

I Get Around

A study into the extent to which the ability to get around locally has impacts on people's community participation, with ideas for how to tackle the problems identified.

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Background & aims

Staveley, Ings & Kentmere have vibrant community networks, activities and services. It has become clear however that some people find it difficult to get around at least some of the time, limiting their ability to participate and/or meet their day-to-day needs. Initial explorations of this suggest that this not only includes people who might be seen as vulnerable, but others in the community whose voices might not be heard on these issues.

This study aimed to:

- 1. Understand the nature of problems that anyone in the community might have in getting around locally.**

“Locally” means both within the settlements (Staveley, Ings and Kentmere) and between them. It is not about mobility more widely – such as to Kendal or further afield, or for routine journeys such as to work or school.

- 2. Identify solutions to overcome the problems identified**

This was done both by gleaning people’s thoughts on possible solutions, and for the project team to consider the problems together to explore and identify solutions.

The identification of solutions would then be used to better inform who might have responsibility for implementing them.

Method

The study was structured around a questionnaire survey that was delivered using a variety of methods in autumn 2024. A small project team was assembled comprising Isobel Stoddart, Alistair Kirkbride, Debs Michel and Jenny Bottomley.

The questionnaire was designed by the study group. We considered carefully issues such as

- the extent to which we were seeking “free” responses vs. leading answers with ideas and information
- the way it was designed to feel relevant to a wide range of types of people - to counter the “not for people like me” problem
- not to be led by our assumptions of main audiences or our perception of problems
- ensuring that we elicited people’s views on the core problems experienced *before* inviting ideas about solutions; it is a well-known trap that people want to talk about ideas for solutions before fully exploring the problems that need solving.
- The order of questions, length of questionnaire and an incentive to complete it (£50 prize voucher for local businesses) to encourage maximum participation.

A few people were invited to test the draft questionnaire – which allowed us to finesse its design before wider use across the community.

The questionnaire was used in a variety of ways – to maximise its reach across the whole community:

- Link to an online (Survey Monkey) version (43 responses)
 - included in a front-page article in the quarterly community newsletter that was delivered to most houses in the village
 - via the SVA Facebook page
 - via the primary School’s “weekly roundup” to all parents/carers
- Paper versions of the questionnaire were available on the counters at the Pharmacy (6 responses)
- The questionnaire was also used either in face-to-face interviews or distributed to participants at Warm Spaces events (8 responses) and Repair Café (5 responses)

Results

1. Who responded?

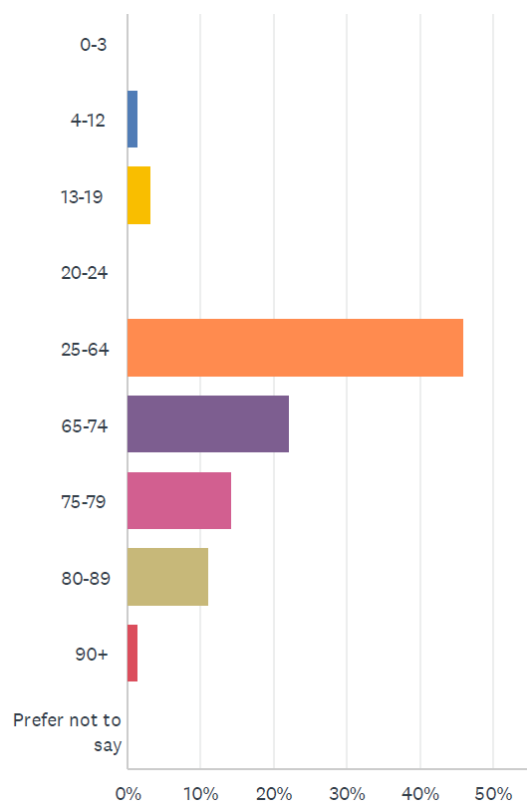


Figure 1 Age of respondents

Whilst there was a good spread of ages, there is a notable gap in the 20-24 age range.

Of 62 respondents, 59 were from Staveley, 2 “other” and 1 from Ings. There were no responses from Kentmere.

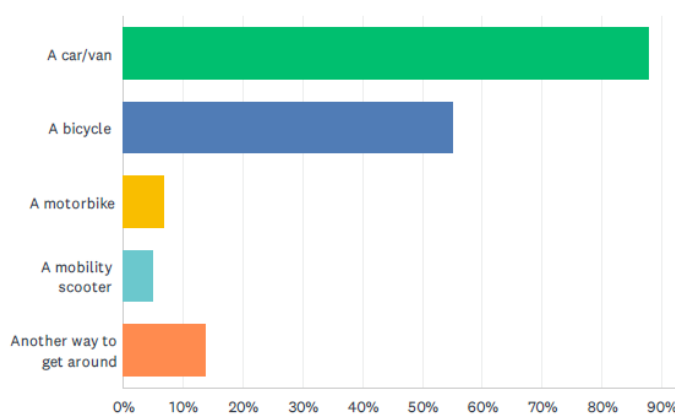


Figure 2 Transport available to respondents

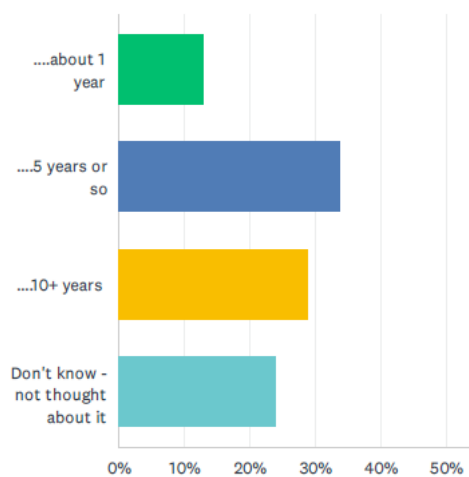
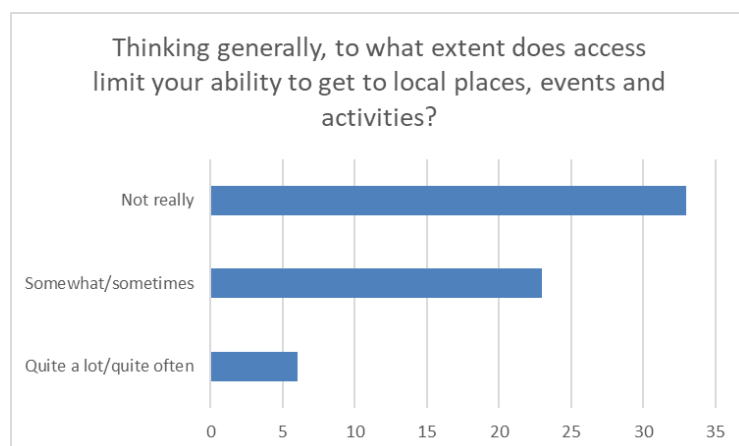


Figure 3 Respondents' views on whether their circumstances (relating to their ability to get around) are likely to change into the future

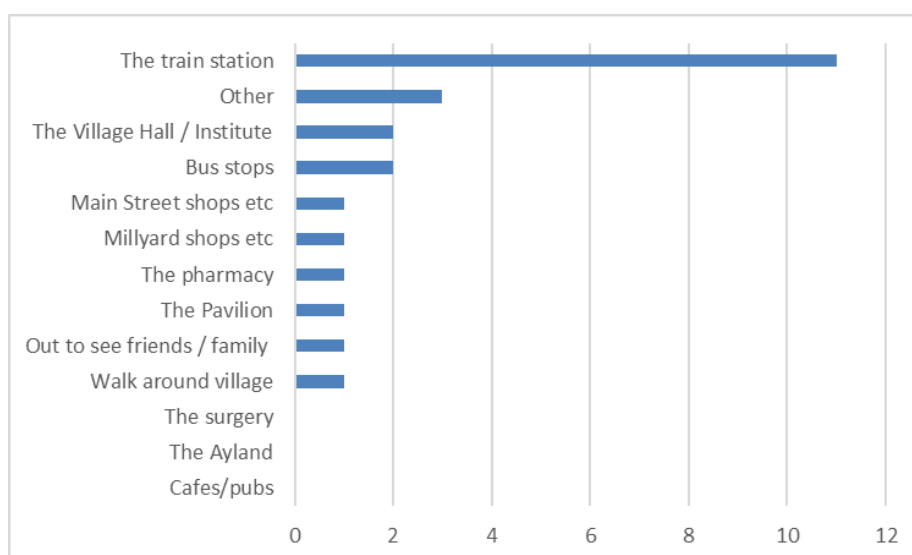
2. Getting around



6 people (9.7%) said that access issues limited their ability to get around quite a lot/often, and a further 23 people said it was an issue sometimes.

These absolute values show that there is a small but significant number of people in the sample who are limited in their participation due to problems “getting around”. This probably represents a minimum as a result of the sampling method.

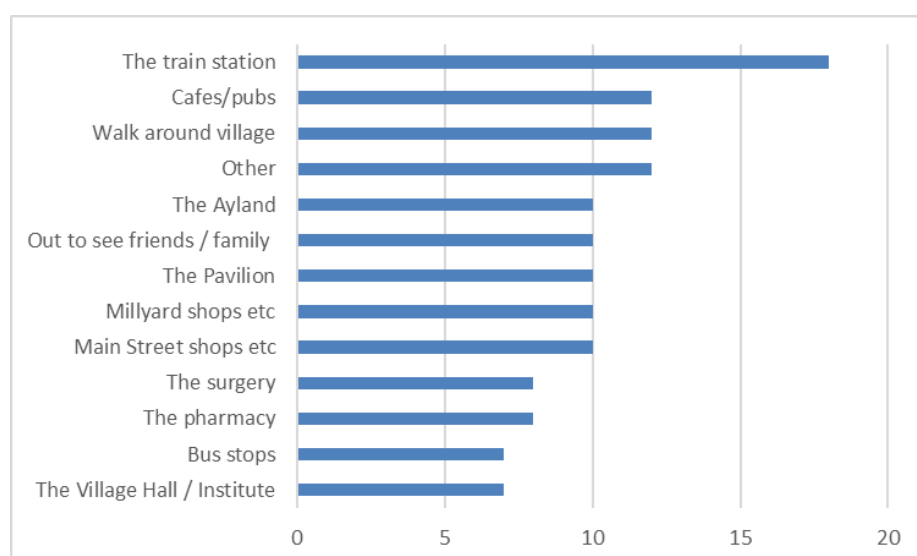
Figure 4 How limited people feel in their ability to get around



The rail station clearly is seen as difficult or impossible to access by many (48%) respondents.

The village hall and bus stops were “impossible” to access by two people.

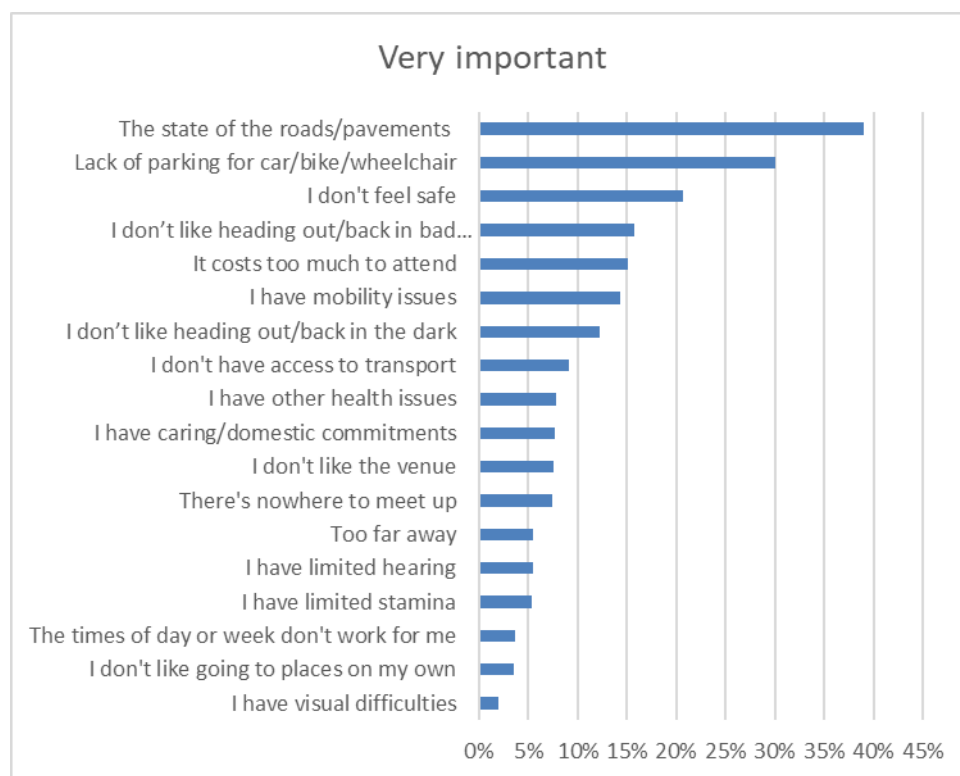
Figure 5 Places that are “impossible” for respondents to access



Places that are seen as “difficult” to access – except the rail station – are fairly varied; between 11% (Village hall; 7 people) – 19% (Cafés/pubs; 12 people) find it difficult getting around the village

Figure 6 Places that are “difficult” for respondents to access

3. What makes it difficult to get around?



These charts show the issues that people stated were very important or quite/slightly important in making it difficult for them to get around.

Figure 7 Issues that are seen as "very important" in restricting respondents' abilities to get around



Figure 8 Issues that are seen as "Quite / slightly important" in restricting respondents' abilities to get around

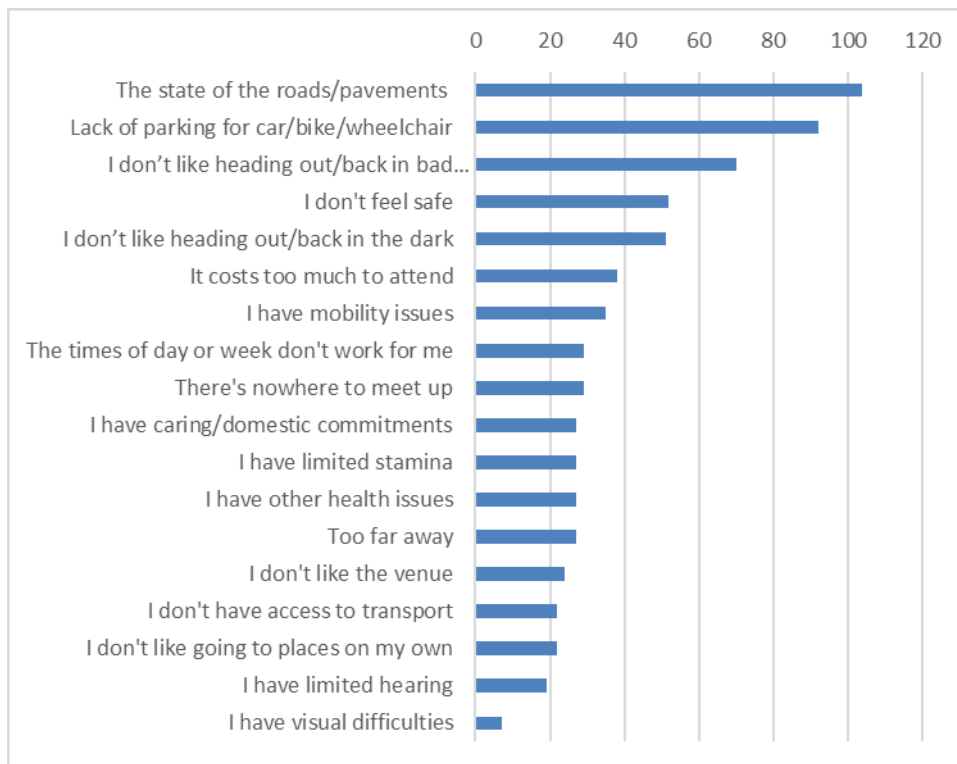


Figure 9 incorporates all of the responses on importance of problems. It does this by weighting them by importance: “very important” scores are multiplied by 3, “quite” by 2 and “slightly” by 1, then the scores added together for each issue.

The resulting table is a useful overview of how the different issues are seen as important relative to each other

Figure 9 Weighted importance of issues

4. Solutions & interventions

This section considers solutions and interventions from two sources: suggestions from respondents and interpretations of the problems identified (previous section). These are then considered together.

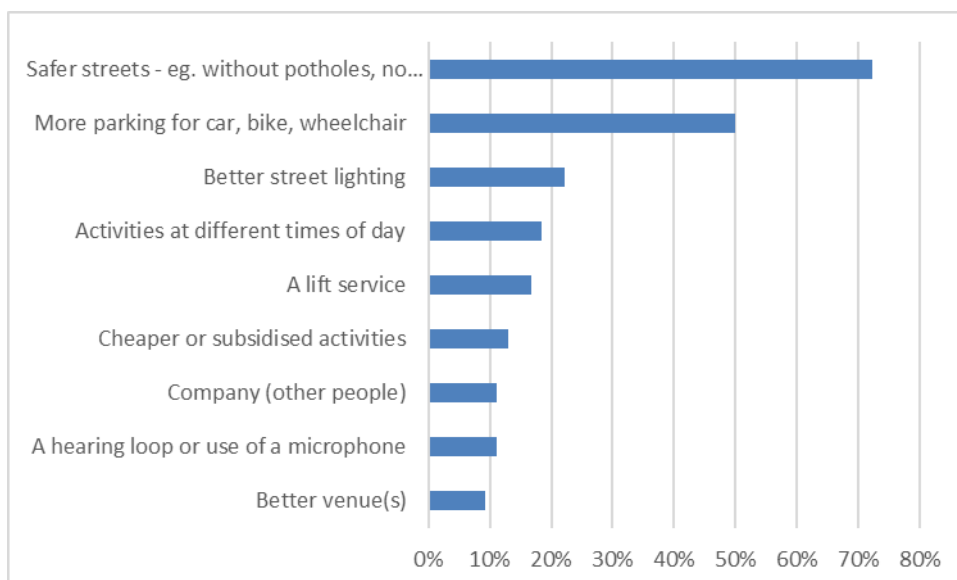


Figure 10 Respondents preferences to possible solutions

The respondent's suggested solutions map fairly clearly to the importance of issues (Figure 9)

Question 6

Respondents were asked to describe other places further afield within the parish (Ings, Staveley, Kentmere) that they had difficulty accessing. (55 responses)

The key issues that were referred to (3 times or more each) include:

- Difficulty accessing the railway platform
- The lack of pavement on Crook Road on the stretch of road under the railway bridge that links access between the village, the surgery, Seedfield housing and the railway station - with cars and vans parked making it hazardous to walk, with no enforcement of the 30pmh zone – this was of particular concern
- Crossing the road at the entrance to the Mill Yard
- Crossing the road near the bridge over the river Kent, close to the Eagle and Child due to poor sight lines. Particularly for access to the playground and/or Pavilion.
- Access to Kentmere due to lack of public transport
- Both lack of, and also too much parking in and around the village at various locations.
- No safe crossings of the A591 in Ings

Question 9

Respondents were asked for any specific suggestions that would help tackle the problems you have identified?(55 responses)

- Solutions for accessing the railway platform included: ramps, a lift, moving the platform to the south side of the bridge providing access via station lane and a path through the garage yard or completely relocating the station to a level location (with parking).
- Solutions for the lack of pavement on Crook Road included: Priority driving through railway bridge and speed humps, plus pavements and more double yellow lines
- A village car park for visitors
- A shuttle bus up and down Kentmere

Question 12

Respondents were asked if there was anything else that they would like to say that could be relevant to this study. (47 responses)

Many of the same issues that have been raised in previous 2 questions emerged again including:

- Need for more parking
- Concerns about the lack of sightlines to cross the road to the playground due to the bridge and speed of traffic on that section. Need for a safe crossing.
- The lack of pavement, and too much parking on the section of Crook Road from the station, past the surgery to the housing.
- Access to the station
- Safe pedestrian crossing at Ings
- Improved junction at the entrance to the Mill Yard

Also:

- Overall better maintained walkways and more cycle facilities
- Improvements to the surface on footpath alongside field on Windermere Road

So what do the results mean for possible interventions?

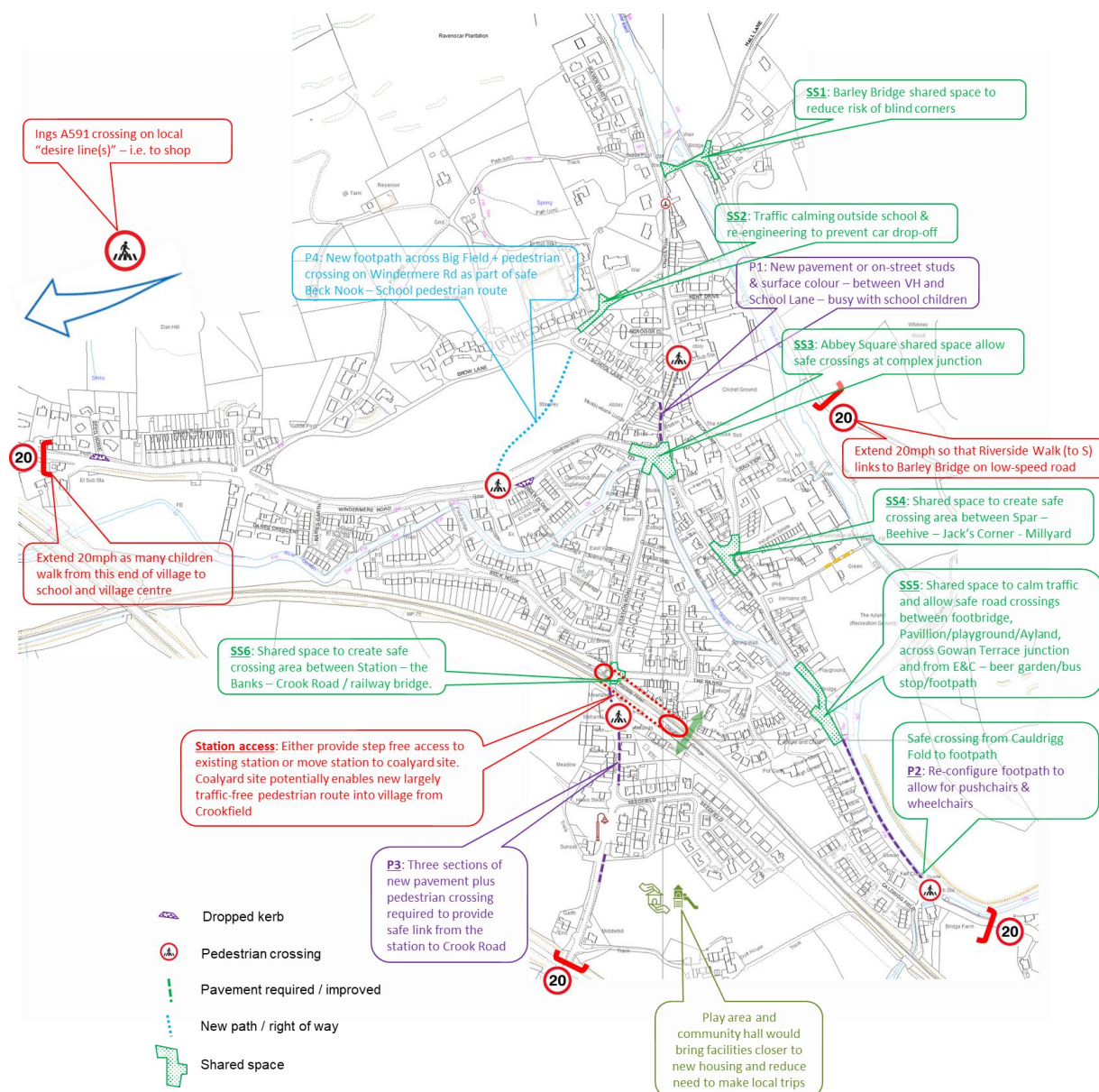
The results reveal both ideas that are well-known and/or long-standing (such as narrow or discontinuous pavements), but also some new ideas for making getting around easier for people.

Here we pull together these into two sets of ideas:

- *What – where?* suggestions for improvements at specific locations around the village
- *Projects* – initiatives that would address barriers to people getting around that were raised by respondents

What – where? Infrastructure

The map shows the locations where people have identified specific problems that affect their ease or willingness to get around. These are briefly described on the map, then the main ones are described in a bit more detail.



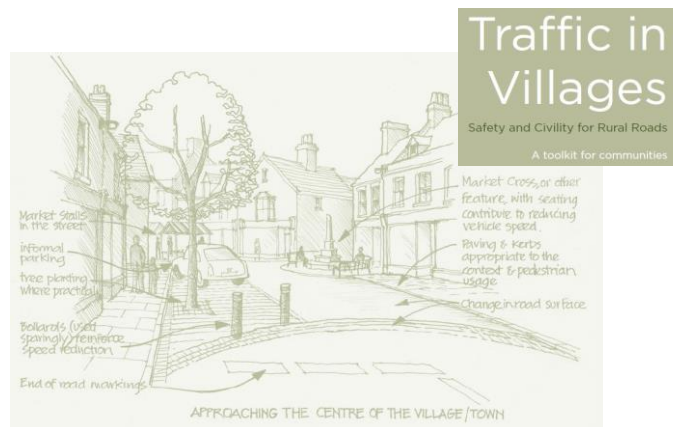
Shared space schemes

Shared space schemes is a method of street design that minimises segregation between traffic and pedestrians, with the result of shifting priorities to pedestrian priority. Such schemes often remove kerbs and might involve “traffic tables” – i.e. bringing the whole area up to pavement level via a small traffic ramp. They often enable more place-friendly public realm.

“
If you want drivers
to behave as in a
village, make sure it
feels like a village.”
Hans Monderman 1945-2008

Shared space schemes work well in places that already have low vehicle speeds. Whilst such schemes are commonplace in Continental Europe – especially in villages popular with visitors – there are examples from the UK from traffic calming in Clifton village (South of Penrith) and more substantial village shared space design and delivery in Poynton (Cheshire)¹ and Rogate (Surrey)²; the description of Rogate sounds unnervingly similar to Staveley “It lies within the new [South Downs] National Park. With around 1,600 inhabitants, a fine village pub, a small village shop and a popular primary school...”.

The graphic is from work developed between Dorset AONB Partnership and Hamilton-Baillie Associates that sets out best practice for villages³; “Streets and village spaces have always served a multitude of purposes. Ever increasing traffic during the past century has created an imbalance at the cost of social and economic life. It is only recently that new models for shared space have begun to emerge, principally in cities and larger market towns. The principles illustrated by more complex urban schemes are still relevant for more modest rural application despite the very different context”



Through this project, five locations have emerged where shared space schemes would be the ideal as isolated solutions such as pedestrian crossings, pavement buildouts or dropped kerbs would not accommodate the local layout nor provide meaningful solutions to the pedestrian risks identified.

SSI: Barley Bridge

This includes multiple road junctions in a small area and blind bends coupled with popular locations (views of the weir, a local village “round walk” involving the off-road Riverside Walk).

SS2: School

There are longstanding problems with parents parking outside school to drop off or pick up their children, the parked cars (often with engines running) creating risk for other children and their families. Behaviour-based solutions via the school and parents have not had lasting impact.



¹ https://www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk/Shared_Space_35342.aspx

²² <https://hamilton-baillie.com/projects/rogate/>

³ Traffic in Villages - Safety and Civility for Rural Roads. A toolkit for communities, <https://dorset-nl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Traffic-in-villages.pdf>

The following three locations effectively operate as three hubs or mini-squares along the village's main street. Main Street is still engineered as an A-road from before the bypass was constructed. The lower traffic volumes and speeds provide new opportunities for design that shift the priority to the village's pedestrians.

These ideas were first floated in c. 2013, when the Parish Council were taken on a tour of the locations to discuss the ideas in general.

SS3: Abbey Square

The Abbey Square area is a complex offset junction with wide roads and narrow pavements with lateral slopes; it is one of the main hubs of the village.

An existing zebra crossing is the legacy of an engineered A-road solution rather than it catering for the pedestrian desire lines.



SS4: Village centre

The area around the Mill Yard junction comprises the main village shops, a café, the entrance into the Mill Yard and the popular Jack's Corner. Again, it is engineered as a wide junction from an A-road into the Mill Yard from the days when there were frequent large truck movements. Whilst current Mill Yard businesses need to retain truck access, there are far fewer truck movements compared to the era in which the junction was engineered.

There are multiple reasons for significant pedestrian movements in this area – people accessing shops, Jack's corner and the Mill Yard.



SS5: Pavillion & Bridge

This area has complex pedestrian demands (footbridge, Pavillion/playground/playing fields, pub, beer garden, discontinuous pavements on alternate sides of the road) coupled with very poor sight lines around the bridge. Many children use this area and there has been a serious collision between a child and car requiring the air Ambulance to attend (2014).



SS6: Station bridge – The Banks

This area sees significant volumes of pedestrians associated with train arrivals and departures; the base of the station steps has a narrow pavement on a junction that has poor sight lines. As dozens of school children use the train, there are sometimes significant groups of children exiting the station.



Pavement improvements

There are generally problems with narrow pavements, lateral slopes, a lack of dropped kerbs (or dropped kerbs in inconvenient locations) and discontinuous pavements. Here, we have tried to identify the main areas requiring attention.

P1: Village Hall – School Lane

This is a key missing pavement. It is a key demand line for children walking to school

(from Crookfield and Beck Nook), and this pedestrian demand occurs at times of high traffic levels and congestion on the narrow Silver Street.

A short pavement between the Village Hall and School Lane would help reduce this risk.

This might be a pavement separated with a standard kerb or be at road-level with on-road studs and surface colouring.



P2: Windermere Road riverside path

This path is the only route for pedestrians

from Cauldrigg Fold. It also is part of the popular Dales Way. The path is separated from the roadway with an attractive low stone wall, but the footpath width is limited, and certainly too narrow for wheelchairs and some pushchairs.

A solution here would be to widen the footway and improve its surface, but to retain a stone dividing wall – both for purposes a sense of safety plus to retain its heritage value.



P3: Crook Road

The three phases of development of the Crookfield estate in the last 15 years has added significant pedestrian flows (including children) along this road. The Surgery is located here with no pavement access.

The solution requires extension to an existing pavement, a pedestrian crossing and new pavement to connect to existing. There is also need for a extra part of missing pavement.



P4: Big field footpath

This footpath would provide a safe route to school from the Beck Nook / Gowan Close area. With a new pedestrian crossing on Windermere road, it would reduce volumes of children having to navigate the dangerous crossing and lack of pavements in the Abbey Square / Silver Street area (SS3 & PI).

Pedestrian crossing of A591 at Ings

Respondents from Ings highlighted the absence of safe crossing of the A591 near to the shop; the crossing near the Watermill is a long way from the main desire line.



Projects

In looking at *all* of the issues, the following solutions emerge as worthy of consideration for development. For each of these solutions, it would require a lead organisation to be identified and initial discussions around next steps to be co-ordinated.

1. *Volunteer accompanier network*

Description

A system or idea would be established across social networks, groups or venues where people volunteer to accompany others to events, meetings or venues. Ideally, each would be via the place (e.g. a specific café or shop), meeting or event so that there is some pre-existing common cause.

It could be developed as a “Staveley idea” with a recognisable name “By-my-sider? Journey sharer?” that can apply across networks; it might apply equally to walking to Warm Spaces meetings as taking children to cubs or to Spar to buy food.

This initiative might sit well within the structure of Warm Spaces, or the WI.

2. *Infrastructure improvements*

Description

The previous section (What – where? *Infrastructure*) identified locations for specific interventions.

Most of these are in the domain of Westmorland & Furness Council as the Highways Authority. The schemes listed here mainly fall into three categories:

- Initiatives that could be introduced into the WFC capital and other programmes – such as specific dropped kerbs, crossings or review of the extent of the 20mph limits
- Initiatives of which the WFC are aware so that they can be incorporated into design when other improvements or maintenance are being planned in the same place – such as road or pavement resurfacing.
- Significant infrastructure investment – such as shared space schemes. These would require deliberate staged action to develop, cost and source investment for schemes. We think the proposition of demonstrating what “civilised” highway design for a mid-21st century village such as Staveley could be the basis of inspiring best practice.

There might be three main pathways for delivery that are worth exploring:

- a. WFC identifying deliverable schemes on the list and scheduling them into their work programmes, such as streetscape around the school (SS2), dropped kerbs or pavement extensions
- b. WFC being aware of the community-desired interventions so that when other works are scheduled on the same parts of the highway, these are considered – and hopefully incorporated – into the works.
- c. Creating a coherent community-led project delivered via the WFC in the same way that other village schemes have been delivered. This would mean actively seeking out funding or putting packages of funding together for delivery for – for example – three linked “Village Squares” (SS3-5)

3. *Reserved car parking for people with mobility issues near to popular venues*

Description

Some respondents highlighted that a lack of parking for people with mobility issues near popular venues restricted their ability to use them. These include the Village Hall, Pavillion and Spar/Beehive.

A solution would be for the Parish Council, SVA and WFC to explore the possibility to marking disabled parking bays at these locations.

4. *Organised local lift giving*

This would make it easy for local people, groups and (for) events or meetings for people to offer and receive lifts.

It might involve

- the establishment of a flexible online service - such as a Staveley portal of Liftshare.com. The benefit of this is that it is a tried-and-tested system. The downside is the need for users to have access to – and be willing to use - the internet or app.
- A less formal approach to lift giving. This might involve nothing more than “Staveley lift sharers” idea and “branding” – so that it promotes the idea and raises awareness of sharing lifts and in doing so legitimises it. In raising awareness, the organisers of events or meetings would invite people to offer lifts or ask whether anyone would like a lift – and try to match people up.
- A hybrid version of the two: a Staveley Liftshare portal could be “curated” by event organisers to make the matching of life offerers and requesters easier.

5. *Venue improvements and event management*

Initiative	Problem alleviated	Lead
“Pay what you can”	Costs as a barrier to participation	Any event organiser – e.g. via SVA.
All meeting an event organisers to consider time of day / week for meetings/events	People not being able attend due to time of day e.g. dark evenings for meetings that might mainly involve retired people	SVA
Induction loops in all public venues	Off-putting for people with hearing difficulties	SVA (Village Hall, Pavillion), Church, Wilfs?
"Ramps not steps" campaign	Enable access by people with mobility needs and/or wheelchair & pushchair users	SVA to work with Action with Communities in Cumbria to audit VH and Pavillion for current accessibility best practice ⁴
Identify missing types or functionality of venues	Consider Staveley's venues from the point of view of current and potential demand instead of / as well as from the perspective of the existing stock. Is anyone / type of event or function currently excluded due to the type of venue? (open sided venue? Community space at Crookfield? Etc)	SVA

⁴ <https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/what-we-do/community-buildings>

6. *We need to talk about parking*

Car parking emerged as an issue via this study, but not in terms of it limiting people getting around the village; like the steps to the rail station, people used this study as an opportunity to repeat their concerns. Because of this, we raise the problem here but do not attempt to propose solutions.

Car parking in the village is a long-standing problem with no clear solution. The village wasn't built for the volume of current demand by cars, and the variety of demands (e.g. multiple car ownership in households with limited/no parking space, volume of people visiting e.g. for a walk/cycle, events, cafes or playground) mean simple solutions do not exist. Recent changes – such as resident's parking and charging for parking in the Mill Yard – solve some problems but generate others.

Because there is not an easy solution doesn't mean it shouldn't be discussed.

We propose that there needs to be a separate deliberate initiative that focusses on parking that involves:

- Understanding clearly the variety of the parking demands – residents, different types of visitors, deliveries; times of day / week / season & events; “hotspots” in the village; drop-off, short-term, long term/campervans, residents, businesses
- Clear acknowledgement of how car parking links to other problems (e.g. safe road crossings / site lines; safety issues of parking near places of demand (village centre, playground)), and opportunities (e.g. design of shared spaces)
- Identifying solutions for the different demands that fit the specifics of the village, looking at how these might work together (or not); consider sharing car parking (e.g. resident use of office car parks at night)
- Identifying ways of reducing car access demand: e.g. better promotion of bus & rail to regular visitors, rail/bus & ebike rental packages.