

# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

by Geoff Chopping

The FRA website contains some details of the planning applications that have been made over the last 3 years and the large number of dwellings that were granted in 2019. Mention is also included about a larger number of dwellings that may be granted in 2020 and that even greater numbers might be granted if certain landowners' dreams are realised.

Neighbourhood Plans are a mechanism for neighbourhoods to say what they want to happen in their areas. It is a legal right, but there are constraints.

It is not straightforward. Unless an area is granted the status of a Neighbourhood Forum, only councils can produce a formal Neighbourhood Plan. And those plans have to be compatible with higher-level plans.

In the Dorset Council Area there are perhaps 18 Neighbourhood Plans, which have become "made" and consequently have legal status. There are at least as many again in preparation. The only ones in the old East Dorset Area that are being prepared formally are for Alderholt and Sturminster Marshall. Much of the rest of The Dorset Council Area is making an effort to produce neighbourhood plans.

Dorset Council website provides a comprehensive lists and maps of the state of all the neighbourhood plans in their area at:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans-in-dorset>

In February 2020 within the Dorset Council Area, 3 more neighbourhood plans have reached the referendum stage and votes by the electorate of each of those neighbourhoods will be held in order to confirm or reject the plans:

- Bridport and 4 surrounding Parishes.
- A non-parish Neighbourhood Forum covering the village of Sutton Poyntz, which has a Sutton Poyntz Society. It is part of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council area.
- Upper Marshwood Vale NP, for a collection of hamlets near the Devon Border.

Developing a neighbourhood plan for Furzehill alone would require a massive amount of work over several years. It would also require our two parish councils to agree. It includes asking for input from residents and local associations. Of course, we don't usually have many volunteers from the Furzehill Residents Association to undertake significant tasks. Wimborne Minster Town council is considering writing one, as is Colehill Parish council. They might develop one jointly. Holt Parish Council may consider writing one alone. .

Contributing to a plan or plans led by Colehill and/or Holt Parish Councils would require much less effort. However there is a risk that our opinions could be ignored or overridden, if the remainder of the much larger neighbourhood feels differently - and perhaps wants all the new development on our patch!

If our residents can say what we want to see and what we don't want to see, then at least we can make an input and try and ensure that we are taken seriously.

So what **do** you want to happen and what **don't** you want to happen? Follow the link on our planning page to the questionnaire and let us know.