

Ribble Banks Parish Council

PARISH PLAN



Tourism Ideas
2003

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In addition, the Parish Council would also like to acknowledge the help, assistance and guidance received from staff of The Countryside Agency, Yorkshire Rural Community Council, and Craven District Council.

This Plan was initiated, developed and compiled by members of the local community, all of whom gave their time and expertise as an in-kind contribution towards the resources required. These included Steve Amphlett, Sue Amphlett, David Clarke, Diane Dean, Michael Dean, Clarice Howorth, Brian Newhouse, Sarah Peel, Roger Wales, Shirley Wales, Chris Weston and David Yorke.

In addition, many local people of all ages gave their time, opinions and comments – through completing the survey form, contributing to meetings or discussions, or providing individual written observations – all of which allowed a detailed picture of Ribble Banks, and what its respective communities want and need, to be drawn together.

To all these people, Ribble Banks Parish Council says “thank you!”

Ribble Banks Parish Council PARISH PLAN

1. Context

Ribble Banks Parish Council covers the three civil parishes of Rathmell, Wigglesworth and Halton West. Each of the three communities also has a Parish Meeting.

In late 2000 the Ribbleside ward of Craven District Council (which comprised Ribble Banks and Long Preston) was identified as one of Craven's three most economically deprived areas, and among the top 20 in North Yorkshire. This identification utilised the Index of Multiple Deprivation (ILD) 2000 to establish the wards of greatest need, with particular weighting given to the access to services ranking. This highlighted a severe structural decline in economic activity and poor access to services.

As a result, Craven DC made a successful application for Objective Two Priority Three funding. In order to deliver the funding into the relevant communities a Local Development and Economic Pact (LDEP) was created, with additional funding allocated for a community development worker.

In order to release funding for appropriate community projects the LDEP required that any such projects should have been identified, and endorsed, by the local communities. Consequently, it was recommended that the local communities undertook the development of Parish Plans. The development of these Plans would be funded through the Vital Villages scheme of The Countryside Agency.

After consultation with the respective Parish Meetings, Ribble Banks Parish Council agreed in 2002 to undertake the development of a Parish Plan, and a successful application was made to The Countryside Agency for funding to support the drawing-up of the Plan.

Work on the Plan was undertaken by Michael Dean, of Tourism Ideas (a rural and tourism development consultancy), and also Chair of Wigglesworth Parish Meeting, along with a group of residents who provided substantial in-kind support and assistance. The consultancy element of the work was also undertaken as an in-kind benefit to the community.

The Parish Plan that follows includes details of consultations undertaken, and represents the views of the three communities that go to make up Ribble Banks Parish Council.

2. Methodology

In order to develop the content of the Parish Plan, several routes were undertaken to obtain information, views and comments from as wide a base as possible.

From early discussions with the Parish Council, a number of key issues were identified as ones which it was felt would be important to the future development of the local area, and therefore ones on which the Parish Council was particularly keen to receive feedback and guidance. However, the Parish Council also felt it was important that all parties should have the opportunity to suggest and discuss as wide a range of subjects as those parties felt necessary and appropriate.

It is important to note that transport facilities were not covered in a significant way in the Plan research, as the Parish Council had only just undertaken a major survey in conjunction with the Rural Community Council, and those results, having been presented to the Council, were up-to-date. The details of that feedback are incorporated into this document, where appropriate.

Discussions were held with the Parish Council and two of the parish meetings. A survey was sent to every household in the parish, with a pre-paid envelope included to encourage returns. A well-attended open meeting was held (which included a free pie-and-peas supper to encourage attendance). A session was held in conjunction with Rathmell Primary School, at which the children were able to discuss and put forward their views about the present position and future of their community. In addition, feedback was sought and obtained from a number of local groups and organisations such as the churches, school governors and local clubs.

All these responses were pulled together and analysed, using the survey responses as a core base.

The level of returned surveys was extremely pleasing with an overall 46% of households returning a completed form (representing 44% of the total parish population). In Rathmell 50% of households returned forms, 44% in Wigglesworth and 39% in Halton West.

It should be noted that part of the village of Tosside (the bulk of which lies in a separate parish, and in the county of Lancashire) is included in the parish of Wigglesworth, although the two villages are some 3 miles apart.

3. Introduction

Ribble Banks Parish Council comprises the three Parish Meetings for the civil parishes and villages of Rathmell, Wigglesworth and Halton West. The parishes sit within the area of Craven District Council and North Yorkshire.

The parishes are situated just south of Settle, between the edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Forest of Bowland, and lie on the south-western side of the Ribble and lower Ribblesdale. Historically, all three communities have been primarily agriculturally focussed, with some allied trades. In more recent years the importance of agriculture as a local employer has diminished significantly, with the majority of residents who are in employment being employed in other industries and professions, and often working outside the immediate community.

As with many other local communities, there has been a steady influx of residents who might be regarded as “off-cumdens”. However, it is fair to say that most of these residents have fully integrated in their local communities, and many play an active role which has actually prevented the core of these communities from declining.

The fact that the populations are now constituted more broadly, and employed both more widely and further afield, most people have become far more mobile. However, there is now a significant dichotomy. It is necessary to travel further to utilise many services that other communities take for granted, but there are some people who cannot travel those distances.

The discussions and feedback for this Plan have clearly shown that the communities recognise this. On the whole, they believe that all members of the community should have access to the sorts and level of facilities and services that are taken for granted in today’s society, and they want to ensure this.

All three communities are seriously disadvantaged by the fact that some services and facilities are not available at all, or they are inaccessible to many people in each area.

For example –

For many, the nearest shop and post office is over 2 miles away

The nearest supermarket is over 4 miles away

The nearest railway station is over 2 miles away, and trains are infrequent

The nearest main road with a bus service is over 2 miles away

Until 2003, the villages were served by one bus, once a week

Since 2003, there are buses most days, but not in the early morning or evenings

The nearest cinema is over 14 miles away

There are no childcare facilities in the villages

And looking forward, in terms of what many already consider “normal” services...

The communities can only receive 4 terrestrial television channels

Digital television and radio is not available, and does not appear to be provisioned

Mobile telephone signal access is at best patchy, and generally unavailable

High-speed internet access will not be available through broadband access, only via satellite

4. Demographics

At the last census (2001), both Rathmell and Wigglesworth have seen increases in their populations, whilst Halton West has seen a decrease -

population at census	2001 census	1991 census	+/- %
Rathmell	270	220	+23%
Wigglesworth	270	210	+29%
Halton West	60	70	-14%
Ribble Banks	600	500	+20%

This compares with a growth of 6% in Craven, 5% in North Yorkshire and 2.5% nationally, across the same period. The levels of growth in Wigglesworth and Rathmell have important implications for the futures of both communities.

The observations made earlier above about the make-up of the communities are further borne out, when the demographics are further analysed. These show that, with minor exceptions, the communities are largely made of active sectors of the population, with a good level of young people. The majority of the populations fall into the 40-59 age band, with a high proportion of under-39s (and under-21s), especially in comparison to over-60s. This, however, does have significant influence on the forward planning for, and potential of, the communities, if such a make-up is continued in the future.

% pop by gender	Female (%)	Male (%)
Rathmell	56	44
Wigglesworth	51	49
Halton West	48	52
Ribble Banks	53	47

% pop by age group	Rathmell (%)	Wigglesworth (%)	Halton West (%)	N Yorks (%)
0 - 4	4.3	4.0	*	5.2
5 - 10	8.7	3.3	*	6.0
11 - 13	3.4	4.0	*	6.7†
14 - 16	1.7	4.9	4.3	6.0†
17 - 21	4.3	2.4	4.3	4.4†
22 - 39	12.9	10.7	8.7	19.5†
40 - 59	32.8	39.8	43.5	28.4
60 - 64	12.0	11.4	*	5.6
65 - 74	14.7	14.6	17.4	9.5
75 +	5.2	4.9	21.8	8.7

* represents less than 0.5%

† North Yorkshire's age groups are not quite the same as in this table, but the best approximation is given here

There are one or two important factors hidden within these figures. These include the fact that Rathmell has a much higher proportion of younger females than males – five times as many in the 22-39 age group ! There is also a good number of school age – and pre-school age – children, which augers well for the flow of pupils to the local primary school – seen as a key focal point for the community. Of more concern would be the ageing and decreasing population of Halton West, with its almost non-existent population of younger people, and the danger of that community literally turning into a dying population.

This also has an important impact not just of the future planning of primary school numbers, but also the provision of pre-school provision (as well as services such as after-school clubs). An area already under discussion before the plan survey took place, the opportunity was taken to establish whether residents felt that should be some provision for pre-school child care, as well as ascertain whether there might be demand for such services. The response to this is discussed further in the report.

The relative splits of male and female within age groups is shown on the following pages.

The fact that significant parts of the populations of the three communities are made up of the active working population, and that the nature of the employment base has significantly shifted over the years away from agriculture, is shown in the distance that people (who are working) travel to work (or school/college) each day.

% pop distance travelled	Rathmell	Wigglesworth	Halton West
Less than 1 mile	14 %	13 %	18 %
1 – 5 miles	44 %	28 %	-
6 – 10 miles	4 %	23 %	-
11 – 20 miles	15 %	21 %	55 %
21 – 50 miles	16 %	12 %	18 %
50 miles +	7 %	3 %	9 %

If the skewing due to children travelling to school in Rathmell or Settle is ignored, a high proportion of working residents travel to work between 11 – 50 miles each day. Even though this is the case, people continue to perceive themselves living in a rural community – indeed, as is highlighted later, one of the key reasons people like their community is because of its rural nature. That said, residents understand the nature of the residential mix of their community, with homes mainly split between the clear village centres, and the more rural, residential residences. The survey, in identifying accommodation, sought to distinguish between farms and other accommodation, in order to see to what extent people perceived where they lived. Thus, the splits were as follows –

% pop accom location	Rathmell	Wigglesworth	Halton West
Village Centre	56 %	36 %	27 %
Rural Residential	29 %	38 %	55 %
Farm	15 %	26 %	18 %

This reflects the fact that, although the area is extremely rural in nature and largely made up of agricultural land, farms, as a proportion of the housing stock, are relatively low.

Finally, within this section, a question was asked to establish the penetration of some core elements that support rural living. It is clear that with the lack of public transport in all three communities, cars (and other methods of private transport) provide an essential lifeline. Therefore, a question sought to establish what sort of access people had to private transport, both in terms of types, and numbers.

% h/holds with	Rathmell (%)	Wigglesworth (%)	Halton West (%)
Car – 1	40	66	45
Car – 2	54	30	36
Car – 3 or more	4	4	9
Van	4	6	9
Motorbike	2	2	-
Bicycle	25	34	9
Other	4	8	9

One of the significant points that came out of this question, when comparing the results to the distances that people travel to work or school, is that there is a high number of multi-car households (ie: with 2 or more cars) who do not actually travel to work.

In addition, given the developing nature of modern telecommunications, the survey sought to establish how many people had telephones, personal computers and internet access.

% h/holds with	Rathmell	Wigglesworth	Halton West
Telephone	100 %	100 %	100 %
PC	81 %	68 %	64 %
Internet access	63 %	54 %	46 %

This also provides useful guidance for the potential of proper high-speed internet access, which is clearly high, and would be a key factor in encouraging the development of small-scale industry, as well as enhancing the service for existing users, in particular farmers, existing local business users and the school.

However, the lack of commitment of BT to providing broadband technology in rural areas, as well as the physical difficulties that exist to provide either broadband or high-quality ISDN links, such a facility would have to be provided by a satellite link and village-wide wireless network. When taken with the wider comments and recommendations that flow through later in this report, it is clear that, in order to ensure modern communication standards for local residents, as well as to ensure businesses are maintained or developed locally to sustain the local economy, the Parish Council should consider seeking funding to provide suitable high speed facilities in, at the very least, Rathmell and Wigglesworth. It is possible that such a project would provide important community facilities – such as access to services and information through a community access computer - as well as for individual residents.

R1: It is recommended that the Parish Council investigates supporting a satellite-wireless high-speed internet access service in both Rathmell and Wigglesworth.

5. The Community Environment

In order to get an understanding on the thinking behind some of the issues that residents raised, some investigation was undertaken into the reasons why people enjoyed living in this particular area, along with the negative aspects.

Both the positive and negative aspects were treated as open-ended, that is to say that no suggestions were made, so as not to guide responses. However, there was consistency in the areas highlighted in the various responses – with more clear-cut views of the negative aspects.

The main “best” reasons for living in the area were given as the rural setting and the peacefulness, with a number of reasons following on – community spirit and friendliness being the most significant (and reflecting more in the village areas than the more rural).

There was a distinct focus on the main “worst” aspects of the area, with traffic (especially speed), the lack of accessible public transport, and the lack of – and distance to – facilities all scoring highly.

These aspects were consistent across all three communities, but certain elements were drawn out in respect of different communities. Halton West highlighted the lack of facilities as by far and away its worst aspect; Rathmell residents also highlighted the lack of a community central focus and flooding as important issues, and the speed of traffic was a major concern in Wigglesworth.

“We want our village to retain its rural, picturesque quaintness – it is this type of thing which maintains the community spirit”

“Change is necessary, but character must be retained”

Having looked at, and understanding, the make-up and broad concerns of the communities, the work then moved on to establish elements that people felt were needed in their respective communities, as well as addressing some key issues that the Parish Council had identified and on which specific feedback was wanted.

Following on directly from the points above, the logical question was asked whether people felt the Parish Council should endeavour to maintain the existing character of the area. There was overwhelming support for retention of the existing character, although the point was made at the open meeting that this does not mean no change – that the communities do need to develop, but in such a way as to retain their character, and their scale. This would therefore envisage no extensions to the current boundaries, but allow some limited and carefully thought through development where appropriate. This is further expanded below.

It is also from this point onwards that the three communities begin to diversify, and therefore at certain points within the plan, the three villages are treated and highlighted separately. Some recommendations are made towards the end of this section about how these different concerns can be brought together so that Ribble Banks can manage responding to these.

When asked about what was currently lacking in the community, but could or should be provided, the following areas were clearly highlighted in respect of the different villages –

Rathmell

Public Transport
Community facility/playground
Mains services - gas
Shop

Wigglesworth

Mains services - gas
Community facility/playground
Public Transport
High-speed internet access

Halton West

Mains services - water

All these start to come together in the issues that are highlighted in the survey – either specifically or within comments made - and which were raised and discussed in the various meetings and feedbacks.

Although situated in a rural location, there was considerable concern expressed about the lack of suitable community open areas, particularly where children could play. This increased concerns over child safety and traffic levels made it clear that many people felt there should be such space made available, both as play area and for community events and activities. Currently, many outdoor community events rely on the goodwill of local farmers or landowners for the use of land (and are therefore subject to their needs, for example when cutting silage).

“[We need] a playground area for children to play and older children to meet...safely in the village away from traffic”

“My children are often confined to the garden”

“Please provide a playground”

R2: It is recommended that the Parish Council seeks to identify potential sites in each village that could be used as safe play areas for children.

There was also some concern expressed about the lack of facilities for older residents, and the difficulty in accessing many facilities for such people.

The provision of a potable water supply to Halton West is of major concern, and it is unacceptable that many households in this community do not have a decent supply of drinking water at the start of the 21st Century. Although discussions have been held with various suppliers, consistent bureaucratic and costing problems have not brought this objective any further forward.

“It is a third world situation when you can't have a glass of safe water from a tap in Halton West”

“We do not need letters from CDC advising us to boil all water...we live in England not a third world country”

R3: It is recommended that the Parish Council continues to lobby for the provision of a mains drinking water supply to Halton West, and that it seeks support and funding through external organisations such as Water Aid.

Public Transport was highlighted by a number of people, and has been the focus of a separate survey, conducted under the auspices of the Rural Community Council for Ribble Banks. This is leading to the creation of a taxi voucher scheme within the parish (and as part of a wider scheme involving a number of other rural parishes locally). Wigglesworth and Rathmell have also benefited from the Bowland Transit scheme, whose minibuses have been running through both villages to Settle on a daily basis since the summer of 2003.

R4: It is recommended that the Parish Council considers what support it might give to the Bowland Transit Scheme to assist its future development.

Two areas that were specifically highlighted initially (by the Parish Council in the survey) were the recycling of household waste, and traffic calming measures.

There was significant support for some form of recycling scheme in all three communities. The facilities at Settle are widely used by residents, especially for glass and paper, but it was felt there was a need for recycling of plastics and other materials, as well as compostable waste. 92% of people wanted to see some form of recycling scheme introduced, and it was clear, when discussed at the open meetings, that people were willing to ensure waste was pre-sorted to facilitate such a scheme. Examples of schemes, such as Wye-Cycle, were discussed at the meeting, and it is therefore recommended that the Parish Council liaise with Craven District Council to ensure that Ribble Banks is incorporated into the Council's recycling scheme with "Growing with Grace", or that it investigates how it might introduce a recycling scheme within the parish.

"We all feel quite strongly about the provision of an effective recycling scheme"

R5: It is recommended that the Parish Council lobbies to have Ribble Banks included in Craven District Council's recycling scheme, and that emphasis on recycling plastics is conveyed to CDC.

The speed of traffic through the villages is an issue that has been raised at meetings before the parish plan process, but again came up as a key concern of villagers. Significantly, it was possibly the single most important issue raised by the children at Rathmell School in their discussions. They highlighted the fact they did not feel safe to walk or cycle on the roadways in the villages – something that is quite unacceptable. In both Rathmell and Wigglesworth there was significant support for some form of traffic calming, with the imposition of speed limits and the monitoring of speed limits by appropriate authorities on a regular basis. It was clear that people in Rathmell felt that, although they have a 30mph limit through the village, it is regularly ignored – although many residents felt the limit should be lowered to 20mph. There was also regular comment about the lack of visible policing of excessive speed, regardless of whether a restricted speed limit was in force or not.

"Speeding cars and motorbikes should be controlled in some way"

"[There should be] more police presence especially on Sunday mornings/evenings"

"Rathmell village is let down by noisy motorbikes and fast cars"

"Enforcing the speed limit seems to be non-existent"

It was clear that people did not want physical calming measures such as humps, although rumble strips were deemed acceptable, and it was also felt that footpaths or some form of appropriate markings or signings to protect pedestrians was required. There was a clear feeling that pedestrians should get more priority over vehicles than at present, and that safety concerns should be given greater consideration by the appropriate authorities, recognising that the village centres, however constituted, should have protection from speeding vehicles. There was also a not insignificant amount of comment about the speed at which some farm vehicles travel through the villages, and the Parish Council might want to take this perception into account also.

R6: It is recommend that the Parish Council seeks to have a 30mph speed limit introduced in Wigglesworth; that the 30mph limit in Rathmell is monitored and imposed properly; that adequate speed calming road markings are made on the entry routes to both villages

Two other major areas that were investigated in detail were Planning and Housing, and Maintaining and Sustaining a vibrant local community.

6. Housing and Planning

In broad terms the majority of people felt that local planning rules, as expressed primarily in the Local Plan, should be maintained. However, at both the meetings and through the survey forms, a number of comments and observations were highlighted. These should enable the Parish Council to formulate specific Village Design Statements for each of the villages, to help inform both residents and the planning authority in the specific village examples, as supplementary planning guidance, for how each community sees itself developing.

“There does not seem to be a constant rule: some are dictated to severely...whereas others planning is almost disregarded”

The thrust of the community is that the local character and nature of the respective villages should continue to be maintained and protected – although this does not mean there should be no change –

“A rural area is by definition rural”

“Areas like ours are becoming rare”

“We are a country parish...whatever we do, we must not take away for the future what we all enjoy now”

The importance of the local topography was felt to be very important, and that planning decisions should take this far more into account with regard to the siting of potential buildings in the landscape – both generally and locally – so that buildings form a natural part of the landscape, and do not dominate nor stand out. This would extend to the types of external materials used, to ensure that buildings sit appropriately within the landscape, and therefore traditional materials should be the materials of choice, avoiding modern equivalents simply because they are more convenient or less expensive. Given that any development in the communities would be largely limited, then any allowed should conform to existing vernacular patterns to maintain a continuity of style, rather than imposing new or different styles.



Above: The setting of Rathmell village (looking towards the school / looking towards the church)

Below left: The setting of Wigglesworth (looking north from Hammerton);

Below right: The setting of Halton West (looking westwards towards Halton West)



There was also a very strong feeling that such rules should also be extended to agricultural and farm buildings to avoid too many utilitarian and standard style buildings appearing and destroying the visual appeal of the landscape. Whilst agriculture might take up a substantial amount of the landscape, its importance in the economy is declining, and it should be recognised that the needs of other industries – such as tourism – are as important a factor in determining land use and landscape in the future.

It was felt most strongly that, within the context of maintaining the rural nature of the local communities, some development of unused or redundant barns and farm buildings could be allowed, as long as these were providing housing and/or employment opportunities for local people. Conversion for holiday home use should not be permitted.

There was also a strong feeling – particularly in Wigglesworth – that there should be restrictions on who should be allowed to buy into the housing stock, with the aim of maintaining a balanced population (and thereby local services and facilities), and avoiding a decline into retirement villages or villages of second homes.

All three communities felt they should not be allowed to extend beyond their existing discrete boundaries, that village layout (particularly the distinct linear layout of Wigglesworth) should

be protected, and that rural development should be limited to the conversion of existing redundant buildings, with any new development being very strictly limited.

No large-scale developments of any kind were felt appropriate in any part of the communities – indeed these would run counter to the wishes of the residents and existing planning policies.

Limited infilling was felt appropriate within village boundaries, where this could occur naturally and not disrupt the natural flow and format of the village development.

The discussions of the above points, both in the survey and at the meeting, led on to consideration of the issue of “affordable” housing. Particularly at the meeting, this was discussed in some detail, both in terms of understanding what “affordable” represented and how feasible such an ideal might be. There was a clear view from the two larger villages that the Parish Council should look at some form of scheme that would enable young people to live locally when they begin work, especially if they are working locally -

“We need more opportunity for low-cost housing for local people and youngsters starting out”

“We urgently need more families – therefore more affordable housing”

“A village needs diversity not a plague of commuters”

This issue is further reinforced by the fact that the majority of pupils at Rathmell School felt they would have to move away from the area when they started work, either because they would not find work locally or that they would not be able to afford to live in the area. The Parish Council therefore needs to examine how it might support or develop some support for local young people to remain living in the villages when they begin their working careers.

R7: It is recommended that the Parish Council liaises with the local Planning Authority to adopt Village Design Statements for each of the three villages (as outlined in the attached appendices) as supplementary planning guidance.

R8: It is recommended that the Parish Council examines the feasibility of enabling some affordable housing within the two main villages.

Based on this feedback, suggested elements for individual Village Design Statements are given as Appendices 1, 2 and 3 at the end of the report.

7. Maintaining a sustainable and vibrant community

Ribble Banks is fortunate amongst many rural communities in that it does retain many of the key elements, albeit not all in one place, that are perceived as essential to a strong, sustainable rural community. These include a shop, post office and pub (all in Wigglesworth), a church and primary school (both in Rathmell). The community is also recognised as vibrant in certain aspects, with a strong social life in Wigglesworth.

“Having lost the shop/garage in Rathmell, it is vital that Wigglesworth [facilities] are sustained. The community should be united to share these vital facilities”

% households using

	Rathmell (%)	Wigglesworth (%)	Halton West (%)
Wigglesworth Shop/PO	75	92	9
Wigglesworth Garage	33	56	9
Tosside Shop/PO	-	6	-
The Plough, Wigglesworth	42	38	9
The Duck & Partridge, Tosside	-	8	-
Crowtrees Pub	-	8	-
Wigglesworth Old School	2	38	-
Rathmell School	29	12	-
Rathmell Reading Room	58	22	-
Rathmell Church	15	34	-
Rathmell Chapel	15	2	-
Tosside Church	-	6	-
Halton West Chapel	-	2	9
Tosside Village Hall	-	34	9
Gardenmakers, Wigglesworth	44	28	18
Equine Centre, Rathmell	6	-	-



Above: Wigglesworth – Village Shop and The Plough Inn

Below: Rathmell – Reading Room and Holy Trinity Church



Where local services and facilities exist, these are fairly well supported and used by the residents of Rathmell and Wigglesworth, and it is crucial that the Parish Council encourages local people to continue to use all these services and facilities to ensure they do not disappear. Similarly, it should endeavour to lobby appropriate local and governmental bodies to ensure that the constraints and difficulties experienced by such businesses are understood, and that the importance of sustaining such services and facilities in rural areas such as Ribble Banks are clearly understood. It is important to emphasise that this is a key role that every resident can play in their day-to-day lives in the community – the term “use it or lose it” has never been so apposite.

However, both the survey forms and the feedback received makes it quite clear that Halton West residents see themselves as linking more to Hellifield than to Wigglesworth or Rathmell. There is some use made of facilities in Wigglesworth, none in Rathmell, and comments clearly pointed towards shopping, education and other ties with Hellifield.

This raises some significant questions about whether Halton West fits comfortably with Rathmell and Wigglesworth as Ribble Banks (as a discrete entity). There is increasing evidence that the focus and pull for Halton West is more towards Hellifield, and one has to question whether, in the future, it fits comfortably with the other two villages.

“Halton West people tend to go to Hellifield”

R9: It is recommended that the Parish Council reviews the status of Halton West as part of the Parish Council

However, the survey and discussions sought to establish what sort of sustainable community people felt could be created and developed going forwards, so that Ribble Banks could attract both employment and residents, maintain a strong community, and sustain and build upon (as well as support) the existing services available to offer a more comprehensive community to those who choose to live, work and spend their lives as part of it.

There was strong support for the Parish Council to look at developing opportunities for businesses to set up within the parish or community business partnerships, although it is also recognised that encouraging support of existing local businesses is also important. This would sit within the planning strategies detailed above, where potentially redundant or old farm buildings could be converted or used for small to medium businesses or for start-up and small business units. Whilst there was strong support for this, there was some discussion over the level of involvement the Parish Council should have –

“The Council should encourage business into the area and let them do the employing”

“A directory of local tradesmen would be helpful...we could use them”

“We need to utilise local traders to create a prosperous community”

In addition, as part of the survey and meetings, residents were asked what sort of businesses they felt would be important to sustain and develop the local communities. Whilst, perhaps not surprisingly, farming and agricultural businesses topped the responses, there was particularly strong support for craft and small scale cottage industries, as well as tourism and IT businesses. Other examples throughout the country show that these businesses are particularly suited to the rural environment, and can, in some cases, further support the local economy by attracting visitors into the area.

R10: It is recommended that the Parish Council looks at a planning and economic strategy that would support potential conversion of redundant buildings into small-scale business units that would attract or support the types of businesses identified above.

R11: It is recommended that the Parish Council examines the possibility of sponsoring or supporting a project to focus on encouraging support of existing local businesses and developing small scale local businesses that would sustain the local economy – for example: farm shops or farmers market, craft businesses, and small scale tourism businesses.

There was also an opportunity for people to list any other concerns and issues that they felt were important, so that these could be reviewed, and several of these were discussed at the open meeting. Obviously, a whole variety of points came forwards, but there were a number that were raised by a large enough number of people to stand out as important issues. Interestingly, many of these points gelled together around a focal point that might be described as “pride in the community”.

Almost without exception, people highlighted both the poor state of the road verges (and the amount of litter), the lack of maintenance that the verges and road edges receive, and the possibility of the Parish Council creating a linesman position that would address these matters. This received strong support at the open meeting as well as through the survey forms.

R12: It is recommended that the Parish Council seeks funding to create a part-time linesman position to undertake appropriate maintenance and care to the verges and road edges in the parish.

Most other issues related to points already mentioned above; however, there was a fair amount of concern about the perceived cost of council tax against the relatively poor level of services that are available and accessible to residents. Whilst it is probably fair to say that residents accept that, due to the rural location of the communities, they would not expect a comprehensive level of services, there is considerable concern about the poor accessibility to services of any kind, and the lack of understanding that exists in urban areas (which would include Settle and Skipton, as well as larger urban units) as to the problems that do exist in the countryside.

However, it was clear from undertaking not just the survey, but also the meetings and discussions, that the residents of Ribble Banks regard their communities extremely strongly, and want to see them sustained but not overwhelmed. They clearly accept that the communities cannot stand still if they are to survive, but they recognise they need to take on board for themselves exactly how much development they want to see in order to sustain living, dynamic communities without ruining both the size, make-up and feel of what are typical rural villages.

The relatively isolated location of the three communities, both individually, and as a group, meant that several comments from respondents focussed on specifics within individual communities, as well as other comments relating to wider issues that directly impacted on the communities, such as the future of the countryside. There was a clear feeling that much policy, whether at governmental, county or district level, is of too general a nature, failing to

allow local communities to address what they – the communities – perceive as their most pressing and urgent needs. It was often felt that there was little “joined-up” thinking in relation to local needs, and a lack of appreciation of how these might be different from one community to the next.

This led on directly, in the survey, to questions about two specific projects that had been discussed throughout the parish, and which were being investigated further by two small working groups of interested parties. The questions sought to sound out views regarding the provision of pre-school child care and after-school clubs, as well as the development of village history websites. This related directly to issues of sustainability, and the importance of generating and providing facilities that attracted, retained and developed families – as a whole – within the local communities, especially linking in to ensure the future of Rathmell School.

“Young people, with children, will not choose to come and live in the village unless they have employment (which is likely to be outside the village) and they are likely to need child care”

Responses showed a clear interest (not just from people with children, but the wider community too) in ensuring some form of pre-school child care provision was developed, both to allow parents with children the ability to get employment, as well as offer local children of that age the opportunity to mix with their peer group and develop social skills from the very earliest age. This is particularly so for 3 and 4 year old children; and currently it is almost impossible for 3 year olds to access available care, as none exists in the immediate locality. This is severely disadvantaging these children.

There is a clear opportunity here for suitable provision to utilise the facilities at Clark’s Old School, Wigglesworth, subject to the improvement of the facilities at the Old School, or at Rathmell School itself. Utilising the Old School could provide a significant project that would consolidate the position of what is seen as an important community resource, as well as offer provision that is clearly required by the local community. The central position of the Old School within the parish could make it an attractive location for a wide range of people, and it would enable close links to be maintained between any child-care providers and the primary school at Rathmell (to which many of those using the provision would probably go to attend full-time education). Alternatively, provision could be offered at Rathmell School, but this would require the close involvement of the school’s Governing Body.

R13: It is recommended that the Parish Council offers what help and support it can to the development of pre-school child care provision at a location within the parish, and encourages the investigation of the development of similar after-school and holiday-time provision.

There was also a good level of support, particularly from young people in Wigglesworth, for the development of a village websites to host information about the history of the village and the village in general.

R14: It is recommended that the Parish Council offers what help and support it can to the instigation and development of village websites, to allow the improved dissemination of information and to heighten awareness of the local communities.

8. Conclusions

It is clear from the responses to the survey and the comments and feedback provided at meetings and in other responses, that the people of Ribble Banks take the future of their community very seriously indeed. For the most part, there is a progressive attitude towards the future development and needs of the villages, wanting to retain as much of the size, nature and character as currently exists, but realising that the make-up of the community has changed, and will continue to change; the importance of the sustainability of the local economy through the identification of other business and economic opportunities beyond the traditional ones; and the importance that the community will only survive if the community itself takes that responsibility.

The Parish Council is to be commended in taking the initiative to identify key issues for the residents in the local communities, so that it can, in turn, identify and prioritise issues for the future, and ensure that such priorities are carried forward into the local and regional agendas – whether governmental or regional development agencies.

It is hoped that the recommendations identified in this Plan will enable the Parish Council, or other interested local groups, to move forwards, seek appropriate funding (where necessary) and continue to ensure that Rathmell, Wigglesworth and Halton West retain their community spirit, develop relevant local facilities and services – or ensure they are provided, and secure a firm future for the whole parish.

9. Going forwards...

It is now the intention for the Parish Council to consider the recommendations contained in the Parish Plan, to consult on these through a series of feedback meetings, and then to finalise an Action Plan. Copies of the Parish Plan will have been circulated to every household in the Ribble Banks area, as well as to other local bodies and interested parties.

This Action Plan - based on the feedback received and considerations of the Council – will prioritise the various recommendations, identify relevant stakeholders and potential participants for different projects, and put some outcomes and timescales on these priorities.

This will allow the Parish Council, along with all those interested and involved in specific projects or ideas, to identify which recommendations it feels it can address over what timescales, and to begin to work in a structured way towards the fulfilment of many of these. This should provide a strategy for improving many aspects of the lives of residents of all ages and all needs throughout Ribble Banks.

It should not be the case that the Parish Council alone will move particular projects forwards, but that it will encourage, support and, where and as appropriate, offer resources and assistance so that local community teams or project groups can deliver the necessary outcomes within the community.

Summary of Parish Plan Recommendations

- R1: It is recommended that the Parish Council investigates supporting a satellite-wireless high-speed internet access service in both Rathmell and Wigglesworth.
- R2: It is recommended that the Parish Council seeks to identify potential sites in each village that could be used as safe play areas for children.
- R3: It is recommended that the Parish Council continues to lobby for the provision of a mains drinking water supply to Halton West, and that it seeks support and funding through external organisations such as Water Aid.
- R4: It is recommended that the Parish Council considers what support it might give to the Bowland Transit Scheme to assist its future development.
- R5: It is recommended that the Parish Council lobbies to have Ribble Banks included in Craven District Council's recycling scheme, and that emphasis on recycling plastics is conveyed to CDC.
- R6: It is recommended that the Parish Council seeks to have a 30mph speed limit introduced in Wigglesworth; that the 30mph limit in Rathmell is monitored and imposed properly; that adequate speed calming road markings are made on the entry routes to both villages.
- R7: It is recommended that the Parish Council liaises with the local Planning Authority to adopt Village Design Statements for each of the three villages (as outlined in the attached appendices) as supplementary planning guidance.
- R8: It is recommended that the Parish Council examines the feasibility of enabling some affordable housing within the two main villages.
- R9: It is recommended that the Parish Council reviews the status of Halton West as part of the Parish Council
- R10: It is recommended that the Parish Council looks at a planning and economic strategy that would support potential conversion of redundant buildings into small-scale business units that would attract or support the types of businesses identified above.

- R11: It is recommended that the Parish Council examines the possibility of sponsoring or supporting a project to focus on encouraging support of existing local businesses and developing small scale local businesses that would sustain the local economy – for example: farm shops or farmers market, craft businesses, and small scale tourism businesses.
- R12: It is recommended that the Parish Council seeks funding to create a part-time linesman position to undertake appropriate maintenance and care to the verges and road edges in the parish.
- R13: It is recommended that the Parish Council offers what help and support it can to the development of pre-school child care provision at a location within the parish, and encourages the investigation of the development of similar after-school and holiday-time provision.
- R14: It is recommended that the Parish Council offers what help and support it can to the instigation and development of village websites, to allow the improved dissemination of information and to heighten awareness of the local communities.

Appendix 1 ***Suggested Village Design Statements***

These proposals are based on a clear desire, expressed in responses in the survey forms as well as at meetings, of residents to lay out the criteria under which any development within each of the three communities might be permitted, if appropriate.

The suggested statements take into account all these comments, along with the existing natures of the villages, their layouts and topographical settings, as well as the importance of the traditional look and feel of existing buildings, their architectural styles and materials; and the importance of maintaining a living village, whilst not shunning the fact that the communities need to develop in an appropriate fashion. The aim is to take into account specific local conditions, yet not ignoring the wider concerns and issues that are laid out in documents such as the Local Plan.

The intention is to avoid random development or building, and to ensure that any resident, landowner or developer understands that they have a responsibility to contribute to an holistic, consistent and integrated community. It is intended that these statements should be finalised in conjunction with the local planning authorities.

Rathmell Village Design Statement

No development will be permitted outside the existing designated village lines, other than conversions of unused or redundant farm buildings and appropriately scaled residential extensions to existing residential properties;

Any such conversions should support local employment or residence, and should not be permitted if developed as speculative second homes or holiday homes;

Infilling within existing village lines would be permitted, where any such development would consist of one or two appropriately sized and designed residences. The development of larger infill areas would not be supported;

All buildings, of whatever type, should be vernacular in style and appropriate to their topographical and village context, with the use of appropriate local materials;

No large-scale development will be permitted within the parish area;

Small-scale buildings or development (of no more than two units in a single location) to support local employment or services would be supported, within the guidelines above.

Halton West Village Design Statement

No development will be permitted outside the existing designated village lines, other than conversions of unused or redundant farm buildings and appropriately scaled residential extensions to existing residential properties;

Any such conversions should support local employment or residence, and should not be permitted if developed as speculative second homes or holiday homes;

Infilling within existing village lines would be permitted, where any such development would consist of one or two appropriately sized and designed residences. The development of larger infill areas would not be supported;

All buildings, of whatever type, should be vernacular in style and appropriate to their topographical and village context, with the use of appropriate local materials;

No large-scale development will be permitted within the parish area;

Small-scale buildings or development (of no more than two units in a single location) to support local employment or services would be supported, within the guidelines above.

Wigglesworth Village Design Statement

The distinct linear nature of Wigglesworth village centre will be maintained, with no development allowed that might interfere with or alter this distinct character (specifically on the north side of the village centre, or at either end of the village centre);

The distinct character of Tosside village (within Wigglesworth/Ribble Banks parish) should be maintained, and there will be no development creep allowed along the roads linking Wigglesworth and Tosside;

No development will be permitted outside the existing designated village lines, other than conversions of unused or redundant farm buildings and appropriately scaled residential extensions to existing residential properties;

Any such conversions should support local employment or residence, and should not be permitted if developed as speculative second homes or holiday homes;

Infilling within existing village lines would be permitted, where any such development would consist of one or two appropriately sized and designed residences. The development of larger infill areas would not be supported;

All buildings, of whatever type, should be vernacular in style and appropriate to their topographical and village context, with the use of appropriate local materials;

No large-scale development will be permitted within the parish area;

Small-scale buildings or development (of no more than two units in a single location) to support local employment or services would be supported, within the guidelines above.