

Osmotherley Area Parish Plan December 06

Fact Book

Introduction

The Parish Plan comprises the Summary Booklet issued as the “Osmotherley Area Parish Plan December 06”, together with this Fact Book.

The Fact Book comprises a compilation of supporting information. In particular, it includes the full list of actions proposed, all the comments received, and the details of the analysis that produced the conclusions.

The opinions given are those of the Parish Plan Steering Group.

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<p>* For access to these documents in e-version look under: www.hambleton.gov.uk/osmotherley and click on “Parish Plan”</p>			

Circulation of copies:

- Copies of the final Parish Plan summary booklet will be issued to each household within the consultation area, and to relevant public organisations.
- Copies of the Fact Book will be lodged with the Parish Council and in various public-accessible locations around the village.
- The Parish Plan summary booklet and Fact Book may be accessed electronically on the Osmotherley Area Parish Council website (see previous page) where they may be downloaded.

Section 1 What is the Fact Book?

The Parish Plan comprises the summary booklet “The Osmotherley Area Parish Plan December 06”, together with this Fact Book. The Fact Book comprises a compilation of supporting information, and is to be read in conjunction with the summary booklet.

The Fact Book contains the following types of information:

- The Introduction section (ie this section) gives general background information, and describes the process that has been followed.
- Appx 1 and 2 are an actual listing of the responses to the questionnaire. The responses have been typed up in this way so as to allow easier interpretation by the Parish Plan team, and any members of the public who may be interested.
- Appx 3 and 4 are a listing of what we were told by the school and by young people interviewed.
- Appx 6 and 7 are our interpretations of the themes emerging from the vast number of comments made in the questionnaire.
- Appx 12 is a list of all the actions recommended. (The Parish Plan booklet contains only the principle recommendations).

Other appendices give information which we think you may find of interest.

So the Fact Book is a mixture of the facts used to influence the Parish Plan, and of the judgements made in arriving at the actions proposed. It is, in effect, the detail underlying the Parish Plan.

You might say that the Fact Book is “the document for the Parish Plan anoraks”. Inevitably it is a rather dry and turgid read, but we see it as a vital part of the process of arriving at our conclusions, and making the process transparent to everybody.

We suggest that the following Appendices may be of particular interest:

- Appx 6 and 7 summarise our analysis of what we thought people were telling us, and what we think should be done about it.
- Appx 12 is a list of all the actions recommended.

Section 2 What is a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan is a written report that analyses the responses to a detailed public consultation exercise, and recommends actions to address the issues that the public consider important.

In autumn 2004, the Osmotherley Area Parish Council held a public meeting to propose the idea of a Parish Plan and, while there were some dissenting voices, there was general approval for the idea and a Parish Plan Steering Group was set up from those who volunteered their help. The Parish Plan summary booklet and the associated Fact Book are the outcome of the subsequent 2 years work.

Parish Plans are a government initiative that we see as intended to “find out what the people who live, work and play in an area really want” as opposed to “what the various local government bodies think they should want”. (Our definition, not the government’s) They have been on the go for some time now, and many villages have achieved remarkable improvements through their Parish Plan. A Parish Plan usually takes between 18mths and 2 years to prepare. It is seen as a “living document” and is expected to be reviewed after perhaps 3-5 years, as changing situations require. They can cover anything and everything that a village wants.

The Parish Plan process has been remarkable in many ways. Apart from some typing support and printing, the work has been done entirely by volunteers – probably about 40 in all. People have freely offered support in many ways, and the response to the questionnaire has been magnificent – over 50% of those living in the villages have responded and an immense amount of information has resulted. Which has, in itself, presented a problem to the Parish Plan team, as lots of data equates to lots of work. But it was a nice problem to have.

A number of key messages seem to emerge from all this:

- People – residents young and old, those who work here, those who visit – care deeply for the villages and the surrounding area.
- Furthermore, they are prepared to offer their time and support in many ways in order to seek improvements. When we have needed help, it has been freely offered.
- Things inevitably change – it is simply not an option to do nothing if people want the villages to remain the lovely place it is, and for it to improve.

Some of the specific messages to emerge are not surprising – traffic, parking, Sheepwash, for example. However, the value of the Parish Plan in addressing these “well, I could have told you that” points is that the thorough consultation process that has been undertaken gives tremendous power to the elbow of those seeking funding e.g. the Parish Council, for improvements.

Section 3 Preparing the Parish Plan

The main stages were as follows:

- Autumn 2004. Public meeting to seek views for a Parish Plan. Steering Group formed.
- Winter 2004. Steering Group set up plans based on Countryside Agency guidance and advice from Yorkshire Rural Community Council. Remit agreed with Parish council. Funding obtained.
- Spring 2005. Villages consulted on issues to be included within questionnaire.
- Summer 2005. 5 Working Groups established to focus on individual aspects. Questionnaires designed.
- Autumn 2005. Questionnaire issued to residents and visitors. Excellent response.
- Winter 2005. Responses typed up to allow easier analysis.
- Spring/Summer 2006. Responses analysed.
- Autumn 2006. Provisional Parish Plan launched for comment. Feedback and comments considered, and minor amendments made. No objections were made to the recommended actions.
- Xmas 2006. Final Parish Plan adopted by the Parish Council.
- New Year 2007 (just over 2 years since commencement). Parish Plan printed and distributed to households and interested bodies.
- Parish Council to follow up by implementing the Action Plan. Parish Plan team disbanded but available to assist Parish Council with implementation.

Some general points are worth noting:

- The area to be covered by the Parish Plan was discussed at length. It was agreed that the area would be that bounded by Osmotherley, Thimbleby, Sheepwash (technically part of Swainby PC), Clack, and Chequers. Effectively this is the area visible from Osmotherley, to the East of the A19.
- However, because the villages are used as a centre by other groups, consultation would cover a wider area, e.g. Ellerbeck and Snilesworth.

- Three different questionnaires were prepared i.e.:
 - A full questionnaire was issued to each adult resident in the villages.
 - A shortened version, focussing on appropriate areas, was offered to 11-17 year old residents, if they preferred not to complete the full one.
 - Recognising the significance of the visitors to the villages, a separate shortened version was prepared for any visitors who were interested in completing one.

In assessing the results, the analysis focussed on the residents' questionnaires, as they formed a statistically relevant response (over 50%). The relatively small number of visitors' responses (40) was used to check out the residents' analysis, to see if any different views emerged that needed consideration, and to lend perspective to the residents' analysis.

- The Steering Group and Working Groups have analysed the responses, and decided on the recommended actions. Whilst we do not claim to be without our own prejudices, we have tried to ensure objectively that the proposals reflect what you told us in the questionnaire responses (rather than what we think you should have told us). Issuing this Fact Book is part of the process of us demonstrating this to you – you can check out why we arrived at the conclusions and decide if you agree.
- Each questionnaire was, after return, allocated a number and these are shown in appendices 1 and 2. They do not allow identification of the person who made the response – indeed, we don't know ourselves. The purpose of this numbering is to allow more detailed analysis. For example, although only a small number of people may have ticked in favour of something, it may be that all those who did so live in Thimbleby, indicating a significant local concern that needs addressing. The numbering allows this sort of analysis.
- We are keen that the process be as transparent as possible, which is why we had the responses typed up so that they can be published and pored over by as many people as wish to do so. Whilst not claiming absolute accuracy for the transposition of information from written questionnaire to typed version (there is a massive amount of information), the transposition has been audited by an independent person and found to accurately reflect the originals.

Section 4 Finance

“You get nowt for nowt” as someone once said, and the same is true of Parish Plans.

To get to the stage of issuing the provisional Parish Plan for comment cost about £1300. Printing the final document is planned to cost a further £2600, which will bring the total to about £4000. (As the printed booklet is used in support of grant applications for village improvements, it is considered necessary to present it in a clear and attractive style). These costs are typical, and perhaps a little lower than is now usual, for preparation of a Parish Plan of this nature.

The bulk of expenditure will therefore have been on printing and associated costs. The Parish Council made a financial contribution and, most valuably, agreed to underwrite the overall funding requirements. Generous outside financial support has come from The North York Moors National Park Authority, Hambleton District Council, Awards for All (the National Lottery Fund), and the Countryside Agency (via the Yorkshire Rural Community Council). Over 30 requests for funding assistance were sent out, of which these 4 were successful.

Formal detailed income and expenditure accounts have been presented to the Parish Council at intervals.

Section 5 Acknowledgements

Preparation of the PP has involved a lot of people in a lot of effort. We would like to acknowledge the Osmotherley Area Parish Council, particularly the then-Chair Howard Higgs and their assiduous and long-suffering clerk. It is the Parish Council who initiated the process, offered funding support, and have been supportive throughout without ever trying to interfere in our deliberations. Not all Parish councils are so brave – some with a control-freak tendency apparently do it entirely themselves “behind closed doors”; whilst others seem to consider it an affront to their dignity, refuse to take part, and result in aggrieved residents doing it quite independently of the Parish Council. We were lucky.

Yorkshire Regional Community Council have been in with us from the start, providing funding, help, guidance from the now-defunct Countryside Agency, advice and a shoulder to cry on; without them we would probably still be trying to get started. Hambleton District Council and the North York Moors National Park Authority have each supported us generously with funding, advice (in particular on ye strange mysteries of government and local authority workings) and practical help. And importantly, Awards for All (the National Lottery Fund) provided substantial funding to get us started.

As so often, our excellent trio of Golden Lion, Queen Catherine and Three Tuns responded positively to yet another request for sponsorship by each agreeing to give a generous dinner prize as an inducement to people to complete and return their questionnaires (which may explain the large return figure). Dave Burgeon and his team at the Top Shop must at times sunk under reams of paper - they have our thanks.

Individuals in the villages have been ever-helpful in countless ways. Always a word of support and a waggish comment to spur us on (well, nearly always.....)

And last but not least, those on the Parish Plan Steering and Working Groups who have worked so hard for so long to get us to the point of issuing the draft Parish Plan. Some have been able to do more than others, but all have done whatever they could to grind the process along. As some inevitably had to withdraw due to other demands on their time, their places were willingly taken by others. Thanks go to Sue Allen, Dawn and Kelly Austin, Jane Bamber, Vicky Black, Paul Brand, Olwyn Burton, Christie Connelly, Noel Coward, Pat Duggan, Chris Gaunt, Margaret Hobbs, Sarah Housden, Adrian Hughes, Sue Hutchinson, Bernard and Jill Kirby, Trevor Mitchell, George Morley, Dave Morris, Shona Padbury, Keith Pearson, Mike Read, Terence Richardson, Lyn and Steve Rogers, Tim Swales, Mike Thomsett, Veda Thompson, Jane and Robert Thorniley-Walker, Penny Vernon, Tim Watts, Eileen Webb, Ben Wild, Laura Wilson, as well as those who have slipped my memory, to whom sincere apologies. Finally, there are those who, for various reasons, prefer not to be mentioned – we and they know who they are and we are grateful to them.

A group of remarkably diverse talents, not least the talent to be able to discuss contentious and sensitive issues without falling out too seriously.

Thank you to all, individuals and organisations, the villages owe you a big debt of gratitude.

Hugh Thompson, (Chair, on behalf of the Parish Plan Steering Group)
December 06