

THE PARISH OF IREBY WITH LECK IN THE COUNTY OF LANCASHIRE PARISH PLAN.

1. INTRODUCTION

It was agreed at the Parish Council Meeting of 7th August 2015 that a Parish Plan should be formulated in accordance with the Government's November 2000 Rural White Paper. The Plans were intended to "identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved." Ireby's Plan required updating and no Plan had ever been agreed for Leck or for that section of Cowan Bridge that lies within the Parish.

Once the Draft has been agreed by the Parish Council, it will be made available for comment from the residents of the parish on the Parish website. Feed back from these comments will then be incorporated into future editions of the Plan which will be kept on the website, updated and incorporated into the archive of the Parish Council.

The Register of Electors for 2014 – 2015 for Leck and that section of Cowan Bridge that lies within the parish lists 130 electors. That for Ireby lists 68. The parish is entering a period of transition with plans for the building of up to 18 new houses on Burr Meadow being presently negotiated between the developer and the planners. The decision of the Secretary of State to approve the extension of the Yorkshire Dales National Park by about 24% to take effect from August 1st 2016 will also bring changes as it will take in the whole of Leck and Ireby, although the settlement at Cowan Bridge will remain just outside the boundary. The Secretary of State's expectation is that "the YDNPA will seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities and will co-operate with the relevant local authorities and other public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the Park....."

The community in Leck tends to be scattered along the country lanes, mainly in small clusters of traditional rural housing and farms, an unusually high proportion of which are rented properties. This tends to make for a fluctuating population. Ireby is a nucleated village settled around a series of village greens and Cowan Bridge lies either side of the A65, the main line of communication linking Kendal in South Lakeland with Skipton in Yorkshire.

There are fewer families of young children than in the past as the youngsters graduate from the local primary school to secondary education and opportunities for local rural workers are also declining. House prices are already an issue within the parish, higher than in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Facilities available in the Leck Ward to residents of the parish:

- Fraser Hall Community Centre
- Youth Club
- Leck St Peter's CE Primary School
- Leck St Peter's Church of England
- Methodist Church in Cowan Bridge
- Cowan Bridge Store
- Mobile Library Service
- First Responders
- Memorial Garden

Facilities available in the Ireby Ward to residents of the parish.

- The village greens
- The designated children's play area
- Neighbourhood Watch and farmwatch
- Mobile library

Whilst the Parish Council is responsible for the preparation of the plan, it has only limited powers and it is essential to bear in mind the cost of any activities it undertakes. Our financial resources are limited to the precept for parish expenses that is set every year and paid by residents as part of their Council Tax to Lancaster City Council. The Parish Council has an input into facilitating the measures detailed below but has no direct responsibility for their implementation.

THE LECK WARD OF THE THE IREBY WITH LECK PARISH PLAN

2. Parish Council Actions and Policies

2.1 Condition of the road network overall

The Parish Council has worked with the Highways Authority over the last few years to achieve a significant improvement in the condition of the road network overall but there are still problems caused by flooding and potholes are an ongoing problem. We will continually monitor the state of the roads and try to ensure that all required repairs are attended to in a timely manner, always subject to the financial resources available.

2.2 Road drainage

There are certain sections of the lanes liable to flooding. The Lancashire Highways contractor is scheduled to visit Leck periodically to clear the drains and monitor the situation. The area below the railway bridge is especially problematic and requires constant monitoring. Water draining from the Church carpark also creates problems on Church Lane. Recent heavy storms have flooded sections of the Fell Road and Church Lane and have demonstrated the importance of keeping a check on the bridges under the roads. The Parish Council has worked with the Highways Authority to improve the situation and will continue to monitor the work done.

2.3 Provision of grit salt in the winter

This is a rural area which, apart from the A65, will not receive a regular visit from the Lancashire Highways grit lorry to spread grit directly onto our roads. There are 2 salt bins provided, one on the car park at Fraser Hall and the second at the end of School Lane. Small piles of grit salt are also available by the triangular paddock on Low Lane and on the lane leading to Ireby on the side of Heber Hill. It is up to residents to spread this salt onto the public highway but it is NOT to be used on private land. The Parish Council will request additional bulk supplies of grit salt in periods of prolonged icy weather conditions and investigate the possibility of providing a salt bin by the electricity sub-station on Woodman's Lane and along the Fell Road.

2.4 Traffic Speeds

This is a serious problem on the A65 and the Parish Council has for several years been urging the Highways Authority to introduce a 30mph restriction. So far the only result has been an increase in the number of police checks but the proposed housing developments in Cowan Bridge should focus attention on the safety issue. The Parish Council will step up their pressure on the Authority to reassess the situation and take action.

The number of cars bringing the children to school creates a challenging situation which has been contained to a certain extent by the creation of a 20mph zone around the School.

2.5 Road Signs

The condition of the road signs has been improved after representations were made to the Authority. There is a problem at the road junction at Tree Cross Cottages and the issue has been raised with the Authority but it appears that little can be done as the lanes are so narrow at this point and we can only urge residents to keep garden bushes clipped back as much as possible to improve the line of sight along the lane.

2.6 Street Lighting

It is generally felt that the level of street lighting is about right. The clarity of the night sky is a feature of Leck that has been preserved and appreciated.

2.7 Grass Verges

The Parish Council is not responsible for the cutting of the verges but a written agreement was made in 2013 after discussion with Lancaster City Council that:

- The edges of the lanes in Leck that require safety swathe cutting are along the Fell Road from Cowan Bridge to the Church Car Park, then on to Hill House, Low Lane and the lane connecting Low Lane with the Fell Road.
- The provision of a safety walk-way, with a mown edge where possible, for the school children from Cowan Bridge to Leck Church Car Park is a primary concern
- These edges should be cut four times a year; at the beginning of April, during June, mid-August and mid-October.
- Conservation areas should be respected wherever possible, the grass being cut to a mower's width (approx. half a meter) from the edge of the lane, providing a refuge for walkers but permitting conservation areas for wild flowers and bulbs wherever possible

There is no consensus within the parish as to the degree of cutting required, with opinions ranging from those wishing to conserve the rural aspect of the Parish to those preferring an immaculate cut. The Parish Council therefore has tried to preserve a compromise position, providing for the safety of road users and for the protection of our natural verges wherever possible but responsibility for the wayside rests initially with the LCC and ultimately with the County Council in Preston.

2.8 Footpaths

There is an important and complex network of footpaths in and around the parish. They are generally well sign posted at the start but some are in danger of being lost and they are not always easy to follow. Erosion by Leck Beck is also a persistent problem. Stiles are sometimes difficult to negotiate and more direction arrows are required. Persistent pressure from the Parish Council was largely instrumental in securing a new right of way to replace that lost over thirty years ago when the footbridge over Leck Beck was swept away. The preferred option of rebuilding the bridge proved no longer feasible in view of the costs involved but a new route from Cowan Bridge over the fields, involving two new swing gates and a footbridge over Ellerbeck, was secured. This gives access to the lanes leading to Casterton and the Lune Valley network.

The policy of the Parish Council is to protect and preserve all rights of way in the parish and provide directional indicators to guide walkers across farm land. We will work in conjunction with the officer responsible within the YDNP once the extension of the park takes effect in August 2016.

2.9 Litter

There are five litter bins provided, four in Cowan Bridge and one at the end of the school lane. The situation has to be monitored, especially around the retail outlet and along the Fell Road. The actions of residents who pick up litter and dispose of it properly are appreciated and encouraged.

2.10 Bus Service

There is usually a bus timetable on the Parish Council Notice Board or in the bus shelter in Cowan Bridge. Buses 580 and 581 serve the village on the Kirkby Lonsdale – Skipton service run by Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire, tel. 01524 733831. There are 7 trips daily each way Monday to Saturday. Further details can be obtained from their website.

2.11 Mobile Library Service

The mobile library van calls on alternate Tuesdays, stopping at Low Lane, Leck by the

phone box between 1:15 and 1:30pm and in Cowan Bridge in the bus stop lay-by between 2:10 and 2:20pm. The dates that the mobile library will call are displayed on the Parish Council notice-board.

2.12 Dog Fouling

This is a continuing issue over which the Parish Council has little control. We have had extra bins provided for dog litter and the lanes are reasonably clear but there is concern that families sometimes exercise their pets on the school field. The extra bin recently provided at the end of School Lane has clearly improved the situation. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.

2.13 First Responders

First Responders are trained by the N.W. Ambulance Service learning most of the skills of the ambulance paramedics, although they do not administer drugs. Candidates have to be interviewed, have a police check, and undertake 16 to 24 hours of training over an 8 week period before taking an assessment. They must attend 'field training' every month and are subject to an annual assessment.

When an ambulance is called, the Ambulance staff immediately call on the first responders in the local area, presently from Kirkby Lonsdale, Ingleton and Barbon.

2.14 The extension of the Yorkshire Dales National Park to include Ireby and Leck August 2016.

As this proposal is progressed, it will bring far-reaching changes to the area. Future developments will be carefully monitored by the Parish Council and residents will be kept informed.

2.15 The Provision of Broadband

There is general dissatisfaction with the services provided by BT. The parish lies within the 5% of the country that is not covered by their fast broadband service. LA6B4RN hyper fast broadband is however about to become available and should be operational throughout the parish by the summer.

2.16 Local Services

The Parish Council stress the importance of the local services of the Village Store, Fraser Hall, the Youth Club, the Churches, Mobile Library and Bus Service to the quality of life in the parish. It is self-evident that residents must make use of these facilities or they will simply be lost.

2.17 Leck St Peter's CE Primary School

The headteacher is Mr K.Stafford-Roberts who can be reached on head@leck-stpeters.lancs.sch.uk

The school has 42 pupils on the current roll, aged between 3 and 11

years and offers wrap around care from 8.00am to 6.00pm. Tel:015242-71538.

Fax:015242-71757. For further information access www.leck-st-peters.lancs.sch.uk

3. Future Developments

3.1 The Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 – 2031: Strategic Options for Land Allocations

A consultation launched by the Lancaster City Council Planning Authority in 2014 placed before the public five options for extensive housing development. Options 3 and 5 related directly to this parish. Option 5, the most extreme in terms of the destructive exploitation of the countryside, envisaged a new town of 5,000 houses sited immediately to the south of Cowan Bridge. The proposals were universally condemned by the Village Assembly, addressed by David Morris, MP for Morecambe & Lunesdale and Councillor Peter Williams, and the Parish Council was accorded a vote of confidence to continue to spearhead opposition to the scheme. Our concerns were the subject of an early day motion in the House of Commons. The controversy was suspended pending the General

Election and the LCC commissioned a second report into the population figures. The following extract is taken from the planning policy consultation document published in the summer of 2015:

“Is the council not pursuing the idea of a new town in the Lune Valley any more? The new town did not compare well with the other approaches and the council is no longer exploring this option.”

Future plans appear to be focusing on the urban development of Lancaster and around Dolphinholme. Although Cowan Bridge does not qualify as a sustainable village which should protect it from over- development the Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation closely.

3.2 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

Two areas of land have been earmarked for possible development in Cowan Bridge; Burr Tree Meadow and the area to the south east of the retail warehouses. There is some support for the development of Burr Tree Meadow on a limited scale and sympathetic to the rural character of the settlement. Not simply a suburban estate planted in the centre of the village. The Parish Council took an active role in seeking to influence the design of the proposed development that is now in dispute between the developer and the planners but how effective we were still remains to be seen.

There are no plans for new build within the parish to provide affordable housing although the Council have retained ownership of two homes on Low Lane.

3.3 Individual Planning Applications

With the incorporation of the parish into the YDNP in August, the system will change but the Parish Council will continue to assess individual applications on their merits.

See next page for Ireby