

Village prepares to resist boosted influx

PARISH councillors at Thorncombe, anxious to protect the remote West Dorset village from unwelcome development, have appointed conservationist and nature photographer Mr. Ron Frampton to co-ordinate a parish appraisal.

His task is to examine the social structure of the community and to assess the likely impact of large-scale development.

Thorncombe, on the edge of the Marshwood Vale, is at the centre of three big development proposals and West Dorset Council planning committee have deferred two applications until they have made their own appraisal.

Mr. Frampton (45), has already started work on a "major development impact map" to define sensitive areas.

Map data will embrace special landscape features and identify sites of eco-

logical and archaeological importance, environmental improvement and historical significance.

Mr. Frampton, a former area co-ordinator for Friends of the Earth who lectures on conservation for Somerset County Council, is hoping to complete a draft map within the next few months.

The parish's appraisal will also look at various social requirements, including housing, employment, recreation, education, community services and transport.

The voluntary co-ordinator, who has lived and worked in the Thorncombe area all his life, said the County Structure Plan envisaged 50 to 150 new houses at Thorncombe, which could more than double the size and population of the village.

"The chairman of the parish council, Mr. Bert Vickery, has made a plea that Thorncombe should be allowed to develop naturally, perhaps at the rate of three of four houses per year," added Mr. Frampton.