

Bourton, Dorset Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Consultation Response Form

Please state fully and clearly your comments and concerns:

We act on behalf of the owners of the Sandways Farm site which has been identified as one of two possible locations for a new Village Hall. Whilst we are pleased to see the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan, we are obliged to highlight our concerns in relation to the “Jubilee Field” site having progressed to this stage and being identified as the alternative site.

Our main concern relates to the significant and adverse visual impact that development on the Jubilee Field site would have upon the character, appearance and rural setting of the village.

We are pleased that Map 2 (Important Views as defined in the Village Design Statement) has been included and would emphasise the significance of views into the village of the Jubilee Field site. The conspicuous nature of the site is clearly shown on the cover photograph (the field is what would become developed) and also within photo 2. The Village Design Statement also included a series of photographs showing the attractive and open views on approaching the village from the west (see Figures 11 and 18). The VDS also emphasised the significance of maintaining the character of certain hamlets including Chaffeymoor and consideration being given to designating this area as a Conservation Area recognising the importance and significance of its character including the openness and views that it provided.

We are pleased to see on Map 2 the inclusion of views from West Bourton and the higher ground (B33081 Wincanton to Gillingham road). We attach a series of photographs which show the prominence of the site in question and the visual harm which would arise from this site being developed.



View from Bridge over A303 – West Bourton Road



View from Western Entrance to the Village



View from Wincanton – Gillingham Road

With respect to the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the Evidence Base, we would respectfully comment that the assessment was not undertaken by a Qualified Landscape Architect and (contrary to what is suggested) does not appear to have taken into account all of the important views defined in the Village Design Statement (and particularly those from the B3081 road to the south of West Bourton. The document does show (photo 3) the important gateway view from the west of the village and the potential development here has to obscure views of the Church (listed building). It is of particular significance that

of the eight receptors considered the Jubilee Field site has been assessed as having a noticeable (visual) impact on 7 of the 8.

In contrast the Sandways Farm site although visible from the main road through the village (much of the view is obscured by hedging and it is only from the gate that such views are appreciated) the site is extremely well contained in landscape terms and also very well related to existing built form (adjacent development).

Overall, taking into account the extremely conspicuous nature of the Jubilee Field site and how this would impact upon views of the village from the south-west and the extremely attractive entrance views from the west – (note the VDS suggesting this area could become a Conservation Area) it is considered most surprising that the Jubilee Field site was shortlisted.

Moving on to the Site Appraisal and Selection Report, one has to query how some of the criteria were assessed as the score for Land Adj. Sandways Farm could have been considerably higher e.g. in terms of access to the village centre one would assume that this should have scored 20 (rather than 10). In terms of impact upon mature trees or hedgerows, whilst these exist on site, none are affected. As such, the score should have been 10 or 20.

It is considered curious that two of the most significant issues (visual impact on main road and village and visual impact on AONB and surrounding countryside) have been weighted as low and medium attributes respectively. In particular it is respectfully suggested that the Jubilee Field site should have scored zero in terms of visual impact on the AONB and surrounding countryside. In terms of impact on heritage assets, it is respectfully suggested that these are equally similar e.g. the setting of the Church (and views of its tower) and a greater number of listed buildings could be adversely affected by development at the Jubilee Field site.

Overall, the main purpose of these comments is to highlight the very significant (and adverse) visual impact that development would have if it took place at Jubilee Field. Not only would this would be extremely conspicuous from three important views into the village and have the potential to adversely affect an important view out from the village, this would also start to close-up the important open space and gap between the village and the hamlet of Chaffeymoor which has been recognised within the VDS as an extremely important characteristic and worthy of Conservation Area status.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there is an attractive view from the field gate on the Sandways Farm site to the south-east, care has been taken to maintain an area of green open space and to set housing further down the slope and in a location that does not have any adverse visual impact.

Not only is the Sandways site far better situated towards the centre of the village in what must be considered a more sustainable location it will sit comfortably and unobtrusively within an area previously allocated for development by the District Council whereas the land at Chaffeymoor has consistently been rejected as being unacceptable for development in principle (see previous Local Plan submissions).

Please indicate what change or alternative approach would resolve your concerns:

Allocate Sandways Farm as the (single) site.

In conclusion, whilst we are pleased to see that the Sandways Farm site has been identified as one of two possible sites, we are surprised/dismayed that it was not simply identified and allocated as **the** site.

I trust that the above matters will be taken into account by the LPA and we would ask to be able to attend the Examination when this is undertaken by the Inspector.