



Parish Profile: Ousby



Ousby is a small rural community of 210 registered electors located on the East Fellside, some 10 miles from Penrith in the beautiful Eden valley of Cumbria. The village consists of a string of hamlets (Ousby Moor, Crewgarth, Shire, Bradley, Hole, Row, Fellside and Townhead) separated by green spaces and sits in the path of the Helm wind.

The village has a pub (Fox Inn), a community centre, a part-time community post office, a village green with children's play equipment, a public garden (Ruh Head Close) and a church (St Luke's). There is no shop for newspapers or sundry groceries but the 'Fellrunner' community bus connects residents to our local town on three days each week. Our nearest railway station is three and half miles away at Langwathby, where passengers can catch trains to Leeds or Carlisle.

Village housing is a mixture of older sandstone properties, farms, new estate houses, modern bungalows and social housing. The older sandstone homes are difficult and expensive to heat.

Ousby is a working village with an agricultural-based economy, plus some tourism through holiday homes and a caravan park. The last village appraisal revealed that 30% of working residents are employed in Ousby, 27% employed in Penrith and 6% in Carlisle, with 68% of them dependent on their own vehicle for travel to work due to lack of public transport. The rising cost of petrol is hitting hard on the pockets of those residents who work outside the village.

Community governance review

In 2017, Ousby ward councillors requested a community governance review to ensure that the specific needs of the residents of Ousby could be addressed in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner. The old Ousby Parish Council was dissolved on 31 March 2019 in line with a structural change order issued by Eden District Council, allowing the two former wards of Ousby and Melmerby, with electorate support, to go their separate ways.

The new Ousby Parish Council was constituted on 1 April 2019. It is unwarded and comprises 5 councillors, supported by an experienced CiLCA qualified clerk.

As residents cautiously emerge into the post-pandemic world, Ousby Parish Council is about to revisit its village appraisal to inform a new community plan, where our general power of competence will be harnessed for the benefit of the rural community we proudly serve.

A 'Doubly Thankful' village

There were twelve men who left Ousby between 1914 and 1918 to fight in World War I. The number of men and youths who died during World War I was devastating. The shocking horror of that war touched every corner of the United Kingdom. It brought death to every city, town and village - except for fifty two. In fifty two communities, one of which was Ousby, all of the men and boys who marched off to war returned alive.

Then another war engulfed Europe and the world. There were twelve men and one woman who left Ousby between 1939 and 1945 in World War II. Incredibly, all thirteen people who left Ousby to serve their king and country in World War II also came home safely.

In the 1930s, the term "Thankful Villages" was first used by the British writer and journalist Arthur Mee in his book 'King's England, a guide to the counties of England'. A "Thankful Village" was said to be one which lost no men or youths in the Great War. It was also noted that these villages had no war memorials, although some had monuments, usually in the church, in gratitude for their good fortune. Ousby is a "Thankful Village".

At the end of World War II, only fourteen of those fifty two "Thankful Villages" remained free from wartime fatalities. These became known as the "Doubly Thankful Villages". Ousby is one of those few "Doubly Thankful Villages" in the United Kingdom.

It is the only known community in Cumbria that can make this claim, giving our village a unique local status.

Ousby parish council replaced the existing three 'Ousby' road signs with ones which read 'A doubly thankful village' to record the unique status of our community in Cumbria, build civic pride and maximise the opportunity of the 2019/20 D-Day 75 and VE Day commemorations to raise the profile of our fellside community.



Serving the community

Ousby's residents have a strong sense of place – they value and love where they live.

Ousby parish council acts on the community's needs and aspirations to protect the things that make this neighbourhood special, deliver value-for-money quality local services and help this fellside community develop in a sustainable way.

Ousby parish councillors intend to fully engage with the new unitary authority to ensure the wishes of our rural community are on the radar and can be accommodated in future local authority plans that affect our area.