

## **Rievaulx Parish Plan**

(revised March 2008)

We eventually received 20 responses to the questionnaire, c.60% of those distributed - a good response to any such exercise.

### **Households:**

49 people were represented in the responses, spread over the age-groups as follows:

age 1 - 4: 2

age 5 - 18: 3

age 19 - 24: 5

age 25 - 44: 11

age 45 - 65: 13

age 66 - 75: 9

age 75+: 6

Even including 4 respondents who have lived in the parish for 2 years or less, the AVERAGE length of time lived in the parish by all respondents is 35 years. People stay in Rievaulx.

The occupations of those represented in the responses were spread as follows:

2 pre-school children; 2 schoolchildren; 5 college students; 3 self-employed; 8 working in agriculture; 6 in professions; 4 other jobs outside the village; 6 housewives; 11 retired or semi-retired.

13 respondents and their families live in rented houses, 3 in tied houses and 4 in owner-occupied houses.

### **Transport:**

The 49 people represented in the responses own 37 cars and 3 bicycles. Only 2 respondents sometimes have difficulty parking their cars at their houses.

No other transport is regularly used.

However, one respondent would use a morning bus (with return) to Helmsley on a Friday, one on a Monday and one on any regular day of the week. Another hoped for an evening bus, with return, to Helmsley. One would like a direct Helmsley-York bus and one a Rievaulx-Helmsley bus every day at 2-hourly intervals.

8 respondents thought a car-share scheme might be helpful to the elderly, and 6 car-owners said they would be willing to take part in such a scheme.

Other suggestions included:

allowing school buses to pick up other passengers;

a 'dial and ride' service to make many empty buses unnecessary;

a small ('people-carrier' size) vehicle rather than a bus.

### **Village amenities:**

The order of priority in which respondents placed what is important to them in the village was as follows:

David Johnson's newsletter

The Village Hall

St Mary's Church  
local footpaths  
the broadband internet connexion  
Methodist Church  
only 2 of the respondents use the Mobile Library

The suggestion of a Post Office in the Village Hall for perhaps 2 hours a week (or even 1 hour) was warmly supported by 9 respondents, including all the elderly who sent back questionnaires.

9 respondents are interested in evening (or - one respondent - afternoon) IT classes in the Village Hall, 3 in arts and crafts classes, 3 in keep-fit and one in yoga.

On the question of new amenities in the village, the weight of opinion was strongly against anything new. One response, however, favoured a children's play area, but not for visitors. [There are not enough children in the village to justify a play area unless it were open to visitors?] One response hoped for a small grocer's shop with newsagent, and one for a pub. [The village population would not make either viable, nor would planning permission be likely?] One response suggested a daily rota for collecting newspapers in Helmsley and delivering them in the village.

#### **Crime and policing:**

Most respondents have suffered no crime and are happy with the quality of local policing. Interestingly, 2 who have been victims of crime are happy with the police service they received. 4 respondents, however, have found, or fear they would find, the police difficult to contact - the nearest call centre is now in Whitby [actually Malton?] - compared to the past when the Helmsley police station could be telephoned, and 5 others would appreciate more police presence and/or more contact with local officers.

#### **Tourism:**

Although the pressure of tourists on the village is very considerable in the summer, especially at weekends, most respondents think that visitors are well managed. The exception is the question of parking. 3 respondents feel strongly that there is too much tourist parking on the verges. One response suggested asking English Heritage to abandon the Pay and Display system in the abbey carpark; another suggested a parking ban on the verges all through the village uphill from the abbey carpark [impossible without double yellow lines which would look horrible??]; and another suggested asking English Heritage to run a courtesy bus from Helmsley to the abbey, with the abbey carpark for disabled visitors only. 2 respondents urged that the Moorsbus should be better publicised to encourage visitors to leave their cars in Helmsley, and 2 that English Heritage should be enabled to expand the abbey carpark into further tree-screened space, One hoped that a carpark could be open every day and include a picnic area.

#### **Nuisances:**

Most respondents were little troubled by the various nuisances listed in the questionnaire, but 10 minded the poor or non-existent mobile phone reception, 5 the poor TV reception, 5 litter, 4 the occasional smell of pigs, 3 aircraft noise, and 3 barking dogs.

**General:**

The feeling against major change - particularly commercial development, any new building, holiday homes or shops - was strong and nearly unanimous. People value the beauty and quiet, and the spirit of a resident community in Rievaulx very highly indeed.

A few suggestions for improvements were made:

4 respondents feel strongly that the cutting of verges and overhanging branches on the roads to improve visibility is an important priority for safety.

2 respondents would like more footpaths and better connecting paths between those that already exist.

One respondent considers that some residents park their cars dangerously on the road through the village, and another that there is too much major untidiness (old cars, unused materials etc.) left about in the village.

One respondent would like the access to the B1257 at the top of Rievaulx Bank to be made safer; another suggested a 50 mph limit on the B1257 at the top of the Bank.

A 30 mph limit in the village was suggested by one respondent. [Most people would think 30 mph too fast for the village most of the time?]

Another respondent would like street lights in the village, but 2 others mentioned the absence of street lights as something they like and appreciate.

One respondent would like more notice of Christmas and Harvest Festival services in the church. These are now appearing in David Johnson's Newsletter.

**Conclusions:**

The results of the questionnaire show clearly that:

The village as it is is warmly appreciated and loved by its residents. There is no desire for major change of any kind, and the protection given by Conservation Area status, by the planning rules of the North York Moors National Park, by English Heritage's care for the abbey and its surroundings, and by the policies of Sir Richard as landlord of most of the houses and the valley, is generally in accordance with the wishes of the parish.

Community amenities already in existence are also much appreciated, most strikingly the Village Hall, the newsletter, the local footpaths and both St Mary's (its roof just restored by a splendid community effort) and the Methodist church. The recent access to broadband is also highly valued (though capable of improvement).

Points for further discussion by the Parish Council, and possibly for raising with the relevant authorities, obviously include:

the possibility of a Post Office service; evening classes in IT; action on the cutting and tidying of the verges; action on parking, particularly on the effects of Pay and

Display at the abbey; action on the danger of the right turn at the top of Rievaulx Bank.

Villagers themselves could organize a newspaper rota if enough people would appreciate it and/or volunteer.

Rievaulx, a very small and very untypical parish with many (welcome) constraints on change, would be able to construct from the above only a modest Parish Plan. The present exercise, however, tells us a good deal about the parish as it is now, and should provide a sensible basis for thinking about major problems bound to arise in the next decade or so, particularly the effects of climate change and local consequences of changes in the production and supply of oil and other traditional fuels. Any Plan we produce now should of course be regularly reviewed to accommodate these and other unpredictable changes.