

## Dianne Sinclair

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**From:** Brian Bowsher [brian@bowshers.plus.com]  
**Sent:** 24 July 2023 14:58  
**Subject:** Neighbourhood Plan Network

Dear Resident,

Sometime in the last year you indicated interest in keeping up with developments in the Neighbourhood Plan for Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington. This email gives you a short update on recent progress and seeks your continued engagement - the better our interactions with the community, the better the Neighbourhood Plan will reflect the wishes of us all.

You may recall that presentations were held in the Village Hall on 13th May which were followed by a meeting to agree the next steps. These were summarised in a leaflet that was circulated to everyone in the area. The main themes that emerged are summarised below:

**Housing** – There was little appetite for major developments in the three villages (this is consistent with the Dorset Local Plan). In general it was felt that any new houses should be aimed at supporting younger families with a willingness to explore different options to provide more affordable housing; the infrastructure (e.g. bus service) also needed improving.

**Heritage** – There was a desire to sustain the distinct identities and general “feel” of the three villages. Guidelines would help ensure that any new development was suited to the character of the villages. Greater use of heritage buildings should be explored to maintain a strong sense of community.

**Environment, Biodiversity and Land Use** – There was a strong desire to protect and enhance the environment and sustain the rural character of the landscape. There was interest in integrated approaches to land management, exploring renewable energy and enhancing our resilience to climate change.

**Business** – The importance of the local farms and businesses to sustaining the nature of the Parish was recognised. It is important to strengthen community support for local businesses and a listing would be useful.

A Steering Group was established at a meeting on 14th June comprising a mixture of people from across our villages: Brian Bowsher (Chair), Sally Bowsher (Swyre), Paul Bullen (Puncknowle), Claire Hart (Swyre), Jackie Hunt (Puncknowle), Fran Marsh (West Bexington), Ellen Simon (West Bexington), Kate Strawbridge (Puncknowle), David Swan (Swyre) and Michele Vassar (West Bexington). This Steering Group manages the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and reports to the Parish Council. The Steering Group meets monthly, generally the third Wednesday of the month, alternating between the Village Hall in Puncknowle and the Manor at West Bexington; our Agenda and Minutes will be published on the Notice Boards of our villages and, in due course, on the [Puncknowle.net](http://Puncknowle.net) web-site. We plan to produce quarterly Newsletters that will be circulated to the entire community and hold six-monthly open meetings in the Village Hall. A Questionnaire will be developed to canvas views on key issues facing the community. We will also establish some ad-hoc groups to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is fully representative of our community (e.g. with people of different ages, with major landowners and businesses, and with other existing community groups). Ultimately, the Neighbourhood Plan would be put to a vote of all residents and, if adopted, would drive future planning decisions.

### So, How Can You Help?

The better our engagement, the more we reflect the views of our community, the better our Plan will be. So, first of all, we assume that you would wish to continue to be part of the Network and receive (by email) future summaries (like this one), and reminders of monthly meetings of the Steering Group. However, please let me know if you no longer wish to receive these.

Secondly, and more importantly, please get involved and make sure that we reflect your views. We would always welcome new members of the Group: we anticipate membership of the Steering Group being fairly fluid as the Plan develops; it's also fine if you only wish to be part of one aspect of the Plan. Members of the Steering Group would be delighted to join you at your existing group (e.g. Churches, Village Hall Committee, Allotments, Portesham Surgery, Lunch Club etc.) to listen to your views.

Best wishes,  
Brian Bowsher  
Chair Steering Group