**Lytchett Matravers Parish Council**

**A Proposed 3 Phase Improvement Programme for the Lytchett Matravers Primary School Crossing**

# Introduction

There have been concerns about the safety of children walking and cycling to the Lytchett Matravers Primary School for many years. There have also been many attempts to improve the situation, including installing bollards at the edge of the pavement in some areas, and by limiting parking along sections of Wareham Road. Despite this, there have continued to be problems, with extreme traffic congestion at the start and end of the school day, and extreme frustration amongst parents dropping their children off at school at the inadequate parking provision, which is overwhelmed at peak times, leading to parking on the pavement, parking down many of the side roads along Wareham Road, etc. The combination of these factors create a situation that is difficult to navigate by both normal road users, parents driving their children to school, and parents and children walking to school, causing significant risks with children crossing between parked cars and sight lines being obscured. The situation is exacerbated by the high proportion of children attending the school who live outside Lytchett Matravers, where public transport is poor, giving parents no option but to drive to school.

By 2018, the situation had dramatically worsened due to steadily increasing traffic volumes, and a group of parents of children attending the Lytchett Matravers Primary School decided that action was imperative. This group contacted the Lytchett Matravers Parish Council, and the Dorset County Councillor for Lytchett Matravers, and decided to raise a petition of parents and to organise a meeting in the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall. The meeting was attended by a large number of parents, members of staff from the School, members of the Parish Council, the Dorset County Councillor, and Officers of Dorset County Council. The petition raised by the parent group gained over 500 signatures, and was presented to Dorset County Council. This number of signatures was sufficient to satisfy a threshold set out in Local Government procedures, such that Dorset County Council were required to formally respond.

In response to the concerns raised by parents, the Dorset County Council Transport Planning team commissioned a project with Sustrans to carry out a study of the School Crossing. This project included consultations with parents, with residents, and with teachers and children at the school, as well as a street project to try out some of the ideas generated. The report of the Sustrans study has now been presented to the Dorset Council, who have asked the Lytchett Matravers Parish Council to consider whether the large number of changes to the School Crossing put forward by Sustrans might be prioritised to develop a phased implementation programme.

This paper presents recommendations developed in response to this request. It is intended for consideration both by the Lytchett Matravers Parish Council and by the Lytchett Matravers Primary School Governors, prior to submission to the Dorset Council.

# Possible Improvements Identified by Sustrans

The Sustrans report identified a large number of improvements, as shown in the diagram presented in Appendix 1 (separate pdf file). These may be summarised as follows:

* Crossings across Wareham Road at both the north end and the south end of the school, with the former being a more formal design
* Bollards along a long section of the West side of Wareham Road
* Bollards on either side of the entrance to Eldons Drove
* Bollards on either side of the entrance to Cecil Place
* Bollards on either side of the entrance to Deans Drove
* Construction of a car park in the Astro as proposed by the Parish Council
* Widening the pavement on the West side of Wareham Road between the two sets of school gates
* Widening the pavement from the south set of school gates to the car park in the Astro
* Modifications to the kerbs on the corners at the entrance to Deans Drove
* An informal crossing across the entrance to Deans Drove
* Modifications to the kerbs on the corners of the entrance to Cecil Place
* An informal crossing across the entrance to Cecil Place
* Modifications to the layby in front of 86 Wareham Road
* Coloured paint designs on the road surface along the stretch of Wareham Road from Cecil Place to Deans Drove (and beyond Deans Drove).

# Process Adopted to Develop a Programme of Improvements

The process adopted to develop a phased approach to implement the possible changes identified by Sustrans has been to review the different design elements in relation to a number of factors, including the following:

* The observations and experience of members of the Parish Council over many years, both as members of the Parish Council, as parents, and as grandparents, including knowledge of solutions already tried in the past, and the observations by members of the Parish Council who participated in the Sustrans Street Project.
* Information provided by Dorset Council Officers indicates that some of the elements put forward by Sustrans have not been effective when implemented at other schools in Dorset.
* Information provided by Dorset Council Officers indicates that some of the elements put forward by Sustrans do not align well with the road safety guidelines issued by the Department of Transport.
* Consideration of the practical impact of the various elements of the design, including the fact that installing bollards reduces the effective width of the pavement, making it more difficult for pedestrians.

# Recommendations

The process set out in section 3 has led to the development of a 3 phase approach to the School Crossing Improvements. This allows those elements identified by Sustrans which are estimated to have the greatest impact to be implemented first, followed by a review of their effectiveness before any further work is carried out, allowing an opportunity to adjust the various design elements based on experience gained. This will lead to a more cost effective overall programme, with phasing over 3 years more efficiently aligned with the Dorset Council’s approach to highways improvements.

The Lytchett Matravers Parish Council and the Lytchett Matravers Primary School Governors are invited to consider for approval the following Phased Approach to Improve the School Crossing:

Phase 1:

* Automation of the warning signs for the school (08.40/09.00 and 15.15/45).
* A crossing at the north end of the school which will require changes to the north end of the layby in front of 86 Wareham Road (as shown in Appendix 1).
* Create a pathway along the south side of Eldons Drove, as shown in Appendix 2, AND construct a suitable surface along the lane from Eldons Drove to the gate at the back of the School playing field.

Phase 2:

* Widening the pavement on the west side of Wareham Road between the two sets of school gates and relocating the bus stop to reduce congestion.
* A selective use of bollards to highlight the approach to the school from both directions and to prevent parking on the corners of the side roads leading from Wareham Road (Cecil Place, Eldons Drove, Deans Drove, Dillons Gardens, and Burbidge Close).

Phase 3:

* A crossing at the south end of the school, incorporating any required changes to Deans Drove (corners) and suitably aligned in relation to the entrance and exit for the car park to be constructed by the Parish Council on the field where the Astro playing area is located.
* Modifications to the south end of the layby in front of 86 Wareham Road.

It is proposed that these 3 Phases are implemented over a 3 year period, with a review of the effectiveness of the improvements between each phase, allowing the design of subsequent improvements to be modified where necessary.

Councillor Alf Bush - Chair

Councillor Ralph Watts – Vice Chair

October 2019

Appendix 1 – Separate pdf file

Appendix 2 – Separate pdf file