



OSMOTHERLEY AREA

PARISH PLAN

DECEMBER 2006

INTRODUCTION

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Preparation

The Osmotherley Area Parish Plan has been prepared by the people of the villages to allow them a voice in any future decisions about their area. The conclusions are based on all the responses to the 2005 questionnaire, and the actions proposed are what we think are needed to respond to the views expressed. This booklet is a summary of the main issues. The complete list of proposals and background information are detailed in the Fact Book (see page 24). The Parish Plan comprises this booklet and the Fact Book together.

Our thanks to:

- The villagers and visitors for their support
- The Parish Council for having the idea, for funding, and for their patient support
- The pubs for their prizes
- The Top Shop and Tim Swales Garage for acting as post-boxes
- Yorkshire Rural Community Council for getting us started, and funding
- North York Moors National Park Authority and Hambleton District Council for funding and practical support
- The Countryside Agency for their invaluable guidance
- Awards for All (The National Lottery) for funding
- The free-paper deliverers for their leaflet-drops
- The pupils and staff of the Village School for their contribution
- Several individuals who have helped in significant ways but prefer to remain anonymous
- ...and many others.

A huge “Thank You” to all.

Hugh Thompson

Osmotherley Area Parish Plan Steering Group December 2006

THE PLAN

The Aims

The Parish Council initiated the Plan as a means of accurately finding out the views of those living in and using the villages. It will be used to inform and influence the various authorities who will make decisions on the development of the villages over the next 5-10 years.

How it was done

In September 2004 the Parish Council, under the chairmanship of Howard Higgs, called a public meeting to propose the idea of a Parish Plan. This was enthusiastically embraced by the meeting and the Steering Group was formed from volunteers who put their names forward that evening. The Council emphasised – courageously we think - that whilst they wanted to support us, they wanted us to work quite independently in order that they did not influence us in any way.

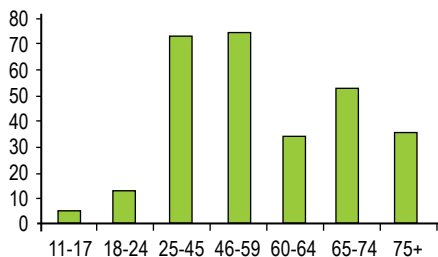
We asked what issues the villagers wanted to raise and a questionnaire was distributed in October 2005. Whilst the questions covered the Osmotherley and Thimbleby area, the questionnaire was also sent to people in the surrounding area who use the village as their centre. A questionnaire was sent to each person over 10 years old (as well as to a sample of visitors) and over 50% of people replied – thank you! (The percentages quoted are based on those responding to the questionnaire).

This booklet summarises what we think are the main issues to emerge. Also, most importantly, it gives a list of the main actions that we think are needed to achieve the developments that people have suggested. We have tried hard to interpret accurately the views expressed.

For some of the conclusions, you will undoubtedly say “I could have told you that without needing a Parish Plan”. You undoubtedly could have done – the difference now is that the Parish Plan gives proof that the village feels this way and this proof is a powerful tool in influencing the decision makers and obtaining grants.

We are pleased to say that the Parish Council has agreed to adopt the Parish Plan and its proposals. Now help is needed in putting these actions into place!

Age Range of Contributors



“Parish Plan a very good idea, hope it works”

OSMOTHERLEY AREA

Osmotherley and Thimbleby

Osmotherley and Thimbleby lie within the western edge of the North York Moors National Park, half a mile to the east of the A19 trunk road and 8 miles north-east of Northallerton. They are within the administrative areas of the North Yorkshire County and Hambleton District Councils.

The area selected for the Parish Plan is effectively that which can be seen from the centre of Osmotherley, going as far west as the A19 and as far south as Thimbleby. Additionally, Sheepwash has been included in view of its impact on the village.

There are about 720 residents living in the area, in over 300 homes. The village has a number of thriving businesses and is a popular centre for visitors, as well as for walkers and cyclists taking advantage of the beautiful surrounding countryside.

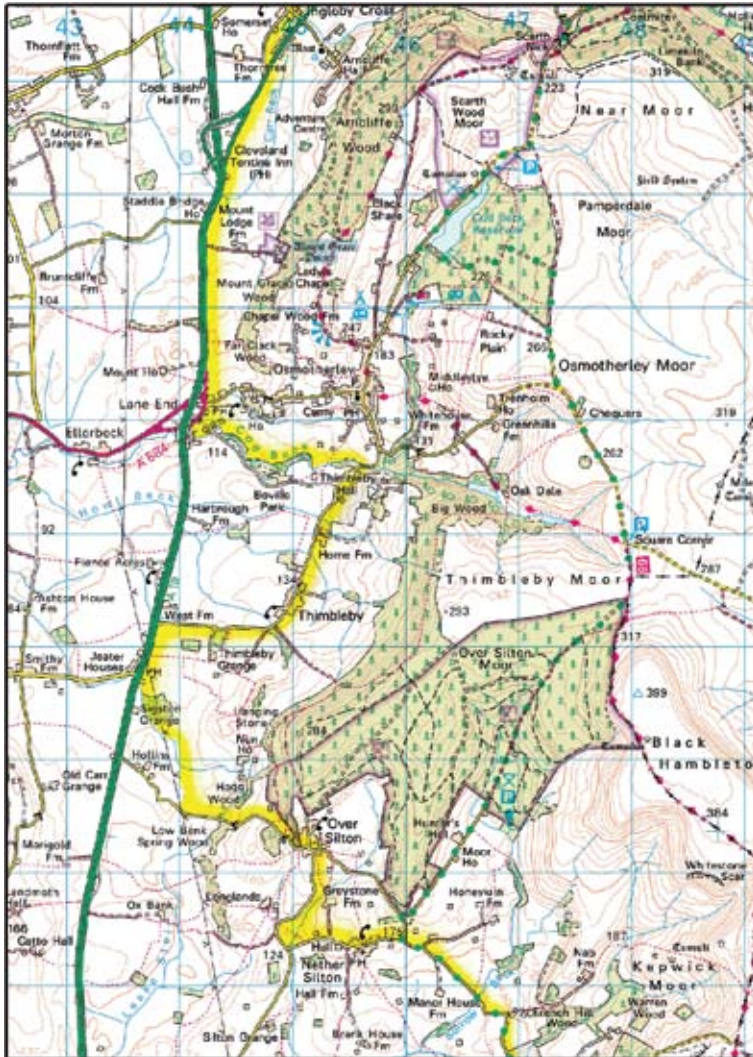
People have inhabited this area since prehistory, with burial sites and Neolithic features above Sheepwash. In the 1700's it was a stopping-off point for cattle herders on the Drove Road (the ancient track running along the top of the escarpment above the village, which was the main road between York and the river crossing at Yarm). In later times the emphasis changed to linen manufacture, and the village expanded significantly to accommodate the workers in several mills, powered by the water from Cod Beck. Stone quarrying and jet mining also took place during this period. Farming has always been, and remains, important to the life of the village.

The area has a long ecumenical history, with Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists and Quakers active and working together. It has a thriving primary school, a well-used village hall, and a cricket and sports field midway between Osmotherley and Thimbleby. It has a post office/general store, three pubs/restaurants, a café, curio shop, two garages and a walking shop.

And from your responses, it's a wonderful place to live in and one that people feel passionately about. **We agree.**

“We need to keep the village alive, a place where people mix and socialise. We must prevent it from becoming a daytime dead community where the inhabitants are only using it as a dormitory”

"The village environment is not a museum piece and must continue to 'live' to survive, but controls / planning framework should exist to maintain its character and quality of the environment for the benefit of the community"



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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



“Strong objection to narrow fenced paths which are very muddy where not paved and a scar on village paths”

IDEAS

A footpath champion should be identified to co-ordinate issues relating to footpaths around the villages.

Have village representative on Sheepwash Problem Solving Group.

Views from the Questionnaire

- Positive action should be taken to protect and promote wildlife, protect wildflower meadows and prevent loss of hedgerows.
- The majority of people (residents 81% and visitors 85%) were of the opinion that the appearance of farm buildings matters.
- 95% of residents and 98% of visitors have indicated their preference to be able to see the stars.
- 90% of people want views and gaps in and out of the villages to be protected.
- The majority of residents (64%) were happy with the number of visitors at Sheepwash although 58% were unhappy with car parking facilities.
- Tremendous concern was voiced at the anti-social behaviour and damage to Sheepwash.
- Mobile phone masts should not be installed in or around the village.
- A majority of the villagers say that they suffer from excessive RAF noise.
- Noise from A19 traffic is a concern for 44 people.



"All the views from Osmotherley onto surrounding countryside are beautiful and should be kept - the views driving home up Clack Lane always lift my spirits"



... Did You Know?

Osmotherley is one of the few places in England where you can still see the Milky Way and other galaxies.

The toad breeding site at Cod Beck Reservoir is of national importance with over 6000 toads.

The North York Moors National Park Authority has created a wildflower meadow east of Cod Beck on the Cleveland Way.



Recommended Actions

Develop Action Plan to protect and promote wildlife/wild flower meadows.

Plant native trees along A19 to block noise.

Views and gaps identified as important to be included in any Village Design Statement (see page 9).

Ask the Parish council to co-opt an interested villager to be active on the Sheepwash Problem Solving Group.

A survey of footpaths and stile conditions should be carried out and an Action Plan developed to bring them up to standard.

Prevent installation of mobile phone masts in or around the villages.

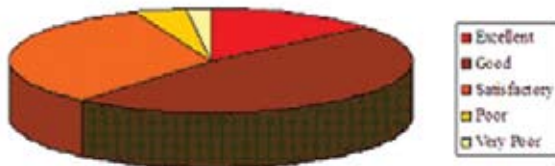
BUILT ENVIRONMENT



Views from the Questionnaire

- The quality of the built environment is rated good but there is scope for improvement - only 14% thought the quality was excellent.
- General preference for no new housing in the area.
- Any new housing should be affordable (80% of sample).
- 80% think that the appearance of our street furniture (e.g. signs and bollards) needs to be improved.

Question 6.1: Would you consider the quality of the areas build environment to be....



“Good design is good design. Poor design in original materials will remain poor design”



"Everything should be well designed and respond to its context"



- 92% want new development to match original styles and materials of their village.
- Only 6% of people want more holiday homes.
- Well over 80% think old barns add to the rural views and should be preserved.
- In Thimbleby and Osmotherley 88% want to see road verges better protected.

... Did You Know?

There is a new National Park 'Article 4' direction restricting changes to the appearance of houses including UPVC windows and satellite dishes.



Recommended Actions

Set up a group to produce a Village Design Statement (guiding location, type and design of housing).

Identify sites for affordable housing.

Apply tighter controls and ensure better maintenance of village greens and cobbled areas.

Produce a survey of street furniture.

Identify historic walls and barns and include them in Village Design Statement.

Good modern designs should be encouraged.

Environmentally friendly housing should be encouraged.

No big new houses should be allowed.

Less visible alterations should be treated less strictly than those seen from highways.

There should be much better communication of existing restrictions in conservation areas and National Parks.

Dilapidated old walls should be rebuilt.

SPORT AND RECREATION

Current sports facilities include a cricket pavilion and field at Thimbleby and a play area in Osmotherley, as well as a network of public footpaths for walkers and cyclists. There is no school sports field in the centre of the village.

The village hall holds activities as varied as toddler groups, art classes, Pilates, village dances and a table tennis club.



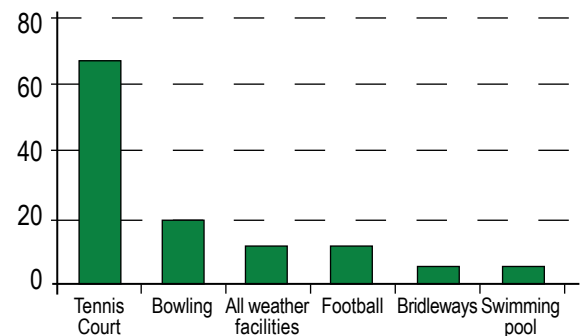
Idea

A sports pitch within the village would benefit the school and residents alike.

Views from the Questionnaire

- Nearly half of villagers (and 78% of 11-17 year olds) said they would use extended sports facilities if available, a common suggestion being the development of the Thimbleby site. *The chart below shows the numbers of people who would like to take part in different sports.*
- Parents of younger children, as well as the school, would ideally like a site in the heart of the village.
- People want safer routes linking the amenities with the villages. Such improvements would help horseriders, cyclists and walkers.
- Villagers would like to see more clubs and classes at the village hall. People said they wanted more drama for all ages, fitness classes, education and language classes, dances, and more over 60s events. Children and young adults were the least satisfied with current provision. There was strong support for a youth club.

Number of suggestions for outdoor sports facilities



"If there were more variety of sports at Thimbleby sports field it would be used more often"



There is an adult cricket team and recently a grant has been awarded to the school for cricket training and equipment for children. Additional facilities at the sports ground at Thimbleby will allow more sports opportunities, and could be organised in the short term.



The play area is well used by locals and visitors and is seen as a real asset to the community. Some older children would like the existing cycle track to be developed and others suggested that goal posts be put up for

informal football games. Publicity designed by children could encourage users to look after their park.

Recommended Actions

Set up an action group in cooperation with the James Hill Memorial Trust to seek funding to extend current facilities and equipment at Thimbleby Sports field.

Improve facilities for sport at the central village play park and in the longer-term support the Parish Council in any negotiations to extend the site or obtain new land in the village.

Provide better footpaths and bridleways from Osmotherley to Thimbleby both for access to sports ground and to serve horseriders, cyclists and walkers.

Explore start-up funding for a youth club in the village and identify leaders.

Attract more diverse indoor clubs and classes for all ages.

DID YOU KNOW?

There has been an active drama group at the hall in the past. Children and adults have expressed a wish to see it revived.

SCHOOL AND CHURCHES

There is a primary school and an award-winning pre-school in the village. Despite space restrictions, the school has made real progress over the past year in maximising the use of its small site - with new play equipment, a wild garden area and building extensions. The school is also developing its links with local schools to share facilities and resources and to anticipate future demographic changes. Greater sporting and music opportunities for the children have been provided, with plans for more in the future.

Much has been achieved to make the school garden a pleasant and stimulating environment for children, but an additional central village sports area would be a real asset (see Sports and Recreation).

Osmotherley is unusual in having four churches. Two of these, the Methodist Chapel and Quaker Meeting House, are among the oldest in the country. The churches work well together and are all keen to be at the service of the local community.



Views from the Questionnaire

- There is strong community support for maintaining the village school and pre-school, and further links with local schools are welcomed.
- The limited sports facilities available for the school are perceived by the wider community as a disadvantage for the children.
- People feel that more links between the school and community would be beneficial – using the building as a centre for continuing education; involving the community in school events; and encouraging communication.
- Parents would be interested in more ‘after-school’ provision.
- The ecumenical approaches of the Osmotherley churches are supported.
- Some villagers would like the churches to organise more community gatherings and events.
- The churches are encouraged to coordinate their pastoral care to ensure that people are not isolated.
- Church sites and worship should both be accessible and grounds should be safe.
- The cemetery site needs to be extended and new land obtained.

“I have never lived anywhere else where the churches do so much”

"Acquiring a playing field for sports would be a great asset"



... Did You Know?

The churches organised the first outdoors Harvest Festival event in 2006, open to the whole community with music and entertainment -- a celebration of rural life!

Gravestones at St Peter's churchyard are very precarious and villagers want the site to be made safe and accessible.

There is limited space left at the village cemetery and people see the obtaining of new land for an extended site as an urgent requirement.

The Quaker Meeting House is already used for art classes, residential courses, and accommodation.

There are numerous popular pilgrimages to the Lady Chapel above Osmotherley each year.



Recommended Actions

Consolidate ecumenical work of churches with occasional joint newsletters.

St Peter's to prepare an action plan for making the churchyard a safe space accessible to community.

Parish Council to consider addressing acquisition of land for a cemetery extension.

Continue links between Osmotherley school and other local primary schools.

Community groups and Parish Council to work with school to get grants for sport and transport.

Extend links between the school and community.

Provide 'after-school' activities.

IDEAS:

More help with transport for children would extend their opportunities for involvement in small school cluster sporting, educational and cultural events. A community bus could also be used by all villagers.

COMMUNITY AND SERVICES

Views from the Questionnaire

Recycling

There are currently recycling facilities for tins, bottles and paper in the Osmotherley area, located at the school and Tim Swales Garage. However, these facilities have limited access within normal working hours. There is also a fortnightly collection of paper from houses in the centre of the villages.

59% of people said they would welcome other recycling facilities including cardboard and plastic. Suggestions also included household collections for a range of recyclables and for the current services to be extended to outlying houses.

“ I didn’t realise these facilities existed – thank you, I will endeavour to use them ”

Rubbish Collection

...Did you know?

Hambleton District Council recently changed rubbish collections in line with Government policy to promote recycling. This means a household rubbish collection once a fortnight, with alternate weeks being for garden waste. Houses with access difficulties still have bin liners collected fortnightly.

This raised many issues with 60 people requesting weekly collection of household rubbish and 15 commenting on bins being unsightly.

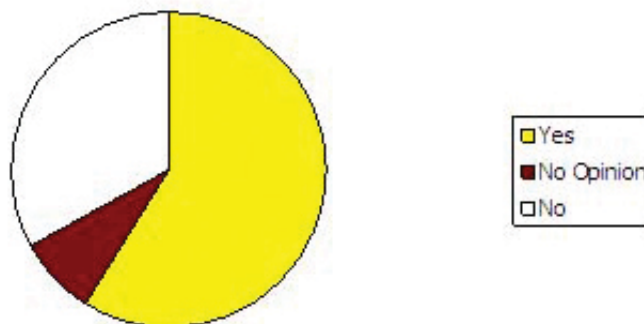
Water Supply

The water supply has been changed in the past two years. Rather than the supply coming from Cod Beck reservoir, water is now pumped from a borehole in the Bedale region. The water has changed from soft to hard. Residents were asked about their thoughts on these changes.


Out of 176 comments only two were positive. All comments criticised the hardness of the water and the issues of limescale build up on electrical equipment.

People also remarked on the fact that the village had lost its water supply in times of power cuts and are not reassured by the contingency plans put in place by Yorkshire Water.

Question 2.12: Does the current water supply concern you?



“[There are] increased costs in materials and products to deal with hard water”



"Water is not as good as it used to be"

Views from the Questionnaire

Litter and Dog Fouling

It was felt that dog fouling was still a major problem, both in the villages and surrounding footpaths. This is compounded by irresponsible disposal of dog waste bags into hedges and trees.

Two thirds of people were happy with the number of litter bins in the villages. Some felt there could be more dog bins available.

Professional Services

Current services include a mobile library, doctor's surgery, baby clinic and more recently a collection/delivery of prescriptions.

There was great praise for all these services, including comments such as "essential" and "highly valued". Ideas for improvements included better information and signposting of opening hours and exact locations. Suggestions were also made for the mobile library to visit outside of school hours and to include Thimbleby.

Access difficulties at the surgery for wheelchairs and pushchairs were also a concern.

Recommended Actions

Water Supply

Arrange open meeting with Yorkshire Water to discuss water quality.

Rubbish Collection

Discuss current fortnightly collections of black bins with Hambleton District Council, sharing current concerns about the service.

Recycling

Make accessibility of recycling points a priority.


Extend current services to include cardboard and plastic.

Provide greater range of recycling drop off points.

Dog Fouling

Increase public awareness.

Make sure dog bins are visible and distributed at key points in the village.



DID YOU KNOW?

Osmotherley village owns a number of bicycles which are available to be borrowed by any residents. These include a tandem, folding bikes, a trailer and an electric powered bike, all of which are stored at Tim Wood's Garage.

BUSINESS & TRANSPORT



... Did You Know?

Hourly bus services run through the day until 6 o'clock from Osmotherley to both Northallerton and Stokesley. A school bus takes children to and from Northallerton. The Moors Bus runs in the summer months, but no longer goes directly to Helmsley. No bus currently serves Thimbleby.

There are over 60 businesses, from agricultural to hot spas, employing over 200 people.

The village is a vibrant community, there are always people to be seen going about their business, setting off on walks, or just passing the time of day. It is recognised as a welcoming place with good hospitality, and a beautiful setting as the entrance to the National Park.

“Visitors to the villages help to make the area more vibrant by using local businesses”

Views from the Questionnaire

- People recognise the value of business to the village in providing employment and contributing to a vibrant atmosphere.
- People value the local shops and would like to see more local produce available.
- Most people want to see business expanding, but are concerned about the traffic and parking implications.
- Many people are unaware of the businesses that do exist.
- Hourly bus services are supported by villagers.
- Modifications to the Northallerton to Stokesley bus route would allow more residents to use public transport in early mornings and evenings.
- Access to Middlesbrough is very limited.
- People would like the Moors Bus timetable to change back to allow a round-trip to Helmsley.
- Bus users would like to see more integration between bus and rail services.



Opened 1786, closed 2005.

We are gradually losing shops – we need to attract more businesses to sustain our vibrant community.

"It is important that a regular bus service is maintained - particularly for the elderly"

... Did You Know?

Osmotherley Agricultural Show is a focus for rural and farming pursuits.



The village school and Womens' Institute have prominent stands, with lovely food on display. Show jumping and livestock are always popular. 2007 will be the 100th show!



Recommended Actions

Include information about businesses and services in a village newsletter and website.

Improve parking for more efficient use of businesses within the village.

Consider forming a local business forum to promote the services of every business in the locality.

Survey residents to see what services should be in a community of our size. This could be used to encourage everybody to use the local services.

National Parks should be asked to form a study group to look into the possibility of providing small workshops for crafts and business.

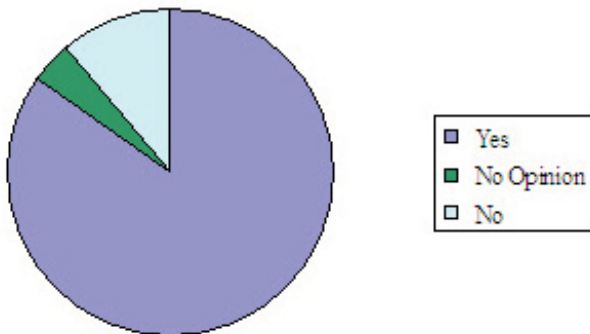
Discuss with NYCC and bus company specific alterations to bus timetable to include:

- An extra service to Stokesley at 8am
- Later services to / from Northallerton
- An extension in direct services or connections to Middlesbrough
- Bus / rail links
- Bus provision for Thimbleby.

Approach Moors Bus Company about changes to timetable to allow return trips to Helmsley.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Question 3.3: Do you think extra car parking should be provided in Osmotherley?



*“Pavements in Osmotherley - what a mess!
Such a beautiful village, such an
awful patchwork of surfaces”*



Views from the Questionnaire

- 84% of residents and 68% of visitors want extra car parking in Osmotherley.
- Although some residents find the yellow lines in Osmotherley unsightly most think that they have brought about improvements and enhanced safety.
- Opinions are divided on the North End bollards: some say “please install more”; others say “they are ugly, an eyesore”.
- Thimbleby residents are concerned about the very large agricultural vehicles that drive through the village.
- Most people are satisfied with the general maintenance of roads and pavements, but the majority are not satisfied with the standard of snow clearance.
- The majority of people favour a one-way system on School Lane.
- There is a lot of concern about the “travel to school” crossings. They are not zebra crossings!





"When I get home at 8pm there is often nowhere to park anywhere in the village let alone near my home"

... Did You Know?

The average number of cars per household is 1.6.



15% frequently have difficulty parking near their home, while 67% have some difficulty parking near Osmotherley village services.

"Encourage more hens in Osmotherley, they slow down the traffic"



Recommended Actions

New or converted dwellings should provide at least enough off-road parking for 2 cars.

Create a car park of between 40 and 60 spaces

Introduce a 40 mph speed limit through Ellerbeck.


Inspect the pavements in Osmotherley and make improvements where necessary.

Carry out a feasibility study of a one-way system on School Lane and implement recommendations.

Monitor the effectiveness of the North End bollards.

Press for more effective speed limit enforcement.

IDEAS:

- 
- Ask the Highways department to look into problems faced by lorries and emergency vehicles in Osmotherley.
 - Better enforcement of speed limits and parking restrictions.
 - How about part-time traffic wardens in Osmotherley?

SECURITY AND COMMUNICATION

The survey highlighted the need for better communications socially, for publicising events and sharing information, and also from a safety point of view with an improved Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.



Two thirds of people agreed that there should be an improvement in sharing and distribution of information. Suggestions included a village newsletter, a website and better use of the noticeboard. Concerns were raised about information getting to outlying areas and also of people getting urgent notices in time e.g. with regards to funerals.



A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme has been in operation in the area for some years, but many residents are not aware of its existence. 62% of villagers would like the Scheme extended and many were keen for better neighbourhood watch communications.

Ideas

Produce posters and a short leaflet for villagers telling people who is involved in the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and how they could get involved.

Strive for more visible and effective policing in the village. This complements moves by North Yorkshire Police to provide local areas with a neighbourhood policing team.

“As a newcomer to the village I feel I have to search for information”

Recommended Actions

Security

Extend Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and discuss improved publicity with local co-ordinator.

Parish Council and Police to consider installation of CCTV logging at entrances to villages.

Local opinions to be communicated to North Yorkshire Police to support implementation of improved local policing.

Communications

Produce a welcome pack for newcomers to the community.

Set up a sub-group to develop better communications within the villages, including a regular newsletter delivered to each home.





VISION FOR THE FUTURE

From what you told us in your questionnaires, it seems that you think the area is a great place to live. You like the fact that Osmotherley is the archetypal moorland village, with wonderful countryside right on the doorstep. You say it's an excellent community, with good services and plenty to do, but you also see problems.

We think that if the ideas laid out in earlier pages are followed, the area can become a place where the character of the village is maintained, and inappropriate development is prevented. A number of affordable homes will be provided for local young people. Parking will be available for those who live here, for visitors who want to take advantage of our area, and for the customers of the businesses. The authorities will enforce the speed limits and make the place safer. More leisure facilities will be available for young and old. Sheepwash will again become a place where people feel happy to walk. And, most importantly, people will know what is happening and have a chance to influence decisions and help put them in place.

Some of the ideas should be easy to achieve, whilst others may be more difficult. However, our formal representatives, the Parish Council, cannot be expected to achieve everything on their own, so we all need to contribute.

In preparing the Parish Plan, the Steering Group have been overwhelmed by support from people; there really is an enormous pool of goodwill waiting to be tapped. There seem to be two significant problems however. First, we're not very good at telling one another what needs doing (and what is already being done), and second, whilst many are prepared to give a bit of their time, not unreasonably they are worried at being sucked into having to do too much work. We think our proposals address both of these points. The Parish Council needs to be in overall charge of managing the Action Plan, but with good communication, delegation, and parcelling work into small packages they should be able to get the help necessary from villagers, and other agencies, to make the plans a reality.

Other villages have made huge improvements through their Parish Plans – so can we.



NOTES





What Happens Next?

The Parish Council will oversee implementation of the Plan, assisted as needed by the Parish Plan team, other volunteers and the various agencies. In due course, perhaps 5 years time, the Plan will be reviewed to see what further actions are needed - the Plan is a living document that will continue to evolve.

How to get involved

One of the successes of the Plan has been the enormous amount of support offered by villagers, and we would welcome any further offers of assistance for individual projects or overall management. Please contact any member of the Parish Council if you can help.

The Fact Book

This is a large document containing the numerical results and comments from the questionnaires, the full analysis of the findings, and the complete list of actions proposed. Hard copies are placed with the National Park Authority and Hambleton District Council; the Parish and Catholic Churches; the school; the Top Shop and Tim Swales Garage. Electronic copies may be read and downloaded from the Parish Council Website (Parish Plan section) on www.hambleton.gov.uk/osmotherley.

