

Langar cum Barnstone Parish Plan 2008



Shaping the future of our villages



INTRODUCTION

The Parish of Langar cum Barnstone

The parish of Langar cum Barnstone is situated in the south east of Nottinghamshire, close to the county borders with both Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. Although the parish is the largest in area within the Borough of Rushcliffe, it comprises an essentially rural community, having a population of approximately 1,000, living in 400 households.

The parish consists of two villages, Langar and Barnstone, of roughly equal size, situated one mile apart. The two villages share facilities and amenities. The main church, village school, post office and public house are located in Langar, whilst the village hall, the play park, a smaller church, the bowling green and a country club are located in Barnstone.

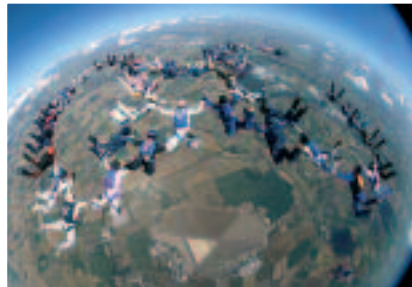
Apart from traditional agricultural activities, the parish also has some light industry and small businesses, many of which are located on an industrial estate bordering the former World War II airfield situated in the south east of the parish.



Members of the Steering Group

Councillor Andrew Charlett (Chair)
Carola Jones (RCAN)
Clive Jones
Nigel Wood
Brenda Mitchell
Viv Lambelle

Karen Seaton (Secretary)
Steve Bowman (Parish Clerk)
Robin Coles
Steve Widdowson
Gillian Clarke
Peter Blackwood



The Parish Plan Steering Group wish to thank the following organisations for their support in the preparation of the Plan:

Rushcliffe Borough Council
Langar cum Barnstone Parish Council
Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire Community Foundation
Lafarge
Councillor Richard Butler

Photographs courtesy of:

British Parachute School
Alex Cessford
Nigel Wood
Robin Coles

Layout and design:

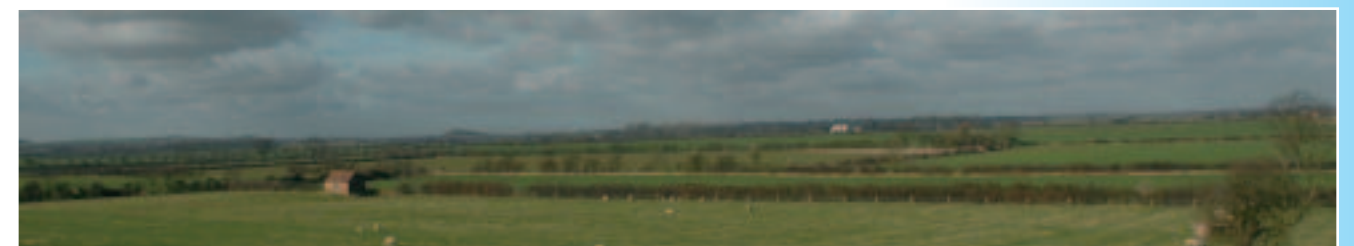
Heather Whitaker

Why have a Parish Plan?

The Government's November 2000 Rural White Paper stated that Parish Plans should "identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved". They should set out a vision for the community in the future and identify the action needed to tackle issues of concern in addition to including everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the community, from employment needs to playgrounds.

The Parish Plan should consult everyone and give them a chance to say what they think about the social, economic and environmental issues affecting them and how they would like to see their community improve during the next 5 to 10 years. Essentially the Parish Plan is a document prepared by the community to address the needs of that community. It is not a Parish Council enterprise, although the Parish Council was instrumental in initiating the Plan, supportive in its development and will be actively involved in its implementation.

The aim is to create a united community where everyone can use the amenities and feel safe, valued and respected.



The Development of the Langar cum Barnstone Parish Plan



In March 2007 the Parish Council decided to ask the community whether it would wish to develop a Parish Plan. At a subsequent meeting of parishioners in May 2007 the proposal for the development of a Parish Plan was discussed. The proposal was voted for unanimously. At a subsequent meeting of interested parishioners a Steering Group was formed.

The Steering Group comprised 10 members including one Parish Councillor, the Parish Clerk and an adviser from Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (see the list of Steering Group members inside front cover).

They met regularly during the formation of the Plan and presented regular reports to the Parish Council in order to keep it informed of progress.

A questionnaire was developed and distributed to every household in the parish in December 2007. 56% of households responded to the questionnaire. A postal opinion survey was conducted amongst businesses within the parish and opinion surveys were also undertaken amongst young people aged 5 – 11 at the local primary school and young people aged 12 – 18 at the Unicorn's Head.

The results of the questionnaire and surveys were distributed to households within the Parish in March 2008 and parishioners were invited to an Action Planning Event in March 2008. At this event issues arising from the surveys were discussed and a Draft Action Plan was initiated, focussing on six specific areas of local need and proposing ways to address them. From this draft, an Action Plan was produced and presented to parishioners for their perusal and comment at the village fete in June 2008. This then formed the basis of the Parish Plan document.



The proposed actions are given in outline in each section with more detail, including time frames, where known, in the Action Plan at the end of this document.

Implementation

The Parish Council have decided to encourage the formation of a number of Task Groups (one group for each of the aspects highlighted within the Parish Plan) and to meet regularly as a forum with each of these Task Groups in order to implement the Action Points outlined in the Parish Plan. Regular feedback on progress will be provided to parishioners via both the Parish Newsletter and the Parish Website (www.theparishcouncil.org). There will also be an opportunity for the task groups and the Parish Council to report back to the community on the progress of implementing the Action Points within the Parish Plan at the annual Parish Meeting.

Parishioners who haven't already indicated an interest and would wish to become members of one or more Task Groups should initially contact the Parish Clerk.

FACILITIES

It was clear from the results of the questionnaire that many residents would support a community shop. 38 parishioners agreed to assist with the running of a shop. This could become a focal point for the community and would greatly assist those parishioners who do not have access to transport. Many respondents were unaware of the existence of mobile traders and stated that they would have been happy to use them if they had been at home when the traders called. The development of a Farmer's Market was also popular.



There is a great need for additional activities to be held in the Village Hall, as currently 60% of parishioners do not use the existing facilities. The first step to achieve this is to implement renovations to improve the kitchen, toilets etc and allow for disabled access. 43% would like to see the hall renovated. Quotations for work are already underway by the Parish Council and funding has been made available. In the long term, if demand outweighs the existing facilities, we could then move forward to consider a new village hall if land and planning consent were available. 31% of residents felt a new village hall would be beneficial and 59% thought a new hall would ideally be situated between the villages.



A number of residents were keen to run their own allotments and the Parish Council have been seeking land for some time. This would be a wonderful addition to the parish to enable householders to grow their own fresh fruit and vegetables, enjoy their hobby and come together with like-minded gardeners.

Residents regularly walk within the parish and enjoy relaxing and taking in the views. It is felt consideration ought to be given to installing additional benches at favoured spots.

Actions required are:

1. Obtain the toolkit for developing the Community Shop project, which is available from Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire.
2. Liaise with local mobile traders to consider stocking the Community Shop with goods from their businesses. This would enable customers who are at work when the mobile traders normally call to pick up their orders when they come home.
3. Develop a Farmer's Market, probably once per month. The site could be on Langar Village Green in front of the Unicorn's Head, with the brewery's permission.
4. Encourage additional activities, with the help of volunteers, once renovation work to the village hall has been completed and the new meeting place for scouts is available.
5. As a consequence of six written requests having been received by the Parish Council for allotments, the Parish Council is obliged to obtain land for this purpose.
6. Sites for benches would need to be considered and both landowners and the Parish Council would need to be consulted. Local businesses could be approached to find out if they would be prepared to donate a bench. Additionally requests are often made for providing a bench as a memorial to a loved one. As there is no longer space for these within the churchyard, consideration could be given to placing them elsewhere within the parish.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

As a rural community reliant on public transport, to enable residents to travel to and from Nottingham and Bingham, we have fought to save bus services from being withdrawn. The Nottingham service is not as comprehensive as it once was, but Nottinghamshire County Council continues to provide subsidy to ensure continued operation. The service operating between Melton Mowbray and Bingham through the parish is subsidised by Leicestershire County Council. Subsidies are subject to continuous review by both authorities and may be reduced or even withdrawn in the future.



The questionnaire found that 72% of respondents do not use the bus regularly and 59% of respondents do not use the bus at all. Possible reasons are: the rather convoluted route taken by the bus to and from Nottingham, buses are not always available when passengers wish to travel and most households own at least one car - a preferred method of transport. Some households do not have a car, or one member of the household is using the car during the working day, leaving other members without transport. A viable and sustainable public transport system is vital!

Use of private cars for commuting to and from work may become less attractive in the future if fiscal measures to combat traffic congestion are implemented by Nottingham City Council. Commuters have recognised the problems of parking in the city of Nottingham and have chosen to travel from Bingham by bus and train. Problems are, that Bingham Town Council are likely to respond to concerns from residents about on-street parking by introducing restrictions and introducing charges for long term parking in the town's car parks. These measures may cause parishioners to reconsider using public transport for their journeys instead of their cars. Another possibility would be to introduce a car sharing scheme.

Young people within the parish request a regular bus service to and from Bingham, particularly in the evenings to attend extra-curricular activities at Toot Hill School or visit friends in Bingham.

In 2004 the Parish Council decided to assist those parishioners who had difficulty with transport. The Assisted Taxi Scheme was introduced to help those with particular needs. The Scheme has been operating successfully for 4 years. In the questionnaire only 50% of the respondents were aware of its existence.



Actions required are:

1. Promote the Assisted Taxi Scheme within the parish, through the newsletter and disseminate information on local bus timetables.
2. Provide a defined bus stop and bench at Langar cross roads to assist passengers from Langar awaiting the arrival of the 24 bus to Bingham.
3. Encourage residents with a Travel Pass to use them on local bus services by publishing an article on the National Bus Concession in the newsletter.
4. Retain the existing Trent Barton 22 service, but should the service be reduced further, examine the possibility of replacing this service with a more regular Paul James Bingham service. Another service provider might be considered. The subsidy from Nottinghamshire County Council, for the 22 Nottingham, could be put to a more efficient use for the benefit of parishioners.
5. Explore the possibility of operating a car-sharing scheme within the parish.



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Generally residents feel safe within the Parish, but there are areas where improvements can be made. Areas for improvement include speeding, vandalism and antisocial behaviour, dissatisfaction with police coverage of the parish and the quality of street lighting.

In the survey 35% of residents said speeding vehicles of all types made them feel unsafe in the community. Speeding occurs through both villages, with motorists appearing to disregard the speed limits in force. Peak times are considered the most dangerous, as the roads through the two villages are used as a 'rat run' by drivers avoiding the hold ups that occur on the A52 between Bingham and Nottingham. The Langar-Barnstone crossroads and Musters Road are singled out as dangerous areas, where the speed limit is considered to be too high at 40 mph, as children attending the local primary school have to cross these daily.



HGV traffic travelling to and from the local industrial estate can be very heavy at times, and at 40MPH+ can be quite frightening to pedestrians using the crossing and especially in the case of the children. *Research has shown that if you hit a child at 40MPH they stand an 80% chance of being killed. If you hit a child at 30MPH they stand an 80% chance of living.*

The Parish Council recognises the problem with speeding vehicles and has recently instigated Community Speed Watch Patrols to carry out roadside speed checks and to warn offending drivers.

The survey indicated that vandalism and antisocial behaviour are more of a problem in Barnstone than in Langar. It is a fact, and it must be noted, that the vast majority of the young people in our villages do not get involved in any form of antisocial behaviour. Particular issues were, however, raised regarding behaviour around the bus shelter near Works Lane in Barnstone, with a number of residents asking that the bus shelter be removed.

Initiatives have recently been put in place to improve matters in the above area and they have proved successful. If this situation continues then the removal of the bus shelter will no longer need to be considered.

The survey indicated that less than 5% of residents thought that police coverage is good and 52% consider it poor.

The survey indicated improvements in the quality of street lighting should be made to help residents feel more secure.

Actions required are:

1. Install flashing speed limit signs at the entrance roads to both villages.
2. Reduce the speed limit on Musters Road, including the crossroads, to 30MPH and reduce the speed limit on Barnstone Road and the crossroads to 20MPH at school starting and finishing times.
3. Install school crossing signs in both directions at Langar crossroads.
4. Liaise with Highways Authority on layout of pedestrian crossing points at Langar crossroads.
5. Improve facilities and activities available in both villages for young people of all ages.
6. Make parents of young people regularly getting involved in antisocial behaviour aware of what is happening and work with them to improve the situation.
7. As a last resort, if the bus shelter near Works Lane in Barnstone remains the site of antisocial behaviour, consider removing it and replace with more bus stops at appropriate locations.



8. Make police aware of survey results and the general dissatisfaction of the community, and discuss with them what can be done to improve our satisfaction and confidence in the service they provide.
9. Get the Parish Council and interested volunteers to carry out a survey of street lighting to decide what improvements are required.
10. Reduce the sense of isolation of sections of the community by identifying them and their needs and by setting up a good neighbour scheme.

TRAFFIC

Parishioners are very concerned about the general movement of traffic in and around the parish. Driving, cycling and walking all have their hazards, although most seem to be from external users not adhering to signage already in existence. This includes speed and weight restriction signs, which do not appear to be very clear.



Give way signs from Barnstone to Langar are too close to the crossroads and an earlier indication of the crossroads is required.

Pavements along Cropwell Road are often blocked by overgrown hedges and do not extend far enough along Cropwell road to enable walkers to walk safely towards Langar Hall. There is also no pavement along Harby Road, Langar towards Coach Gap Lane. This is a particular issue for pedestrians from Langar Woods accessing the village and young people accessing the scout hut on Coach Gap Lane.

Currently both the speed restriction sign and the village sign when entering Langar from Harby exclude the community at Langar Woods. It is important that these residents should feel that they are part of the community and thus both the speed restriction and village signs should be moved closer to Coach Gap Lane.

Businesses located on both Coach Gap Lane and the airfield have indicated that the direction signage is poor and this needs to be improved.

Safe provision is required for the boarding and dropping off of school children from school buses within both villages. Parking of vehicles on Main Road and Barnstone Road in Langar at school drop off and pick up times cause considerable safety issues. Safe parking provision is required for children being brought to and picked up from Langar School.

Actions required are:

1. To enable HGVs to approach the villages in a safe manner, bigger and clearer signs are needed from both the A46 and the A52, and on all entries to both villages.

2. A survey of HGVs violating weight and speed limits to be implemented by parishioners.

3. Give Way traffic signs at Langar crossroads need an advanced warning sign installed to alert drivers of the coming give way sign.



4. The pavement from Musters Road along Cropwell Road to Main Street to be cleared of overgrown hedges.

5. The pavement from Musters Road along Cropwell Road requires extending to the entrance of Langar Hall, giving safety to walkers.

6. The pavement from Musters Road along Harby Road requires extending to Coach Gap Lane.

7. The speed restriction signs and village signs on Harby Road need to be moved to the entrance of Coach Gap Lane.



8. A stile or gate to be made in the hedge at Butlers Field, to enable residents or scholars using the bus or school bus easier access. Residents to be approached.

9. Cars dropping off or picking up children from Langar School to use the Unicorn's Head car park and children to be safely taken to and from this location to the school by an organised 'walking bus' service.

10. Provide signs to aid drivers in finding businesses based at Coach Gap Lane and Langar Airfield.

ENVIRONMENT



The residents of the parish are proud of the environment in which they live, both built and natural. They are keen to retain the features they enjoy such as open green spaces within both villages, access to the countryside via footpaths and bridleways and the historic buildings, which give both Barnstone and Langar their character.

Beyond retaining what they have there is a strong desire to improve and enhance, where possible, areas which create an impact on visitors and add to the quality of life of the residents. It is also recognised that there is a need to make both residents and visitors aware of what is the make up of the parish's natural environment and historical heritage.



Actions required are:

1. Create a parish free of litter by organising regular litter picking parties with help and advice from Rushcliffe Streetwise and continuing education of children on litter responsibility.
2. Ensure there is greater use of the public rights of way by forming an off-road cycle club and publicising the existing rights of way for pedestrians and cyclists within the parish and surrounding villages.
3. Work jointly with Nottinghamshire County Council and local landowners to create new rights of way and permissive paths to improve access around the parish and to surrounding villages. Potential

routes include the old railway line between Barnstone and Harby and a connection between the bridleway on Bingham Road and Cropwell Road.

4. Increase the awareness of the Conservation Area in the parish by residents and visitors through publicity on village notice boards, leaflets in the Post Office and an article in the Parish Newsletter.

5. Demonstrate our pride in the parish by entering the Best Kept Village competition and Britain in Bloom.

6. Discover what wildlife we have in the parish by mapping the area with the help of organisations such as the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.

7. Once we know what we have we will then work to publicise and improve access to appropriate wildlife sites in conjunction with the landowners.

8. Discover the historical heritage of the parish by mapping the area with the help of local historians, the County Archaeologists and other bodies.

9. Once we know what we have we will then work to publicise and improve access to appropriate historical sites in conjunction with the landowners and establish a heritage centre within St. Andrew's



YOUNG PEOPLE

From the results of the questionnaire it was established that 25% of the population were under the age of 18. Additional information was obtained from two opinion surveys, one from the young people attending Langar school and the other from the youth forum.



The young people of the Parish appreciate the quiet rural environment they live in and would like to see this improved further with more trees, flowers, wildlife areas and cycle paths. The services that are provided (e.g. Brownies, Scouts, school) are of an exceptionally high quality.

However, many feel strongly that the Parish does not cater for their needs. The main concerns of young people include: a lack of things to do and places to go; poor public transport to leisure and recreation facilities outside the villages; and having no voice.



Many of these issues are a manifestation of the wider community issues discussed elsewhere in this document - including unsafe crossroads connecting the villages, fast traffic, lack of a village shop and dog mess as a result of irresponsible dog owners.

Others are focussed purely on young people's needs – play areas, areas for hanging out, activities, transport and ensuring they have a voice. These require the active support and involvement of the community. Young people recognise there are limits to the facilities that may be available in a rural community; however these limits should not be relied upon to excuse a lack of provision.



Actions required are:

1. Identify and equip a play area for children up to 12 years old in Langar.
2. Update Barnstone play area to include facilities for children up to 12 years old.
3. Identify and equip areas in both Langar and Barnstone where young people (11-18) can 'hang out'.
4. Liaise with Lafarge to develop the football pitch on the site near the cement works with a view to forming a local team and provide 'hang out' area.
5. Give young people a voice by encouraging the formation of a local youth forum.



6. Assist young people to organise an on-going programme of activities and events, utilising local facilities such as the Scout Hut, Village Hall and new school hall.
7. Construct a footpath/cycleway from Langar Village to the scout hut on Coach Gap Lane.
8. Explore possibility of extending Assisted Taxi voucher scheme to young people.

