

PEN SELWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

PLANNING POLICY

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Context

The Parish of PEN SELWOOD occupies the southern end of a prominent wooded ridge which formed the core of the ancient forest of Selwood and boundary between Somerset and Wiltshire.

The ridge of Upper Greensand on which most of the parish lies reaches 210 m. on the northern boundary and 201m. near the southern. To the east the land falls in Coombes to the silty clay valley of the river Stour which forms the boundary with Wiltshire. To the west it falls to 110 m. down a wooded scarp of clay and landslip and continues south-west over Coral Rag and Oxford Clay to include Leigh Common. Much of the Parish lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Wiltshire Downs.

The AONB

Cranborne Chase and the West Wiltshire Downs is a landscape of national significance as recognised by its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As such it is recognised to be of equivalent importance in terms of landscape quality as a National Park. Its designation as an AONB was confirmed in October 1983.

The First Priority of the Parish Council and residents is to:
“Preserve the tranquil, rural character of PEN SELWOOD as part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”

To achieve this we must:

1. Maintain the rural ambience
2. Preserve our leafy lanes and hedgerows
3. Protect the tranquillity and visual amenity of the village
4. Ensure that only appropriate and suitable development occurs in the village

With valued spaces under threat, now is the right time to consider what development would best ensure that PEN SELWOOD Parish, in spite of our limited services, remains vigorous, yet retains its distinctiveness. Vigorous because each year PEN SELWOOD has a Village Fete; a Horse and Dog Show; 'Tough Ten K' run which attracts runners from out of the county. It also has an annual village party; runs its own Website; has events throughout the year to support the Church, the Community Field and Children's playground and the Village Hall. The Parish Council has recently provided allotments and is supporting the introduction of a Defibrillator. The village also has, for example a Book Club; Play Reading Group; Gardening Club and Art Club and produces its own quarterly newsletter. The Village is both vigorous and vibrant and all of these activities and clubs effectively contribute to this vibrant and social community.

The rural nature of the village is the main reason why people like the Parish and decide to live here.

The distinctive features that people value are:

1. The rural ambience – the area has a rural feeling with tree-lined approaches and natural verges. It has no street lights which adds to the rural nature and allows the stars to be seen. It is rare to have so little light pollution these days.
2. Outstanding landscape – the Parish sits almost wholly in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
3. Well known views – overlooking fields and beyond to the Blackmore Vale and West Wiltshire Downs to intricate village landscapes like Coombe Bottom and the Coombe that runs parallel to Coombe Street.
4. Historical features such as the ancient field boundaries show evidence of the millstone pits of the of the 13th and 14th centuries, the ancient Pack Horse route and the two Motte and Bailey Castles.
5. Woodland, leafy lanes and hedgerows – the species-rich hedgerows complement broad areas of woodland and copses and incised Coombes
6. Quiet lanes – the lanes in PEN SELWOOD are extensively used by walkers, cyclists horse-riders, joggers and motorists.
7. The linear settlements – with few exceptions, dwellings are well spaced and contribute to the rural atmosphere.
8. The diversity of building styles – although the local greensand is the dominant material in the older houses, there is wide diversity of dwelling types including traditional cottages, individual properties “tucked away” in the woodland, terraced Local Authority Housing and bungalows.
9. Interesting architectural features – hung tiles, varied roofline, thatched roofs.

The present-day inhabitants of PEN SELWOOD are aware of their historical inheritance. Many residents have sympathetically restored their houses and preserve the historic features. The main concern of many residents is the possibility of “creeping suburbanisation” and development which could be 'out of scale' with the village. Development should be tied to proven local Parish need that is identified and accepted by both the Parish Council and South Somerset District Council.

Any proposals for future development will be judged against relevant planning policies and in particular be related to maintaining a sustainable Residential and Agricultural environment. The Parish Council will respond to all Planning Applications within the given time frame as stipulated by the District Council. Where Planning Applications are received outside the normal cycle of meetings, non-contentious applications will be dealt with through consultation with the Councillors together with site visits where considered necessary. An additional Council Meeting will be called whenever there is a situation of wider public concern.

Historical and Community Guidelines

1. PEN SELWOOD's historical inheritance will be recognised and retained, particular care being taken to protect and enhance individual features of historic interest. These will include the Church; the Memorial Cross; Village Pump; the Pack Horse Route; Leigh Common; Ancient Field Boundaries; evidence of Medieval Quarrying and the Motte and Bailey Castles.
2. Any new development will be expected to respect the historic character and pattern of the settlements.

3. We will encourage the removal of unsightly street furniture such as disused telegraph poles and overhead cables where these detract from the historical settings and character of the village.
4. The Parish Council will seek to ensure that any development, either new or the alteration to existing properties will blend in and be sympathetic to the surrounding area. Small scale building conversions or extensions to accommodate home working should be permitted provided the character of the village and its rural setting is not adversely affected.
5. The Parish Council will not support any large scale development which could be detrimental to the character of the village.

Landscape guidelines

1. Development that would be visually intrusive should be resisted unless adequate screening or landscaping measures can be achieved. Where possible native trees and hedges should be planted.
2. Development that involves the removal of native species and hedgerows will be resisted.
3. All new development will be expected to provide appropriate landscaping measures, including the planting of native trees and hedgerows.
4. Any development involving the subdivision of fields will be encouraged to include the planting of native species hedgerows and trees as appropriate to create new boundaries.
5. Agricultural buildings and stables should avoid isolated and prominent locations. They should be positioned close to existing hedgerows or trees or other agricultural buildings and be accompanied by additional tree planting if this will help to achieve better integration with the village landscape. Vistas should be retained.
6. The 11.5 miles of footpaths in the Parish is recognised as a valuable asset. We will resist rerouting of footpaths or the closure of footpaths to make way for any development that would have a detrimental impact on the village amenity.
7. Wind Turbines that are clearly visible from the ANOB will be resisted.
8. The Common Land at Leigh Common should be protected
9. The SSSI at Moldrum's Ground which currently hosts a colony of slow worms must be protected.
10. The ancient Pack Horse route which is the unsurfaced bridleway extension of Long Lane must be preserved.

11. The Coombe and Surrounding area is recognised as an area of Cherished Landscape within the village and should be protected. Please see Appendix 1 'Cherished Landscape'.
12. The Parish Council supports the designation of SSSI's and is happy to encourage the development or designation of other Wildlife Conservation areas in the Parish.

Highway Guidelines

With the exception of Leigh Common area the village is accessed by narrow winding country lanes. Transit is achieved more often than not by giving way to others. All access is single track with infrequent passing places. Vehicular progress is slow and the many tight bends make visibility difficult. There are some notably difficult slopes to navigate which become very dangerous in winter. In particular these are Great Hill and Coombe Street. The lanes are too narrow for heavy vehicles, lorries and large buses. When large lorries do come into the village they can cause damage to the verges, banks and overhanging vegetation. Like so many Parishes we have some difficulty with lorries ending up in the village because they have followed the quickest route on their Satellite Navigation System. On several occasions long vehicles have become stuck across the bends in Long Lane and elsewhere. Particular problems are caused when any combination of large lorry, tractor, school bus, cyclist, walker, horse rider, delivery van and resident in their car meet on a blind bend. The narrow highways would be an impediment to further development.

1. The Parish Council will continue to issue reminders to residents requesting that deliveries are made using the smallest vehicle possible.
2. The Parish Council will work relentlessly to encourage Highways to keep the lanes in good repair and deal with our annual pothole problem.
3. The Parish Council will work with Highways to agree hedge cutting and verge maintenance.
4. All planning applications will be assessed in terms of their likely impact on the limited road network and general environment in terms of noise, air and light pollution.

Settlement Guidelines

1. The spacious and open character of PEN SELWOOD should be retained as should the extensive views from many parts of the village
2. Any new development will be expected to respect the linear layout of the village which radiates from the Church.
3. New development with frontages on to the main village streets will be expected to retain their existing hedging and/or natural stone walling.
4. Open green verges adjoining the lanes through the village will be retained.
5. Road signs will be restricted and only essential signage will be permitted.

6. Additional road names will not be permitted.
7. Street lighting will not be permitted.
8. Hard kerb edging between verges and road surfaces will be discouraged. The use of geometrical waiting bays will be discouraged.
9. New development will be expected to provide parking and access so that visual impact is minimised and the narrow lanes are kept free of parked vehicles.
10. There should be no major developments of economic activity and no new housing except in exceptional circumstances. Major development would be considered to damage the character of the village and the AONB.
11. Approval for mobile homes will be given only on a needs basis and for a limited period of time. The term mobile home is understood to be temporary accommodation used while an individual property is renovated, remodelled or extended. A grouping of several mobile homes should not be permitted.
12. Change of use of residential buildings to offices will be permitted but only where the scale and nature of the business is not detrimental to the neighbouring properties.

Building Guidelines

1. The overall design of new dwellings should be on traditional lines (vernacular architecture of the village) using natural building materials such as Greensand stone.
2. Natural clay tiles or slates for roofs should be used in preference to concrete tiles and conform to traditional roof pitches and overhangs.
3. Chimney stacks in brick or stone are a notable feature and should to be retained and incorporated into new developments where possible. House extensions should be in keeping with the property that is being developed and wherever possible should use the same materials.
4. New farm buildings should respect the traditional character of nearby buildings. Traditional materials of appropriate colour should be used where possible and/or screened by sensitive planting.
5. Applications for residential buildings on the grounds of agricultural need must have an agricultural tie.
6. Porches and windows of a scale and design similar to those used traditionally will be encouraged.
7. Standard modern house types should be avoided.
8. Individual, unique builds will be decided on their merits but must be sympathetic and protect the rural character

Environmental Guidelines

1. The Parish Council (PC) will look favourably on new Technology and Environmentally friendly developments such as improvements in broadband
2. The PC is alert to the noise and visual impact of wind power generators and the PC would resist any such development within the Parish.
3. The PC would resist the erection of tall galvanised phone masts.
4. The PC would encourage anti-pollution practices wherever possible in terms of light, air, noise, water and waste.
5. Taking into account their visual impact within the village and with the exception of large commercial wind turbines, the PC will support the installation of renewable energy sources such as solar panels, heat pumps and small domestic wind turbines which minimise carbon emissions or the use of fossil fuels.

Consultation

The PC will lobby for a reduction in noise from the A303 through the use of low noise surfaces.

Review

The Parish Council will monitor the application of this Policy document and review its contents on a needs basis.

Pen Selwood Parish Council

Parish Councillors

Chairman:

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Corner Cottage, Bleak Street, Pen Selwood, Wincanton BA9 8LZ
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