

# **Consultation Statement**

## **Morland Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

Submission Version 2026

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# Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been prepared with the aim of fulfilling the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, which are set out in the legislative basis below.

An extensive level of consultation (community and statutory) has been undertaken by the steering group, focus groups and parish council than what is required by the legislation and is set out below.

## Legal basis

Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations sets out that a consultation statement should be a document containing the following:

- (a) details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;*
- (b) explanation of how they were consulted;*
- (c) summary of the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and*
- (d) description of how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan*

## Background

Morland Parish Council undertook preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in Spring 2017 and arranged for a Steering Group of local people to meet regularly to oversee the preparation of the Plan. A number of informal consultation events took place during this time:

### Pre-Plan Consultation

The Steering Group undertook a number of informal consultations which informed the Group's input in the process. This is set out in the following statement from the Steering Group:

Morland neighbourhood planning group came together following adverts for community members to get involved. Adverts were placed on the village noticeboards, featured in parish council meetings and were broadcast in Church.

Our group went on to comprise five members of the parish, the clerk and two parish councillors. We felt our group well represented the village offering a spread of age and interests. Each person in the newly formed group were members of different

clubs or groups within the village (school PTA, the PCC) therefore they had access to varied circles of people with whom to chat about the plan and hear informal comments. We felt the composition of our group was fully representative of the village.

Our debate on the idea of undertaking a neighbourhood plan had taken place at parish council meetings where members decided a plan was a good way forward in considering future development plans for the village but of a type and amount that were suitable for a small settlement with great character. The meetings are public and opinion was sought at these events prior to the formal undertaking. Subsequently, the Neighbourhood Plan was an agenda item at all Parish council meetings.

In May (2017) the Parish council advertised their next meeting, including a presentation by our consultant, Mr. Tom Woof. This meeting attracted a good turn out and following Mr Woof's presentation, there was a lively question and answer session.

The public session introducing Mr. Tom Woof and comments made informed the steering groups first task set by our author, this was to walk our village photographing key areas we valued, such as features of buildings, stonework, views and restricted views and any areas we considered attractive or unattractive. In this way, he suggested we would start to collate thoughts on what was so appealing about our village and how to maintain and protect it (and to highlight areas of concern). This led ultimately to our commissioning of a full detailed Heritage Report which we felt strongly underpinned parishioners and the steering group's enthusiasm to properly appreciate and value our village, with particular reference to the central village character area.

In early June, the NP group hosted a 'display and discuss' event in our village hall. We decided that to encourage as many callers as possible into the presentation, it needed to be split into two parts, one session to be held at school collection time and the second later in the evening. We arranged refreshments to make the event as welcoming and relaxed as we could, to encourage more time spent considering the display and, we hoped, more debate. Our aim was to encourage younger members of the community to come and spend time looking at our information boards and to attract working Parishioners later in the day.

We used large display boards for our plans and had information around the hall in folders. Members of the group manned the hall at all times and were able to discuss and describe how we felt the plan might proceed and to gather insight from visitors and record this for later use.

Later in June, at our annual fete day, the neighbourhood planning group held a stall again using display boards and folders of photographs of the village and information about neighbourhood planning and how it can help develop and protect our village.

This location offered a great opportunity for informal conversation and the sharing of ideas and attracted attention from a wide cross section of the community.

For our formal consultation, we focused on a wide advertising campaign, we had posters on every noticeboard, posters were circulated to every parish councilor for display in their area, this meant every street and estate had sight of the advert for the consultation. In addition, the Parish council website advertised the consultation process. Our area has an excellent newsletter which also ran an advert publicising the consultation. Every advert gave the names of group members should anyone wish to discuss the plan and our local well-used café kindly held copies of the plan to be read informally by their customers. Moreover, copies of the plan were available to any Parishioner via any member of the neighbourhood planning group and parish councilors. Furthermore, an advert was placed in the local newspaper.

In October 2020, a survey of local residents was carried out regarding local opinion as to the community value of a field known as 'The Donkey Field' (grid ref NY60022240). This field has been previously identified as a key green and protected space within the Parish but lost its designation in the new ELP. The Morland Neighbourhood Development Group, with the backing of the Parish Council, felt it was important to know if residents wished to seek better protection for the field against possible future development. Our survey was available online and in paper format, and advertised on the Parish Council website, through Facebook, in the newsletter and in local businesses. It generated a strong response in favour of protecting the field from future development.

In January 2024, a second regulation 14 consultation took place with statutory consultees. This was on the recommendation of Westmorland and Furness Council as the new planning authority, following local government organisation which took place in 2023.

## **Regulation 14 Consultations**

A Pre-Submission Draft Plan was prepared and was subject to a Regulation 14 compliant consultation process which took place 5th January - 16th February 2018. This comprised:

- Notices in the Village of Morland, on the website and in the local paper (Cumberland and Westmorland Herald)
- Publicity at the Parish Council meetings
- Email contact with Statutory Agencies
- Email contact with local sports and community groups
- Hand delivery to residents who requested copies of the plan

- Letters to the owners of key sites mentioned in the Plan (Halmshaw's Garage)

Prior to the consultation activities listed above, the steering group planned a broad eye-catching campaign to engage villagers' attention through a variety of means. Adverts were placed in five key locations in the village utilising well-used noticeboards, including adverts in the church, the village square, the primary school, the village hall and on the popular café noticeboard. In addition, every parish councillor displayed the same advert in their garden/roadside, therefore every street, estate, enclave and meeting points had sight of our poster.

Publicity for the consultation period was also on the parish website and the area has a superb village newsletter which goes to every home, this also had an advert publicising the consultation. Furthermore, an advert was placed in the local newspaper.

The adverts contained the names of three of the steering group members should anyone wish to discuss the plan and an offer stood to hand deliver the plan to anyone requesting a copy. The local very well-used café kindly displayed copies of the plan to be read by the customers.

Further consultation was conducted in 2020 regarding the Donkey Field, which consisted of:

- A survey of residents advertised online and in local businesses.
- Contact with rentees of the Donkey Field.
- Contact with representatives of the owner of the Donkey Field.

In January 2024, following amendments to the plan, a further Regulation 14 compliant consultation took place, between 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 - 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024. This comprised:

- Notices in the village of Morland, on the website, through the Parish Council Facebook page, the local Facebook group and through the local village Newsletter.
- Minuted announcement at Parish Council Meeting.
- Email contact with all Statutory Consultees, including the local planning authority.
- Copies made available in person or digitally to any requestor.

A full list of consultees is contained in the appendix.

## Conclusion

There were no significant comments received from the public or Statutory Agencies that required modifications to the plan during either Regulation 14 consultation. The exception were comments received initially from EDC during the first consultation (as shown in the attached appendices 7 and 8) with further minor comments arising from Westmorland and

Furness Council (WFC) during the second consultation (as shown in appendix 13). The main feedback from the local population was very encouraging and there were no contentious issues. For the size of Morland the feedback was excellent.

Following consideration of the consultation responses and the subsequent refinement of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council also reviewed whether the level of protection proposed for a number of open spaces remained appropriate. In doing so, the Parish Council had regard to the evidence gathered throughout the preparation of the Plan, including the views and priorities consistently expressed by residents through community engagement. Having considered the longstanding importance of The Beckside and The Drying Field to the community, it concluded that these sites would be more appropriately protected through designation as Local Green Spaces, recognising their particular recreational, environmental and historic value.

This decision reflects the Parish Council's long-term objective of safeguarding important community spaces to ensure they remain available for recreation, community use and enjoyment by future generations.

The Beckside is a defining feature of Morland, forming the historic and visual heart of the village. It is used extensively by residents and visitors for walking, informal recreation and appreciating the rural setting, watercourse and historic bridges. The Beckside includes the historic mill race and sluice gate, both of which contribute to the village's heritage and are regularly used by the local school for educational activities, including history and science projects. The Parish Council actively maintains the area through grass cutting, tree management, wildflower planting and upkeep of interpretation boards, ensuring it continues to provide an attractive, accessible and biodiverse community asset. The space also hosts community events and celebrations throughout the year and supports a range of wildlife.

The Drying Field is a small but highly valued green space located within the heart of the village. Its enclosed position, set back from the road, provides a safe environment for children to play close to home while remaining within sight of their families. The site offers opportunities for informal recreation, engagement with nature and community activities, including village fêtes and picnic gatherings. Its more natural character, with areas of longer grass and wildflowers, provides a valuable contrast to private gardens and contributes to local biodiversity.

The Parish Council has also become increasingly aware of concerns regarding parking within the village, as reflected in Parish Council meeting discussions. Whilst additional parking solutions may need to be explored in the future, the Parish Council considers it important that this is not achieved at the expense of the village's valued open spaces. Designating The Beckside and The Drying Field as Local Green Spaces reflects the importance of these areas to the community and provides confidence that they will continue to fulfil their recreational, environmental, historic and amenity functions in the long term.

For these reasons, the Parish Council concluded that Local Green Space designation was the most appropriate means of recognising and protecting the special significance of The Beckside and The Drying Field to the local community.

Recurring and key themes raised by the consultation:

- Inclusion of the beck and the surrounding green areas in the plan.
- The possible use of Halmshaw's Garage site as additional parking for the church and café.
- The Village Hall should be listed as an amenity.
- Open spaces, such as The Donkey Field, should be protected from development.

The result of the consultation with the owners of Halmshaw's Garage is that it is in two separate ownerships, one of whom did not respond to the approach. It is considered that without the active engagement of both owners this site cannot be formally allocated for development in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, policy MNP6 is included to provide an aspiration for decision makers to consider if the occasion arises.

Eden District Council provided the most comments and those are listed as a separate document in the appendix.

# List of Appendix Documents

Provided in separate documents:

1. Copy of the pre-submission Consultation Version of the Morland NDP (2018)
2. Copy of the consultation letter (2018)
3. Copy of the Consultation Notice (2018)
4. List of consultees and a table of their responses (2018)
5. Tracked changes version of the Pre-Submission version of the NDP as provided by EDC (2018)
6. Table of responses to EDC comments (2018)
7. Table of responses from local consultees (2018)
8. Donkey Field survey results
9. Copy of the pre-submission Consultation Version of the Morland NDP (2024)
10. Copy of the consultation letter (2024)
11. Copy of the Consultation Notice (2024)
12. List of consultees and a table of their responses (2024)
13. Table of WFC comments, with responses (2024)