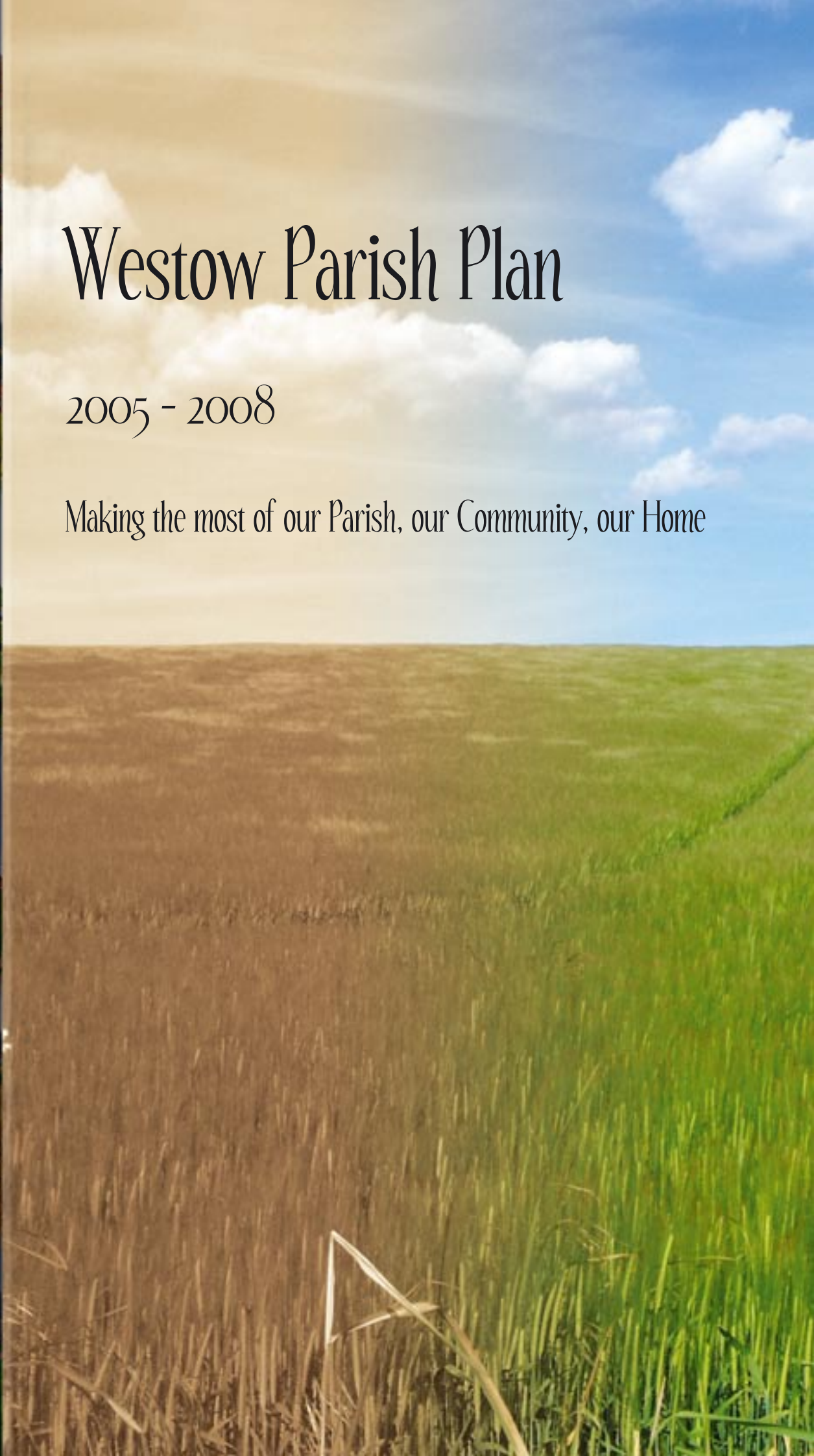




Westow Parish Plan

2005 - 2008

Making the most of our Parish, our Community, our Home



Foreword...

The Parish Plan has been developed in partnership with the residents of Westow Parish. It reflects our priorities for the next three years and the actions we wish to see take place to ensure our Parish continues to improve, develop and flourish, without losing any of its natural beauty and heritage.

As Chairman of the Parish Council I am delighted with the support and effort so many people have contributed to make this plan a reality. Putting it into action will require a real team effort from not only my colleagues on the Parish Council, but all the residents of the Parish. I look forward to working with you all on this new and exciting challenge.



P Kershaw

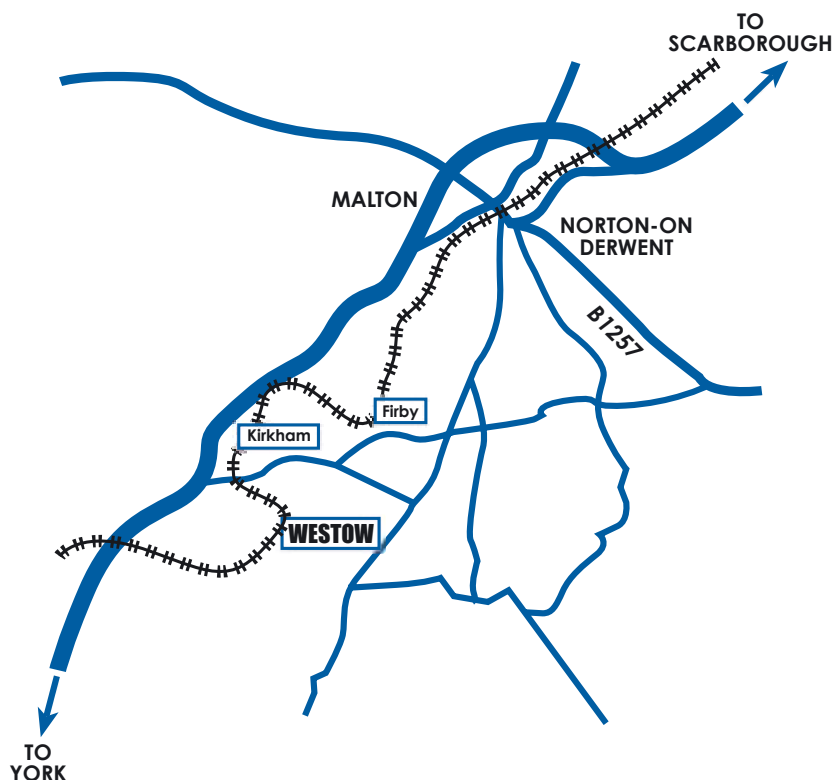
Chairman- Westow Parish Council 2005

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A brief history and description of the Parish

Westow Parish is located in beautiful countryside, in an area where the landscape of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty opens out into the rolling hills at the foot of the Yorkshire Wolds. It includes the villages of Westow, Firby and Kirkham, with a population of approximately 320 people.



The earliest evidence of human settlement in the Parish can be found in the long barrow near Westow which dates from c. 4000 – 3500 B.C. and the nearby round barrow (c. 2000 – 1500 B.C.).

Westow probably became one of the first settlements in Danelaw after the great invasion of c. 865 A.D. and its identity as a village probably dates from 876 A.D. Although the Parish church (which is located just out of Westow village) has a Norman font, the church register is dated 1549.

The Parish school in Westow closed in the 1960's and is now a private house. The children of the Parish now attend primary school in either Langton or Leavening.

The Parish boasts a rich natural and built heritage with many of its features having special protection status.

The designation of much of Westow as a Conservation Area reflects the attractiveness of the old stone and brick buildings. Across the Parish there are eighteen Grade 2, two Grade 2* and one Grade 1 listed buildings and three

A brief history and description of the Parish

Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These are Kirkham Bridge, Kirkham Prior Augustinian Monastery and Long Barrow incorporating part of a medieval field system.

The importance of the Parish's natural heritage is recognised by the number of registered Sites of Special Interest (SSSIs) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). These include the River Derwent, which is considered one of the best British examples of the Classic River profile, Kirkham Park and Riverside, Jeffrey Bog and Beckdale Meadow.

Traditionally the economy of the Parish was based predominantly on agriculture but in recent years this has changed and Parishioners work both locally and further a field in a range of business and professions. Today Westow Parish serves a diverse community of residents as shown on the tables in the Statistics section. There is a good balance of young families as well as more mature residents who all offer different skills and experiences to make up a vibrant community.

The Parish boasts a range of local amenities and is the base for some very active community groups such as the Westow Cricket Club, Westow Village Hall Committee, the Playing Fields Association and the local Petanque Club. Two very popular public houses with excellent restaurants are also to be found in the Parish and attract both Parishioners and visitors throughout the year.

Although there is no longer a shop or post office in the Parish, it is served by a travelling fishmonger, greengrocer and bakery and the mobile library.

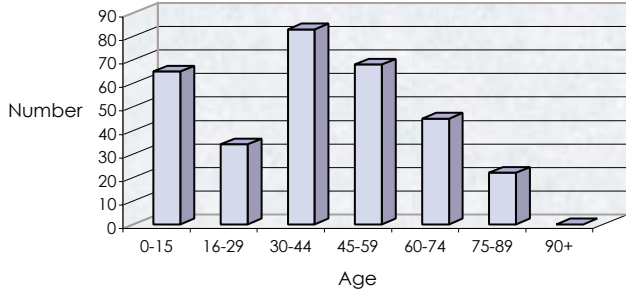
The sustainability of all these features and services is critical to the well being of the community now and in the future.



Current Parish Statistics

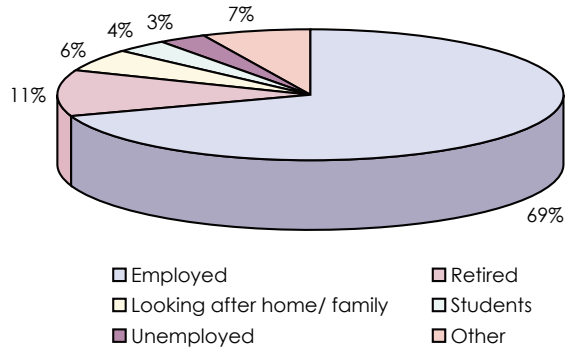
Extracts from the 2001 National Census for the Parish of Westow

The Age of our Population

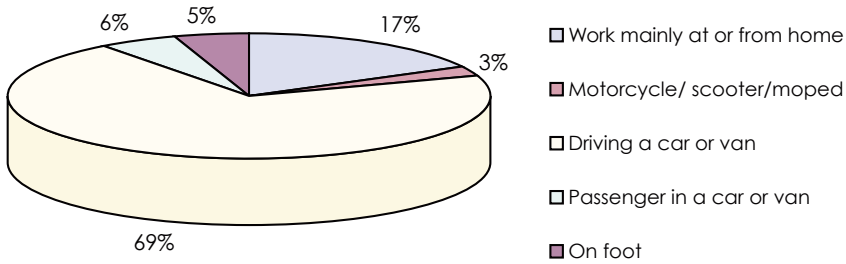


This total population of 317 is spread across 134 households & the average number of people in each household is 3.

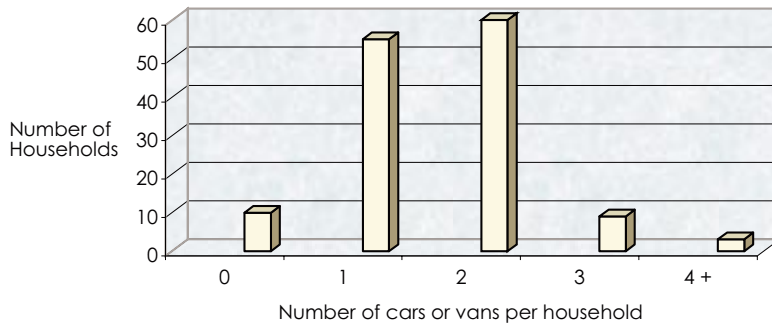
Economic Activity (% of the population aged 16-74)



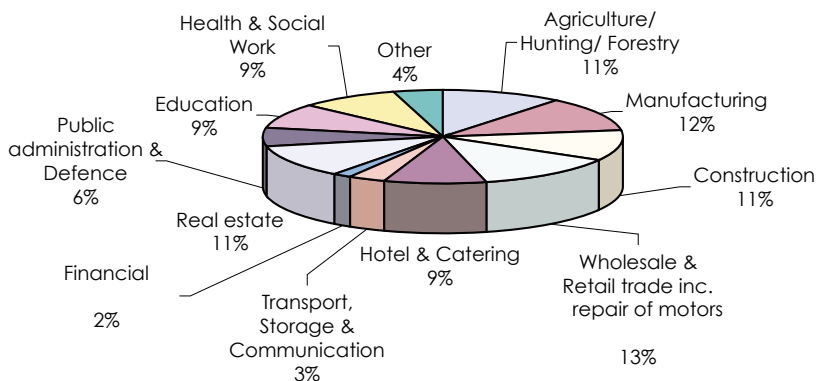
How Parishoners Travel To Work (% of population aged 16-74 in employment)



Car Ownership



Type of Employment of Parishoners (% of population aged 16-74 in employment)



Purpose and Principles...

Purpose of the Plan

The overall purpose in developing a plan for the Parish of Westow is to develop a whole and vibrant community where people of all ages and talents are welcomed and encouraged to contribute actively.

Principles for the Plan

In developing the Plan it was recognised that we needed to instigate change to reflect the varied interests of the Parishioners whilst preserving the character of the Parish.

We have tried to reflect these principles in each of the areas for action on pages 6-13. These also indicate the importance of working together to make this Plan have a real and lasting impact:

1. **Heritage** - Cherish and protect the locally built and natural surroundings and heritage
2. **Amenities** - Develop amenities to meet the aspirations and changing nature of the Parish and the surrounding area
3. **Safety** - Achieve a safe and secure community
4. **Access** - Improve opportunities for access and mobility within the Parish and surrounding area
5. **Communication** - Improve communication and access to technology for all
6. **Natural Resources** - Support and protect the sustainability of natural resources
7. **Participation** – Encourage and provide opportunities for participation by residents of the Parish
8. **Partnerships** - Develop partnerships with those within and outside the Parish to ensure delivery of services from government and other official bodies, and to maximise securing funding opportunities to support improvement in life within the community

How the Plan was Developed...

Consultation process 2003-4

It was agreed at the meeting of the Parish Council in August 2003, that Westow Parish Council would work towards developing a Parish Plan. After a full discussion at the October meeting, it was proposed that further work was done to define the priority areas prior to arranging an open public meeting for the whole village over the winter period. It was agreed that a small group of councillors would work on the consultation and putting the Plan together.

Consultation with Parish Councillors and Community Leaders resulted in positive feedback for the notion of a Parish Plan. Letters were received from the Church leaders, Petanque and Table tennis Club and Cricket Club Chairs to this effect. Specific comments were incorporated into a draft list of priority areas.

Parishioners were invited to contribute to the development of the Parish Plan at the Christmas lights event in early December 2003, by adding comments and suggestions to posters in the village hall on 'post-it' stickers and direct remarks to Parish Councillors.

Further to this, a second public meeting took place in early spring 2004 to invite people to discuss the draft Parish Plan and to add further comments to the suggested priority areas. In addition, at each Parish Council public meeting during this time, the Parish Plan was discussed as a regular agenda item. With the help of the Yorkshire Rural Community Council funding was secured from the Countryside Agency to enable the production and printing of the plan.

During June 2004, a postal questionnaire was distributed to each household in the Parish alongside a copy of the recently developed newsletter. This invited people to comment on the importance of different elements of the suggested plan, and to add their comments about other local priorities. Creative strategies were also developed to engage hard to reach groups such as young people in the Parish. Consultation and dialogue will be part of an ongoing process throughout the duration of the Plan.

At each consultation event, and from the questionnaire survey important contributions from local people were made which have been incorporated to shape the emergent Westow Parish Plan 2005-8.

How We Will Use This Plan

Each action has been identified through the above consultation period with Parishioners and all are important. However we have to be realistic about what can be achieved over the lifetime of this Plan. We have therefore considered each action on its own merit & determined each as 'essential', 'desirable' or 'ongoing'. 'Essential' actions will be addressed by the Parish Council in 2005; 'Desirable' actions will be addressed during 2006, and 'Ongoing' actions are matters that are to be considered regularly, at least annually. For 'Ongoing' actions we have also identified the frequency of the occasions these will be considered. We will take stock of our progress periodically and use the newsletter and website to report to the community.

Improving Roads and Travel

This section covers a range of concerns and proposals from Parishioners relating to:

- Road signing
- Traffic restrictions
- Road condition and improvements
- Parking
- Road safety in wintry conditions

Westow Parish is accessed by four roads. One length, running from Kirkham to Edlethorpe is classed as over 4 metres wide. The others including all roads directly accessing Westow and Firby are classified as less than 4 metres wide and in many cases are single track. There are also a number of footpaths within the Parish including part of the Centenary Way.

The majority of road traffic consists of light vehicles (although the nature of the area means that many are 4x4s). There is also delivery traffic and some heavier vehicles and farm machinery. Anecdotal evidence and the 'creation' of additional passing places on the road from Westow to Kirkham is indicative of an increase in traffic volume in recent years. Other road users include horse-riders, pedestrians and cyclists (including part of a designated cycleway).

AIMS

To work with Ryedale District Council, the Police and the Highways Agency through lobbying and provision of information to ensure that speed restrictions of 20mph are in place throughout the main residential areas in the Parish, and that appropriate signage is in place.

To work with Ryedale District Council, the Police and the Highways Agency to ensure that signage is in place to warn drivers to address particular risk areas such as blind corners at Badger's Bank, Kirkham bridge and Westow Croft.

To ensure that Ryedale Council and/ or North Yorkshire County Council are informed promptly of the needs for action when roads are in a poor state of repair, and to follow up request for action until they have been resolved.

To consider the implications for parking and transport in any planning application submitted to the Council.

To work with RDC and NYCC to ensure that gritting and salting of local roads is actioned promptly in wintry conditions, and distribute guidelines on safe driving in these conditions for Parishioners.

Improving Communication across the Parish

This section covers issues raised in relation to how we communicate information across the Parish, and also how we access technology. Main issues included:

- Wide access to Broadband technology across the Parish
- Producing an interesting and informative newsletter delivered to each home about Parish activities
- Developing a website for the Parish

Things people said

'First newsletter was fantastic
– we need updates'

'Broadband should be
available ASAP'

'A Westow website would be
a great development'

'A nice and brief
newsletter is welcome'

AIMS

We will lobby BT and other providers to support the extension of broadband technology to the Parish.

We have already developed a free newsletter, to which local people contribute and will continue to produce this and distribute it to all households in the Parish. We will also use, and encourage all to make full use of the Parish notice-boards and local press for the exchange of important information about Parish events.

We will work with local computer experts, and local people who have an interest and expertise in website design and development to establish a website for the Parish.

Improving Community Life...

The Parish often has a variety of activities throughout the year, led by different community groups such as the Cricket Club, Village Hall Committee and Playing Fields Association. We want to make sure that all the residents of the Parish have the opportunity to play a full part in these events and develop a real sense of belonging.

Plans are afoot for the development of a new community facility for the Parish in the guise of a new village hall and cricket pavilion. This will provide a wonderful resource for the whole Parish. However, plans are at an early stage, and a great deal of work is needed across the Parish to have a concerted fundraising strategy and to lobby key funders for community projects such as the National Lottery Fund, DEFRA and Yorkshire Forward as well as Ryedale and North Yorkshire County Council.

Issues raised in relation to this issue included:

- Making the best use of the existing Village Hall
- Taking part in community events and advertising them effectively
- Having lots more fun activities in the Parish
- Working together across the community groups to support the fund raising for this community resource

AIMS

We will work with other groups within and outside the Parish to support the development of the new Village Hall and cricket pavilion.

We will promote Parish activities using a range of methods including the newsletter and the website.

We will work to influence all Parishioners to play a full part in community activities and having fun across the Parish.

We will explore the possibility of having a post office facility established in the Village Hall.

The Parish Council will maintain a facility to enable residents to discuss and debate local matters of concern. These might include the looking after village amenities, the issue of introducing street lighting, creating a role for a village caretaker etc.

Improving Safety & Security...

This was one of the most frequently mentioned issues of concern to residents across the Parish. It was mentioned in relation to

- Reducing risks of accidents
- Crime prevention
- Improving safety in the community and in the home
- Considering re-establishing a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Things people said:

'can we reactivate local neighbourhood watch schemes?'

'We need to strengthen relations with the local police, including contact with a local bobby'

'run some campaigns about smoke alarms, security, locks and not talking to strangers'

' a local bobby would be a marvellous asset'

AIMS

We will strengthen relations with the local police force and will invite a police officer to come at least annually to the Parish Council public meeting to advise about security issues.

We will make a similar arrangement with the local fire service.

We will include security tips and contact details in the Parish newsletter.

We will talk to North Yorkshire Police about how best to pursue the notion of developing a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the Parish.



Improving local built & natural surroundings...

Living in a Parish located in an area designated to be of outstanding natural beauty, it is clear that preserving the attractiveness of the natural and built environment matters a great deal to local people.

Issues people raised included:

- Updating and re promotion of the Village Design Statement 2001 – keeping in line with the local plan from Ryedale
- The need for the whole Parish to get behind the development of a new Village Hall
- The need for a discussion about how best as a community to ensure that village amenities remain in a good state of repair

Things people said:

'Villagers should work together to make the new Village Hall happen'

'Having annual events to work together to maintain village amenities'

'Development of new Village Hall to provide a wider range of facilities'

'Phone box to be repainted to improve its appearance and visibility at the heart of the village'

AIMS

We will engage in discussion with Ryedale District council to see what we need to do to update and relaunch the Village Design Statement 2001, and make sure that it is available for each household in the Parish.

We will provide the initiative to have some Parish-wide discussions on the suggestions of 'annual days' for village amenity repair etc.

We will also ensure that we have the latest information from Ryedale Council so we can request as much help and support from them and NYCC in helping our Parish remain attractive.

We will continue to review all planning applications carefully to make sure that our recommendations to Ryedale District Council are centred around preserving the beauty of the Parish and reflect the principles of the Village Design Statement (2001).

Supporting & Protecting the Environment...

Westow village has well-established facilities for the recycling of glass, newspapers and aluminium cans. Many Parishioners wanted additional and more diverse recycling facilities to be available.

Issues raised included:

- Increase and improve recycling facilities
- Development of a garden waste removal scheme
- Combining the school bus and a public bus service
- Provision of regular education and information for people about efficient use of energy resources

Things people said:

Combine school bus with public bus service

Continual 're-education' in recycling needed - there is still too much waste

More use of energy saving techniques and sustainable/renewable energy source

Good now, but plastic recycling would be good

Facility for garden waste removal

More recycling facilities in the village – such as green waste and plastic bottle recycling - appropriately positioned and screened

AIMS

We will work with Ryedale Council and lobby them for wider recycling facilities in the Parish to include cardboard and plastic recycling.

We will contact the school bus service to explore the feasibility of a combined service, and will also speak to neighbouring villages to see if this is an issue we can work jointly on.

We will explore with Ryedale Council the possibility of establishing a garden waste removal scheme.

Through the newsletter and through inviting visiting speakers to the Parish Council public meetings, we will try and provide regular updates on information to help people make efficient use of energy sources.

Improving Access & Transport...

In a rural Parish with a number of small villages it is clear that the issue of access, both across the Parish and to local service centres such as Malton, is of high importance to local people. There is very little public transport support and for households without access to a car, there is a real risk of isolation.

Issues raised included:

- The need to continually lobby bus companies and Ryedale Council about the importance of bus routes.
- The need to promote and support the Westow Transport Scheme, including the availability of taxi vouchers, group buses and car sharing schemes.
- The need to maintain the integrity and safety of local footpaths.
- A need to work towards ensuring all village amenities enable full access to people with mobility problems or disabilities.

AIMS

We will continue to communicate with and lobby local bus companies and Ryedale Council about the importance of bus routes which include the villages in the Parish.

We will ensure that any information about mobile services such as library, grocery, health is made available through the website and newsletter.

We will provide regular updates about the availability of vouchers and information as part of the transport scheme through a range of methods including the newsletter, meetings and notice-boards.

We will ensure that when we are informed about problems in relation to any footpaths in the Parish that we will take prompt action to inform the appropriate authorities and will follow this up to ensure that promised actions have taken place.

We will ensure that planning for any future village amenities will have full access for all residents regardless of mobility needs.

Action Plan - Roads/Travel...

Goal	Partners	Priority	Principles Applied	Report by
To work with Ryedale District Council, the Police and the Highways Agency through lobbying and provision of information to ensure that speed restrictions of 20mph are in place throughout the main residential areas in the Parish, and that appropriate signage is in place.	RDC NY Police Highway Agency	Essential	Safety Participation	During 2005
To work with Ryedale District Council, the Police and the Highways Agency to ensure that signage is in place to warn drivers to address particular risk areas such as blind corners at Badger's Bank, Kirkham Bridge and Westow Croft.	RDC NY Police Highways Agency	Essential	Safety Communication Heritage	During 2005
To ensure that Ryedale Council and/ or North Yorkshire County Council are informed promptly of the needs for action on when roads are in a poor state of repair, and to follow up request for action until they have been resolved.	RDC NYCC	Ongoing	Safety Heritage	At each PC Meeting
To consider the implications for parking and transport in any planning application submitted to the Council	NYCC Planning Sub- committe	Ongoing	Safety Heritage	Upon planning applications being recieved for consultation
To work with RDC and NYCC to ensure that gritting and salting of local roads is actioned promptly in wintry conditions, and distribute guidelines on safe driving in these conditions for Parishioners.	RDC NYCC	Ongoing	Safety Heritage	At each PC Meeting during winter

Action Plan - Communication...

Goal	Partners	Priority	Principles Applied	Report by
Liaise with BT and other suppliers to ensure provision and maintenance of Broadband facilities to the community.	BT	Essential	Amenities Partnerships (BT and other suppliers) Communication	Quarterly
Encourage communication by, and to, all members of the community on important and useful information via the regular newsletter, notice board, local paper and website (when available).	All parishoners	Ongoing	Communication Participation	Every PC Meeting
Working with local experts, develop, establish and evolve a Parish website for communication of local information and events.	All parishoners	Desirable & ongoing	Amenities Participation	Every PC Meeting

Action Plan - Community Life...

Goal	Partners	Priority	Principles Applied	Report by
Work with residents and relevant agencies to encourage the upkeep and use of the Village Hall for community activities, regular interest groups (eg table tennis, WI) and provision of facilities (eg Post Office).	All Parishoners Service Suppliers Community Groups	Ongoing	Amenities Participation	As Required
Promote Parish activities and facilities, eg sports facilities, regular and occasional events, via the newsletter, notice board, press and website	Parish Council All Parishoners	Ongoing	Communication Participation	Quarterly
Encourage and inspire all Parishoners to play a full part in community life by promoting fun events and activities for all.	All Parishoners	Ongoing	Participation	As Required
Encourage community groups to work together to establish requirements for the new community facility and support the necessary fundraising.	All Parishoners	Ongoing		As Required
The Parish Council will provide a forum and encourage the discussion and debate of matters of local concern.	RDC	Ongoing	Participation Communication	As Required



Action Plan - Safety and Security...

Goal	Partners	Priority	Principles Applied	Report by
Consider the safety aspect of all development, improvement, and maintenance within the Parish to minimise the risk of accidents.	NYCC NY Police All Parishoners	Ongoing	Heritage	Every PC Meeting
Work with North Yorkshire Police to minimise the risk of crime in the community, by having a higher police profile in the area, promoting a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and making homes and personal property more secure.	NY Police RDC Community Safety Partnership	Essential	Participation	During 2005
With the support of Ryedale District Council, the Police and other agencies, run regular campaigns and provide safety information and security tips in the newsletter and website of such things as smoke alarms, postcoding personal property, safety in the homes.	NY Police RDC Community Partnership	Ongoing	Communication Participation Safety	Every PC Meeting
Strengthen relationship with local Fire Service to assist in the promotion of safety and safe practices.	Fire Service	Ongoing		During 2005



Action Plan - Natural Surroundings...

Goal	Partners	Priority	Principles Applied	Report by
Liaise with residents and Ryedale District Council to ensure that all planning applications reflect the principles of the Village Design Statement (2001).	RDC All Parishoners	Ongoing	Heritage Amenities	Every PC Meeting
Seek advice and assistance from Ryedale District Council and NYCC to ensure our Parish remains attractive and to update and relaunch the Village Design Statement (2001).	RDC NYCC	Ongoing	Heritage	End of 2006
With input from residents, organise 'annual days' for village amenity repair, etc.	All Parishoners	Ongoing	Heritage Amenities Partnerships (Residents)	Annually

Action Plan - Supporting the Environment...

Goal	Partners	Priority	Principles Applied	Report by
Work with RDC to provide additional recycling facilities in the Parish, including plastics, cardboard and garden waste.	RDC	Desirable	Natural resources Amenities	End of 2006
Look at the feasibility of making the school bus service available to other residents with/without neighbouring villages.	School Bus Service Neighbouring Parish Councils	Desirable	Access	End of 2006
Provide regular information on energy efficiency through the newsletter, visiting speakers, etc.	Service Suppliers	Essential	Environment Communication	End of 2005

Action Plan - Access and Transport...

Goal	Partners	Priority	Principles Applied	Report by
Lobby bus companies and RDC to ensure the best provision of services for villages in the Parish	Bus Operators RDC		Access	Annually
Provide regular updates/ information on the local transport scheme and other public transport facilities via the newsletter, noticeboard, website, etc.	Transport Sub Committee	Ongoing	Access Communication	Quarterly
Provide up-to-date information about mobile services (eg library, grocery, health) via the newsletter and website	Parish Council	Ongoing	Amenities Communication	Quarterly
Encourage Parishioners to inform the Parish council of all problems with roads and footpaths in the Parish and ensure these are acted upon swiftly and effectively.	RDC NYCC All Parishoners	Ongoing	Access Participation	Every Parish Council Meeting
Ensure that planning for future village amenities have full access for all regardless of mobility needs	RDC NYCC	Ongoing	Access Amenities	As Required

Glossary of Partners

RDC	Ryedale District Council
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council
NY Police	North Yorkshire Police
RVA	Ryedale Voluntary Action
YRCC	Yorkshire Rural Community Council

Acknowledgment

This Parish Plan could not have been developed without the valuable contributions of Parishioners across Westow, Firby and Kirkham. I hope that people feel that their views and priorities are reflected in this Plan.

I would also like to thank the Parish Plan sub-committee of Anne Conroy, Zoe Plummer, Sue Proctor and Linda Shipley for their attention to detail and hard work in making this Plan a reality. Thanks must also go to the Countryside Agency who's funding and support made the production of the Plan possible.

Phil Kershaw
Chairman of Westow Parish Council

Notes

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Further copies of our Parish Plan can be obtained by telephoning 01653 618060. Alternatively it can be viewed on the website at www.westow.org.uk.



local images





Supported by

