Notes of a meeting of the SPS Committee with Local Councillors – Wednesday 28th Nov 2007
at SP Mission Hall - Simon Emblen in the Chair

1) Apologies – Karen Phillips, M Haine .
Present - Simon Emblen, John Sutherland, Joyce Litschi, Peter Riley, John Bellis, Tony Bugler, Peter Jones, G Embley, T Heathershaw, J Crisp
Local Councillors – Peter Chapman (PC), Brian Ellis (BE).

2) Welcome SE welcomed the two local councillors and expressed regret that Hazel Bruce could not join us, but noted that we have invited her to our next committee meeting in Jan 08.

3) Introduction and Overview JS outlined the formation of the SPS 40 year ago and the aim of the Society: To make every effort to maintain and improve upon the natural beauty of the village and to liaise with The Campaign to Protect Rural England and with the Weymouth Civic Society, in an effort to protect the area from unnecessary and ugly development.
The production of the Village Survey in 1997 and published in 1999 was provided to the W&PBC for consideration in the Local Plan. The updating of the 1999 survey was started in 2005 with a comprehensive questionnaire taken in the village and the results analysed and culminated in the 2007 VP provided to the Councillors today. Resulting from the work of the survey, the Committee provided the Society response to the W&PBC consultation requests for the LDF (Local development framework) that is being developed.
The intention of the meeting was to reinforce the support of the Councillors to keep Sutton Poyntz "The Jewel in the crown of W&PBC".

4) TH led discussion on the following topics.
   a) How are you going to promote Option 1 (LDF consultation – Maintain established patterns of development), as this would maintain the SPS view of the built and natural environment of the village for the future?
   BE noted that the initial presentation of the LDF consultation programme to the Planning Committee was on 16 May. He thought we ought to get the Planning Office to SP as part of the consultation – not rely upon a nearest meeting place in Littlemoor. TH noted that the council officers had been kept involved in the development of the VP – Karyn Punchard was a member of the Steering Group; he also believed the VP has formed part of the background consultation process for the LDF and CP (Community Plan).
   PC advised that he supported Options 1 and 3 (more development in brownfield urban land) together noting that the Planning committee has to live within the constraints of planning directives and permitted items of development. He noted that there seems a preponderance of emphasis in minimising climate change – but he considered that many other resources should also be considered as priorities such as water, topsoil etc.
   TH enquired whether Flood Risk is always considered – **PC** advised that there should be an environmental report – he noted that we should ensure that all instances of flooding should be notified so that evidence from the area is accrued – and not rely upon general feelings. TH noted that there was a suggestion of a bund to the east of the village along the valley towards Osmington. JC noted that flash flooding has also occurred causing the foul water sewers to overflow. Recourse should be to Wessex Water, Environment agency and the W&PBC tech services (Martyn Gallivan).
   BE noted that Option 1 was the only way to protect the community and we should support only one option and not suggest that part of other options may be acceptable. He quoted the developments along Preston Road were a bad example of supporting two options – and showed garden grabbing at its worst.
   It was suggested that all developments should call for a flood impact assessment.

   b) How do you perceive the Government's Planning Reform Bill could impact on our community?
   PC thought that there was little to worry about – he did not think the planning process would be circumvented. It was noted that 4 objections to any plan were required to force the matter to the Planning committee. We were concerned on the widening of permitted development rights – **PC** noted that rights were restricted in Conservation areas – anything facing the highway needs permission.
   PC suggested that there was no testing of feasibility on items like wind generators.
   BE was concerned however that people could lose right to object on major schemes – planners have targets to meet.

   c) How best can we work together to protect our environment? How can we protect character of village, open gaps and views through the and out of the village.
   PC noted that no one has the right to a view individually – although cognisance is taken of the overall scene and general look of the area.

SE suggested that all applications in SP should include a site visit.
It was noted that a Society objection is only ONE letter.
BE asked whether the Council had gone around the borough in developing the LDF and CP – **PC** advised no. It was noted that the Planning committee needs a better understanding of the areas that they pass judgement upon – **BE** suggested that the scrutiny committee should investigate the process used by the Planning Office in development of the LDF.
TH noted that the open gaps were important – it was further noted that the area is a recreational area for the town with the open areas and walks as well as a tourist area.
JS noted that it was felt that the Development boundary should remain sacrosanct.

d) Discuss concerns of increasing traffic levels and road safety issues
JS reported the conclusions from Sat Nav correspondence who advised that satnavs were aimed at the private motorist and were inappropriate to be used by lorry drivers. However, they advised that "As of October, we now produce a version of our data, which includes HGV restrictions, so hopefully the system manufacturers will be able to produce navigation devices appropriate for use in HGV's. You should understand, this is not within our control."
Suggestions on possible areas to be considered were 20mph limit through village, use of SID signs, road signs referring to narrow roads early enough to permit change of route – i.e. back on the Ridgeway before the Broadmayne exit.
It was noted that PC Eames was looking for a local contact – the Society was suggested.
It was suggested that any accident should be reported to add substance to any request for action.
JL suggested a gap in the parked traffic along Sutton road would provide a passing spot for opposing traffic.
BE suggested we should write to the CC re concerns and include the above possibilities.

e) How are you able to help in the promotion of better community policing? There was some concern in the VP regarding burglaries and lack of police presence in the area. It was also of concern that response was exceeding tardy. The old Neighbourhood watch has fallen into disrepair. Note comment above re PC Eames.

f) How may improvements be made in the maintenance and modernisation of bus services/public transport for the community? TH related concern on the general bus services and the old equipment used.
BE noted that First are not very good in updating their resources. Noted that a process for switching off engines already exists – and should be chased when ignored (Christine James is clean air contact). Usage is an obvious key – although a suitable service needs to be available first to allow and encourage use.
BE suggested we might contact First to suggest they turn around in the village rather than in the main road - as a safety improvement – which would also bring all buses into the village. Access along Sutton Road is an obvious problem.

5) Summary and Close - SE was reassured that both **PC** and **BE** considered the meeting useful and informative - and should be repeated regularly.
AOB
PR expressed concerns on garden grabbing – **PC** noted that planning looked at the appropriateness of developments for the area and considered over dominance. **BE** noted that the Planning Committee could oppose a recommendation from the Planning Office – they should not over concerned with the possible cost involved in an appeal.
TP noted that the secret of SP is that is does not change – it was vital to have support to control this.
PJ noted that the VP had been passed back to the SPC for progressing the Action Plan. Neither **PC** nor **BE** were sure of the position of the bill re anti garden grabbing.
JL noted that she was hopeful that the council would support the Society.
TH noted that a copy of the VP will be uploaded to local web sites. He expressed the hope that it would prove useful.
GE expressed his concern on the caravan site situation. Apart from pressure to increase the size of sites – he noted that they were being treated as second homes rather than holiday accommodation and contributing to tourism. **PC** noted that the Planning inspector had commented on the unfortunate concentration of caravans in Preston.
PC expressed thanks for opportunity to meet.
BE considered it was useful to meet. He noted that the Government needs to be advised that planning should not be stacked to the advantage of developers – objectors should also have the right of appeal against approvals.

It was noted that SP was important and once despoiled, could not be restored.