

Sebergham Parish Council Incorporating the villages of Sebergham and Welton

Parish Plan 2011

Introduction

The Government Rural White Paper “Our countryside, the future”, published in 2000, states

“... Parish Plans are an important step in helping local rural communities to take charge of their own destinies and also an opportunity to strengthen the first, and most local, form of government we have in this country”

Parish Plans, now called “Community Led Plans”, have **no** statutory powers – they represent the wishes and aspirations of all members of a Parish, for the future direction and development of communities.

Their strength lies on the fact that they represent a majority opinion in a community. They provide a positive mandate for policy and decision making by Parish Councils and other local bodies.

They can be used to make a case **that demonstrably reflects local opinion** to local Government and planning authorities, and to other public and private bodies. Increasingly grant funding bodies and local authorities look for evidence of need provided in Parish Plans before considering project funding.

A Parish Plan allows the Parish Council and community groups to access funding and support for schemes that will benefit us all.

Background to the Sebergham-Welton Parish Plan

Under the sponsorship of the Parish Council, a Parish Plan steering group was brought together to discuss how to formulate a plan for our Parish.

The validity of a Parish Plan is based upon consultation with residents of a parish.

We decided that a comprehensive questionnaire would be the best way to achieve this, to get the broadest range of opinions from residents.

In addition, the Headmistress of Welton School, Sue Watson, kindly agreed to run a mini-questionnaire of our younger residents, which proved enlightening!

It was felt that many Parish Plans turn out to be expensive glossy documents, which just give a statistical analysis of questionnaire responses, with a list of aspirations attached, which is quickly recycled, as well as being unnecessarily expensive.

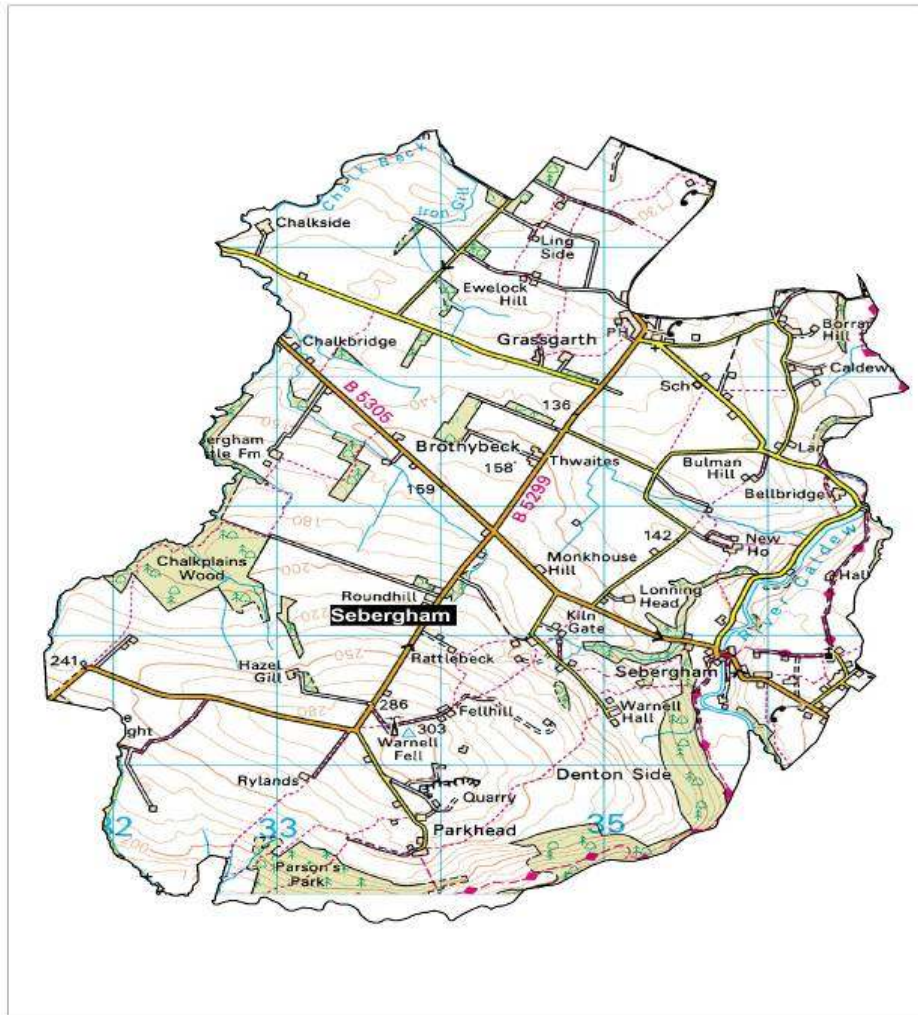
The purpose of the consultation is to highlight the issues in the Parish and produce an Action Plan which will guide the Parish Council.

The **Action Plan is the heart of a Community-led Plan**, and we felt that the document should reflect this, and we have tried to avoid it being a long-winded précis of the questionnaire.

We were also fortunate in being able to have access to the results of Allerdale’s most recent Housing Survey for the parish.

The Parish of Sebergham and Welton

The parish stretches from the edge of Caldbeck village, over Warnell Fell to Nether Welton, and from Chalkbridge and Chalkside to Sebergham and Churchtown. Goose Green is the geographical centre of the parish, and the parish includes the Cumbria Way footpath as it passes through Parsons Park and along the Caldew River.



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At the time of the 2001 census, the population of the parish was 361, with 129 households.

In terms of population, our parish is half the size of Caldbeck.

Age of the people who live in Sebergham Parish

Age Range 2001	ALL PEOPLE	0 – 4	5 – 15	16 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 – 74	75 +
Count	361	28	58	29	109	84	30	23
%		7.8	16.1	8.0	30.2	23.3	8.3	6.4

(Source: Cumbria County Council)

The average age in the parish (from the 2001 census) is 37 years. The number of people aged 16-24 is well below the Cumbria average.

The median income in the parish is £34,700 (as at 2007)

Table 2b: Households by Type in Sebergham Parish – there are a lower number of one person households in the parish compared to the Allerdale average

Household Type	Count	%	Allerdale %	Cumbria %	North West %
All households	129	100	100	100	100
One person households (excl. pensioners)	10	7.8	13.4	14.3	15.9
Pensioner households	27	20.9	26.1	26.6	23.9
Couples with dependent children	37	28.7	20.9	22.0	22.7
Lone parents with dependent children	3	2.3	5.7	5.5	7.7
Households with non - dependent children	16	12.4	10.7	9.8	10.3
Households with no children	28	21.7	19.1	19.3	16.4
All other households	8	6.2	4.1	2.5	3.1

(Source: Cumbria County Council /Census 2001)

Almost a quarter (25%) of dwellings in the parish are rented.

The largest single employer in the parish is Steadmans of Warnell Fell manufacturing metal roofing and cladding systems, although only one of the questionnaire respondents is employed there.

57% of households relate most closely to Welton, with 28% relating closely to Sebergham, 3% to Rosley, and (surprisingly) 12% relate most closely to Caldbeck.

46% of households in the parish have lived here for more than 21 years, with 88% having been here for 6 years or more.

Alternatively, a third of households (33%) have lived in the parish for 10 years or less.

57% of respondents did not grow up in the area of the parish, with some 43% who spent some of all of their childhood here.

Nearly half of working households are self employed.

A third of all working households are involved in agriculture.

The Issues – What the Children Think

Every pupil at Welton Village School completed a short questionnaire, as their contribution to community consultation on a Parish Plan.
We felt it best to just list their comments.

Things I like about living in this area

Peaceful; it's quiet; privacy; it's small
Can see the stars clearly; no light pollution
Wildlife; see animals and birds
Nice views; trees to climb and hide behind
School
You know everybody
Some people are nice; everyone is nice
Not much traffic- not many cars

Things I don't like about living in this area

Not many people; not many friends; friends live too far away
No park; nowhere to play; nothing to do
Fast cars on main road; people speeding
No shop; no sweetshop
Not many clubs for young people;
No swimming pool; nowhere to ride bikes
Not many footpaths
Having to travel everywhere by car
Too wet; fields everywhere

Things I would like to see in this area

Shop; sweetshop; toyshop; clothes shop; car shop; petrol station
Play park; play area; indoor play area; sports centre
More footpaths; more cycle paths
Buses; more clubs; more houses
Casino!

Our younger residents are very ambitious!

Actions

To provide more recreation facilities within parish—play and games areas (both outdoor and indoor)

The Issues - Policing and Crime

9% of households in the parish indicated that they have suffered some form of theft or burglary in the past two years, three households having had two or more crimes committed. This seems to be a surprisingly high figure for a rural parish, and certainly more than was expected.

Some 15% of households know who the Community Police Officer is, and how to contact him. This is probably a reasonable number, but one that we should aim to increase, as one person commented: "there is a lack of any police presence, or support".

Over three-quarters of households, an overwhelming number, would like to see a neighbourhood watch scheme put in place.

A small number of households in the parish are already part of a watch scheme (this may be the Farm Watch Scheme). It would therefore appear that a parish-wide neighbourhood watch schemes should be initiated.

Actions

- Liaise with the Community Police Officer and area Police Inspector, to improve the profile of the CPO within the parish.
- To provide CPO contact details on parish website and noticeboards.
- To include the police and crime reports for the area on the parish website.
- To set up neighbourhood watch schemes throughout the parish.
- To seek volunteers to become Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators.

The Issues - Play and Recreation Areas

Apart from the small scale children's play areas at Welton school, there are no other outdoor recreation facilities in the two villages.

Amongst the Welton Schoolchildren, there is **extremely** strong support for play areas.

There is support for children's play areas to be situated at Churchtown (possibly the Old School), and at Welton (the school, village hall, or Welton Green).

There was a feeling that Welton Green is under-used, with comments of "a wasted opportunity" "a green desert".

".....there are no local clubs for young people".

Would a tennis court facility be wanted and used by teenagers and older residents?

Actions

- Investigate grant funding for play areas.
- Set up "Play Area Groups" of interested parties, in Welton and Sebergham/ Churchtown, to develop plans.
- Investigate the potential for games court facilities, and potential funding.
- Consider the usage of the Welton Village Green.

The Issues - Welton Village School

96% of respondents felt that having the school was important, or very important, to the parish.

With the ongoing viability of the school dependent on numbers of pupils, the low level of families in the parish, must be an ongoing concern.

This raises the concern of having a sustainable community. Some comments in the survey were:

“Bring in young families – through affordable housing”

“Support school numbers by building more houses”.

The long-term future of the school is likely to be closely linked to what housing development takes place within the parish.

There was strong support for using the school facilities after school hours, although what facilities may be available, or what people want, is unclear.

Use of outdoor play area was a particular suggestion.

The Headteacher, Sue Watson, has very kindly allowed usage of the school computer facility for training sessions when the Parish website was being set up, and has also hosted meetings of the Parish Plan Steering Group.

Actions

- Approach Welton School as to what facilities could be available.
- Investigate the possibility of extending and improving the play area for community use.
- Clarify the out of hours usage of the play area.

The Issues - Housing and Development

Is there a need in the parish for additional housing?

There is a feeling expressed in the survey responses that the long-term future of the school depends on having more younger families in the area.

One survey response was: "extra houses; only if there is a real need – we don't know how great that need is"

Actually, we do. We were lucky to have access to the Allerdale Housing Needs Survey which clearly establishes the need for at least a further nine homes in the parish.

"Recommendation: Analysis shows that 9 affordable units are needed in the parish of Sebergham between 2007-12: 2 x 2-bedroom houses for rent, 1 x 3-bedroom house for rent, 3 x 2 bedroom affordable houses, 1 x 3-bedroom affordable house, 1 x 4-bedroom affordable house, 1 x 2-bedroom affordable bungalow."

(Source: Allerdale BC; Sebergham Parish Housing Market Assessment)

The community view is somewhat split, with 60% being in favour of more housing, and 40% against.

There is evidence that some family members have moved away from the parish due to a lack of housing, and a number of responses indicated that family members would move to the area if there was sufficient housing stock.

The Parish Plan survey indicated that if there are to be extra houses they should be considered in both Sebergham and Welton, and also most notably at Warnell. In addition many would like to see single new houses outside of the villages .

Some comments from the questionnaire:

"More housing – get some young blood in"

"Make it easier to convert redundant farm buildings"

"Ease planning for affordable homes".

Even with this evidence, the local authorities have a "no new-build" policy in and around villages that are not considered "sustainable".

Welton And Sebergham are not considered "sustainable" because of the lack of facilities and infrastructure.

There was reasonable support for infrastructure development in the form of mains sewerage being installed in the two villages.

Actions

- Approach United Utilities to investigate feasibility of installing sewerage systems.
- Liaise with Allerdale BC how to develop future housing strategy (wrt housing and parish survey results).
- Identify suitable land for housing, in conjunction with planning authority.
- Seek resident's views on other developments (eg. wind turbines).

The Issues - Public and Mobile Telephone; Internet and Broadband Connection

A majority of households (65%) have difficulties with mobile phone signals, or are limited in which provider network they can use.

Interestingly, as many as (9%) of households do not have a mobile phone.

Although the majority of residents do not regularly use public telephones, a significant number wish to retain the present number in the parish, whilst a few feel that more public telephones are needed. There is strong support for the retention of public telephones as a public and community facility.

The survey indicates that at least 17% of households do not have internet access at all. As it is likely that these will be the more elderly in our communities, it is important that they are not discriminated against, and disenfranchised, by the steamroller insistence of Government and organisations that everything has to be done "online".

For those that do have internet connection, and a good number do have broadband, nearly half of households complain of problems with their connection. Even those with broadband connections generally complain of its slowness. As one respondent wrote "good broadband access is vital for all of us".

With regard to the BT telephone and broadband infrastructure the parish is served by the Raughton Head exchange. The entire network from the exchange is based on copper wire lines. There is no prospect in the near to medium term of upgrading the BT network to a fibre optic network.

BT Openreach has a general policy of upgrading lines to the highest specification where repair work is being carried out. This has happened recently in the Churchtown area with a high specification copper wire line being placed. However the capacity of any line is only as good as the weakest component.

Actions

- Approach Cumbria County Council (C.C.C.) to enquire as to what steps are being taken to improve the broadband network infrastructure in the parish.
- Approach BT Openreach to enquire as to what steps are being taken to improve the BT network infrastructure in the parish.
- Approach BT Openreach to press for long term retention of public telephones in the parish.
- Press Local Government Authorities (CCC and Allerdale BC) to maintain and improve non-online access to services.
- Consider approaching mobile telephone network operators to increase coverage of the parish.
- Maintain a watching brief of broadband developments within the County
- Develop relationships with other organisations, such as 'Northern Fells Broadband', in order to access pilot scheme funding which may be available in the future and also to develop greater negotiating power with suppliers.

The Issues - Roads and Traffic

Not surprisingly, the poor state of road surfaces, and speeding traffic were major issues in almost all the questionnaire responses, with many people indicating specific problem area.

One respondent would like to see stocks set up on Welton Green for all speeding motorists to be put into!

There is very little that the Parish Council can do about these matters, except constantly bringing them to the attention of the relevant statutory bodies (CCC, CAPITA Highways, Cumbria Police).

It often carries more weight if these agencies receive several reports, (eg. of potholes) and we would encourage every resident to contact Capita to report potholes, and contact the Community Police Officer about speeding vehicles.

Minor maintenance (not potholes repair) is carried out by the area Highway Steward, and any matters suitable for the steward can be passed through the Parish Council Liaison (Peter Pearson – details on website/ parish notice boards).

Actions

- Capita Road Hotline number available to all residents.
- Encourage reporting of potholes/ speeding by all residents.
- Parish Council to press for regular updates on road repairs from Highways Authorities.
- Press highways authority to place rumble strips on B5305 eastern side of Sebergham (countdown to 40 mph speed limit zone).
- Press highways authority to place “stop” signs at Goose Green junctions.

The Issues - Footpaths

The majority of households in the parish use the local footpaths from time to time, with some making regular use of them for recreation. They are also a valuable resource for visitors staying in the parish, particularly those using the various holiday lodges.

There was some concern about the state of some of the paths. The Parish Council has been actively pressing for repairs to the Cumbria Way footpath through Parson's Park.

As many of the footpaths were originally routes for agricultural workers, they do not always join up, or allow a circular walk.

Actions

- Sponsor the formation of a Parish Path Support Group.
- Consider projects to improve the parish path network.
- Apply through the "Parish Path Initiative" for grant funding for developing, advertising, and mapping our path network.
- Create a large scale map showing footpaths and quiet lanes available for visitors and locals to use. (Link to PPI funding)
- Link on Parish website to directly report footpath problems to Path Officer at Allerdale B.C.

The Issues - Public Transport

Bus services through the parish are felt to be very poor (in terms of times, routes, and frequency). However, there is a general lack of knowledge as to what services are available.

Whilst there are good and regular bus services from Dalston Bridge End directly into Carlisle, and via Durdar, there is only an extremely limited service through Welton on a Wednesday to Carlisle, and on a Saturday to Caldbeck and Keswick (during holiday periods this service becomes more frequent, and daily in the summer).

Many feel that a bus service is essential to the community, and a significant number indicated that they or their families would use the bus if there was a regular and conveniently timed service.

Many people would like to see a better service, ideally daily, to Carlisle and a regular service between Wigton and Penrith.

The minibus service organised by the Northern Fells Group is well known about, and appreciated, but most people have their own transport arrangements.

Actions

- Parish website to show/ link to timetables for present services.
- Make bus timetables available through the Parish.
- Press local authorities (CCC., Allerdale BC, Eden BC.) to consider bus services between Wigton and Penrith, and describe their bus service plans.
- Liaise with Caldbeck Parish Council (and others) to consider joint action on a Penrith-Wigton bus route.
- Press local authorities (CCC., Allerdale BC, Eden BC.) to consider more frequent bus services between the parish and Carlisle, and describe their bus service plans.
- Liaise with Caldbeck Parish Council (and others) to consider joint action on a Caldbeck- Carlisle bus route.

The Issues - Parking in Churchtown

This raised many comments, from complaints about verge damage, dangers to young children, to obstruction of the highway and notice board.

The Parish Council has set up a sub-committee to try to bring together the various groups with an interest in this issue.

The Parish Council has no power or authority to take any enforcement action, or impose a solution, but has been trying to get the statutory authorities (Planning, Highways, Police) to resolve the problems.

Although some of the problems are perceived to arise from the garage business, the garage is valued as a resource for the community.

Actions

- To review the work of the PC sub-committee.
- To ensure the reporting of offences of “unnecessary obstruction” to the Community Police Officer.

The Issues - The Community

There is good awareness of the Northern Fells Group and its activities, although most respondents do not use (or have need of at present) the services that NFG provides. The NFG provides holiday youth clubs, lunch clubs, activities groups, and minibus transport.

There are village halls in both Welton and Sebergham, and the Old School hall in Churchtown.

They are available for hire by groups and private individuals and can be used for fundraising and social events.

Although there are a number of events that take place in the halls, some sponsored by Solway Arts (recently a touring theatre group at Welton, jazz evenings), these are often poorly supported.

From the survey however, there were comments of “we need more events to support”. There was also a long list of classes and events that people suggested take place.

There are difficulties in adequately advertising events, but this is being partly addressed by a “what's-on” section on the parish website.

There was support for having social events for the parish or villages e.g summer BBQ.

Actions

- Support the Northern Fells Group in their activities.
- Encourage more residents to support the NFG by becoming a member.
- Parish Council to provide appropriate support to the village hall management committees, as needed.
- Encourage formation of an “Events Group” to organise specific social events at each village hall.
- Encourage residents to support varied events at the Village Halls, by buying tickets in advance.

The Issues - Events notices and Parish Council Communication

About half of households use the parish noticeboards to seek information about events/ meetings within and around the parish.

A number of people find that they are not in convenient locations.

Sebergham residents do receive the Caldbeck Parish Church magazine, which lists future events, but Welton events are not listed in this, and non-church events are not listed in the Welton/ Rosley/ Westward/ Thursby magazine.

On behalf of the Parish Council Michael Stockdale has set up a parish website (www.seberghamwelton.org.uk) which includes pages from the churches, village halls and community groups within the parish.

It is funded by the Parish council, and provides a source of information for both parish residents and non-residents.

Suggestions as to the future development of the website pages should be made to the Parish Council.

The website also provides details on contacting individual parish councillors, and email to the parish clerks and councillors.

Actions

- Consider siting additional parish notice-boards (Warnell, Sebergham Bridge lay-by)
- Placing flagstones/ bollards at the relocated Churchtown/ Sebergham notice board.
- Approach church magazine editors with a view to greater promotion of events in parish and surrounding area.
- Consider feasibility of a parish email database with view to advertising events by email.

Acknowledgements and Support from:

Chairman & Members of Sebergham Parish Council

Members of the Parish Plan Steering Group

Voluntary Action Cumbria

Head Teacher, Pupils & Staff, of Welton School

Allerdale Borough Council