

Caton-with-Littledale Parish Plan

October 2005





FORWARD

The Parish Plan draws together previous Parish Appraisals (1992) The Real Report (2002) and up to date consultations in the Villages.

Members of the Parish Plan Committee have contributed many hours of their time to produce the report, as has the Parish Clerk. I would like to thank them all for their great efforts, particularly Barbara Dearnley, Chris Kynch and Pat Quinton who have put many extra hours into the Plan as it developed.

Detailed discussions in the Action Groups have refined the plan: to the stage where it is a starting point for the future development of the Villages and hopefully will inform how things will progress.

Funding has been received from the Countryside Agency and has had the wholehearted support of the Parish Council and we commend The Parish Plan to you.

*David Mason
Chair, Parish Plan Steering Group
October 2003*

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CATON PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE

Caton lies on the south bank of the River Lune, four miles upstream from Lancaster, where a substantial tributary, the Artle Beck, enters the Lune. The Parish of Caton-with-Littledale comprises four communities: Town End, (part of present day Caton, near the Croft), Brookhouse, Caton Green hamlet and Littledale. It covers 8393 acres and lies within the Forest of Bowland, a designated area of outstanding Natural Beauty. The village took shape from 650 AD and Caton is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. In the 18th century Caton was transformed by the industrial revolution. At one time there were as many as eight mills operating in Caton and the population grew substantially, helped by the construction of the Turnpike Road in 1812 and the arrival of the railway in 1850. By Nelson's time Caton was one of the major suppliers of sails to both the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy but as the demand for sail cloth collapsed the mills declined. Although some of the old mills have been converted into modern housing, but others now are only memories.

Caton's rapid expansion meant the population grew to a peak of 1434 in 1851. Numbers fluctuated with workers moving as the fortunes of the mills alternately expanded and declined, but the population remained fairly steady until the after the First World War. Between the wars Caton grew very slowly, some housing on Copy Lane was built in the 1930s and Fell View estate was built after the Second World War. The population of the Parish today is around 2700.

A combination of large scale shopping facilities and modern technology has seen a decrease in local shops and the loss of two banks. However facilities within the village include a post office, a co-operative store, a general store, a butcher, a florist and a chemist. The village also has two primary schools, five places of worship, three public houses, a library, and a health centre. The site of Moor Platt is now due for re-development into units for retired persons – plans are pending.

There is a reasonable balance of age groups in the village between young, middle aged and older residents. Activities range from a kid's club/ after school club; a youth centre through to leisure, recreational and sports facilities for other age groups. Many indoor activities take place at the village hall, the Victoria Institute, which also has an excellent information technology centre.

The future is uncertain, but it is likely the village may grow and alter. It is the duty of all of us to ensure this is done properly and to the advantage of the whole community. Any changes should be done under the control of the residents via the Parish Council and other pressure groups. This is why a parish plan is so important; it will help the village to develop in our own way.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE PARISH PLAN

What is a Parish Plan?

Parish Plans were launched in 2001 as part of the ‘Vital Villages’ scheme being run by the Countryside Agency. Vital Villages offers a range of grants and advice to rural communities to help them take action on the issues that affect them. The idea behind Parish Plans is that residents should have an opportunity to take stock of their parish, identify what their parish needs and bring this information together in a practical document.

Why do we need one?

The Parish Council felt the Plan could be a good opportunity to give everyone a chance to say what they thought about living in Caton with Littledale and how they would like it to be improved in the future. They also hoped that a Parish Plan would act as a lever to raise funds to improve the parish facilities and act as a catalyst for community action locally. The Plan is aimed at all those who might have a role in helping to deliver the aspirations of the village for improvement. These include:

- Local residents
- Local businesses
- Local organisations, clubs etc.
- The Parish Council
- Lancaster City Council
- Lancashire County Council
- The North West Development Agency
- The Countryside Agency
- Other national and regional bodies

It can be used in a variety of ways:

- As an agreed framework for local action on the ground
- To support bids for funding from local, regional and national bodies
- To feed into the statutory development plan, either as Supplementary Guidance to the Local Plan or an Action Plan under the new Local Development Framework.

How have we gone about it?

In September 2004 the Parish Council put in for a £4000 grant from the Countryside Agency to undertake the parish plan process, which was duly granted. In October the Council arranged an open meeting to set up a small steering group to manage the process of creating a Parish Plan. This group was to include members of the wider community who would work alongside some of the Parish Council members to fully develop the plan.

Usually the process of creating a Parish Plan begins with wide community consultation to gather the views of people living in the Parish. Caton with Littledale however had already conducted an extensive Village Appraisal in 1992 and had also produced the REAL report in 2002. It was decided therefore that the process would begin by checking the main issues that had emerged from these earlier consultations.

- Supporting Shops and Local Businesses
- Protecting Public Services
- Village Centre
- Transport
- Residents of the Village
- The Countryside
- Housing and Development
- Sports and Recreation
- Safety
- Education
- The Environment
- Employment

Over the next few months the village was asked in a series of meetings about what they wanted improved in the village. Whilst consulting with the village, the Parish Plan committee decided it would be prudent to set up a dedicated website, (www.catonpp.co.uk) so that the residents could forward their concerns if unable to attend any of the meetings. These suggestions were added to the website and further comments were sought. Finally an Open Meeting was organised in March 2004, to gather more detailed information on these issues. For each issue we asked for more information on:

- What was already in the area
- What would you like to see in the area
- What any problems were in that area, and
- What should be done to improve the situation?

Unfortunately the meeting was poorly attended, but the residents that took the time to attend have contributed to this document.

The feedback so far has showed that people love living in Caton; they value the peace and quiet, the beautiful countryside, the friendly and active community, and good village facilities. Overall the majority of residents expressed satisfaction with the range of services and opportunities needed, or wanted by people in the village. There are particular things that are working especially well in Caton and some areas that people would like to see improved. We are currently working on some guidelines in order to proceed to the next stage.

The next stage of the process will be to take the wants and needs expressed through the consultation and to look at whether and how these can be turned into reality and identified what, if any, action needed to be taken over the next fifteen years.

The Plan will summarise the results of the steering committee findings under these main topic headings, namely:

- Retail & Village Development
- Public Services & Health Care
- Traffic & Transport
- The Countryside & Environment
- Housing Needs
- Sport & Leisure
- Residents of the Village
- Employment & Education

2. RETAIL & VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Despite the loss of some of the retail establishments Caton with Littledale is a thriving community, but there is always room for improvement. The need for short term visual improvements to the centre, including maintenance by the Council and property owners, is recognised. Existing and future car-parking is a key issue, also the proposed re-development of Moor Platt, this could involve the re-arrangement of parking, roads, pavements and public spaces.

Many people have expressed a desire for the centre to contain more parking. Creating a village green is one of the main suggestions, traffic control, litter bins and extended hours of our existing toilet facilities were also asked for, which would provide the necessary infrastructure to give Caton with Littledale a beautiful village centre.

Residents really appreciate the local shops currently available to them and are passionate about ensuring these continue to operate within the village. The Post Office was particularly mentioned. People are aware of the complexities around shop provision in the village. Many people buy provisions further a field, whilst those without transport are left to try and fulfil all their needs in Caton & Brookhouse.

The group felt that the concerns about a “centre” for the village to include ideas for a village square/ green, but soon recognised that there would be many different ideas about how this might be done and concluded, that the best way to reach a consensus on a long term plan for the village centre would be to hold a “planning for real” exercise with local people, organisations and property owners. In the past Fell View was a well used children’s area, but at the present time now seems to be under utilized.

The other major concern addressed by the group was the future viability of the village shops. Improvements to the village centre would not be sufficient to ensure they are retained and there was a need to find out what could be done to persuade people to spend more money in them, and to encourage them to do so. Having surveyed this there would then may be a need to campaign for people to “use them or lose them”.

3. PUBLIC SERVICES & HEALTH CARE

The Health Centre, Fire Brigade, Post Office, 2 Schools, Community Policemen, Recycling Facilities, Internet access at both the Victoria Institute and the Library were widely celebrated as examples of good services in Caton. Difficulties however included: cramped accommodation in the library, lack of knowledge about where and how the community police can be contacted. To improve public service provision in Caton, many people asked for: better library opening times, help for the disabled and elderly to get to health services; more police; more street cleaning and quicker emptying of current recycling collection point.

Healthcare Services

The majority of people don't find it difficult to access healthcare services such as local doctor or hospital. The elderly residents would like to have easier access to dental and chiropody services, but the majority of residents were happy with the level of care already provided by the current health facilities.

Crime & Safety

Crime revealed itself as an area for concern from a number of sources, in many cases it is just minor incidents, and the presence of a 'visible' police officer would be appreciated. However low the actual incidence of crime may be within the parish, it is clear that levels of fear and worry about potential crime remain relatively high.

The residents have told us that they want a local Police Officer available in the village. The steering group appreciate that we already have a police presence, but perhaps some 'open sessions' could be arranged. Neighbourhood Watch schemes are the second most popular options. There are already some areas covered in the village but possibly more could be initiated in consultation with the police.

Recycling

Access to recycling facilities is also seen as a problem. The main reasons given were the fact that there is no kerbside collection, or that at times the current recycling collection point is not emptied fast enough. The items that are least recycled are foil, aluminium cans, raw food waste and plastic bags. The most popular items to recycle are paper and glass. Lancaster District Council is currently rolling out a new kerbside collection project across the district and Caton will be incorporated into this scheme in 2006.

Library

Currently the library is open 2 days a week (*add times*) but the residents are requesting that better and more convenient times could be considered.

4. TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

Transport is a difficult issue in a rural area where most, but not all, people have a car. There are a number of questions regarding the impact that traffic has on quality of life in the parish.

Currently bus services to Lancaster are fairly frequent, but they are infrequent to other areas particularly Morecambe to make them a viable alternative to car use. Recently there have been new bus shelters provided throughout the village as part of the Parish Transport Grant.

Congestion in the village centre has been alleviated by the provision of two small car parks, other sites could be investigated for car-parking, and both for shopping and school drop off /pick up. Provision for short and long term parking should be included in village centre improvement plans.

Speed Limits: the introduction of some traffic calming measures in parts of the village is suggested, together with measures to increase awareness of the dangers of speeding amongst Caton residents.

Some villagers commented about the noise problems including ‘boy racers’ and ‘weekend motorcycles’ experienced by residents of the parish. Speeding Traffic can be taken to indicate problems with road safety, as this is a common cause of road traffic accidents involving pedestrians and other drivers. Concerns were also raised about the use of Quernmore Road by heavy wagons that go to Nightingale Farm where the firm Fats & Proteins are located.

There is an assumption when Road Safety arises as an issue that the problem stems from traffic passing through the village, rather than traffic generated by the residents of a particular place. The comments from the discussion day indicate that traffic problems are mostly to do with speeding and congestion. Caton-with-Littledale lies on the route to Kirby Lonsdale, which is a very busy main road through the parish. There is already a traffic camera on Lancaster Road, and presumably this has gone some way to addressing previous concerns regarding road safety.

5. THE COUNTRYSIDE & ENVIRONMENT

It can be difficult in an AONB (Area of Outstanding National Beauty) to strike a balance between protecting the countryside and allowing people to access it for recreation and tourism. The AONB is supported by many organisations, both voluntary and professional, and generally there is an appreciation of the fragility and importance of the local ecosystem. Striking a balance between protecting the countryside and allowing people access to use it recreationally can be difficult. Maintaining and strengthening relations between the Parish Council and conservation bodies, liaison over planning and development plans and continuing to inform villagers about planning applications, are all important, with emphasis on community action. An integrated approach should be taken to future planning in the village.

Many residents want a raised awareness of the impact of pets on the environment, encouragement of ecologically sound pest control, action against litter, encouragement of recycling and more monitoring and control of noise pollution. The wind farm is to be extended and a new access road is to be built, the developers are working with the parish council to keep the impact on the village to a minimum.

The group found that residents, whether born and bred here or newly settled, understand and appreciate the special character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and whilst there is naturally some interest in what are seen as improvements to village life, the central principle must always be borne in mind, that our countryside, its plants and animals and the complex relationships they have with one another, are fragile and need particular care in their preservation.

On the contentious issue of dog dirt, the group felt that dog owners need further encouragement to clean up after their pets, as there is strong feeling about the fouling of footpaths, especially close to the heart of the village. A renewed campaign seems to be called for, and once again a broader view is recommended.

On other environmental issues, the group commented that pollution of the environment is not perpetrated by big business alone. Everyone has a part to play in securing a cleaner, greener environment. Various suggestions were made in this context, covering issues such as recycling, environmentally friendly gardening practices, noise pollution and litter. In addition the Group made some recommendations covering transport and housing and these are included under the relevant chapters.

The young people also registered concern about the environment, in the form of requesting an animal sanctuary in their vision for the future of the parish. Amongst the aspects of life in the parish that the young people like are the quantity of animals, wildlife and being able to walk by, and fish in, the river. The young people also said that they like the upside-down trees! When we consider what the young people liked about Caton individual features of the natural environment seemed to be of significant value.

There may be several solutions to the issues raised in this section of the report. Litter and dog fouling could be addressed by increased provision of bins within the parish, and some kind of campaign targeted at litterbugs and unconscientious dog-owners. Litter picks could be organised, possibly involving the young people of the parish. Caton already benefits from participating in Lancashire County Council's Parish Lengthsman Scheme.

6. HOUSING NEEDS

Many people are calling for affordable housing to be available in the village. This would enable local young people to stay living in the area, and in turn, raise their own families. People feel this would keep the village vibrant and alive. However many people also want to see development carefully limited, preserving open green space. Some people want the parish council to have a stronger hand in approving or rejecting planning applications and others want there to be no development at all. Some people suggested that existing buildings be converted and renovated for affordable housing to prevent new building on new sites. No one supports extensive development.

Affordable housing for local people and housing for young people are the main areas of concern around housing in Caton-with-Littledale. It is therefore important that these points are considered, before any future housing development takes place. The re-development of Moor Platt will commence once plans have been finalised, and it is envisaged that the completed units will be available to local residents in the Lune Valley.

The results of the Lancaster City Council housing needs survey identifies a need for approximately 75 new housing units that are affordable, within the whole of the Lune Valley. This would cover the next 3 years and this need is based on a household income of less than £20,000 and monthly housing costs of below £500. What will be needed in the future only time will tell?

The City council has also commissioned a housing condition survey of the district, which has brought to light the energy inefficiency, which has led to unfit rural housing. There is substantial potential to cut down on energy waste which is costly to households; fuel stocks and in terms of environmental pollution. There is potential to draw in agencies from local and national government to raise local awareness of the benefits of conserving household energy.

7. SPORT & LEISURE

There are many varied activities within the village, ranging from field sports to indoor activities. Many residents felt that the village catered well enough for sporting and leisure activities. The majority of them are well subscribed to, but there are some small clubs that are mainly used by the older residents of the village and these do need some help. Although there is a playground in the village, it is designed for older children, and parents have expressed an interest in the development of a quiet area for toddlers to use. There is a clearly recognised need for improvement to current recreational facilities in the village.

Some young people have carried out a survey to assess the need for a skatepark, over 120 names were collected. The Parish Council need to assess the possibility of providing this facility. This includes work to look at land ownership, planning permission, gaining funding, getting residents' support and future maintenance of any new facilities.

There are many good services in the village for children and parents. There are 2 schools, a library, a playgroup, and 2 mums and tots group. However more could be done. After consideration of all the comments from the Parish Plan consultation process, it was obvious that there is a desperate need for better play facilities for children of all ages in Caton. Many young mothers would like to see a purpose built play area for toddlers, but on the other hand the older children would like to see a skate park. (To this end the children have already organised a petition in support of their request and have collected over 120 names in support).

The Youth and Community Centre is owned by the village and in 2003 it was decided to keep the building as the youth of the village identified with The Youth Centre and regarded it as their own.

Since we made that decision the Centre has been going through an extensive program of refurbishments to bring it up to current standards. At present the Centre is used three/four nights a week. Lancashire Youth Services run girls only nights Tuesdays, a mixed night Wednesdays and a boys only night Thursdays. Chairman Stephen Talbot runs a general youth club night on Friday evenings. As you can see we have a Youth and Community Centre the whole village can be proud of. With your support the Centre could offer more.

The activities and services appreciated by older people include the several organisations that are available for the use of retired persons and provide a wide range of activities, various dance clubs that cater for all tastes, bridge; and the services of a chemist, the health centre; library and post office. Transport can be a particular difficulty for those older people who are no longer able to drive. The extra support people need as they get older is very clear: sheltered housing; somewhere to meet to prevent isolation; and volunteer support schemes.

A majority of residents expressed satisfaction with the range of services and opportunities needed, or wanted, by older people in the village. The only significant issue for the Parish Plan relating to older people's services was the proposed Moor Platt re-development.

8. EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

It is estimated that 70 businesses operate from the parish, including farmers, retailers, small businesses and self employed people operating from their own homes. The majority of people employed work fairly locally, within Lancaster and Morecambe, but a percentage work further a field, commuting daily.

There are primary school facilities in the village and several good senior schools only a short bus ride away. Nearby there are two further education colleges, Adult College and Lancaster & Morecambe, and in Lancaster there are also two universities.

At the present time the Adult College also runs several courses from the Victoria Institute, and the Victoria Institute also provides several basic IT courses for absolute beginners.

New business is always welcomed within the village.

As stated earlier the overall employment of the eligible population is considerable, and at the present time suggestions have been made to the parish plan committee to improve the current level. The two local colleges offer courses on a wide range of subjects and there is an outreach centre for the Adult college at the Victoria Institute. The Victoria Institute also holds an IT suite and it is regularly used by the villagers as a community centre.

9. CONCLUSION

The proposals that have emerged from the Village Plan exercise, range from the immediately achievable, which can be delivered at relatively low cost by existing bodies, volunteers and property owners, to long-term aspirations, which may or may not come to fruition depending on a number of external factors, including land-ownership, finance and cooperation from local authorities and other public and private sector interests. Both perspectives are equally valid, but there is a need to put into place some action which is a positive outcome of the consultation and work that so many people have put in. At the same time, the Village Plan must also give direction and a vision of how the residents wish their village to develop in the longer term. Only by doing this can measures and actions be put in place to ensure the vision is eventually achieved.

This gives rise to the following vision for the village:

Vision

Caton with Little Dale will be a socially mixed, environmentally friendly and economically prosperous community, with recreational, shopping, library and public transport facilities to meet the main needs of its residents and visitors, and housing for local people of all ages who wish to remain there; the community will be working together to protect its special environment and to enable all to enjoy it in a way that maintains enjoyment by future generations.

A great deal of work has been undertaken by the Parish Plan Steering Committee in carrying out the initial consultations with various user groups around the village. In many cases their work is ongoing and further recommendations may come forward as a result. This Plan is therefore in some ways an interim report on “work in progress”, especially in relation to any major projects that require land, finance, time and commitment of many people. However there are also many other firm recommendations that can bring more immediate results, many of which do not require large amounts of money. They do however need ratification, support and leadership from the bodies concerned.

Further work is also a need to address the overlap between the issues of children’s play, sport and recreation facilities and providing activities for young people. The open area of Fell View and possibly land near the primary school have all been identified to assist in such provision. The Parish Council, in consultation with residents, Lancaster City Council and other bodies, will need to give a lead on the co-ordination and development of these proposals.

While many of the actions will achieve ‘rapid solutions’, others are longer term aspirations, all contributing to the vision of how the village is to develop in the longer term. It is envisaged that Caton with Littledale will be a socially mixed, environmentally friendly and economically prosperous community, with recreational, shopping, library and public transport facilities to meet the main needs of its residents and visitors, and housing for local people of all ages who wish to remain there; the community will be working together to protect its special environment and to enable all to enjoy it in a way that maintains enjoyment by future generations.

In order to achieve the results required the committee have developed ideas that would enable various groups to fulfil these objectives. The Parish Council will help to monitor the progress of the plan and the aim is for action groups to be formed in order to take these ideas forward.

. Health

On Access to Health Services	To liaise with the Primary Care Trust on this issue, particularly Chiropody and Dentists.
On Support for Elderly	To encourage isolated members of our community to access the many local social activities. To investigate what assistance is needed to help the elderly, infirm and disabled population to access services.

Community Safety

Policing Matters	To work with the Police authority on raising the profile of the Community Beat Officer and Community Support Police Officer.
Neighbourhood Watch	To promote Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the area.

Transport

Parking	Investigate the need for and potential provision of further car parking. To liaise with the two local Primary Schools on their Travel Plans to ease congestion at school pick up and drop off times.
Traffic Calming	To liaise with County Council and Police on how to reduce speeding in the village. To lobby for implementation of solutions.
Cycling	To work with County Council's Cycling Strategy Officer on the strategy implementation in the Parish.
Bus Service	Update evidence of need and support the assessment of the economic impact of restricting Rural Public Transport. Lobbying County Council, Stagecoach and other providers. Applying for grants to improve services within the village.

Environment

Litter & Street Cleaning	Develop proposals on how to reduce litter and keep the streets clean in the village. Liaise with City Council over its litter strategy and fly tipping.
Dog Fouling & Other Excrement	Develop proposals on how to reduce dog fouling. Liaise with City Council's Environmental Health on this issue.
Noise Pollution	Identifying the source of the problem e.g. traffic, and develop potential solutions in consultation with Environmental Health.
Street Furniture	To review existing signage in the village. To act on this survey as appropriate.
Footpaths	To sustain and improve our footpath network and publicise their existence
Protection of our Natural Environment	To work with the Countryside Agency, County Council, Forest of Bowland, Lune Valley Habitat Group and other voluntary groups on developing and promoting nature conservation. To encourage the involvement of community groups and individuals in this work.

Sustainable Rural Economy

<p>Self Employment Business Encouragement</p>	<p>To promote the village as a place to base your business. To review current needs of business in the Parish. To liaise with City Council Economic Development team and other agencies to get more information on grants, schemes and support services.</p>
<p>Shop Retention Farmer's Markets</p>	<p>To investigate how to promote the sale and use of local produce. To promote the retention of local retail establishments.</p>

Housing

<p>Affordable Housing</p>	<p>To liaise with City Council's Strategic Housing department. To campaign for affordable housing schemes for rent or purchase for local people. To campaign for more effective use of existing buildings.</p>
<p>Quality of Housing</p>	<p>To liaise with City Council's Strategic Housing department and other agencies. To ensure that housing schemes are sympathetic to the environment of the village. To promote schemes which encourage energy efficiency in the Parish.</p>

Sport & Leisure

Volunteering & Community Involvement	To promote volunteering and community involvement with the support of the Council of Voluntary Service. To promote the activities of organisations which are active locally to and act as a catalyst for community action.
Play Areas	To develop and implement a strategy to improve the leisure and play facilities for children and young people in the Parish.
Sports Facilities	To support current sports activities and the retention of facilities. To encourage the development of new facilities as required.
Library	To work with County to align the library services more closely with user needs.
Community Buildings	To support the development and retention of community facilities and buildings.
Adult Education	To build on existing consultation with the community on their local needs and to promote and develop a programme.

SUMMARY OF PRIOR SURVEYS AND OTHER EVIDENCE

PEOPLE

The population in 1992 was 2706 and is now 2720

The present balance of age groups in the village between young, middle aged and older residents is similar to the average for Lancashire as a whole (according to the REAL survey of 400 responses) with marginally lower proportions of people aged below 55 and marginally higher proportions of older people. This survey shows a slightly higher proportion of females to males than the Lancashire data. The Census 2001 also indicates that the Lower Lune Valley Ward has a slightly older average age than Lancaster, and slightly fewer people in each age group below 60 years old. The Census also shows relatively more married or re-married, fewer divorcees and slightly more widowed.. The Census figures show that 99.5% of the population are white and over four out of five people are 'Christian' – a little higher than Lancaster. The 2001 Census found that The Lower Lune Valley residents were slightly better educated than those of Lancaster with just under a quarter with no qualifications and just over a quarter qualified to degree level or above.

The 1992 Village Appraisal reported a permanent residency of 98% indicating that holiday homes are not a problem. It also reported that the number of people working or studying outside the parish was 55% - and asks 'are we a dormitory village?' The REAL survey found that from survey respondents (190) 8% worked at home; 28% traveled less than 5 miles; 38% between 5 and 10 miles; 22% traveled more than 10 miles. This suggests that the village/ parish is 'dormitory' only if this reflects work within Lancaster and Morecambe, including Lancaster University.

HOUSING

The 1992 Village Appraisal found a relatively stable population: 73% had lived here more than 5 and 45% more than 15 years, including 24% between 26 and 50 years. Only 15% were looking for alternative accommodation. This would be in the village (42%) or elsewhere in the parish (14%) and outside but within the parish (24%). The Appraisal commented that the main growth period was the mid 60's to early 70's. The children of this influx 'have moved away or into Lancaster and Morecambe almost without exception'.

The census data showed slightly fewer one person households (just over a quarter) in the Lower Lune Valley than in Lancaster and similar proportions with dependent children. There were fewer in the Parish without facilities such as central heating, sole use of bath, shower, w.c.

i) Local housing needs

If local housing needs are not met, there are potential losses to the community including

- ❖ The exclusion of people who have grown up in the villages and would like their families to do the same but are constrained by low incomes/ high housing costs
- ❖ Relatively few young families to enable schools and other facilities to flourish and the age balance to be healthy
- ❖ Adverse knock on effects for local business tourism sport etc
- ❖ The sense of well-being from enabling everyone who loves the area to live here
- ❖ The difficulty of assessing the need for additional housing is that data cannot be sought from the people affected because they are not there to be asked.

Outstanding need for local housing has been a focus of existing residents in previous surveys.

i) Ownership of property

The REAL report found that 91% of households were owner occupiers; only 4% renting from Local authority and 3% from a private landlord. *The 2001 Census reported that 'Just over four fifths of residents of the Lower Lune Valley were owner occupiers (more than Lancashire). Proportions were very small, but there were fewer tenants of the council or housing association of registered social landlord'.* The 1992 Village Appraisal found that of those who would like to move, 13% wanted district council rented housing which, if representative of current demand within the village, is unlikely to be met from a 4% stock. However numbers were small (96) and should be treated with caution. The Village Appraisal reported 3% of those living in the village and wanting to move, selected 'Shared Equity'. We do not know how substantial demand for each category might be if the views of those wanting to move into the village were taken into account.

ii) Housing by age and affordability

Potential age and affordability have been jointly investigated, although they are not necessarily associated. The weakness in the evidence is that it has been provided by people's views about the needs of others rather than themselves.

The Village Appraisal 1992 drew responses from substantial numbers:

- ❖ 423 people (34%) thought more housing for young people was needed (responses skewed towards younger age groups).
- ❖ 397 (32%) thought more housing for local people was needed.
- ❖ 231 (18%) thought more housing for the elderly is needed (responses skewed to older age groups).
- ❖ 229 (18%) thought more housing for low income people was needed.
- ❖ 877 (69% of 1266) said they would have no objection in principle to a development which might help to meet housing needs.

From the small numbers in the village wanting to move (most within the locality), 12% required a 'low cost starter' home although most of these are likely to be owner occupiers already.

The REAL report indicated that the priorities had changed little by 2001:

- ❖ Affordable housing for local people (180) 34%
- ❖ Housing for young people (93) 18%
- ❖ No housing needed (88) 17%
- ❖ No opinion (70) 13%
- ❖ Housing for elderly (61) 12%

If the Village Appraisal responses for 'local' and 'low income' were combined then this would broadly correspond with the REAL findings. Affordable housing for local people and for the young scores higher than housing for the elderly, and this is especially notable as survey completion rates are higher for older age groups, who may be relatively likely to emphasise their own prospective needs.

However, as the Appraisal pointed out, there may be a link between satisfying these demands. 'If more elderly people can move, as they wish, into more appropriate accommodation, then a possible 'log jam' may be released, allowing more inter-village movement'. 'More people might be able to move into the village if a number of elderly people within the village could move into more appropriately sized accommodation.'

The most recent data show that the population of the Parish has fallen, and so also has average household size. There may be a growing mismatch between demand and supply in terms of size and affordability of the housing stock, but on this there is a lack of quantitative evidence. The 1992 Village Appraisal stated that 1 bedroom housing was wanted by 12%; 2 bedrooms by 31%; 3 bedrooms by 34%; 4 bedrooms by 19%. It did not indicate if there is excess demand for smaller units from those in the village wanting to move.

The REAL survey however found that 80 people from 247 responses considered that 'Sheltered or wardened housing for elderly people' was inadequate and 167 responded that it was 'adequate'. It is not clear to what extent these figures reflect personal circumstances. More evidence is required to assess true demand.

The Lancaster City Council housing needs survey (which unfortunately does not specify how or from whom the data was obtained) identifies a need for approximately 75 new housing units that are affordable, within the whole of the Lune Valley over the next 3 years; for household income of less than £20,000 and monthly housing costs of below £500. Our Parish population would form an unknown proportion of this.

iii) Housing and energy conservation

The energy saving potential of houses is very far from being realised according to the REAL survey findings. Only one in five had loft insulation and similar proportions a lagged hot water tank. Less than one in five reported using energy saving bulbs. Only about one in ten had draught excluders on windows or doors, and less than one in ten had cavity wall insulation. The City council have also commissioned a housing condition survey of the district, which has brought to light the energy inefficiency of housing.

INCOME

The REAL survey data on income showed that those individuals who responded had marginally higher incomes than for Lancashire as a whole, with slightly lower proportions in the 'up to £5,000' and between £20,001 and £30,000. There was little sign of an affluent commuter belt. If 43% of households have less than £10,000 income, there are likely to be knock on effects for ability to pay for services and recreational pursuits etc. However the REAL report does not make clear whether the figures relate to households or the individuals in them.

	Caton		Lancs	
	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total
Excluding no responses				
Up to £5000	64	19%	441	21%
£5000-£10000	82	24%	513	25%
£10001-£15000	69	21%	412	20%
£15001-£20000	45	13%	245	12%
£20001-£25000	21	6%	136	7%
£25001-£30000	14	4%	115	6%
More than £30000	41	12%	221	11%
Total	336		2083	

The REAL report found a higher proportion of survey respondents on a state pension (31%) than for Lancashire as a whole (23%) and lower proportion receiving family allowances (9%) than for Lancashire as a whole (11%). The proportions receiving other benefits were the same.

EMPLOYMENT

According to the REAL survey, our villages have slightly lower rates of full and part time employment, and much lower rates of self employment than Lancashire as a whole (at 26%; 13%; 6% respectively). However unemployment reported appeared low (1%). The balance of respondents were made up of retired people (45%) with small proportions looking after home and family (5%); disability or long term illness (2%); student (1%).

i) More local jobs?

Of REAL survey respondents, only 2 indicated that the cause of employment was 'no jobs in the local area'; one 'no reliable transport to jobs'; one to 'low confidence'. None indicated 'need for affordable childcare'; 'feel need for skills/ training first' or 'getting information about vacancies'. Low response does not mean an absence of demand for local work. Local people are recruited by local retail establishments and other businesses; Lune Valley Kids Club attracts and qualifies local staff. There may be 'unmet demand', for example from returnees to work, or 'improvers'. However more systematic evidence is required.

The Village Appraisal asked what jobs people would like to see. Of 1310 respondents, 68% wanted to see more local jobs becoming available. 63% (of 1296) said they would be in favour of 'a few small-scale light industrial workshops' if proposed for the village/parish. Moreover a site was identified – 91% of 943 would 'prefer' the rear of the Highways department (Old Railway Goods Yard).

ii) Better jobs for local people and returnees to work?

It appears that the main source of demand is for improving rather than finding employment. The Victoria Institute 'One stop shop' survey of 1997, which asked people if they would be interested in various classes on computers, found a demand from 37% of all respondents (i.e. 72 out of total 195) wanting to improve their career and jobs and from returnees to work. The proportions were: 'advance/ (change/ begin) career' (28%); 'return to work' (7%); 'improve existing work' (2%). Specific classes of interest were 'computers for beginners' (41% of respondents to question); 'word processing' (39%); 'business skills on computers' (30%); 'internet, e-mail, video-conferencing' (28%). The benefits of such classes for the community, rather than the individual were more highly rated: 'computers for beginners' (87% of respondents to question); 'word processing' (72%); 'business skills on computers' (68%); 'internet, e-mail, video-conferencing' (52%). 85% of respondents thought such courses would help people in the community to return to work and 82% that it would help people in the community advance their careers.

The REAL survey identified 74 people undertaking adult education courses, of which 70 were part time (16 hours or less). 39 of these were 'mainly to help career or gain employment'. It appeared that 22% of the reasons indicated by respondents for not attending adult education courses were that 'career advice is needed first'. But when advice has been offered locally, sessions have been in the day, rather than the evening when more working people can attend.

The 'One stop shop' survey indicated a substantial personal demand for local information about employment (16% of survey respondents) and training (21%). 34% were interested in local information about 'education', although this may have been interpreted as school age as well as adult education opportunities. The proportion who thought local information would be of benefit to the community rather than themselves was 62% (employment); 64% (training); 74% (education). The personal levels of interest appear to be from improvers and returnees to work, rather than the officially unemployed.

iii) Prospects of local business

A Victoria Institute questionnaire to 70 local businesses, in 1997, suggested that almost a half would find advice on grants useful; a quarter would find local information from Business Link, property, training and recruitment useful; one in five would find legal advice and advice on tax useful. Nearly half indicated that a local beginner's course in computing and an accounting course would be of interest.

Following on a survey by the Victoria Institute of 'The IT needs of rural business' in 2000 undertook 50 in depth interviews of 40 local farms and 10 other businesses within the village/ parish. The final report provides substantial insights into the perceptions of local business of need for skills and knowledge and the conditions under which training designed to meet these may be taken up.

iv) Self-employment?

The REAL survey found that 6% (n=22) of respondents could envisage starting own business in the foreseeable future with a further 5% (n=21) 'uncertain', in addition to the 5% (n=21) who were already self-employed or ran their own business. Asked what sort of business, the numbers were small but suggest small service provision, egg 9 using information technology; 5 tourism; 4 each 'care' and 'finance/ insurance'; 3 horticulture; 2 each retail and food processing/ catering; one health and three 'other'. Asked if it would be more likely that they would start up a business if support and advice were available, 12 said 'much more likely' and 7 more said 'a little more' likely. If these small numbers were to be reliable to be grossed up for the total population this would indicate 81 and 47 people respectively who might be encouraged to set up their own business or become self employed.

v) Commuting to work

Cars are the prime means of transport in the village – the REAL survey found that 88% of respondents had access to a vehicle 'at all times'.

Cars provide the main means of commuting to work for the village. The 1992 Village Appraisal found 70% of 1261 respondents had daytime access to a vehicle; and of 910 respondents, 33% used it for 'business purposes' and 54% for travel to work'. A further 17% used it to transport children to school or college. By contrast only 17% 'often' and 10% 'occasionally' used the bus to travel to work – while 73% 'never' did this. There are implications for environmental pollution: of 1129 respondents, 43% travelled outside the parish but within 10 miles; 7% within 11-30 miles and 5% further.

If commuting by car is to be reduced, attractive alternatives must be found. The Village Appraisal found that 50% of 1076 respondents said they would not use the bus even if it was more convenient, and a much smaller 21% (n=221) said they would. However this may imply a substantial reduction of environmental pollution.

The REAL survey attracted a lower response but potential for alternative transport emerged from a finer breakdown. From 190 responses, 8% worked at home; 6% within less than a mile and 3% between 1 and 2 miles (either normally walkable); another 19% between 2 and 5 miles (easy cycling distance) and 38% between 5 and 10 miles (cycling distance); 13% between 10 and 25 miles; 9% more than 25 miles (potential rail passengers); 5% reported no fixed work destination. This indicates potential for over 2/3 of people to avoid using a car to travel to work, in addition to the alternative of bus travel.

Actual patterns suggest substantial potential for change. The REAL survey found that of 187 respondents, 6% worked at home; of the rest 88% drive a car or van to work; 4% use a bicycle; 3% travel on foot; 2% use bus, minibus or coach; 1% each 'motorbike, scooter, moped' and 'other'.

LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT

The 1992 Village Appraisal undertook a thorough investigation of views about the countryside and environment.

Of 1287 responses, 67% thought there should be special nature reserves in the village/parish for wild flowers and animals. But 68% of 1277 responses considered that 'parts of the village/parish are spoilt and could be better looked after'. Individual priorities for improvement to local land were sought. Over 92% and 91% respectively thought that to 'clean out water courses' and 'look after smaller woods' was very important or worthwhile. This proportion was 87% for 'preserve single trees'; 82% for 'keep hedges short and tidy'; 66% for 'plant more hedges / trees'; and less than half (38%) only for the 'wild look' of 'let hedges grow naturally'. The Parish Council have since employed a lengthsman to attend to such priorities in public areas.

People also responded to 'what do you think could be done with the roads, lanes and paths to make the local countryside better?' Removing litter was considered very important or worthwhile by 99%; 'repair gates stiles and bridges' by 96%; 'stop vehicle damage to verges' and 'keep roadside verges mown' each by 83%; 'open more footpaths/bridleways' by 68%; while 'let roadside verges grow' less than half at 47%; 'close some footpaths/bridleways' was unpopular at only 9%. Again, the lengthsman is employed to attend to such priorities in public areas. Whether priorities have changed since the survey, or satisfaction has increased because of the lengthsman's work, is not known.

The REAL survey found hearsay evidence of some similar strength of feeling about the countryside and environment, but the survey asked questions from a different perspective, about 'issues in the community' to which there was a lower response. 19% were concerned about 'declining numbers of birds'; 16% each about 'loss of wild flowers' and 'river or stream fouling'; 14% about 'loss of natural habitat' and 7% about 'flooding'. The contrasting responses between the two surveys may indicate that most people think positively that the countryside and environment is good but could be even better.

The REAL survey found that 87% (of 400) used footpaths and bridleways. When asked what factors might stop or limit their use, no single item attracted more than 7% of people to agree. However the indicate that these issues may deserve attention if it were valid to 'gross up' numbers to the total population: 40 people each were deterred by 'lack of signposting or waymarking' and 'fear of trespassing'; 39 'obstructed access'; 30 'poor surfaces'; 29 'don't know where the paths go'; 26 'fear of farm animals'; 23 'fear of abuse from landowners or others'; 16 'fear of dogs'.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Village Appraisal asked how good were specific services in the village.

The most used service was Doctor (80% of 1209 responses); followed by District nurse (27% of 1018 responses); Health visitor (16% of 962 responses); Ambulance (16% of 952 responses); Chiropody (11% of 983 responses); Maternity (10% of 950 responses); Loan of medical equipment (9% of 973 responses); Home help (5% of 959 responses); Meals on wheels (4% of 939 responses).

Satisfaction with services appeared high for all. In order (as a proportion of users) these were: Doctor (99%); District nurse (96%); Ambulance (94%); Health visitor (92%); Maternity (86%); Loan of medical equipment (82%); Chiropody (76%); Home help (76%); Meals on wheels (66%).

The REAL survey asked a different question - 'Is the provision of the following services adequate?' of a different set of services. Of the total responses to each service, the proportion responding 'adequate' was: Pharmacy (97%); Doctors (96%); Meals on wheels (83%); Sheltered or wardened housing for elderly people (68%); Assistance for elderly or disabled people or with disabilities (62%); Dentist (10%) - unsurprising as there is no village service. Since the 'Assistance for elderly or disabled people or with disabilities' were considered inadequate by 71 people it would appear worthwhile to investigate what kind of assistance is required and for what so as to provide an evidence base to seek appropriate support services. The REAL survey also listed many one off suggestions which perhaps reflect the limited questions but which could be considered in future investigations.

The REAL report found that 21% of respondents were responsible for a child or children of school age (which excludes responsibilities for younger children) and 6% each for an older person who is unable to care for themselves, and for a person with a disability or long term illness.

REAL asked some questions relating to psychological and physical health. The survey asked people if they were lonely where they were living, and there appeared slightly less loneliness than for Lancashire as a whole. 18% said they were occasionally lonely; 6% regularly and 1% every day. 4% reported a child of school age with asthma. 66% of survey respondents reported participating in physical activity, including brisk walking, for at least 20 minutes and 3 days a week.

Reasons given for not taking exercise, in order of number of responses were: No time (46); Illness/ disability presents (38); Does not want (28); No exercise facilities in the area (19); Local exercise facilities are too expensive (13); Nowhere safe to walk cycle (4).

EMERGENCY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER SERVICES

i) Emergency services

The Village Appraisal asked for views 'on the standard of the emergency services which cover the village/ parish'. 93% of respondents to the question marked ambulance 'good' or 'reasonable'; proportions are 90% for fire and 72% for police.

The REAL survey focused on crime. The proportion of question respondents who had not suffered from crime was at 86% - slightly higher than Lancashire overall. 6% reported car theft and 4% burglary. In response to 'feeling of being afraid after dark' people reported feeling slightly safer than in Lancashire overall, with 5% 'very unsafe' and 20 'a bit unsafe'; and 48% and 23% feeling 'fairly safe' or 'very safe'. It is striking that women feel five times as safe as men. More information could be sought about which women feel vulnerable (are they more elderly?) and there may be potential ways of enhancing feeling of safety among the women identified.

People were found to be more likely to be worried about home being broken into and something stolen than being mugged. Of all survey respondents, 49% wanted 'increased police presence'; 18% a 'neighbourhood watch scheme'; and 10% each 'better street lighting' and 'more information on crime'. Individual suggestions were recorded.

There have been many changes in service provision and new initiatives especially by the police and responses may have changed accordingly.

ii) Environmental services

Recycling

Since the 1992 village appraisal, recycling facilities about which people were surveyed have been provided. The 2000 REAL survey enquired about why people (average of 38% of total responses) did not recycle specific types of waste: paper; glass; books; tin/aluminum cans; white goods; clothes and shoes; plastic; raw food waste; garden waste; foil. Non re-cycling was highest for foil (58%); tin/aluminum cans (53%); raw food waste (49%); plastic (48%). The outstanding explanations offered for not re-cycling were no door/kerbside collection or local collection point, cited by an average of 45% of non re-cyclers across all items. This proportion rose to 63% for plastic, and 47% for cans, indicating that providing facilities would be especially effective, as also for clothes and shoes (55%) and books (54%). However facilities would be likely to be less effective for foil (38%); white goods (37%) and raw food waste (29%).

Other services

The village appraisal asked ‘what is your opinion of the following services in the village/ parish?’ As a proportion of those giving an opinion, those indicating ‘good’ or ‘reasonable’ , in order of frequency, were: refuse collection (96%); postal deliveries (90%); street lighting (90%); telephone kiosk reliability (84%); road maintenance (77%); verge maintenance (76%); road cleaning (74%); provision of litter bins (47%); footpath sweeping (44%). Since 1992 the Parish Council has increased the provision of litter bins. It would be helpful to have evidence to show if opinion has changed significantly since 1992.

iii) Issues

The REAL project asked if the community suffered significantly from listed possible environmental problems. As a percentage of total responses to the question, dog fouling ranked top with 39% citing it; followed by speeding traffic (31%); litter (21%); foul smells (4%); unsightly buildings 3%; graffiti 1%. Despite the efforts of the parish council to provide dog waste bags and bins and warning notices; litter picking by the lengthsmen; a speed camera on Lancaster Road, the first three issues appear still to present major challenges for the community, parish and district councils and other related agencies.

The REAL survey asked if people suffered from noise. Out of the possible 400, 263 did not respond, indicating a large majority did not so suffer. Of the responses, the highest proportion indicated road traffic (31%); followed by dogs (20%); aircraft (19%); neighbours (13%); pubs, clubs, entertainment (6%); agricultural activities (5%); other (5%); industrial/ commercial premises (1%); trains, construction/ demolition, and quarrying (0%). Road nuisance appears again as a problem, and the low flying military jets are also causing distress.

RETAIL SERVICES AND OTHER FACILITIES

i) Main facilities

The Village Appraisal asked how often people used certain shops and services. The frequency of use for each tended to be ranked similarly, whether daily, weekly, monthly and less frequent use. In order of overall frequency of use were: retail stores (88%); post office (72%); garage services (60%); chemist (55%); banks (37%); public houses (34%); library (26%); city council mobile collection van (11%); public telephone (6%). Where these facilities are privately owned, and business cannot draw on other customer bases, these figures may reflect sustainability. Banks no longer operate in the village/ parish. Otherwise the village has not yet suffered from the closures of other establishments suffered by other, smaller populations.

ii) Other facilities

The Village Appraisal asked if the village/ parish needs other facilities. Of 957 respondents to the question, public toilets were indicated by 73%; more amenity seats (60%); more public telephones (21%). In 1999 a public toilet was provided in the centre of the village.

SPORTS, SOCIAL AND ENTERTAINMENT

i) Activities

The 1992 Village Appraisal asked people about use of the main community facilities then available. A relatively small proportion of respondents (varying between 910 and 1024) used them 'often': 7% each for the leisure and friendship clubs; 6% for outdoor sports; 5% for indoor sports and 2% for dancing. Asked what club respondents would like to see formed (n=592), 'hobbies and pastimes' were selected by 56%; sports facilities by 47%; drama group by 25%; more drop-in evenings by 21%; more drop-in days by 16%.

The REAL survey asked people which activities they would like to see in the community. 29% did not respond; 15% of responses indicated sports; 11% arts and crafts; 8% each local history society, youth group, clubs for older people; 5% each drama group, women's group, parent and toddler group.

The 1997 survey by the Victoria Institute Council of Management asked respondents to indicate interest in specified activities and to indicate the preferred time of day. The survey completion was skewed towards the older age groups and retired people. Nevertheless there was interest from all age groups for additional activities.

Some patterns are suggested. Of 193 respondents, all age groups except the over 60's preferred evening to morning or afternoon activities, although in the 26-45 age group about one in five each would attend morning and in the afternoon (perhaps reflecting part time work), and about a quarter of the 46-59 age group. By employment or study status, preference for evening activities varied: for those in 'full or part time employment' it was 65%; at home with or without children, 22%; at school or college, 100%; self employed, 43%; retired only 23%. There were 130 respondents to specific 'evening' activities; over 65 for 'events'; between 45 and 50 each for education, clubs and sports; between 40 and 45 for healthcare, legal advice and information about timetables; between 30 and 40 for training and tax advice; between 20 and 30 for information about employment; between 10 and 20 each information about benefits and housing. There were similar proportions but fewer responses for morning (74); lunchtime (36); afternoon (89).

ii) Volunteering

Evidence suggests a willingness to volunteer in the community. When asked ‘would you be willing to help organise and run any of the following social activities?’ 49% would help with leisure activities; 48% with sporting activities; 39% with social activities. The REAL survey of 2000 reported that 38% of respondents had been involved in a community or voluntary group at least 3 times in the last 12 months.

iii) Adult education classes

The REAL project obtained 222 reasons why respondents did not attend adult education classes. 23% of these were because of the lack of local provision/ college location/ lack of transport; 14% because of the times classes are held; ‘can’t find the course I want’, 9% and cost, 7%. These figures suggest substantial scope for increasing what is on offer locally and tailoring it more closely to meet local need.

iv) Activities for different age groups

The Village Appraisal 1992 showed a sharp age gradient of response to ‘what are your views on local social facilities’ for each age group. For children aged up to 16, 24% of respondents to the question considered these ‘good’ or ‘reasonable’ while 28% thought they were ‘poor’. For young people aged 17-25, 9% considered these ‘good’ or ‘reasonable’ while 46% thought they were ‘poor’. For people 26-60, the proportions had reversed to 25% ‘good’ or ‘reasonable’ and 21% ‘poor’. For people over 60, considered these ‘good’ or ‘reasonable’ 41% and only 5% ‘poor’. If this reflects what people themselves want – rather than what they think is good for the community – then it is the 17-25 year old group that would be most short of social facilities.

The Village Appraisal did not distinguish between the very different needs and provision which might be appropriate for children up to 16. The REAL consultation ran workshops with primary age children, and the report listed the ideas, but there has as yet been no further enquiry to gauge the robustness of support for suggestions. The stick a star part of a public consultation produced 31% support for more activities for young people – e.g. ‘a place for teenage children to meet/ gather that they want to use’ but the REAL report did not consult the young people themselves.

TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

i) Mobility and car use

The Village Appraisal 1992 asked ‘do you experience transport difficulties in getting out of the village/parish to other places?’ Of 1186 respondents to the question, 66% said ‘never’; 25% ‘occasionally’ and 9% ‘often’. 30% of 1261 respondents were not ‘a driver who has daytime access to a car’. Of those who answered ‘yes’ (910) the greatest use of the car was reported for ‘leisure’ (86%) and ‘shopping’ (81%) – well ahead of use for business (33%), work (54%) and school/ college journeys (17). It would appear that lack of a car could be a substantial constraint on lifestyle for those without a car. However the 2000 REAL survey found that a much lower proportion of survey respondents ‘never’ had access to a car; 88% always did; 2% ‘seldom or occasionally’; 2% ‘weekends only’ and 1% ‘usually weekdays’. The contrast between the surveys may reflect rapidly rising car ownership, and numbers of vehicle per household.

One solution for those without access to a car is using local facilities and activities. But the REAL report also showed some constraints on mobility within the local area (see numbers in table below) which appear to require different support services for transport.

	Fairly difficult	Very difficult	Total difficult
Access to Corner shop	1	4	5
Post office	3	4	7
Public transport facility	22	6	28
Doctor	17	7	24
Park or other outdoor recreation	28	10	38
Total finding access to local facilities difficult	71	31	102

The difficulty of access was also reported for other facilities, some local, some no longer available. Difficulty in accessing a bank (40% of respondents) and sports facilities (32%) are prominent. A cash machine ‘hole in the wall’ has now been installed to overcome the former.

	Fairly difficult	Very difficult	Total difficult	Total difficult as % of all responses
Recycling facility	36	13	49	13%
Sports facility	85	20	105	32%
Bank	118	26	144	40%
Filling station	1	2	3	1%

The REAL survey also showed difficulties in accessing outside facilities, presumably despite public transport:

	Fairly difficult	Very difficult	Total
Access to Local hospital	60	10	70
Large/ medium sized supermarket	45	15	60
Total finding access difficult	105	25	130

For people who are able to make use of it, a solution is public transport outside the village/parish.

ii) Public transport

The 1992 Village Appraisal asked if people used the bus service and if so how often. The proportions of respondents who never used it for work were 73%; shopping (62%); medical visits 84%; social or leisure 72% or any other 85%. It was used 'often' by 17% for work; 10% for shopping; 3% for medical visits and 7% for social or leisure.

Asked 'how do you rate the bus service', the ratio of 'good' and 'reasonable' to 'poor' was 90%:10% for route; 63%:37% for timetable; 70%:30% for reliability; 26%:74% for cost. Cost therefore could be the main reason for not using the bus. People were asked if the bus service were more convenient, 'would you use it?' to which 50% of 1076 respondents said 'no' and only 21 'yes'.

The REAL survey provided more detail on 'how public transport could improve to ensure greater usage' – although not that the respondent would use it more. Of 832 responses to the question, the recommendation, in order of frequency of response was as follows:

	% of responses
Increase in frequency	17%
Better value for money	15%
Better information on times	14%
Run at more appropriate times	9%
No matter how improved would not use	9%
Public transport adequate as it is	8%
Current provision more reliable	6%
Easier access for people with mobility problems	6%
Assistance with baggage/ young children	5%
Dial-a-ride	5%
Other	4%
Increase safety on current provision	1%

31 individual suggestions were also offered.

iii) Cycle path

A cycle path along the Lune Valley between the Bull Beck picnic site and Lancaster has been opened since the REAL report. People had been asked how it would be used and responses, in order of frequency were as follows:

	% of responses
cycling for pleasure	41%
would not use	18%
getting to and from social and leisure activities	14%
getting to and from the shops	12%
getting to and from work	8%
would prefer safer roads	6%

iv) Parking

The 1992 Village Appraisal asked 'if you have a vehicle do you have problems parking in the village/parish?' At that time 68% of 921 responders indicated 'never'; 25% 'occasionally' and 7% 'often'. However there has been a self evident shortage of parking at the centre of Caton for those using shops and post office and the Victoria Institute. This has a knock on effect on street parking on the A683 and Brookhouse Road. Asked 'is street parking a road hazard in the village/parish?', 81% of those expressing an opinion said 'yes'. Friction has occurred because of the public using parking at the Station Hotel and the Health Centre car park. The Parish Council has provided extra parking in Station Road and a park between the Pharmacy and library, and both are well used and often full.