



FOSTON & THORNTON-LE-CLAY

**PARISH PLAN
2009**

A COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Foston & Thornton-le-Clay Parish Boundaries

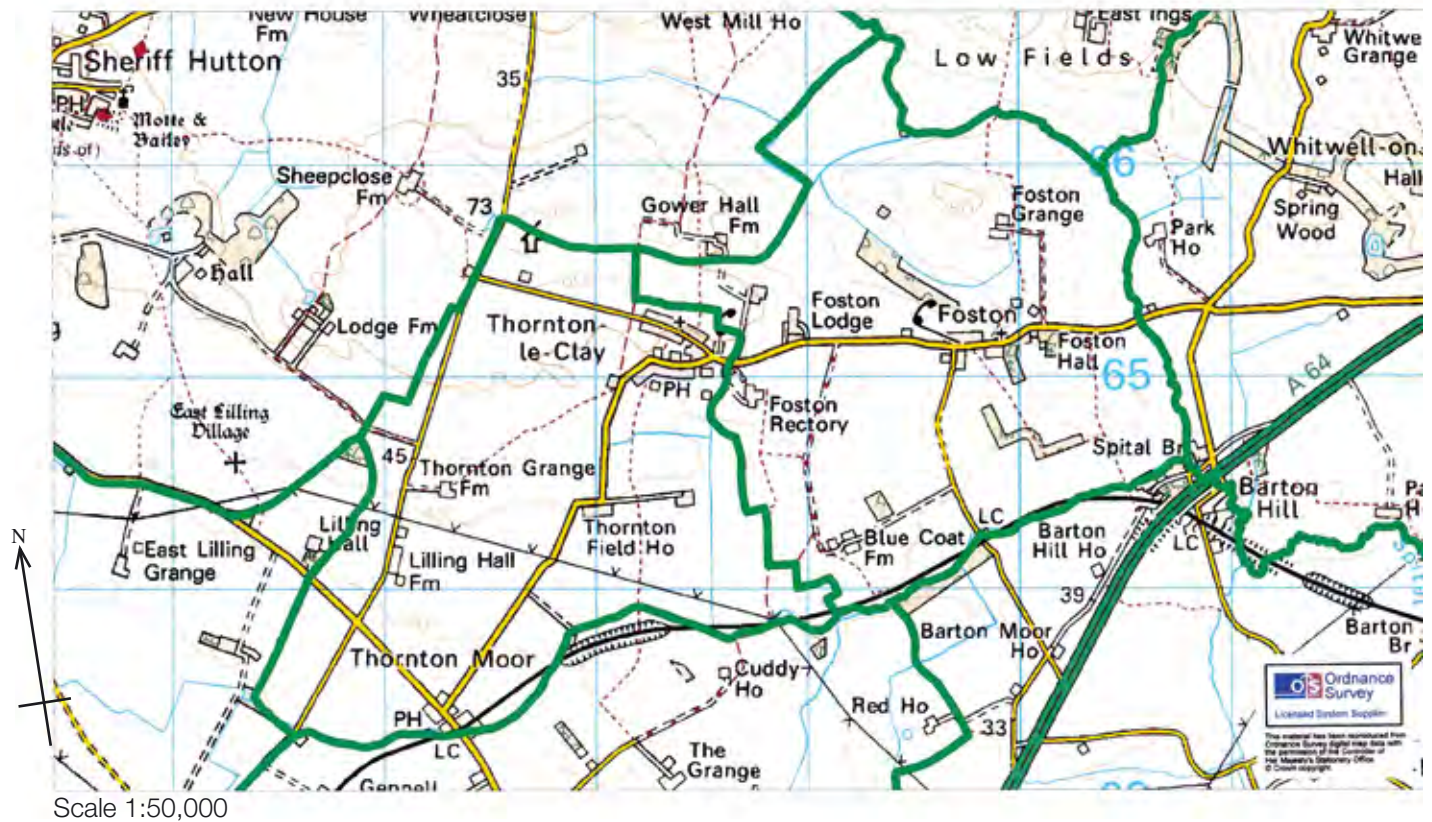




Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	4
What is a community strategy?	4
Why have a community strategy?	4
When has the consultation process taken place?	4
How will the strategy ultimately be of benefit?.....	4
About the Villages	5
History of the Villages	6
Demographics of the villages	7
Facilities and Amenities in the Villages	8
Parish Churches	8
Foston C of E Primary School	8
White Swan Inn, Low Street, Thornton-le-Clay	9
Thompsons Arms Inn, Rice Lane, Flaxton.....	9
Foston and Thornton-le-Clay Village Hall.....	9
Employment and Business	10
Goods and Services	10
Other Facilities.....	10-11
Environment	12-13
Development	14-15
Traffic and Transport	16
Communications	17
Action Plan	18-21
Summary and Conclusion	22

Response to Questionnaire

Around 200 adults in the parishes could have replied and we received 148 completed questionnaires. This is an overall **81%** return rate of which there were **56%** returned from Foston and **87%** from Thornton-le-Clay and outliers.

Further details of the Foston and Thornton-le-Clay Community Strategy can be found on the following web site:

<http://mycommunitystrategy.pbwiki.com/>

For those who do not have computer access, further details can be obtained by contacting a member of the Parish Council.

The current members of the Steering Committee, as at May 2009, are:

Craig Anderton, Stuart Brown, Nigel Cox, Fiona Hill, John Holman, Mark Thompson, Chris Walker, Peter Woodhead

Introduction



Welcome to the Community Strategy for the Parishes of Foston and Thornton-le-Clay. The following pages represent a major step in a process of consultation that has been ongoing for a period of several months. In this time the volunteers on the Community Strategy Committee have, through various means, endeavored to find out what matters to you about the local environment in which we all live. What follows is an explanation of the process, a summary of the results and our recommendations for action based on what you want to see happen.

What is a Community Strategy?

A community strategy, otherwise known as a parish plan, sets out a vision for the community in the future and identifies the action needed to tackle issues of concern. In addition it includes everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the community, from transport to playgrounds. The community strategy 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.

Why have a Community Strategy?

As is often the case in a small rural community like our own there has been a lot of comment about the point of or need for a community strategy. Many people believe that villages such as ours grow naturally and needs are dealt with as they arise. However, we are a diverse community within which there is a broad spread of age groups, and a wide cross section of needs and opinions. Sometimes it is useful and often very valuable to ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard.

When has the Consultation Process taken place?

At an open meeting in July 2008 it was agreed unanimously to produce a Community Strategy and volunteers to be involved were sought. A Steering Committee was formed at a subsequent meeting and a successful application for funding was made from Rural Action Yorkshire.

Firstly a brief questionnaire was circulated to try and find out what was important to residents. The questionnaire asked what they liked, did not like, and would like to change about the parish. Information about community strategy/parish plans was provided on boards and displays at an open meeting in November 2008 and people were invited to make observations and raise any points relating to the parish. Taking these comments into account, the committee then researched and prepared a Community Strategy Questionnaire.

A cheese and wine evening was subsequently held to launch the main questionnaire, attended by the local parish councillors and councillors from the District and County Councils. Those attending were encouraged to post their views on a board or scale map of the villages, constructed by local school children.

A questionnaire was drawn up and personally delivered to every household in the parishes in January 2009. There was an opportunity for every person in the parishes over 11 years of age to have a questionnaire. Following analysis of the completed questionnaire, this strategy document was put together. In July 2009 the Community Strategy was published and sent to the local authorities for information and formal acceptance.

How will the Community Strategy ultimately be of benefit?

The Community Strategy will;

- enable our community to engage meaningfully with the local planning process;
- make known those issues that affect our community;
- identify and prioritise key issues within our community and include an Action Plan to promote the changes that the community would like to see at local, district and county levels and feeding into district and county strategies, through local strategic partnerships.

About the Villages



Foston and Thornton-le-Clay are villages in the Ryedale District of North Yorkshire, about 10 miles from York and 8 miles from Malton. These small villages lie about 1 mile apart on the northern edge of the Vale of York, alongside the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) where the hills begin to rise gently towards the North Yorkshire Moors to the north and the Yorkshire Wolds to the east. Although close to York and its extensive commuter villages, they are approached through quiet lanes bordered by agricultural land, trees and hedgerows.

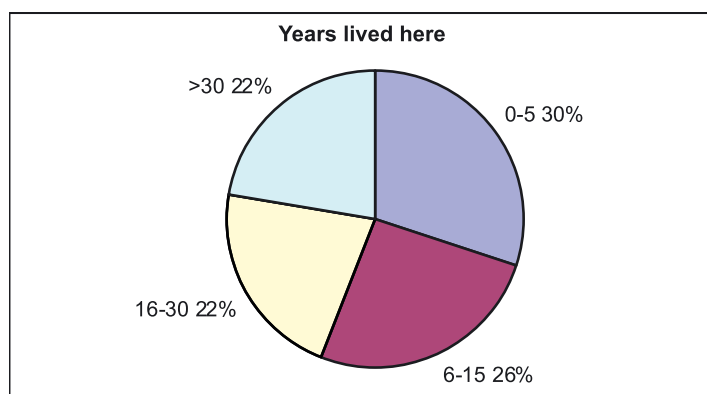
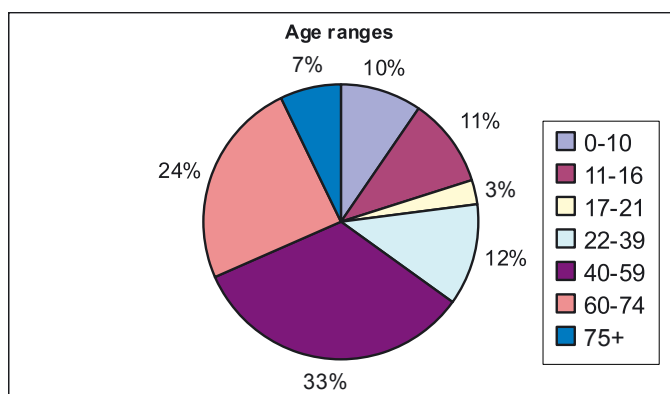
The population of Foston is around 50 and of Thornton-le-Clay and outlying homesteads is around 170. The Parish Church for the villages is located in Foston, whilst there is a small village school, a pub, a village hall and a Methodist chapel in Thornton-le-Clay. Although the origin of the villages is agricultural, there is a wide range of occupations, and a number of small businesses including farms. There is a good number of retired people, and many others who commute to work in York or Malton or work at home.

Although lying just outside the Howardian Hills AONB, the rural nature of Foston and Thornton-le-Clay and the surrounding countryside has much in common with the area within it. There is considerable open space surrounding the houses in the villages and these areas are used as gardens and paddocks on which you can see horses, sheep and other livestock grazing. In addition, many of the houses stand back from the village roads giving room for neat front gardens with grass verges and footpaths between the gardens and the roadway.

All the land surrounding the villages is farmed or down to permanent pasture and some fields still retain the ancient ridge and furrow pattern that was created centuries ago. On the gently rising land from the south to the north, whereas once there was dairy farming, arable farming now predominates with the usual crops being wheat, barley, oil-seed rape and potatoes. Livestock farming concentrates on sheep with a small number of pigs. As well as farming there are a number of horse-racing establishments in the wider surrounding area, with the nearby town of Malton a major centre in the horse racing industry.

Demographics of the villages

We estimate that there are over 220 adults and children in the parishes, with age ranges as shown in the first chart. The second chart shows the number of years that people have lived in the parishes.



History of the Villages



Imagine you are standing at the junction of High Street and Low Street in Thornton-le-Clay, around the time of the First World War, over 90 years ago. The unmade roads would have been dusty in summer and muddy in winter - there is good reason for the 'Clay' in Thornton-le-Clay's name, and in Foston's too, for it was Foston-le-Clay in former times. You might see a groom bringing horses from Foston Hall to be shod at the forge which stood between the two streets - the Old Forge still bears its name. Next door, heavy horses would be hauling up the wagons laden with tree trunks to be sawn at the woodyard at Wood House.

Across the road from the forge you might see the horses pulling drays, entering and leaving the Brewery which occupied what is now the Old Brewery House, and if the children were on their way home from school, you might see them bow and curtsy to the owners Mr and Mrs Christie as they passed by. If you were very lucky, you might have seen Rudyard Kipling coming or going from Nidd Cottage where his aunts Miss Kipling and Miss Dryden lived.

A little further down Low Street would be the White Swan, a public house as now, but then also the butcher's shop where pigs were slaughtered. The pub would be busy with people coming to draw water from the pump behind, for which each villager paid six pence a year. Outside, where the village hall now stands, you might have seen games of quoits being played.

Like many villages at that time, Thornton-le-Clay would have been semi-industrial, with its brewery, forge and wood yard. The industrial theme went further: Foston Hall had been bought by the Wormald family who made their money from the boom in the wool industry of the West Riding and chose the village for a country seat.



A thousand years of history

Foston and Thornton-le-Clay are ancient villages. The location and general arrangement of the villages originates from Anglo-Saxon times, when they developed along a main road running from Malton to Sheriff Hutton - the two most important local settlements of that time.

The 'manors' (farmlands) in Foston and Thornton are listed in the Domesday Book of 1086 as belonging to one Count Alan, but by 1167 they had been given to the Abbey of St Mary in York. The Abbey kept them, and presumably enjoyed the income from them, until in 1539 Henry VIII did away with the abbey, along with so many others, and grabbed the lands for himself. The Crown first leased the lands, then sold them to Thomas Bamburgh of Howsham in 1591, for £933 4s 6d. At that time, most of the fields would have been common land, with ordinary people having the right to graze animals on them, but the common fields of Foston were enclosed, or privatised, in 1639, and the people lost their grazing rights. The manorial rights were passed on through families or sold until, with Sir Edmund Lechmere, the last lord of the manor, they lapsed in 1890.



The church in Foston is the oldest building in our villages and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The oldest part of the existing building dates from the early 12th century. The old manor-house of Foston no longer exists, but on its site is today's Foston Hall, built in 1823 by the Rev Francis Simpson, one of the principal landowners in the parish at that time.



Thornton-le-Clay developed mainly in the 19th century along the hilly turnpike road that is now High Street and on which the Wesleyan chapel and Friends' meeting house were built, as well as the village's first post office.

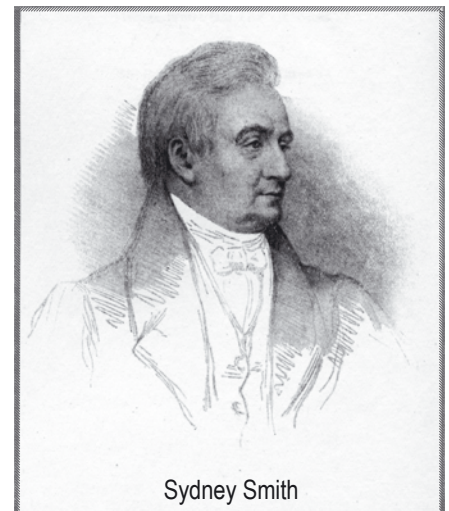


Foston Hall

The arrival of the York to Scarborough railway in 1845 and the construction of the nearby station of Flaxton brought our formerly isolated communities within much closer reach of ancient York and sophisticated Scarborough. But before the railway came, the sophistication of the villages must have been greatly increased when, in 1806, the charismatic Sydney Smith came to be Rector of Foston, the first resident clergyman there for 150 years.

The Reverend Sydney Smith must have been an extraordinary figure in our quiet Yorkshire village,

arriving fresh from London, 'not knowing a turnip from a carrot', but with his reputation as an essayist, wit, social commentator and political activist dating back to 1802 when he founded the Edinburgh Review. He soon established himself in Foston, as a farmer and magistrate as well as a clergyman, and as a sought-after dinner guest whose circle of Whig friends soon included the Carlises of Castle Howard. At first Sydney lived in Heslington near York, but he built Foston Rectory to his own design and moved his family there in 1814, staying until he left for Somerset in 1829.



Sydney Smith

These two villages, with so much history, retain to this day the essentially agricultural character with which they began. But today they are largely residential, with a community that chooses to live in them because of their tranquil and rural character. It is this character that our plan seeks to retain, while making the village communities a pleasant twenty first century environment in which to live.



Foston Rectory

There is, though, much still to be discovered about the history of the villages and how they developed. It is suggested, therefore, that one of the actions arising from the plan should be the establishment of a working group to prepare a more comprehensive history of the villages and their surroundings.

Facilities and Amenities in the Villages



The Strategy Questionnaire indicated that **20%** of the 150 adult respondents attended worship.



All Saint's Parish Church, Foston

The church on its present site predates the Norman Conquest and is recorded in the Domesday Survey. What we have now is a building that is the same in appearance to the re-built church dating 1130. The most recent alteration occurred in 1911/12 when the church was enlarged and a stone bell gable erected. Details of services can be found in the church's newsletter, 'The Circular', and periodical United Service leaflets.

The new vicar, Revd. Ivan Howitt will take charge this year.



Thornton-le-Clay Methodist Chapel

A small Society of 8 members was formed in 1813. In 1822 a piece of ground was acquired from Mr W. Lund of Flaxton and on this site the present Chapel was erected at a cost of £200. The present members are committed to maintaining a Christian presence within the community. Details of services can be found on the Chapel notice board, and in The Circular, and periodic United Service leaflets.

The minister is Revd. Graham Peaden.



Foston C of E Primary School

The Strategy Questionnaire indicated that **11%** of respondents sent their children to the school, (a similar percentage, however, sent their children to schools outside the village). The remainder of children attending the school come from surrounding villages. The questionnaire also revealed that there are 12 children under the age of 5 who could potentially attend the school.

Foston school was built by John Spaven on "wasteland belonging to the Parish" (its present location) in 1844 at a cost of £57.50p. The school received its certificate of education and was placed under the management of the Parochial Clergyman. The school has been thoroughly modernised,

extended and upgraded in line with present legislation, and has an attached playing field rented from Mr Walsh.

The present staff, governors and PAFFS actively encourage community interest and support. The head teacher is Mrs. S Moore.



White Swan Inn, Low Street, Thornton-le-Clay



The Strategy Questionnaire indicated that **32%** of the adult respondents used the White Swan Inn regularly. The White Swan is located in the centre of Thornton-le-Clay village. The original part of the building dates back to 1800 and is believed to have always been a public house. The Pilgrim family have been owners since 1982 when the property was extended, modernised and the gardens landscaped.

The present owners John, Susan and Lucy Pilgrim will continue to build on their local reputation, by expanding theme focused events, (see the Forthcoming Events leaflet from the pub and village newsletter etc.) to help bring the community together.



Thompsons Arms Inn, Rice Lane, Flaxton

Located on the edge of the parishes, towards Flaxton, this building, erected in 1840, was originally a farm and in 1890 was converted into a coaching inn. The present landlord is Stuart Calder and his family has owned the Thompsons Arms since 1935.

Stuart took over on his mother's death in 1999 and has refurbished and modernised the inn, culminating in the alteration of the attached outbuildings into holiday accommodation. This new venture should open shortly. The traditional pub atmosphere and regular events are an important community asset.



Foston and Thornton-le-Clay Village Hall

The Strategy Questionnaire indicated that about **30%** of respondents attended functions in the Village Hall. However **45%** said they would attend an expanded programme of activities. The Village Hall has always been and remains an important community focal asset and contributor to village life.

The majority of all respondents mentioned the need for refurbishment/redecoration of the Village Hall, and also replacement of the heating system and improved parking.

In August 1930 the Trustees of the village hall purchased the piece of land on which the hall now stands for £10.00, in order to provide physical and mental recreation, social, moral and intellectual development for the benefit of the parish.

The current committee and Trustees remain true to that ethos and sympathetic to the communities changing needs. The Village Hall Committee are actively trying to expand village activities.

Employment and Business

Like many rural communities Foston and Thornton-le-Clay have close ties with local agriculture and a number of people within the parishes still work on the land. However, as with the rest of the UK, the industrial revolution and the decades that have followed have changed the relationship between those who live and those who work in the country.



The car has had the greatest impact and has enabled those who live in outlying areas to be far more flexible with where and when they work. In more recent years the trend to work at home has been growing largely due to the influence of modern mobile communications and of course the internet.

As a result there are a number of individuals who run business of all types from homes in the parishes and these include such diverse businesses as joineries and interior designers to decorators and pet product sales. Many other people in the area are employed by these and by other locally based businesses.

Goods and Services

The Strategy Questionnaire asked parishioners their views on externally provided goods and services i.e. (mobile butcher, baker and fishmonger) but only **18%** said they used them on a regular basis and only **7%** used the mobile library. However, **61%** did use the milk and paper delivery (although there is no delivery in Foston). Comments from respondents ranged from the need for improved awareness of delivery times and proposals for visiting the villages during evenings and weekend. Interestingly the majority of respondents expressed an interest in a village shop/post office where they could purchase local produce and essentials.

Other Facilities

The Strategy Questionnaire respondents identified an interest in the provision of a playing field or play area for children / teenagers, a village green/conservation area and a youth club in the village hall. Whilst there is a considerable amount of open space within the villages, most of it is privately owned or immediately adjacent to the village roads. For this reason, many (**64%**) indicated an interest in the provision of a village green or playing field which the community could use for a number of different activities. This could be an expensive facility to provide without an element of donation or subsidy, but, even as a longer term aim, some further consideration should be given towards an appropriate location.

For the senior citizens, many respondents were interested in drop-in sessions/chats/coffee mornings and assistance with transport/shopping and visits to doctors and hospital. For younger people suggestions were made for a youth club (possibly in the village hall) and youth teams and for somewhere for the youngsters to 'hang out'.

The parishes, including the communities of Foston and Thornton-le-Clay, are fortunate in the provision of the facilities and amenities available and in most cases this provision can be enhanced and improved without large capital projects provided that parishioners are willing and interested enough to co-operate together.

The parishes are connected to the national Grid by NEDL but there is no mains gas connection. We are also connected to mains water, drainage and sewerage.

From the above, the recommendations are to:

- Encourage the physically active village residents to organise and run clubs and transport services for the elderly;
- Encourage volunteers to organise and run a youth club and youth teams for the young people and/or somewhere for them to 'hang out';

- Work with the Village Hall Committee to seek funds to refurbish/ redecorate the Village Hall, and also to replace the heating system, improve parking and provide an outdoor area;
- Investigate the feasibility of a village shop (or mobile shop) and identify premises which could be used as a drop off point;
- Work with the Parish Council to further investigate an appropriate location and funding for a village green/conservation/play area;
- Identify the requirement for a milk/paper delivery in Foston and contact current suppliers to see if they would extend their service.



Environment



Driving or walking through the villages one gets an immediate impression, for the most part, that they are well kept, peaceful and safe, where people are proud to look after their houses and gardens. Almost all the people replying to the questionnaire said that they appreciate these aspects and that is what attracts people to come and live here. The verges and hedgerows are full of daffodils in spring, and summertime sees the gardens in colour with flowers and shrubs. The questionnaire



Photograph by Stephen Horncastle - Geocites

revealed, however, that the majority of residents felt that greater efforts should be made to retain the attractive appearance of the villages, with **66%** of people wanting to see the grass and hedges cut more frequently, **69%** wanting better maintenance of footpaths, **57%** wanting to see more bulb and flower planting and **42%** more tree planting. It should be noted that prior to the onset of Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s, there would have been a considerably larger number of trees both in and surrounding the villages.

Some aspects of maintaining these elements are currently undertaken by annual contract but, in time, should a larger number of features be included, alternative approaches may have to be considered such as the employment of a village caretaker. This idea received some support in responses to the questionnaire and is an idea currently being trialled by Ryedale District Council.

The villages have a rich bird life, including common all-year round residents such as blackbirds and sparrows; migratory species such as swifts and house martins and endangered species such as lapwings, skylarks and tree sparrows. Many species of fauna such as rabbits, hares, and deer are also present. It is particularly noticeable from the approaches to the villages that there are varying views on the maintenance of countryside features such as hedgerow trees and the use of measures to encourage wildlife such as stewardship schemes. With government subsidy policy encouraging care for the countryside, efforts could be made to provide a larger number of suitable habitats for endangered species of wildlife in and around the villages. Some farmers already benefit from participation in the entry level stewardship scheme and it is hoped that this participation may be widened in future to improve the quality of the villages' surrounding countryside.

The roadside footpaths within and between the villages link to a network of public footpaths and bridleways which give access, among other destinations, to the more major countryside footpaths

of the Ebor and Centenary Ways which lead respectively in the direction of the North York Moors and the Yorkshire Wolds. These footpaths provide the opportunity for walkers to gain access from the villages to the surrounding attractive countryside, particularly the Howardian Hills AONB. In some ways, the correlation between our villages and those within the AONB may mean there could be funds available for similar village projects, such as improving footpaths, providing co-ordinated and attractive village signposting – perhaps radiating from an information hub (public house, village green) - and viewpoint seating.



In addition to asking how the village could be enhanced, the questionnaire also canvassed views on the manner in which the well kept, peaceful and safe aspects of the villages were being currently attained. Refuse collection and recycling were overall considered to be satisfactory in helping to maintain our well kept villages (**51%**), with the exception of a requirement for more dog waste bins and measures to deter littering on the outskirts of the villages. On the other hand, it was considered that the improvement of policing in the villages would enhance the peaceful and safe aspects of village life (**51%**). These aspects would be further improved by the re-introduction of a neighbourhood watch scheme for the villages, a measure which was strongly supported by the residents (**61%**). The installation of street lighting could also be considered beneficial in this respect, but the larger proportion of village residents (**67%**) felt it would be wrong to introduce a feature associated with urban life.

The response to the questionnaire on environment issues has suggested a series of actions ranging from shorter term, less expensive, projects such as bulb and flower planting to longer term projects such as a comprehensive nature conservation plan for the villages. The re-establishment of a neighbourhood watch scheme for both villages and the improvement of village policing could be important mechanisms to maintain the existing well-being of village life.

From the above, the recommendations are to:

- Set up a working group to look after village enhancement issues such as bulb and flower planting, litter clearing and grass and hedge cutting;
- Set up a working group for conservation issues such as finding a suitable site for a nature conservation area and encouraging conservation measures in and around the villages;
- Improve and maintain the footpaths;
- Work with the Parish Council and Police to improve the policing presence and other safety measures in the parishes.



Photograph by Roger Gilbertson - Geocites

Development



The earliest of the current village houses lie along what was an ancient road running from Malton to Sheriff Hutton and date from a period of development which followed common field enclosure in the early 17th century.

Of the two villages, there is very little scope for further development in Foston as, apart from the need to conserve the setting of the 12th century church, the existing village is almost entirely surrounded by scheduled ancient monument sites. There is more scope for limited



development in Thornton-le-Clay, although this is currently constrained by the village development limits and by 'visually important undeveloped areas' both of which are shown in the 2002 Ryedale Local Plan.

76% of those responding to the strategy questionnaire wanted the current level and style of development to be maintained and, more specifically, **56%** did not want to see further infill development. On the other hand, **26%** of respondents were prepared to consider some infill development and this rose to **59%** if this development was related to providing affordable housing to meet local needs, such as subsidised property for young adults - the most significant need according to previous Ryedale Council surveys - or sheltered accommodation for the elderly to enable them to continue to live in the villages and keep in touch with family and friends.

In relation to the wish to retain the current style of development, the 2002 Local Plan recognised Thornton-le-Clay's mixture of traditional two-storey brick and pantile houses and infill development of a variety of modern brick dwellings. Some of the earlier infill developments have not enhanced the character of the village and current policies in the Local Plan to ensure that future development reflects the rural character of the villages in terms of siting, design, materials and scale should be carried forward into the Local Development Framework currently being prepared by Ryedale Council. Based on these policies, there may be some merit in preparing development and design guidelines for the villages, particularly Thornton-le-Clay.

82% of respondents were in favour of working with the planning authority to ensure that future development was in keeping with the existing. In this context, there are a number of issues relating to the villages' development limits, the extent of the 'visually important undeveloped areas' and,

identified in the previous section of the Strategy, issues regarding nature conservation and the environment where it may be worthwhile to request one or more meetings with Ryedale Council.



From the above, the recommendations are to:

- Determine whether there is a need for the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs and to consider whether the village development limits should be modified to allow for such a development;
- With the assistance of Ryedale District Council, to prepare a village development/design statement which would set out guidelines for how the villages might develop in future in terms of layout, appearance, open spaces, woodland and other related features.



Traffic and Transport



The villages of Foston and Thornton-le-Clay lie between the A64 and Sheriff Hutton. Generally traffic levels and patterns are in line with those ordinarily associated with minor routes, busier during the morning and evening rush hours, i.e. parents doing the school run and commuters travelling to and from work.

Although traffic levels are not ordinarily excessive it was felt by a number of respondents that the villages are at times used as a “rat run” to avoid busy traffic on the main A64 route particularly at weekends in the summer months.

The issue of speeding traffic in the villages was hi-lighted as a concern by **68%** of all respondents. Although one or two “hot spots” were specifically identified by some respondents it was felt the issue of speeding applied throughout the entirety of both villages.

In addition to speeding and to a lesser extent the volume of traffic in summer months, **55%** of the respondents to the questionnaire felt there were traffic danger spots within the villages. Areas highlighted include the village school, the junction of High Street and Low Street and Low Street in general.

On street parking was also raised as a concern by **56%** of respondents and a possible contributing factor to danger/hot spots.

Given the need to commute to work and to most local services it was of no surprise that feedback from the questionnaire indicated that **79%** of villagers use their car every day, with **11%** using the bus every week.

The villages of Foston and Thornton-le-Clay are served by a single bus service between Malton and York - Monday to Saturday with no Sunday or evening service. There are 4 buses per day in each direction and the route is subsidised by North Yorkshire County Council.

Responses to the questionnaire indicated that there was a need to improve the number of destinations - for example running the bus to York via Strensall, where many villagers use the medical practice, and through Monks Cross for shopping and employment - and a better timetable to fit in with working hours. Also there was felt to be a need for later buses to and from York with an evening service on Friday and Saturday.

From the above, the recommendations are to:

- Identify where the danger hotspots are perceived to be and discuss with the Police as to how improvements can be made;
- Identify where there are vehicles parked in dangerous situations and discuss with the Police as to how this may be addressed. Identify any areas where off-street parking could be made available;
- Investigate traffic management measures.



Communications



In general terms rural areas, especially those without a natural community hub such as a shop/post office, suffer from poor communication.

The traditional means of communicating events and activities such as by newsletters and notice boards remain the means by which most people have access to local information.

Therefore it is not surprising that around **80%** of those people who responded thought that the newsletter and the village notice boards were important, less so the church news (The Circular) and Radius. With regard to notice boards it was felt that a notice board on the village hall would be very useful. Many people have expressed the desire to have a combined newsletter and for it to be delivered earlier, before any events were over (especially High Street, Thornton-le-Clay and outlying farms and houses). Some people, especially those in outlying areas, do not receive the Radius at all.

From those who replied to the question, **62%** said they would like a website and **79%** said they did not think there should be any more signage. Those who commented about the website also noted the poor internet service in Thornton-le-Clay, where broadband speed is particularly slow.

From the above, the recommendations are to:

- Investigate the possibility of a combined local newsletter encompassing the content of the existing newsletter, church news (The Circular) and the Radius;
- Consider getting a new notice board for the Thornton-le-Clay village hall and posting a map of the local area on each of the notice boards;
- Look into the feasibility of establishing a parish website, dependent on cost.



Action Plan



Each heading below was identified in the questionnaire responses as a concern to many of the villagers who sent in a return. The major actions are shown in bold and listed in alphabetical order. The actions shown are only intended to be the basic ones required to start the process. The major issues are shown in bold type.

Action on all of them will need either a volunteer working party who would actually carry out the work, or a volunteer working group who would make a feasibility study, identify funding and formulate a plan to carry out the action. In some cases it may be that the Parish Council itself has to take the lead, albeit with volunteer help to do that. In all cases funding must be identified before any expenditure is incurred.

Facilities and Amenities		
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Aim</i>	<i>Action</i>
Improvements and services for the elderly -	Enhance and introduce services for the elderly, eg. drop in sessions, tea and coffee sessions, help with transport, in line with questionnaire suggestions.	Identify ways of enhancing and introducing services. These would include premises for drop-in sessions or coffee/tea mornings and afternoons; volunteers to be sought to help with shopping/deliveries/doctor visits etc; the administration and advertising of a formally run, volunteer led transport service. Proposals to be put in place even if on a trial basis initially.
Improvements and services for young people	Enhance and introduce services for young people, in line with the questionnaire suggestions.	Identify ways of enhancing and introducing services. These would include premises for a youth club or 'hanging out' area. Volunteers would be required to help with organisation and supervision.
Village hall	Upgrade, refurbish and generally improve the village hall including improved heating, and parking. Review feasibility of an outdoor area. Provide further events as requested by villagers. Better advertise village hall events to villagers.	Provide detailed information to the village hall committee on the comments concerning the village hall. The village hall committee to form working groups to consider the requested refurbishments and improvements, identify funding sources, canvas new events and implement the changes where possible.
Village shop	Provide a village shop (or mobile shop) selling essentials, and local produce without taking business from the current mobile deliveries. Provide a drop off point for services (eg dry cleaning, current mobile deliveries) and a location for a nurse surgery/ blood testing etc.	Investigate the feasibility of a village shop (or mobile shop). Identify premises which could be used as a drop off point. If premises identified, discuss with relevant service providers.

Village green/ conservation/play area	There was a desire of some villagers to create a communal area for walking, meeting, playing.	Work with the Parish Council to investigate an appropriate location and funding for a village green/conservation/play area. Take further note of villagers wishes if any area is identified as only around 50% said they would like to see a playing field.
Milk and paper delivery	Expand the service to all areas.	Identify who would use this if available in Foston and outlying areas. Contact current suppliers to see if they would extend their service.
Mobile suppliers generally	Improve accessibility to all of mobile services. Provide villagers with better information about when and where mobile services visit.	Find out the current times and locations of mobile deliveries. Communicate these to villagers (eg newsletter, notice boards, leaflet drop). Contact suppliers to discuss service improvements (eg weekends, evenings, locations). Investigate feasibility of a drop off point for people who are out when delivery services visit.
Fish and chip mobile	Provide a local service to the villages.	Investigate whether there is a local service which could visit the villages.
Church/chapel	Encourage more people to attend.	Provide detailed information to the relevant ministers on the comments concerning the church and chapel.
School	Increase the no. of children attending the village school to secure its future. Make more use of the school out of school hours.	Provide detailed information to the school on the comments concerning the school and on suggestions for using the school more. Investigate ways of attracting a larger no. of pupils and whether the school and volunteers could provide classes and/or events out of school hours.

Environment

Issue	Aim	Action
Bulb planting	Improve the appearance of the villages.	Plant bulbs and flowers on the verges of and at the entrance to the villages.
Conservation area	There was a desire of some villagers to create a nature conservation area in the village. Encourage other conservation measures.	Work with the Parish Council to investigate an appropriate location and funding for a nature conservation area. Enhance areas in and around the villages with regard to enriching plant, bird and animal life.
Footpaths	Improve and maintain footpaths.	Decide which footpaths need to be upgraded and order of priority. Of particular concern is the footpath between the villages.
Grass and hedge cutting	Maintain grass and hedges in the villages and ensure footpaths and roads are kept clear of hedge trimmings.	Review grass and hedge cutting throughout the villages. Communicate to contractors and villagers the legal aspects of hedge cutting (eg need to keep clear footpaths; avoid times when birds nesting etc). Ensure hedge trimmings are removed.

Policing	Improve the policing presence in the villages. (Note that only 50% of villagers thought that policing was poor)	Work with the Parish Council and Police to improve the policing presence and other safety measures in the parishes, such as neighbourhood/country watch schemes.
Tree planting	Improve the landscape of the villages and replace trees that have been cut down.	Identify appropriate locations to plant trees and woodland and to replace trees previously cut down. Take professional advice on buying and planting.
Litter	Provide litter and dog waste bins and keep the villages and surrounding areas clear from litter.	Clear up litter around the 4 mile block. Name and shame.
Neighbourhood Watch	Re-establish neighbourhood watch scheme	Better information about neighbourhood watch schemes needs to be put in place. Identify people who would like to be involved and re-establish scheme for both villages..
Surface drainage	Review, improve and maintain drainage and dykes to reduce surface water	Discuss with partners ways of improving the drainage. Review what has already been done. Plan how to keep dykes maintained.

Development

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Aim</i>	<i>Action</i>
Housing	Determine housing requirements for the village residents.	Establish a working group to investigate housing and housing needs for village residents.
Village development	Prepare a village development/design statement which would set out guidelines for how the villages might develop in the future.	Work with Ryedale Council to produce a development/design statement which will be available as a guide for the local planning authority and other statutory bodies.

Traffic and Transport

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Aim</i>	<i>Action</i>
Traffic danger points	Reduce the danger at various locations	Identify the location of danger points. Discuss traffic management measures with the Police and local authorities.
Parking	Reduce parking on bends and footpaths. Provide more off street parking.	Identify where there are vehicles parked in dangerous situations and discuss appropriate traffic management measures with the Police and local authorities. Identify suitable areas where off-street parking could be made available.
Speeding	Reduce speeding in the villages	Investigate traffic management measures
Bus service	Improve the current bus service in terms of frequency, times and destinations.	Investigate the feasibility of increasing the service including more appropriate timings and destinations. Canvas potential usage.

Excessive traffic	Reduce excessive traffic particularly when the A64 is busy in summer and at weekends.	Discuss traffic management measures with the Police and local authorities.
HGVs	Reduce the number of HGVs travelling through the villages.	Discuss traffic management measures with the Police and local authorities. Identify if particular companies are involved or if mainly when the A64 is busy.
Communications		
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Aim</i>	<i>Action</i>
Newsletters	Enhance the newsletter and combine with the churches' newsletter (The Circular) and Radius. Improve the delivery timing of the newsletters.	Include advertising of local services and local events. Examine ways of improving the delivery timing of the newsletter (eg more volunteers?)
Notice boards	Improve the usage of the notice boards. Provide a new notice board for the village hall.	Raise awareness of all groups that they can advertise events and services on the notice boards. Ensure that notice boards are in place in both villages and at Flaxton station. Post maps of the local area on the notice boards.
Web site	Provide a web site for the villages.	Investigate the feasibility and funding of providing a web site for the villages. Website to include history/advertising local services and events/facilities etc.



Photograph by Roger Gilbertson - Geocites

Summary and Conclusion



This Community Strategy has been produced by consulting the people in our communities: **80%** of adults in the community have responded to our questionnaire. This high response rate gives us confidence in putting forward these proposals for how our communities might develop over the next five years or so.

We identify in our action plan a number of areas where people in our villages would like to see developments – or in some cases, an absence of development. The proposals fall into the following general areas:

- **Facilities**
- **Environment**
- **Development**
- **Traffic and Transport**
- **Communications**

We should not expect all of the actions to be carried out at once: although some are fairly simple and uncontroversial and could be carried out quickly, others will need further consultation, and several will require fund-raising.

None of the actions here will happen without the agreement and involvement of the communities: in this sense, this document is a beginning rather than an end. We recommend our actions should be taken forward through a number of working groups.

We propose that the lifetime of this Community Strategy should be five years, but that it should be reviewed at yearly intervals. The next step is to set up the working groups to oversee the aims and actions noted in the action plan, and to take forward individual areas of the plan in consultation with the communities. The Parish Council will oversee this process and we recommend that the implementation of this plan should be a standing item on the Parish Council agenda.

Many people have given time to the production of this plan. The Steering Committee would particularly like to thank the following for their support:

Maggie Farey, Community Engagement Officer, Rural Action Yorkshire
Cllr Clare Wood, North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Eric Hope and Cllr Keith Knaggs, Ryedale District Council

A huge thank you also to all those who took photographs for the plan.

Above all, we would like to thank the parishioners of Foston and Thornton-le-Clay for their positive response.



