

Distington Parish Development & Action Plan



2005 - 2010



Voluntary
Action
Cumbria



Distington

Parish Development and Action Plan

2005-2010

Prepared by

Distington Parish Council

The Parish Of Distington

The Parish of Distington is situated four miles from Workington and Whitehaven, and ten miles from Cockermouth, and is made up of the villages of Distington, Gilgarran and Pica plus the surrounding area. The population of 2247, recorded in the 2001 census, shows a decrease of 270 on the 1995 figures which was already down 107 on the 1991 figure, making a total reduction of 377 or 10.3% in just 10yrs. This is a trend, which may have turned around since 2001, as the housing association now report that there is a waiting list for housing in the Parish.

In the past, the Parish was largely dependent upon farming, coal mining, iron making and High Duty Alloys for its income. All of these industries have declined over the years. There is now no coal mining or iron making, and High Duty Alloys and farming are much reduced in the number they employ.

Most of the Community now has to travel to the neighbouring towns and further a field for employment, which is made difficult for some by the scarcity of public transport, especially for those who cannot drive, and in particular the school leaver. The 1995 census showed that of the 972 households in the Parish 295 did not own a car, which is 34% a reduction of 4% on the 1995 figure of 38%. The census also showed that 19% of the residents were over 65, with a further 27% over the age of 45, statistics which many believe will have increased considerably over recent years, meaning that there will be a greater need for better public transport, and a greater demand for recreational activities.

There used to be a full range of shops in the Parish, but now there is only a post office, hairdresser, three takeaway facilities and a Co-op Store. There are also two public houses and two social clubs in the Parish, which provide for the social needs of the residents.

The villages of Gilgarran and Pica have no such facilities and very poor public transport to enable them to access these outlets in Distington at times which are convenient for them to do so. This lack of transport also denies reasonable access to many of the sporting and recreational facilities that are centred in the major populated village.

Map of Distington Parish



A Short History of Distington Parish.

Distington History Society

The village of Distington was formed about 500 AD, by Anglo – Saxons who were the first settlers, living in a clearing in the middle of the forest of Cumberland near a stream. Common End or Beck Green was probably the beginning of the village with its name being derived from “Diss” or “Dist” being thought to be the leader of the people. “Ing” means a clearing and “ton” beside water.

The Norman Knights came to settle in the area from circa 1100AD. Gilbert of Dundraw was given land after William the Conqueror’s victory in the Battle of Hasting. He built Hayes Castle at Common End. It was a square Pele-tower with three floors and was surrounded by a moat. The Knight’s eldest son inherited the estate and the second son was made rector of the church, a very rich position to hold. The castle fell into ruin when the Lords wanted more comfort and bought Moresby Hall, which was originally built by another Norman Knight, called Morris, the Welshman.

As the trees were cleared, farming spread, becoming the main employment for village labourers. Men were hired for six months, being paid only when their time was up.

A church has been in the village since Anglo-Saxon times. It was on a mound overlooking the village. The church was built of local trees, mostly oak, and was surrounded by a round wooden fence. The Normans were the first to build a stone church. Others since then have been built in 1330, 1662 and the present church, The Church of the Holy Spirit, was built from 1883 to 1886. Two bronze bells hang in the tower, one dated 1404 and the other one is older.

During the middle ages, coal was found, initially dug from drift mines driven into the side of hills and also bell pits: these were shallow, because no roof supports were used and were dug out in the shape of a bell. The last pit in the Parish was Oatlands Pit, owned by the Moresby Coal Company, which closed down in 1934 due to lack of sales during the depression. Pica Cottages was built for the miners working there.

A number of stone quarries were dug in the 19th Century, the largest of which was Barffs Quarry. Limestone was sent to the port of Harrington for exporting to Scotland and Ireland, the track became the Lime Road, still called that today. The owner was Mr Charles Fisher, and his family home was Distington Hall, a large mansion where the Crematorium now stands.

Mr William Walker, a Whitehaven businessman, built Gilgarran Mansion, 1805 to 1809. When he was killed at sea, his sister married a sea captain named Robertson, who on marriage took on the name Robertson-Walker. The family and his descendants took a large interest in village life until the last occupier of the mansion, Mr Austin Robertson-Walker left in the early 1950s and the mansion was demolished.

The first school was at Brookfield House, Common End and opened in 1794. Some private schools were opened on the main street and at Gilgarran. When the government passed the Education Act Law making free places available for all children, the Main Street School opened in 1878.

The railway came when the Cleator and Workington Joint Railway Company, built a line in 1873 mainly for goods, with a passenger service being set up by the Furness Railway Company. Three other lines were built shortly afterwards, with one line running past Barffs Quarry to Parton Junction. Then a line was built to Rowrah with a station at Oatlands Pit, and a fourth mine which was for goods only went to Branthwaite.

After the depression between the wars, Jack Adams, later Lord Adams of Ennerdale, led the effort to bring new industry to the area. He was successful in bringing High Duty Alloys to Lillyhall. The factory, which was built by Laing's 1940-41, working flat out with three shifts per day during the war effort, employed 3,000 people operating three shifts, many of these were women using machinery for the first time in their life when their husbands were away in the forces.

Billy Myers and Billy Bowman started in Pica repairing cycles and farm equipment before moving into Distington where they developed a vehicle workshop business. It became the largest of its kind in Cumberland and also the areas largest employer until High Duty Alloys was built. Distington expanded between the two world wars, when council houses were built.

NB. Distington History Society compiled a book on the Parish of Distington, and it was approached to make a contribution to the development plan by compiling this short history of the Parish.

FOREWORD

Over several months the Distington Parish Council had discussed the need to produce a Parish Development and Action Plan. While it was agreed that it would be beneficial to the Parish for a good plan to be produced, the financial implications of preparing such a plan were also to be considered, and the benefits must outweigh the cost, and to this end funding assistance would have to be sought.

Voluntary Action Cumbria was contacted, and Hannah Scamens was invited to attend the Parish Council Meeting, to explain the benefits, and what would be required of the Parish Council to produce a plan, which was of a suitably high standard. At that meeting, it was also explained by Hannah how the Parish Council could get some assistance with funding of such a project through applying for a grant from the Countryside Agency through the Vital Villages Scheme.

At the next meeting of the Parish Council it was agreed that the Project should be proceeded with, and to assist with the request for a grant, informal meetings were then arranged to decide the content and make up of the proposed Development and Action Plan.

The application form required a breakdown of the expected costs of producing the plan in order that the amount of grant required could be established. The Clerk was instructed to put together an estimate of the costs etc, and it was also agreed that any time spent on the project by the Clerk, or the Parish Councillors, would be donated to make up the 'in-kind part of the costs.



To begin the project a leaflet was produced, and distributed to every household in the Parish, explaining what the Parish Council was about to begin. The leaflet was intended to point out many of the good things that are in the Parish in order that when the questionnaire was sent out, the residents would concentrate on the bigger picture and not just complain about pot-holes etc.

The next stage of producing a plan was to formulate a questionnaire to be circulated to every household in the Parish. To do this, an open day was arranged, and from the comments made by the residents who attended the open day, the basis for the questions to be put to the rest of the Parish was decided upon.

Further open days were arranged to get the views of other sections of the public with an emphasis on the young people, as their views had not been readily forthcoming from the questionnaire. Direct questioning of groups of young people was also carried out to get a full picture of their wishes.

After the consultation process was completed, the results were analysed, and the Plan developed by the Sub-Committee over several meetings. An abridged version was drawn up and both plans were then printed. The main plan, which was to be distributed to various authorities and funding groups was launched at a public meeting with an exhibition showing all aspects of the plan, and the abridged version was distributed to every residence in the Parish.

List of Members and Officer

Chairman	Mr J W Bowman
Vice Chairman	Mr R M Gallacher

Members of the Council

Mrs L Beattie	6 Pica Cottages, Pica	CA14 4QA
Mr J W Bowman	3 Ennerdale View, Distington	CA14 5TX
Mrs J Bowman	3 Ennerdale View, Distington	CA14 5TX
Mrs M Canfield	71, Main Street, Distington.	CA14 5SZ
Mr C Cooper	5 Kiln Side, Distington	CA14 5TW
Mr R M Gallacher	62, Barfs Road, Distington	CA14 5TG
Mrs V Gee	Honeysuckle House, Gilgarran View, Distington	CA14 5TT
Mr B M Kirkwood	9 Winscales Avenue, Lillyhall Workington	CA14 4NY
Mr D Richardson	41 Main Street, Distington	CA14 5SS.
Mrs K I M Sharpe	‘Prospect Cottage’, 98B Main Street, Distington.	CA14 5XJ
Mr R Sharpe	‘Propect Cottage’, 98B Main Street, Distington.	CA14 5XJ.
Mr R Shepherd	Wellington House, Common End, Distington	CA14 5XU
Mrs E B Walker	92, Hinnings Road, Distington.	CA14 5UX
Mr H Ward	27, Common End, Distington.	CA14 5XT
	Clerk.	
Mr J S Holliday	12 Northumberland St, Workington.	CA14 3HA

Parish Plan Sub Committee

In addition to the Parish Councillors the Sub Committee consisted of the following:-

Rev Jeremy Stagg	Church of the Holy Spirit
Mr Andrew Cannon	Head Teacher Distington Community School
Miss Christine Jones	Distington Club for Young People

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PART 1. PREPARATION OF THE PLAN

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

Like most Parishes in the area, Distington has seen local services decline leaving only a few shops and a small number of businesses still operating, and as a result, the residents have to travel much further for schooling, training and employment.

The residents of Distington are also dependant on the neighbouring towns of Whitehaven and Workington for many essential services including secondary education etc.

The Parish Council is concerned that the lack of work and services within the Parish has an adverse effect on the social well being of the residents and has produced this plan to suggest ways of halting the decline and as much as possible reinstate services where practical.

There is also concern with the infrastructure of Parishes, which are suffering from lack of investment, and it is the council's intention to reverse this trend, and attempt to attract some of the funding which is, at present, going to the Urban Areas of West Cumbria.

1.1 Distington Parish

The area that this plan covers is the entire Parish of Distington, which includes Gilgarran and Pica and also the surrounding area. The three villages form a rural community with the major centre of population being in Distington with reasonable access by public transport to the major towns of West Cumbria while the other two villages are much more dependent on the motor car.

It was accepted from the beginning that the plan had to take in the needs and aspirations of all the residents of the Parish, and to be seen to be consulting everyone. It was recognised from the beginning that the needs of the Distington residents would contrast with those of the two smaller villages with many of the properties in Distington being social housing, while the other two are mainly privately owned. It is in Distington that all the facilities are based and transport across the Parish not being very good.

Over recent years there has been a decline in the numbers of residents in the Parish, in particular in Distington where many of the social housing stock have been demolished and not replaced because of a lack of demand. It is the wish of the Parish Council that this trend is reversed, and actions are put in place for the regeneration of the village.



A major road (A595) runs right through the Parish and while creating the advantage of having good public transport to Whitehaven and Workington it has long been a hazard for residents who have to cross to get to and from the village, it has also been the site of many serious accidents.

On the fringe of the Parish there are two landfill sites which have generated a lot of controversy over a number of years, and were used as a burial ground for many of the carcasses during the foot & mouth outbreak of 2001.



The Parish can be considered as a rural Parish, yet being so close to the major West Cumbrian Towns, the residents have access to all their facilities only a short distance away. The countryside within the Parish is of the highest quality and the views from the high ground at Pica are quite stunning on a sunny day.

When considering the content of the plan it was realised at an early stage that the priorities, which most rural communities have, will not necessarily be the same for Distington, because in the Parish there are a good range of organisations providing good voluntary service to the community, the Parish has lots going for it. Nevertheless, there are always new ventures to be looked at to improve the lives of the Parishioners, as it is the aim of this project to seek out fresh ideas and prepare the ground for putting them in place.

1.2 Objectives of the Development Plan

At the first meeting of the Parish Plan Committee, a set of objectives was set out for a basis to use in preparing the plan and cover all the issues, which are seen as important for the Parish of Distington.

- Protect and enhance the services in the Parish.
- Improve the appearance and regenerate the infrastructure of the Parish.
- Ensure future development protects the environment of the Parish.
- Ensure the safety of the residents of the Parish.
- Promote employment opportunities for residents of the Parish.
- Promote opportunity for sporting and recreation facilities.
- Promote public participation in the Parish, especially by the young people.
- Promote health and welfare facilities within the Parish.
- Assist all organisations within the Parish.
- Work with the educational services within the Parish.
- Create an action plan as a guide for the Parish Council to work to.
- Establish a basis for the attraction of regeneration funding.

2. METHOD OF PREPARING THE PLAN

In the past, residents of the Parish have left the decisions regarding the Parish to the Parish Council, but the need for a greater involvement in the decision making process was seen as essential by the members of the Parish Council, and to improve their awareness in what can, and should be done, the decision to produce a Parish plan was taken.

The most important aspect of producing a plan is the involvement of all the residents of Parish, and this was to be achieved by the following process:-

2.1 Application for Grant

With guidance from Sarah Mitchell, Voluntary Action Cumbria, a grant application form was completed which outlined how the Parish Council intended producing a Parish Plan. All possible costs were included in the application and the Parish Council was awarded a

grant of £4,998 to cover 75% of the cost of producing the plan. The other 25% was to be met by the Parish Council with 20% being in the form voluntary input and the remaining 5% from Parish funds.

2.2 Meetings of Sub-Committee

After receiving 50% of the grant, the other 50% to be applied for as progress is made. The Parish Plan Committee was formed, and it was agreed that this group would meet once per month to progress the production of the report.

2.3 Leaflet

To set the process in motion a leaflet was produced and delivered to every household in the Parish by members of the Club for Young People. The leaflet explained what the Parish Council was intending to do in producing a Parish Plan, and also gave a snap shot of many of the facilities and activities which already exist in the Parish, in order that when the questionnaire was delivered, the residents would look at the bigger picture when putting forward their aspirations, and not just report the routine matters.

2.4 Open Days

As agreed in the grant application form, three open days were organised to bring as many residents as possible along to air their views and put their suggestions forward for the benefit of the Parish. One other meeting was arranged with various representatives of Councils, Charities, Agencies and Industry invited in order to see how the plan will fit in with their proposals for the future.

2.5 Questionnaire

To consult the community as a whole, a questionnaire was formulated and delivered to every household in the Parish by members of the Club for Young People. As a reward for this valuable assistance in the task of production of the plan, a contribution was made to the clubs 'Give & Take Scheme'.

2.6 Analysing the Replies

After receiving the replies back from the residents, they were analysed thoroughly in order to compile a list of all the comments the residents had made, and also to pick up on any additional information volunteered by the respondents. The results were then sorted into various topic headings for entry into the Plan.

2.7 Consulting the Young People of the Parish

When all the analysing of the questionnaires was complete, it became apparent that the young people of the Parish had not made a big contribution in the completion of the questionnaires, and as the open days had not had a big response from that age-group it was decided to use a different angle to get a contribution from them. The younger children were consulted at the Club for Young People and also at the school, while a number of teenagers were given training to go out and consult others of their age group in the street etc.

2.8 Preparing the Document for Printing

After the final draft of the plan was agreed during several meetings of the Parish Plan Committee, the document was prepared for printing by the instructors and trainees in the Distington Community Participation Project instructors and trainees.

An abridged version was also compiled for distribution to each resident in the Parish.

2.9 Printing and Distribution of the Plan

The document was then passed to the printers in disc form, and on completion of printing, a launch event was arranged where all aspects of the plan were put on display for professional invitees and interested residents to see. The abridged version was delivered to every household in the Parish.

PART 2. CONSULTATION

3. RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

As part of the process of producing this plan the members of the Distington Young Peoples Club delivered over 900 questionnaires, one to every household in the Parish. Of these nearly 250 were completed by the residents and returned to the Parish Plan Committee for analysis.

When compiling the Questionnaire, the Parish Plan Committee, which was made up of Parish Councillors and representatives of the Church, School, Club for Young People and Home Housing, formulated the questionnaire in such a way as to help stimulate ideas to come forward without influencing the outcome unduly. A wide a range of topics were touched on and residents encouraged to make their own suggestions to add anything they believed had been missed from the topics on the questionnaire.

After the questionnaires were returned, it became apparent that the comments made on these forms could be classified under the following headings:-

Property.
Projects Where It Was Felt That The Parish Council Should Act Upon.
Environment.
Suggested Enhancements to the Parish.
Health and Welfare.
Employment.
Training.
Sport.
Recreation.
Crime Prevention.
Transport.
Highway Safety.
The Highway Network.

After placing each response under their appropriate heading the following conclusions were arrived at.

3.1 Property

The general comments with regard to property in the Parish, was that there was a need for much of it to be smartened up, with particular reference made to the Victoria Hall, disused School and the Pub on the Main Street.



Comments were made about the need to tidy up many of the gardens of the council houses, and reference was also made about the eyesore where 14, Kiln Side was demolished.



The improvements made by painting the houses on Hinnings Road was noted and the question asked as to when others at the bottom and at the Crescent were to be done, as they looked so drab.

The only need suggested for more housing was for flats for the elderly, with several replies to this effect.

3.2 Projects Where It Was Felt That The Parish Council Should Act Upon.

Areas which were noted as being in need of improvement were, at the entrance to Beck Green, behind the Young Persons Club, the path to Hinnings Farm, corner of Glebe Lane, Kiln Side and where Grants Shop was demolished.



Grassed areas which were considered in need of cutting at more regular intervals, were identified as being at Pica in general, opposite Rathbones and from 71 to 90 Pica Cottages.



There were many comments made about the number of rusting scrap cars being in evidence at several sites around the Parish, and also the amount of litter in general, but the area around Rathbones was prominent in this complaint.

A wish was made evident in most of the replies, for the Parish to be tidied up as a whole, and also the replanting of the trees at Rectory Square and at Colour Gro.

Various shrubberies around the Parish were highlighted as in need of some attention with regard to litter and weeds. Highlighted were the tubs on the Millennium Green, Junction of Main Street and Hinnings Road, Glebe Lane, Kilnside and Rectory Place. The garden to the rear of the Reading Rooms was also pointed out as in need of better maintenance.

3.3 Environment

To improve the environment in general, there were requests for tighter controls over dog fouling, with more fines for owners. This request was referring to the whole of the Parish, but special mention was made with regard to the cyclepath, with requests for more dog waste bins to be provided.

The replies suggested that there was a need for many more litter bins sited around the Parish, in the hope that those responsible for dropping their rubbish may be made to realise the harm that they do to the environment for others. An improvement in the quantity and quality of litter picking carried out by the council was suggested as a way forward, and it was also thought that regular community litter clean-ups could be carried out. The poor condition of the bins on the Millennium Park was raised on several of the replies.

It was suggested that there was a need for stricter controls over the materials stored by some businesses in the Parish be carried out, and also a strong plea from one resident for no wind turbines to be permitted to be erected within the Parish.

3.4 Suggested Enhancements to the Parish

Areas where enhancement could be made to the appearance of the Parish were for flower tubs to be placed in various locations, and a bus shelters erected at the Castle Inn and opposite the Co-op. Other bus shelters were said to be in a poor state of repair.



More play equipment provided in the play areas, and also dedicated toddler parks. Improvements to the playing field at the Community Centre was suggested, and also the general tidying up of the Parish as a whole.

It was suggested that there should be more public involvement in the appearance of the Parish with comments of:-

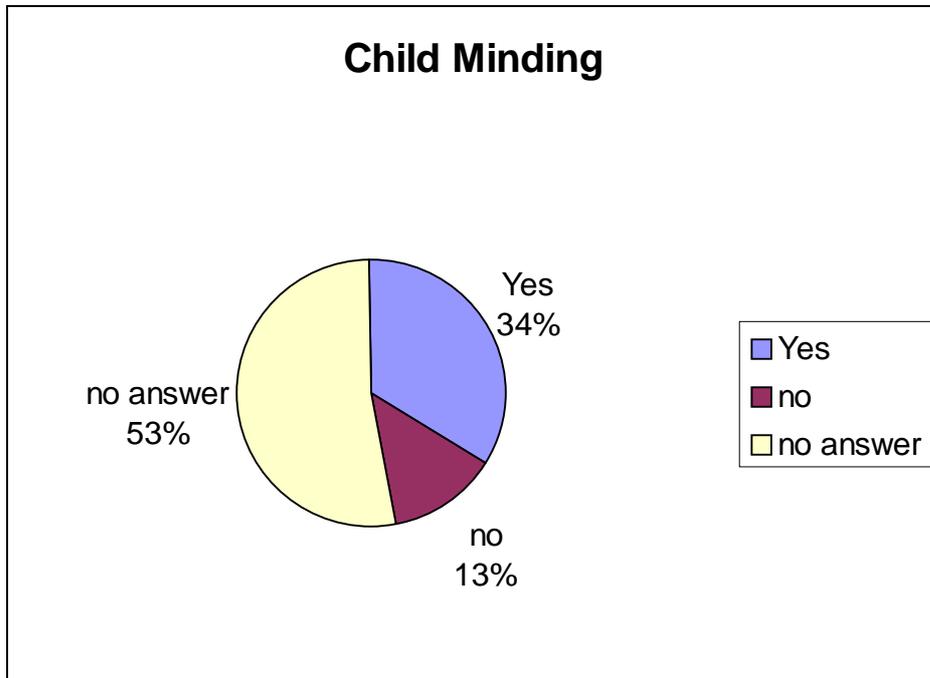
“There are some people working hard to improve the Parish, while yobs and apathy tend to spoil it”.

“People should take more pride in the look of the village”.

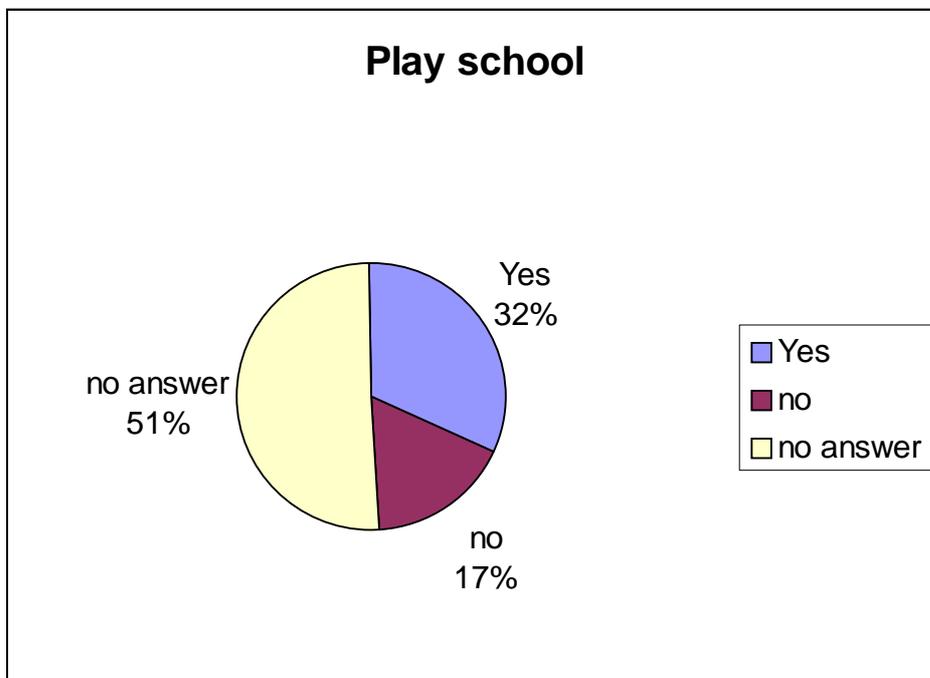
There were many other good suggestions on how the Parish could be enhanced but these are included under other headings within the document.

3.5 Health and Welfare

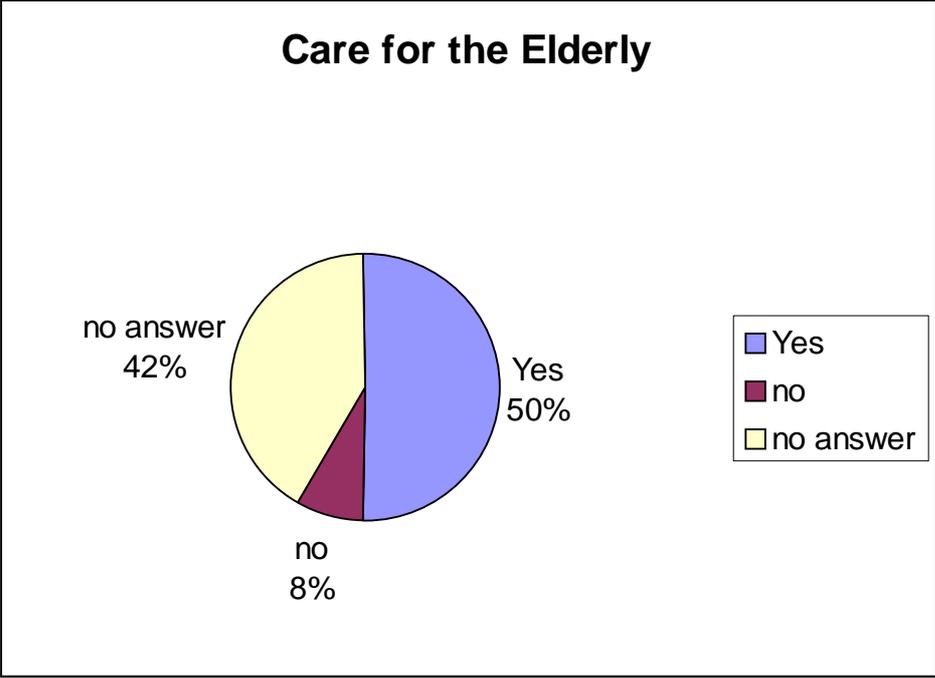
The need for health and welfare facilities in the Parish was also included in the questionnaire and the results are shown below.



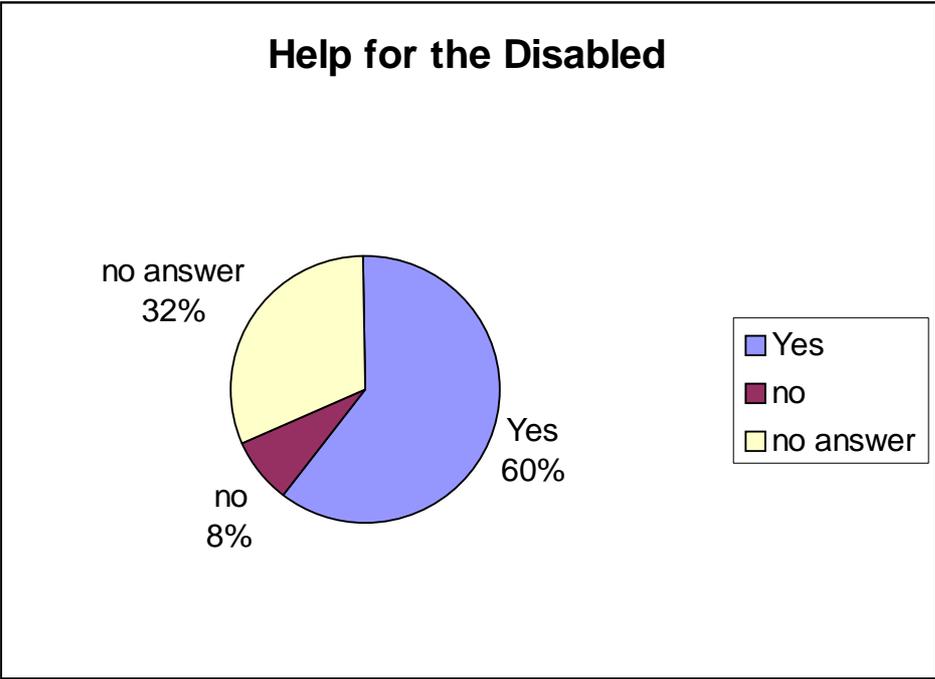
A little under 50% of respondents commented on this but of those who did, the vast majority were of the opinion that there was a need for this service in the Parish.



The results of this show a very similar response as for the childminding service, which reflects the similarity in the service and the user.

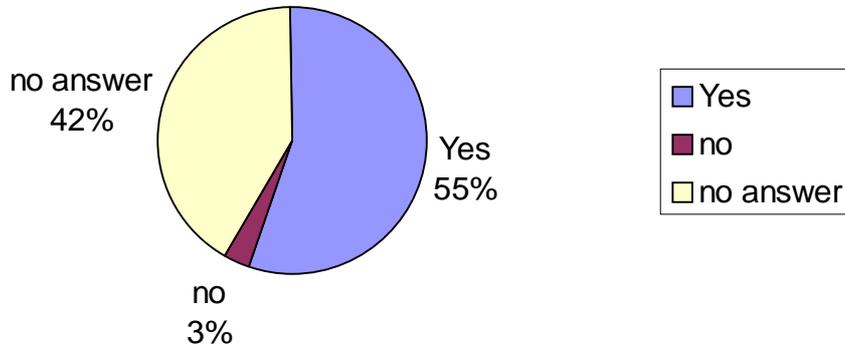


With a 58% response to this question and a very large majority of the replies stating that there is a need. The actual detail of what type of care is not defined by the responses.



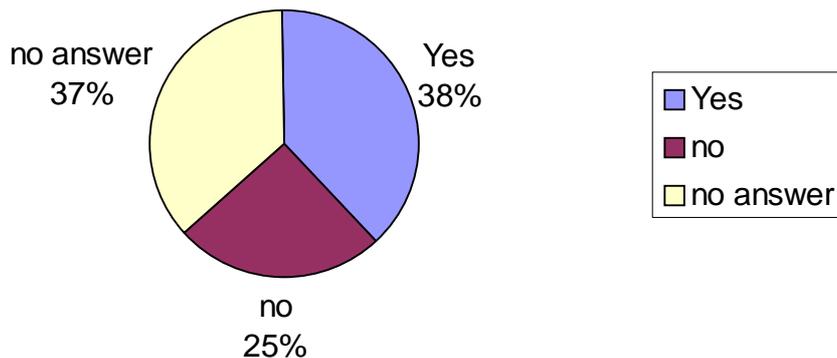
The responses to this question show that there is an even greater need for this service within the Parish.

Centre for the disabled or infirm

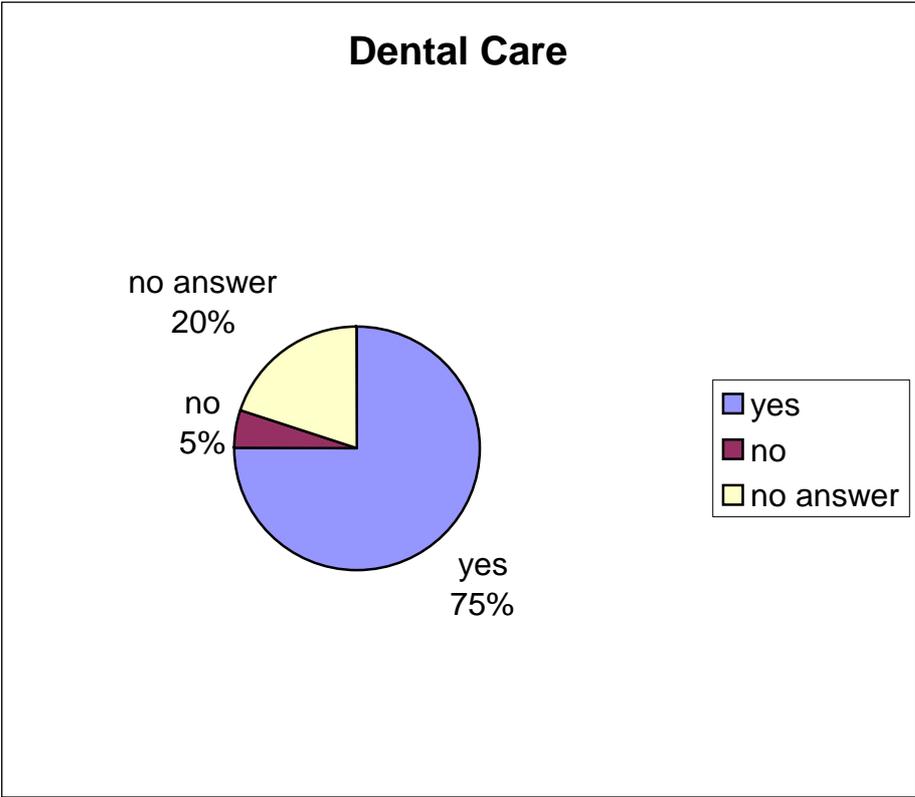


The replies show a similar requirement for this service as both the previous responses which is probably as a result of the age profile of the Parish, with over 20% of the residents being over 60years of age.

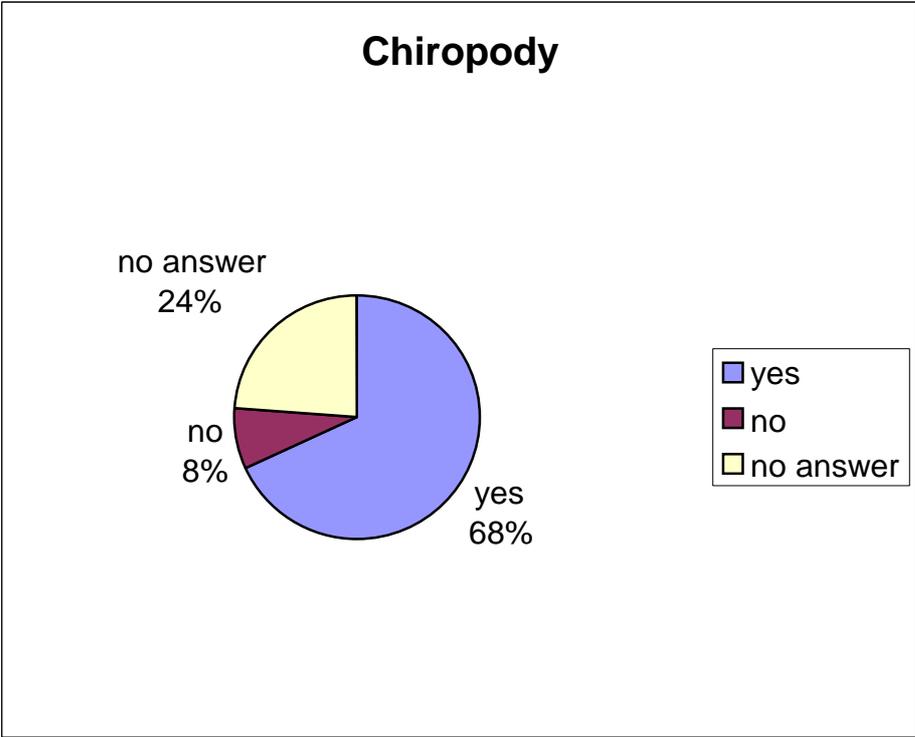
Dispensing Chemist



The replies to this question are a little surprising as with the village surgery having a dispensing chemist, the suggestion that there was a need for another, would not have been so great. The conclusion to this result must reflect that only the members of the doctor's practice may use the existing service.



With an 80% response to this question, and with nearly all identifying a need, gives a clear indication that this is a service for which there would be a great demand.



With a very similar response and only slightly less number of them stating that there is a need, this is also a service which would be in demand, if provided.

3.6 Employment

There were several suggestions put forward which could improve the employment possibilities within the Parish, with the most obvious being the setting-up of a Job Centre where vacancies in and around the area could be displayed and also an advice centre.

One resident pointed out that it would not be easy to attract major businesses to set up in the Parish, but that the District and Parish Councils could work with those responsible for attracting businesses to the nearby Lillyhall Industrial Estate and make them aware of the workforce available within the Parish. Some types of employment that it was thought could be established in the Parish were suggested by the respondents, with 'Work-from-Home' and 'Self-employment' being the obvious ones.

Small one-man businesses should be encouraged with there being a reported shortage of plumbers, electricians and builders, and that these should be encourage and assisted in getting established.

There was also a suggestion that regular car boot sales could be organised on one of the areas of spare ground in the Parish.

3.7 Training

It was made clear that there was a lot of good training being carried out at the Community Centre and in the School, but that there was always room for more.



Some courses suggested included:- Self-Employment classes for Women (eg be more positive and confident) and Young people preparing themselves for interviews (confidence building). Work experience and back to work courses were also suggested

One reply pointed out that until you know what employment is available it is difficult to assess what training is needed.

Some replies raised the fact that the Lakes College, where many courses are run, is situated in close proximity of the Parish.

3.8 Sport



The replies suggested that there is a need for football and rugby for the 5-16 age range within the Parish, and it was pointed out that there are first class facilities in the village for rugby, yet there are no teams playing.

It was stated that there is a need for other sporting facilities within the Parish with athletics, running track, swimming pool, volley-ball being suggested.

3.9 Recreation

A whole range of recreational activities and facilities were suggested with the emphasis being on provision for the elderly and retired.



The predominance of the activities suggested were outdoor-pursuits, including organised cycle rides with a need for cycle hire, walking groups, bowling green, trips off and swimming for the elderly.

Indoor activities for which there appears to be a demand included ten-pin bowling, Gymnasium, Yoga and Dance classes for the elderly. Regular talks & presentations were also suggested.

It was also pointed out that, although there was an over 60s club in the Parish no information was readily available as to what was being organised such as trips off etc. There was also several suggestions that, because of early retirements etc, it should be an over 55s club. (it should be noted that there is in fact no over 60s club in the Parish, but an annual trip off is organised for elderly residents).

More seated areas around the Parish were called for, indoor and outdoor, and also that the library should stock more non-fictional books such as DIY manuals, history and reference.



The need for more people to get involved in activities in the Parish was stated as being essential if any increase in this area was to be achieved.

From the replies to the questionnaire, the need of an improved, and enlarged premises for the Club for Young People, was expressed.

As stated earlier, it was the view of the sub committee that the replies received from the questionnaires did not entirely reflect all the views of the young people. Therefore a different form of consultation was carried out, and this is dealt with elsewhere in this document.

3.10 Crime Prevention

Most of the comments on crime prevention centred around the large number of youths hanging around on Main Street, and the need for additional police on foot to reduce the unsocial behaviour of these youths.

While street lighting in the Parish was considered reasonable, there were concerns in some areas, and this is seen as a need to reduce crime. The introduction of CCT cameras, was also a high priority to many residents, especially on Main Street.

There was one comment of the need to rid the Parish of druggies and criminals.

3.11 Transport

The village of Distington was seen to have good public transport facilities, but connections to Gilgarran and Pica were poor. Direct connections with other nearby villages such as Moresby & Lowca were said to be non-existent, with a need identified for some children from Pica who attend school at Moresby.

The need for a free transport for the elderly into town was also suggested.

3.12 Highway Safety



The removal of the chicanes, and replacing with speed humps in the Main Street was requested on many of the replies, while two other were quite specific in wanting to retain them, and definitely no ramps.

The need to reduce speeding around the Parish was seen as essential, and the introduction of speed cameras and the reducing some of the speed limits to 20mph was also high on the agenda for many residents. While again, it was pointed out by one resident that the accident figures suggested that everything was fine.

There were many requests by residents, for safe crossing points at the Co-op on Main Street and also near to the Castle Inn at Common End. One resident stated that crossing the road at Common End was “Dodgy for the fit and perilous for the elderly”.

The need for traffic calming in the form of sleeping policemen in various locations, and also the enforcement of the present regulations was seen as being essential to safety in the Parish. The parking of vehicles on the footpaths and chicanes as well as indiscriminately on yellow lines was seen as extremely dangerous for pedestrians and road users alike.

The loading and unloading of lorries on the highway, especially on Main Street, was also raised on many of the replies as a safety issue, as was the need for more off-street parking around the Parish to improve the situation for other road users.



A very large percentage of the replies made the need for the by-pass to go ahead as essential for the improvement of safety in the Parish as a whole.

3.13 Highway Network

The large majority of replies suggest that the condition of the roads and footways around the Parish are in a reasonable state of repair, although some replies indicated otherwise.

The lack of street cleaning and gully emptying was said to be very poor, with some of the respondents suggesting that it was non-existent and referring to the whole of the Parish not any specific area.

A great many of the replies stated that there is a need for dropped crossing points at kerbsides to assist the disabled and elderly to be able to get around the Parish. Some other individual requests for improvement were made but these are dealt with elsewhere in the document.

4. CONSULTATION WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

4.1 Children

It became obvious by the responses, that although the questionnaires were delivered to all the houses in the Parish, and were intended to pick up the needs and aspirations of the young people in the Parish, this had not materialised. It was decided that the young people should be contacted directly and their views obtained.

To do this, the younger children were contacted through the Community School and the Club for Young People, and the following responses were compiled.

The greatest request was for the Millennium Park to be upgraded and sorted out followed closely with a large percentage of those questioned putting the need for a skateboarding and roller-blading park.

There were also requests for a swimming pool, improvements to the play areas, bike-park, a caravan site, and more places to play football. A large number of participants indicated the need for more community events for all ages as needs, with the possibility of an annual event “The Distington Rendezvous” where everyone would join in the festivities.

Indoor activities were also high on the list of requests with a gymnasium, indoor soccer, a cinema, a new building for the Club for Young People, a museum, and somewhere older kids can congregate where they are not considered a nuisance to others.

On the more general issues, a good number of the children requested that the Parish was given a good clean-up, and the problem with dogs fouling footpaths and play areas was highlighted as a high priority. Stray dogs were given as a problem in the Parish, also a need for more litter bins. Better bus services were requested with cheaper fares for the under 18s being put forward as essential, and more shops, including a cash machine was seen as a need, as well as more/better housing.

Speeding cars were seen as a major problem throughout the Parish, and there was a specific need for a safe crossing place at Common End requested by many. Police to be based in the Parish was seen as a way of reducing crime in the area, as was better street lighting in some parts of the Parish.

On the subject of what was already good about the Parish the Club for Young People came out on top, while the cyclepath and being close to the countryside were seen as pluses for the Parish. One reply stated that Distington is a friendly place and everyone seems to get on.

4.2 Teenagers

To obtain the views of the teenagers in the Parish, a small group of that age were given training in ‘one to one’ interviewing and then given the task of going out into the Parish to talk to their own age group to collect the required information. By using this approach, two objectives were achieved, as the training given to the young people to go out and conduct the interviews gained them vital experience that will serve them well in the future, while it was obvious that other teenagers were more forthcoming with their ideas to others of their own age group.

The older youths replies regarding facilities within the Parish, mainly followed the same line as the school children, with the emphasis being on freedom to do their own thing without interference from adults.

The youths drinking on Main Street, was given as a problem in the village, as were drugs and abusive behaviour, but it was acknowledged that the additional police officers were making a difference.

Transport to the larger towns at convenient times was seen as a need for improvement that affected their age group more than others, as they are either too young to drive, or unable to afford to buy a car. This was also seen as a problem for this age group if they need to travel to work or training.

Comments were made about the view taken by older people towards the youths of the Parish, and one remark was 'if the older people in Distington start respecting the younger generation, then maybe the young people will respect them'. Many of this age group had a desire for the reintroduction of a rugby team playing from the Parish, as they remembered their older relatives playing and had looked forward to when they could be given a go, adding that this gave them something to look forward to and also promoted fitness and health.

5. CONSULTATION MEETING WITH THE AUTHORITIES

The final stage of the consultation process came with a meeting with various representatives of the local authorities, volunteer groups and funding agents. A meeting took place in the community centre where a presentation of how the Parish Plan had been developed and then the views of these representatives was sought in how their plans fitted into the Plan for Distington Parish and vice versa, and how they might be able to assist with the desires and aspirations of the residents of Distington.

The meeting was very successful in that several of the invitees stated a strong wish to be involved in many of the ideas which had come out of the consultation process, and were looking forward to receiving a copy of the completed document in order that they could assess in what way their relative organisations could be of assistance. The County Council representative thanked the committee for the invite to the meeting and commended them on the thorough manner in which they had carried out the consultation and production of the plan.

Invitations were sent out to the following:-

Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, The Local Strategic Partnership, Local Industries, Charitable Organisations, Local Council Advisors, Home Housing Association, and the Police

PART 3. THE PLAN.

6. PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICES IN THE PARISH

6.1 Transport

The village of Distington is well served by public transport during the daytime with the village being on the direct route between Whitehaven and Workington, but in the evenings and over the weekend the service is reduced and the villages Pica and Gilgarran have a very meagre service at any time. Ideally these two villages should be served by a local service, which would travel between the two villages and meet the connection with the service at Distington.

There is also a problem identified for children who travel to the school at Moresby, as there is no service at all between the two villages.

Recommendation

A survey should be carried out to ascertain the level of demand, which may be present, and if there is evidence that the need is sufficient, a way forward should be sought.

Initial thoughts would be for a small vehicle to take a circular route, possibly also taking in Moresby, Parton and Lowca, and timed to meet a connection or simply drop passengers off to shop in Distington. Start up funding may be available for such a service and possible subsidising by other sources. Other thoughts are for an annual pass and a low charge for each journey.

6.2 Accommodation

There is very little holiday accommodation in the Parish, despite being located close to the Lake-District and the coast, and also on the national cyclepath network. Some properties in Pica are now holiday homes and there are also two guest-houses at Hayes Castle.

Recommendation

Encouragement should be given to anyone wishing to start up such a business, and advice supplied as to where any financial assistance may be available.

6.3 Commercial Outlets



As with most Parishes in the area, there has been a decline in the number of local outlets. There are only two grocery shops presently open in the Parish, three fast food outlets and a newsagents, all in Distington but nothing in the adjoining villages.

Only two public houses remain in business in the Parish and two other outlets in the form of social clubs, and ever increasing pressures make it more difficult to make such businesses profitable.

Recommendation

The Parish Council would support any measures available to assist the existing businesses and any possible new ventures. These businesses not only provide jobs but are an important part of the community, and the Parish Council see it as vital to the economic welfare of the Parish to reverse the trend and not to lose the remaining businesses and also to have new outlets start up.

6.4 Tradesmen

As with many other places there is evidence to show that there is a shortage of tradesmen, such as plumbers, joiners and electricians in the area. This is a countywide problem and the situation does not appear to be improving.

Recommendation

The Parish Council supports any scheme, which would enable local young people to be trained and then set up in business in the Parish. The problem is seen as it is difficult for a young person to be running his own business. Therefore some training and assistance should be available to help the business long-term.

6.5 Churches and the Churchyard



stone building and has all the high costs that go with maintaining such a building.

The churchyard in Distington is attached to the Church of the Holy Spirit in Distington and the maintenance is quite a burden for a small Parish church to bear. The same can be said for the church itself; it is a large



There is also the Methodist Church in the village, which has the same problems of rising maintenance costs.

Recommendation

The Parish will support any scheme, which will assist these Churches in meeting their obligation and would seek advice on how the burden of cost can be reduced. The Parish Council believe that the Churches are a vital asset to the life of the Parish and as such must be preserved.

A solution to the cost of maintaining the churchyard on behalf of the residents of the Parish will be investigated.

6.6 Crematorium

The crematorium within the Parish is owned and operated by Copeland Borough Council and concerns have been expressed about the poor visibility for motorist emerging from the driveway. The visibility problem arises from the trees, which are either side of the entrance and made worse by the excessive speed of vehicles on the main road.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will press the District Council for action to be taken to improve the entrance, and also approach the highway authority for measures to be put in place to warn motorists of the danger.

6.7 Library Service

Distington is very fortunate to have its own library and everything possible is done to retain this service in the Parish, but concerns were raised in the questionnaire about the lack of non-fictional material in stock.

Like most small libraries, there are no facilities for local history research which is a service provided by the archives service.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will seek to have constructive discussions with the library and archives services in an attempt to resolve these issues for the residents.

6.8 Public Call Boxes

British Telecom has a policy to remove all public payphones, which are underused and consequently financially unviable. The Parish Council wrote to British Telecom to object to their proposal to remove a call box from the Main Street, and it was successful in having the decision reversed, at least temporarily.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will continue to oppose any proposals to remove call boxes from any part of the Parish.

6.9 Refuse Collection

Many concerns have been raised about the service provided by Copeland Borough Council since they introduce a new system to accommodate their recycling policy.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will continually press the District Council for improvements to the system and monitor any problems raised by residents.

6.10 School



The School is seen as a focal point of the Parish and as such attracts most of the residents of the Parish at some time. A new extension is being built to house a theatre, sports & recreation hall.

Recommendation

The Parish council welcomes this facility, which will become a great asset to the Parish, and will encourage all residents of the Parish to take advantage of the facilities provided. The Parish Council will give as much support as possible to the staff of the school in their work to educate the children of the Parish and prepare them for their future.

6.11 Disused School

After being unoccupied for three years, and after constant pressure being exerted by the Parish Council and the County & District Councillors, Social Services have now taken over part of the disused school for office space.

There were many comments about this building raised in the replies to the Parish questionnaire.



The exterior of the school and the surrounding wall has become very dilapidated from lack of maintenance since closing, and as this building is at the centre of the village it is the centre of attention to residents and visitors alike.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will continue to press for this building to be fully occupied and it's future secured. Pressure will also be exerted to have the exterior brought up to standard and to have the clock brought back into use.

7. MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE, AND TO REGENERATE THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PARISH

7.1 Highways

The research and inspection carried out while producing this plan came to the conclusion that most of the roads and footways within the Parish were in a satisfactory condition, with some exceptions. There is a proposal for the A595 to be diverted away from the village with a by pass.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will continue to exert pressure on the Highway Authority to ensure a high level of maintenance of the highway network is provided at all times. The need for the by pass to be commenced without delay, will be expressed to the Highways Agency by the Parish Council.

7.2 Property

Concerns were expressed during the consultation process with regards to the poor and unsightly condition of some properties in the Parish, especially along Main Street, Distington.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will work with the appropriate authorities and the owners to bring the exterior of all properties to a standard, which will enhance the visual appearance of the Parish.

7.3 Housing Estates



Most of the social housing within the Parish are the property of Home Housing and are generally maintained to a high standard, though the replies to the questionnaire raised question marks about the condition of some gardens, and the drab look of the exterior of some of the houses. A small number of the social houses have recently been acquired by Copeland Homes and a percentage has now been bought by the tenants.

Recommendation

The Parish council will consult with all the property owners and the Distington Tenants and Residents Group to work to keep the standard of homes in the Parish to a good standard and encourage improvements to the properties for the benefit of the tenants wherever necessary.

7.4 Individual Private Housing



standards of modern living.

The Distington Parish is varied in the type and age of private housing with modern estates especially in Gilgarran and many individual new properties being constructed each year around the Parish. A large percentage of the older properties are maintained to a very high standard, but as with much of the older properties elsewhere, there is a need for regeneration funding to bring them to a standard fitting for the expected

Recommendation

The Parish council will work with other authorities in order to assist any property owner to acquire funding whenever it is available, to maintain and bring all properties up to a standard for the benefit of owners.

7.5 Industrial Property

There are now only a small number of industrial properties within the Parish Boundary, as most new businesses coming into the area, are encouraged to develop on the nearby Lillyhall Industrial Estate.

There are a few of the industrial properties that are still in the Parish, which are rather run down, and came for criticism in the questionnaire.

Recommendation

The Parish Council supports any businesses, whether within the Parish boundary or on the Lillyhall estate, but will also encourage all owners of such properties to keep the appearance of buildings etc. in a condition which does not detract from the appearance of their surroundings.

Where there are existing industrial properties which are suitable for the purpose, the Parish Council will work with others to encourage the continuation of this use to re-establish suitable employment within the Parish boundaries.

7.6 Verges

The cutting of roadside verges, which is the responsibility of the appropriate highway authority has, over recent years, been carried out to a very poor standard with only a narrow strip at the edge of the carriageway being cut, leaving the remainder to grow wild and unkempt.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will make representations to the highway authorities for the full verges within village boundaries to be cut and more frequently. The Parish Council already maintain some grass areas, and where funding permits, it will endeavour to take on the maintenance of all small areas of verge and spare ground.

7.7 Signs

The highway inspections revealed that there are a large number of highway signs around the Parish, especially in the vicinity of Pica, which have been vandalised and have lettering missing making them unreadable. The inspections revealed only one street with no name plate, and this is already on the list for the District Council to rectify.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will press for all highways signs to be maintained to an appropriate standard, and that all signs affecting the safety of road users be renewed without delay.

7.8 Street Lighting

Street lighting in the villages of Distington and Pica is considered to be satisfactory, with some exceptions, but the village of Gilgarran is in places very poorly lit. The lights on the Millennium Green in some cases have never been operating and the remainder are poorly maintained.

A small number of street lights have been upgraded and are found to be a great improvement in the amount of light emitted, a scheme which the residents would like to see extended to all the other lights in the Parish.

Recommendation

All areas of the Parish should have lighting appropriate to their needs in the interest of safety, and the Parish Council will continue to request upgrading and maintenance where necessary. The lights on the Millennium Green are the property of Home Housing, and continued request will be made for these to be put in order.

7.9 Planting Areas



The questionnaires revealed a wish for more planting areas to be developed around the Parish to make the environment more desirable. There were also several requests for planting tubs contained in the questionnaire.

Recommendation

Distington Parish Council already has some planting areas, which it maintains to a high standard within the Parish. Funding permitting more areas will be looked at with the intention of planting them up to enhance the appearance of the Parish and therefore the environment of the residents. Planting tubs will be considered as these can be provided in positions where planting areas are not feasible.

7.10 Cleansing – Tidying Up

This is an issue, which was raised in many of the questionnaires, and it is of great concern for the Parish Council. Litter and the lack of sweeping is a situation no Parish should have to endure.

The comments in the questionnaire placed litter and general lack of sweeping as a major issue with regard to appearance of the Parish. While there were some specific areas identified, it was a complaint about the Parish as a whole.

Recommendation

Removal of litter and sweeping the streets is the responsibility of the District Council and their failure to carry the work out to a satisfactory standard is not to be tolerated.

The Parish Council will press for more litter patrols and street sweeping, from the District Council, and also seek ways to educate those who cause the problem, and to encourage the suggestion made in the questionnaire for regular organised litter picking and tidying up events.

7.11 Dog-Fouling

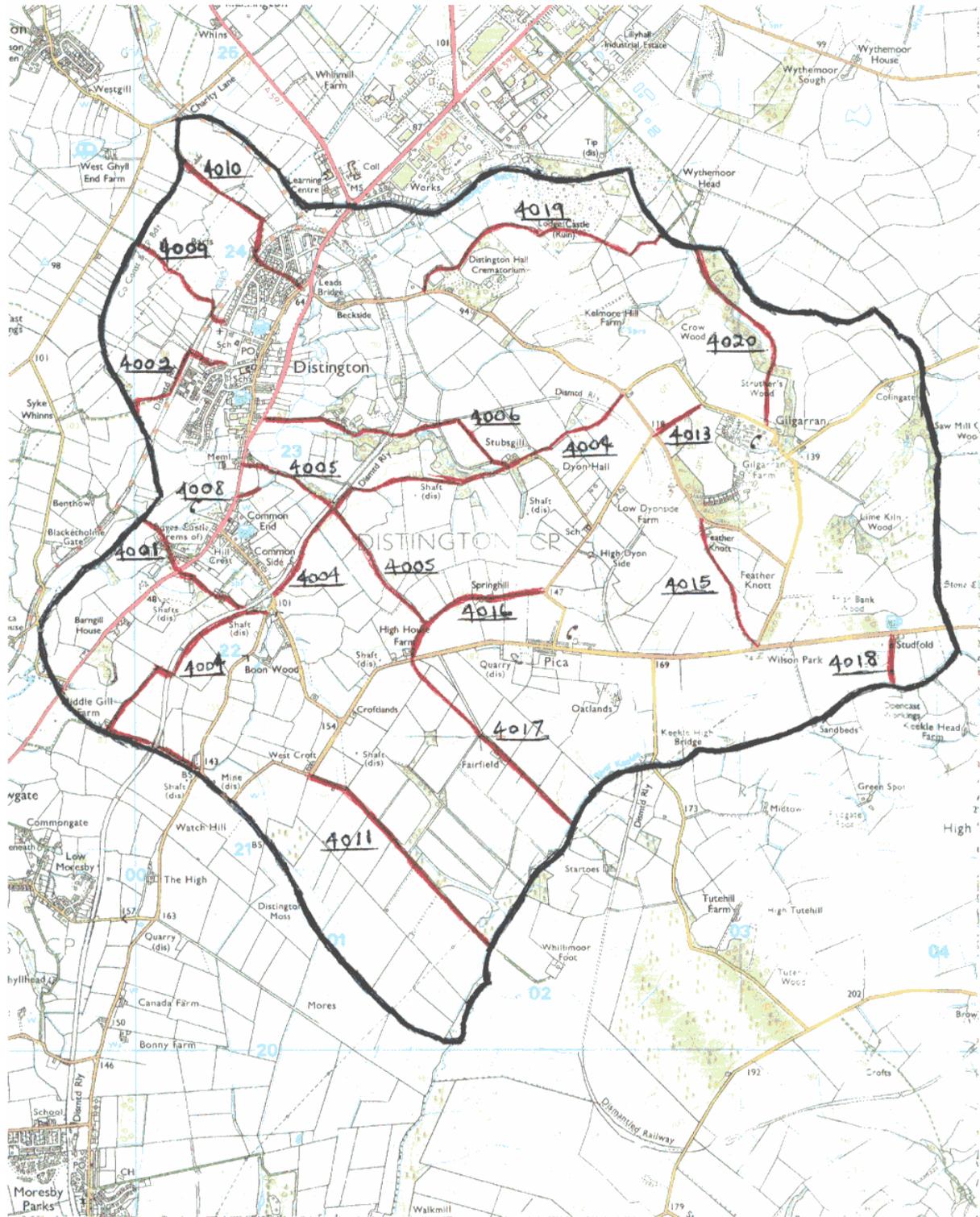
The problem of dog fouling around the Parish was high on the agenda of residents, especially on the cyclepath.

Recommendation

It is recognised that this is a problem which is prevalent everywhere, not just the cyclepath, and while it a massive problem it is very difficult to prevent. The Parish Council will work with the District Council and the enforcement officers to attempt to bring the owners attention to the dangers of disease from dog-fouling.

Accepting that there is a need for owners to exercise their dogs the Parish council will work to find a solution, possibly by identifying dedicated dog- walking areas with poop scoops and bins provided.

Public Footpaths and Bridleways



7.12 Public Footpaths and Bridleways

Distington has an extensive network of public footpaths, and during the course of producing this plan each path was inspected by Parish Councillors.

The list of footpaths as described on the definitive list.

Path No	Type	Description
404001	Footpath	From Whitehaven-Workington Road at Sunnybrow North-westerly via Hayescastle, crossing Distington Beck and Ajam Beck to Parish boundary there joining path FP 413011 (Lowca Parish).

The footpath start where you pass through a gate and go through the farmyard to Hayescastle Road where you then cross a bridge over Distington Beck then over a two stiles into the fields. At this point you leave the Parish of Distington and into Lowca Parish (FP 413011), where one route goes straight on and connects directly to the cyclepath and the other follows the edge of the stream and eventually also crosses the cyclepath and in wet conditions it is very difficult to negotiate either of these routes.

Note. This footpath while within the Distington Parish Boundaries offers very little in terms of scenery as it is in a low lying area and surrounded by trees.

404002	Footpath	From end of Chapel Street, Distington at Hinnings, over disused railway embankment, thence south-south-westerly along side of embankment approximately 201 metres, thence south-westerly to Hallcat Gill and Parish boundary there joining path to Hallcat Farm (413012 – Lowca Parish) (Hallcat Path).
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To follow this footpath you have to walk up past the derelict Hinnings Farm and across the cyclepath via a bridge where you turn left walk along the top of the embankment of the cyclepath before entering a field via a stile and then up the field to the Parish Boundary.

Note. The view from this path is very good once you leave the edge of the cyclepath and walk up the field.

404003	Footpath	From Whitehaven-Workington Road at Sunnybrow south-easterly via Bottom Bank and Hillgill to and across railway to join FP 404004 near Swallow Hill (Bottom Bank Path).
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Taking this footpath you pass over a stile and climb steeply up a track by the former Bottom Bank Farm and through an arch under the disused railway and up past Hillgill to join the road at Swallow hill.

Note. Although fairly steep this path is quite easy to negotiate.

404004	Footpath	From Parish boundary at Middlegill Farm north-easterly to and over Cleator and Workington Railway thence north-easterly alongside railway, passing Swallow Hill to road at Stonefell Gate, continuing north-north-easterly along east side of railway, crossing FP 404005 (to The Green) thence easterly to Stubsgill
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thence east-north-easterly through Dyon Wood, crossing Rowrah Branch dismantled railway to road at Tithe Barn.

This footpath is very easy to walk, but heavy going when condition are wet. The only difficult section is where the path crosses footpath FP 404005 near to railway underpass, as the embankments are steep. Most of this footpath is on high ground and therefore the views can be splendid.

Note At present the section through Dyon Wood is impassable as there is a footbridge missing.

404005 Footpath From Pica-Common Side Road at High House Farm, north-north-easterly approximately 183 metres joining FP 404016, thence north-westerly crossing FP 404004 on east side of railway, under railway continuing north-westerly to The Green, Distington (Stoney Lonning and Swinster Lonning Path).

Footpath very steep along most of its length and difficult underfoot while passing through woods above Beck Green. Once out of the woods and under the disused railway the views over the Solway Firth from the high ground are spectacular.

Note. The precise line of this footpath where it passes through the woods is difficult to follow because of many fallen trees and parts of the path slipping away. The underpass is washed away and dangerous to walk through.

404006 Footpath From Levens Bridge- Carlisle Road, Distington, easterly across Distington Beck passing south of Prospect through small wood crossing railway thence easterly and south-easterly to join FP 404004 at Stubsgill Farm.



A great part of this footpath follows the lane by Prospect House, which is very easy walking, but on entering the woods the line of the path is difficult to follow because of fallen trees. After leaving the woods and across fields the views of both the Solway and the Lakeland Hills are well worth the effort.

Note. It is impossible to follow the path through the woods and easier to use the disused railway.

404007 Footpath From road at Common Side, Distington south-westerly to Hillgill.



This path is very narrow where it passes between the houses at Common Side but is easy to follow from there on.

404008 Bridleway From Whitehaven-Workington Road at Boot Bridge, Distington north-easterly to The Green.

This short path starts by going down a set of steps and a gate and is easy to walk along, as it is level going to the Green.

404009 Footpath From north-west end of Church Road, Distington, north-westerly to and over Gilgarran Branch railway, continuing north-westerly for 550 metres to Parish boundary east of Jubilee House continuing as FP 262003 (Harrington, Workington).

After crossing the bridge over the cyclepath, there is a series of stiles and the walk is generally gentle uphill until you reach the Parish Boundary. There are unrestricted views all around from the higher points of the footpath.

404010 Footpath From Barfs Road, Distington, north-westerly to and over Gilgarran Branch railway along north-east side of Barfs Quarries to Parish boundary continuing as FP262003 (Harrington, Workington).

This path crosses the cyclepath where it briefly leaves the line of the disused railway to avoid a deep cutting. The path then goes up the fields past the golf course via a series of stiles to join FP 262002, which is outside the Parish Boundary.

Note. Since the development of the cyclepath it is now easier to use that instead of this path as they both generally take the same route.

404011 Bridleway From road at West Croft, south-easterly to River Keekle at Parish boundary to join FP 401012 (Arlecdon & Frizington).

As this is a bridleway the surface is sound and easy to walk and as it passes up the fields the views all around are spectacular and uninterrupted.

404013 Footpath From Gilgarran- Tithe Barn Road, approximately 366 metres north-west of Gilgarran west-south-westerly approximately 275 metres to road near junction with Pica Road.

This path crosses between the Gilgarran Road via several fields to the Pica Road and as the gradient is flat it is an easy to walk.

404015 Footpath From road at Wilson Park north-north-westerly over Feather Knott to road near Gilgarran Tank (Feather Knott path).

This footpath is very steep where it joins the road at the Gilgarran end but the highest point gives a wonderful view over the Solway Firth and all around in every direction.

Note. This path is currently blocked at the Wilson Park end by farmer using it as a dump.

404016 Footpath From Stubsgill-Pica road approximately 275 metres north of Pica, westerly via Spring Hill Farm to join FP 404005 approximately 183 metres north of High House Farm.

This footpath follows the line of the farm lane and is therefore very easy to walk. The view over the Solway is unrestricted as this path follows high ground.

404017 Footpath From Moresby Parks-Pica road at High House Farm south-easterly via Fairfield to River Keekle at Parish boundary to join FP 401013 (Arlecdon & Frizington).

This is another path that follows high ground and has unrestricted views of the Solway and Lakeland Hills. The path crosses several fields before passing onto a farm lane and is quite easy to walk despite being a steady uphill all the way towards the Parish boundary.

404018 Footpath From road east of Pica and approximately 183 metres east of Wilson Park Farm, south-south-easterly to River Keekle at Parish boundary to join FP 401014 (Arlecdon & Frizington).

The path follows the line of the farm lane until it reaches the Parish boundary and is therefore easy to walk but as it is in a dip the views are rather restricted.

404019 Footpath From County Road at GR 0145-2380 northerly for 140 metres, then generally north-eastwards past Distington Hall, then generally eastwards approximately 850 metres along un-surfaced track to Distington Beck at Parish boundary, continuing as FP 260004 in Winscales Parish.

Passing through a gate adjacent to the walled garden this path is at first very comfortable to walk, but after passing the derelict Lodge Castle Farm the path becomes very difficult as it follows the edge of the landfill site and up to Wythmoor Head where the last section in the Winscales Parish is again easy to walk. The views of the Lakeland hills are quite spectacular from this path.

Note. The line of this path has been diverted to accommodate the landfill site and it is because of this that the path has become impossible to follow.

404020 Bridleway From road at Gilgarran north-westerly to Crow Wood, thence north-easterly along south-east side of wood, over dismantled Gilgarran Branch railway to and across Distington Beck at Parish boundary, continuing as BW 260005 in Winscales Parish.

The first half of this path, from Wythmoor Head is very easy walking but as you approach Gilgarran the steep fields make it much more difficult especially in wet conditions.

Note. A section of the path is difficult to follow as some tree planting has made the route uneven.

Recommendation

Many of the footpaths within the Parish have been neglected over the years and are now very difficult to walk, and many are blocked. In some cases it has become the practice for walkers to take alternative routes because they are easier to negotiate, and this has led to a lack of use of the official paths.



The Parish Council will press for the relevant authorities to take steps to ensure all footpaths are open and free from obstruction in order that everyone can enjoy the freedom that they can provide.

It is agreed that the whole footpath network needs to be redefined, and the Parish Council will consult with all the relevant parties to ascertain which paths are still viable, and which alternative routes are more suitable. Where there is a more suitable route, which is to the satisfaction of both walkers and

landowners, to make applications for the appropriate orders to be drawn up.

7.13 Open Spaces and Village Greens

There are several areas of land within the Parish, which have always been used for recreational purposes, but were not registered as village greens when the register was compiled during the 1960s.

The Green, Beck Green

The Green has always been regarded as a village green and the omission from the register is surprising. Enquiries indicate that there is no claimed ownership with the Land Registry and as the Parish council have carried out maintenance of this area, although rather sparingly, this would indicate that the omission should be rectified.

The Village Green, Gilgarran

This is an area of land created when a housing development was carried out many years ago, and since the development this area, it has been used by local children and others as a recreation facility. Enquiries indicate that there are owners of this land but it was their intention that after the development was completed, it should be for the benefit of the residents and some form of agreement was made with them.

Land Opposite the Houses, Pica

This area land in Pica, which has been used by the residents for many years as a recreation area, and enquiries to the Land Registry have not revealed any claimed ownership. This essentially grassed area, has been maintained, to some extent by the District Council, with tree planting and grass cutting, while there is also some seating provided.

Land between the Houses and the village Hall, Pica

The Land Registry also has no record of ownership of this land, which has been used as a drying area by nearby residents over many years.

Recommendation

Applications should be made to the relevant authority, to have these areas of land registered as either village greens or common land. When the registration of these areas is completed funding should be sought to restore them for the purpose, which they were intended, and made available for the benefit of the residents of the Parish.

Millennium Green

When Home Housing demolished a large number of houses, the open space that this created was landscaped and dedicated as a Millennium Green. This area of land is not maintained to the standard, which should be expected of such a project, and is steadily becoming untidy and regarded by many as an eyesore.

Recommendation

Discussions should take place with the owners of this land to ascertain what the future plans are with regard to maintenance and usage of the Green. There are many complaints about this area, which received funding to restore, and the Parish Council will work to press for a programmed effort to improve the appearance, usage and viability of the Millennium Green.

7.14 War Memorial



The Distington Parish has a war memorial with surrounding gardens, flower beds, paths and seat, and is a fitting setting in memory of the people of the Parish who gave their lives during the two wars. The memorial and gardens are the responsibility of the Parish Council and are well maintained by them, and are regarded as an attractive feature when entering the village from the south.

Recommendation

The Parish Council recognises the importance of the memorial to all the residents of the Parish, and as such, will always hold it as a high priority and keep it to the standard of maintenance it deserves.

7.15 Cyclepaths

The cyclepath network, which passes through the Parish, was identified in the questionnaires as untidy, covered in dog fouling and overgrown in many places, to the extent that it is becoming unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians. It was also pointed out that it could be a great asset to the village as a pleasant outlet for recreation. It was also pointed out that this is an area which some form of planting could be carried out to enhance its appearance.

There are two other disused railways within the Parish, which could at some time in the future be developed into a footpath/cyclepath.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will endeavour to have the cyclepath maintained to a satisfactory standard throughout, and to assist in any measures, which may improve the appearance and attraction of the path.

Consultation will be encouraged for the remaining track to be developed if, and when, funding is available.

7.16 Un-adopted Roads

There are several un-adopted and unmade roads in the Parish, which some residents would like to see tidied up and, if possible, adopted for maintenance by the highway authority.

Recommendation

Any efforts to have these roads brought up to standard, for use and safety, will be supported by the Parish Council in whatever way open to it.

7.17 Back Lanes.

There a large number of back lanes in the Parish, especially in Pica, which are far from suitable and are a hazard to residents in the dangers of tripping and also could be considered as a health hazard.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will endeavour to push for all these back lanes to be brought up to standard for the safety and welfare of the residents who are obliged to use them.

7.18 Sites of Special Interest.

There are several sites around the Parish where the ordnance survey map show sites of special interest, and it was suggested on some questionnaires returned, that work should be done to protect these properties.

Hayes Castle



The remains of Hayes Castle standing at the bottom of Hayes Castle Road has been reduced to just one large section of wall which is in some need of protection from erosion. This is the site where the first residents of Distington are thought to have settled and is of great historical value to the Parish.

Hayes Castle Mill



Hayes Castle Mill is the remains of a Grain Mill, which was powered by a waterwheel and, being largely intact, it would not take a great amount of work to renovate it to a condition where it would become an attraction and is reasonably accessible, being close to the A595.

Viking Arch

One respondent to the questionnaire referred to a Viking Arch, which is in need of preservation. It is believed, by the Plan Sub Committee, that what this resident was referring to was the stone arch that stands in the Churchyard of the Church of the Holy Spirit and is, in fact, thought to be a stone arched doorway which was the entrance to an original church which was demolished to make way for the present church. Nevertheless, this is an important historical remains of great value to the Parish of Distington and must be preserved for future generations to see and appreciate.

Saw Mill, Quarry Wood



Remains of a water-powered sawmill are to be found in Quarry Wood, Collingate near to Gilgarran and, having been surrounded by a plantation for many years, is quite well preserved with the wheel still in place. While the mill would take a lot of funding to renovate it to a condition where it could become a place of interest to residents and visitors, this would appear to be a venture well worth pursuing.

Stone Circle, Friar Bank Wood.

The stone circle at Friar Bank Wood is largely undisturbed, with more than half the circle of stones intact. This site needs no additional renovation but must be monitored in order that it stays at this level of preservation for years ahead.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will work with others to encourage restoration and preservation of these examples of the Parish history.

8. ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE PARISH

8.1 Road Safety

The need for improved road safety was highlighted in many of the questionnaires and at the all day events which were run in the Community Centre. The main concerns were, the need for safe crossing points at Common End and at several points along Main Street Distington. Speeding was another safety issue, and in particular at Pica, and on the narrow roads around the Parish.

Recommendation

It is the Parish Council's intention to push for the removal of the chicanes along Main Street and the installation of other measures such as safe crossing points. The need for a safe crossing point at Common End is also seen by the Parish Council as essential, and will continue to press the Highways Agency for some action to be taken, while, at the time, it is believed that this matter will improve when the new by-pass is constructed.

Speeding on all roads in the Parish is a problem and the Parish Council will work with the police and highway authority to try and reduce it by legal action and education of the culprits.

Improved street lighting in the housing estates is also seen as essential in improving road safety.

8.2 Policing

During the consultation process there were many calls for the need for more police constable on the beat within the Parish. The problem with youths hanging around, especially on the Main Street Distington, was also seen as a major problem.

This is a matter, which has always been high on the Parish Council's agenda for action, and events have overtaken the production of this plan somewhat.

The Parish now have Community Police Officers, who are dedicated to working in and around the Parish of Distington and some neighbouring Parishes. This is seen as a big improvement and the crime statistics are proof of that improvement.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will continue to work with the Police Authorities to retain this service and press for assurances that it will not be reduced in any way and allow the problems to return.

It is also the Parish Council's intention to ensure the retention of this service by assisting the provision of accommodation and facilities for these constables within the Parish boundaries.

8.3 Safe Play Areas

There are already several safe play areas within the Parish and in general the young children are well catered for, but the replies to the questionnaire raised this as an issue that still needs some improvement.

The children's play areas within the Parish are owned and maintained by Copeland Borough Council and have a selection of well maintained equipment within them, but there is an ever increasing demand for improvement and development of this type of equipment to keep up with the changing wishes of the users of these facilities.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will consider all requests for improvements, and will consult with the appropriate authority to endeavour to find ways of securing appropriate funds whenever they become available for this purpose.

8.4 Safety in the Home

Safety in the home is of major importance to any community, but especially in a community with a large percentage of elderly residents. The replies to the questionnaire highlighted this to be of concern in all areas of the Parish.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will encourage education of residents of all ages of the dangers that are always present with the home, and consult with the various emergency services in order to find ways of ensuring that the risk is reduced to a minimum.

Whenever assistance with funding and advice becomes available the Parish council will endeavour to ensure that the residents of Distington Parish are the first to benefit.

9. PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF THE PARISH

9.1 Training within the Parish

The Parish is already well served by training services and also has the Lakes College only a few hundred yards outside the boundary at Lillyhall. There is a Credits Centre based at the school and training opportunities in the Community Centre as well as Rathbone's Training Services.

Despite this, the questionnaire revealed a demand for more training especially for young mothers wishing to get back into employment, elderly wishing to take up hobbies or to assist them in ways of carrying out their normal household chores which become difficult as their mobility becomes impaired.

Recommendation

Distington Parish Council will work to establish more training within the Parish to suit whatever needs of the residents are. They will work with existing training providers to ascertain the needs of all residents and do whatever is within the powers of the council.

9.2 Employment within the Parish

In the replies to the questionnaire it was quite rightly pointed out that it was unlikely that any major company would envisage setting up a business in the Parish. There are existing businesses in the Parish that, with support, may develop and expand if the opportunity presents itself.

Several good ideas were put forward from the questionnaires as to the type of employment which, could be developed within the Parish some of which would come from following up schemes like a Children's Centre, Advice Centre and the wishes surrounding health care etc. Distington is well placed for small business development, with ease of access to both Copeland and Allerdale from its location beside the A595, and also a direct route out of the County.

9.3 Work-from-Home Schemes

Work-from-home was suggested as a way forward to providing good quality of employment within the Parish, and a way which the Parish of Distington is well suited, being a semi-rural community yet, close to the large towns of Whitehaven and Workington for good communication which is required for this type of employment.

9.4 Self-Employment

As with most areas, the shortage of tradesmen such as joiners, plumbers and electricians was highlighted as a need within the Parish, and as with the position regarding work from home, Distington is ideal with ease of access to other areas.

9.5 Support for Local Businesses

Although the number of businesses working within the Parish has diminished over recent years, there are still many small businesses such as shops, takeaways, small industrial concerns and of course the training services. All of these businesses need the support of the local community by residents of the Parish taking advantage of the services they provide; otherwise these will also be lost.

Recommendation

Distington Parish Council will work with other authorities and funding bodies, to support any business or individual who wishes to establish employment within the Parish, whilst not forgetting the valuable service provided by the existing businesses and individuals working within the Parish, by offering them the same level of support.

10. PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELFARE FACILITIES WITHIN THE PARISH

10.1 Child-Minding

At present there are no child-minding facilities in the Parish and the questionnaires showed a substantial demand, and while a great deal of work has already been carried out to try and develop this service in the Parish, this is an ongoing process if it is seen as an essential service to enable young parents to go back into employment.

10.2 Play School

This is also a service which the questionnaires showed as there being a considerable demand, and for the same reasons as for child care, it is clearly seen as essential to the well being of the young people and therefore the regeneration of the Parish with regard to the age balance of the residents.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will support and work with the Children's Centre Group in their efforts to bring these services to the Parish, and in doing so also provide the much needed employment for some residents, as well as allowing others to take up employment.

10.3 Care-in-the-Home

Care-in-the-Home is a function, which is the responsibility of the Social Services department of the County Council and, as such, should be available to all residents who are in need of this service. The replies during consultation implied that there is a need may indicate a lack of information, which in its turn, will result in those in need not receiving their rightful service.

Recommendation

The concept of a Children's Centre is to bring together all the various services together primarily with the care of young children in mind, but it would appear logical that the same concept could be drawn out to include all who are in need.

The Parish Council will consult with other to try and bring all the caring services within the reach of those who are in need of them.

10.4 Rest Home

The results of the survey suggesting a need for rest home facilities must reflect the ever-increasing number of elderly residents in the Parish, as there is already one such facility in Distinguon.

Recommendation

Distington Parish Council will consult with the relevant providers of this service to ensure adequate provision is within the Parish so as no resident need have to move out of the area to be cared for in their time of need.

10.5 Day Centre

Day Centre facilities are already provided in the Community Centre and are very well supported.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will support the exiting service by whatever means open to them, and consult with the authorities to ensure all residents who are in need can be catered for, and are encouraged to take part.

10.6 Centre for Persons with Special needs

The results in the questionnaire indicate a large demand for such a service, which depending on the extent of the disability and age range, may already be in place within the previous provision.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will consult with the various disability groups to ascertain the true extent of the need and agree what measures can be taken to accommodate all residents, no matter what the extent of the disability, in the life of the Parish.

10.7 Doctors' Facilities

The Parish of Distington is fortunate to have a large and very successful doctors' practice in the village, but many residents have to travel to Whitehaven and Workington to access their doctors. Consultation with residents who have to travel reveal great difficulties in these arrangements in having to travel at a time when their state of health is low, but not sufficiently so to require the doctors to make the journey from their surgeries. This is especially a problem for the elderly.

It is recognised by the Parish Council that the existing practice, due to legislation and economy, may not be in a position to take on all those who would wish to access their service, but it also sees this as a way forward.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will consult further with residents, to build up a full picture and the extent of this problem, and subsequently bring together the relevant parties to attempt to improve the situation.

10.8 Dispensing Chemists

This is also a service, which is well supplied by the Doctors' Surgery, but initial enquiries indicate that this service is only accessible to members of that practice. The results of the survey indicated a great need for this service in the Parish, which would imply that an accessibility problem does exist.

Recommendation

Consultation will take place with the relevant parties in an attempt to have this service provided to all residents of the Parish in a way that the members of the surgery are catered for.

10.9 Services for the Hard of Hearing and Impaired Sight

The need for services for the hard of hearing and impaired sight was stated in several of the questionnaires as a need in the Parish, and with the increasing age of a large percentage of the residents, this would again be a service which will be gaining in demand.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will consult with the relevant authorities, and representatives of these groups, to ascertain the full extent and the difficulties that go with these needs, and to press for appropriate action to be taken.

It was pointed out by one respondent on their questionnaire that the population was too small to expect all these services, but went on to indicate a need for many of these facilities. It is the view of the Parish Council that the residents of Distington Parish pay for and are entitled to, the same health and welfare facilities as those provided for residents on the larger populated areas of Cumbria, and it is one of the aims of this Parish plan to highlight the deficiencies in the service provision.

11. PROMOTE OPPORTUNITY FOR SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

11.1 Sporting Clubs



Distington has, in the past, had a very successful Rugby League Team but although the facilities at the rugby club are first class, there is no longer a team playing in the local league. The questionnaires completed by the young people showed a great desire for a resurrection of a team and also other sports to be on offer.

It was felt that the facilities at the Rugby Club could support, rugby, football, bowls, cricket, athletics, hockey and many other outdoor sports. The clubhouse is also ideal for indoor recreational events.

11.2 Recreational Activities

There are several recreational activities carried out in the Parish, mainly at the Community Centre and the Club for Young People, but the questionnaire called for more variety of events especially for the elderly who are becoming a large proportion of the community.

11.3 Social Establishments

There are two public houses and two social clubs in the Parish, which along with the community centre, are the centre of the social life of the Parish. The reduction in the population of the Parish has had an effect on these establishments, which is clear by the fact that the village of Distington had six public houses in the past.

11.4 Sports Hall/Theatre



At the time of compiling the questionnaire a new Sports Hall/Theatre was being constructed at the Community School, and it is expected that with the support of the residents of the Parish and beyond, this will become a focal point where many of the activities which were put on the wish list of residents in the questionnaires will be developed.

Recommendation

The Parish Council recognise that many of the organisations and groups are dependent on the same volunteers and in doing so, are stretching the resolve of these admirable individuals to an extent which makes their own lives difficult. It also recognises that it is becoming more difficult to find volunteers to run sporting and recreational activities as it takes up a lot of time for people have to take on these responsibilities, and as with elsewhere, it is of the opinion that the way forward is to obtain sufficient funds in order that some recompense for these people's work can be provided.

The Parish Council will consult and work with any organisation, which can possibly assist in laying on sporting and social activities in the Parish, and will assist and support the applications for appropriate funds to increase the provision of facilities wherever the demand comes from.

12. WORK WITH THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES WITHIN THE PARISH

12.1 Distington Community School

In September 2001, Distington Community School was formed from the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. The 130 boys and girls aged 3 - 11 years are mainly from the village of Distington with some children travelling in by bus from neighbouring villages. Presently, the school has five classes, class teachers, teaching assistants, specialist teachers, learning mentors and a head-teacher.

The school's main priorities centre upon **raising standards of attainment**. In a positive inspection report (Spring 2003), the school was praised for identifying and addressing issues swiftly. The inspection judged the school to be effective.

The school is an important focal point for the community, and parents are actively encouraged to develop their involvement with our school. Communication with parents is very good and their opinions of our school are very high. The links with the community include working with the volunteers from Distington Women's Institute, involvement in the West Cumbria Excellence Cluster, sports initiatives and arts initiatives. There is a monthly school newsletter, which tracks all developments for the community to see. Current projects include the building of a community sports hall/ theatre and craft room.

12.2 Educational Activities

The Community Centre, the School Credits Centre and the Club for Young People all provide educational activities for different groups of people. However, each of these organisations are constantly having to obtain funds in order to put on these activities at a cost which is within the means of the participants, a task which is becoming more difficult each year.

Recommendation

Distington Parish Council will work with all educational organisations in the Parish, which provide for the educational needs of residents of all ages. The Council recognises that these organisation add greatly to the life of the Parish and that the improvement in the health and education of all, but especially the young people of the Parish, is essential to sustain a vibrant and well-balanced community.

The Parish Council will lobby other organisations involved in education to assist with funding and any other direct means, which make these, and any other organisations that wish to set up training facilities within the Parish viable.

13. PROMOTE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PARISH, ESPECIALLY BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE

13.1 Encourage Attendance at Parish Council Meetings

The replies to some of the questionnaires indicated that it is not clear to all residents of the Parish that members of the public are welcome to attend Parish Council Meetings, despite the notices advertising the times and dates of meetings clearly state that to be so. Distington Parish Council Meetings do have a number of residents in attendance, who bring the members attention to matters of concern.

Recommendation

There is an agenda item on every Parish Council Meeting when time is set aside for public participation when any resident of the Parish, after giving notice of their wish, may speak to the meeting on any matter of concern.

The Parish Council will endeavour to inform the residents of the Parish of their rights, and to make it clear that their attendance at meetings is both welcome and appreciated.

13.2 Participation in Parish Committees

With the questionnaire showing a need for more activities of all kinds to be provided in the Parish, there will be a need for a greater contribution from volunteers to serve on the many committees that are essential to the running of these services.

Recommendation

The Parish Council will consult and work with whoever can provide training and assistance to enable as many residents as possible to take up serving on committees in the Parish.

13.3 A Youth Council

The consultation with the young people of the Parish revealed a desire on their part for a say in their own futures, and to make a contribution towards the improvement to the environment and well being of the Parish.

Distington Parish Council has long held the view that forming 'A Youth Council' would be of great benefit to the Parish as a whole. Four years ago attempts were made by the Parish Council to establish 'A Youth Council' by putting the idea to the young people, but were unsuccessful in bringing together sufficient young people to decide how such a council should be run.

Recommendation

Distington Parish Council, as a result of the interest shown in the questionnaire, will consult with them and others to establish how ‘A Youth Council’ could be formed and sustained.

14. ASSIST ALL ORGANISATIONS WITHIN THE PARISH

14.1 Parish Council

Distington Parish Council meets in the Community Centre on the second Monday of each month except August when no meeting is held. The Council, which comes up for re-election every four years, consists of fifteen members of the Parish who work to strict guidelines to decide what level of precept should be set, to carry out works within the Parish in accordance with the wishes of the residents as is possible within those guidelines.

The Parish Council is also consulted by other authorities in such matters as planning, highways works and policing and safety matters. The residents of the Parish may, after putting in a written request, speak to the members in the public participation agenda item, on any matter of concern to them.

14.2 Royal British Legion

The aims of the Royal British Legion are to assist Ex-Service personnel and their families wherever possible. The Legion Social Club in Distington also provide excellent facilities for social events, which adds greatly to the well being of the Parish as a whole.

14.3 Churches

Church of the Holy Spirit, Church Road, Distington.
Methodist Chapel, Main Street, Distington.
Christian Spiritual Church, Community Centre, Church Rd, Distington.
St Mary’s Catholic Church, Church Road, Harrington.

These churches provide for the spiritual well-being of anyone who wish to receive it within the Parish of Distington, and the wider community.

14.4 Community Centre Management Committee

The Community Centre, which is owned by Distington Parish Council, is run by the Community Centre Management Committee for the benefit of the residents of the whole of the Parish in providing suitable facilities for a wide variety of functions.

14.5 Distington Family & Local History Group

The history group meet twice a month in the Community Centre to collect and preserve the history of the Parish and have already produced one book about the servicemen and women who originated from the Parish of Distington.

14.6 Women's Institute

The Women's Institute is open to membership of both women and men and meet monthly in the Community Centre to discuss its aims, which are to promote improvements in the general quality of life by lobbying for change where they feel it necessary.

14.7 Distington Community Participation Project

The Distington Community Participation Project was set up to assist with the regeneration of the Parish and has served the Parish well in all it has done, but during the time of producing this document the decision has been made to wind up this project, as it has become increasingly difficult to obtain the level of funding required to be sustainable.

14.8 Credit Union

The Credit Union meets in the Community Centre each Friday to transact their business as a savings and loan organisation.

14.9 Tenants' and Residents' Association

The Tenants' and Residents' Association meet in the Community Centre monthly to receive reports from any resident who may have a grievance or idea for improvement within the Parish. The association then lobbies for changes to be made where necessary and have a close working relationship with the housing association.

14.10 Scallywags

Scallywags, is a mother's and toddler's group which meets in the Community Centre twice a week and is run by volunteers under the auspices of the doctors' surgery. The group is well attended and is seen as a valuable asset in the development of the very young in the Parish.

14.11 Drama Group

A drama group has recently been set up and meet weekly to develop performing arts and rehearse shows which are to be staged in various venues in the Parish. The group, which meet in the Community Centre, is for residents of all ages to take part and is building up a good following.

14.12 Bowling Club

The Distington Bowling Club has a good number of regular attendees at the Community Centre, and it meets each Friday in the Community Centre to play carpet bowls and generally socialise.

14.13 Day Centre

The Distington Day Centre is run each Wednesday when many of the housebound residents of the Parish are transported from their homes to the Community Centre to take part in various social activities. Volunteers from the Parish run the Day Centre, with an Age Concern Supervisor in attendance.

14.14 Craft Club

The craft club meets in the Community Centre each Tuesday to exchange skills in various crafts and to produce goods for sale and also send abroad to orphanages etc.

14.15 Massage Club

The massage club meets each Friday in the Community Centre, and its aim is to promote healthy living by exercise, massage and relaxation and is open to all residents of the Parish to take part.

14.16 Brownies

The Brownies, which take in the age range of seven to ten years, is the only branch of the scouting movement still running in the Parish, and meet in the Community Centre on Monday nights, when the aim is to provide fun, friendship and training in good citizenship.

14.17 Old Folks' Reunion Committee

The Old Folks' Reunion Committee run a variety of fund raising events which provide for an annual trip including lunch and also a Christmas lunch with entertainment for the older people of the Parish. The Committee use the Royal British Legion club to hold their meetings.

14.18 Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union, whose aims are to uphold marriage and family values, meet on the first Wednesday in the month in the Chapel and work in the community by raising funds to assist residents when in a moment of need. The Mothers' Union, which is open for membership of men as well as women, also send funds to their central office for good works around the world.

14.19 Distington Club for Young People

The club is open seven days a week for the young people of the Parish to take part in various activities with each day being set aside for the different age groups. The Club for Young People run a Give and Take Scheme where the young people are set tasks to be carried out for the benefit of others and are awarded points, which go towards various awards such as away days. The club hall is in need of a massive amount of funding to renovate or a complete rebuild.

14.20 Distington Amateur Rugby League Club

The rugby league club has a club house with a bar and various social facilities both indoors and out. The playing field is of top class quality and while there is not a rugby team playing in the league at present, a soccer team is entered in the league and playing from the ground. The playing field is given over to the school to use whenever it requires it, and any other organisations that may wish to use the facility are welcomed.

14.21 Solway Good Neighbours Scheme

The Solway Good Neighbours Scheme has been run by a small number of volunteers with sponsorship from the Cleator Moor Co-op, for ten years and provides a Christmas food parcel to many of the residents of the parish who are living alone. It is intended that Distington Parish Council will take over the responsibility for this scheme later this year, from the volunteers who have made it such a well-admired and successful contribution to the welfare of the Parish.

Recommendation

Distington Parish Council will support all the existing local clubs and organisations in providing activities for all ages in the Parish. The Council recognises the value to the residents in the work that these groups carry out, and in doing so enhance the lifestyle and well-being of all.

PART 4. MAJOR ISSUES

From all the various consultations, there are six major issues that have emerged as high priority and after discussions with various professional bodies and residents, the following conclusions were reached as to how improvements could be made.

15.1 Local Transport System

The village of Distington has a fairly good bus service to Workington and Whitehaven during the weekdays/daytime, but in the evenings and weekends this service is reduced greatly and the outlying parts of the Parish, Gilgarran & Pica, have a very poor service at all times, and it is agreed that there is a need for a much improved local transport system for the area, and where there are services to and from Distington, to link them into these services with other convenient modes of transport.

There is also a need highlighted for additional services at more convenient times and routes to access recreational and social services that are not available within the Parish. Long discussions have taken place as to how these changes and additional services may be provided.

Ideas which have come forward include the possibility of the Parish having its own rural service, which would take a circular route around the Parish, including the larger housing estates and villages. The timings would coincide with the services run by Stagecoach so as passengers could transfer to those which go to Workington and Whitehaven and also link up on the return journeys.

This service could also include a parcel and shopping delivery service, collecting and dropping off wherever required. Possibly it could have pre-set arrangements with the Post

Office and the shops such as the Co-op which would attract extra income to make the service sustainable.

Special journeys could be arranged on a regular basis to facilities in the towns at appropriate times, travelling direct, instead of passengers having to change buses to get to destinations like the Swimming Baths, Hospital, Cinema etc.

The service could be operated by either utilising existing transport companies within the Parish, or by volunteer drivers using community transport. It has also been considered that the possibility of annual passes being purchased by residents of the Parish, coupled with cheap fares would encourage regular usage of the service thus making the scheme much more likely to become sustainable.

15.2 Road Safety

It is expected that many of the major road safety issues will decline, if not go altogether, when the A595 improvement is completed around 2007-08, but the consultation process carried out for the Parish Plan revealed that there is a fear that the removal of the volume of traffic from the existing A595 may only serve to encourage more speeding on this stretch of road by motorists who still wish to travel along it.

Consultations are already in progress with the Highways Agency as to how this can be deterred when the new road is complete, and what steps can be taken to improve the safety for pedestrians and other road users. The need for a pedestrian crossing point at Common End is high on the agenda in these discussions and it is believed that this need will not diminish when the road improvements are complete. These consultations will continue as long as it takes to ensure road safety within the Parish.

The other main issue of traffic safety raised by the questionnaire returns is centred around the chicanes on Main Street, and it has been the policy of the Parish Council, in accordance with the wish of the residents that these should be removed and other safety measures put in place, which are more appropriate for the needs of the road.

There are also some lengths of road, other than the A595 where persistent speeding has been reported on many occasions. This was raised on a large number of the questionnaires which were returned, and these will also be placed high on the agenda for improvement during the life span of this plan.

Improvement to the poor quality lighting in the Parish is an issue which was also made as a priority by the residents when consulted on road safety. Some improvements in the type of lighting units have been made to a small number of lights in Distington, but this is only carried out when the existing ones reach their life span. The Parish Council will continue to exert pressure on the Highways Authority to speed up this process, and also the installation of extra lighting where deemed appropriate, as much as their funding will allow. This is an issue which was also listed as a priority with regard to prevention of crime in the Parish.

15.3 Advice Centre

The need for an advice centre was raised on many occasions during the consultation process, and during the meeting held with the various authorities as part of this consultation, some of the attendees expressed interest in assisting with setting up such a centre.

The proposal would be for a centre to be set up with possibly volunteers manning it, who could point anyone in the right direction in order to get the right advice or service according to the problem or interest. It is not envisaged that the professional advisors would be based at the centre, but as much information as possible would be available with regard to leaflets and telephone numbers. With the assistance provided by the volunteers this would be a step in the right direction in providing this type of service in the Parish.

It is envisaged that advice on a large range of subjects such as employment, pensions, benefits payments could be made accessible to the residents of the Parish by a project such as this, as well as being a focal point for people to come together to help each other when in need.

15.4 Recreation for All

The consultation process revealed a need for more recreational facilities within the Parish for all age groups, despite there already being a good range of activities being provided. The need was especially made with regard to the older resident and as the percentage of population of the Parish over 60 is increasing each year, there is seen to be demand for what are relatively fit people wishing to take part in physical recreation.

Ideas and possible solutions which have come from the discussions that have already taken place include:-

Organised walks – these could take place along the safety of the cyclepath and the extensive network of public footpaths in and around the Parish. At present inspections which have taken place along the footpath network have revealed a need for extensive improvements to be carried out to make walking a safe and pleasurable exercise. The Parish Council will press for improvements and consult with relevant organisations to make this service available to the residents of the Parish.

Cycling for the older people – The extensive cyclepath network, which passes through the Parish would appear to make this an easy activity to provide. The problem appears to be that many older people do not have access to a cycle and it has been suggested that some form of cycle hire/loan could be provided. During the discussions which have taken place so far, it was suggested that many residents have cycles which are either not used or underused, and could be made available for the use by other who would like to take part. There could also be the possibility of a cycle hire business being set up, if the demand made it a viable proposition.

Swimming – This was a wish for all age groups and, while it is not envisaged that a swimming pool could be provided in the Parish, the possible transport improvements would bring this activity within easy reach of all residents, and also many of the other specialist activities that are available in the nearby towns.

Other Activities requested – Many of the other activities such as a gymnasium, yoga, dance classes and regular talks and presentations can be provided in the existing Community Centre and the School Hall, but it would need additional volunteers to put on these events. The Parish Council will work with others to provide all types of activity in the Parish wherever the demand arises.

15.5 Main Street

The Main Street of Distington is seen by many of those who responded to the questionnaire to be in a poor and untidy state, and could do with much renovation and enhancement.

Ideas, which were put forward by many of the respondents, included the provision of hanging baskets, planting tubs and additional planted areas. It was also pointed out that there was a need for better and more regular litter picking and sweeping in all areas of the Parish, but especially in Main Street, where the shops and takeaways are situated.

Discussions which have already taken place have come up with an idea where planting tubs/baskets could be provided by the authorities, including the Parish Council. Residents could volunteer to adopt one or more of these close to their homes, and cultivate and care for them. This would give a sense of ownership by individuals and others who would appreciate them, and could be extended to include the school children and young people at appropriate sites.

The members of the Club for Young People suggested that regular litter picking events could take place, which they could organise and would include any older residents who wished to take part. They suggested that this would educate many of the culprits who generate this litter, and also bring together all ages to generate a feeling of togetherness in tackling the problems of the Parish.

15.6 Distington Club for Young People



The need for a new or extensively renovated building for the Club for Young People was expressed, not only by the young people themselves, but also by many of the older residents who responded to the questionnaire.

All residents in the Parish are appreciative of the work which is carried out in the present hall, in providing activities and education for the young of the Parish at an age when it has the greatest effect. It is agreed by all that the whole Parish should get behind a fund raising effort to bring this wish to fruition.

The Parish Plan Sub Committee is especially appreciative of these young people in the efforts that they have put in assisting with the delivery of leaflets and is a measure of the good work being carried out by the club leaders with these young people.

Part 5. The Action Plan

Index	Topic	Recommendation	Detailed Action	Responsibility	Priority
6.1	Local Transport	Develop a Suitable Service	Feasibility Study	PC	1 st year
6.2	Holiday Accommodation	Increase amount of provision	Consult Tourist Board	TB	3 rd year
6.3	Commercial Outlets	Encourage more outlets	Consult Local Businesses	PC	3 rd year
6.4	Tradesmen	Encourage take up of trades	Consult Local Businesses	PC	4 th year
6.5	Churches	Assist with maintenance	Consult Church Councils and funders	PC	On Going
6.6	Crematorium	Improve safety for users	Consult Copeland BC and Cumbria CC	CBC/CC	1 st year
6.7	Library Service	Ensure best possible service	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	On Going
6.8	Public Call Boxes	Not allow reduction in provision	Consult with Telephone Services	Tel	On Going
6.9	Refuse Collection	Ensure best possible service provided	Consult with Copeland BC	CBC	1 st year
6.10	School	Ensure the best possible education for children	Consult with Head Teacher	HT	On Going
6.11	Disused School	Ensure continued use of building	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	On Going
7.1	Highways	Strive for improvements	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	On Going
7.2	Property	Encourage satisfactory appearance	Consult with Owners	PC	On Going
7.3	Housing Estates	Encourage satisfactory appearance	Consult with Housing Associations	HA	On Going
7.4	Individual Houses	Encourage satisfactory appearance	Consult with Owners	PC	On Going
7.5	Industrial Property	Encourage satisfactory appearance	Consult with Owners	PC	On Going
7.6	Verges	Strive for improvements	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	On Going
7.7	Signs	Strive for improvements	Consult with Copeland BC and Cumbria CC	CBC/CC	On Going
7.8	Street Lighting	Strive for improvements	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	On Going
7.9	Planting Areas	Increase number of sites	Conduct Feasibility Study	PC	3 rd year
7.10	Cleansing – Tidying Up	Strive for improvements	Consult with Copeland BC and Cumbria CC	CBC/CC	On Going
7.11	Dog Fouling	Strive for improvements	Consult with Copeland BC	CBC	On Going
7.12	Public Footpaths	Encourage more use of footpaths	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	2 nd year
7.13	Open Spaces and Village Greens	Apply for village green status	Consult with Cumbria CC and Residents	PC/CC	1 st year
7.14	Memorial	Continue and improve appearance	Consult Residents	PC	On Going
7.15	Cyclepath	Strive for improvements	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	1 st year
7.16	Un-Adopted Roads	Have them upgraded and adopted	Consult with Cumbria CC and Residents	CC	4 th year
7.17	Back Lanes	Have them upgraded and adopted	Consult with Cumbria CC	CC	4 th year
7.18	Sites of Special Interest	Encourage restoration, preservation.	Consult Heritage Groups	PC	3 rd year
8.1	Road Safety	Improve safety for pedestrians	Consult with Cumbria CC and Police	CC/Pol	1 st year
8.2	Policing	Work in partnership	Consult Police	Pol	On Going

Index	Topic	Recommendation	Detailed Action	Responsibility	Priority
8.3	More Safe Playing Areas	Consult to assess demand	Consult with Copeland BC	CBC	3 rd year
8.4	Safety in the Home	Education in all aspects of safety.	Consult Emergency Services	PC	1 st year
9.1	Training in the Parish	Work to establish more training	Consult Appropriate Training Providers	PC	3 rd year
9.2	Employment in the Parish	Work to encourage employment	Consult Local Businesses	PC	1 st year
9.5	Support for Local Business	Support all existing employers	Consult Local Businesses	PC	On Going
10.3	Care in the Home	Work to ensure availability of service	Consult Social and Health Services	CC/HT	1 st year
10.4	Rest Homes	Consult with other to assess need	Consult Social and Health Services	CC/HT	4 th year
10.5	Day Centre	Encourage more use of service	Consult Social and Health Services	CC/HT	2 nd year
10.6	Centre for Persons with Special Needs	Consult with other to assess need	Consult Social and Health Services	CC/HT	2 nd year
10.7	Doctors Facilities	Consult with other to assess need	Consult Social and Health Services	CC/HT	4 th year
10.8	Dispensing Chemist	Consult with other to assess need	Consult Social and Health Services	CC/HT	4 th year
10.9	Services for the Hard of Hearing and Impaired Sight	Consult with other to assess need	Consult Social and Health Services	CC/HT	2 nd year
11.1	Sporting and Recreation Facilities	Encourage the retention of existing facilities and introduction of new.	Consult existing and potential providers	PC	1 st year
11.4	Sports Hall/Theatre	Work with all to ensure success.	Consult with Head Teacher	HT	1 st year
12.1	Educational Activities	Give support where required	Consult Education Providers	PC	1 st year
13.1	Encourage Attendance at Parish Council Meetings	Welcome residents and encourage participation	Improve awareness	PC	1 st year
13.2	Participation in Parish Committees	Consult and encourage potential volunteers	Work with others to provide training	PC	1 st year
13.3	Youth Council	Set up a Youth Council	Consult further with the young people	PC	1 st year
14.	Organisations within the Parish	Recognise the value of the work carried out by these groups.	Support all the existing local organisations	PC	1 st year

It is intended that this action plan, and the development plan, will be reviewed twice yearly by Distington Parish Council. In November of each year when the Council are considering their budget plans for the following year and at the Annual Parish Meeting, which is held in May of each year, when members of the public may make contributions to help advance all aspects of the plan.