

SUTTON FOYNTZ SOCIETY

Meeting of members with Mr Richard Burgess, Chief Planning Officer of W.P.B.C. on 24 September 1991 at 7.30 pm in the Springhead Pavilion.  
About 45 persons present.

The Chairman, Mrs J Litschi, introduced Mr Burgess. He spoke of the authorities he has served, including two in the Midlands, Harrogate and Yeovil. He said he always welcomed the existence of active amenity/civic societies to work with the Planning Office and act as "watch dogs".  
Comments made:

1 A new local Plan being prepared, with consultation on it at the end of the year or early next. Important that it is studied - developers etc can seek to include possible future development in the Plan, which will have to be first consideration in considering applications. Important also to comment not only on things disliked but also on matters we think right and acceptable.

2 On the borough as a whole - (a) brief being prepared on the future of the inner harbour, (b) confidential negotiations going on re outer harbour - future of ferries etc uncertain, (c) thought being given to Melcombe Gardens area, (d) pedestrianisation of town centre streets advantageous - he would like to see a complete pedestrian walkway on this side of harbour, (e) on economic planning - future of A.R.E. and Naval base important, (f) Conservation important - Weymouth has a good record, (g) a survey of listed buildings will be undertaken, new ones may be included and some "de-listed"?; grants are available for work on them, (h) "green" issues important - White Horse area now S.S.I.

3 As regards Sutton Foyntz - need for tight development boundary round the village is accepted. Conversion of barns and siting of caravans now being tightened under DoE circulars. Society members should not relax its stand and should keep an eye on the new Plan for reasons mentioned.

4 Future of l.g. - Differing views as to what makes l.g. "close to the people" and which authorities should exercise which functions. All authorities restricted in capital programmes - major items like e.g. sports centres unlikely to be approved for years. For small scale improvements he favours an amenity fund from which l.a. can assist local societies - little prospect of such a fund here in present circumstances,

Questions

1 The realigned boundary discussed with Graham Fletcher has not stopped building on the Stables?

A: CPOs do take account of views expressed but in the end have to act in line with planning law, DoE circulars, appeal decisions etc.

2 Why not re-open Westham Bridge to help traffic congestion in King Street and the Clock area?

A: Westham Bridge exit would be far too close to the new bridge and road system. Congestion at the clock aggravated, especially in the season, by motorists going round two or even three times to find a parking space. Only real solution, in his view, would be considerable demolition of property in Park Street area - not acceptable politically? System under review - may be computerised lights at King St/Esplanade junction?

3 Will Plaisters Lane be renovated after all the work done in it?

A: Not his responsibility but he will mention it to the Engineer.

4 Puddledock Lane and Farm - He and his Dept are aware of the Society's views and worries on the plans for the five houses and also the recent application to renew permission for a new farmhouse?

A: Yes; as regards the houses, he hopes they will be very attractive, possibly some thatched - developers are sensitive to the area. On the farmhouse, he appreciates that farming doesn't appear to have been undertaken recently. It is not possible to block the Lane in any way - it is a "highway" (albeit private) used by the public; "keeping the puddles could be a good deterrent".

5 How do appeals to DoE affect local decisions?

A: Appeal decisions create precedents which it is unwise not to follow. But almost 80% of planning applications received by l.a.s are granted, and only a proportion of the others go to appeal. Under the Ridley regime at DoE most decisions on appeal were against the planning authority but this seems to be changing of late.

6 Any comments on the Borough Council's proposals for boundary revision?

A: Revisions may not necessarily be considered - linked with overall proposals for general reorganisation of l.g.? But obvious individual nonsenses - e.g. house in Weymouth, but its garage in W.D.D.C. Also some absurd situations from the borough point of view - Chickerell industrial estate, where the Council owns pieces of land, is in W.D.D.C. area but everyone thinks of it as Weymouth proper. Many holiday-makers to places just outside the borough use its facilities and regard the town as base. With possible unitary authorities, a population of 100,000 is an unspoken criterion, so the Council needs to consider.

7 Isn't it dangerous to allow disabled persons' cars to cross the Esplanade by the clock to park - why not reserve spaces further along?

A: There would certainly be protests if steps were taken to stop those people parking overlooking the sea directly? The situation may not be ideal but little evidence of any major problem.

8 What about the Old Mill House and White Horse Cottage?

A: Mill House - there is continuing interest in possible purchase and the Department points out that grants may be available. W.H.Cottage - now seems possible that it can be restored and not demolished; being considered.

Mr Burgess was thanked for his interesting and informative talk and for dealing so fully with questions

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