

Birlingham Parish Plan

You may have seen comment in the press recently about the Government's draft National Planning Framework. The central theme of the framework is that Councils will have to apply a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" to all planning applications unless they are clearly in violation of certain other policies such as protection of heritage assets, bio diversity and National Parks.

This fundamental change in national planning policy is the result of intense lobbying by developers and commercial interests who have found the present system too restrictive.

It is easy to see that the new formula could lead to a serious breakdown in the measures which currently protect our villages and countryside.

One way in which the amenities and character of the village could be preserved is by the creation of a Village Plan. Provided this is constructed with the full participation and approval of the residents, such a plan would meet the conditions of the Government's Localism Bill and Councils would be obliged to treat the Plan as a significant factor in all planning applications.

The Plans would enable residents to specify the particular features and characteristics of their community which they would like to preserve or expand and would be drawn up by a representative committee. Assistance in the drafting would be given by Wychavon Council. The Plans can be extremely wide ranging and could include matters such as housing, development, the natural environment, sporting and leisure interests and so forth.

The Plans require much research and investigation and frequent consultation with residents. It normally takes some years of volunteer work before they can be finished.

We need residents to come forward to take up the opportunity of making a plan and would ask anyone who would like to contribute to the process to let June Hiden, the Parish Clerk know at Lamorna, Broadway Road, Birlingham, Pershore. WR10 3AF