

**Sutton Poyntz Society – Village Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015**  
**Debate on proposed development of field off Plaisters Lane**

The meeting was attended by John Crisp (Chairman), Richard Burgess (invited), and 60 villagers:

Tony & Pat Bugler, Simon & Dot Emblen, Barbara Harrison, Norman Bryant, Anne Robotham, John & Ivy Sutherland, Anne Kemp, Diana Lane, Peter & Sue Jones, Dave & Gill Caddy, Richard Seys, Mike & Mary Fry, John & Lesley Wilson, Mike & Katrina Blee, John & Pat Bellis, Graham Embley, Jez Cunningham, Bill & Ruth Egerton, Caroline Crisp, Pam Dawson-Hollis, Peter & Anne Dye, John & Annette Witham, Chris Hubbard, Maureen Bond, Ros Evans, Elizabeth Saunders, Jane Walsh, Paul Walsh & Julie Caswell, Keith Potter, Ian & Sue Locke, Robert Proctor, Keith & Fiona Johnson, Wendy Vallance, Tony Heathershaw, John & Betty Morris, Richard & Judy Backwell, Michael & Cathy Pressly, Nick Maton, Maureen Morris, Grant Leighton, Clive Davies, Dan Stinson

John Crisp welcomed people to the meeting, and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to allow members to debate the proposed development in the field by Plaisters Lane, in order to give guidance to the Committee in reaching a decision on how the Society would respond when the application is submitted.

He explained that the Committee uses the Society's Planning Policy, copies of which were distributed, in arriving at decisions about planning applications.

Bill Egerton read some extracts from comments that had been submitted by Roy & Sara Knight and Mike & Wendy Edwards, who had sent their apologies. These comments were opposed to the development, on the basis that it:

- Was outside the Development Boundary,
- Would harm the Conservation Area,
- Would exacerbate problems with surface water run-off in heavy rain,
- Harmed views currently enjoyed by houses on the other side of Plaisters Lane,
- Was out of keeping with the character of the village, and
- Would cause a hazard from having garages right on the road.

Bill Egerton confirmed that the proposed development was outside the Development Boundary, and inside the Conservation Area and AONB.

A number of villagers (Sue Jones, Barbara Harrison, Peter Jones, Ros Evans, Nick Maton, Mary Fry, Clive Davies, John Sutherland and Michael Pressly) then spoke on a variety of topics:

- When the application is submitted, it was recommended that individual villagers should put in representations as well as the Society;
- The site is currently Greenfield, and the proposal was seen as contravening 6 of the Society's 7 policies (i.e. all other than Policy 1);
- The design was thought particularly unsympathetic for a village context where the standard is for stone cottages;
- It was pointed out that the developers' feedback form was hard to use, but the general view was that we should not help the developers by using their form;
- The development is outside the Development Boundary – we were reminded that in our 2007 Village Plan, 96% of those who responded said the Development Boundary was important, and also that the Boundary has substantially been held to since it was last changed about 50 years ago.

Katrina Blee explained the current position Weymouth & Portland Borough is in as to Planning Policy. The draft new Local Plan has not yet been approved, mainly because it does not allocate enough new building land to satisfy the 5-year local demand. Under such circumstances the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has a presumption in favour of sustainable development proposals, and Development Boundaries cannot be relied on. This situation should be resolved in the Autumn, but in the meanwhile there is some uncertainty about how applications will be dealt with. Katrina explained that other policies, relating in particular to the Conservation Area and AONB, will continue to apply.

Richard Burgess (former Chief Planning Officer for Weymouth & Portland, now retired) then gave a more detailed explanation of the situation, and answered a number of questions.

- He observed that an appeal for development at Markham Field had been allowed because of the shortfall from the 5-year land supply target. On the other hand, an appeal for development on Portland had been turned down because it was for an open countryside site;
- He pointed out that the NPPF contains specific protection for AONB's; he suggested this was the strongest argument against development at this site;
- He also pointed to the Conservation Area Appraisal in the Local Plan (a copy was circulated), which specifically discusses this area; another very strong argument against development;
- Richard suggested that there was no need to respond to the developers now – better to wait and respond to the application. He suggested the developers may have made a pre-application enquiry and been advised to carry out consultation;
- The developers will need to carry out a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), and this should specifically show the impact on the view over the gate. The developers will also need to show that flooding will be no worse than at present;
- Richard expressed his own view that the detailed design was not appropriate;
- In answer to a question, Richard suggested the Highways Authority would be unhappy with the garages facing straight onto the road, and also with the crossroads created at Sutton Court Lawns;
- A question was asked about affordable housing, and Richard stated that new Government policy is that developments up to 10 houses do not need an affordable housing element except in AONB's and National Parks;
- On archaeology, a desktop appraisal will be needed, as well as a Heritage Assessment;
- On a question about the proposal being split into two applications, Richard stated that each would be looked at on its own merits;
- Richard was asked about the provision of facilities; he said this would be part of the assessment of sustainability, and said Sutton Poyntz would probably score about 4 out of 10 for sustainability;
- A question was asked about access to the Waterworks field behind, and Richard reminded us that agricultural access was important as well as Street Fayre parking access – this is another important point;
- Ros Evans observed that the market for large houses such as were suggested was not good, given the number of houses for sale or under development for extended times;
- Finally, Richard was asked whether an application now effectively wedged the window of opportunity open, but Richard stated that an application is dealt with at each stage under the Policies (National and local) that apply at the time, so the window of opportunity will close soon.

John Crisp thanked Richard Burgess very much for his very valuable contribution. He then pointed to two possible strategies – either to oppose development on this site on principle, or (as was done by the Society with Old Bincombe Lane) to generate alternative plans that might be acceptable to the

village. After discussion it was concluded that opposing development on principle is important, but that if that battle looks like being lost, we should try to ensure that any development suits the character and needs of the village. At a Council Planning Committee meeting, it will be possible to have several speakers, with one speaker dealing with the principle, and others dealing with shortcomings of design. We will need to coordinate our approach carefully.

Finally, on a different topic (footpath from Old Granary Close) Richard Seys said that his application to have the old footpath put on the Definitive Map will be heard some time in March.