

SAMLESBURY & CUERDALE



PARISH PLAN

2021

Cover Picture: The Thirlmere Pipe Bridge.

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INTRODUCTION

The Government encourages rural communities to become more involved in local decisions that affect everyone. The idea is that people have more say and more control over their own lives and their own localities.

The purpose of the Parish Plan is to investigate and discover what needs to be improved, and what the issues are that people feel strongly about, so that something can be done to address them, and interaction with the various agencies is made easier and more straight forward.

It is recommended that a Parish plan should be produced by the people, with the people, for the people, but the task of bringing the Parish Plan up-to-date was begun during the Covid-19 lockdown, so the pandemic caused us to take a different approach.



OVERVIEW

Samlesbury and Cuerdale form most of the green belt between Preston and Blackburn. Samlesbury's estimated acreage (including inland water) is 1754 hectares (4,386 statute acres). Cuerdale is estimated at 155 hectares (388 acres).

The civil and ecclesiastical boundaries of Samlesbury were identical until 1931, when the eastern civil boundary was moved westwards from Bosburn Brook to the centre of Branch Road. It now extends from there in a westerly direction, to the River Ribble at Ha'penny Bridge, a distance of approximately four miles. North to south the greatest distance (between the Ribble at Bezza and the Quaker Brook boundaries), is nearly three miles.

The Roman Catholic parish boundary includes Brockholes, but does not stretch as far south or east as the Anglican parish.



Preston New Road at the eastern end of the parish

Cuerdale lies to the west (see map on page 20), and was grouped with Samlesbury in 1966.

In addition to agriculture, horticulture and its related industries, there is Blackburn's Waste Water Treatment Plant, a brewery, an aerospace systems manufacturing industry, an evolving enterprise zone, some light industry, two hotels, two pubs, 3 business/trading centres, a farm shop and various places to eat. Creeping urbanisation has been the parish's greatest concern, but it is feared that rampant urbanisation and urban sprawl may well take root in the Parish.

The M6 motorway, A59 and A677 (ex-trunk roads) each traverse the parish, but despite this, there are still ancient woodlands and a pleasing variety of flora and fauna. The Ribble and Darwen are wild-life corridors which enhance the parish and there are also a number of designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Biological Heritage Sites and Lancashire Heritage Sites.

The social structure of the parish and farming practices have changed out of all recognition. Land from small farms has been assigned to larger ones to make viable businesses, and there are no longer any smaller farms for young people to rent. Many farmhouses have been sold off and some of the barns converted. Young people cannot now afford to buy a house in their own parish.

The Wesleyan Methodist chapel and Roman Catholic school are amongst those which have been converted into dwellings, but the Parish Church School is still open.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PAST

At the time of the Roman invasion (AD 43), Samlesbury and Cuerdale were in the Kingdom of Brigantia and in Saxon times it was part of the 'land between the Ribble and Mersey,' which was held by Edward the Confessor. Following the Norman invasion, William the Conqueror awarded the area to Roger de Poitou, but the latter rebelled and it was given to Ilbert de Lacy. By about 1180 the de Samlesbury family held the manor under their Norman overlords – the de Lacys.

Disturbed earthworks in Seed Park may be the remains of a Norman motte and bailey castle, but Cospatric de Samlesbury's manor house is believed to have been in the Lower Hall area, where the Ribble's horseshoe bend encloses the land on three sides. It is believed to have been the earliest settled land in Samlesbury.



Photo showing Samlesbury Lower Hall and the Grade I/2 Agricultural land within Horseshoe Bend.

The manor was divided into the Lower and Higher Hall estates in the 13th century. Elizabeth de Samlesbury held the Lower Hall moiety, (although the family is unlikely to have resided there), whereas her sister Cecily and her descendents lived at the Higher Hall for over 350 years.

Saint John Southworth (c1582-1654) was born into the Higher Hall manorial family. He was the last Secular priest to be executed for high treason, and the only one to be executed during the rule of Cromwell. His story is quite remarkable.

Jennet and Ellen Bierley and Jane Southworth, the '*famous witches of Samlesbury as the Country called them,*' were acquitted after trial at Lancaster Assizes in August 1612.

In August 1648 Cromwell defeated the Royalist forces at the Battle of Preston (Ribbleton Moor), and the 'bucketsfull' of musket balls found on the Samlesbury side of the Ribble suggest that the battle spilled across the river.

When the 'Cuerdale Hoard' (over $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt./40 kg. of hack silver and coins) was discovered on 15th May 1840, it was the largest Viking cache ever found in Western Europe.

Samlesbury War Memorial Hall on Cuerdale Lane was built in 1922/3 in memory of the Servicemen killed in WWI.

Samlesbury Aerodrome was originally planned as a civil airport for Preston and Blackburn, but the site was taken over by the Air Ministry at the beginning of WWII for the assembly of military aircraft. Today few people remember the important contribution which Samlesbury made to the war effort; yet approximately 1,100 personnel supplied the country with nearly 3000 medium and heavy bombers. There was also a prisoner-of-war camp on Whalley Road.

The estimated population of Samlesbury and Cuerdale in 2021 is 1,320 with the main centres of population lying in the Nab's Head and Branch Road/Mellor Brook areas. Small clusters also occur at Church Bottoms, Roach Bridge, and Turner Green.

There are 26 Grade II Listed Buildings in the parish, whilst St. Leonard's-the-Less Parish Church (c1186) and the Higher Hall (c1325), are the only Grade I buildings listed in South Ribble.

WORK / BUSINESS



Part of the enterprise zone on Samlesbury airfield, with one of the wartime sheds in the background centre right

More people travel into the parish to work, compared to the number of people who live here. For instance, according to 'Lancashire Local Industrial Strategy: Evidence Base 2019 – draft,' **BAE Systems** has 4,500+ employees.

In October 2021 news broke that National Cyber Force are expanding out of London and bringing thousands of workers onto the Enterprise Zone.



AB Inbev Brewery employs a total of 500 staff and a further 32 jobs are expected to be available when the planned extensions are completed.

Originally built by Whitbread's as 'the largest brewery in the world,' it was erected on protected 'white land.'

After a national outcry over the un-necessary destruction of good agricultural land, the parish was subsequently re-classified as green belt. (The objections to the development directly contributed to the setting up of the Government's new *Department of the Environment* in 1970.)

United Utilities (Blackburn waste water treatment plant) employs about 150 people.

We also have **Wilson's Agricultural Contractors** servicing the needs of the farming community. They have a fluctuating work force depending upon the seasons.

There are 15 separate businesses on the **Huntley's** site – namely, the *Food Hall, Bakery, Lou's Plaice, Sprinkles Ice Cream, Antiques, the Farmhouse Kitchen* (downstairs), *Lazio's Café* (upstairs), a *Butcher, the Beauty Shed*, (a holiday let), *Turtle B* (an eco shop), *John's Plants, Enoteca* (wines), *Mellor Dog School, Cored's Furniture, Tricia's Love Jewellery* (& clothes). In total there are 53 people employed there.

Samlesbury and **Roach Bridge Mills** are now split into units:

At Samlesbury Mill there is *T. Forrest & Sons Ltd.* pet food manufacturers, who employ approximately 22 people, depending on the seasons.

About ten years ago the company looked into utilizing water power from the crescent weir on the Darwen, but it proved to be too expensive. If government funding becomes available however, they would be keen to look at it again, and they would also welcome a bus service.



P.J. Fabrications and *Summit Engineering Ltd.* too, trade from the Bottoms, and employ several people.

Samlesbury Mill

At Roach Bridge there are light engineering companies and *Roach Bridge Tissues*, who are specialist printers and converters of fine quality tissue. Currently there are about 20 employees on site, but they are looking to increase the number.



Roach Bridge Mill

There are also other small businesses in the parish which give employment. Some of their workers live locally, whilst others travel in to work.

We know that the local planners have set out conditions as part of granting permission to BAE, the brewery and Roach Bridge Mill sites, to address the problems of transport to and from these places of work, and on the whole the Parish Council enjoys quite good relations with all the businesses mentioned.

Actions

To maintain dialogue with all the businesses in the area, in order to address any concerns and problems that may arise.

To remain vigilant and keep regular contact with the local authorities, to ensure the rural characteristics of the parishes are not compromised.

COUNTRYSIDE

Residents require the parish to retain its rural character. Although it is located between Preston and Blackburn, the area is more rural than is at first apparent. There are still eighteen working farms in Samlesbury and two in Cuerdale. Regular meetings of the *Young farmers* and *Lady Farmers* is confirmation of the ongoing contribution that farming makes to the local economy. Any future plans for the parish will need to seek to protect this aspect of local life.

The continuing agricultural activity means that the countryside is well maintained and most hedges are regularly cut and ditches cleared. Vegetation overgrowth on footways can perhaps be addressed by the Parish Council appointing a lengthsman.

The community has expressed an interest in better tree conservation, maintaining and protecting our ancient woodlands and green belt pasture lands, in order to conform with the Government's ambition to achieve net zero for carbon.



A number of trees will be planted for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

There is also some volunteer interest in helping to maintain the green public areas, and a Civic Society has been formed to enhance the ascetics of the area, by planting throughout the Parish.

From Stanley Coppice looking towards the industrial element of 'AB inbev' and 'Blackburn Waste Water' treatment plant.

If the rural nature of the parish is to be retained and enhanced then it is suggested that the Parish Council (in conjunction with the Borough and County Councils) should develop a Countryside Management Programme that public, private and voluntary sections of the community can implement.

The 2020/2021 pandemic taught us that during a monumental crisis the nation relies heavily on its 'green spaces.' Samlesbury's lanes and parks around the parish became a haven for people to escape and relax.

The *Space to Thrive* report highlights the benefits of green space on peoples' mental health – together with mild, moderate, and occasional extreme physical activity. It also gives people a chance to think and 'to be.'

With more people registered as suffering from anxiety, we feel it is imperative to enhance Nature, and retain and support our natural carbon recovery and green space.

The other major concern for parishioners is increased flooding. It is **vital** that the natural flood planes of both rivers are retained and in some cases, re-instated.



Looking over Cuerdale from Ha'penny Bridge on Boxing Day 2015



Looking over Cuerdale towards Mete House, Fishwick. (Taken from Cuerdale Lane in 2015.)

Actions

- Ask for the support of South Ribble Borough Council and Lancashire County Council in retaining the natural flood plains of the two rivers within the parish. It is estimated that there could be as much as 500 acres of Samlesbury, Cuerdale and the immediate surrounding areas under water in flood conditions – nearly a square mile. The proposed bunds around the proposed quarry would exacerbate the problem both up and down-stream.
- Develop a countryside management programme, in collaboration with the Borough Council.
- It must be emphasised that development in Samlesbury has *already* caused the loss of 15 lanes/footpaths.
- We need to continue encouraging moves towards net zero carbon, and keep our pastures free to feed the country and sink carbon, because it can be firmly argued that pasture land is the most efficient form of sequestration. The pastoral farms forming Samlesbury and Cuerdale's countryside therefore, are very important.



Looking across the Darwen Valley from the New Hall Tavern

- Seek to appoint a lengthsman and include contact information about fly-tipping in the Parish Council's newsletter.
- Persuade SRBC to clear footways and hedges which encroach on narrow footways, and/or interfere with sight-lines.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The parish has limited services and facilities. There are 2 public houses, the **Nabs Head** and the **New Hall Tavern**. Both serve food.



The New Hall Tavern



The Nab's Head

There are also 2 hotels, the **Mercure Five Barred Gate** and the **Tickled Trout**, three petrol stations and various food outlets.

The community also has the **War Memorial Hall** which has undergone a series of improvements over the last few years.

The present committee is looking at further development.



Samlesbury War Memorial Hall



Samlesbury Hall caters for weddings and other social events, as well as being a popular visitor attraction.

Samlesbury Higher Hall

There are two churches, the **Anglican Church** of St Leonard-the-Less and the **RC Chapel** of St Mary and St John Southworth.

The Anglican Parish is now part of the *United Benefice of Balderstone, Mellor and Samlesbury*.

Samlesbury's parishioners normally meet for worship at 11.00 am. on Sundays and people of other denominations are always welcome.

St. Leonard's-the-Less Parish Church



The Church seeks to serve residents with the various pastoral needs of their lives, be they joyful celebrations or serious anxieties and problems. For any enquiries, please contact 01254 814041, or www.achurchnearyou.com and click on the link below. (Leonard-the-Less, Samlesbury).

A bellringing team practices on Wednesday evenings and various social events are organised during the year which are held in the school, church or War Memorial Hall. These are largely viewed as parish events and involve the wider community. We also seek to support other groups in the parish and co-operate in developing community activities.

There are strong links with the school and there is a Service in Church each half term. *All Age Worship* is held once a month on Sundays and a *Junior Church* is being considered.

Samlesbury Church of England School (adjacent to the church) welcomes applications across the parish, and beyond if space permits. At present there are 73 children (20th Oct. 2021), together with 5 teachers, 4 assistants and 4 support staff.

The school has an in-house Breakfast Club and runs after-school care (Cool Kidz @ Samlesbury) in conjunction with Community Futures.

Since Covid-19 some lunch-time activities have been re-started and taekwondo is available. Other activities will resume when restrictions allow.

Outdoor provision for the infant class has been extended, a mini orchard planted, the pond area is to be re-developed and a mini bee colony is on a wish list for the future.

The daily bus service to outlying areas has now been reduced to one taxi.



Samlesbury Church of England School.

School has been working with building consultants and the Diocese to make significant improvements to insulation, lighting and heating systems. The latter is a result of the Government's de-carbonisation grant and is still ongoing.

The **Roman Catholic Chapel** no longer has a resident priest, but is served from St. Patrick's at Walton-le-Dale. Mass is held on Sunday mornings at 9.15 and post Covid will resume on Thursdays at 9.30.am..



Funerals, weddings and baptisms are celebrated by appointment on 01772 253709.

St. Mary and St. John Southworth R.C. Chapel

Groups wishing to visit the chapel and/or venerate the relic of St. John Southworth can do so by ringing the housekeeper, Maureen O'Hara, on 01772 877241. Social events are held in the church hall, eg. a Coffee Morning on the last Sunday of each month and occasional fund-raising events for St. Catherine's and Derian House hospices. Further information will be found on www.ourladyandstpatrick.org.uk

Social events in the parish are organised by the Churches or the War Memorial Hall committee and individuals, providing a wide range of events for all ages. Events in the Memorial Hall include quizzes, dances, performing arts evenings, etc., which are supported in varying degrees. Contact details can be found on Samlesbury War Memorial Hall website. (www.samlesburymemorialhall.co.uk).

Future Directions at Stanley Grange, Roach Road, is a care facility for people with learning disabilities. They have 42 residents at present (20th Oct. 2021), who are cared for by approximately 150 staff working on a shift system. The residents run a small plant centre, but they may also be looking to sell crafts in the future.

The **Travelling Library** was discontinued during the pandemic but is expected to recommence before 2022. There is also a good little library at Mellor which is used by a number of Samlesbury people.

The car is still the major form of **transport** to and from the area and public transport is little used. The problems come from the lack of information, as well as the frequency, and seem to be a barrier to its use.

There is a need to bring **health services** to the area as general practitioners and dentists are fairly difficult to access. The supply of services such as roadside care, snow clearing and general road/street maintenance also require attention.

Actions

- Continue to promote events and the usage of the Memorial Hall as a venue.
- Actively involve all members of the community in the organising of events.
- Maintenance of road side verges and footpaths for the safety of residents.
- The provision of recreational and play areas to be continued in conjunction with the appropriate authorities.
- Create a provision for a Post Office.



Nab's Head from Goosefoot Lane (1991)

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

People within the parish are realistic that small elements of development will inevitably take place, particularly if some additional employment is being created and some affordable housing is to be provided.



There is however, a very strong feeling that the 'green lung' quality of the area (located as it is between Preston and Blackburn) *must* be conserved and there should be no large scale new development of any kind, either industrial or housing.

Gypsy Lane, Cuerdale

So the parish plan should lead to a document which indicates areas where some individual or new 'conversion' housing might be accommodated. But it is suggested that 'affordable housing' should not be thought of as inferior quality. Discussions with the Borough Council should be initiated by the Parish Council about how some form of subsidy could be devised.

As indicated in the *Countryside* section, there is a very strong interest in the parish retaining its rural character and it needs to be remembered that after a 5-day public enquiry regarding planning permission for a brewery, the parish was given the assurance that the brewery was an exceptional development '**and an exception it would remain.**' The wider benefits of peoples' mental health and well being, through exercise and a positive appreciation of Nature, must be taken into consideration, because workers also exercise here in their lunchtime.

So the retention of the Green Belt between Preston and Blackburn in the future *Borough Council Development Framework*, and the integration of the aspirations of the community as expressed in this Parish Plan into that Framework, are therefore very important.

The plan envisages the Parish Council taking a pro-active role in this, securing its resources to do so through the precept and other income sources.

Actions

- Develop and design development guides in conjunction with South Ribble Borough Council.
- Liaise with the Borough Council on the Local Development Framework, in order to indicate where modest development might take place, reflecting the aspirations of the Parish Plan.

COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION

Communication delivers information to and from the community, and the parish plan tries to address this effectively.

Representation is the delivery of the wishes of the community taken to the relevant authorities.

The development of an action plan will show how these elements can be improved.

Actions

- Utilise the Parish Council Website.
- Verbal communication is a necessary part of the rural community, good for building relationships and community.
- Parish Council agendas are posted up for the meetings, and members of the public are encouraged to attend.



Ha'penny Bridge

ROAD SAFETY

There is a general level of concern about traffic safety, particularly on the A677 and the A59, but also on Cuerdale Lane and Nab's Head Lane. Traffic islands have been introduced on Preston New Road, but have had little effect.

Suggestions have included traffic-calming measures of various types, signage, and restrictions on large vehicles.

Average speed cameras and enforcement of the existing speed limits are essential.

Actions

- Maintain the dialogue with the local police regarding the use of the shared speed camera which has been purchased by the local authority.
- Discussion with Lancashire County Council, the Police and the Safety Partnership about traffic management on the major roads in the parish.
- Many concerns shown elsewhere in the Parish Plan – particularly highway issues – are the responsibility of Lancashire County Council. More effective and urgent responses are sought by the parish.



Alum Scar Bridge on the old road from Blackburn to Samlesbury. (Courtesy of L.C.C.)

SECURITY AND PERSONAL SAFETY

Our local **Police Officer** is now Angela Atkinson, (No. PS 2812), who is based at Leyland Police Station, Tel. 01772 614444, e-mail 2812@lancashire.police.uk The parish is rural and fragmented and there is some **wildlife crime**. For **Rural Crime** telephone 101.

The parish is well-served by motorway and main road networks and the most common crime in the parish is currently theft from motor vehicles. Crime hot spots are periodic and generally localised to hotel car parks and petrol filling stations. Levels of disorder and anti-social behaviour are very low.

The crime figures are generally below the national average, although there is the occasional low incident level of crime committed by people from outside the area.

Operational policing of the parish is supported by CID teams and an Intelligence Unit based at Leyland.

At **divisional level** there is support from the Automatic Number Plate Recognition team (ANPR), Road Policing Unit (Traffic), Support Units (Riot Vans) and a Financial Investigation Unit.

Force level has the support of the Accident Investigation Unit, Mounted Branch, Dog Section, Air Support Unit (Helicopter), Wildlife Liaison and Major Crime Units.

The **Motorway Policing Unit** for Lancashire is based within the parish at the Samlesbury motorway post.

PACT is community consultation that takes place during the first week of each month in the eastern parish's area. The issues raised are considered by a panel of people from the community and three policing priorities are set. The community consultation usually takes the form of a public meeting, surgery or survey.

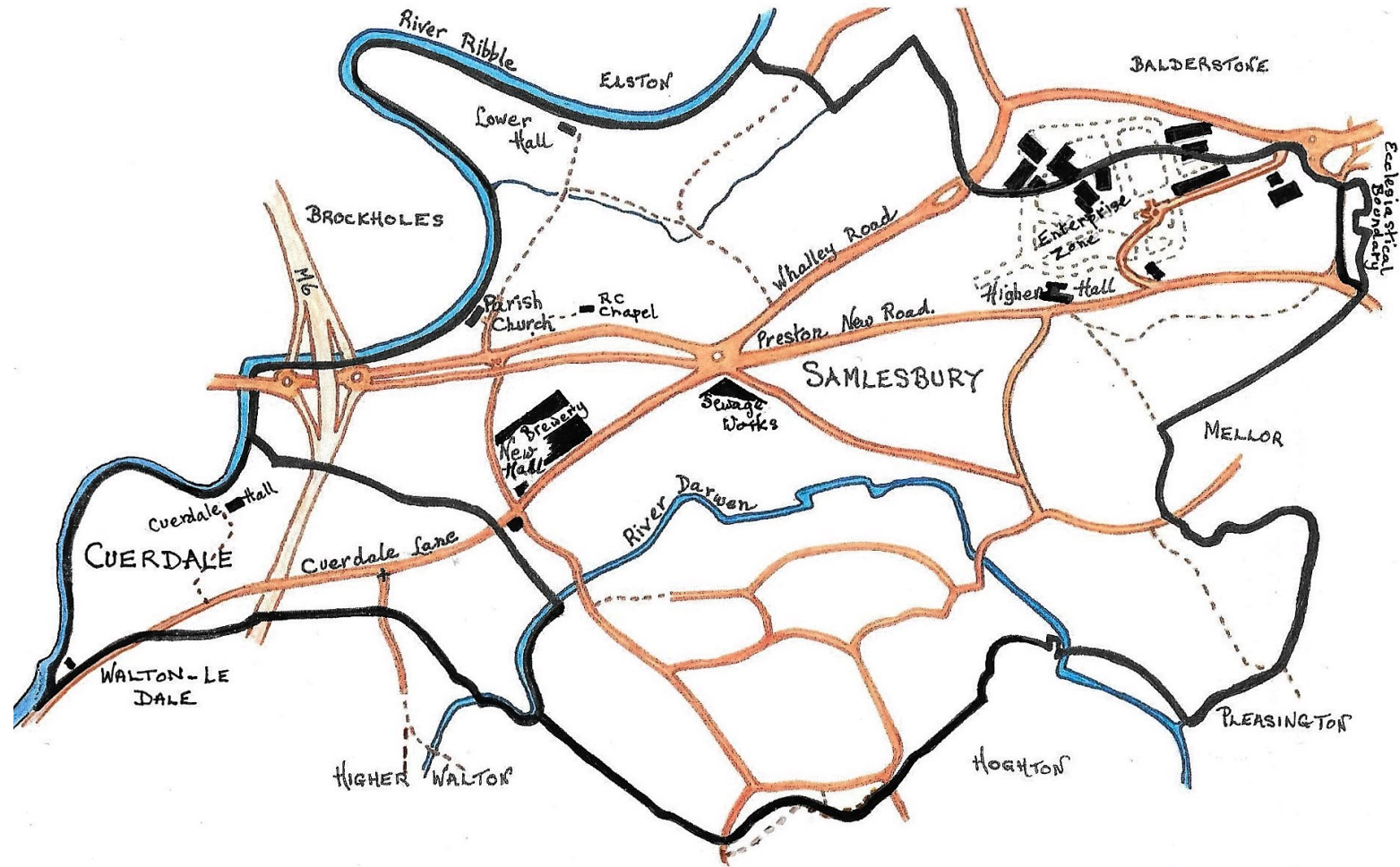
Actions

- The Parish Council will ensure that a Community Beat Manager maintains a regular visible presence in Samlesbury and Cuerdale.
- The Community beat manager will be asked to attend Parish Council meetings whenever possible in order to engage with the community.
- The Community beat manager will display contact details of the neighbourhood policing team on community notice boards. This will promote details about the local police and contact details for residents. The notice will include PACT, website details and details of when the next area PACT meeting will be.
- The Community Police Officers are keen to extend an initiative called KINs (Key Individual Networks). This is a system of distributing crime and crime prevention information via e-mail to people within the parish. This system has prevented crime and led to criminals being arrested in neighbouring parishes. Anyone wishing to receive police bulletins and are willing to distribute such information into the community should contact a local officer: Details above.

SUMMARY OF ASPIRATIONS

- Application of the Localism Act in relevant planning procedures:
- Preservation of the Green Belt and pastoral nature of the Samlesbury countryside:
- Preservation of the Samlesbury and Cuerdale flood plains:
- Preservation of the wildlife corridors:
- Preservation of the biological heritage sites:
- Preservation of the geological heritage sites:
- Preservation of the SSSI's:
- Re-instate a bus service:
- Renovation of the Playing Field on Nab Lane.





Samlesbury and Cuerdale 2021: (not to scale).



THE CRESCENT WEIR AT SAMLESBURY BOTTOMS