

## **Future of Madeley Living History Project Management Committee**

The Living History project was established as a charity in May 2002 with the intention to:-

- To advance the public's education in the local history of Madeley Parish; and
- To preserve and protect the artefacts, archives and features of historic or archaeological interest in the area of benefit

To deliver these objectives, its Management Committee was given a number of powers, which are set out in the attached constitution.

Upon the retirement of the Living History Project Manager, the Parish Council decided that it wanted a change of direction from the previous work that had been carried out. The valuable work that had been carried out under the auspices of the Living History Project was commended. The project had highlighted the extremely important historical legacy of Madeley, its people, places and connections, as well as capturing the reminiscences of local people. The Group had produced a number of leaflets and pamphlets as well as organising well regarded projects such as the restoration of memorials at St Michael's church.

However, the Parish Council recognised that local owners of important heritage buildings need support if they are to properly upkeep their properties. Many local facilities are run and managed by volunteers and there is concern that, without support, these could become run down and/or close. There are already a number of buildings boarded up in Town and if our most valuable assets were to be lost, it would have a significant adverse impact on the local economy and social life. This could seriously undermine efforts to raise the status of Madeley as part of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site/Conservation Area and its regeneration imperative.

Accordingly, the new Heritage officer who was appointed in January 2012 , has been focussed upon a number of buildings in Madeley Centre and is working with the owners to identify suitable uses and secure grants to refurbish their properties.

It is felt therefore, that it is an appropriate time for the Management Committee to consider its future role.

There would appear to be two possible options:-

1. Decide to carry on with the Living History Project as a self managing group with its current focus. The Heritage Officer could still be asked to update the Group on progress.
2. Decide to wind up the Living History Project in accordance with the requirements of the constitution and rules of Charity Commission

There would appear to be two potential groups that could be asked to oversee the work of the Heritage officer if the LHP is wound up. They would be either the Ironbridge Gorge WHS Steering Group which might help to raise the status of Madeley as part of the world heritage site or the Madeley Regeneration Partnership which may be more relevant given the focus upon regeneration of the centre. One advantage that the Living History Project currently has is its charitable status which does open up more potential funding streams. This might be something that the other groups have to consider if taking on these Heritage responsibilities, thereby conserving the Local History Project status to advantage.