A first draft of the conclusions and proposed actions was commented upon by members of the Sounding Board and other parts were reviewed by the representatives of organisations during December 2013. A full draft was examined by Parish Councillors in February 2014. After further adjustment the final version of the plan was prepared and printed. The launch of the plan is due to take place in April 2014 when copies will be available to residents attending. Copies will be delivered to all remaining households that are permanent addresses.

Copies of Bassenthwaite Community Plan can be downloaded from: www.derwent7.wordpress.com or www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/WhatWeDo/CommunityLedPlanning Copies of the questionnaire will be available on request at the launch event or from Steering Group members. Telephone (017687) 76485.

Appendix 3. Summary Table of Actions *(More detail is available in the main text)*

No. / page	Issue	Action(s)	How to tackle it	Lead group and partners	Priority	Timescale	Resources Needed
1 16	Practical help with upkeep of amenities	Seek volunteers.	Identify at launch and during delivery of Plan.	Plan Steering Group	Medium	1 month	-
2 16	Care of graveyards	Ensure on-going care.	Set up joint working party.	PCC, PC	Medium	4 months	Possible Parish Precept element
3 16	High number of holiday homes	Explore control measures.	Work within Derwent 7 and directly with LDNPA.	PC, Derwent 7, LDNPA	High	Long term	-
4 17	Affordable Housing	Encourage provision.	Inform LDNPA of support. Work with Allerdale BC	PC, LDNPA Allerdale BC	High	1 month; long term	-
5 17	Affordable Housing	Commission survey of need.	PC invite Cumbria Rural Housing Trust.	PC	High	1 month	-
6 17	Affordable Housing	Respond to need	PC to continue to work with Housing Dept Allerdale BC	PC, Allerdale BC	Medium	3 months	-
7 18	Crime	Re-establish Farm & Neighbourhood Watch.	Seek volunteer conveners at launch.	Plan Steering Group	Medium	1 month	Unclear
8 18	Crime	Increase patrols by PCSOs.	Convey request to PCS team.	PC	Medium	1 month	-
9 18	Crime	Inform residents how to summon police.	Ask PCS team for information cards or similar.	PC	Medium	3 months	Unclear – probably within PCS team
10 18	Dog fouling	Inform residents of PC approach.	Letter to all households reminding to scoop poop.	PC	Medium	2 months	£120
11 18	Dog fouling	Inform all of legal requirement.	Put up signs in key areas.	PC	Medium	3 months	Perhaps £100
12 18	Dog fouling	Provide adequate bins.	Put up bins and arrange emptying.	PC, Allerdale BC	Medium	3 months	Unknown. Initial and on-going.
13 18	Dog fouling	Deter persistent offenders.	Consider Dog Control Order.	PC, Allerdale BC	If needed	-	-
14 18	Litter	Clear litter (by volunteer action) and review regular need.	Find volunteer convenor for litter picking * Litter picking day already enacted.	Plan Steering Group, PC, Allerdale BC	Medium	* Already in action	Equipment and collection from ABC
15 18	Litter	Reduce littering	Revue need for additional bins and emptying.	PC	Medium	3 months	Unknown. Initial and on-going

No. / page	Issue	Action(s)	How to tackle it	Lead group	Priority	Timescale	Resources
16 20	Parish information and communication	Establish Parish Website.	Form Website Group (adding to initial volunteers). Produce proposal.	Initial volunteers with PC input	Medium	3 months	Initial uncertain. On-going ? £100 p.a. from PC.
17 21	Road maintenance	Improve notification of problems.	Inform residents by this plan, B. Beacon and new website.	PC	Medium	2 months	-
18 21	Street lighting	Improve notification of problems.	Inform residents by this document and by B. Beacon and website.	PC	Medium	2 months	-
19 21	Street lighting	Reduce sky glare.	Press Allerdale B C to adopt established standards.	PC	Medium	2 months	-
20 21	Road Safety	Reduce traffic speed and risk esp. A591 at Chapel.	Conclude survey and discussion with Cumbria CC. Implement.	PC, Cumbria CC Highways	Current	Soon as possible	By CCC
21 22	Road Safety and Footpaths	Provide safe practical route from Butts Meadow to School Road.	Establish working group to focus on the field footpath from Winding Gate to School Road.	PC, LDNPA, Landowner(s), local parents and residents	High	By end May 2014	Unknown
22 22	Condition of Rights of Way	Conduct regular inspection.	Two volunteers to recruit others to walk paths regularly.	Volunteers, LDNPA, PC	Low	On-going	Little additional. Landowners and LDNPA
23 23	Parish Council communications	Make parishioners more aware of PC business.	Publish summary of meetings in Binsey Beacon*.	PC	Medium	*Already enacted since survey	-
24 23	Parish Council communications	Make parishioners more aware of business.	Publish minutes or summary on new website.	PC	Medium	When available	-
25 23	Other possible improvements	Test whether any issue has real support.	Seek volunteers to take forward each issue.	Plan Steering Group, Parishioners	Low	At launch and at 3 months	-
26 24	Play equipment	Review provision of play equipment.	Discussion and survey of views already in hand since survey.	PC	High	* Already in hand.	Unknown but perhaps significant