

## INTRODUCTION

### The Planning Framework

- It is expected that developers will submit plans that conform to Charnwood Borough Council's planning policies. These are *based on a proper assessment of the character of the surrounding built environment and landscape, and should take account of the defining characteristics of each local area, for example, local or regional building traditions and materials.* ODPM [2004] Consultation Paper on Planning Policy 1: Creating sustainable communities.
- The Planning Authority *pays special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area when making decisions and expects a high standard of design.* Thus *retaining and repairing original features* is seen as more cost-effective than replacing with new, and *original materials should be re-used where possible.* Charnwood Borough Council's supplementary planning document *Leading in Design* provides particularly helpful guidance, which we refer to throughout this document.

### Our Village

The appearance of Woodhouse is that of a high quality rural settlement. The last census identified 130 homes and approximately 430 residents. The Parish of Woodhouse includes Woodhouse Eaves, its younger and bigger neighbour. The villages are in distinctive rural settings, surrounded by agricultural and pastureland and are popular with tourists. Woodhouse has a historic legacy but is a thriving, sustainable community. Major centres of employment such as Loughborough, Nottingham and Leicester, are easily accessible by car. Nearby villages with shops and services that residents need, lie to the east and west within walking distances of around one mile, and there is an hourly bus service. Beaumanor Hall is an education and conference centre run by Leicestershire County Council. An adjacent Ministry of Defence sixth form college for 350 students opened in September 2005. The only community amenity is the church of St Mary in the Elms.

## **Why produce a Village Design Statement?**

The purpose of our Village Design Statement is to influence the character of development in Woodhouse and support Charnwood Borough Council to make suitable planning decisions for the village. Good design matters to villagers.



## **Rural Woodhouse**

The Parish Plan survey carried out in the summer of 2004 demonstrated a keen interest in planning issues [*see Page 19*] and stimulated the development of these guidelines.

The guidelines cover the environment of the village as well as its buildings and boundaries.

## **Woodhouse – A Special Place and Conservation Area**

As almost all homes in Woodhouse are within the conservation area, this means that plans are scrutinised in detail rather than in outline.

- Even permitted developments may need approval under the building regulations, whether or not buildings are listed, as many are [*see the list on Page 18*].
- Much of Woodhouse contains sites of ecological and geological interest, some hosting protected species. Hedgerows, grassland, streams, roadside verges, woodland and lakes fall into one or other of these categories.
- Woodhouse is also an Archaeological Alert Area [AAA] likely to contain important archaeological remains.
- Trees occupy a special place - permission is required for any tree work, and many individual specimens enjoy the special protection of Tree Preservation Orders [TPOs].

## How Woodhouse Developed

Woodhouse is a medieval village, although there is evidence of ancient settlements to the west in Beaumanor Park and a roman road to the east. Garats Hay is a manor house from the period 1067-1539 AD. On adjacent land there is a fishpond from the same period and in nearby School Lane there is a medieval barn. The village developed to the Beaumanor Estate, which dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. St Mary in the Elms Church was built in 1338. A few houses from the 16<sup>th</sup> century remain.

Construction of the current Beaumanor Hall started in 1842 and began a period of building cottages and lodges in a distinct style that characterises the village today. The main road through Woodhouse looks similar to early photographs – it is still a tree-lined street.



**Forest Road then and now**

Relics of the village history remain around the village and are some of the attractions for visitors, many of whom stop to take photographs. The Bull's Head fountain stands at the side of Forest Road. The bell once rung to summon farm workers now resides alongside a private home. There is a listed red telephone box.

