

VRLP002772 NW

PARISH OF CUMWHITTON

PARISH PLAN

SPRING 2004

COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY
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HAWSWATER ROAD
PENRITH
CUMBRIA CA11 7EH

CONTENTS

- Introduction
- The Parish
- Environment And Planning
- Parish Hall
- Youth And Younger People
- Heritage
- Communications
- Leisure, Education And Sport
- Transport
- Highways
- Community Partnership

PARISH OF CUMWHITTON

We acknowledge the financial support given to this project by the Countryside Agency through its 'Vital Villages' Scheme. Without this help the plan would not have got off the ground.

The assistance of the team from Voluntary Action Cumbria was also greatly appreciated.

Finally, we thank the many parishioners who have contributed their thoughts and ideas towards this plan.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARISH PLAN

There is a government initiative to improve the quality of life of those who live in rural areas. Through the Countryside Agency and its 'Vital Villages' scheme the government aims to support rural communities to take stock of their parish, identify what they need and ensure local people have a voice in their future and make their own decisions about local improvements.

The Parish Plan aims to obtain local views on environment, social, transport and housing needs and to prepare plans for the development of the parish in line with these views.

METHOD

Cumwhitton Parish Council agreed to ask for the help of Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC) through the Countryside Agency to develop a Parish Plan.

A group of parishioners representing different aspects of the community were brought together to form a working group. This group decided to obtain the views of all the parishioners by way of a questionnaire. The questions were wide ranging and allowed for individual responses on the most important subjects. Both closed and open questions based on software provided by VAC were included. The closed questions could be analysed directly by the computer and the open questions assessed individually before being included in the overall analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Each residence was visited and the questionnaires were given to residents personally when that was possible. Two weeks later they were collected in a sealed envelope. The replies were anonymous and unidentifiable.

Analysis was carried out over a period of two months after which time the results were presented to the parishioners at an open meeting held towards the end of November 2003.

Responses were obtained from 206 (75%) of residents and 74 (68%) of householders.

INTRODUCTION

The following headings are an attempt to highlight the most important features that the questionnaire has produced. Identifying such features is of little point unless action is taken to rectify them. Some of these factors such as roads, transport, communications and the Parish Hall are the responsibility of the Parish Council and it will be prevailed upon to respond. Others, for example, youth and children's activities, social, educational and recreational opportunities are not really in the remit of the Parish Council. It is suggested therefore that another group (without the legal and other restraints of the Parish Council) should be formed to take on these aspects of development in the parish. This could be called the 'Community Partnership' and could bring together and co-ordinate all the resources in the parish to develop these recreational and other services.

A separate heading under Community Partnership, takes this idea further.

'Action Plans' are included which are suggestions as to the way forward but they are not written in stone and are open to discussion. However, not everything is possible and it would be wrong to raise expectations beyond that which can be achieved.

The priorities for action decided by the parishioners are as follows:-

- Facilities for young people
- Planning and environment
- Parish Hall refurbishment
- Communications
- Leisure, education and sporting facilities
- Transport and highways
- Local heritage

INTRODUCTION

The first stage is to create a plan, the second is to implement the proposals put forward.

The response to the questionnaire was fantastic. All we need now is the help and support of those who responded so enthusiastically to make things happen for the benefit of everyone in Cumwhiton Parish.

A summary of the findings of the questionnaire has been circulated to every household in the parish. However, should anyone wish to see the results in more detail, they may be obtained from any member of the working group.

The Parish Plan Working Group:

Tony Brown
Tony Fenton
Ian Macfadyen
Raymond Potter
Jenny Robley
Martin Rook
Tracy Watt

Elaine Watson and Leah Cameron acted as clerk.

We should like to acknowledge the help of John Hinchliff and Deirdre Brown in the production of this plan.

THE PARISH

"Cumwhitton Parish lies on the east side of the River Eden and is bounded on the north by Great Corby, on the south by Leath ward, on the east by Cumrew and Carlatton and on the west by the above named river."

"...the soil is light and stony, producing barley, oats, a little wheat and excellent potatoes. The climate is cold but invigorating and healthy."

"...formerly on the village green were two artificial mounds which had been used as butts when the stout yeomen of Cumberland prided themselves upon their skill in archery."

Extracted from 'the
Directory of East
Cumberland'
T F Bulmer. 1884

The Parish of Cumwhitton lies to the east of the River Eden and this river acts as it's boundary between Brocklewath in the north and Holmwrangle in the south. The Cairn Beck is the border of the northwest aspect of the parish and it flows from Hazelgill to the most northerly point at Cairn Bridge. The north easterly and south westerly borders wind in a largely random manner between these points.

The parish is rural and the main industry is agriculture and related businesses. In recent years the number employed in agriculture has declined but there has been a considerable increase in those who live in the area but work in Carlisle and surrounding areas.

The largest centre of population is the village of Cumwhitton with smaller residential areas in Hornsby and Moorthwaite.

The 1991 census (the 2001 results are not available) showed that there were 132 residences and 261 adults in the parish. This has increased as a result of new building in Cumwhitton and Hornsby and the conversion of some agricultural buildings for residential use elsewhere in the parish.

The village has the attractive and ancient Church of St Mary's, a Parish Hall that is over 100 years old and a thriving pub 'The Pheasant Inn'. Sadly the village shop and post office closed several years ago.

There is an irregular and largely inconvenient bus service and most people travel by car, bicycle and foot.

THE PARISH

"I like everything about living in this area..."

"I think the preservation of our unique cultural and historic sites should form a major part of any Parish Plan..."

Parish Questionnaire
2003

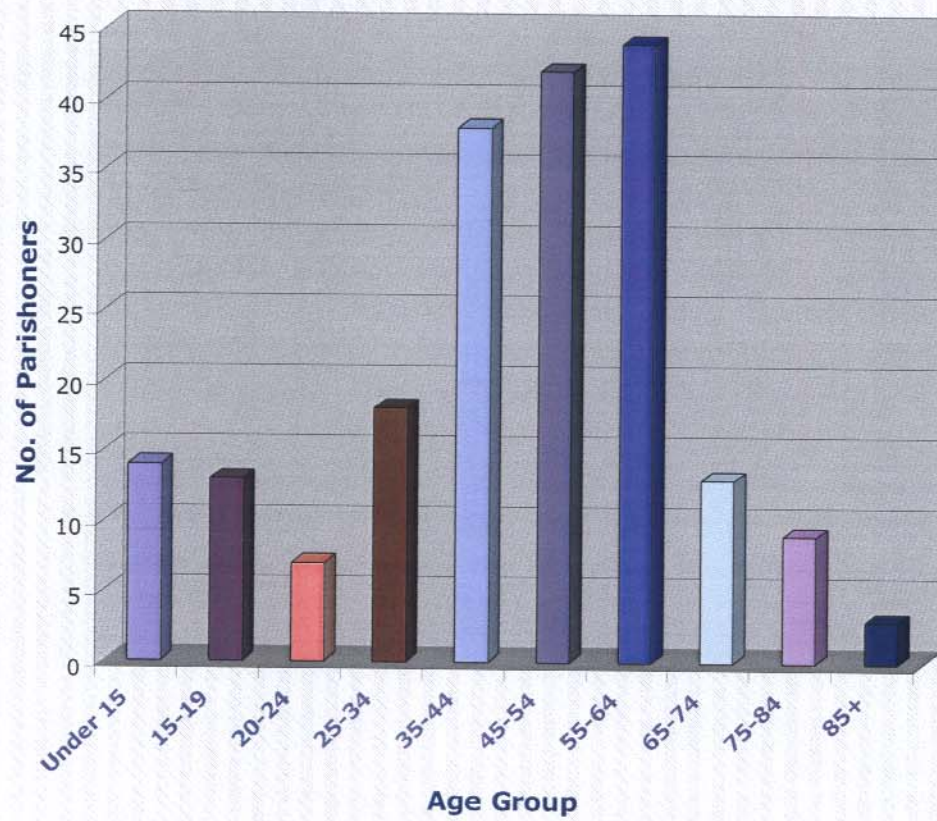
"The villages that lie in the Eden valley include a few which are more like fell side villages. Cumwhitton is one of these. It's red sandstone houses and farms would seem to breed good darts players if the number of certificates hanging in the 'Red Lion' are anything to go by..."

'Cumbrian Villages'
Kenneth Smith. 1973

In those households that responded to the questionnaire the age groups of the occupants show that the major number of parishioners are in the 25 to 65 group but with a significant number of young people. The older people are an important minority in the community. Figure 1 shows this more clearly.

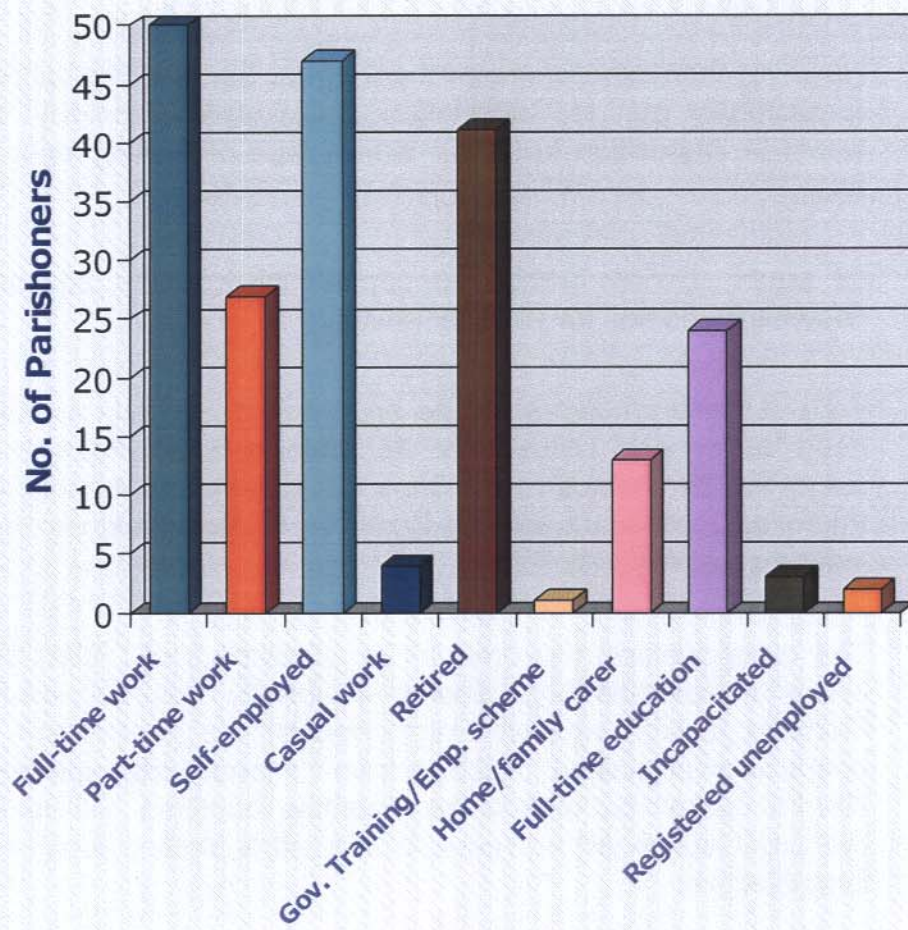
Employment in the parish is high with the great majority self employed or in full or part-time work. The number of retired people and those in full time education reflects the age groups in the parish. A small but valuable number are those who have a full time occupation looking after home and family. These results are shown in figure 2.

Fig. 1 AGE GROUP



November 2003

Fig. 2. EMPLOYMENT STATUS



November 2003

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

A great majority of those who responded to questions on the environment enjoy living in the area because of the rural atmosphere, the attractive scenery and the tranquillity of the parish.

However there was some concern about the new residential building (presumably that in Cumwhitton and possibly Hornsby) and there would be opposition to further similar type of development within the area.

Of equal concern within the community was the absence of low cost/starter homes for younger adults.

Both of these problems can be approached by firstly establishing the need for low cost houses and determining those areas which are at risk of further development. Once this knowledge is available the City Planning Department and the Cumbria Housing Trust can be involved in future residential building.

The questionnaire also brought up concerns about litter, dog fouling and anti social and illegal tipping of rubbish. Voluntary clearing up of roadside rubbish was well supported by the parishioners and only needs to be organised. Rubbish from old landfill sites will require more effort to remove but these sites should be identified. Co-operation with the City Council will be required and extra funding found to achieve this objective.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Recycling was mentioned by many who responded and again the City Council would need to be approached for skips and the necessary funding to provide and service them.

Some concern was expressed about the poor state of some of the hedgerows. It was suggested that a plan for tree planting in hedgerows over the next 5 years would produce a substantial improvement. Undoubtedly this would cost money but there appears to be grants available for this task which have been applied for successfully in other parts of the country.

Comments have been made quite correctly about the use or misuse of public funds in attempts to maintain areas of special scientific interest within the parish. It is suggested that a group of interested parishioners be formed to establish links with these bodies and co-ordinate the management of these sites. This should not require funding!

ACTION PLAN – PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Action	Method	Priority	Partners	Time Scale	Leader	Cost
Define need for low cost Starter homes	Carry out formal survey to establish accurate need	High	Cumbria Rural Housing Trust	1 year	Parish Council	Nil
Preservation/ Protection of current surroundings	Establish and define boundaries for areas considered at risk	Medium	City Planning Department	2 Years	Parish Council	Nil
Clean up litter	Establish volunteer group. Obtain sacks, pickers, gloves etc	High	City Council	Ongoing	Parish Council	Nil
Removal of old fly tip rubbish	Liaise with Landowners and Countryside Agency. Remove to landfill site	Medium	City Council Countryside Agency DEFRA	2 Years	Parish Council	Nil
Recycling facility	Carry out formal survey to establish need	High	DEFRA City Council ?	Ongoing	Parish Council	Nil
Tree planting of verges	Establish plan to replace trees in hedgerows	Medium	The Tree Council English Nature DEFRA	5 Years	Parish Council	10% Parish Budget
Improved Traffic and Directional Signs	Lobby Highways Dept.	High	City Council Highways Dept.	2 Years	Parish Council	10% Parish Budget
Conservation of Cumwhitton /Moorthwaite Mosses and other wildlife habitat	Identify key areas, prepare conservation plan for development and maintenance	Medium	English Nature Environment Agency DEFRA	Ongoing	Parish Council	Nil

THE PARISH HALL

The Parish Hall

The Parish Hall is a solidly built single storey building over 100 years old. It contains a single large hall, kitchen and toilet facilities. The last upgrading of the hall was carried out 25 years ago, since when the condition of the hall has deteriorated. In particular the toilets are now of a poor standard. Recent investigations have shown that the ceiling is in a dangerous condition.

Over the years the hall has been used by playgroups, W.I. Young Farmers, Parish Council, Luncheon Club and for private functions. However, recently its use has declined and it is now used perhaps four or five times a month.

The cost to the parish in insurance, water maintenance and electricity is now approximately £1200 per annum and has become a burden to the community.

The Parish Plan shows clearly that there is a demand for the hall for social and educational functions. There were over 300 positive responses from the parishioners who said they would support functions in a refurbished hall.

Young parishioners need a centre for gathering after school and during the holidays – at present the hall is not suitable for this function.

The development of activities for older residents, such as afternoon clubs etc. would also be enhanced by a redeveloped and upgraded hall.

THE PARISH HALL

The building is Victorian and is struggling to provide services for the 21st century. It is in need of total upgrading in order to serve the community and its current needs.

Therefore it is proposed that additional support be given to the Parish Hall Committee to oversee the development of the hall. Based on the results of the questionnaire the group would draw up a list of the priorities. It would apply for funds for an initial assessment of the structural changes required to make it more attractive and usable for all parishioners.

Once the proposed costings have been obtained these would be brought back to the Parish Council who would invite residents in the parish to an open meeting to discuss these future developments.

No major funds, except for maintenance and running costs, should be spent on the hall until members of the parish have had an opportunity to give an opinion on these future proposals.

The Parish Hall