

Old Inn Cottage
Castle Street
Aixminster

16 July '86

Dear Ron,

I have been horrified to hear of the major development proposal that is hanging over the heads of the residents of Thorncombe.

It so upset me, that I felt compelled to express my feelings in writing to the local Press. I'm sending you in advance this copy of my letter, as I'm sure it will show you, how much I share your deep commitment to the country side, and in particular to this one region where your roots over many generations, have made it even more dear to you.

My many visits to you and to Thorncombe make it unbelievable to contemplate it's being deprived of the long standing peaceful charm that it holds.

I pray that all who are fighting against such destruction, will win their case.

The best of Good Wishes
Kathleen.

Kathleen Chambers
Old Inn Cottage
Castle Street
Axminster
Devon

16th July 86

To the Editor

Sir,

One of our cherished, beautiful and historical areas of rural Dorset is now immediately under the threat of complete despoilation.

Thorncombe Village, in the quiet charm of its rural setting, is recorded in history by both artists and poets; Whistler was drawn to its landscape when living in Lyme Regis; Lucien Pissarro, a resident of Thorncombe, said that rather than vast majestic scenes, he preferred homely landscapes, peopled by local inhabitants. Also lovers of Thorncombe and its surroundings were the Wordsworths, living on the edge of the parish.

These great spirits who expressed their delight through paint and verse on the beauty of this particular stretch of our countryside, recording it as a gift to human kind, would I'm sure turn in their graves did they know that so called DEVELOPERS had their money-grubbing claws on this area, itching to tear apart and destroy for all future generations its natural beauty that had been nurtured by sympathetic husbandry over the centuries.

How much thought does any Developer, working on so large a proposed scale of housing, give to the impact this has on the local community and their environment? I gather he would have no regard for our tree, hedgerow and landscape heritage that happened to stand in the way of financial gain. Failing to observe the rule, now so vital to the control of our weather and health of our soil, that no broadleaved tree should be felled before reaching the final limit of its life span.

The present community would be content with a limited number of starter homes that would be a beneficial provision for the village's upcoming generation, and would detract little from the village's original character - but from there, these Developers having got wind of opportunities in the area, the development idea has escalated to transform it into a region of urban degradation in which no inhabitant would have any prospect for pleasurable satisfaction from their surroundings; they would be caged in what was neither town nor country, and lacking the amenities provided normally by either the one or the other.

The message the great painters and poets enchanted by Thorncombe were giving to their fellow beings, through their work, was how greatly enjoyment in life can be heightened by increasing visual awareness and a sensitivity to all natural beauty.

The value of living in harmony with a region where the lanes have flowering banks, a minimum of traffic, majestic trees for shade and for variety in a wealth of green open landscape, even though some may not give much conscious thought about it, will make for a more integrated and peaceful personality.

Where such surroundings are taken away, unrest, vandalism and violence steps in.

I plead with all my heart that this will not be allowed to be the fate of Thorncombe, where as a painter myself I have found so much charm and pleasure, remembering the words of Dorothy Wordsworth in writing with rapture about the lovely views, saying this place was the dearest to her upon the whole surface of the land.

If so much more housing is really needed in Dorset, who can have been so misguidedly irresponsible for suggesting Thorncombe as a suitable area for Development?

Kathleen Chambers