



STINSFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Regulation 16 Consultation **Wednesday 13 October 2021 until Wednesday 24 November 2021**

Response Form

The proposed Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted to Dorset Council for examination. The neighbourhood plan and supporting documentation can be viewed on Dorset Council's website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/stinsford-neighbourhood-plan>

Please return completed forms to:

Email: NeighbourhoodPlanning@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Post: Spatial Planning, Dorset Council, County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Deadline: **End of Wednesday 24 November 2021.** Representations received after this date will not be accepted.

Part A – Personal Details

This part of the form must be completed by all people making representations as **anonymous comments cannot be accepted**. By submitting this response form you consent to your information being disclosed to third parties for this purpose, personal details will not be visible on our website, although they will be shown on paper copies that will be sent to the independent examiner and available for inspection. Your information will be retained by the Council in line with its retention schedule and privacy policy (www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/privacypolicy). Your data will be destroyed when the plan becomes redundant.

	Personal Details *	Agent's Details *
Title	Mr	
First Name	Neil	

Last Name	Matthews	
Job Title(if relevant)	Retired	
Organisation (if relevant)	N/A	
Address	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 300px; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 60px; height: 15px;"></div>	
Postcode	<div style="background-color: black; width: 80px; height: 15px;"></div>	
Tel. No.	<div style="background-color: black; width: 130px; height: 15px;"></div>	
Email Address	<div style="background-color: black; width: 300px; height: 15px;"></div>	

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes to the personal details but complete the full contact details of the agent. All correspondence will be sent to the agent.*

Part B – Representation

1. To which document does the comment relate? *Please tick one box only.*

Yes	Submission Plan
	Consultation Statement
	Basic Conditions Statement
	Other – please specify:-

2. To which part of the document does the comment relate? *Please identify the text that you are commenting on, where appropriate.*

	<i>Location of Text</i>
Whole document	Whole document
Section	
Policy	
Page	

Appendix	
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3. Do you wish to? *Please tick one box only.*

Yes	Support
	Object
	Make an observation

4. Please use the box below to give reasons for your support or objection, or to make your observation.

Personal Statement

Firstly, let me state my relationship with the Parish of Stinsford. Growing up in Dorchester, I have been a frequent visitor to Stinsford for walks and recreation since I was a small boy. I used to fish for minnows with a jam jar on a string at Blue Bridge with my grandmother; and regularly walked the Bockhampton path from Grey's Bridge to Lower Bockhampton with my parents.

As a student of environmental science, I rediscovered Thorncombe Wood and Rushy Pond whilst at college. Professionally, I was a residential housemaster at Stinsford School in the seventies which was located in Stinsford House. During this time, Kingston Maurward was a haven from the stresses of living and teaching in a Special School.

Now, I enjoy the walks and bridleways around Frome Whitfield, Coker's Frome and the Dorchester Show Ground. I still enjoy walking the Bockhampton Path, exploring Kingston Maurward and Yellowham Woods. I feel I know the Parish as well as, perhaps, any other non-resident.

Stinsford Parish Council are to be congratulated on producing such a comprehensive and detailed Neighbourhood Plan. It has a clear Aim: to safeguard and enhance the Parish's outstanding environment and heritage. I wish them well in this endeavour. My comments focus on what, to me, are the key aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan and to highlight some particular threats to the Parish. They are based on my professional experience as an environmental science teacher; my enjoyment of the Parish for personal recreation; and my status as a local.

River Frome: Paras 1.13, 3.1, 3.5, 3.12, 3.14

As an SSSI, the River Frome east of Grey's Bridge is a very special stretch of chalk stream habitat. It is also an integral part of the Land of Local Importance as cited in Dorset Council's Local Plan. The SNP is absolutely right to express the residents' concerns that any overdevelopment will negatively affect the water quality and therefore impact on the river all the way through south Dorset to Poole Harbour (an important, nationally protected wildlife site).

The land to the north of the river provides an uninterrupted thoroughfare for land mammals travelling east-west through the landscape between Charminster and Stinsford. The line of the river is an important navigation route for migratory birds (eg sand martins and swallows).

Open Spaces: 3.4, 3.8, 3.10, 3.16

It is refreshing to note that the Parish would like to “work with local landowners to improve climate resilience and enhance the environment through rewilding...” (para 3.8). This is so important given Dorset Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency. The parkland and water meadows around Frome Whitfield and Coker’s Frome would seem ideally placed to fulfil this objective. In para 3.4 it is noted that protecting soils (which store carbon) can help combat such climate change.

The views from the northernmost boundary of the Parish are simply stunning. Looking south from Waterstone Ridgeway, one can see a succession of chalk valleys and downland all the way to Dorchester. The vista takes in the AONB towards the distant horizon including Hardy’s Monument and Came Woods. It provides a strong sense of place for Dorchester sitting, as it does, on the southern bank of the river valley rising to Poundbury on a promontory to the west. The unspoilt uninterrupted view provides a narrative of where Dorchester sits within its landscape.

The contrast between the landscapes (chalk downland and river valley) is very clear. The lower slopes have a particularly rural agricultural feel which provide a setting for the string of settlements along the length of the river.

The settlements have never been contiguous, nor should they be. In the SNP, Table 3 shows the importance of the gaps between settlements and highlights the danger of infill. It is the very discrete nature of the settlements that make up the Parish that defines how it ebbs and flows along the line of the Frome. Notable among these are Frome Whitfield, Coker’s Frome and Stinsford itself (see Table 5).

Enhancing the Rural Character: 3.18

The SNP notes that, “Opportunities should be taken, where possible, to enhance the rural character of the area.” It goes on to give an example, “the replacement planting of the parkland trees at Frome Whitfield would help reinforce the historic landscape character of this settlement.” This is an excellent example of how the Neighbourhood Plan focuses on the local landscape characteristics. This suggestion should be followed up.

Dark Skies: 3.21

In Figure 3 it is reassuring to see how far south in the vicinity of Slyer’s Lane relatively dark skies can be enjoyed (down to 0.25 – 0.5 Nanowatts/cm²/sr). However, there can be no room for complacency, and it is important to keep pushing down the incidence of light pollution across the parish allowing all residents and visitors enjoyment of the night sky. The dark skies must be conserved at all costs.

Wildlife: 3.1

Table 1 (p7) and Appendix 1 list some of the wildlife found in in the Parish - the majority of the data coming from the Bhompston area. I should like to add my own observations.

I have seen a **Peregrine Falcon** on a number of occasions over the fields associated with the Dorchester Show Ground – probably the same individual(s) that is often seen on the towers of St Peter’s and St George’s churches in Dorchester.

Yellow Hammers are regularly seen in the hedges around Slyer's Lane and the associated unnamed east-west road.

Badgers inhabit the fields and hedgerows to the east of Higher Burton Farm.

Increasingly, **Red Kites** are seen over the eastern part of the Parish in late spring to high summer. They appear, at present, to be vagrants and young adults. However, as the success of the reintroduction in the Chilterns continues they seem to be spreading south west and it can only be a matter of time before they become established in this area.

Bats – I have observed both Pipistrelles and Daubentons along the path leading to Blue Bridge and around Greys' Bridge.

Sika Deer are regularly seen grazing on the roadside south of the A35 (Yellowham Hill).

Threats: Northward Development of Dorchester: paras 3.28 – 3.31, 5.16

The biggest threat to all of the positive aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan is Dorset Council's suggestion that Dorchester should be extended northwards beyond the line of the River Frome for the first time. The extension (called Dor13 in the Council's proposed Local Plan) would entirely be built on what is now part of Stinsford Parish. I note that the residents of the Parish are "vehemently opposed" to this development. And so they should be. This development threatens the environment, the wildlife, the habitats, the river, the dark skies and the rural character of the Parish. If it goes ahead, Stinsford will never be the same again.

Groundwater: paras 6.6, 6.7

Perhaps the most worrying aspect is the potential effect on drinking water. Boreholes in the Parish supply much of the drinking water for its intrinsic villages, Kingston Maurward as well as Dorchester itself. 4000 extra homes (25% bigger than Poundbury), schools and businesses will put huge strains on supplying the water required. Will the aquifer be sufficient? How will the levels of the river itself be affected? These questions must be addressed by the Council and scrutinised by Wessex Water at the earliest juncture.

Conclusion

The Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan is an important statement of intent. It is an extremely well researched document that highlights many opportunities and threats facing this unique Parish. I have no hesitation in supporting it and urge its formal adoption by Dorset Council.

Neil Matthews, BSc, LCCI, FLS, MCollP

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

5. Please give details of any suggested modifications in the box below.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

6. Do you wish to be notified of Dorset Council's decision to make or refuse to make the neighbourhood plan? Please tick one box only.

Yes	Yes
	No

Signature: _____ Date: _____
If submitting the form electronically, no signature is required.