



## *Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan*

*Help make the  
Vision  
for our future*

### **Newsletter 13**

#### **To all residents and friends of the Piddle Valley**

The Neighbourhood Plan is moving forward. In the last couple of months we have thought through all your much wanted ideas which have led to quite a big change in direction. Based on all the information received and what you have said, we have now begun to draft the Plan and its policies. We have the help of a professional planning consultant to help us to get this right.

The Aims we are trying to achieve are:

- 1** To protect the important green open and wooded spaces within and around the settlements, protect links and views of the wider countryside.
- 2** To protect the gaps between the different settlements which help keep their separate identities.
- 3** To protect the wider, open countryside, particularly the higher rolling landscapes which are largely undeveloped and offer important long distance views.
- 4** To protect and enhance the animal and plant biodiversity within the Valley, including the Piddle River and its characteristic chalk river habitats.
- 5** To avoid adding to the current groundwater problems and help provide solutions where possible for reducing surface water run-off from the surrounding slopes resulting in damage to properties.
- 6** To ensure that where building takes place sewerage provisions are fit for purpose and that no buildings are constructed that would exacerbate existing problems until a solution exists.
- 7** To avoid adding to the current traffic and parking problems and reduce the problems where possible.
- 8** To ensure new buildings are located and designed to complement and /or add to the local character of the Valley and their immediate surroundings.
- 9** To protect dark skies and prohibit light pollution from new developments.
- 10** To help make buildings environmentally sustainable and where possible use recycled materials.
- 11** To support leading edge communication with underground connectivity.

- 12 To provide in perpetuity more low cost housing for local people within the Valley. This will help local people stay or return to the valley who couldn't otherwise afford to buy or rent here.
- 13 To allow some open market housing, to provide opportunities for local people to down size, and to help bring in new people to the Valley to ensure a thriving community into the future.
- 14 To provide more opportunities for people to work locally, either from home or new live-work units.
- 15 To support changes to farms that would reduce the amount of large farm vehicles and tractors driving along the roads through the valley.
- 16 To keep, and if possible extend, the range of community venues that bring people together. These include the halls, churches, school, shops, pubs and sports and recreational facilities.

I hope you agree with these Aims but we do need to include more of what you think, so will be presenting the initial draft Neighbourhood Plan for your further comments on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April at Piddle Valley First School. The feedback from that day of consultation will go into a second draft. We will circulate more details of this meeting nearer the date.

Paul Johns, Working Group Chairman  
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### **Housing - both for open market and low cost for local people**

We have received 118 completed questionnaires with settlement specific responses to the suggested development sites within the Valley. The written comments included were most valuable and have given the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party valuable understanding of people's concerns and ideas. Additionally, we have the 70 responses from the questionnaire distributed in Piddlehinton in November (a 40% return). The outcome of this differed in that one site was approved by a 63% majority.

We have also received feedback from West Dorset District Council (WDDC) on the sites and they have raised a number of concerns about many sites, with less than half seeming viable at first evaluation. In light of your feedback combined with that from WDDC, we have concluded that the strategy of nominating development sites within the Neighbourhood Plan is flawed and accordingly have decided to remove them from the maps.

We propose to present a small number of sites which have particular promise for providing local (affordable) housing and produce potential layouts for these which will explore how the land could be used, so that everyone can see and comment on whether they should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

## Sewerage and Flooding

Many thanks to those residents who completed and returned the Sewerage and Flooding questionnaires, the information received was most helpful. The following is a summary of a meeting held on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015 with Oliver Letwin MP, representatives of Wessex Water, the Piddle Valley Parish Council and the Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan Working Group in order to find solutions to the sewage problems within the catchment area of the Piddle Valley Parish Council. The hamlet of Plush has no public sewer.

The main sewer was built in 1973 and terminates at the sewerage works south of Piddlehinton. For nine months of the year the sewer operates without problems and is well within its overall capacity. The difficulties arise during the very wet winter months when some years there has been continuous heavy rain.

The sewage problems are due in the main to the leakage of ground water into the sewer. This occurs only when the level of the water table rises above that of the sewer. Ground water seeps into the sewer through cracks and open joints in the sewer pipe walls and through cracks around manhole sections and covers. This permeability of the sewer accounts for about 80-90% of the ingress. The remaining 10-20% is due to 'sewer abuse', that is the lifting of manhole covers by residents to prevent ground water endangering properties, but the true impact of this is not known.

The main sewer was inspected in 2008 resulting in some sealing using a 'gel system'. This has deteriorated faster than anticipated and is becoming ineffective. The system has been replaced by Wessex Water who are now re-lining the sewer with an epoxy resin on a continuing basis where leaks occur which proved a permanent solution.

After a meeting of the Piddle Valley Parish Council with Wessex Water in 2008, three options were considered:

**A** To install three pumping stations to take dilute sewage from the sewer, screen (coarse filter) it and pump it into the river. These are now only allowed by the Environment Agency in exceptional circumstances (due to EU legislation) and on a temporary basis - but presumably will remain as long as there is not a problem with the quality of water within the river.

**B** To construct a new sewer from Alton Pancras, to the sewerage treatment plant just below Enterprise Park to the south. (The treatment plant was constructed in approximately 1940, much earlier than the sewer, to cope with sewage from the army camp.) This would cost £4m-£5m, excluding the treatment plant upgrade costs.

**C** Sealing private laterals.

The plan adopted in 2008, was a combination of options A and C. However, only two pumping stations were installed, at Rivendell (between The Poachers and the Manor House) and behind the Piddle Inn.

Normally the pumps only pump extremely dilute sewage into the river when the water table is very high and the sewer fills with ground water. Last summer a blockage occurred which started the pump at Rivendell which pumped raw sewage into the river. The problem was swiftly cured and the river cleaned. Telemetry has since been installed to prevent a further occurrence.

For several months during the winters of 2012/2013 and 2013/14 tankers had to pump out sewage from several locations in the main valley sewer many times a day in order to keep the toilets operating in some properties.

Due to the extremely wet winter, an additional temporary pump was installed for a few months in 2013/14 in Church Lane, Piddletrenthide. There was an apparent lack of screen (filter), which is being investigated.

The main sewer in Piddlehinton was surveyed in 2011 and was found to be in good condition with little or no infiltration

From 2011 to the present day CCTV surveys and sealing and lining works have been carried out to the Piddle Valley sewers. The last survey was carried out week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015. From this survey Wessex Water will seal all serious leaks during 2015-2016.

It was agreed at the meeting that Wessex Water would keep the Parish Council informed of the already completed and proposed works to include marked up drawings. Wessex Water would also consider other proposals to cure the problems that the Valley experiences during wet winters.

Full notes of the meeting will be available on the website and the noticeboards. Also a copy of the Wessex Water Inflow Management Plan for the Piddle Valley has been received, and available via the Piddle Valley website. It should be noted that due to time restraints the meeting focused on the sewage situation; a further meeting to discuss flooding is being arranged with Oliver Letwin, the Environment Agency and the Parish Council is being organised.

*Neil Herbert + John Cox*

**First Consultation of Draft Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan  
Saturday 25th April 2015  
10 am–4 pm  
Piddle Valley First School, Piddletrenthide**