**Lytchett Matravers Parish Council**

**Notes of a Meeting with Stephen Mepham on 11th July**

# Introduction

This was a follow up to a meeting with Stephen Mepham on 13th May 2019.

The purpose of the meetings is to discuss the Dorset Council’s Highways involvement in the Parish Council’s project to improve the Village Centre.

Those present:

 Alf Bush

Rob Carswell

Stephen Mepham

Tim Watton

Ralph Watts

# Notes of the Meeting

Councillor Watts gave a memory stick to Stephen Mepham which held a number of photographs showing Tesco lorries driving over the island outside the Tesco store.

In response to a question, Stephen Mepham confirmed that he has been given responsibility to work with the Parish Council to improve the arrangements for loading/unloading and parking outside the Tesco shop. This fits with his area of responsibility which is dealing with the existing Highways. Helen Jackson’s role is related to projects to improve the Highways through new additions.

Stephen said that a budget is available for the proposed improvements to the area in front of Tesco, but it is fairly modest.

Councillor Bush went through the 3 design options developed by the Dorset Council, which formed part of a pre-feasibility assessment sent by Helen Jackson.

Stephen Mepham suggested that the process to take these options forward should be as follows:

1. The Parish Council consider the 3 options to determine which it preferred
2. Agree a final design with the Dorset Council
3. Arrange a joint meeting with Tesco to talk through the propose solution
4. Negotiate with Tesco for a financial contribution towards the work

Stephen asked how much we should seek from Tesco. The initial response was perhaps 50% (note however, that at the subsequent Village Centre Working Group meeting it was felt that Tesco should contribute a higher proportion than this, since it is damage caused by Tesco lorries that has created the need for options to be considered to prevent recurrence).

Councillor Bush also talked through the design options developed by the Dorset Council for the High Street Crossing, and for a footpath along Eldons Drove. However, Stephen Mepham indicated that the Parish Council should pursue these matters with Helen Jackson.

Councillor Bush then raised the issue of cutting the verges and clearing weed growth from the gutters of highways. It was understood that there had been a change in the approach taken by the Dorset Council that these activities were now being undertaken only when there was a road safety concern, rather than to maintain the appearance of the highway. Stephen Mepham responded that similar concerns had been raised recently by a resident in Ballard Close. He said that the frequency of cutting the verges had been reduced for some time due to budgetary constraints, and that avoiding road safety concerns had become the standard applied. He added that the responsibility for these aspects of highway maintenance had been split, such that the rangers were now responsible for cutting the verges and the Dorset Waste Partnership were responsible for clearing the gutters. If there were concerns about the schedule for cutting the verges, the Parish Council needed to report these to Katie Black.

Tim Watton said that the task of removing weeds from the gutters could be undertaken by a lengthsman. He added that the Parish Council does not have the resources to employ a lengthsman full time, but has tried in the past to get other nearby Parish and Town Councils to share a lengsthman. He asked if Stephen Mepham was aware of any interest in such an arrangement from nearby Town and Parish Councils. Stephen Mepham replied that no-one had raised this with him, but he would keep it in mind.

Councillor Carswell raised a question about the speed restriction sign on Wimborne Road, which might need to be moved as a result of Planning Permission being granted to Bracken Developments for the RBL site. Stephen Mepham replied that this would have been considered as part of the Dorset Highways input to granting Planning Permission, and that any requirement to move the speed restriction sign would have been a planning condition, subject to an agreement with Bracken Developments.

Councillor Watts asked about the possibility of arranging a regular meeting with the Dorset Council Highways team to discuss operational matters. He suggested that at the moment there was a need for more frequent meetings associated with the various projects being pursued by the Parish Council, but that it might be useful to have a meeting every 3 months to discuss more routine aspects of highway maintenance, etc. Stephen agreed that this might be useful and said it should be arranged through Sue Hetherington who is the Community Highways Officer (CHO).

# Next Steps

1. The Parish Council to consider the design options for the area in front of Tesco.
2. The Parish Council to liaise with Helen Jackson on the design options for the High Street Crossing and Eldons Drove footpath.
3. Tim Watton to raise concerns about verge cutting with Katie Black
4. Tim Watton to contact Sue Hetherington to discuss setting up a regular meeting to discuss Highways issues

Councillor Alf Bush

Councillor Rob Carswell

Councillor Ralph Watts

Parish Clerk

July 2019