

# **Enterprise Park**

## **Piddlehinton**



**Report prepared for the  
Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**

**September 2012**

## 1.0 Purpose of this Report

The Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was constituted in early 2012 by the Piddle Valley Parish Council to research and determine the feasibility of establishing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Piddle Valley. It was clear to the members of the Working Party that appropriate consideration should be given to the owners and tenants of Enterprise Park.

It was further acknowledged that within the Working Party - and probably among the Piddle Valley residents - that there was low level of knowledge and understanding of the entrepreneurs and their activities within Enterprise Park.

One of the delegated tasks of the Working Party was to make contact with the owners and tenants to discover what kind of work is undertaken at Enterprise Park and more about the people who work there. This contact would also bring the opportunity to explain to them about the implications of adopting a Neighbourhood Plan.

Contact was made with the owners and tenants and a questionnaire sent to them all. The response rate was encouraging – just 8 tenants and 2 independent owners did not respond (one of them - Open Networks - is currently not operating from the site).

The data gathered is based on 20 responses. Without exception, all entrepreneurs were friendly, welcoming and interested in why the enquiry was being undertaken.

## 2.0 Location of Enterprise Park

Enterprise Park is situated approximately 1 mile to the south of Piddlehinton on the B3143. It is situated within a site of approximately 90 acres. Adjacent is Bourne Park; both sites use the same entrance from the road.



In the West Dorset District Local Plan (2006) the area is described as “Chalk Valley Floor and Chalk Valley Sides”. Enterprise Park is not located in an *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* but it is adjacent to one and may be seen from it. There are, therefore, a number of sensitivities around the use and development of the site.

## 3.0 History of the Park

While in the ownership of Edgar Tory, a local landowner, the land was requisitioned by the government during World War 2 and a military camp built on the site in 1941. It functioned as a Reception and Reinforcement camp. Later in the War, it became a D Day Marshalling

Area camp. At that time 3,600 men lived on the site and had responsibility for 510 vehicles.

The US 67<sup>th</sup> Armed Field Artillery Battalion was based here, as were two US Infantry Divisions who, after leaving Piddlehinton for service to clear German troops from Brittany, suffered a great tragedy when 802 of their men died when their troopship was torpedoed off the coast of Cherbourg.

After the War, the facilities were used as a base for National Service and then to house homeless people, including Asian refugees from Uganda in the early 1970's.

In 1975 some of the land (approximately 25 acres) was acquired by West Dorset District Council who engaged in letting some of the buildings as small industrial units. West Dorset District Council also made provision for a gypsy settlement on part of the site. They also retained ownership of the Drill Hall.

The Ministry of Defence retained 10 acres which is still used by the Royal School of Signals for training purposes. Puddletown Rugby Club acquired 42 acres on which they have a rugby pitch, clubhouse and changing facilities. Dorchester Rifle and Pistol Club acquired an area of land to be used as a shooting Range.



Royal School of Signals  
Training Ground



Puddletown RFC has a major  
share of land at the old Camp



The old Drill Hall now  
Piddlehinton Gym

In 1996 the 25 acre West Dorset District Council site was sold to Dr Alan Perry, a historian and landowner. Dr Perry and his family engaged in improving the site in order to develop further the potential for small industrial units. He also planted 802 beech trees – one for each soldier who died on *the SS Leopoldville*.

The next change came in 2006 when the site was split and sold on in 2 lots; one of 11.6 acres to Conduit Mead and the other of 13.6 acres to Jade Aden. These 2 companies manage the tenancies. Both have made significant improvements to the infrastructure of the Park – notably to the refurbishment of the units and enhancement of security. Ref: Appendix 1

In 2007, a Management Plan was drafted and mutually agreed by the owners and Piddle Valley Parish Council. This covered the following subjects; landscaping, extensions and refurbishments to buildings, transport, security, fencing and signage.



Units before and after refurbishment

Adding to the complexity of ownership on the whole site, are a number of the entrepreneurs who own the freehold of the industrial units they are operating from.

#### **4.0 A Previous Report**

A report titled, “Piddlehinton Camp The Future” was produced (date uncertain, thought to be 2003) in conjunction with Piddle Valley Parish Council. Within the report, current usage of the site was then described as follows;

*“Apart from one or two larger enterprises, the industrial units are generally occupied by fairly small businesses. A number of them merely use the buildings for storage. Others are involved in light engineering, manufacturing or electronics. Consequently the need for local services and transport links is not vital. Just over 40 people work full time on the site, with a number of others only there irregularly when delivering or collecting from storage units. About 15% of the workforce live within the Piddle Valley. The remainder drive more than 10 miles to the Camp. Owners are clearly satisfied with the facilities and local services as they have nearly all indicated that if they expanded their businesses they would hope to remain at the present site.”*

#### **5.0 Enterprise Park in 2012 (data collected from questionnaire & interview)**

##### **5.1 Current Owners and Tenants**

###### **Independent Owners**

- Abadine (storage)
- Ashley Wood (vehicle recovery, storage and repair)
- B J Guy (skip hire)
- Crendon Timber (manufacturing roof trusses)
- Glasmaster (fibre glass manufacture)
- Hardy Signs (sign makers)
- IMSIS (structured cabling accessories)
- Knighton Countryside (forestry, conservation and ecological contractors)
- Lewins (joinery)
- Pete Rees (fibre glass manufacture) and including Griddle on the Piddle



Glasmaster – 32 years trading from Enterprise Park



Crendon Timber- employs 31 people on the Park



Griddle on the Piddle serves breakfast, lunch, snacks ...always with a smile!

### **Conduit Mead**

Total units: 22

Occupied: 18

Conduit Mead has one unit for their own office

*\* Some tenants have more than one unit*

Tenants include;

- Motor repairs and restoration
- Furniture restoration
- Carpentry
- Land based sector training
- Mini coach hire
- Circuit board screen print manufacturers
- Garden ornaments manufacture
- Shot blasting
- Brewery
- Drinks agent
- Motor garage
- Storage



Piddle Valley Brewery: a success story for Enterprise Park

### **Jade Aden**

Total units: 19

Occupied: 12

Under refurbishment: 6

Jade Aden has 3 units for their own business – structural steel and industrial cladding

*\* Some tenants have more than one unit*

Tenants include:

- Street lighting maintenance
- Soft furnishings manufacture
- Electronics assembly



The old Parade Ground – perfect storage for street lights

## 5.2 Length of Time Trading from Enterprise Park

< 1 year	: 1
1 – 3 years	: 8
3 – 5 years	: 3
5-7 years	: 4
7- 10 years	: 0
10 + years	: 4

## 5.3 Reasons for choosing Enterprise Park

The following were the reasons given (in order of frequency)

- Affordable
- Personal/family
- Available space in Dorchester area
- Rural environment
- Spacious/room to expand
- Good business catchment area
- Quiet and suitable for anti social(noisy/smelly) enterprise
- Refurbished units
- Easy delivery of supplies
- Short lease
- Needed to downsize
- Inherited from previous contractor
- Iconic name (for the beer!)



Beautiful Dorset countryside on the doorstep

## 5.4 Number of Employees

Data from responders confirms that 206 persons are employed full time and a further 15 persons may be counted as occasional. Some do not spend the whole of their working time at Enterprise Park as their work takes them elsewhere.

**Note:** The actual figure will exceed this number slightly as there were non-responders. Mostly though, these were one man bands.

**Second note:** a significant increase from the figure of 40+ persons quoted in the (2003?) report.

Data breakdown;

1 worker	2 businesses
1 – 3 workers	8 businesses
4 – 9 workers	8 businesses
10 – 19 workers	2 businesses
20 – 29 workers	0 businesses
30 – 50 workers	3 businesses
Occasional workers	15

## 5.5 Male/Female Ratio of Workers

90% of workers at Enterprise Park are male.

## 5.6 Age Profile of Workers

< 18 years	3
18 – 29 years	54
30 – 49 years	112
50 - 59 years	32
60+ years	5

## 5.7 Home locations of Workers

At the time of asking, just 3 people live in the Piddle Valley.

The catchment for workers at Enterprise Park is very wide. The largest cluster is from Dorchester, followed closely by Weymouth. Some workers travel from the towns of

Blandford, Poole, Swanage, Yeovil, Bridport, Christchurch, Salisbury. Some travel from even farther afield – Winchester.

Most travel from small Dorset settlements, including; Moreton, Bere Regis, Charminster, Bridport, Stratton, Cerne Abbas, Crossways, Wool, Rampisham,

### **5.8 Travel to Work**

With the exception of 8 who travel by motorbike and 2 who travel by cycle, all workers travel to Enterprise Park by car.

### **5.9 Perceived advantages of Enterprise Park as a work location – Employees**

The following were given (in order of frequency);

- A job
- Countryside environment
- Local to home
- Not on a trading estate
- No difficult neighbours
- Family/social
- Plenty of parking

### **5.10 Perceived disadvantages Enterprise Park as a work location – Employees**

The following were given (in order of frequency)

- Road infrastructure – especially in winter
- Isolation
- Security/theft issues
- Vulnerability
- Poor lighting
- Lack of amenities
- Lack of public transport/travel to work costs
- Travellers

### **5.11 Perceived advantages of Enterprise Park as a work location –**

**Owners/Tenants**

The following were given (in order of frequency)

- Community spirit/sharing and helping each other
- Affordability
- Countryside location/relaxed atmosphere
- Business opportunities created from neighbours on the Park
- Spacious/open storage

- Quiet/no noise issues
- Ease of transport for supplies
- Supportive landlord
- Easy access for clients
- Quality of refurbished units
- Improved security

## **5.12 Perceived disadvantages of Enterprise Park as a work location –**

### **Owners/Tenants**

The following were given (in order of frequency)

- Isolation/security/lighting concerns
- Broadband – hopeless internet access
- Restrictive Planning
- Lack of public transport
- Poor road on site
- No passing trade
- No village shop
- Non - availability of skilled workers
- High business rates
- Complaints from the Gypsy residential site

## **5.13 More business success could be achieved if**

The following were given (in order of frequency)

- Planning permission to expand
- Improved Broadband
- Lower rents
- Better public transport
- Availability of bigger unit
- Designation changed to industrial estate and not to include residential
- More encouragement from Local Authority
- More sympathetic Parish Council
- Fewer travellers
- Use both entrances
- More customers

## 6.0 Some additional observations

### 6.1 Environment of Enterprise Park

A number of entrepreneurs were keen to report that the Park is much better cared for than it used to be. Generally, they were those who had known the site when it was managed by the Council. They were complimentary of the work done by Alan Perry to improve the landscaping and general maintenance and of the improvements introduced by current landlords. Others expressed concern about what they described as “scruffiness” and the effect such a visual impact has upon their customers. There is some justification for this as the camera reveals.



Less than attractive views of Enterprise Park

### 6.2 Security

Security was an issue mentioned frequently. Some entrepreneurs spoke of how much better it was now compared with the early years. Others described how much it worries them that they are isolated and exposed to risk – particularly of theft.

Reference was made to the gypsies who live so close by. Some said that they presented no problems at all. Others did not share this confidence.

Particularly strong feelings were expressed about the permission that was granted by Dorset County Council for travellers to use land adjacent to Enterprise Park during the period of the Olympic Games. Many entrepreneurs felt and, even though at the time of writing they have moved on, continue to feel very vulnerable.

An ever present reminder of the proximity of the gypsy community is the large number of horses and ponies on areas of grass on Enterprise Park.



A common sight at Enterprise Park

### **6.3 Planning**

Over the years there has been a step change from the early concept of “the Camp” providing affordable “seedbed” facilities for developing businesses which, when established, might be expected to move on to other premises. Now sizeable, well established companies are operating from this location. A number expressed frustration that they have been inhibited by planning regulations from expanding their businesses at Enterprise Park. Some feel the local authorities; District and Parish to be unsupportive and unsympathetic to their needs and aspirations.

At present, the planning framework of the West Dorset District Plan (2006) covers Enterprise Park. Ref: Appendix 2

### **7.0 Appendices**

1. Plan of Enterprise Park
2. Extract from West Dorset District Plan (2006) – Piddlehinton Camp

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