



Curdridge Parish Council News

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CHAIR'S NOTES—JULY 2017

This is a letter we sent recently to the Head of Planning at Winchester City Council:

"As you'll know, the growing popularity of tall close-board fences, tall brick walls and tall brick gateways has been troubling Curdridge Parish Council – and many parishioners – for a long time. We are experiencing an increasing suburbanisation of our rural village through the replacement of traditional 'soft' boundaries with inappropriately 'hard' and opaque structures. We know that you – i.e. Planning and Enforcement – share our concern on this matter of inappropriate boundaries in rural villages. However, as there have been a number of relevant cases recently we thought it might be helpful to share with you and your colleagues exactly where we are coming from on this issue.

The *Curdridge and Curbridge Village Design Statement – VDS - (2002)* says: Planning Guideline 7 – Boundaries within the village are defined predominantly, but not exclusively, by hedgerows. Property owners are urged to be sensitive in their choice of alternative boundaries. The use of high brick walls and other discordant boundary structures can have a detrimental effect on the character of the locality. Therefore the planning authorities and other agencies should use their powers where

possible to control inappropriate property boundaries. (This does not specifically mention close-board fencing, but such fencing has in fact been as of as great a concern as brick walls since that time).

We recognise that the VDS is now some years old, however, our understanding is that it is still an 'official' document which should be given consideration in the planning process.

Furthermore, we have clear evidence that 'discordant boundary structures' has continued to be an issue of concern to parishioners. In 2011 a Parish Plan Questionnaire/Survey was conducted by a group of interested parishioners – including, but not only, Parish Councillors. A question on boundaries was included because we knew it was still a live issue. The question was: Which of the following do you consider to be in keeping with the character of the village? Hedges – Wire fencing – Open wooden fencing – Close-board or panel fencing, Brick walls.

108 (51% of responses were for hedges and 57 (27%) for open wooden fencing. Wire fencing (11, 5%), close-board or panel fencing (16, 7.5%) and brick walls

(21, 10%) were judged to be in keeping by relatively few. Two comments (Q21) were made explicitly against the proliferation of high close-board fencing: "It is depressing to see the proliferation of 2m close-boarded fencing as replacements for hedge boundaries" and "Nothing worse than fence panels." However, there was also one comment in favour of such panels on the grounds of reducing traffic noise.

Two comments (Q21) were made explicitly against brick pillared electric gates in the Parish. For example: "Restriction on installation of inappropriately large and ornate remotely operated security gates which are more suited to stockbroker Surrey" and "Electric gates are undesirable - they give the impression of "gated communities" separate from neighbours and inaccessible to others . . ."

Unfortunately, for various reasons, the group was not able to produce a final Parish Plan. However, the Parish Council has since used the results of the Questionnaire to inform our position on a range of issues,

Next Planning, Highway & Licensing Meetings (if sufficient business) 3 August 2017, 7 September & 5 October 2017
Next Full Council Meetings 3 August 2017, 21 September 2017 & 19 October
Council Meetings start at 7pm and are held at the Reading Rooms.
Contact details for the Council are published in this magazine.