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Villagers unite to fight development

THORNCOMBE residents, angry about plans for large scale development in their picturesque West Dorset community, met on Wednesday to launch a village trust.

The new group was formed as a direct result of controversial development proposals for 26 homes, craft workshops, eight holiday units, the conversion of a listed farmhouse and the erection of a new one on four and a half acres of village land.

The scheme, submitted on behalf of the owner of the area — parish and West Dorset councillor Mr Jim Atyeo — has caused a split among Thorncombe residents.

Opponents of the plan feel that such large scale development would place a strain on existing village

facilities and they have called for a formal plan of Thorncombe's needs to be carried out.

Supporters of the scheme say however that it would be entirely in line with the County Structure Plan which pin-points the village for priority development status and envisages between 50 and 150 new homes there by 1996.

The first meeting of the Thorncombe Trust took place on Wednesday night to form a committee and elect officers.

They are expected to present a case of opposition to Mr Atyeo's plans when they come before next Thursday's meeting of West Dorset's western area plans sub-committee for consideration.

Mr Atyeo, who is vice-chairman of that committee, has stated he will declare an interest and take no part in discussing or voting on the issue.