

## **A Neighbourhood Plan for Wyeside Group Parishes**

(Blakemere, Bredwardine, Moccas, Preston-on-Wye and Tyberton)

Most people regard our five parishes along the Wye Valley as rural communities in beautiful countryside where time seems to stand still, far away from the congestion and pace of modern living. However local services and facilities that were once taken for granted such as public transport, development of facilities for the elderly and maintenance of council property including playing fields and play areas are now under threat, due to rigorous scrutiny by local authorities. Nothing will escape the eyes of those seeking to balance the budget.

New national planning policies give property developers the upper hand in selection of sites for new housing that maximise their profit with little or no regard for the impact on a local community. Consequently opportunities for development of affordable eco housing and downsized retirement properties, as part of a balanced approach to development, focused on maintaining a community's values and cohesion are now under threat. These have been identified as important issues during the ongoing consultation phase for the Wyeside Neighbourhood Plan development.

This consultation phase has also illustrated the importance Wyeside places on environmental initiatives such as wind turbines, protection of nature sites, flood protection, improved availability of footpaths, picnic sites and play areas etc. which if they are to be successfully developed should be addressed within a framework that is acceptable to the community as a whole.

In addition Herefordshire County Council's plan for creation of a university to offer greater education opportunities and as hub for innovation and new employment, whilst welcome, is likely to have a significant impact on housing and facilities both in Hereford and the surrounding villages. It is anticipated that a significant number of the university professors, lecturers and research personnel will have a preference for living in rural communities such as Wyeside. Children leaving school will be able to consider a lower cost local university education by continuing to live at home. More frequent and regular bus services will be required. Employment for young people will also be more varied and financially lucrative with opportunities for work based vocational training and improved recreational facilities.

The Wyeside Group therefore needs to prioritise issues raised by you for inclusion in a questionnaire for the Neighbourhood Plan to 2031. In addition we need to produce a plan of action to address these opportunities and threats to ensure the values and cohesion within our communities are not lost.

***A public meeting is to be held in Moccas Village Hall on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00pm to prioritise issues raised by you in the June – August consultation period, for inclusion in the questionnaire and to agree a community plan of action.***

***The bar will be open with an initial drink, refreshments and cakes provided free.***