

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

There can be few residents unaware of actual and potential demands on the countryside of the Parish: planning applications for wind turbines and associated infrastructure will need to be assessed for environmental and landscape impact: housing is a real issue, and all proposals for inappropriate development within the Parish should be resisted in line with policies within the Village Design Statement: developments for diversification of agricultural enterprises should be considered if they do not result in adverse impact on the character and amenities of the area, or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and land users.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is one of the biggest threats to our future, and there is increasing evidence that the climate is already changing: Lanchester may well experience temperatures currently enjoyed in south coast counties such as Kent and Sussex by the year 2050. As a result farmers and landowners could well be seen as being increasingly in the vanguard of dealing with climate change in a role as 'carbon managers'. In achieving that, new renewable energy developments should respect the character of the landscape, and biomass crops may be an appropriate tool in enhancing more degraded and less biodiverse landscapes.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The Action Plan, which forms the final section of the report, takes all the above areas of concern and proposes ways of dealing with them together as a community. It represents an agenda of work which the Parish Council wishes to take forward with the community. Its essential feature lies in encouraging active participation by all stakeholder groups in future management of the Parish's countryside.

As examples the Parish Council would wish to:

- Develop 'Rural Advocacy' as a way to increase communication, understanding of, and opportunities within the rural sector and the future management of the Parish's countryside
- Support farmers to create and sustain well-paid jobs whether on the land or through on-farm diversification
- Actively promote Lanchester's rural image and its tranquillity as assets to foster growth in the 'knowledge-based' economy and internet business development
- Explore options and mechanisms to increase the ability of farmers, landowners and other interested parties to fund-raise to create routes that increase provision of access and viewpoints
- Increase understanding of the varied natural environment we have already by recording features, raising awareness and exploring options for the future
- Increase diversity and sustainability of wildlife

The action plan indicates some of the organisations the Parish Council hope to work with but if you would like to help please contact the Parish Clerk:

t: **01207 521 957**

The full plan can be seen in the library or at the Parish Office (Park House). It can also be found on the Parish Council web site:

www.lanchesterparish.info

The Lanchester Locality Map has been produced on behalf of Lanchester Parish Council and the Lanchester Partnership by Steve Coffin Associates



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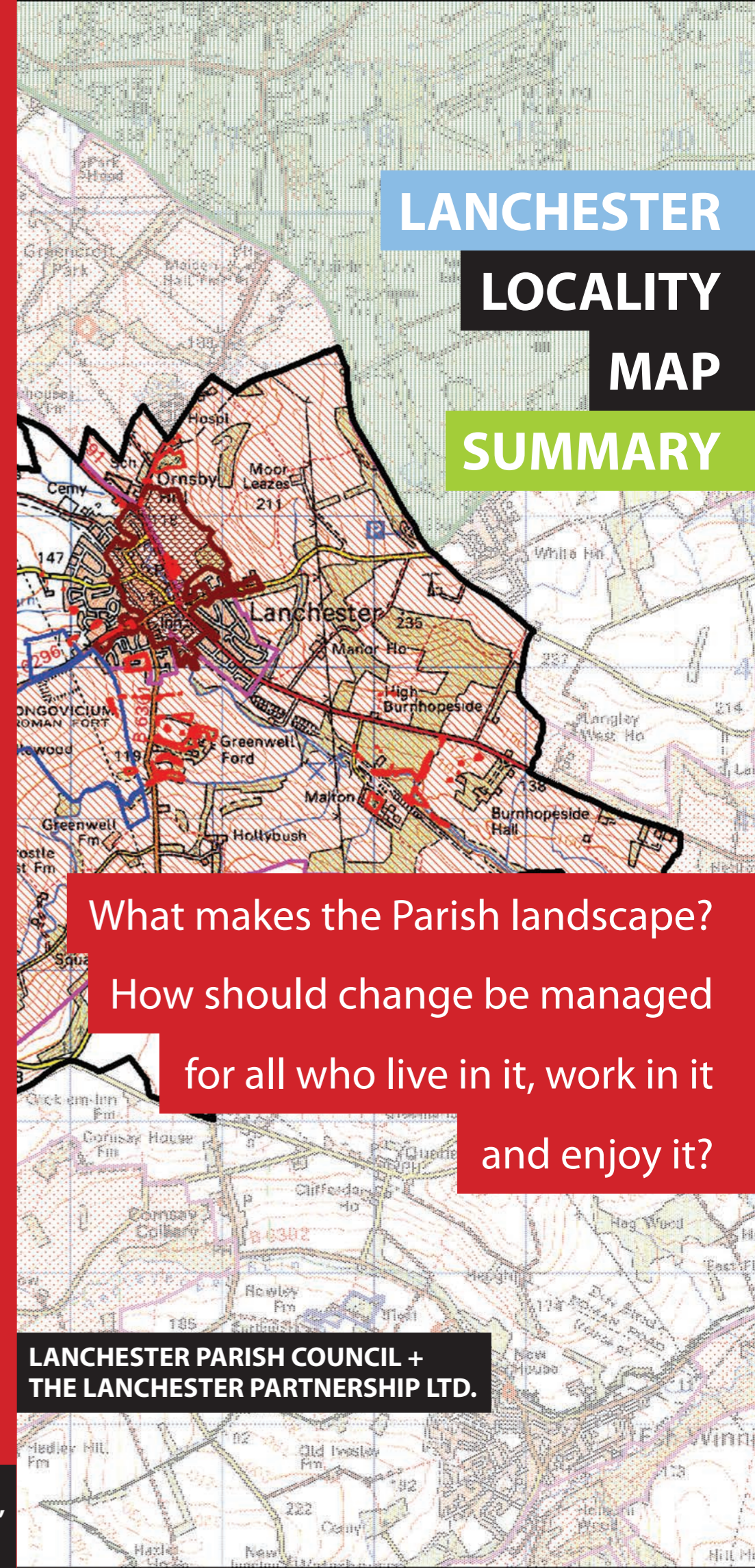
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LANCHESTER

LOCALITY

MAP

SUMMARY



What makes the Parish landscape?

How should change be managed

for all who live in it, work in it

and enjoy it?

LANCHESTER PARISH COUNCIL +
THE LANCHESTER PARTNERSHIP LTD.

WHAT IS THE LANCHESTER LOCALITY MAP?

The Locality Map stems from the Lanchester Parish Plan in July 2005, which recognised a need to provide a framework for actions to safeguard farming, the environment and wildlife. It complements both the Parish Plan and the Lanchester Village Design Statement, and recognises the need to shape the future of the countryside within the whole Parish and its relationship to and with the village. It has been prepared by a group of local people under the chairmanship of Keith Harrison, Parish Councillor and farmer. Other farmers have been involved in the group as well as representatives of Lanchester Wildlife Group and members of Lanchester Partnership. The group and the Parish Council very much appreciate the advice of Steve Scoffin Associates acting as their consultant.

The Locality Map provides a concise approach to the direction of changes of the wider countryside and rural communities of the Parish and provides an agenda of activity to be pursued by the Parish Council together with the community of the parish in the coming years.

By recognising that the Parish's countryside is a 'living landscape' and the workplace for the land-based economy, future management must balance a wide variety of needs and influences and acknowledge that it is the farming and landowning community that will be asked to implement management on behalf of our wider society.

The Locality Map therefore draws together a number of themes:

- Encouraging and increasing sustainability
- Accepting that landscapes are dynamic
- Recognising that farmland appearance alters with changes to government policy, schemes and farming practices
- Providing a resource for tourism and leisure
- Retaining Lanchester's distinctiveness
- Encouraging planning policies to match the vision for the future of the Parish, with any development to fit within the existing environment
- Seeking a fit for all stakeholders, including farmers, landowners, parish residents (involving those in rural areas who are not engaged in agriculture), those who come to the Parish to work, tourists and visitors, local businesses, local authorities, organisations, partnerships and those managing wildlife communities and habitats
- Endeavouring to deliver the promises in relevant local authority Local Development Documents when these become available.

By producing the Locality Map, the people of Lanchester Parish wish to:

"Support the land-based economy as the custodian of the landscape in managing the wider countryside of Lanchester Parish to conserve and enhance the area's rich landscape character and diversity, increase biodiversity and tranquillity, promote enjoyment and understanding of its cultural heritage and plan for future influences on the environment."

WHAT DOES THE LOCALITY MAP SAY?

STAKEHOLDERS

These are those who live and work in the Parish, and those who come to enjoy the countryside. For example, at present there are 35 active farmers within the Parish, only one of whom is a working dairy farmer, reflecting the decline in the dairy industry. Production now is predominantly related to beef, sheep and horses. We believe that interests such as shooting and fishing will continue to make a contribution to a viable rural economy. We recognise that young children, while actively engaged within the village, are less involved in the countryside, where they could help with on-farm activities or maintenance of footpaths and discover more about where their food comes from.

LANDSCAPE + LAND USE

This chapter identifies the natural and human features that have combined to create the current landscape of the Parish: restoration of former parkland and woodland features will enable them to make a positive contribution to the landscape and to enhance biodiversity. How do we manage landscape change which may result from predicted climate change? Diversification into production of biomass and energy crops (e.g Willow growing for fuel or Oil-seed Rape) could increase income to farmers, but would affect some agricultural landscape elements and features. What of the impact of opencast coal production should applications be submitted? How do we involve residents in the development of tourism and agri-environment schemes (e.g Forestry and woodland development), both of which would benefit from a co-ordinated approach involving all interests? Our roadside verges and ditches need to be reviewed to ensure that they are managed to balance the needs of accessibility, visibility, safe passage and encouraging biodiversity.

NATURAL HERITAGE + BIODIVERSITY

Here we deal with management of the natural environment: The Smallhope and Alderdene Burns flow through disturbed ground that has seen open cast mining, which needs to be sensitively enhanced – they already provide an invaluable wildlife corridor, particularly as a link between the moorlands and the River Wear lowlands. Fly-tipping is clearly an issue with some parts of the Parish being blighted by regular dumping of rubbish from domestic and building waste - how can that be better controlled? We can make more of roadside verges, particularly those supporting species that are scarce – they can be identified as 'nature reserves', with appropriate management.

ACCESS, RECREATION + TOURISM

This section looks at the Public Rights of Way network, and how Lanchester can draw on its location to meet both the needs of tourists whilst within the Parish, and to use as a base for day trips further afield. The lack of footpaths in the west of the Parish, together with the current state of the roadsides, means that there are few opportunities for circular walks from the village or outlying hamlets. Careful planning to create safe routes for increases in cycling and horse-riding is likely to benefit the rural economy and the well-being of the community.

HISTORICAL + CULTURAL HERITAGE

Here we consider ways of valuing the Parish inheritance - former landscaped parklands within the Parish, which have suffered loss of significant clumps of woodland and boundary planting: Greencroft Hall which still has its Ice House and Dovecote, which could be consolidated or restored, together with increased public access to them. Valuable work has started on interpretation of the Roman Fort and associated features. All of these will not only increase knowledge and understanding of the Parish's heritage, but could also give increased access and tourism benefits. The Lanchester Valley Way provides an excellent platform to view parts of the Parish, in particular the valley bottom, and merits interpretation in its own right as a key part of the Parish's industrial and social heritage.