

Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council

PARISH PLAN UPDATE

Phase 1

In mid-May the Parish Plan Steering Group agreed unanimously to adopt a two-phase strategy to the Parish Plan and to start by setting up a volunteer network of patchworkers in the parish to undertake a land-use questionnaire, the results of which would be ready by the time ABC conducted its own consultation event on the Tenterden & Rural Sites Development Plan Document. The Steering Group produced a leaflet and organised for it to be distributed throughout the parish. The leaflet provided an update about the project and called for volunteers to become 'patchworkers'. A summary was published in the parish magazine in June. 'Patchworker' is the name being given to volunteers who are prepared to be responsible for a group of around 25 households in a particular road or area of the parish – which will become their 'patch'. The role of patchworkers is to

- distribute and collect the forthcoming land-use questionnaires in their patches
- help the people in their patch to understand the parish plan process and participate in its component elements
- listen carefully to people's views on Wye's development, and help validate the final analysis of the responses to the land use questionnaire

The budget for the first phase of the parish plan process was agreed by the Steering Group and it was approved by the Parish Council on 17 May 2007.

Over the next three weeks (21 May – 11 June) the Steering Group finalised the household questionnaire, devised a questionnaire for children/ young people on land use issues particularly relevant to them, and finalised supporting documents (an A4 sheet providing background information, and maps of Wye village and Wye with Hinxhill parish on a double-sided A3 sheet) all for inclusion in the questionnaire pack. Recruitment of patchworkers eventually yielded over 40 volunteers who were allocated throughout the parish which was divided for the purpose into 11 areas.

During the first week in June, arrangements were made to print and assemble 1100 questionnaire packs in unsealed A4 envelopes (that were overprinted with brief instructions and will be used by participants to return their completed questionnaires). Each questionnaire has a unique number and will be allocated an area code on its return so that the response rate within the different areas can be assessed. The questionnaires are themselves completely anonymous.

The Steering Group organised a session for patchworkers on the morning of Saturday 9 June in order to brief them about their tasks. Those patchworkers who could not attend were visited by a member of the Steering Group in their homes. Patchworkers started distributing questionnaires during the week beginning 11 June with a view to collecting them over the following two weeks. Each patchworker has been assigned to a member of the Steering Group who is responsible for supporting a set of patchworkers during the distribution and collection stage. The whole exercise has received publicity mainly via posters and www.wyeweb.org. (The Parish Plan Steering Group maintains a mini-site on this new website.)

Questionnaires are currently being collected in, and patchworkers will be delivering them to the Steering Group during the last week in June.

The Steering Group meets again on 25 June and detailed arrangements for the analysis of responses will be made. An IT professional living in the parish who is also a patchworker and who has recently joined the Steering Group, has designed a database for the analysis of the Phase 1 questionnaire. Data entry will be an exacting task, and the Steering Group is proceeding to identify volunteers to undertake the task. Once the task has been completed an interim report of the analysis will be produced, a leaflet summarising the findings will be distributed to every household, and a validation exercise involving patchworkers will be held. There is a possibility that the consultation exercise (on the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD) that ABC originally suggested would be held in July might be delayed to September, in which case there will be more time in which to produce a thorough analysis and to undertake wider community validation of the results of the Phase 1 Questionnaire if necessary.