

Community Plan



of

***Lower Allithwaite Parish
Council***

LOWER ALLITHWAITE COMMUNITY PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Community Plan is the result of the most ambitious consultation exercise undertaken by the Parish Council in decades. As its title suggests, the community as a whole owns the Plan, even if the Parish Council launched the idea.

Though it is a snapshot of the public's attitudes, values and concerns, many of the Plan's aspirations have been long-standing ones. The intention is that the comprehensive process which produced the Plan has added value to its findings, helping persuade our key partners to support the parish's prime objectives.

There are high levels of satisfaction with living in the area. The community is clear about what it values here. The local countryside should be preserved from intrusions such as significant wind farm development. The villages should not become even more commercialised. The community needs to remain vibrant with young families continuing to live here.

Issues to be addressed include road traffic, safety and parking, gritting of roads and pavements, public transport provision and the quality of broadband. The need to attract visitors is well understood and local events are popular, but they should not increase beyond their current level.

There is strong support for affordable housing and local occupancy, particularly for people connected with parish, but any housing development should be in keeping with the locality and small scale.

Our Action Plan tries to steer a sensible course between the many competing demands of the locality and its people. It is designed to span roughly a five year period. Clearly everything cannot be achieved overnight. Indeed there may be some intransigent problems which remain with us in 2018, though hopefully not too many. Progress will be systematically monitored through an annual review. Resources at local level will be allocated to help drive things forward. And we hope that individuals who have the local quality of life at heart will volunteer to join us to help make things happen – and to share the sense of achievement when they succeed.

I invite you to spend some time looking through your Community Plan. At its heart is the Action Plan, the working document which is the outcome of all the consultation which has taken place. Do especially read this, so that you can see where we are planning to go and how we aim to get there.

On behalf of the Parish Council, my thanks to all those who have responded during the consultation exercises. I hope you feel that, so far, your involvement has been worthwhile.

David Huggett
Chairman, Lower Allithwaite Parish Council
June 2013

INTRODUCTION

Lower Allithwaite Parish forms a rough arc midway across the Cartmel peninsula, which lies to the south of the A590 in south Cumbria. It is located between the Lake District National Park and Morecambe Bay. The parish comprises the villages of Allithwaite and Cartmel with surrounding rural areas. It has 907 households and a population of approximately 1,758¹. The Core Strategy, which underpins South Lakeland District Council's Local Development Framework, identifies Allithwaite and Cartmel as local service centres². They are situated in close proximity to the resort of Grange-over-Sands, a key service centre³.

The area's transport links include a railway station at Grange, bus services to the local towns and the M6 approximately 15 miles away. Grange offers a range of shops, while the larger towns of Kendal and Barrow-in-Furness can be reached within 30 to 45 minutes drive.

A large proportion of Cartmel village is situated within high probability flood risk land relating to the River Eea and minor tributaries.

The traditional economy of the area has been mainly agricultural with some small businesses. Tourism now plays a major role and there are consequently numerous related accommodation, catering and retail businesses in the parish.

Cartmel is renowned for its historic priory and race meetings and the valley as a whole enjoys unspoilt views extending as far as the Lake District fells to north and west. The village's rich built heritage is reflected in its conservation area status. The District Council's Core Strategy aims to 'secure the preservation and enhancement of the very distinctive character and appearance of Cartmel village and ensure that its characteristic landscape setting is protected from harmful development'.

Holker Hall, located in the neighbouring parish, owns a significant proportion of the land locally including various farms, woodland and Cartmel Park (the racecourse, situated on the edge of Cartmel village). Over recent years Holker Estates has extended the number and range of events held at the racecourse.

Allithwaite is a south-facing village attractively sited on low hills that overlook Morecambe Bay. The village is less dependent on tourism as a community, though it has features of interest such as Boarbank Hall and walking in the area is a popular leisure activity. Nearby large scale events do have an impact on the locality. The village has continually grown in size over the last fifty years and has more households than Cartmel. While it has fewer historic properties, the nature of its physical development nevertheless presents its own challenges to its residents.

Changes in the pattern of the parish's population over the last 30 years have seen an increasing number of people moving from outside the area to live here, some of

¹ 2001 census

² Like key service centres (see below) but offering fewer services

³ Key service centres act as service centres for surrounding areas, providing a range of services and having good public transport links to surrounding towns and villages, or the potential for their development and enhancement

them commuting to employment and many of them retired or second home owners. In Cartmel particularly more and more homes are being bought for use as holiday lets or overnight accommodation linked with local eating establishments. The number of permanent static vans and chalets in year round holiday parks has also increased. The area's popularity with visitors has had a significant impact on the market value of local housing and therefore on the availability of affordable homes for local residents⁴. The Core Strategy has set a target that 35% of new dwellings in the area are affordable.

Despite increasing numbers of non-main residences, both villages still enjoy a thriving community life. While some leisure activities tend to be focused on Cartmel, with its range of eating establishments, the Priory, park and village hall, Allithwaite has its own sports field, community centre and institute (built in the mid-nineteenth century as a place of education), all of which provide venues for a wide range of clubs and social events. Both villages have shops and post office facilities. They both have successful primary schools and Cartmel has an 11-16 comprehensive school, to which pupils travel from a wide catchment area. Cartmel also has a doctors' surgery.

BACKGROUND

Over the years a number of snapshots have been taken of life in the parish to identify issues of greatest concern to local residents. In 1993, based on an extensive consultation exercise, Lower Allithwaite Parish Council published Village Appraisals for both Allithwaite and Cartmel. In 2009 a Parish Statement was produced, setting out the public's most important priorities for action.

Government policy has been to encourage Parish Councils around the country to develop fully fledged Parish Plans. Often known as community led plans these were to be 'owned' by the community and intended to help Parish Councils focus on agreed local priorities. The 2009 Statement was a simplified version of such a plan. While it provided a useful framework for Parish Council priorities, it was seen as a holding operation pending the drawing up of a fully comprehensive plan.

In October 2010 the Parish Council set up a Community Plan group to move this idea forward. The group consisted of Parish Councillors and members of the public who for the most part represented particular community groups or interests. Informal consultation exercises were undertaken with the local community throughout the following year⁵, resulting in an exhaustive compilation of issues. These in due course formed the basis of a detailed questionnaire for every household in the parish.

The questionnaire was distributed door to door and made available online late spring 2012. This was the process by which public opinion across the full range of local issues could be both identified and quantified. Much detailed analysis has followed, together with further public consultation at the action planning stage. This present Community Plan is the outcome.

⁴ Mean house price/mean income ratio in 2008 was 8.5 in the Cartmel peninsula, compared with 6.4 in Cumbria and England generally. (Cartmel Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009)

⁵ See Annex 1

THE NEXT STEPS

Having adopted this Community Plan, Lower Allithwaite Parish Council is committed to promoting and developing the aims, objectives and actions outlined in the Action Plan. It will take measures to manage its budget and resources in the delivery of the Plan and will keep residents informed about the progress made. The Action Plan provides a transparent framework which will enable regular monitoring to take place.

While the Parish Council will have the overall management and control of the delivery of the Plan, it will seek the support of various groups in the community to deliver different aspects of it. The Council will also need to commission some new groups.

It is suggested that these should be:

Allithwaite Community Group
an Active Travel group
a Countryside group
the Cartmel Townscape Initiative.

A number of members of the public have already volunteered their services to support the Action Plan in some capacity. The Parish Council intends to follow up such offers as well as further canvassing local people to ensure the viability of each group.

The Parish Council will provide a clear brief which outlines the delegated powers of these groups, the timescale within which it will work and the success criteria which will be applied. Where groups exist already the Parish Council will similarly define its expectation in negotiation with them.

All groups will be expected to report back to the Parish Council on a regular basis as well as producing a summary statement of progress for the Annual Parish Meeting.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

284 questionnaires were completed. 64% of respondents were aged 51 or over. 69% had lived in the area for at least 11 years. Given the length of the questionnaire some people did not answer all questions.

Clearly there were high levels of satisfaction with *living in this area*. Time and again respondents commented on the quality of the countryside, its scenery and its peace and quiet. Equally they valued the nature of the community itself and the quality of village life including its relatively crime free nature.

The most frequently voiced hope for the future was that the area and the respondent's village would stay very much the same. Where *change* was necessary, it should be for such things as improvements in parking and some small scale provision of affordable homes for local families. The local countryside should be preserved from intrusions such as significant wind farm development and the villages should not become more commercialised than they are. The community needed to remain vibrant with young families continuing to live here.

On the whole respondents appreciated *how their village looked* and how its buildings were cared for. However, one criticism was pavement clutter, including A boards. *Open spaces* within the villages were greatly valued - 91% respondents said such spaces were very or fairly important. The surrounding countryside was if anything even more important to people. Nobody ticked the not at all important option, either for open spaces within the villages or more widely.

As regards *green issues*, although major infrastructure projects were strongly opposed, interest was nevertheless expressed in smaller scale local renewable energy development: 54% of respondents felt this was very or fairly important. There was quite a strong demand for improved recycling arrangements.

Respondents viewed *road traffic* (57%), *parking* (53%) and *safety* (39%) as serious concerns, which were very much intertwined. These issues particularly affected the centre of the villages but also, to an extent, the wider area. The volume and speed of traffic were a concern and a reduced speed limit, particularly within the villages, was the most supported of the presented options.

Car parking was a significant problem, especially in the centre of the villages, where pedestrians felt particularly vulnerable. It is a daily issue and it applies all year round. Indiscriminate parking was one of the main bugbears. A range of solutions was supported, the most popular being additional parking provision on the edge of the villages.

Housing was a burning issue. It was felt that any housing development should be small scale: 57% were in favour of just 1 to 3 houses, whereas just 9% would support developments of 10 or more. On the other hand, the great majority of respondents showed strong support for affordable housing, 75% regarding this as very or fairly important. 71% of respondents supported the principle of building for local occupancy, particularly for people connected with the parish.

The value of having *local businesses* was recognised and the importance of attracting *visitors* was understood. Local *events* were popular and well supported (67%), ranging from small community based events to the larger scale shows,

festivals and race meetings. The vast majority of people felt the number of events should not increase beyond the current level, concerns being expressed by some about noise and, more significantly, road congestion.

Local amenities and services were generally well thought of. However, the gritting of roads and particularly pavements was regarded as unsatisfactory by a majority of respondents: 39% were satisfied against 45% dissatisfied with road gritting; and just 13% were satisfied against 54% dissatisfied with pavement gritting. A narrow majority thought road maintenance satisfactory. Many people were unhappy about dog fouling (32% satisfied with the situation compared with 40% dissatisfied).

Public transport – especially the bus service - was poorly rated to the extent that 18% of respondents said there was nothing which could induce them to use it more often. 70% regarded it as easier to use a car and 25% even thought it easier to walk or cycle than use public transport. Services running at times needed (for example, for getting to work) and with better connections would help.

Provision of **faster broadband** was supported by 75% of people, 46% seeing this as very important.

There is a general feeling that the **needs of particular groups** in our community are at least reasonably well cared for, though quite large numbers chose not to offer a judgement. 52% of people were satisfied with how older people are cared for compared with 6% dissatisfied. For families the breakdown was 39% as against 5%, for people with disabilities 26% as against 10% and for younger people 26% as against 17%. A variety of suggestions was offered for improving the picture, including the views of young people from the local primary schools and of a small number from Cartmel Priory School.

DETAILED SURVEY REPORT

284 questionnaires were completed, though not everyone answered every question. Added to the Don't Knows for a particular question the Not Answered figure sometimes accounts for quite a number out of the total respondents. Nevertheless, it is the percentages of the 284 total which are quoted throughout this report except where otherwise stated. It is of course the breakdown of those who expressed a definite opinion which counts.

145 respondents (52%) said they lived in Allithwaite, 111 (39%) in Cartmel and 22 (7%) in the surrounding area. These figures changed somewhat when respondents were asked which village they viewed as their main centre, 137 for Allithwaite compared with 136 for Cartmel. Where specific village responses are described, it is these latter figures which are being referred to.

The profile of respondents overall showed little variance across the parish. The majority were in the older age ranges, 87 (31%) being between 66 and 80 years old and 94 (33%) between 51 and 65. 32 were over 80. 48 were in the 36-50 group and only 9 respondents were younger than this. There were no Under 16s. 137 (48%) admitted to being male, 122 (43%) female.

There were no children aged 17 or under in the households of 224 of the respondents (79%). 32 households (11%) had one child living there and 13 had two. Just four homes had three children and none had more than this.

Almost all the respondents (268 or 94%) have lived in the area for two years or more, with 196 (69%) having been here at least 11 years. 71 (25%) have lived here 30 years or more. There were 12 second home respondents (4%), while 14 people did not answer this question or preferred not to say.

Subject areas

1. Place

1a. Villages

On the whole respondents appreciated how their village looked. 45% did not think there were any unsightly areas or features needing improvement compared with 35% who did. However, there was criticism of pavement clutter, including A boards. Litter was a problem in certain places. Allithwaite people were unhappy about unkempt pavements and grass verges and parking was seen as an issue in Cartmel.

Most people felt that alterations or repairs to buildings were in keeping with the village tradition (51% compared with 16% who did not) and that older or more historic buildings were well looked after (57% against 7%). However, neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction were strong. A number of Allithwaite respondents felt there should be greater Parish Council involvement; and a number objected to developments like Greendales. People from Cartmel felt there should be greater enforcement and supervision of conservation area planning principles. Plastic or otherwise inappropriate windows and doors were mentioned frequently.

On the whole the various ideas put forward to enhance the villages received quite a favourable or at least open-minded response. Separating the answers by village, Allithwaite residents were interested in the idea of a square, ornamental park or other focal point for their village (31% of Allithwaite responses agreeing, the same number answering Possibly). For their part Cartmel people strongly approved the idea of a footbridge crossing the River Eea linking to the corner of the square beside the Kings Arms (46% Yes and 24% Possibly). However, they were rather more divided over a garden by the entrance to the racecourse car park (38% Yes, 22% Possibly). Both villages supported improving the provision of road or street name signs (33% Yes, 28% Possibly with 24% against the idea).

However, except for the footbridge idea, the significant statistic was the number of Possibly respondents, yet to be firmly convinced.

Individually proposed ideas for improving the villages were very varied in nature, ranging from a general tidy up (verges, litter) to the encouragement of off-street parking. Signs needed to be better maintained and new signs introduced where necessary. Toilets and more footpaths were mentioned in Allithwaite.

1b. Open spaces

Open spaces within the villages are greatly valued. 74% respondents said such spaces were very important and a further 17% fairly important. The surrounding

countryside is at least as important to parish residents as the villages in which most of them live: 77% regarded it as very important and a further 14% as fairly important.

Nobody selected the Not at all important option, either for open spaces in the villages or more widely.

70% of people stated that they admired views every single day, these ranging across all areas of the parish. Walking was the most popular activity with 86% of people walking at least weekly and most of them daily. Apart from pure relaxation, which came second to walking, a variety of sports and other leisure activities was listed – cycling, gardening, horse riding, running and many more. Various different open spaces throughout the locality were listed, including footpaths generally, Cartmel park and woods (mentioned by both Allithwaite and Cartmel residents) and Wartbarrow Lane and Fell (Allithwaite). The use of the community centre and playing fields was also referred to.

There was strong opposition to infrastructure developments such as wind farms: 46.1% rated protection from these as very important and 17% as fairly important, only 14% viewing the issue as not very or not at all important. The opposition to electricity pylons was even stronger, the equivalent figures being 54% very important, 21% fairly important and 7% not very or not at all important.

1c. Green issues

Though major infrastructure projects are strongly opposed, there is some interest in smaller scale local renewable energy development, 23% of respondents seeing this as very important and 31% as fairly important.

More general responses showed residents open to a variety of green ideas: 116 people (41%) responded to the general question which asked for ideas for local initiatives. Of these, 48 felt there could be improvements of various sorts in waste recycling arrangements; 17 supported solar roof panel initiatives, including their installation on public buildings; seven suggested a greater emphasis on buildings insulation; six suggested small scale onshore wind energy, including community organised projects and three supported offshore wind. (Three others opposed wind development). Other suggestions included tidal energy, increasing the number of allotments and how to deal with litter. A number of people considered it important to reduce the use of private vehicles by such means as the better provision of walking and cycle ways, improvements in public transport, improvements in the provision of amenities locally and better broadband.

1d. Traffic – congestion, parking and road safety

1di. Parking

Parking was seen as a significant problem. 53% of people confirmed this, the proportion being higher for Cartmel (62%). The problem was a daily one rather than particularly during holiday periods and related to parking in the villages (51% seeing this as a major or minor problem) rather than outside one's home (a major or minor problem for 27%).

In both villages the combination of narrow roads and indiscriminate parking created real difficulties. Allithwaite respondents commented how parking both sides of the road could make it difficult for large vehicles to get through. The school run was considered part of the problem. The location most complained about in Allithwaite was Church Road, a particular difficulty for people wanting to park near their home. Despite these views, a number of respondents felt parking was not really an issue in the village but that the situation would be helped if homeowners who had a drive used it.

In Cartmel the problem was almost everywhere, but especially in the centre, where again indiscriminate parking made things difficult. The extent of parking by business owners and employees, unrestricted by any short stay regulation, was commented on; parked delivery vehicles were also a regular problem.

There was a positive response to a number of the suggested options relating to parking. Additional parking provision on the edge of the villages was the most favoured, supported by 40% of people, followed by on-street residents' parking permits (32%), the use of yellow lines (28%), improved parking signage (27%), limiting parking to short stays (27%), promoting the annual parking permit on the racecourse for Cartmel residents (24%) and parking enforcement by the Parish Council (22%). Least popular were restricting parking during peak times (16%), sympathetic marked parking bays such as the use of cobbles (15%) and marked parking bays using white lines (14%).

Cartmel support for all the above measures was more positive than these overall scores, in many cases by 10 to 15%, though parking bays marked with white lines remained least popular. A number of additional comments from Cartmel respondents mainly reiterated the above points. Restricting street parking in some way was seen as a key solution, but such restrictions needed to be enforced. Some people, however, stated their opposition to yellow lines.

1dii. Traffic flow, congestion and road safety

Traffic was seen as a problem by 57% of people and particularly so by Cartmel people (68%). It was a major or minor problem in the villages themselves for 61% (for Cartmel 78%). Almost twice as many respondents, across both villages, saw it as a major rather than a minor problem. In the wider area outside the villages it was felt to be a problem by 41% of people.

Fears over road safety were inevitably linked to the more general problem of traffic. It was a concern for both pedestrians and vehicle users. Though a number of people chose not to answer, 167 respondents (or 59%) regarded road safety as a major or at least a minor problem in the villages and 125 (44%) felt this to be so in the wider area.

Traffic generally and road safety were both seen as problems besetting the area on a daily basis. The traffic situation was felt to worsen at weekends though holiday periods were not identified as an extra factor.

In the villages part of the problem was seen as parked or speeding cars and the lack of pavements. In Allithwaite poor visibility was an issue, partly because of overgrown hedges. Large vehicles were thought dangerous in Cartmel village, as well as vans obstructing one's view, but to an extent the problem was seen as sheer volume of

traffic. A number of roads were named as being particularly prone to traffic problems in both villages, on the outskirts as well as in the centres.

In the wider area the general problem was fast traffic and too many large vehicles on narrow roads and lanes. All the roads out of Cartmel were mentioned. Wartbarrow Lane and the road down to Cartmel were particular problems for Allithwaite respondents, whose other concerns included blind corners and poor provision of passing places.

Of the suggestions proposed to improve the situation, a 20 mph limit in villages was by far the most popular (58% of respondents). Least favoured by far was improved street lighting (6%). Non-roadside pedestrian routes was a highly rated option across the parish (37%) and pavement improvements also gained reasonable support (28%) from both villages.

In other respects, however, there were some important variations between Allithwaite and Cartmel. Parking management scored highly for Cartmel (51% of Cartmel respondents), as did modified traffic routes (40% of Cartmel respondents). Traffic calming came higher in Allithwaite's rating (32% of Allithwaite respondents), as did non-roadside cycle ways (30% of Allithwaite respondents).

Various of the other measures floated proved at least interesting possibilities for people, a number of whom added their own suggestions. Some of these reiterated listed options, reduced speed limits, traffic calming and limiting access among them. Awareness-raising of wheelchair and motorised buggy use was suggested in Allithwaite and painted walkways in Cartmel.

2. People

2a. Housing

The great majority of respondents showed strong support for affordable housing, 75% regarding this as very or fairly important (more so the former), compared with only 7% who felt it was not important. In parallel with this there was a strong belief in the principle of local occupancy for people connected with the parish (71% compared with 8% against). Fewer thought it important that provision should be for those connected to South Lakeland District generally (56%, with a higher number of Fairly rather than Very important).

26 people (9%) reported that a family member had had to move away from the area owing to a lack of suitable or affordable housing.

It was felt that any housing development should be small scale: 57% were in favour of just 1 to 3 houses, whereas just 9% were happy with developments of 10 or more. Scoring one of the highest response levels to any question, 232 people (82%) felt it very or fairly important that new housing was in keeping with local architecture; and 222 (78%) supported the idea of sheltered accommodation within the parish.

Where developments of four or more houses were being planned, getting the infrastructure right was viewed as critical by an overwhelming number of respondents. 92% emphasised the importance of adequate parking provision and 89% thought traffic flow and 88% traffic speed would need addressing. 69%

supported the provision of pedestrian or cycle routes. 89% agreed with protecting the open spaces within the village boundaries and an even higher proportion, 91%, the wider countryside. Also important were the provision of utilities (88%) and local employment opportunities (72%). Street lighting was not regarded as so important a need (40%).

Green energy features were important for some, including the scope for small individual wind turbines, though there was also opposition to full scale wind farms and inappropriately placed solar panels. Sufficient land with each new property for parking and/or growing produce was suggested. Other ideas included routing all cables underground, ensuring good access to public transport, ensuring that building designs were in keeping with their rural setting and showing awareness of the problems of light and noise pollution.

There was a generally positive response about second home owners becoming more involved in the local community, 40% agreeing compared with 29% disagreeing. The more detailed comments were mixed: several respondents suggested that second home owners should pay more council tax while others felt more should be done to make second home owners feel more welcome and to involve them. Though there were some negative comments, it was also argued that second home owners helped the local economy.

2b. Business and employment

A strong majority (88%) held a positive view of the contribution made by locally run businesses and believed them to have a positive impact on the community (80%). 76% felt it important that there should be new employment prospects locally. Respondents commented that as well as providing local employment, businesses ensured a vibrant community. They were conveniently located for local people (thus helping reduce our carbon footprint) and, in Cartmel particularly, brought in visitors.

50 questionnaire responses (18%) were from people who ran their own businesses. These ranged from farming and various building trades to consultancies, gift shops, bed and breakfasts and holiday lets.

Apart from visitor numbers (which had a positive impact for 25 out of the 50 businesses responding), none of the impact examples presented seemed to be significant either way. However, 19 business respondents said the issue of broadband speeds was having a negative impact and 15 said the same of parking. Of the few additional comments, one expressed concern about the future of direct train access to Manchester airport.

2c. Events and visitors

67% of people supported the idea of local events, from local church and other community events to larger scale ones such as the Cartmel Show, the races and Holker Festival. Only 14% regarded them as not very or not at all important.

Events may exist primarily for the local population or the wider public. Both Allithwaite and Cartmel respondents felt both types of event were important to them. The former referred to the village carnival, school and church events and playground and community centre activities. The latter mentioned Priory concerts, football and cricket matches, bonfire night and school and village hall events. More major events

enjoyed by both sets of respondents were Cartmel Show and the races. Allithwaite people also made mention of the Holker Garden Festival, the Steam Gathering and Grange-based activities. The food market was popular with Cartmel respondents.

A variety of reasons was given for the importance of events, such as community spirit (including bringing old and young together) and economic benefits, as well as just personal enjoyment. A few mentioned the value of keeping traditions going while others pointed out about sustainability and how locally based events helped reduce the carbon footprint.

Having said this, only 11% of people wanted such events more often than at present. The vast majority felt the number should stay about the same, while 8% wanted fewer, most of these coming from Cartmel.

Generally people enjoyed events (72%), attended them when they could (69%) and certainly appreciated the contribution they made to the local economy (80%). However, 62% – a large proportion of these in Cartmel - felt that road congestion relating to events could be a problem and 23% – again the majority in Cartmel - thought they could be too noisy.

There was overwhelming agreement (over 80% of respondents) about the importance of visitors to the local economy and of the importance of the local environment and local facilities in attracting visitors. A similar proportion of people confirmed the view that the local environment was indeed of a high quality. A significant majority of people (69%) - from both villages – felt it was important to retain the existing public toilets in the centre of Cartmel. 45% thought that direction and information signs could be improved, this receiving significantly higher support among Cartmel respondents.

Suggestions were made about how to improve signage. More Cartmel respondents than Allithwaite wanted more signs (some of the latter felt there were already too many). In Cartmel it was felt important to have better direction signs for the car park, for other facilities and as pointers for village walks. In Allithwaite the concern was over visitor-related facilities themselves – the need for public toilets, maps containing local information, better public transport and better disabled access.

Most people supported the view that the positive impact of visitors outweighed the drawbacks (68% against 10%). Ideas for making the area more attractive to visitors were not very different from those for reducing their negative impact.

In terms of the former, both villages wanted parking facilities improved. Allithwaite respondents again felt public toilets were needed but otherwise, on the whole, they wished the village to stay as it was. Cartmel respondents thought there should be better tourist information and that verges needed to look tidier.

As for reducing visitors' negative impact, managing car parking was again the main issue, along with traffic control. Allithwaite, for example, wanted to see lower speed limits, Cartmel different access routes through to the racecourse. Allithwaite also wanted to see more litter bins about the place.

2d. Amenities and Services

People had mixed views about how their locality was being cared for.

The gritting of roads and particularly pavements was regarded as unsatisfactory by most respondents, in the case of the former 39% satisfied against 45% dissatisfied and just 13% against 54% for the latter. The inadequate gritting of roads in Cartmel was seen as far more of an issue than in Allithwaite.

Road maintenance fared rather better, with 43% of respondents saying it was satisfactory compared with 40% unsatisfactory. Again Cartmel residents were less happy.

Respondents were generally more positive about how the litter situation was managed - 47% satisfied against 30% dissatisfied - and the tidiness of verges and hedges (50% against 34%), but were unhappy about dog fouling (32% satisfied with the situation compared with 40% dissatisfied), especially in Allithwaite.

Levels of use of public transport are low: 43% of respondents said they never used buses; 15% never used the train. Just six people used Rural Wheels at least once or twice a month and three used the Voluntary Car Scheme.

The clearest reason for not making more use of public transport was that it was easier to use the car, according to 70% of respondents. (53% of the over-80s also gave this as their reason.) Moreover, 25% regarded it as easier to walk or cycle than use public transport. Other reasons picked out from those presented included buses and trains not running at the times needed, connections not being synchronised, no buses or trains running to the destinations needed and a car being cheaper to use. Added comments criticised the infrequency and irregularity of the bus service and the 'roundabout route' taken. Public transport could be expensive for families and did not lend itself to people with much shopping or heavy luggage – or to wheelchair users.

To encourage people to use public transport more often 39% of people thought better connected services might be an answer. Better cleanliness, however, was not seen as a factor (supported by only 6%). It was commented that for working people a more frequent service was necessary. Buses stopping on request would be helpful given the distance between actual bus stop points. More services into the Lake District would also be valued. However, 18% of respondents said there was nothing which could induce them to use public transport more often.

Respondents were positive about various of the amenities which were listed. 60% agreed there was a useful range of businesses locally. 57% felt there was a good balance between shops and eating establishments and 72% thought there was a good choice of places to eat. However, feelings were more mixed about whether shops were adequate for their needs: only 25% felt local shops stocked everything they needed, though 62% did say they were open when they needed them to be. Post Office arrangements were satisfactory for 62% of people. The mobile library was regarded as important to only 8% of people. While the majority of Allithwaite people agreed about most of these amenities, they rated them lower in almost every case and especially places to eat and opening times of shops; on the other hand, Cartmel felt considerably more poorly served by Post Office arrangements.

Questioned about a range of possible new services or amenities, respondents' strongly supported the idea of a local cash machine, only 8% saying they would never use one and most (164 or 58%) saying they would use it about once a week

or more often. Only five people said they would never use local recycling facilities, 244 (86%) reckoning they would use it at least once or twice a month. 124 people (44%) reckoned they would use a public swimming pool in the area at least once a week. And 31 Allithwaite people (23%) – along with eight others – would use a new café in Allithwaite around once a week or more often.

Elsewhere in the questionnaire a question on infrastructure development revealed a significant majority supporting improved broadband provision, 75%, with 46% seeing it as very important and only 7% relatively unconcerned. In terms of daily use, fast broadband was supported by 61%, with a further 11% saying they would use it around once a week or more often.

Least support among the amenities listed was for a mobile bank and a local police presence.

Among the few additional suggestions made, Allithwaite's need for public toilet facilities were again mentioned, as was the lack of a local petrol station and the need for a drop-in centre and youth club. Cartmel wanted increased opening hours for their outreach Post Office and also a cinema locally.

2e. Specific needs: the elderly, the young, the disabled and families

There is a general feeling that the needs of these particular groups in our community are at least reasonably well cared for. However, moderately high numbers of respondents chose not to answer or responded with Don't know – 38% on younger people, 42% on people with disabilities and 36% on families. A high number (variously between 15 and 25%) answered with Neither/Nor. However, the Not answered/Don't know aggregated figure in relation to older people was lower at 25%.

149 people (52%) were satisfied with how older people are cared for compared with 17 (6%) dissatisfied. For families the figures were 110 (39%) as against 15 (5%), for people with disabilities 73 (26%) as against 28 (10%) and for younger people 75 (26%) as against 48 (17%).

A variety of suggestions was made to improve provision. Sheltered housing and better organised care schemes were needed for older people. People with disabilities needed more suitable housing and better access along roads and pavements. More social housing was needed at affordable rents for families, who would also benefit from better local leisure facilities, especially a swimming pool.

Comments made on behalf of young people proposed dedicated meeting places, better facilities, youth groups, better public transport and affordable housing. By comparison direct feedback through other forms of consultation with secondary age young people themselves was very small scale. However, it was interesting how far it reflected the preoccupations of the adult community. The local scenery and the villages themselves were appreciated, as were open spaces especially the racecourse area and play parks. The closeness of the community was also seen as a positive feature. For Allithwaite youngsters the Post Office was a much appreciated amenity.

Concerns were voiced over new housing developments on green field sites, the need for more car parking areas (in both villages) and the lack of leisure facilities of various sorts: there needed to be more sports facilities, more equipment in

Allithwaite play park and more places where dogs could be exercised off the lead. Taking a rather broader perspective, one negative was the need to travel further afield than Grange to enjoy a good selection of shops which met their needs.

In consulting with primary school children in both Allithwaite and Cartmel schools a set of 'quality of life' questions was put to them. The children were rather critical of the state of tidiness of buildings and streets in their respective village, more so in Allithwaite. However, they felt generally positive about having a convenient public place to play and felt safe there. Most also felt safe from traffic if they went for a walk, though this was less true in the Cartmel area. On the whole they felt comfortable with other people in their particular community, though Cartmel children felt both grown-ups and teenagers they knew were somewhat friendlier. (Some of the younger Cartmel children, however, appeared more cautious in these answers.) Asked how they felt if they had to leave the area and their school, the great majority of children were evidently unhappy at the prospect.

Both Allithwaite and Cartmel understandably share the same kinds of activities and there was overlap between them in the use of local amenities. Organised sports such as football, cricket and baseball were popular as well as other outdoor activities such as cycling, riding, walking (maybe with the dog) and visiting the play park. The village shops, including the Allithwaite Post Office, were regular destinations. Children in Cartmel were likely to make use of the racecourse and the woods. They might go into a local restaurant or pub with the family or visit the Priory. Allithwaite children might sledge on Hampsfell or go to the allotments or take part in archery.



These children had a clear idea of what needed putting right: potholes in the roads, dog fouling, the need to continue improving the equipment in the play parks, bringing a swimming pool to the area, having tennis courts in Cartmel and cleaning

up the ones in Allithwaite; having an ice cream van which goes round all the villages. Allithwaite children wanted new goal posts and basketball hoops at the play park, a warmer church, more footpaths, more safe places to play including safer roads; they would like more large stores in the area and even more ambitious projects than this. Cartmel children wanted to see their school playground further developed, speed restrictions outside the school and more or wider pavements or painted walkways.

2f. Parish Council and Emergency Planning

There was broad support for extending the roles of the Parish Council, 68% of respondents agreeing with giving it greater responsibility for planning issues, the same number agreeing with its development of an Emergency Plan and 70% supporting its undertaking services such as street cleaning. There was some concern over the likely impartiality of the Parish Council regarding planning decisions.

30 respondents (11%) came up with further ideas of their own. Various aspects of maintenance of highways, verges and footpaths were put forward, as well as monitoring noise and pollution and more involvement with recycling. Dealing with vehicle speed and parking problems was proposed.

In the event of an emergency 61% of people were prepared to help out in some way or other. This generally took the form of accommodation, but medical and technical skills and assistance with transport and communication were also offered.

At the same time 44% said they would appreciate receiving help of some sort. Provisions, especially the collection of medication, and transport were the areas where assistance would be most appreciated.

62% of people felt the Parish Council communicated well, compared with just 16% who did not. A number of suggestions were made to improve communication further. Some people were not aware of either the Parish Council newsletter or website. Others did not receive the newsletter and some of those who did felt its format and the level of information it contained needed some work. It was commented that the website needed updating more frequently; related email alerts were also suggested. Existing methods of communication could be extended with, for example, noticeboards in local surgeries being used.

3. General

The open questions generated a wide range of responses, some – but not all – of which reflected the more detailed earlier answers.

Clearly there were high levels of satisfaction with living in this area. Time and again respondents commented on the quality of the countryside, its scenery and its peace and quiet. Equally they valued the nature of the community itself and the quality of village life including its relatively crime free nature. In addition the convenience of our location was appreciated, its handiness for the National Park, town shopping, commuting and motorway.

Looking ahead 15 years the most frequently voiced hope was that the area and the respondent's village would stay very much the same as at present. Where change was necessary, it should be for such things as improvements in parking and some small scale provision of affordable homes for local families. The local countryside

should be preserved from intrusions such as significant wind farm development and the villages should not become greatly more commercialised than at present. The community needed to remain vibrant with young families continuing to be a presence here.

Fears for the future focused primarily on the challenge of an increasing - and ageing - population, the merging of the individual villages with their neighbours, even more second homes and too few affordable homes for young families. The over-dominance of tourism was a concern voiced by some, along with the amount of traffic and the problems of parking. Wind farm developments which altered the local landscape were also the fear of a number of respondents.

Concerns relating to the wider peninsula echoed much of the above – over-development, wind turbines, too much tourism, too few affordable homes, traffic. Other points raised included too few jobs for younger people, the lack of a local petrol station, the dangers of the A590, poor local supermarket provision, the noise of flying from Cark airfield and the threat of pylons.

4. Any other comments

It might be argued that this opportunity for a final fling would throw up the issues that really did provoke most feeling. If so, then people's preoccupations were traffic and parking, followed by excessive housing development.

However, a number of respondents used this question as a chance to thank the organising group for their work in seeking the views of local people so comprehensively, though one or two complained about the questionnaire's length. Two comments are perhaps worth quoting:

'Thank you for giving us all the opportunity to express our views, concerns and ideas on the future of our parish. I must apologise for the sheer amount of words in my response - I didn't realise I would have so much to say on so many subjects! It has been a very interesting and thought-provoking exercise.'

and more simply:

'Thank you for the opportunity to express my strongly held views.'

ACTION PLAN

The Plan uses the following abbreviations to describe lead organisations and partners:

PC - Parish Council

CCC - Cumbria County Council

SLDC - South Lakeland District Council

G&C LAP - Grange and Cartmel Local Area Partnership (a group of local parish councils working together to influence the actions of the statutory bodies)

LOWER ALLITHWAITE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2013

Issue:	Objectives	Actions	Organisations	Start date
<p>1a/b. Villages and Open Spaces</p> <p>Aim: To protect the built and natural environment for the continuing enjoyment of present and future generations</p>	i. Create clean and tidy villages and surrounding areas.	<p>PC to commission and fund programme of work to include litter, dog fouling, grass verges and road sweeping.</p> <p>PC to explore participatory budgeting with SLDC and CCC.</p>	Allithwaite Community Group/Cartmel in Bloom, SLDC and CCC	2013
	ii. Reduce pavement clutter.	PC to develop voluntary code of conduct with traders and monitor with SLDC enforcement officer	Cartmel Traders, SLDC	2013
	iii. Improve road surfaces and footpaths (link to 1d)	PC to organise survey, identify improvements needed and work with CCC to prioritise a programme of work.	PC, CCC	2014
	iv. Improve signage in and around villages	PC to commission and fund programme of work which will identify improvements needed to street signs and local directional signs.	Allithwaite Community Group/Cartmel Townscape Initiative, SLDC and CCC	2014
	v. Raise public awareness of the Cartmel conservation area's built heritage. Protect the village from inappropriate changes to properties.	Develop a conservation management plan for Cartmel	Cartmel Village Society, SLDC	2013
	vi. Seek to protect green spaces within villages and the surrounding countryside from inappropriate developments	<p>PC to commission interest group to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify landscape, environmental, and wildlife features of significance • draft strategy for PC approval 	Countryside Group to work with other statutory and voluntary bodies	2013
	vii. Protect and enhance existing levels of access to the local countryside	Review existing CCC footpath document with view to improve provision.	Active Travel Group, CCC	2014

	viii. Seek to enhance and develop the village centre in Allithwaite	Review permissive footpaths/public access areas and seek to persuade landowners to introduce/expand network where possible PC to seek ideas and fund appropriate projects where affordable	Allithwaite Community Group	2014
1c. Green issues Aim: To encourage the take-up of environmental initiatives appropriate to local community level	i. Improve waste recycling arrangements ii. Encourage small scale renewable energy schemes which do not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding countryside iii. Meet demand for ground to grow own produce by increasing the number of allotments and suitable garden areas as needed <i>Encourage greater use of public transport to reduce community's carbon footprint (see Amenities and Services)</i>	PC to lobby SLDC for earliest possible rollout of plastic and cardboard recycling. PC to work with G&C LAP and CCC to maintain household waste recycling site PC to draw up acceptable parameters. Where appropriate, encourage and support interest groups, local businesses and community groups, offering an initial point of reference. Explore the possibility of creating new allotments in new housing developments.	PC , SLDC , G&C LAP , CCC PC, planning officers and groups as schemes arise PC statutory responsibility	2013 Ongoing Ongoing
1d. Traffic – congestion, parking and road safety Aim: To balance the needs of increasing	i. Review parking provision for residents, businesses and visitors in order to reduce the congestion caused by inappropriate parking in villages, improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety. ii. Promote safer use of road system	Commission survey work in both villages, draw up action plan and initiate actions; in Cartmel this to be part of a wider holistic review. PC to influence provision in new developments. PC to make P4C (Paths for	PC, Cartmel Townscape Initiative, Allithwaite Community Group with CCC and SLDC Active Travel Group,	2013 2013

numbers of vehicle users with the protection of the local environment and quality of everyday life.	generally and in particular easier and safer pedestrian and cycling access both within and between villages ('active travel'): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make pedestrian and cycle routes safer and more enjoyable • Improve the extent and quality of disabled access • Reduce the danger of speeding vehicles on country roads and lanes 	Communities) bid for Allithwaite. Review pedestrian access routes within villages and work with other PCs to commission a wider review and action improved routes between villages. New developments to incorporate appropriate provision.	G&C LAP, CCC, SLDC, Cartmel Townscape Initiative	
2a. Housing Aim: To ensure that housing provision meets genuine local need with minimum detrimental impact on local environment	<p>i. Achieve more control of future building developments by local community</p> <p>ii. Ensure housing stock meets local affordable needs and enables local people of all ages to continue to reside within the local area.</p> <p>iii. Ensure new housing developments meet the aspirations of low density and appropriate design; seek to bring empty properties back into use.</p> <p>iv. Monitor and mitigate the impact of second home/holiday let ownership on community life</p>	<p>Explore the potential benefits of developing a Neighbourhood Plan and initiate action if feasible.</p> <p>Monitor delivery and explore opportunities to deliver affordable housing with the G&C LAP and Cumbria Rural Housing Trust.</p> <p>PC work actively with planners and developers to achieve aspirations</p> <p>Encourage involvement in village life, e.g. through newsletters. Monitor numbers, using data to influence the proportion of affordable houses in future housing developments</p>	<p>PC , SLDC, G&C LAP</p> <p>PC, SLDC, G&C LAP, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust</p> <p>PC, SLDC</p> <p>PC, SLDC</p>	<p>2014</p> <p>2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
2b/c. Business and employment, events and visitors	<p>i. Encourage and support events for the local community.</p> <p>ii. Aim to manage and reduce disruption to the local community</p>	<p>PC engage with and support and encourage local event organisers.</p> <p>PC monitor impact and work proactively with providers and others</p>	<p>PC and community groups</p> <p>PC, Cartmel Townscape Initiative</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2013</p>

<p>Aim: To help enable local businesses to thrive – for the benefit of all - without a detrimental impact on the local community and the attractiveness of the area to visitors; particularly to support events which enhance the experience of community</p>	<p>caused by major events.</p> <p>iii. Enhance the visitor experience by improving signage, information and the general attractiveness of the local area <i>(see also 1a and b)</i></p> <p>iv. Ensure adequate toilet provision in both villages</p> <p>v. Support local employment opportunities</p> <p>vi. Help ensure the survival of local shops</p> <p><i>Support local businesses with the provision of an affordable fast broadband service (see Amenities and Services)</i></p>	<p>to ensure minimum disruption</p> <p>PC commission groups to review visitor access and information and undertake improvements as appropriate. Seek sponsor partners to assist funding.</p> <p>PC to assess need, monitor existing provision and seek to enhance provision in Allithwaite.</p> <p>PC monitor new business premises applications through the planning process and support where appropriate.</p> <p>PC to explore needs with local traders and, where possible, encourage and support services provided.</p>	<p>PC, Allithwaite Community Group, Cartmel Townscape Initiative, Cartmel Village Society, Cartmel Traders, Countryside Group, Active Travel Group</p> <p>PC and community groups.</p> <p>PC, SLDC</p> <p>PC</p>	<p>2014</p> <p>2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>2d. Amenities and Services</p> <p>Aim: To enhance local quality of life by helping make day to day living easier and more enjoyable in a family friendly locality.</p>	<p>i. Encourage the increased use of public transport</p> <p>ii. Seek to improve broadband provision across the locality</p> <p>iii. Develop an emergency plan to</p>	<p>PC to take active steps to influence timetable connections, including evening provision and access for elderly and disabled passengers. Support and promote Community Transport schemes in newsletters.</p> <p>PC continue to work proactively with CCC and providers.</p> <p>Commission an initial response plan</p>	<p>PC , Active Travel Group, G&C LAP</p> <p>PC, CCC, broadband providers</p> <p>PC, statutory and</p>	<p>2014</p> <p>2013</p> <p>2015</p>

	ensure people in the locality are cared for in extreme conditions	to ensure people are looked after in the event of severe weather or other emergencies	voluntary bodies	
	iv. Improve the provision of care for the elderly and disabled in their own home	PC support and promote initiatives from voluntary bodies, e.g. Age UK ('village agents')	PC, statutory and voluntary bodies	Ongoing
	v. Increase the pool of volunteers within the community willing to offer a service to the young, disabled and elderly	PC to support as appropriate the work of voluntary organisations and G&C LAP initiatives	PC, statutory and voluntary bodies	Ongoing
	vi. Help ensure that local schools survive and flourish as a key service to local families present and future	PC to support and promote the work of the schools.	PC, local schools	Ongoing
	vii. Help ensure adequate provision of out-of-school activities for youngsters of both primary and secondary age	PC to support and promote the work of youth organisations. Identify any major gaps in provision and work with partners to bring about improvements.	PC and youth groups	Ongoing

ANNEX 1: CONSULTATION PROCESSES

In February 2011 drop-in consultation events were held in both Allithwaite and Cartmel. These were designed to raise awareness of the Parish Council's intentions to develop a full Community Plan. Using the chief issues from the 2009 Parish Statement as a starting point they sought responses from the public on a range of local issues, including proposals for land allocation for building development. Open-ended questions prompted the public to put forward a wide range of issues.

This initial Plan launch was followed up around Easter 2011 by a letter issued through the local media, an information leaflet delivered to every household and suggestion boxes located at various points in Cartmel and Allithwaite. The email and phone details of members of the Community Plan group were publicised.

Over the coming weeks various members of the group reached out to a large number of individuals via local clubs and community activities to consult and raise awareness. These included:

- Allithwaite and Cartmel sports clubs
- Allithwaite businesses
- Allithwaite carnival
- Allithwaite Community Hall
- Allithwaite Institute
- Allithwaite over-60s
- Cartmel Allotment holders
- Cartmel food market
- Cartmel over-60s
- Cartmel scouts
- Cartmel Show
- Cartmel Traders
- Cartmel Village Society
- Women's Institute
- Young Farmers
- Schools: Cartmel Priory secondary school and Cartmel and Allithwaite primary schools.

Including the earlier drop-in sessions, the total number of responses received was approximately 100, with in addition 70 pupils involved across the three schools. The total of all the comments received, collated as a basis for framing the questionnaire, numbered 209.

In the case of the schools members of the Community Plan group, supported by the experience of Young Cumbria, worked with groups of pupils to identify what they appreciated about where they lived and what they would like improved. Since the household questionnaire was unlikely to prove particularly accessible to youngsters, the key outcomes from these exercises were carried forward into the final Plan in their own right.

Subsequent to the questionnaire process a bulletin email system was set up to maintain contact with subscribers. In addition public updates have been maintained through Grange Now, the Westmorland Gazette, parish magazines, Parish Council noticeboards and village websites.

ANNEX 2: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lower Allithwaite Parish Council is grateful to the Community Plan group for producing this Plan and steering the process from which it emerged. It also appreciates the generous professional guidance of Julia Wilson, Project Team Manager at Action with Communities in Cumbria, and Emma Nichols, Community Engagement Officer at South Lakeland District Council.

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Members of the Community Group have been:

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ANNEX 3: CONTACTS

For further information about the Community Plan and its progress contact David Huggett, Chairman of Lower Allithwaite Parish Council (davidl.huggett@virgin.net; telephone 015395 36378), or Phil Turner, Clerk to the Parish Council (lapc.clerk@gmail.com; telephone 015395 32639).

The Community Plan may be accessed online at www.allithwaite.com/parish-notice and www.cartmelvillage.com/parishnews, where future updates relating to the Plan will also be found. Related information is also hosted on the Have Your Say Consultation Hub at www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria/other-public-sector (listed under Closed Consultations).

Printed copies of the full Community Plan are held by the Parish Council and deposited with Grange-over-Sands public library for reference.