

## 4 - Parish Plans

Parish Plans originated from the Government's "Rural White Paper" published in November 2000 entitled "**Our Countryside : The Future - A fair deal for rural England**". The white paper launched the concept which was developed by the Countryside Agency within the "Vital Villages" scheme, offering a range of grants and advice to help rural communities take action for themselves on issues like transport and community activities. The purpose of Parish Plans is to set out a vision of what is important, how new development can best be fitted in, the design and quality standards it should meet, how to preserve valued local features and to map out the facilities which the community needs to safeguard for the future. Plans should indicate how they would like their town or village to develop, identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how its distinctive character and features can be preserved.

### **A Parish Plan for Barwick in Elmet & Scholes**

Whilst there was no obligation on anyone to produce a Parish Plan there is always political pressure to continually consult with the community about current local issues and therefore the Barwick in Elmet & Scholes Parish Council decided to take up this challenge. The Parish is unusual in that it is divided into two separate Wards—one for Scholes with an electorate of 1,964 and the other for Barwick with 2,146 voters. The villages are entirely different in character although the population and housing stock are much the same. The village characteristics result from their differing historical backgrounds. Scholes developed from early 19C farm workers accommodation in a rural situation to a Leeds satellite commuter village in the 1960's. Barwick lies two miles to the east and the centre of the village is a Conservation Area which includes the Parish Church, many other old buildings and the famous Maypole. There are also sites of historical importance, not at present well protected and in need of careful planning for their safe keeping. Both villages are surrounded by farmed Green Belt land and this continues to be under threat of development. The expressed needs of residents in both villages have, in the past, proved to be very similar.



The modern maypole raising in 2005



Scholes Lane approach to the village

Issues such as Green Belt protection, care and improvement of the environment, inappropriate "brownfield" housing developments, better policing to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, better public transport links, provision of facilities for young persons, support to local sports clubs and other village organisations are continually raised. In February 2004 it was therefore resolved to formulate a Parish Plan and an application was submitted for funding to the Countryside Agency resulting in a grant of £1,700 half of which was to be paid immediately and the balance upon completion of the Plan. A flyer was initially

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