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26 January 2015

Dear Parishioner

Neighbourhood Plan Survey Feedback

I'm afraid this is a rather a long letter, but it is important and I would be very grateful if you try to find the time to read it, despite its length. It does affect every one of us.

Survey and Response Statistics

We sent out 806 questionnaires by post to every single household in the Parish of Bere Regis. We also put the same questionnaire on-line on the Parish Council website.

We received 181 responses, representing the views of 325 individuals. That was a response rate of 22.5% of households, and 23.6% of the total electorate.

The Map

I can only apologise for the quality of the printed map. It lacked a key and did not show the detail at all well. Having said that, the on-line version was much, much better, as many of you remarked. In addition, 50 people attended the briefing session at the Drax Hall on Saturday 22nd November and were able to view large scale maps and ask for information and clarification. The poorly printed map made answering Question 8 about the Settlement Boundary difficult. We are, therefore, treating the answers we received to this particular question as unsound. We will hold another public meeting, or meetings, in Spring 2015 to let people have access to all the necessary information concerning the Settlement Boundary and to ask for your views again, when you have the full facts and a better map in front of you.

The Questions and Responses

All the questions, except Question 8, and a summary of your answers to the questions, except Question 8, are on the Annex attached to this letter. Below is a summary of the key responses:

Q1: The draft Neighbourhood Plan proposes that 70 new dwellings be built on four development sites around the village. According to the Purbeck Local Plan, 28 of these new dwellings should be "affordable". The Parish Council would like to see all affordable homes located on two sites that are closer to the village centre so that residents can make use of local shopping and service facilities. Do you agree with this approach?

72% of respondents in favour

Q2: Of the 28 "affordable" homes the Parish Council would like to see a mix of social rented, shared ownership and low equity properties in order to assist some first time buyers onto the housing ladder. Do you agree that a mix of housing types would benefit the Parish?

83% of respondents in favour

Q3: If adequate local demand exists, it might be possible for some of the building plots to be available for self-build projects. Please confirm if you would be interested in purchasing a plot and are capable of building your own house.

10% could be interested.

Q4: With the new housing development proposed on the northern side of the village, the Parish Council believes that a new walking route, connecting Roke Road to Snow Hill and North Street, could be of benefit to the parish. The proposed route is shown on the attached plan, marked "SANG". If such a path were created, would you use it?

On a regular basis	16%
Occasionally	37%
Infrequently	23%
Never	21%

Q5a: The Parish Council would like to protect some existing open areas around the village from development, as they create breaks between the buildings and add character. Do you agree that the open areas, shown in pale green on the plan, should be protected against development?

81% of respondents in favour

Q5b: Would you prefer to see some, or all, of the open areas developed with housing to reduce the number of new dwellings in the proposed four development sites?

74% of respondents against development of the open areas

Q6: The Parish Council understands that traffic noise from the bypass affects some dwellings in the village. How do you feel about the noise?

Aware of noise 64%

Not aware 34%

Q7: The Parish Council is aware of traffic problems at the access to the Shell garage, which can result in traffic backing up to the roundabout. How do you feel about traffic in that area?

81% in favour of improvements to the access road

Q9a: The old school site will become available for re-use when the new school is completed. How would you like to see the old school site used in the future?

Retain the buildings 42%

Demolish the buildings 34%

Q9b: Please rank the following in order of preference for how you would like the old school site used:

Community use 37%

Residential use 34%

Commercial use 28%

(weighted scores)

Your Comments

The vast majority of comments that you made are published on-line on the Parish Council website at www.bereregisparishcouncil.co.uk. If you want to see these comments and need a printed copy, please contact our Clerk on 01929 472327. The only comments that have not been included are those containing a personal reference which could identify the writer.

Our Responses

1. What we can and can't control through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Purbeck District Council (PDC) Local Plan, following central government guidelines, presently calls for 120 houses to be built in northern Purbeck, mostly in the village, between 2006 and 2027. 40 of these have already been built, some will emerge as "windfall" developments, but there is a requirement for at least 50 to be built in one or more settlement extensions. There may, in the end, be a requirement for more than 50, because the Local Plan is under review at the moment, and the government may insist that Purbeck build more. So, whether we like it or not, provided a developer comes forward with a suitable site, or sites, we will see 50 houses built somewhere on the edge of the village. This was the number agreed in the PDC consultation on the Local Plan in 2010.

Our Parish Neighbourhood Plan cannot reduce the numbers required, but it can say where they should be built; it can increase the numbers if we believe there is benefit to the community in doing so, and, once settled and agreed, can help prevent developers from trying to get permission to build more than the agreed number. It can also help prevent the development of sites which have not been agreed by us through the plan.

So, by writing a Plan and agreeing it with you, the residents, through a local referendum (planned for Autumn 2015), and subject to the District wide Partial Review*, we will have the power to set the total number of houses and where the development areas should be.

If we don't have an agreed plan, a landowner and developer will be free to bring forward proposals for whatever number they think they can get agreement for, on any sites at the edge of the village.

Some people wondered why our proposals have changed from our last major consultation exercise 2 years ago. The answer is that we were then, as now, consulting on draft plans. Following the consultation, we took into account the responses and the views of the 16 people on our working groups to develop a further draft. We have also since had considerable professional advice from the team at PDC as to what is or is not permissible in a Neighbourhood Plan. Hence, we are again consulting on a further draft, which may, in the light of your comments, change again before we publish the final plan for your agreement.

We are now proposing a total of 70 houses, i.e. 20 more than Purbeck's minimum. Why? The Parish Council believes that demand for such a number exists; that the proportion of affordable homes as part of the mix will help satisfy demand, particularly amongst the younger members of our community, to live where they were born and brought up; that the school, our shops and pubs, and our village organisations will benefit from the modest population growth that 70 houses will bring. We also believe that the Partial Review* of the Purbeck Local Plan will, almost certainly, force an increase on us, so we may as well pre-empt that increase. 70 dwellings would represent an 8% increase in housing numbers over 20 years.

We also believe that we have the potential sites that will absorb these numbers happily without too much impact on residents or our infrastructure.

2. Does the Council own the proposed sites? Who would actually develop them?

The Council does not own any of the sites. All the sites are owned by private land owners who will probably sell to developers to make these proposals happen. The developer has various obligations that he has to meet; for instance, to make a substantial financial contribution to the (national) Community Infrastructure Levy; to create and maintain the "SANG" which we mentioned in the questionnaire; and to build an agreed percentage of affordable homes, which are subsidised by the profit made from market housing.

3. Two years ago the "Bonfire Field" was a "preferred site". Why wasn't it included in the last consultation?

Development of this site was considered, along with a scheme for traffic calming on Rye Hill. DCC have now advised us that traffic lights or a roundabout would not be allowed as a means of slowing traffic on that road, so there is no benefit in developing the site. Furthermore, the Parish Council is concerned that housing on that site could be somewhat detached from the village centre.

4. The field at Barrow Hill was also not included as a possible development site. Why not?

This site was rejected by Purbeck District Council due to poor vehicular access. The Parish Council agrees with that decision.

5. You didn't make clear where the access would be to the Back Lane site.

There will be no vehicle access to the Back Lane site through Butt Lane or off Back Lane. There are two possible routes in. One access route would be via the gap in the houses that exists on West Street between the Chanelles and the last terraced cottage. This route would require significant engineering, but it would lead directly into the site across Back Lane. We are recommending that the spoil from the engineering be used to create a noise reducing bund along the side of the by-pass. The other route could be opposite the Old Mill and would turn Eastward behind Back Lane into the housing development.

6. What about the additional traffic in the village?

Clearly, new housing, wherever it is put, will add traffic to the village. We will be asking that all new houses have adequate parking provision. The traffic problems we have on West Street are an issue, but we are working with the Highways Department at Dorset County Council to try and find some practical solutions.

7. Please can we do something about all the oversized, noisy traffic that forever blocks up our village – height restrictions and weight restrictions should apply AT ALL TIMES?

There are, at present, no weight or height restrictions on vehicles using West Street, because this is the main route to Milborne St Andrew from the East.

8. What about the dangers of rainwater run-off from the Back Lane and North Street sites? Will our sewerage system cope with the increased number of houses?

Developers will have to demonstrate that they can design and engineer solutions to these potential problems before planning permission is given. The Parish Council would not support any planning applications unless a solution is proposed.

9. What about the Old School site?

Because there has been some ambiguity about the ownership of the Old School site, and because the final decision to go ahead with the move of the school has only been taken fairly recently, we have rather ignored the Old School site, but your responses to this question will make us look closely at the potential of the site, both for housing and/or community facilities.

10. I was given to understand that the new school would incorporate community facilities, i.e. a new school hall that could be used.

At the time of the last questionnaire we very much hoped that a new school would be able to incorporate community facilities, but it has not proved possible to incorporate, for instance, a large hall. Although the Parish Council is working very closely with the School Governors on the new school project, for example, to provide the access drive over Souls Moor, the development of the new school is not part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

11. Could Self-build dwellings be sold on at full market price? Can Shared Equity houses be guaranteed to stay in use by locals in the future?

As yet, central government has not finalised the conditions of such schemes. If they were to follow the same terms and conditions as the CIL exemption for self-build, then the self-builder would need to live in it as their primary residence for three years before being able to sell on the open market. Households with a local connection will be given first refusal when an affordable home (social rented or shared equity) becomes available.

12. A pedestrian bridge over the A35 at the end of Butt Lane (Jubilee Trail) is badly needed.

We have looked into this but, in these times of financial austerity, funds are just not available for this sort of aspiration.

If you have any queries about any matters in this letter, please don't hesitate to contact me, or Amanda Crocker, our clerk, or indeed any of the Parish Councillors, for more information. You are all, as ever, very welcome to come to our Parish Council meetings (second Thursday in the month, 7pm, at the Drax Hall), when there is always an opportunity for parishioners to raise any matters they wish.

Yours faithfully

Ian Ventham
Chairman: Bere Regis Parish Council

****The Partial Review***

Purbeck District Council is currently producing the Partial Review of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1. The first stage is called the issues and options stage, and PDC hopes to consult on this in late January. Evidence indicates that the district needs more housing, but exactly how much and where it will go will not be decided until the plan is refined. As the plan progresses, the District Council will continue to consult Purbeck residents.

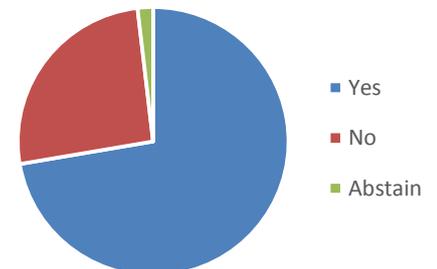
Central Government has recently made some changes to planning policy guidance, setting a new threshold for developers providing affordable housing. The Neighbourhood Plan Group will be considering the implications of this in the New Year.

Bere Regis Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 2014 Summary of Results

Question 1

The draft Neighbourhood Plan proposes that 70 new dwellings be built on four development sites around the village. According to the Purbeck Local Plan, 28 of these new dwellings should be “affordable.” The Parish Council would like to see all affordable homes located on the two sites that are closer to the village centre so that residents can make use of local shopping and service facilities. Do you agree with this approach?

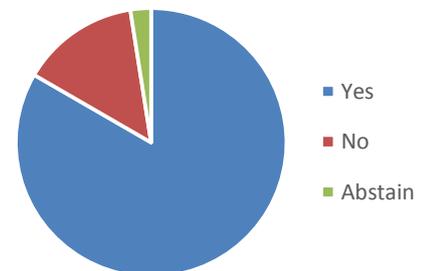
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
Yes	138	235	72%
No	41	84	26%
Abstain	2	6	2%
	181	325	100%



Question 2

Of the 28 “affordable” homes, the Parish Council would like to see a mix of social rented, shared ownership and low equity properties in order to assist some first time buyers onto the housing ladder. Do you agree that a mix of housing types would benefit the Parish?

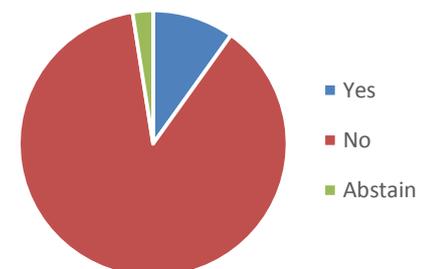
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
Yes	155	271	83%
No	23	46	14%
Abstain	3	8	2%
	181	325	100%



Question 3

If adequate local demand exists it might be possible for some of the building plots to be available for self-build properties. Please confirm if you would be interested in purchasing a plot and are capable of building your own house.

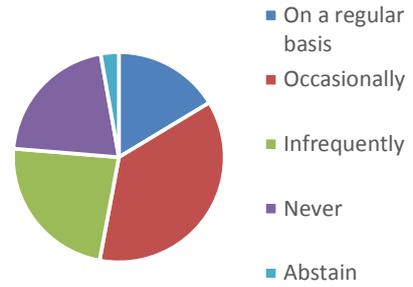
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
Yes	13	32	10%
No	164	285	88%
Abstain	4	8	2%
	181	325	100%



Question 4

With the new housing development proposed on the northern side of the village, the Parish Council believes that a new walking route connecting Roke Road to Snow Hill and North Street could be of benefit to the parish. The proposed route is shown on the attached plan, marked “SANG”. If such a path were created, would you use it?

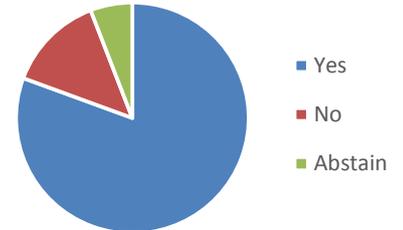
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
On a regular basis	27	53	16%
Occasionally	68	119	37%
Infrequently	43	76	23%
Never	38	68	21%
Abstain	5	9	3%
	181	325	100%



Question 5a

The Parish Council would like to protect some existing open areas around the village from development as they create breaks between the buildings and add character. Do you agree that the open areas shown in pale green on the plan should be protected against development?

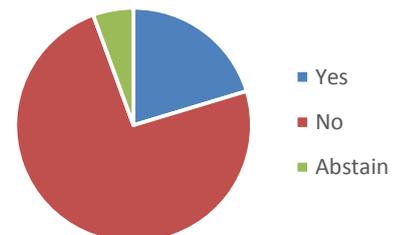
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
Yes	150	262	81%
No	22	44	14%
Abstain	9	19	6%
	181	325	100%



Question 5b

Would you prefer to see some or all of the open areas developed with housing to reduce the number of new dwellings in the proposed four development sites?

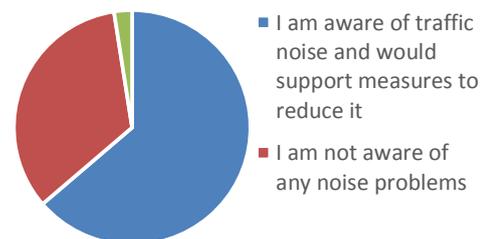
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
Yes	34	66	20%
No	137	241	74%
Abstain	10	18	6%
	181	325	100%



Question 6

The Parish Council understands that traffic noise from the bypass affects some dwellings in the village. How do you feel about the noise?

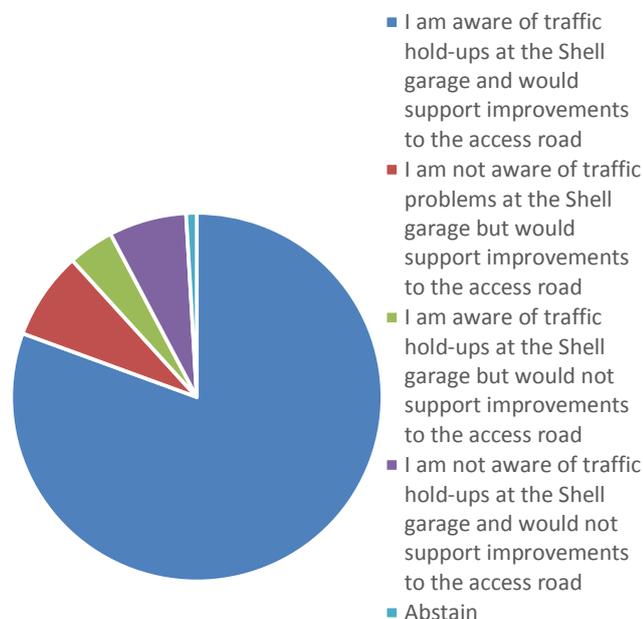
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
I am aware of traffic noise and would support measures to reduce it	111	207	64%
I am not aware of any noise problems	66	110	34%
Abstain	4	8	2%
	181	325	100%



Question 7

The Parish Council is aware of traffic problems at the access to the Shell garage, which can result in traffic backing up to the roundabout. How do you feel about traffic in that area?

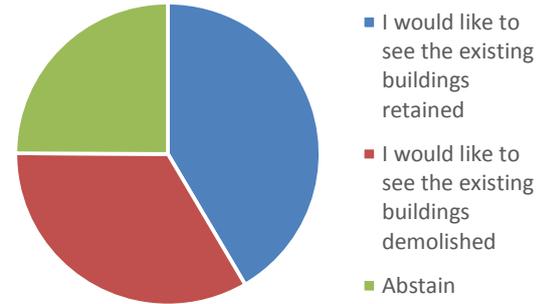
	Households	Individuals	Percentage
I am aware of traffic hold-ups at the Shell garage and would support improvements to the access road	141	262	81%
I am not aware of traffic problems at the Shell garage but would support improvements to the access road	19	25	8%
I am aware of traffic hold-ups at the Shell garage but would not support improvements to the access road	6	13	4%
I am not aware of traffic hold-ups at the Shell garage and would not support improvements to the access road	13	22	7%
Abstain	2	3	1%
	181	325	100%



Question 9a

The old school site will become available for re-use when the new school is completed. How would you like to see the old school site used in the future?

	Households	Individuals	Percentage
I would like to see the existing buildings retained	73	135	42%
I would like to see the existing buildings demolished	57	109	34%
Abstain	51	81	25%
	181	325	100%



Question 9b

Please rank the following in order of preference for how you would like the old school site used. (weighted scores)

	Total	Top	Second	Third	%
Community facilities	664	423	180	61	37%
Commercial facilities	500	183	202	115	28%
Residential facilities	608	345	168	95	34%
	1772	951	550	271	

