



CORNHILL SCHOOL SITE

Supporting Local Needs Information



Area Information

The village of Cornhill on Tweed and its outlying parish of farming based hamlets is part of the Norham and Islandshires Ward of Northumberland (the Ward does not include Berwick upon Tweed). At 2012 the population of this Ward was just under 4,300*. Cornhill Parish has approximately 290 properties, the majority of which are privately owned. The village itself has a settled population which is characterised by a much higher proportion of retired people and many fewer people under 24 than the general locality. Nestled in the beautiful tourist area of North Northumberland situated 1 mile from the England/Scottish border and the border town of Coldstream (population 1,930 in 2016)**. It is 15 miles east of Berwick (population 12,000)***, the largest English town in the area and the same distance north from the market town of Wooler (population 2,000)***. The largest Scottish town is Kelso (population 5,500)*** being some 10 miles to the east. A significant catchment area for any potential business opportunity.

Located on the busy A697, the main rural and tourist route from Newcastle to Edinburgh and gateway to the Scottish Borders. It attracts a significant amount of all year round passing traffic and tourism trade including world renowned fishing opportunities which would contribute to the potential footfall for future services offered at the old school site. The village is served by a highly regarded, award winning and well patronised village shop offering post office, internet, deli and café facilities (the hub of the community). It also boasts a long established 15 bedroom hotel (no leisure facilities), a boutique B&B, a popular village hall and a Grade II listed church.

Its public transport links are limited to a bus route that runs from Galashiels in the west to Berwick in the east, with approximately 6 services per day. There are no direct transport links from the village to Wooler and those hamlets to the south.

Social Background

The age demographic of the area is high, with a significant number of residents in Cornhill and its surrounding small villages and hamlets in the 50+ range (25% of the ward are aged 65 or over*), some living on low incomes and/or pensions with 15% of pensioners in the ward classed as in deprivation*. However, the age demographic is significantly younger in the nearest larger towns on both sides of the border surrounding Cornhill, all having primary and/or high schools.

Being a predominantly rural area, the ward and its nearest main towns do not attract large scale employment and as a result does little to attract young people and/or families from other parts of the county. Outside of Berwick, there is limited access to entertainment and leisure facilities and it is felt that priorities and funding are channelled towards the more densely populated region of south east Northumberland.

* stats taken from the 2015 Norham and Islandshires Public Health England report.

** based on National Records of Scotland and approx. value for 2016 calculated by City Population

***stats from Wikipedia

The Need

Our public consultation exercise identified both the desire and need by locals for more accessible health and well-being services at a reasonable cost. The Parish Council support this view and feel that provision of these types of services, specifically targeted to the surrounding population, within the existing Cornhill School site would satisfy a number of social and economic factors.

There is real opportunity for long term health improvement, increased activity rates across the population and the potential for more frequent social interaction for those who need it most. The resulting increase in footfall into the community will also have a financial benefit to existing businesses. It would also support the drive to reduce costs to the over-burdened NHS and promote greater emphasis on the public to look after their health and well-being. At 2011, 27% of the ward were classed as having either a long term illness or disability or in bad to very bad health*. Obesity rates were 28%. * However, in general, the ward fares either significantly better than or equal to the England average across the adult lifestyle and health care categories.

According to Sport England, for 2015/16, only 28% of adults across Northumberland surveyed in The Active People survey take part in 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport per week which is lower than the North East and England average. This is down from 36% in 09/10. And more worryingly, 56.5% of those surveyed in Northumberland did not partake in any sporting activity during a 28 a period.

(The Active People Survey is a national telephone survey about participation in sport and cultural activities. It collects data for every local authority in England, managed by Sport England in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Existing Health & Wellbeing Opportunities

Opportunities to undertake a more active lifestyle in and around the ward are hampered by a number of factors. Firstly the high age demographic and the elderly in rural communities often feel isolated, lonely and vulnerable (with 30% of pensioners living alone*). The Church, Parish Council and Village Hall Committee work together to offer interactive inter-community services to increase social interaction such as the WI, monthly soup and sandwich drop in (with transport if required), bingo, historical talks and quizzes. Exercise offerings at the Cornhill village hall are limited to a weekly carpet bowls session. Other village halls in the ward offer similar events.

The village and surrounding areas offer good walking and hiking facilities, however local and national funding to maintain footpaths and bridleways is limited and not all walkways are suitable for the elderly or infirm. This has not been lost on the Parish Council and we are actively engaged with Northumberland County Council to maintain and improve these routes. We are also heavily involved in developing and maintaining a pan-parish lower Tweed

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Trail which covers the 20 mile route from Berwick to Coldstream which is hoped will boost tourism to Cornhill and encourage locals and tourists alike to take more exercise. We have also lobbied our local MP to pledge greater funding to walking and cycling routes in the area.

Existing Health & Wellbeing style services

The nearest gyms are in Berwick and Kelso respectively.

The charity Active Northumberland run all of Northumberland's sports centres including the Swan Centre in Berwick. The complex offers swimming, gym and a range of standard fitness classes including a weekly yoga class. There are a range of membership plans including a pay as you go (PAYG) offering, flexi 3 month rolling contract, 12 month rolling contracts, 6 monthly and annual membership.

Cheapest monthly flexible contract for adults for access to gym, classes and pool at all NCC leisure centres is £32 on a 12 month rolling contract which increases to £40 if a 3 month rolling option is chosen. There are reduced rates for young people 14-21, those in receipt of benefit and mature students. PAYG classes are around the £5-£7 range.

There are 3 gyms based in Kelso:

Abbey Fitness Centre offers standard gym facilities, spinning and kettlecise classes and a sauna. Monthly fees are £36 with savings if you chose a 12 month contract. PAYG rates are £5 or £6 if you add the sauna option.

The Muscle Factory offers standard gym facilities and spinning classes only. Fees are £35 per month or £300 per annum.

Fitness Academy offers standard gym and boot camp style classes. Massages also. Membership fees are similar to the other two.

The Glendale Gateway Trust is a charitable community development trust based in Wooler and is based at the towns Cheviot Centre. The small centre has become a central community hub and houses a mixture of offices and community space for gatherings, events, conferences and workshops. It offers a range of exercise classes and typically a yoga class is around £7/£8 per session.

Berwick, Wooler, Coldstream and Kelso have a smattering of businesses offering well-being services such as yoga, physiotherapy, acupuncture, beautician and flotation therapy, but the majority are privately run and costly. Acupuncture services ranges from £28-£35 per session. Flotation £25. Physiotherapy £35-£40.

NHS Service Offerings

In relation to GP services, residents have the choice to register with one of a number of practices on either side of the border although the intricacies of NHS England vs NHS Scotland care provision can be complex. If you are registered with an English GP you are referred to South East Northumberland hospitals.

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***stats from Wikipedia

Scottish registered patients are referred to Borders General (Melrose). There have been instances in the past where the ambulance service will not cross the border.

The nearest non A&E English based hospital is located in Berwick whilst English GP registered residents would have to travel the 50 mile journey to Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care (NSEC) in Cramlington, SE Northumberland for emergencies and access to wider NHS facilities.

The nearest non A&E Scottish hospital is located in Kelso and Scottish registered residents travel the 30 mile journey to Borders General Hospital in Melrose for access to wider NHS facilities and commonly emergencies.

GP practices employ GPs, Nurses and Health Practitioners who alongside diagnosis and treatment of a whole spectrum of ailments and illnesses, provide general health and well-being advice to their patients. In Northumberland patients who need more specific health and wellbeing assistance can be referred to a Health Trainer. If necessary the Health Trainer can refer patients to Berwick or Alnwick sports centre to improve their overall fitness.

There are a lot of activities aimed at and available to the older generation. If social care problems are identified by a practice such as loneliness, the practice can put the patient in touch with local walking groups and a knit and natter group and make them aware of social activities available locally. Across the ward it has been recognised that there is a lack of services available to younger people.

Patients wishing to access Mental Health interventions (English side) can self-refer through their GP practice website and are directed to 'Talking Matters' Northumberland (based in Morpeth) which can offer group meetings (closest being in Alnwick 32miles away), web based or telephone assistance.

Coldstream Medical Practice (the designated and closest practice for Cornhill) has reported that adults with mental health issues are generally referred to the community hospital in Kelso but children are referred to the Andrew Lang Unit in Selkirk. For those persons registered from England, the option is to travel to Morpeth and engage with the Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership.

CONCLUSION

The following are facts taken from 'Northumberlands Vital Issues 2017' written by Communityfoundation.org.uk -

In rural Northumberland there are areas where the Living Environment Deprivation Index, Indoor Measure suggests there is a significant problem with 6 wards in the 10% most deprived in England: **Norham and Islandshires;** Humshaugh; South Tynedale; Haydon and Hadrian; Bamburgh and Bellingham. A further 6 include smaller areas (LSOAs) in the worst 10% nationally. It is significant that this measure identifies rural areas rather than urban for the

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quality of housing. The rural areas are generally less deprived than the urban areas for most other deprivation domains. This, together with the proximity of services and amenities are the main issues for countryside dwellers in Northumberland.

Access to services is an issue in rural areas of the County. This is captured by the IMD Geographical Barriers to Services data which shows that 7 of the 10 most deprived LSOAs in the country against this measure are in Northumberland.

Fuel poverty which is higher in the NE region at 13.3% of households, compared to 11% average across England¹¹. Rural areas of Northumberland that are “off mains” are likely to be more effected by this issue due to high fuel costs particularly as housing stock may be in worse condition.

Lifestyle, obesity and diabetes seem to be areas where action is definitely needed.

The participation of those over 16 in sport is declining. Nearly 1 in 5 children aged 10-11 is obese, whilst nearly 70% of adults are overweight or obese. Rates of diabetes are amongst the highest in the country.

Potential roles for philanthropy

Encouraging healthier lifestyles through providing opportunities to learn about healthy eating, take exercise or address harmful behaviours is an area where the local voluntary sector has established a good track record of achievement and could continue to be supported.

Support for services for those contemplating self-harm emerges as a clear priority. However the provision of opportunities to socialise and engage in purposeful activity, both for those with mental health issues and people at risk of social isolation, is another way that philanthropy can help address the needs of those at risk.

Funding that enables civil society organisations to continue to add value to the work of health and social care agencies may also be considered a priority.

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