The Great Wyre Jigsaw project took place during summer 2006 and was part of the plan for delivering better public services across Wyre. It was set up by Wyre Borough Council and Wyre Local Strategic Partnership and aimed to find out how people feel about living in the Borough.

The Great Wyre Jigsaw is one of the largest community consultations ever carried out in Wyre: 2,000 people took part in the project and told us what’s special about living in Wyre, what should be preserved or looked after to keep the character of the area and what, if anything, would make Wyre a better place to live. This information will be used to shape our community plan for the area and to help public bodies plan services that are more in line with local people’s needs.

639 people living in Rural East gave their views and this booklet shows what they said.
The aim of the project was to find out how people feel about living in Wyre and focussed on four key questions:

- **What’s great about living in Wyre?**
- **What are the main problems about life in Wyre that you and your friends talk about?**
- **What, if anything, would improve Wyre as a place to live?**
- **To keep Wyre special, what needs to be preserved or looked after?**

The project set out to gather the views of 2,000 people and to consult with people in each of the six regional forum areas: **Cleveleys; Fleetwood; Poulton; Rural East** (the area which includes Garstang, Scorton and Great Eccleston); **Rural West** (the area which includes Knott End, Preesall and Stalmine) and **Thornton**.
The consultation was carried out by Pathways Consultancy from Manchester. The Pathways team worked at key community venues such as libraries; attended village fêtes, festivals and countryside events; and spent time ‘on the streets’ talking to people. Pathways also carried out 10 one-to-one interviews or meetings with key workers representing specific interest groups in Wyre. **2,136 people gave their views this way.**

In addition, 1,100 postal questionnaires were posted out by Wyre Borough Council: **200 people gave their views this way.**

The results have been analysed and written up by Pathways. The quotes used in this booklet were given during the consultation and have not been altered in any way.

Pathways devises and runs research, consultation and evaluation projects.

To contact us please call **0161 273 8235**
or visit our website: **www.pathwaysconsultancy.co.uk**
or alternatively email: **projects@pathwaysconsultancy.co.uk**
In Rural East people told us that living in a rural area is especially important to them.

65% of the people we interviewed told us that they valued living in a beautiful rural area that was largely unspoilt. They like the variety of scenery from the coast to the fells, the small country towns and the pretty villages. People like the big open spaces in the east of Wyre and they appreciate being able to access some “great walks” on the footpath network.

37% of people told us that the area has a strong sense of community and they appreciate this. Some people told us their families have lived in the area for many years; others told us about the friendly people and everyone knowing everyone – both in Garstang and in the small villages. It is a place where people can walk down the street and people say hello. People told us that there is a lot going on and lots of opportunities to be active in the community.

36% of people told us that they value the local facilities and services and told us about small country schools which “seem to do well for the children”; good sports facilities – leisure centre, bowling green, swimming pool; lots going on in the villages – festivals, Mothers Union, Women’s Institute and active churches; and the good shopping that is available locally.
What’s special about Wyre and the Rural East area?

People walk down the street and wave and shout at each other. The newspaper headlines are about cars being stolen. If that’s all we’ve got here, then we’re okay...

What’s great about living in Wyre and the Rural East area

- **Number of people**
  - 415
  - 235
  - 227
  - 143
  - 97
  - 63
  - 45
  - 44
  - 11
  - 8
  - 5

- **Rural area**
- **Strong community**
- **Good local facilities & services**
- **Peaceful, quiet village feel**
- **Accessible to other places**
- **Good local transport systems**
- **Feels safe**
- **Civic pride**
- **Council do a good job**
- **Local economy doing well**
- **A sense of heritage**
Five main issues were raised by people during the consultation and these were:

- Problems with traffic, parking and poor public transport
- Feeling unsafe, crime and vandalism
- Overdevelopment
- Poor local services and facilities
- Disappointment with the Council

1. Problems with traffic, parking and poor public transport

*The top issue – 48% of people raised it.* People told us about the lack of public transport in rural areas – “you need a car, otherwise you can’t get around”; about changes to the Garstang Super 8 bus service and places being taken off the route; expensive bus fares; the lack of bus services to the new Health Centre in Garstang; how much they miss transport to trains. On rural roads people told us that speeding is a problem; there are no pavements or footpaths on busy lanes; there are too many lorries on rural roads and not enough grit on the roads in winter (especially in Barnacre and Scorton). In Garstang people told us there is not enough parking – especially on market days; the cost of parking is high and there is not enough parking for residents.
2. Feeling unsafe, crime and vandalism

*This is a concern for 21% of people.* Some people told us that they see very few policeman around and that the police “aren’t bothered”; others told us about growing vandalism – windows smashed, flower displays damaged; and about problems with litter and fly tipping.

3. Overdevelopment

*An issue for 20% of people who are concerned at the overdevelopment of Garstang.* They told us that too many houses are being built; some are concerned that new houses are in inappropriate designs; others want housing development to be carefully considered and question whether services and infrastructure can cope.

4. Poor local facilities and services

*An issue for 19% of people, who told us about facilities closing* such as post offices and banks; the doctor’s surgery in Garstang moving without consultation; the lack of a cinema or theatre; and problems with refuse and recycling collection.

5. Disappointment with the Council

*This is a concern for 17% of people,* who told us that Wyre Borough Council feels remote; that their local knowledge and opinion was ignored by the Council; and that it was hard to get in contact with the Council.
The people we interviewed in Rural East are particularly concerned about the level of development going on in their area and are concerned that it is affecting their local environment and the rural character of the area.

44% of people told us that this was important to them and some of the things they want to see happen to help keep the character of the area are:

- Keep the small-town feel of Garstang and the character of its centre
- Restrict infill in villages
- Sympathetic planning to retain the character of the area
- Local materials for new buildings in rural areas
- Include trees in developments
- New buildings should blend in – three-storey town houses are not in keeping in the countryside
- Don’t convert all historic farm buildings
- Protect the green belt between Garstang and Preston against housing “creep”

31% of people told us that keeping the rural nature of the area is important. As well as opposing overdevelopment, they also want to see well-kept parks; protection of the footpath network; and maintenance of the canal and canal side walks in Garstang.
What needs to be preserved or looked after?

29% of people told us that they want the historical character of the area to be preserved; old buildings in Garstang should be protected and given a new lease of life.

You need housing, but it’s just everywhere you look.

It’s not an improvement to knock old stuff down and replace it with new stuff.

What needs to be preserved or looked after?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curb development &amp; protect local environment</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area’s rural nature</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area’s historical character</td>
<td>176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local services &amp; facilities</td>
<td>168</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>117</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local economy</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality public space and street scene</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Better traffic management and public transport**

*The top issue – 35% of people raised it.* Their ideas included free parking in Garstang to boost the local economy; better public transport to rural areas and smaller villages; Garstang railway station to be opened and service to Preston re-opened; lower speed limits on rural lanes; more passing places on some lanes and weight restrictions on some lanes to cut down the volume of heavy vehicles.

**Improve local facilities and services**

*A concern for 26% of people:* their ideas for improvement included having farmers’ markets and opening more farm shops; supporting traditional shops; developing the arts in Garstang; more festivals in villages; a theatre; a venue for concerts; a community centre; a day centre for older people; investing more in Countryside Services; more public footpaths; a bigger and more modern swimming pool; and transport to community events.

**Improve the street scene and increase civic pride**

*An issue for 14% of people, who want to see the Fair Trade Town status of Garstang promoted more:* hedges on narrow country lanes cut back regularly; the appointment of a lengthsman to cut the roadside grass and clean out dykes; and the collection of litter, particularly on the sides of roads.
Provide more things for young people to do

An issue for 14% of people. However, people could not give us many ideas about the kind of facilities or activities they would like to see – ideas put forward were to open up village halls to youth groups; develop the site of the old surgery and clinic into a centre for young people; and a go-karting track.

Improve community safety

13% of people raised this as an issue: their ideas included advertising local police station numbers; more police patrols in village areas; and visible community policing (with police on foot or on bikes).

Improve the Council’s performance

An issue for 11% of people, who suggested bringing the Council offices back to Garstang; returning the administration of some Council services to small towns; ensuring that rural areas to the east of the M6 are kept in touch with Council activities; and more consultation with local people.

People believe that all the money is spent in the west (of the Borough)
This booklet, together with information from the other five areas of Wyre, will be used to produce a spatial portrait of the Borough. The portrait will then become part of the land use plan for the Wyre – the Local Development Framework.

The information will also be used to help develop a ‘vision’ for Wyre. This is a collective view of how we all want the Borough to be in the future. This vision will set the direction and agenda for all service organisations in the Borough and therefore needs to be based on community need as recognised and agreed by all agencies. The Great Wyre Jigsaw is the first step in the process of achieving a vision for Wyre.

What you can do now:

You can find out what people from the other areas of Wyre told us by reading the booklets for those areas.

You can get copies from Wyre Borough Council • Telephone 01253 891000

The results of this exercise will also be discussed at the Area Forum taking place in your area. Area Forums now meet in each area of the Borough to discuss issues of concern to local people and to ensure a response. For more details of the area forum in your area, contact:

Donna Midgley-Davies on 01253 891000

or email dmidgley-davies@wyrebc.gov.uk