

Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan

PLACE APPRAISAL - 2018

"Its sentiment must arise from the expanse around - contrasted with the recesses - and solitudes and haunts - below" *John Constable 26 April 1826*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The village of Sutton Poyntz is situated three miles east of Weymouth and five miles south-east of Dorchester. It is incorporated within the Weymouth and Portland District, but lies just outside the town's built-up area (represented by Chalbury, Preston and Seven Acres). The village is bounded to the north by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), to the north and west by scheduled ancient monuments and is located entirely within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is also protected by a Conservation Area.

This Place Appraisal has been produced by the Steering Group of the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Forum, established in 2016 to create a Neighbourhood Plan. It supports the Plan by identifying what is important about Sutton Poyntz, its setting, history, people and buildings. It presents a collective view of the village, its character and qualities and provides the foundation for the consultation process, as well as a reference point for the policies produced by the Neighbourhood Forum.

SHARED VISION

The community has been directly involved in creating the Place Appraisal, providing documents and images as well as offering advice, suggestions and feedback. Their collective efforts have been directed towards delivering a Neighbourhood Plan that will:

Improve the quality of life for residents.

Provide housing that better suits local needs.

Support a thriving and friendly community.

Preserve what is special

Allow the village to adapt to societal and economic changes.

DESIGN STANDARDS

The analysis and recommendations have been based on previous work conducted by the village, including the 1999 Sutton Poyntz Village Survey¹ and the 2007 Sutton Poyntz Community Survey and Action Plan,² walk-in sessions, public meetings, direct consultation, newsletters and email. Design standards should draw on national standards, including *Building for Life 12* and *Manual for Streets*, and consider the existing Sutton Poyntz Society Planning Policies.

BACKGROUND

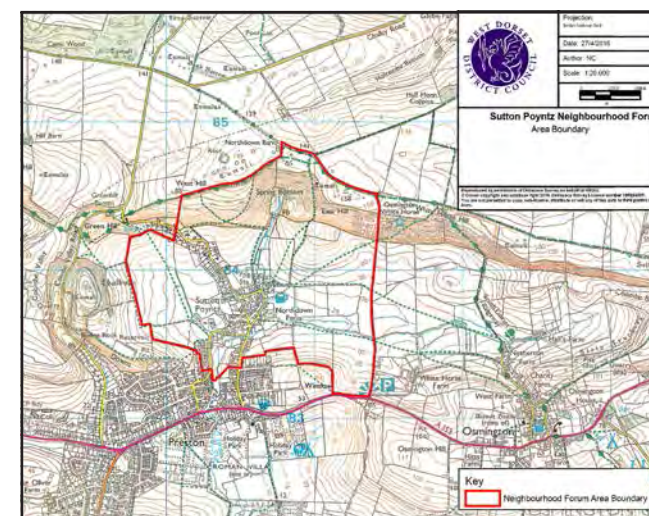
The possibility of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for the village of Sutton Poyntz was first discussed in 2010 by the Sutton Poyntz Society,³ even before the Localism Act became law. As the village was not a parish, but within the Borough of Weymouth and Portland, there was uncertainty about how this could be progressed (and funded). However, by early 2016, following discussions with Council Officers, it was agreed that the Sutton Poyntz Society could (subject to certain changes in its constitution) act as a non-parish Neighbourhood Forum. The proposed Neighbourhood Area (some 100 hectares) included the village of Sutton Poyntz and adjacent farmland, bounded to the south by Preston and the slopes of Winslow Hill, to the west by the slopes of Chalbury Hill, to the north by the Ridgeway and to the east by the Osmington parish boundary (Maps 1 & 2 refer).

PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION: FEBRUARY 2016

During February 2016, a Neighbourhood Planning newsletter was hand-delivered to every dwelling within the proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area (some 230 household spaces). Additional copies were delivered to businesses within the village and to households immediately outside the proposed



Map 1: Weymouth and Portland District



Map 2: Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan Area

1. Introduction

area including Plaisters Lane, Puddledock Lane, Sutton Road, Verlands Road and Winslow Road. A total of 393 newsletters were distributed. The proposal to create a Neighbourhood Plan, and turn the Sutton Poyntz Society into a Neighbourhood Forum, was unanimously approved at the Sutton Poyntz Society AGM on 13 April 2016.

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

Twenty responses were received.

Main Issues Raised: There was one outright objection, on the basis that a Neighbourhood Plan was unnecessary and could be divisive, but the remainder were supportive, although some concerns were raised. One respondent felt that the process could be taken over by vested interests, but the remainder addressed the proposed boundary and the possible exclusion of households, at the end of Puddledock Lane and Sutton Road, that had traditionally regarded themselves as members of the village. The boundary was revised to accommodate these additional dwellings where practicable.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA APPLICATION: JUNE 2016

How We Consulted: The draft Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Plan Area Application was submitted to Weymouth and Portland Borough Council on 27 May 2016. The formal consultation period ran from 10 June to 5 August 2016. The application was publicised on-line and in the Dorset Echo. Posters were also put up around the village and in the Springhead Public House. Pending approval, a Neighbourhood Forum Steering Group was established, Terms of Reference agreed and Chairman elected. The Steering Group first met on 17 May 2016. Every effort was made to ensure broad representation, including those not members of the Sutton Poyntz Society, those with second homes or those working in the village but living elsewhere. Consequent to the request for volunteers, included in the initial newsletter, over a dozen members of the village (some

not members of the Sutton Poyntz Society) attended the first Steering Group meeting.

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

The Borough Council received a total of eight representations, five from statutory bodies and three from residents. The statutory body responses were as follows:

The DCC Flood Risk Management team had no objection to the proposed designation, but provided information on local flood risks that needed to be borne in mind during the planning process;

The DCC Planning Obligations Manager noted a small area of safeguarded building stone within the Neighbourhood Area;

Historic England had no objection to the proposal, provided useful information on heritage assets that need to be protected by the Neighbourhood Plan and resources available to help, as well as offering further discussions should they become necessary;

Highways England had no objection, and noted that the Neighbourhood Area was remote from the nearest strategic highway;

Natural England offered no direct observation on the application, but provided very helpful information on how Neighbourhood Plans should seek to protect natural assets.

The three individual representations were discussed at the Borough Council Management Committee meeting on 20 September 2016. One representation was in favour of the application. The other two representations questioned the democratic accountability of the Sutton Poyntz Society, but did not present any evidence that the Society did not meet the legally prescribed definition of a Neighbourhood Forum. One of the representations questioned the small size of the proposed Neighbourhood Area, with limited local services

and development land, and suggested Preston Ward as more suitable. The Officers' Report recommended that the area was suitable and noted that the arguments in the two dissenting responses were not reasons for the application to be rejected. The Borough Council Management Committee formally approved the application on 20 September 2016.

VILLAGE CONSULTATION: KEY ISSUES

How We Consulted: During October 2016, the Steering Group conducted a consultation by means of a survey form distributed to every household, along with Open Days at the Mission Hall. 77 survey forms were returned, and in addition the Open Days were attended by 66 people, who completed over 400 'post-it' notes with comments.

Main issues raised:

The feedback comments were collated into subject areas on a spreadsheet and this was used to provide a summary of the responses communicated by newsletter to all households and other stakeholders. Subgroups were identified to conduct further analysis and study, as follows:

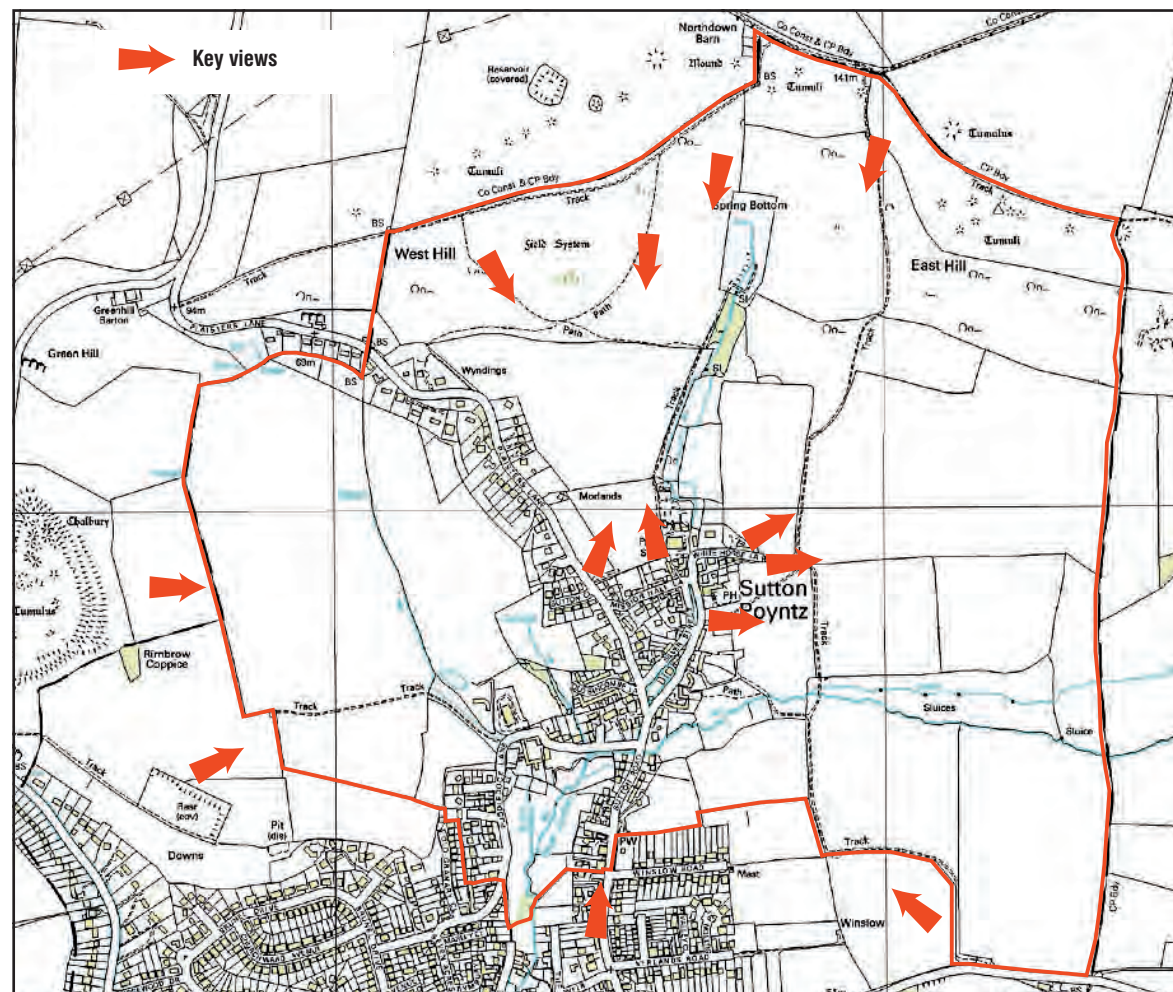
Theme: Land Use and Conservation

- Protect important views and the green wedge gap
- Care for trees, hedges and the Mill Pond
- Protect the countryside and rural lanes
- Better communicate and cooperate with landowners

Theme: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

- Work with landowners and environmental groups to conserve habitat
- Include biodiversity criteria in new build planning
- Promote clean tidy environment

1. Introduction



Map 3: Early thoughts on key views, into and out of Sutton Poyntz.

Theme Heritage

Protect heritage sites and ensure development protects their character and setting

Provide information on village's heritage



Sutton Poyntz from the Ridgeway, circa 1910



Puddledock Lane and Sutton Road from the Gateway, circa 1910

1. Introduction

Theme: Housing and Planning

Retain our village character and sense of community

Focus on smaller houses, both for younger families and for downsizing

Encourage full-time occupancy of houses

Growth through infill rather than from incursion into open country

Use of appropriate materials and design in keeping with village character

Theme: Transport

Preservation of bus service

Lower speed limit, and more considerate parking to improve access

Improved foot and cycle access, especially Puddledock Lane

Theme: Sports and Recreation

Support for Mission Hall and Springhead as village social facilities

Improve facilities such as a playground or sports field

Maintain footpaths and tracks - easy access to beautiful countryside and coastline, with great views of and from the village

Potential for a Village Green

Theme: Employment, Business and Tourism

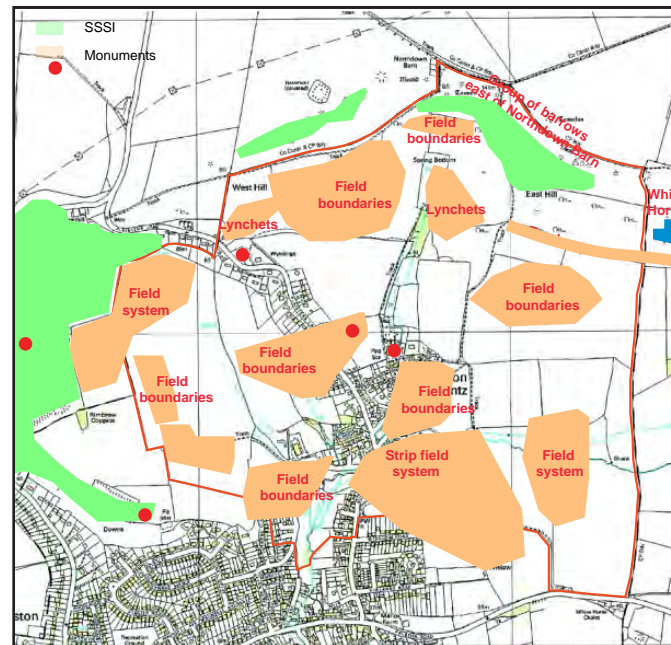
Work with employers to create jobs

Encourage small businesses, and encourage facilities for visitors

Improved communications coverage, speed and reliability

Non-intrusive infrastructure

Continued use of traditional village communications



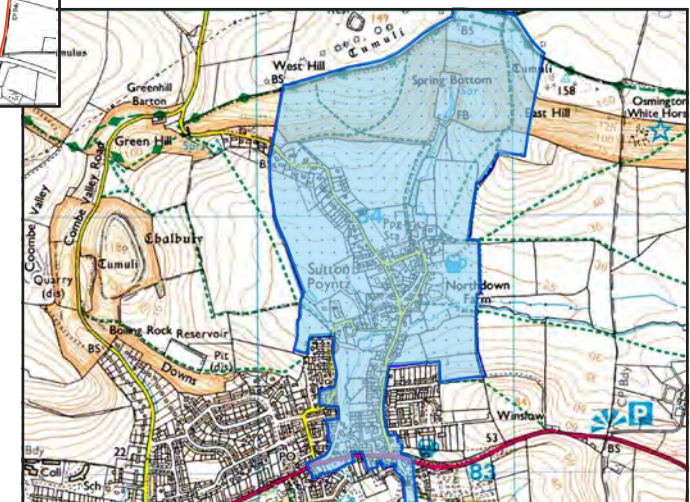
Map 4: SSSI & archaeological heritage

PLACE APPRAISAL

Following this feedback, the Steering Group conducted a walk of the Neighbourhood Plan area to place these issues and themes in context. The subsequent discussion highlighted the significance of landscape features, such as the willows around the Mill Pond and the coniferous lines close to the waterworks, and the key views, both out of the village (such as the gate between Northdown and Springhead and the Kissing Gate to Cuckoo Field above Hunts Timber Yard) and into the village (Margaret's Seat and the Beacon).

The River Jordan descends a steep valley through wet woodland and old watermeadows through the village past two flower mills to the junction with Osmington Brook.

Looking down on the village from the South Dorset Ridgeway, it is striking how the existing tree cover follows the river Jordan, while the valley floor and hill tops are



Map 5: Conservation Area

1. Introduction

largely bare. Houses, trees and water form a green/blue/grey corridor that flows from the base of the Ridgeway to the end of Puddledock Lane. Historic photographs suggest that the tree cover (possibly elms) within this corridor was much denser and taller in the past, providing an even greater contrast to the valley and hills.

At ground level, this corridor provides an important structural element to the village. The scattered weeping willows by the Mill Pond contrast with the tall rigid lines of the conifers around the waterworks and Springhead. Each brings a distinct shape and aesthetic. Historic buildings, trees and water play an important role in sustaining the economic benefits from tourists and visitors attracted to a picturesque location. There are also recreation aspects, for example, Veterans' Wood is an important community facility as well as the last remnant of the original wild, wooded area that impressed John Constable in 1816.

PRODUCTION OF THE PLACE APPRAISAL

The Place Appraisal was created over the course of a year by a small collaborative team, based on feedback from the initial consultation and inputs from the Neighbourhood Steering Group. Where required, supporting information and images were commissioned from villagers with specialist knowledge or skills. The graphical design aspects were also handled in-house. Progress with the draft document was regularly reviewed at the monthly Steering Group meetings, and the document was held in a Dropbox folder for editing.

CONSULTATION

The draft Place Appraisal formed part of the extensive village consultation exercise conducted in December 2017. The document was made available in both electronic and hard copy. Feedback was extremely positive with few adverse comments.

Although no significant changes were required, a number of corrections and improvements were made to address errors or clarify the analysis. The Place Appraisal was formally agreed by the Steering Group in October 2018 and published on the Neighbourhood Forum website.

THE CHALLENGE

Sutton Poyntz benefits immensely from the services offered by Dorchester and Weymouth and their onward transport links. In turn, it provides a quiet rural location that day-trippers can enjoy alongside scout groups, painters, campers, para-gliders, walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and holiday-makers. However, this relationship, and the economic benefits that flow from it, depends on preserving Sutton Poyntz's character and distinctive identity. Without planning protection, both the village and its valley risk disappearing beneath ever-expanding urban development. The challenge for the village, and for Weymouth, is how to maintain this separate identity while accommodating change for the better. Sutton Poyntz residents recognise their good fortune in living in an AONB, close to the Heritage Coast (a World Heritage Site) and within an ancient landscape. They are proud that the village is an accessible and welcoming place, a planet-friendly community intent on protecting the village within its spectacular setting. The Steering Group aims to develop policies that meet this challenge and address the key themes identified during the consultation process. The Place Appraisal provides the informed analysis and detailed evidence essential to creating a comprehensive, relevant and persuasive Neighbourhood Plan needed to deliver the community's shared vision.

1. Introduction

NOTES

1. The Sutton Poyntz Village Survey, undertaken in 1999 by the Sutton Poyntz Society, identified three main areas of concern:
 - Threats to the visual character of the village and its perimeter.
 - Vulnerability to serious flooding.
 - Increasing volume and dangers of road traffic.
2. The Sutton Poyntz Village Plan brought together the results of a community survey and an action plan completed over a period of 18 months during 2006 and 2007. It built on the 1999 Village Survey. Production of the action plan was informed by the results of the original survey and subsequent feedback from public meetings. The plan made proposals for projects to address a wide range of topics including: housing development; traffic congestion; road safety; policing; the environment; and leisure and recreational facilities. The aim of the plan was to enable residents to express their hopes and fears regarding their community and to demonstrate how they could tackle some of these issues. A steering group completed the village plan working under the auspices of the Sutton Poyntz Society and assisted by Dorset Community Action: funding was by a Community Strategy Grant from Dorset County Council and the Dorset Strategic Partnership.
3. The Sutton Poyntz Society was established in 1968 with the aim of helping to conserve the character of Sutton Poyntz and working with the Borough Council on planning, transport, economic and environmental issues. As at 1 April 2017, it had 295 members, with 253 living within the village itself.

2. Sense of Place

In *Dorset, The Complete Guide*, Sutton Poyntz is described as:

*Right up under the hills. Its large mill-pond has been a beauty spot since visitors first came to Weymouth in the 18th century. The mill and village in Hardy's **Trumpet Major** are partly based on Sutton Poyntz, and photographs taken before most of the cottages on the far side of the pond were altered and re-roofed show it was then one of the prettiest spots in Dorset.*⁴

This short paragraph captures the essence of Sutton Poyntz, as well as the contradictions: the intimate relationship with its landscape and the industrial legacy that has enhanced rather than damaged the pastoral setting; a quintessential English country village next to a bustling seaside town; a magnet for visitors, and an inspiration for authors and artists, but lacking significant buildings or important history.

Sutton Poyntz sits in unspoilt countryside; a rural landscape shaped by thousands of years of habitation, marked by farming and industry, adjacent to a busy Georgian seaside town. It is both separate and integral to Weymouth, taking advantage of the transport links and facilities, while supplying the water that nourishes its population, and offering a tranquil green space within a few miles of the beaches, attractions and funfairs.



The village mill pond and thatched cottages in the 1940s



Weymouth beach in the 1920s

2. Sense of Place

ARTISTS' VIEW

The village and its setting has provided inspiration for artists for over 200 years. John Constable (1776-1837), one of Britain's greatest landscape painters, walked the Ridgeway above Sutton Poyntz in 1816, stopping to sketch the views, including the scene (right) showing Sutton Poyntz nestling in its valley with Portland in the background. This is now the site of Margaret's Seat, offering any who climb the hill unrivalled views across the bay. Constable described the spot as lovely, adding that "its sentiment must arise from the expanse around – contrasted with the recesses - and solitudes and haunts - below."⁵

Constable's close friend John Fisher (1788-1832), the Vicar at Preston Church (below right), wrote of "the little wooded valley of Sutton and Preston from the springheads in the little amphitheatre formed by the hills. It has a peep of the blue bay in the distance and two forlorn ash trees in the foreground. The place is very sequestered and is frequented by kingfishers and woodcocks."⁶ The cover photograph shows the same view in 2017. Little has changed in 200 years.

Constable visited Sutton Poyntz shortly after a mounted white horse was carved in the hillside above the village in 1808, commemorating King George III's regular visits to Melcombe Regis to enjoy the seaside air and calm bathing waters of Weymouth Bay. The figure, which can be seen from Portland, has attracted

Sketch of Sutton Poyntz and Weymouth Bay by John Constable, 1816



Sketch of St Andrew's Church, Preston, by John Constable, 1816



The White Horse, painting by Eric Ravilious, 1939

2. Sense of Place

artists and poets alike, including Eric Ravilious, who famously painted the valley in December 1939.

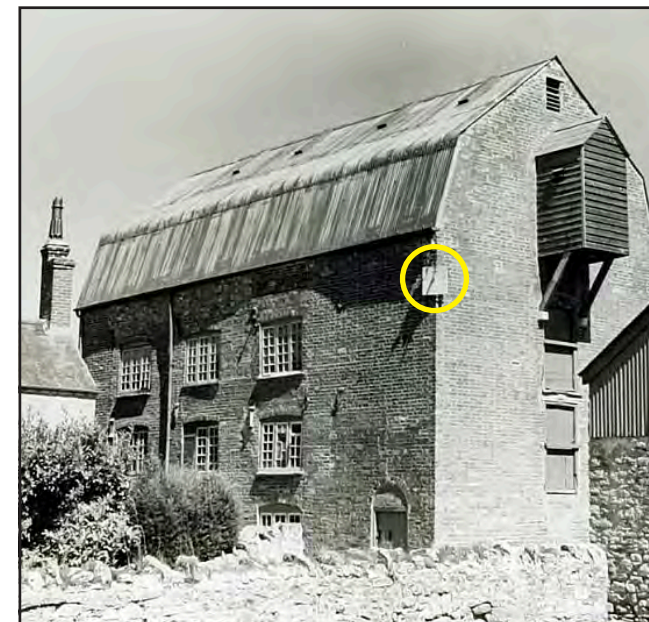
WRITERS' VIEW

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) incorporated Sutton Poyntz (***Overcombe***) in his Wessex novels. Sutton Mill features in the ***Trumpet Major*** (***published in 1880***), although the present building has replaced the original. Even so, Hardy would still recognise the village today. Little has changed in the immediate landscape. The village nestles in the hollow of the chalk hills that form the South Dorset Ridgeway, home to dozens of Bronze Age burial mounds – now travelled by thousands of walkers every year. Chalbury Hill, West and East Hills remain untouched (other than by electricity pylons marching into Weymouth) and provide the enduring backdrop to the village. Poets such as William Barnes (1801-1886), who resided at Came Rectory on the downs above Sutton Poyntz, and the 'Ploughman Poet', Albert Bailey (1860-1916), who lived in the village for most of his life, have joined Hardy in celebrating the quiet peace of the village. The novelist Llewelyn Powys (1884-1939) visited shortly after the Great War:



Sutton Mill, 2017

To Sutton Poyntz, a little village under the downs and here I came upon an old eighteenth-century sundial let into a delicious red brick wall with the words 'Life is but a shadow' written underneath it. I wondered what old village philosopher was responsible for these emphatic words. I like them very well.⁷



Sutton Mill, 1942

The redbrick wall of Sutton Mill is still warm and rich in the sunlight, although the sundial (circled top right) has been lost to time (and gravity).

2. Sense of Place

The relationship between Sutton Poyntz and Weymouth has not always been easy. “Fellows from Weymouth with padded chests and vacant faces come there and let off guns and disturb the still genius of the place.”⁸ However, without tourists the Springhead Hotel (right) would never have been built, and there would have been less demand to preserve the quiet charm of the village.

TOURISTS' VIEW

The advent of the railway, and the motor car, saw Sutton Poyntz become a favoured destination for visitors.. Regular charabancs (right) would arrive in the village to enjoy its beauty and the teas. The Springhead Hotel opened in the 1890s to cater for this trade, and attracted a large clientele, including visitors from overseas, although the writer Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923) complained that:

*Charabancs from Weymouth (for the fee of one shilling each), bringing hundreds of hearty folk, who clamour for ‘shrimp and lobster teas’, pelt the ducks in the pond, and rot the dignified villagers with unintelligible jibes.*⁹

In 1895 Beatrix Potter motored from Weymouth, writing in her diary that Sutton Poyntz was a most quaint village with heavy thatch roofs up and down in orchards and little gardens and osier-beds¹⁰. The next day, she drove on to the quarry in Chalbury Hill (right):



The rear garden of the Springhead Hotel, 1907

We had a beautiful drive on the Downs at the back of Chalbury Hill. The narrow, white, unbordered roads on a great expanse of turf gives an impressive feeling of size and solitude, increased by the great earthworks on the solitary slopes.”¹¹

In the intervening years, the Mill Pond has lost some of its thatched cottages, although it has also lost the waterworks chimney that marked the skyline for many years (right). Modernity has introduced a sprawl of wires and telegraph poles that evidence little sympathy for, “the mill ponds and duck ponds, and cool broad elder-tree shadows...story-book cottage gardens of returned sailor boys, with lavender and myrtle at their doors, and their low upstairs windows



Charabancs departing from Weymouth, circa 1930



Near the quarry on Chalbury Hill, 1926

2. Sense of Place

jasmine-muffled.”¹² Of course, as picturesque as the village appeared to outsiders, there was also poverty, poor sanitation and squalid living conditions. A report by Weymouth Borough’s Chief Medical Officer in 1933, when the Borough was about to take over what had previously been Weymouth Rural District, stated that a high percentage of Sutton Poyntz’s dwellings were “of no better than slum quality”.¹³

After two centuries, Sutton Poyntz still retains the recesses and solitudes described by Constable. The back lanes and alleyways offer a sense of mystery and the ability to surprise - notably Silver Street where the old lane into the village, masquerading as front garden and footpath (below left), suddenly deposits the unwary traveller at the head of the Mill Pond, bursting into the sunlight and the spectacular view down the valley to the White Horse (right). One of the key views identified by the village as important to retain.



The pond and cottages as they are today



Silver Street



View from the southern end of the mill pond, looking towards White Horse Hill

2. Sense of Place

NOTES

4. J. Draper, *Dorset, The Complete Guide* (Wimborne Minster: The Dovecote Press, 1986).
5. *John Constable's Correspondence with the Fishers* (Suffolk Records Society, 1968), Constable to Fisher, 26 April 1826.
6. *John Constable's Correspondence with the Fishers* (Suffolk Records Society, 1968), Fisher to Constable, 22 April 1826.
7. *Llewelyn Powys, Diary*, 30 September 1919
8. *John Constable's Correspondence with the Fishers* (Suffolk Records Society, 1968), Fisher to Constable, 22 April 1826.
9. F. Treves, *Highways and Byways in Dorset* (London: Macmillan, 1906).
10. An osier bed is where willows were planted and coppiced to produce withies used to for basket making and other purposes.
11. *The Journal of Beatrix Potter 1881-1897* (London: Frederick Warne, 1966), 12 April 1895.
12. *Llewelyn Powys, Somerset & Dorset Essays* (London: Macdonald, 1957).
13. The Weymouth Borough Minute with this quote is held by the Weymouth Museum.

3. Village Setting & Development

Sutton Poyntz is set in a secluded valley beneath the dramatic south Dorset chalk escarpment, within the Dorset AONB. The valley has an east-west axis and is drained by the River Jordan and its tributaries which break through the Preston Gap between Rimbury and Winslow hills on its south side. The contour map clearly shows the shape of the valley and the river system which flows through it before turning due south towards the sea at Bowleaze Cove.

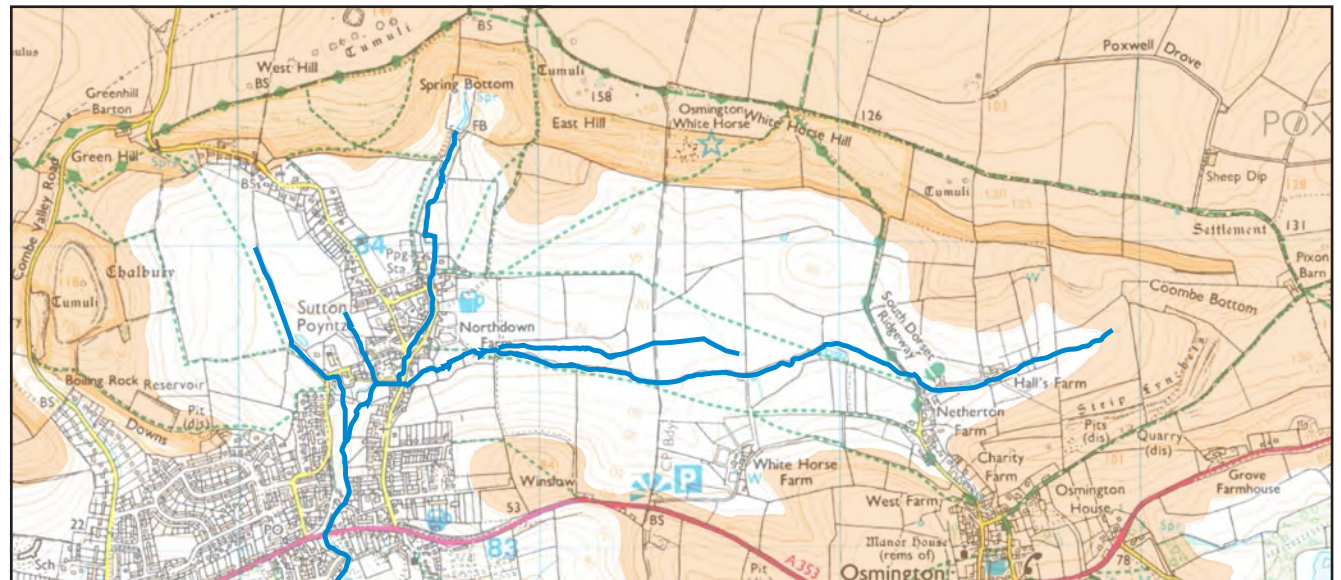
GEOLOGY

The valley is well-defined with a floor of Kimmeridge clay bounded by the chalk escarpment to the north and hills formed from Portland limestones on the remaining three sides. They are all that remain of a pericline (an 'unroofed' anticline) whose axis runs east west along the valley. This valley is one of the most structurally-complex parts of Dorset due to strong transverse folding and faulting at different stages of Earth history. The extract of the geology map ¹⁴ (Map 7 overleaf) shows displaced inliers of even older rocks (Forest Marble, Cornbrash and Oxford Clay), bounded by faults, which outcrop beneath the chalk hills and create an undulating landform on the north side of the valley.

The prolific waterflow which emerges at the bottom of the chalk in Spring Bottom was the reason that the village first became established in this location though, since the 19th century, it has been captured to serve the needs of Weymouth. The Jordan has sustained the farmlands around and no less than three watermills at different times in the past, two in the village and a third (Tullidge's) to the south in the narrow Preston Gap just to the north of the present-day Bridge Inn. No working farms remain in the village, though fields are let out and used predominantly



Looking from Winslow Hill towards the village



Map 6: Topography and Drainage

3. Village Setting & Development

for sheep grazing, with arable crops limited mainly to the fields north and west of the village and above on the chalk hills.

ECOLOGY

Environmental policy for the village is based on a backdrop of a troubling 53% of species showing a decline in the UK's wildlife between 2002 and 2013 with much of this change apportioned to agriculture and climate change¹⁵.

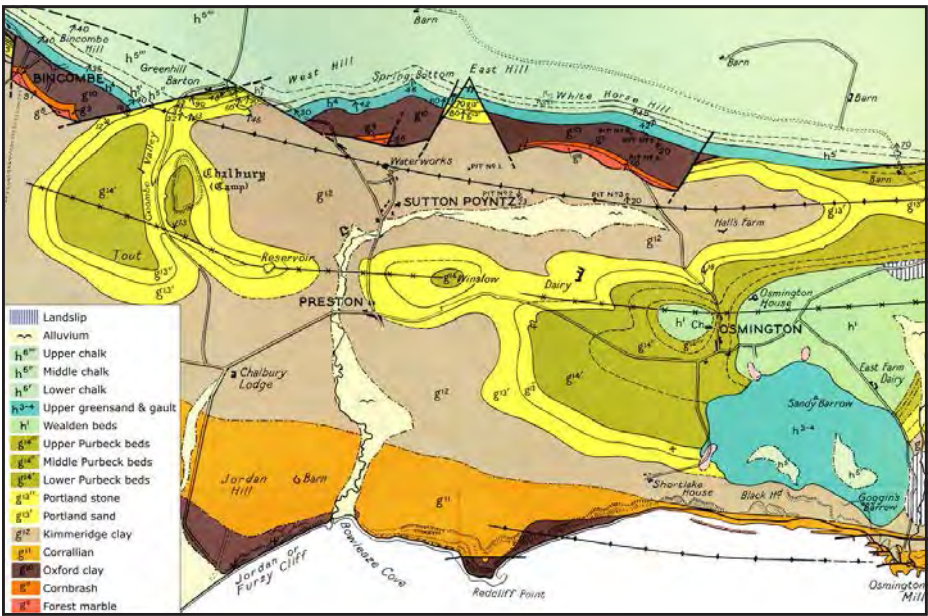
Driven by legislation¹⁶ a list of habitats and species important to biodiversity has been compiled nationally, which public bodies must take account of in the planning process. Sutton Poyntz has a number of such habitats and species.

Broad Habitats	Habitat Name
Arable and horticulture	Arable field margins Traditional orchards
Boundaries	Hedgerows
Freshwater	Ponds Rivers
Grassland	Lowland calcareous grassland Lowland meadows
Wetland	Reed beds
Woodland	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland Wet woodland

Of these habitat types, in recent years, orchards have gradually disappeared due to development with the loss of species such as mistletoe. Our aim is to protect and enhance the remaining habitat types and by education encourage residents to make a space for nature by planting bee friendly plants and providing garden ponds.

The village sits in a valley surrounded by a horseshoe of chalk downland from which the River Jordan rises and flows immediately southwards before meandering its way to the sea. The steep outcropped slopes and clay soils of the valley bottom have placed limitations on intensive agricultural practice, which provides an ideal habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna. The patches of scrub on the hill and patchwork of small fields with their enclosing hedgerows that surround the village on the lower slopes provide good cover for a wide variety of native species whilst the chalk bed stream of European importance provides important habitat for a variety of aquatic species, including the critically endangered European eel *Anguilla Anguilla*.

The lowland calcareous grassland supports a range of wild flowers including small scabious, sainfoin, salad burnet, greater knapweed and in favoured places pyramidal orchids and cowslips. Lowland unimproved grassland declined by 97% between 1930 and 1984¹⁷. A variety of vetches including bird's-foot trefoil and horseshoe vetch provide a rich food source for butterflies. These include commoner species such as Marbled White, Ringlet and Peacock as well as the S41 priority species, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper,



Map 7: Local Geology - Extract from W.J. Arkell, 1947



Looking down the valley from the East towards the White Horse, the village and the Preston Gap.

3. Village Setting & Development

Adonis Blue, Small Heath and Lulworth Skipper. Day flying moths including the Six-spot Burnet are commonly seen in the summer months.

Walkers using the many public footpaths which criss-cross the hill will encounter meadow pipit and skylarks soaring above the fields, whilst yellow hammer and stone chat use the scrub cover and are joined by European Wheatear, Linnet and the rarer Corn Bunting along the field margins and stone walls of the Ridgeway during the summer months.

The autumn months see an influx of migrant birds such as Whinchat seeking berries and seeds in the hedgerows along the valley bottom and arable fields and the colder winter months bring numbers of Redwing and Fieldfare into the arable fields and occasionally Lapwing and Golden Plover. Common birds of prey including Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk patrol the skies while a wide variety of garden birds populate the village including priority species such as House Sparrow, Starling and Song Thrush.

Large mammals such as roe deer, fox and badger can be seen in the fields and along hedgerows close to human habitation and small mammals including mice, voles and shrews provide a rich food source for owls. There is a healthy population of Common Pipistrelle bats within the Waterworks complex with Serotine and Natterers bats also being commonly detected along the River Jordan and the hedge-lined lanes, while occasional Daubenton's bats may be found around the Mill Pond. Local recording along with specialist studies¹⁸ have contributed to the identification of a total of 10 bat species.

A number of aquatic plants such as watercress, water mint and flag iris populate the chalk bed stream and its margins as it flows through wet woodland, fen and open meadows en-route to the sea. Brown Trout and the occasional Water Vole



Grassland - grazed but not cultivated

as well as breeding birds such as Grey Wagtail populate this environment. Independent studies carried out for Wessex Water plc have identified a high proportion of nationally important invertebrates; "Of the 543 species identified by this survey, 29 (5.3%) were Red Data Book or Nationally Scarce species; an above average percentage"¹⁹.

A full list of local Priority species is available.

The activities of the Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group²⁰, formed in 2008, have resulted in the area being one of the best recorded in Dorset. Since formation the group have been actively engaged in working with landowners such as Wessex Water on numerous habitat management projects as well as leading public training and information events, in addition to co-ordinating public participation activities such as Garden Bird Watch. The group publish a monthly newsletter.



Adonis Blue Butterfly



Linnet, on grasslands above village

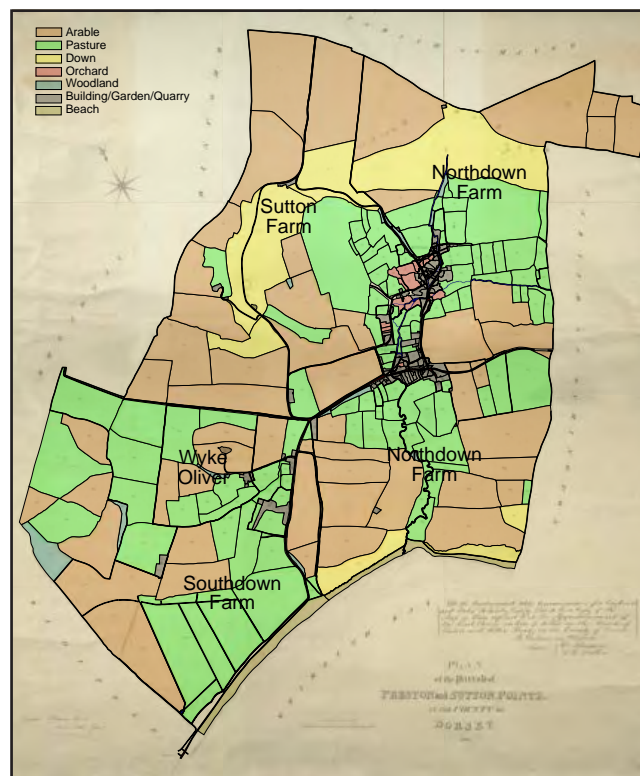
3. Village Setting & Development

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY - ANCIENT & MEDIEVAL

This favoured setting has long been attractive to man. Archaeological records evidence use of the area by hunter gatherers in the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age period, and by the Bronze Age farmers who marked their presence on the downland with field systems, burial barrows along the hillcrest and a large cemetery at Rimbury. In the early Iron Age an enclosed and defended settlement was established at the Chalbury Camp Hillfort, overlooking the valley where roundhouses were built near Spring Bottom. The hillfort was abandoned in the 4th century BC, but the Romans were known to be active in this area from about the 1st to the 4th century AD.

There is little known of the area during the Dark Ages that followed, until 'Suttone' was identified as a Royal Manor, part of the Culliford Hundred, in a Saxon Charter of 891AD²¹. The suffix, Poyntz, came from the family which later owned the Estate from c1212-1315 at which time it became a Liberty or free Manor. The Poyntz family was one of several that owned the lands around through to its final disposal by the Weld family in 1925. It was during this first private ownership, however, that two watermills were established and it is from these roots that the village established itself as the centre of a farming community, with the river supplying its water as well as the power for the mills.

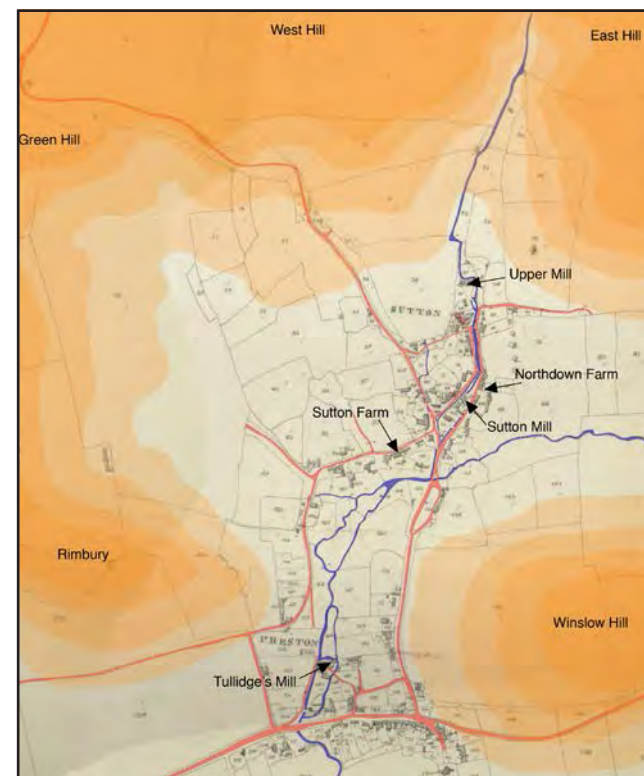
The village has always been closely linked to the separate community of Preston. Records show that they were a common Prebendal under the Salisbury Diocese from at least 1226 and the present St Andrews Church was built in 'Priests Town' during the 13th-14th Century, along with a chapel which has not survived in Sutton Poyntz. They were both part of a common Parish of Preston-cum-Sutton Poyntz and the Manor of Sutton Poyntz which embraced the villages and included a total of five farms stretching right down to Bowleaze and Lodmoor.



Map 8: Tithe Map, showing land use

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY - ENCLOSURE

A Manor Survey²² was commissioned in 1788 by Adm. Eliab Harvey, the Lord of the Manor. This Survey described a pre-Enclosure, essentially medieval, pattern of cultivation; only two farms are specifically mentioned, North Down and Jordan Farms. The surveyor pointed out the benefits to production that would accrue from Enclosure. As a result, the Manor of Sutton Poyntz was enclosed in 1798²³, and the field systems



Map 9: Original Village Structure

were reshaped into the pattern of occupation shown in the contemporary Estate Map. A more detailed tithe map of the village from 1838 illustrates the structure of the village and its relationship to Preston at that time. These maps reveal the way that the village had developed as an s-shaped ribbon alongside the Sutton stream and the northern flank of the Jordan. A road led due south across the Jordan and up Sutton Knap before following the flank of Winslow Hill to the separate community of Preston on the Wareham to Weymouth highway. Northwards a

3. Village Setting & Development

track (now Plaisters Lane) climbed the chalk hillside to Greenhill Barton, and further tracks linked from it across to the Mill Pond and beyond to the fields east of the village and Osmington (Mission Hall and White Horse lanes). Silver Street continued almost directly in a westerly direction along a differently-aligned Puddledock Lane before turning south to parallel Sutton Road on the opposite side of the Jordan. Following a lower course closer to the floodplain, this route continued in a straight line down to Tullidge's Mill.

Significant changes occurred in the nineteenth century, with the replacement of the Upper Mill by the new Weymouth Waterworks and the construction of the Springhead to welcome a growing number of visitors. Puddledock Lane was repositioned closer to the stream to afford Sutton House greater privacy and the establishment of a lake and a grander entrance, and give access direct to the new Puddledock Dairy Farm. A new CofE national school was built near the church in Preston, to serve the wider area, in 1850.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY - LAST 90 YEARS

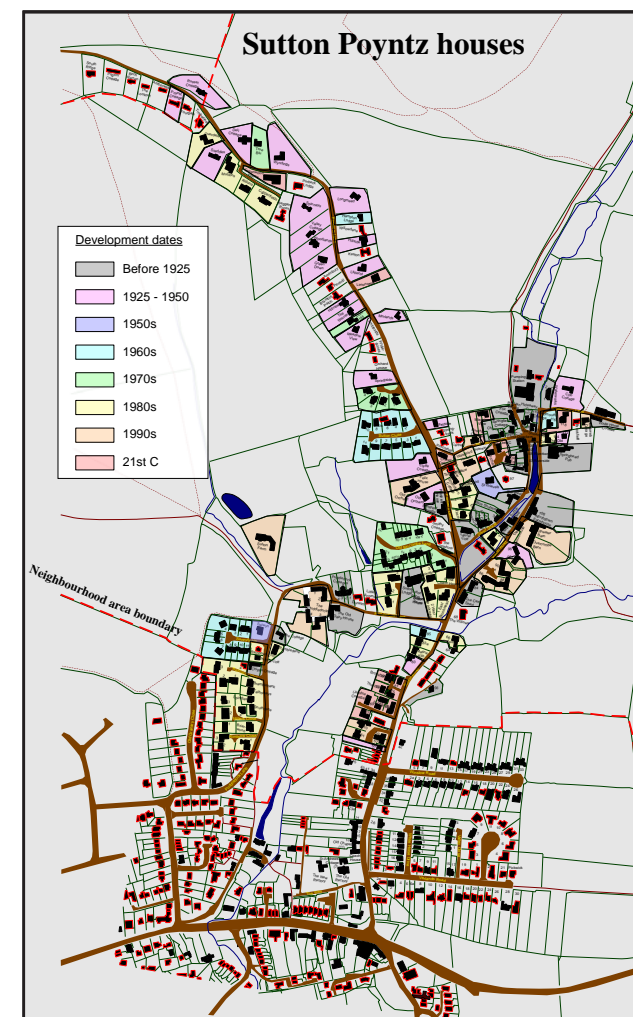
In 1925, the Weld family of Lulworth Castle, under financial pressure from a succession of Death Duties, sold off most of their property in Preston and Sutton Poyntz²⁴. For the very first time, ownership became distributed between numbers of people. The century that has followed has been marked by a profound and radical change, with the development of both caravan camps and extensive residential development across the surrounding farmland that has overwhelmed the former hamlet of Preston and threatened the same for Sutton Poyntz. The character of the area began to alter after the 1925 Estate sell-off, with land and individual plots being developed on a piecemeal and unplanned basis, without regard for the impact on either the villages or the surrounding landscape. Change was further fostered by the arrival of electricity during the 1930's

and sewerage in the 1950's which enabled a transition from near slum conditions in many cottages to the very different and more prosperous communities that exist today.

The rapid increase in growth in the pre and post WW2 periods followed the transfer of Preston-cum-Sutton Poyntz from Weymouth Rural District to Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Borough, led by owner ambitions rather than planning. The steeper hillsides up Plaisters Lane in Sutton Poyntz and the west side of Winslow Hill in Preston proved attractive for their potential views. They were however a significant departure from the traditional form and compact shape of communities in the area. Development slowed during WW2, with just limited infilling afterwards in the same areas and along Sutton road itself.

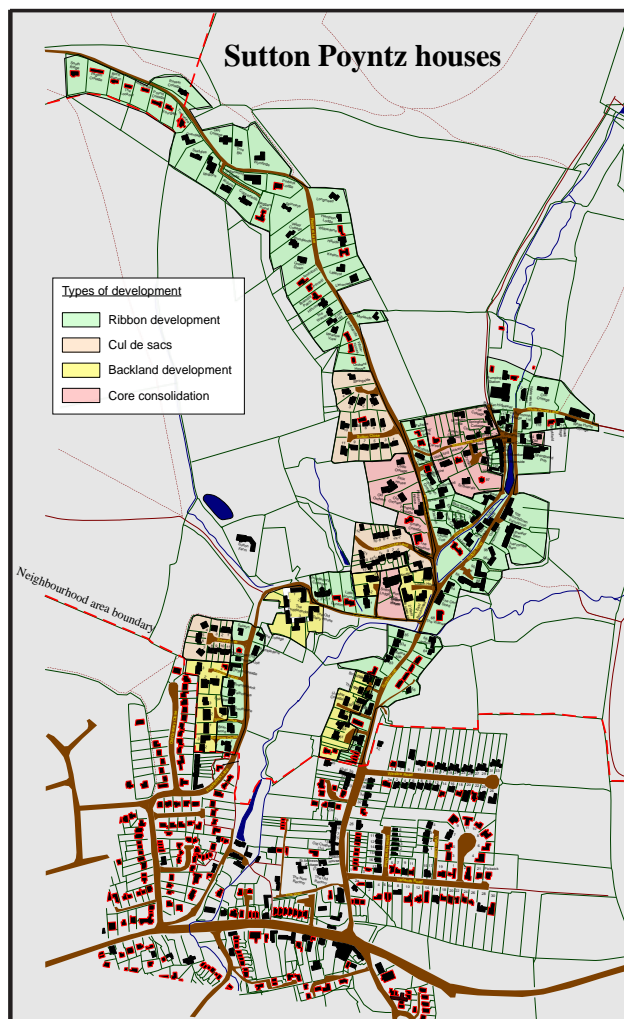
The 1960s saw two significant departures in Sutton Poyntz as two fields were developed as cul de sacs off Plaisters and Puddledock Lane respectively, which broke both the pattern of development and rural style of the village which had been linear and without pavements or street lighting. Sunnyfields was perhaps the more surprising development as it was built in an open field situation and served by a lane which was unmade and difficult to use. This development layout was nevertheless repeated in the 1970s with Old Bincombe Lane and Sutton Court Lawns.

The next decade brought significant change with frontage development of Puddledock Lane and three further small backland developments on the orchards and smallholdings south of Chipp's Cottage. Further infilling south of the Jordan and redevelopment of Sutton Farm was accompanied by new properties adjoining the village core and off Plaisters Lane. This consolidation of the village core continued in the 1990s, and closure of Northdown and Court Farms led to their redevelopment as residences along with Puddledock Dairy Farm. The first backland development on the west side of Sutton



Map 10: Village Building Periods

3. Village Setting & Development



Map 11: Village Development Types

Road was followed by two further ones in the next decade, smaller developments without footpaths and lighting and more in character with the village in style and layout. These finally closed the remaining undeveloped gaps that separated Preston and Sutton Poyntz on the western side of the Jordan.

PLANNING CONTROLS

By this stage, not only had all the farms disappeared, (although fields were still being let out), but the gap between the two villages had been closed on both sides of the Jordan, with only a narrow gap in Puddledock Lane linking the river floodplain there to the fields and wider landscape surrounding Sutton Poyntz to the north. This radical change of circumstance had



View across the important open gap towards Chalbury



The village looking east from Chalbury Hillfort

3. Village Setting & Development

in part predated planning control, but had been shaped from 1957 by the designation of extensive residential development across the farmland from Preston down as far as Lodmoor in the first Weymouth Town Map. The greatly enlarged community of Preston extended to Overcombe and Bowleaze, becoming a major new suburb of Weymouth.

The resulting shape of the village, the development forms which make up the village today, and approximate development periods are illustrated on the two adjacent maps (Maps 10 & 11). The village has consolidated around the historic village core to the north of the River Jordan, with ribbon developments extending north up Plaisters Lane and southward along both Sutton Road and Puddledock Lane. Cul de sac style developments of the 60s and 70s have been replaced by smaller and more sympathetic backland development forms.

Belated recognition of the unique rural qualities of Sutton Poyntz came with designation of a Conservation Area in 1972; this was extended in 1979 to include the older buildings of Preston and again in 2000 to embrace Plaisters Lane and surrounding farmland, including the surviving green wedge between Sutton Road and Puddledock Lane - the last remnant of the open fields that used to separate Sutton Poyntz from Preston. Much of the development that has taken place within the Conservation Area has been of a better standard than previously allowed. Designation of a development boundary constrained the outward spread of development to the surrounding countryside, which led inevitably to greater pressure to infill and redevelop within it.

The surrounding countryside, including the green wedge between Puddledock Lane and Sutton Road which has been safeguarded as part of an Important Open Gap, has however been well protected – more effectively than the AONB designation

which has been so extensively built over in the Preston area since its designation in 1959. This expansion had been heralded by the 1957 Development Plan, which nevertheless protected the valley and hillsides surrounding Sutton Poyntz. However, the AONB did not offer protection against the 400kv transmission line which arrived in 1964 and crossed the chalk escarpment with little regard for its impact on the extraordinary beauty and historic significance of the landscape.

CONCLUSION

Sutton Poyntz is very different to the village of a hundred years ago, having grown very substantially and developed a wide range of building types and styles. It has successfully transformed itself from a farming village to a greatly enlarged residential community with a tourism and heritage value that is widely admired. The village nevertheless still retains a sense of peace and tranquillity.

3. Village Setting & Development

NOTES

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4. Village Demographics & Economy

SETTLEMENT

Sutton Poyntz is a small rural community of 217 households and 456 inhabitants.²⁵ The village is largely residential with a sprinkling of holiday-lets and second homes (perhaps 15 household spaces). Most houses in Sutton Poyntz are detached, with 3-4 bedrooms.²⁶ Over 87% of households are owner-occupied, compared to an overall 67% in Weymouth and 73% in Dorset.²⁷ The remaining households are mostly privately rented with almost no publicly rented accommodation.

POPULATION

Some 34% of the working age population is retired, compared to just 18% in Weymouth and 20% in Dorset. Of the economically active, 45% are employed full-time. Of the economically inactive, 78% are retired (compared to 55% in Weymouth and 64% in Dorset).²⁸ The population of Sutton Poyntz is older than the national average (37% of residents are over age 65, compared to a national average of 16%).²⁹ There are fewer residents aged under 16 (12%) than the national average (19%).³⁰ A higher proportion of households (42%) are headed by an individual aged over 65 compared to Weymouth (25%) or Dorset (31%). At the same time, the number of lone parent households (5%) is substantially lower than Weymouth (10%) and Dorset (8%).³¹ Individual residents are on average as healthy, or slightly better, than the local area, with 80% of residents reporting health as 'good or very good', compared to Weymouth (79%) and Dorset (81%).³²

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

There are few businesses in the village. Other than the Springhead public house (owned by Punch Taverns), Sutton Forge and the Sutton Poyntz Carriage Co, economic activity is confined to a handful of small enterprises (bed & breakfast, child-minding,



The village of Sutton Poyntz, looking west towards Chalbury Hill, with its iron age fort (centre), and the South Dorset Ridgeway, with its bronze age burial mounds (top right)..



There are only a few businesses in the village; the most significant is the Springhead Public House.

4. Village Demographics & Economy

dog-walking, plant nurseries, pottery, etc) and home-based workers (consultants, authors, etc). The Waterworks (operated by Wessex Water) has a caretaker, but is otherwise unmanned, although its operation (extracting the spring water that flows from beneath the Ridgeway into the River Jordan) provides most of Weymouth's drinking water. The area continues to support farming, both arable and pastoral (sheep, goats, cattle and ponies), although the farmers have long moved out of the village. There are, however, several small-holdings supporting sheep and pigs, as well as honey farming. More recently, the valley floor has been used for summer camping.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Sutton Poyntz has few community facilities. There are no indoor or outdoor sports facilities, although Weymouth is relatively well provided with both.³³ There is limited provision for children and young people (other than the Springhead play area), a deficiency mirrored across Weymouth. The Mission Hall, on long-term lease from the Salisbury Diocese, acts as a village hall. It is a popular venue, although capacity is limited to 60 persons (although larger summer functions can take place in the orchard behind the hall). There are three other, slightly larger, halls outside Sutton Poyntz, but within a short walking distance (Scutt Hall, St Andrews's Hall and Preston Village Hall). The Waterworks Museum provides a venue for events (fundraising lunches, art shows, etc), while the Springhead has a small function room that is used for village meetings, functions, family parties, etc. The field adjacent to the Waterworks, also owned by Wessex Water, provides parking during the biennial Street Fair. There is no village shop, but Preston and Chalbury offer three general stores (including a post-office), a pharmacy, an estate agents, two public houses, two fish-and-chip shops and several beauticians/hairdressers. The nearest GP surgery is at Chalbury Corner (a 15-20-minute walk).



The Waterworks has been an important feature of the village for nearly 150 years.



Benches have been provided to enable residents and visitors to enjoy the scenery and important views.

4. Village Demographics & Economy

There are few green spaces within the village itself, although this is offset by the green corridors that surround the community and provide residents and visitors with ready access to the countryside. There is no civic space (other than a small area outside the Mission Hall) or village green, but the Mill Pond provides a natural focus for the community (and the occasional baptism in the 'River Jordan'). There are privately managed allotments on Puddledock Lane, but no community gardens or community allotments. Veterans' Wood, adjacent to the Waterworks, offers a tranquil spot for villagers and visitors, while the network of paths, linking the village to the valley and Ridgeway, is enjoyed by villagers, ramblers, dog-walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and holiday-makers. St Andrew's Church, Preston, the nearest church to the village, is a short walk away. The Roman Catholic Chapel in the village was redeveloped for housing many years ago, while the Evangelical Chapel is inactive. As a result, the Springhead and Mission Hall represent the most important village facilities. They have yet to be registered as Assets of Community Value (under the Localism Act 2011)

GETTING AROUND

As a small farming hamlet located close to the sea and looked down upon by the South Dorset Ridgeway the movement of people has always been a key factor in the development of Sutton Poyntz, as evidenced by the Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval archaeology that permeates the area.

Sutton Poyntz is surrounded by hills and a network of tracks has evolved over the centuries in order to connect with the surrounding towns and villages. These have survived into the modern day either as footpaths for leisure or access routes to services, some having developed into minor roads. A Turnpike Road led from Broadway through Preston to Warmwell, connecting to longer routes. Much of this is now part of the A353



The pond has been damaged by parked cars that also restrict access to the heart of the village.

which provides links to Weymouth to the west and Wareham to the east.

The coming of the railways in the mid 19th century coincided with the development of larger scale dairy farming (happily plans to drive the main London to Weymouth line through our valley were abandoned). 100 years later a very different form of wealth creation arrived in the form of tourism.

There is a Monday-Friday bus service between the village and Weymouth, but the frequency has been reduced in recent years. A more regular service (seven days a week) is available from Preston (a ten-minute walk), including occasional buses to Dorchester. Weymouth offers direct rail links to London every



Passengers for the bus service wait in the road

4. Village Demographics & Economy

hour and Bristol two hourly. Several taxi companies operate out of Weymouth and Dorchester.

Car ownership is higher than in Weymouth or Dorset. Only 11% of households have no car or van, whereas nearly 46% have more than two vehicles (the Weymouth figures are 25% and 30% respectively).³⁴

PARKING

The roads through the village (Sutton Road and Plaisters Lane) are largely narrow, with few passing places, and no pavements. Pedestrians and cars must share the roads, particularly in the historic core where many houses lack parking spaces (either on or off-road). As a result, the area around the Mill Pond, adjacent to the Springhead, can become very busy and access is difficult for large vehicles (including emergency vehicles). This has resulted in structural damage to the edge of the Mill Pond. Although the lack of parking spaces could be said to have had a calming effect on traffic, it is nevertheless unsightly and creates access problems for residents. Overflow parking has been occasionally made available in the valley farmland immediately adjacent to the Mill Pond. There is a strong risk that further development, and the increasing popularity of the Springhead, will exacerbate these issues.

STREET FURNITURE

Pavements in Sutton Poyntz are only found in a few of the relatively modern cul-de-sacs, but the streets and lanes are well lit and pedestrian safety has never been a serious issue, other than the danger from speeding cars on the main roads that run through the village. The existing street furniture is low key. The limited number of road signs and the absence of traffic control measures (speed-bumps, bollards, etc), together with a surviving red telephone box and traditional Dorset fingerposts,



One of the two surviving Dorset fingerposts



Fundraising event at the Waterworks



The Mission Hall provides the social heart of the village

4. Village Demographics & Economy

add to the character of the village. There are several public benches and planters maintained by the village, placed adjacent to roads and footpaths, for pedestrians to enjoy the surroundings and important views. A proliferation of power and telephone cables around the mill pond, introduced in the last century, are unsightly and inappropriate to the setting.

VILLAGE LIFE

There is a strong sense of community in the village. There are numerous special-interest groups such as two local Women's Institute groups, a mens group (SPAM - Sutton Poyntz Action Men), a Biodiversity Group, a History Group, and two art groups. The Sutton Poyntz Society, established in 1968, has just under 300 members (equivalent to some 65% of the village). Its aim is to protect the character of the village by providing the community with a voice on issues such as planning, trees, transport, road safety, etc. It also organises a wide range of social and fundraising activities. The Mission Hall Trust, which very successfully manages the village's hall runs a number of other events, as do more ad hoc groups of villagers. A number of these events support local charities, and the village has an outstanding record of support for charities, national and local, mainly through the biennial Street Fayre that attracts more than 6,000 visitors and in the last twenty four years has raised over £100,000 for a variety of charities. Because of Sutton Poyntz's special relationship with the water industry, WaterAid is one of the charities we frequently support.

4. Village Demographics & Economy

NOTES

25. 'Sutton Poyntz' describes the geographic area defined by the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). 'Weymouth' is the Borough of Weymouth and Portland (including Sutton Poyntz). 'Dorset' excludes Bournemouth and Poole, but includes Weymouth and Portland. 'Households' are occupied 'housing spaces'. The number of 'housing spaces' in Sutton Poyntz exceeds the number of 'households' because of empty or unoccupied houses, typically holiday-lets or second homes.
26. The average household size in Sutton Poyntz (2.1) is slightly less than the surrounding area (Weymouth and Dorset), but the average number of bedrooms per household (3.3) is greater than the overall average for Weymouth and Dorset (2.7 and 2.8 respectively).
27. As the 2011 Census coverage is not an exact match, the data has been adjusted to provide a meaningful comparison with Weymouth, Dorset and National households. The 2011 Census Areas, E00104284 and E00104271, have been 'corrected' by 109.2% and 52.7% respectively - based on the actual number of buildings within the NP. The 2001 Census cannot be directly compared, but provides indicative trends.
28. There are 182 economically active and 139 economically inactive individuals in Sutton Poyntz (age 16-64).
29. In 2001, the proportion of residents aged over 65 was 30%, suggesting that average age has increased over the decade.
30. In 2011, the average for Dorset was 12%, roughly the same as in 2001.
31. In 2001, the proportion of households headed by an individual aged over 65 was 40%, suggesting little change over the decade.
32. In 2001, 91% of residents reported that their health was 'good or very good'.
33. *Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Open Space, Sport and Recreational Assessment*, Draft Final Report, July 2007.
34. The National picture (26% and 32% respectively) is comparable to Weymouth. Car ownership has remained roughly constant over the decade. In 2001, 10% of Sutton Poyntz households had no car or van and 46 % had more than two cars.

5. Village Character

5.1 Overview

As a result of the development and planning control history described in Section 3 above, different parts of the village have taken on noticeably different characters, reflecting styles and constraints prevalent at different times. Accordingly, we have been able to divide the village into five main subdivisions, each with reasonably coherent character:

- The Historic core (the area of the pre-1925 village, much well-preserved although 1980s development has affected the western part of this area);
- West side (a mix of 1960s & 1970s extension westwards, along with infill of old market garden area since 1980);
- Plaisters Lane north (ribbon extension started in about 1930 and still continuing);
- Gateway (extension along Sutton Road started in 1930, with later infill); and
- Puddledock south (a highly coherent area developed on old orchards and closes in the 1960s and 80s).

These are shown in the adjoining map; the character of each of these sub-divisions is described in the following sections. In addition, we have divided the surrounding countryside into three rural sub-divisions, also described below. These are

- the Green Corridor (an area of ecological importance along the branches of the River Jordan);
- the Chalk Escarpment (the hills and slopes historically used as sheep pasture and now mainly within the White Horse Hill SSSI); and
- the Valley Farmland (flat or gently sloping farmland with a historic mix of arable, cattle pasture, horse paddock and orchard).



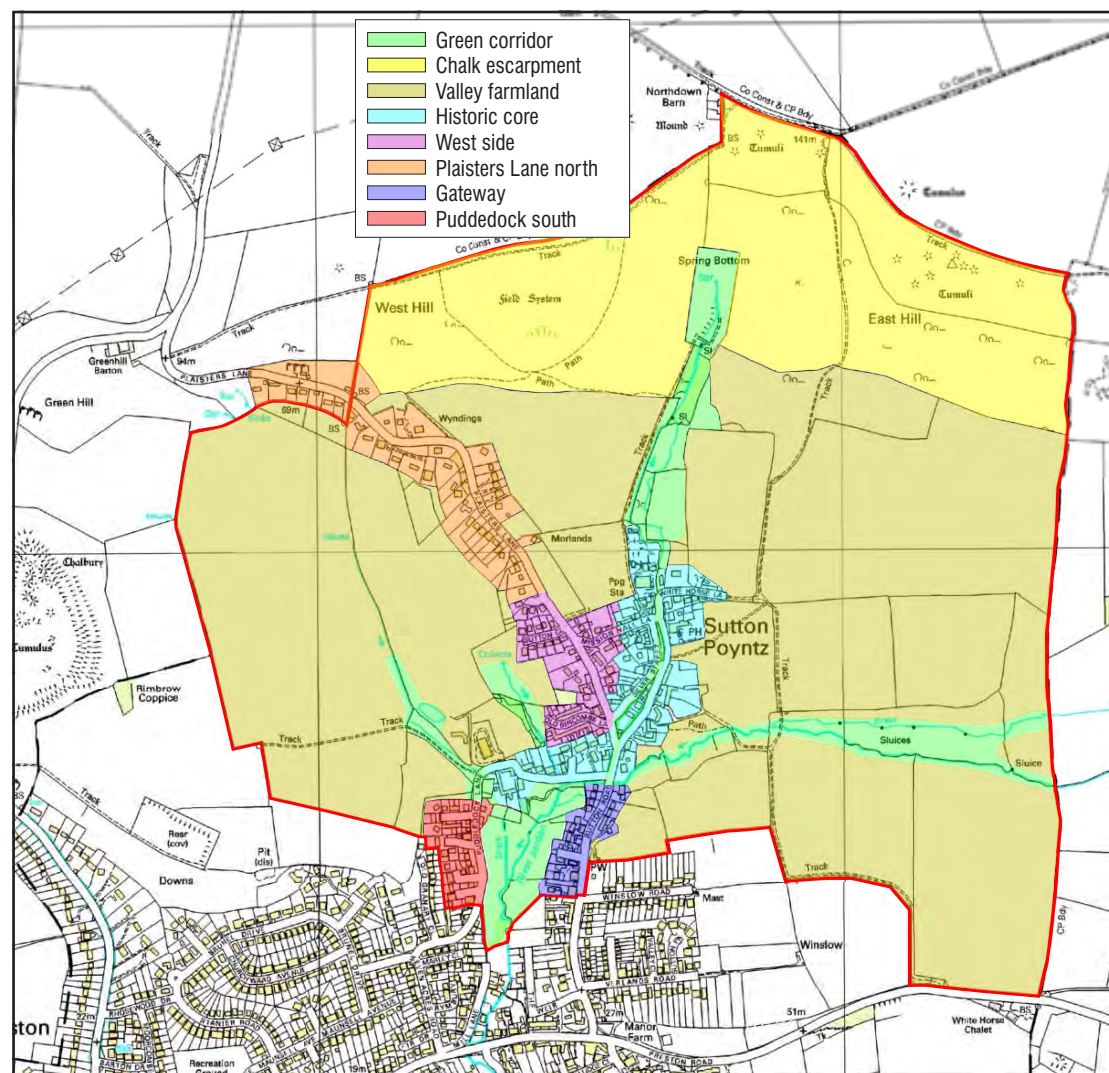
View of the village in the foreground, with Preston, Weymouth Bay and Portland beyond.



The Mission Hall (immediately beyond Church Cottage on the right) is the social heart of the village.

5. Village Character

5.1 Overview



Map 12: Village Character Areas

5. Village Character

5.1 Overview



Sutton Poyntz Village Victorian Street Fayre

5. Village Character

5.2 Historic core



The pond, with its line of cottages opposite the Springhead pub, is the heart of the village for villagers and visitors alike



This aerial photo of the village core, with the pond and its trees at the top, includes a cluster of agricultural, industrial and domestic Listed Buildings.



This view east from pond has always been said by the village to be an important one to preserve; the photograph also shows an example of vernacular-style wall built from local stone, but sadly the Dorset-style farm gate has gone

5. Village Character

5.2 Historic core



Sutton Lodge, formerly Sutton Farm House and the childhood home of the two Pope founders of Eldridge Pope, now hemmed in by newer houses.



The Mill and Mill House. Stone walls (ashlar at the front and rubble at the back and sides) beneath a slate roof, with good sash windows. The weathered old local brick of the Mill blends in.



The Waterworks, with 1840's industrial building, 1890's cottages, and the 18th C Upper Mill, represents Sutton Poyntz's industrial heritage.

5. Village Character

5.2 Historic core



The so-called Silver Street (perhaps not an old name), with a number of 19th C or older cottages of a variety of types and sizes, loosely aligned along the stream.



Puddledock Cottages, an attractive late-Victorian group.



Right next to the Old Dairy House, The Puddledocks is a sympathetic new development using the footprint of the old dairy buildings.



The track up to this cluster of old cottages leads on into the fields beside the Waterworks, and hence to the hills above the village.

5. Village Character

5.3 West side

Summary:

West side benefits from proximity to the Historic Core but has a more diverse character with a confusion of styles and building materials. Several cul-de-sacs, with wide roads and pavements, strike a discordant note. Future development that better matched the Historic Core, while retaining the existing hedges and field boundaries and key views, would enhance the overall character of the village and strengthen the sense of community.

Geography – This gently-sloping area was occupied by field and close on either side of Plaisters Lane, some of which was used as market garden and/or orchard.

Development history – Up Plaisters Lane there were just two houses, Prospect House and Cartref (Welsh for ‘home’) which was demolished in the 1970s to be replaced by Sutton Court Lawns. This area has been almost entirely filled in with houses since about 1960.

Street form – The simple old country lanes (Plaisters, Puddledock, Mission Hall) have been disturbed by cul-de-sac developments to the west. The more recent of these developments have tried to avoid too heavy a suburban feel.

Building plot form – Generally still quite generous plots, with some denser development in Old Bincombe Lane.

Predominant building form and size – Mostly 3- and 4-bed detached houses, with some smaller terraced houses.

Predominant building materials – Mostly dressed stone or reconstituted stone under tile, but some more recent examples use rubble under thatch or tile.

Heritage assets – Prospect Cottage is of local interest. Old OS maps show the site of the Sutton Poyntz chapel near here, but this is probably mistaken. Just to the north an old carpenter’s workshop has been adapted as holiday accommodation.

Significant non-built features – The wall by Dolphins was part of an old barn.

Trees & hedges – The boundaries of some developments are old field hedges, and the hedge on the east side of Plaisters Lane is perhaps 150 years old. Some good individual native trees at Felix House.

Views and access to countryside – There are no footpaths here. There was one important view to the east opposite Sutton Close, now obscured by a gate. The view of the hills from alongside the Mission Hall has been partly blocked.



Map 14: West Side

5. Village Character

5.3 West side



Aerial photo, showing complete area; stone is predominant building material with a mix of tile and slate



Sutton Close - fine houses but pavement and choice of materials out of context in village environment



Corner Cottage, on a site previously occupied by a car body-works at the junction of Plaisters Lane and Mission Hall Lane, is less than 20 years old, but shows what can be achieved with care by developers and planners.



View eastward from Plaisters Lane, across the field, towards East Hill, now partially obscured by a metal gate

5. Village Character

5.4 Plaisters Lane north

Summary:

Plaisters Lane offers a mixture of styles, with several houses of recognised architectural merit, although the plots are larger and buildings more widely spaced than in the Historic Core. Any future development should be sympathetic to these important pre-war designs, while retaining the trees and key views, and consistent with the country lane feel.

Geography – Plaisters Lane was originally the route from Preston and Sutton Poyntz to Dorchester; initially it climbs gently in a north-west direction, but as it reaches the steep hill it turns to the west to climb the hillside diagonally. The upper part was originally open sheep pasture, while the southern end led through a thin band of coppice, with closes on either side.

Development history – After the Weld sale in 1925, land on either side of the road was sold on, and development started in 1930, with Wyndings very soon followed by Littlecot, Meadow View and Springside, and then a series of Wamsley Lewis houses. Development has been fairly continuous since, with for example a group of 1960s houses at the southern end, and two recent houses built in the curtilages of older houses. Some of the oldest houses initially had very large grounds, which have been divided more than once.

Street form – Apart from one short cul de sac opposite Wyndings, this is linear. The road still has the feel of a narrow country lane with hedge and the remnants of copse.

Building plot form – Generally large, even with some sub-division.

Predominant building form and size – 4- and 5-bed detached houses.

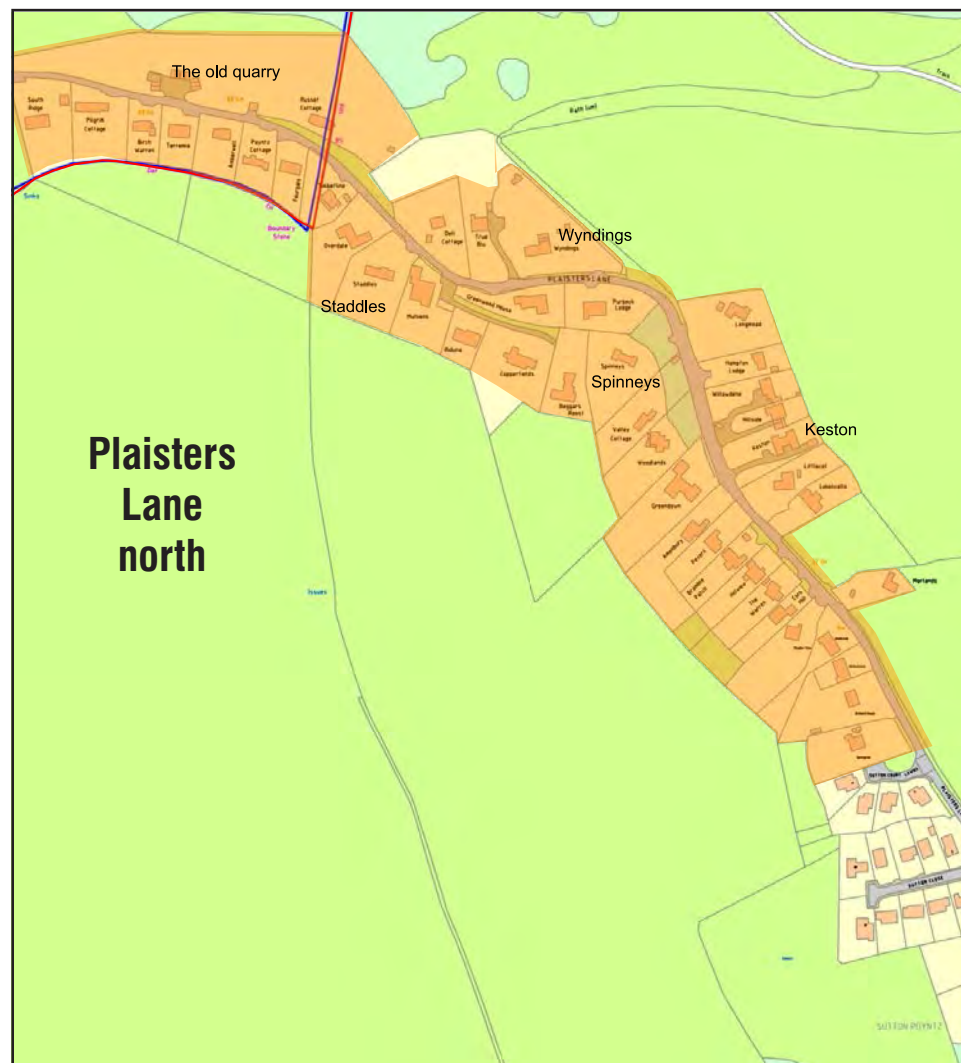
Predominant building materials – Stone and/or render, with low-eaved thatch or tile roofs. A group of more recent brick buildings appears out of place here.

Heritage assets – 4 Wamsley Lewis houses are of local interest, as are Wyndings and Littlecot. The recent extension at Keston shows that modern styles can succeed in this sort of environment.

Significant non-built features – The chalk quarry on the northern side was originally used for surfacing for roads in the parish.

Trees & hedges – The hedge on the east side at the southern end is perhaps 150 years old. The plots in this area are well stocked with mature trees, which are an important part of the landscape. There is still an area of open trees where there was once coppice, but this is poorly protected by the Planning Authority.

Views and access to countryside – There are now no views westward. There are two important views from the road to the north-east. One footpath to the hills beside Wyndings. Beyond the village up Plaisters Lane, there are footpaths towards Bincombe and Puddledock Lane, and an excellent view of the valley and Chalbury Hillfort.



Map 15: Plaisters Lane north

5. Village Character

5.4 Plaisters Lane north



View from top of Plaisters Lane, showing the well-treed landscape which has its own microclimate - the houses themselves can hardly be seen



View looking steeply down from the road to some of the top houses, with the valley and Weymouth bay in the background



View of West Hill through farm gate on Plaisters Lane



View up Plaisters Lane from Sutton Court Lawns with field hedge and 1960s brick house on left



Spinneys, one of Wamsley Lewis houses with low thatch eaves above stone walls

5. Village Character

5.5 Gateway

Summary:

Gateway marks the transition between Preston and Sutton Poyntz. The narrow lane descending into the village used to offer a striking vista of the South Dorset Ridgeway and the White Horse. Recent development, while employing traditional materials, has compromised these views and made the transition more problematic. Future development that retains the narrow lane, while protecting the residual views and offering the same high design standards, would help maintain the distinct identity of the village and protect its value to the wider community.

Geography – Sutton Road climbs quite steeply to the south away from the River Jordan, and then flattens out. This was always the principal route from Sutton Poyntz to Preston, Weymouth and the main highway.

Development history – Historically Sutton Road divided just south of the river and recombined where the track leads to number 56. There were a couple of old houses just south of the river, including the village pub. Development started in the late 1920s (Linden Lea and the Police House), and has continued ever since. Recently, older houses have been demolished to allow higher density development. The last partial gap on the west side of Sutton Road was closed as recently as 1997.

Street form – Essentially linear, with very short side-roads in plots formerly owned by larger houses. The road is fairly narrow, without pavement.

Building plot form – Despite subdivision of large older plots, the building plots in this area are still predominantly quite generous.

Predominant building form and size – Mainly detached houses but with some semi-detached or terraced, and some bungalows.

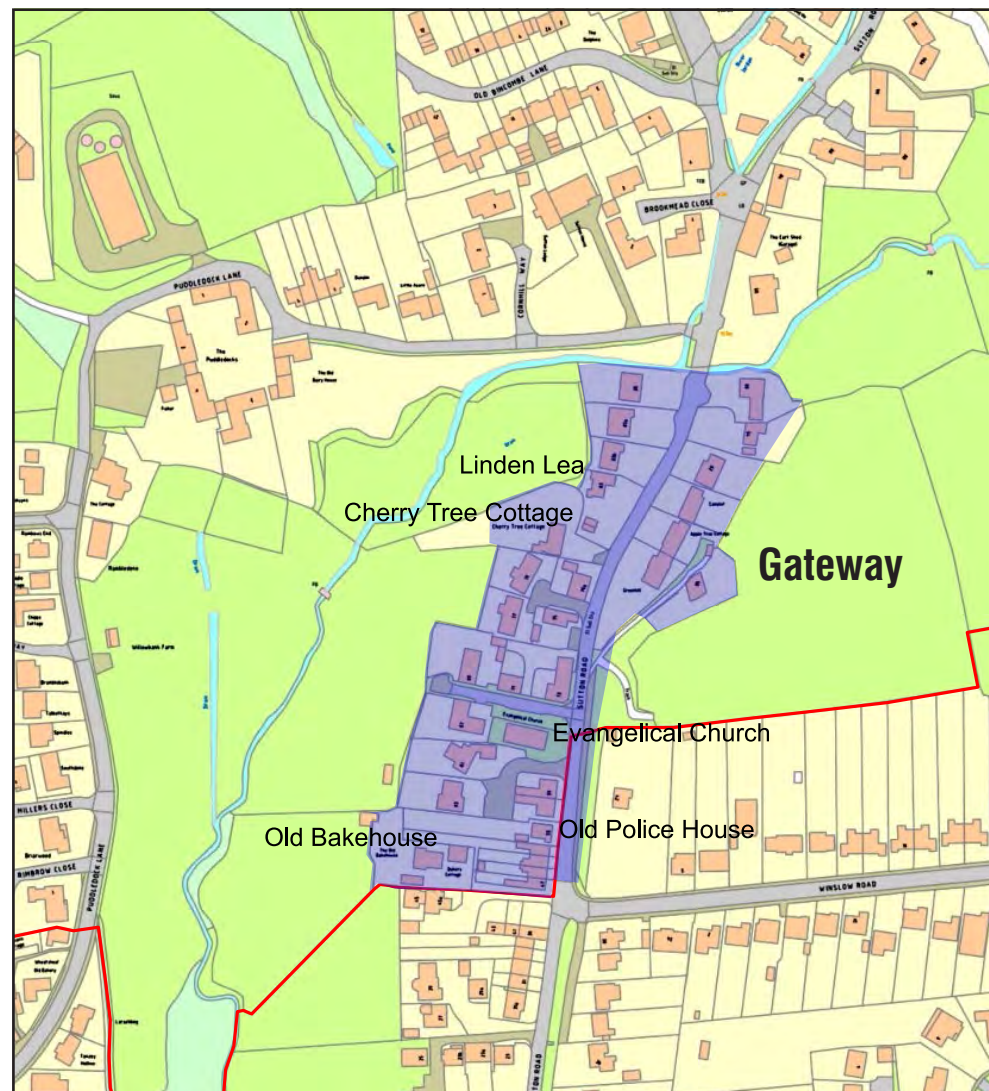
Predominant building materials – A wide variety, with brick, rendered brick, stone and reconstituted stone. Many of the more recent developments have used dressed stone and a mix of tile, slate and thatch.

Heritage assets – Number 47 was a shop owned by the Neath family, with a bakery behind. Eric Neath developed much of Sutton Road and Winslow Road.

Significant non-built features – The bridge over the Jordan as it flows from Osmington is attractive, but its date is not known.

Trees & hedges – Apart from some tall conifers by the track to number 56 this area is characterised mainly by specimen garden trees. Some significant trees by the river have been pollarded recently.

Views and access to countryside – No footpaths. There is still an attractive view of the village, with the hills behind, from up the rise on Sutton Road, although recent development has partially obscured it. One of the side roads has been designed to offer a partial view across the river valley towards Rimbury.



Map 16: Gateway

5. Village Character

5.5 Gateway



View from "Sutton Knap" of village and hillside beyond



Photo of side lane with numbers 67 to 73, a group of modern cottages in sympathetic style, with a partially retained view towards Rimbury



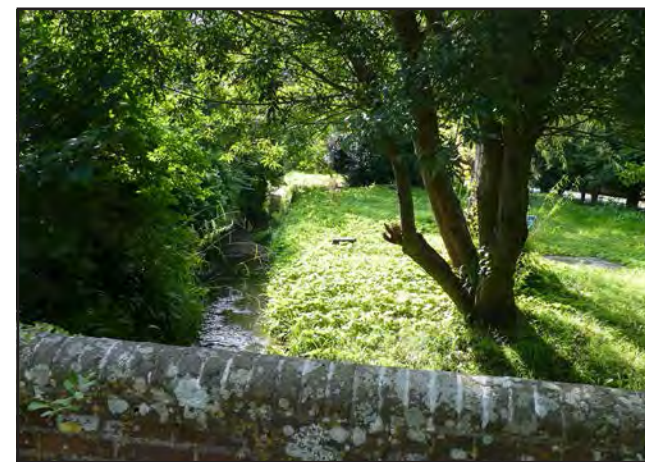
Numbers 47 to 59, a mix of ages from 1920's to 1990's. and building types



Cherry Tree Cottage and Linden Lea, two older houses in this area that have not been replaced with higher density housing



The site of the old village pub (long replaced) and of the "Sutton Poyntz murder" in 1862



The river Jordan bridge, with an area of trees alongside the stream

5. Village Character

5.6 Puddledock south

Summary:

Puddledock south abuts Preston, but does not offer the clear transition or views provided by Gateway. Development of what was previously a farm track happened quite quickly, and features pavements and wide roads. There is no sense of a narrow village lane connecting Weymouth with the countryside. There appears to be little scope for future development to enhance the character of the area, beyond adopting the design standards found in the Historic Core and protecting the Green Corridor.

Geography – This is an area alongside the old country lane leading toward Preston formerly called Love Lane. It overlooks green space along the River Jordan across to Sutton Road, at the point where the river valley is at its narrowest; the land climbs quite steeply to the west towards Rimbury.

Development history – This area has two Victorian (or older) smallholders' cottages – Chipps Cottage and The Cottage; further south along the lane was the old malthouse. Sunnyfields was developed in the 1960s, at which time it was tarmaced but only reached by a muddy farm track. The rest of this development was built in the 1980s. The old smallholding boundaries are in the main preserved in the layout.

Street form – Sunnyfields and this part of Puddledock Lane have pedestrian pavements; the other three short side roads are narrow and quite steep. Beyond The Cottage, the lane remains unmade.

Building plot form – Reasonably generous rectangular garden plots.

Predominant building form and size – Mainly 3- and 4-bed detached houses, with some bungalows, and a few semi-detached pairs in Sunnyfields.

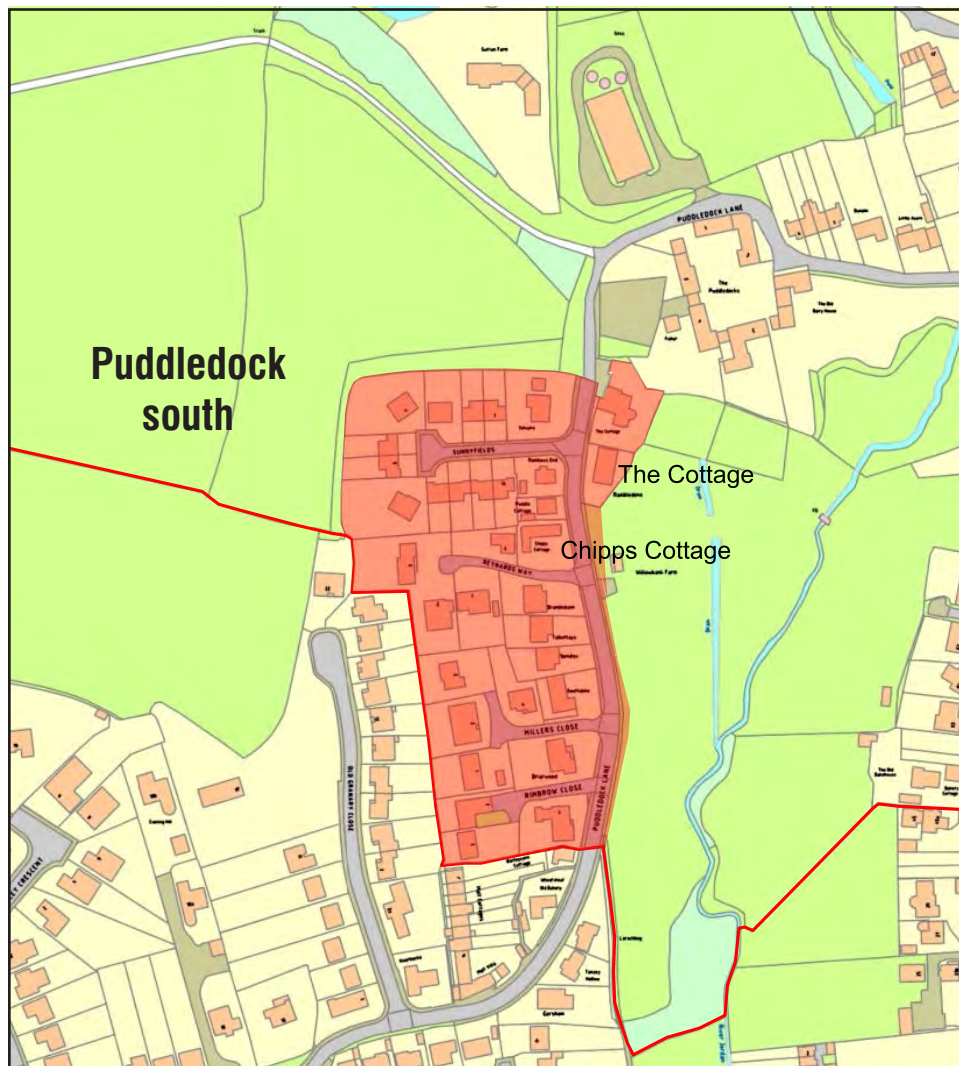
Predominant building materials – The old cottages are rubble stone, one tile and one slate roof. The more recent developments have a mix of brick and dressed or reconstituted stone under tile roofs.

Heritage assets – The two Victorian cottages are of local interest.

Significant non-built features – None

Trees & hedges – The line of poplars and sycamore along the east side of Puddledock Lane now dominate. Otherwise specimen garden trees predominate. There may be some remnants of old hedge boundaries between the separate developments, but nothing well preserved.

Views and access to countryside – There is very little left in the way of views from the lane. Trees and stable buildings have recently blocked views that were enjoyed across the Jordan towards White Horse Hill, and development here has compromised views westwards. One footpath towards Rimbury skirts round Sunnyfields, and another towards Chalbury starts at the bend where Puddledock Lane turns east. Neither offers any view from the lane.



Map 17: Puddledock south

5. Village Character

5.6 Puddledock south



1980s houses along Puddledock Lane; the formerly open view from here towards White Horse Hill is now blocked by a line of trees.



The Cottage, one of the two much older houses whose smallholdings made up part of this area



The end of the road and the start of the lane. Originally this was all unmade lane – the southern end was improved (at their own expense) by Sunnyfields residents but not adopted and tarmaced until almost 20 years after the first development here.



The last remnant of view eastwards from this part of Puddledock Lane.

5. Village Character

5.7 Green Corridor

Summary:

The Green Corridor, comprising at least four separate arms along the River Jordan and its tributaries, provides the backbone to the village and is integral to its character, linking Sutton Poyntz to its valley and the ancient landscape, along and beneath the Souths Dorset Ridgeway. Beyond its historic importance, the river sustains a diverse flora and fauna and supports important groups of trees that offer structure and amenity value to the community. These few, precious areas are the residue of a much denser assemblage that characterised the village in the past. Any development that further reduces the Green Corridor would damage the environment, diminish its community value and degrade the overall character of the village.

Geography – One branch of the River Jordan flows from springs in the hill north of Sutton Poyntz, quite steeply to start with and then more gently through the village to near the fork between Sutton Road and Plaisters Lane. Here it joins the longer branch from Osmington, which flows gently through the nearly flat valley. The combined river then flows through an open grassed area where it is joined by shorter rivulets from west of the village; the valley constricts at this point between shoulders of Rimbury and Winslow Hill, before opening out again as the river reaches Preston.

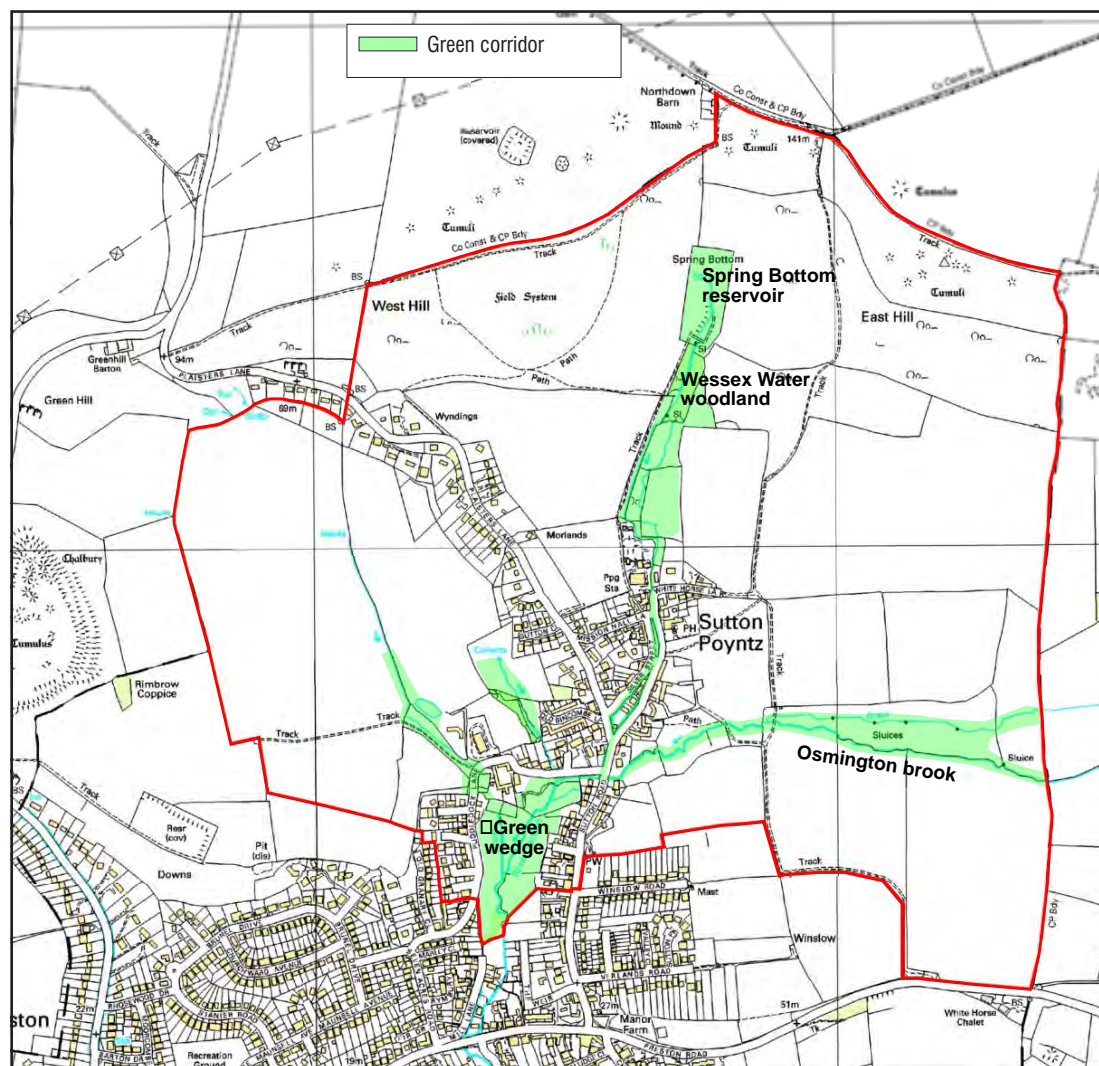
Description – Both the stream and the green banks offer a highway for wildlife. There are ponds and reed beds, and a number of areas of woodland. Coming straight from the springs, the water quality is generally good.

Flora – Chalk bed streams are rare in Europe. This stream provides an ideal environment for aquatic plants such as water crowfoot, yellow flag iris with corn mint found in adjacent meadow areas.

Fauna – Bats forage along the tree-lined corridors beside the stream and where it passes through wet woodland to the north. Grey wagtails are seen frequently and kingfishers have been reported by the Osmington Brook. Reported aquatic species include Brown Trout, Bullhead, Water Vole and the critically endangered European Eel. Golden Ringed Dragonfly are frequently observed, and Palmate Newts are found in garden ponds.

Heritage assets – The river has numerous workings along its length, serving the three mills, two on the fast flowing stream coming from Spring Bottom and a third in Preston south of the junction between the two main branches. The workings for Sutton Mill are fairly well preserved. The river branch from Spring Bottom would originally have flowed much more strongly than now, but extraction for Weymouth's water supply reduces the flow significantly, to the extent that the mill Pond used to dry out in summer. Just below the Waterworks, there is a ledge where by repute village women used to wash laundry.

Views and amenity – Part of the Wessex Water woodland has been opened as permissive access. The "green wedge" is part of an Important Open Gap separating Sutton Poyntz and Preston.



Map 18: Green corridor

5. Village Character

5.7 Green Corridor



The view from the hills above Spring Bottom, with the stream flowing from its source, where Weymouth's water supply is extracted, through Wessex Water's woodland



The stream flows through "Veterans' Wood", an area that Wessex Water have given open access to, at the same time protecting the adjoining woodland for wildlife



The Osmington branch of the river flows along a tree-lined course through a nearly flat valley



The Mill Pond, with Sutton Mill behind; the pond was the head-water for the mill wheel until it ceased operation in the 1980's



View from Sutton Road of the "green wedge" with Puddledock Lane beyond - despite gentrification important for wildlife and separating Sutton Poyntz from Preston

5. Village Character

5.8 Chalk Escarpment

Summary:

The Chalk Escarpment provides the dramatic backdrop to the village as well as the source of the streams that sustain the Green Corridor. The area is well protected (AONB, SSSI, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Area), with limited access and little agricultural value. Under these circumstances, it is unlikely to feature in any future development, but the quality of the views from this Open Access Area need to be preserved.

Geography – Of the steep hillsides that almost surround Sutton Poyntz's valley, only those to the immediate north are within the Neighbourhood Area. This area has a complex geology, with a fault above Spring Bottom allowing a strong flow of water from springs that feed the River Jordan.

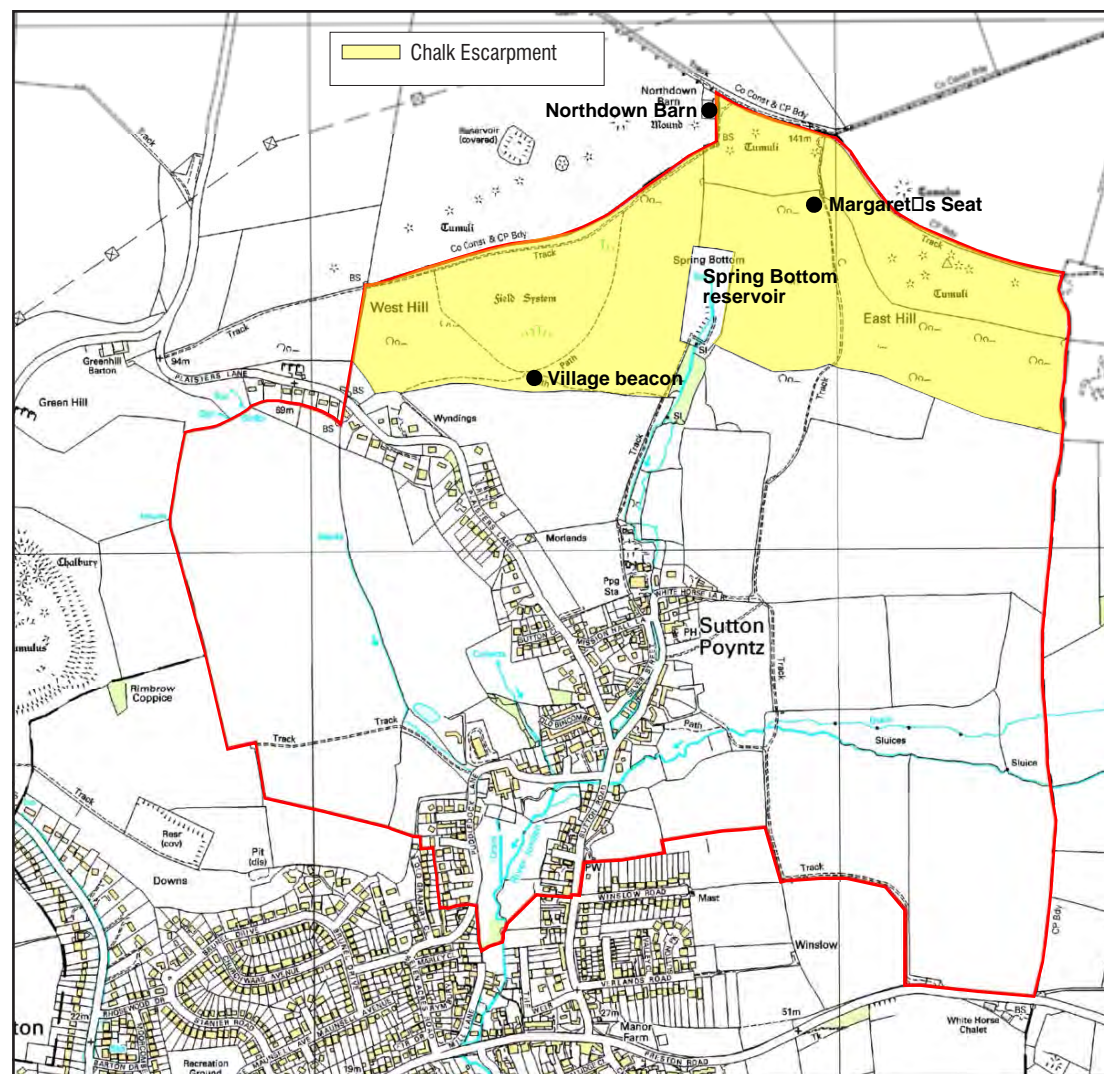
Description – The hillside is too steep to plough, and has always been used as grazing for sheep, cattle and ponies. It is therefore an area of open grassland and gorse. Fitful attempts are made, under Natural England urging, to control the gorse but as the gorse is a valuable habitat in its own right, this practice is a two-edged sword.

Flora – The chalk grassland supports a number of important chalk habitat species such as the vulnerable sainfoin, the near-threatened rock rose and carline thistle, the locally scarce horseshoe vetch and kidney vetch as well as several commoner species including pyramidal orchids, small scabious, greater knapweed and cowslip.

Fauna – Several species of butterfly are found on the chalk slope including Grizzled and Dingy Skippers (both classified as vulnerable), Adonis Blue, Small Heath and Lulworth Skipper. Areas of scrub provide cover for a variety of birds including Dartford Warbler, Yellow Hammer and Linnet, while Corn Bunting and Skylark are regularly seen along the field edges at the top of the Ridgeway. Adder and slow worm are present down to low levels and a number of badger sets are found on the lower slopes.

Heritage assets – An area rich in evidence of long occupation, with tumuli on the ridge-top, lynchets and an old field system on West Hill, and an old trackway below East Hill. The age of the two tracks ascending the hill on either side of Spring Bottom is not known; the one up East Hill may be part of a drove-way system. Although not old, Margaret's Seat and the village beacon are two much-loved features. Near Northdown Barn stones mark the local government boundary created in 1933 when the Parish was divided.

Views and amenity – There are excellent views of the village, Weymouth Bay and Portland from many parts of this area, which is in the AONB and is mainly Open Access. A branch of the Dorset Coastal Path leads along the ridge-top, and is met by three footpaths from the village



Map 19: Chalk Escarpment

5. Village Character

5.8 Chalk Escarpment



The view from Margaret's Seat of village and Weymouth Bay



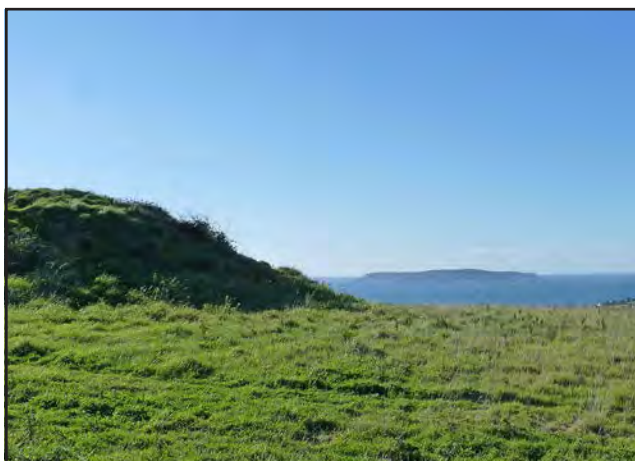
The village beacon, initially provided by British Gas for the Millennium, and moved to its present spot for the Trafalgar bicentenary



Gorse fire on the hillside in 2012, showing the steep gorse covered hillside



Spring Bottom, a fault in the chalk hillside between West Hill and East Hill, from which come the strongly flowing spring that feed Weymouth's water supply



Round barrow near Northdown Barm above Spring Bottom, evidence of very old occupation of the area



View from the top of the winter toboggan slope near Spring Bottom

5. Village Character

5.9 Valley Farmland

Summary:

The Valley Farmland surrounds Sutton Poyntz, linking the village with its setting. It is a continuing reminder of the working origins of the village as well as providing the essential gap that secures its distinct identity, separate from Preston and Weymouth. This is an agricultural and recreational landscape, with significant amenity value including key views, footpaths, and bridleways. Future development will be determined by economic factors as well as by statutory protection.

Geography – The area that was traditionally farmed from Sutton Poyntz includes all of the Neighbourhood Area plus land to the west. This mainly flat area of farmland was a mix of arable and pasture for cattle, horses and sheep, with areas of orchard and market garden that grew and diminished in accordance with demand.

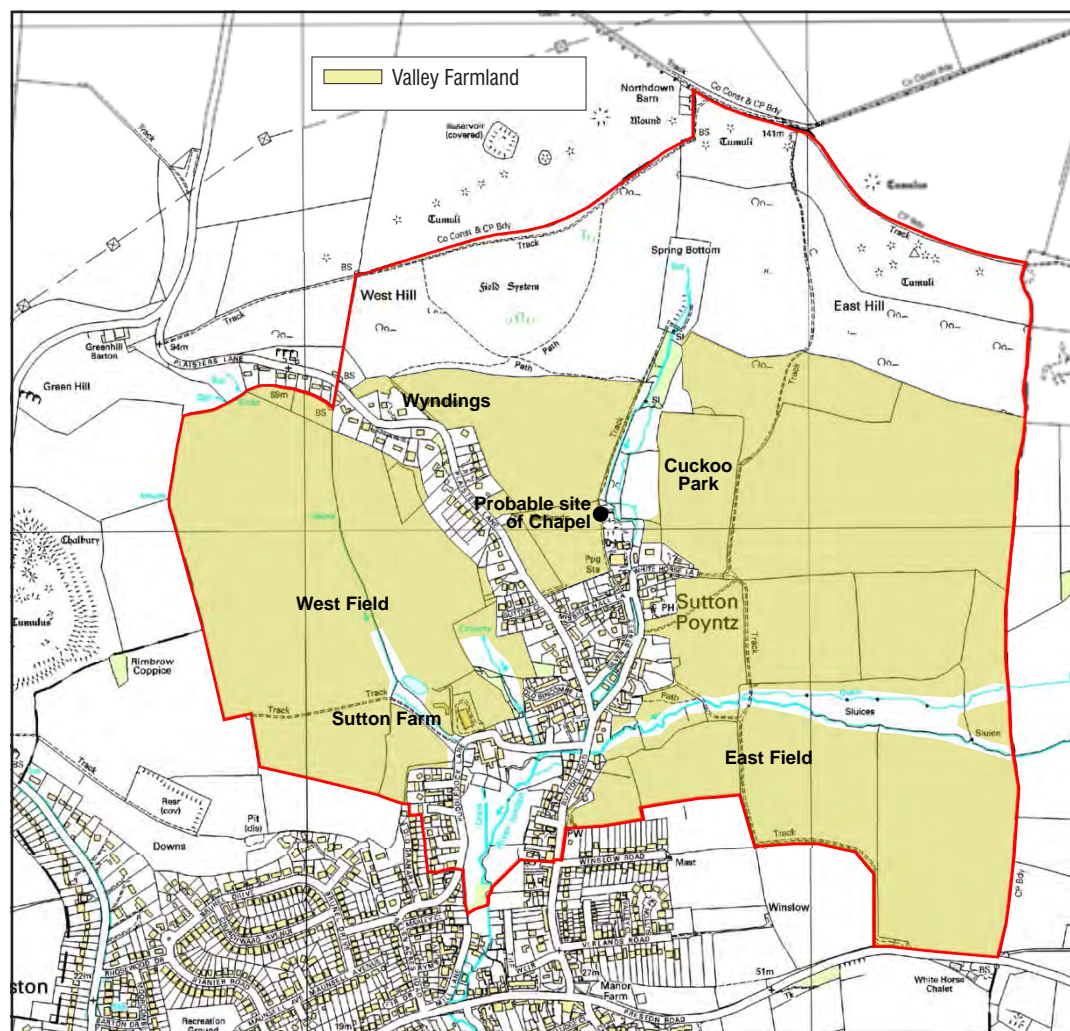
Description – The land west of the village was originally almost all occupied by a single West Field, with closes nearer in to the village itself. This was and remains mainly arable. There was a similar East Field on the sloping land south of the Osmington brook, which is used for arable and/or silage. The land immediately to the north of the Osmington brook seems always to have been divided into smaller fields, presumably laid out in connection with dairy farming at Northdown Farm. Part of this area is now used for a temporary summer campsite.

Flora – A number of common species of wild flower are present along the field margins including Scarlet Pimpernel, Speedwell, Teasel, Willow Herbs.

Fauna – Birds such as Song Thrush, House Sparrow and Common Starling appear in good numbers in the hedgerows and open field areas close to residences; winter visitors to the fields include Northern Lapwing, Redwing and Fieldfare. Badgers and Roe Deer are commonly observed while butterflies such as Small Tortoiseshell and Wall Brown and moths including Nut-tree Tussock, Jersey Tiger and Knot Grass are regularly reported.

Heritage assets – Most of the area is designated as of “archaeological potential”. A number of old field boundaries and field systems have been identified. Archaeological digs at and near Wyndings and in and next to the Waterworks site have shown evidence of occupation over a very long period. Of most interest, perhaps, is the presumed identification of the medieval Chapel that Sutton Poyntz is known to have had.

Views and amenity – There are two main footpaths from the village leading eastwards towards Osmington, and two leading west from Puddledock Lane, one towards Rimbury and Chalbury, and the other leading past Sutton Farm before splitting, with spurs towards Chalbury and the top of Plaisters Lane. Finally there are two paths northwards leading up the hills. There is no Open Access.



Map 20: Valley Farmland

5. Village Character

5.9 Valley Farmland



View from above of the open arable West Field, extending to Chalbury and Rimbury



View from the Springhead of the East Field, sloping up to Winslow Hill



View from above of the smaller fields, originally for dairy farming, just north of the Osmington Brook



Cuckoo Park field, just north of White Horse Lane, which may be "The Park" referred to in medieval documents



View up Court Close of the Waterworks, with the site excavated in 1993/4 which may include the location of the village Chapel



Site of excavations by Wyndings, where extensive Roman-era findings were dug up

5. Village Character

5.10 Views and Amenity

Summary:

Sutton Poyntz is not well supplied with amenity space. The key views into and out of the village are important to the community and the sense of place. The views into the village are largely protected (excepting Sutton Knap) but several of those out of the village have been lost. Consideration should be given in future development to protecting these remaining key views that add so much to the community's quality of life and sense of place.

The village of Sutton Poyntz enjoys a number of outstanding views of the surrounding countryside and hills. Conversely, there are beautiful views of the village itself from the footpaths and the South Dorset Ridgeway. The hillsides to the north and west are areas of Open Access, so the views can change rapidly as one roams.

The views of the village are enhanced by areas of open woodland and by groups of trees. The most important is probably the area of old woodland alongside the stream between Spring Bottom and the Waterworks, but other areas contribute greatly to the views of the village from the hills around. The countryside surrounding the village is only very sparsely populated by trees, but it does, however, contain a patchwork of hedges; of these, the oldest is almost certainly the hedge that divides the Parish of Preston with Sutton Poyntz from the adjoining Parish of Osmington.

Sutton Poyntz is not well supplied with amenity space. The most important area is the Mill Pond itself, which with its surrounds serves villagers and visitors alike as a focal point for the village. The garden of the pub is an extremely pleasant open space, although reserved for pub users, with a play area and outstanding views along the valley to the east. On a smaller scale and lacking in views is the Mission Hall garden, which is well used in the summer for village events such as the annual Cream Teas. Finally, there is the tiny grassed area at the start of Mission Hall Lane, generally known as the Village Green although without any formal justification; this has been used by Street Fayres almost since they started, and is maintained by the village.

There is a good network of footpaths around the village, created when the village was a farming centre but still well used and enjoyed. Two paths to the east link Sutton Poyntz with Osmington, and four more climb the hills to the north to join the Ridgeway track which is part of the South West Coastal Path. Finally there are three footpaths on the west side of the village, one joining Puddledock Lane and the top end of Plaisters Lane, one to Combe Valley Road just south of

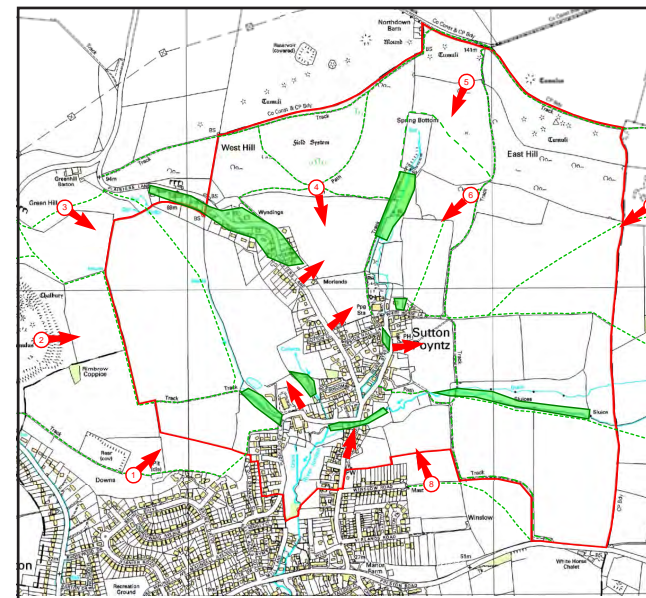
Chalbury, and one from Puddledock Lane to Greenhill and hence to Bincombe. There are also two permissive paths, one around the top of Spring Bottom and the other north from the A353 east of Winslow Hill to near the end of White Horse Lane.

As well as seats by the Mill Pond, there are others around the village for walkers. First, Margaret's Seat sits close to the Ridgeway with an outstanding view to the south of the village, Weymouth Bay and Portland. This commemorates a local resident, Margaret Hobson who greatly enjoyed walking in the hills. Sadly the original seat was destroyed, probably by over-enthusiastic cattle, but a public subscription allowed the seat to be replaced with one that is cattle-proof. Lower down there is a seat by the village beacon, with a shorter range view of the village. Finally, there is one seat by the start of Plaisters Lane, close to the fork in the centre of the village.

The 1999 Village Survey³⁵ identified the most important views, both from the village and into the village from the hills. The importance of views was confirmed in the 2007 Village Plan³⁶, in which respondents to the survey said they valued "the picturesque valley setting and surrounding hills, the open views, ease of access to the countryside", and again in the Sutton Poyntz Society Planning Policy³⁷ (and its predecessor the village Conservation Policy³⁸), in which two of the eight policies deal with the protection of views.

Of the views out from the village that were identified in 1999, one has been built over and therefore part lost, one has been destroyed by the planting of a palisade of poplars, and one has been temporally obscured by a tall metal gate. This shows how precious the remaining views are. The Neighbourhood Plan team have noticed during their recent work that while the village enjoys good views to the north and east, there are almost no views westwards towards Chalbury from within the village. Originally there would have been good views from Plaisters Lane, but development on the western side has left no remaining gap.

Photographs elsewhere in this document record the main views out from the village and some of the areas of amenity space. The following panoramic photographs show a sample of the best views into the village from the hills above; the accompanying map shows where these photographs were taken from. These panoramas between them show up the main areas of woodland around the village, which are also marked on the map, as are the footpaths around the village.



Map 21: Important views identified in village survey

5. Village Character

5.10 Views and Amenity



Panorama 1 – View from near the Reservoir on Rimbury, south-west of the village



Panorama 2 – View from Chalbury, west of the village

5.10 Views and Amenity



Panorama 3 – View from Greenhill, north-west of the village



Panorama 4 – View from the Beacon, half way up the hills north of the village

5.10 Views and Amenity



Panorama 5 – View from near Margaret's Seat, north of the village



Panorama 6 – View from above the field called Cuckoo Park, north of the village

5.10 Views and Amenity



Photo 7 – View from near the White Horse, north-east of the village



Panorama 8 – View from Winslow Hill, south-east of the village

5.10 Views and Amenity

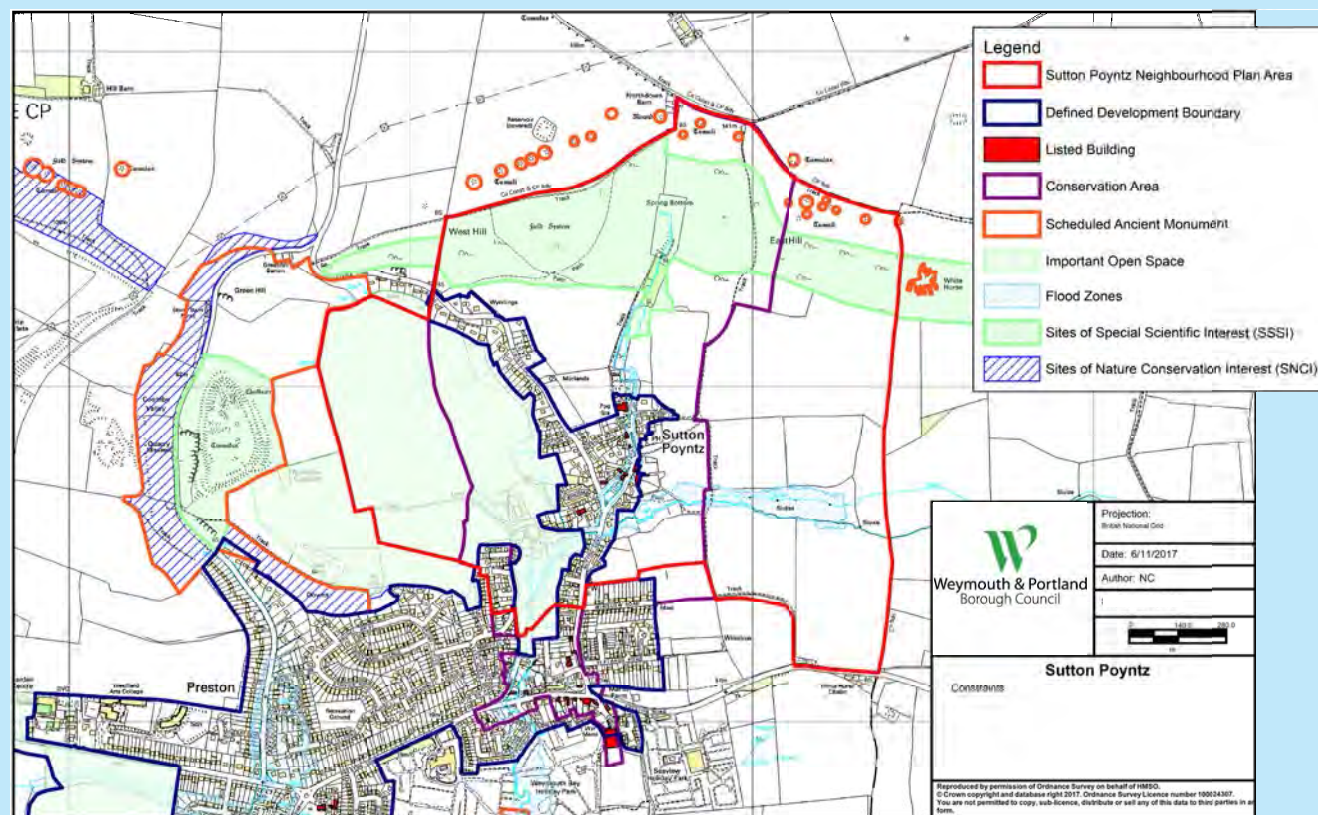
NOTES

- 35. Village Survey (1999), a village planning document produced by the Sutton Poyntz Society.
Available at <http://suttonpoyntz.org.uk/index.php/sutton-poyntz-society/planning-documents>
- 36. Village Plan (2007). This documents results from a village survey, with an action plan.
Available at the same location as the Village Survey
- 37. Sutton Poyntz Society Planning Policy (2012-17). Policies applied by the Society in assessing development proposals.
Available at <http://suttonpoyntz.org.uk/index.php/sutton-poyntz-society/policy-documents/planning-policy>
- 38. Sutton Poyntz Society Conservation Policy (1984). Now supplanted by the Planning Policy.
Available at <http://suttonpoyntz.org.uk/index.php/sutton-poyntz-society/policy-documents/conservation-policy>

6. Emerging Opportunities and Recommendations

The following recommendations were produced by the Steering Group of the Neighbourhood Forum to help inform the village's Stage Two consultation and to identify potential policy areas. These conclusions were provisional, but they were based on a careful evaluation and investigation of the issues raised during the initial village consultation conducted in October/November 2016. Each of the key themes identified by the community had been addressed by a dedicated sub-group, who shared their results with the remainder of the Steering Group. During this process, it was decided to fold 'Land Use and Conservation' into 'Biodiversity and the Natural Environment' and 'Housing & Planning'. The six remaining themes were

- Biodiversity and the Natural Environment
- Housing and Planning
- Transport
- Sports and Recreation
- Employment, Business and Tourism
- Heritage



Map 22: Sutton Poyntz Setting

6. Emerging Opportunities and Recommendations

Where possible, the census data from 2011 (supplemented where necessary by 2001 data) was employed to provide the necessary metrics and help quantify the issues involved. In addition, a dedicated traffic survey was commissioned in September 2017 to assist us understand the transport challenges faced by the village. Care was taken to avoid duplication within each of the theme areas, but there was some inevitable overlap, for example, community assets are relevant to 'Biodiversity and the Natural Environment', as well as to 'Sports and Recreation' and 'Employment, Business and Tourism'.

Much of the discussion within the Steering Group was, inevitably, focussed on development. The preceding sections describe the origins of Sutton Poyntz, placing the village in its historical, geological and natural landscapes. These factors have determined the basic form and shape of settlement in the Jordan valley, however, the character area analysis has demonstrated how, since the end of the Second World War, economic and social factors have increasingly influenced

housing within the village. Recent development is characterised by more confused building styles and a wider range of materials as well as the loss of some key views and a steady reduction in the 'green gap' between Sutton Poyntz and Weymouth. There are risks that this will continue, further eroding the character and distinct identity of the village. The challenge is how best to accommodate future development while preserving the amenity value of the village and its contribution to the local economy. Although there are constraints on development (as identified in the accompanying map), it is important to establish a shared vision for how the village should look in the future, to avoid piecemeal and inconsistent decision-making focussed solely on individual developments. In this context, it is worth restating the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Improve the quality of life for residents
- Provide housing that better suits local needs
- Support a thriving and friendly community
- Preserve what is special
- Allow the village to adapt to societal and economic change

6. Opportunities and Recommendations

BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Feedback from the first village consultation showed a strong appreciation of the diversity of habitat and wildlife and how this adds value to life in the community. There was a strong sense of the need to protect and enhance our biodiversity and a recognition of the need to work with all stakeholders and build upon existing community initiatives to achieve this aim.

Challenges

- Influencing landowners, farmers and residents to adopt biodiversity friendly practices and engage in joint community action programmes e.g. hedge laying and planting
- Demonstrating the ethical and reputational advantages of the conservation and enhancement of wildlife to developers
- Establishing effective means of communicating with statutory and other public bodies on matters associated with biodiversity
- Ensuring that planning policies are appropriately applied and any agreed planning conditions are implemented

Risks

- Loss of habitats such as ancient trees, hedges, stone walls, older buildings, rural lanes as a result of development.
- Loss of connectivity for wildlife (hedges, wooden gates, tree overhang etc.) preventing access to more favourable habitat as climate change occurs.
- Increased levels of pollution due to greater traffic movement and intensive agriculture.
- Loss of species and habitat due to lack of measures to reduce flood risk

Opportunities : Establish planning policies to:

- Enhance as well as conserve biodiversity for new development
- Reduce flooding
- Protect trees and hedges
- Identify a biodiversity 'green corridor' to be protected from harm or destruction
- Designate green spaces based on their biodiversity value. Improve connectivity between green space and establish links into the green corridor
- Provide information on simple measures that all stakeholders (developers, landowners, businesses, residents) can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Increase community awareness of biodiversity
- Create new biodiversity programmes with other landowners, similar to that already established with Wessex Water
- Involve more people in biodiversity-related volunteer work, giving health and wellbeing benefits
- Re-introduce threatened species not currently recorded in the village, e.g. hedgehogs.

6. Opportunities and Recommendations

HOUSING AND PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES

Identifying the need for housing within the village and determining the community's view on future development has been the most difficult of the tasks undertaken by the Steering Group. The feedback from the initial village consultation indicated significant concerns over development issues, but no clear evidence as to what scale or style of development was wanted. It was felt that more evidence was needed to allow these issues to be properly explored, without eliminating any options. The following considerations have provided the basis for a more detailed survey to determine the village's views on future development and potential planning policies. A separate survey is being undertaken to quantify housing needs within the village.

Challenges

- To identify what level of development might be desirable/ needed by the residents.
- To encourage the appropriate number of well-designed housing in keeping with the defined village areas.
- To ensure the village benefits from any development in terms of additional facilities for residents from developers.
- To ensure changes, if any, to the development boundary are sympathetic to the village and the green wedge between Preston and Sutton Poyntz.

Risks

- New homes detract from the environment and/ or are not of appropriate design.
- Restricted possibility for residents to move within the village.
- Too many new homes will change character of village.
- Lack of new homes means the population is mainly older with few young people and families.
- Lack of diversity within the village.
- High density of new builds in gardens and green spaces within the development boundary.
- Changes in the development boundary would encroach upon the green wedge between the village and Preston.
- Changes in the development boundary encroach upon the surroundings, closing the open gap between Sutton Poyntz and Preston, or extending into open land.

Opportunities

- To restrict unwanted and inappropriate development.
- To encourage new homes for younger families and downsizing for older residents.
- To have a positive influence on the design of new homes in the village.
- To obtain additional facilities for the village.
- Potential to build affordable homes for the village.
- Identify what positive contribution in terms of amenities can be provided alongside any development.

6. Opportunities and Recommendations (contd)

TRANSPORT OPPORTUNITIES

The initial village survey identified the importance to the community of retaining the village bus service and the provision and maintenance of the network of footpaths into the countryside and for access to essential services. Other concerns related to vehicle congestion on the narrow streets and the perceived speed of traffic through the village. Some of these issues will be addressed as action points for the community whilst others are suitable for incorporation into the Neighbourhood Plan planning policy.

Challenges

- Traffic speed reduction without the use of obtrusive measures which are out of character with the surroundings.
- Reducing dependence upon the car.
- Reducing damage caused by vehicles to the narrow village lanes.
- Encouraging greater use of the village bus service.

Risks

- Degradation of rural footpaths and lanes arising from new development and increased traffic flow.
- Parked vehicle congestion with its detrimental impact on amenity.
- Negative impact of inadequate traffic management on public safety.
- Reduced access to/from the village due to the loss of public transport services.

Opportunities

- Consultation with the highway authority to seek solutions to access issues.
- Work with the various stakeholders to identify off-street parking solutions.
- Use of traffic monitoring data to inform the adoption of appropriate traffic calming and other public safety measures.
- Promote greater use of the village bus service through communication – ‘Use it or lose it’.

6. Opportunities and Recommendations

SPORTS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Proximity to Preston and Weymouth offers access to a wide range of sports and recreation facilities. There are only a few facilities in the village itself, but all are essential to the social and recreational life of the community. Potential development that resulted in these being lost or repurposed would have a serious and damaging impact on village life.

Challenges

- High property values make it attractive to convert existing community facilities into housing.
- There are no sports facilities in the village and no children's play area, other than in the Springhead garden.
- Only a small proportion (less than 15%) of the village can use the Mission Hall at any one time.
- The popularity of the Springhead brings employment and increased economic security for a key community asset, but with more road traffic, increased congestion and greater parking problems.

Risks

- A future change in use of the Springhead. The landlord (Punch Taverns) could sell the building and land for development.
- The Diocese of Salisbury could revoke the Mission Hall lease or sell the freehold.
- Wessex Water could close the Waterworks Museum, deny the village access to Veterans' Wood and end the use of the Waterworks and adjacent field for the biannual Street Fayre.

Opportunities

- Work with Wessex Water to secure the community benefits provided by the Waterworks.
- Work with Punch Taverns and the tenants of the Springhead to strengthen its role as a village asset.
- Engage proactively with potential developers to protect and enhance community facilities.
- Secure additional protection for existing facilities.

6. Opportunities and Recommendations

EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Employment

The nearest shops (Spar and Co-op) are approximately half a mile from the centre of the village. In the initial village consultation there was appetite for a shop in the village, incorporating a tea shop and an outlet for selling local arts & crafts and produce. A location would be required, which is currently not obvious, and it is unlikely that such a shop would be commercially viable. It could, however, perhaps be successfully run by local volunteers.

Challenges

- Finding a location for the shop and volunteers to consistently manage and run it.

Risks

- There could be insufficient volunteer support to keep such a shop open and therefore viable.

Opportunities

- A shop could be a further social outlet for the village as well as providing a channel for local arts & crafts and produce and attract more tourists.

Business

The initial village consultation suggested that there was appetite for job creation by encouraging an increase in the number of businesses in the village with the hope that this also attracts a younger population to live in the village. Dependent on the type attracted, such an increase in the number of businesses could result in a small increase in motor traffic (from employees, customers and deliveries) and therefore general noise. This could also result in an increase in parking required for the additional staff, customers and deliveries. Locations would be required, which are currently not obvious.

Challenges

- To attract the right type of “cottage style” businesses to the village to support an increase in local employment.
- To find locations to house the additional businesses.

Risks

- Dependent on the type of business that is attracted, this could result in a small increase in motor traffic (from employees, customers and deliveries) and therefore general noise.
- This could also result in an increase in parking required for the additional staff, customers and deliveries.

Opportunities

- More businesses and therefore employment opportunities may attract a younger population to the village.
- More businesses will likely attract more visitors to the village which will help support the local amenities, for example the pub / proposed shop.

6. Opportunities and Recommendations

TOURISM, COMMUNICATIONS OPPORTUNITIES

Tourism

The initial village consultation indicated an appetite to encourage more tourism. Such an increase in tourism could result in a small increase in motor traffic and therefore general noise. This could also result in a requirement for additional parking. In order to encourage more tourism, we may have to enhance and improve facilities in the area.

Challenges

- Obtaining the planning consent required for additional facilities.
- To identify locations for the likely increase in parking required.

Risks

- More tourism is likely to result in an increase in motor traffic, with the resultant requirement for parking.
- More tourism could result in an increase in noise, litter and uncleared dog mess.

Opportunities

- More tourism will help further support the local amenities, for example the pub / proposed shop.

Communications

Since the first consultation, broadband and mobile communications seem to have improved, with for example many areas of the village are now getting 4G. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot influence suppliers' strategies, it would be useful to accumulate "real world" details of mobile phone and internet coverage

6. Opportunities and Recommendations

HERITAGE OPPORTUNITIES

The initial consultation showed that the village values its heritage, both built and archaeological, and wishes both to protect it and to celebrate it.

Challenges

- To protect buildings, or groups of buildings, of recognised heritage value not (to date) subject to formal listing.

Risks

- The owners of individual heritage buildings may feel that such a listing could reduce the value of their property.

Opportunities

- Sutton Poyntz has a number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments that are given good protection under national and local policy. The National Planning Policy Framework allows communities in addition to create a list of “Locally Important Heritage Assets” which will then be given some protection through local planning policies. Our Neighbourhood Plan gives us an ideal opportunity to create such a list for Sutton Poyntz, and then to ensure that the Planning Authority gives appropriate protection to those assets.



SUTTON POYNTZ NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Shaping The Future Of Our Community Together

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