



## Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan group mounted a very successful display at the Information Day in Whitmore Village Hall in March. The map showing the locations of facilities, services, conservation areas and natural habitats and wildlife areas in the Neighbourhood Area drew much interest.

### Mapping the Neighbourhood

Planning is based on evidence and it is about the use of land – for housing, economic activity, transport, for social and community uses and for environmental purposes. One kind of evidence that we need to collect is evidence that shows how the land is used in the Neighbourhood Area. This will have a two-fold purpose: to demonstrate that the land is being used for valuable purposes; and to identify places where the land could be developed for a variety of purposes ranging from housing and community facilities to such things as joining up fragmented public rights of way, improving watercourses and creating new habitats for wildlife.

Following a recent meeting at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust we are getting ready to start mapping different aspects of the area. A major piece of work will be to record a Land Utilisation Survey to map the current categories of land use, such as for residences, roads, agricultural buildings, grazing, arable, woodland, ponds and watercourses etc. The most famous land utilisation survey of England is the Domesday Book (after which there was no such survey until the 1930s), so perhaps we can think of this aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan as our own mini Domesday Book.

Wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors (routes along which wildlife can move safely from one wildlife area to another) are another thing that will be mapped. Mapping the habitats and existing corridors will help to identify where additional wildlife corridors are needed to join up isolated habitats. We also need to look at our countryside and consider whether any existing habitats are special enough to need extra protection.

We will map our footpaths and transport routes so that we can see where changes or improvements are needed. For example, providing small parking areas near the access to public rights of way could help to protect roadside habitats and make our lanes safer.

If you are interested in the geography or wildlife habitats of our Neighbourhood Area this could be your opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the Neighbourhood Development Plan. You can get in touch with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group via the Contact form on the website at [www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk).