

Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2036

Vision, Principles, Objectives and Actions

1) Introduction

Puddletown is currently in the enviable position of having the opportunity of managing and promoting its own growth, with the West Dorset Local Plan placing no requirement on Puddletown for additional housing development.

However, a number of landowners and developers are interested in building over 300 dwellings in the parish of Puddletown.

The evidence gathered by the Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan Committee so far shows that the majority of the respondents to the 2016 survey in Puddletown want to see a rate of growth of housing that is in line with previous trends so that Puddletown's key services (such as the surgery, the shop, the pub, the vets, the schools) can continue to thrive. This equates to 120 new dwellings staged over the planning period 2018 – 2036¹. There is further evidence that people want to have more housing that is affordable for local people so that they can stay in the village.

Other issues to be addressed have also been raised by the people of Puddletown. These include traffic and parking; the encouragement of new employment opportunities in the village; improvement in social opportunities; protection of our green spaces and the environment; the development of our infrastructure; and improvements to safety and security. These are all issues that can be addressed by a Neighbourhood Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan gives the residents of Puddletown more opportunity to have our say on our village's future. A Neighbourhood Plan has to be taken into account in any planning application or other development by the various responsible councils.

This document sets out the Vision, Principles, Objectives and Actions that govern the Neighbourhood Plan. It should be noted that no particular authority, organisation or individual is targeted by this document. Rather it is a document that sets out the wishes of the people of Puddletown for the development of their village over the next planning period. The implementation of these desires, and the resulting Neighbourhood Plan, should be taken up by the relevant authorities (Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council – or whatever replaces the WDDC, Puddletown Area Parish Council) as well as by interested organisations

¹ 6.7 dwellings per year were constructed in the parish of Puddletown between 1997-2015. The equivalent number of dwelling for the period 2018 – 2036 is 120.6 dwellings. For simplicity the number of 120 dwellings has therefore been used.

and individuals (e.g. landowners, business people or other people interested in the welfare of Puddletown).

2) Vision, Principles, Objectives and Actions

a) Vision

In 2036 Puddletown will be a safe, thriving, and well-connected village, maintaining its character and sense of community spirit, and encompassing a wide range of age and income groups.

b) Principles

Puddletown will:

- Be a **well-connected** village, served by a range of bus services, public footpaths, bridleways, roads and cycle ways designed to meet the needs of the people of Puddletown.
- Be a **traffic friendly and traffic safe** village, with sufficient public and private car parking to meet its needs and ensuring that traffic speed is maintained at a safe level.
- Continue to **develop its housing stock** at a pace commensurate with the desire to keep the village thriving, but not greater than that undertaken in the period 1997-2015.
- Have a **mixed housing stock**, including the development of significant quantities of local housing for local people. New housing developments must be in line with the character of the village, with minimal further infilling, and the avoidance of sprawl.
- Seek to encourage **new and existing local businesses** so as to increase the number of local jobs; this will include an increase in the number of shops and services.
- Maintain and improve the opportunities for **social interaction** within the village, addressing all age groups.
- Be **environmentally safe and friendly**, providing adequate flood defences, maintaining green spaces and protecting ecological habitats.
- Have an underpinning **infrastructure to meet the needs** at the heart of our community, including but not limited to, schools, doctors, vets, broadband, children play areas and a shop, post office and pub.
- Be a **safe and secure** place to live.

c) Objectives and Actions

Objectives: Transport

- **Buses:** To have a bus system with sufficient options to meet the needs of the people of Puddletown.
- **Public Rights of Way:** To have a series of interconnected public rights of way (public footpaths, bridleways, cycle ways) that provide the people of Puddletown with access to the surrounding countryside and sites of natural and archaeological interest.

Actions:

- *Implement a public footpath from Puddletown to Athelhampton.*
- *Connect the public right of way on Rodhill to the footpaths and bridleways crossing Puddletown Forest.*
- *Negotiate a public footpath / bridleway around the north of the village, traversing the Moor round to the Athelhampton Road.*
- *Implement a cycle way along the High Street once new parking restrictions are implemented that will completely block parking on the north side of the street.*

Objectives: Traffic

- **Car Parking:** To have sufficient public and private parking so as to minimise congestion and to maximise safety, particularly along the High Street, alongside the Green, and outside the two schools.

Actions:

- *Recruit a Transport and Traffic expert to review the situation in Puddletown, and to draw up a plan of action to be presented to the relevant authorities.*
- *The review by the expert should consider the following Actions (as well as those related to speed, pedestrian crossings, traffic congestion, noise abatement, street maintenance, public car park):*
 - *Ensure that all new dwellings have at least 2 car parking spaces within the boundary of the properties.*
 - *Ensure that additional visitor parking is available in each new housing development.*
 - *Create a pavement from the Recreation Car Park to the First School in order to encourage parents to use the Recreation Park when dropping off or collecting their children.*
 - *Implement clear signage indicating that the Recreation Car Park is there, and that it is available for people dropping off and picking up children from the First School.*
 - *Investigate more public parking around the First School by better use of the available curb area.*
 - *Restrict parking on the Coombe Road towards Puddletown Forest and the junction to Whitehill: aimed at improving and decreasing risk during school drop off and pick up times.*
- **Speed:** To ensure that traffic speed is reduced through the village by implementing various traffic calming measures.

Actions:

- *Implement a speed indication device (SID) on the High Street and on the Blandford Road in Puddletown.*
- *Create a new entrance to the village on the Athelhampton and Blandford Roads, similar to the entrance on the Dorchester Road, noting the Puddletown welcomes careful drivers.*
- **Pedestrian Crossings:** To construct new pedestrian crossings in order to allow the safe crossing at sites near the shop and the First School.

Actions:

- *Implement a new pedestrian crossing at the First School.*
- *Implement a new pedestrian crossing across the High Street near the shop.*
- **Traffic Congestion:** To improve traffic congestion in the morning and evening as school buses arrive to drop off and pick up children.

Actions:

- *Actions to be defined following the completion of the Feasibility Study for the expansion of the St Mary's (Middle School).*
- **Noise Abatement:** To construct various measures to minimise the traffic noise from the bypass.

Actions:

- *Put in place noise abatement technologies to block the noise from the by-pass.*

Objectives: Housing

- **Development Rate:** To continue housing development at a pace commensurate with the desire to keep the village thriving, but not greater than that undertaken in the period 1997-2015.

Actions:

- *Assess the impact (social, economic, environmental – including services) of all new developments before giving planning permission.*
- *Growth to equate to under 7 properties per year, or 120 properties in the planning period 2018-2036 (dwellings planned before the planning period, i.e. 2015 or before, are not taken into account in this number).*
- *THIS ACTION NEEDS TO BE FURTHER CONSIDERED [Housing development to take place throughout the planning period (2018 – 2036) allowing sustained, steady growth. 40% of the planned development can take place in the first 5 year phase (2018 – 2022) in order to allow developers to get started. 30% of the planned development can take place in a second 7 year phase (2023 – 2029). 30% of the planned development can take place in the third 7 year phase (2030 – 2036). It has to be decided if multiple sites are selected for development, whether or not these developments should be allowed to proceed concurrently, or in sequence. Developments taking place at either end of the village at the same time would be disruptive. This might naturally achieve the phased growth above.]*
- **Development Areas:** Substantial development (developments greater than 2 dwellings, including the conversion of existing buildings) can only take place in identified areas; these are:

Actions:

- TO BE DEFINED
- **Social Investment:** To ensure that companies leading future housing development also contribute to the social [infrastructure] development of the entire village.

Actions:

- *Contributions (in-kind or financial) must be sought from each developer to contribute to community projects; the community projects to be selected by the Parish Council (e.g. a Community Café, children's playground facilities, community sports facilities, the Community Library, community groups, allotments, public orchard etc.).*
- **Lower cost housing for local needs:** 15% of housing development should be available to people with a local connection, in addition to that required by WDDC to meet their affordability criteria.

Actions:

- *A significant proportion of this housing should be of an inter-generational design serving both young (starter homes) and older generations (including down-sizing).*
- *The inter-generational starter homes to be built at a cost of £115k².*
- *Inter-generational extensions to existing dwellings to be encouraged.*
- **Housing Quality:** To ensure that all new housing developments meet a set of design criteria that will maintain the character of the village and ensure high quality housing.

Actions:

- *Planning Authorities to check and comment on each planning application against the design criteria given in the Neighbourhood Plan.*
- **Infilling and Sprawl:** To minimise the rate of infilling in future housing development, and to ensure that any future housing development maintains the integrity of the village and does not result in sprawl.

Actions:

- *No developments greater than 2 dwellings can be permitted within the current planning area (as set for the year 2017)*
- **Services:** To ensure that any future development does not put undue pressure on the current Puddletown services (especially the schools and the surgery), and that any significant developments contribute to developing those services to meet the additional needs.

Actions:

- *The impact on services must be one of the criteria of the overall impact assessment that must be undertaken for each planning application (greater than 2 dwellings) by the Puddletown Area Parish Council (see also section 'Development Rate' above).*

Objectives: Business

² This is based on the borrowing that could be achieved by a household with a median average income two people in full time employment (defined as 16 hours+) paid the median average wage for West Dorset aged between 25-29. This has been tested with the developer for Brown's Field site.

- **New Businesses:** To encourage new businesses into Puddletown in order to improve the sustainability of the village, to improve local job opportunities and also to improve the social opportunities for villagers (this could include a café, a dentist and a bakery).

Actions:

- *TO BE DEFINED*
- **Tourism:** To maximise the benefit to the village from local (or nearby) tourist opportunities, including archaeological sites, architectural buildings of interest and the links to Thomas Hardy.

Actions:

- *Material, including maps, leaflets and web sites should be developed to advertise the tourism opportunities within Puddletown and the surrounding area. These should be placed in places like the shop, the surgery, the pub, the Community Library, and the Community Café (when built), as well as the Tourist Information Office in Dorchester (and other surrounding towns).*

Objectives: Society

- **Social Opportunities:** To increase the number of, and to make better use of existing facilities that offer social interaction within the village. This should target all age groups, and should encourage inter-age community.

Actions:

- *Build a Community Café.*
- *Seek to improve the use of the meeting room / day room attached to the retirement housing on Butt Close (called Rodhill).*
- *Seek to improve the use of the open space in the Church.*
- **Groups and Classes:** To maintain the number of groups and classes which address all age groups.
- **Community:** To maintain the sense of community and vibrancy to be found in the village.

Objectives: Environment

- **Flood Risk:** To protect the people and buildings of Puddletown from the flooding of the Rivers Piddle and Frome.

Actions:

- *Put in place additional flood protection for the River Piddle in the vicinity of the Blandford Road, and particularly Catsmead and the Blue Vinny pub.*
- **Environmental Protection:** To ensure that the environment and ecological habitats within the Puddletown and area parish are properly protected and enhanced. Includes protection of green spaces such as the Green.

Actions:

- *Assure the maintenance of the trees on The Green.*

- **Green Spaces:** To ensure that the green spaces within the village of Puddletown are retained and properly maintained to the benefit of the people of Puddletown.
- **Renewable Energy:** To encourage the use of local, small-scale renewable energy schemes within Puddletown parish. This should be a key element of the Design Code defined for the village:

Actions:

- *Include the use of renewable energy in the design criteria of the Neighbourhood Plan.*
- *All new developments must include renewable energy schemes as part of their plans. All new dwellings must have a Standard Assessment Procedure rating of 80 or more.*
- *Consider use of Greenacres/Northbrook for solar panel farm.*

Objectives: Infrastructure

- **Current Infrastructure:** To ensure that better use is made of current infrastructures, and that all infrastructure use is maximised for the benefit of the people of Puddletown.
- **Public Car Park:** To build a public car park(s) in Puddletown to alleviate road congestion and parking chaos.

Actions:

- *This Objective should be considered by the Traffic and Transport expert (see previous section).*
- **Public Toilets:** To build a set of public toilets to serve Puddletown and its visitors.

Actions:

- *Public toilets should be built as part of the new public car park.*
- **Rubbish Bins:** To increase the number of rubbish bins within the village of Puddletown.

Actions:

- *Additional rubbish bins should be placed by the shop, next to each bus stop and outside the Middle School.*
- **Street Maintenance:** To improve street maintenance and road markings in order to improve road safety.

Actions:

- *Double yellow lines to be placed in vicinity of the bridge over the River Piddle on the Blandford Road.*
- *Double yellow lines should be placed along the High Street from the traffic lights to the Old Book Shop on the side of the road opposite to the shop.*
- **Public Space:** To create public space(s) to serve the people of Puddletown (for example a set of allotments or a public orchard).
- **Broadband:** To ensure that the broadband supplied to Puddletown is technologically current and the best available.

Actions:

- *Contact broadband supply companies to urge the improvement of supply to Puddletown.*

Safety

- ***Puddletown Forest:*** To improve public safety in the environs of Puddletown Forest, with particular reference to theft and molestation.

Actions:

- *Relevant authorities to investigate the level of the problem in Puddletown Forest.*
- ***Unlit Lanes:*** To improve lighting in the unlit lanes of Puddletown.

Actions:

- *Identify which lanes are unlit, undertake an assessment of which lanes need to be lit, and contact the relevant authorities in order to get them lit. Do we have enough support on this – I thought as a policy they had been removed: cost saving/light pollution?*