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Summary of views from the 9 hamlet-based Zoom consultation meetings

Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan

November 2020

PART 1 – EXCLUDING TRAFFIC AND CYCLING (ran out of time)

Numbers attending

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **No. of residents** **(excl Steering Group members)** | **No. of SG members attending as residents** | **Total attendance** **(excl SG members servicing meeting)** |
| Frome Whitfield | 6 |  | 6 |
| Cokers Frome & the ridge | 4 |  | 4 |
| Higher Bockhampton | 3 |  | 3 |
| Stinsford | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Kingston Mwd Estate | 2 |  | 2 |
| Birkin area | 7 |  | 7 |
| Higher Kingston | 2 |  | 2 |
| Bhompston and Pine Lodge | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Lower Bockhampton | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| **TOTAL** | **42[[1]](#footnote-2)** | **7** | **49** |

We had additional written submissions from 2 people who had attended meetings (Sue and Judy), and from three people who had not attended (Martin, Roberta and Suzie). These submissions are separate from the questionnaire replies; we have had 7 replies so far (30 Nov) to the questionnaire, which is open until 5th December. In addition I know of at least two paper questionnaires due to arrive.

General impressions of the plan

Many people expressed their appreciation for the hard work, abundant research and interesting presentation of the plan. They also appreciated the chance to take part in the meetings. Whilst appreciating the work done so far, the view was also voiced that the plan could focus even more ambitiously, and do more to meet goals such as carbon reduction and wildlife protection.

Housing

‘No new housing in this particular settlement’ was the view of Frome Whitfield, Cokers Frome, Higher Bockhampton, Higher Kingston and Lower Bockhampton (5 of 9 hamlets). Various reasons were advanced, including ‘had enough development already’; ‘not sustainable due to lack of facilities’; ‘DOR15 will provide enough housing if it goes ahead’.

Settlements that seemed open to some development were: Birkin area, where 2-5 new homes in Maurward Close ‘would be plenty’; and Stinsford hamlet, where 2 of the new homes proposed by Kingston Maurward were just tolerable, with maybe some more in replacement of some of the farm buildings.

Kingston Maurward estate and Bhompston seemed not to want housing in their immediate area, but were sympathetic to affordable housing for local people, in suitable circumstances e.g. if a suitable development were proposed by Kingston Maurward.

Overall, many comments challenged the reality of a need for housing in the parish (although a few residents spoke up for young people’s needs); some were sympathetic to KM’s financial needs, if they are genuine; many wanted ‘affordable’ to be carefully defined and enforced. Some seemed to say ‘NO new housing, but if …. ‘ and then indicated they could be sympathetic if the circumstances were right, e.g. if KM made a good case, or if a generous landowner offered a rural exception site for affordable homes.

Housing on a brownfield site was not supported.

One person advocated inserting a policy for an early review of the NP, to take account of the ‘North Dorchester’ proposal.

My sense overall from the meetings is that **most people preferred Option 1 (‘do nothing’)** even though they had some sympathy with the idea of affordable housing in principle.

Employment

Six of the 9 hamlets were opposed to growth in employment provision (i.e. preferred Option 1): Cokers Frome, Higher Bockhampton, Birkin area, Higher Kingston, Bhompston and Lower Bockhampton. Two meetings contained mixed views, with some supporting limited business growth and others opposed: Frome Whitfield, and Stinsford hamlet. The KM Estate meeting favoured business growth. All meetings raised the questions of traffic arising from businesses. They insisted that steps should be taken to ensure that any business growth did not impact the lanes. One person suggested the opportunity should be taken to encourage better environmental practice by local businesses.

Overall **my sense is that the balance was towards Option 1 (‘do nothing’)**.

Community facilities

There was support for sharing community facilities at KM by two meetings (Lower Bockhampton and Bhompston), including a hope that sports facilities could be shared (subject to safeguarding etc), and a desire for more community events, possibly even extending to using the Greenwood Cafe sometimes.

Other hamlets either did not comment (Cokers Frome, Birkin) or said that they used facilities elsewhere, e.g. Charminster, Puddletown, Dorchester, Piddlehinton. Hence access, including cycle or foot access, to those centres was important.

Landscape and Views

Seven of the 9 hamlets **responded very positively** to these policies; two (Birkin and Higher Kingston) did not comment. Additional points made were: emphasise the role of hamlets in the local landscape; extend the AONB to include the ridge; tackle the issue of noise from the A35; support for landscaping of business parks and tackling light pollution; increase the prominence of SSSIs in the NP; support for the Open Gaps proposal; make the avoidance of harm a more measurable concept.

Regarding the project for woodland surveys and management, two people voiced support, one of whom suggested strengthening the aim to include addressing climate change.

Cultural and historic environment

Five of the 9 meetings made **very complimentary** points about this section, e.g. “lovely piece of work”; “learned lots”. Birkin area did not comment, nor did Higher Kingston save for a minor correction. **Higher Bockhampton however felt that the impact of visitors was negative** and that no more should be encouraged.

Recreation and access

Concern about the impact of visitors was expressed under this section by Higher and Lower Bockhampton; in both places concern was voiced that Dorset Council’s forecasts and promises made when the Visitor Centre was built had not been fulfilled. **Residents of Higher Bockhampton felt strongly that Thorncombe Woods is overused; other woodland access is needed.**

Frome Whitfield, Cokers Frome, Higehr Bockhampton, Kingston Maurward Estate and Higher Kingston all expressed the **importance of a good rights of way network**, in some cases wanting specific improvements.

Stinsford hamlet hoped that KM could help more in managing visitors, e.g. by acting as a central hub for the Thomas Hardy attractions; KM Estate residents did not agree!

Sustainability and Building Design

Six of the 9 hamlets **supported this section;** three (Birkin, Higher Kingston, Bhompston) did not comment. Of those which commented, two (Stinsford hamlet and KM Estate) highlighted that design should be sympathetic to the immediate settlement; one (Cokers Frome) contained a strong voice for modern design. Frome Whitfield and Stinsford both mentioned climate change as an important aspect of design.

**Concerns about groundwater**, and possibly strengthening our position, came from Higher Bockhampton and KM Estate.

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Omitted due to lack of time: Travel and Cycling.

I will try to do something on these topics before our meeting on 3 Dec.

SC/ 30 Nov 2020

1. One resident (Chris Courtaux) attended two meetings and played an active part in both. He is counted twice, so the actual no. of non-SG residents taking part was 41, and the overall total is 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)