



Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan

*Help make the
Vision
for our future*

Newsletter 6

To all residents and friends of the Piddle Valley

The Housing Survey forms are in, so thanks to all who took part and for attending our meeting at the school in November. Progress continues in all areas but it is housing on which we concentrate most space again this time.

Just over a year ago, our MP, Oliver Letwin, joined a meeting of our working group and gave us an encouraging start. This exercise was repeated recently when he came again to look at our progress and gave us very helpful advice. He suggested our survey questions might have limited the response so we shall compare our findings with those received from neighbouring communities at Cerne Abbas and Buckland Newton. We have still to include data collected by the District Council. He could see that second homes are affecting communities, particularly Plush.

It was reassuring to hear we can be as specific as we wish in the type, character, size and specification of housing and free to locate housing where needed and appropriate, and in small groups as necessary. Redundant farm buildings have been the subject of debate for a long time but it is now becoming possible to see them converted where appropriate to residential use, workshops or for local community needs. He accepted that the contour restrictions set out in the Village Design Statement will avoid intrusion into the wider landscape.

Land, as well as redundant structures, have been offered by several landowners. We shall be discussing this in more detail with them to help build the overall picture for what is available in the Valley and could go a long way towards what we eventually turn out to need. The procurement route for low cost housing as well as community facilities may well be best achieved through the medium of a community land trust, not unlike the scheme utilised at Buckland Newton. Another useful route might be the setting up of self-help groups where the efforts of individuals can be channelled into the shared objective of building sustainably. These can be exciting options that will bring residents into the latest techniques of energy saving passive construction.

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

led by Malcolm Johnston malcolm.johnston@zaffre.co / 01300 34869

The Housing and Land Survey Questionnaire distributed with the November edition of Piddle Valley News and Views led to 18 responses, 6 were proposals for land use and the remainder gave information about housing needs.

The meeting held on 25th November to discuss the survey was attended by 25 people and led to some very useful discussion which helped the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Group better understand people's needs. The overwhelming number of comments related to the problems local people face in affording housing whose prices have been driven up by market forces. Among the points discussed around this topic were:

- 1 The negative connotations of the commonly used description 'affordable housing' with its implication that people are poor, and the terms 'local' or 'low cost' were offered as better.
- 2 The possibility of a Piddle Valley Housing Trust being established to build 'local' housing whose prices or rental charges would be lower than open market.
- 3 The possibility of land being made available for self builders – potentially to be administered by the Housing Trust.
- 4 Whether house owners without relatives would consider bequeathing their homes to a Housing Trust.

The housing information provided in the survey responses is shown in this chart; the need for 'low cost' housing clearly demonstrated and emphasised by those who stated that costs prevent them moving. There is a demand for larger houses, but perhaps surprisingly, a greater need stated for smaller houses - this concern relates particularly to those over 50.

An analysis of the responses suggests that 13 houses would be needed to satisfy the respondents' needs but this does not include the number (43) already registered with West Dorset District Council housing officer for the Piddle Valley.

Environment, landscape and farming

led by Peter Chance peter_chance@btinternet.com / 01300 348311

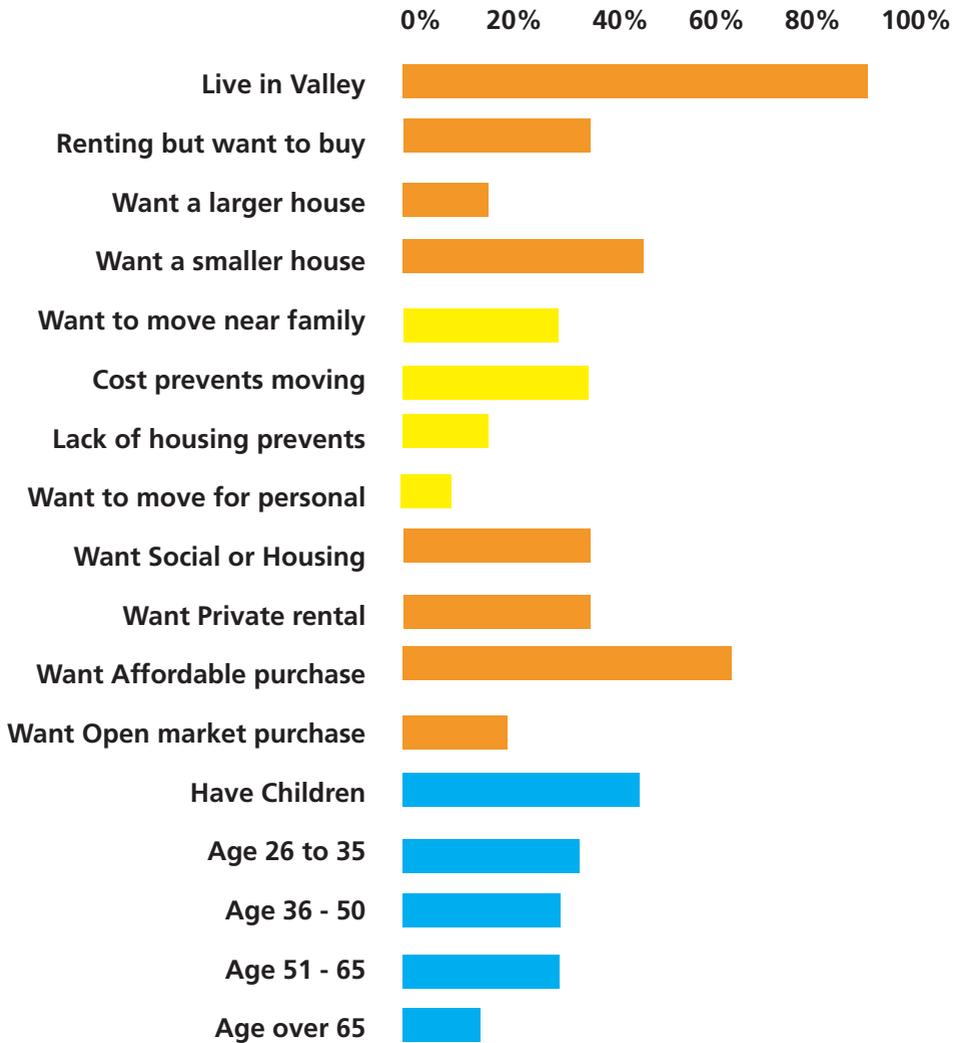
Following advice from South West Regen, a Forestry consultant will be assessing opportunities for further discussion with owners.

Business and community needs

led for the time being by John Browning 01300 348580 / or as above

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Responses to Housing Survey, Housing Requirements



Note not all respondents completed all relevant boxes.

Responses to Survey - Land questions

Of the six respondents offering land for potential development, half had land only and the other half land with existing industrial or farm buildings. Analysis suggests that up to 25 houses could be built on this land.

Community energy generation and low energy design

led by Dot Browning dot.descon@easynet.co.uk / 01300 348280

Hydropower

After the session with Pete West, leader of DCC Renewable Energy Strategy and Rupert Lloyd, DCC Climate Adaptation Officer, Energy Group members have met a hydro consultant to discuss feasibility of a hydropower turbine on the River Piddle. Data relating to river flow rates obtained by the Energy group suggest that a hydro scheme is viable subject to some initial survey work by members before a professional feasibility study can be carried out.

Further hydro related matters were discussed, including Environment Agency involvement, impoundment / abstraction licences, and various funding mechanisms. Site visits to existing local hydro schemes are being arranged to widen our knowledge of viability levels.

Transport, traffic speed, footpaths, cycleways and communications

led by Neil Herbert sherbetnj@yahoo.co.uk / 01300 348479

Broadband Speed

More checks needed from residents please, by using:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/broadband/technical-information/speed>

So far speeds vary : 2.80 - 3Mbps Piddletrenthide (Egypt); 5.40 - 6.00 Mbps (Piddle/Poachers); 1.80 – 2.00Mbps in Plush; 3.75Mbps Piddlehinton; 3.40 - 4.70Mbps Alton Pancras. The average speed for Dorset is 8.70Mbps with 14% less than 2.00Mbps. Superfast Broadband should deliver 24Mbps by summer 2016 to 97% of properties in Dorset as a whole.

Traffic on the Valley Road (B3143)

The KEEP US SAFE posters from local children have been well received by residents and are moved around to refresh them. The Rectory Road traffic survey is complete and results being collated and added to the draft report on the B3143 Valley Road.

SatNav

Any useful data depicting routes along the Valley Road would be helpful for our records.

Rights of Way

The all-weather route from Piddlehinton to Piddletrenthide for horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians has been well received by DCC but is not likely to be included in next years allocation for funding but more likely for the 2015/16 programme.