

# GREAT SALKELD - PARISH PLAN

## *Introduction*

### **What is a parish plan?**

Parish plans grew out of the Government White Paper 'Our countryside: The future', published in November 2000. It offered grants and advice to help communities take action for themselves on issues important to them.

They are produced by volunteer members of the community and are a way of capturing the ideas of those who live there. What they like, dislike, want to change and also, importantly, what they want to preserve.

They are about how people would like to see their community develop over the next few years and beyond. They are also about turning people's thoughts and ideas into actions that will make a real difference.

Parish plans don't work on their own - they need to dovetail with the wider range of services and organisations active in the area.

### **What's the background to Great Salkeld's plan?**

The idea of Great Salkeld producing its own parish plan was initially raised by the parish council. In October 2006 a small steering group of interested volunteers met to take the idea forward. Advice was sought from Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC) and a decision made to hold an open meeting in the village hall.

A letter was circulated to all residents in the parish, inviting them to attend a meeting in November 2006. Over 40 residents attended, ideas were discussed and the Great Salkeld Parish Plan Group was formed, comprising 15 volunteers.

The group met on a monthly basis and, supported by VAC, was successful in applying for a grant from DEFRA to cover the cost of producing the plan.

### **How was this plan put together?**

The first step for the parish plan group was to form a number of working groups in the following areas:

- A demographics group assembled statistics and background data on the community.
- A community working group sent out a questionnaire to all the different clubs, societies and organisations within the parish to find out what was important to them.
- A youth group encouraged the younger members of the parish to express their opinions in art workshops. These were held in conjunction with the youth club, and they produced some wonderfully informative and vibrant work.

This work helped inform what should go into a questionnaire to be sent to all households in the parish. Expert advice in compiling the questionnaire and how to conduct interviews was also sought from an experienced professional interviewer and, again, Voluntary Action Cumbria.

In July/August 2007 members of the parish plan group took to the streets of the parish with the anonymous questionnaires. The response was fantastic, with 77% of households taking part.

The data from the questionnaires was computer analysed and the results presented at an open meeting in the village hall on the 8th December 2007. This meeting was also an opportunity to display the wonderful art work the youth group had completed and a presentation of the demographic data that had been collected.

### **What's in this plan?**

As you have read, a lot of information has been collected about Great Salkeld and the people who live here. We have used all this information to put together a plan which not only gives a snapshot of the demographic make-up of the parish and its various clubs and societies, but also gives several action points which the questionnaire suggests you think would make Great Salkeld a better place.

Four key themes have been chosen: communication, environment, housing and leisure. Each theme includes an action plan, which aims to identify the issues raised and how they can be tackled.

You will also see a number of personal quotes, both positive and negative, which were anonymously recorded during the questionnaires and are presented throughout the plan as 'voices of the village'.

### **A final word from the Chairman**

It's important that the opinions of the whole community are captured in this parish plan. Hopefully we have managed this, although, by its very nature, not every individual may agree with a plan that's been drawn up by a whole community.

Keeping the community informed has been a priority and as well as the open meetings, regular updates have been published in Connect magazine, the parish council minutes and in the local paper.

The plan will now be 'adopted' by the parish council to ensure that all the hard work that has gone in to producing this document does not sit gathering dust. It's essential that the ideas and concerns of the parish are put into actions. To help this, a small parish plan sub group will be formed to help maintain momentum, implement the action plans and give support. Anyone who wants to get involved in delivering any of the action plans can do so either through the parish council or through this sub-group. The intention is to look at updating the plan or repeating the whole process in about five years time.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in producing this plan. It has been a pleasure to work with such an enthusiastic, talented and dedicated group of people, who have all given up so much of their time so freely.

I am sure I can speak for all involved and say that we have certainly learned a lot about the wonderful parish in which we live. Lastly, and most importantly, thank you to the parishioners of Great Salkeld for giving us their time and ideas to make this plan a reality.

Jo Thompson  
Chairman

## *About Great Salkeld*

### **Great Salkeld's origins**

Great Salkeld is located in the Eden Valley, which has traditionally been an area of mixed arable and crop farming. The four corners of the parish boundaries lie in Inglewood in the south west and Nunwick in the south east to Eden Lacy in the north east and Wan Fell in the north west. As well as the main village, there are clusters of houses in North and South Dykes as well as several outlying farms.

It is thought that the meaning of 'Salkeld' comes from the old English 'salh' and 'hylte' which means 'sallow' and 'wood'. Sallows are a type of willow, and willows still grow on the banks of the river Eden near the village. The name first appears in the Wetheral Priory Register as Salchild.

The location of the village came about through proximity to the river and a number of springs (4 in total) and wells (also 4) throughout the village. The eastern-most spring was still used as the main water supply for villagers until the 1930s.

It seems likely that the settlement started and grew from being a convenient camping and watering place for drovers, who took cattle and other animals from Scotland to Brough Hill Fayre and Smithfield Market, London. After a day's walking from Carlisle, people would camp here before crossing the River Eden to head east.

A map of 1794 clearly shows a bridge over the River Eden, which would have been accessed from Back Lane. The bridge is no longer there, but an 1864 map shows a dotted line from the village to the river, through the river and on towards Little Salkeld. The river crossing point is marked 'Low Wath' ('wath' means ford). The drovers probably continued to ford the river following the loss of the bridge. Locals say that there is still a paved crossing, part of which can be seen when the water level is low.

The development of the railways brought to an end the need for droving.

### **Key features of the parish**

Great Salkeld's parish church is dedicated to St Cuthbert, who visited Carlisle in 685 AD. Religious records say his body was brought to Great Salkeld for safekeeping from Lindisfarne in 877 AD, 150 years after his death.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> Century a defensive pele tower was built onto the church and the tower still houses an old iron helmet, a breast plate, and other pieces of armour as well as a 'monumental effigy of a man in praying position'.

Great Salkeld was unusual in having a particularly early school, founded in 1515. Schooling was initially held in the tower until the first schoolhouse was built by subscription in 1686, in the time of Bishop Nicholson. The existing school building was constructed in 1856, but the school was closed in 2004.

There are three significant manor houses in the parish, Eden Lacy, Inglewood and Nunwick Hall, which have all played a significant part in the history of the parish.

In 2008 the village became a designated Conservation Area.

### **Demographics**

The last time a national census was carried out was in 2001. It states that there were 204 dwellings in the parish and 445 residents, of which 221 were males and 224 female. This half-and-half split was replicated in the parish questionnaire conducted in summer 2007, when the households surveyed showed that there were 186 males and 186 females. As the parish questionnaire only surveyed 77% of the households in the parish, the latest figures suggest the population of the village may have increased to over 480 since 2001.

This table outlines the age ranges of people in the parish, how it has changed between 2001 and 2007 and how it compared with Cumbrian averages in the 2001 Census.

DATA FOR BAR CHART:

Age Range	2001 overall Cumbria %	2001 Great Salkeld %	2007 Great Salkeld %
0-4	5.2	4.5	5.5
5-15	13.7	15.1	8.1
16-24	9.1	5.2	12.8
25-44	27.2	26.3	18.3
45-64	26.5	28.8	34.7
65-74	9.8	11.7	13.1
75+	8.5	8.5	7.5

Source: 2001 Census & 2007 Great Salkeld parish questionnaire

The 2007 parish plan questionnaire also revealed the following information on how long people have lived in the village:

- Less than 1 year: 7%
- 1-2 years: 5%
- 3-5 years: 13%
- 6-10 years: 21%
- 11-20 years: 18%
- More than 20 years: 36%

*(p.6-7) An active community*

Great Salkeld does not have a lot of things that can bind a community together. There is, however, a great sense of community.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a village shop, post office, petrol station, launderette, blacksmith, school and several pubs all functioning in the parish. These have all now gone, apart from the Highland Drove pub, which draws people not only from the parish but from all around the area. St Cuthbert's Church and the Methodist Chapel are also hubs of village life, and the village hall is a focal point for community events and activities. There numerous societies, clubs and social groups to help people feel included, loved and secure.

In preparing this questionnaire, the organisations that help bind the parish together were contacted for their views on their short and longer-term aims, what they've achieved in the last five years, any problems getting in their way and any help they need.

As might be expected, the short and long term aims of each organisation vary but all groups indicated they are planning to continue operating. They are all concerned with promoting the welfare of the parish as a whole, or specific groups within it. Their achievements over the last five years are impressive and worth listing:

**Parish Council:** Promoted the parish plan; encouraged the purchase of the playing field; meetings are now open to residents; more professional approach is followed due to changes in local government.

**Nunwick Cricket Club:** Provides coaching for up to 120 children each week during the season. Senior teams have been increased from one to two. The club now runs an U/11, two U/13 and U/15 teams. Improved facilities at the ground.

**Great Salkeld Playgroup:** Now flourishing after a period when numbers were low and also now attracts toddlers and parents from outside the parish.

**Great Salkeld Ladies Group:** Makes donations to charity; provides a social gathering for members; organises visits and meals.

**Mother's Union:** Raises money and sends families in distress from the Penrith and Carlisle areas on holidays and days out. Provides hampers for local families at Christmas. Raises money for Third World Relief.

**Great Salkeld Youth Club:** Now successfully established, it meets monthly and has 18 members aged 7-15. It is a focal point for children in the parish now that the school has closed.

**Village Hall Committee:** Built new entrance porch and toilet for disabled people and young children. Refurbished existing toilets and the decorated the hall and Thompson Room. Guttering and fascia boards have been renewed. Various social events organised.

**Sports Committee:** Pledged £1,000 to the village hall for refurbishment work. Gave £100 to the Youth Club. Organised Christmas and New Year events for younger and older residents of the village. Sports Day, St. George's Day Walk organised.

**Great Salkeld Art Group:** This group has become established in the village. Contributed to notelets and provides lessons for members. Helped to organise the Art Safari weekend.

**Neighbourhood Watch:** One of very few groups in Cumbria that can claim coverage of the whole village.

**St. Cuthbert's Church & Methodist Chapel:** Both churches have continued to maintain their buildings and provide services and activities for the community. St. Cuthbert's Church is considering adding toilet and basic catering facilities.

There are three main hindrances to organisations achieving their aims. A lack of adequate finance is mentioned by many groups, together with a need for more storage facilities, particularly in the village hall. An invitation to all parish residents to become involved in the organisations is also frequently mentioned. New members are always welcomed. The same points are made when asked if there is any help that the parish could usefully give – finance, storage and an invitation for more resident participation and help.

Some groups do realise that having a higher profile in the parish through increased publicity might help them. The use of the Connect magazine, village notice boards and the Cumberland & Westmorland Herald has been mentioned.

The parish questionnaire to all residents revealed that there could be opportunities for new groups and clubs - the main ones being a gardening club, walking group and historical group. There were also suggestions to look into whether allotments could be made available in the parish.

*Voices of the Village:*

“It’s a nice friendly village to live in. Everyone’s united despite the geographical spread. A lot of people are concerned with the social well-being of the village and are putting in a lot of effort.”

“We’ve been made to feel very welcome and have been struck by how hard the community works to bond together. Perhaps this is because there is no shop or school – everyone realizes they have to work harder and make more of an effort.”

**Youth group art project**

The parish questionnaire included some areas of particular interest to children, but it was also decided to gather opinions directly from young people via an art project with the youth group.

At the first meeting a large scale map of the parish had been prepared, and the children marked onto it their current activities and journeys in and around the village. This was followed up with suggestions and drawings of their wishes for the future.

At later meetings, more drawings were produced and transferred onto large canvas panels. Over the next eight months, the panels were painted in full colour. One panel shows the parish map, with a key of activities and routes; the other shows the children’s creative and lively ideas for the future. The paintings were presented to the parish at our open event in December and are now on permanent display in the Thompson room of the village hall. They also make a fitting cover image for this parish plan.

It was a less formal approach than the statistical analysis of the parish questionnaire, but it is clear from their verbal, written and visual contributions, that the main wishes of young people in the village are:

- develop the village field to provide sports facilities and play equipment
- set up village sports teams, especially football
- have safe biking trails and a bike club
- open a village shop
- have safe areas away from speeding traffic, more suited to walking dogs off leads
- improve the bridleways and open new ones

Other wishes expressed were for a swimming pool, wildlife area, picnic area, more litter bins and recycling facilities, reopen the school and hold more events such as fêtes, jumble sales and a funfair.

## ***Housing***

When designating Great Salkeld a Conservation Area in March 2008, Eden District Council described the village as having a ‘tranquil quality’. The character appraisal stated:

“The built and natural landscapes are very much in harmony. The village is also notable for the amount of red sandstone walling which, together with the predominance of historic and traditional buildings in the local red sandstone and the amount of grass and trees, gives the village an intensity of colour. This combination is a particular characteristic of the village, and is undoubtedly one of the reasons for its attractiveness.”

Although the layout of the village is still similar to that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with its defensive triangular plan at the heart of the village, the social fabric of Great Salkeld has changed greatly in the last century.

The parish’s proximity to Penrith plus the nearby rail links to Carlisle mean that over the years it has evolved from its original function as an agricultural settlement into a quiet dormitory village and has a relatively large number of commuters. There have been many ‘incomers’ in recent decades and some houses have become holiday homes.

This change has been accompanied by new pressures on housing. Across all the villages in Eden there is a pressure for affordable housing for local people. It is government policy that development in rural settlements should be strictly controlled in order to conserve their character and natural resources. At the same time, however, it has to be remembered that these are living, working communities.

### **Housing in the parish questionnaire**

The parish plan questionnaire attempted to establish the views of residents about the following areas:

- Affordable homes/low-cost starter homes
- In-fill developments
- Conversion of redundant buildings
- Greenfield developments on the edge of the village
- Holiday accommodation
- Sheltered housing for the elderly
- Whether there should be any further development

The following bar chart shows the percentage of people supporting various different new housing options suggested in the questionnaire:

### **BAR CHART - Housing Options**

In-fill developments	36%
Conversion of redundant buildings	78%
New greenfield development	25%
Low-cost starter homes	72%
Holiday accommodation	11%
Sheltered housing	54%

Others	11%
No further development	7%

It was clear from the questionnaire that people in Great Salkeld are keen to protect and preserve local needs and there was strong support from many quarters for more local occupancy restrictions. Despite this, the number of people reporting that they had household members who has been forced to move out of the area because they could not afford to buy or rent locally was relatively low (8%).

From the response to the questionnaire it appears that residents are generally happy with the provision of larger and more expensive owner occupied homes in the parish.

However, some things appear not to be working in terms of housing provision in the parish and there was widespread support for the following measures:

- The need to allow the conversion of redundant buildings
- More provision of affordable homes
- More provision of sheltered housing for the elderly
- The need to allow in-fill development.

### **Housing action plan**

One of the criteria for affordable housing is that it must meet the needs of the local community. The parish plan questionnaire indicates that there's a need for 12-14 affordable housing units in the parish. Eden District Council's housing team say that, from past experience, two out of every five identified will proceed.

The 2006 Housing Needs Survey, carried out by Eden District Council, identified a need for 25 affordable housing units within Lazonby ward over the next five years. On a pro-rata basis that would mean five for the Parish of Great Salkeld.

The next step is to ask Eden's housing research team to carry out a more detailed parish survey to identify the actual housing needs in the parish.

Today the main cost in 'open market' housing is the land cost. In affordable housing the lands cost has to be kept to a minimum and this could make identification of potential sites much more difficult. It will therefore be crucial to facilitate the use of in-fill land and redundant buildings to provide residential units for local people.

ISSUE	ACTIONS	HOW TO TACKLE IT
Lack of affordable housing	Ask Eden District Council's housing research team and the Cumbria Rural Housing Trust (CRHT) to carry out a more detailed housing survey to identify actual requirements.	Identify the detailed requirements within the parish and acquire/identify suitable sites to meet those requirements. Identify housing provider and range of tenures.
Disused infill land and redundant buildings which could provide residential units for local people.	Influence local authority planning policy and the relevant land/property owners.	Consultation on housing policy has already confirmed Parish Council support for relaxed planning approach. Maintain pressure on council policy.
Increased demand for sheltered housing or	Work with Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Primary	Work with relevant agencies to improve provision of care for older

appropriate housing for elderly residents.	Care Trust and EDC Housing to assess current situation and future requirements.	people within the parish.
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*Voices of the village:*

“We need more low-cost starter homes for local families. They need larger rooms, a decent sized garden and a good architect. We should avoid the mistakes made on previous affordable homes – as soon as people had children they had to move out.”

“We shouldn’t build all our new homes condensed on the same plot – we need to encourage integration with the rest of the village. In-fill developments should be considered for low-cost homes or sheltered accommodation.”

## ***Environment***

The natural environment in Great Salkeld is clearly one of its major attractions for people living here. The village is noted for the amount of greenery and foliage and the wide grass verges which run alongside the roads.

But beyond the fresh air and bird song, the parish questionnaire aimed to identify potential areas of concern and areas where improvements could be made in the environment. Key areas of focus included recycling facilities, traffic and vehicle speeds, road conditions and litter.

In recycling Eden District Council currently provides a ‘green box’ doorstep collection (but not to all houses in the parish) and there are recycling points at the Highland Drove (card, paper, bottles, cans) and the top of Pillar Hill (card and paper) which benefit village organisations (the sports committee receives proceeds from the Highland Drove and the village hall from Pillar Hill). The nearest facilities for recycling plastics are at Lazonby.

As for traffic, a current speed limit of 30 mph is imposed through the heart of the village, down Green Lane and through South Dykes and part of North Dykes, but elsewhere the national 60mph speed limit is applied. Many of the roads are narrow country lanes used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. A community police officer does periodic checks with speed cameras and mobile traffic calming signs, but has to cover such a large area that these are infrequent.

The loss of the village school means that all children, both at primary and secondary level, have to use a car or bus to go to school. The condition of local roads is therefore important. The county council provides salt bins at various positions around the village and will re-stock these on demand. It grits the road between Lazonby and Langwathby, however the smaller roads and the ‘golf course’ road are not routinely gritted, despite the fact the golf course road is used as a main access road to Penrith by many from Great Salkeld and other surrounding parishes.

Responsibility for street cleaning and litter collection lies with Eden District Council, although in reality it is down to the people who live in Great Salkeld to maintain the general cleanliness of the parish. ‘Boon’ nights are held by the Parish council and church

to help keep the central areas of the village and churchyard tidy, but there are no formally organised litter collecting days within the parish at the moment.

Responsible dog walkers use the bins at the top of pillar hill to dispose of waste, however dog fouling remains a problem in certain areas.

**Key findings from the questionnaire**

- 68% of respondents use recycling facilities outside the parish
- 62% want to be able to recycle plastics in the village
- 50% use the facilities at Pillar Hill and 37% at the Highland Drove
- 32% do not use the doorstep collection
- 49% would like to see measures to reduce the speed of traffic
- 53% said current road gritting measures are inadequate
- 24% felt that there were not adequate measures in place to deal with flooding

Households were also asked whether they were concerned about specific issues. The bar chart below indicates the percentage of people saying, yes, they were concerned.

Perceived nuisances mentioned under the category ‘Other’ included noise pollution from low flying aircraft and the motocross events, and tractors travelling through the village.

**BAR CHART - Parish Concerns**

Fast Traffic	81%
Dog Fouling	37%
Litter Dumping	34%
Nuisance Parking	26%
Other	18%

**Environment action plan**

It is encouraging that the overwhelming majority of households in the parish recycle, but disappointing that the facilities at Pillar Hill and the Highland Drove are not used to their fund raising potential and that the council doorstep facility is not available to everyone. There is clearly a demand for a wider range of recycling options - particularly plastics.

On the issue of traffic and vehicle speeds, it is interesting that, while 81% felt fast traffic through the parish was an important issue, there was a fairly even split for and against traffic calming measures. Experiences in other villages suggest that, once a community has successfully lobbied for road bumps, the ensuing vibration and noise can be as big a nuisance as the original problem of the speeding traffic.

ISSUE	ACTIONS	HOW TO TACKLE IT
Speeding traffic	Seek expert advice and support from people and organisations in the provision of non-disruptive methods of reducing road traffic speed	If appropriate, approach Cumbria County Council’s Eden Local Committee to apply for funds to implement traffic calming measures
Road conditions and gritting	Ensure adequate facilities	Lobby Cumbria County Council, in

	within the parish to deal with winter road conditions.	conjunction with neighbouring parishes, to routinely grit the 'golf course' road to Penrith.
Increase recycling provision	Provide facilities for recycling plastics locally; consider relocating recycling sites for improved access and uptake.	Raise awareness of existing facilities within the parish and how the benefit local organisations; liaise with EDC on ways to improve access to doorstep collection.
Litter and dog fouling	Organise volunteer work parties; raise awareness of the responsibility to dispose of litter properly and pick up dog waste.	Encourage more local people to take a pride in the parish and get involved in collection; liaise with EDC on provision of litter bins.

*Voices of the village:*

“We should have plastic recycling facilities in the village – you can recycle almost anything else. Also the doorstep collection doesn’t go further than Fairleigh Court in North Dykes because of turning.”

“I would like to see regular litter picks on a voluntary basis. We collected 15 bags worth of litter from the Langwathby road over the last year.”

## ***Leisure***

Alongside the clubs and committees already outlined in this plan, people spend their time in the village in many different ways. Some use the local footpaths and bridleways - be it by foot, horseback or bicycle - others fish, and the sound of lawnmowers and gardening tools is a familiar refrain in the summer.

The parish questionnaire aimed to gauge levels of satisfaction with the current provision of leisure facilities and explore areas that need to change.

At present there are five existing public footpaths and bridleways, some of which require maintenance and improvement. Occasional village walks, such as the annual St George’s day walk, are currently organized by the sports committee and village hall committee, with permission for access from local landowners. These events are well supported and much appreciated.

Currently there is no public access to the River Eden other than on the organized walks and there is also no access to Wan Fell from the parish.

The development of the village field and provision of play equipment has been identified as a key issue due to the field’s location at the heart of the village next to St Cuthbert’s church. When asked what single amenity in the parish needs to improve in the questionnaire, the field easily came out the top answer. It was bought in December 2005 by the parish council after protracted negotiation with the landowners and has a grassed

area which is regularly cut by a volunteer, a tarmac playground and one swing. Local children currently use the field for games.

There are now significant funds available to develop play facilities there, but there has been an apparent lack of progress until recently due to a lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities. A management committee has now been formed and has made initial plans for the site as well as the purchase of some play equipment, which awaits installation.

### **Key findings from the questionnaire**

- 58% of respondents want the school field to improve
- 35% said the condition of the grass verges needs to improve
- 22% said better street lighting is needed
- 82% want access from the village to the River Eden
- 47% want access to Wan Fell from within the parish
- 56% want more footpaths and bridleways
- 41% said the condition of rights away needs to improve
- 21% want allotments to be provided

When asked what activities would be suitable for the school playing field, the following bar chart reveals the level of support for a range of options suggested in the questionnaire. Suggestions made under 'Others' included a landscaped village green, tennis court and picnic area.

### **BAR CHART - Use of school playing field**

Skateboard	15%
Play equipment	86%
Cycle track	25%
Wildlife	37%
Sandpit	28%
Sports markings	57%
Others	30%

### **Leisure action plan**

There seems to be united desire in the village to make the most of the village field and turn it into a real hub of the community. The management committee which is progressing the development of the field are doing so in the full knowledge that they have the backing of most of the parish and the Parish Council.

The issue of access to the local countryside, however, may not be so easily resolved. There is often a clear conflict of interests between the landowners, who have an understandable desire to protect their land and livestock, and the people who wish to access local beauty spots such as the River Eden and Wan Fell. The organized village walks have helped resolve some of these tensions and there is more potential for future walks which are being investigated.

Some of the public footpaths and stiles have been improved while this plan was being prepared. Many people were unaware until the survey, and pleased to discover, the existence of the North Dykes field as a public area with potential.

ISSUE	ACTIONS	HOW TO TACKLE IT
Development of school field	Clarify funding arrangements, consult interested parties; obtain design for best use of area; formulate budget to include maintenance, equipment and contingency fund; explore any other funding options.	Management committee to work with trustees, parish council and Eden District Council to develop new play facilities.
Access to land and improvement of rights of way	Update map and produce a guide of existing footpaths and bridleways; engage local countryside ranger for advice on opening access to areas such as Wan Fell and the River Eden and ensuring all existing footpaths and bridleways are well signposted; set up annual programme of access days with permission granted by landowners.	Set up a countryside access group to implement actions in consultation with landowners.
North Dykes field	Reinstate access to North Dykes Parish field to community.	Consult with local residents; cost out provision of benches etc and explore funding sources.

*Voices of the village:*

“Access to River Eden? Yes! Yes! Yes!”

“It would be good to have some decisive action on the school field soon rather than once our children have grown up.”

***Communications***

Eden District is the most sparsely populated area in England, so it has unique challenges in getting people to link up with essential services. Great Salkeld is fortunate in that it is only five miles north east of Penrith, and is therefore relatively close geographically to the main town in the area.

But five miles can still seem a world away to someone who cannot drive and has no other means of travelling. One of the key aims of the parish questionnaire was to gauge how people get around and how they communicate with people both outside and inside the parish.

Within the parish, there are a number of ways people find out what's going on. Village notice boards and Connect newsletter are the main 'official' mediums of delivering information.

In the past, new arrivals in the village were presented with a 'Welcome Pack' which contained a directory of local services and organisations. As this was volunteer-driven, it ended up petering out, but the parish questionnaire was keen to explore whether there was still a demand for this and whether the existing communication methods are working.

The phenomenon of the internet has revolutionized the way people in rural communities can shop, browse and communicate with others. Another aim of the parish questionnaire was to explore whether people in Great Salkeld are using the internet, and whether more can be done to unleash its full potential.

### **Key findings from the questionnaire**

- The car is the main form of transport for 95% of households.
- 73% of households never use a bus.
- 99% of households receive the Connect newsletter as a source for parish news.
- 90% of households do not use the travelling post office, the mobile shops, the mobile police service or the mobile library.
- Only 17% of households did not think that it was a good idea for Great Salkeld to have its own website.
- 20% of households need more information about the switchover from analogue to digital television in 2009.
- 88% of households would find a directory of local services useful.
- 40% of people would be prepared to participate in a voluntary car sharing scheme.

### **Pie chart - Access to the Internet in Great Salkeld**

Do not have a computer - 22%

Have a computer - 78% (this section subdivided into three shaded areas: Broadband access 56%; Dial-up access 14%; No internet access 8%).

The questionnaire revealed that some people believe the village notice boards are in inappropriate locations and there's uncertainty locally over how frequently the boards are updated.

The lack of knowledge and interest in some of the mobile services offered in the parish, such as the post office, mobile shops and library, is also an area of concern as they could become unviable.

People's heavy reliance on cars has also become a self-perpetuating problem, with bus services becoming less and less frequent and a lack of local awareness about the Fell Runner bus running times and Rural Wheels community transport programme. The questionnaire, however, did reveal a certain amount of interest in setting up a car sharing scheme and a number of people said they'd be willing to become a volunteer driver or

help collect prescriptions from health centres and pharmacies for villagers with no transport.

### **Communications action plan**

Great Salkeld is fortunate in that a relatively large proportion of people who live in the parish take an interest in village life. When Eden District Council was consulting on making the village a conservation area, it commented on the large number of responses and the impressive turnout at the public meeting. Likewise the public meetings on preparing the parish plan have been well attended.

In this respect, there is a ‘captive audience’ for parish news, which explains why Connect is so well-known and well-read. So the current system works, but the parish questionnaire revealed opportunities to build on it and develop new electronic communication tools such as a website or emailed newsletter.

Connect contains news from the parish council and other parish clubs and committees, but it is produced by the church and therefore some of its information is not of interest to everyone. There appeared to be a demand for a clearer non-religious publication containing parish news.

There could also be opportunities in using the local newspaper, the Cumberland & Westmorland Herald, as a forum for parish news. Many local WI branches already file reports in the paper - it could be amenable to a small ‘news from Great Salkeld’ section.

ISSUE	ACTIONS	HOW TO TACKLE IT
Parish Newsletter	Explore whether a parish newsletter similar to Lazonby Lines could be distributed alongside Connect.	Someone to write and co-ordinate the newsletter needs to be identified; also explore whether an electronic version could be emailed to people.
Welcome Pack & Parish Directory	Re-establish the practice of providing new arrivals and existing residents with a ‘Welcome Pack’ giving details of services available to residents.	Update the old Welcome Pack and also develop an electronic version to be accessed via website or email.
Parish Notice Boards	Set up a small volunteer group to maintain them on a frequent basis; consider relocating existing notice boards for more convenient (main village & Salkeld Dykes) or safer (North Dykes) use.	Draw up guidelines to establish which items should appear on noticeboards (a mixture of permanent and temporary). Consider use by residents personal notices - be it ‘lost cat’ or ‘for sale’.
Parish Website	Either set up a new website or use an existing local one to convey news and information about Great Salkeld parish.	It needs to be driven by information from the parish newsletter and directory, but also needs to be maintained and updated. Costs and

		funding have to be considered.
New Clubs & Activities	Facilitate the setting up of new clubs and activities within the parish.	Revisit the info generated by the Parish Plan questionnaire.
Voluntary transport	Encourage volunteers to step forward to gauge firm levels of interest as well as raising awareness of existing schemes.	Contact Cumbria County Council for further details on how new volunteers can help existing schemes or help set up new ones.

*Voices of the Village:*

“One improvement I would like to see would be an improvement in broadband speeds. Rural communities are often distant from the exchange, so slow speeds are the norm. Faster internet access could attract a small community-based business and stimulate the local economy.”

“A map of the village on the village noticeboards would be useful. It could show footpaths, with the names of roads and lanes.”

“I think there should be a non-religious community based newsletter with articles, like the Raven. It would be more inclusive.”