**Lytchett Matravers Parish Council**

**Quarterly Meeting with Dorset Council Highways on 24th February 2020**

Those present:

 Stephen Mepham Dorset Council

Alf Bush Lytchett Matravers Parish Council

Rob Carswell Lytchett Matravers Parish Council

Ralph Watts Lytchett Matravers Parish Council

Ken Morgan RIBA Chartered Architect

# Vegetation

There was a discussion about the types of work that might be undertaken by the “Guerilla Gardeners”, a group of volunteers who have come together this year to improve the appearance of the village and making walking and cycling routes more accessible. The group might take on jobs involving cutting back vegetation to widen accessible footpaths, including where grassed areas had encroached across the pavement over time. Volunteer Groups of this kind are covered by the Parish Council’s insurance, which includes a limitation that any power tools should not be such as to require specialised training (e.g no chain saws). Stephen Mepham advised that the Dorset Council Rangers (Katie Black or Paul Kitchen) should be made aware of this activity, and that the key issue is to ensure that volunteer groups have safe systems of work. This might include wearing Hi Viz, ensuring awareness of road users, doing the work at quiet times, and placing warning signs to make sure that road users were given sufficient warning of workers, eg on the side of the road. As an example, work on the verge along Huntick Road would need greater care because it was classed as a “Distributor Road”, rather than a Residential Road, and in particular one where speed limits were greater than 30mph. In these circumstances, Workforce in Road signs would be needed, and if work was to be carried out outside the 30mph limit, it would be best if the Dorset Council Rangers were informed in advance. With regards to the latter, it might be possible for one of the Rangers to be deployed to work with the Guerilla Gardeners for the day, ensuring that those taking part could be given appropriate training on work on the public highway, and that the work was appropriately supervised in view of the higher level of risk.

The possibility of planting shrubs or other plants on the highway verge was also discussed. Stephen Mepham said that kept to facilitate this a Licence to Cultivate should be applied for. These licences generally included conditions to ensure that the plants would be both planted and maintained by those involved, and were kept to a suitable height. Depending on the location, the visibility splay, etc, the height requirement might be either no more than 10cm or no more than 1metre.

# Flowers Drove – Residents’ Concerns about Speeding

Stephen Mepham reported that this matter was being dealt with by Susan Hetherington. Her investigation suggested that the road location, function, layout, and volumes of traffic were not likely to justify any expenditure on speed restrictions. Councillor Andrew Starr has been working with her on the concerns raised.

There was also a discussion about the recent initiative by the Parish Council to request speed surveys to be carried out by the Dorset Council in a number of locations around the village.

# Tesco Parking Area

Ralph Watts and Rob Carswell provided an update on interactions with the Store Manager of Tesco to request a meeting to discuss the Parish Council project to improve the parking area in front of Tesco. Stephen Mepham asked if someone from the Parish Council could provide him with the Store Manager’s contact details, so that he could write to her about the need for action to prevent further damage to the public highway.

Alf Bush said that the Parish Council would continue to press Tesco for a meeting, and would also put together a letter to Tesco, setting out the proposed improvements to the Tesco Forecourt and the benefits that would be achieved.

Ralph Watts asked whether the works to improve the area would be carried out by the Dorset Council Highways team, or whether it would be contracted out. Stephen Mepham replied that the Council preferred to carry out this type of highways construction work in-house.

# Recreation Ground Car Park

A number of points were discussed, summarised as follows:

* The contractors selected by the Parish Council to carry out the works would need to be “appropriately accredited” for work on the public highway. The contractors would need to apply for a Licence for the works, but would not need to submit the designs for approval as part of that application.
* The Dorset Council contact who would need to be consulted on moving the Streetlight in the Car Park was Rod Mainstone
* There were a series of specifications for the first 5 metres of vehicle access points onto the highway, depending on whether the access was for domestic use, industrial, commercial, or agricultural. Stephen Mepham would provide the appropriate specification to Ken Morgan.
* The proposal to re-route the footpath from the Hannams Close houses to the High Street during some phases of the project was sufficient, since it provided a safe alternative route. It would not be necessary to obtain a formal consent since the footpath did not run along the side of the road (so risks to those using the path were not as high).

# WI Proposal to Plant Trees in Lytchett Matravers

Any proposal to plant trees on land owned by the Dorset Council, or on the side of the road, would need to be discussed with the Dorset Council Rangers, covering both the intended location, and the species of tree. The Countryside team would also need to be consulted with, led by Giles Nicholson, and which included Steve Marras who is the Eastern Arboricultural Officer.

Stephen Mepham agreed to provide a print out from Dorset Explorer showing the land in Lytchett Matravers that is owned by the Dorset Council.

# Next Meeting

No specific date was agreed, but it was suggested that the next meeting should take place in May/June.

Councillor Ralph Watts