

## APPENDIX 10

### Interviews with Representatives of the Business community

I spoke to 2 business owners today. Both have had businesses in the village for many years.

#### 1. Country Crafts and Coffee Shop (Pat Matthews)

I had left her a note about our reasons for speaking to businesses people but when I went back she basically seemed satisfied with her lot. She had seen the village and her customers needs change over the years and her approach was you just adapt and get on with it. Her only real concern was parking. She has seen the number of cars increase without any real increase in the number of parking spaces. But she also appreciates the difficulty of solving the problem. She has elderly village customers who like to park as near as possible. Also her business attracts customers from outside who need parking. She was also concerned about people sometimes parking on the paved area outside the shop.

#### 2 Hairdresser (Carol)

I called in for a haircut so took the opportunity to get her views. Again she is happy to be in business in Lanchester and sees it as much better than the surrounding towns and villages. Her main concern was also parking. She has elderly village customers and others from outside who rely on being able to park nearby. Some come here because it is easier than Stanley and Consett. She would not want any restrictions on Front Street parking. She also mentioned the loss of business and disruption when Woodham Court was being built when contractors took up a lot of parking places. She was concerned that there would be a repeat if the Lanchester Arms development gets the ok.

Brian Naylor

Meeting with Ray Emmerton, Green Grocer.

1) Would like to expand, interested in the property at rear of shop - outbuildings at back of old Co-op. Resentful of the way Spar have held on to that shop lease therefore preventing any competition.

Also resentful of amount of litter Spar creates at rear of their joint premises.

2) Considers that the free Tesco bus hits several businesses in the village.

3) However he believes there are a number of people who do major shopping on a monthly basis at one or other Supermarket but then do specialist shopping in the week in the village. Specialist being Crinions, Peters Bakery and himself. He has a core of loyal customers who do this. He believes that all three shops are well regarded because of the quality of their products - this keystone of maintaining that kind of loyalty.

4) He was ambivalent about parking controls, fearing they would reduce trade, but very critical of some who park at the rear of his shop for the full day and either take buses or share cars for their onward journey. Thinks there are currently 3 or 4 who do this.

5) Staffing is a permanent problem - no one currently works in the shop and lives in the Parish. He considers that working in a Green Grocery is one of the least pleasant shop jobs - shelf stacking is very heavy work and maintaining fresh produce means that the shop is always cool and sometimes cold.

6) The Fruit Farm does employ local labour for the seasonal sessional work but his wife is responsible for the management of that site. Mrs. Emmerton has arranged for Jamie Oliver to do one of his demonstrations at the farm, which will be broadcast later this year.

7) He has not use or sought any grants for the shop.

8) He says he likes being in the village and I gained the impression that he sees himself here for the foreseeable future.

---

Brief discussion with Crinions who also report that there are all-day parkers regularly using spaces in that part of the Centre.

#### MEETING WITH LANCHESTER DAIRIES.

Discussion with three Directors of Company which is family owned.

The family have been based at Upper Houses farm for the past 50 yrs. initially as farming. They moved into the milk business approximately 13 yrs. ago partly as a result of realising that when the present Managing Director married the farm couldn't support three families and partly because of the introduction of Milk Quotas. They initially purchased a Milk round in Durham but as the imposition of milk quotas resulted in more farmers withdrawing from milk production they realised that there was more potential in milk processing. They had no grant-aid but did receive an interest-free loan from the Mining Communities regeneration programme. They did, however, receive a 50% grant from Business Link in order to prepare the specification when they subsequently sought accreditation with the European Food Safety Inspection Society. This accreditation they now carry and it means they can, if they choose, export anywhere in Europe. Their production is fresh milk, single and double cream and they buy in eggs from local farms.

They serve an area from Catterick to Widdrington and Barnard Castle to Yarm/Teesside. Currently they have a staff of 47, mainly from Derwentside although none from the Parish. They have had little success in recruiting from the Parish but are unclear why. They have a modest turnover of drivers, they recruit through job centres and the Newcastle Journal. They recently appointed a Receptionist and an Office Manager. While both are from Derwentside there were no immediately local applications. However the seven managers (including Directors) are all from Lanchester. They use their own mini-bus to collect staff because public transport is not satisfactory. When they started in the Milk Processing there were 2,000 head of milk-cows within a five-mile radius; there are now 80. As a result their milk comes from the Tyne Valley and they have an increasing number of direct contracts with farms. Their current production amounts to 50,000 litres per day but they have the capacity with existing plant of increasing that to 150,000. They have created 10 new full-time jobs in the past 10 months and there could be 10 more in the coming year. Staff attend Derwentside College for Food hygiene Courses.

Apart from increasing milk production they have plans prepared for the conversion of surplus buildings for use as Out of Town offices for which they are confident of finding tenants. This could potentially bring 50 more jobs to the site with knock-on benefits for the village economy.

They clearly see themselves as having a future in the Parish for ten years and beyond and their main request is for "A more supportive attitude from all Councils". As other farmers have reported, they have encountered comments such as "If you want a house as big as that you should move" when seeking relatively modest alterations to existing houses and there have been difficulties over the maintenance of the Right of Way over their land which is Council maintained.

They have paid for the production of Anti-bullying Leaflets for the local schools, sponsor the Village Bowls Club and the Farmwatch Scheme in the area.

Mike Wardle.

---

## **CARERS REPORT**

### **SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP - CARERS AND HEALTH**

#### **Aim of the group: -**

- . To get a fuller understanding and awareness of the experience of vulnerable groups in our community with special needs; disability, elderly and frail, mental health problems, Alzheimer sufferers and Carers.
- . Familiarise ourselves with current service provision.
- . Look ahead at what can be done to support imaginative development and initiatives geared to meet the very probably increasing future demands on these services. The demographic population profile of Lanchester is weighted to an older population and current social policy trends are towards people remaining in their own homes as long as possible, with implications for service delivery.

#### **Background**

The closure of many local authority and small private residential homes for the elderly, with anticipated loss of the remaining residential home actually in the village. There is little/no sheltered accommodation in Lanchester Parish and no N.H.S. day care.

## **Future**

Future challenges might include finding a way to influence local planning and development, to encourage a range of more integrated local provision that can meet changing dependency needs from supported independent living, semi-independent, sheltered, day care initiatives, residential and nursing care. The advantage of "local" units would enhance the likelihood of community involvement and support, make for easier recruitment of staff and hopefully a visible and better quality of care. Members of the group expressed serious concerns at the sub-standard of care they were sometimes aware is being offered in some residential units where there is poor staff retention, low wages, low staff motivation and morale, all impacting very negatively on the care of residents.

## **ORGANISATIONS SURVEYED**

### **DERWENTSIDE CARERS**

ALZHEMERS (Derwentside area)

SOCIAL CARE DIRECT (Derwentside)

RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP (District wide but meets in the Community Centre)

AMIGOS (Community Centre)

VILLA REAL SCHOOL (Consett)

BARNARDO'S YOUNG CARERS PROJECT (Derwentside)

All are seeking to meet the needs of a particular group. Interviews were carried out on a loose questionnaire format, as guidance for gathering information: -

## **GROUP LEADERS 'QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. What are the objectives of your group?
2. Do you have any difficulties in meeting your objectives?
3. How are you financed?
4. Do you need help in seeking funding?
5. Is there any way the community might be able to offer practical support or help?
6. How would you like to see this service developing in the future?

## **USERS QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. How did you find out about the group?
2. How long have you been coming?
3. What do you enjoy about the group?
4. Is there anything else you would like this group to offer in the future?
5. (If the opportunity presents, explore if anything prevents them from asking for the help they need).

## **PROCESS AND RESULTS OF SURVEY**

Members of this Special Interest Group met several times to share results of interviews and the information gained. Derwentside Carers, Alzheimer's, Barnardo's and Richmond Fellowship are all working district wide, Derwentside Carers and Richmond Fellowship both hold regular support meetings actually based in Lanchester Park House (D.C.) and the Community Centre (R.F.) Alzheimer's is a national organisation but local offices are autonomous and self financing. Lanchester is covered by the Consett Branch established with a Lottery grant 3 years ago and currently seeking to renew funding. It offers a wide range of care initiatives based on the assessment of need. They work very closely in partnership with the assessment unit at Shotley Bridge Hospital and Social Care Direct. They have 120 contacts in the area who are informed of 'diary dates and events' and 90 ongoing active cases receiving support and care, 6 of whom are in Lanchester. The total hours of support that can be offered are limited by funding and money raised locally cannot be tied to specific use or place. Derwentside Carers also offer a range of services tailored to meet need; from home based respite to practical and emotional support and setting up of support groups one of which, as already mentioned, meets twice monthly in the village. If funding were to be raised locally for D.C. it could be earmarked for initiatives in Lanchester.

Two local groups meet in the Community Centre. Amigos is for the very elderly and the Breathe Easy Group offers support for people with respiratory disease, both are self funded with a small group of

regular participants and provide much valued friendship, support, an opportunity for chat, sharing, and a meal / coffee out.

Richmond Fellowship offer a district wide service of regular group support meetings, as a community initiative for the long term mentally ill. Day meetings are organised for two separate groups on two days a week in the Community Centre in Lanchester.

All of the organisations have a campaigning aspect to their work aimed at raising awareness of the needs of their particular client group. The issue of staffing levels and how to provide good quality care and essential continuity (particularly vital for Alzheimer services) are key issues, as well as the isolation and loneliness often encountered by these vulnerable members of the community.

It was suggested that there are many ways the local community could offer support in meeting often very practical needs as well as a befriending input. All the organisations welcome volunteer support, and indeed depend on it, to work alongside their professional or statutory services. Transport is a common problem and could be one of the practical ways that help could be offered.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE**

Barnardo's Young Carer's Project is a very comprehensive service self funded by the charity, providing its own transport but relying on a band of dedicated, trained volunteers to provide a support service to Young Carers of a parent or sibling. They aim to offer an experience of 'free time' and normal fun activities suited to their age group with regular meetings, support, friendship and mentoring.

Villa Real School is specially set up to provide education and support to vulnerable children (with e.g. autistic disorders, special problems) and their families, several of whom live in Lanchester. The special needs of this group and the impact that these difficulties can have on family life are not widely appreciated.

The dedication, enthusiasm and sensitivity demonstrated by many of those we interviewed was truly inspiring and the value that many of the users placed on the initiatives they were participating in, made us very aware how vital this work is and what a huge difference some community support and involvement could make.

The issue of hidden need was a thread of concern touched on by all the organisations. Challenges of how to advertise and make a service accessible, acceptable and sensitive enough to overcome personal barriers that may exist and prevent a willingness to reach out and ask for help. The Alzheimer's group in particular seeks to do a lot of educational work with health workers so that they can be more alert to picking up hidden illness. Information dissemination is also flagged up as vital. Information is empowering, ensuring that services are 'known about', phone numbers and advice are available and they are successful in reaching those in need, is where the partnership with Health and Health promotion, may act to provide a bridge.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Funding**

**Patterns of funding vary with each service and are quite complex, some are free, some are part of a Social Services Care package based on assessment, some services have to be paid for. All this can lead to financial worries and concerns which may inhibit recipients from feeling able to ask for all the help they need. Users suggested a number of small and practical tasks, e.g. gardening, laundry, shopping, DIY which can often become a problem for a full time carer.**

### **Transport**

**This is identified by all the organisations as a problem that has to be solved as they endeavour to arrange, meetings, lunch clubs, day events, on a regular basis in order to get people 'out' of their homes occasionally.**

**Volunteer drivers could be a very helpful back up for them to call on.**

### **Volunteer input**

**A local band of volunteers willing to carry out often simple practical tasks, or befriending, or 'handyperson' initiatives, would be a very useful asset for Derwentside Carers and the Alzheimer group to call on.**

**Barnardo's are always seeking to recruit volunteers, especially male ones, from a range of different backgrounds. The relationship of the volunteer to the young people is a key factor of the service, as they may act as a mentor and widen the horizons of the young carer, particularly those in the teenage group.**

### **Community involvement - awareness raising**

**A manned central point in the village such as a shop front/advice centre, could be invaluable for advertising all of these services alongside a range of other information leaflets. All the organisations felt raising local awareness and personalising initial contact and information giving was an important tool in helping people to access services**

---

#### **NOTES FROM MEETING WITH FARMERS. 16-3-04**

The meeting was hosted by Keith Harrison, farmer and Parish Councillor and attended by Mr. and Mrs Harrison, Mr. Suddes and his sons Ian and Shaun who run two farms together with a landscaping business, Mr. Neil Hunter and Mr. David Maddick the local NFU representative.

- In general working farms are congregated towards the western end of the Parish, those nearest the village have lost their land and become homes with at best a small piece of land attached.
- Most farms in the Parish are owner-occupied and there were no perceived problems with absentee landlords. This is a legacy of property originally owned by the NCB and sold off in the last thirty years or so.
- There is now very little arable farming in the Parish.
- Milk production ceased in the 1960s
- Main productive farming is now suckler cows and sheep
- There was general agreement that Government policy now expects farmers to be caretakers of the environment rather than producers of food. The expectation of the group was that this emphasis would continue.
- Despite the above everyone was concerned to emphasise that they saw themselves as farmers – there wasn't a lot of interest in diversification.
- The comment was made strongly by one person and assented to by others that Derwentside is “a black hole for tourism” – people tend to drive through on the A68. This was qualified by the Harrisons who are in their second year of running a holiday cottage with booking going well for the current season. Visitors use it as a base for visits to Durham, Beamish, Alnwick Garden (seen as an important addition to the region's attractions), Northumberland and for some local walking. There did not appear to be interest in developing activities such as farm walks.
- There was a cautious welcome to the idea of developing the Roman Camp as a visitor attraction but it was felt that it would need a visitor centre on site with associated car parking – the idea of a centre at the bottom of the hill was not seen as viable.
- The Stewardship Scheme was seen as having value – help with building and maintaining dry stone walls and the encouragement of planting copses and creating ponds were viewed as sensible provided that local skilled labour was available to do the work. There are now very few Wallers in the area.
- By contrast, the creation of wild flower meadows was seen as destroying good farming land – to run viable suckler herds requires good grass in quantity and this needs fertiliser. However, rearing beast as sucklers was seen as semi-organic and their grazing created good conditions for some birds like Skylarks. Overall the Stewardship Scheme does not offer long-term economic viability.
- Similarly Organic Farming is not seen as an economic proposition mainly because the additional purchase price of the produce puts customers off. Farmers Markets were seen as minority outlets but welcome - the example given was that the addition of a third meat stall in Durham Farmers' market would destroy the profitability of all three.
- Lanchester Fruit Farm was seen as a good example of someone identifying a niche market and working hard to develop it. It was, however, a special case and again vulnerable if a second similar initiative developed.
- The proposed changes in CAP funding are likely to have an adverse effect in the Parish if they are adopted in their present form – subsidies are likely to be lost in the areas used for the suckler herds and the appearance of land on the higher parts will change as a result. There may be some increase in sheep farming but labour requirements work against this. Conservation Groups will modify these changes because they will be seen as detrimental to wildlife.
- Livery work and associated activities with horses is considered to be at saturation point with little prospect of growth.
- The Landscaping Business is now paid less for turf than it was 4 years ago and seeks work in an area from the Tees to Morpeth. It was seen as an example of positive diversification, which has been undermined by the number of people moving into it and undercutting one another. Only niche contracting activity such as dry-stone walling were likely to be economic because so many are now seeking opportunities. One farm has a scramble track with 6 meetings a year at present. It is possible to have up to 12 meets a year without requiring planning permission but 6 appear to be satisfying demand at present. It was recognised that an isolated setting is needed to avoid complaints. It was noted that a Clay Pigeon Shoot had failed because of what was felt to be justified objections by neighbours. Flying model planes has been known to generate similar complaints and to have been blocked by people who know how to use the system for their own ends. The

development of a golf course was unlikely to be economic on its own but would need to be linked to other development such as holiday accommodation.

- Everyone would welcome improved maintenance of roadside verges, this covered the clearance of litter, good tree maintenance including reducing over-hangs and work on drainage ditches. The reinstatement of the "Lengthman" would be welcome.
- There were also problems with fly tipping on verges although so far no-one present had suffered from this on their own land. There were, however, one or two examples of old cars being dumped or burnt.
- More information about Parish affairs would be welcome, especially since the "Village Voice" doesn't reach outlying properties. Those who have seen it consider it a useful publication. It was suggested that the Parish Newsletter might perhaps be put on the Net either as email or Web site. Would it be possible to develop a "Parish email register"? Some further training on IT use would be useful.
- Everyone would also welcome better information and clarification of Council Policy in relation to Barn conversions. It was felt that it seemed much easier to convert for holiday cottage use as compared to creating a second home on site for son to live with his family alongside his father on the family farm. One member quoted such a situation where the family (not their own) had been told that the father could live in Consett because he wasn't needed on the farm now. There also appeared to be wide variation in the way these policies were applied – the large development at Five Lane Ends was sited.
- It would be major help if Beef in some form or other could be re-instated on school menus – the legacy of BSE continues.
- Despite all the above everyone felt that farming viability was improving – the recovery from Foot and Mouth was steady and incomes were returning to the level they had been before that disaster. It was, however, noted that in the Edmundbyers and Waskerly area where there had been 20 farms 18 years ago there were now 2 and that this trend to farm amalgamation was appearing in this area.

**It was acknowledged that transport to schools was generally good but that there were declining numbers of young people in farming and it was unclear as to who would pay to keep the countryside as it is.**

#### **Notes on meeting at Greenwell Farm 9/8/04 for Parish Plan**

Jean, John and Ian Natrass, Mike Wardle, Michael Horsley

The overall impression is of a committed, thoughtful and professional farming family with a well run and well respected farm.

The farm has about 50 pedigree Limousins with followers (> 100 in total) with the business being selling cows for breeding. The farm is more or less closed with only the occasional purchase to improve the breeding line. Barley is grown for feed plus one lateish 'haylage' cut a year. There is relatively low input of chemicals mainly to give an initial boost to the grass (minimum of nitrogen, calcified? Seaweed) and to control weeds (e.g. dock and thistles, ragwort is regularly pulled). Rotation is used (what grass mix is used when reseeding?).

Stonewalls have been rebuilt at own cost over a period of years (using local stone waller) and hedges are regularly flail cut after nesting season to maintain stockproof barriers (wider at bottom 3' tapering to 1' but not generally layed). A good hedge can be established by this means in 5+ years. Additional hedgerow trees have been planted. Smallish fields suit their farming allowing good stock control. The Natrasses have been at Greenwell Farm for 40 years, latterly as owners.

Wildlife is important and they have a good knowledge of what is present, trends and reasons for these. E.g. mink have 'passed through' at expense of moorhens (but these will hopefully return now?) etc, otters are now present, badgers have increased since protection but at expense of grey partridge, sparrow hawks are on increase but have reduced house martins from 10 down to 1 pair. Red squirrels have gone.

Strongly opposed nearby chicken farm, would damage woodland, result in severe run off through existing stone culverts to river, not be an economic unit but only a way to lead to a house in country.

Don't rely on e.g. CSS, get current headage subsidies, don't know what effect new schemes will have but suspect the worst, concerned about leaving large headlands as weed banks.

Not personally in favour of b&b/holiday lets but there is a place for them.

Went into Limousins (from Friesians crossed with Limousins) in 70s – timing was affected by open casting on 50 acres of their farm. The current herd characteristics are well thought of finding a ready market and the plan is to keep developing to keep it that way.

Farm very well kept, e.g. old equipment traded in (in working condition) for new.

There is a great range of farms and farmers locally from those who do a good job for the land and wildlife to those who just look for a quick return without thought for the consequences.

Organic farming is not the way forward! Who will pay the premium (not it seems the Natrasses!)? The farms tend to be ill kept with poor animal health (ringworms, etc) and weedy land and even the need for the quiet use of some chemicals. (Whilst this is their view and will sometimes be the case it is contradicted by Low Sizergh Farm – perhaps one element is the continuing use of overbred stock rather than more efficient older breeds that are generally more resilient and keep the weeds down being less fussy about what they eat).

The loss of the Milk Marketing Board was a disaster.

**What are the lessons?**

1. Getting into a new market early and doing it well can pay long term.
2. Farms can make a profit and be good for wildlife.
3. It was thought there is a market for tourism in this area (people who visit like what they see but it needs promoting).
4. In spite of consumer's pipe dreams there is very limited future for organic.
5. Farmers will have to adapt to as yet unknown effects of changes to subsidies, etc.
6. Planning system needs to be more consistent for e.g. conversion to residential.
7. Conversion to residential can result in more land being let to remaining committed farmers.
8. How to promote good practice?

•

**Meeting on Great North Forest Possibilities**

**LPL Environment Meeting with Steve Scoffin, Director Great North Forest, 14/2/05**

Steve Scoffin outlined the purpose and current area of the Great North Forest (GNF). He explained that the GNF promotes not only woodland but also lowland heath (which is found in the Parish) and magnesian limestone grassland (not appropriate). It provides grants in addition to those made by organisations such as DEFRA as part of its Woodland Grant Scheme. The current GNF area currently just excludes Lanchester but includes Burnhope and Maiden Law. It has a strategy with a 40 to 50 year vision.

Funding for GNF is changing from being solely provided by the Countryside Agency to being more self-supporting. As a result of this they are preparing a Regional Forest Strategy for the Forestry Commission which will provide income for GNF. Also they will not be able to provide the same grants. The area boundary is becoming less rigid and will include more of the urban fringe. This could bring Lanchester within scope.

The GNF will now act more as a facilitator. They could look at wildlife corridors to be highlighted in the Parish Plan and identify areas of potential funding. Then assist by meeting with farmers to see who might take it up say for small scale planting on otherwise less useful land.

It was agreed to have a follow up meeting.

**Follow up meeting Steve Scoffin, Keith Harrison, Terry Coult, Michael Horsley, 21/2/05**

At the meeting it was suggested that PP objectives could include:

- Enhancement of landscape through phased adoption of County Landscape Strategy (CLS)
- Recognise value of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) as the 'best parts' and aim to enhance/link together
- Audit environmental assets
- Through GNF encourage small scale planting particularly for recreation and access (which are current triggers) maybe using SNCIs or suitable woodland mapped in CLS as hubs.

It may be appropriate for PP to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance – see Jeff Singleton of Derwentside DC.

Mathew Gibson of Derwentside DC may be able to help promote open spaces.

John Wearmouth may be able to assist with grants through CDENT.

Simon Wilson of Durham CC may be able to promote rights of way in the parish.

Overall a short study, say 6 to 8 pages, using the GNF Local Management Strategy template could help. This would tie all issues together, provide a map of potential sites for improvement and assess economic benefits. Although requiring funding to produce, it could then be used as a basis to attract more substantial funding to meet the wider objectives. This might be appropriate work for a student placement that could be supervised under GNF.

#### NOTES FROM MEETING AT ST. BEDES SCHOOL.

Present. Pat Dixon, Ian Merrington, Jill Gladstone, Mike Gladstone, Mike Wardle.

Pat Dixon reported that in the past plans prepared by the school for developments which would have lent themselves to shared community use have been dashed by funders, they have found themselves in competition with schools such as Wolsingham Grammar School and the LEA have favoured them. None of these applications had been prepared as joint applications with representatives from the community and they would welcome the opportunity to do this. They'd be equally prepared to work with the Parish Council, the Lanchester Partnership or a committee created specifically for the development.

In terms of present community use the main activity is lettings for Opera, Drama and a meeting of the Tenants' Forum. There are four tennis courts which are open to after hours use and are used although not on a very formal basis. Approximately 20% of the children attending St. Bedes are from the Parish. Everyone agreed that there was a need for an overview of all Community resources with a view to establishing a co-ordinated rather than a competitive approach. For example, it would appear that the Community Centre development of language courses could be complemented by the school's language lab. For those who wished to take their learning further. Similarly the IT facilities at the school will be the equal of those at Derwentside College in September, how can both be best used? Is there a role for the Parish Council in the medium to long term in bringing all interested parties together?

In terms of sporting activity plans exist for a Sports Hall with an adjoining All-weather sports pitch and the school would welcome resubmitting these as a joint bid with Community Representatives – possibly the Partnership. Any such development would be a substantial one since it would involve funding the post of a Warden who would look after after-hours activity and their would need to be professional supervision of activities. Mike Gladstone felt that it was in this area of sporting activity for older teenagers that the most pressing need existed and that the Partnership would be most interested in exploring options. It was also noted that plans are well in hand for reforming the "Friends of St. Bedes" parents group and this may be an additional source of interested support.

#### Next steps.

- Explore possible visits to existing Community Schools – Hermitage/Deerness Valley etc. – Partnership but visits could be jointly with school.
- Establish who, from the Parish, use Derwentside College both in the day and evenings and for what? – Parish plan steering Group.
- Explore staff availability – school
- Seek students and School Council involvement – school.
- Keep in touch and plan to meet early in the Autumn term – All.

Mike Wardle.

#### **Visit to R. C. Junior School on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2004**

Before the visit I had phoned the headmaster, Mr Tony Reather, to discuss this visit, explain the Parish Plan and suggest ways in which the school might like to participate.

I met 7 members of the School Council who were in school that day:

Hannah

Tom

Shannon

Daniel

Jack

Jessica

Gaynor

Not all of them live in Lanchester, (Daniel lives in Castleside, Gaynor in Satley and Tom in Iveston) but all come to school, shop etc. here.

They all said that they liked Lanchester:

- 1) 'it isn't too big'
- 2) 'we can sledge on Paste-egg Bank'
- 3) 'it's friendly'
- 4) 'nice park and things to do'
- 5) 'things are nearby' (meaning places like Durham, Metro Centre and Newcastle).

We talked about what a Parish Plan is and what it hopes to achieve.

We talked about how old they would be in 5 and in 10 years.

I said that there could be no promises, but unless we asked them questions on how things could be improved and what would make life easier/more fun we might not get it right in the Parish Plan.

I spoke about the 1998 Village Appraisal and asked what improvements had been made because of it, e.g.

- a) Parklife → Playpark. They asked about the new equipment just being installed. Also I mentioned the planting, new trees, art-work etc. They were very interested.
- b) The Village Voice, our local newspaper.
- c) The Link Bus.

They were familiar with all three.

We didn't have much time to discuss what would improve life for them but some of their suggestions were:

1. Very keen to have a skateboard area in the park or elsewhere e.g. Kitswell Road where there used to be an area of tarmac for skateboards/bikes.
2. The basketball court behind the Green School should be improved.
3. A zebra crossing (across the by-pass).

I asked them to talk to their classmates, friends at school and at home, and gather their views and ideas. Also, when the questionnaire comes through their letterboxes would they please ask their parents to complete it.

It was then time to leave, but I felt that it would be easy to resume the discussion in the future.

Mr Reather was friendly and helpful and lent us a lovely book written and published by the school in 1995.

I gave him a copy of some questions that I had drawn up (with Mike Wardle's approval).

Jill Gladstone

### **Meeting at Derwentside College 1/10/04**

Present: David Houpt, Barbara Powell – Derwentside College; Mike Gladstone, Mike Wardle - Parish plan steering Committee.

1. Status of College – the College is a registered charity and Company Limited by guarantee.
2. Management is the responsibility of the Principal answering to a Governing Board with representation from the County Education Committee, the learning and Skills Council and local industry.

3. The building programme is funded on the basis of capital grants of 30% and borrowed finance, which has to be covered by earned income. The current building programme at Lanchester site involves a hall, Learning and Resource Centre and 2 classrooms. In 2005 building at the left hand side of the site will create new toilets and a medical room. This will represent the limit of development on that site. The longer-term development of the Consett site is being worked on jointly with the District Council and is hoped to include a new comprehensive school and a major leisure centre to be shared by both educational establishments and the community. This whole development is intended to be a contribution to the regeneration of the area.
4. Courses are commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council, contracted with the Job Centre and the College has a commercial arm "Derwentside Training for Industry" offering, among other things HR support, financial Consultancy on business plans. Current turnover is of the order of £13m p.a.
5. It is intended that post-16 day-time Education returns to the Lanchester site in April 2005, There is a need for a single co-ordinated Community Education plan for rural areas, however, a strategic area review is in progress which will explore options for this.
6. Community uses at Lanchester :-
  - The tennis courts and 5-a-side football pitch have been resurfaced jointly by the College and District Council are available for community use
  - The new hall will have a seating capacity of 100 and could be used for community events
  - There may be the possibility of small conferences if, for example, there could be a partnership with the Kings Head who could provide accommodation.
7. The most significant problem at the Lanchester site is parking.

#### **NOTES OF COMMUNITY CENTRE MEETING. 3-8-04**

Present: Arthur Maughan, Chair CC; Liz Smith, Vice Chair;  
Ken Gardiner, Exec. Member with responsibility for strategic development,  
Mike Wardle, Mike Gladstone.

1. Arthur Maughan opened meeting with brief history. Seriously disappointed with failure of bid for funding extension (their FACES project).
2. Key problems derive from nature of building – room design too inflexible, under use in daytime and school holidays, over demand in evenings.
3. Secondary problems derive from loss of County Council funding – now no financial input from them, major source of funding is now the Learning and Skills Council, grant of £10,000 p.a. now funds Olive Simpkins as co-ordinator of educational courses, pays care-taking costs and provides £3,000 for development of further courses. Olive continues to act as "Warden" but in a voluntary capacity.
4. This grant represents approx half their income and has resulted in any of their activities, which include a learning component being labelled "Educational".
5. Arthur appears to expect that there will be little or no increase in this level of grant aid and that expansion of courses will have to be funded from any surplus generated from within the existing programme.
6. Ken Gardiner expressed some interest in the possibility of joint bidding with, for example, St.Bedes if this meant securing funding to recruit additional tutors, Arthur less confident about this.
7. Their strategy for making good the failure of their bid for extension appears to be one of trying to maximise use of the building – enhanced marketing, increasing daytime use etc. they wish to increase lettings at commercial rates but acknowledge that weddings and similar events are likely to use the Social Club where the room is free.
8. Developments such as cinema screenings (as at St. John's Chapel) are seen as difficult because it isn't possible to give a regular commitment of room use because of pre-existing bookings with organisations in the village.
9. They see themselves as reasonably financially secure for the next three/four years although this may involve drawing on reserves and Arthur feels that they will continue beyond that although they need to take care not to overburden existing volunteers.
10. They would welcome general supportive messages in the Parish Plan but nothing specific was indicated.
11. Overall I was left with the impression of an organisation that is currently reasonably strong but plans for more of the same, largely in isolation from other organisations in the same field.