

Village fears homes

FEARS that possible low cost starter units at Thorncombe could become holiday and second homes were voiced this week by the village trust.

The small community on the edge of the Marshwood Vale, already fighting proposals for houses and holiday units on land owned by their district councillor, Mr Jim Atyeo, was stunned last month with the news that builders C G Fry and Son, of Litton Cheney, want to build on a two-and-a-quarter acre site in the village.

Frys are seeking outline consent and have submitted a plan illustrating how the land almost opposite the village hall might be developed. It shows eight three-bedroomed homes, four four-bedroomed houses and 15 starter homes.

Now Thorncombe Village Trust chairman Mr Ron Hawkes has written to West Dorset planners voicing the objections.

"Bearing in mind what has happened in surrounding villages, the provision of low-cost starter homes which are not protected by a housing association agreement all too often become holiday or second homes after a year or two," said Mr Hawkes, adding that the trust were also worried about the scale and character of the latest proposal.

He added: "Holiday and

opposed to major development, and the parish council feel the number should be restricted to the lower end of the structure plan range.

Meanwhile, the application submitted by Bridport surveyor Mr Michael Fearn for 26 houses, craft workshops and holiday units at Mr Atyeo's Higher Farm has been deferred until a village appraisal is carried out by the chief planning officer.

Area planning officer Mr Derek Price said the current application was also likely to be deferred until the appraisal, concentrating on the impact development would have on the village and its sewerage system, was completed in two to three months' time.

He added: "Holiday and

second homes don't really do anything for the village. Much of the year they are empty and when the people do come in the summer, they just add to the traffic problems and disappear off to the seaside."

A recent survey carried out by the parish council and currently being analysed by a field officer from the West Dorset Rural Development Area, showed a need for rented accommodation under the protection of a housing association, Mr Hawkes added.

"Within the actual parish, there are already about 30 holiday homes in a village of around 200 dwellings," commented Mr Hawkes. "We certainly don't want to increase that percentage."

As reported in May, a village trust member, land-owner Mr Brian Maber, has offered the district council a site for low-cost starter homes at a price the authority could afford.

Country structure plan guidelines suggest construction of 50 to 150 homes by 1996 and the three schemes together envisage around 65 dwellings.

The village trust, who are