



## **Newsletter 8**

The busiest parts of the Neighbourhood Plan work in this last month have been in housing, communications and community energy fields about which you will read more in these centre pages but we are working towards producing informative material for residents to discuss with the Working Group at the summer fetes, now not far away.

Two presentations from the Wessex Community Land Trust Project team of Steve Watson and Alison Ward with Paul Derrien from the WDDC have shown how low cost local housing can be provided in the next 15-29 years. The Community Land Trust concept is becoming popular all over the country which is why this advisory group has been set up. Such a Trust could be formed outside the Neighbourhood Plan operation and can be a very helpful vehicle to achieve what is needed, with local people involved, and can be used in time to take on many other local roles, such as in protecting the future management of housing (successful at Buckland Newton), amenity land and the future of the shop and pubs as a few examples. Our vicar Tony Monds has taken an interest in this beneficial initiative so if you feel you might wish to join him, please get in touch with us so that work can get started.

Many have been interested in the activities of Wessex Internet after they spoke about the future of high-speed broadband at our public meeting in the School recently; now 62 people have returned their expressions of interest on the forms in the last edition of the PVNV. Elsewhere this week we have made an inspection study of six areas of local woodlands, an initiative supported by the owners. We commissioned a specialist forestry advisor to carry this out and he is now preparing a report for the Plan, soon to be available for public view and copies sent to landowners involved. The focus is on management of woodland for sustainability, managed regeneration, fuel generation, climate change plantings, community access and amenity protection, all as part of our energy and environmental objectives under the Plan.

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*Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan*

## Transport, traffic speed, footpaths, cycleways and communications

led by Neil Herbert [sherbetnj@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sherbetnj@yahoo.co.uk) / 01300 348479

### Broadband

- More than 60 completed forms were returned from local residents and businesses in response to our article regarding an alternative superfast broadband Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the March/April edition of PVNV. A meeting was arranged at Piddle Valley First School in Piddletrenthide on Tuesday 8 April 2014 with Wessex Internet, a local Internet Service Provider (ISP), to which everyone who responded was invited. Notices advertising the event were also placed in various village locations.
- Wessex gave an account of their company background, their operating system and the areas of Dorset/Wiltshire they currently operate in. They said it was possible that work to install their system could begin at Piddlehinton Enterprise Park “within weeks” and that they would consider how the other parts of the Piddle Valley could be accommodated. To enable them to progress this, they require certain information, particularly post codes, so please register your interest via their website <http://www.wessexinternet.com/register>

### Traffic on the Valley Road (B3143)

- DCC carried out a traffic survey over a 24 hour/5 day period between Wednesday 9 and Sunday 13 October 2013 at Honeypuddle, Rectory Road, Piddlehinton.
- Over 6,000 traffic movements were recorded over the 5 day period, with almost 1,400 average weekday movements and over 1,000 at weekends. Traffic travelling north east towards the B3143 constituted 50% of all traffic, with 50% travelling south west towards Charlton Down.
- Cars and small vans made up 87% of the traffic, larger vans and small lorries 10%, with HGV's, Buses and Agricultural Traffic totalling 3%. 30% of traffic travelled below 30mph, 26% at 30–35mph, 37% over 35 with 7% “anomalies”.
- A weekday average of some 900 motorists exceeded the 30 mph speed limit on this section of Rectory Road, with over 500 drivers exceeding 35 mph.

### Rights of Way

- The extract below regarding the Piddle Valley Treasure Trail is from the “visitdorset.com” website - note particularly the final few sentences !

*Piddlehinton and Piddletrenthide are two small English villages in the heart of Thomas Hardy Country in rural Dorset, six miles from the County Town of Dorchester and 13 miles from the coast. The Trail starts in Piddlehinton with a two and a half mile walk to Piddletrenthide, finishing at the Piddle Inn, an ideal end to your Trail. There are a few different walks back to your car or you could just retrace your steps. This Treasure Trail takes you along one of the many bridleways in the beautiful Piddle Valley. The River Piddle or Trent is a fairly small rural Dorset river which rises next to Alton Pancras church, which is about a mile further along the valley. The Trail is about 2.5 miles and takes approximately 3.5 hours. This is a walking Trail but it is possible to drive between the clues. As the walking trail takes the bridle path it is therefore unsuitable for both pushchairs and for wheelchairs. However if driven the trail would be suitable for both. The bridle way can get very muddy in wet weather conditions - you may need your wellies!*

## **Housing - both for open market and low cost for local people**

led by Malcolm Johnston    [malcolm.johnston@zaffre.co](mailto:malcolm.johnston@zaffre.co) / 01300 34869

We have been awaiting information from West Dorset District Council about the numbers of people on their housing lists that require accommodation in the Piddle Valley. This will be available by the end of April and will be combined with the results of our own survey to give a clear picture of local housing requirements (note, all information provided by the Council will be anonymous). Anticipating the need for a good number of housing units (first discussions with the District Council indicate it could be as many as 40), the Working Party has been investigating the ways in which a Community Land Trust might be set up in the Valley to ensure both the initial provision of low cost housing and its continuation in the future. More information about Community Land Trusts may be found at [www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk). We do not propose large housing developments as have been carried out by some Community Land Trusts but to use infill spaces between existing housing groups for small clusters of houses (eg 3 or more) and would welcome any suggestions from readers for potential locations across the villages.

We will shortly be meeting with the members of the Environment Group to compare and combine our proposals for housing locations, protected areas of land, protected views and land use policies. These will be combined onto a large map of the valley with the intention that it can be presented to the Working Party and subsequently be available for viewing by all at this summer's village fetes.

The group has also reviewed the Piddle Valley Design Statement (produced in 2005) which will form part of the supporting evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan. We have identified items from the report to be incorporated into the Housing chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Environment, landscape and farming**

led by Peter Chance    [peter\\_chance@btinternet.com](mailto:peter_chance@btinternet.com) / 01300 348311

The topography of the Piddle Valley together with the combination of arable and live-stock units results in landscape contrasts and this together with the long distance uninterrupted views give the area its distinct and outstanding character. The location of the five communities, all situated in the Valley bottom together with virtually no development on the higher landscape, is an important factor in protecting the environment of the AONB.

The Neighbourhood Plan area embraces 26 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest of which 20 are in the northern area; these sites are monitored by the Dorset Wildlife Trust, some remain in good condition, others have deteriorated due to lack of grazing.

Uncontrolled grass growth stifles out the plant species which have a low growth habit. There is an opportunity within the Plan to raise the profile of this problem within the community and thereby trigger the possibility of grazing the affected sites with animals from adjacent farms, particularly youngstock.

Over many years farming within the Valley has gone through a period of restructuring resulting in smaller farms being absorbed by larger and more efficient units. While it is frequently claimed that larger farms are responsible for the reduced diversity of our landscapes and wildlife habitats, in reality there is sound evidence to show that larger farms have the area of land and ability to address these problems and participate fully in Environment Stewardship Schemes.

We must ensure that building developments on farms are grouped together rather than fragmented and by appropriate siting, good design and the use of sympathetic materials, their impact on the landscape can be greatly reduced. A problem associated with larger units consisting of blocks of fragmented land divorced from the main farming enterprise, is the increase in the number of tractor movements within the Valley. This has a major impact on noise levels, damage to road surfaces and the environment and will only be resolved by economic pressures together with appropriate policies to allow investment in new facilities.

### **Community energy generation and low energy design**

led by Dot Browning [dot.descon@easynet.co.uk](mailto:dot.descon@easynet.co.uk) / 01300 348280

### **Woodland energy**

The recent inspection of 6 woodlands confirmed not only the diversity and richness of our woodland but the potential for woodland fuel enabling logs and kindling to be available for purchase in the Valley. The sheer extent of fallen trees could generate significant tonnage of logs now and a managed approach would ensure a continued stock for future decades. We await the full report and discussion with owners to take this forward.

### **Climate Change**

DCC Climate Adaptation Officer Rupert Lloyd gave an overview of anticipated changes to weather patterns and the impact on the Piddle Valley. There was confirmation that measures taken at high contour levels could reduce the run off and flooding experienced this year in the Valley bottom.

### **Solar**

The Plan will include design criteria for domestic solar panels with residents encouraged to see if gardens could accommodate low-level panels. There are opportunities for smaller solar farms but a detailed study of potential sites will be needed.