

Planning Report for 2025 AGM

The Planning sub-Committee has continued to meet throughout the year despite some absences for medical reasons. We have been pleased to welcome Marilyn Barber and Michael Hodge onto the committee and that Stephen Protheroe and Bryan Hoile are back with us. I would like to thank Andrew Pilborough for his contribution throughout the year and say that we will miss him.

We have looked at the planning applications in the Society's area of interest which roughly coincides with BH21. There have been 472 applications in the year, slightly down on previous years, and of those we have looked in detail at 165, about the usual 1/3.

We have commented to the Local Planning Authorities on 12 of these applications. Some of the applications would have resulted in over-development such as one to replace a bungalow with 11 dwellings and another where the proposed addition on severed land had to be a strange shape in order to fit. There have also been three applications to raise the roof line in otherwise totally bungalow areas which we felt would have changed the character of the area.

One application was to build a care home instead of a retail unit on the Quarter Jack Park Estate. We felt that this was unfair for those residents who had bought properties on the understanding that shops would be built. This application was approved by the Local Planning Authority despite objections from us, the Town Council and Colehill Council. On the other hand we have commented in favour of the proposal by Bloor to build a retail unit on the East side of the Cranborne Road Estate. A long overdue addition.

Then there is the field at the end of Birchdale Road. This field was in the now abandoned Dorset Plan for development as WMC06. It has since been removed from consideration because of its ecological value and because it is one of the few remaining areas of Green Belt between Wimborne and Colehill. A company from Cheshire put in an application to Dorset to develop an estate of 59 houses on this site. We, along with several hundred others, objected to this. The application was rejected, an appeal was filed and then withdrawn. Now another application, almost identical to the first, has been made with similar numbers of objections, including from us. We await the decision.

For the last two years, we have had representation at the Town Council's Planning and Environment Committee. We can express our views but not vote. Coming out of that is a decision by the Town Council following encouragement from Dorset to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. A Steering Group has been set up and the Civic Society has been invited supply a representative. So far there has just been one inaugural meeting which I attended. From now on we will move to collecting suggestions of what the content should be prior to going out to public consultation and before creating a draft document for formal approval by the Secretary of State. If you have views, let me or Cllr Simon Wheeler know. Wareham have a good example of such a plan if you want to see one.

We will try to ensure that the plan is in line with the aspirations of the Society but also that infrastructure catches up with the pressures created by the large numbers of extra houses built in the area over recent years