

Sutton Poyntz is nicely sited in an armchair of south-facing hills. It is the home of some 150 families, the majority of whom have expressed their concern for its future by membership of an active conservation society.

The framing chalk hills, which include the White Horse, are classified as of Outstanding Landscape Value and the village does not encroach on these but fits neatly into the lower contours. By road from the east (A353) and from the north (Plaisters Lane) it can be seen as a well-defined group of dwellings and farms, on the whole well contained by trees, and the popular footpaths and bridleways confirm this good impression.

1. The village has as its focal point, and an original *raison d'être*, a good expanse of flowing water, with grass banks, stone-work, bridges and waterways. It is around this pond that the village first developed as quite tightly-packed dwellings, but with breaks through to long-distance views to hills and valleys.

Despite recent change it remains essentially rural in character, providing a quiet leafy contrast to the seaside bustle of Weymouth, one valued by many visitors.

### Principle (1)

**The framing hills, the compact boundaries of the village, the containing trees, the focal point of the pond, and the contrast between fairly dense development and open-space are the essential themes of Sutton Poyntz.**

2. The original Conservation Area, designated in 1972, cuts through the village in a way not fully related to the picture it presents from a distance. An extended conservation area, following the boundary of the general sight line has now been adopted.

The village is much visited, and provides recreation to Weymouth and to visitors and holiday-makers both summer and winter. Though threatened by more sprawling development from the west it does still retain definition, the feeling of a separate place which is entered after leaving another. This illusion rests in places on just one or two small breaks in development, at the riding stables and the gateway at the East end of the pond for example.

### Principle (2)

**The existing breaks between suburban style development and the village must be recognised as having key value in retaining the experience of entering an identifiable village.**

3. Every feature which helps to make the distinction must be respected.

Growth can add to, and complement, or blurr and subtract from, the whole. While there remains a few sites within the village which could be regarded as suitable for infilling, the existing boundaries are such that disregard of them would destroy the character of the village as such, visually, socially, and in terms of its identity.

### Principle (3)

**The existing agricultural/residential use boundary, which defines the village so effectively, must be respected as the shape which, if blurred, would detract from the whole. Every**

**opportunity should be taken to preserve the distinction between Weymouth's seaside town and village elements.**

4. Infilling can be of positive value, but instances of this being the case are too rare and it has become almost taken for granted that new development spoils. The key here is the relationship of the new to its own unique site. By paying respect to the best surrounding features a new building can in fact "pull together" positive points; by attention to scale and siting, the filling of gaps can serve to emphasise good line and contour in a positive way. Judicious selection of materials, not necessarily from the expensive range, can harmonise with and "bring out" materials typical of a particular place, instead of blurring themes and breaking harmony. The use, e.g. of artificial stone in close proximity to natural stone devalues both materials, whereas suitably toned rendering can harmonise, and some use of natural stone can confirm this as a characteristic theme.

#### Principle (4)

**Development of the few remaining opportunities for infilling must be considered in relation to each particular site and should make a positive contribution to the village pattern. We attach notes offering guidance as to the range of materials which relate well to the village's best features.**

5. Provision under the 1968 act for the waiving, within Conservation areas, of restrictions which otherwise determine scale, etc. may in particular instances be employed to facilitate the best marrying of old and new building.

While reflecting current population trends to some extent, Sutton Poyntz yet possesses good social variation, well related. There is no division, as in many places, into a "smart" end and an ugly end, and the village contains in close proximity and good visual relationship, dwellings of widely differing market price and size, with varying sizes of household of varying age range and life style. The village appears to have reversed the common trend of becoming largely occupied by the retired, as 10 years ago there was scarcely a child, and now there is a good balance.

Many villages developed either side of a roadway and have been destroyed by widening of a through road. Of those remaining which give substance to the life of residents and recreation to the visitor, most lie off the main road. We are fortunate that Sutton Poyntz at the core leads only to hill pathways, so that the pond, for example, can be enjoyed in relative tranquility and safety. No change will be considered that, for example, would lead to a "run round" for vehicles, such as would soon occur if Mission Hall Lane, at present used almost exclusively as a pedestrian and cycle way, was widened. We must avoid the danger too of providing for existing traffic needs so well that other categories of vehicle are attracted, the problem repeated and amenity lost.

#### Principle (5)

**The village should remain essentially a place to go to, rather than to drive through.**

6. Like many other beauty spots, Sutton Poyntz gives its worst impression on summer bank holidays, when so many visitors arrive to enjoy it but fill the village with their parked cars. Extended provision at the Springhead, which maturing trees will screen, has improved the position recently. The ideal, one attained only in rare instances, would be for a well concealed, accessible car park to make no-parking within the village a reasonable restriction. Lacking that, it

is vital that parking should not do permanent damage, a fairly successful measure to this end being the deterring stones at the edge of the banks surrounding the pond, placed there by the S.P.S. to arrest erosion of the banks.

#### Principle (6)

**Destructive parking must be discouraged, where possible by means other than unsightly notices, and this changing problem kept under review.**

7. The value of trees to the landscape and the disastrous effect of their loss is now fully appreciated by most of the village, and some welcome planting has taken place under the Countryside Commission Scheme.

As a whole Sutton Poyntz is well contained by trees and new planting was a condition of development in Old Bincombe Lane which at first projected through the tree enclosure (particularly as seen from the top of Plaisters Lane) in an unfortunate way. Improvement will continue as the trees mature.

#### Principle (7)

**That the trees policy provide the basis for continuation of planting and renewal.**

8. Linking pathways are now a valued feature of mature development in both towns and villages. Unexpected choice of route provides variation and enrichment and safe recreation for children, pram wheelers, dog exercisers and the aged, and as traffic increases the pedestrian ways become more treasured, yet they are too seldom provided for in new development at a local level. Sutton Poyntz has a number of much-frequented pathways, some of which could be enhanced at small cost, some of which are at times lost to the pram wheeler, for example, by careless parking.

#### Principle (8)

**That linking pathways be recognised as an essential and enriching amenity, providing valued experience to residents and visitors seeking quiet relief from the contrasting beach and town atmosphere.**