# SITLINGTON
# PARISH PLAN
# 2010

*Edited by*
Margaret L. Faull

© Sitlington Parish Council

*Published by*
Sitlington Parish Council
c/o Sitlington Parish Clerk
4 Ingswell Drive
Notton
Wakefield
WF4 2NF
*website/email* www.sitlington-pc.com

ISBN
978-0-9564766-0-9

*This Plan has been produced by*
The Sitlington Parish Plan Steering Group

*chaired by*
Roger Bennett, Nigel Brook, John Newsome and Wendy Newsome

*on behalf of*
Sitlington Parish Council

*Cover*
Middlestown as seen across the Coxley Valley from Netherton Hall (© NCMME)

# SITLINGTON PARISH PLAN 2010

## Contents


*page*

Illustrations ..... ii

Foreword ..... iii

The parish of Sitlington and its history ..... 1

Leisure, recreation and environment ..... 8

Faith ..... 13

Transport ..... 17

Employment ..... 21

Health and social care ..... 23

Housing ..... 25

Police ..... 26

Children and young people ..... 27

General ..... 28

Summary of recommendations ..... 29

Members of Sitlington Parish Plan Steering Group ..... 32

References ..... 33

# ILLUSTRATIONS


page

Middlestown in the winter as seen across the Coxley Valley from Netherton Hall ..... cover
Netherton Hall ..... 1
Aerial photograph showing the two turnpike roads as they enter Sitlington Parish from the west ..... 2
Toll house, Overton ..... 3
Original 1877 Co-op building ..... 3
1930 Co-op building ..... 3
Denby Grange Colliery in 1992 ..... 4
Capping stone of Denby Grange Colliery ..... 4
Caphouse Colliery ..... 5
Chimney of Number One Engine House on the Caphouse Colliery to Calder Grove railway ..... 7
Hope Pit ..... 7
Nature trail at the National Coal Mining Museum ..... 8
Middlestown Cemetery ..... 8
Netherton Cemetery ..... 9
Windy Bank allotment gardens, Netherton ..... 9
Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground ..... 9-10
Emroyd Common ..... 10
Stocksmoor Common ..... 11
Public footpath, New Hall Wood ..... 12
Exterior of St Luke's, Overton ..... 13
Interior of St Luke's, Overton ..... 13
Map of Sitlington Parish ..... 14-15
Exterior of St Andrew's, Netherton ..... 16
Interior of St Andrew's, Netherton, during community art exhibition ..... 16
Exterior of Trinity Methodist Chapel, Netherton ..... 16
Interior of St Luke's, Overton ..... 16
New Road, Middlestown ..... 17
Bridleway, Coxley Valley ..... 18
Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground with Wakefield in the background ..... 20
Earnshaw's Fencing Centre ..... 21
New Hall Prison ..... 22
Sitlington Parish: a safe and peaceful place to live ..... 26
Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground ..... 27
Sitlington Parish Green Belt ..... 28
Middlestown in the summer as seen across the Coxley Valley from Netherton Hall ..... 31



Copyright in the illustrations in the Sitlington Parish Plan is held by Richard Bell (RB), the National Coal Mining Museum for England (NCMME; photograph of Denby Grange in 1992 taken by Rosemary Preece and other photographs taken by David Halstead) or Susan Walker (SW), as indicated on the individual illustrations. Permission has been obtained for the use of photographs of any identifiable individuals, either from that individual or, in the case of children, from one of their parents.

# FOREWORD

Parish councils are the tier of government closest to the local communities and have a central role to play in improving local quality of life. One of the ways they can do this is by means of a parish plan for which the parish councillors consult the local community to ascertain what visions local people have for the future.

Sitlington Parish Council has found this a lengthy, but rewarding, process. After launching the idea at a Coxley Live Exhibition at the National Coal Mining Museum for England on 8th October 2006, the first Steering Group meeting was held on 22nd January 2007 and comprised a number of parish councillors and representatives of local voluntary organisations and businesses (for the full membership see p. 32). A number of sub-groups were set up to consult businesses, schools, youth groups, health and social services and voluntary organisations. They looked at other parish plans and questionnaires and any other appropriate literature, and consulted appropriate organisations.

Each sub-group also devised the questions they would like to be asked in a Sitlington Questionnaire and a Working Party was authorised to co-ordinate those questions. The questionnaire was then delivered to all the houses in the parish and collection boxes were placed in pubs, clubs and shops. Three hundred and ninety-seven questionnaires were returned, along with another fifty emails, giving a return of approximately 20%, well above the usual average. All statistics in this plan are based on this 20% return. Detailed returns can be obtained from the Parish Council website (www.sitlington-pc.com).

The sub-groups analysed the returns and, from their findings and any previous comments they had received, made recommendations back to the Steering Group. The Working Party was again convened to draw everything together and produce the Parish Plan, which was accepted first by the Steering Group and then forwarded to Sitlington Parish Council for approval.

The Plan that you have before you is the result of three years of consultation and preparation. It will form the basis of the commitments of Sitlington Parish Council for the years to come, revised every five years so that it keeps apace with current developments.

# THE PARISH OF SITLINGTON AND ITS HISTORY

Sitlington Parish covers a large area, of mainly agricultural land and woodlands, including the straggling Coxley Valley and the villages of Middlestown, Midgley, Netherton and Overton. It is part of the Rural Ward of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and has the highest mileage of public footpaths in the District.

## Brief History

The medieval vill, or township, of **Shitlington**, which was to become the present civil parish of Sitlington, is first recorded in 1086 in Domesday Book. The form of the name in 1086, *Scellintone, Schelintone,* shows that the name means 'Scytel's farmstead'. Shitlington township was divided into four parts, or hamlets – Middle Shitlington, Nether Shitlington (or Shitlington Inferior), Over Shitlington and Midgley, the boundaries of which are shown on the map in this Plan (pp. 14-15; taken from Map 21 in volume 4 of Faull and Moorhouse 1981). The main settlements in these were Middlestown (SE 266 172), Netherton (SE 279 165), Overton (SE 258 177) and Midgley (SE 272 147) respectively. Middle Shitlington and its main settlement of Middlestown were so named from being in the middle or between Nether Shitlington/Netherton and Over Shitlington/Overton, not because they were half-way between Wakefield and Huddersfield. Middlestown and Overton have now expanded to such an extent that they are to all intents and purposes one settlement. In 1929 the name Shitlington was changed to Sitlington. Indeed two respondents to the Parish Survey suggested that the old name of Shitlington should be revived.

There are no identifiable prehistoric, Roman or Dark Age sites in Sitlington, although there has been one stray find of a Mesolithic axe, plus some undated crop marks. The likely medieval sites all still have later buildings on them.

## Historic Buildings

The earliest surviving building of major architectural or historical significance in the township is **Netherton Hall** (SE 280 170), the manor house of Nether Shitlington, and the largest house in Sitlington. There are references to Netherton Hall from the sixteenth century, when it was in the ownership of the Amyas family, subsequently passing in the seventeenth century to the Armitage family. The present building, listed as Grade Two for its architectural merit, dates from about 1775 and was built by the Perkins family, who had a clerical background. It is a three-bay, three-storey building with low two-storey flanking wings. There is a large pediment over the main entrance, with balancing bay windows. The main stair was for use by the family, with servants' stairs located in the wings. The supposed 'secret tunnel', leading from the cellar to Coxley Wood, is likely to have been an original sewage or drainage system for the house.

*Netherton Hall (© NCMME)*

New Hall Farm (SE 259 159) is on the site of **New Hall**, the manor house of Over Shitlington, which is definitely recorded from the sixteenth century, when it was in the ownership of the Storthes family (*Niwehall* is recorded in 1202, but it is not certain that this is the same hall, although it seems likely that it was). Most of the present New Hall Farm building dates from the eighteenth century and the adjacent dovecote has a datestone of 1759; both were probably built for the Beatson family. The front of the house incorporates a medieval carved stone head, and there are the remains of a moat immediately to the south of the farm. Part of the farm's land has been used since 1936 for New Hall Prison, currently a women's prison and young female offenders' institution (see p. 21).

**Hollinhirst** (SE 286 165), off Blacker Lane, is first recorded in the early-thirteenth century, and by the early-seventeenth century was in the hands of the Wentworth family. The present farm house probably dates back to about 1735, although the back of the house may be later than the front. The structure is constructed of hand-made bricks, although it has been pebble-dashed. There is also a timber-framed barn and a haha behind the house.

There are still a number of other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farms scattered throughout Sitlington, as well as some interesting houses, such as the stone-built cottages on Coxley Lane. **Low Farm** on Netherton Lane and **Long Royd Farm**, Middlestown, which appears to be a timber-framed building encased in stone, are both probably late-eighteenth-century in date. Nineteenth–century buildings include Stocksmoor Farm in Midgley (SE 275 154); number 5, Green Lane, Overton; and Ash Cottage, 108 Netherton Lane. The sites of the water mills in the township are known – for example at Mug Mill on Smithy Brook in the northern part of Sitlington and at Cockshutt Corn Mill on the River Calder on the eastern boundary of the township. But the only substantial surviving fabric is of the nineteenth-century windmill in Middlestown, which is now Windmill Cottage, number 29, Sandy Lane.

Two turnpike roads ran through Sitlington. The first, the Wakefield and Austerlands Turnpike, was constructed in 1758, and survives as Old Road, Overton/Middlestown. The second turnpike road was built slightly to the north in the 1830s and is represented today by New Road, Overton/Middlestown, the present A642. There were four **turnpike toll houses** in Sitlington township – one in Midgley hamlet near the smithy, from which Bar Lane (the A637) was probably named; one in Overton on New Road at the junction with Wood Lane and opposite Green Lane (SE 259 171); one in Netherton hamlet on the southern side of the A642 just before the junction with Sandy Lane (SE 277 178); and one also in Netherton hamlet at Horbury Bridge near the bottom of Netherton Lane, which probably replaced the Sandy Lane junction toll house. The second and third of these still survive *in situ*. The one at Horbury Bridge ceased to function as a toll house when the 1758 turnpike was taken over by the West Riding County Council in 1882; the castellated one-storey building was moved stone by stone by Alfred Earnshaw in the 1930s to the garden of Rose Cottage, Balk Lane, Netherton, and is now a scheduled monument.

*Aerial photograph showing the two turnpike roads as they enter Sitlington Parish from the west (© NCMME)*

*Toll house, Overton (© NCMME)*

*1930 Co-op building (© NCMME)*

Other buildings in the township are more recent, although of some interest. The main ones are the stone-built **Middlestown Co-operative Industrial Society stores.** The Co-op was set up in Middlestown in 1868 (SE 267 173) and the building now known as Middlestown Furnishings was erected in 1877 on the north-western corner of New Road and Thornhill Road. In 1930 the Savoy Hall, cinema and further shops were opened on the south-eastern corner of the intersection of the two roads. The cinema shut in 1959 and, with competition from the supermarkets and the growth in ownership of cars, the Co-op closed down in 1967; the premises, now housing a fish and chip shop, hairdressers and pharmacist, still bear the proud title on the pediment of 'MIDDLESTOWN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED' with the date '1930' above. From the twentieth century there are also a number of public houses, as well as the Netherton Sports and Social Club and Middlestown Working Men's Club.

*Original 1877 Co-op building (© NCMME)*

## Churches and Chapels

Sitlington township was originally part of Thornhill ecclesiastical parish, along with the townships of Flockton, Lower Whitley and Thornhill; the church serving the whole parish being the medieval St Michael's Church in Thornhill. The township acquired its own churches in the nineteenth century: **St Luke's Church, Middlestown**, on Nell Gap Lane, was consecrated for services in 1877, and **St Andrew's Church, Netherton**, in 1881, replacing the old tithe barn that had previously been used for services and education and which was eventually demolished about 1970. St Luke's Church was demolished in 1969, to be replaced by a new, modern St Luke's Church (SE 260 168) on Old Road, Overton, in 1974. St Andrew's Church (SE 283 170), which was designed by John D. Sedding of London, has scheduled monument status as being of architectural importance. Although relatively small and plain, with only a few side windows, and so rather dark inside, it is considered very original in its design and to exemplify the Late Victorian preference for unexpected effects. The timber roof is large and open with wooden tie-beams rising from arched braces. The nave and chancel are all one, and the church has a projection for a baptistry on the western front.

There were **Primitive Methodist Chapels** on Old Road, Overton (SE 256 166), built in 1876; Cross Road, Middlestown (SE 267 170), built in 1886; and near the junction of Blacker Lane and Netherton Lane (SE 283 181), built in 1890. The latter is now a house.

The 1851 **Methodist New Connexion Chapel** at Midgley (SE 272 147) was rebuilt in 1912, but that too is now a house. Even the **Wesleyan Chapel** on Netherton Lane, Netherton (SE 280 166), which was erected in 1886, is no longer used. There are plans to demolish it and develop the Sunday School Hall, at the rear of the church, into a dual-purpose building for worship and meetings. There was also a **Wesleyan Chapel** on Thornhill Road, Middlestown, opened in 1876, replacing an old chapel on Smithy Brook. Therefore, in what was once a hotbed of Methodism, only in Netherton are there now Methodist services held, in the Sunday School Hall at the Trinity Methodist Church.

## Industrial and Related Sites

The major industries in Sitlington of which traces survive are farming, quarrying and coal mining, the Middlestown Engineering Works having been demolished in 2000. A number of pits were sunk in the area in the later-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one group being known collectively as the **Denby Grange Collieries**. Many of these early pits have disappeared completely, such as Blossom Pit, Hartley Bank Colliery, Dam Ing Pit, Netherton Colliery, Lower Windy Bank Pit, etc., although traces of the collieries remain in the form of spoil heaps, such as Wortley Pit, whose tip can be seen in the fields beyond the Reindeer Inn. Of the collieries that survived into the twentieth century, Denby Grange Colliery (earlier known as Prince of Wales, and colloquially as t' Wood Pit), which had opened in 1894, closed in 1991, the shaft was capped in 1993 and the site and some of the buildings were taken over by Earnshaw's Fencing Centre (SE 270 154).

*Denby Grange Colliery in 1992 (© NCMME)*

*Capping stone of Denby Grange Colliery (© NCMME)*

**Caphouse Colliery** (SE 252 164), sunk in the 1780s, and the adjacent **Hope Pit** (SE 249 162), developed in the 1830s by the mining engineer John Blenkinsop, together form the National Coal Mining Museum for England. As well as the underground located in the 1870s New Hards Seam, which is open to the public, a number of interesting buildings survive. These include the 1876 stone-built winding-engine house, the wooden headgear with wheels one above the other, dating to sometime between 1904 and 1911, and the screens building where the coal was sorted from the muck, dating to somewhere between 1904/5 and 1924, which is one of the latest timber-framed buildings to be constructed in Yorkshire. The new plainer style of building developed in the 1930s first reached Yorkshire in the form of pithead baths built for the Miners' Welfare Committee, of which the 1938 baths at Caphouse Colliery, designed by O. H. Parry, are a good example.

*Caphouse Colliery (© NCMME)*

As well as the collieries there are traces in the landscape of Sitlington of various mineral railways, in the form of steam-engine houses, tunnels (some now infilled), waggonways and viaducts, that were used to transport the coal away from the various collieries. As the colliery owners did not co-operate with each other, each group of collieries had its own mineral line. Most of the surviving remains relate to the line from Caphouse, which ran first to Hope Pit, then through a tunnel under the A642, for 5 miles, via Denby Grange Colliery and Victoria Pit, to join the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and the Calder and Hebble Navigation canal at Calder Grove, outside Sitlington Parish.

The workforce of the collieries in the western part of the Yorkshire coalfield tended to live scattered throughout the area. Certainly in the eighteenth century, they often alternated work underground with assistance with the harvest on local farms and, if conditions were bad in the mines, working in the mills of nearby Dewsbury.

This means that Sitlington does not have the norm of a colliery village, with rows of uniformly designed dwellings, to house the miners. The main surviving group of houses associated with coal mining is the row known as Little London, at numbers 129 to 139 South Lane. Little London (SE 277 154) is marked on the 1854 first edition 6 inch OS map, sheet 262. The male inhabitants worked at the nearby Star Colliery (shut 1875), Victoria Colliery and the Little London Pits (closed in 1886), and subsequently at Denby Grange Colliery, 1,056 yards away.

## Heritage: Analysis

Of the people in Sitlington Parish who responded to the survey, 56% said they would like to see the name 'Parish of Sitlington' on local signs. Some people stated that they believed children need to be taught about their local history. Almost three-quarters of the replies (73%) would like to see heritage signs on places of historical interest, but this would need the approval of the owners of the buildings.

There is ample opportunity to walk around the parish in Stocksmoor Common, the Coxley Valley, Blacker Woods, Emroyd Common, Stoneycliffe Wood and the Mining Museum Nature Trail, to appreciate the beauty of the parish and its wildlife without any cost to the individual, though residents may have thought that new parking areas and proposed heritage/nature trails might have charges associated with them.

There were some concerns about accessibility, especially if the heritage of the parish were being actively promoted and the area became more popular, particularly in regard to parking. Bicycle riders are able to use bridle paths but not public footpaths. This leads to a conflict with wheelchair users, people with disabilities and parents with pushchairs because stiles are part of the footpath chain and, by keeping out horses and motor bikes from certain areas, help to protect the flora and fauna in our nature reserves.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that boundary signs stating 'Parish of Sitlington' are provided to the north, where Thornhill Road crosses Smithy Brook, and at the Wakefield/Kirklees boundary on Hostingley Lane; to the east where the A642, New Road, crosses the River Calder and the Calder and Hebble Navigation at Horbury Bridge; to the south where the A637, Bar Lane, enters the Midgley section of Sitlington from both directions, and on Blacker Lane near the disused railway bridge that spans Blacker Lane near the junction with Denby Dale Road; and to the west where the A642 leaves Sitlington adjacent to the National Coal Mining Museum for England and on Hardcastle Lane by the Wakefield/Kirklees boundary.

2. Coxley Live has begun to publicise footpath walks and heritage trails and this is to be encouraged. It could be linked to the production of a new footpath map of the parish. Suggestions for inclusion are thematic trails visiting sites from the Middle Ages like Netherton and Middlestown tithe barns, as well as Netherton Hall and Hollinhurst, etc; from disused colliery site to colliery site; along routes of industrial heritage including collieries, Jarvis's Foundry (now demolished, and itself on the site of Middlestown tithe barn), coal staithes, etc; or places relating to community life, such as the sites of chapels and churches, the Co-op, the working men's clubs, etc. It might be possible to enlist local schoolchildren to work out the best trails, or Coxley Live might be able to raise further funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project.

3. Greater use of the footpaths could well lead to a need to improve them. Although footpaths are just that, places to walk on, the more they are used the greater the deterioration. As they become muddier, the wider they become, because people walk along the edges, so the more vegetation is destroyed. It is, therefore, essential to repair the damage or to create a better surface upon which to walk.

4. The Parish Council has consistently supported proposals to build a house on the site of Coxley Woollen Mill as long as the owner enhances the area historically by excavating to reveal some of the original walls and restoring the engine house as a heritage centre. Exhibitions could be held there showing the local history of the area, possibly art exhibitions promoting the work of local artists, and it could also be where the historical information collected by Coxley Live could be stored. This is the only project for development in Green Belt that the Parish Council has supported in living memory, but the Council considers it would considerably enhance the historical importance of the area.

5. It is also recommended that information about the history of Sitlington be provided in leaflet form, available in the churches and chapel, libraries at Horbury, Ossett and Middlestown and the mobile library that serves Netherton, schools and doctors' surgeries. It could also be included in *Coxley News* and placed on the Parish Council website.

*Chimney of Number One Engine House on the Caphouse Colliery to Calder Grove railway (© NCMME)*

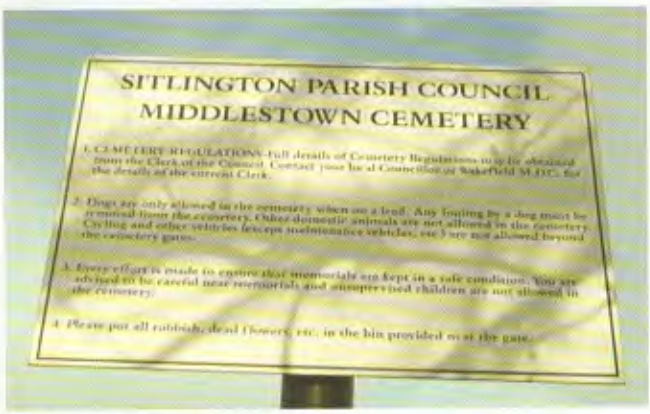
*Hope Pit (© NCMME)*

# LEISURE, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT

The parish of Sitlington is fortunate to have a diverse range of leisure and recreational facilities. These include the National Coal Mining Museum for England and the nature trail that has been created there; two churches, a chapel, a village hall, a library in Middlestown with computer facilities and an I.T. link, and a mobile library serving Netherton; also one working men's club, one sports and social club, and seven public houses, two cricket clubs, a number of football clubs and a restaurant. Social events are held, such as ceilidhs, pantomimes and exhibitions at the Netherton Working Men's Club. There are also several general stores, two post offices and several beauty salons, together with a variety of other businesses.

*Nature trail at the National Coal Mining Museum (© NCMME)*

The Parish Council is responsible for three allotment gardens – one in Overton and two in Netherton – as well as for the maintenance of the cemeteries in Middlestown and Netherton. The parish has a waiting list for allotments, and the Parish Council is hoping to be given planning consent by Wakefield MDC to convert existing land to allotment use to cater for this popular hobby. It must be pointed out that the Parish Council continues to fight for the retention of its post offices, medical centres, schools and libraries, as they are important features of community life.




*Middlestown Cemetery (© NCMME)*

*Middlestown Cemetery (© NCMME)*

*Netherton Cemetery (© NCMME)*

*Windy Bank allotment gardens, Netherton (© NCMME)*

*Windy Bank allotment gardens, Netherton (© NCMME)*

## Group Activities in the Parish

A number of groups meet in the parish, some of which receive financial grants from the Parish Council.

Groups in Netherton include the Over-Fifties Club, Walking Group, Women's Institute, Luncheon Club, St Andrew's Men's Group, Netherton Junior Football Club and Netherton Cricket Club. The Netherton Family Chess Club now meets at West Bretton Village Hall, outside the parish. The Dog Club, the Karate Club and the Badminton Group meet at Netherton Village Hall. Improvements are needed to the heating system, kitchen and acoustics at Netherton Village Hall. These are already under consideration, although solving the noise from the heaters may not solve the acoustics problem, so that a dedicated sound system may be needed.

Groups that meet in Middlestown are the Middlestown and Overton Tenants and Residents Association, the Darby and Joan Club and the Ladies' Guild. The Denby Grange Sports Club is located in Overton, and the Ladies' Circle and Parish Singers meet at St Luke's Church, Middlestown.

Although there had been no carnivals in the villages for several years, galas have been introduced in Netherton and Middlestown, and the National Coal Mining Museum now holds a Miners' Gala in June each year. Wakefield Harriers arrange the Reindeer Romp, which are four races that start at the Reindeer public house and follow a circular cross-country run.

Sixty-six per cent of the questionnaires returned stated that the residents were aware of the various group activities in the parish. A newsletter and village notice boards were the most popular ways of providing information about activities within the parish, and it is hoped that all groups will take notice of this fact.

*Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground (© NCMME)*

*Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground (© NCMME)*

*Denby Grange Miners' Welfare clubhouse (© NCMME)*

## Facilities for Young People

Netherton has a Netherton Playgroup as well as a Tiny Tots and Little Fishes group that meets at St Andrew's Church, Netherton, and there is also a Tiny Tots group that meets at St Luke's Church, Overton. There are two Brownie packs in the parish but, although more groups are required, it is very difficult to recruit leaders. In Netherton there is a Majorette Group, but this now meets in Horbury (outside the parish) as the school hall proved not to be large enough. There are two youth clubs for children up to the age of thirteen, one in Overton and one in Netherton, and the Netherton Youth Crew for young people between the ages of thirteen and nineteen.

The largest response, 23.6%, was for safer play areas and parks for young children. It is clear that outdoor recreational facilities are required for young people, and although parish councillors have had talks with Wakefield MDC, and some work has been done to repair fencing, swings, etc., unfortunately vandalism has spoilt any progress made in this area. There are, however, plans for the redevelopment of all the play areas, which are at Denby Grange, Overton and next to the Village Hall, Netherton.

Youth clubs, meeting places, and organised events were the top three requirements in this section, with other suggestions such as a sports arena, tennis courts, football and five-a-side pitches, and better park areas. The Parish Council is well aware of these problems, and is actively pursuing the development of land at Emroyd Common. If sufficient funds can be obtained for better recreational facilities, a football pitch and picnic area are planned, together with improving footpaths throughout the parish. Some improvements have been made to Stocksmoor Common and Coxley Valley by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

*Emroyd Common (© SW)*

*Stocksmoor Common (© NCMME)*

*Stocksmoor Common (© SW)*

## Facilities for the Elderly and Parishioners with Disabilities

These have been grouped together as their wishes are similar. The most requested items were a suitable meeting place for socialising, improved bus services (with adequate access for wheelchairs) and access to shops and parks for wheelchair users. Park benches were also suggested as suitable fine-weather meeting places.

## General Points

It was apparent from responses to the questions asked in the Parish Plan questionnaire that the most important issue raised was the preservation of the Green Belt and the rural feel of the parish, with 91% of responses supporting this suggestion. The poor state of bridleways and footpaths, which have deteriorated in the wet weather, was an issue to be addressed, together with the tidying of hedgerows where they encroach on footpaths.

Eighty per cent of questionnaires returned requested more planting of bulbs, flowerbeds and shrubs to improve the appearance of the area. The Parish Council has already purchased bulbs from Wakefield MDC and these have been planted.

Although the majority (60%) of the residents are happy with the recycling arrangements, it was frequently pointed out that the green recycling box was not large enough. However, Wakefield MDC has given assurances that this problem will be rectified in due course.

Dog fouling and the growing problem of litter were high on the list of complaints, and more bins for both items were suggested, together with the setting up of a voluntary litter-clearance scheme. Netherton Women's Institute have now purchased tabards, gloves, etc., with the intention of litter picking on a regular basis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the Parish Council defends the Green Belt and works with Wakefield MDC, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and its conservation group, together with Coxley Live (the local-interest group), to protect, maintain and defend the countryside, its paths, bridleways and wildlife.

2. Working groups should be supported and all community organisations should continue to be supported financially where there is a shortfall in their funding.

3. All play areas for young children need to be improved and repaired.

4. The appearance of the villages should be improved by removing litter and fly tipping, increasing the number of dog-fouling and litter bins and tidying the

hedgerows where they encroach on footpaths. There is also room for improvement with the purchase and planting of flowers and bulbs.

5. To obtain funding for the development of Emroyd Common, all relevant organisations need to be approached.

6. The Parish Council should continue to support maintaining the provision of libraries and post offices in the parish.

7. The facilities at Netherton Village Hall need to be improved.

8. There should be sufficient allotments in the parish for all those who would like one.

*Public footpath, New Hall Wood (© NCMME)*

# FAITH

There is recognition in both local and national Government that faith groups and communities can have a beneficial impact in an area often far greater than that which might at first glance be suspected. As examples of the type of observation being made, here are two taken from the 2004 Home Office publication *'Working Together': Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities*:

> Faith communities have a long tradition of working with their members and others to foster community development. Central Government is increasingly exploring ways of using the experience and resources of faith communities 'on the ground' to deliver services. (Home Office Faith Communities Group 2004, p. 8)

and

> Faith community organisations are gateways to access the tremendous reserves of energy and commitment of their members, which can be of greater importance to the development of civil society. (*ibid.*, p. 7)

It is in this context that this section on faith is included. Two hundred and two people (44%) described themselves as being a spiritual person, against 165 (36%) who did not, with ninety-four (20%) replying that they did not know. Of these, 158 (34%) said that their spiritual journey had led them to a major religion, against 208 (45%) who said that it had not done so.

The faith group with the largest respondents in this questionnaire is that of Christianity. The three remaining places of Christian worship in the parish are St Luke's Anglican Church, at Overton, and St Andrew's Anglican Church and Trinity Methodist Chapel, both at Netherton. Some 33% of people responding claimed some association with the Christian faith and 9% of the responses received support the churches and chapel, which do not receive funding from the Parish Council.

*Exterior of St Luke's, Overton (© SW)*

*Interior of St Luke's, Overton (© NCMME)*

*Interior of St Luke's, Overton (© NCMME)*

Middle Shitlington
Emroyd Common
Middlesto
health centre
school/library
Over Shitlington
Mining Museum
Overton
Coxley Valley
New Hall
Earnshaws
Midgley
Midgley
Bank Wood

*Map of Sitlington Parish (© RB)*

*Exterior of St Andrew's, Netherton (© NCMME)*

*Interior of St Andrew's, Netherton, during community art exhibition (© NCMME)*

*Exterior of Trinity Methodist Chapel, Netherton, with Sunday School Hall to the right (© NCMME)*

The questionnaires returned also show that in Sitlington Parish there are a number of different faith groups and opinions (albeit at statistically very small levels) – Buddhism (1 respondent), Christadelphian (1), Deism (1), Jedi (1), Pagan (2) and Spiritualist (1), with two people describing religion as 'emotional clap trap'. We also know that there are more major faith groups represented than this survey reveals. Although there were no replies from any Hindus, Jews or Muslims, we are aware from other sources of both Hindus and Muslims living in the parish.

Over the years there have been many examples of faith-group-led community-building activities. In addition to the opportunities for regular fellowship, worship, baptisms, weddings and funerals, there have also been concerts, plays, art exhibitions, lunches, fetes, street parades, guided walks, youth groups, children's workshops and holiday clubs, men's groups, ladies' groups, tiny tots' groups, day trips, coffee mornings, and the provision and maintenance of halls and spaces for other community groups and activities. Most recently the *Coxley News* and the Coxley Live project, with its many facets of community building, has been initiated, encouraged and supported, leading in turn to the launch of work on the Sitlington Parish Plan itself.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All major faith groups must be included and encouraged in community building.
2. All such faith contributions to community building should be affirmed and welcomed.

*Interior of St Luke's, Overton (© NCMME)*

# TRANSPORT

## Roads

With 461 answers returned, 52% of the answers returned thought traffic-calming measures in the parish were inadequate compared to 37% who thought they were acceptable. One per cent pointed out there were no calming measures at all on the estates. Although 11% thought speed humps were easily avoided by vehicles, 2% did not think they slowed down traffic and 1% thought speed humps were dangerous, statistics in the parish have proved how effective they are in fact. Reported incidents showed in Netherton that, before the installation of speed humps, there were four accidents a year on average and, after their installation, only one accident in three years. Indeed 4% of respondents thought that speed humps should go right across the road. There can be a problem when speed humps are first installed as drivers try to avoid them, instead of looking at vehicles approaching them, but this decreases as drivers become used to them. There were requests for speed humps on Sandy Lane and Thornhill Road, Middlestown, and on Blacker Lane and South Lane, Netherton.

Too many speeding vehicles were identified as a problem by 10% of respondents. One per cent complained of a lack of action by the police on speeding vehicles. Areas particularly identified as the worst for speeding were all in Middlestown – Old Road (5%), New Road (4%) and Sandy Lane in the morning (1%) and 2% expressed the view that the measures were useless. Speed cameras were suggested for Sandy Lane and New Road. The majority of people were, however, against speed cameras. For Netherton there were 27% for and 44% against; Old Road, Middlestown, had 23% for and 39% against; and only New Road, Middlestown, had a majority for the introduction of speed cameras (34% for and 31% against). Two per cent wanted more speed restrictions.

Blacker Lane, Netherton, was singled out as easily the most dangerous road in the parish (102 people – 22%). New Road came easily second (seventy-five people – 17%). Bad spots mentioned were the exit from Middlestown Health Centre due to parked cars on the road (1%), the junction of Nell Gap Lane and New Road (2%), Old Road, Middlestown (7%), and Sandy Lane/Cross Lane/Carr Lane/Old Road corner (8%). Outside Middlestown School (2%), and Sandy Lane, Middlestown (7%), were also mentioned. Equally there were problems in Netherton with thirty-four people highlighting Netherton Lane (7%), 37 people Upper Lane (8%) with the junction of Stocksmoor Road and Bar Lane, Midgley specifically mentioned. The narrow blind bend on Green Lane, Overton was mentioned by 2%, with the suggestion to make it one way. Most of these areas are identified as areas for road improvements.

*New Road, Middlestown (© NCMME)*

Four per cent would like heavy goods vehicles banned in the villages, but this is not feasible, as Netherton Lane/ Upper Lane in Netherton and New Road in Middlestown are main trunk roads. Heavy goods vehicles are already banned along Blacker Lane, Netherton, but the restriction is often ignored (the police would welcome being given registration numbers of offending vehicles).

Pedestrian crossings have been recommended at previous Parish Council meetings. There was a majority in favour of each possible pedestrian crossing – at Horbury Bridge by the restaurant (34% for and 25%

against), at the Bingley Arms near Horbury Bridge (33% for and 25% against), at the bottom of Netherton Lane (36% for and 24% against), at Netherton Post Office (32% for and 25% against) and at Middlestown Health Centre (48% for and only 16% against). Other suggested locations for crossings were outside both schools, at the top and bottom shops in Netherton and at Middlestown Cemetery.

Three per cent wanted to stop cars obstructing pavements, which is in fact already an offence, but is not being enforced. Two per cent wanted parking allowed on only one side of the street, with another 2% in favour of parking restrictions. The same number wanted a priority system, as in Flockton, another 2% wanted the roads resurfacing, a further 2% wanted better road signs and the same number were for illuminated speed signs that show a car's speed. Interestingly 1% wanted mirrors to improve viewing, but these would have to be erected on private land, because it is against highway regulations to erect them on public land.

When it came to the state of the pavements, Blacker Lane and Blacker Crescent, Netherton, came out as being considered in need of repair by the highest proportion of respondents (6%). Sandy Lane, Middlestown, was the next worse (2%), followed by New Road, Middlestown (2%), and then both Upper Lane, Netherton, and Green Lane, Overton (1%). Four per cent said that the pavements everywhere were in need of improvement.

## Bridleways

Fifty-five per cent of people who returned the questionnaire thought there was a satisfactory system of bridleways in the parish and only 10% thought the opposite. Areas identified for improvement were behind Middlestown Cemetery; Smithy Lane, Overton; the bridleway from Coxley bungalow to the pheasant farm in Middlestown; and the entry to Emroyd Common from Thornhill Road, Middlestown.

*Bridleway, Coxley Valley (© SW)*

## Rail

Seventy-five per cent of people who returned the questionnaire would use a station at Horbury Bridge if one were opened and only 18% said that they would no

## Buses

Only 28% of those who returned the questionnaire were satisfied with the bus service available in the parish, compared to 47% who were not. However it must be pointed out that only 4% used the service daily, another 19% weekly and 32% less often than that. Thirty-four per cent do not use the bus at all.

The most common destination was Wakefield (50%), followed by Horbury (12%), Dewsbury (10%), Huddersfield (9%), Leeds and Ossett (both 8%) and finally Barnsley (2%). Only 18% of the people who replied travelled at peak times and 54% travelled off peak; a number of these were probably pensioners travelling free. Only 41% knew of any fare reductions, compared to 33% who did not.

As many people (38%) are put off buses by the journe time as are not. If the Parish Council were to put on a one-off Saturday service, 44% said they would use it a 34% would not. The favoured destination was Meadowhall (21%), closely followed by the White Ros

Centre (19%); 6% preferred Freeport and the same percentage did not mind where the bus went. There was only 1% each for Leeds and Wakefield town centre and ASDA. For the outward journey 32% of those who replied preferred a time between 8 am and 10 am and only 9% between 10 am and 12 noon. Twenty per cent preferred a return time between 3 pm and 6 pm and 8% between 12 noon and 3 pm.

A car-share scheme was not popular. Only 11% were in favour and 70% against. Interestingly 50% said that, if there were an adequate bus service, they would leave their car at home, compared to 27% who said that they would not.

Car parking in the parish is not a major problem, apart from at Middlestown and Netherton Schools (18%), followed by Upper Lane and Netherton Lane (6%), although 2% said it was a problem in most areas in Netherton. Another problem area appears to be at St Luke's Church, Overton (2%), and 3% complained about the restricted view at Old Road and Green Lane outside St Luke's Church. One per cent mentioned the Nell Gap Lane/Old Road junction at Overton; Ramsey Road/Ridge Crescent at Middlestown; and New Road, Middlestown.

## Bicycles

Sixty-eight per cent of the people who answered the questionnaire were in favour of a cycleway along the towpath linking Wakefield and Dewsbury and only 12% were against. Few people (18%) were aware of bicycle access in the parish and 63% were not. Six people (1%) said a map of cycle routes in the parish was required and the same number would like a cycle path.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the Parish Council approaches Wakefield MDC for safety measures to reduce the high rate of accidents on the stretch of New Road between the traffic lights at Middlestown and past the National Coal Mining Museum up to the boundary with Kirklees, especially with consideration given to the introduction of speed cameras or, failing that, speed humps.
2. The Parish Council website should display information about the speeding tickets and summonses issued by the police in the parish, and that this information also to be supplied in the *Coxley News* magazine.
3. The Parish Council needs to renew its efforts to improve and make safe Blacker Lane, including:
    1. Measures to ensure the weight restrictions for vehicles are enforced.
    2. Improvements to safety at the Blacker Lane/ Blacker Crescent junction.
    3. Improving and making safe the pavement along Blacker Lane.
    4. Encouraging residents to report to the police registration numbers of heavy-goods vehicles using Blacker Lane illegally.
4. The traffic lights at the junction of Netherton Lane and Bridge Road should be made into pedestrian crossings and pedestrian crossings should be provided near Netherton Post Office and Middlestown Health Centre. Also to ask for pedestrian crossings at Netherton and Middlestown Schools and Middlestown Cemetery.
5. Wakefield MDC to be approached to provide speed humps on those sections of Sandy Lane where there are houses.
6. The Parish Council to work towards the reopening of Horbury Bridge railway station.
7. The Parish Council to trial a bus to either Meadowhall or the White Rose Centre and return on a number of Saturdays, arrangements to be made with a public-transport company or tenders sought.
8. The Parish Council and Wakefield MDC should continue to work together to identify and then improve any footpaths and bridleways that are in need of repair and maintenance.

9. The Parish Council to explore with Wakefield MDC and other relevant authorities the possibility of a cycle path on the towpath beside the Calder and Hebble Navigation canal connecting Wakefield and Dewsbury.

10. A new parish map be produced, showing the footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways, as well as including the heritage trails and suggested walks.

11. The Parish Council to explore the possibility with Wakefield MDC of 20 mph restrictions in residential areas and outside schools.

12. Car owners should be encouraged to park in their own drives, where available, to improve road visibility.

*Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground with Wakefield in the background (© NCMME)*

# EMPLOYMENT

The response to this section was disappointing, with many respondents not answering the questions. The parish has only three large employers within its boundaries, namely the National Coal Mining Museum for England (see p. 4); HM Prison and Young Offenders Institute, New Hall, Flockton; and Earnshaw's Fencing Centre. The two schools also employ a number of staff who live within the parish. The bus services to the largest three employers are poor. It is difficult enough for visitors to access the sites during the day; for employees even more difficult. The only alternatives are to walk or possibly car-share.

*Earnshaw's Fencing Centre (© NCMME)*

*Earnshaw's Fencing Centre (© NCMME)*

Forty-six per cent of respondents were either retired or unemployed. If they are retired, they are not seeking employment, and if they are unemployed, they have to have the means to get to potential work. There was an overall impression that the residents of the parish accepted as fact that, in order to work, most people either have to travel outside the parish (37%) or be self-employed (10%). Employment for young people in the area was also a concern.

Support for the development of more sources of employment within the parish, which one person commented would mean more prosperity, was balanced by the realisation that the majority do not want more building development within the parish; one view being, why spoil a nice area. There was concern at the time about the loss of the industrial units on the Wultex site, and land is limited for any new development. Thirty-two per cent of people wanted more retail opportunities, but equally the same proportion did not want any development. Twenty-one per cent thought tourism should be encouraged in the parish, with maybe a small tourist-information centre, perhaps based in the proposed exhibition centre at Coxley Mill.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consideration needs to be given to what sort of additional employment would be acceptable in the area, especially for young people, while maintaining the village and rural atmosphere of the parish.

2. A small tourist-information centre is required to encourage tourism in the parish.

*New Hall Prison (© NCMME)*

# HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

## Health Care

Approximately 461 replies were received. Of those 81% considered the health service available to be adequate and only 19% considered it inadequate, with 6% feeling that services could be improved. A number of people praised the excellent health service in the parish. Where there have been health-care problems, the Parish Council has supported local people, e.g. saving the dispensary at Netherton. Any other complaints were minimal.

The lack of public transport to health care was emphasised. Only 7% of the returns considered this to be adequate and 73% considered it inadequate. This particularly applied to people who lived in Netherton, but attended the Middlestown clinic, and vice-versa.

The biggest problem was over dental care. Sixteen per cent of the respondents considered this to be inadequate. This is a nation-wide problem, but there is a dental practice in Upper Lane, Netherton.

## Social Care

Sixty-five per cent said they had no difficulty with home support, with only 5% reporting a difficulty, and the question not being applicable to 30% of respondents. One person did state that they received excellent care via Care Force. Of those who had experienced difficulties with home support, four people (0.9%) needed personal care, eight people (1.7%) were caring for a sick member of their household and a further eight people were either caring for the elderly or caring for a parent still in their own home; more assistance required for the elderly was a theme that came out of the responses. One person commented that it was difficult to find respite care and another that there was no support for adults with learning problems or epilepsy. Other comments were that there were too many lonely people in the parish and that there were insufficient trained helpers.

A number of replies to letters were received from local organisations. They raised the point that there is a lack of community spirit, although this is being addressed by the Coxley Live Project, the community website and *Coxley News*. The other issue for local organisations is the need for financial help from the Parish Council in the form of grants given to groups in the parish that work with the elderly or with young people or that contribute to the social life of the parish. Examples are the Middlestown Darby and Joan Club, the Netherton Over-Fifties Club, the Netherton Youth Club, the Denby Grange Sports and Social Club, the Netherton Cricket Club, the Netherton Family Chess Club, the Middlestown Ladies Circle, etc. Groups like these can apply for grants to the Parish Council and must submit an annual balance sheet. Grants are usually given unless the balance sheets are very healthy and the Parish Council considers that the organisation can manage without a grant.

Social Care Direct is a twenty-four-hour one-stop shop and is the first point of contact for anyone who believes they might need services or to report any child-protection issues. Information, advice and guidance are given and people signposted to the appropriate social-care team. Access is available to a telephone-interpreting service for people whose first language is not English.

Social Care Direct can be contacted on:

| | |
|---|---|
| Free phone | 0845 8503503 |
| Fax | 01924 303455 |
| Email | social-care-direct@wakefield.gov.uk |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Parish Council must ensure support for health-care provision to continue to be available in the future.

2. There are problems with the transport links between Netherton and Middlestown for people wishing to access health care. A regular transport link between the two villages would be ideal, but may not be economically viable.

3. The Parish Council should continue to support the work of Coxley Live and other community groups, both financially and in collaboration.

4. Information about how to contact Social Care Direct should be given in the Parish Plan and on notice boards in the Parish.

# HOUSING

From the replies received to the parish questionnaire, there is little enthusiasm for more housing, less than 8% saying that this was a need in the parish. Of those who wished to see more houses built, the greatest demand was for low-cost starter homes (13%), followed by bungalows (8%), sheltered housing (7%), family housing (6%) and rented accommodation (5%). The development on the Paddock, although opposed by the Parish Council and local residents, was only approved because its emphasis was on low-cost starter homes.

Comments expressed were that people did not wish to see new buildings in the Green Belt, because more buildings would destroy the village atmosphere and it was felt that creeping urbanisation should be resisted. Any buildings should be on brownfield sites. The importance of the preservation of the Green Belt and the rural feel of the parish was raised in 91% of the responses to the questionnaire.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Parish Council should continue to defend the Green Belt.

2. The Parish Council should work with Wakefield MDC, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and other groups to protect, maintain and defend the countryside, its wildlife, flora and fauna.

# POLICE

Of the people who replied to the questionnaire, 79% considered that Sitlington is a safe place to live. Only 27%, however, were satisfied with the police presence in the villages, with 63% being dissatisfied and 17% saying that they did not see police in the parish and 13% desiring a greater police presence. The Parish Council has already realised this and pays for extra policing through the Safe Scheme. A member of the West Yorkshire Police Force attends the Parish Council meeting every month, reports on the crime figures and takes suggestions from the councillors as to what areas need targeting. This has resulted in a crack-down on anti-social behaviour and is proving popular with parishioners, who feel the Scheme is working. The police also crack down on speeding, although this information does not seem to reach the public.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Information about speeding tickets and summonses issued by the police should be highlighted on the parish website and in the *Coxley News* magazine.

2. The Parish Council should continue with the Police Safe Scheme and with co-operating with Neighbourhood Policing.

*Sitlington Parish: a safe and peaceful place to live (© NCMME)*

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The response to this section of the questionnaire was poor and varied across the parish, with thirty-eight questionnaires being returned from Netherton and sixteen from Middlestown. Adolescents are especially difficult to engage and a great deal of effort was put into contacting teenagers. One major concern was a lack of youth facilities and a feeling of a lack of understanding from adults. Of the few who did respond, two met their friends around the shops and one at church, and three felt that the rest of the community did not feel comfortable seeing groups of young people hanging around. Only a couple would be prepared to meet adults to discuss their needs.

More people in Middlestown were aware of sports and other activities in the village for primary school-age children, and used them (especially the youth club), than in Netherton. The greatest concern in Netherton was the lack of a safe and suitable playground for the under-fives (58%), with half saying that they had to leave the village to access suitable play areas. Of these 66% thought that the local authority should provide facilities for the under-fives and 31% considered it to be the responsibility of the Parish Council. A few people thought volunteers should provide the service for children, but 21% did not want to volunteer themselves, although 34% would be prepared to do so.

Six people said they would be prepared to move home after their children left primary school to be nearer better facilities, and one person commented that they were already considering moving, as the public transport to access other provision was getting worse. Most people seemed to feel happy about the villages, apart from a desire for more youth facilities and better play areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A safe and suitable play area for children is needed in Netherton.

2. Youth facilities should be developed further within the parish, preferably by the local authority (Wakefield MDC) or the Parish Council, but also involving volunteers.

*Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground (© NCMME)*

*Denby Grange Miners' Welfare sports ground (© NCMME)*

# GENERAL

There is no doubt that the majority of people who replied to the questionnaire were anxious to maintain the rural nature of the area. Of those who replied, 21% valued the beautiful countryside and access to it; 16% valued the rural living; 13% the peace and quiet; 12% mentioned the paths and country walks; 5% specifically mentioned Coxley Wood; 4% valued th Green Belt areas; 3% valued the cleanliness and 2% the wildlife of the area. Seven per cent felt safe living in the area.

Local facilities and services were valued: 17% appreciated facilities like the shops, post office, doctors and dentist; 7% valued the village schools; 5% valued the church and the vicar; 3% supported Middlestown Library; 2% supported the mobile library; and 1% mentioned good health services and facilities. The work of Coxley Live is bearing fruit, for 12% valued the community spirit of the parish and 7% appreciated their friends and neighbours. Four per cent mentioned friendly caring people and 3% community involvement in social activities. Some people valued the convenience of the location of the parish near to towns and its easy access to motorways.

When it came to volunteering, however, only 114 people replied and twenty-five of these were unable to help. Conservation work was the most popular with six volunteering to join a conservation group, ten improving public footpaths and thirteen helping in Coxley Woods. Another six volunteered for gardening and ten for litter picking. There were seven volunteers for the toddler group and six for the youth group. The remaining thirty-one volunteers covered eighteen different activities

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Parish Council to continue to defend the Green Belt and work with Wakefield MDC and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to protect, maintain and defend the countryside, its paths and bridleways and its wildlif

2. The Parish Council to continue to fight for the retention of its post offices, medical centres, librarie and schools, as they are important features of community life.

3. The Parish Council to continue to work closely with the police through schemes like the Safe Scheme and Neighbourhood Policing.

*Sitlington Parish Green Belt (© NCMME)*

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that boundary signs stating 'Parish of Sitlington' are provided to the north, where Thornhill Road crosses Smithy Brook, and at the Wakefield/Kirklees boundary on Hostingley Lane; to the east where the A642, New Road, crosses the River Calder and the Calder and Hebble Navigation at Horbury Bridge; to the south where the A637, Bar Lane, enters the Midgley section of Sitlington from both directions, and on Blacker Lane near the disused railway bridge that spans Blacker Lane near the junction with Denby Dale Road; and to the west where the A642 leaves Sitlington adjacent to the National Coal Mining Museum for England and on Hardcastle Lane by the Wakefield/Kirklees boundary.

2. Coxley Live has begun to publicise footpath walks and heritage trails and this is to be encouraged. It could be linked to the production of a new footpath map of the Parish. Suggestions for inclusion are thematic trails visiting sites from the Middle Ages like Netherton and Middlestown tithe barns, as well as Netherton Hall and Hollinhurst, etc; from disused colliery site to colliery site; along routes of industrial heritage including collieries, Jarvis's Foundry (now demolished, and itself on the site of Middlestown tithe barn), coal staithes, etc; or places relating to community life, such as the sites of chapels and churches, the Co-op, the working men's clubs, etc. It might be possible to enlist local schoolchildren to work out the best trails, or Coxley Live might be able to raise further funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project.

3. Greater use of the footpaths could well lead to a need to improve them. Although footpaths are just that, places to walk on, the more they are used the greater the deterioration. As they become muddier, the wider they become, because people walk along the edges, so the more vegetation is destroyed. It is, therefore, essential to repair the damage or to create a better surface upon which to walk.

4. The Parish Council has consistently supported proposals to build a house on the site of Coxley Woollen Mill as long as the owner enhances the area historically by excavating to reveal some of the original walls and restoring the engine house as a heritage centre. Exhibitions could be held there showing the local history of the area, possibly art exhibitions promoting the work of local artists, and it could also be where the historical information collected by Coxley Live could be stored. This is the only project for development in Green Belt that the Parish Council has supported in living memory, but the Council considers it would considerably enhance the historical importance of the area.

5. It is also recommended that information about the history of Sitlington be provided in leaflet form, available in the churches and chapel, libraries at Horbury, Ossett and Middlestown and the mobile library that serves Netherton, schools and doctors' surgeries. It could also be included in *Coxley News* and placed on the Parish Council website.

6. It is recommended that the Parish Council should defend the Green Belt and work with Wakefield MDC, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and its conservation group, together with Coxley Live (the local-interest group), to protect, maintain and defend the countryside, its paths, bridleways and wildlife.

7. Working groups should be supported and all community organisations, such as Coxley Live, should continue to be supported in collaboration, and financially where there is a shortfall in their funding.

8. All play areas for young children need to be improved and repaired.

9. The appearance of the villages should be improved by removing litter and fly tipping, increasing the number of dog-fouling and litter bins and tidying the hedgerows where they encroach on footpaths. There is also room for improvement with the purchase and planting of flowers and bulbs.

10. To obtain funding for the development of Emroyd Common, all relevant organisations need to be approached.

11. The Parish Council should continue supporting maintaining the provision of libraries and post offices in the parish.

12. The facilities at Netherton Village Hall need to be improved.

13. There should be sufficient allotments in the parish for all those who would like one.

14. All major faith groups must be included and encouraged in community building.

15. All such faith contributions to community building should be affirmed and welcomed.

16. It is recommended that the Parish Council approaches WMDC for safety measures to reduce the high rate of accidents on the stretch of New Road between the traffic lights at Middlestown and past the National Coal Mining Museum up to the boundary with Kirklees, especially with consideration given to the introduction of speed cameras or, failing that, speed humps.

17. The Parish Council website should display information about the speeding tickets and summonses issued by the police in the parish, and that this information also to be supplied in the *Coxley News* magazine.

18. The Parish Council needs to renew its efforts to improve and make safe Blacker Lane, including:
    1. Measures to ensure the weight restrictions for vehicles are enforced.
    2. Improvements to safety at the Blacker Lane/ Blacker Crescent junction.
    3. Improving and making safe the pavement along Blacker Lane.
    4. Encouraging residents to report to the police registration numbers of heavy-goods vehicles using Blacker Lane illegally.

19. The traffic lights at the junction of Netherton Lane and Bridge Road should be made into pedestrian crossings and that pedestrian crossings be provided near Netherton Post Office and Middlestown Health Centre. Also to ask for pedestrian crossings at Netherton and Middlestown Schools and Middlestown Cemetery.

20. Wakefield MDC to be approached to provide speed humps on those sections of Sandy Lane where the are houses.

21. The Parish Council to work towards the reopening Horbury Bridge railway station.

22. The Parish Council to trial a bus to either Meadowhall or the White Rose Centre and return o a number of Saturdays, arrangements to be made with a public-transport company or tenders sought

23. The Parish Council and Wakefield MDC should continue to work together to identify and then improve any footpaths and bridleways that are in need of repair and maintenance.

24. The Parish Council to explore with Wakefield MDC and other relevant authorities the possibility of a cycle path on the towpath beside the Calder and Hebble Navigation canal connecting Wakefield and Dewsbury.

25. A new parish map be produced, showing the footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways, as well as including the heritage trails and suggested walks.

26. The Parish Council to explore the possibility with Wakefield MDC of 20 mph restrictions in residential areas and outside schools.

27. Car owners should be encouraged to park in their own drives, where available, to improve road visibility.

28. Consideration needs to be given to what sort of additional employment would be acceptable in the area, especially for young people, while maintaining the village and rural atmosphere of the parish.

29. A small tourist-information centre is required to encourage tourism in the parish.

30. The Parish Council must ensure support for health-care provision to continue to be available in the future.

31. There are problems with the transport links between Netherton and Middlestown for people wishing to access health care. A regular transport link between the two villages would be ideal, but may not be economically viable.

32. Information about how to contact Social Care Direct should be given in the Parish Plan and on notice boards in the parish.

33. The Parish Council should work with Wakefield MDC, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and other groups to protect, maintain and defend the countryside, its wildlife, flora and fauna.

34. The Parish Council should continue with the Police Safe Scheme and with co-operating with Neighbourhood Policing.

35. A safe and suitable play area for children is needed in Netherton.

36. Youth facilities should be developed further within the parish, preferably by the local authority (Wakefield MDC) or the Parish Council, but also involving volunteers.

37. The Parish Council to continue to fight for the retention of its post offices, medical centres, libraries and schools, as they are important features of community life.

*Middlestown in the summer as seen across the Coxley Valley from Netherton Hall (© SW)*

# MEMBERS OF SITLINGTON PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Sitlington Parish Councillors** | Roger Bennett | |
| | Keith Bray | |
| | Mavis Bray | |
| | Nigel Brook | |
| | Patricia France | |
| | Judith Holmes | |
| | Helen Kirkpatrick | |
| | Bill Mutch | |
| | John Newsome | |
| | Wendy Newsome | |
| | David Walker | |
| **Sitlington Parish Clerk** | David Dransfield | |
| **Wakefield District Councillors** | Bryan Denson | |
| | June Drysdale | |
| **Residents of/Employed in the Parish** | Reverend Hugh Baker | Vicar, St Andrew's and St Luke's Churches |
| | Janet Baker | Coxley Conservation Group |
| | Margaret Bradley | Middlestown Darby and Joan Club/Middlestown and Overton Tenants and Residents Association |
| | Peter Chisholm | HM Prison and Young Offenders Institute, New Hall |
| | Margaret Faull | National Coal Mining Museum for England |
| | Margaret Gascoigne | Coxley Live |
| | Harry Hayes | Middlestown Youth Club |
| | Shirley Jones | Netherton Playgroup |
| | Rosemary Preece | National Coal Mining Museum for England |
| | Margaret Strong | Coxley Live |
| | Ann Tomlinson | Netherton Women's Institute |
| | Lesley Wackett | Netherton Over-Fifties Club |
| | John Wackett | Netherton Over-Fifties Club |
| | Susan Walker | Overton resident |
| | Linda Webster | Sitlington Bridleways Group |
| | Adrian Woodhouse | Coxley Live |

The Steering Group was chaired successively by John Newsome, Nigel Brook, Wendy Newsome and Roger Bennett

# REFERENCES


Faull, M.L., and Moorhouse, S.A., *West Yorkshire; an Archaeological Survey*, 4 vols (Wakefield, 1981).

Giles, C., *Rural Houses of West Yorkshire, 1400-1830*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England Supplementary Series, 8 (London 1986).

Gillard, J., *Middlestown and Overton; a look back in time* (Middlestown [2001]).

Goodchild, J., *Before the National Coal Mining Museum: a new history of Caphouse Colliery and Denby Grange Collieries*, Wakefield Historical Publications, 37 (Wakefield, 2000).

Home Office Faith Communities Unit, *'Working Together': Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities; Recommendations of the Steering Group reviewing patterns of engagement between Government and Faith Communities in England* ([London], 2004).

Pevsner, N., The *Buildings of England: Yorkshire; The West Riding*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, 1967).

Smith, A.H., *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire; II*, English Place-Name Society, 31 (Cambridge, 1961).

Schofield, J., *Caphouse Colliery; a brief mining history*, 3rd ed. (Overton, 2003).

Thornes, R.C.N., *West Yorkshire: 'a noble scene of industry'; the development of the county from 1500 to 1830* ([Wakefield], 1981).

Till, M., *Caphouse to Calder Grove; the story of a colliery mineral line*, National Coal Mining Museum for England Publications, 6 (Overton, 2007).

Woodall, R.D., *The Sitlington Story* (Horbury, 1977).