

Lesbury Parish Plan

2009

Today's Vision for Tomorrow

LESBURY PARISH COUNCIL

An important part of living as a community in a beautiful place is to protect what we value whilst sharing a vision for the future.

The Parish Council represents the community and knows that it must engage with residents to try to meet their needs, aspirations and concerns. The objectives of this Plan are to reflect the wishes of the community and the Parish Council has supported its preparation enthusiastically.

It is clear that the Parish Council cannot achieve all the objectives outlined in the Plan on its own. It does not have the time or the resources. In order to make the Plan a reality, we need to attract many willing volunteers from the community. One fact that has become abundantly clear in the preparation of the Parish Plan over the past 15 months is the level and variety of skills possessed by our residents and we hope to be able to use such skills to take the Plan forward. Please don't leave it all to somebody else and do not be afraid to get involved in the future; your help is needed.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I want to express my sincere thanks to the many residents who have played a part in the production of this Plan. I must however, make special mention of the members of the Steering Committee who have worked tirelessly as a team to bring the Plan to fruition.

I am very pleased to commend this Parish Plan to you all.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Tom Wilson." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Tom Wilson
Chairman, Lesbury Parish Council

November 2009

Lesbury Parish Plan Steering Committee

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Foreword

This Parish Plan is the result of a year's work by a team of volunteer residents at the invitation of the Parish Council. It is designed to bring to the attention of the Parish Council the needs and aspirations of all sections of our community and help the Parish Council to define its objectives and plan its programme during the next few years. It is also aimed at encouraging residents to work with the Parish Council to achieve these goals.

While the recommendations and advice given in the Plan are those of the Steering Committee, they reflect local public opinion both in their content and in their priority, and we are very grateful to all residents who attended our meetings and exhibitions, gave us their comments and completed the questionnaires.

Taken as a whole, the Parish Plan represents a formidable set of tasks for the community and I take this opportunity to emphasise that many residents have expressed themselves willing to help the Council in the implementation of specific projects, and thus spread the load.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to act as Chairman of the Steering Committee, and I want to thank its members and the many residents who served on the working groups for their individual and collective contributions to the development of the Plan.

Dorothy Wilson

Dorothy Wilson
Chairman

November 2009



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1

Introduction

What is a Parish Plan?

The Government wants local communities to have more say in decisions that affect them either as individuals or as part of the community in which they live. Change has always been an unavoidable part of life! There might be some things about our Parish we would like to see changed or improved and other things which we would prefer to keep as they are. Opinions are many and varied. A Parish Plan is an opportunity for everyone living in the Parish to make their views known and it tries to ensure that any proposed changes for the future are in accordance with the wishes of our residents.

Why have a Parish Plan for Lesbury?

This Parish Plan provides an overview of the main issues which concern people in our Parish. Parish Plans are able to have an influence on things which affect our daily lives and can pinpoint actions which the local community can take to influence decisions and policies of official bodies which deal with planning, transport and housing etc. They can also be used in support of funding for local projects and developments.

How was the Plan produced?

At the outset the Parish Council encouraged residents who were interested in being involved in preparing a Parish Plan to meet together and to form volunteer groups to acquire information on the Parish. The sequence of activities and the way in which these contributed to the formulation of the Plan are set out in Appendices 1 and 2, the latter dealing specifically with the programme of public consultation that lay at the heart of the recommendations which follow.

The Parish Plan is based on information derived from public participation, which took place throughout the period of study.

Gathering information from a wide range of sources has not only provided a wealth of information but has enabled individual views to be compared, contrasted and further explored in order to ensure that the plan reflects the collective views of residents of the Parish.

What does the Plan cover?

For the purposes of the Parish Plan, the word environment is defined as “physical surroundings and conditions, especially as affecting people’s lives”.

The Parish Plan is a concise summary of how we, the residents, see the community and how it might develop over the foreseeable future. As a result of various consultations it reflects opinions across the Parish and identifies the characteristics people value. It analyses local issues and makes proposals as to how people want the community to evolve. Action Plans have been prepared to assist the Parish Council in achieving this vision.

Whilst we acknowledge that one of the sites of RAF Boulmer is located within the Parish, the base



focuses mainly on the village of Longhoughton where substantial housing is located for service personnel together with a NAAFI shop. An unspecified number of civilian and military staff live within Lesbury Parish. The main impact of the site on the surrounding area is the amount of traffic passing through Lesbury village and the trade at the shop/post office. The nature of the air defence operation means that it cannot be included in the Parish Plan.



Who is it for?

As a principal requirement of the Parish Council a copy of this Plan has been delivered to every household in the Parish to ensure that all residents have access to the information contained in it. Other organisations and officials listed below will also obtain relevant information from the Plan:

- Northumberland County Council (the new Unitary Authority) where it is intended to influence policy and planning decisions.
- The County Council's Highways and Transport department
- Utility companies
- Internet service providers
- Others – (elected Councillors, MP, Northumberland Estates, etc)

What were the main issues?

The responses to the Questionnaire revealed that the five main issues, in order, were:

- Concerns about car parking and traffic speeding
- Community social and sporting activities including use of the Village Hall
- Conservation of the built and natural environment
- Provision of affordable housing
- Prevention of dog fouling

What next?

The views and opinions expressed in this Plan are described and summarised by the Steering Committee, and for the sake of brevity 'We' therefore refers to 'The Steering Committee'.

Action Plans have been drawn up by the Steering Committee and are included at the end of each chapter. However, by the time you read this Plan you may find that some of the issues raised are already being dealt with. **Other matters will take longer to resolve and will require the effort and enthusiasm of the community as a whole.** The Parish Council do not have the time or resources to do everything themselves and, taken on face value, the matters which need to be dealt with represent a considerable challenge. Although not specified in every case, we fully expect that the Parish Council will need to set up small community groups or sub-committees to take some of these matters forward on their behalf. This is where YOU, the residents can play your part in giving support and help to the Parish Council to get things done. Will you help? If you are interested in assisting with your time and experience in any of the recommended projects, please let a Parish Councillor know.

2

Lesbury Parish – setting the scene



After the Norman invasion of 1066 land was shared out between various Lords and Barons and the Parish of Lesbury stands within land belonging to the Percy family, Dukes of Northumberland. Records indicate that there is a long history of settlement in the Lesbury area going back to 12th century medieval times. It later gradually developed into a sizeable settlement and by the 13th century, must have rivalled Alnwick and Alnmouth in local importance. Over time, some medieval villages like Lesbury grew in size, whilst others like Hawkhill, Bilton and Wooden reduced to just one or two houses or a farm which came to form part of the Parish of Lesbury ¹.



It is conceivable that a bridge over the river Aln may have been built at the same time as the Mill although the existing stone bridge was constructed

in the 15th century perhaps replacing an earlier one. Lesbury and its surrounding Parish was mainly engaged in farming hence the importance of the Mill to the local economy.

The railway was constructed in 1848 and the 18 arches viaduct which was designed by Robert Stephenson spanned the River Aln. This has undoubtedly made an important contribution to the life and economy of the Parish right up to the present day.

Lesbury Parish is situated within magnificent coastal scenery and countryside and is within easy reach of the historic market town of Alnwick. The Cheviot Hills are but a relatively short drive away. The larger town of Morpeth and the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne are also accessible by means of the A1 trunk road and the main east coast railway line. The busy railway station of Alnmouth for Alnwick situated in the Parish also provides a well-used train service to most parts of the country.

These features have provided the residents with both a heritage and an environment that are the envy of many other parts of the country.

1 Keys to the Past; a new and exciting Heritage Lottery Funded project which unlocks the archaeological secrets of County Durham and Northumberland. <http://www.keystothePast.info/durhamcc/K2P.nsf/K2PDetail?readform&PRN=N13492> (accessed 18 May 2009)



3.1 Farming

By far the major land use in the Parish is farming. The area supports both arable and mixed farms.



Clearly agriculture plays a major role in preserving and shaping the local environment, providing food and shelter for many and varied flora and fauna. Local farms follow Government stewardship programmes designed to conserve biodiversity, landscape and the historic environment, as well as promoting public access and countryside awareness. These stewardship principles should be encouraged. One of the main objectives of the Environment Agency is that “Wildlife corridors and their associated habitats will be of high quality, with no artificial barriers to wildlife movement”.

3.2 Salt-marsh, sand dunes and beaches

A portion of Lesbury Parish to the south and an area west of the Duchess Bridge includes some of

the Alnmouth salt marsh which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As such it contains unique flora and fauna as well as providing overwintering grounds for many bird species. The Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which stretches from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Amble cuts through Lesbury Parish north to south approximately following the B1339. This and other national and international designations convey high levels of legal and Governmental protection for both habitats and species and will have further regulation under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill currently going through Parliament. Not surprisingly these areas are also favoured by both tourists and local people alike for recreation. Although well regulated at Government and local level, the Parish Council should encourage continued support for these initiatives. In order to increase public awareness of these designations it would be useful to produce a simple document for information, e.g. as a separate leaflet.



3.3 Rivers and streams

The River Aln passes through the area and out to sea at Alnmouth. It is tidal to Lesbury Road Bridge (A1068) upstream and is fed by various freshwater becks. As expected, it provides varied habitats for fish and invertebrates as well as birds and mammals. During 2009 the river has been restocked with the release of 250 brown trout. In terms of water quality generally, the river is in good condition although colour could be improved.

The Environment Agency has produced a Flood Map which clearly shows the flood plain and the upstream areas of the village that may be at risk. As recently as 7th October 2008 Alnwick District Council produced a Strategic Risk Flood Assessment which highlighted areas "at risk" of flooding from the major rivers and streams within the District.

On its way through Lesbury the River Aln meanders through an extensive flood plain of ecological importance: it is used for grazing but is not good quality agricultural land. It has an important function as a flood plain during the winter months or at times of high rainfall.



The 4shores Project has re-instated the natural flood plain and created scrapes to hold water on the plain. The plain showed its worth during the latest storms in September 2008, when the flooded river dissipated relatively quickly, and it proved a

major component in managing flood risk. Other benefits will accrue with the development of new habitats for birds and other wildlife. The Parish Council and the 4shores Project have provided some points of access via kissing gates to view these wetlands as well as some benches to enjoy the surroundings.

It is considered that the original concept of the Northumberland 4shores – Alnmouth Scheme Vision should be completed as far as possible with footpaths giving access to viewing platforms. Additionally some signage on right of way and description of the area is essential. Organisations including the Environment Agency and Natural England working together with AONB, land owners and the Parish Council should continue to develop plans to mitigate flooding problems, erosion of river banks and improve public access.

3.4 Woodlands

There are no major wooded areas within the Parish but there are a number of smaller plantations dotted around the area which support varied wildlife including buzzards, sparrow-hawks, owls and many smaller bird species. Importantly in terms of conservation red squirrels inhabit a number of these areas. We feel that the Parish, with the landowners' agreement, should be seeking to restore native trees and plant hedgerows, including hedgerow trees, in suitable locations. Hedge cutting should be at the time of year to avoid disturbing nesting birds and the removal of berries before the winter. This is automatically included in stewardship programmes followed by farmers and local councils but should be monitored for compliance.



3.5 The Built Environment

Recent new housing developments in the Parish include those in Townfoot, Alnside Court, Hipsburn Steading, the Coppice and Hillside, off Curly Lane some of which have taken green space. We believe that new development is necessary to invigorate the area but where possible should be kept within existing village boundaries to avoid ribbon development and linking up of settlements which would severely impact the general environment of the Parish. A “green belt” should be maintained around the settlements to support the national idea of wildlife corridors. The former Alnwick District Council Local Development Framework stated that one of their aims was to protect the flora and fauna in our environment and the surrounding landscape from inappropriate development.

3.6 Green spaces



Although urban development in the Parish is minimal, open or green spaces do enhance the area. The survey showed that 73% of residents who returned the questionnaire thought that better use could be made of some of these spaces by careful planting of native trees and wildflowers. It should be borne in mind that green spaces are not necessarily owned by the Parish. Assets including the football and cricket club sites are let by Northumberland Estates for the use of these clubs.

3.7 Environmental impact of local industry

There is no major industry in the Parish, apart from tourism. The RAF Boulmer site has a major visual impact on the area to the north of the Parish. There has been some attempt to minimise this with extensive tree plantings near the entrance on Longhoughton Road providing refuges for wild life. This helps to hide buildings, aerials and the radar dome, at least from some aspects, but as raised in the survey does nothing to reduce the noise pollution from rifle shooting.

The Hipsburn coal yard was mentioned as a particular issue by local residents. Bold and inappropriate signs visually dominate the exit to the station. Additionally there is an issue of coal dust being blown around the adjacent houses.

The Northumbrian Water sewage treatment works by the river is visually well screened but its presence can be detected from a characteristic odour. Pied wagtails and small warblers are attracted to the unit particularly during migration.

The office site at Hawkhill has been sympathetically developed and could be a model for the development of local “industry.”

According to the survey there was firm support (83% in favour) to use the building of the new station car park as an opportunity for landscaping and planting which would encourage wildlife without compromising safety and security.



NATURAL ASSETS – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

High Priority

- raise support from local and County Councillors to establish an effective “Green Belt” around the present settlements to avoid ribbon development.

Secondary Priority

- produce an information document on the attractions in the Parish’s salt marshes sand dunes and beaches.
- approach the Station Commander at RAF Boulmer to discuss ways to reduce random local noise pollution from the shooting range.
- discuss with the operators of the Coal Yard on South View, the landowners, the Planning Authority and Network Rail with a view to re-locating the operation.

When Expedient

- support Government initiatives on Farming Stewardship and protection of habitats within the AONB and SSSI.
- monitor the presence and condition of native trees and hedgerows, and produce a plan to restore, enhance and manage them.
- monitor the condition of public green spaces and produce a plan for management and planting where appropriate.



The Working Group's tasks were to

- Compile a list of any structures that were thought to be of historic interest.
- Outline any issues relating to their continued existence.
- Suggest ways of overcoming those problems

Many structures within Lesbury Parish exude the image of old England which is so greatly valued. The Percy Family presence began in 1309 and eventually held influence over Lesbury which came within the Barony of Alnwick. It could be argued that a degree of influence remains today through The Northumberland Estates' continued ownership of certain land tracts and buildings. Existing visual evidence includes several houses bearing the family crescent.

A history of the village is not the main purpose of this work, rather the identification of any structures deemed to be of historic interest. One of the Parish's endearing features is the main route through Lesbury village which is lined largely with attractive stone cottages. The old bridge, church, post office and shop, public house and Village Hall add to the appeal. Many respondents to the survey believed that it was important to preserve these features.

Bilton, which lies within the Parish boundary, is enhanced by similar local stone-built cottages with

tilled roofs and a cluster of interesting structures, central to which is Bilton House.

Many Parish structures are protected by Listed Buildings status.

- The Old Bridge is classified as Grade I and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Saint Mary's Church is classified Grade II*

There are 24 other listed structures within the Parish, which are shown more fully in Appendix 4. The more important listed structures are described further over the next few pages.



Lesbury Old Bridge and river crossings

The Old Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument thought to be of 15th century origin, altered in the 19th century. The main feature is two arches with steeply-canted cutwaters in between.



While the new bridge that has recently replaced the ancient one is a great improvement from the point of view of traffic safety, its appearance has proved controversial.

The present metal footbridge linking Steppey Lane to Lesbury Village once carried pedestrians over the A1 road at Stanington and replaced a smaller metal structure about 25 years ago. Although our present footbridge stood up to a recent storm, the raised stone walkway and metal railings approaching from the south did not, causing its temporary closure. Substantial new railings have been installed and the walkway reconstructed in 2009.

The site of stepping stones exists at what was once a Steppey Lane ford, a few metres below the footbridge. There is no longer a crossing at this point. The remains of another set of stepping stones can be found at Greenrigg. These originally stood alongside the ford or crossing point but have been ruined by years of river turbulence. The ford itself is still occasionally used by farm vehicles and walkers but is unsafe underfoot.

The Church of St. Mary

A mass of factual data exists relating to the church building. It is the oldest existing structure in the Parish. The present building may well have been preceded by a Saxon church but the earliest written evidence (1147) relates to the Norman period when Eustace Fitzjohn, Baron of Alnwick, gave it to the abbot of the newly created Alnwick Abbey.

Various structural alterations/repairs have occurred between that date and the present, most notably hood moulding to the window on the east elevation (14th century) and major repairs in 1847 to the nave (south wall) which can be seen from the road.

Repairing parts of the structure has been an ongoing theme for St Mary's over the centuries. The building is made from local materials and, there is visual evidence of minor weathering. Dioceses in the Church of England conduct Quinquennial Inspections i.e., every 5 years. Quinquennial inspections involve a thorough survey of all



aspects of a building and are intended to identify problems which have developed since the last time it was inspected and to establish priorities for repair to ensure the preservation of the fabric. Quinquennial inspections are generally frequent enough to catch problems before significant damage occurs ¹.

¹ *The Appointment of Professionals for Quinquennial Inspections: An Introduction to Accreditation and Approval Systems* (Jonathan Taylor) in *The Conservation and Repair of Ecclesiastical Buildings*, 1999 www.buildingconservation.com (accessed 27 June 2009)

We are concerned that the present congregation may not have the resources or the energy to raise the finances needed for the upkeep of this historic structure, which has for centuries been central to the life of the Parish. We recommend that the Parish Council consult the church's Parochial Church Council as to the most effective way that support can be given by the Parish as a whole.

The Glebe (The old vicarage)

This is now a private residence and was built in the second half of the nineteenth century, but 18th century fabric exists at the rear. A reset door-head from the previous vicarage is recorded as bearing an inscription dated 1765. The present vicarage is a modern house situated nearby.

Vicarage Cottages

These are now semi-detached, residential properties, standing opposite The Glebe, on a bend in the road, facing west. Formerly The Poor House and School, church records include accounts relating to domestic details from 1776 to 1824.

The School House

This property is now rented accommodation and still owned by Northumberland Estates.

Lesbury Village Hall

The Hall was previously the Village School, founded by the Percy Family in 1857. The school, which was Church of England endowed, closed in 1971. It continues in use as a village hall and is important as a centre for the community.

Lesbury House

The present house was built circa 1800, incorporating an earlier (18thC) rear wing. It has a direct connection with nearby Lesbury Mill in that the Earl of Northumberland (mill owner) allowed his tenant to reside there. Lesbury House is currently in private ownership. The high boundary wall alongside the road through the village was repointed during the Spring of 2009.

The Square

Buildings in The Square once provided accommodation for the grooms, etc. who worked at Lesbury House and for mill workers.

Reading Room

Currently private accommodation, the Reading Room was once a centre for information within the Parish. It housed a collection of 500 volumes.

Water Pant

This structure stands on the side of an access road next to Meldon Cottage. It probably dates from the introduction of a water pipeline into Lesbury by the fourth Duke of Northumberland in 1860.

The Coach Inn



This was first a blacksmith's shop, then The Blacksmith's Arms public house which closed down in the mid nineteenth century. This was due to the rowdy behaviour of navvies taking time off from laying the new railway system.

Mills

There were three water-driven mills on the river Aln within Lesbury Parish boundary. Lesbury Mill was situated on the south side of the old bridge. It was a centre for corn grinding over six hundred years until the 1920s.

A large fire in 1964 preceded its final demolition.



All that remains today is a reduced section of the east wall that runs between the old and new bridges. Slightly upstream, and across the river, can be found the substantial stone remains of the mill race. As the main structure has gone, to the visitor there is no indication from the remnants of the mill that it was such an important part of our Parish industry. A stone abutment with arch that carried a mill race over the river still survives. Part of the stone-built mill race adjoins it. Both are in need of conservation if deemed important enough.

The first record of Bilton Flint Mill was in 1786. It was owned by James King & Company, St. Anthony's Pottery, Tyneside. It is marked as a flint mill on Greenwood's map of Northumberland in 1828 but some time afterwards became a corn mill. Flint was brought to this region by the coal ships which used it as ballast. It was used in the pottery industry after being roasted then ground into dust. Flint powder hardened the clay and lightened its colour. A gutted two storey building remains behind the mill. Constructed in rough, light coloured sandstone, it has well-dressed stone at all the main openings. The roof is intact. A photograph of the building when in use shows

a water wheel shed on the western wall which probably dates from the early twentieth century.

Documentary evidence of Longhoughton Mill exists in text and on old maps. It was situated next to the eighteen arches railway viaduct and riverside in Deep Dene. Very little visual evidence of its existence survives.

The Eighteen Arch Viaduct

Today this carries the main East Coast railway line but was built for the York, Newcastle and Berwick Railway by Robert Stephenson in 1848/9 and is a highly visible and significant part of the local heritage.

Cawledge Viaduct

A seven arch viaduct spans the Cawledge Burn ravine on the now defunct Alnwick to Alnmouth branchline. Maintenance of this is the responsibility of Northumberland Estates.

Weirs on the river

Lesbury Dam remains the most intact with a fish pass by the side. Evidence of two others exists below the Eighteen Arches Viaduct and above Bilton Mill.

Bilton Banks Colliery Manager's House

Two rows of houses were demolished decades ago but the main residence remains and is privately occupied. This house is on the periphery of our Parish boundary but just within it. Old photographs exist of the mining village and nearby colliery buildings.

Farmsteads

Bilton Barns, Bilton Mill, Field House, Greenrigg, Hawkhill, Hipsburn, Spylaw, Wooden, Townfoot and Lookout, all existed when the 1866 Ordnance Survey map was printed.

N.B. See Appendix 4 for a complete list of historic structures and significant buildings within the Parish.

STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS OF HISTORIC INTEREST – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

High Priority

- consult with the County Council's Conservation Officer to help owners of Listed Buildings understand their obligations and be made aware of possible financial help.
- discuss the desirability and practicality of raising the status of certain additional buildings to the List of historically important structures e.g. Church Cottages in Lesbury Village.
- ascertain the procedures necessary to de-List some other structures which may be of little historical or architectural importance, including the Village Hall.

Secondary Priority

- support through the Parish Newsletter, the efforts of the PCC and congregation of St Mary's to maintain the fabric of the Grade II* Church building and the integrity of the Closed and Open Churchyards.
- raise general awareness of historic structures in the Parish by producing an informative leaflet and location map based on the information given in the Parish Plan.
- encourage and support detailed research by interested residents into all the Listed and other significant buildings and structures in the Parish, leading to the publication of a new booklet.

When Expedient

- provide an interpretation board near the Old Bridge, describing the history of the 15th century bridge and explaining the visible remnants of the ancient mill structures and mill race.



5

The Economy of the Parish

5. 1 People and employment

The basis of all statistical information is the National Statistic Office and the 2001 census (Appendix 3). In 2001 we had some 394 households, excluding second homes and empty properties. Total housing stock is now about 480 properties as a result of the new developments including Alnside Court, Hipsburn Steadings the Coppice and Hillside and some in-fill individual properties.

The value of Lesbury property tends to be somewhat higher than in surrounding areas and this will no doubt have a knock on effect in the overall economy.

As at 2001 the Parish had 871 persons between 16 – 74 years old. At that time 343 were employed, 20 unemployed and 249 retired. The census indicated that 24 persons travelled by public transport to work, 251 used their own transport and 73 worked at home or in the immediate vicinity.

Residents who are in employment are commuting as follows:

- A) Short distances to Alnwick or surrounding area.
- B) Medium distances typically to Newcastle, Berwick or within the county.
- C) Long distances perhaps to Edinburgh or London.

5. 2 Local businesses

The businesses that actually operate in the Parish are

The Post office/shop - This is run as a family business and as reflected in the survey any closure would be a huge loss to the assets of the Parish and the community.

The Coach Inn - A “village” pub is, along with the church, the heart of any community, more so in a rural environment. In order for it to reach its full potential, it needs to provide good food, involvement in village social activities and a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Farming - The farms operating in the Parish, are Hawkhill Farm, Wooden Farm, Field House Farm, Townfoot Farm, Hipsburn Farm, Bilton Mill Farm and Bilton Barns Farm.

Commercial premises - The Hawkhill complex, recently converted from redundant farm buildings, consists of 10 office / workshop units. It supports a variety of businesses including computer programme development. As far as is known, the employment at Hawkhill is not specifically geared to providing employment in Lesbury Parish.

RAF Boulmer - Not strictly a business but some personnel live in Lesbury and certainly there is an impact on local trade either from these residents or as passing trade on the way to or from the base.

5. 3 Tourism

The Parish does not have any of its own tourist attractions but is close to Alnwick Castle and The Alnwick Garden and to Howick and Craggside.



The Parish does provide a relatively small accommodation base of 2 bed and breakfast facilities (Hawkhill farmhouse 6 people and Swallowdale Cottage 5 people) and a little more substantial base of self catering properties, about 13 in number, providing beds for about 70 tourists. Bed and Breakfast is also offered by the

Dormy House at Alnmouth Golf Club, Foxton. The area appears to be a base (or potential base) for tourists in search of activity based pursuits e.g. golf, walking and sightseeing.



5. 4 The Present

The Parish economy is not self-perpetuating but is derived largely from the spending power created by those who live here and work elsewhere, with the exception of the farming input, and by a small amount of tourist income. In addition a certain amount of income is generated as "passing trade."

Any future development would need quite large scale or industrial changes but as highlighted in the survey this is not the wish of those who have chosen to live here. Provision of employment is however of substantial concern to children leaving school especially in the present climate. The 2001 census indicated that only 2% of the local population was unemployed which in future may be viewed as the "good old days."

5. 5 The Future

The economy of the area may be enhanced by building more “executive homes”, as has been the main development in the last 10 years. Respondents to the survey indicated that they do not want more of this type of development and it is doubtful if this would have major impact on the economy. The survey also showed general support for more affordable homes but probably only on a relatively small scale which again would not impact the local economy greatly

The encouragement and subsidising of cottage industry type businesses, eco-tourism such as guided walks may provide employment and be part of the diversity needed in farming, if funding would be available to start such an enterprise.

We suggest that the Parish Council encourage service businesses, for example a tea room. This was mentioned several times during the Open Day and in the survey and would be a facility for the use of both tourists and local people alike.

We are unsure whether an increasing number of holiday accommodation properties helps or hinders the local economy. More and more dwellings are being offered as holiday lets. We doubt whether the Parish has the ability to be sustainable if the mix of housing changes to a larger proportion of second homes. There is general concern about the increasing number of second homes e.g. 9 out of 12 dwellings in Townfoot Steading, which could lead to isolation and stagnation of areas in the village.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

High Priority

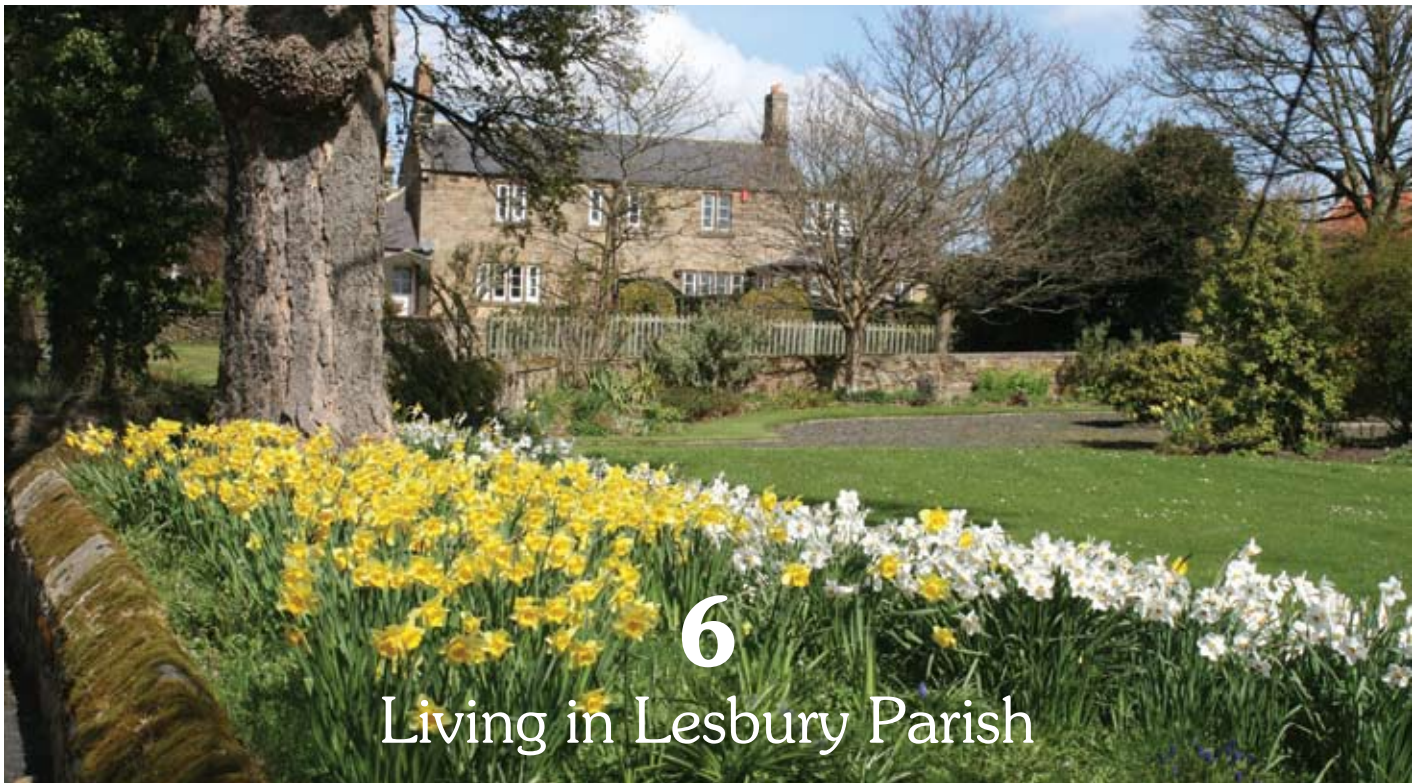
- encourage potential new providers of bed and breakfast accommodation and associated leisure activity breaks.
- promote accommodation and tourist activities on the proposed Information Board at the Railway Station.

Secondary Priority

- encourage local support for the Shop / Post Office and for the Coach Inn by means of articles and free advertisements in the Parish Newsletter.
- encourage and support any proposal for tourist service businesses such as a Tea Room.

Action When Expedient

- support planning applications for small-scale commercial re-development of redundant farmstead buildings, modelled on the Hawkhill project.



6

Living in Lesbury Parish

6.1 Introduction

The People and Community Facilities Working Group explored issues highlighted in the public meetings arranged as part of the early phase of the plan. The topics agreed for consideration were:

- Children and young people
- Older people
- Sports and leisure facilities
- Crime & community safety
- Community enterprises and activities
- Community groups
- Use of community buildings
- Life-style issues, including sustainability
- Health and disability
- Communications (Parish information, links etc)

In addressing the issues the group set out to explore the experience of residents of the Parish in terms of their hopes, aspirations and concerns with a view to making recommendations aimed at enhancing the well-being of all residents.

6.2 Children and young people

Census statistics indicate that there were 156 children and young people aged from 0-17 years in the Parish in 2001 (approx 18% of the population), with those aged 10 plus significantly outnumbering those aged 7 and under.

Feedback identified an appreciation by children and young people of the advantages of growing up in the Parish, describing a safe, rural environment free from anti-social behaviour and crime. There was also a realisation that a lack of education and employment opportunities in the future along with high housing costs would probably mean young people moving out of the area.

A number of valued resources were identified in the Parish for children and young people, including:

- Hipsburn First School
- Toddler Group – meets weekly in the Village Hall
- Pre-school playgroup – 5 mornings a week at the school
- Allsorts Breakfast and After School Club
- Pond Field Play Area
- Mobile Library

Hipsburn First School is situated in Lesbury Parish. It is a well respected school which serves children aged 4 – 9 years from within the Parish and beyond. By January 2010 there will be 66 pupils on the school register and a few younger part-timers, approximately 40% of whom live within the Parish. The school was last inspected by Ofsted on 11th March 2009 and was judged outstanding. In a letter to the pupils the Reporting Inspector said.... "I inspect many primary schools and yours is one of the best I have visited. You attend an outstanding school. You were friendly and polite and I was impressed by your excellent behaviour and good attendance...."

Alongside the school the pre-school playgroup, Allsorts Breakfast and After School Club and the toddler group were identified as excellent local activities with the toddler group in particular considered a good meeting place for local mums and dads.



The existence of a school together with associated early years activity in the Parish was thought to be important to the current needs and future sustainability of the community. At the moment school numbers are rising, however, concern was raised about the future of these organisations in light of the ageing population in the Parish. We feel that affordable housing is one way of maintaining a balanced and sustainable community.

Respondents were concerned about the relationship of the school, playgroup and the out of school club, all of which depend on the use of the school premises. They are viewed as important parts of local early years education. We believe it

to be important to protect all these facilities for the benefit of children and families, even if there were major changes in either the school or Parish populations.

There is potential for the school premises to be used for youth / community purposes during evenings, weekends and holidays. Governors and the Local Authority are open to ideas and in principle, welcome community use.



The re-development of the Pond Field Play Area is seen as a positive example of what can be achieved for children as a result of local action. Whilst the Pond Field provides an alternative to playing on the street for some children, it has raised some road safety concerns in South View.

Existing resources in the Parish for children and young people are believed to be focused on younger children under 10 years with support indicated for additional activities. However, we feel that provision for older children aged over 10 years in particular, out of school care and social and leisure activities, is lacking. The few activities on offer in the Parish for youngsters over the age of 10 years are linked to outdoor sports, cricket, tennis, football and golf which are provided through formal membership of clubs. Less formal activities, indoor sports or non-sporting pastimes are not available locally, although our consultation indicated that some children and young people do access these in the wider area outside the Parish.

6.3 Older people

For the purpose of this report we have defined 'older people' as being 60 years and over, only because that sits conveniently with the age

bands of census data. Census statistics from 2001 indicated that approximately 35% of the population of the Parish were aged 60 years plus. Respondents to the survey thought that much of the current social activity taking place within the Village Hall was more relevant to older people and there was a general sense that this age group were well provided for in the Parish. In particular the Autumn Club, held monthly in the Village Hall, is highly regarded. We agree with the suggestion that there is scope for a wider range of self-help activities for active retired people aged 50 plus.

Much community activity centres on Lesbury village due to the position of the Church, Village Hall, shop and pub. Access to these amenities can be difficult for some older people living south of the river. The footbridge is critical to access as highlighted recently when the bridge was unusable for several months because of flooding, causing major inconvenience for many people.

6. 4 Sport and leisure facilities

Lesbury Parish has various sport / leisure facilities in and around the Parish, including, golf, tennis club, cricket club and bowls club, together with those activities held in the Village Hall. The swimming pool and indoor sports facilities in Alnwick are a valuable resource for Parish residents and are easy to access. The wide variety of walks in the area is much valued by residents and visitors too.



We discovered that there was a general desire to develop sports amenities in the Parish with improved outdoor facilities including astroturf, hockey and tennis. Interest in better tennis facilities was particularly well supported especially as the present court is not full-size. However there is a perception that the majority of sporting facilities

were limited to club use only. We agree with some of the young people in the consultation that there is a need for a 'kick-about' space with facilities like practice nets, toilets and rubbish bins etc. The current facilities have developed in a piecemeal way and we would propose a dialogue between existing clubs to consider the needs of the population and the use of existing resources and to take action to further develop amenities for all age groups.

6. 5 Crime and community safety

Northumbria Police report that this area is generally crime-free and in fact 93% of our respondents did not feel anxious about crime in general in our Parish. We understand that there are three official Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the Parish but that these do not cover the entire community.

The major concern raised from a crime / anti-social behaviour point of view was dog fouling on pavements around the Parish. This problem was viewed as unacceptable and unhygienic and raised particular health concerns for children and young people.

Community Safety is most commonly linked to the speed of traffic especially in Lesbury Village, Lesbury Road, along the road near to the school and the Pond Field area. The condition of pedestrian walkways with poor lighting and narrow footpaths in Bilton Road are thought to be hazardous.

We have seen no evidence of drug or alcohol abuse or of any significant anti-social behaviour and this was confirmed during the young people's forum.

6. 6 Use of community buildings

There is a range of buildings which are used by the community including the Village Hall, Post Office, Bowls Club, Church, School, Pub and Sports Pavilions.

The Village Hall is highly regarded as a core venue for Community events an opinion confirmed by 63% of respondents; however there was a wide

variety of opinion as to whether it entirely fulfilled the expectations of the community. Concern was voiced that the tenancy conditions with Northumberland Estates could affect any potential refurbishment or extension to the existing building. As a result, we feel that we should clarify the tenancy arrangements. The lease is held by Lesbury Parish Council as Trustees. However the Parish Council plays no part in running the Hall's affairs. All decisions about the day to day use of the Hall, improvements, hiring charges etc., are made by a separate Management Committee. The Hall is funded from hire charges and fund raising.



It was clear from the replies to the survey that many people felt that the Village Hall was inadequate, that the toilet facilities needed upgrading, and better use should be made of space. Some respondents commented that perhaps it was time for a new Community Centre to be built which could be more versatile than the present Hall. Such comment arose out of the high level of usage of the existing facilities at 'peak' times on weekday evenings.

Comments relating to St Mary's Church focused on the appreciation of the building which lay at the heart of the Parish rather than any specific reference to its value as a central part of community life. We feel that there is scope for dialogue between the church's Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council to explore possibilities of the development of a Parish Centre around the church.

The Coach Inn is situated in the centre of Lesbury village. We understand that the owners naturally

need to maximise the business opportunities through tourism but this should be balanced with the stated desire of the residents for a family friendly village pub.

Given the diverse range of opinion and interest of residents in the quality, availability and fitness for purpose of existing community buildings, we propose that a review is undertaken to see how the Parish could maximise their use and any shortfall identified. This could be a basis for future case-building for constructing new community buildings. Hipsburn School is in a well sited position for access from Lesbury Village, Hipsburn and Bilton and has a new car park to one side. Part of any case-build should look at how this building could be used for out of school hours community activities.

6. 7 Lifestyle and sustainability

Most households (78%) responding to the survey felt that community spirit was either good or very good. However there was also a general perception of the Parish as a number of distinct communities situated in close proximity, each with its own character. This sense of 'disparate' communities particularly between Hipsburn and Lesbury Village appears to be historic. We suggest that projects be developed aimed at bringing the communities of Bilton, Hipsburn, Lesbury and outlying areas together, with volunteer groups established to lead activity.



Many residents acknowledge the benefits of living in this coastal area in terms of its rural location, relative safety, access to amenities both within and outside of the Parish and the sense of community.

6. 7 Health and disability

Little information has come to our attention through the development of the Parish Plan regarding the incidence or needs of people in the Parish with specific health problems or disabilities and therefore assumptions cannot be made regarding these matters. Census statistics indicate that of the 871 residents in the Parish in 2001, approximately 19% considered themselves to have a 'limiting, long term illness.' Of those, approximately 29% were of working age representing 5% of the total population.

Feedback from the survey suggested that the majority of households (94%) experienced no difficulty in accessing healthcare. Of those that did, access to transport and the cost of hospital parking were raised as problems, and some form of community transport was suggested as a solution. We think this should be explored with existing organisations.

There are a number of services available in the Parish which are useful in supporting individuals with health or disability needs; these include access to a local shop and post office and home deliveries of some basic provisions.

Problems relating to mobility indicated a need for more dropped kerbs to minimise access problems to public buildings, for example in front of the Church, along with wheelchair (and pushchair) access over the footbridge to Steppey Lane.

6. 8 Communications

Respondents to the Survey were most appreciative of the Parish Newsletter produced by the Parish Council and The Bridge magazine produced by the church. We agree that they are good sources of information and ways to highlight the wealth of activities in the Parish.

A number of additional public notice boards have been sited around the Parish during 2009 and their value as a means of communication was confirmed in the survey. We suggest that the height of the notice board at Hipsburn should be lowered and the board re-positioned nearer the fence to enable it to be more easily read, and a new one provided at the rail station. We believe it is vital that the information on all the notice boards is kept as up-to-date as possible.

Several respondents considered that the current 'Lesbury' website was of limited value and this view is supported by the Steering Committee.

Some households reported difficulties when first moving into the area about finding out details concerning the life of the Parish. Experience elsewhere suggests that the introduction of a "Welcome Pack" for new residents would be appreciated.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING FACILITIES – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

High Priority

- determine if there are needs in the Parish for additional community (including sports) facilities for all age groups and identify sourcing of finance to fund any proposed development, e.g. Green Gym at the Pond Field.
- encourage the Village Hall committee to have a professional assessment of the existing Village Hall and explore its potential for extension/improvement. At this time consider with the Parish Council any need for the creation of a new Community Centre.
- initiate a review of usage of existing buildings within the Parish to see how they might be developed more effectively for community events.
- encourage residents (young and old) or external organisations in the creation of activities for young people over 10 years.
- obtain funding to maintain effective Parish Council communication e.g., the Parish Newsletter, notice boards and website and continue to update regularly the Parish Notice Boards with information that can be easily read.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING FACILITIES – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

Secondary Priority

- encourage and support (with publicity) existing local activity groups to increase their present scope or to start up new activities for all ages.
- assess the potential of existing open spaces as informal play areas for “kick around” games etc. for older children.
- encourage and support any proposal to provide an informal meeting area and/or café possibly providing Internet access.
- continue to monitor dog-fouling and similar nuisances and take action to insist that owners keep control of their dogs.
- explore the extension of Neighbourhood Watch schemes throughout the Parish.
- actively support the continuation of the County Council’s mobile library service to the Parish.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING FACILITIES – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

Action When Expedient

- encourage and support with publicity community efforts and events organised by community organisations.
- encourage the production by volunteers of a “Welcome Pack” for newcomers to the Parish.
- encourage and facilitate occasional Parish-wide Events.
- promote the existence of, and access to, the range of services for residents available within the wider area, for example, the community transport service TINN based in Alnwick.
- initiate the formation of a group of volunteer residents to undertake community tasks as the need arises.



7. 1 The development of housing in the Parish to the present day

Lesbury is a medieval settlement. By the time of publication of the first Ordnance Survey map in 1866, the substantial, isolated farmhouses and steadings that still exist today were all shown. Other than these, the map indicates housing only along the road through Lesbury Village and along the Shilbottle Road through Bilton.

The twentieth century saw extensive new house building. Since the 2001 Census, further houses and bungalows have been built, adding over 80 “executive” homes to the stock in the Parish. This brings the total number of households from the 394 recorded in the Census to about 480 today.

7. 2 Relevant Census data on households

Relevant extracts from the 2001 Census are reproduced in Appendix 3. In 2001, 739 people of 16 years of age or more were living in 394 households in Lesbury Parish.

At the time of the 2001 Census, 90% of these were occupied by Parish residents, with 17 “second homes” or houses for holiday letting (4%) and 26

houses empty (6%). It is thought that the 80 or so houses built since then are split in similar ratios. 70% of the houses were owner-occupied and the remainder rented from either the Council or from private landlords.

In 2001, car ownership figures (a good indicator of lifestyle) showed that

- the 394 households owned or had the use of 505 cars or vans.
- 17% of households had no vehicle,
- 45% had one vehicle, and
- 38% had two or more.

These figures suggest that Lesbury / Hipsburn / Bilton is a comparatively well-off area, heavily dependent on the use of cars, which impacts directly on the housing policy for the Parish.

7. 3 Need for “affordable housing” for local families

It is National policy that “everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home that they can afford within their community”. The questionnaire returns indicate strong public support (59%) for the principle of affordable housing for the Parish with however, a significant 29% against. 12% expressed no opinion.

House prices in the Parish have generally been higher than the average for the District, and a Housing Needs Survey of Lesbury and Alnmouth Parishes was commissioned by Alnmouth District Council in 2007. This verified a need, between the two Parishes, for some 13 new affordable “units” per annum during the period 2008-13.



To date, a site for 12 affordable dwellings has been identified and approved in Lesbury Village adjacent to Townfoot Steading, and construction is under way. If further affordable housing is proposed for the Parish there are several small “gap sites” within the existing built-up areas and identified in the Needs Survey, that could be seen as suitable locations.

The need for some additional affordable housing in the Parish is recognised. We believe that the terms and conditions for rent or sale should be tightly controlled by any Housing Association. The Parish Council is urged to press for a reassessment of the current method of control and allocation of affordable housing, to ensure local representation in the decision-making process.

7. 4 Current Local Authority policies on housing in the Parish

The Unitary Authority has now taken over the responsibilities for planning policies, and is due to review the District’s “Core Strategy” which was adopted by the District Council in October 2007.

Among its key sustainable community goals were to:

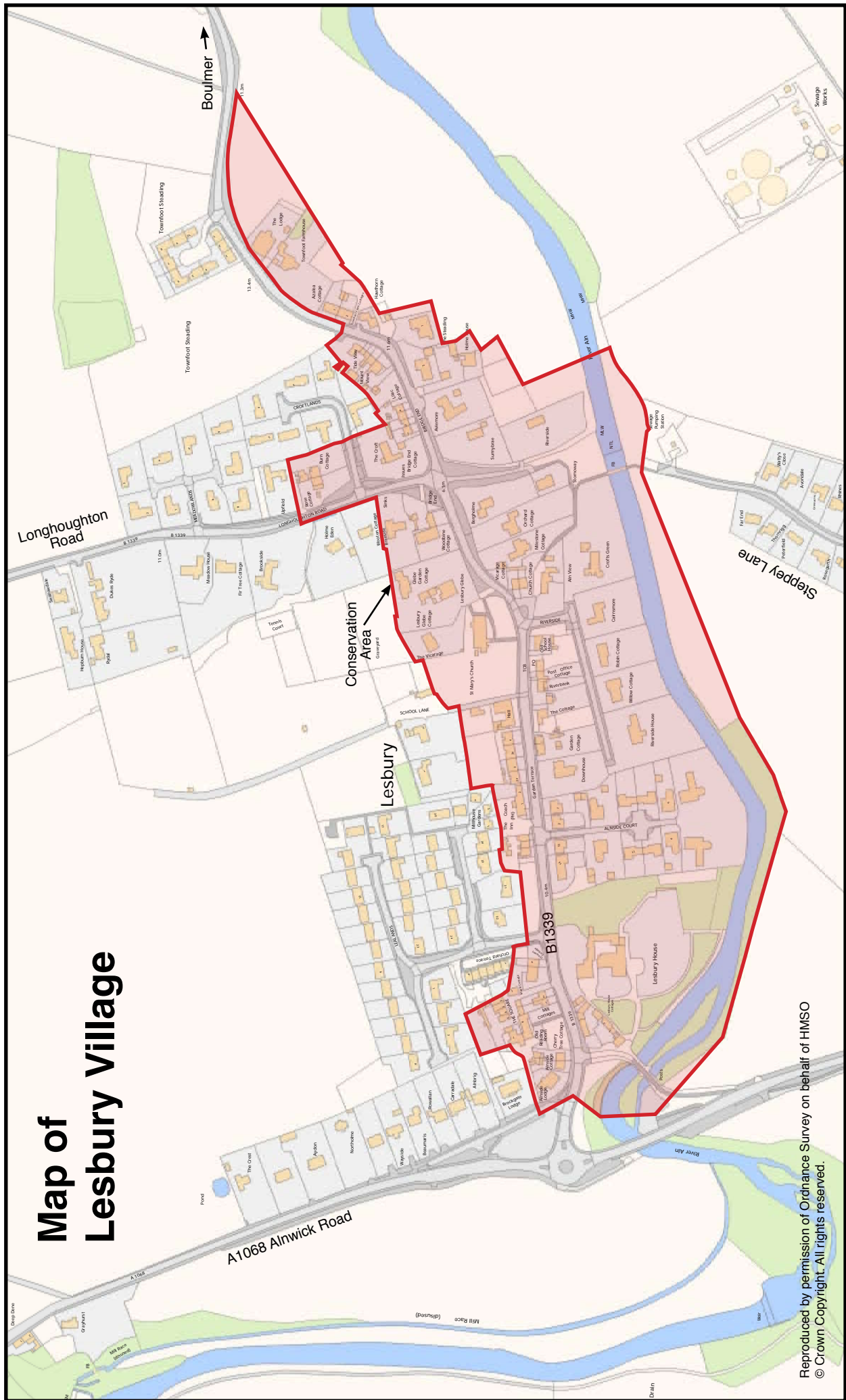
- provide affordable and quality housing to residents
- ensure that barriers to accessing services are removed
- reduce waste and improve waste management
- conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage

As to the location and scale of new housing, the District Council (Policy S1) provided a hierarchy of sites suitable for development. It gave first priority to the main centres of Alnmouth and Amble, with Rothbury a close second. It then identified a number of “sustainable village centres”, of which “Lesbury / Hipsburn / Bilton / Alnmouth” is shown as one. These centres were described as being *“settlements with public transport and a strong service base comprising school, shop, post office, pub, church, community hall, sports and recreation facilities, and where development will be well-related to the scale and function of the settlement”*.

The implication is that for future development purposes, Lesbury Parish could be combined with Alnmouth, our neighbouring, but very different village. Within our boundary we share with Alnmouth the primary school, the railway station, the cricket ground and Alnmouth Football Club’s new ground, but otherwise we have little in common. Within Lesbury Parish, we have only one shop / Post Office, a pub, the church and the Village Hall, leaving us vulnerable to the effects of closure of any of these facilities and casting doubt on our “sustainability”.

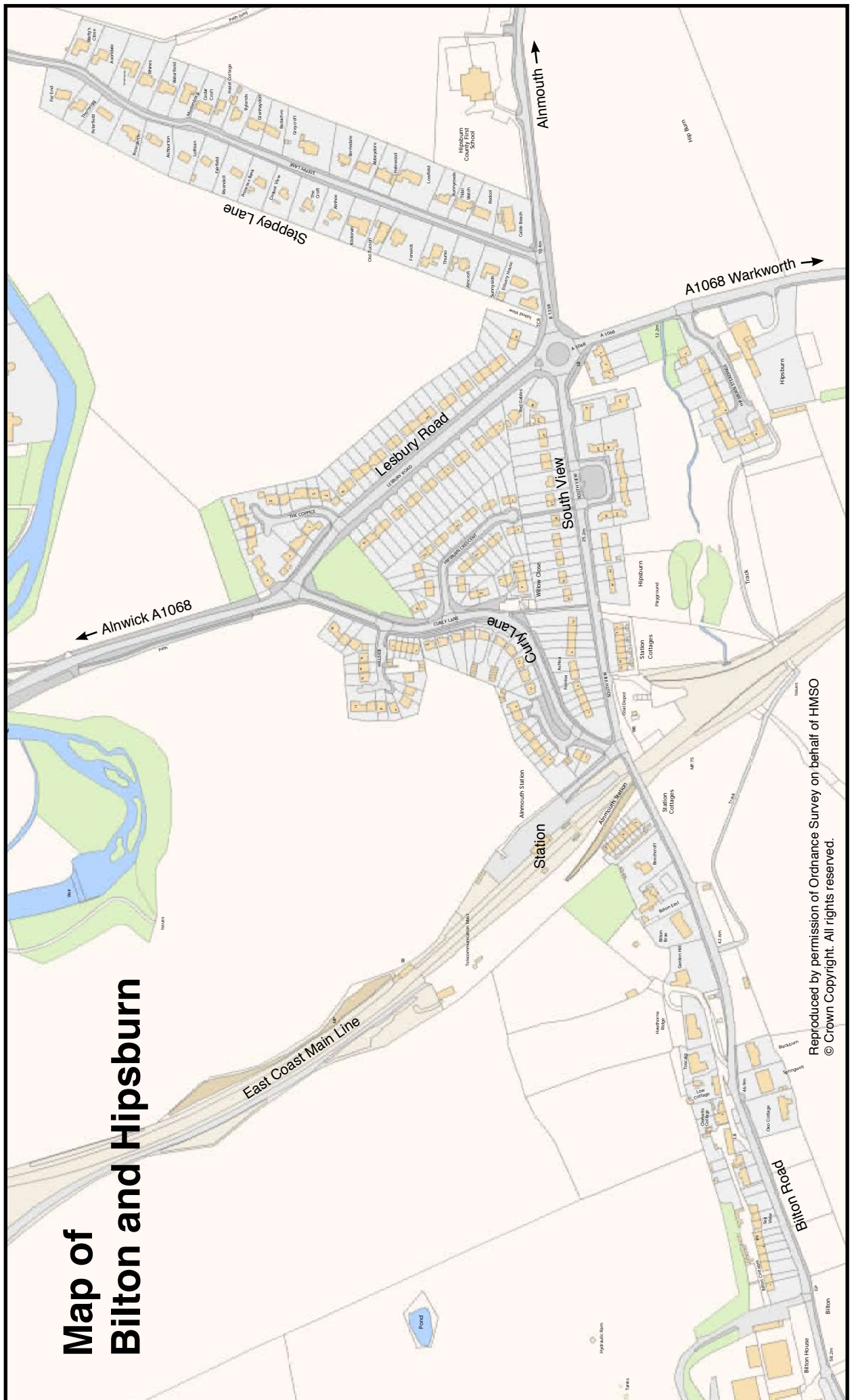
The questionnaire revealed a very strong majority of residents (68%) as being against any further significant housing development in the Parish, other than the provision of a small number of affordable properties.

We recommend that the two Parishes should be treated quite separately in the Unitary Authority’s



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Map of Bilton and Hipsburn



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revised core strategy, thus putting Lesbury Parish in a lower category of suitability for further housing development outside existing settlement boundaries.

7.5 Potential sites for new housing

We hope that the Unitary Authority will accept the overwhelming expression of public opinion and agree to the recommendation to downgrade Lesbury Parish's suitability for substantial additional housing. However, it is possible that this may not happen; we may have to face a directive from County Hall that imposes a new requirement to build more houses. In that case, we need to consider where such housing could best be sited.

While the District-wide Local Development Plan, adopted in the 1990s, is now out of date, it remains as Policy until the new Development Framework documents are available, possibly in two-three years' time. The Plan drew a tight line around each individual settlement, and new building was to be permitted only in gap sites within the line. The Parish Plan gives an opportunity for local opinion to be brought to bear on this policy.

The response to a specific question in the Survey showed that 68% of respondents did not want any further housing development. Should the need arise for the Parish to accept new housing then a number of areas of land were considered that appeared to offer the possibility for development, but we feel that these areas would only be acceptable if they offered significant additional community benefits.

In the event of a large scale development proposal being received by the County Council, a series of public meetings should be held, where issues of siting and possible community planning gain would be discussed. This would enable the Parish Council and the community to decide whether or not to endorse the proposal.

This constraint narrowed the options down to two:

- some housing behind Hillside which would result in a new road to the Station alleviating the pressures and dangers of accessing the Station via Curly Lane.
- a development to the north of Lealands, which would offer a by-pass from the Alnwick road to the Longhoughton Road that would reduce the traffic through Lesbury Village.

The latter option could provide the opportunity for additional community facilities, possibly including tennis courts and a larger bowling green.

If in the future, the Parish Council is faced with having to advise the Unitary Authority on this matter, it is recommended that these two sites should be kept in mind as offering significant additional community benefits.

7.6 Housing quality

Most of the older houses in the Parish are built in Northumberland's vernacular style in stonework with slate roofs and timber-framed doors and windows. This traditional style has been carried on in some degree by many of the more recent house designs. However, there is still a wide variety of styles throughout the Parish.



Part of Lesbury Village has Conservation Area status. We note that the Planning Authority has no power to remove Permitted Development Rights without the application of an "Article 4

Direction” for the Area. We feel that the Authority should take the necessary steps to make such a direction for the Conservation Area in Lesbury. This would prevent any deterioration in the quality of its buildings and ensure that the design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings comply with traditional or sympathetic standards of design.

We recognise that whilst there is a wide range of styles of house building throughout the Parish both inside and outside the Conservation Area, it is important to maintain a high standard of design and materials both for new buildings and for alterations to existing buildings. For instance, we believe that the Planning Authority should ensure that uPVC structures, windows and doors, are of the highest visual quality available.



We also noted from the responses to the questionnaire that whilst 81% supported the application of firm standards in the Conservation Area, 50% agreed that more flexible standards could be applied outside the Area.

We recommend that the Parish Council should adopt the stance that within the Conservation Area strict control should continue to be exercised, avoiding where possible the use of non-traditional materials and encouraging designs that respect the Northumberland vernacular. Outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area, a more flexible approach should be adopted, with each application looked at on its merits.

7. 7 Utilities and services to housing

Refuse Collection: in recent years all households have been issued with “wheelie bins” – green for general household waste and blue for recycling of paper, tins and plastic. Some residents also have bins for garden rubbish, all collected by the Local Authority. While the questionnaire revealed general satisfaction with the present service, there were many calls for the re-introduction of a weekly collection for household waste.

We have no problem with the collection of the blue bins fortnightly. However for obvious reasons of hygiene, we recommend that the green bins should be collected weekly as a minimum requirement.

Electricity Supply: while all parts of the Parish are served with mains electricity, often by overhead cable, the supply is frequently affected by short power cuts, particularly in stormy weather. While public opinion appears to show general satisfaction, the annoyance caused by the power failures was obvious from many comments. The Parish Council should apply pressure to the utility company to provide a more reliable service throughout the Parish.

Gas Supply: within the past ten years, a gas supply has been laid in the streets of the built-up areas. Many householders took advantage of the offer of free connection at the time. It is considered that the supply to those that are connected is reliable and satisfactory.

Water Supply, house drainage and sewerage: water supply pipes have recently been renewed in most of the built-up areas, and many residents have had water meters installed. It is considered that the systems are satisfactory at the moment, although a number of residents complained in their responses to this question that the quality of the water was poor. Any additional housing may require increased capacity of the sewerage systems.

Postal Deliveries: mail is delivered from the Royal Mail depot in Alnwick once a day. Due to the scattered nature of the Parish some households do not receive their mail until well into the afternoon. In their replies to this question many residents felt that the system has deteriorated sharply from the service enjoyed in the past.

Lesbury Post Office: The Post Office provides all the essential postal services that are compatible with a small rural Sub-Post Office, combined with direct links to certain Banks for paying in cheques and drawing out cash. Its viability is tied up with its complementary function as a small general village shop. It is easily accessed by car and on foot, but is somewhat remote from homes in Hipsburn and Bilton.



The public opinion exercise revealed general satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the existing Post Office, but several respondents asked for Vehicle Tax, TV Licences and passport application forms to be made available.

Broadband: this service is now available throughout the built-up areas in the Parish; the connection speed is considered to be slow compared with that in urban areas.

Street Lighting: this is the responsibility of the Highways and Transport Department of the County Council, and is present in all the built-up

areas. The use of modern street lights in secluded roads such as Steppey Lane is regretted. New street lights in the Parish should be of an energy-saving specification to minimise light pollution and at the same time be sympathetic in design to a village location. Also, we question the need to keep the street lights lit all night when the saving of energy is such an important consideration.

Analysis of the questionnaires showed mixed public views on the provision, operation and maintenance of street lighting, and there is clearly a need for a comprehensive review to make sure that street lighting is appropriate in each part of the Parish.

HOUSING – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

High Priority

- confirm to the Unitary Authority its general support for the provision of more affordable housing in the Parish using small pockets of land available within the existing settlement envelopes.
- press for a re-assessment of the current method of control and allocation of affordable housing, to ensure local representation in the decision-making process.
- obtain local and County Councillor support for the separation of Lesbury Parish from Alnmouth Parish in the “sustainable village centres” Housing Allocation Policy shown in the Alnwick District Council Core Strategy document.
- ensure that the housing allocation table is adjusted accordingly by the new Planning Authority in its forthcoming review of the Strategy.
- press for a weekly collection of household refuse from the green bins rather than a fortnightly service

Secondary Priority

- support the control of the quality of housing design within the Conservation Area but adopt a flexible approach to designs of new housing and alterations to existing houses elsewhere.

Action when Expedient

- oppose any proposals from the Unitary Authority, if it seeks to impose additional housing allocation outside the existing village boundaries, unless it brings significant additional public benefit.
- monitor Broadband provision in the Parish and support any campaign to improve the existing, painfully slow service in this area.



8

Traffic and Transport

8. 1 Environment and transport

Transport, in all its forms, is clearly an important environmental issue in this Parish, and featured consistently in the responses to public consultations. When asked to place their main concerns in order of priority, residents put Parking and Traffic issues at the top of the list.

Many residents are heavily dependent on the use of cars, but walking, cycling, riding, farm and service vehicles, and travel by bus and train were also considered.

8. 2 The road hierarchy

The road system serving the Parish centres on the A1068 which carries traffic between Amble and Alnwick, and is the Parish's primary link to the A1 Trunk Road.

The B1339 runs from the A1068 roundabout through Lesbury Village. It carries significant through traffic including RAF personnel and heavy lorries which serve quarries, as well as providing local access for residents.

Curly Lane and South View are much used as link roads giving access to the Station from the A1068.

Isolated farms and houses in the rest of the Parish are served by a network of individual lanes and minor roads.

8. 3 Design quality and maintenance of roads

The quality of the A1068 as it passes through the Parish is characteristic of our rural environment. For most of its length within the Parish it is narrow, with twists and changes of gradient.

We would advocate that the Parish Council should press for a higher standard of road surface maintenance of all our roads than the current "drop and slap" method generally employed by the County Council, and for improvement of the drainage and the maintenance of the hedge-trimming routine. Gritting of most of the key, well-used roads is good, with the exception of the Shilbottle Road from Bilton, which is seldom treated in icy weather. It is also noted that, while the roads are gritted, the adjoining public footpaths are not treated.



There are several examples of poor road drainage in the Parish which cause flooding. These are usually due to inadequate or blocked drains intended to take run-off water from fields, and should be improved to avoid the frequent road safety hazards encountered in wet weather.

8. 4 Design quality and maintenance of footpaths / cycleways



- On A1068, between the junction with The Coppice and the new bridge at Lesbury Village, there is a gap in the paved footpath on the east side, causing pedestrians to cross the main road and use the high path behind the trees. Numerous references in the questionnaire responses confirm that this is unsatisfactory and unsafe, and should be rectified with a new section of paved path.



- On A1068, between the Lesbury roundabout and the Parish boundary on the Alnwick Road, there is virtually no provision made for the safety of pedestrians or cyclists. Consequently there is a strong case, well supported by public opinion, for the provision of a separate footpath / cycle-way on the west side of the main road, similar to that already provided for cyclists between Hipsburn and Warkworth. Because of the damage liable to be done to the surface, the cycle-way would not be suitable for horses.

- On the road from Hipsburn roundabout to Alnmouth, there is a case for a pedestrian crossing at the roundabout to link with South View.
- In Lesbury Village, the footpaths are adequate except for those on both sides of the road at the S-bend beside the Church. These are referred to later in Section 8.7 (Specific Problem Areas).



- The footbridge from Steppey Lane into Lesbury Village is a vital pedestrian link for the residents, and was restored in 2009 after the flood damage of September 2008. The Parish Council should look for an improvement to make it more accessible for push-chairs and wheel-chairs at each end especially as it is a link to the school.

Apart from those mentioned above, footpaths in the residential areas are generally good. The remaining network of minor roads is frequently used by both cyclists and horse riders.

National Cycle routes have been laid out and signposted, using a separate cycle path alongside the A1068 from Warkworth to Hipsburn, with an off-road link towards the Duchess's Bridge. In places the designated routes continue, using the ordinary narrow roads particularly from the Duchess's Bridge north past Foxton to join the road to Boulmer. We comment that:

- the small blue signs and other "Cycle Route" signs appear to be somewhat haphazard in location and direction and may account for the fact that the new cycle track is not well used as the preferred route.

- the designated cycle routes that use the ordinary roads are hazardous to cyclists, especially when these are visitors with no knowledge of the nature of the roads. Only 30% of the respondents to the questionnaire thought these routes “safe”.
- the newly-constructed cycle track on the north side of the Hipsburn-Alnmouth road links to the track from A1068 on the south side by an unsigned crossing of the road at a bend that makes it dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians. Some form of warning should be given to motorists and path users to reduce the risk of accident.
- many cyclists do not use the cycle path between Warkworth and Hipsburn. There may be an opportunity to divert cyclists off the A1068 and on to the track by much better signage. The signs should advise horse riders that it is not a bridle path.
- cycling on the non-designated, bendy and hilly A1068 to Alnwick is particularly dangerous.

It is recommended that, apart from the separate, purpose-built cycle-ways noted above, the designation and signposting of the “National Cycle Route”, focused on Alnmouth, should be abandoned, as the roads are manifestly unsafe for use by cyclists.

There exists a network of signposted footpaths and bridle-ways throughout the Parish, well marked on OS maps. There have been requests for an additional footpath in the privately-owned field along the south side of the River Aln between the Steppey Lane footbridge and the A1068, thus providing a loop walk around Lesbury Village. This would avoid the B1339 in the Village and link existing paths.

This idea has already met with objection from some of the residents of Riverside, and was tested in the course of the public consultation exercise to determine the balance of opinion. 69% of

respondents supported the idea, with 8% against and 21% with no opinion. We recommend that the idea be explored further with the landowners and the Planning Authority.

8. 5 Public transport



Buses serve Hipsburn (including the Station) and Lesbury, linking them hourly to Alnwick and Newcastle but less frequently, to the coast. The regular school buses are well used. Modern, open-sided bus shelters are provided, but offer little comfort to waiting passengers in bad weather.

The fact is that the Parish is largely a car-owning and car-using community, with (in the 2001 census) 84% of households having the use of at least one vehicle; many having two or more. The questionnaire results revealed that only half the residents in the Parish use the bus services, most of them considering the services to be adequate. Similarly, the bus shelters were considered satisfactory.



The railway station offers a remarkably good regional and national service for residents and visitors, with a number of London-Edinburgh and local trains stopping each day. This very good service and increased use of the trains has

resulted in a severe shortage of off-street car parking spaces and a corresponding hazard of all-day and even overnight parking on Curly Lane, South View and the road through Bilton. There were more comments on this issue in the returned questionnaires than on any other matter.

The District Council had plans to create a new 44 space car park on the west side of the line and the Parish Council should encourage the new car park to be completed as a matter of urgency. It should also be noted however, that there will be an additional road safety hazard created at its proposed access. Comments in the public consultation emphasised that if there was a parking charge, motorists would continue to park on the surrounding roads.



With or without the additional car park, there is a problem in crossing on foot between the northbound and southbound railway lines. The steps up and down to the footbridge are formidable obstacles to the elderly and/or infirm, and even to fitter, younger passengers with heavy luggage. The existing “disabled” crossing of the tracks is available only when station staff on duty are alerted, and is not conveniently signposted. We feel that this matter should be addressed by Network Rail.

While taxis are usually available to serve passengers to and from the Station, this is not a reliable service. We recommend that an information notice be provided and maintained for visitors at the Station waiting room giving details of all

local taxis and buses. This is strongly supported by public opinion.

The Aln Valley Railway Society is keen to reopen part of the old branch rail line to Alnwick (the Aln Valley Railway), partly as a tourist attraction but also to encourage Alnwick residents to use it as a feeder to Alnmouth Station instead of driving there and parking.



In the questionnaire, residents were invited to comment on three possibilities:

- re-establish the Aln Valley Railway.
- use the remaining track bed as a public footpath, or
- create a cycle route on the old track bed

40% of residents were shown by the questionnaire to be in favour of the railway scheme, with 35% against. By contrast, 72% were in favour of either a public footpath or a cycleway, or both. We recommend that the Parish Council oppose any proposal that could prevent the eventual use by the public of the track bed.

8. 6 Traffic speed and parking

Public consultation strongly confirms the view of the Steering Committee that traffic speeds on all roads in the built-up areas cause a problem for residents. There is an existing speed limit of 30mph that is frequently exceeded, making life unpleasant for residents and others crossing the roads.



Lesbury Road, Hipsburn

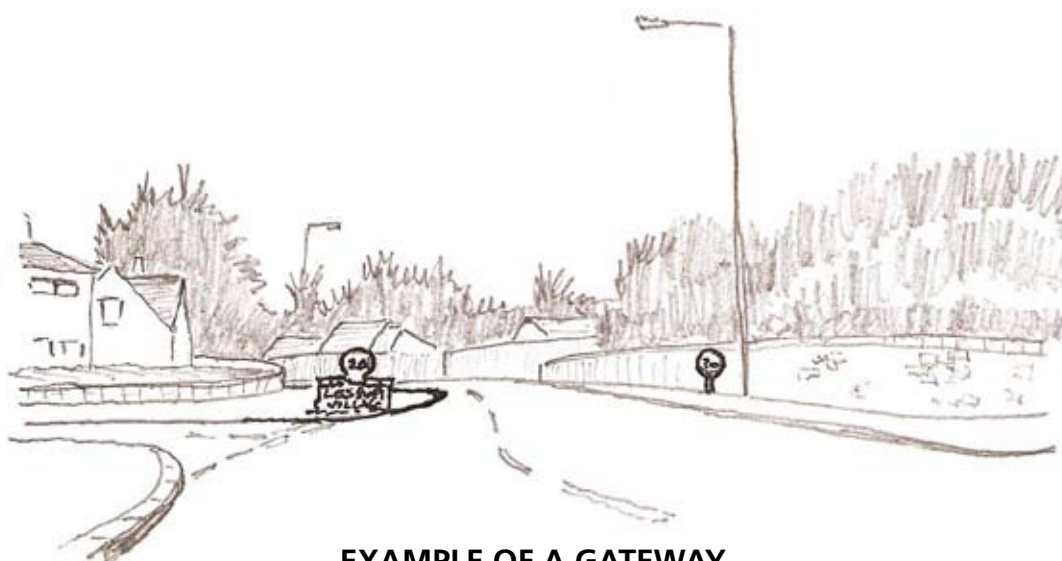
Parking (by residents and others) is uncontrolled and is seen as a problem, particularly:

- on Lesbury Road, where parking often occurs, quite unnecessarily, on the footpath
- on South View, Curly Lane and Bilton Road, mainly as overspill from the Station car park, but also by residents themselves
- on B1339 in Lesbury Village, especially at the Shop and the Village Hall.

Based on experience in many towns in Britain and

on the Continent, and encouraged by the 60% favourable response in public consultation, we recommend that measures be put in place that will reduce vehicle speeds and make clear where parking is permissible. These measures could consist of:

- placing a stone structure or other clear sign bearing the name of each distinct settlement at each point of entry into that settlement. This would apply to Bilton, Hipsburn and Lesbury Village, replacing several existing, misleading and poorly located signs. The intention of these gateway structures is to let the vehicle driver know that he or she is entering a specific residential “place” where speed limits and pedestrian safety must be respected.
- introducing a 20mph speed limit throughout each of these settlements (other than on the A1068 in Lesbury Road where, because of the road’s primary function in the hierarchy, it should remain at 30mph).
- in Lesbury Road (Hipsburn), where the road width is as much as 9m, mark permitted parking strips on both sides of the road, giving a narrowing visual effect to the main carriageway. At the same time, re-introduce the grass verges, and plant suitable trees to line the road and screen the houses from the road.

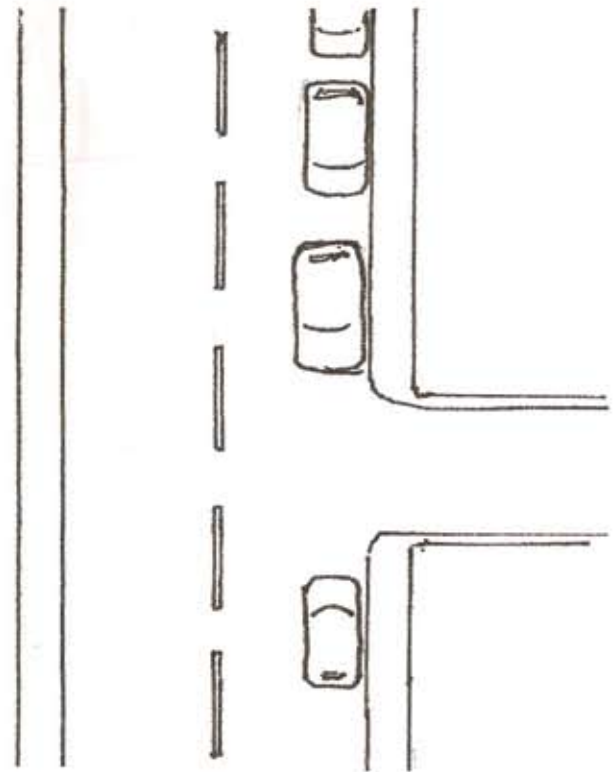


EXAMPLE OF A GATEWAY
Entering Lesbury Village from the Roundabout

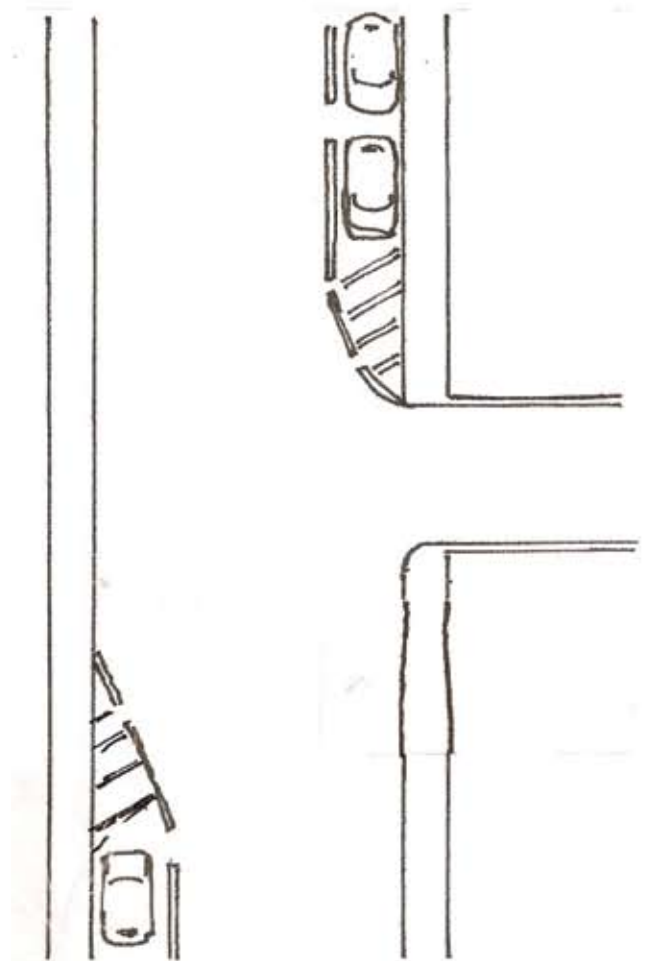


B1339 in Lesbury Village

- in South View and on B1339 in Lesbury Village, where the road widths are 7m or more, removing the central white lines and introducing clearly-marked 2m wide strips for permitted parking on whichever side is appropriate; this would give the visual effect to drivers of a reduced carriageway width and cause them to drive more slowly and more cautiously.



PRESENT ARRANGEMENT



SUGGESTED ARRANGEMENT

8. 7 Specific problem areas

Station Access. Junction of Curly Lane, South View, Bilton Road and the Station Access Road.

Drivers emerging from the Station cannot see traffic approaching the junction from the Shilbottle direction because of the high stone parapet across the bridge. The reduced (20mph) speed limit across the bridge would help to minimise the effects of a collision, but still give rise to difficulties for bus drivers and others negotiating the sharp bend from South View into Curly Lane. The view that some improvements are essential is clearly supported by public opinion.



Bridge parapets



South View



Emerging from the station



Curly Lane

Three main options have been discussed by the Steering Committee:

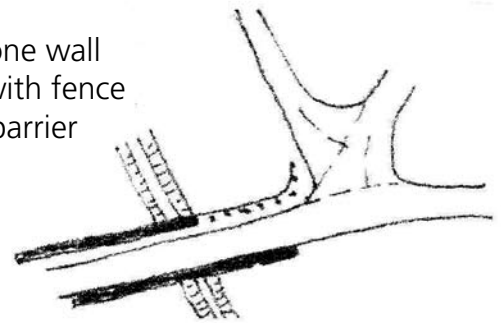
- removal by Network Rail of part or all of the solid stone wall on the Station platform side of the bridge, replacing it with a low level vehicle crash barrier and a permeable fence through which drivers could see traffic approaching the junction both ways.
- erection of a large, stainless steel, convex reflecting mirror facing the Station access road and giving views in both directions.
- creation of a low-level mini-roundabout, capable of being crossed by longer vehicles. "Give Way" markings would be introduced on the road surface for all four legs, with vehicles giving way to traffic from the right. This would require the purchase and building up of land on the corner of Curly Lane and South View in order to give space for an effective roundabout.

These ideas are illustrated here and the Parish Council is urged to put them forward for consideration by the various Authorities involved.

Public consultation produced other suggestions including the use of yellow lines, a one-way system or possible use of traffic lights at the junction.

Option 1

Replace stone wall of bridge with fence and crash barrier



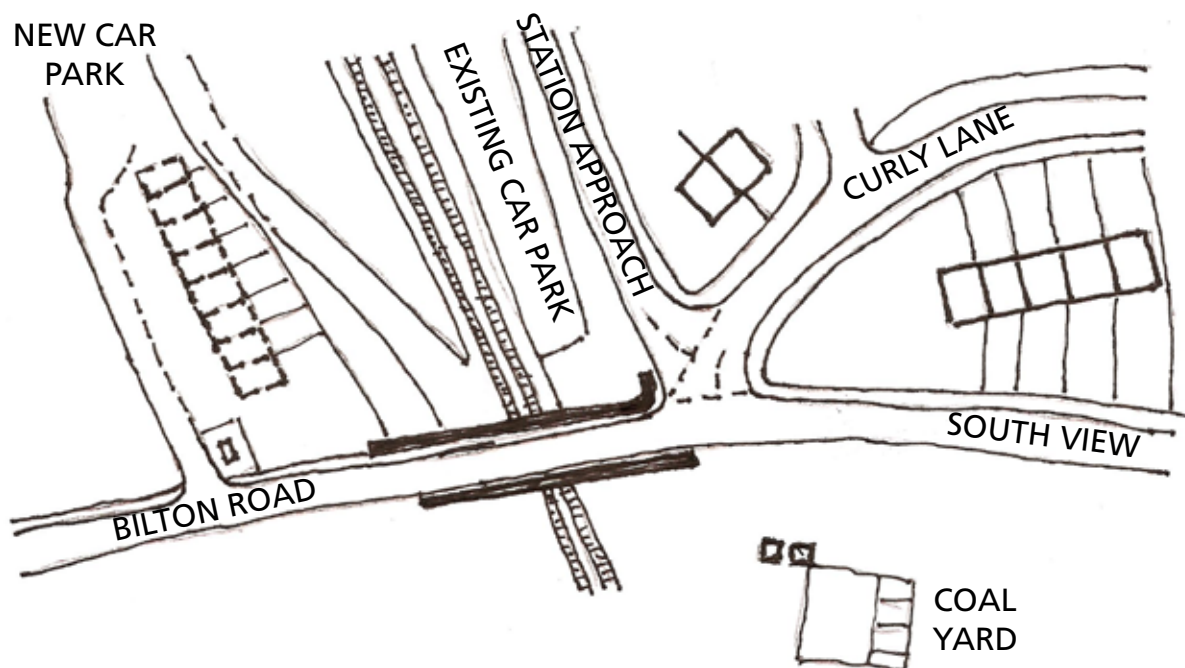
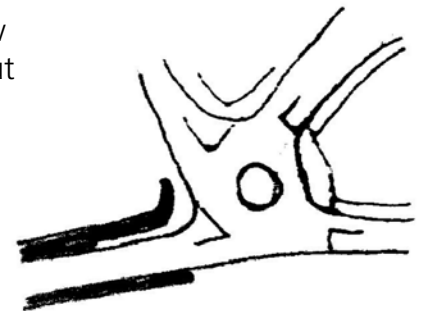
Option 2

Introduce large convex mirror



Option 3

Introduce a new mini-roundabout



Lesbury Village – S-bend at St Mary's Church

We feel that a section of the footpath at this narrowed part of the road is hazardous to pedestrians and unusable for push-chairs and wheel-chairs on the Church side of the road, and non-existent on the other side. This opinion was supported by a large number of residents in the public consultation exercise. The situation is unacceptable, particularly in the light of the building of twelve new affordable houses at Townfoot Steading that will probably house relatively young families needing safe access to the shop and bus stops.

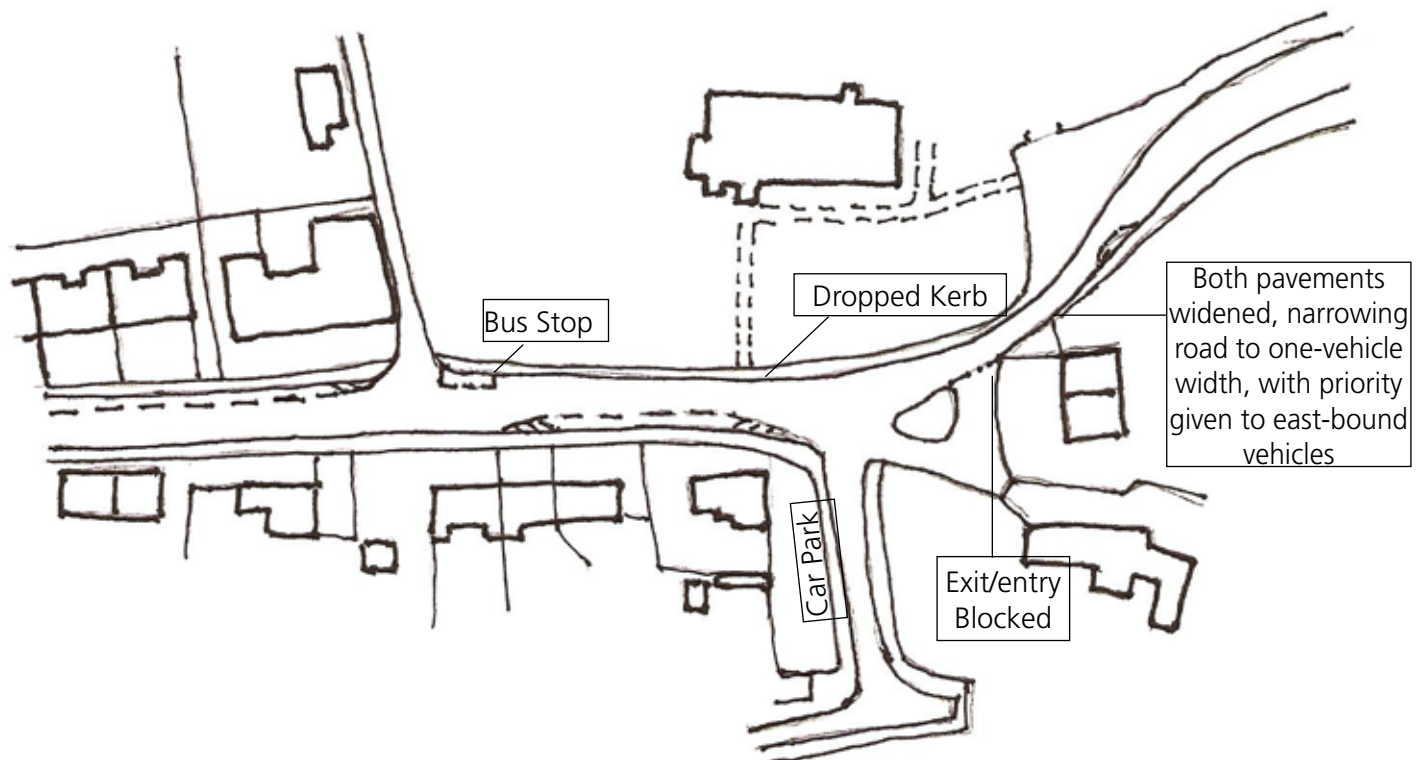
Our recommendations, as illustrated are

- 1.8m wide footpaths should be provided on both sides of the road, resulting in a narrowing of the road to about 3m for a very short length in the centre of the S-bend.
- a "one-way at a time" system should be introduced for vehicles, with priority given to eastbound traffic, similar to those in operation at the Duchess's Bridge at Alnmouth. The stop and wait signs on the road should be close enough to the constriction to allow drivers to see traffic advancing from the opposite direction.
- warning signs would be needed in advance both ways.

- dropped kerbs should be provided to help pushchair and wheelchair access across the road and at the footpath entrance to the Church.

A further road safety problem exists at this point, caused by the occasional informal use as a traffic roundabout of the small area of ornamental trees and shrubs. This is clearly hazardous, and it is recommended that it be stopped by closing off the entrance from B1339 with posts alongside the new footway. Drivers affected by this change could reasonably be expected to make 3-point turns at the car park in Riverside, where there are several opportunities to do so safely.

The Parish Council is urged to put these ideas forward for consideration by the various Authorities concerned.



TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

High Priority

- meet with councillors and senior officials to discuss the issues of access and parking at the rail station in order to produce a workable, costed plan to improve the situation.
- address the questions of provision and control of adequate off-street car parking including the issue of Residents' Parking Permits.
- discuss with Network Rail the introduction of a more convenient controlled ground-level crossing of the tracks for use at all times by elderly and / or infirm passengers and for those with heavy luggage.
- obtain local and County support (Highways and County Conservation office) for the reduction of the vehicle speed limit from 30mph to 20mph in the built-up areas with the exception of Lesbury Road (A1068), where it should remain at 30mph.
- obtain local and County support to position well-designed "gateway" structures bearing the name of each distinct settlement – Lesbury Village, Hipsburn and Bilton – on the roadside at the entrances to each, to give motorists a "sense of place".
- obtain local and County support in the removal of the existing white-painted road centre lines in Lesbury Village and South View, and introduce defined car parking bays on alternate sides of the road, to reduce vehicle speeds.
- support a scheme in Lesbury Road (A1068 in Hipsburn) for on-street car parking in defined bays on both sides of the road leaving the footpaths free to be returned to the original pleasant visual features of grass and trees.
- request a comprehensive technical study from the County Highways Department to resolve urgently the road and footpath problems at the S-bend beside St Mary's Church, Lesbury.
- request the Lighting section of the Highways and Transport department to review the present variable standard of street lighting throughout the Parish and identify those lights which could safely be switched off after midnight.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT – ACTION PLANS

We recommend that the Parish Council with Community support should:

Secondary Priority

- monitor the problem of road drainage on roads throughout the Parish, particularly where flooding occurs from overflowing field drains, and lobby the County Council Highways Department to take appropriate action.
- monitor the extent of road surface deterioration throughout the Parish and lobby the County Council Highways Department to improve their current haphazard “drop and slap” treatment of potholes.
- monitor the sections of road where outgrowing hedges at bends can cause dangerous loss of driver sightlines, and lobby the Highways Department to manage the hedges in good time at these locations.
- obtain local and County Councillor support for a request to the Highways and Transport Department to provide a paved footway from The Coppice to the Lesbury Bridge on the east side of the A1068.
- institute discussions with County Councillors and landowners (primarily Northumberland Estates) on the practicalities of providing a footway / cycle track alongside the A1068 from the new bridge at Lesbury to Hawkhill.
- obtain local and County Councillor support for the provision of a high-visibility pedestrian crossing of the A1068 just north of the Hipsburn roundabout to link South View to the Alnmouth road, mainly for the benefit of children walking to school.
- seek local and County Councillor support for the introduction of wheel-chair and child push-chair ramps at each end of the footbridge linking Steppey Lane to Lesbury Village.
- seek, via the County Council, the removal of signs indicating the “National Cycle Route” from all roads in the Parish, in view of the manifest road safety hazards to both cyclists and vehicle drivers.
- take a policy decision to oppose any proposal that could affect permanently the public use of the track bed of the abandoned Alnwick Branch railway line.

Action When Expedient

- approach both the owner (Northumberland Estates) of the narrow strip of land beside the river and the present owner of the adjoining fields, to explore the possibility of opening a public footpath linking the Steppey Lane footbridge to the old A1068 road bridge.
- seek the assistance of the County Council to institute the legal and practical steps, including public consultation, to implement the proposal if it proves feasible.

Lesbury Parish Plan 2009

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Appendix 1:

The Project Process

Once the Parish Council had resolved to commission a Parish Plan, two well-advertised public meetings were held in the Village Hall to explain the nature of the proposed Plan and to invite residents to volunteer to take active parts in the process. As a result, a Steering Committee was formed, together with two Working Groups, one concerned with all aspects of the environment and the other concentrating on community activities and facilities.

While the two Working Groups considered their respective briefs and produced initial papers on their ideas on the perceived issues, the Steering Committee established relationships with relevant local authorities, obtained basic material such as maps and census data and discussed and collated Group Reports.

At this stage, the Steering Committee produced a statement of the issues that had emerged to date, and presented an Interim Report to the Parish Council as a progress check and to ensure that the main issues had been covered. The Report was endorsed by the Parish Council, after which widespread public consultation began.

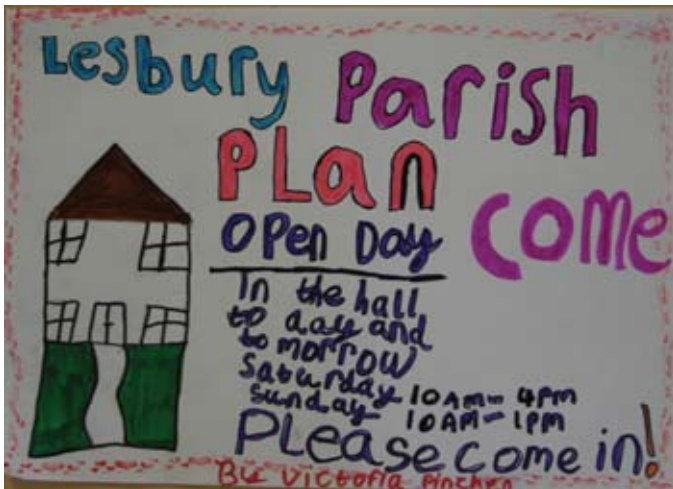
Once the responses to the several elements of the public consultation (particularly the Questionnaire Survey) had been analysed, the initial draft papers on each main topic were revised to reflect public opinion on the issues raised and the relative priority that should be placed on each. Subsequently, Action Plans for use by the Parish Council were developed and included in the document.

The Parish Plan document was then developed with contributions from each of the two Groups feeding into all the Plan's main elements. The two co-Editors had the task of drafting and illustrating the Plan with assistance from a small sub-committee which reported periodically to the Steering Committee for discussion and agreement of the final wording.

The final draft was then submitted to the Parish Councillors for information and comment before it was printed for distribution to all households in the Parish and to interested parties such as the Unitary Authority.

Appendix 2:

Public Consultation and the Questionnaire



Ap. 2.1 Description of the Process

In order to make the Parish Plan a genuine expression of the opinions, comments and suggestions of residents, the Steering Committee organised a series of public events, which took place as follows:

- Stall at the Church Christmas Fair, 29 November 2008
- Christmas Fayre at Hipsburn First School, 10 December 2008
- Open Days in March 2009 with displays and discussion in the Village Hall
- Questionnaire survey delivered early in May 2009 to every house in the Parish, followed by evaluation of the results

The three open events were all well advertised in the Parish Newsletter and The Bridge magazine, and were well attended. In addition, the Steering Committee also advertised the fact that its own regular meetings were open to interested observers, although the response to this was minimal.

The first two events were designed to alert people to the intention to produce a Parish Plan and to invite ideas and participation. The Parish Newsletter carried notices and reports of each, so that by the last weekend in March 2009, when the Open Days were held in the Village Hall, there was widespread knowledge of, and interest in the production of the Plan.



Ap. 2.2 The Open Days Exhibition

The exhibition consisted of a series of 40 panels illustrating each of the main issues that had been identified by the Steering Committee, in most cases inviting comments and suggestions. Topics covered included:

- A photographic display of the natural and built assets of the Parish;
- A summary of the existing community activities, indoors and outdoors;
- The question of sustainability, linked with employment opportunities;
- Housing, including the need for "affordable housing";
- Traffic and transport problems and some suggested measures.

In addition, side tables manned by members of the Steering Committee and Working Groups carried further detailed information of each of the main topics, while an important corner exhibit offered scope for young people to express their thoughts. The stage carried panels explaining the role of the Parish Council and summarising its present policies on many of the issues raised in the Steering Committee's Interim Report to the Council.

More than 400 people attended the exhibition, and many valuable comments were recorded. These, combined with the knowledge and the experience of members of the working groups, provided an insight into what really concerned residents and fed straight into the formulation of the Questionnaire.

However, we acknowledge that, given the means of collecting and recording the comments, the impressions of public opinion to this point, were likely to be subjective.

Ap. 2.3 The Questionnaire

A Sub-Committee was formed to devise the questionnaire. This was designed to confirm household attitudes to the wide range of issues already identified, and to invite individual comments and ideas. Accordingly, some questions were answered simply by ticking boxes, while most also gave space for additional remarks.

A copy of the Questionnaire was delivered by hand to every household early in May 2009. Because of data protection laws and the confidentiality of Electoral Roll information, no attempt was made to provide a form for every individual resident. Instead, each household was invited to debate the questions and respond collectively. This restriction did not appear to cause any problems.

The forms did not ask for names and addresses, but each form carried a unique reference number which corresponded to a checklist of groups of areas. Respondents were asked to specify to which area they belonged.

As an inducement to completing and returning the forms, a £100 prize was to be won by the owner of the number drawn from a hat. Over 170 forms were returned, representing 37% of the households in the Parish, a high proportion giving reasonable confidence in the validity of the resulting analysis.

Towards the end, the questionnaire asked respondents to state the three issues that most concerned them, in order of priority. Consideration later of the replies to this helped the Steering Committee to prioritise their recommendations for action to the Parish Council.

As soon as the forms were collected from three specified delivery points, they were taken, unread, to County Hall where they were analysed by one of the County's statisticians using a computer program for the "tick-box" replies and recording comments systematically. The Steering Committee is particularly grateful for this valuable, professional and independent appraisal.

Area Geography for the Questionnaire

A.	B.	C.	D.
Bilton	Hipsburn Farm	Old Hawkhill	Field House
Bilton Banks	Hipsburn Steadings	Hawkhill	Field House Cottages
Bilton Barns	Hipsburn Farm Cottages	Old Station	Foxton
Bilton Cottages	South View	Alnwick Road	Foxbury House
Bilton Mill	Curly Lane	The Square	Town Foot Steadings
Greenrigg	Hipsburn Crescent	Lealands	Town Foot
Wooden Farm	Willow Close	Mill House	Longhoughton Road
Wooden Gate	Station Cottages	Mill House Gardens	Meadowlands
	Hillside	Orchard Terrace	Croftlands
	The Coppice	Alnside Court	The Wynd
	Lesbury Road	School Lane	
	Steppey Lane	Garden Terrace	Main Street between
		Riverside	Townfoot and
			Longhoughton Road
		Main Street between	
		road bridge and	
		Longhoughton Road	

Ap. 2.4 Steering Committee Report on the Questionnaire Returns

On receipt from County Hall of the statistician's report, the Steering Committee produced a summary, shown below:

Q1a: Distribution of responses

- Shows 46% from Area A, 33% from Area B, 35% from Area C and 44% from Area D
- However, A and B cover what is virtually a contiguous area South of the River, while C and D, apart from a few outlying properties, together cover Lesbury Village and its immediate surroundings.
- 34% of households in A and B, and 38% of households in C and D returned completed questionnaires. This seems to indicate a reasonably balanced response rate from across the Parish.

Q1b: Age profile

- Draws attention to the fact that the Parish has many older people.
- Cannot really draw a meaningful histogram as the age-groups are not constant.

Q1c: How long have you lived in the Parish?

Up to 5 years:	25%
6 to 10 years:	17%
11 to 15 years:	11%
More than 16 years:	47%

- Indicates that fresh newcomers and long established residents have shown interest in the Plan, with perhaps a slackening of interest in the intermediate group.

Q1d: Attend the Open Days Exhibition?

- 40% of households attended. Many will have seen more than is indicated in the Questionnaire.

Q2: How many residents in the household are in employment?

None:	53%
One:	19%
Two:	23%
Three:	5%

- Note the significant number of households that have two or more in work, having different needs from households without employed residents.

Q3a: Views on activities etc

- This was a somewhat ambiguous question, and it is evident from the large proportion of "no opinion" responses that many have noted opinions only on facilities for their own age-groups. The responses to Q3b give a better idea.

Q3b: Suggestions for activities etc

Many respondents made suggestions for new or improved activities and facilities. These cannot be codified numerically, but several dominant themes emerged.

- Thirteen respondents indicated satisfaction with what exists at present
- Many stressed the need for a new and/or improved/enlarged community centre to cater for all age groups, giving examples such as youth club, drop-in, book group, fitness-type classes, tea dances, coffee mornings, concerts, drama, clubs etc.
- Many called for new and/or improved outdoor sports facilities for all ages, with emphasis on tennis. Some mentioned the possible development of tennis and bowls in the area also used by the Cricket Club and Alnmouth Football Club.
- A number of respondents urged the provision of better facilities for young children and youths, including the use of the school outside school hours.

Q4a: How do you find out what is going on?

91.9% said: Parish Newsletter;
73% said: The Bridge Magazine;
38% said: Noticeboards;
only 4% said: website.
19% (see list) added that they found out about events by word of mouth.

Clearly, the Parish Newsletter is performing a useful function and is read by 98% of the residents. The fact that as many as 73% also got useful information from The Bridge, which is a Church Magazine serving five Parishes, shows the value of this publication. The website does not yet seem to have caught on.

Q4b: How to improve information

About half the responses to this question confirmed satisfaction with the Newsletter, with many complimentary remarks. Other suggestions, each with a few supporters, included:

- More use of Notice Boards, kept up to date
- Publication in the Newsletter of (or reference to) Planning Applications for developments in the Parish
- Improvement of the website, and use of group e-mailing of information
- Use of free facility of an article in the weekly Northumberland Gazette.

Q5a: How does the household rate the feeling of community spirit?

Encouraging that 78% replied "Very Good" or "Good", and only 9% replied "Poor". None said: "Very poor". However, responses to the next question contain some worrying remarks.

Q5b: Any particular reasons for the response to Q5a?

About half of the replies confirmed satisfaction with the community spirit, but a worrying number commented on the divisions between Hipsburn and Lesbury Village, many seeming to imply that residents of Hipsburn felt patronised. There were also several comments that community activities were organised by the older age-group section, largely for their own benefit. Several suggested here and elsewhere in their responses, that the provision of a new Community Centre, presumably located more "centrally", could overcome the problem.

Q5c: Suggestions for new activities to improve community spirit

The list of suggestions included forming a volunteer group to devise and run activities such as:

- Opening up use of the Village Hall for more locally-organised events and activities such as themed nights, quizzes, talks
- Joint charity fundraising ventures, such as Open garden days
- Parish events on public holidays, e.g. Street Parties, barbecues, sports, country dancing
- Pro-health activities
- Involving children in events with parents
- Drop-in centre, café
- Welcoming and befriending newcomers

Q6a: Is the Village Hall adequate for the needs of the Parish?

63% said "Yes"

21% said "No"

As many as 15% "did not know".

Q6b: Suggested improvements to the Village Hall

Many of the comments included several suggestions, among which, in order of number of mentions, were:

- Enlarge by extension(s)
- Modernise toilets
- Modernise kitchen
- Improve maintenance and cleaning
- Eliminate damp and heating problems
- As part of modernisation, improve stage
- Improve furnishings and chairs
- Build a new Community Centre (by implication, elsewhere)
- Build a new Community Centre on the site of the Village Hall
- Improve storage facilities
- Circulate better information on activities
- Provide terminal with web access – perhaps with a Parish Office
- Reduce fees for use by local groups

One suggestion was to employ a professional architect to review the state of the existing Hall, its pattern of use and its potential for extension.

Q7a: Is there anything more that the Shop/Post Office could provide?

68% said: "No", implying a good degree of satisfaction with the present offer. The list of comments and suggestions included, in order of the number of mentions:

- Very complimentary of the service and range offered
- Concern that the present hours of opening limited patronage by commuting and other residents (including one suggestion that the Shop could act as a collecting point for deliveries to households at work)
- Wider choice of local produce, including fresh bread, organic vegetables
- Additional Post Office facilities such as Vehicle and TV Licensing, Passport applications
- Provision of a cash machine
- Photocopying service
- More local information and OS maps
- Teas
- Improved shop front
- General internal refit

Several respondents acknowledged that the present shop is too small to accommodate much more produce, and some suggested enlargement of the premises.

Q7b: Does the community need other shops etc?

64% replied:	"No"
9% said:	"Yes"
the balance said:	"Don't know".

Q7c: If "Yes", what is needed?

While some respondents acknowledged that another shop might be non-viable, several suggested that Hipsburn, and particularly the Station, were in need of facilities, including, in order of the number of mentions:

- A shop or general store, preferably in Hipsburn
- A café or kiosk at the Station
- A miscellany of ideas including a vending machine, a filling station, a cash-point, a public toilet, glass recycling point, internet access, a "friendly" pub and a chemist.

Q8a: Difficulty of access to medical facilities

An emphatic 94% said that they had no problems. Of the remaining 6%, access to hospital and to a dentist were noted as problems.

Q8b: What makes access to medical facilities difficult?

Most of those who noted problems cited lack of personal transport as the main difficulty, with some mentioning the cost of parking.

Q8c: Could anything be done to improve the situation?

Suggestions included:

- Free parking for locals at Hospital, Infirmary
- Community transport scheme
- Reduced bus fares for locals under 65

Q9a: Crime, security and safety issues concerns were expressed thus:

• Safety of children:	23% concerned,	72% not concerned
• Safety of the elderly:	17% concerned,	80% not concerned
• Vandalism and anti-social behaviour:	9% concerned,	89% not concerned
• Safety of property:	9% concerned,	88% not concerned
• Crime in general:	3% concerned,	93% not concerned

Q9b: Any other concerns about safety or security?

The great majority of comments show concern at the road safety aspects of speeding traffic, with some additional comments on lack of footpaths and localised poor street lighting. Some are concerned at the lack of a police presence and the lack of crime prevention measures. Dog fouling is an issue with a small number of respondents. Other individual comments included:

- The unsavoury condition of the coppice at the foot of Curly Lane, where children play
- Potential dangers at Steppey Lane footbridge
- Ball games in the street
- Unsupervised use by children of the Football field

Q10: Concerns expressed about environmental issues

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Concerned</i>	<i>Not concerned</i>
Dog fouling	74%	24%
Condition of roads and footpaths	61%	38%
Litter pollution	43%	55%
Management and replacement of trees	35%	61%
Light pollution from street lighting	28%	69%
Traffic noise	25%	72%
Coal dust from Hipsburn Coal Yard	15%	84%

Q11: Some environmental ideas for comment

Better use of open spaces, with planting					
<i>Would support</i>	73%	<i>Would not support</i>	7%	<i>No opinion</i>	20%
Footpath on south side of river, Steppey Lane to A1068					
<i>Would support</i>	69%	<i>Would not support</i>	8%	<i>No opinion</i>	21%
Extend Warkworth cycle track to Hipsburn roundabout					
<i>Would support</i>	67%	<i>Would not support</i>	12%	<i>No opinion</i>	21%
Switch off some street lights after midnight					
<i>Would support</i>	57%	<i>Would not support</i>	28%	<i>No opinion</i>	15%
Paint the new bridge green to blend in with surroundings					
<i>Would support</i>	46%	<i>Would not support</i>	32%	<i>No opinion</i>	22%

Q12: Environmental aspects of the proposed new car park at the Station

(a) Landscaping and planting for wildlife support					
<i>Would support</i>	88%	<i>Would not support</i>	3%	<i>No opinion</i>	9%
b) Footpath linking car park to old branch line					
<i>Would support</i>	79%	<i>Would not support</i>	4%	<i>No opinion</i>	17%

Q12c: Any other environmental suggestions?

Some ideas came from several people, including, in order of number of responses:

- Demolish and replace the new bridge with a more sympathetic design, or repaint (no consensus on colour)
- Pedestrian and cycle path beside the A1068 to Alnwick
- Maintain and enhance planting, using native species where possible

Other individual ideas included:

Bat boxes, improve footpaths including cutting back overhanging hedges, bury telephone and electricity cables, cut back ivy on mature trees, keep dogs on the lead in bird breeding period, provide dog mess bins, control RAF shooting practice times, improve exterior of Post Office, provide information on walks, create a group of volunteers to keep the Parish tidy.

Q13 and Q14: The local economy Issue

13a. Concerned about lack of employment opportunities in the Parish?					
<i>Yes</i>	31%	<i>No</i>	39%	<i>No opinion</i>	30%
13b. Increased commercial or industrial activity to boost economy?					
<i>Yes</i>	21%	<i>No</i>	60%	<i>No opinion</i>	18%
13c. New cottage industries, aimed at the tourist potential?					
<i>Yes</i>	52%	<i>No</i>	24%	<i>No opinion</i>	24%
14. Tourist information facility at Station?					
<i>Yes</i>	67%	<i>No</i>	12%	<i>No opinion</i>	21%

Q15a: Affordable Housing

Does the Parish require affordable housing?

Yes	59%
No	29%
No opinion	12%

Q15b: Housing in general

Is there a need for other types of housing development?

Yes	12%
No	68%
No opinion	19%

Q16a and 16b: Building standards

Should there be firm adherence to traditional styles in Conservation Area?

Yes	81%	No	9%	No opinion	9%
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Should there be flexibility outside the Conservation Area?

Yes	50%	No	34%	No opinion	15%
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Q17: Services to housing: Are residents satisfied with the following:

Water supply

Yes	94%	No	5%	No opinion	1%
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Frequency of refuse collection

Yes	87%	No	12%	No opinion	9%
-----	-----	----	-----	------------	----

Electricity supply

Yes	86%	No	13%	No opinion	1%
-----	-----	----	-----	------------	----

Street lighting

Yes	84%	No	12%	No opinion	4%
-----	-----	----	-----	------------	----

Postal delivery and collection services

Yes	82%	No	16%	No opinion	2%
-----	-----	----	-----	------------	----

Gas supply

Yes	71%	No	7%	No opinion	21%
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Respondents saying "No" to any of the above were asked to give reasons. These are summarised in the order of numbers of responses:

- **Street lighting** – some areas inadequate, some over-lit. Some support for switching off some lights at midnight. System needs a complete review and rationalisation.
- **Postal services** – strong complaints about late delivery (often well into the afternoon). Some worried at the failure to collect mail from boxes at the weekends.
- **Electricity supply** – frequent short power cuts, disrupting domestic arrangements and computers. Some calls for putting cables underground.
- **Refuse collection** – strongly-expressed calls for weekly collections, especially in Summer months.
- **Gas supply** – several areas are not connected to the mains.
- **Water supply** – some complaints about quality and low pressure.

Q18: Internet and broadband

74% of respondents have access to the Internet at home. Almost all of them have Broadband, but 40% of those who have it are dissatisfied with the transmission speed available.

Q19a and 19b: Transport and Traffic issues

Residents were asked if traffic speeding and/or car parking were perceived as problems in specific lengths of road, with the following responses:

Road

A1068 to Warkworth, south of Hipsburn roundabout	<i>Speeding</i> 49%	<i>Parking</i> 4%
From Hipsburn roundabout to Alnmouth past the school	<i>Speeding</i> 58%	<i>Parking</i> 10%
A1068 Lesbury Road from Hipsburn roundabout to new bridge	<i>Speeding</i> 43%	<i>Parking</i> 9%
A1068 from new bridge towards Alnwick	<i>Speeding</i> 32%	<i>Parking</i> 3%
South View and Bilton Road	<i>Speeding</i> 27%	<i>Parking</i> 51%
Steppey Lane	<i>Speeding</i> 7%	<i>Parking</i> 2%
Curly Lane	<i>Speeding</i> 13%	<i>Parking</i> 47%
In Lesbury Village	<i>Speeding</i> 43%	<i>Parking</i> 25%
Longhoughton Road	<i>Speeding</i> 24%	<i>Parking</i> 1%
Road towards Boulmer beyond Townfoot	<i>Speeding</i> 17%	<i>Parking</i> 1%

Speeding problems elsewhere were noted:

- Outside 30mph limit on Bilton-Shilbottle road and on Foxton Road. One respondent noted that the limit on such roads is 60mph, and that many motorists drive on them too slowly for road safety.
- Several reiterated concern about speeding throughout the built-up areas, some mentioning buses and motorcyclists.

Parking problems were emphasised:

- At and near the railway station, in South View, Curly Lane and Bilton Road.
- At the Church and Village Hall in Lesbury Village, some noting that the car park in Riverside is not fully utilised.
- Parking on the footpath in Lesbury Road. Also mentioned were parking hazards at Wooden level crossing and in the dip on A1068 before the 18-arch railway bridge. One suggestion was the provision of an off road parking area on A1068 south of Hipsburn to give a photo opportunity for pictures of Alnmouth across the estuary.

Q20a and 20b: Should designated parking and other measures be introduced to reduce speeds, and, if so, where?

60% of respondents agreed that measures should be introduced; 16% did not, and 21% expressed no opinion.

Many respondents replied to the question of where they would like to see 20mph speed limits applied. These locations are listed in order of the number of mentions:

- Lesbury Village street and Longhoughton Road
- Bilton and South View

- Road near and past the school
- Curly Lane
- Lesbury Road
- Steppey Lane

Several called for 20mph limits throughout the built-up areas or throughout the Parish. Some called for police enforcement of the existing limits.

Q21a and 21b: Do you know of any pavements that are dangerous, and, if so, where?

23% of respondents said: "Yes"; 30% said: "No", and as many as 42% said: "Don't know".

However, the responses to 21b suggested locations of dangerous pavements as follows, in order of the number of mentions:

- Along the A1068 from Curly Lane/The Coppice to the new bridge, including the High Path
- In Lesbury Village at the S-bend beside the Church
- Bilton Road (with special reference to overhanging hedges)
- Sections of footpath between Steppey Lane and the school
- Longhoughton Road
- Lesbury Road (with special reference to car parking on the footpath)

There were several references to the lack of dropped kerbs to suit wheelchair access, and some criticisms of lack of provision on the Alnwick Road A1068. Poor maintenance of some footpaths was also mentioned.

Q22a and 22b: Cycling

- 49% of respondents thought that the designated off street cycle paths were safe and adequate, while 9% said: "No" and 41% responded: "Don't know".
- 30% thought that the signposted on-street cycle paths were safe, while 23% said: "No" and 47% responded: "Don't know".

Q22c, d and e: Buses and services

- 48% of respondents use the bus services. 50% do not use them.
- 38% consider the services adequate, 15% disagree and 42% "Don't know". The high number of "don't knows" may reflect the fact that 50% do not use buses.
- 44% are content with the bus stop shelter provision, 10% are not. As above, the 41% who expressed no opinion probably reflect the high proportion who do not use buses.

Q23: Problems of traffic and parking at and near the railway station

Respondents were invited to suggest ways to resolve the acute access and parking problems. Replies are listed in groups, in order of the number of mentions:

- Many suggested that the planned 44-space car park north of the line would solve the problem, though several warned that it may not be big enough.

- Various conventional parking controls on local roads – yellow lines, parking tickets etc.
- Many local residents suggested designated residents' parking permits and places to allow them to park outside their own homes.
- Many warned that, if the new car park is subject to charges, motorists would ignore it and continue to park on the nearby streets.
- Some urged practical measures to improve access to the station at the junction, supporting some of the ideas displayed at the Open Days exhibition.
- Several suggested re-locating the Coal Yard to allow station parking there, linked with the release for parking of the strip of land east of the station building at present used as the railway maintenance depot.
- Only one respondent noted the idea (featured at the Open Days exhibition) of a new station access taken from the A1068 behind Hillside.

Q24: Proposals for old branch line to Alnwick

Reactions to some suggestions for future use of the disused line were:

Create the Aln Valley Railway, if funds could be raised

Yes	40%	No	35%	No opinion	23%
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Create a public footpath

Yes	72%	No	6%	No opinion	20%
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Create a cycle route

Yes	72%	No	6%	No opinion	20%
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Other comments and suggestions included creation of a bridlepath, and the development of the route as a tourist trail.

Q25: Offers of help to Parish Council in tackling any projects that emerge in the Parish Plan

58% of respondents stated that they would be prepared to help.

Q26: What are the three most important issues for the Parish Council to tackle, in order of priority?

This question produced three long lists of items that have been grouped into broad topics related to one another. To attempt to distil these into the three top items, those mentioned as first priority were weighted by multiplying them by three, those in the second by two and those in the third by one, with all the weighted figures being aggregated to produce the top items in order. The resulting list of main priorities from this aspect of public consultation is as follows:

- Problems caused by car parking, both at the Station and generally in the built-up areas:
score 197
- Problems caused by traffic speeds in built-up areas:
score 167
- Issues relating to community social and sporting activities, including use of the Village Hall / new community centre:
score 103
- Conservation of the environment in rural and built-up areas, including housing issues:
score 72

- Provision of affordable housing:
score 52
- Prevention of dog fouling:
score 50

Q27: Additional comments

The “raw data” analysis of the questionnaires ends with six pages of summarised, wide-ranging comments. Most of these re-emphasise or expand on answers given to earlier specific questions, and there are few new suggestions over and above these. However, those preparing the Action Plans emanating from the Parish Plan will consider each of the particular, localised requests or suggestions, as these may give weight to any proposals.

The Parish Council should be pleased at the number of complimentary remarks made about their initiatives in publishing and distributing the Parish Newsletter, and about the fact that they have commissioned the Parish Plan.

Appendix 3:

Relevant Extracts from 2001 Census for the Parish

The 2001 Census is the latest set of statistics available via the District Council. The figures below relate to Lesbury Parish and are extracted from a large spread-sheet that also includes finer analysis of some items (e.g. male / female) and some additional data that are probably not relevant to the Parish Plan. The spread-sheet, which is available on request, also gives figures for all other Parishes in the District, so that comparisons can be made if desired.

The owner-occupied houses at The Coppice, Hillside, Hipsburn Steadings and Alnside Court have all been built and occupied since the 2001 Census, and that the next Census will probably show some corresponding skewing of the percentage statistics.

Further statistical information may be obtained by reference to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) web-site: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

People

871 residents, 410 male, 461 female, in 394 households.
29 students away from home

Ethnic Groups

Total 871, White British 841, Other white 17, White and British Asian 10, Other mixed 3.

Area

1644 hectares. Density: 0.53 people per hectare

Age Structure

Age	No.	%
0-4	32	3.67%
5-7	29	3.33%
8-9	11	1.26%
10-14	50	5.74%
15	10	1.15%
16-17	24	2.76%
18-19	21	2.41%
20-24	17	1.95%
25-29	32	3.67%
30-44	139	15.96%
45-59	200	22.96%
60-64	75	8.61%
65-74	121	13.89%
75-84	80	9.18%
85-89	21	2.41%
90+	9	1.03%

Country of Birth

Total 871, England 760, Scotland 53, Wales 17, Northern Ireland 7, Eire 3, Other EU countries 7, Elsewhere 24.

Health and Unpaid Care

All: 871. Limiting long-term illness: 163.
Working age with limiting long-term illness: 47
In good health: 576. In fairly good health: 222.
Not in good health: 73
People provided with unpaid care: 104.
Of these, 86 for 1-19 hrs a week, 8 for 20-49 hrs per week and 10 for 50+hrs per week.

Living Arrangements (age 16+)

739 people (16+) in households. Of these, 506 are couples, 245 live singly, including 83 widowed.

Household Spaces

Household spaces with residents: 394.
Household spaces vacant: 26.
Second residences / holiday lets: 17.

Home Ownership

All households: 394.
Owned outright: 160 (40.61%).
Subject to mortgage: 114 (28.93%).
Shared ownership: 0.
Rented from Council: 32 (8.12%).
Rented from Housing Association: 14 (3.55%). Rented from private landlord: 48 (12.18%). Other rented: 26 (6.60%).

Miscellaneous

Lone parent households with dependent children: 17.
One-person pensioner households: 15

Economic Activity (ages 16-74)

All economically active: 629.
Part-time employed: 70 (11.13%).
Full-time employed: 188 (29.89%).
Self-employed: 85 (13.51%).
Unemployed: 20 (3.18%).
Students: 17 (2.7%).
Retired: 161 (25.6%).
Unemployed aged 16-24: 3 (0.48%).
Unemployed aged 50+: 6 (0.95%).
Long-term unemployed: 6 (0.95%).
Economically inactive students: 21 (3.34%).
Looking after home / family: 36 (5.72%).
Permanently sick / disabled: 15 (2.38%).
Other: 16 (2.54%).

Type of Employment (ages 16-74)

All in employment: 357.
Agriculture, hunting, forestry: 14 (3.92%).
Fishing: 3 (0.84%).
Mining, quarrying: 0 (0.00%).
Manufacturing: 39 (10.92%).
Electricity, gas, water supply: 3 (0.84%).
Construction: 26 (7.28%).
Retail: 42 (11.76%).
Hotels / catering: 28 (7.84%).
Transport / communication: 12 (3.36%).
Finance: 9 (2.84%).
Real estate, business: 38 (10.64%).
Public administration, defence: 30 (8.40%).
Education: 41 (11.48%).
Health and Social work: 53 (14.85%).
Other: 19 (5.32%).

Occupational Groups (ages 16-74)

All in employment: 357
Managers / senior officials: 52 (14.53%).
Professional: 58 (16.20%).
Associated professional and technical: 53 (14.80%).
Administration / secretarial: 35 (9.78%).
Skilled trades: 59 (16.48%).
Personal service occupations: 33 (9.22%).
Sales and customer service: 17 (4.75%).
Process, plant and machinery operatives: 18 (5.03%).
Elementary occupation: 33 (9.22%).

Car Ownership

All households: 394.
Total vehicles in Parish: 505.
No car or van: 66 (16.75%).
One car or van: 177 (44.92%).
Two vehicles: 129 (32.74%).
Three vehicles: 19 (4.82%).
Four+ vehicles: 3 (0.76%).
There were no one-family households with dependent children without a car or van.

Appendix 4:

Listed Buildings and other historically significant buildings and structures in the Parish

Ap. 4.1 Introduction

Buildings and structures are Listed at rare intervals, normally by inspection by an official of the relevant Government Department with reference to informal advice from local Planning Authorities and selected residents. Individuals (resident or not) may apply to have a building Listed, the application being granted only with the approval of the local Planning Authority. The main criteria for Listing are:

- unusual or unique architectural merit of national importance, and/or
- special historical importance in the way the structure, building or group of buildings has affected the development of the settlement over the years.

Unless otherwise specified, the whole area attached to a Listed building, including its boundary walls, is treated as part of the Listing for purposes of protection and maintenance.

Three Grades of Listing are present in the Parish:

- Grade I covers buildings of exceptional interest.
- Grade II* is for buildings of particular importance of more than special interest.
- Grade II is for those of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them.

Ap. 4.2 Listed buildings and structures

The 15th Century bridge over the River Aln is a scheduled ancient monument and is Listed in Grade I

The Church of St Mary in Lesbury is Listed as Grade II*

Twenty-two other structures within the Parish are classified Grade II as follows:

Within the Old (Closed) Churchyard

- Headstone with coat of arms (1764) twelve metres south of the chancel.

- Headstone (19th century) nine metres north east of south gate.
- Herdman Family Vault (1827), north of church tower.
- Headstone Donkin and Aitken, fourteen metres south of chancel.
- Headstone, relief-carved (1779), seventeen metres south-east of church.

Others

- The Glebe (the old vicarage).
- Wall and Gate Piers of The Glebe (1865).
- Stable (18th century) and Attached Walls (19th century) north of The Glebe.
- Village Hall (previously school) (1857).
- Front Wall of Village Hall (1857).
- Woodbine Cottage (18th century) remodelled (19th century).
- Lesbury House circa 1800 with earlier 18th century rear wing
- Pant (water pump) to the west of Meldon Cottage (Mid 19th century)
- Tithe Barns (19th century), north side of A1068 as it passes under the 18 arches.
- Lesbury Mill remains (18th century) south of the new A1068 bridge
- Aqueduct remains on west bank of river, 100 metres upstream from bridge
- Bilton House (circa 1825-50)
- Gate Screen south east of Bilton House
- Garden Wall east of Bilton House
- Cartshed / Granary 80 metres north-east of Bilton House
- Buildings and Yard Walls to north of Bilton House. These comprise: a former coach house, stable, outbuildings and attached walls.
- Railway Viaduct (eighteen arches) built by Robert Stephenson in 1848/49

Ap. 4.3 Additional Buildings and Structures of interest

- Old schoolhouse in Lesbury Village
- Church Cottages (previously the Poorhouse and School)
- Model farmworkers' homes in Garden Terrace?
- Reading Room
- The Square
- Coach Inn
- Mills - Lesbury, Bilton, Longhoughton
- Railway viaduct (defunct Aln valley railway track over Cawledge Burn)
- Stepping stones (Steppey Lane and Greenrigg)
- River weirs (Lesbury dam, below viaduct, Bilton Mill)
- Farmsteads

Appendix 5:

Acknowledgements

The Chairman and members of the Steering Committee acknowledge gratefully the contributions made by the many volunteers from the community who took part in discussion groups, undertook research into specific topics and produced ideas and proposals for consideration.

In addition, the Steering Committee acknowledges the help given by a number of bodies, including:

- The Parish Council, for practical help and encouragement.
- The producers of the Parish Newsletter and its distributors.
- District Council officers, pre-reorganisation, for encouragement, advice, maps and some statistical material.
- Community Action Northumberland, for initial advice and “Toolkit”, and for a grant to the Parish Council towards the anticipated costs.
- Awards for All, for a grant to the Parish Council to cover the balance of the Steering Committee’s main printing and administration costs, together with the cost of equipment and materials for the Parish Newsletter.
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- St Mary’s Parish Church Parochial Church Council
- Postmaster - Robert Thompson
- Hipsburn First School.

The Steering Committee is grateful for the time given freely by so many people who volunteered their services and also to the many residents who supported the public consultation events and Survey.

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**We hope you have found this Document interesting and informative
and will keep it for future reference.**

**If you move away, you may like to leave the Plan
for the next occupant of your house.**