

Section 3: A brief Introduction to the Parish

The Parish Past¹

1. Archaeological findings indicate the presence of both Stone Age and Bronze Age settlements within the parish, whilst the discovery of the body of a Centurion at Tom Corner in Dallowgill also suggests that there was activity in the area during the time of the Roman occupation.
2. The name Kirkby Malzeard (meaning the 'church by the poor clearing in the forest') has Danish and Norman origins and the village was referred to in the Domesday book with '8 villagers having a plough' at that time. St Andrews Church in Kirkby Malzeard originates from 1150 and is positioned close to the site of Mowbray Castle, which was destroyed by King Henry II in 1174.
3. Kirkby Malzeard was granted a Market Charter by King Edward I in 1307 and it became a locally important Township during the Middle Ages. There is still evidence of the medieval layout of the village, with the main village street running off to the west from the crossroads where the Market Cross is situated, with tofts and crofts behind the Back Lanes.
4. Dallowgill takes its name from the old English Dael (meaning valley) and haga (meaning enclosure) with Gill (meaning ravine) added later. Laverton was previously referred to as variously as Layreton or Lavertona. Carlesmoor, Swetton and Laverton are all mentioned in the Domesday book although the land was largely described as 'waste land'. By the 15th century, much of the area was controlled by Fountains Abbey and the Monks had a farm at Azerley Grange providing produce for the Abbey. Parliamentary enclosure in the 1780s was largely responsible for the current field pattern.
5. In more recent times populations in the rural areas as well as in the villages and hamlets throughout the parish have fluctuated, reflecting changes in agricultural practices and the rise and decline of different trades. During the first half of the 19th Century, the area was one of the most important centres of straw plaiting and bonnet making in England and there were numerous small shops and businesses not only in Kirkby Malzeard but even in hamlets such as Greygarth.

¹ Sources include Kirkby Malzeard 1850 to the Present Day – Ian Corfield (published 2012); Dallowgill – Lilian Chandler (published 1991); Laverton and Dallowgill – Lilian Chandler (published 1994); Dallowgill Local History website <https://www.dallowgill.org.uk/> and Kirkby Malzeard, Laverton and Dallowgill History Facebook page.

6. Since the mid-20th century, there has been a transition away from agriculture towards tourism as the predominant source of income, with many residents living in the parish but working elsewhere in the larger centres of North Yorkshire. Undoubtedly there will be changes again in the future and it is hoped that the Plan will help the area to adapt in a positive way.

The Parish Present

7. The parish is an attractive, rural and historic parish in North Yorkshire
8. It is a popular place to live, as reflected in the buoyant housing market, with a strong sense of identity and community spirit.
9. It comprises several distinct historic settlements, the largest of which is Kirkby Malzeard, in which most of its population and services are concentrated. Other smaller settlements include the village of Laverton as well as the hamlets of Dallow, Carlsmoor, Swetton and Greygarth.
10. These settlements are interspersed and surrounded by large areas of open, attractive and largely unspoilt open countryside.
11. The beauty and quality of this landscape are reflected in that the whole of the parish is within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
12. Extending over 4,852 hectares², it is mainly rural and open in nature. At 0.25 persons per hectare, its population density is well below the Harrogate district³ (1.25), Yorkshire and Humber (3.56) and England (4.34) averages. Farming and agriculture played an important role in the development of the parish and continue to be the main land uses.
13. In 2021, the Census indicated that it had a population of 1,206 (up from 1147 at the time of the 2011 census). Reflecting the national trend, it has an ageing population. At 29.2%, the proportion of the population aged over 65 was above the Harrogate district (23.4%), Yorkshire and Humber (19.0%) and England (18.6%) averages.
14. For a parish of its size and nature, there is an excellent range of community and service facilities. Mainly concentrated in Kirkby Malzeard, these include a church, a primary school, medical centre, pub, shops, a village hall and a range of other facilities. Residents also travel outside the parish mainly to the nearby centres of Ripon and Harrogate, to access retail, community and other services,

² Source 2021 Census. All statistics quotes in this section are from the 2021 Census unless stated otherwise.

³ Former Harrogate Borough Council area.

15. There are some employment opportunities in the parish, but the majority of those in employment travel outside of the parish to work. The proportion of the population that holds a higher-level qualification at 39.5% is similar to the Harrogate district (39.9%), but above the Yorkshire and Humber (29.5%) and England (33.9%) averages.
16. There appears to have been a dramatic increase in people working mainly from home at the time of the 2021 census in comparison to information at the time of the 2011 census. The proportion of working-age residents who stated that they work mainly at home was 33.9% whereas in 2011 it was only 10.1%. This data must however be seen against the backdrop of the Covid pandemic and the impact of Government advice to 'work at home' if practical. The comparable 2021 figures for Yorkshire and Humberside (25.9%), Harrogate district (35.4%) and the England average (31.5%) have also shown similar marked increases.
17. Levels of deprivation are relatively low⁴, as are the rates of ill-health.
18. Housing affordability, both for sale and rent, is a significant issue in the parish. Only 7.1% of residents live in 'social rented' accommodation which is lower than the Harrogate district (9.9%), Yorkshire and Humber Region (17.3%) and England (17.1%) averages. There was a 0.0% return in the 2021 census within Laverton Parish as there is no social housing provision within this part of the overall grouped parish.
19. The built environment is generally very good. There are numerous buildings and structures that have been identified as being of national and historic interest, including over 25 Listed Buildings and 2 Scheduled Monuments⁵.
20. Most people living in the parish use a car. 93.4% of households have access to a vehicle, compared to 85.3% in Harrogate district, 75.8% in Yorkshire and Humber and 76.5% in England. There is limited public transport provision.
21. A more detailed statistical profile of the parish from the 2021 Census can be found at the websites of the Office of National Statistics⁶ and City Population.⁷

⁴ English indices of deprivation 2019- GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

⁵ Source English Heritage (2021)

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

⁷ <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/>