

KEMERTON PARISH PLAN: AN UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

Earlier this year, thanks to the hard work of the steering committee, a Parish Plan was drafted outlining the community's vision for the future. Many of you contributed to this process by completing questionnaires and attending the consultation event at the Victoria Hall back in March. The Parish Council submitted the draft plan to Wychavon for adoption in July, and Wychavon is due complete the adoption process by January next year. Under the plan, the Parish Council undertook to carry out certain tasks. We have detailed these below, along with an update on our progress to date.

- **Seek volunteers to run a transport network.**

A voluntary service providing transport for medical appointments, shopping, and social activities is maintained by Tewkesbury Borough Community Transport (01684 297 209). A car sharing scheme is run by the County Council (to register contact carshare@worcestershire.gov.uk or call 01905 766841).

- **Appoint a police and Neighbourhood Watch coordinator.**

We are still seeking a volunteer. Anyone interested, please contact Jackie, our Parish Clerk (see overleaf).

- **Review the number and siting of dog litter bins.**

The subsidised scheme has been cut, and more bins cannot be provided within our current budget. The two existing bins in Bayliss Road and Job's Lane will still be emptied. We will keep this under review.

- **Arrange regular meetings with the Community Support Officer.**

The police already attend the Annual Parish Meeting in March to answer questions from residents. Further attendance at PC meetings can be arranged by our Parish Clerk on request.

- **Investigate the feasibility of providing children's playground, playing field and allotments.**

The PC has considered these questions in depth. The key issue is that grant funding is very scarce in the current financial climate. Residents will have to raise much of the money themselves for leasing land, construction, equipment purchase & ongoing management. While many people favour these facilities, it is not clear if they would be prepared to bear the costs either privately or via the parish precept. The PC needs volunteers to research this further. Please contact our Parish Clerk if you are prepared to be involved.

- **Produce a map of the village showing footpaths and items of interest.**

We have underwritten the new stock of OS Pathfinder (1:25,000) maps and Guides to Bredon Hill Walks, available for purchase at Kemerton Stores.

- **Encourage residents to complain to power companies about frequent failures, and to Internet Service Providers about low broadband speeds.**

It is important for residents to contact suppliers. Please copy your letters to our Clerk so that we can build an evidence base for future action. Please tell BT you want faster broadband at www.racetoinfinity.bt.com.

- **Seek to reclassify Kemerton as a Category 3 settlement in the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy.**

Efforts have been successful so far. Kemerton has changed from Category 2 to 3 in the JCS & new SWDP.

- **Initiate a Village Design Statement.**

This is being undertaken (please see overleaf).

- **Find a volunteer to set up a village website.**

The PC website has been set up at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish (select Kemerton). All minutes and PC information are posted here. Please contact our Clerk to place an item on the 'notice board' section.

- **Relocate the village notice board from outside Victoria Hall.**

The PC has considered various locations. A possibility is the verge next to the bus shelter, though some feel the current location is more prominent. We welcome your feedback.

- **Parish Councillors should publicise more broadly their plans and activities.**

We urge people to attend meetings and read our minutes in the Parish Magazine or on the website.

- **Vacancies on the Parish Council should be widely publicised.**

Casual vacancies will be publicised on our website, on notice boards and in the shop. Wychavon is responsible for managing the PC elections in May 2011, which will be widely publicised nearer the time.

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Local planning is going through the biggest shake-up in more than forty years. The coalition government has announced the scrapping of *Regional Spatial Strategies*, which previously set high numbers for new housing in South Worcestershire. It has also announced that more power should be given to communities to decide their own future. However, what this means in practice is far from clear and future local housing requirements are not yet known. The **South Worcestershire Development Plan** (a rebranded version of the Joint Core Strategy) aims to provide the missing detail, and policy makers have begun deciding big questions like how many houses will be built in Wychavon, Malvern Hills and Worcester City, and what proportion of them will be located in villages as opposed to the more sustainable urban areas.

The Village Design Statement (VDS) gives residents the opportunity to combine their voices in order to have a stronger say in shaping the future of the built environment. It does this in two ways:

- It provides analysis and guidance to planning authorities for use in preparing new policies. This is crucial, as we know from past experience that once policies have been decided residents only have a marginal say in how and where development takes place.
- Once policy has been set, the VDS provides detailed guidance as to how to make new development fit better with residents' own aspirations for the village.

The VDS is being drafted jointly by the Parish Council and a committee of volunteers. For it to be successful it is vital that it reflects the views of the community as a whole. To this end it has drawn on four separate consultative exercises - the questionnaire supporting the Parish Plan; the village petition relating to the Joint Core Strategy; the Village Design Questionnaire and the consultation event at Victoria Hall. From these consultations, very strong consensus has emerged on a number of key issues, including:

- Kemerton is not a sustainable location for significant quantities of new housing.
- Kemerton boasts an exceptional built heritage, with 41 listed buildings and two thirds of its buildings dating from before 1850. This special interest must be preserved.
- The village is located in one of the UK's most well-known and valuable protected landscapes, the Cotswolds AONB. This importance must be safeguarded.
- The surroundings are nationally important for wildlife. Parts of the parish are designated Special Area of Conservation (the EU's highest wildlife designation). The wildlife value of the parish needs to be protected.
- In order to safeguard the special character of the village, new development should not take place in gardens or farmland, or where it would impact key views. Previously developed sites are the most acceptable locations.
- New development must enhance and not detract from the special character of the village, and should predominantly make use of traditional forms and materials.
- Affordable housing should be aimed at meeting local need and reserved for people with strong connections to the village.

These points have been drawn together in the draft VDS, and are supported by detailed evidence and analysis. Please let us know if you agree that these are the right priorities. The VDS makes a number of other related points which cannot be summarised in this limited space. Please also try and look at the complete Draft VDS online at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish (select Kemerton, and then look for the 'Parish Plan' link). NB, illustrations have not yet been included. For those without internet access, please contact the Parish Clerk for a paper copy. In order to ensure that feedback is balanced, please tell us whether and how you agree with the VDS, rather than limiting your comments to any improvements that may be needed. Please send all your comments in writing to the Parish Clerk:

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