

## **ALMELEY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Notes of a meeting of Almeley Parish residents held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 to discuss the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**CHAIR:** Mr Jeff Glyn-Jones, Chairman NDP Advisory Group and vice-chair Almeley Parish Council.

The aim of the meeting was to present the first draft of the NDP, which had been prepared by an Advisory Group with guidance from the Parish council, and to invite comments and contributions from residents.

The principles of the Localism Act 2011 allows neighbourhoods, through the Parish Council, to grant planning permission for certain types of development and be involved in creating policies which will allow local communities to influence building in their area. The NDP, once approved, will become part of the Herefordshire District Council's Planning Framework, which informs and controls local planning decisions.

The outcome of the questionnaire recently circulated to residents was briefly revisited. Large-scale development was rejected in favour of small-scale development and protection for areas considered to be essential for the traditional environment received strong support. There was support, also, for 1-2 house development outside the village envelope where existing houses or farms provide an existing infrastructure, including roads and water supply. Possible areas suggested for development were Woonton, Almeley Wootton and Upcott, rather than Almeley Village which had considerable building during the last 40 years, including examples of garden-infill in some areas.

Questions were raised about site allocation, which did not feature in the draft. It was explained that this was considered to be outside the remit of the Advisory Group; release of land for possible development is the responsibility of the land owner, potential developers and the planners. Apart from possible development on farms, no brown field sites were identified which could be allocated for building.

There were several complaints about broadband provision, essential for businesses. Downloads are slow and often unreliable. Information available indicates that the service will improve, but not until 2016.

The lack of employment opportunities, especially for young people was raised. Providing affordable housing and employment are essential if young families are to remain in the parish and be encouraged to move here and on which the viability of the school depends. A proposal in Eardisley that a brown field site should be developed for housing and a small industrial unit may provide some employment for local people, including Almeley.

During discussion, information was provided on a decision by Herefordshire Council that development without the need for planning consent should be permitted on land which will be vacated by tenant farmers. This will be explored further at a forthcoming meeting with Ted Bannister, Herefordshire Council.

The NDP will be revised after this meeting and the meeting with Ted Bannister to discuss progress towards developing a final NDP for review by residents. Information will be provided regularly on the website: [www.almeley.net](http://www.almeley.net) and the usual sources.

15<sup>th</sup> October 2014.