

WYCHAVON

Strong communities event

Tuesday, 9 June, 6pm – 8.15pm at Civic Centre, Pershore

Event summary

This is a summary of our **Strong communities event** which took place on 9 June 2015. A total of 43 people attended, including representatives from parish and town councils and a good number of district councillors. The presentation slides are available on our [website](#).

Welcome and introduction

Cllr Audrey Steel, Chairman of Wychavon's Localism and Community Funding Advisory Panel introduced the programme for the evening. The event focused on the part we can all play in developing and supporting strong local communities. Audrey encouraged parish/town councils to use the Meet Your Council leaflets for their area on noticeboards and information from the leaflets on their websites. Audrey highlighted the twice yearly [Partners Together events](#) and the short films made for the events. One film looks at [What Wychavon residents think about culture](#) and the other is about [Growing older in Wychavon](#).



More information: www.wychavon.gov.uk/list-of-district-councillors - ward information
www.wychavon.gov.uk/partners-together-events



Latest news

Cllr Linda Robinson, Wychavon's new Leader, introduced herself and the other five members of the new [Executive Board](#). We have set up three new [advisory panels](#) to provide advice and policy development support to the Executive Board. Linda highlighted some of the areas covered by each panel. She shared some of the council's promises for 2015/16 and her aspirations as new Leader.

More information: www.wychavon.gov.uk/promises

Community renewable energy projects

Ruth Corral, Sustainable Communities Project Manager for Worcestershire County Council, explained what community energy is, how and why parish/town councils should be involved. She outlined the financial, social and environmental benefits to local communities. Ruth suggested five ways that parish/town councils can get involved in community renewable projects.

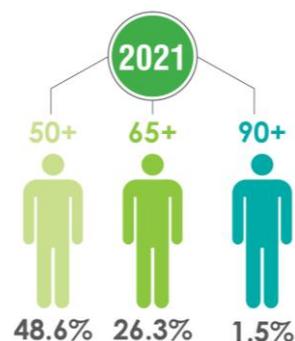


Ruth explained the various funding options and grants available, including the [Rural Community Energy Fund](#) and [community shares](#). She shared four examples of renewable energy projects in Worcestershire.

More information: Ruth Corrall, Sustainable Communities Project Manager
01905 765882 rcorrall@worcestershire.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/community-energy

Knowing our communities

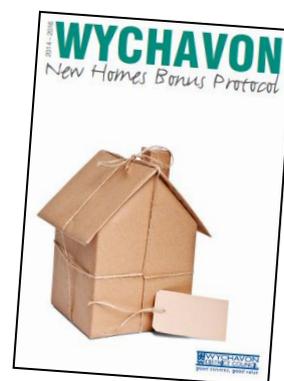
Fiona Narburgh, Head of Strategy and Communications, gave a short overview of some of the latest information about Wychavon – its population, economy, environment and communities. Wychavon is one of the best rural areas to live in the country. Unemployment and crime levels are low and average life expectancy is good. The proportion of over 65s is growing, over 70% of adults are now overweight and around one in three over 65s living on their own is likely to be socially isolated. Fiona encouraged everyone to consider what the data means for the way their organisations support local communities.



More information: www.wychavon.gov.uk/information-about-the-district

New Homes Bonus

Vic Allison, Deputy Managing Director, explained what the New Homes Bonus (NHB) is and how it's calculated. He outlined what Wychavon is spending its NHB on. We have allocated 40% of our Years 2 to 5 NHB for parish and town councils to spend in communities that have experienced growth. There is sliding scale for Year 4 and 5 allocations of over £50,000. Parish and town councils can check their NHB allocations and how much they currently have available to draw down on our [website](#).



Vic explained that NHB payments due to parish and town councils from 1 April 2015 remain on hold until we know the national position. If the government honours its commitments to us, we will honour our commitments to parish/town councils. Vic emphasised that **all** parish/town councils need to tell residents how much NHB they have been allocated and invite ideas about how it is spent **before** submitting a proposal.

More information: www.wychavon.gov.uk/newhomesbonus

Tracy Perkins, Localism and Communities Officer
01386 565517 tracy.perkins@wychavon.gov.uk

Rural Communities Programme update

David Manning, Programme Manager, said that the Rural Communities Programme is a way of tackling some of the issues raised by previous speakers. The programme aims to tackle social isolation and to support existing organisations, such as parish councils, to play a greater role in supporting vulnerable people in their communities.

This is happening through working with parish councils and community groups, a network of community connectors, providing local information about services and taking services out to potentially vulnerable people through door knocks.



There is a dedicated [website](#) providing local case studies and how to guides. David encouraged parish councils to look at the website and do the [village health check](#) to assess how strong their community is and identify possible areas that could be strengthened.

More information: David Manning, Rural Communities Programme Manager
01386 565478 david.manning@wychavon.gov.uk
www.wychavon.gov.uk/rural

New affordable homes for local people

Kirstie-May Jones, Housing Development Officer, explained what affordable housing is and why it's needed in Wychavon. Kirstie outlined the three sources of evidence used to identify housing need and some of the challenges to building affordable homes. Wychavon has helped deliver 660 new affordable homes over the last three years. Kirstie shared examples of affordable housing developments from across the district.



More information: Kirstie May Jones, Housing Development Officer
01386 565524 kirstie.may-jones@wychavon.gov.uk

The Police and Crime Commissioner's Ambassador

Richard Morris is the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Ambassador for South Worcestershire. The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of people in policing. Community Ambassadors act as the eyes and ears of the PCC. Richard mentioned the [grants](#) available from the PCC. The next round opens in July and will have a focus on activities for young people and domestic violence. Richard told us about some of the events and activities he has attended, such as a pop-up community shop in Droitwich, Evesham Street Pastors and Witton WI. You can stay in touch with all the latest news from the PCC by subscribing to the weekly e-newsletter.



More information: www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk

Feedback

Thank you to all the speakers and everyone who attended the event. Here are a few of comments we received about the event.

“Very useful and positive to receive a body of information for us to feedback to our parish council and community members.”

“Really informative meeting”

“Too much content”

“Good time keeping, inspiring”

“Good content, but maybe too many presentations and not enough workshop time”

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DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value