January 2026:

LYTCHETT MATRAVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation:

The results from the consultation will probably be released around Easter. The feedback is that there were a high number of responses across Dorset and that will take some time to process. However, we do expect a working Local Plan by the end of 2026 since that is a likely national deadline.

The main task for our Neighbourhood Planning team in the interim is to develop a Design Code. At a parish level this sets out how we want the village to look in terms of appearance, how to deal with car parking, zones within developments that allow for slower traffic areas, of green spaces and integrated playgrounds. Roads should have a mix of housing styles and layouts and try to blend in with the landscape.

However, we are also expecting significant updates from Government on Development Management policies, how Neighbourhood Plans will function and be examined and possibly some level of national design code.

Community Asset Transfers:

The Parish Council has requested in the past the transfer of land belonging to Dorset Council to the parish for community purposes. These include the land where the Youth Hall is located, the land where the Lytchett Astro is and the adjoining horse field behind the school, as well as the library.

Dorset Council have responded in respect of the library and have said that it is now not available for transfer. The Parish Council had made this request due to the history of plans to close our library and concern that we would lose the central community building. The good news is that Dorset Council's reason is that they are committed to continue to deliver library services. The maintenance and continuity of the village library has long been of primary importance to the village and, at least for now, this commitment is welcome news.

Meeting With Vikki Slade:

The Parish Council used to meet annually with our local Member of Parliament. Covid stopped that but we are now pleased to report that these meetings have restarted. We reviewed areas where our MP, Vikki Slade, may be able to help the Parish Council in its objectives. That may include some reduction in the housing targets set out in the consultation.

We also discussed the long term objective of a safe route to Lytchett Minster for both walking and cycling. The view was that establishing such a route alongside Huntick Road will be expensive and beyond the resources of Dorset Council for some years. Active Travel is a goal and one that our MP has pursued elsewhere, but we need to find a lower costs solution.

2026 Precept

The precept is that portion of Council Tax which is allocated to Parish Councils. Each January we submit a request for the next financial year which is based on our costs, the services provided for the parish and an estimate for inflation. For the year 2026/27 we are planning to ask for an increase of 5% which is line with that expected from Dorset Council. This will be reviewed at both our January meetings prior to being submitted to Dorset Council.

2025 Review:

Aside from the above, the Parish Council has tried to move things forward in many ways. We are often delayed by dependencies with Dorset Council Planning and Highways, so those larger projects do take longer.

The installation of a zebra crossing by the school has taken years to achieve, but is now up and running. This was as a result of the parent petition in 2019 that gathered over 500 signatures. The response to the new crossing has been positive, but we are always willing to listen to any feedback.

The Eldons Drove pond restoration is now operating as it should. Technically, it is like a large attenuation tank, collecting water running off from the Recreation Ground and then allowing it to drain downhill in a controlled way. Environmentally, it will be a space that will allow a whole range of flora and fauna to thrive. Watch out in the spring.

The large Viking Swing was replaced in Rocket Park and plans are afoot for a larger redesign of the park and looking to add some extra features. A new noticeboard was installed near the pharmacy with more space for village notices. Two of the three sides are for village notices and the keys can be found in Tesco. Just try and arrange your notice in line with others. A replacement village finger post sign was raised at the corner of Halls Road and Wareham Road as part of our renovation scheme. These are a very Dorset feature with the roundel on top.

We also ran a major Neighbourhood Plan based survey and consultation in the summer. Those responses provided the main data for our response to the Dorset Local Plan Consultation. Having the voice of the village is a key component in our ability to address issues with Dorset Council.

Councillor Vacancies:

Many tasks and projects are still in the pipeline. We do need new blood and new energy in our council. Anyone who has lived here for more than 12 months can apply. There are currently still two vacancies, so please call the Parish Clerk to find out more. Being a parish councillor is a direct way to participate and help in your community. It does take a few hours per week, but it is very rewarding so give it some thought. If you have any questions, please call the Parish Clerk or any Councillor to have a chat.

Parish Council Meetings:

Our next Finance & General Purposes meeting is on January 14th at 7 p.m. and the next Full Council meeting will be on January 28th at 7 p.m., both in the Village Hall as usual. Agendas for all meetings are published online and the associated reports can be requested from the Parish Clerk. Meetings always start with a public participation session, so please come along if you have suggestions or questions that you would like to discuss with the Parish Council or stay and listen to our discussions, because it's all about your village.
Alf Bush,
Chair, Lytchett Matravers Parish Council

For further information please visit our website at: https://lytchettmatraverspc.org/ or contact the Parish Clerk via clerk@lytchettmatraversparishcouncil.gov.uk. You can find us and comment on the Lytchett Matravers PC Facebook page. The Parish Clerk can also be contacted directly on 07596-885667.