

Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan

Pre-Submission Consultation (February – April 2021)

SUMMARY – what this plan is all about...

Our **Neighbourhood Plan** has been created by our community. Local people and businesses in the parish have decided what kind of place Stinsford parish should be, and what changes need to be made to planning policies to ensure that the right type of development is allowed, in the right places, at the right time.

The Plan has at its heart a **shared vision** for the protection and development of the Parish that reflects our values, hopes and needs today, and into the future, until 2038. It has given us an opportunity to create policies that will **shape the places where we live and work**. If and when it is agreed, the Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan for our area.

We are a rural parish, on the edge of the county town of Dorchester. There has not been a great deal of development over recent years – although this could change if Dorset Council decide to press ahead with their ideas of a northern extension to Dorchester. Otherwise there is no expectation that our parish should have much, if any, development at all.

Most of the plan, not surprisingly, is about our natural and historic environment. The beautiful countryside, the peace and tranquility, the variety of wildlife, the historic buildings, and the cultural connections (particularly with Thomas Hardy) are points that almost everyone said they felt were special about our parish. So our plan has reflected these attributes and its aim is to safeguard and enhance the Parish's outstanding natural beauty and heritage. Extensive research means that we have been able to prepare wide-ranging policies with a common theme: **protection**.

- Protecting and strengthening our local wildlife and habitats, and playing our part in tackling climate change through the protection and enhancement of our trees, woodland and forest
- Reinforcing the local landscape character (including the tranquility of the countryside and dark skies, and the undeveloped gaps between settlements)
- Protecting our important local views
- Encouraging appropriate recreational access to the countryside
- Protecting Stinsford's historic environment
- Positively managing the Thomas Hardy connection
- Better building design (that balances the importance of our beautiful places with the need to build sustainably)
- Protection of groundwater resources

Given the prospect of possible strategic development north of Dorchester, the issue of housing growth in the parish was discussed at length. The outcome of the consultation shows that local residents support **very limited new housing** in the parish, of which half should be **genuinely affordable, giving priority to local people**. The Kingston Maurward College (KMC) Masterplan (July 2019) indicates an intention to build about 18 homes, including some low-cost housing, and there are mixed views on the sites put forward so it will be important to ensure that the aspirations of the College and the community are aligned.

Another element in the KMC Masterplan is a proposal to create additional business incubation units at Stinsford Enterprise Park and this was generally considered to be acceptable by the community. However, it was felt that any future **employment opportunities and business growth** should be

restricted to the footprints of the three existing Business Parks, and any impacts on traffic and the environment should be carefully managed.

We are fortunate to benefit from a wide range of **recreational opportunities** linked to the countryside. While a shop or a pub may not be commercially viable, in future we may be able to take advantage of new multi-purpose community facilities thanks to KMC who may be in a position to offer the community a venue suitable for social and recreational activities.

Traffic was the **number one issue** highlighted by residents when asked about what they disliked about living in the Parish. The busy A35 is the main noise source and has other negative effects on the Parish. And, given we are a rural parish, it is inevitable that car is the dominant form of transport for residents, commuters and visitors. Our roads are very rural in nature, so we don't have pavements or cycleways, and walkers and cyclists are forced to share our lanes with cars, lorries and tractors. So we plan to promote safe access for walkers. We also have ambitious plans to improve and extend our network of cycle routes. Ultimately this should help reduce the reliance on cars.

Cycle route improvements is an example of one of a significant number of specific **projects** designed to further improve our natural landscape and address some of the concerns raised by our community. These will be taken forward by Stinsford Parish Council.

The Council also knows that many local residents are **vehemently opposed** to the proposal for possible major growth north of Dorchester and is committed to reflect their concerns.

What changes were made as part of the last consultation?

Since the last draft was published in November, the main changes have been:

- *updated objectives to give greater emphasis to tackling climate change*
- *broadened project on Woodland Survey and Planting*
- *new project to lobby for noise-reduction measures on the A35 as and when opportunities arise*
- *view across Exhibition Field looking across Dorchester's skyline added to the table of important views*
- *policy (SNP8) on visitor attractions broadened to cover need for visitor management plans*
- *policy on affordable housing now drafted (SNP9) to reflect consultation feedback*
- *policy on local employment opportunities now drafted (SNP10) to reflect consultation feedback*
- *policy on community facilities now drafted (SNP11) to reflect consultation feedback*
- *traffic issues relating to Slyer's Lane (up to Waterston Ridge) added to the map and table.*

How can you comment now on the revised draft?

We are happy to hear from anyone who lives, works or has an interest in the area and either wants to let us know if they think the plan is fine, or if not what changes they would like to see and why.

To see the plan in full, visit <http://www.stinsfordnplan.org.uk/emerging-policy/>. If you cannot easily see it on the internet, you can contact your local champion who should be able to lend you a printed copy.

There is an online form that you can use to respond <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SNP-Reg14> or you can send your responses by post (SNP Group, c/o 2 Bhompson Farm Cottages, Dorchester DT2 8QN) or by email (stinsfordnplan@gmail.com)

The consultation is open until 23.59 on 27th April 2021.