Trust plea to council planners

THORNCOMBE Village Trust has asked West Dorset District Council planning department to keep all development in the village to a reasonable scale.

For the village is now subject to two major planning applications, as well as an offer of one acre of land from villager Brian Maber for low cost starter homes.

The Village Trust, which was formed from the concern felt over plans made by the village's district council representative Jim Atyeo, has set out its formal objections to major development.

The first plan is for 25 houses, a farmhouse, workshop and conversion of farm buildings to holiday cottages in the heart of the village. The second is for a two acre housing development opposite the village hall.

The trust says in its letter to the planners that:

● The scale and character of the development are not appropriate.

● A larger population would put too much strain on doctors and emergency services.

● Extra demands would be made on a sewerage system "already acknowledged as being barely adequate by the South West Waterboard".

● Narrow country roads and natural habitats around Thorncombe would be jeopardised by the increase in traffic the development would bring.

● High density housing should not be built in an area designated as being of "outstanding natural beauty".

● The siting of housing apart from garages had been criticised by interested parties.

● Experience in nearby villages shows that low-cost starter homes often become holiday or second homes after a year or two if not protected by a housing association agreement.

The Trust claims a balanced and active community already exists in the village. Its character would be harmed by a sudden influx of people, the Trust says.

There was a need shown in a village housing survey for rented accommodation under the protection of a housing association, but no need for more holiday homes, it said.

In the letter, trust chairman Ron Hawkes concluded: "Issues of scale and character of development are of paramount importance."