

Water Power makes a Comeback



The river near Rash Mill – a possible source of power?

An initiative by the National Park

to promote water powered electricity schemes could have an impact on Dentdale. A feasibility study of sites at Rash, Millthrop, Farfield and Peasgill above Gawthrop, has shown that Rash Mill could be economically viable.

Increasing energy costs and concerns about carbon dioxide emissions have seen a growing interest in schemes like this, and a further attraction to a developer is that any surplus can be sold back to the National Grid at a price fixed by law.

There is funding, too. The North West Rural Carbon Challenge Fund was recently set up with a £4million budget. Its money will be directed to schemes costing between £200,000 and £500,000 with community groups and social enterprises eligible to receive 100% funding.

History

The Yorkshire Dales has a long history of harnessing water power and Dentdale is no exception, with mills at Stonehouse, Barth, Gawthrop and Rash. In more recent times Dent saw small scale electric power generation at Millbeck. Could this new level of support mean that some enterprising group will rent a length of fast running beck and make a bid to illuminate Dent by water power?

If you are interested in renewable energy schemes and related funding, be it water, wind, solar or sustainable wood, Moya Turrell, the National Park's Sustainable Development Officer (tel: 01969 652341) can introduce you to those who can best help develop your ideas, and the parish council would be keen to support you as well.

Contact the Council

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Working with other Organisations

As well as attending council meetings, parish councillors, together with their nominees, also represent Dentdale on nine other committees.

Grammar School

Chris Evans, Graham Dalton, Geoffrey Woof, Ken Smith and council nominee Heather Fraser are trustees of the Dent Grammar School Educational Foundation, a charity whose aim is to give grants to local children and young adults for educational purposes. The charity's income comes from its properties, and major renovation work on one of them in 2009-10 meant it was unable to award the usual grants last year. Ken Smith, the Foundation's Chair, says, "When the work is completed we will also be looking at ways of maximising our assets for the future, as well as ways of increasing the profile of the Foundation in Dentdale in the coming months."

Sedbergh

The parish council contributes a small amount each year to the running of the community office in Sedbergh, and Graham Dalton and Peter Knaption are on its management committee. "In effect the building is the Town Hall of the area," says Graham. "It belongs to the National Park which has decided it must sell it, so ways to bring it into local collective ownership are being investigated. This will be a real challenge."

Medical

Representatives from Dentdale also belong to the consultation groups for the Sedbergh and Hawes medical practices. In Sedbergh, the council's nominee Kate Cairns has raised the concerns of Dent patients with the GPs; in Hawes, Jenny Pilgrim reports that both the Dentdale First Responders and the distribution of the WI's laminated address cards to all households are seen by everyone as examples of good practice.

DENT

Parish Council



Newsletter

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£50,000 in Grants for Dentdale Projects



Peter Clarke, SLDC Recreation Engineer, assembles the new swing at the play area on The Green

Two projects in Dentdale, funded by over £50,000 of external grants, will be completed by the end of June. They are both part of the parish plan, which members of the community have been helping the parish council to implement.

The allotments near Church Bridge are dug and planted, with all but one

of the thirty plots in use after a lot of hard work by the allotment holders. On The Green, the new play area has been constructed in the last few weeks. The children in the dale helped to design it, and they have watched with increasing excitement as it has taken shape.

Council Elected for New 4-Year Term

When residents went to vote in Dent on May 6 they also elected the parish council, even though no names appeared on the ballot paper. Because only eight candidates were standing for nine seats, everyone who stood was elected. The members of the new council are:

Jock Cairns (Chair)	Graham Dalton	Chris Evans	Peter Knaption
Ken McClurg	Jenny Pilgrim	Ken Smith	Geoffrey Woof

There were some changes to the old council during the last year. In December, David Hartley left the council after five years service, being replaced by Ken Smith, and Wendy Pontefract decided not to stand for re-election at the end of her term.

About this Newsletter

This newsletter is a response to requests in the parish plan survey for information about the parish council. This third edition contains information about the work of the council over the twelve months to the end of March.

More information about the parish council is published each month in Lookaround and on the parish council pages at www.dentdale.com.

Meetings, Meetings...

These days, a lot of the council's business is done by email. But councillors still need to meet, and eleven full council meetings were held in the Sedgwick Room in 2009-10. The playing field and parish plan committees both met monthly as well. The planning group used email to make recommendations about all planning applications and met only occasionally.

Now that the car park is running successfully, the council decided it could be managed on a day-to-day basis by the two car park administrators and the parish clerk. Consequently, the car park committee's meetings were suspended.

Other meetings

During 2009-10, councillors were involved in other meetings as well. They organised a public meeting to discuss timber extraction from Littletown, spoke at a National Park Authority meeting about affordable housing sites in Dentdale and held meetings with Cumbria Highways about street parking and cutting roadside verges.

Affordable Housing Delays



Existing housing in Dent for local people

A recurring concern within the Dale has been the lack of affordable housing, particularly for young families. To provide an up-to-date picture of the situation, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust came to a parish council meeting in July 2009 to discuss housing needs. They proposed carrying out a housing needs survey to establish the current level of demand.

Results not known

This was completed last September, but the results are still not available. The parish council has been pressing for the results, because they are needed before progress can be made on any potential affordable housing developments. Given the low numbers on the school roll, the ageing population and the high cost of housing within the dale, we need action now to maintain our thriving community.

Housing Sites

Conservation or Change?

Dent village was designated a conservation area some time ago to conserve its unique character. Last year consultants for the National Park worked with the parish council and other Dent residents to review it and make recommendations about how the area should be managed in future.

Managing Change

One comment in their report refers to guidance given by English Heritage. This says that modern conservation is about helping everyone to manage change, not to prevent it. The aim

Quite separately from this, the National Park has been looking for suitable sites for affordable and local needs housing. Those approved will be granted outline planning permission, and may be developed over the next fifteen years. In October, it asked for potential sites and the parish council encouraged landowners to respond.

Glebe Fold

The Bradford diocese offered part of the field next to Glebe Fold for development, and six other sites in Dentdale were also put forward. Two sites – to the rear of Ghyllside and to the west of Dale View – will be included in the forthcoming public consultation, but the field next to Glebe Fold will not be. However, it may be restored to the list if the National Park is persuaded to do so by the response to the consultation.

should be "to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to make sure that people can continue to use and enjoy them."

The needs of this local community have sometimes seemed in conflict with the conservation of the landscape and its buildings. This report is suggesting that this does not have to be so in Dent – but it does rely on the National Park acting on English Heritage's advice.

Planning in the Park

Although the National Park is the planning authority for this area, all applications are sent to the parish council for comments. A planning group of three councillors – Jenny Pilgrim, Peter Knapton and Chris Evans – examine them in detail and make recommendations to the full council about how it should respond.

Straightforward

When the parish council decides its response, it informs the National Park, sometimes with detailed reasons. If its view differs from the Park's, the application is automatically referred to the planning committee, where members, not officers, take the decision. This happened several times last year, when the parish council supported applications that planning officers wanted to refuse, and two recommendations were overturned.

Concern

But other cases gave cause for concern. Jenny Pilgrim, the Planning Group's convenor, explains: "Underpinning the planning officers' whole approach appeared to be a very narrow and inflexible focus on the conservation of buildings and the environment which did not take into account the need to maintain the viable community which will be carrying out this conservation."

Action

Parish council members have let the National Park know about these concerns. They have explained them to Peter Watson, YDNPA's Head of Planning, at a meeting of local parish councillors. They have met both John Blackie, the YDNPA Member Champion for planning, and the National Park's Chief Executive, David Butterworth, to discuss them.

It became apparent in these discussions that there are severe staffing shortages in the National Park's planning department at present and these will take some time to resolve. However, the Park is now fully aware of Dent's concerns, and the parish council will be assessing whether things improve over the next twelve months.

Last Year's Grants

The 70% increase in grant applications last year meant the council reduced grants across the board to ensure all organisations were treated fairly. The Play Area committee was given a one-off grant of £5,000 and other amounts are shown below.

To prevent the same problem arising next year, the whole grants process is now being reviewed.

Citizens Advice South Lakeland	£ 75
Dales United Football Club	£100
Dent Allotment Association	£400
Dent C of E Primary School	£250
Dent Folk Carols Weekend	£100
Dent Football Club	£100
Dent Methodist Chapel burial ground	£100
Dent Music & Beer Festival	£250
Dent Pre-School	£150
Dent Reading Room	£150
Dent Table Tennis Club	£132
Dentdale Cricket Club	£200
Dentdale Festive Lights	£125
Dentdale Over 60s	£150
Dentdale Show	£250
North West Air Ambulance	£150
Sed. & District Community Office (2 years' grant)	£400
St Andrew's Church Bells	£100
St Andrew's Church burial ground	£412
St John's Church burial ground	£187

Money, Money, Money....

In 2009-10 the parish council spent £8,296 more than it received in revenue, partly due to a £5,000 grant given for the refurbishment of the play area on The Green. The shortfall was covered by using the surplus that has been accumulated from the car park income over the last five years.

In setting its 2010-11 budget, the council decided not to increase its share of the council tax, or to cut the total amount given in grants. It decided

instead to increase car park charges, with the two-hour charge going up from £1.20 to £1.50 and annual permits from £60 to £65.

Clearly the council cannot continue indefinitely to spend more than it receives. Although charges for residents' parking have so far been avoided – against the trend in the rest of the National Park and in Sedbergh – it is likely that these will soon have to be considered.

End of Year Figures

Receipts		Payments	
Interest received	27	Admin and election costs	397
Precept received	7,900	Audit	448
VAT repayment	833	Street Lighting	500
Playing field receipts	1,030	Grants given*	9,037
Sundry receipts*	150	Insurance	1,195
		Room Hire	171
		Subscriptions	156
		Staff costs and training	3,756
		Playing field costs	1,912
		Parish Plan costs	725
Total	9,940	Total	18,297

*includes £5,000 to Play Area

Car Park to Stay with Parish Council

The five-year lease from the National Park expired at the end of March, and Jock Cairns and Peter Knapton negotiated a renewal for a further five years. Jock Cairns said, "Although we tried to persuade them to lease the car park to us rent-free,

we knew this was always going to be unlikely, and in the present financial climate we felt that we got the best deal available. At £3,000 per year, the rent is relatively low compared with other local car parks, and by the time the new lease ends in 2015, there will have been no rent increase for 10 years."

Profit

In 2009-10 the car park made £7,340 profit on a turnover of £23,144. Although takings were affected by the prolonged cold winter weather, the better weather last summer more than made up for this.

However, a series of court cases between an Isle of Wight parish council and HM Revenue and Customs could affect these takings. If the Isle of Wight parish council loses, all car parks run by local councils will be liable for VAT. For Dent, this will mean paying arrears of nearly £16,000 from reserves and nearly £3,500 VAT each year in future, which will significantly reduce the car park's profitability.



Ken Smith (left) and Peter Stephenson starting work on the allotments, which received a parish council grant of £400