



Belmont Parish Plan Update

In 2009 Belmont Parish Council set out to achieve Quality Parish Council status. Part of this process was to establish a Parish Plan.

To this effect an introductory public meeting took place in June, 2009. A Steering Group was established and questionnaires were compiled and distributed throughout the parish. These were returned in October 2010. The Steering Group identified 9 priorities for action.

The Plan was published in 2013 and copies were placed at a number of locations including Belmont and Clayport libraries and the Parish Office.

This document is an update on the plan and the priorities.

Almost all of the priorities are ongoing issues that will require continuous monitoring and reviewing. In many cases action has been taken by various groups, elected and voluntary, and by various individuals either as a result of their elected duties or purely in a civic minded response to a community problem.

The priorities listed in the plan were as follows:-

Promote Parish Council Role and responsibilities

Problem: - People don't know what the Parish does.

Action: -

- (a) A website has been constructed which is expected to go live in the very near future.
- (b) A parish newsletter is regularly delivered to every household.
- (c) The chairman of the council issues an annual report which is also delivered to every household in the parish.
- (d) Parish boards are at various points throughout the parish and are in the process of being given a facelift. Current items of business and interest are displayed on them.
- (e) Parish Council meetings which are open to the public are on the first Thursday of every month (except August)

Parking

Problem: - (a) Parking on pavements.

Action: - The residents in Kinley Road and Filby Drive petitioned the Police and the County Council. Local County Councillors have taken the matter up with both the County Council and the Police. Under the auspices of Police And Community Together (PACT), residents have been issued with 'polite notices' to place on inappropriately parked cars, asking drivers to park with consideration for local residents and access. The scheme will be monitored. The Steering Group will continue to review this situation

(b) Carrville High Street.

Action: - (1) An agreement has been reached for a single yellow line on an area of Carrville High Street in order to improve visibility. Introduction of this will be pursued with our new councillors.

(2) Local residents presented a petition to Councillor Mavin for a pedestrian refuge near the Kirkstone Drive junction. This was in turn passed on to the County Council. Durham County Council consulted on this but local businesses objected and D.C.C. dismissed the application.

(c) School dropping-off and picking-up

Action: - This is ongoing. The Police have been asked to monitor and issue parking tickets where appropriate. The schools themselves have also asked parents to walk the children to school where possible. Concern has now been expressed to both Parish and County Councillors with regard to St Hilds in Renny's Lane as well as the other schools in the parish.

Speeding Vehicles

Action: - (a) The Parish Council requested the Police to monitor the speed of vehicles along Broomside Lane and Carrville High Street. The Police did monitor but said the speed wasn't high enough to warrant action. Since then the Police say that they have asked for civilian volunteers to monitor this but did not get any response. They have been asked to advertise for volunteers again.

(b) The County Council was requested to reduce the speed on all estate roads to 20 mph. This request has been turned down and the Council won't change policy as they say it cannot be enforced.

Parish Identity

There has been little progress on this matter as yet.

Parish Council documents and headed paper do now include the parish logo which is a map of the parish area. The website should help.

Litter

Action: - There have been numerous initiatives on this issue including representations to the schools and the provision of new bins in some areas. There have also been litter-picking days organized by local groups and individuals. Further the new agents at Cheveley Park shops appear to be more responsive to requests to clean up the area but this is an ongoing problem. Some residents consider that the standard of litter-picking by Durham County Council has improved.

Dog Fouling

Action: - A new Dog Warden seemed to have improved the situation. Notices were prominently displayed issuing warnings and offering stars. However the system was changed and things appear to have regressed. The Parish council has pursued this matter vigorously. Free dog bags are issued at Belmont Community Centre, Belmont Library and at the entrance to the Scrambles. In December 2011 a “Green Dog Walkers Campaign” was launched as a friendly way to change attitudes to dog fouling. Information can be obtained from the Parish Council.

Dog Fouling notices were displayed in some areas as part of a county-wide Durham County Council initiative but these were not followed up by any rewards or penalties as had been proposed by wardens.

Keep Green Spaces

Action: - Parish and local councillors are continually trying to defend green field sites against unnecessary development and misuse of verge areas but they are often frustrated by County Council planning decisions. Belmont Parish Council argues that local people and Parish Councils should have a greater part in the decision making process in neighbourhood planning rather than just a consultative one.

Police Visibility

Action: - Regular requests have been made to the Police but this is governed by Police finances. It has been noticed that there has recently been an increased presence especially in the Brackendale Road area.

Summary

Since the first public meeting was held to launch the Parish Plan in June 2009, a Steering Group was established, the community was consulted and a questionnaire distributed. The Questionnaires were collected, the information was collated and analysed and priorities decided upon. A draft document was produced and edited and a final document was then produced and made available to the public. The Steering Group then launched the completed plan. The Group must now implement an action plan. This action plan must now be monitored and reviewed and its progress reported back to the people of the parish. As can be seen from the above some of this has already been done but a formal action plan that can be easily reviewed and monitored must now be put in place.