

Letter to editor  
written by  
Joan Lovegrove  
& published

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## We must learn to live together

RE: "Residents unite to fight homes plan" (Western Gazette, 13 December)

A statement alleged to have been made by me was printed: "Thorncombe Village Trust secretary Joan Loveridge said villagers' main concern was an influx of wealthy retired couples from towns."

I hotly deny this, it had not even crossed my mind, and is an opinion hardly conducive to the harmony to which we are all aspiring. The important issue is we learn to live together and the Trust is anxious to play its part.

It is therefore unhelpful for the sake of making the story more interesting that I have been put in this embarrassing position.

**Joan Lovegrove,**  
Thorncombe, full address  
supplied.

# Residents unite to fight homes plan

Report by  
Paul Wilson

RESIDENTS are on tenterhooks as a planning inspector decides whether a major development should be built.

More than 50 people attended the two-day public inquiry at Thorncombe village hall last week to hear the cases put by developer Philip Fry and opponents led by parish council chairman Mark Agnew.

C. G. Fry wants to build 40 homes off High Street but villagers must wait until after the New Year for a decision.

C. G. Fry is set to lose millions if the inspector backs West Dorset District Council's decision last August not to renew planning permission for the scheme after the developer missed a deadline to resub-

mit detailed plans.

Local campaigners say the homes will devastate the local infrastructure and scar an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Cllr Agnew is spearheading local opposition. He said plans which were accepted ten years ago did not stand the same chance of being accepted today.

"This has dragged on for 11 years now," he said.

"While it might have been allowed in the past it may well not be today because areas of outstanding natural beauty have now been upgraded to almost the same status as national

parks. Policies have changed to prevent developments like these on greenfield sites.

"The village has increased in size by 40 per cent since 1993 and this proposal would mean a further 35 per cent increase.

"New development could kill the village from an infrastructure and social point of view."

He added that recent "gifts" from the developer to the community - including £80,000 towards the village school and £50,000 for employment - would not sway public opinion.

Thorncombe Village Trust secretary Joan Loveridge said villagers' main concern was an influx of wealthy, retired couples from towns.

"This is a cause of very deep concern to the whole

village. We have already had 50 houses built in what is effectively a hamlet. It takes a while for incomers from urban environments to adjust to village life."

If the inspectors support the district council against the developer it will be a landmark decision, but C. G. Fry could take its case to the High Court of Appeal.

Mr Fry would not be drawn on his company's plans, but said: "The development would bring more people to help support Thorncombe's school and shops, but it is now a case of wait and see.

"We are happy with the case that we put forward to the inspectors and until we get the decision it would be unfair to say anything."