

MICKLETON PARISH PLAN

CONTENTS

Section	page no.
1. Introduction	
2. Background	
Geographical Location	
Local Climate	
Local History	
3. Mickleton's Conservation Status	
4. The Built Environment	
Housing Statistics and Housing Needs Survey	
Current Public/Community Buildings	
Other village Features	
5. Traffic and Highways	
6. Services	
Bus Services	
Food Stores and other shops	
Schools	
Post Office	
Financial Services	
Mickleton Village Hall Association	
Medical Services	
Crime and Safety	
Environment Issues	
7. Social and Leisure Activities	
8. Economic Activity	
Current Businesses in the Parish	
ACTION PLAN	
9. Guidelines for Future Development	
Housing	
Design Guidelines	
10. Future Economic Development	
11. Action Plan	
12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.	

APPENDIX A. The process by which the 2006 Questionnaire was carried out.

MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Maps

Mickleton's Conservation Area
The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Mickleton
Sites of Special Scientific Interest
Durham County Council's designated Landscape of High Value in
Mickleton

Photographs

Aerial view of the Parish (back page) Front cover coming from Marion
The Blacksmiths
Mickleton Station
Mill Farm as it is today
Mickleton from
The Pennine way in Mickleton

1. INTRODUCTION

This plan is intended to be used as a base document to inform all parishioners about the parish and its current services. It is also intended to set out plans for the future and the parish's plans to meet local people's expressed needs and aspirations as identified in independent survey. This in turn will provide the guide for government and other organisations considering development plans related to Mickleton whether for economic or housing development or for services for example social, transport, and medical services.

We are a small parish with a small population and do not have the resources to constantly re-present our views to the extensive number of organisations - both public and private that want to consult us about our parish. Therefore we aim through this document to pull together all the different aspects of what living in Mickleton Parish is about so that one document can serve these many purposes.

A survey was conducted by the Parish Council in 2004, and a further survey has been conducted by the Parish in association with the mid Teesdale Partnership and Durham Rural Community Council in February 2006, to find out what local people want and those views have been summarised under the different headings and fed into this plan to inform the way forward and set out future action.

We are grateful to the Mid Teesdale Partnership, Durham Rural Community Council and Durham County Council for their time and DEFRA for resources provided to enable us to pull all these different strands together.

Mickleton Parish Council
for the people of Mickleton Parish
April 2006

Further information can be obtained from Cllr. Mrs. E. O'Sullivan 01833640? and Mrs. M. Hutchinson 01833640331

2. BACKGROUND

Mickleton is an historic area set high in the North Pennines amidst an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and area of High Landscape Value. The Parish falls within the Romalldkirk Ward for electoral purposes. Mickleton Village has had Conservation Village status since 1987. The Parish has a long history of agriculture and, during Victorian times also lead and barytes mining, as well as quarrying for slate and stone. Its population was then twice its current level. Nonetheless over the last few years there has been considerable inward migration to the Parish as rural locations have become increasingly attractive to people relocating for improved quality of life. It has been a tourist venue for many years and the Pennine Way and Durham County Council's local Railway Walk run through the Parish. The following sections describe the Parish's inherited past, its natural and built environment and human activities, to provide understanding of the context in which to plan for the future.

Geographical Location (4 maps to be added somewhere to this lot!)

Mickleton village is located on the B6277 on the south side of the River Tees now in County Durham but until 1971 part of North Yorkshire / Richmondshire with the River Tees the boundary with County Durham. Mickleton dates back to at least Roman times but there is some evidence of human settlement in the Parish at Bail Hill as far back as Neolithic times. It is built on a north facing river terrace of the Tees and the village is about 370m (730ft) above sea level. The Parish boundary extends south to Pind Hill with the land rising to about 450m (1345ft) over Mickleton Moor much of which is designated Site of Special Scientific Interest being part of the Lune Forest SSSI and part of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The River Lune to the west forms the western Parish boundary and the River Tees forms the Parish boundary to the north. That part of the Parish that is not of AONB or Conservation status, is designated as being of High Landscape Value. Beyond the River Tees to the north the land rises to 565 m (1850ft) on Monks Moor and 485m (1591ft) on Eggleston Common much of which is also SSSI and both being within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The eastern Parish boundary with Romalldkirk lies just east of Hayberries Farm also within the AONB. Beyond our western boundaries the dale climbs steadily to run north of Cross Fell – the Pennines' highest peak at 890m (2920ft). The maps below show the Parish boundaries and the various designation boundaries.

The geology of Mickleton Parish is complex with upland boulder clays, large areas of peat over limestone with some outcrops of limestone and igneous rocks. At village levels the area is made up of complex drift deposits of glacial sands and gravels down to river terrace deposits along the valley floor of the River Tees. The River Lune flows into the Tees to the west of Mickleton village and Icaron Beck flows into the Tees on the east. The River Lune was once a major river but is now controlled by Grassholme reservoir to the south which was completed in 1914, and Selset reservoir , part of which is in the

Parish which was opened in 1960 for the Cleveland Water Board to provide water for Teesside. The Railway Walk, on the old Teesdale railway line, runs through the Parish to the south and provides public amenity access on its unmetalled route between Cotherstone and Lonton just to the west of Mickleton. The Pennine Way also crosses the Parish. (Photo of Pennine Way sign on Disc)

In 2000 a new bridge-crossing north over the Tees from Mickleton, to join up with local Eggleston and circuit walks to Middleton, was provided as a Millennium project. The bridge is located at the old ford crossing of the Tees which was used for centuries as the main cattle drive crossing from Scotland, although the ford was lost in the reorientation of the riverbed when Cow Green Reservoir was opened for the provision of water supply for Teesside's manufacturing industry. (Photo of new bridge on disc)

Local Climate

Given the Parish's location high in the Pennines, it suffers severe winters and will usually have permanent snow up to a foot deep on the ground for periods of 10 days or more during the course of any winter. As a consequence in winter, it is not unusual for temperatures to remain below freezing for days on end; spring comes late. (According to some records, Mickleton has the record for England for deepest snowfall – some 10 feet- one year in the late 19th century). The local climate in winter means that access can be difficult and sometimes impossible without regular road gritting and snow clearance. Precipitation is high being around 900mm annually. However, because of its location there is little risk of flooding beyond some minor field run-off problems during intense downpours or prolonged wet weather. Mickleton gets about 1400 hours of sunshine a year. Global climate change predictions do not indicate any major changes that will impact our local climate.

Local History

Mickleton village's origins are primarily Saxon and Mickleton still has an 'East End' and West End' signifying where the Forest of Loun began outside the village. Forest preserves were often called parles or parks and the farm 'East Park' indicates the start of the forest. In 1086 the Domesday Book records 'In Mickleton there are taxation 6 carucates and there might be 3 more.' From this time until the 16th century, Mickleton was held by the FitzHugh family. In Edward 1's survey - Kirkeby's Quest (which is kept in Westminster Abbey), it states in 'Mickleton, Crossthwaite and Lonton there are six caracutes of land whereby 12 make a knights fee value 16 shillings, in all one mile long of half a mile broad.'

Before the creation of Laithkirk Church just outside the Parish in the old Tythe Barn in the 16th century, Mickleton had access to a chapel and priest as long ago as the 12th century and there are crosses marking the way of the dead to Romaldkirk such as at High Cross Farm. Mickleton held 13 parcels of land in

common for the village and a manor court or Court Leet (such courts were held wherever there was a castle or manor), was made up of tenants of the Manor elected to do duty in the court. The last one in Mickleton was held in 1948.

By the 16th century the early Norman lords of the manor had died out and the estate passed to their relatives - the Parrs. The new lord's sister, Catherine, was a wife of Henry VIII. In 1532 the Parrs sold the estate to the Bowes Family who negotiated the Mickleton Lease with local farming tenants and many of the older Mickleton properties are still covered by that 1000 year lease, the original of which is kept in the 'Mickleton Chest' in the Bowes Museum. Mickleton became part of the Wemmergill Estates - owned by the 'Rt. Hon. Claude, Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne and Baron Bowes of Streatlam Castle tenant for life in Wemmergill settled estates'.

In 1644 the plague arrived in Mickleton from Sunderland and the Black Death killed many in the neighbourhood. A common grave was established on Low Side. In 1811 only 8 houses in the village were not thatched. The Village Green was lost in the Enclosures of 1822 a plan of which is still available showing how the fields were allotted to the different landowners. Keith Atkinson of Mill Farm, whose family has farmed in the village for many generations, holds a copy of this map. Until the 18th century Mickleton was primarily agricultural although there had been some iron and lead mining on a small scale since Roman times. By the 1750s lead mining had begun in earnest in the dale but the Mickleton mines were not developed until the late 19th century. The 1888 list of mines under, the Metalliferous Mines Act Lead Mines, records 'Mickleton Mine - Lunehead Lead and Barytes mining Co'.

Mickleton's population in 1892 was 600, most employed in the many quarries around the village. Bail Hill, later used as Mickleton tip (now disused), was a limestone quarry, Whinstone Quarry nearby employed nearly 200 men quarrying stone and slate. Mickleton's church - St Mary Magdelene - which closed in 1972, was built on the site of the current village hall in 1896 at the cost of £330. Services were held fortnightly. The church institute was opened the following year in 1897. In 1900 the town street was still earth with a cobbled ditch for drainage. In 1901 the village had 154 inhabited houses and a population of 656. By 1900 Mickleton had 20 shops which a local resident - Violet Acres listing in her reminiscences for the WI - a butcher at Ling Villa, 3 Blacksmiths - one now the Blacksmiths Arms and another at Middle Farm; a lemonade bottling factory behind Hawthorn Cottage in Market Place, 2 or 3 joiners - at Angle House, another being a coach builder and wheelwright, and a joiner at the Boggs; a stone flag and slate merchant, 2 shoe and clog makers, a tailor and draper, a dressmaker, a paraffin and household goods store in Low Side, farm and garden produce and later a sweet shop at what is now Ivy Cottage; a stone mason and sculptor, a corn mill until 1929, a Flax mill, a Silk mill (for making material to sift flour), a Tannery - now the Ashes, and the Rose and Crown, established c1750.

Railway Station pix from magazine to be scanned

The NER (North Eastern Railway) ran through the village from 1868 until 1964. Mickleton Station, including a small waiting room, was located in what is now the Railway Walk picnic area on Station Road. The railway brought coal into the dale, and tourists, and was used for local public transport access to nearby towns for work and school. The School opened in Mickleton in 1906 and provided education for 5 –14 year olds until after WWII when it became the local primary school for 5 –11 year olds. With much local protest the school was eventually closed in 1981. This meant that the village library housed in the school was also lost although it was replaced by a weekly visit by the County Durham mobile library which still operates today. A Sunday School flourished in the village on Low Side until the 1980s and there was also a Girl Guides group which used to meet in the village institute. Other activity groups of a more social character included the Mickleton Hospital Demonstration Fund which ran annual carnival events from 1903 until 1948 when it was revitalised in the form of the MAD MADS – Mickleton and District Music and Drama Society - which eventually became the Carnival Committee in 1969 beginning with an annual Garden Fete. The village playing field initiative was begun in 1972 with Mickleton's playing field opening in 1975 which is still run today by the Parish Council as the village play area.. The Mickleton Women's Institute was started in 1926 and ran for nearly 70 years before finally coming to an end in the 1990s.

School photo and carnival one to come from Marion

Mickleton has always been a farming community that has been a major source of employment both for locals, often in conjunction with other employment such as in the quarries and mines, and for those coming into the area in service as maids on the larger farms. This included evacuees during WW2. In 1950 Mickleton village alone had more than 20 working farms all employing local labour. A Farmers Discussion Group with speakers supplied by the Ministry and the NFU met monthly in the Rose and Crown over a 50 year period until 1990. More recently the number of farms has reduced and there are now only 20 working farms in the whole of the Parish. **(Farm on disc got cows on rhand side in barn)**

The village had its own Police Constable until 1993 and the police house was at Haddon House in the middle of the village.

Mickleton's Parish Council was created in 1894 meeting in the school until that was closed and then in the Institute until the new village hall was built, where the Council still meets monthly.

3. MICKLETON'S CONSERVATION STATUS

The 1987 citation for Mickleton's Conservation status states

‘ Designation of a Conservation Area can be thought of as a stamp of quality, a reminder to respect the irreplaceable quality of traditional design, materials and craftsmanship.’

Mickleton's conservation interest relates to the village having retained much of its historic original field system particularly to the north down to the River Tees, where there are many picturesque walled, small fields. This field pattern remains the same as that recorded for the Act of Enclosure in the early 1800s and many fields can be identified by their original names. The back lanes, they

too having their original names, retain their green verges which are a particular, unique feature of the village adding additional quaint charm. Many of the old village watercourses, troughs and wells have survived and No.2 Pinfold, or penfold, opposite the school was a small field used to hold stray animals, all of which add to Mickleton's historic inheritance.

The built environment is typical of the local vernacular dales architecture of stone buildings with stone slate roofs. The placing of buildings over the centuries has been somewhat random and much of Mickleton's charm lies in the irregularity of development and lack of uniformity of the orientation of its houses often interspersed with old agricultural buildings and yards. There is little development in modern style to spoil the historic built landscape. The Conservation value of Mickleton is currently being updated by Durham County Council.

Conservation status brings with it a presumption of protection for all large trees in the area, but one individual Tree Preservation Order has been made to especially protect the large landmark sycamore in the field behind Low Side Farm believed to have been planted in 1795.

(pix sycamore tree to be scanned)

4. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Parish has only one village – Mickleton, plus the scattered community of Kelton, to the south of the Parish, and some isolated farmsteads. Given its agricultural origins, there are many stone farm buildings in the village and surrounding fields. Many of the old agricultural buildings are grouped around the dwellings, although there are several isolated old stone field barns. Because Mickleton village has been developed over many centuries, building alignment has been creative so that Mickleton does not have long terraces, or uniform rows, of houses. Because of its location on a river terrace with the land falling away sharply down to the River Tees, the village has been developed largely along the main road 'ribbon fashion' and is now 1 1/2 miles long aligned east to west.

Some of the many old barns in the village are Listed for their historic interest eg at the top of Robinson's Bank, and some of these have been converted into private residences gaining planning permission largely as a measure to secure an otherwise uncertain future and eventual decay. However there are still others needing attention.

Most of the buildings in the Parish are built in stone in traditional vernacular style. There is some limited mid 20th century development which is somewhat different, mainly of local authority origin before Conservation Status was applied to the village.

Some of the Parish's buildings are very old dating from the 17th century many being covered by the Mickleton Lease of 1607. Also many have a chequered history of use having seen changes or conversions and mergers with adjoining buildings or having been split into multiple residences only to be restored as single dwellings again. Quebec Terrace was completed in 1887 incorporating

at number 3 the building that had been the General Wolfe pub dating from around 1724. Mickleton School which closed in 1981 has been converted into a private residence. Holmlea and Arbelia at West End were originally one building - the Black Bull pub. 2 Garth Cottages West End was the hospital for the Grassholme Reservoir workers. By 1914 the hospital, Black Bull and General Wolfe pubs were all closed. The Wesleyan Chapel, now converted into a private residence, was built on Low Side in 1892. There was also a primitive Methodist Chapel at Bank Top also now a private house. After WWII several Council Farms were set up to provide opportunity for ex-servicemen who wanted to farm but could not afford to buy. Quebec Farm, Rood Top (Dale Holme) and Southview are examples.

(Pix of Grassholme Res)

The new village hall was built in 1993 to replace the old tin Church Institute erected in the 1890s. Over £10,000 was raised by local residents and local companies helped with gifts or goods at cost price. Durham County Council and the Rural Development Council gave grants towards the project. The building design won 2 awards – Times Touches sponsored and presented by HRH Prince Charles, and the Durham County Council Environment Award. (Pix of new village hall on disc, Marion has an old one to be added also)

Mickleton's Housing Statistics

The population of Mickleton at about 340 is just over half that of Victorian times although the number of dwellings now is about the same as a century ago. At that time families shared accommodation and sometimes tiny cottages accommodated up to 3 generations of one family. The Parish currently has a mix of housing both in terms of size and age. It has about 197 dwellings of which 43% are rated for Council tax purposes in bands A or B. 60% of houses fall within the A/C bands. 18% are in band D. Only 23% of properties are above band D (usually taken as the mid reference). Band E -14%, band F-7%, and band G -1.5%. Over a third (35%) of dwellings have some kind of discount applied to their rated council tax. The balance or ratio of small to larger premises is 2:1.

5% of dwellings are social provision – 5 houses in Dale View and 5 bungalows for older people. There appears to be little demand in the Parish for additional social housing perhaps because Mickleton's house prices and rents remain very competitive compared with the other villages located south of the Tees such as Romaldkirk and Cotherstone.

There are plenty of small properties many of which are rented. Approximately 6% of the housing stock is holiday lets while 15% is let permanently. Less than 4% of dwellings are second homes.

Teesdale District Council's Housing Needs Survey 2004

This survey was conducted to establish the need for provision of social housing and does not cover the general housing market so there is no information on what drives the housing market in Teesdale or Mickleton in particular. The only comment on the general housing market is that there is inward migration particularly from outside the region by better-off families seeking improved quality of life. It also says that generally there is a high

demand for larger houses of 3 bedrooms + which supports the inward migration trend largely by the better off.

The survey responses from Mickleton households were poor with 56 responding out of the possible 197 households ie 28%. This means that the report figures and conclusions have at least a +/-10% potential sample error rate. There are no statistics specifically for Mickleton, rather the TDC area is split into different sub areas and Mickleton is placed into what is called **Lower Teesdale** - along with Romaldkirk, Cotherstone, Lartington, Eggleston, Hunderthwaite.

The survey reports that there are 940 council owned dwellings in Teesdale with a strong buy to let investment market. Of the socially rented stock in Teesdale 3% is Local Authority owned, 2.1% is rented social landlord owned – presumably the rest is privately owned. Socially rented stock makes up 2.7% of all housing which suggests that Mickleton already has twice the average proportion of social housing in the District. In the Romaldkirk Ward (which includes Mickleton) 10% of dwellings are second homes. 52% of dwellings are owned outright and 32% are owned with a mortgage – this means that at least 16% are rented although presumably some of the owned are also let, given the comments on buy-to-let. Mickleton is recorded as having 10 Two Castles social rented lets - 4 bungalows and 6 houses. Locally, Stainton Grove is the nearest area with 1 bedroom accommodation regularly available. Lower Teesdale, at 10.3%, has the lowest proportion of private rented accommodation of the district.

Mickleton's Key Public/Community/ Social Buildings

Mickleton Village Hall

Blacksmiths Arms Public House (old photo in book, new photo on disc)

The Rose and Crown Public house

Village store and Post office

Mickleton Service Station (photo on disc)

Other Village Features

Many old water pumps, troughs and watercourses survive from earlier times when they formed part of the Mickleton village water supply or provided power for the mills. Mickleton has 3 main Greens' areas (albeit now walled and privately owned) protected as green space in the current adopted plan. (Photo on paper maked 1,2,3)

5. TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS

The main road through Mickleton village is the B6277 which carries quarry traffic from Lunedale Quarry and through traffic from/to Upper Teesdale moving via villages south of the Tees, and occasionally diverted traffic from the A66. In recent years the volume of traffic has increased considerably and a recent Durham County Council local traffic survey showed that some 2000 vehicles aweek pass through the village, some 30% of which regularly exceeds the local speed limit. This road with its links to the A66 is becoming

increasingly popular with motor-cycle traffic much of which travels well above the village speed limit. In our 2004 survey of local residents, dealing with traffic speeding was viewed as a priority by 86% of respondents being the highest priority for action. This has been underlined by our most recent survey where the majority of those who responded wanted traffic speeding to be reduced.

Several respondents to the '06 Questionnaire stated that several roads and verges need repair especially at Bank Top, Swarthymere, Lowside and by the Post Office. Also the amount of litter near the traffic lights at Croft Yocks was thought to be disgusting!

Given the severe local weather, winter road and pavement treatment and clearance are necessities to ensure residents have access to employment, most of which is outside the Parish, with regular commuter traffic going both east to Barnard Castle and beyond, and north to Durham city and beyond.

6. SERVICES

Mickleton is 2.5 miles from Middleton in Teesdale, 8.5 miles from Barnard Castle, 14 miles from Bishop Auckland, 30 miles from Durham city and 27 miles from Darlington. Being a remote Parish with few local services means that most households have at least one car, some have 4 cars. As residents become elderly and unable to drive this means that they have to rely on the bus service. The Mickleton group of the Retired and Senior Volunteer programme (RSVP) scheme run from the GP Practice in Middleton in Teesdale, provides a degree of support for older residents. However, it is run voluntarily and receives little public funding support although donations from their clients help cover costs such as insurance and out of pocket expenses of the volunteer drivers.

Bus Services

Mickleton is fortunate to have a regular Arriva bus service although the level of services is now under review by Durham County Council because of the expense of existing provision. However bus travel is relatively expensive; for example a round trip to Middleton costs nearly £3 per person, to Barnard Castle over £4, and to Darlington on a day return £5 although nearly £10 for an open return. The over 60's have free travel tokens, but public transport for families is extremely expensive compared with journey costs by private car. Also given our remote location, services are already limited and the bus timetable is restricted. Overall making use of public transport for access to work and to wider services, such as education, training and medical services, and shops, is very difficult and for some services impossible. Further reduction of the bus service will inevitably result in even less use than currently as bus travel becomes less and less practicable.

Comments from the '06 Questionnaire raised the following points:-

“Better links to Darlington without long waits in Barnard Castle would be advantageous”

“Could those eligible for travel tokens but with no access to public transport use them for fuel?”

Food Stores and other shops

Access to food shops is limited with pending closure of the local village stores making the Co-op in Middleton the nearest supermarket. Another small independent food shop in Middleton is up for sale. Middleton has a range of small shops and basic essentials can usually be found locally but Barnard Castle and beyond remain the main focus for wider shopping. Tesco is currently the only supermarket provider of local grocery delivery for online orders although a mobile shop visits the village once a week from Kirby Stephen. Other mobile traders provide occasional access to other supplies eg fresh fish, tea and coffee, gourmet ready meals, household goods and even woollen clothing.

The '06 Questionnaire showed a great strength of feeling for the future of the shop, Post Office. A lot of people would use it if it had reliable opening hours, a greater choice and better value of stock and had essentials including fruit, veg, bread etc. A large proportion want to use the shop not lose it.

Schools

There is no school or nursery in the village so parents of young children have to arrange their own transport for nursery services requiring car ownership with all that that entails in terms of cost. School pupils have access to school bus services, but if they want to take part in extra curricular activities again they have to rely on parents' transport.

Post Office

While the existing Post Office in the village is up for sale and may well close, If this happens consideration will be given to a part-time post office service for the village as at Eggleston and Romalldkirk. This will leave the nearest fulltime post office service available only in Middleton. The post office currently provides access for personal banking but it is not clear whether this will be maintained as part of the part-time service.

“Why not add a tea room for locals and tourists to give extra revenue” was one comment.

Financial Services

The nearest bank is in Middleton – Barclays - offering a part-time opening service. In recent years many other banks have closed their branches in Barnard Castle making longer journeys to Darlington or Bishop Auckland essential to reach the full range of financial services. Benefits Offices are available only in Barnard Castle and again these are threatened with relocation to bigger centres.

Mickleton Village Hall Association

The present village hall was opened in 1994 by Lord Strathmore. It is run on a voluntary basis by a Village Hall Association Committee and every villager is automatically a member of the association. There is provision for stage productions for entertainment, and with kitchen facilities, and a bar when required, a number of regular events take place. There are 2 rooms for use for a wide range of activities plus there is a computer suite which provides online broadband access for use by anyone in the Parish.

Medical Services

Doctors' surgeries are available in Middleton and Barnard Castle and both can take local people onto their lists. There are 2 NHS dental practices in Barnard Castle although both have now closed their lists for new patients and access to dental services in the dale is increasingly being seen as a growing problem. The local Richardson hospital in Barnard Castle is being replaced by a brand new Community Hospital planned to open in 2007. However the nearest accident and emergencies department is and will remain at the relatively new hospital in Bishop Auckland. It is generally felt that Mickleton is comparatively well served by NHS services. However, a major emerging problem for Mickleton along with other villages in the dale is the threat of removal of 24 hour cover of the local ambulance service. Ambulances will then be on call from the nearest point could be anything up to 20 miles away. It is generally felt that this is a dramatic reduction in the level of local service which should not be allowed to happen. In the recent survey respondents expressed concern over the possibility that emergency services might not be able to reach them in time.

The Parish is fortunate to be covered by the air ambulance service funded totally by charitable donation and it is believed that if local ambulance emergency services are removed, then funding for the air ambulance should be provided from the publicly funded ambulance service. It should be noted that night time and adverse weather conditions prevent use of this service.

Crime and Safety

In the '06 Questionnaire most respondents felt that Mickleton was a safe place to live however they would like to see more community policing. Concerns were expressed at police not having local knowledge and also the difficulty in contacting them by phone on non urgent issues.

Environment Issues.

A good number of households in the '06 Questionnaire felt that dog fouling is a problem around the lanes and railway walk. Some were concerned at Teesdale District Council's poor litter control whilst spending money cutting down wildflowers on verges before they set seed. A request was made for them to consider separation of recycled waste by having designated skips i.e. wood, metal, hardcore etc. at the local civic amenity site as well as recycling plastic bags. One respondent wondered if grants could be made available for larger scale sustainable renewable energy sources and another to looking at using natural waterfalls for hydro electricity.

The lack of a litter bin, which would need to be regularly emptied, at the bus stop was suggested as there is a problem with litter being pushed into the surrounding hedges.

7. SOCIAL/ LEISURE ACTIVITIES

The village hall provides the main focus for village social activities and a number of clubs operate from the venue. Since opening it has been the venue for regular clubs for all ages providing stage plays, concerts, cinema, theatre, private hire for birthdays parties and weddings. It also provides a modern venue for all kinds of meetings acting as a centre used for Teesdale-wide meetings as well as just local meetings. Currently the Parish Council meets there regularly every month and a programme of special interest groups and training is available for example a weekly luncheon club, badminton, a youth club, and flower arranging.

The village hall is highly valued by local residents and in the recent survey, the live music, facilities for young people and computer facilities, were all identified as being of particular value.

As part of the '06 Consultation Durham Rural Community Council and the Mid Tees Project Partnership held an afternoon event for young people "A Spellathon" They gave their views on a variety of issues as follows: **Maureen you have these.** Residents also brought along a display of Local History pictures.

Although there is an excellent selection of activities in the hall there were some requests for the following:- woodworking, manual or IT book keeping, soft furnishing and other crafts, horticulture, garden design, massage and complimentary therapies, reading (Book club) and creative writing.

The Parish Council manages a play area for local and visiting children and through the fund raising work of the Mid Teesdale partnership this is in the process of being revamped with new play equipment selected on the basis of local children's choice.

Teesdale Gun Club was formed in 1970 for clay pigeon shooting with Sir Joseph Nickerson President, Eric Wilkinson Chairman and Peter Matless Secretary/Treasurer. It is located in Banklands Quarry and still flourishes today with The Earl Strathmore as President . ET McFarlane Treasurer and M F Corner Secretary. (**Hopefully S has photo for here**)

There is no other organised social provision in the village although there are many out-door recreational pursuits available:-

There is a Sailing Club on Grassholme Reservoir, local walks, fishing in the River Tees and local reservoirs, canoeing in the River Tees, wildlife to be seen both locally and on the nearby fells including Northumbrian Water's local Nature Reserve at Grassholme, and several active local conservation societies, history groups and so on spread between the parishes of this part of Teesdale. Respondents to the recent survey identified Mickleton's natural setting and access to the beautiful surrounding countryside as being of major importance to them. (**Fishing photo you have a choice on the disc**)

8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Current Businesses in the Parish

The mines, stone and slate quarries and reservoir construction employment came to an end in Mickleton many years ago. Some residual employment is still available in the wider surrounds where quarrying still continues for example in Lunedale at least for the moment, and High Force, but the largest employment sources are now in Barnard Castle and beyond. There are 20 farms within the Parish and after the impact of foot and mouth disease in 2001 some of these are now diversifying into tourism and other small businesses. There are currently 5 holiday cottage/caravan businesses in the Parish, 1 B&B, 2 pubs, a worm farm, 1 Post office and store, 1 petrol service station and 2 car repair businesses, an engineering/fabrication company, a landscaping company, an engraving business, 2 electricians, 3 stone wallers, a decorator, a caterer, and 1 roofer /house builder, 1 piano teacher.

Those households who responded to the survey were clearly averse to further tourist developments but by contrast business responses strongly favoured increased tourism. Some respondents felt that there was a need for more information for tourists giving walks, historical details, places of interest and local services.

ACTION PLAN

9. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN MICKLETON

General

Mickleton once accommodated a much larger population than at present and over the years, as migration led to a 50% reduction in numbers, so the local shops and services have also reduced. Therefore it is important that given Mickleton's relative remoteness, we do not lose even more services. An increase in population related to inward migration of self-sufficient people would therefore secure existing services. This would also provide the basis for future growth and contribution to the regional strategy of growing the tourist industry although the recent survey showed mixed feelings over further development of tourism in Mickleton. Nonetheless in order to sustain our existing community overall it makes sense to encourage a small incremental increase in local population and associated development, provided that the social balance of the village is not upset and provided that development can be carried out sensitively given the very vulnerable location of the Parish amidst a host of special landscape and conservation designations.

ACTION

The Parish Council will, over the next few months, prepare a set of Guidelines outlining a Parish strategy on future local development at the parish level. This will be used to inform the Parish Council's decisions and

comments when consulted on development proposals of all kinds whether individual development applications or larger more strategic plans such as the Local Development Framework, transport provision, minerals and energy development, and so on.

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SERVICES

Medical

Generally the parish is well served by the national health service with the exception of proposed changes in the emergency Ambulance service cover. Given the nearest A&E department is 17 miles away it is vital that current cover is maintained.

ACTION

The Parish Council will write to the local Ambulance Service provider expressing concern over possible reduction in services and will support public funding for the current charity air ambulance service.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Traffic speeds through our community are increasing, the only current limiting factor being the number of cars parked on the roads and the steep banks on some of the minor roads. It is vital that some form of additional speed limitation be introduced before there is a major fatality. In the recent household survey the majority of respondents wanted traffic speeds reduced. In light of the Government's drive for more environmentally sustainable transport but given the Parish's remote location and poor provision of the full range of local services within the Parish, it is vital that alternative provision of public transport is investigated to provide a viable alternative to the private car.

ACTION

The Parish Council will continue to press the County Council and Police to introduce further speed reduction initiatives. Also the Parish Council will continue to support pressure to maintain existing bus services and investigation into alternative, creative approaches to transport provision in the Dale eg Hail and Ride bus services and localised link bus services for the main contracted bus service provision.

CONSERVATION VILLAGE

Mickleton's historic built environment, old lanes and agricultural field patterns are vulnerable to impact of development and changes in management. These need to be maintained sympathetically so to contribute to local tourism which is a major source of income in the village.

ACTION

The Parish Council will continue its negotiations with Durham County Council to influence local maintenance regimes such as verge grass cutting. Also the Parish Council has a 3 year plan to conserve and sign village features such as the old water features and local lane network.

COMMUNICATIONS/ NEXT STEPS

As a small parish with limited resources we do not have facilities to embark on a major programme of additional work. However our existing plans cover many of the issues raised in consultation not least because we have based our planned work and priorities on the results of consultation with parishioners during 2004.

ACTION

We will continue to communicate our progress in our twice yearly Newsletter and will hold another consultation in 2008 to provide a 2 year cycle of consultation (following the one just completed(2006) which has informed this formal plan).

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INDEMNITY;