

# **Bredon**

## **Village Design Statement**



**July 2011**

Cover photograph: The Church of St Giles, Bredon

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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## I.1. Executive summary

Bredon is located on the banks of the Avon on the lower slopes of Bredon Hill, at “the beginning of the Cotswolds”.<sup>1</sup> As “Brensham Village”, it has been made famous by the writer John Moore, whose descriptions of village life between the wars are widely celebrated.<sup>2</sup> Bredon boasts an exceptional built heritage, with 43 listed buildings, including one of Worcestershire’s most admired churches.<sup>3</sup> During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the village experienced major expansion. Much of this growth was poorly planned, resulting in an unsustainable settlement, whose large population is reliant on nearby towns for employment and many of its services. If Bredon is to retain its village character and thrive in the future, it is imperative that it does not undergo any further major housing development, and that its employment, infrastructure and service needs are satisfied. This document primarily deals with Bredon village and not with the outlying hamlets of the parish, as these are not expected to experience significant new development under emerging planning policy.

### **Prime aims**

This *Village Design Statement* (VDS) gives residents the opportunity to combine their voices and have a stronger say in shaping the future of the built environment. It does this in several ways.

- It provides factual analysis about the built and landscape environment for use by planning authorities, both when deciding planning applications, and when drawing up new policies.
- It provides guidance to planning authorities as to how to align planning decisions and new planning policies with residents’ own aspirations for the future of the village.

### **Key recommendations of local residents**

The VDS aims to reflect the views of the Bredon community as a whole. It has been drafted by a committee of volunteers overseen by the Parish Council, and draws on a series of consultations with the community (see Section 4.1). These reveal clear consensus on a number of key issues.

- Bredon cannot accommodate a significant amount of new market housing *sustainably* due to the limitations of its services and infrastructure, and lack of employment (see Section 5.9).
- The Cotswolds AONB, one of the UK’s most valued landscapes, must be safeguarded.
- All new development should preserve and make a positive contribution towards – not detract from – the special historic interest and character of the village (see Section 3).
- The parish holds nationally important wildlife, which must be protected (see Section 2.3).

### **Navigating this document**

This VDS contains detailed information, some of which may not be required by readers. It has therefore been laid out so that users can quickly find the sections relevant to them.

- Sections 1 to 3 are factual. They provide planning information, along with a detailed description and historical analysis of the buildings of the village and its landscape setting.
- Sections 4 and 5 are interpretative. They give voice to residents’ views about the village and their aspirations for its future development.
- Section 6 consists of a set of Guidelines, showing how new development can best preserve and enhance the special character of Bredon.

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1. Stanley Baldwin, former Prime Minister / 2. Moore, J. (1946). *Brensham Village* / 3. Jenkins, S. (1999). *England's Thousand Best Churches*

## **1.2. About Village Design Statements**

VDSs were established by the Countryside Commission in 1996 to enhance the role of local communities in planning. They fit well with the new government agenda for greater localism. Their major objectives are:

- to provide a forum for the community to say what it is that they value about their village and how they would like to see it develop in the future;
- to describe the distinctive character of the village through its buildings and its landscape setting;
- to demonstrate how this character can be protected and enhanced;
- to provide guidelines for householders, architects and developers with the aim of ensuring that new developments respect the character of the village and make a positive contribution to the local environment;
- to influence future planning policies; in particular the successor to the *Local Plan*.

In July 2011, Wychavon District Council adopted the *Bredon Village Design Statement* as a Local Information Source, to offer advice and to be a material consideration to the relevant departments of the Council.

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## **1.3. Planning policy context**

This VDS is intended to be compatible with national and local planning policy. Central Government is currently carrying out a root and branch reform of the planning system. In May 2010 sweeping changes were announced, which included the intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and to devolve more power to the local level. The pending Localism Bill is expected to provide many answers with regard to how housing targets will be set at the sub-regional level. In the meantime, all development requiring planning permission continues to be governed by a combination of current and emerging national and local policies. National policies are largely set out in a series of *Planning Policy Statements* (PPS) and *Planning Policy Guidance* notes (PPG). The main local policies applying to Bredon are detailed below.

### **1.3.1. Wychavon District Local Plan & supplementary guidance**

The current local planning policies governing Bredon are set out in the *Wychavon District Local Plan, 2006–11 (Local Plan)*.<sup>1</sup> This defines a Development Boundary for the village, which has been drawn to reflect where new development, through infilling or minor consolidation, would be appropriate under GDI and other policies. Planning decisions taken by Wychavon are based on the policies laid down in the *Local Plan*, but also have regard to national planning policy and supplementary guidance. Wychavon's *Residential Design Guide* (RDG) was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in September 2010.

1. *Wychavon District Council Local Plan (2006-11)*. Available at Council Offices, local libraries, and on the Council's website (<http://wychavon.whub.org.uk>)

Wychavon's Planning Service has the authority to decide the majority of planning applications under delegated powers. Major or controversial applications are decided by Wychavon's Development Control Committee. All planning applications are advertised locally and, in the case

of Bredon, are reviewed by the Parish Council, which sends its recommendations to Wychavon. Individuals are also able to submit comments on any planning application directly to Wychavon.

### **1.3.2. Worcestershire Structure Plan**

The Worcestershire Structure Plan (WSP) is a long term planning document covering the period 1996–2011, which establishes a strategic policy framework for planning in the county. Some of the policies in the WSP were repealed by the Secretary of State in 2007. Other policies were “saved” until further notice and will continue to have a material bearing on planning.

### **1.3.3. Cotswolds AONB**

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the UK’s most outstanding landscapes. *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 (Part IV)* confers equal protected status upon AONBs as upon National Parks, with relation to conserving and enhancing natural beauty. It also gives very strong powers to planning authorities to enforce this. It further places a statutory duty on planning authorities and public bodies to “*have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB*”. It is worth noting that this statutory duty relates to any matter which may “*affect land in an AONB*” and can thus extend beyond the boundary of the AONB itself.

Since 1990, the northern third of the parish (including Bredon’s Norton and Westmancote) has been located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is the largest of the 40 AONBs in England and Wales, and it is internationally recognised as one of the most beautiful areas of the UK.<sup>1</sup> The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has awarded the Cotswolds AONB ‘Protected Landscape’ status for its high scenic quality.<sup>2</sup>

1. Cotswolds Conservation Board ([www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)) / 2. IUCN ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)): Category V – Protected Landscape / Seascape:

### **1.3.4. Bredon Conservation Area**

Designation as a Conservation Area is an official recognition of the collective value of buildings and their surroundings, and of the desirability of conserving and enhancing their special architectural or historic interest. Conservation Area designation does not exclude the possibility of change, but it does require that all new buildings and significant alterations should preserve and enhance – not erode – the historic environment.

Conservation Areas are given statutory protection through Town and Country Planning legislation. Further government guidance is provided by *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5)*. The local authority has a duty to draw up proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. It is worth noting that, as with AONBs, Conservation Area policies can apply outside the area where the character and setting of the area may be affected. Where an ‘Article 4 Direction’ exists, some works normally classed as permitted development (not requiring planning permission) will require planning approval.

The Bredon Conservation Area was designated in November 1969 and revised in June 1987. The area was reappraised by Wychavon in January 2008 following public consultation. Most of the village west of the railway is covered by the designation (see map in Appendix 5.2). Within the Conservation Area strict planning policies and guidelines apply, in particular ENV12 of the *Local Plan*. However, between 1969 and 1993, a significant amount of development took place which is

generally regarded as having had a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area's historic character. This demonstrates that the effectiveness of the designation is dependent on proper enforcement.

### **1.3.5. Listed building control**

Listed buildings represent the best examples of the nation's architectural and historic heritage which have been identified as being worthy of protection under special legislation. Across England it is estimated that up to 2% of dwellings are listed. All buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition, along with most of those built between 1700 and 1840, are listed.<sup>1</sup> Some buildings which are not listed individually fall within the curtilage of a listed building (the grounds surrounding it), and are considered part of the listed building from a planning viewpoint.

No changes can be made to listed buildings without consent. Proposals affecting a listed building or its setting are assessed by Wychavon's Heritage Team to ensure that features of special architectural or historic interest are not damaged or lost, and that the building's character and setting is preserved.

Listed buildings are graded as follows:

- Grade I: of exceptional interest, sometimes internationally important (2.5% of all listed buildings)
- Grade II\*: particularly important and of more than special interest (5.5% of all listed buildings)
- Grade II: nationally important and of special interest (92% of all listed buildings)

Within the village of Bredon there are 43 listed buildings, all located within the Conservation Area. St Giles's Church and Bredon Barn (belonging to the National Trust) are both Grade I; The Old Rectory is Grade II\*; the remainder are Grade II. A further 41 buildings in the Conservation Area were formerly listed prior to the abolition of the Grade III category in 1970. Compared to the national picture, Bredon has an exceptionally rich built heritage.

1. English Heritage; [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk).

### **1.3.6. South Worcestershire Development Plan**

The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) is an emerging policy document being formulated jointly by the three south Worcestershire local authorities (Wychavon District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, and Worcester City Council). From October 2010, it replaced the *South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy* (JCS) which was being developed under the defunct RSS process. It does, however, retain the JCS evidence base. While details are yet to be confirmed (February 2011), it is likely that the SWDP will replace local plans (see Section 1.3.1) as well as determining the amount and distribution of development within south Worcestershire. The plan is scheduled for adoption in September 2013, and will remain in effect until 2030.

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## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT

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### 2.1. Location & setting

#### 2.1.1. Location

Bredon lies between Tewkesbury and Evesham on the southern edges of both Worcestershire and the West Midlands Region. It is adjacent to Gloucestershire and the South West Region, to which it looks for many of its shopping facilities and services.

The village lies on the south-west slopes of Bredon Hill, an outlier of the Cotswolds projecting into the Vale of Evesham. The northern third of the parish, constituting the hill land, falls within the Cotswolds AONB. The Cotswolds region is internationally recognised as one of the most beautiful areas of England, and has been the inspiration for artists and poets down the ages, from Shakespeare<sup>1</sup> to Betjeman, and Turner to William Morris.

The landscape to the south and west of Bredon is dominated by the sweeping flood plain of the rivers Severn and Avon. The Avon forms the western boundary of the parish, and two of its tributaries, Carrant Brook and Squitter Brook, form the southern boundary. The Avon meets the Severn at Tewkesbury approximately 1.4 km (0.9 miles) south-west of the parish boundary.

South of the Carrant, and 2 km (1.2 miles) from the village at the nearest point, lies the Tewkesbury urban area, which includes the Northway Trading Estate, the MoD's Defence Storage and Distribution Agency Depot (DSDA) at Ashchurch, and the extensive post-1950 housing developments at Northway.

1. *Richard II*, [11, 3] 'these high wild hills and rough uneven ways'



Figure 1. View west towards the Malvern Hills from Bridleway BX-501 in the north of the parish.

### **2.1.2. Settlements of Westmancote, Kinsham, Bredon's Hardwick and Bredon's Norton**

The parish includes several outlying hamlets surrounding Bredon. Westmancote is a settlement 350 metres to the north-east (at the nearest point); Kinsham is a hamlet 750 metres to the south; and Bredon's Hardwick is small hamlet 1.1 km (0.7 miles) to the south-west. Until the 1960s Mitton was also a part of the parish, before being transferred to Tewkesbury Town. Cutsdean in Gloucestershire was a detached part of the parish until it was annexed to Temple Guiting Parish in 1912.

In 1976, Bredon Parish merged with Bredon's Norton, a small village 1.8 km (1.1 miles) to the north, to form the modern parish of 'Bredon & Bredon's Norton'. Where this VDS uses the term 'historic parish' it refers to the parish immediately prior to the merger with Bredon's Norton.

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## **2.2. Local landscape & agriculture**

### **2.2.1. Overview**

Bredon's landscape of hill and vale has been justifiably celebrated over the centuries. Sir Stanley Baldwin, the former Prime Minister, described it thus: "*Bredon, the beginning of the Cotswolds, like a cameo against the sky*".<sup>1</sup> It has been made famous by a multitude of artists, poets, musicians and writers. It has featured in the works of the composers Ralph Vaughn Williams, Sir Arthur Somervell, Ivor Gurney and George Butterworth; the poets A E Housman, John Masefield, and Cecil Day Lewis; the writers E V Lucas, Arthur Quiller-Couch, John Moore and Fred Archer; and the painters Peter de Wint, Alfred William Parsons and Benjamin Williams Leader.

Bredon Hill, topped with its famous hillfort and tower<sup>2</sup>, provides an imposing backdrop to the village and is an integral part of its history and character. The historic parish (excluding Bredon's Norton and Mitton) extends from the hill's upper slopes at an elevation of 250 metres (820 ft) down to the Avon valley floor at an elevation of 10 metres (32 ft) in the south-west. At its greatest extent it measures approximately 7.6 km (4.7 miles) long by 3.5 km (2.2 miles) wide, and covers around 12.2 km<sup>2</sup> (3010 acres).

1. Cannadine, D. (2002). *In Churchill's Shadow* / 2. Parsons Folly (also called Kemerton Tower) was built c. 1765 by John Parsons, squire of neighbouring Kemerton.

Bredon is set in an agricultural landscape, surrounded by a patchwork of arable and grass fields, interspersed with orchards and woodland. Much of the parish commands long views over the wide expanses of the Avon, Severn and Carrant vales. The horizons are dominated by hills: Bredon Hill to the north, the Cotswold escarpment to the east and south, and the dramatic line of the Malverns to the west.

The immediate surroundings of the village have experienced a large amount of new housing during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There has been a certain amount of 'ribbon development' along the main roads, and the separate character of Bredon and its neighbouring villages has consequently been eroded. The effect is marked between the three settlements of Bredon, Westmancote and Kemerton where very little open countryside remains. The open space between Bredon and Kinsham has also been significantly eroded. Similarly, there has been a major expansion of Tewkesbury at Mitton along the B4080 in the direction Bredon's Hardwick.

Two Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) have been carried out covering the modern parish, to help guide appropriate management decisions and influence planning policy. In 2002, The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership undertook a LCA of the AONB. This classified the northern part of the parish as one of two Landscape Character Types: Escarpment Outlier; or Unwooded Vale. In 2004, Worcestershire County Council published its LCA of the entire county. This divided the parish into three Landscape Types: Limestone Estatelands (the upper slopes of Bredon Hill); Wooded Hills and Farmlands (the lower slopes of Bredon Hill); and Principal Village Farmlands (the vale).

### **2.2.2. Development of the landscape pre-Agricultural Revolution**

The landscape of Bredon is the product of millennia of farming. During the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages most of the oak-ash wildwood which originally covered the parish was cleared for agriculture. The woodland recorded in the Domesday survey in 1086, was probably largely located in Cutsdean and other outlying parts of the Bishop's manor.



Figure 2. Footpath BX-509: the ancient road to Evesham over Bredon Hill.

A stable system of land management evolved from the Saxon period (c. 500 – 1066) onwards, which remained substantially unaltered through the Middle Ages until the agricultural revolution of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Under this system, the hill was predominantly given over to common sheep pasture and furze, which gave way on the mid and lower slopes to the great open arable fields. Down on the flood plains of the Avon and Carrant Brook, the valuable village meadowlands were located. These were shut up for hay during spring and summer and grazed after Lammas Day (1 August). Most cottages had closes or small fields associated with them for growing vegetables and keeping livestock. Many of these ancient enclosures still survive as gardens or paddocks. Hop yards and orchards are recorded with increasing frequency from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

During this period the farmland surrounding Bredon was open in character with few hedges, apart from those marking the parish boundary and those enclosing the messuages and closes of cottages. The large open fields were strip-farmed and individual holdings were scattered, so that the most easily worked and fertile soils were shared out. The pattern created by ploughing these strips in the same direction over centuries can still be seen today as 'ridge and furrow'. This does not

survive modern ploughing, but it does remain in a few grass fields, including the field immediately to the west of Oak Lane, and at Carron Farm, Bredon's Hardwick. Sheep played an important role in the village economy, with a large amount of suitable pasture available on the hill.

A few areas of woodland retain the flora characteristic of ancient woodland, and probably date from the Late Middle Ages (1300–1500) or earlier. For further details see Section 2.3.2.

### **2.2.3. Development of the modern landscape**

The landscape we see today is largely a product of the agricultural revolution of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Under a series of parliamentary acts, known as **Inclosure**, the open fields of England were divided up into regular parcels and apportioned to the owners of scattered strips. These new parcels were enclosed with ditches, hedges, fences and walls to form fields which could be farmed more efficiently. Bredon's Act of Inclosure was passed in 1811 and those gaining large consolidated holdings were Rev. Richard Darke (lord of the manor), Rev. John Keysall (rector of Bredon), the Earl of Coventry, and John Skipp. Many of today's farmland boundaries date from the Act. On the lower ground, fields were mainly enclosed by hedges and ditches, whereas on the stony hill ground, dry stone walls were the norm. New fields were often drained or otherwise improved, thereby greatly increasing productivity. A major boost to the fruit and vegetable growing sector was provided by the arrival of the Birmingham and Gloucester railway in 1841, which created transport links to large new urban markets.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were numerous farms, smallholdings, market-gardens, poultry farms and fruit farms in and around Bredon. By 2011, productive land had mostly been consolidated into a handful of large farms. Only one farm still makes use of agricultural buildings in the village itself. The once thriving market-gardening and fruit industries have all but gone. The majority of the farmland is now arable, farmed on a four year rotation of wheat-rape-wheat-beans. Some land is farmed organically under a six-year rotation of grass, clover, wheat and oats. There is a significant area of pasture and meadow, on which sheep and cattle are raised. A number of traditional orchard remnants still survive in the village, comprising tall, well-spaced trees, combined with animal pasture. Some of these have been replanted (on a non-commercial basis), though others are senescent and have lost many of their trees. The farms of Bredon make a crucial contribution to its landscape and wildlife (see Section 2.3).

There is a long history of sand and gravel extraction in the locality, which is reflected by place names such as Gravel Pits Close in Bredon. During the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, large extractions were undertaken in the parish at Croft Farm in the Avon flood plain, and at Kemerton Lake in the Carrant Brook catchment. The lakes left behind at these sites have become major landscape features. Kemerton Lake was excavated (1987–1997) in order to create a wetland nature reserve, and has since become a wildlife site of regional importance (see Section 2.3).

Significant changes to the landscape took place during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The M5 Motorway was constructed through the middle of the parish during the 1960s. There was a dramatic loss of traditional orchards, many of which gave way to large-scale housing developments, which took place from the 1960s to 1990s. Elm disease in the 1960s and 1970s brought about significant changes to the landscape. Prior to the disease, as many as one in four trees in the locality was an elm, and almost every hedgerow contained one or more freestanding elms. Since 1960, a number of small, mixed-broadleaf woodland blocks and belts have been planted on former farmland, including the plantations surrounding Kemerton Lake.

#### 2.2.4. Open countryside between settlements

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been a significant reduction in the amount of undeveloped countryside between Bredon and its neighbouring settlements. To the east, approximately 300 metres of undeveloped countryside remains between Bredon and Westmancote. To the south, around 700 metres of (mostly) undeveloped countryside remains between Bredon and Kinsham. 1.1 km (0.7 miles) of undeveloped countryside exists between Bredon and Bredon's Hardwick. At its nearest point (in Northway) the Tewkesbury conurbation comes almost to the parish boundary, within 2 km (1.2 miles) of Bredon village itself.



Figure 3. Undeveloped countryside between Bredon and Kinsham.

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### 2.3. Natural environment

#### 2.3.1. Overview

Bredon and its surroundings are exceptionally rich in wildlife, boasting sites of international importance for rare fauna.<sup>1</sup> The historic parish (not including Bredon's Norton) contains part of the Bredon Hill *Special Area of Conservation* (SAC – the EU's highest wildlife designation); parts of three *Sites of Special Scientific Interest* (SSSI – the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in England); and parts of twelve *Special Wildlife Sites* (the best sites in Worcestershire not covered by national designations). It is home to a number of the Priority Species and Habitats identified by the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* (UK BAP). The high wildlife value of several farmed habitats has been recognised by Natural England which has entered much farmland in the parish into the Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

1. Natural England, Bredon Hill SSSI citation

Bredon Hill has been recognised as the third most important site in the UK for dead-wood beetles and other invertebrates, a large proportion of which are in Bredon.<sup>1</sup> The north of the parish is the richest area in the county for rare arable plants. Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (half in Bredon Parish) is the West Midlands Region's most important site for dragon flies, with 22 species recorded. The reserve is Worcestershire's most important site for jack snipe, and more than 170

other bird species have been recorded here. It is also one of the few sites where the native white-clawed crayfish survives. Bredon's Hardwick Lakes is the best location for wintering waterfowl in the Severn and Avon vales north of Gloucester.<sup>2</sup> The Avon and Carrant flood plains are home to important populations of wading birds. Otters and polecats have returned to the parish after becoming locally extinct during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Purple milk-vetch, violet click beetle, barbastelle bat, lesser horseshoe bat and great-crested newt are some of the other interesting species found in and around the village.

1. Whitehead P & J. (1991–96). Articles published in *The Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* / 2. Gloucestershire Naturalists Society

Several sites in Bredon are managed as nature reserves by the locally-based charity, Kemerton Conservation Trust. These include parts of Upham Meadow, Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve, and Beggarboys wetland.



Figure 4. Kemerton Lake, seen from Footpath BX-527.

### **2.3.2. Habitat types**

The richest semi-natural ecosystems tend to be those which have enjoyed an unchanged management regime for a long period – in some cases for many centuries – emphasising the correlation between traditional husbandry and high biodiversity. In Bredon, these are arable land, scrub, pasture, river meadow, woodland and hedgerows. Other important habitats include rivers, streams and wetlands.

#### ***Arable farmland***

Until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, arable land was farmed without modern chemicals and a varied flora of specialist arable plants developed – particularly on the brashy limestone soils of the hill. These plants include scarlet pimpernel, wild pansy, prickly poppy and night-flowering catchfly. Even after agricultural improvement, some of this flora survives, and the 1 km square (SO9438) towards the northern end of the parish (shared with Kemerton) is the richest in Worcestershire for this type of flora, as assessed by Plantlife.

### ***Calcareous scrub***

There are 15 hectares (37 acres) of calcareous scrub (limestone grassland associated with a long-established scrub community) west of the King and Queen Stones. This area forms part of the Bredon Hill SSSI. The scrub is characterised by hawthorn, elder, ivy, gorse, blackthorn, goat willow and wild rose species. It provides important breeding habitat for many species of bird, such as whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, linnet, yellowhammer, and turtle dove. Redstarts breed in ancient bushes within the scrub.

### ***Pasture & meadow***

A few areas of unimproved limestone pasture (which has never been fertilised or sprayed) survive in the historic parish, including Quarryfield and Cherry Tree Meadow west and east of Cherry Tree Cottage, Westmancote. The calcareous scrub mentioned above also partly consists of unimproved limestone pasture. These areas have escaped agricultural improvement largely by virtue of their rough terrain. They are characterised by plants found in calcareous grassland including tor-grass, pyramidal orchid, dwarf thistle, wild thyme, small scabious and purple milk-vetch. The three disused quarries in the north-east of the parish (Lords Quarry, Upper Westmancote Quarry and Lower Westmancote Quarry) are also rich in calcareous plants, where they have not been shaded out by woodland encroachment.

Before Inclosure (see Section 2.2.3) Bredon had rich meadows all along the River Avon and the Carrant and Squitter brooks which were fertilised by annual winter flooding. Several of these, including The Sling (on Squitter Brook south of Kinsham), Upham Meadow and Rectory Farm Meadows (both on the Avon) still survive as unimproved grassland with diverse botanical interest. Upham Meadow has been designated SSSI primarily for its breeding wading birds and overwintering populations of wildfowl and waders. Rectory Farm Meadows has been designated SSSI for its botanical interest. Plants found in these riverside meadows include meadow foxtail, great burnet, meadowsweet, cuckooflower, yellow iris, and the nationally scarce narrow-leaved water-dropwort.

### ***Wetlands***

As well as farmed semi-natural habitats, Bredon has a number of valuable riparian (riverside) and wetland habitats. The historic parish has around 6.7 km (4.2 miles) of frontage to the River Avon which forms its west boundary. It has a further 4.4 km (2.7 miles) frontage along the Carrant Brook and Squitter Brook on its southern boundary. This is home to eel, otter, kingfisher and other characteristic river fauna. These river habitats have been designated by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust as Special Wildlife Sites.

As stated above, Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and Bredon's Hardwick Lakes are of regional and county importance for a number of plant and animals species, despite the fact that they are relatively new creations.

### ***Woodland & hedgerows***

Aldwick Wood (east of Footpath 503) is 11 hectares (27 acres) of important *semi-natural ancient woodland* (defined as dating from before 1600). It forms part of the Bredon Hill SSSI and SAC, and consists mainly of ash, beech, oak, and non-native sycamore. The King and

Queen Stones spinney (west of Footpath 501), Far Frankwells Spinney (south of footpath 522), and the northern end of Kemerton Larches (east of Footpath 521) are other areas of mature woodland. Bredon Hill is internationally important for its array of threatened beetles and other invertebrates which feed on dead wood, including the violet click beetle, previously only known from Windsor Great Park. Native woodland and wood pasture habitats are of particular importance in this context.

There has been a significant amount of woodland creation in the parish since 1970. In particular, three large areas of native broadleaf woodland have been planted on the edges of the village. These are the plantations north of The Red House and The Dell; Benshams Wood (south of the Blenheim Drive); and Kemerton Woods (south and east of Queensmead). Kemerton Woods extends over some 40 hectares (100 acres), and is notable for the orchid and fungi species which have colonised it, as well as the eight species of bat which have been recorded on the site.<sup>1</sup>

Bredon’s network of hedges, some of which date back to Saxon times, also provide excellent habitat in their own right, as well as creating corridors of connectivity for wildlife.

1. Kemerton Conservation Trust



Figure 5. Aldwick Wood, the only ancient semi-natural woodland in the parish.



## 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGE

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### 3.1. Overview

Bredon is a large village with a population in approximately 2,020 residents living in approximately 840 dwellings in 2011.<sup>1</sup> The total population of the parish, including the surrounding hamlets of Bredon's Hardwick, Bredon's Norton, Kinsham and Westmancote, is approximately 2,800 in 2011. The parish has a good demographic mix of ages and incomes, close to Wychavon averages in most age ranges, though with slightly more in the 45–64 year age group (32.4% compared with the Wychavon average of 29.8%).<sup>2</sup>

For most of its long history, the village was confined to the area around St Giles's Church, broadly coinciding with the modern Conservation Area. Within this, there are 95 historic properties dating from pre-1850 out of a total of 150. 43 of these are listed – two of them Grade I – giving the Conservation Area its exceptional historic interest. Almost all historic buildings are at least partly built from Cotswold limestone, quarried locally on Bredon Hill. Timber frame construction was used as a secondary material up until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century (often not painted black and white until the 20<sup>th</sup> century). As is the case in most Cotswold villages a variety of architectural styles and materials are in evidence, but an overall visual harmony is achieved through the prevalent use of local stone in buildings and boundary walls throughout the Conservation Area.

1. Electoral register, 2010 and Census returns, 2001 / 2. Source: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)



Figure 6. The historic heart of Bredon, seen beyond the flooded Twyning Ham.

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the village saw a seven-fold expansion, with the bulk of this growth occurring during the 1970s and 1980s, driven by developers and landowners. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the use of standardised sub-urban architectural forms, which are commonplace in towns and villages across the UK, has led to the erosion of Bredon's distinctive historic character. Only in the Conservation Area, where two-thirds of buildings are historic, has Bredon's distinctive local character survived. Even here modern buildings have had a disproportionately transformative effect on the street scene.

## **3.2. History of settlement**

### **3.2.1 Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman & Anglo-Saxon periods, 2500 BC – 1066 AD**

Bredon is an ancient village with a history of farming and settlement that goes back at least four thousand years. Archaeological remains establish that parts of the parish were settled early in the Bronze Age (2500–800 BC). There are numerous Iron Age (800 BC–100 AD) remains, some of which would have related to Kemerton Camp, a large univallate hillfort at the summit of Bredon Hill. By the Iron Age, the oak-ash wildwood which originally covered Bredon had been largely cleared, giving rise to a network of small fields orientated on the hillfort. The parish is also rich in archaeological remains from the Roman Period (43–410 AD), revealing a continuous history of settlement and farming.

Modern Bredon has its roots in the Anglo-Saxon period (c. 500 – 1066), when c. 716 Æthelbald, King of Mercia 716–757, gave land to his kinsman Eanwulf to found a monastery. For some time, the manor of Bredon continued under an abbot of its own, but by 844, it had become the property of the Bishop of Worcester. It remained part of the Worcester Monastic Estate until the Reformation. Reference to these monastic roots still exists in the names of some local properties, including Monks Close and St Peters Cottage.

Bredon's name evolved during the Saxon period, deriving from *bree* (Celtic for hill) and *don* (Anglo-Saxon for hill).

### **3.2.2. High & Late Middle Ages, 1066 – 1500**

From the Norman Conquest (1066) to the end of the Late Medieval Period (1500), the parish was governed under the feudal system. The manor was the basic unit of society, granted by the king to the lord of the manor in return for knight's service. In Bredon, the manor was held by the Bishop of Worcester, who granted rights and sub-holdings to villagers, in return for labour, produce, or rent. These would have included the right to cultivate strips in the open fields and to graze the common pasture.

The Bishop of Worcester, maintained a summer residence, park and fisheries on the site of the first monastery, and the medieval village developed around these church buildings. Following the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the manor passed to the Crown.

There were major Benedictine monastic foundations at Tewkesbury, Pershore and Evesham, with a significant amount of traffic passing between them. Bredon was located directly on the route between Tewkesbury and the abbeys of Pershore and Evesham. The direct route between Tewkesbury and Evesham, over Bredon Hill by way of Westmancote, would have been particularly important when periodic flooding made the vale roads impassable. The Pershore road originally ran north-eastwards from Chains Corner, between Bredon Barn and the church, before continuing along Dock Lane. The Old Rectory and Church Rooms are aligned with this route.

The historic core of Bredon as we see it today retains many of the features of the medieval village. The series of linear plots fronting onto Main Road, Church Street, and Back Lane are suggestive of a planned farming settlement, established by the Bishop and worked by a peasant tenantry.

### **3.2.3. 1500–1650**

During the Tudor and Stuart periods, individual houses, cottages and farm buildings were loosely scattered along roads and lanes with no particular uniformity of spacing between buildings. Some buildings sat immediately on the road with gardens at their rear; others were set back with gardens extending to the front, sides and rear. There was no consistent building line, though most buildings tended to fall within 10 metres of the road.

### **3.2.4. 1650–1850**

The population grew steadily during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, before undergoing a rapid expansion during the years following the agricultural revolution (see Section 2.2.3). In 1801, the population of the parish (including Bredon's Hardwick, Kinsham, Westmancote, Mitton and Cutsdean) was recorded as 749. By 1851, this had increased to 1,163.

During the period, Cotswold stone became the dominant building material and the use of timber in external walls became uncommon. The change was driven by a combination of factors. Mature oak for building was increasingly scarce and expensive. After the Fire of London in 1666, wooden buildings were portrayed as dangerous and outmoded. Conversely, technological advances meant that limestone was becoming cheaper to quarry and cut. Most of the limestone used in Bredon would have been cut from one of the many (now disused) quarries on Bredon Hill.

By 1811, the date of the Bredon Inclosure map, the grouping of houses, roads and open spaces had developed into the pattern that is still recognisable today within the Conservation Area. Houses were loosely scattered along the lanes with no uniformity of spacing. They were most densely spaced on Church Street. Most dwellings sat immediately on the road, or just back from it, with gardens at the rear. Others were set back with gardens extending to the front, sides and rear. There was no firm building line, although nearly all houses fell within 10 metres of the road. Most dwellings retained a large close for keeping animals and growing vegetables. The main exception was the north side of Back Lane, where houses were confined to a series of narrow linear plots. Farm buildings tended to be clustered around rectangular yards.

### **3.2.5. 1850–1900**

By 1881, the population had fallen back slightly from its mid-century peak to 1,092. During this period, farming and horticulture continued to support many village families, while a variety of trades provided livings for the many of the remainder. These included brewing, blacksmithing, silk bleaching, stocking making, tailoring, glove making, shoemaking, stone masonry, wheelwrighting, cooping and carpentry. Many people were employed in domestic service.

The Birmingham and Gloucester Railway opened a station in Bredon in 1841. The railway provided a boost to the fruit and vegetable growing sectors. By the time the first edition of the Ordnance Survey was published in 1886, the village was surrounded by orchards and allotments, and much produce was being despatched by rail to the rapidly expanding cities.

### **3.2.6. Post-1900**

The pre-war years were characterised by major demographic changes. There was a very sharp decline in the number people working in agriculture, and the loss of trades to nearby towns and cities. The population, however, remained relatively stable. It was recorded as 1,070 in 1901, and 1,028 in 1951, by which time Cutsdean and Mitton Manor were no longer part of the parish.



Figure 7. Bredon Station prior to its closure in 1965.

Bredon changed dramatically during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when, within a few decades, new developments increased the number of houses in the village by around seven times. The bulk of this was private market housing, in a process driven by developers and local landowners. This stands in contrast to most of the Bredon Hill villages, where growth has been modest, and largely in response to local need. The expansion eastwards was somewhat limited by the fact that the Kemerton Estate, the principal landowner in the parish east of the railway, did not develop any of its land for housing.

The first large development of 88 houses began in 1953 with the construction of Queensmead (the section east of Wellington Lodge Close). This was followed in the 1960s with the commencement of the St Giles development on College Road.

Light industrial development began in 1953 with the establishment of a manufactory in Oilcroft Orchard immediately west of the railway line. The construction of 17 light industrial units at Station Drive, on the site of the former station, followed some twenty years later.

The 1970s and 1980s saw a very rapid growth in the residential population of the village, with the addition of approximately 600 new homes in Waterloo (Blenheim Drive estate), St Giles and elsewhere, located on former orchards, allotments and farmland. This rapid expansion was facilitated by Worcestershire County Council's *Bredon Village Plan* (1971-1981). However, this new housing was not matched by new retail facilities or adequate employment sites. Bredon increasingly became a dormitory community, relying on local towns for most of its employment and facilities.

Since 1990, the rate of growth has slowed. Vallenders Road (20 dwellings) in the mid-1990s and Grange Field Road (24 dwellings) in 2007 have been the only major housing developments. However, in 2011 planning permission was granted for 28 new dwellings south of Blenheim Drive. The number of business and retail outlets has declined since 1990 with the conversion of employment sites to residential uses (see Section 3.11). Brensham Court, on the site of a former petrol station, is the most significant example.

### **3.3. Architecture, by period**

#### **3.3.1. Buildings of the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman & Saxon periods, 2500 BC -1066 AD**

The remains of a Late Bronze Age (c. 1200 – 700 BC) settlement of boat-shaped and D-shaped buildings with thatched roofs and wattle walls were discovered north of Kemerton Lake, 1994–96. From the Roman Period (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century AD), the remains of a number of enclosures have been recorded, along with an important villa south of Bredon's Norton.

There are no obvious remains of the Saxon monastic buildings, though St Giles's Church and The Old Mansion may incorporate elements of these earlier structures.

#### **3.3.2. Buildings of the High & Late Middle Ages, 1066–1500**

The earliest surviving building in the village is the parish church of St Giles. It is built largely in the Norman, Early English and Decorated styles. A substantial part of the nave, the north porch and the western tower arch date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with significant additions during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries – the most visible being a tall, elegant, octagonal spire, dating from 1300–1350. This spire has been made famous by the poet, John Masefield.



Figure 8. Bredon Barn, a 14<sup>th</sup> century threshing barn belonging to the National Trust.

To the west of the church is the late 14<sup>th</sup> century Bredon Barn, a former threshing barn measuring approximately 40 metres by 12 metres. It has an enormous steep pitched roof covered in limestone tiles. Walls are of rubble masonry, divided into 9 bays by oak posts on stone plinths forming aisles, and carrying the open timber roof. The barn was badly damaged by fire in 1980. Now restored, it is in the care of the National Trust.

In 1086 a corn mill was also recorded in Bredon, possibly at Mill End, though no sign remains of this building.

### 3.3.3. Buildings of the period 1500-1650

#### ***Vernacular buildings***

Most of the surviving buildings dating from this period can be classed as vernacular. These were functional with few stylistic pretensions. They typically had simple rectangular plans with limited spans, and were usually orientated so that their ridges were parallel to the road, although some were perpendicular. They were moderately sized, mainly either single storey plus attic, or two storeys in height. Gable walls, external chimney stacks, and the plinths to the timber walls were typically made of local limestone rubble (see Appendix 4.2). Front and back walls were constructed from a box timber frame of sawn oak, interspersed with wattle and daub panels. The panels were limewashed (see Appendix 4.5) giving them a warm stone-like appearance – as can be seen at the John Moore Museum in Tewkesbury (in later centuries, many of these panels were filled in with bricks, while timbers and panels were painted black and white). Roofs were usually steeply pitched and thatched – the cheapest roof covering but vulnerable to fire. A number of buildings in Bredon still have thatched roofs. Others, which were originally thatched but were subsequently tiled, have retained their characteristic steep pitches. Gutters were not fitted to thatched roofs, giving rise to wide overhanging eaves. Where they could be afforded, windows had limestone mullions and decorative hood moulds. Doors were plain and vertically planked, or occasionally part glazed, with modest porches sometimes added later.



Figure 9. Vernacular buildings from the period 1500–1650 (foreground).

#### ***Other buildings***

The Old Rectory is an example of a more prestigious building dating from the period. This is a large, irregular house, the nucleus of which dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is built predominantly from limestone with a stone tiled roof. At either end are hipped, two-storey gable brick projections, which are later additions. A projecting gabled porch is faced in ashlar with an early 17<sup>th</sup> century classical entrance.



Figure 10. The Old Rectory, largely dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **3.3.4. Buildings of the period 1650–1850**

#### ***Vernacular buildings***

Vernacular buildings of this period were modestly sized, like their timber framed predecessors, but generally with a greater degree of symmetry and regularity. They typically had rectangular plans, orientated with their ridges parallel to the road. They were mainly of two storeys and had limestone rubble walls (see Appendix 4.2). A minority were constructed from red brick. The humblest structures were devoid of ornament, whereas more elaborate buildings had dressed lintels or hood moulds over doors and windows. Typically, roofs were covered with handmade reddish-brown clay tiles, although Welsh slate was also used once the railways began to make this lightweight material more cheaply available during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Roofs had varied pitches of around 40° to 50°, usually with moderately projecting gable verges and eaves. Several had limestone gable copings projecting above the roof surface. Windows would generally have been timber framed, with smith-made, iron casements glazed with small leaded panes or rectangular panes separated by glazing bars. Typically, they had hand-forged handles and spring stays. Eaves-mounted gable dormers were common while skylights were almost entirely absent. Houses tended to have centrally-placed, panelled front doors – occasionally with small, open or enclosed porches. Buildings were typically fitted with cast iron gutters and downpipes, many of which still survive. Decorative cover moulds were sometimes fitted around chimneys at the junction with the roof. Non-residential buildings, such as barns were functional, and devoid of anything but simple dressings around windows and doorways. Most of the farm buildings and malt houses date from this period.

Bredon's vernacular architecture of this period is fairly typical of other northern Cotswold villages, albeit with a greater use of brick, and only occasional use of limestone tiles. This latter is probably due to the fact that the limestone strata on Bredon Hill are not well-suited to making roof tiles, and that the distant transportation of materials was expensive.



Figure 11. A vernacular building typical of the period 1650–1850.

The prevalence of Cotswold stone walls is one of old Bredon's most significant characteristics, providing a considerable degree of visual unity to the historic areas of the village. The majority of these are of dry stone construction. While stone boundary walls can be hard to date, many surviving walls were probably built or rebuilt during this period. A few walls, notably the one forming the boundary to the Old Rectory, are built partly or wholly of brick. Typically, walls in the village are of stock height, allowing views over them into gardens and closes. Few field gates have survived, but both hardwood five bar gates and wrought iron gates would have been common.

The Reed's Close almshouses in Main Road are a noteworthy example of a Cotswold vernacular building. Founded in 1696 by Catherine Reed, they are constructed from dressed limestone with characteristic mullioned two-light windows.

### ***Other buildings***

There are several non-vernacular buildings dating from this period. These tend to be larger buildings with more decorative features, often of two-and-a-half or three storeys. In the main, these follow various classical and revivalist styles (although sometimes they lag behind the national trend by many years). An example is Bredon Manor, which dates mainly from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (around an earlier core), and is built in a Georgian classical style. The gates to Bredon Manor are said to have been made out of two canons. The limestone hall at Bredon Hancock's School, dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, is built in the Gothic Revival manner. Despite their disparate styles these buildings are visually unified by their Cotswold stone construction.

### **3.3.5. Buildings of the period 1850–1900**

Comparison between the Inclosure Map of 1811 and the various editions of the Ordnance Survey Map of Gloucestershire (first edition 1884–86) shows that little new development occurred in Bredon during this period. The exceptions were a small group of houses and farm buildings



scattered along the east side of Cheltenham Road, from Waterloo Corner to Waterloo Gardens. These date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and are mostly brick-built in brick in a vernacular style. Wellington Lodge and Bredon Lodge both date from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and are brick-built in different Victorian revivalist styles. A number of other buildings were altered and extended to accommodate the changing needs of their occupants, and many of the surviving brick outhouses date from this time.

### **3.3.6. Buildings post-1900**

Nearly all 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings have been constructed using standardised, non-local building materials and styles. These buildings tend to be typical of development occurring in towns and suburbs across the UK at their respective dates. The large majority of buildings were constructed during the 1970s and 1980s. The predominant materials are brown brick, red brick, rendered blockwork and synthetic stone. Windows are often large with a strong horizontal emphasis. The use of fascia and barge boards is common. Synthetic materials are also widespread, with doors and windows often constructed from uPVC, and roofs from concrete tiles. Many houses have integral or attached garaging. A few 20<sup>th</sup> century houses have continued the local tradition of dry stone boundary walls, but evergreen hedges and panel fences are the norm.

Conigree in Dock Lane (1935–7) is a rare example of distinguished 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, described by Pevsner as “*an early Modern house set high above tacky later development... with entirely horizontal emphasis*”.



Figure 12. Housing dating from the mid-1990s.

In addition to new buildings, a number of old buildings have been redeveloped. These include the former farm buildings at Waterloo Corner and the former bakery behind Drapers. A typical feature of conversions is the use of skylights, which are noticeably absent pre-1900. Many dwellings in the village have been extended during the last half-century. Some buildings have been extended more than once, with the result that the combined extensions are significantly larger than the original dwelling.

### **3.4. Bredon's vernacular style**

Architectural historians primarily use “vernacular” to describe buildings which are distinctive to a particular locality. In other words, it is possible to determine a building's origin from its visual characteristics. Vernacular architecture does not belong to national or international architectural styles (such as Gothic or Regency) since by definition it is local. “Traditional” architecture can have a number of meanings, but in this VDS refers to built forms common before 1900.

The Cotswolds, a long outcrop of oolitic limestone stretching from Bath to South Warwickshire and encompassing Bredon Hill, give rise to some of the most distinctive vernacular architecture in the country. Throughout the Cotswolds, limestone is the dominant construction material and it is this which lends buildings such iconic recognisability.

Bredon falls within the northern Cotswolds vernacular tradition and provides examples of two main architectural types. One group comprises those buildings dating from 1500–1650 having a part-timber, part-limestone construction and thatched roofs. This group is described in more detail in Section 3.3.3. The second group comprises buildings dating from 1650–1850 having limestone masonry walls and plain tiled roofs. This group is described in detail in Section 3.3.4.

Analysis of the built environment reveals that, despite some modern development, a majority of buildings in the historic core of Bredon use traditional and vernacular building forms. Of approximately 150 properties in the Conservation Area, around 100 (67%) were built pre-1850 and can be described as historic. The majority of these are constructed partly or wholly from locally quarried limestone and are classified as Cotswold vernacular. Of the remaining historic buildings, a number have a Cotswold flavour, in that they are constructed largely from Cotswold materials, using non-vernacular architectural styles.

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### **3.5. Affordable & social housing**

Bredon Parish currently provides 108 affordable and social housing units, with planning permission recently granted for a further 8 units south of Blenheim Drive.

6 dwellings (1 bedroom) in the Reeds Close almshouses are reserved for older, single persons of need. These are managed by a charitable trust.

102 dwellings are currently managed by Evesham & Pershore Housing Association Ltd. (part of Rooftop Housing Group). This total breaks down as follows: 34 houses (2-3 bedrooms); 23 bungalows (1-2 bedrooms); 2 flats (1-2 bedrooms); 3 sheltered bungalows (2 bedrooms); and 12 sheltered flats (2 bedrooms); and 24 covenanted freehold bungalows (2 bedrooms).

These properties provide accommodation for residents of all ages, held on Secured or Assured Tenancies. A number of other dwellings formally owned by the local authority have been purchased by tenants under the ‘Right to Buy’ or ‘Right to Acquire’ schemes.

Wychavon District Council maintains the Home Choice Plus Register (Common Housing Register) of those seeking social rented housing or low cost housing. When a housing association property becomes vacant, tenants are chosen primarily according to need, with the strength of their local connections also taken into account. The register's database is not searchable by local connection. However, it is searchable by place of current residence, and at the time of writing (February 2011) there were 13 households in Bredon seeking social housing.



Figure 13. Reeds Close almshouses, founded in 1696.

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### **3.6. Gardens & open spaces**

#### **3.6.1. Gardens**

Much of the special interest and character of Bredon, particularly in the Conservation Area, derives from the undeveloped open spaces around houses. These spaces provide very tangible evidence of the origins of the village, as well as allowing clear views of historic buildings. From the High Medieval period onwards, gardens, messuages, closes, and orchards evolved alongside buildings. Often, the same close or smallholding has been associated with a property for hundreds of years. Today, the developed part of the Conservation Area (excluding the marinas, the grounds fronting the river, Chains Corner paddock, Glebe Field, the churchyard, School Field, and the field west of Oak Lane) covers 17.5 hectares (43 acres). This gives historic Bredon a low building density, with around 150 properties having an average plot size of 1,170 m<sup>2</sup> (0.29 acre).

Gardens tend to be smaller outside the Conservation Area, but housing remains at low densities compared with urban areas. Nonetheless, gardens are often visually prominent from roads and other public spaces, and therefore make a major contribution to the visual amenity of the village.

### **3.6.2. Orchards & trees and woods**

Some of Bredon's most important open spaces are remnants of the traditional orchards which once almost entirely surrounded the village. There are six surviving orchards within or adjacent to the Development Boundary. These are: Grange Farm orchard, Bredon Fruit Farm, the two large orchards either side of the railway immediately north-east of the Dell, the orchard strips at Benshams, and Upstones Orchard. Many houses have been developed on former orchards and some gardens retain veteran fruit trees.

Bredon village is characterised by a number of large deciduous trees. The most important of these in visual terms are: the row of English oaks along the north side of Kemerton Road; the English oaks bordering the Westmancote–Bredon's Norton road; the row of trees along the west boundary of Bredon Lodge; and the mature trees in the gardens of Bredon House, the Manor and the Rectory. A number of exotic specimen trees have also been planted throughout the village. Typically, these do not contribute to the rural or historic visual character of the parish, particularly where these trees are coniferous. One exception is the mature Wellingtonia opposite Bredon Lodge, which is an important feature.

Since 1970 three large areas of native broadleaf woodland have been planted on the edges of the village, forming an important part of Bredon's green space (see Section 2.3.2). These are the plantations north of the Red House and The Dell; Benshams Wood (south of Blenheim Drive); and Kemerton Woods (south and east of Queensmead).

### **3.6.3. Small holdings**

Until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of the parish was given over to small, privately-owned allotments for growing market-garden produce. The Benshams Allotments, immediately south of Waterloo (or 'Blenheim Drive estate'), is the only visually prominent remnant of these once extensive smallholdings, and constitutes an important amenity.

### **3.6.4. River Avon, sports & recreational areas**

The river, the Playing Field and other recreation areas provide some of the key open spaces in and around Bredon. These are described in more detail in Section 3.10.4.

### **3.6.5. Key open spaces by type**

Bredon's most important open spaces can be categorised according to the type of public access they provide, as follows.

#### ***Open spaces with full public access:***

- roads, verges and rights of way;
- River Avon;
- Bredon Sports Ground and recreation area;
- Cherry Orchard playground;
- St Giles's churchyard and gardens;
- Bredon Dock;
- Waterloo (or Blenheim Drive estate) Green;

- Queensmead Green;
- Brasenose Green;
- Obelisk Green.

***Open spaces with partial or occasional public access:***

- School Field and the school grounds;
- Glebe Field;
- Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and woodland walks;
- Bredon Cricket club;
- Westmancote rugby pitches;
- Perwell Vale, crossed by Footpath BX-517.

***Open spaces with no access, which are visually prominent from public areas:***

- the paddock north of Chains Corner;
- the fields west and east of the Tewkesbury Road, at the western entrance to the village;
- the River Avon frontage, from Bredon Manor to Bredon Marina;
- the gardens of Bredon Manor, The Old Rectory, Prior's Garden and The Old Mansion;
- Grange Farm orchard, at the junction of Main Road and Farm Lane;
- the garden of Bredon House;
- Mayville Field on Kemerton Road;
- the field immediately north of Queensmead;
- the field surrounding The Moretons;
- the garden of Oranje House;
- Long Furlong allotments, between Oranje House and Westmancote;
- Benshams allotments / orchards, marking the Cheltenham Road entrance to the village;
- Upstones Orchard and Kemerton Woods.



Figure 14. Obelisk Green and Glebe Field.

### 3.7. Key views

An important characteristic of Bredon is the number and quality of views it commands over surrounding farmland towards distant hills and vales. Also important are the views of the village itself. Some of the key views are:

- The panoramic southern views over the village from the upper part of the parish, towards the Malverns, the Cotswold escarpment, Oxenton Hill, Tewkesbury Abbey, Severn Vale and Gloucester Cathedral – from Westmancote and Footpaths (BX) 501, 503, 511, 513;
- views of Bredon Hill – from Cheltenham Road, Moreton Lane, Main Road, Kemerton Road and Footpaths 557, 527, 512, 529;
- views towards Bredon and Bredon Hill – from Tewkesbury Road, and Footpaths 530, 531;
- views towards the Cotswold escarpment – from Westmancote and Footpaths 509, 513, 527, 524, 529, 549;
- views west over the River Avon and Twyning Ham, towards the Malvern Hills – from Dock Lane, Tewkesbury Road, and Footpaths 512, 530;
- view into Benshams Allotments – from Cheltenham Road;
- view over the fields west of Tewkesbury Road – from Chains Corner;
- view east across Kemerton Park – from Footpaths 524, 525;
- view over Twyning Ham towards St Giles’s Church spire – from M5 Motorway;
- view of St Giles’s spire – from permissive paths in Kemerton Woods and Footpath 527;
- view of St Giles’s Church across Glebe Field – from Main Road;
- views along Church Street in both directions.



Figure 15. View over farmland towards Bredon Hill from Kemerton Road (at Waterloo Corner).

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### 3.8. Transport, roads & paths

#### 3.8.1. Roads & verges

Many of the roads and paths in Bredon are ancient. Part of Cheltenham Road, cutting through the south of the parish, is thought to be a pre-Roman ‘salt road’ from the salt workings at Droitwich.

Footpath 523 in the north of the parish was originally a road running between Westmancote and Evesham (via Elmley Castle) and is probably of Saxon origin. It appeared as a public road on maps as late as the 1870s, and was the most direct route between the great Benedictine abbeys of Tewkesbury and Evesham. The Bredon–Tewkesbury road, which has long been the main thoroughfare of the village, was turnpiked as a toll road by Act of Parliament in 1725/6. The Bredon–Eckington Bridge road and the Bredon–Overbury road were both turnpiked in 1756. Cheltenham Road between ‘Oak Field’ in Bredon and ‘Isabel’s Elm’ (200 metres north of Aston Cross) was turnpiked in 1826.

Today the village is linked to Highways Agency road network. It is 3.9 km (2.4 miles) by road to the A46 Trunk Road and 6.6 km (4.1 miles) to Junction 9 of the M5 Motorway. The motorway itself passes 210 metres from the western edge of the village and high levels of road noise are experienced across much of the village. The national speed limit (60 mph) operates on Tewkesbury Road and Moreton Lane (both B4080), and Cheltenham Road (B4079). A 40 mph speed limit operates on Kemerton Road, while a 30 mph speed limit operates on all other roads within the village.

All public roads in the village are maintained by the Local Highway Authority, Worcestershire County Council. Minor roads are resurfaced with tar spray and chippings. Pavements are generally made from tarmac edged with kerbstones. In the Conservation Area, kerbs are predominantly made from stone; elsewhere they are mostly concrete. The footways (paths forming part of the roadway, but separated from the carriageway by verges) alongside Kemerton Road and Cheltenham Road are tarmac. Outside the Bredon Development Boundary, roads are generally bordered by rough verges without kerb stones, characteristic of rural areas. Inside the village, verges are generally tightly mown by the Parish Council or by neighbouring residents.

### **3.8.2. Congestion & road safety**

Road congestion is a very serious problem around Church Street, where Drapers shop-Post Office, Bredon Hancock’s First School, Bredon Playgroup, St Giles’s Church, and the Fox & Hounds Inn are all located. Peak congestion coincides with school drop-off and collection. Parents tend to park near the school or playgroup in order to accompany their children onto the premises. There is a limited amount of on-street parking in Church Street, and cars are required to park in the Fox & Hounds car park, Back Lane and Reeds Close, where they can cause an obstruction. When cars are parked on both sides of the road, Church Street is reduced to a single carriageway. Church Street and Dock Lane form a cul-de-sac and vehicles must turn near the church, or travel round Back Lane, which is mostly single-track with few passing places. Problems are aggravated by large vehicles making deliveries to Drapers, which regularly block Church Street for significant periods. This can be a particular problem for people trying to leave their homes in Dock Lane and Back Lane.

The junction between Church Street and Main Road is extremely acute, with poor visibility. There have been a number of accidents here in recent years. Since 2007, there have also been two serious accidents on the Cheltenham Road near Kinsham. Some of the pavements in the village are very narrow, giving rise to safety concerns where pedestrians are in close proximity to fast-moving vehicles. The main areas of concern are Chains Corner and Main Road (especially close to the junctions with Church Street and Moreton Lane). The risk to pedestrians is compounded by poor visibility in some locations.



Figure 16. Morning congestion in Church Street, near the junction with Main Road and Back Lane.

### **3.8.3. Parking**

There are three public car parks in the village, all on Main Road within 150 metres of the Village Hall – two adjacent to the Playing Field, and one on opposite the Bowls Club. Together they have the capacity for approximately 84 cars. At busy times, parking overflows onto Blenheim Drive. Bredon Hill Surgery, Westmancote Nurseries, Stanway Screens, and the business units in Station Drive each have their own dedicated car parking.

### **3.8.4. Bus services**

The Cheltenham–Tewkesbury–Evesham bus service (540 / 545) operates throughout the day from Monday to Saturday. The Bredon's Norton–Tewkesbury service (395) operates once each way on Wednesdays. The Tewkesbury–Eckington–Pershore service (562) operates once each way on Wednesdays. The Pershore–Cheltenham service (575) operates once each way on Fridays. There are no late-evening or Sunday bus services. Extensive cuts in the County Council subsidy for the bus service have been announced, and it is not clear at the time of writing (February 2011) if these services will persist.

### **3.8.5. Voluntary transport service & car sharing**

A voluntary service providing transport for medical appointments, shopping, and social activities is maintained by Tewkesbury Borough Community Transport. A car sharing scheme is run by Worcestershire County Council. See Appendix 2 for contact details.

### **3.8.6. Paths**

Five public footpaths originate in the village, connecting to a wider network of footpaths and bridle paths in the parish. Worcestershire County Council is legally responsible for maintaining the surface of these paths, including bridges, and keeping them free of overgrowth. They have the power to require owners to cut back overhanging growth from the side of paths. Farmers have a duty to prevent crops (other than grass) from making paths difficult to find or follow, and for restoring paths that have been ploughed so that they are reasonably convenient to use within two weeks.<sup>1</sup> Few paths are entirely suitable for disabled users due to the uneven nature of the terrain.



In addition to public rights of way, a series of permissive paths around Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve are maintained by Kemerton Conservation Trust volunteers and the Kemerton Estate.

I. Ramblers Association ([www.ramblers.org](http://www.ramblers.org))

### **3.8.7. River**

Bredon is situated on the River Avon, which flows into the River Severn 5 km (3.1 miles) south-west of the village at Tewkesbury. From earliest times, the river has provided an important communications route. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was used for the transportation of commodities such as grain and bricks. With the growth of rail and road transport, the river's commercial uses declined and only one barge was still in use between Tewkesbury and Pershore by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. A series of river works were undertaken during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, including dredging and the rebuilding of sluices, locks and weirs. The waterway was re-opened in 1962 and now falls under the administration of the Avon Navigation Trust. Today, the river is used almost exclusively for leisure purposes (see Section 3.10.4).

### **3.8.8. Rail**

The Birmingham and Gloucester railway, one of the oldest railways in the world, was constructed during the 1830s and 1840s. It passed through the centre of Bredon in a cutting 60 metres west of Moreton Lane. A station opened in Bredon in 1841. The line was once a major freight route, although this function has now largely been replaced by the M5, M6 and M1 motorways. The station was closed in 1965 under the Beeching Axe, and the station premises were converted into a business park.

Today, Bredon is located on the Bristol–Birmingham Cross-Country Route between Ashchurch and Bromsgrove stations. The nearest station is Ashchurch-for-Tewkesbury, which is 6.1 km (3.8 miles) by road from the centre of Bredon.

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## **3.9. Utilities & drainage**

### **3.9.1. Gas & electricity**

The Shropshire Worcestershire & Staffordshire Electric Power Co. first installed the Bredon to Ashton-under-Hill electricity supply in the 1920s. Much of today's supply is via E.ON's extensive network of High Voltage (11kV) overhead lines and underground network. Mains Gas, first available following nationalisation and the laying of an integration main linking Cheltenham to Pershore via Tewkesbury, is presently available through an underground distribution system owned by Wales and West Utilities.

### **3.9.2. Street lighting**

Three street lights exist in the village on Main Road; two near the Village Hall, and one at the junction with Moreton Lane.

### **3.9.3. Telephone & broadband**

The village is supplied with telephone and broadband services via BT's Bredon exchange (01684 772 / 773) located on Main Road. Much of the supply is from overhead lines which are visually prominent throughout the village, although increasingly households are obtaining communications services via satellite. Broadband speeds are low compared to the national average. There is mobile phone coverage across most of the parish; however black spots exist for some networks.

### **3.9.4. Water & sewerage**

The first piped water was supplied to the village in 1896 from springs on Bredon Hill in Kemerton parish. A public water supply was later provided by Pershore Rural District Council. Today, houses are supplied with mains water and sewerage by Severn Trent Plc.

### **3.9.5. Drainage & flooding**

The River Avon floods several times a year, most frequently during winter. This affects low-lying riverside areas. The impact is most seriously felt in Dock Lane, where floods regularly close the road, cutting off 20 dwellings and the two marinas.

Cheltenham Road (B4079) becomes flooded after heavy rain in two locations south of the village where the winter water table is very high and where drainage ditches pass underneath the road. During the storms of July 2007 flooding affected many properties in the village, most often where culverts and drains were of insufficient capacity to remove exceptional quantities of water.



Figure 17. Flooding from the River Avon is a frequent occurrence in Dock Lane.

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## **3.10. Services, facilities & recreation**

### **3.10.1. Shops & general services**

The parish is served by several retail premises, including Drapers shop and Post Office, and a farm shop. Three further retail premises are currently unused. Several supermarkets offer delivery services to the village. Other services include a mobile library, bed-and-breakfast accommodation, a part-time veterinary clinic, a cattery, a hairdressing salon, two pubs (serving food), and St Giles's Church (Anglican).

### 3.10.2. Health

Bredon Hill Surgery, on Main Road, is a general medical practice and dispensary serving approximately 5,100 patients (in 2011). It currently has 5 doctors, 4 nursing staff, 4 dispensers, and 7 administration staff, along with 4 other attached community staff. The practice admits patients from Bredon Parish and the surrounding towns and villages, including Ashchurch and Northway in the neighbouring district of Tewkesbury Borough (Gloucestershire). Residents of Tewkesbury town are not currently eligible to register with the practice as new patients.

### 3.10.3. Education

Bredon Hancock's School was founded by a codicil to the will of William Hancock in 1718 as a Free School, or Blue Coat School, originally for the clothing and education of twelve boys, with the master being a member of the Church of England not in ecclesiastical orders.

Today, Bredon Hancock's First School is larger than the average sized first school. It seeks to admit up to 30 pupils per class and had 156 pupils in December 2010.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the school was expanded from five classes to six, increasing capacity to 180 pupils. This provides one separate class per year group, but has placed some strain on space, with the library having to be co-opted as a classroom. In the last two years, the school has been operating at capacity or near capacity. In 2009, there were 44 applicants for 30 spaces, and children from the parish were required to enrol at schools in other towns and villages. In 2010, there were 29 new pupils from a maximum possible intake of 30. The intake is forecast to be under capacity for the academic year starting in September 2011. The school's Ofsted inspection in 2010 rated it as "Good".

1. In Autumn 2010, Reception had 1 space, Year 1 had 0 spaces; Year 2 had 7 spaces; Year 3 had 2 spaces; Year 4 had 9 spaces and Year 5 had 5 spaces.



Figure 18. The supervised daily 'Walking Bus' to Bredon Hancock's First School.

Bredon Playgroup is a pre-school nursery for children over two operating in the Church Rooms. It has the capacity for up to 20 children per session. Its Ofsted inspection in 2009 rated it as "Outstanding". The Playgroup has operated at capacity for the last two years, and some pre-school children from Bredon have been required to enrol in nurseries in other towns and villages.

Bredon Forest School provides an outdoor 'classroom' for younger children, focussing on fun and learning in the natural environment. It is located in secluded private woodland within the parish.

There is no secondary or further education establishment within Bredon. Many older children travel daily to Bredon Hill Middle School in Ashton under Hill (13 km / 8 miles), and Prince Henry's High School in Evesham (20 km / 12 miles). Worcestershire County Council operates a school coach service to these schools from several locations within the parish.

#### **3.10.4. Sports & recreation facilities**

Bredon has outstanding sporting facilities. The Sports Ground adjacent to the Village Hall covers approximately 3.6 Ha (8.8 acres). It comprises four full-size sports pitches, children's play equipment, changing rooms and clubhouse facilities. In 2011, plans were well-advanced for the provision of the new and improved play and recreational facilities, under the leadership of Bredon Community Play & Recreation. The planned improvements include constructing a new children's play area and a multi-use games area (MUGA).

In addition, Bredon has a Tennis Club (with four courts), a Bowls Club, a Soccer Club and a Rugby Club – all located on or adjacent to the Sports Ground. It also has a Cricket Club and two further rugby pitches at Westmancote. Croft Farm Waterpark in Bredon's Hardwick provides a number of other leisure and sporting facilities. There is a small children's playground in Cherry Orchard.

Bredon has a long tradition of communal recreational activities. These include Cubs, Brownies, Women's Institute, walking, cycling, dancing and nature conservation volunteering. In most years there is a village event or fair.



Figure 19. Bredon Sports Ground, with the Tennis Club in the background.

The principle parish recreational facility is Bredon Village Hall. The Parish Council purchased the hall from a charitable trust in 2009, a century after Miss Woodhall of Norton Park placed at the disposal of the ladies of the village “a pretty little cottage” to be used “as a meeting place for the interchange of ideas upon the various social and national problems of the day.” Today, the hall is managed by the Parish Council and provides approximately 650 m<sup>2</sup> (7,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) of space, including kitchen and lavatory facilities. It plays host, throughout the week, to a variety of clubs, societies and social events. It can be rented as a public venue.

The River Avon offers important recreational opportunities including angling and boating. Bredon Marina provides 80 private, non-residential moorings, and the Old Rectory Meadow Moorings provide a further 24 moorings. The Severn Sailing Club is based at Bredon's Norton.

### **3.10.5. Waste disposal**

Wychavon District Council provides an alternate-weekly recycling / refuse wheelee bin collection service. Wingmoor Farm Landfill at Stoke Orchard (11 km / 7 miles) is the nearest public tip and Household Recycling Centre.

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### **3.11. Employment**

The parish has a large working-age population of approximately 1,700 people. Of these, only a small minority work within the parish, while the overwhelming majority commute to centres of employment in neighbouring towns.

The main sources of employment are Bredon Hancock's First School, Bredon Hill Surgery, Westmancote Nurseries, Croft Farm Waterpark, Stanway Screens, Bredon Playgroup, Drapers shop and Post Office, two pubs, Bredon Marina, several agricultural holdings. There are 17 business units in Station Drive, whose occupants include 3 small manufacturing companies, a printing company, and a heating installation company. All of the units are currently occupied.

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### **3.12. Sustainability**

A Village Facilities and Rural Transport Study was undertaken in 2008 as part of the evidence-gathering work for the *South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy*. This now forms part of the evidence base of the SWDP (see Section 1.3.6). The study aims to establish the relative sustainability of villages and rank them according to category. Bredon has been placed in Category I (the most sustainable category). The qualifying criteria for this category are “four Key Services and score at least 16 points in the Village Facilities Survey. In addition they have “medium / high” levels of public transport”.

A key measure of a settlement's sustainability, under emerging policy, is the amount of private car use it generates. The higher the car use, the lower the sustainability. By this measure most villages – even those in higher categories – are relatively unsustainable compared with urban centres. Bredon scores particularly poorly by this test. There are few employment opportunities in the village and most residents commute to urban centres for work. The large majority of residents also drive to the shops and recreational facilities of Tewkesbury, Bishop's Cleeve, Cheltenham and Evesham. Bredon Playgroup operates at full capacity and cannot meet greater demand from Bredon residents, requiring parents to drive to nursery schools in other towns and villages. It is unlikely that private car use can be significantly reduced through the provision of more frequent bus services, which are already quite well provided (see Section 3.8.4). However, the converse is not true, and it is highly likely that cutting bus services would result in significant increases in car use.

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## 4. LIKES & DISLIKES OF RESIDENTS

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### 4.1. Village consultations

While it is acknowledged that the good and bad characteristics of Bredon are somewhat in the eye of the beholder, this VDS has engaged deeply with residents to identify commonly held viewpoints where they exist. Three separate consultative exercises inform this document – a questionnaire supporting the Parish Plan; a Village Design Questionnaire (see Appendix 3); and a public event held in the Village Hall to publicise and invite feedback on the draft VDS. The *Parish Magazine* and parish website<sup>1</sup> have both been used to publicise the VDS and invite participation from all residents of Bredon, Bredon's Norton, Westmancote, Kinsham, and Bredon's Hardwick. In addition, the members of the VDS drafting committee and the Parish Council, all of whom have helped shape this document, represent a wide cross-section of the community.

Overwhelmingly, residents have emphasised the positive aspects of Bredon, but they also draw attention to some problems and particular concerns for the future. These have been summarised below as positive and negative features.

1. [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish) (select Bredon)

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### 4.2. Positive features

This section aims to identify the features which epitomise the positive aspects of Bredon. The picture that emerges is of a friendly, safe community, which prizes its village status and rural setting. The historic core of the village is noted for its exceptional historic buildings and mellow Cotswold architecture. The village is set within an outstanding landscape, and the parish commands exceptional views, particularly from the slopes of Bredon Hill. The village has excellent sports and recreation facilities, as well as access to some of the best wildlife sites in Worcestershire. A strong spirit binds the community, with lifelong and new residents sharing a determination to enhance village life. The key positive features are as follows:

- a. a sense of history;
- b. the beautiful rural landscape of the Cotswolds AONB;
- c. outstanding sports and recreation facilities;
- d. exceptional architecture;
- e. a safe and healthy environment for children;
- f. attractive Cotswold buildings and boundary walls;
- g. the low density of buildings in the Conservation Area;
- h. attractive open spaces, including gardens, orchards and paddocks;
- i. an excellent health facility in Bredon Hill Surgery;
- j. farming still taking place in and around the village;

- k.* interesting historic features, including the obelisk, Bredon Manor's canon gates, the phone box and old post boxes;
- l.* community spirit and events;
- m.* outstanding wildlife;
- n.* shops and services including the Post Office, church and pubs;
- o.* the extensive network of public footpaths;
- p.* access to the River Avon;
- q.* the absence of street lighting;
- r.* low crime rates.



Figure 20. Bredon seen from the River Avon against the backdrop of Bredon Hill.

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### **4.3. Negative features**

This section sets out some of the features of Bredon which residents experience as negative. The most commonly expressed sentiment is that Bredon will be made a less sustainable, cohesive and attractive place to live with the addition of extra housing. Residents also identify problems with excessive car use, speeding and parking congestion. The key negative features are as follows:

- a.* serious and dangerous traffic congestion and lack of parking around the school, playgroup and shop in Church Street, along with an over-reliance on car use;
- b.* lack of employment opportunities in the village, requiring the vast majority of working residents to commute into neighbouring towns;
- c.* the loss of open countryside between Bredon and its neighbouring villages, undermining the individual nature of the settlements, and creating a more urban environment;

- d.* the absence of basic retail facilities which a community of Bredon's size would normally support: i.e. launderette, dry cleaner, internet café, petrol station, chip shop;
- e.* the lack of late-evening and Sunday bus services;
- f.* inappropriate and unsympathetic new buildings in the Conservation Area, along with the use of unsympathetic materials, including synthetic stone and roof tiles, uPVC windows and doors, brown bricks, cement (non-lime) pointing;
- g.* unsympathetic and over-large extensions, which degrade the visual and historic amenity of the street scene;
- h.* noise pollution from the M5 Motorway;
- i.* the use of inappropriate boundary treatments, such as leylandii hedges and Bradstone walls;
- j.* excessive vehicle speeds along Main Road and Cheltenham Road;
- k.* poor maintenance of roads and rights of way;
- l.* litter and dog mess along roads and footpaths;
- m.* over-large and inappropriate signage;
- n.* night sky light pollution.



Figure 21. The M5 Motorway, which passes within 210 metres of the village, creates a serious noise nuisance for residents.



## 5. IMPROVING VILLAGE LIFE

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Change will always occur: the residents of Bredon want to ensure that change is well-managed in the interests of the whole village, bringing benefits not just for the short-term but for future generations also.

Using responses gathered in the consultations described in Section 4.1, this section of the VDS sets out a series of recommendations and aspirations aimed at assisting all tiers of government in determining and implementing the planning policies which apply to Bredon. From these general recommendations, the Design Guidelines in Section 6 will flow.

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### 5.1. Landscape & the natural environment

#### 5.1.1. Outstanding landscape

Bredon is located in a beautiful landscape, part of which is recognised being of outstanding national importance by its designation as part of the Cotswolds AONB. The primary purpose of AONBs is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of landscapes. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 (Part IV) planning authorities have wide powers to enforce this. They also have a statutory duty to “*have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB*” whenever they take action on any matter which may affect an AONB. It is hoped that planning authorities, in order to meet their obligations under the Act, will carefully weigh and, if necessary, restrict any development which may negatively affect the Cotswolds AONB.



Figure 22. The King and Queens Stones in the north-east of the parish.

97% of respondents to the VDS Questionnaire (see Appendix 3) want new development to be planned with the aim of safeguarding the landscape of the AONB. This VDS is opposed to any development which fails to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.

### **5.1.2. Settlements of Westmancote, Kinsham, Bredon's Hardwick and Bredon's Norton**

The VDS primarily deals with Bredon village, as the outlying hamlets in the parish are not expected to experience significant new development under emerging planning policy. However, the Design Guidelines in Section 6 should also be applied to any development taking place in Westmancote, Kinsham, Bredon's Hardwick and Bredon's Norton.

A Village Facilities and Rural Transport Study was published in March 2010 as part of the evidence-gathering work for the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy. This now forms part of the evidence base of the SWDP (see Section 1.3.6). The study aims to establish the relative sustainability of villages and rank them according to category. Bredon's Norton is placed in Category 4a, whereas Westmancote, Kinsham, Bredon's Hardwick are all placed in Category 4b (the least sustainable category). On this basis, the VDS is opposed to the development of new housing in these settlements.

### **5.1.3. Maintaining rural character and open countryside between settlements**

As described in Section 2.2.4, the undeveloped open countryside between Bredon and its hamlets is severely limited, particularly between Bredon and Westmancote. The rural character of the village has been eroded by the growth of the village, and by the encroachment of Tewkesbury and Northway onto the margins of the parish.



Figure 23. The remaining undeveloped countryside between Bredon and Westmancote.

The large majority of respondents to the VDS Questionnaire (86%) would prefer development not to take place in the open countryside. 95% stated that it should be a priority to maintain the existing open countryside along roads into Bredon. The VDS is particularly opposed to any development of the road frontages between Bredon and Westmancote, Bredon and Kemerton, and Bredon and Kinsham, as well as between Mitton and Bredon's Hardwick. It recommends that the successor to the *Local Plan* designates these areas as Strategic Gaps or their equivalent.

It is important that large or unsympathetic signage to business premises does not detract from the rural character of the village.

#### **5.1.4. Renewable energy, water conservation, & recycling**

Bredon, like other villages, is supportive of the need to reduce energy use and carbon emissions by becoming more energy efficient and by increasing the use of renewable forms of energy. This is particularly important when planning applications are made for new buildings or the conversion of existing buildings. Equally, water conservation should be encouraged at all times (e.g. reuse of 'grey' water, use of water butts to store rainwater, etc.). With care, renewable energy can be generated in communities such as Bredon in a variety of ways without damaging the beauty of the landscape or the appearance of traditional buildings. The main sources of renewable energy are treated in the following paragraphs. Additional energy sources include micro-hydroelectric systems, wood-fuel systems using locally sourced wood, and heat exchange systems. From June 2011 the Government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) promises payment to those installing renewable heat systems.

##### ***Domestic wind turbines***

Turbines can make a significant contribution to average household energy use without the production of greenhouse gases and other pollution. This should not, and need not, be at the cost of degrading the historic character and visual amenity of the village. Careful planning and professional advice is an important requirement. Part of the village is located in a Conservation Area, and here, in particular, turbines should not intrude on the skyline. In all cases, the character and visual amenity of the street scene should not be degraded, and turbines should not create a noise or vibration nuisance for neighbours.

##### ***Solar water heating panels & photovoltaic panels***

Solar power is probably the most easily harnessed renewable energy source in Bredon. There are two main types of solar panel widely available for domestic use. Solar water heating panels generate hot water (generally via evacuated tubes) for use in the home. Photovoltaic (PV) panels generate electricity which can either be used in the home or sold back to the National Grid. A typical PV system can produce around 40% of the electricity a household uses in a year.<sup>1</sup> Over time, solar panel technology is likely to become more cost-effective and efficient.

Solar panels can be roof-mounted, or ground-mounted. In either case, the site will need to face within 90 degrees of south, and not be badly overshadowed by trees or buildings. Roof-mounted panels should be sited in a way which is not detrimental to the historic character and visual appearance of the street scene. Solar tiles mimicking the appearance of Welsh slate and other materials can help to reduce their visual impact, although these still tend to be somewhat obtrusive. Within the Conservation Area and on listed buildings, solar panels should be invisible from public places.

1. Energy Saving Trust ([www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk))

##### ***Recycling & waste disposal***

Bredon benefits from the District Council's existing recycling policies, but improvements in efficiency and sustainability should be sought. The amount of garden waste disposed of via

landfill has been reduced by the Council's composting scheme, but additional, locally-based schemes might achieve further reductions.

### **5.1.5. Wildlife & conservation**

Bredon has an exceptionally rich flora and fauna, but many species have seen dramatic, nationwide declines in recent years through habitat loss, the increased use of garden and farm chemicals, and the impact of invasive species and pathogens. This picture is also reflected in Bredon with a collapse in the population of house sparrows and barn owls, and the near extinction of once common species such as grey partridge, turtle dove and spotted flycatcher.

Bredon is fortunate in having many fine trees in private gardens. In addition to their visual appeal, trees confer many environmental benefits – particularly if they are native broadleaf species. A number of trees are afforded protection by the Conservation Area. However, regular appraisals need to be carried out to identify any mature trees outside the Conservation Area requiring protection under Tree Preservation Orders. Many kinds of tree are increasingly threatened by an explosion in the incidence of exotic disease. Horse chestnuts around the country are especially badly affected by several kinds of bleeding canker. These can girdle the tree, causing die-back and death. It is important that trees are inspected regularly so that infection can be treated as early as possible. Where trees need to be felled, it is desirable that they should be replaced with a suitable native alternative.

Bredon is fortunate in having a charity dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and landscape, the Kemerton Conservation Trust, operating in the parish. The Trust is supported by generous donations from local residents and receives assistance from a committed group of volunteers. This support enables it to make a vital contribution towards protecting and enhancing local ecosystems. The Government's *Lawton Review* has set out how much more needs to be done at a national and local level to halt the decline in biodiversity. In Bredon, it is of particular importance that any future development takes account of wildlife priorities as set out in the national and local *Biodiversity Action Plans*.

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## **5.2. Housing & the built environment**

### **5.2.1. Overview**

Bredon is within easy reach by car of the major urban centres of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Worcester. This, combined with its outstanding Cotswold landscape, has made it an exceptionally attractive location for house builders to develop property. Regrettably, such development has rarely been carried out with the needs of Bredon residents (present and future) foremost in mind.

Since 2007, planning permission has been granted for 59 new dwellings in Bredon village,<sup>1</sup> representing a 7.3% increase in the housing stock. The VDS is opposed to any new 'major development'<sup>2</sup> of housing in the village during the period to 2030. It does not view Bredon as a sustainable location for additional housing. The parish's large population of approximately 2,800 residents is greater than its employment opportunities and some services can support.

1. This total is comprised of 24 units at Grange Field Road, 1 at The Dell, 1 at Drapers, 1 at Waterloo Gardens, 4 at Bredon House, and 28 at Orchard Close.

2. Throughout this VDS, 'major development' is defined as any development either consisting of five or more dwellings, or generating significant public objection.

This view is held by the overwhelming majority by residents. 93% of respondents to the VDS Questionnaire stated that they were not in favour of a significant amount of new housing of any kind being located in Bredon during the period to 2026. Residents feel that Bredon is being transformed from a village into a town, and would like to halt this process in order to retain the social and quality-of-life benefits associated with smaller communities. Almost all of the negative aspects of Bredon life, according to its residents, would be made worse by a significant increase in the resident population.

It is not yet clear how development targets will be set at the sub-regional level under emerging government policy, or whether Bredon will be required to accommodate a significant amount of new housing under the SWDP (see Section 1.3.6). The New Home Bonus Scheme, which has yet to be finalised, aims to incentivise local authorities to increase housing stocks. This VDS argues that all payments under the scheme should be passed on by the local authority to the communities where development takes place. The Government’s Localism Agenda is expected to give communities a greater say in determining the nature and location of future development, so that local needs and priorities can be met. Clearly, some decisions still to be made by Central Government and by the South Worcestershire local authorities may affect some of the recommendations put forward in this *Village Design Statement*.

**5.2.2. Historic environment**

There are 43 listed buildings in Bredon, including two which are Grade I, and one which is Grade II\*. Approximately 100 out of 150 buildings in the Conservation Area date from pre-1850. Maintaining this exceptional historic interest is a key priority of this VDS. Several buildings and structures worthy of listing are not currently protected. These include a number of substantially intact 17<sup>th</sup> century houses. It is hoped that listings will be revised to include these in the future.



Figure 24. A group of 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Cotswold buildings in Church Street.

The continuing loss of historic architectural features, such as historic windows and doors, needs to be halted. Regrettably, controls on permitted development in Conservation Areas and AONBs were significantly relaxed under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008. The VDS strongly supports applying Article 4 Directions to all the Conservation Areas of the parish.

### **5.2.3. New market housing**

As stated in Section 5.2.1, This VDS does not view Bredon as a sustainable location for significant amounts of new market housing during the period to 2030. Every opportunity should be sought to maintain and enhance the existing built heritage of Bredon, and to improve the balance and structure of the village in other key respects.

Where residential development does take place, it must be located centrally, within safe and easy walking distance of the key services of Church Street and the centre of the village. The VDS is opposed to new housing taking place at the extremities of the village where the negative landscape impacts would be greatest, and where car dependency would be highest. In addition, increasing the linearity of the village would be detrimental to the community's cohesiveness and sense of its own identity. This view is supported by the overwhelming majority of respondents to the VDS Questionnaire (86%).

Under PPS3, the national indicative minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare was deleted in June 2010. Local councils now have flexibility to set density ranges to suit local needs. In Bredon, existing housing is at relatively low densities (see Section 3.6.1), and new development should aim to replicate this.

The Government's target is that 60% of all new housing will take place on 'brownfield' (previously developed) land. In Bredon, the large majority of residents (77% of respondents) would prefer all new development to take place on brownfield land. Such sites could include redundant old farm buildings and yards, but not gardens, paddocks or orchards. PPS3 was amended in June 2010 to exclude private gardens from the definition of what constitutes brownfield land.

It is important that any regional and sub-regional housing targets which may be applied to Bredon Parish take account of projected windfall sites.

There are 42 static caravan units at Croft Farm Waterpark. These are intended for holiday use only. This VDS is strongly opposed to any of the units being used as permanent residential accommodation or being occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence.

### **5.2.4. Affordable & social housing**

Residents wish to preserve the existing stock of affordable housing for the elderly, young families, and single persons. There is broad consensus that any new affordable housing should only be developed in response to a proven local need, and that such housing should be reserved for local people by means of Section 106 Agreements. Schemes must be carefully integrated into the community and linked to employment opportunities and public transport. Small dedicated schemes taking place on brownfield sites within the Development Boundary are seen as the most desirable way forward.

Since the adoption of the *Local Plan* in 2006, Wychavon policy's on the allocation of new affordable homes in rural areas has been to give preference to those in housing need with 'local connections'. This policy defines all of the following as local connections: living in the area for the 6 out of the last 12 months; living in the area for 3 out of the last 5 years; having permanent employment in the area; having a close family member living in the area for more than 5 years.<sup>1</sup>

When assessing the need for new affordable housing in Bredon, and when allocating any new affordable housing units, this VDS supports defining local connections more narrowly as: either living in Bredon Parish for 3 out of the last 5 years; or having a close family member living in the parish for more than 5 years. In this way, the policy aim of maintaining community cohesiveness is more likely to be achieved.

A Housing Need Survey was undertaken by Community First in 2007. The accompanying draft report suggested that there was a need for 25 new affordable housing units over a five year period. The methodology and conclusions of the report were not accepted by the Parish Council. In particular, these numbers were at variance with the Home Choice Plus Register, which recorded only 6 individuals then living in Bredon (2008) as requiring social accommodation. The VDS would be supportive of a new affordable housing need assessment being carried out as soon as possible, with a revised methodology to be agreed between Wychavon and the Parish Council.

1. [www.wychavon.gov.uk](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk) > Housing > Homelessness & prevention.

### **5.2.5. Sites reserved for enhancement of village facilities**

There are very few centrally located sites in Bredon where new retail or leisure facilities could be developed. Where areas do exist in the heart of the village with the potential for non-residential developments benefitting the community, these must be kept free of housing. In particular, this VDS would like to ensure that the front garden of Bredon Lodge and the road frontage to Moreton Lane, at the northern entrance to the village, are kept free of residential development.

### **5.2.6. Gypsy sites**

This VDS supports the retention of existing gypsy and traveller sites, and their protection from other forms of development, to ensure adequate provision for gypsies. Proposals for extensions to existing gypsy sites, or for new sites, should be subject to the general recommendations for development set out in this document and, in particular, to the Design Guidelines in Section 6.

### **5.2.7. Building design**

Where new development is carried out, almost all respondents to the VDS Questionnaire (96%) would like new development to make use of traditional designs. Cotswold materials and designs are most appropriate in and around the Conservation Area. This VDS provides clear guidance as to what constitutes traditional vernacular building (see Section 3.4). Broadly speaking, this means that new buildings should be moderate in scale, with external walls faced with Cotswold stone or traditional red brick, with windows of timber and glass, with plain tiled roofs, and with dormers in preference to skylights. There should be a place for high quality innovative architectural design, provided that it does not have a detrimental effect on the existing street scene and key views.

This statement strongly supports enhancing the built environment of Bredon. In particular it favours the reinstatement of traditional features on historic properties where they have been lost, and the replacement of inappropriate buildings with sympathetic alternatives throughout the Conservation Area – and in other visually prominent locations – whenever opportunities arise.

### **5.2.8. Home extensions**

Under the recently revised Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008 controls on development in Conservation Areas and AONBs have been significantly weakened. It is anticipated that this will lead to an increase in the rate at which building extensions are constructed. It is important that the practice of extending homes does not threaten the supply of smaller (one and two bedroom) properties, thereby increasing the need for affordable/social housing.

Extensions should not be over-large and should remain clearly subservient in scale to the original building (having an area less than 40% of the original building before the addition of any post-1950 extensions). Extensions should also have regard for neighbouring properties and amenities. It is important that extensions and alterations do not detract from the general character of buildings or the surrounding street scene. Where they relate to historic properties, they should blend externally with existing architecture by making use of appropriate traditional materials and designs.

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## **5.3. Gardens & open spaces**

One of the characteristic features of Bredon is the number of large gardens in and around the Conservation Area (see Section 3.6.1). Many of the closes and gardens therein are historic and reveal the ancient origins of the village. Building on such sites would have a highly detrimental effect, both on the archaeological interest and visual character of Bredon. Elsewhere, gardens form an important part of the shared visual amenity and green space of the settlement. The large majority of respondents to the VDS Questionnaire (91%) would prefer that new homes were not located in gardens.

93% of respondents to VDS Questionnaire also think it is important that open spaces in the vicinity of the Church and Bredon Barn receive particular protection under the successor to the *Local Plan*. Other key open spaces within the village, while not necessarily historically significant, make a strong contribution to the visual amenity of the village. The most important of these areas are identified in Section 3.6.5. The VDS opposes the development of any of these sites, and recommends that the successor to the *Local Plan* confers protection on these key open spaces.

The planting of native trees and shrubs in gardens should be encouraged, both for wildlife and landscape benefits. Some exotic tree species grow to be very large, and can appear alien in the landscape when compared to native and naturalised varieties. The protection conferred on trees under Conservation Area policies should recognise this distinction, and facilitate the replacement of alien exotics (especially eucalyptus and conifer species) with native trees and shrubs.



This VDS strongly supports the restocking of old orchards with traditional local fruit varieties, to reverse the decline in these important environmental, horticultural and cultural assets. Development should not take place on disused allotments, which should be reserved for horticultural or wildlife purposes.

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### **5.4. Key views**

Much of the rural character and charm of Bredon derives from the views it enjoys over surrounding countryside. The most important of these have been described in Section 3.7. It is very important that key views, particularly those at the approaches to the village, are preserved.

Views both within and from the AONB are considered nationally important, and have been given special protection under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 (Part IV). The Act also confers protection on views from within the AONB which are affected by activities taking place outside the AONB. It is hoped that the statutory duty to protect and enhance views from the AONB will be observed.

The dark skies around Bredon suffer from upwardly directed light emanating from the nearby urban centres. The night sky south of the village is coloured by the lights of Tewkesbury and Cheltenham. This VDS would like to add its voice to efforts to reduce long-distance light pollution of the night sky.



Figure 25. View south over the village from Footpath BX-503, with Tewkesbury beyond.

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### **5.5 Transport, roads & paths**

#### **5.5.1. Roads & verges**

Pavements and footways are generally in good order, but the footways on Kemerton Road opposite Queensmead, and on Cheltenham Road between Bredon and Kinsham, are in poor condition. The former is uneven and affected by poor drainage after rain. The latter is very

narrow and becomes muddy in wet weather. Many of the pavements in the village are narrow, creating a sense of insecurity for pedestrians where they are close to fast moving vehicles. This is a particular problem for those walking with young children to school. The most dangerous areas are Chains Corner and Main Road (particularly close to the junctions with Church Street and Moreton Lane).

Most of the pavements in the Conservation Area are made from tarmac edged with natural stone or concrete kerbstones. When these kerbs are replaced, natural stone should be employed, as the most sympathetic material.

Maintenance of verges is split between the Parish Council and the Local Highway Authority, and their care and protection must remain a high priority. The rural character of the parish is greatly enhanced by rough grass verges directly abutting roads, without kerbstones. It is important that cutting programmes encourage wildflowers at the expense of thick grasses, nettles and other rank vegetation. This may be easily achieved (without compromising road safety) by cutting later and less often, and by removing cuttings from the site to reduce fertility. A cost saving is often achievable by this method.

### **5.5.2. Congestion & road safety**

Road safety through the village is one of the highest priorities for local residents. Most of the of the key village services are located in and around Church Street, including the school, playgroup, shop-Post Office, St Giles's church, Church Rooms, and the two pubs. As stated in Section 3.8.2, this area becomes very congested at school drop-off and collection times, and some residents are put off using the shop and Post Office as a consequence. The junction between Church Street and Main Road has extremely poor visibility and has been the site of several accidents in recent years. It is important that any future development proposal should be evaluated on the basis of its likely impact on traffic congestion and road safety in the village as a whole. When planning new housing, every effort should be made to locate dwellings within easy walking distance of the school, playgroup and Post Office so as to minimise car journeys within the village.

Possible solutions to the congestion in and around Church Street should be the subject of further study by the Local Highway Authority in consultation with the school, Drapers and the Parish Council. It may be possible to alleviate congestion problems and provide significant benefits to local residents by restricting Back Lane to one-way traffic (travelling eastwards).

Many residents believe that cars travel dangerously fast in certain areas, particularly where there is poor visibility. Areas of greatest concern are Chains Corner, Main Road (at the junctions with Church Street, Oak Lane and Moreton Lane; and near to the Village Hall), Cheltenham Road (in Kinsham), and parts of Blenheim Drive. While it is recognised that problems are caused by a small minority of drivers, speed alleviation measures should be considered.

Bredon's traffic problems would be seriously exacerbated by large-scale housing development in the neighbouring parishes of Ashchurch and Northway (in Gloucestershire), and this VDS opposes any development which may bring about a significant increase in traffic through the built-up areas of the parish. The VDS is opposed to any expansion of Junction 9 of the M5 Motorway, or re-routing of the A46 trunk road, both of which would be likely to lead to increased levels of through-traffic in the parish.

In the smaller roads of the village, there is little speeding and an extremely low accident rate. The proliferation of signage, road markings and large visibility splays can be unnecessary and out of character – particularly on smaller roads. Within the Conservation Areas of the parish, maintaining special historic character should take precedence over the requirement for signage and splays, except where they are essential to safety.

### **5.5.3. Parking**

As stated in Section 5.5.2, the lack of available parking in Church Street outside Draper's is a particular concern for residents and businesses. Future development in the village needs to recognise these limitations and should not exacerbate the problem.

### **5.5.4. Traffic noise**

Over recent years, noise from the M5 motorway has become an increasing irritant for residents on the west side of the village, particularly when the air has high moisture content. Much of this noise is attributable to the road surface, and this VDS lends its voice to those calling for noise abatement measures to be undertaken on the elevated section of the M5 at Bredon.

### **5.5.5. Bus services**

It is recognised that public transport is less convenient than a private car for most journey types, and that car use will remain the dominant form of travel. However, buses still fulfil a crucial role for many residents, particularly the young and elderly, and remain their only means of travelling to and from towns for work, shopping, socialising and recreation. This VDS believes that, as a minimum, bus services should be maintained at their current levels. It would like to see the provision of late-evening and Sunday bus services, to improve the quality of life for residents who are unable otherwise to travel independently.

### **5.5.6. Paths**

It is important for councils and landowners to continue to meet their obligations to keep footpaths passable. At the same time, it is important for users to recognise the realities of rural life, and to be prepared for rough and muddy terrain in certain places.

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## **5.6. Utilities & drainage**

### **5.6.1. Gas & electricity**

Utility poles are visually prominent within the village. With regard to any future works, utility companies should be encouraged to explore the use of underground cables and the sharing of existing infrastructure in order to minimise visual intrusion.

The village suffers relatively frequent power failures, and a more resilient electricity supply would be welcomed by residents.

### **5.6.2. Street lighting**

A large majority of respondents to the VDS Questionnaire (85%) do not want future housing developments to have urban-style street lighting. The VDS opposes the installation of street lighting throughout the village in the interests of energy efficiency and preserving the dark skies characteristic of rural areas.

Residents installing private house lighting should avoid any adverse impact on neighbours, and be aware of the desirability of preserving dark skies. They should aim to minimise harmful effects by using white bulbs and effective downward reflectors.

### **5.6.3. Telephone & broadband**

Around two-thirds of the village has a broadband connection and it is important that the village continues to have access to up-to-date communications technology. The VDS lends its voice to calls for higher broadband speeds within the parish. Mobile phone coverage over the village is variable and an improved service should be encouraged by service providers.

This VDS recommends that, wherever possible, new telecom and utility masts and equipment should be sited away from occupied buildings. These should be sited in unobtrusive locations which are sensitive to the landscape. Telecom providers should share poles and masts where feasible, and locate cabling underground.

### **5.6.4. Water & sewerage**

Bredon's network of underground pipes is dated and will require substantial investment in the future. Residents have reported issues ranging from low water pressure to blocked drains. During periods of heavy rainfall, raw sewage is discharged into storm drains. Any future development must take account of the condition and capacity of the existing drainage and sewerage infrastructure, and must mitigate any adverse effects it may give rise to.

### **5.6.5. Drainage & flooding**

Bredon suffered serious flooding in July 2007. Any future development must consider the effects of flooding, both in its immediate vicinity, and further down the water catchment. Local authorities and riparian owners should carry out regular maintenance of the water-courses and drainage channels for which they are responsible.

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## **5.7. Services, facilities & recreation**

### **5.7.1 Shops & general services**

This VDS emphasises the need to retain and, in some cases, improve village services and facilities. Most residents make frequent use of the postal, licensing, pension and banking services provided by the Post Office. Most also make some use the Village Hall and pubs.

As stated in Section 5.5.2, some residents are put off using the shop and Post Office by the amount of traffic and the lack of available parking in Church Street. The future viability of these and other services may be jeopardised by increasing levels of traffic in the village.

### **5.7.2 Health**

It is important that Bredon Hill Surgery is able to accommodate the needs of a growing local population. New housing development needs to be carefully planned so as to avoid negative impacts on the delivery of health services.

### **5.7.3 Education**

It is important that Bredon Hancock's First School and Bredon Playgroup are able to adapt to the needs of the growing catchment population. New housing needs to be carefully planned and phased so as to minimise negative impacts on education.

### **5.7.4 Sports & recreational facilities**

As stated in Section 3.10.4, Bredon enjoys an excellent range of facilities for its size. It is of key importance that a thriving village hall and sports ground are maintained and enhanced as a focal point for community activities.

The range and condition of these facilities is a tribute to the members of the community who have worked tirelessly to raise funds for their maintenance and improvement. Plans by Bredon Community Play & Recreation, in association with the Parish Council, are well-advanced for a substantial upgrade of the Playing Field to provide a new range of facilities for children of all ages. It is important that current momentum is maintained until the completion of the project.

Any future Section 106 monies arising from development should continue to be made available for community projects, including improvements to the sports and leisure facilities.

There is some demand for allotments in the parish. This VDS is opposed to any change of use at the Benshams private allotments on Cheltenham Road, and supports efforts to make these available to new users where they are unoccupied.

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## **5.8. Employment**

The parish has few employment opportunities relative to its large working-age population (see Section 3.11). Consequently there is a very high level of out-commuting to the nearby towns and cities. Much more employment would need to be provided locally to reduce private car use and improve sustainability. Bredon's population could almost certainly sustain more small businesses and services in the village, such as a drycleaner, takeaway restaurant, physiotherapist, beauty salon, alternative health therapists, internet café and gym.

While the village would undoubtedly benefit from a small, centrally-located retail centre, there are no obvious sites with sufficient space to provide the necessary parking. In this context, the development of the former Bredon Garage site into housing (Brensham Court), against the wishes

of the community, is to be particularly lamented. Learning from the mistakes of the past, any future proposals to reduce the supply of employment sites should be considered very carefully. There should be a presumption against converting employment sites to residential uses, and this should only be permitted where an overall benefit to the community can be clearly demonstrated.

This VDS sees the retention of the business park at Station Drive as a key priority, and would be supportive of any efforts to modernise and upgrade these facilities. The development of a new business or retail area on the outskirts of the village is opposed by the VDS. This would have the particular disadvantages of eroding the small amount of open countryside between Bredon and its neighbouring settlements, and of increasing road congestion through the village.

This VDS supports permitting small businesses to operate in residential premises, provided such businesses do not cause a nuisance to neighbours, or cause parking problems.

It is a key priority of this VDS that business premises in general, and signage in particular, should be sympathetic to the village street scene, and should not detract from the rural character of Bredon's surroundings.

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## **5.9. Sustainability**

Bredon may be viewed as an unsustainable settlement, compared with towns and urban centres, because of its high reliance on private car use (see Section 3.12). The parish has a large population of some 2,800 residents, with few of the associated services to match – particularly in terms of secondary education, shops and restaurants. As stated in Section 3.11, there are limited employment opportunities in the parish, and the overwhelming majority out-commute to work.

It is unlikely that the provision of some additional services would significantly increase Bredon's sustainability. Given the limitations of village geography, the majority of residents will always rely on nearby towns for employment, shopping facilities and education. A fairly frequent bus service currently exists (see Section 3.8.4), and it is unlikely that improving the public transport network would result in a substantial reduction in car use. Some village services, such as the playgroup, already operate at or close to capacity, and enlarging the population will result in more residents having to drive neighbouring towns to meet their needs.

Village sustainability would certainly be reduced by the loss of key services. The future existence of the shop-Post Office is threatened by the serious congestion and lack of available parking in the Church Street. An increase in the resident population would certainly exacerbate these problems, potentially offsetting any gain arising from an enlarged customer base. Substantial sites in Bredon's Hardwick, Bredon, Ashchurch and Northway, have been put forward for consideration under the respective *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments* (SHLAA). Large-scale development in any of these locations could worsen the situation further by leading to a significant increase in through-traffic along Main Road.

## 6. DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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The *Village Design Statement* is based on residents' views about the built and landscape environment of Bredon. It is not intended to prevent change; especially where change would make a positive contribution to the appearance of the village and its surroundings. It does, however, seek to ensure that all future development conserves the special character of Bredon Bredon's Norton, Westmancote, Kinsham, and Bredon's Hardwick. The guidelines in this section show how this can be achieved.

Some guidelines are derived from national and local planning policies (see Section 1.3). These policies have been of particular benefit in preserving the character of Bredon and it is hoped that any successor to the *Local Plan* will carry similar policies forward provided they continue to reflect national policy. Some guidelines are aspirational, and it is hoped that they will eventually become policy under future development plans.

The guidelines are intended for use by householders, architects and developers when considering new works; as well as by planning authorities – both when drafting new planning policies and when deciding planning applications under existing policy. They should be read in the context of the *Wychavon District Local Plan*, the *South Worcestershire Development Plan*, Building Regulations, *Wychavon's Residential Design Guide SPD*, *Wychavon's Water Management SPD*, and other supplementary planning guidance. Advice for householders, architects, developers and builders is readily available from Wychavon District Council's Planning Department. Around one third of the parish is also in the Cotswolds AONB, and the Cotswolds District Council's *Cotswold Design Guide* is also helpful for understanding vernacular design. Tewkesbury Borough Council and the Cotswold Conservation Board are also excellent sources of information about local building design and materials. Contact information for all of these bodies is provided in Appendix 2.

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### 6.1. General guidelines for all development

This section applies to all new buildings, conversions, alterations and extensions, as well as to works relating to roadways and utilities. The particular character of Bredon and its hamlets should form the context for all new design and planning. Any new development should:

- a. establish the suitability of a site for development by means of an in-depth site appraisal involving stakeholders;
- b. be in harmony with community needs and priorities as set out in Section 5;
- c. conserve the special historic character of the parish;
- d. make a positive contribution towards the shared visual amenity of the street scene;
- e. not encroach on the key open spaces identified in Section 3.6.5;
- f. not have a detrimental impact on wildlife, and in particular on *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* (BAP) or *Local Biodiversity Action Plan* (LBAP) indicator species;
- g. not obscure the key views identified in Section 3.7;

- h. conserve traditional orchards, as well as native and naturalised trees, while discouraging the planting of large alien trees such as eucalyptus or conifer species;
- i. not have a detrimental effect on historic buildings or their settings;
- j. utilise previously developed land, and not encroach on farmland or gardens;
- k. maintain the local tradition of plot sizes and orientation;
- l. with regard to siting – be in keeping with the historic character of the parish, as well as being sensitive to neighbouring buildings, the street scene, and the building line;
- m. with regard to height, scale and external appearance – use designs and materials in keeping with the street scene and, wherever it would not be out of place, use traditional vernacular forms (see Section 3.4) to conserve and enhance the special historic character of the village;
- n. conserve historic and traditional building features, such as handmade tiles, windows, doors and rainwater goods (or provide equivalent replacements when necessary);
- o. conserve historic boundary walls and historic hedges, and use Cotswold dry stone walls for roadside boundaries wherever this would enhance the street scene;
- p. avoid making over-large and inappropriate entrances, keeping splays to a minimum;
- q. reduce flood risk by ensuring the free running of all watercourses, gullies and culverts; by using soak-aways for roof run-off; and by avoiding the use of impermeable surfaces such as tarmac in gardens and driveways;

## **6.2. Additional guidelines for the Conservation Areas**

Conservation Areas cover much of the western half of Bredon, as well as most of Bredon's Norton, Kinsham and Westmancote. This designation is not intended to exclude the possibility of change and development, but all new buildings and significant alterations should preserve or enhance – not erode – the special architectural and historic interest of the parish (see Section 3). Conservation Areas are governed by legislation as well as by national and local planning policy. For more information see Section 1.3.4, and Wychavon's *Bredon Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)* and *Bredon's Norton Conservation Area Appraisal (2006)*. In addition to the General Guidelines in Section 6.1, any development having an impact on one of the Conservation Areas in the parish (including works beyond the actual boundary of these areas) should:

- a. with regard to alterations and extensions of historic buildings – use architectural styles, materials and details which match the original building;
- b. with regard to new buildings – use traditional Cotswold vernacular materials, building styles, and details such as windows and doors;
- c. with regard to new buildings, or alterations to historic properties – use building professionals and contractors with an experience of Cotswold vernacular construction;
- d. avoid the use of visible skylights, preferring vernacular dormers in most cases;
- e. take every opportunity to replace inappropriate modern features on historic properties (such as plastic rainwater goods, uPVC windows and stable doors) with traditional features;
- f. take every opportunity to make existing non-historic buildings more in keeping with the special character of the Conservation Area.



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### **6.3. Additional guidelines for the AONB setting**

Approximately one third of the parish is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The primary purpose of the legislation governing AONBs is to safeguard the beauty of landscapes. All public bodies have a statutory duty to “*have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB*”. For more information, see Section 1.3.3. In addition to the General Guidelines in Section 6.1, any works in, close to, or affecting the Cotswolds AONB should:

- a.* have regard to the statutory purposes of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- b.* not negatively affect key views into and out of the AONB;
- c.* ensure the preservation and enhancement of traditional Cotswold features;
- d.* conserve remaining ridge and furrow around settlements;
- e.* encourage the management of verges to create wildflower-rich swards in place of thick grass and rank vegetation;

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### **6.4. Additional guidelines for new building**

For any new building in the parish, the traditions of local building should be integrated with current technologies to produce architecture appropriate for today, but in keeping with the past. All new buildings must adhere to planning and listed building controls and Building Regulations. In addition to the General Guidelines in Section 6.1, any new building should:

- a.* predominantly use traditional vernacular forms (see Section 3.4) to conserve and enhance the special historic character of the parish, while exceptionally retaining a place for high quality innovative contemporary design where this does not have a detrimental effect on the existing street scene or key views.
- b.* with regard to developments of several units – be of a density which is in keeping with the settlement as a whole;
- c.* preserve the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties;
- d.* with regard to developments of several units – avoid standardised house design;
- e.* provide off-street parking wherever possible;
- f.* make provision for upgrading the sewerage network, and be contingent upon adequately increased capacity in the existing network;
- g.* only make use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) where soil structure and composition are appropriate;
- h.* use water conservation systems (i.e. grey water recovery, rainwater collection, etc.);
- i.* use energy-saving technology wherever possible, without compromising the special historic character of the village.

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## 6.5. Additional guidelines for extensions

Extensions must adhere to planning and listed building controls and Building Regulations. With regard to historic buildings, extensions should preserve and enhance their character and/or special historic interest. For guidance about historic building forms see Sections 3.3 and 3.4. Further advice is provided in *Wychavon's Residential Design Guide*. In addition to the General Guidelines in Section 6.1, the development of an extension should:

- a. enhance – not detract from – the visual appearance of the original building, its surroundings and the street scene;
- b. not threaten the supply of smaller residential units;
- c. preserve the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties;
- d. remain clearly subservient in scale to the original building (defined as having an area less than 40% of the original building before the addition of any post-1950 extensions);
- e. with regard to roof extensions – be lower than the original roof, with pitches and eaves details the same as the original roof;
- f. with regard to windows – be of similar proportions and detailing to the original historic windows; with skylights used sparingly, preferring dormers (which are more in keeping with the vernacular) in most cases;
- g. with regard to historic buildings – should blend externally with the existing architecture, by making use of building styles, materials, techniques and features which match the original building, including cylinder blown glass, glazing bars and cast-iron rainwater goods;
- h. with regard to conservatories – remain subordinate in scale, using materials in harmony with the existing building, and avoiding synthetic materials in any historic context;
- i. use design breaks where appropriate (i.e. stepping back) to prevent extensions from appearing too dominant;
- j. with regard to semi-detached houses or dwellings located close to each other – be set back to prevent a terracing effect;
- k. with regard to side extensions – not obscure traditional gable ends;
- l. with regard to rear extensions – ensure that sufficient garden remains to meet the needs of future occupiers;
- m. ensure the retention of on-site parking capacity, particularly where there is a shortage of on-street parking, or where an increase in on-street parking would compromise highway safety.

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## **6.6. Additional guidelines for alterations & conversions**

All alterations must adhere to planning and listed building controls and Building Regulations. With relation to historic properties, alterations and conversions should preserve and enhance their character and/or special historic interest. For guidance about historic building forms, see Sections 3.3 and 3.4. These guidelines also apply to small alterations, which can easily disfigure existing buildings. In addition to the General Guidelines in Section 6.1, any works relating to alterations and conversions should:

- a.* with regard to historic buildings – enhance the original building, preserve rooflines, and make use of materials, design and architectural features characteristic of the original building;
- b.* ensure that major changes of use have the support of the local community;
- c.* with regard to shop-fronts and shop-signs – be in keeping with the street scene;
- d.* ensure that replacement windows, doors, roofing materials and external finishes do not fundamentally alter the original character of the building, or make use of inappropriate materials such as uPVC;
- e.* use skylights sparingly, preferring dormer windows for all types of conversions as being more in keeping with the vernacular style;
- f.* use traditional lime mortar to re-point historic buildings, not cement;
- g.* with regard to garage conversions – not reduce on-site car parking capacity, particularly where there is a shortage of on-street parking, or where an increase in on-street parking would compromise highway safety.

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## **6.7. Additional guidelines for external works & private open spaces**

The contribution that gardens, driveways and other open spaces make to the appearance of the parish (see Section 3.6) means that any changes should be carefully considered. In addition to the General Guidelines in Section 6.1, any planned works affecting such open spaces should:

- a.* conserve and enhance the integrity of gardens and open spaces;
- b.* ensure that paths and driveways are constructed from traditional materials wherever possible, with a strong preference for Cotswold gravels;
- c.* encourage the planting of fruit trees and appropriately-sized native trees and shrubs, while discouraging large alien trees such as eucalyptus and conifer species;
- d.* locate aerials, dishes and other roof furniture (including energy-saving devices) unobtrusively, and not where they will be visible from roads and other public spaces;
- e.* ensure that signs and advertisements are restricted in size and number, traditionally designed, not illuminated, and located behind frontages;
- f.* ensure that external domestic lighting is not intrusive, and that light pollution is minimised by effective shading and limiting night-time use;
- g.* ensure that lighting schemes for commercial premises are carefully evaluated with the aim of preventing negative impacts on the rural character of the parish.

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## **6.8. Additional guidelines for roads, footways & utilities**

The provision of good roads is of major importance to residents, and sensible road safety measures remain a priority. Roads and the issues they give rise to are described in more detail in Section 3.8 and Section 5.5. The supply of utilities is also of considerable importance to residents, but utility providers need to ensure that they do not harm the special historic interest and character of the parish. In addition to the General Guidelines in Section 6.1, any works affecting roads, footways and utility provision should:

- a.* ensure that highway authorities have regard to the special character of the parish when changing road layout, surfacing, signage or lighting; and consult with the Parish Council at an early stage;
- b.* safeguard the needs of pedestrians at all times;
- c.* minimise the use of road markings, permanent signage and lighting; siting them with care and ensuring that they are in keeping with their surroundings wherever possible;
- d.* ensure that new and replacement pavements and footways are not detrimental to historic features, and have an appearance in keeping with their surroundings, with natural stone kerbs rather than concrete being used in Conservation Areas and other sensitive locations;
- e.* ensure that new and replacement utility equipment is not detrimental to historic features and has an appearance in keeping with its surroundings;
- f.* oblige utility companies requiring access to services beneath pavements and footways to reinstate them with natural stone kerbs, to the standard laid down by County Highways;
- g.* avoid the use of kerb stones on rural grass verges to preserve rural character;
- h.* avoid the use of street lighting to preserve rural character;
- i.* minimise the visual impact of services by using existing poles and masts, and requiring telecom providers to share masts wherever possible;
- j.* minimise the visual impact of services by placing essential utility equipment underground, or in unobtrusive locations which are sensitive to the landscape, wherever possible;
- k.* site new communications masts and equipment away from homes;
- l.* during road resurfacing, the overall height of village lanes should not be raised, so that the original proportions of walls and other roadside features are not altered, and the historic streetscape is maintained.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The VDS was overseen by the Parish Council, whose members were: Ken Brown (chairman), Matt Darby, Allen Frampton, Phil Handy, Martin Hardy, John Masters, Andrew Rhodes, Rob Sly, Jo Wenham, Gail Whiting and Andrew Woodward.

The committee is grateful for the assistance of Jackie Shields, the parish clerk.

A large number of parish residents have contributed by taking part in one or other of the consultative exercises, and we express our thanks to them.

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The committee has liaised with neighbouring parishes, and developed certain sections of text in collaboration with the Kemerton Village Design Statement Committee.

Many of the photographs were kindly taken by Geoff Bryant, John Clarke, and Matt Darby.

Several photographs were obtained from Google Earth (figures 3, 11, 12, 15, 23: © 2010 Google, © 2011 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, © 2011 Tele Atlas).

Further photographs were sourced from Geograph (figure 1: © Trevor Rickard; figures 2, 22: © Bob Embleton; figure 6: © Jonathan Billinger; figure 7: © Ben Brooksbank; figures 8, 13, 14, 20, 21: © Philip Halling).

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## 8. APPENDICES

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### Appendix I. Reference sources

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- Ordnance Survey Map of Gloucestershire, 1902 (1:2,500)
- Ordnance Survey Map of Gloucestershire, 1923 (1:2,500)
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## **Appendix 2. Useful contacts**

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### **Wychavon District Council Planning Services**

Website: [www.wychavon.gov.uk](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01386 565 000

Heritage and conservation: Carol Ashman ([carol.ashman@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:carol.ashman@wychavon.gov.uk))

Planning policy: Andrew Ford ([andrew.ford@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.ford@wychavon.gov.uk))

### **Bredon & Bredon's Norton Parish Council**

Website: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish) (select Bredon)

Parish Council Clerk: Jackie Shields, Potenza, Chapel Lane, Kinsham, Tewkesbury, GL20 8HS

Telephone: 01684 773 236

Email: [Bredonpc@btinternet.com](mailto:Bredonpc@btinternet.com)

### **Tewkesbury Borough Community Transport** (voluntary transport service)

Telephone: 01684 297 209

### **Worcestershire Car Sharing Scheme**

Email: [carshare@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:carshare@worcestershire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01905 766 841

### **Kemerton Conservation Trust**

Website: [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org)

Telephone: 01386 725 653

### **Cotswold District Council Heritage Service**

Website: [www.cotswolds.gov.uk](http://www.cotswolds.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01285 623 000

### **Tewkesbury Borough Council**

Telephone: 01684 295 010

Website: [www.tewkesbury.gov.uk](http://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk)

### **English Heritage**

Website: [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

Telephone: 0870 333 1181

### **For advice on Cotswold stone and gravel**

Stanleys Quarry\*

Telephone: 01386 841 236

### **For advice on lime mortar and render**

The Traditional Lime Co\*

Website: [www.traditionallime.co.uk](http://www.traditionallime.co.uk)

Telephone 01242 525 444

### **For advice on traditional glass**

The London Crown Glass Company\*

Telephone 01491 413 227

\* Inclusion of these companies' names is for reference only and does not imply endorsement of their products

### Appendix 3. Analysis of responses to the VDS questionnaire

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1. Are you in favour of a significant amount of new housing being located in Bredon during the next 16 years?  
Yes 15 (7%)      No 191 (93%)
2. Would you prefer that new homes were located in...
  - Open countryside outside the village? 31 (14%)
  - Large gardens inside the village? 20 (9%)
  - Yards and redundant areas (not gardens) inside the village? 169 (77%)
3. Do you think it should be a priority to maintain the existing open countryside along roads into Bredon?  
Yes 214 (95%)      No 12 (5%)
4. Government policy is likely to require that 30–40% of new homes will be affordable/social housing. Do you think this type of housing should be reserved for people with a local connection?  
Yes 215 (95%)      No 11 (5%)
5. Part of the Parish lies within the protected landscape of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Should new development be planned with the aim of safeguarding the landscape of the AONB?  
Yes 208 (97%)      No 6 (3%)
6. Would you like the majority of new development to be of traditional design?  
Yes 210 (96%)      No 9 (4%)
7. Government policy requires that a minimum of 30 new homes are built per hectare. The recent Grange Field Road development has a density of 33 homes per hectare. Brensham Court has a density of 36 homes per hectare. Would you prefer new developments to have...
  - Lower densities of 30–35 homes per hectare? 204 (94%)
  - Higher densities of 36–40 homes per hectare? 14 (6%)
8. The open space around the church is currently protected under Wychavon Local Plan Policy 'COM13'. Is it important that the open spaces around the church and National Trust barn are similarly protected under the new Local Development Framework?  
Yes 212 (93%)      No 15 (7%)
9. Do you want future housing developments to have urban-style street lighting?  
Yes 33 (15%)      No 190 (85%)
10. Would you like new homes to be located within easy walking distance of existing shops and schools with the aim of reducing car journeys within the village?  
Yes 188 (86%)      No 30 (14%)
11. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the future of housing in Bredon? (Please use the other side if needed):  
The most common responses related to:
  - Inability of existing infrastructure / services to cope with new development
  - Desire to preserve village character

Questionnaires were delivered to approximately 800 households in Bredon village only on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010. A total of 229 questionnaires were returned (29% of households).

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## **Appendix 4. Traditional materials & construction**

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This section provides in-depth detail about the most commonly occurring traditional building materials and construction methods in Bredon, and is intended for use primarily by those undertaking or evaluating development which relates to historic buildings. Approximately two-thirds of the buildings in the Conservation Area date from 1850 or earlier. Most of these belong to a relatively narrow range of building types.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Cyclopedia of Architecture, Carpentry and Building*, Vols I–VI

### **1. Timber-frame construction**

The historic timber-frame houses in Bredon share certain features. They were built before the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, partly of locally quarried limestone and partly of box-framed timber construction. Typically, limestone rubble (see Appendix 4.2) was used in the construction of gable walls, chimneys and the plinths underpinning the timber walls. Vertical timber posts were tenoned into these stone plinths making them less liable to damp rot. In between the timbers were wattle panels (a woven lattice of wooden strips) covered with daub (some combination of straw, hair, soil, sand, clay, or dung). These panels were protected from rain by a binding layer of limewash (see Appendix 4.5), which remained permeable to air. This breathability was important as it enabled buildings to dry out quickly after rain, as air was drawn through walls by the action of hearth fires.

In later years, wattle and daub panels were often replaced with brick for ease of maintenance. Timbers and panels typically became painted in black and white, although originally most would have had a softer, more natural appearance with timbers in unpainted weathered oak and panels the colour of limewash.

### **2. Masonry**

The oolitic limestone rock strata, from which Cotswold stone is extracted, are among the youngest in the British Isles, being laid down about 200 million years ago. Their highly-prized honey-coloured tones are mainly due to the presence of limonite and iron oxide. These tones can change considerably when stone is exposed to weather or fire. Cotswold stone is highly porous which renders it soft and easily worked when newly extracted; nonetheless it is highly durable and in many cases cut stone is still crisp and fresh after three or four hundred years of weathering. Even small tool marks can often be seen after several centuries.

There are four basic types of historic stone wall construction in Bredon, which are detailed below from the crudest to the most elaborate:

#### ***Dry stone***

A relatively inexpensive method of construction whereby flat, undressed stones are laid on top of each other without mortar in rough **courses** (rows of stones laid horizontally).

#### ***Rubble***

Masonry on which little work has been done dressing the stones other than knocking off protruding points, although the cleavage planes may be such that very regular stones may be

produced with very little work. Rubble masonry usually has joints which are very irregular in thickness. In order to reduce the amount of mortar, small pieces of stone called **spalls** are placed between larger stones. The cavity fill is a mixture of soil, clay and loose stone, sometimes with the addition of lime to strengthen it. In Bredon, rubble masonry is common. Often it is **range** (each stone in a course having the same height, although courses are of different heights), and sometimes it is **random** (not laid in courses). Random rubble masonry is found more often in older cottages.

### **Squared-stone**

Masonry which has been hand dressed (by axing or chopping the stone) to provide joints which are tighter than random rubble, but less tight than ashlar (see below). Courses may be range (see above) or **coursed** (each course having the same height throughout), but seldom random. Preparing masonry in this way is time-consuming and demands a high level of craftsmanship. Where only the exterior face is visible squared-stone masonry can be very hard to distinguish from range rubble. It is usually easiest to identify when a building is in need of re-pointing, and the joints are exposed.

### **Ashlar**

Ashlar is the finest masonry and its use was usually restricted to more prestigious buildings. It consists of stones with rectangular faces and joints dressed so closely that the distance between the planes of adjoining stones is 12 mm ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch) or less – usually 2–4 mm. Coursing may be coursed or range, but seldom random. Stones are usually sawn on all six sides. Walls can be constructed either from **solid ashlar**, where whole blocks run right through the wall from face to face or, more commonly, from **ashlar facing**, where ashlar blocks are used only on the outer face, with some long blocks keying into an inner layer of rubble.

## **3. Quarry waste**

The by-products of limestone quarrying included various grades of rubble, chippings and dust. Quarry waste was traditionally used to construct roads, drives, paths, pavements, yards and hard standings, which added greatly to the local character of buildings. Today, this material is mainly used on driveways, where it harmonises naturally with surrounding stone buildings and walls.

## **4. Mortar & bedding materials**

Lime mortar was traditionally used as the bedding material for stone and brickwork in Bredon. It consists of a mixture of hydrated lime and sand, sometimes with earth added. Lime mortar allows the evaporation of moisture from within walls, and also acts as a sacrificial anode – crumbling away before the surrounding stone. This is the reason that so many ancient buildings remain in such good condition today.

Lime is produced by heating limestone (calcium carbonate /  $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) in a lime kiln to drive off carbon dioxide, creating **quicklime** (calcium oxide /  $\text{CaO}$ ). Quicklime is not stable and, when cooled, it will spontaneously react with  $\text{CO}_2$  from the air until, over time, it is completely converted back to  $\text{CaCO}_3$ . Quicklime can be slaked or mixed with water, to produce **slaked** or **hydrated lime** (calcium hydroxide /  $\text{Ca(OH)}_2$ ), in the form of a workable slurry called **lime putty**. When exposed to the air, it reabsorbs carbon dioxide and gradually becomes calcium

carbonate again. Lime putty was generally used neat in fine ashlar work. For cruder masonry, slaked lime was diluted with an aggregate such as sharp sand or stone dust to make **lime mortar**.

During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, various processes for manufacturing Ordinary Portland cement (OPC) were developed, and this began to replace lime as a bedding material. Cement became popular for its ease of use, quick setting and compressive strength. However, OPC is too hard for use with certain building materials such as limestone, soft brick and terracotta. Over time, it causes the outer face to crumble, leaving the cement standing proud. Cement also harmonises less well than lime with natural materials, both in terms of its texture and colour. Historic buildings should always be re-pointed with lime to avoid damaging surrounding stonework.

## **5. Render & limewash**

Slaked lime mixed with aggregate was used to make **lime render**, which was applied as an external finish to rough stonework. The render was sometimes treated with a further saturated solution of slaked lime, called **limewash**, which cured in air to form a hard skin to buffer the effects of weather while still remaining air-permeable. The curing process produces crystals of calcite (calcium carbonate). These crystals are unusual in that they have a dual refractive index; light entering each crystal is reflected back in duplicate. This results in the unique glow that is characteristic of limewashed surfaces. Tallow was often added to limewash to make it more water-resistant while retaining its air-permeability. Limewash and **whitewash** (limewash mixed with chalk) were often used internally, particularly in areas which benefited from the mildly antibacterial qualities of lime.

## **6. Roofing materials**

Vernacular buildings in Bredon make use of three kinds of roofing material: thatch, plain clay tile or slate. Unlike many other Cotswold villages few buildings were traditionally roofed with limestone tiles, probably due to the unsuitability of the local stone for fine cleaving.

### ***Thatch***

Until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, thatch was the dominant roofing material in Bredon. Thatched roofs need to be more steeply sloping than tiled roofs in order to shed rainwater – typically, pitches are more than 50°.

Historically, any long-stemmed vegetable matter might be used for thatching buildings, provided it was local, plentiful and cheap. Today, three traditional materials are used by thatchers. **Long straw** is threshed wheat straw laid haphazardly with the butt ends and ears of the straw arranged randomly. This type of roof has a life expectancy of roughly 25 years. **Combed wheat reed** is wheat that has been passed through a reed comber and laid so that only the butt ends are exposed. This type of roof has a life expectancy of 40 years. **Water reed** is the most long-lasting thatching material, with a life expectancy of 50 years.

Thatched roofs have a separate ridge, which can be formed in a variety of ways. In Bredon, new ridges often have patterned bottom edges, but these are a relatively new innovation. Historically, ridges in the northern Cotswolds were plain, without much embellishment. Ridges need to be replaced on average every 10–15 years.

### **Plain clay tiles**

Handmade reddish-brown **plain clay tiles** replaced thatch as the dominant roofing material in Bredon during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These tiles are individually varied and full of character.

Traditional handmade tiles are made from a mixture of clay and aggregate rolled and cut, or moulded, into rectangles which are then fired in a kiln. The majority of plain tiles have two holes at the upper end for fixing to roof battens, although some are hung from nibs projecting from the top of the tile. The colour is determined by the clay and aggregate mixture, and by the duration of firing and kiln temperature. Firing causes tiles to become slightly convex. Uneven temperatures within the kiln, as well as variability in raw materials and manual craftsmanship, create individual differences in form, colour and texture.

Plain clay tiles are best used on roof pitches of around 40°. They are laid in regular courses with each tile partly overlaying two others, leaving approximately four inches of the lower tiles exposed. Historically, lime mortar, sometimes mixed with straw or aggregates, was often filleted internally to the space between tiles, both to fill gaps and to fix the tiles more securely. This is often referred to as 'torching'.

The method of fixing tiles depends on their shape. Nibbed tiles were suspended from battens by the nibs. Un-nibbed tiles were hung using simple tapered wooden pegs pushed through the two holes in the top of the tile. These pegs were trimmed flush to the surface of the tile so that the next course would lie flat. Sometimes, pegs were used only on occasional courses, although this same effect can be produced by pegs rotting away.

Today, a wide variety of traditional tiles are still manufactured, including handmade peg tiles.

### **Slate**

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century Welsh slate was a luxury product and was used infrequently. However, the extension of the railway network, coupled with an increase in quarrying capacity and the introduction of a tax on fired materials to fund the Napoleonic wars, helped make slate more affordable. The use of slate increased throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **7. Windows & glass**

Original windows are one of the most important and valued features of historic buildings. They are often referred to as a building's eyes. They are enhanced by the use of hand made glass, which reflects light unevenly. This rippling effect is one of the most characteristic and attractive features of historic buildings.

Prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, most windows consisted of unglazed openings. These could be closed with wooden shutters, oiled cloth, paper, or even thin sheets of horn. Only the wealthiest households could afford to have glazed windows. These were constructed from small panes of handmade **broad sheet** or **cylinder blown** glass, called quarrels, held in a lattice of **comes** (lead strips). This lead lattice was quite soft, so it was usually reinforced with **stanchions** (vertical steel bars) or **saddle bars** (horizontal steel bars). Typically, windows were divided by limestone **mullions** (vertical bars), moulded inside and outside with a chamfer or cavetto. Timber window frames, which were usually constructed from oak with pegged mortise and tenon joints, were similarly moulded in imitation of more expensive stone.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, **casement windows** were increasingly used in vernacular buildings. An outer frame, constructed from wrought iron or oak, was set into a mullioned cavity. Into this outer frame an iron **casement** (opening frame) would be hinged. This could be latched shut with an iron catch, or held open with an iron stay. Often one **light** (section of a mullioned window) would hold a casement, and the other would be a **fixed light** (non-opening section).

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, casements and their frames were typically made of timber (usually Baltic pine) and were no longer mullioned. Individual casements were vertically orientated and were usually no wider than 450 mm (18"). A column of three horizontally orientated panes per casement is a typical arrangement found in Bredon.

The introduction of hand-spun crown glass in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century allowed the production of much larger panes. These were secured to glazing bars by pins and putty. The manufacturing process gave rise to significant curves and imperfections in the glass, causing light to reflect unevenly and giving rise to a characteristic rippling effect.

**Sash windows** were invented in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. These consist of overlapping glazed panels which slide vertically over one another. They are nearly always taller than they are wide. The earliest type is the **flush box sash**, which was built level with the external face of the wall. The Building Act of 1709 banned these because of fire risk, and thereafter the **recessed box sash** was set back by 100 mm or more. A further Act in 1774 decreed that wooden sash boxes should be concealed within the walls thus making windows even more fire resistant, as with the **concealed box sash**. However, these laws were not always scrupulously obeyed. Early sash windows are characterised by thick glazing bars of approximately 40 mm with internal ovolo mouldings. Over time these reduced in width so that, by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, narrow glazing bars of 15 mm with lamb's tongue internal mouldings were the norm, along with fewer panes of a larger size.

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century sashes were always externally painted. The earliest sashes tended to be painted off-white or pale stone colours but, from the mid-Georgian period, greens, browns and even black were not uncommon.

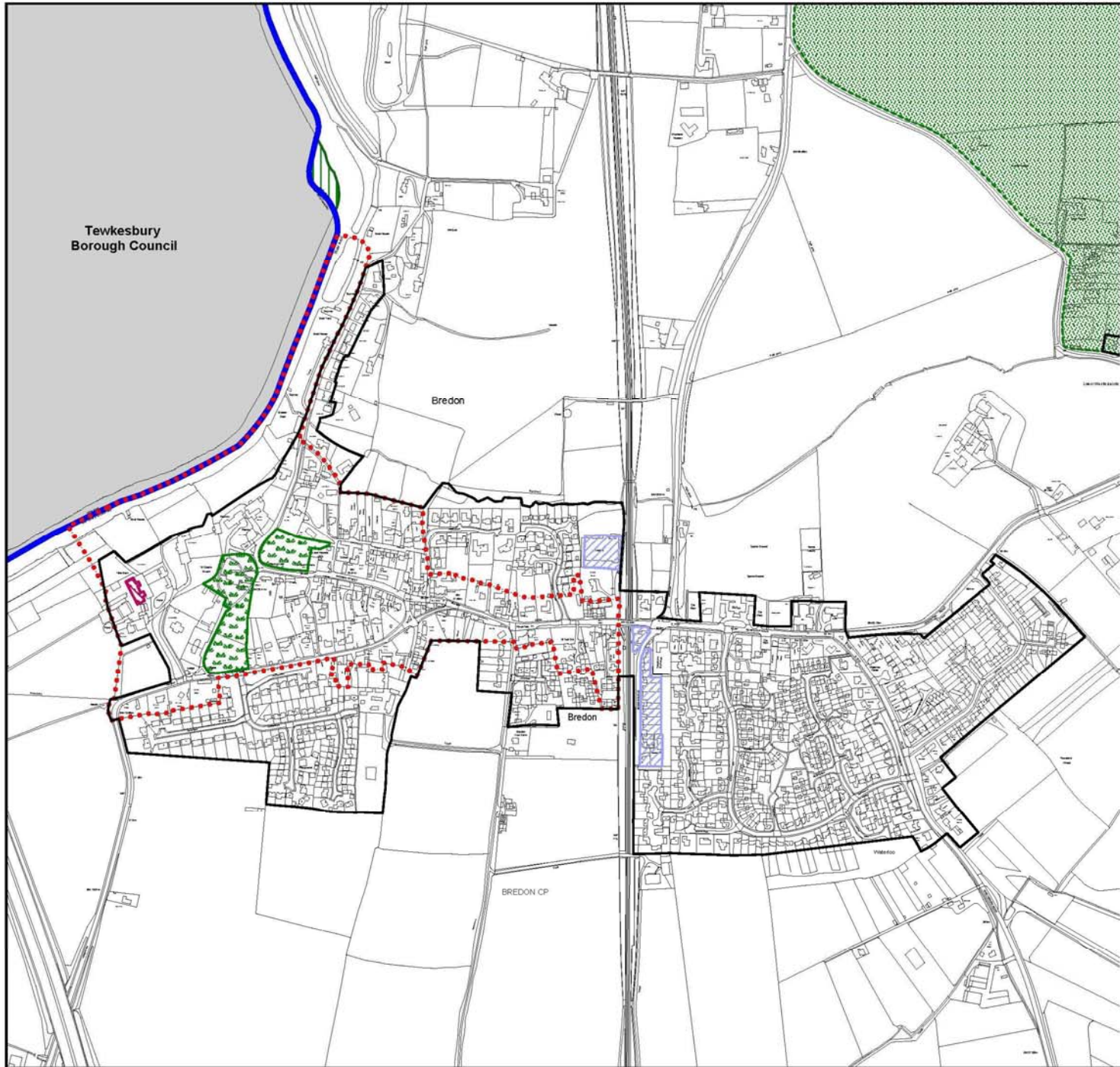
Sash windows were used widely in Bredon. The earlier windows were expensive and restricted to the wealthy but, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they had become widely affordable and appeared on even the smallest worker's dwellings.

From the 1830s onwards, the use of **plate glass** (an industrialised version of cylinder blown glass) became widespread in Britain. Plate glass could be produced in large sheets of high quality at a relatively low cost. This enabled windows to have larger panes with fewer glazing bars. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century most sashes either had only a single, central glazing bar, or none at all.

Modern **float glass**, invented in the 1950s, is structurally strong and entirely flat without any imperfections. It appears lifeless in comparison to plate glass, and especially to hand made glass.

Today, a variety of traditional glass products are available from the London Crown Glass Company relatively affordably. Traditional-style glass can even be combined into small modern double-glazed units for use with standard glazing bars. The need to maintain traditional glass, and replace it where it is broken, is a usual requirement of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.





### Appendix 5.1: Plan of Bredon

#### General Strategy

Location Strategy for New Development (GD1)

#### Protecting the Environment

- Cotswolds AGLV (ENV1; para. 4.2.3)
- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ENV2)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (ENV4)
- Sites of Archaeological Significance (ENV10)
- Conservation Areas (ENV12)

#### Social Progress

Protection of Open Space (COM13)

#### Economic Opportunity

Protection of Existing Employment Land (ECON1)

Wychavon District boundary

### Wychavon District Local Plan

Scale : 1:6000 @ A3 June 2006

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Appendix 5.2: Bredon Conservation Area

