

PANNAL & BURN BRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT

1. Crimple Valley, Special Landscape Area, and Green Belt

The village of Pannal predates Harrogate and is mentioned in the Domesday Book as part of the Manor of Rossett. Burn Bridge was first recorded in 1666 as part of the township of North Rigton. The twin village settlement has always been physically separate from the town of Harrogate. In 1894 a large part of the Parish of Pannal was taken under the control of Harrogate. In 1937, the Parish Council was merged with the Borough of Harrogate. In 2016 the Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish (P&BB) Council was re-established by the wish of the people. [See Appendix 1 Parish map]

The Crimple Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA) was written into the Harrogate District Local Plan in 2001. Justification for this was considered to be essential for the maintenance of the special character of these settlements. Subsequently protection of the SLA was reinforced by policies adopted in 2004 and 2008¹ that highlighted the exceptionally high landscape quality and the importance of maintaining a separation between Harrogate and Pannal. [see Appendix 2: Background History]

A scientific survey (2015)² with a near 50% response rate found that the residents of Pannal and Burn Bridge wanted to:

- maintain the rural, village character and the separation from Harrogate (97%)
- preserve the SLA and Green Belt designations from development (78%)

These findings were corroborated in a 2018 online poll on the Save Crimple Valley website that produced important insights into how the SLA is viewed and used by residents in all the surrounding areas, not just P&BB residents. All are stakeholders in seeking to preserve this valuable asset. Of the 180 respondents, 169 supported preserving the SLA. See Appendix 3 for full overview of results.

From a number of locations within the Parish there are cherished views and vistas that embrace the wider landscape setting of the village, including the Grade II* listed Victorian Viaduct. The local population from within and outside the Parish (backed by the Civic Society and other stakeholders) has prized and defended the ecologically rich Crimple Valley, with its many lanes and footpaths, farms, historic trees and hedgerows from inappropriate development over the decades. This high quality rural landscape is an important asset not just for the Parish but also as the southern gateway and setting for Harrogate Spa Town.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CV1: The landscape around the Parish should remain protected by the existing Special Landscape Area designation

CV2: The landscape around the Parish should remain protected by the current Green Belt designation

2. Woodlands, Local Parks, Public Paths and Green Spaces

The rich natural assets of the Parish are widely appreciated and used; they are also vital for threatened wildlife. However, while Public Rights of Way give access to rural land in and around the Parish, there are currently no Local Nature Reserves, Country Parks, or Common Land designations; there are no registered Village Greens or Local Green Spaces in the Parish. Neither are there any designated cycle paths linking the Parish to local designations.

At the same time, it is clear to see why developers are eager to obtain planning permission for new housing estates. The Parish is located astride road and rail transport routes between York, Harrogate and Leeds, making it an attractive site for development that meets sustainable transport criteria. Moreover, since the 1950's, Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) has owned a large amount of land within the parish. Despite previous recognition of the valuable wildlife and rural assets of this land, reductions to Local Authority (LA) funding from Central Governments has created a need for LAs to seek other sources of income. Land 'assets' may be vulnerable to being sold for development to provide funds for the Local Authority, as identified in the proposed HBC Local Plan. Contrary to there being only limited need for new housing in the area – see separate Housing Focus Group Report – HBC have earmarked the area for development as a commuter suburb, against strongly voiced and documented wishes of the parishioners and other stakeholders.

Recommendations for the preservation of the rural landscape along with creation and linking of new green spaces are compatible with sustainable development of carefully chosen sites for needed housing, primarily within infill areas within the parish.

There are many such ways to enhance the natural features and resources of the Parish. See Appendix 4: Landscape & Environment Proposals Map and Recommendations GS 1- 5 below. Partners in delivering landscape improvements could include Landowners, Tenants, the Parish Council, District and County Councils. Other organisations that may be able to assist include Northern/White Rose Forest, Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Forestry Commission, and local volunteers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GS1: Designate Local Green Spaces to protect land from changes which would adversely affect their value to the local community
- GS2: Improve and include provision for networks of interconnected green spaces
- GS3: Protect significant trees and hedgerows, and promote the planting of additional native hedgerows and trees. Embrace the Northern Forest and other new funding opportunities for linking and enlarging woodland areas
- GS4: Establish a Local Nature Reserve in combination with tree planting
- GS5: Protect and enhance the condition of existing Public Footpaths, Bridle Paths and create new Cycle Paths. Provide new linking paths where required or where development creates further opportunities

See Appendix 4: Landscape & Environment Proposals Map

for **Local Green Spaces** potential sites, including:

- Allen Wood
- Crimple Meadows Recreation Ground
- Pannal Village Green
- Sandy Bank Wood
- Long Acres Recreation Ground
- Pannal Cricket Club Ground
- Pannal Community Park
- Crimple Seasonal Wetland (near Almsford Bank)

Crimple Valley Local Nature Reserve potential sites

- Land beside Ringway Path and Crimple Beck from Parish Church to Almsford Bank
- Fields beside bridlepath from Sandy Bank SINC northwards towards Stone Rings Beck
- Land beside footpath from Almsford Bridge to Follyfoot Road

Local Geological Site Potential for Designation

- Sandy Bank Wood/Quarry rock outcrops

3. Environment, Biodiversity, Wildlife

The natural heritage of the Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish includes a diverse range of habitats and ecosystems, each home to a characteristic flora and fauna. Appendix 5: Biodiversity Action Plan is a work-in-progress which lists and reviews the local habitats and species of the Parish and is developing a phased plan of actions, over the 2018-2035 time scale, with the following goals:

- To conserve and enhance the ecological and environmental richness of the Parish and Crimple Valley, with focus on the wildlife as one aspect of the well-cherished Special Landscape Area and other rural areas.
- To encourage greater understanding and awareness of the natural environment and the rich biodiversity of the Parish at all levels through educational information and participation
- To protect and enhance wildlife habitats, especially for priority species, with an initial emphasis on the Crimple Wetlands areas.
- To encourage agricultural practices that conserve and enhance biodiversity.

There is a strong national, European, and local legislative and legal underpinning for these plans, together with an established scientific and procedural basis to evaluate the value of biodiversity, as described in the document's Appendices. To help implement these plans, a volunteer group, **Pannal & Burn Bridge Biodiversity Group (PBBBG)**, has been created, and several other interested parties will be involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EB1: To preserve local habitats important for biodiversity conservation and priority species

EB2: To maintain physical continuity of habitats for the maintenance and enhancement of natural biodiversity

EB3: To continue species recording and priority species listing

4. Geology and Hydrology

The predominant feature that distinguishes the Parish of Pannal and Burn Bridge from many similar communities is the setting provided by the protected and much-cherished Special Landscape Area (SLA). This landscape is defined topographically by the upper-mid Crimple Valley and tributaries and by the sandstone and shale hills and farmland of the southern Harrogate anticline.

The underlying geology and geomorphology, together with the underground water-bearing aquifers, have several distinctive or unique features. These deserve to be better known and appreciated both for their intrinsic qualities and for the sense of perspective and timelessness conveyed.

Appendix 5: Geology, Aquifers, Soil, Water outlines the predominant geological and hydrological features of the parish. This is a work in progress. Continued monitoring and recording of aquifer discharges and their consequences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GH1: Continued monitoring and recording of aquifer discharges and their consequences

GH2: For any building development on land on or near the Harrogate Till aquifer, the Parish Council should require a Geotechnical Survey at the early strategic stage of any planning application

GH3: To aim for designation of the Marchup Grit formation at Sandy Bank Quarry as a Local Geological Site

5. The Built Environment: Heritage Assets

Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) drive to achieve sustainable development (as defined in paragraphs 6-10). The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the 'Core Planning Principles' (paragraph 17 bullet 10) that underpin the planning system.

Where it is relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the Local Plan into action at a neighbourhood scale. Where it is relevant, designated heritage assets within the plan area should be clearly identified at the start of the plan-making process so they can be appropriately taken into account. In addition, and where relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions.

The Report on Heritage Assets – Appendix 7 outlines NPPF guidelines, lists existing Heritage Assets, nominates additional Heritage Assets, and identifies Non-

Designated Heritage Assets. These are also identified on the Appendix 4: Landscape & Environment Proposals Map.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HA1: Develop policies to inform residents, visitors, and new residents of the nature, location and details of Heritage Assets in the Parish

HA2: List buildings within the Parish that are considered to be Heritage Assets

HA3: Make a preliminary list of non-designated Heritage Assets as an on-going project

REFERENCES:

1. Reference to HBC docs upholding SLA
2. Community-Led Plan Survey (2015)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Map of Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish

Appendix 2: Background History

Appendix 3: a & b, Save Crimple Valley, online poll

Appendix 4: Landscape & Environment Proposals Map

Appendix 5: Biodiversity Action Plan

Appendix 6: Geology, Aquifers, Soil, Water

Appendix 7: a, b & c, Report on Heritage Assets