

# **Community Action Plan for Bootle Parish**



Issue 1 – February 2009

**Produced for the Community of Bootle  
By the Bootle Community Action Plan Steering Group**

With assistance from:

Rural Cumbria (formerly Voluntary Action Cumbria)  
Lake District National Park Authority  
Cumbria Rural Housing Trust  
DEFRA

For our Implementation Partners:

The South Copeland Partnership (of Parish Councils)  
Cumbria Association of Local Councils  
Copeland Borough Council  
Cumbria County Council  
Westlakes Renaissance  
Cumbria Vision

## **1. Introduction**

In the Government White Paper “Our Countryside, The Future” published in 2000, it was stated that ‘*parish (community action) plans are an important step in helping local rural communities to take charge of their own destinies and also an opportunity to strengthen the first, and the most local form of government we have in this country*’.

Since then several other key papers and guidance have been produced to assist villages understand services and attributes they have and wish to retain or improve on. In addition they describe what is needed to protect and enhance rural areas so that they can remain or become vibrant and sustainable well into the future. Some of these generic and Cumbria-specific documents and strategies include:-

*Sustainable Communities Act 2007*

*Pathways of Influence, Community Led Planning-why it matters, Carnegie Trust, March 2008*

*Charter for Rural Community, Carnegie Trust, 2008*

*Future Generations-A strategy for sustainable communities in Cumbria 2007-27*

*Britain’s energy coast – master plan for West Cumbria*

*Local matters – Cumbria County Council*

*Cumbria Economic Plan, (sustaining the rural economy), Cumbria Vision, 2008.*

*Strategy action plans for Cumbria Economic Plan, Cumbria Vision. 2008.*

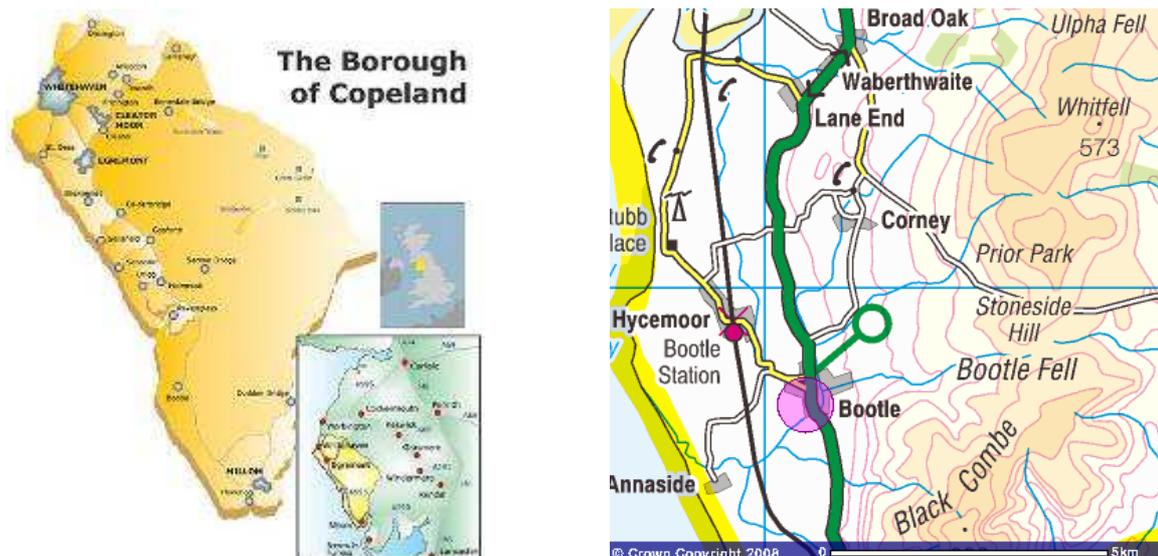
## **2. Setting the Scene**

Bootle Parish includes the settlements of Bootle, Bootle Station, and Hycemoor, together with many outlying farms and dwellings. It is situated in the south west corner of Cumbria in the southern portion of the Borough of Copeland, wholly within the Lake District National Park, and between the (civil) parishes of Waberthwaite to the north and Whicham to the south.

Most of the parish of Bootle lies on a narrow strip of low lying land oriented north – south between the Black Combe fells to the east, and the Irish Sea and the Isle of Man to the west. The principal transport routes are the A595 main road and the Whitehaven to Barrow in Furness railway line, running north to south, with only a single track road leading over the fells to the east.

The nearest centres to Bootle are the small town of Millom (8 miles to the south), and the larger town of Egremont (20 miles north). Administrative centres are still further away; the Borough Council is based in Whitehaven (25 miles north), and the County Council in Carlisle (65 miles north).

Bootle which was recently featured on TV in ‘Coast to Coast’ is located within the western strip of the Lake District National Park and is one of the six parishes within South Copeland. The location of Bootle Parish is illustrated in the maps overleaf.



Rather than give a whole summary of the history of Bootle Parish which can be found elsewhere, especially within the book 'the history of Bootle', and the two DVDs – 'Bootle Past and Present' and 'the Hidden Gem of South West Cumbria', here are a few facts about the Parish:-

- *Parish established in 1150 with building of St. Michaels/All Angel's church.*
- *During the medieval period Bootle was a busy town and in 1347 received its charter as the smallest market town in Britain.*
- *In 1651, George Fox, founder of the Quaker movement stayed at Millholme.*
- *William Wordsworth visited Bootle and Black Combe in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century*
- *During the 18<sup>th</sup> century Bootle became prominent for its Magistrate Courts.*
- *From the earliest times farming has been the mainstay of Bootle.*
- *Captain Shaw's School was established in 1829 by Captain Isaac Shaw who fought at Trafalgar.*
- *The railway arrived in 1850. Electricity only became commonplace in 1964*
- *The world champion Cumbrian wrestler, Bill Knowles, lived in the Parish.*

It is well known that many rural communities in Cumbria and elsewhere in the UK have been struggling to survive especially during the last two to three decades. There are items in the news regularly about closures of post offices, shops, small businesses and rural schools. The impact of any further loss of services is normally devastating for many small rural communities. This is exacerbated in rural areas that have poor public transport because of the increased cost of fuel and food combined with the lack of employment, affordable housing, amenities and services.

Bootle is both remote from major centres and very poorly served by public transport. Whilst these features enhance the impression of rural tranquillity they do give rise to problems in maintaining a balanced and viable community. Significant difficulties in accessing education, employment, and housing have led to the departure of many younger people - more people in the Parish are aged over 50 than are under 50, and the single largest 'employment' category is 'retired'.

It is considered that the steady loss of the village's younger people represents the greatest threat to its long term sustainability, and action is urgently needed to reverse this trend. It may not be possible to reverse past losses in employment opportunities (incurred as farms have become more mechanised and as the Ministry of Defence Gun Range at Eskmeals underwent a major post-Cold War contraction), but it should be possible to create new ones, and a radical improvement in public transport (road and rail) would allow easier access to employment outside the parish.

The greatest difficulty faced by young people, especially those on modest incomes, who wish to set up home in the village, is the severe lack of suitable housing. For many years the stringent planning policies of the National Park Authority, intended to restrict development in the interests of preservation, have resulted in significant under-supply of affordable housing stock, particularly that which is suitable for young families.

These issues also make it difficult to set up small new businesses to develop new rural ideas and initiatives. However this problem has been recognised within recent years and policies are now being revised to help address the problem. This includes planning policies such as the new Local Development Framework by the LDNPA, rural regeneration programmes run by the Local Authorities, the energy coast initiative for west Cumbria, Leader+ programmes and other government/community initiatives.

It is recognised by the majority of local communities and also by government that young people are absolutely essential to the future health and sustainability of all settlements. The needs of retired people are of equal importance within the community but without young people and families being able to provide the necessary support, settlements struggle to survive and can end up losing their identity, vibrancy and community spirit. This has already happened in some parts of Cumbria and other rural and remote counties, as evidenced by the closure of post offices, shops, schools and other essential services.

Old and young alike face just such a steady reduction in the range of services available within Bootle. In the 1920's Bootle village had 28 shops, and Bootle Station had 7. More recently, a survey has shown that within the past 22 years over 60% of village retail outlets have disappeared.

<b>Retail businesses operating in 1985</b>	<b>Situation in 2008</b>
Post Office and store, Bootle	Continues
Post Office and store, Bootle Station	Closed
Butcher's shop, Bootle	Continues
Petrol Station, Bootle	Closed
Coal & gas deliveries, Bootle Station	Continue
Milk round, based at Bootle Station	Ceased
Milk round, Gowan, based in Bootle	Ceased, but replaced by round based in Seascale

Hairdresser	Closed, but mobile service since started
Natwest Bank	Closed
Barclays Bank	Closed
West Cumberland Farmers (food, clothing toys)	Closed
May Fisher's Hardware, Bootle	Closed
Harry Fisher's Car Repairs, Bootle	Closed
King's Head pub, Bootle	Continues
Station Hotel, Bootle Station	Closed
	Cafe, Bakery & Deli at Millstones, Bootle, opened 2006

These steady losses of services are not unique to Bootle, nor are specific causes easy to identify. In many cases, however, the redundant business premises were converted to residential use, apparently with little difficulty, which at least went some way towards compensating for the shortage of housing caused by planning policies then in force.

### **3. The Way Forward**

Does the situation need attention, or should nature be left to take its course? It appears, from the evidence given above, that if the 'do nothing' approach continues, the loss of facilities will continue, and Bootle could cease to remain a self contained village so loved by its residents. Having once been a town, it could become no more than a collection of houses- a 'hamlet' in character.

So what can be done? Should anything be done? Who can best define the problems and also who can provide answers and solutions to help sustain Bootle parish well into the future? The best people to ask are those who live within the community!

Clear direction and a realistic achievable plan with community and partner back up must be implemented to safeguard the future for all generations, young and old.

Since one of the major issues facing the community appears to be a shortage of suitable housing and since planning rules are unable to allow the provision of new housing without firm evidence, the National Park Authority agreed to commission a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) as the first stage in the process.

But while housing is the most pressing need, it is only part of the picture. So once the HNS process was under way attention turned to the wider issues, and the preparation of this Community Action Plan (CAP).

This, then, is the main purpose of this CAP; to consult with the community and ask them what they think is required to keep Bootle Parish vibrant. We can then agree together how we can move forwards, with small but bold and positive steps.

The remainder of this CAP deals with consulting the community, obtaining and analysing the comments from the local community in order to summarise key findings. It is then about sharing the vision and formulating, refining and agreeing on an action plan using available evidence that is achievable and effective.

The vision and action plan will be shared with all those interested to identify more community volunteers to drive each of the agreed actions forward to completion. We believe that, in 'working in partnership' with key organisations, most if not all of the actions identified could be implemented in a timely manner to bring about positive change that will ensure the long term sustainability of Bootle Parish.

One recent success story of a 'flagship regeneration project' is Millstones and The Byre. It is hoped that a few more flagship projects can be achieved within Bootle Parish, to meet the common needs of the community as well as the authorities. The implementation of other similar beneficial regeneration projects that retain and enhance the Parish should encourage neighbouring parishes throughout South Copeland to undertake similar initiatives.

#### **4. Consulting the Community**

This has consisted of the following events:-

- *An evening meeting in the School in the spring of 2008 to make people aware of the Housing Needs Survey. This was followed by a 100% house delivery of HNS forms by volunteers.*
- *A presentation of 'This is Bootle' to major partners and organisations in May 2008, summarising what Bootle is, including its history and its strengths and weaknesses.*
- *An evening meeting held in the School in the June 2008 to make people aware of the Community Action Plan and provide an opportunity for discussion. Questionnaires were left in several public places.*
- *Several summer events with a CAP stand to inform the community (school fair, rectory garden fete) and which allowed residents to share their views.*
- *This was followed by a 100% house delivery of the CAP Questionnaires.*
- *A prize draw and collation of all returned CAP Questionnaires in early October.*

During this time a lot of interesting discussions with members of the community have taken place. Whilst a few members of the community have been dismissive or doubtful of any positive changes ever happening to our Parish, the vast majority spoken to have been supportive of the aims of both the HNS and the CAP.

#### **5. Details of Findings**

Over 40% of the community completed and returned the HNS survey forms, which is regarded by CRHT as a very good response. Whilst the full HNS results are awaited some of the key points already identified are:-

- *There are 16 households requiring a combination of 2 and 3 bedroom houses to rent or buy.*
- *There is also a need for a few 2 bedroom bungalows and a small number of larger family properties within the Parish.*
- *60% of returns were from retired people and 87% were from those aged 60+.*
- *Only 14% of those returned were from young working families/young people.*
- *Lack of housing, jobs, transport and other services were the main reason cited by most for the declining numbers of young people.*
- *90% welcomed a small number of new homes to help sustain the community.*

The response rate for the Community Action Plan questionnaires, delivered and returned later than the HNS forms, was only around 20%. This relatively low response can be attributed to the fact that the CAP papers followed hard on the heels of the HNS forms, and in many respects covered similar ground (points which were made in conversation by a number of members of the community).

Nevertheless the completed questionnaires gave wide coverage of the community, both geographically, and by age and by background; they are therefore felt to be both valuable, and representative of the views of the whole community. This is confirmed by the way in which the views put forward in the CAP responses meshed with those shown by the HNS.

Whilst everyone has been given an opportunity to make their views known through this exercise and several social events and evenings, this is the 1<sup>st</sup> issue of the Community Action Plan and it is expected that further comments will be received following distribution.

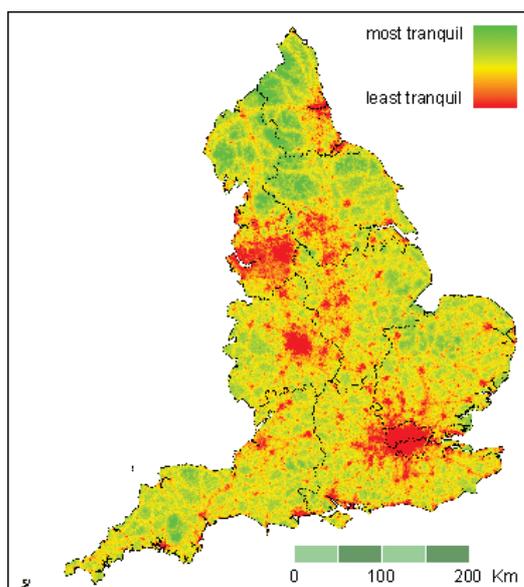
Further comments and questionnaires received will be taken on board and included in the Issue 1 (final) of this CAP, expected to be in February 2009.

The main findings from analysing the results of the CAP questionnaires returned are summarised as follows:-

#### **Responses to Qi) what do you think of Bootle as a place to live?**

Some 82% found Bootle Parish either an 'average' or a 'good' place to live in, with less than 2% saying it is poor and 16% thinking it is an excellent place to live.

Bootle and the rest of Cumbria has a lot going for it in terms of our environment and people and according to national statistics we are one of the most tranquil places to live in England!



<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/tranquillity/national-and-regional-tranquillity-maps>

**Responses to Qii) what do you like about Bootle Parish?**

The things that most people liked about the Parish are a combination of the relatively quiet and scenic location combined by its overall friendly and helpful residents.

**Responses to Qiii) what makes Bootle special and different from other places?**

The things that most residents say that make the Parish special are a combination of the community, the surroundings and some of its services, especially the school, the Pre-school, the café, the butcher and Bootle Stores.

**Responses to Question iv) What do you NOT like about Bootle Parish?**

The things that most people did not like about living in the Parish are a combination of the ongoing general decline of the area, the lack of investment and often poor support by the authorities to help retain what few services are still remaining (especially the school and surgery). There is a strong perception that South Copeland is ignored. The lack of investment for new services (transport, housing, employment, tourism, leisure) was expressed by many as their greatest concern.

In order to gauge support for the following 12 initiatives, respondents were asked to rate their enthusiasm for each, ranging from 1 (definitely) to 4 (no). Many added additional comments.

**Responses to Q1: The Wellbank site being developed**

There is overwhelming support (>90%) to see the site at Wellbank developed with many stating that it should ideally be a mixed development to include affordable housing, tourism, some business units, possibly a restaurant and a new swimming pool and/or small leisure centre. Several others said that they would like see recycling and environmentally 'green' features incorporated into any development there including solar, biomass and heat pumps.

The vast majority agreed that something positive should be done as soon as possible with this dilapidated site (see photo) that will benefit the local community as well as the landowner.

**Responses to Q2: A small community owned renewable energy development**

There is strong support for renewable energy and energy efficiency measures on new and existing developments to help people in fuel poverty although the benefits and cost of this are not well understood.

Most people are supportive of biomass, hydro and solar power and community-type projects especially if they can benefit the community. However few want to see wind turbines installed. Only those that are small and unobtrusive would be supported (like the 6kW one near Ravensglass).

**Responses to Q3: A bus service or other transport initiative**

There is overwhelming support for better transportation between Bootle and Millom, Broughton in Furness, Ulverston, Barrow and Whitehaven. The main suggestions were for a Sunday train service and also an evening train service (which currently terminate at Barrow and Whitehaven). There was widespread support for a more

regular train service with more rolling stock to take more people off the roads, especially those commuting to Sellafield and Drigg where the trains are filled to over capacity.

Northern Rail have recently undertaken a detailed study and consultation of the west coast line which supports improvements and the 1<sup>st</sup> copy the Bootle Parish newsletter mentions some increased train frequency. There was strong support for any sort of local bus service with many mentioning a micro or mini-bus service or even a regular taxi service especially between Whitehaven/Egremont/Ravensglass and Millom/ Ulverston/Broughton and Barrow.

#### **Responses to Q4: A path and cycleway linking Bootle and Bootle Station**

There is overwhelming support to see a path and cycleway linking Bootle and Bootle Station. It was stated by many that this could be linked with the development of the Wellbank site and any other smaller housing/business developments. Sustrans appear very keen to support this and several other organisations are also very supportive.

However, some people in the community are not aware of the need for this and what benefits it would bring. Some also do not appreciate that this would be in the fields adjacent to the road, where a track once was (see photo). Therefore it would be beneficial to get one or two schemes drawn up along with schemes for the development of Wellbank which could be presented to the community in 2009.

#### **Responses to Q5: Some low key development at the beach**

There is overwhelming support to see some sort of low key development at the beach. It should NOT be left to be reclaimed by the sea for much longer (as suggested by the shoreline management plan) as this will mean the loss of the road serving Eskmeals in the next 5 to 10 years (not 50 years as suggested).

The most common suggestions were for low impact 'soft engineering' to stop further erosion (i.e. similar to but on a smaller scale to the sea wall at Haverigg), to make a flat designated car parking area plus a public toilet and shelter - possibly integrated into a beach (summer) café.

Several indicated the importance of some low key development of the beach shoreline, which was once a popular place for locals and visitors. However because it has been left for so long now and become dilapidated (see photo) it no longer is.

Most people agreed that some sort of low key development is essential to attract visitors again and is absolutely imperative for any 'green tourism' related regeneration of the Wellbank site and any other sites.

#### **Responses to Q6: More businesses being started in Bootle Parish.**

There is overwhelming support for the development of new business in this area which lacks job opportunities for all ages and skills sets. However ideas being suggested were somewhat limited although there are quite a few suggestions that

Wellbank could be developed to include some small business units (up to 6 for local trades, high and low tech-linked with energy coast spin offs and local produce outlet).

**Response to Q7: More leisure facilities in Bootle Parish.**

There is overwhelming support for more leisure facilities especially a new swimming pool (to replace the existing one which has a very limited life expectancy) and also a small gym/badminton/squash court was suggested by a number of the community.

In addition some sort of park/play area/wooded area/pond was suggested by several. Away from Wellbank a skate park, a bike park and a horse riding centre were also suggested. A few suggested that a mountain biking centre would be a positive step.

**Responses to Q8: Somewhere to eat out in the evening.**

There is overwhelming support for somewhere to eat out in the evening. Suggestions included the King's Head pub considering serving food, the Byre tearooms considering opening several evenings a week or alternatively a restaurant being built at Wellbank or even on the high street. One person suggested that the old petrol station could be developed to serve visitors, commuters and locals, although parking would be limited.

**Responses to Q9: More places to stay and visit within Bootle Parish**

There is overwhelming support for more places to stay and visit within the Parish and also within the adjacent parishes. There is good evidence that we should be making more use of our natural environment for social and economic purposes so that more people can enjoy the peaceful and scenic surroundings of the west side of the Lake District.

Suggestions for visitor attractions include green tourism with ideas such as a small number of eco/wooden lodges on secluded sites, eco camping pods or yurts and one or two outdoor activity centres (e.g. horse riding/mountain biking/canoeing/ dinghy sailing/ecology/walking holidays). Sites mentioned to accommodate some of these included Millholme, Bootle Station, the fell road and close to the Beach (see Appendix 2 for a list of main sites identified).

**Responses to Q10: Captain Shaw's or Waberthwaite School closing down or merging as a result of declining numbers.**

This question received lots of comments with most in favour of retaining both. Several people suggested that in hindsight a better question might have been to ask 'What is required to provide the best long term solution for primary school education in South Copeland?' However the responses received were significant.

Responses to this question indicated an overwhelming acknowledgement of the vital importance of Captain Shaw's Primary School within the village. Not only does it provide the children with excellent educational opportunities and vital social interaction skills, but it also provides 'networking' opportunities and social benefits for parents and the wider community.

It is considered by most to be the hub of the village along with the excellent pre-school in the Pavilion. Education and child care is considered essential in keeping the community vibrant, alive and kicking and its future is imperative if we are to attract more young people and young families to live in the Parish.

Whilst the vast majority do not want to see Captain Shaw's or Waberthwaite School close down, many recognise the harsh realities of declining numbers and raw economics. Some even suggested closing one or the other or even both.

However the overwhelming majority recognised that the answer to keeping Captain Shaw's open is to attract some young families to live within the Parish by identifying suitable land and obtaining permissions to build a small number of more affordable houses.

### **Responses to Q11: A small number of new affordable homes**

There is overwhelming support to build a small number of new and more affordable houses to meet the demand for young and older people to stay in the Parish and also for a small number of new family homes for people both within, and also currently living outside of, the Parish.

The comments received indicate a strong demand for more houses to rent as well as some houses being built to purchase outright or partially (shared ownership). This is considered in more detail within the Housing Needs Survey report for Bootle Parish.

Housing demand has been demonstrated from the feedback at the open evening to launch the Community Action Plan, by the housing needs survey and results of this study. In addition there is known demand from employees who live in the south of the County but who commute daily to major employers (Sellafield and Drigg).

On a national scale there is a mass shortage of affordable houses due to the growing UK population. It has been mentioned by some that the Lake District, which is now described as 'the Adventure Capital of the UK', should be actively seeking to retain and attract more young people back to live and work here as a 'lifestyle choice'.

One thing that most people commented on here is the urgent need to attract more young people to the area (aided by starting a few small affordable housing developments) and provide new diverse employment opportunities. This is a common theme within many village and small rural settlements within the Lake District.

It was stated that attracting more young people would help sustain Captain Shaw's and the pre-school, which have received such glowing reports even from secondary school teachers of these pupils. Several stated that without a school, villages die out and attracting young families becomes even harder to achieve. This has already been demonstrated many times over in reports by the Commission for Rural Communities.

### **Responses to Q12: A small number of new family houses**

Comments were also raised regarding the need for a more inclusive range of housing within the Parish to accommodate a variety of demands, changes and earning potentials including those working for small and large employers in full time and part time occupations.

There was strong agreement that the focus and priority should be for more high quality more housing for people living with the Parish followed by a few others for those living and working in West Cumbria but commuting through the parish. It was recognised by some that this would also mesh with strategies to support and develop this part of Cumbria within the overall economic plan for rural communities.

**Responses to Q13: Do you know of any plots of land for self-build to supply local housing need?**

The main plots of land identified for housing and other types of development are similar to those raised under the Housing Needs Survey which identified 16 areas including land and sites at Wellbank, Bootle Station, Millholme, Pavilion, Chapel Lane, the 2 acre field north side of Church Lane. Other land includes farms, barn conversions, renovation of derelict houses and self build in the Parish (see photo). Appendix 2 list the main sites currently identified.

**Responses to Q14: What other land would like to see developed?**

The responses to this question included comments asking why several empty barns and houses are still sitting empty and have not been converted to provide affordable accommodation. Several comments were raised about the need to allow for more self-build on own land/gardens especially to allow some people with enough land to downsize without moving out of the parish.

Some residents said they had enquired about obtaining planning permission in the past but have been turned down or discouraged from submitting any formal planning applications. Others would like to see housing upgrades and/or replacements to existing socially rented housing stock.

**Responses to Q15: What land would not like to see built on?**

The majority of people did not want to see any major development on greenbelt land and especially the lower fells and on their own land/gardens. Other areas that were mentioned that should not be built on included playing fields, Abbeyfield, Pavillion, fields near Bootle Station, and land directly adjacent to the Church and Chapel.

**Responses to Q16: Do you know of anyone who would like to move back here?**

Quite a few people knew of friends/families/couples that currently do not live in the Parish, but would like to, especially if there was more suitable and affordable housing stock. The type of housing wanted now is a mix of small 2 bedroom houses to rent or buy and also 3 and 4 bedroom houses to rent or buy.

Interest for market price houses has been expressed from some professionals working at Sellafield and Drigg who currently commute from towns including Ulverston, Kendal and Barrow and other outlying rural areas. Some of these employees are seeking market value properties, especially to rent, that are South of Sellafield and Drigg.

There was wide agreement that any affordable housing to be built should be for people living within, or with a need to live in, the Parish. This includes and applicants should be subject to fair and equitable means testing. Other types of housing including executive homes which are required within South Copeland are considered elsewhere (e.g. major employment study).

**Responses to Q17: Would you like to see greater use made of Captain Shaw's and Bootle Station village hall?**

The majority of the community who responded would like to see greater use made of Bootle Station village hall and Captain Shaw's for a combination of activities. This

included a youth club, yoga and other fitness classes and possibly some sort of evening entertainment/cinema. However it was recognised that this requires more people with ideas, commitment, energy and time and currently only a few have come forward.

The Steering Group and the Parish Council will endeavour and continue to encourage any willing volunteers to come forward to help with such initiatives to help improve the quality of life for those living both within and outside of the Parish.

### **Responses to Q18: Would you like last year's nativity play to be an annual event?**

The majority of the responses were a resounding yes, although quite a few weren't aware of the event last year, especially those at Hycemoor. Several suggested a different theme for this festive season. Volunteers are needed to assist here.

### **Responses to Q19 and 20: Please comment on the provision of education and health services within the Parish.**

What became clear from analysing the results to these responses is that the overwhelming majority want our services to be maintained and gradually improved. This includes Captain Shaw's, Wellbank Pre-school at the Pavilion and the Surgery. Some 85% of respondents considered these absolutely essential for the future of the village.

Many said that these services were essential for its current residents as well as being needed to remain a sustainable and attractive place to live in the future. Many said that any further loss of services would make it almost impossible to attract new people and especially young people and families to live within the Parish. However a few said that our current services are overstretched limiting growth.

### **Responses to Q21: Comment on how often you use our current services.**

The use of current services within Bootle Parish across the community varies from low to high where most thought the quality of provision was good to excellent.

The comments received on the Bootle Stores, post office, butcher, tearooms, Millstones, swimming pool, church, chapel, the pub, surgery, train station, Bootle Station village hall, Captain Shaw's hall, varied from 'excellent' and 'high use' to 'good' and 'low use'.

### **Responses to Q22 and Q23: Other comments on provision and improvements**

The main comments provided here were on the slow but general decline of the Parish mainly from the lack of investment and support from the local authorities. Most mentioned that a combination of the lack of adequate public transport, affordable housing and jobs were the main reason for the continued decline which some consider to be adversely affecting community spirit.

Several retired people said that this has happened after the run-down of Eskmeals MoD base which used to be the main employer in the Parish. Others said that it was down to the various partners not working together to allow small but beneficial regeneration projects to be implemented. Several said that more regeneration projects are urgently needed, similar to that achieved by Millstone and The Byre.

This successful regeneration project was not widely supported initially by the majority community when first proposed but has proved to be a much needed positive boost not just to the local community but as a major visitor attraction and proves what can be achieved.

In summary, the main requests for improvements to Bootle Parish are to:-

- retain what services we currently have
- provide some activities for young people and to help retain/attract more families and working people
- provide more affordable high quality housing to help meet the identified need
- allow the use of barns and redundant buildings to be converted into houses
- allow the use of barns and redundant buildings to be converted to improve tourism and visitor attractions
- provide some low impact eco-tourism developments especially for an outward bound centre –cycling/walking linked to fells (Millholme and elsewhere)
- create some new jobs including business units (Wellbank and elsewhere)
- provide somewhere to eat out in the evenings (that is reasonably priced)
- provide a cycleway/footpath between Bootle and Bootle station
- provide improvements to the road between Bootle and Bootle station
- provide more indoor and outdoor activities for all ages
- integrate renewable energy into most new developments (highly efficient)
- provide some low key development at the beach (toilet/car park/café)
- introduce more traffic calming measures
- provide a more frequent train service.
- provide a local bus and/or taxi service.
- provide recycling facilities.

## **6. Summary of Key Findings**

The key findings from analysis of the CAP questionnaires can be summarised into two categories: essential measures and complementary measures. These are summarised below:-

### **Essential measures**

The following findings need to be considered and implemented to enhance the socio-economic and environmental diversity and sustainability of Bootle.

1. Positive action is required to encourage, retain and attract more young working people and more young working families to live in the area. This needs to involve key partners who want a more diverse and vibrant economy.
2. As identified by the HNS, and confirmed by the CAP results, there is urgent need for approximately 20 good quality, energy-efficient affordable homes for young people, for families, and for the retired. 'New land', both Greenfield and Brownfield, have been identified by respondents to meet much of the initial local need. In addition the renovation of unused agricultural buildings and self build on one's own land needs to be encouraged, including the use for visitor attractions and job creation/diversity. It is strongly recommended that Bootle set up a Community Land Trust (CLT) to enable sites that the community would like to see utilised for housing developments as soon as possible. This approach should assist in streamlining the planning process for affordable homes, including allowing self-build and working with housing associations.
3. There is a need to encourage and assist new business start-ups. This is essential to the long term sustainability of Bootle and requires positive support (advertising, funding). Whilst some employment will result from the regeneration of some of the sites identified, others are needed. Ideas include:-
  - a small business park with a few business units for rent which could be linked with energy coast initiative
  - ICT, using broadband internet & small businesses working from home
  - more local trades, crafts & produce; creative arts and culture
  - green tourism (linked with helping to create a low carbon economy and addressing some of the economic implication of climate change and the reduction of jobs at major employers)
  - outdoor adventure holidays, ecology and education for greener living (linked with University of Cumbria, CREA and Cumbria Tourism).

Some of the identified sites (see Appendix 2) should be developed to address the growing need for outdoor activity and eco-tourism projects that will help boost the struggling local economy, just like Millstones has. It is recognised by the community that mixed use of some sites will be essential to be economically viable, especially where funding cannot be obtained (more likely in the current economic climate).

4. Development of the Wellbank site (owned by Greening Developments) must take place before it deteriorates much further. There were various suggestions

for a mixed use of this site involving housing, business, leisure and eco-tourism. Local skills and labour should be employed wherever possible.

5. There is a need for improved transport links, primarily in the form of a more frequent train service and more carriages on all trains with evening and Sunday services to Whitehaven and Barrow in Furness. This would need to be supplemented by the provision of a safe access route from the village to the station in the form of a cycle way/footpath between Bootle and Bootle Station to benefit the community and visitors alike. This could be linked with cycle hire and would benefit any development at Wellbank and other proposed sites in the locality. In addition there is already a strong need for a minibuss and/or taxi service.
6. Implementation of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures should be used in all new developments. This includes using more sustainable materials, completing a detailed feasibility study for a part-owned community village hydro plant (that could power most of the village) and possibly a similar study for a biomass CHP plant to power Wellbank. Implementation of these would provide an excellent and sustainable way of reducing our carbon footprint, increasing energy security, providing a visitor attraction (green build fortnight) and also providing a small but steady income stream into the CLT to help fund other initiatives. These two projects along with others could make Bootle one of the 'cleanest & greenest villages in Cumbria' and provide a few long term jobs for local residents (e.g. biomass supplies, small businesses, green tourism and maintenance).

### **Complementary measures**

The following findings need to be considered and if implemented will further enhance the socio-economic-environmental benefits, diversity and vibrancy of Bootle.

7. Provision of some low impact regeneration at the beach (toilets/shelter/café). If the road to Eskmeals is considered essential then this should become a higher priority action to protect it from coastal erosion. In addition, some low key development of the site will become essential to complement any major regeneration at Wellbank etc.
8. Provision of somewhere to eat in the evenings (pub/café or new build possibly at Wellbank)
9. The development of other low impact tourism and outward bound activities such as walking, cycling and other outdoor adventure holidays on other identified sites possibly also linked with ecology, education and outward bound training/team building.
10. Provision of better indoor sports facilities (possibly linked with Wellbank)
11. Provision of better recycling facilities.
12. Better utilisation of community halls/school for youth club/evening entertainment.

These findings have been turned from an initial 12 actions in the draft CAP report into 16 actions within this final version as shown in the Actions Table in Appendix 1.

## **7. Conclusions, Recommendations and Next Steps**

The Actions Plan forms the main conclusions of this report which have been refined from comments received from the various partners and the community during winter 2008/9.

It is concluded that if a modest number of the identified actions can be implemented, especially those identified as 'high priority', then this will provide a much needed 'regeneration boost' to this special but often ignored region of South Copeland.

Implementation of some of these actions fits very well with the aims and visions of the Economic Development Strategy and Regeneration Plans for Cumbria as detailed in documents available on the Partners (National Park, Councils, Cumbria Vision and Westlakes Renaissance and other) websites. Some actions also mesh well with the Energy Coast Initiatives, especially for diversification away from Nuclear.

The steering group is seeking individuals from the community and organisations alike to champion and support each of these agreed actions from initial ideas developed up into innovative designs that can be implemented to help sustain Bootle Parish and have a positive influence beyond (i.e. within Parishes of South Copeland Partnership).

Funding may need to be sought and secured to help implement some but not all of these actions. Those actions for affordable housing developments on some of the main sites to meet identified housing need may require significant funding unless mixed use applications proposed can be supported, submitted and approved.

Some actions identified may require part funding in terms of helping to complete detailed feasibility studies, planning submissions, ground works, building development works and regeneration equipment and activities.

It is recommended that some of the high priority actions, especially for development of the Wellbank site should be presented to the community in 2009 to gain extra support and attract volunteers and perhaps funding from regeneration organisations.

It is hoped that momentum can be gathered and partnerships developed that will allow good progress to be made so that some of these actions to be commenced in the summer of 2009 and implemented during 2009 and into 2010 and beyond.

The success of implementing much of this Action Plan depends upon the long term commitment and ownership of community leaders to help work with land-owners, developers and other partners to implement the identified actions. Effective working with the various partners to gain advice, permissions, support and funding together with community volunteers is key to delivering small but sustainable regeneration projects (as done for the Byre).

It is the wish of the Bootle Steering Group that this Action Plan can result in positive action translated on the ground into physical regeneration projects as soon as possible to help keep Bootle Parish vibrant. It is essential that Bootle retains what few services we have and build upon this so that the current community and future generations can continue to live in, grow-up, work, retire and enjoy this wonderful part of Cumbria.

**Appendix 1: Bootle Parish Community Action Plan: 2009 - 2013.**

	Priority	Objective	Purpose / Implications	Key Actions	Lead	Partners	Target	Notes
1.	High	Retain younger residents	To maintain balanced age distribution & sustain facilities (especially primary school) for children  To maintain continuity of family residence in Bootle To help maintain overall population levels, attract younger families & sustain local facilities	Provide affordable housing	CPSG	NPA, landowners, regeneration partners	Visible progress 2009/2010	HNS has shown need for approx 20 units with the parish for local need NPA willing to consider non-traditional sustainable designs Community Land Trust (CLT) probably needed for some sites Self-build could by-pass the need for external funding
				Provide employment sites	CPSG	NPA, regeneration partners	Planning issues to be agreed 2009	Likely to depend mainly on the regeneration of Wellbank and possibly other sites
2.	High	Retain older residents	To maintain family & community links  To help maintain overall population levels & sustain local facilities	Facilitate 'downsizing'	Home owners	NPA, BPC		Some Planning flexibility may well be necessary to enable this.
				Possibly some social housing	CLT / Copeland Homes	NPA, landowners		Included within HNS 'affordable housing' proposals
3.	High	Retain / attract other residents	To help maintain overall population levels & sustain local facilities	Publicise possibilities	CPSG	Major employers outside of Bootle		Could be linked with Energy Coast initiatives and major employers Existing open market housing likely to be sufficient for most (except executive). Allowing existing residents to downsize without leaving the Parish would help.

	Priority	Objective	Purpose / Implications	Key Actions	Lead	Partners	Target	Notes
4.	High	Regenerate Wellbank site	Prevention of further deterioration and an eyesore / health and safety hazard. Provision of facilities including housing, tourism, leisure, employment on the site	Develop scheme acceptable to NPA, the landowners and the community	Greening (site owners)	NPA, CPSG, BPC, regeneration partners	Agree outline scheme by mid 2009	Identified by community as an main objective in its own right Multi-use proposals most likely to be viable Income generation within overall scheme would reduce the need for significant external funding
5.	High	Highway protection at Bootle Beach	To maintain access to coastal dwellings & Eskmeals	Stabilise road against erosion	CCC	MoD (for Eskmeals)	Now	Need agreed, implementation details being debated
6.	High	Transport links, improve rail service	Could reduce use of private cars and encourage tourism	Improve service frequency and stock	CPSG	Northern Rail, CCC	New timetable Dec 2008	Improved daytime frequency in Dec 2008 timetable. Possibility of evening trains linked with creating a 'low carbon economy & visitor attraction' to help regenerate area.
7.	High	Transport links, provide safe route to station	Would encourage greater use of rail service Would facilitate village-to-beach walk	Provide footpath / cycleway	BPC	CCC, regeneration partners, landowners	Into CCC 2010-11 'program'	BPC to re-submit 2006 proposals for a footpath / cycleway to CCC together with details for minor improvements to the road
8.	Medium	Transport links, provide minibuss or taxi services	Particular need for village to station service Would encourage greater use of rail service	Investigate options	CPSG	Primarily CCC	During 2009	Existing Rural Wheels / Muncaster Microbus to serve area may suffice. Revival of Voluntary Car Service or microbus to be considered
9.	Medium	Community information and advertising the parish regionally and nationally	To promote Bootle as a desirable business / residence location via Media. The development of Wellbank and other sites will assist	Website	CPSG	BPC	During 2009	Development and launch of website <a href="http://www.bootleparish.org.uk">www.bootleparish.org.uk</a> in 2009
				Newsletter	CPSG	BPC	1 <sup>st</sup> issue published 2008	Need to identify a volunteer to produce and distribute this and also to maintain website.

	Priority	Objective	Purpose / Implications	Key Actions	Lead	Partners	Target	Notes
10.	Medium to high	Renewable Energy	To develop community owned hydro plant	Feasibility study	CPSG		2009	Flow / fall in Gibson Spout stream sufficient for a viable scheme to power most of Bootle
			To develop biomass energy plant	Feasibility study	CPSG, Greening		2009/10	Appropriate as part of Wellbank regeneration, scheme size dependant on Wellbank proposals
11.	Medium to high	Energy efficiency	To improve energy efficiency of existing housing stock	Encourage take-up of existing schemes	BPC	Initially CBC	2009	Research into existing provision is required. Funding/partnering sought to help improve efficiency of existing housing stock
12.	Medium to high	'Low Impact' tourism	To provide more accommodation facilities to help meet the need for visitors	Support initiatives by owners	BPC	NPA		'Farm/Business diversification' schemes to be encouraged Likely to be a fundamental income-generating part of the Wellbank scheme and some other sites 'Green' novel initiatives to be encouraged e.g. organic produce
			To provide facilities for activities	Support initiatives by owners	BPC, CPSG	NPA		Some facilities (e.g. horse riding) could be based on farms, others (e.g. mountain bike hire) at Wellbank or elsewhere- Millholme
			To provide toilet & refreshment facilities facilities at Bootle Beach Would benefit both local resident & tourists	Develop proposals	CPSG			To complement road stabilisation tasks and also help promote the area for locals and visitors, possibly linked with the development of Wellbank and other sites
13.	Medium	Indoor sports	To provide indoor sports facilities for local residents (multi-function gym and pool)	Incorporate in Wellbank development	Greening			Could be part of 'tourism' and 'leisure' provision Need to continue swimming pool provision already recognised by Greening.

	Priority	Objective	Purpose / Implications	Key Actions	Lead	Partners	Target	Notes
14.	Medium	Community halls	To increase utilisation of existing community halls Help reduce hourly rates & ensure financial viability	Encourage new initiatives	CPSG	Volunteers as identified		Very many suggestions from the community, volunteer leaders to be identified, supported & encouraged to help implement high usage
15.	Medium	Evening 'eating out' opportunities	To provide an evening meal service within the village Would reduce need to travel	Encourage initiatives by owners / operators	BPC	Owners / operators	Summer 2009	Extension of capabilities of existing establishments probably preferable to opening new ones. Operator of The Byre currently developing proposals for occasional evening opening
16.	Low	Recycling	To provide facilities to recycle plastic & cardboard Would improve recycling rates and reduce need to travel out of village	Agree revised plans with CBC Waste Management	BPC	CBC	Complete by mid 2009	Doorstep collections recently extended to whole village, paper / glass / can bins may now be redundant, could perhaps be replaced by bins for plastic & cardboard.

### **Glossary of main terms (groups/organisations) and proposed main tasks**

	<b>Group / Organisation</b>	<b>Main tasks / support needed/required/expected</b>
CPSG	(Bootle) Community Action Plan Steering Group	Each task to be led by an individual, yet to be identified, within the community but not necessarily on the Steering Group (Bootle & South Copeland Partnership)
BPC	Bootle Parish Council	Some tasks to be led by an individual Councillors, still to be identified
NPA	(Lake District) National Park Authority	Policies to help maintain diverse and vibrant rural communities (e.g. LDF)
CCC	Cumbria County Council	To help facilitate some of these regeneration and transportation projects
CBC	Copeland Borough Council	Regeneration managers/Housing Associations to assist with implementing AH
CLT	(Bootle) Community Land Trust	Not yet set up, but will be required for pure AH (Affordable Housing) sites
HNS	(Bootle) Housing Needs Survey	Conducted by CRHT (Cumbria Rural Housing Trust) to assist with setting up a CLT

**Appendix 2: Bootle Community Plan, Land Available for Housing in Bootle Parish**

	<b>Site 1: Wellbank</b>	<b>Site 2: Field off Church Lane</b>
1. Main proposed use of land	Mixed use regeneration project. Affordable / mixed housing together with commercial and/or leisure developments. Existing community swimming pool to remain & be upgraded.	Housing, all-affordable or mixed
2. Landowner(s) & tenure	Greening Developments, Freehold.	Mr & Mrs D Clarke, Believed Freehold.
3. Any restrictions on use of land (e.g. covenants)	No covenants known, community swimming pool to be incorporated into development.	None known
4. Location	Between Bootle and Bootle station Grid SD 099 886	Bootle village, North of Church lane, next to graveyard Grid SD 106 884
5. Approx size	0.5 to 1 ha (8 to 12 houses) within 1 ha of 5 ha site	1 ha (up to 12 affordable housing units or mixed use)
6. Current use / condition	Former MoD site, various redundant buildings and building bases, swimming pool still in use.	Field, agriculture /horticulture
7. Access	Direct access to C4027 , existing internal roads might need some improvement	Direct access to C4027.
8. Availability of services	Water, sewerage & electricity in place throughout site to existing & former buildings	Water, sewerage & electricity available opposite site at existing houses
9. Consent of owners	Verbal consent (without obligation) from owners. May be willing to provide housing land free if remainder of site can be developed to produce an income.	Verbal consent (without obligation) from owners
10. Viability	High. By far the highest score in HNS survey responses. Available for use, <i>and</i> in need of remediation, <i>and</i> with services already in place.	Medium – a good Greenfield site, on fringe of village. Could provide most of community’s identified housing needs on one site.

	<b>Site 3: West end of Hycemoor Way</b>	<b>Site 4: Millholme</b>
1. Main proposed use of land	Housing, all-affordable or mixed	Mixed housing and tourism all incorporating eco-technologies
2. Landowner(s) & tenure	Mr & Mrs C A James, Freehold	Mr & Mrs S Dalton, Freehold
3. Any restrictions on use of land (e.g. covenants)	None relevant	No covenants. Site adjacent to stream, minor flood risk to be taken into account in detailed design
4. Location	West of existing Hycemoor Way houses, opposite garages Grid SD 088 898	Millholme, south end of Bootle Village Grid SD 878 109
5. Approx size	0.5 ha, or more if needed, within 2 ha plot perhaps 4 units	1 ha, for a private eco-development consisting of 1 plot with detailed planning permission for an eco house (for Cumbrian's) to help fund 1 or 2 affordable eco bungalows and up to 3 eco-tourism lodges providing local jobs and outward bound diversification (e.g. mountain biking centre for fells).
6. Current use / condition	Conifer woodland, crop nearing maturity	Private and secluded gardens
7. Access	Existing estate road fronts site & joins C4027	Existing access to A595 (separate from Millholme access) has Highways approval for 5 dwellings subject to minor improvements along track/entrance.
8. Availability of services	Water & electricity at adjacent houses, new main sewer being installed at front of site	Water & electricity at Millholme , but proposals would be for off-grid electricity and eco water/sewerage systems
9. Consent of owners	Verbal consent (without obligation)	Verbal consent (without obligation)
10. Viability	Medium, the only known site in the Bootle Station / Hycemoor area	Medium

	<b>Site 5: Fell Green</b>
1. Main proposed use of land	All-affordable housing
2. Landowner(s) & tenure	Bootle Parish Council, Freehold
3. Any restrictions on use of land (e.g. covenants)	Land currently let to tenant
4. Location	At foot of Bootle Fell, opposite Fell Green cottages Grid SD 886 116
5. Approx size	0.2 ha, perhaps 2 units
6. Current use / condition	Rough grazing
7. Access	Unclassified road adjacent
8. Availability of services	Water & electricity at adjacent houses
9. Consent of owners	Suggestion during Council Meeting discussions, would require formal ratification by vote
10. Viability	Medium

**Other smaller sites may be offered once progress on one or more of the sites so far identified can be seen. Early and visible commencement of development is therefore essential if Community engagement is to be sustained.**

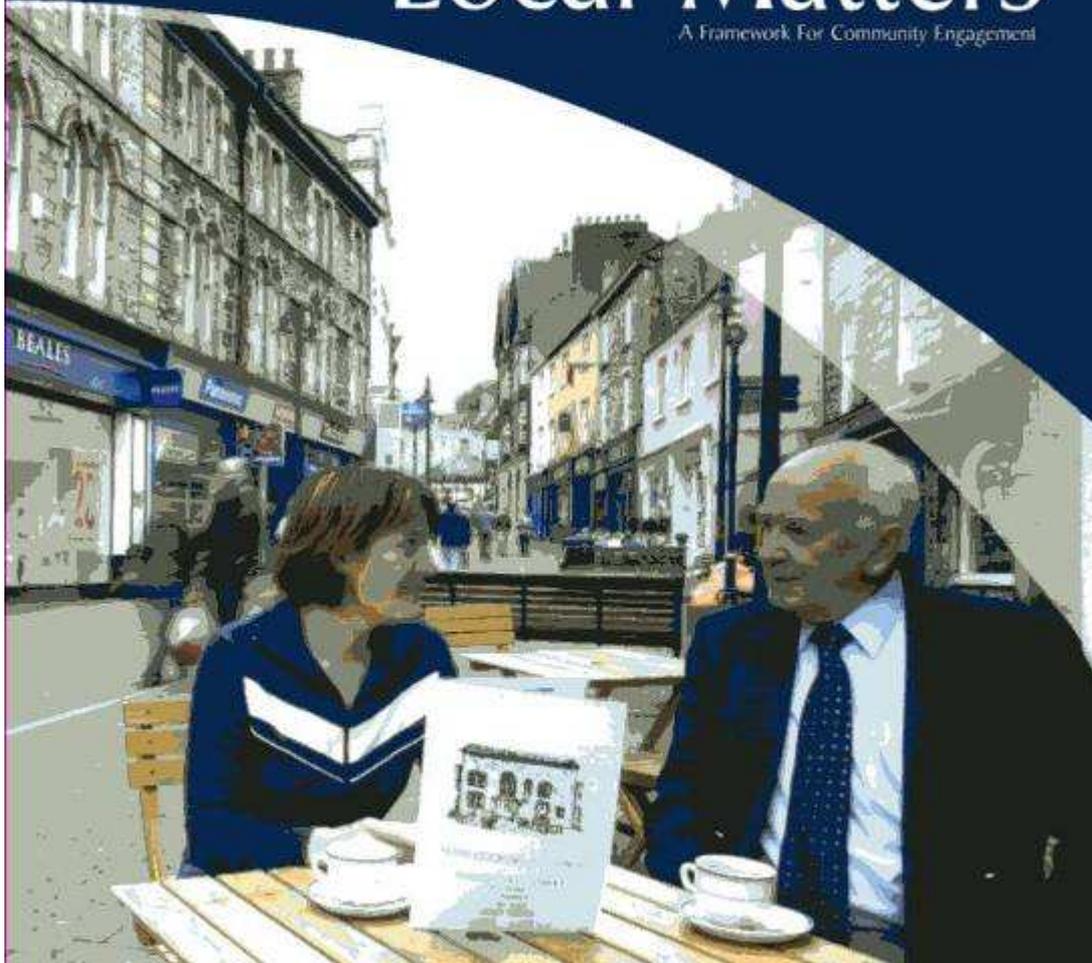
**Planning Approval within 2009 and on-site commencement in 2010 on at least one site are important targets.**

# Getting community engagement right...

**Cumbria  
NWPLIS**  
County Council

## Local Matters

A Framework For Community Engagement



## 6 SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES

### FUTURE GENERATION

#### 6.5 Communities that Work

Our communities each have a strong local and cultural identity. They retain a level of traditional networking, community spirit and willingness to work together which has much to offer in maintaining tolerant, supportive and strong communities.

We want our communities to be places where everyone has access to the services they need and is able to become involved in activities in their community. Masked by the high quality of the local environment, **some communities and individuals continue to suffer disadvantage.**

We will ensure good life chances for all by **creating inclusive communities** and continuing to look for new ways to narrow the gap between their experience and the best.

We commit to local facilities run by local people - social enterprise, commerce, manufacturing and financial services which retain wealth in our communities - and providing access to services such as health care for all, which will enable people to work, shop and enjoy their leisure time locally.

Our communities can be enterprising and able but too often, these attributes are not used to their full potential.

We will value life-long learning and creativity, for its own sake and for its role in empowering people to exercise greater control over their lives and to engage with others with respect and tolerance.

We will create opportunities to study at the highest levels locally. We will enable people to take up other appropriate learning to allow them to fulfil their potential. We will also increase peoples' understanding of what makes communities work so that they can make the



right decisions for a sustainable community. We also recognise the value of supporting and developing the local cultural and leisure opportunities available to residents and visitors.

We need leisure, cultural and sporting facilities that will engage the imagination and make our communities places that people want to live.

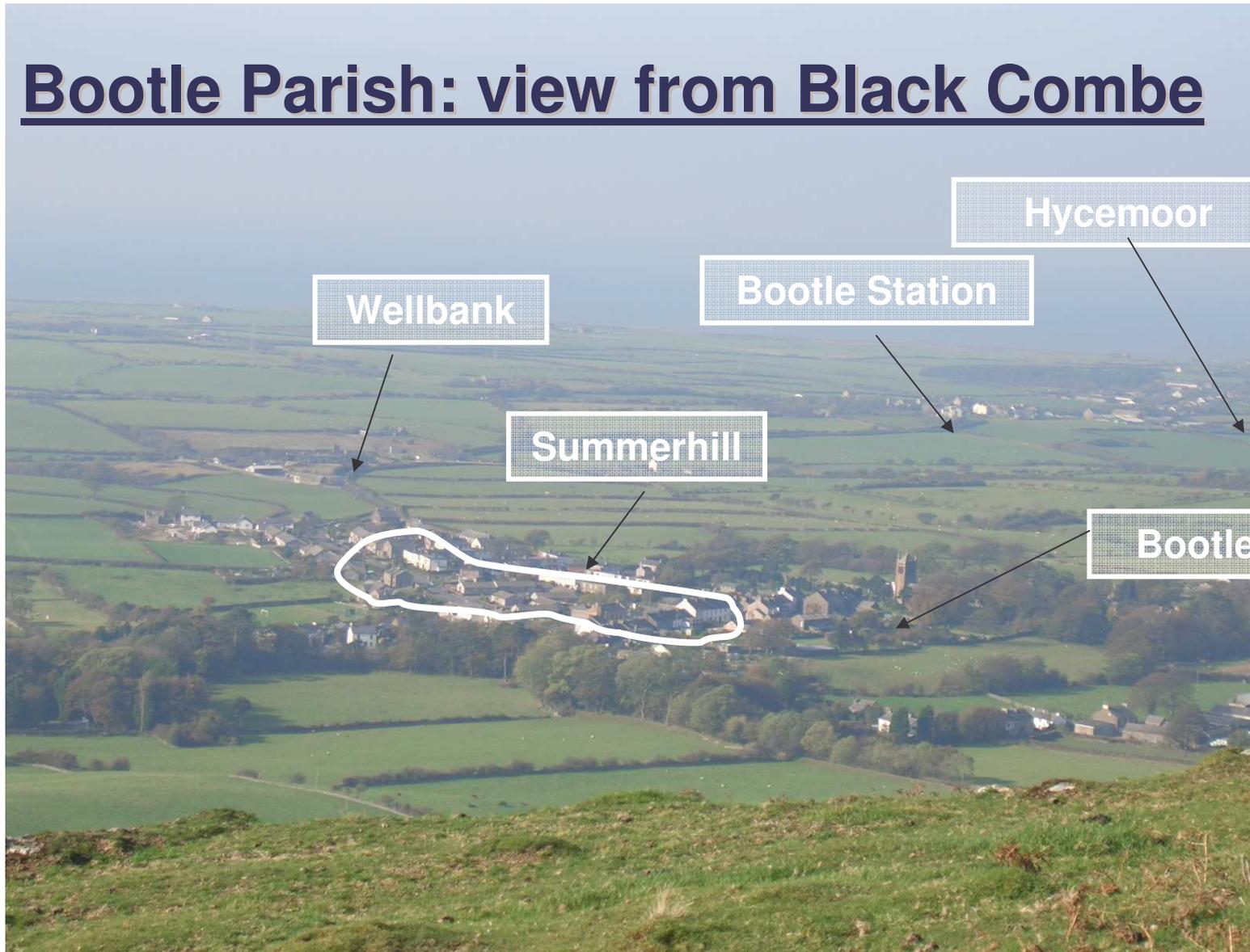
**We must face the challenge of creating a society which will retain and attract young people. That means being prepared to be challenged on conventional norms in areas such as housing, relaxation and lifestyle.** We commit to innovative and 'access to all' solutions.

**We will develop the role of schools as drivers of sustainable neighbourhoods,** alongside the community-based networks and resources of the voluntary and community sector.

We recognise that, with the area's lifestyle, culture and leisure opportunities, we will attract new migrants. We will value the skills of living together in harmony and recognise the importance of ensuring that these skills are nurtured and enhanced throughout life.

Recognising the value of unpaid and voluntary work, we will promote volunteering as an opportunity for work experience, skills development and general well-being.

# Bootle Parish: view from Black Combe





**A restoration project into a home or small business?**



# Wellbank

**...surely a major opportunity for development  
...or arguably, a site that it is *essential* to develop**

# The beach is a great asset, but it needs at least some (low-key) development





**Route between Bootle and Bootle Station  
(footpath / cyclepath needed adjacent to road)**



Bootle's idea of a 'flagship' development...

**Distribution List: Key Partners (Issue 1 – Draft/Final)**

*Lake District National Park Authority*  
*Copeland Borough Council*  
*Cumbria County Council*  
*Cumbria Rural Housing Trust*  
*South Copeland Partnership*  
*Cumbria Association of Local Councils*  
*Voluntary Action Cumbria*  
*Westlakes Renaissance*  
*DEFRA*

**Additional Distribution List: For other potentially Interested Organisations (from Issue 1 - Final)**

*North West Development Agency*  
*West Cumbria Development Agency*  
*Cumbria Vision*  
*Cumbria Tourism*  
*South Copeland Tourist Group*  
*Millom & Haverigg Economic Development Group*  
*West Cumbria Vision*  
*RST Cumbria*  
*Furness Enterprise*  
*Cumbria Chamber*  
*Nuclear Decommissioning Authority*  
*Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency*  
*Cumbria Action for Sustainability*  
*Made in Cumbria*  
*Cumbria Futures*  
*Furness Enterprise*

*UKLEADER*  
*Fells and Dales*  
*Cumbria strategic partnership*  
*Carnegie UK trust*  
*The uplands centre*  
*Commission for Rural Communities*  
*Cumbria Community Foundation*  
*West Cumbria*  
*South Lakeland*  
*Regenerate Trust*  
*Rural Regeneration*  
*Millom Network Centre*  
*Business Link NW*  
*Cumbria Community Asset & Reinvestment Trust*  
*Invest in Cumbria*  
*Englands-North West*  
*Northern Rail*  
*Sustrans*  
*AmeyMouchel*  
*Rural Wheels*  
*Qinetiq*  
*Sellafield Ltd*  
*Copeland homes*  
*Eden Housing Association*  
*Impact Housing Association*  
*Rural Communities*  
*Churches Together Cumbria*  
*Rural Services Online*