

## Redbrook

### Introduction

- 35.1 Redbrook is located in the Wye Valley, approximately 5 kilometres south of Monmouth. The village lies wholly within the AONB and occupies a very cramped setting on the confined valley floors of the River Wye and two small tributary valleys.
- 35.2 The built-up area of Redbrook is mostly located to the east of the main road (A.466) and contains a wide variety of housing styles. Vehicle access is a significant problem in those parts of the village not located on the valley floor. The population of Redbrook is approximately 372 with a housing stock of approximately 155 in January 2004. The village has seen a significant growth in housing stock over the previous Plan period through the development of 44 new dwellings on the site of the former tinplate works. In January 2004 there were 8 outstanding planning consents.
- 35.3 Land to the west of the village adjacent to the River Wye is largely open in character. This area includes a football ground, associated car park and other open space. A pedestrian footbridge attached to the former railway bridge crosses the river. Significant physical improvement within this area has recently taken place through a community led initiative funded by the Countryside Agency to create a Millennium Green on land comprised of tipped material derived from a former tinplate works located adjacent to the site. This project has cleared a previously derelict site and created an area of public open space. Further works in this area have also recently taken place in association with the local community, including the demolition of a vacant garage and temporary resurfacing of the site for use as a car park.
- 35.4 Redbrook has a limited range of local services which include a primary school and a hall, together with a football ground. In addition there is a public house close to the village and an antique shop. These services are supported by tourism which makes a significant contribution in terms of income and support for local employment. A wide range of services and employment is available in Monmouth.
- 35.5 Tourism plays an important role within the village. Redbrook is one of the few places on the east bank of the River Wye where provision is made for vehicle access. As a result of this and access to the Wye Valley Walk and Offa's Dyke footpath a significant number of tourists and walkers arrive at and pass through Redbrook. During the peak visitor periods problems arise in the village due to the lack of public facilities in Redbrook, especially car parking, public toilets and visitor information.
- 35.6 There is some disturbance to the amenity of Redbrook caused by traffic volumes on the A.466 generated from tourism and heavy goods vehicles. During the previous Plan period the District Council has worked together with the Highway Authority to overcome traffic problems. Measures have included the introduction of weight limits and new speed limit restrictions through the village. A zebra crossing has also been installed to provide safe pedestrian access to the newly created Millennium Green
- 35.7 Part of the village of Redbrook lies within Wales. The District Council will seek to ensure a compatible approach to policies and proposals for Redbrook by the adjacent Local Authority.

### Development Strategy

- 35.8 Redbrook is a small settlement which is physically constrained by the landform in which it is located. To the east the village is set against a backdrop of wooded hillsides which are very attractive and visually prominent, to the west is the River Wye. The River Wye is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and requires careful protection. The strategy for Redbrook is intended to protect the quality of the landscape of the AONB, both within the village and the surrounding countryside.

- 35.9 Throughout the village and the adjacent countryside, landscape considerations are a major constraint on development. It is anticipated that there will be few development opportunities for housing in the village during the Plan period. Any such sites which do arise will be restricted to infilling, single dwellings and small groups of dwellings.
- 35.10 Redbrook is an important location for providing recreational access to the River Wye. The Plan strategy identifies land along the east bank of the River for the provision of improved tourist and recreational facilities. It is intended that this area should be developed only to provide small scale and appropriate visitor amenities such as car parking, public toilets, visitor information and access to the river bank for walkers. The overall intention is to produce a physical improvement to the amenity of the area. Short term measures have recently been implemented by the District Council on land formerly used by a garage. During the Plan period the District Council will work together with the community to implement a formal scheme for the site.
- 35.11 Development in certain parts of Redbrook may be constrained by the need to ensure it is not affected by flooding which can occur.

#### **Built Environment**

- 35.12 All new development will be required to complement the established character of this area. Policy (R)FBE.2 identifies the considerations which will apply in particular to this area and it is identified on the proposals Map Inset.

#### **Tourism**

##### **Improved Visitor Facilities**

###### **(R)F.Redbrook 1**

Proposals for small scale tourism and recreational development will be permitted on land along the east bank of the River Wye as identified on the Inset Map. Development will be permitted where proposals meet the needs of visitors, provide improved access to the River Wye, and result in improvements to the amenity of the area. Proposals must have due regard to the prominent location of this site within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- 35.13 During the Plan period the District Council will seek to provide improved tourism and recreational facilities on the east bank of the River Wye. This location is a meeting point for the Offa's Dyke footpath, the Wye Valley Walk and other more local routes. The site is only suitable for development and buildings on a small scale. Proposals will need to incorporate improved access and amenity landscaping, and will need to respect the quality of the environment and prominence of this location within the AONB. Any proposals brought forward by the District Council will be developed together with the local community.

## Redmarley

### Introduction

36.1 Redmarley is a small village located in the north Forest. Almost all of the village is designated a Conservation Area, reflecting the high quality of the compact built form of the settlement. The village contains about 70 houses with a population of about 150. The village has a school, a church, a village hall, and recreational facilities including a football ground and tennis court. There are no shops in the village and no employment of any significance.

36.2 There has been little change in the parish or village population since the early 1980's though there have been about 11 housing completions. There were no outstanding housing commitments in the village on January 1st 2004.

### Development Strategy

36.3 The village offers few opportunities for further development. It has few services and has restricted accessibility. The need to protect and enhance the Conservation Area and the surrounding countryside means that there is now very little potential for further development. New development will therefore be restricted to one or two dwellings on appropriate sites within the defined settlement boundary.

### Environment

36.4 There are a number of open areas and several narrow lanes and pathways within the village which contribute to the settlement character of the village. The long history of the settlement makes it of archaeological interest and appropriate investigation is likely to be required as part of any new development. Redmarley village lies within a groundwater protection area and the potential impact of any new development on this resource will need to be carefully evaluated as part of any development proposal.



## Ruardean

### Introduction

- 37.1 Ruardean is a large village located on the northern edge of the Forest Ring of settlements, abutting the coalfield outcrop. It lies within a landscape of Limestone Hills above the Wye Valley and occupies a very prominent position on a steep north facing hillside.
- 37.2 The village is divided into two distinct parts comprising of an historic core to the west and a number of small modern housing estates to the east. The area around the High Street largely consists of terraced housing and forms the historic core of the village, including an attractive church and many other buildings of traditional style. This area together with the site of Ruardean Castle (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) is the basis for the Conservation Area which was designated in 1990. To the east the village has grown in a linear form out from the historic core. Development has generally been in the form of local authority and private housing estates which now comprise the larger part of the housing stock. To the south of the village development has taken place on a more ad hoc basis and is clustered around a large area of open space on an elevated hillside.
- 37.3 Ruardean has a good range of services for a village of its size including several shops, a post office, two public houses, village hall, doctors surgery, school, Parish Church and public toilets. In addition there is a garage and some small scale industrial employers using various converted premises. A large recreation ground is located to the north east of the village immediately adjacent the defined settlement boundary.
- 37.4 The present population of Ruardean is approximately 1043, with a housing stock of about 440. There have been 94 dwelling completions since 1981, comprising of small estate developments and small scale infilling. In January 2004 there were 20 outstanding consents.

### Development Strategy

- 37.5 The strategy for Ruardean is to contain development within a tightly drawn defined settlement boundary in order to safeguard the landscape character of the area and to protect the overall setting, form and character of the village. Proposals for large scale development will be resisted, however the Plan will allow the development of small groups and single dwellings within the settlement boundary. A small site has been allocated by the Plan for a development of approximately 12 dwellings. A number of sites within the village have previously obtained consent for residential development, including one site for 27 new dwellings off the High Street which has recently been developed.
- 37.6 Within the older part of Ruardean, south of the High Street, further opportunities for development are limited. This area generally has poor vehicular access accountable to a combination of narrow poorly aligned lanes superimposed on a steeply sloping hillside. In the area of Pettycroft, located to the extreme south of the village attention will need to be paid to the potential impact of new development.
- 37.7 Proposals for development within the Conservation Area of Ruardean will be required to pay particular attention to the need to protect and improve the built environment. The Conservation Area boundary reflects the extent of the historic part of the settlement which contains several listed buildings. Where development proposals are brought forward an archaeological assessment may be required.
- 37.8 The Plan strategy seeks to improve the built environment of the District. During the previous Plan period a number of environmental schemes were implemented including improvements to the area surrounding the public toilets in Ruardean. Further areas of concern within the village include parts of the historic core along the frontage of the High Street where the need for environmental improvements is evident. This area contains a section of narrow highway where traffic is in conflict with pedestrians and those

using local services. The District Council will, during the period of the Plan consider opportunities for localised environmental improvements. Any proposals brought forward will be required to be implemented with the support of private landowners and the local community.

- 37.9 The Inset Map identifies a number of open areas which are of visual and amenity importance. The Plan will protect these important open spaces which provide areas for informal recreation and add to the amenity of the built environment. The largest of these spaces is located off School Lane. It is acknowledged that part of this land is earmarked in the long term for a possible permanent replacement of the school and the temporary classrooms which have been erected on part of the site.

### **Built Environment**

- 37.10 The area of Pettycroft is located at the extreme south of Ruardean on the highest ground in the village and consists of a small number of dwellings set in large gardens. The area is settled in character and constrained by poor vehicular access. All new development in this area should complement its established character. Policy (R)FBE.2 outlines the considerations which will be applied to development proposals in this area, which is identified on the Proposals Map Inset as locally distinctive.

### **Relocation of Ruardean Primary School**

#### **(R)F.Ruardean 1**

**Development will not be permitted on land designated as an Important Open Area off School Lane. The only exception to this Policy will be the approval of an alternative use on land identified on the Inset Map for the relocation of Ruardean Primary School.**

- 37.11 (R)F.Ruardean 1 identifies land which forms part of a larger open area to the south of the village. This area of land has been acquired by the County Council as a potential site for the relocation of Ruardean Primary School. The existing school building occupies a cramped and inadequate site with poor access. There will be a clear benefit to the community in providing a new school on a site which can be properly laid out for the purpose, including associated recreational space.
- 37.12 For these reasons Policy (R)F.Ruardean 1 will accept a Primary School as the only alternative to the retention of the site as an open area. Development of the site will be required to ensure that new buildings make the least possible impact on the open hillside and retain as large and continuous an area of associated open space as possible to maintain an important element of the amenity value of the land for the village. The optimum site for relocation of the school is not necessarily that now occupied by the temporary classrooms.

### **Housing**

#### **Housing Allocation - Norman Way**

#### **(R)F.Ruardean 2**

**Approximately 0.4 hectares of land will be allocated for the development of 12 dwellings.**

**The development will be required to:**

- 1. Provide vehicular access from Norman Way**
- 2. Provide an appropriate number of affordable housing units**
- 3. Provide landscaping to the site boundaries especially where it abuts the Important Open Area**
- 4. Provide an appropriate contribution to educational provision for future occupiers of the site.**

- 37.13 The site is located to the south of the High Street and is well related to the village centre. Vehicular access will be achieved off School Road, utilising the existing highway infrastructure of Norman Way. The site is suitable for the development of 12 dwellings and the Plan will require proposals to bring forward a development which secures a mix of dwelling types. The Forest of Dean District Council will seek to negotiate an appropriate number of affordable housing units to meet local need over the Plan period.

37.14 The site consists of two small agricultural paddocks abutting existing housing to the north and east. The landscape to the west of the site is more open in nature and designated as an Important Open Area. The open space contributes to the character of the settlement and development will need to ensure the establishment of a landscaped boundary to the site. Close to the southern boundary of the site are several important pine trees which are a local landmark and are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999). Development of the site will need to take into account the presence of these trees.



## Ruardean Hill

### Introduction

- 38.1 Ruardean Hill is situated on a prominent and visible hillside within the Statutory boundary of the Forest. It is part of the Forest Ring of settlements on the coal outcrop and shows evidence of past industrial activity, including mining, quarrying and timber processing. The village lies within the boundary of the Statutory Forest as shown on the proposals map and policy (R)FBE.9 would apply to proposals for the change of use of Forest Waste and other crown land within the Statutory Forest. The village is less than 4 kilometres north of Cinderford and is closely associated with the neighbouring villages of Drybrook, Ruardean Woodside and Ruardean which are all located within a 3 kilometre radius.
- 38.2 The village is characteristic of the Forest Fringes and Settlements as described in the Landscape Character Assessment published as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Both within the village and around its periphery are very substantial areas of forest waste which provide important open spaces of amenity value and form part of the landscape's special character. An extensive network of tracks and paths are a feature of the village, and these give access to the surrounding open areas for informal recreation. Vehicular access is poor in many parts of the village, and is a constraint upon development. The built environment displays a mixture of traditional building styles using local materials. These traditional buildings are interweaved with more recent infilling and groups of dwellings. Not all of the more modern buildings are built in materials and styles which are in keeping with earlier buildings.
- 38.3 Ruardean Hill has a limited range of local services which comprise a Chapel, social club and recreation ground, and a nearby public house. The nearest schools are located within the villages of Ruardean Woodside and Drybrook. The village provides only limited local employment, however further employment opportunities are available within the neighbouring settlements.
- 38.4 The present population of Ruardean Hill is approximately 350 with a housing stock of 142 in January 2000. During the 1980's the village experienced a considerable amount of building activity, with approximately 45 dwelling completions since 1981. In January 2004 there were eight outstanding consents.

### Development Strategy

- 38.5 Ruardean Hill displays many of the attractive features of the Forest Ring of settlements. Its form and character are derived from the haphazard and dispersed way in which it has developed. The strategy will enable proposals for residential infilling of one or two dwellings where development respects the strong underlying form and character of the village, and have regard to the prominent hilltop position and extensive views into and out of the settlement from the surrounding villages and open countryside. In the eastern part of Ruardean Hill a more restrictive policy will be implemented reflecting the area's special qualities, prominence and its poor access. New development in this area will be limited to that which would lead to a positive improvement to the built environment.
- 38.6 Within the village are a large number of open areas the majority of which comprise forest waste. These spaces are visually important features within the village and are well used for informal recreation. A significant contribution is also made by small enclosed fields and by the many smaller verges, tracks and paths. The Plan will protect these important open spaces which provide areas for both formal and informal recreation and add to the amenity of the built environment.

### Built Environment

- 38.7 The eastern part of the settlement retains most clearly many of the features of the original settlement form and character. This area is particularly open and dispersed in character resulting in its vulnerability to the cumulative process of infilling which risks detracting from its special qualities. The area is

positioned on an exposed hillside, where new residential or non-residential development could appear very prominent and where vehicular access is restricted. These factors will be taken into account when considering the potential impact of any development on the character and appearance of the area as required by policies including (R)FBE.1, (R)FBE.2 and (R)FH.5. The area itself is shown on the Proposals Map Inset.

## Ruardean Woodside

### Introduction

- 39.1 Ruardean Woodside is located on the northern edge of the Forest Ring of settlements. It lies wholly within the Statutory Forest and is surrounded by forest waste, woodland and agricultural land. The landscape is typical of the Forest Fringes and Settlements identified in the Landscape Character Assessment. The village is typical of a Forest Ring settlement, characterised by a random pattern of buildings interweaved with small fields, forest waste, lanes and tracks. Within the settlement are areas of intensive development where modern infilling and small groups of dwellings have been built, including post war local authority housing and a variety of more recent private houses. The built form of the older buildings utilises traditional materials of stone and slate. Newer development however generally displays a variety of styles and materials, not always in harmony with the traditional built environment.
- 39.2 Ruardean Woodside has only limited local services which include a grocery store /post office, a school and a village hall. There are several small businesses in the village which provide a very limited source of local employment.
- 39.3 The population of Ruardean Woodside in January 2000 was approximately 340 with a housing stock of 140. The dwelling stock has experienced a recent increase through the completion of 16 new dwellings on the site of the former Roebuck Public House. There remains an outstanding planning consent for a single dwelling.

### Development Strategy

- 39.4 Ruardean Woodside is characterised by an open and disaggregated character which is susceptible to erosion by small scale infilling. The strategy provides only for single dwellings or minor infilling within the settlement boundary. Any development permitted will be required to respect the original settlement form and the attractive open quality of the village. There may be opportunities to secure small environmental improvements in the village through the redevelopment of sites which are poor neighbours at present. Overall little change is anticipated in the village during the Plan period.
- 39.5 There are many important open areas of forest waste within the village which contribute significantly to the settlement form and character and provide areas of amenity value. These include areas of highway verge and track which provide small but important green areas which add to the character of the settlement. The larger of these areas are identified on the Inset Map. Within the settlement boundary are a number of open areas which are individually too small to be identified on the Inset Map. The contribution of these smaller open areas will be evaluated as part of the assessment of any development proposal, taking into account their contribution to the settlement form and character.

