

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FURZEHILL AREA

by Geoff Chopping

In the last 100 years the four hamlets Bothenwood, Dogdean, Grange and Furzehill, have grown from about 50 dwellings to about 150 dwellings, with a growth rate of much less than one a year in recent years.

In the last 30 years, there have been probably only two developments of multiple dwellings in our area. One was in Furzehill with 3 detached houses being built opposite Woodleaze Copse and the other being 3 detached houses at Bothenwood. In both cases all the dwellings had direct access onto a main road.

The inclusion of 600 dwellings adjacent to the Cranborne Road in the 2014 Core Strategy as well as the proposed redevelopment of the Council Offices Woodleaze site (possibly 35 dwellings) has triggered several other possible large developments proposals in our area: 45 dwellings behind the Stock's Inn (NE of the crossroads at the heart of our area) and 200 dwellings at Jade's Farm (NW of the same crossroads), both of course being outside the Furzehill Village Envelope and within the "protected Green Belt", just as the 600 and the 35 were before the structure plan.

As can be seen from the Planning Decisions Page, in 2019, 13 extra dwellings have been granted or deemed lawful. Some of these are as a result of a change in the law, which makes it easier for barn and cattle-sheds to become dwellings. Comparing this with the historical average of one new dwelling a year, implies that something is changing in our small area, even if the 35 dwellings on the Woodleaze site are considered a one-off, as it is a brown-field site.

Even if the proposed 45 and 200 dwellings are not built, there is still likely to be a growth of about a third in our area - from c150 to c200.

The new Dorset Council has issued a "Call for Sites" from owners who wish their land to be considered for development, and it is possible that the 45 and 200 will be offered again.

The Furzehill Residents Association is monitoring the situation and did make representations to the now suspended East Dorset District Council Local Plan Review, as did several individual members.

The Association could make representations to the new Dorset Council Plan when the public consultation is opened, as could individual members.

The Association could also work with Colehill and/or Holt Parish Councils on any neighbourhood plans that are proposed in order that any changes to the Furzehill area are in-line with the wishes of the majority of Furzehill Residents.