

SUTTON POYNTZ SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 9, September 1971.

There have been several highly important events since Newsletter No. 8, keeping your officers and committee busy and anxious. We can only summarise here, but any member hungry for details will be given them.

Firstly, - Proposed new development on land previously belonging to Sutton Farm.

This site roughly 1 2/3 acres, lies to the south of Smithy Cottage and behind Dolphins, the access road to emerge roughly opposite the end of Silver Street by the farm barn (maps available).

Outline planning permission for 6 houses was granted apparently, in 1968 before the land was sold. This year the present owner made a second application, this time for 9 houses. Your society opposed these plans on the grounds that (a) the proposed layout, with houses laid around a central road, was essentially suburban in character, (b) dwellings backing onto Smithy Cottage and Dolphins would rob the occupants of visual amenity and (c) the development allowed no scope for landscaping, paid no respect to this particular site and in fact would be no more Sutton Poyntz than a Cul-de-sac in Woking.

The local Authority Planning Committee, in considering the builders proposals and our objections, were firm in avoiding any hasty decisions and have endeavoured to see this site, shortly to become part of the Conservation Area, as a positive opportunity for development to be proud of.

Your Society was invited to put forward its own views and, after considerable soul searching decided to commission its own architect to express our strong but muddled feelings in a coherent and professional form - at a cost of £50! It was felt that there was risk in this, as we have no guarantee and indeed no legal right to demand that the local authority should act upon our scheme. Consequently the Society's funds will only meet one half of the fee, the remainder being donated voluntarily by a number of idealistic and generous members.

Our architect, who is specialising in the Challenging field of mating new development sympathetically to mature settings, feels that "the distinguishing feature of a village is its variety, that new inhabitants should come from a cross section of society and that the size and type of house should differ accordingly.....an instantaneous new development can lack much of the intimate and varied character associated with a village".

Your committee feels the Society has been extremely lucky in having Mrs. Litschi, our Secretary, as a councillor and newly appointed member of the Local Authority Planning Committee. If we do succeed in winning through to a development of which we can be proud it will be in a large measure thanks to her skilled negotiations.

We also believe that, whatever the outcome, it is essential that the Society should make a firm and coherent stand over this first major development since we found our feet. The fact that such a small group has committed itself to back its ideas in hard cash has helped to convince all concerned of the earnestness of our caring. Any member feeling we have done the right thing and prepared to back our effort by however small an amount will be most heartily thanked by the committee.

Incidentally, the Developer has kindly allowed us to choose a name for the road. Running as this does over part of the old route to Bincombe, we have suggested Old Bincombe Lane, an honest rural name we feel. Perhaps in the future we will all be proud to take our visitors along Old Bincombe Lane.

Footpaths

The Local Authority has, we understand, received a number of complaints about blocking of Rights of Way off Fuddledock Lane. Some of our members have also reported being turned back from rightful walks by barbed wire in profusion, so we are relieved to hear that the Borough Engineer's Department has been in touch with the landowner concerned and it is hoped that the Right of Way will be made available for proper use, and obstructions cleared, in the near future.

The Pond

Unhappily looking its very worst when so many summer visitors are here to see it. The Water Authority seems to be with-holding every drip, even since recent rains. We have written to the Dorset Water Board who are sympathetic, and negotiations will continue. Of course the pond is, strictly speaking beyond the concern of the Board and it may be that we will have to wait until our Conservation Policy is composed, and the functions of the various powers co-related, so that a positive policy can be evolved. It could be that one tap flow of water would be sufficient to keep the pond healthy! In the meantime we are grateful to the pondsider who saved the life of the fish recently by turning a garden hose into the brackish slime. Of course there is a health issue here too, as well as an aesthetic one. Water too foul for fish to live in is too foul for humans to live beside.

Conservation

The County Planning Office have at last been able to turn their attentions to Weymouth's outlying villages. Sutton Poyntz and Nottingham head the list and designation is imminent. After this has occurred the written policy for maintaining and improving the village has to be composed, and your ideas are needed. We have called for these in 2 newsletters. It surely cannot be that no-one has anything to say now that, at long last, the lines of communication are really open? How often have you said, "What they ought to do is....."? What you must do now is to forward your ideas to your committee.

The History Section is unearthing more material than it can cope with and is in desperate need of interested helpers. Did you know that the wood for the Preston Church Lynch gate came from Sutton Poyntz Court House? Was there a set of stocks beside the pond? These and other fascinating questions await research.

Future events

September 24th, Friday, talk on Small Gardens by Mr. Jones of the Agricultural College, at Mission Hall, 7.30 pm.

November 13th, Saturday, Sutton Poyntz Society Social Evening.