



Neighbourhood Development Plan

Protecting Rural Character

The overarching aim of our Neighbourhood Plan is to protect rural character while allowing for appropriate development. The results from last year's Questionnaire showed overwhelming agreement that our area's rural character and landscape is the thing that residents value most of all.

Under the terms of our government grant we are now receiving technical assistance to create "Village Design Statements" for the Neighbourhood Area. The consultants who are doing this work are looking at more than just the villages and their buildings. They are looking at the whole landscape, how the settlements fit into the landscape, and the scale of development. In other words, they are looking at the impact that development has had and will have on the area's landscape and rural character.

Many of our older settlements are well integrated into the landscape. You do not see them until you actually arrive at them. Maer, Whitmore and Acton, for example, are located in dips and hollows in the landscape. Other settlements, like Aston and Chapel Chorlton, are located at the end of long and steep winding lanes. Even though they are on higher ground you cannot see them from a distance because the hilly landscape blocks them from view.

In other places our well-wooded countryside also helps to conceal development. Whitmore Heath and Madeley Park Wood are good examples of settlements that are mostly hidden by mature woodland. In Whitmore village and in and around Butterton too, as well as in other places, trees and woodland help to conceal development from view.

Baldwins Gate, on the other hand, spreads out in a wide, flat valley and is visible from many surrounding points. Now, with the Kier development, it is advancing even further into the countryside.

The concealed nature of so many of our settlements contributes a great deal to our rural character. This is something that we need to preserve.

There is no doubt that there will be further development in our Neighbourhood Area. The Joint Local Plan now being prepared by Newcastle and Stoke will require us to accept some new housing development. By being aware of the relationship between our villages and the landscape we love and value, we can help to ensure that any new development preserves our Neighbourhood Area's rural character.

It's your neighbourhood – please support the Neighbourhood Plan!

Please participate in the Local Consultation

Visit the website: www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk

Email us: cmaw-neighbourhoodplan@hotmail.com