



BROUGHTON COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW

funded by Action with Communities in Cumbria

March 2021

Dear Resident,

In April 2016, a **Broughton Community Plan** booklet was distributed to residents and businesses (viewable online at www.duddonparishcouncil.org.uk under the Community & Local Attractions tab). Using replies to a parish-wide questionnaire, the Community Plan sets out what residents think of our local area, identifies changes that are wanted and aims to suggest goals our community could work towards. Backed by response data from the questionnaire, the Community Plan also provides an evidence base to support initiatives as well as helping to inform policy makers of local priorities.

Five years on it seems appropriate to take stock and to ask again for your input.

By providing a brief review of issues identified by our Community Plan and highlighting successes as well as ongoing problems, we welcome comments on what you value about your community and what you would like improved.

Traffic and Road Safety

There was a strong consensus amongst the 365 respondents to our 2015 questionnaire that the speed and volume of traffic on local roads and especially through Broughton made people feel unsafe. With over 70% of parishioners supporting the lowering of the speed limit to 20 mph through the town, the volunteer representatives on Broughton Community Plan Steering Group were given a strong mandate to tackle the problem.

But first improving pedestrian safety outside Broughton-in-Furness CE Primary School had to be urgently addressed. After a successful media and banner campaign and having secured funding, warning lights were automated followed by road markings, rumble strips and additional signage in 2017.

Funding was also obtained from local county councillors' budgets for various road safety and traffic calming measures such as refreshing road markings on Church Street's hill and laying down lines and erecting signage at the Wreaks End narrowing.

However, the important goal of achieving a 20 mph limit still demanded a significant amount of time and persistence. Following on from a formal request for a 20 mph speed limit made to Cumbria County Council in September 2015, it has taken the intervening years for Broughton Community Plan Steering Group to successfully engage with and persuade Cumbria Highways of the need for a lower limit, to gather traffic data to support our case and to reduce average vehicle speed to necessary parameters through the setting up a Speed Watch Group and the installation of a Speed Indicator Device. £36,000 was then raised in conjunction with Duddon Parish Council and Cllr. Matt Brereton to fund the scheme.

“Even with issues I would not live anywhere else”

20 mph Zone

Following on from the Formal Consultation undertaken by Highways in December 2020, it is expected that Cumbria County Council will shortly grant approval for a lower speed limit in Broughton-in-Furness. The 20 mph zone and associated traffic calming measures should then be put in place this summer.

It has indeed been a long haul but hopefully our community will feel significantly safer and the town benefit from a reduction in both the speed and volume of traffic passing through.

Parking

Parking provision in Broughton, an issue raised by many residents in 2015, remains problematic but has somewhat improved with part of the Auction Mart now doubling up as a parking area for CGP staff vehicles.

Highways

Inadequate maintenance of local roads and poor visibility of road signs were concerns flagged up by some residents. The Parish Council continues to lobby for improvements while also publicising the Highways hotline to encourage locals to report issues directly.

Transport

In 2015 dissatisfaction was expressed over availability and frequency of public transport in the area, especially buses. Nowadays parishioners still remain heavily reliant on private cars while limited train and bus provision continues to impact negatively on local employment and tourism. However, a community transport minibus service run by the Keppleway Centre has been expanded to offer the use of two minibuses to local voluntary groups and schools.

Some questionnaire respondents wanted a Sunday train service and this at least has materialised. However, better pedestrian access to Foxfield Station and a car parking area for train users are still unfulfilled aspirations.

Local Services and Facilities

With the disappearance of all the banks from our town and the number of shops declining in recent decades, our Community Plan recognised the essential role remaining local services and facilities play in sustaining our area. In early 2016 the closure of Broughton Post Office was narrowly averted through a campaign run by Broughton Community Plan Steering Group with support from John Woodcock MP and Broughton's other shops.

Last year Broughton's dental practice and the High Cross pub shut. Ulpha Post Office also sadly closed but an Outreach Post Office service at the Browfoot Room is now available one day a week. Recently, CGP stepped in to prevent the loss of Melville Tyson and The Bakery - highlighting again the vulnerability of such outlets in rural areas.

To improve information on local facilities and services, Steering Group volunteers produced the **Broughton Community Handbook** in 2018. By providing listings of health, education, religious and council services and details on local groups, clubs and organisations, the Handbook helps increase awareness and usage of community resources.

“Peaceful friendly area where people genuinely care about each other and their community”

Environment

Problems relating to the local environment which residents wanted action over included littering and dog fouling.

Several civic-minded individuals pick up rubbish when out walking and some group sessions have also taken place but it would be beneficial if community litter picks could be organised on a more regular basis.

Duddon Parish Council has implemented a Public Space Protection Order on Wilson Park which has helped reduce dog fouling there but occurrences still happen elsewhere.

Recycling

The 2016 Action Plan noted the inadequacy of recycling facilities, especially kerbside collections. Shortly afterwards South Lakeland District Council added plastic and cardboard to kerbside recycling and Copeland Borough Council extended collections to the Duddon Valley.

At Donkey Rocks, the Parish Council has made efforts to improve the emptying of recycling containers. SLDC also puts a live camera there on occasion to deter fly tippers.

Communication

Feedback from the 2015 questionnaire expressed some dissatisfaction with Parish Council communications. This has since been addressed with monthly drop-in surgeries and more informative notices in the Parish Pump.

Connectivity

Poor broadband and mobile connectivity was also cited as a problem - one which has only partially improved in the past five years. Shortly after the consultation, fibre optic broadband came to Broughton but for some townspeople as well as for those living in other parts of the parish, fibre direct to their property remains inaccessible. 3G and 4G coverage in our area also remains patchy.

With the current COVID-19 pandemic resulting in a greater reliance on good connectivity for work and education, our community continues to be disadvantaged, although government pledges to improve internet speeds nationally and initiatives such as B4RN hold out some hope.

Young People

Our 2015 Young People's Questionnaire found that teenagers living here often found it difficult to get to activities or social events elsewhere and were keen to have more facilities locally.

In response, a Youth Table Tennis Club was set up to add to existing groups such as Broughton Runners, Meeting Point, Broughton Tennis Club and Broughton Drama Group which youngsters can participate in. Steering Group members also ran an occasional Kids Film Club attended mostly by parents with younger children.

It would be beneficial if more parish-based activities and a suitable meeting up facility could be available for our young people.

"It's time to look forward and stop wanting Broughton just to stay the same"

Housing

There have not been any substantial changes to housing provision within our parish and concerns expressed by respondents 6 years ago about the lack of affordable housing and the absence of sheltered housing for elderly residents remain unresolved.

Community Assets

When it comes to community assets, local people thought that Broughton's Victory Hall, Wilson Park and allotments were underutilised. With the Parish Council subsequently publicising the allotments more, most of the plots have now been taken up. These were especially well tended and appreciated during lockdown periods.

Efforts have also been made to improve the Hall's viability by increasing usage. An outside charging point was installed in 2019 to bring in some revenue and attract electric vehicle users to Broughton-in-Furness. Several volunteers are now helping manage this community venue but it still needs more getting involved.

For Wilson Park, the Community Plan suggested that residents form a group to help develop better amenities through fundraising and organising communal events but this has not yet happened. Duddon Parish Council continues to manage the Park and currently would be interested in knowing whether equipment for older children should be added to the playground.

Our Community in 2021

So, since our 2015 community-wide consultation, some things have changed for the better while others remain broadly the same. The past twelve months have been especially challenging of course – but has also reminded us how supportive our community can be. Shops, pubs, cafes, garages, businesses, veterinary and health services have all adapted to restrictions and gone the extra mile to look after customers. A weekly Meals on Wheels initiative has reached out to the more vulnerable within our community while there have been countless interactions between people taking time to care about others.

Feedback

There are other topics not touched upon above which parishioners may like to comment on (e.g. flooding, climate change, wildlife preservation, protection of landscape, historic buildings conservation, footpath maintenance, local public health provision, crime, small business support, emergency planning).

We are also keen to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in potential projects such as upgrading Wilson Park, restoring the X7 bus service and improving access to Foxfield Station. Local people have achieved some good things over the past few years and by working together we can continue to build a better and more sustainable community. Remember too that, if you believe something needs changing, maybe you are the one to take some action!

If you have some suggestions on what could be improved upon locally, please send an e-mail to broughtonduddonclp@gmail.com by Friday 30th April 2021. Or write to Annette Carmichael, Chair BCP Steering Group, Lowfield, Church Street, Broughton-in-Furness, LA20 6ER. There will also be a short public meeting held at 7 pm on Monday 26th April via Zoom. Send an e-mail to request the link.

“Will support any initiative to help improve life in our area”