

Bredenbury Group Parish Council

Over the last few months, I have reported on our progress towards renewing our Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) for Bredenbury, Wacton & Grendon Bishop. We have recruited our NDP Steering Group from members of our local community and made preparations for the first community survey. By the time you read this, a copy of this first survey will have been distributed to every household in our group of parishes. Members of the Steering Group will deliver the survey so there will be a chance for face to face discussions with members of the team. The purpose of this first survey is to ensure that our long term Vision for our community is still fit for purpose and that the main Objectives still reflect your wishes. There is also an opportunity for you to propose any changes which you think may be relevant. The survey allows for you to make a direct contribution to our renewed NDP going forward. If you need additional copies of the survey these are available from Vicky Hancock (clerk@bredenburygroup-pc.gov.uk)

At the same time, we have been reassured that national government still see Neighbourhood Planning as the cornerstone of Localism – a principle enshrined in law in the Localism Act (2011). **So now comes the bombshell.....**

As part of their recent spending review, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government have announced that all grants supporting the development of NDPs will cease immediately. This decision would threaten every NDP which is in preparation, has passed referendum or has been adopted across the country. That is a total of 2400 local communities nationally, 92 in Herefordshire alone!

I hope that you will not be surprised to hear that we do not intend to take this threatening news lying down. The grant which we would receive is around £9000. This goes towards helping us with the costs of the essential guidance and support of our NDP Consultant, holding meetings, preparing documents and displays, statutory consultations, referendum costs and a host of other associated administrative tasks which occur along the way. When you multiply these costs with all NDPs across the country, both existing and in preparation, the overall costs are not huge in comparison to the billions we hear are being spent on other issues.

We learned of this decision on Tuesday, 17th June and by Saturday, 20th June we have learned that all of the groups representing parish & town councils in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire have met to organise a campaign to get these grants reinstated. All individual parish & town councils in Herefordshire have been asked to add their voice to this campaign.

So why is this so important for us locally? At present, our plan with its policies and settlement boundary represents the wishes of our local community. The plan welcomes new housing to support our local school to ensure we enjoy a thriving future. We have plans for new housing but these will be in locations and numbers that the majority of us feel are appropriate. Personally speaking, I doubt that the majority of our residents would like to see Bredenbury becoming a dormitory settlement.

So what will we do locally? At present, our plan is to continue with our NDP renewal plans while considering how we can support this campaign. That is why it is so important for everyone to help us with the surveys so we can be sure we are reflecting the views of our local community. Your parish council will continue to lobby for funding but we think we can carry on with our renewal campaign with this work going on in the background. Please take the opportunity to reflect your views through the surveys and later in the year, at community events that will take place in Bredenbury Village Hall.

As always - *Our Place, Our Future!*

John Hulse – Chairman, Bredenbury Group Parish Council