

Transport, Parking & Road Safety – Evidence Topic Paper

Table of Contents

1. Overview	3
2. Community Feedback	3
3. Dorset (West) Local Plan	4
a) West Dorset Local Plan (Dorset Emerging Local Plan) – Transport Section	4
b) National Highways Agency (A35) – Planned Highway Updates	4
c) Dorset Highways – Planned Highways Updates	5
4. Motor Vehicles	6
5. Public Transport	8
a) Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP 3)	8
b) Public Transport Services	9
c) Bus Stops	12
d) Dorset Community Transport Grant	12
6. Parking	13
a) Local Plan	13
b) Parking Locally	13
7. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) & Cycle Routes	14
a) Local Plan	14
b) Responsible organisations	15
c) Public Rights of Way Puncknowle (inc. West Bexington)	15
d) Public Rights of Way Swyre	16
e) Improvement Plan	16
f) Definitive Map	17
g) Cycle Routes	18
8. Road Safety	19
a) Local Plan	19
b) Speed Limits	20
c) Speed Limits	20

d) Speed of Vehicles in Villages	20
e) Road Use	21
f) Speed Watch	21
g) Physical Measures	21
h) Reducing the Speed Limit	22
i) Accident Statistics	22
Appendices	24

Notes:

- Narrative in italics is a quote from source material.
- Each section will have a reference for the source of the information, organisation and contact details at the end, and where feasible referenced in the text.
- Local sites for development have not been identified – none of the evidence has been mapped to proposed development.
- Dorset Council Policies in appendices

Review

Name	Version	Date	Action
P Bullen	Draft 0.2		Author

1. Overview

The Dorset (emerging) Local Plan (2021) notes: "The rural nature of Dorset presents access challenges for much of the area, particularly in the North and West, where there is a notable absence of public transport services or rail connections. This situation results in a high dependence on private vehicles, which poses obstacles to sustainable development as well as access to education and employment opportunities."

Access to and from the Neighbourhood Area is predominantly reliant on private car use due to an insufficient public transport network, which no longer reliably facilitates access to employment, amenities, or the broader regional transport infrastructure. This limitation particularly impacts younger individuals, older adults, and vulnerable people. Dorset Council provides limited bus services for residents unable to utilise conventional public transport, school bus services, and a volunteer taxi service—primarily aimed at ensuring access to healthcare—operates at nominal cost.

Road safety remains a concern within the villages. While there have been no recorded vehicle accidents apart from those on the coast road, issues persist regarding ambiguous speed limits and excessive vehicle speeds in built-up areas.

The parish of Puncknowle features long-established public and ancient rights of way, reflecting historical routes between villages and hamlets, such as those used by workers travelling eastwards, toward the Knowle ridge, and further to West Bexington. Swyre also retains similar pathways linking it with Berwick and Modbury. These Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Bridleways, situated exclusively on privately owned land, are actively maintained by the Parish Council through dedicated footpath officers and are regularly utilised by residents, primarily for recreational purposes.

2. Community Feedback

Resident views on transport varied from one village to the other:

- Those nearer the coastal road taking more issue with speed and noise, although it was noted that most people wanted slower vehicles on the roads.
- Public Transport featured as a key issue for some, the impact varied, but the level of service is considered poor and fails to support local workforce consistently year-round, with services falling off after the holiday makers leave.
- It was felt that existing transport support for the elderly should be retained and services for the young improved.
- Parking issues were thought to be a problem in some areas, particularly the older parts of the villages and the reliance on cars has increased the numbers of vehicles for each household which is exacerbating the problem.
- The lack of road markings and pedestrian lighting are aspects they wish to retain.

A specific focus group isn't planned at the time of writing to expand community feedback but may be required if the outcomes of the evidence move outside of the scope detailed above.

Reference	Source
-----------	--------

Steering Group	November 2023 Drop in Sessions
----------------	--------------------------------

3. Dorset (West) Local Plan

a) West Dorset Local Plan (Dorset Emerging Local Plan) – Transport Section

West Dorset Local Plan sets out the need for local transport for individuals - getting to work, school; hospital, shops etc. Also, business – access to suppliers, markets (workforce isn't mentioned). That the need for transport creates noise, pollution and other consequences of travel can impact people's health. **“An effective and efficient transport system is one that gives people a choice about how they travel and options that can reduce journeys by car and also the need the to be safe.”**

The Local Plan defers, in the main, to the Bournemouth Poole and Dorset – Local Transport Plan (LTP) which details the objectives, policies and targets for the county.

The Local; Plan goes on to say ... *A reduction in funding sources, particularly for capital infrastructure type schemes means the LTP identifies little in the way of major road improvements in its plan. They will maximise benefits from existing investment, increasing public transport orientated development, mixed use development, development located to achieve the full utilisation of the highway network.*

This and the LTP (3) position, which is much in the same as the overarching strategy, to focus on existing larger scale conurbations, such as Dorchester and Weymouth to the west, and Bournemouth and Poole to the east.

In assessing development proposals, the councils will consider whether opportunities for more sustainable travel modes have been taken up, considering the nature and location of the site. Developers will be encouraged to work with public transport providers to develop viable solutions to support sustainable travel patterns (see also Policy ENV11). The needs of people with disabilities will also be carefully considered.

While the Local Plan generally seeks to concentrate development in areas which are most accessible, it is recognised that some growth will continue in rural areas. In considering such proposals, the benefits of development will be weighed up against any disadvantages arising from its location. Proposals which are likely to generate a significant amount of movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised.

Organisation	Contact
West Dorset Local Plan	Available at: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP) – 2011- 2026	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/local-transport-plan-3

b) National Highways Agency (A35) – Planned Highway Updates

Whilst not in the Parish of Puncknowle and Swyre the A35 is the major road between the Dorchester (and further east) and Bridport (and further west) runs along the north ridge of the Bride Valley. It provides an essential link to nearby towns and the wider road network. National highways were contacted 11/12/2024 to establish planned highway updates.

They replied as follows:

'In terms of improvements to the A35, National Highways do not currently have any plans for large scale improvements which would fundamentally change strategic movements along the route between Bridport and Winterbourne Abbas. We have however undertaken a route safety study which covered the section of the A35 from Charmouth to Yellowham Hill. This identified a range of smaller scale works to improve the safety of the route including grading of the bends, improved lining and signing and greater consistency and clarity around village gateways. We will also be looking to bring in average speed cameras - initially we had considered implementing these along the whole of the route, but we are now focussing the cameras instead on protecting key villages only. We started delivery of the study measures this financial year with lining improvements and, subject to the availability of funding and any other emerging priorities, delivery will continue into our next Roads Investment Period (RIS3) which commences in April 2025. Alongside the proposed safety measures, you may also wish to be aware that there are also a number of drainage improvement schemes planned for the route during RIS3.'

Organisation	Contact
National Highways	<p>██████████ – South West Operations – Assistant Spatial Planner (Highways Development Management) National Highways Ash House Falcon Road, Sowton Ind. Estate Exeter EX2 7LB Tel: 0300 470 4376 Web: http://www.nationalhighways.co.uk</p>

c) Dorset Highways – Planned Highways Updates

Dorset Council (Highways) are responsible for all local highway carriageways, footpaths, cycleways, traffic signals, signs, street lighting, safety fences, verges, bridges and public rights of way (unless on private land).

The parish is serviced by the B1357 (Coast Road) passing through its centre. To the south a D class road moves east before dropping down to the coast through West Bexington. Swyre Road (C class) off the coast road heads north through the village of Swyre before entering the village of Puncknowle. Both Swyre and Puncknowle are served by a C & D class roads as detailed in fig 1 below.

The parishes do not have street lighting or traffic signals and all public rights of way are on private land and maintained by the landowner. The coastal footpath is the responsibility of Dorset Council through the Coastal Ranger Team (see Public Rights of Way – section 4) who are responsible for maintenance.

The routine maintenance of the roads is undertaken by Highways, in terms of resurfacing, verges (although these looked after by residents/grass cutting), and overgrown verges obstructing road drains. In terms of road markings, *'Highways will under codes of Practice, renew Junction markings etc when they become more than 70% worn. Most countryside lanes*

do not have road markings other than at junctions, and you must bear in mind that any markings are generally a driving aid and not a legal requirement.’

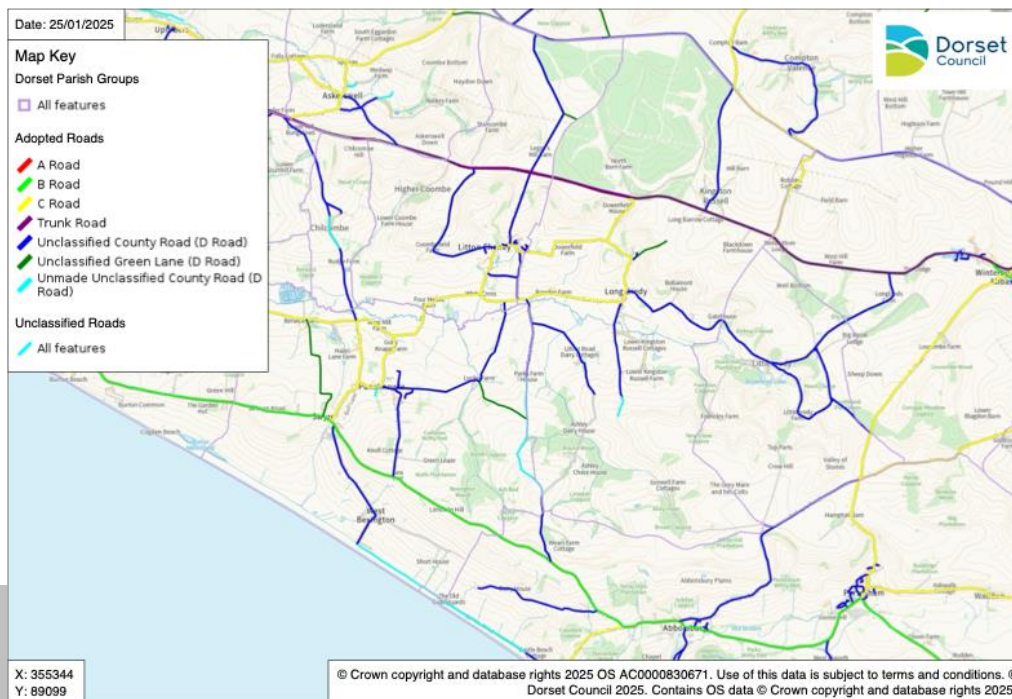



Fig:1 Road System Puncknowle, Swyre & West Bexington

There are no Highways impending announcements for planned Highways updates or upgrades in the Parish of Puncknowle and Swyre, other than the routine notices are issued for closures due to Utility or Highways works supplied to the Parishes in Advance.

Roads – Policy NOT REQUIRED

Dorset have a policy that determines the requirement for settlement access – but to scale, so not applicable to the parish, where any development would be small.

Organisation	Contact
Dorset Highways	 https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Highways
Dorset Highways Maintenance Plan	Available at: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Highways
Coastal Management & Protection	Available at: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

4. Motor Vehicles

Rural car ownership in Dorset is amongst the highest in the country, with almost 50% of households owning 2 cars and consequently car dependency is high. A significant problem in the area is that both local people and incoming residents, often retiring, become dependent on the

car for access to services and are consequently cut off from those services when they are no longer able to drive. In the urban areas approximately 1 in 4 households do not run a car at all.¹

In Punccknowle:

- Of the people who travel to work 47.7% use a car;
- 37.3% of working people work from home;
- 3.6% car share or use a van;
- 3.6% use a bicycle: and,
- 7.3% walk.

Car ownership: 9.8% don't own a car or van, 42.9% have one, 31% have two and 16.1% have three.

In Swyre:

- Of the people who travel to work 46% use a car:
- 54% of working people work from home;

Car ownership: 34% have one, 41% have two and 24.4% have three.

By way of a comparison - Bridport, the nearest market town (population of 14,600) 50% of people drive to and from work, 18% don't own a car and 82% do, although multiple ownership is lower presumably due to easy access facilities and the lack of parking. In larger urban areas like Weymouth (population of 58,000) it is estimated that 40% of people do not own a car

The main issue is not community size or infrastructure but the reliance on cars in rural areas, which has reduced public transport options without improving rural road conditions. Vehicle costs act as an effective tax on rural residents, leaving those who can't drive—especially the elderly and young—isolated due to inadequate public transport.

Carbon targets may reduce car use. According to the LTP 4 consultation, 62% of local trips are for business or commuting, with 95% beginning and ending locally and a third under five miles. Cars generate 70% of emissions, HGVs/LGVs 28%. Reducing car journeys is essential to meet national carbon goals. LTP 4 notes that effective public transport is vital for these targets, but relies on securing sufficient funding.

No Policy
Covered by National and Local Policy

Source Material

Organisation	Contact
Census 2021 (ONS)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/
LTP 4 Consultation Document.	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/local-transport-plan-2026-to-2041-summary

¹ Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset Local Transport Plan (2011-2026)

5. Public Transport

a) Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP 3)

This part of Dorset is rural with scattered villages and hamlets centred on the small towns of Bridport, and the larger hubs Weymouth and Dorchester. Ideally buses would be supported by a network focused on these towns. Reliable, frequent – at least hourly – direct services throughout the day and evening would connect these towns where residents access education, employment, health services etc.

Trunk routes could be complemented by less frequent (and not necessarily daily) services mostly giving smaller communities access to Bridport and larger hubs. This is regrettably not the case, and rural community bus services have been in decline since 1950. The policy over the years has been to increase the reliance of car ownership and the reduction of smaller bus routes – feeder services – in support of smaller communities.

The reliance on motor vehicles has increased the need for impact on the climate, financial burden of running a vehicle and constrained parking spaces in narrow rural roads without any clear resolve to remedy other than development policy, to ensure parking is included in any proposal. Dorset Council accepts that need to address the mobility and isolation of the elderly in rural communities and the restrictions on the young, which it does in part.

The follow extracts from the LTP (3) that focus on transport in rural communities:

..... also faces some **serious challenges**. Its unique environmental assets pose particular physical constraints. Economic productivity should be higher and it is generally a low wage area, whilst house prices are very high. There are skills gaps in the workforce, exacerbated by a rapidly ageing population. There are some pockets of the most **deprived areas** nationally. It suffers from **increasing congestion** in the urban areas and **inadequate wider connectivity**, compounded by an historic under-investment in transport. Furthermore, mitigating climate change and responding to the future prospect of slowing oil production (peak oil) represent significant wider challenges to be addressed. Behind all of these is the backdrop of public sector spending cuts with potentially long lasting and significant effects.

Key Transport Challenges

- *The volume and speed of motorised traffic, including HGV's impacts on the quality of town centre environments, especially in market towns and some villages;*
- *Very high car ownership in rural areas – the availability and frequency of public transport is a key issue in the rural areas of Dorset. Access to jobs, education and services can be a problem for people on isolated rural areas who do not own a private car or where the distances involved are too long to walk or cycle.*
- *Decreasing budgets for public transport means that subsidies for rural bus routes could cease, resulting on a cut in services;*
- *Urbanisation through signs, line markings, kerbs and other traffic calming features can degrade high quality rural landscapes; and*
- *High proportion of older people with particular access needs and issues.*

Rural car ownership is amongst the highest in the country, with almost 50% of households owning 2 cars and consequently car dependency is high. A significant problem in the area is that both

local people and incoming residents, often retiring, become dependent on the car for access to services and are consequently cut off from those services when they are no longer able to drive. In the urban areas approximately 1 in 4 households do not run a car at all.

Bus services in the urbanised areas are generally good with high levels of frequency on the core corridors. However, recent years have seen reduced frequencies and coverage in the suburban areas. In the more rural areas services are more limited and, despite heavy investment and considerable revenue support, passenger transport services fail to attract significant transfer of trips from the private car. Despite strong bus passenger growth in urban areas, there remain key issues relating to the frequency, directness, reliability and cost of bus services. Service levels reduce significantly in some areas in the evening.

There are key gaps in the cycling/walking infrastructure in urban areas, whilst in rural areas there is a general lack of dedicated infrastructure. Physical barriers such as river crossings and high traffic volumes / speeds are also significant deterrents to walking and cycling.

Bus services linking neighbouring villages and towns were key to connecting rural populations with work and the facilities needed for healthy, prosperous and fulfilling lives. These services are all but extinct, which may sit uneasily in the context of Dorset Councils Local Transport Plan (3) (2011 -26) where in the last progress report 2017-2020 (published May 2017) – page 19/19-2.4 Market Towns and Hinterlands, where the following was stated:

‘The market towns and rural hinterland cover a significant proportion of the LTP area, whilst accounting for a relatively low proportion of total population. The market towns are renowned for their high quality historic built environments, whilst larger rural parts of the LPT area offer outstanding natural environments with extensive areas of ecological value covered by the Natural Landscape (AONB). The market towns offer limited services for their rural hinterlands and are dependent on the main urban centres for some key services.’

Local authorities have never been required to maintain public rural bus networks, although they have long had powers to do so financially

b) Public Transport Services

The parish is no longer serviced by a feeder bus service between villages in the Bride Valley. There are two commercial bus services, the X51 which operates between Dorchester and Axminster (via Bridport) along the A35 and is practically out of reach for most residents. The X53 runs between Weymouth and Axminster (also via Bridport) along the Coast Road, through Swyre. Whilst these buses offer a service it is less frequent in winter months (which stretch to end of March), more regular in summer when there is the ‘Jurassic Coast’ open top bus, which also travels from Weymouth, passing through Swyre.

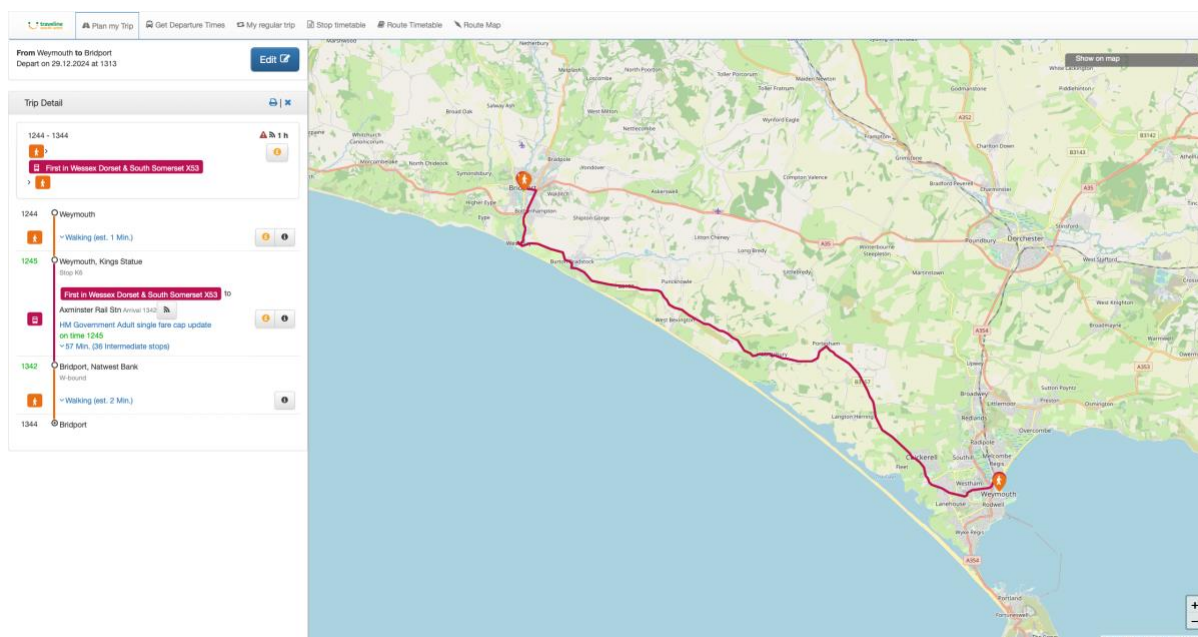


Fig 2 : X53 Bus Route

These buses offer (increasingly poorly timed) interchange with trains at: Axminster and (infrequently) Crewkerne for services towards London, Salisbury and Exeter; at Dorchester South, for London, the South East Dorset conurbation, Southampton and Weymouth; and at Dorchester West for Yeovil, Bath, Bristol and Weymouth.

DCT also operated four PlusBus services, two weekly and two fortnightly, serving Bridport's hinterland. Each consisted of a return trip allowing roughly two hours in the town. DCT also operated two similar weekly services linking villages in West Dorset with Dorchester.

Community Service	Timings	Cost
Axe Vally & West Dorset Ring & Ride – For people with no access or unable to use public transport.	Monday to Saturday Call for booking	Shopping - £5 Outing – cultural and social activities - £5
Plus Bus to Bridport – local shopping and appointments – 2 hours, where possible door to door,	Weekday – Wednesday midmorning Grouped by villages – Service C includes Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington. Leaves 11 am,	£6 – bus pass is acceptable.
Bride Valley Car Service – voluntary car scheme – hospital, doctors, opticians, chiropodists and prescription collection.	Call service – Monday till Sunday	50 pence per mile & £1 booking fee

--	--	--

School Bus Services	Timings	Costs
Thorner’s School (Litton) Bus	Collects between 08:25 & 08:32 across West Bexington, Swyre and Puncknowle.	NA
Colfox (Bridport) School Bus	Collects – Puncknowle only	NA

Public Bus Services	Timings	Costs
<p>First Bus (provider)</p> <p>X53 is the bus route that runs the coast road between Weymouth and Axminster (through West Bay and Bridport).</p> <p>X51 is a Dorchester (sometimes including Weymouth) Axminster Service running along the A35.</p> <p>Both the X53 and X51 connect to an extended network of bus, coach and rail services across Dorset and the rest of the UK.</p>	<p>Seasonal – winter months every 2 hours (approximately). From 08:40 to 18:30.</p> <p>Summer months – every hour + additional service for the open top bus (although this is primarily a tourist attraction)</p>	<p>Variable + bus pass.</p>

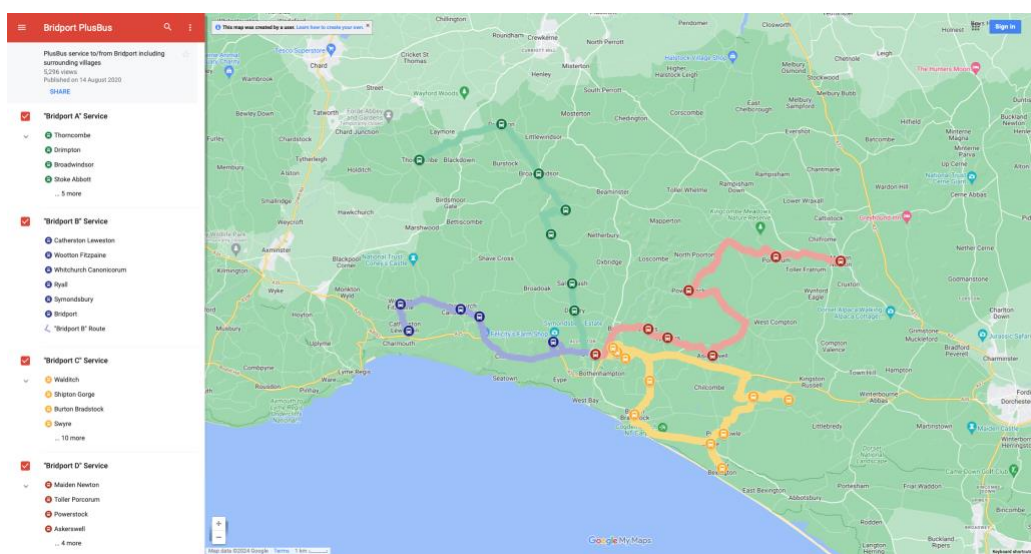


Fig 3: Plus Bus Route

c) Bus Stops

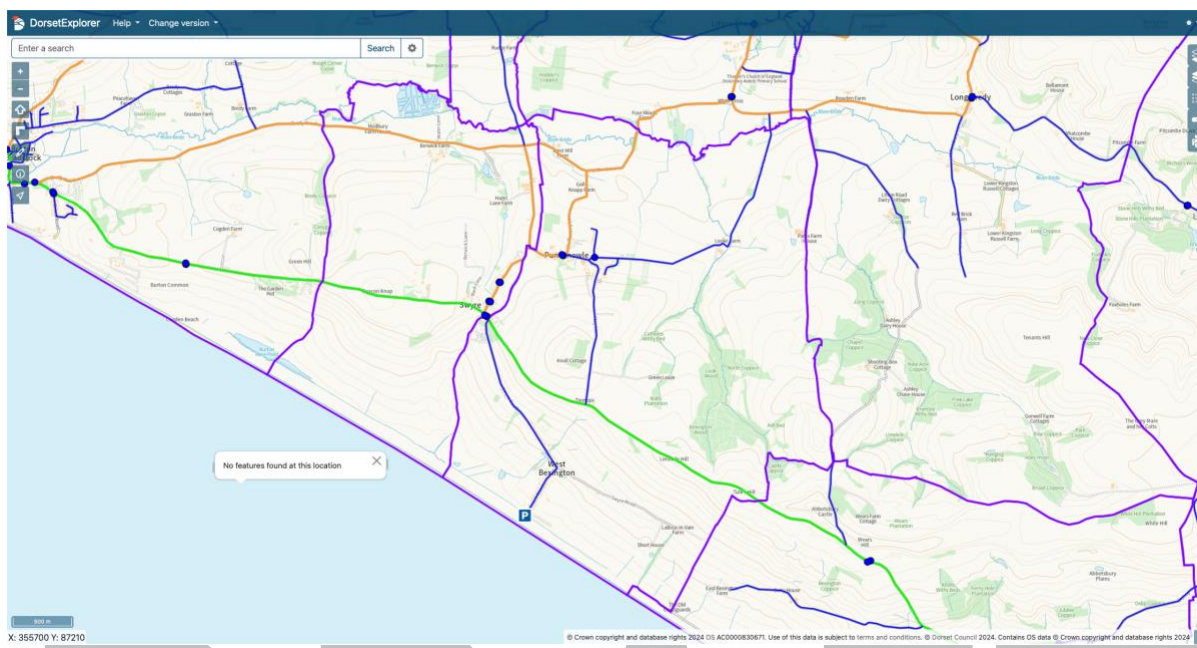


Fig 4: Bus Stops

Of the six bus stops in the parish, two have buses stopping at them. The timetable is posted at each when the schedule changes, fortunately we have yet to find someone waiting for a bus at one of these stops. They can be removed by contacting the Dorset Council.

d) Dorset Community Transport Grant

The aim of the Dorset Community Transport Grant is to support Dorset residents with the continuing cost of living challenge delivered by Dorset Council with their volunteer community sector partners. The fund aims to invest in the sustainability of Dorset’s community network. Dorset Council stipulate the groups that can apply for the grant (includes the Parish Councils), which can’t be used for commercial companies, school services, transport providers – it needs to be in support of voluntary initiatives. Capital grants up to £10,000, and revenue of up to £5,000. The process involved a written proposal that is assessed by a panel and awarded on a case-by-case basis until the funding runs out.

Policy NOT REQUIRED

Little or no influence on public transport.

The Parish Council may wish to look at grants in support of local transport initiatives.

Public Transport Section Source Material

Organisation	Contact
Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/local-transport-plan-3

Local Transport Plan (LTP) – 2011-2026	
Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset LTP (3) Implementation Plan – 2017 – 2020 (published May 2017)	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/288596/IP3+2017-2020+_Final+160517.pdf/ad607757-6672-26e5-d044-8212a2245d22
Dorset Council – Transport Grant	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-community-transport-grant
WATAG Committee Member	https://watag.org.uk

6. Parking

a) Local Plan

The lack of, or poor planning of parking provision can have a negative impact on the public realm and highway functions. Over-provision and poor management can lead to the inefficient use of land. Under-provision can lead to congestion and clutter on the roads and related access problems.

The Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset Residential Car Parking Study (BPDRPS) provides evidence on the optimum number of parking spaces needed for new residential developments, specific to their location. Parking standards for non-residential development have also been established to meet the likely and operational requirements of various establishments and business uses, and should be used as an initial, pragmatic guide, with the final level agreed through joint discussions between the Council, local Highway Authority and the applicant. Both standards can be viewed on the Councils' website or at the council offices. Provision for cycle parking also needs to be considered to ensure that this remains an attractive and convenient mode of transport.

The (BPDRPS), as stated above clearly lays out the level of parking required for the development of a range of residential and business settings.

Highways, at a regional level have commented as follows: *'Parking is a widespread issue but does not fall under Highways remit. Our role is to allow and keep the road safe for passage, free of obstruction and risk, not to facilitate parking of vehicles. As our towns and villages expand, the issue becomes more common, however, in the short term there is no easy solution.'*

b) Parking Locally

Parking provision in the villages is somewhat dependent upon where you live and the age of your house. West Bexington is primarily a modern settlement, other than a few farmers homes and a hotel. Homes were built on the back of the beach being a holiday destination in the 1930's. Development has mainly been confined to the access road – Swyre Road, leading to Beach Road and Labour in Vain, which heads east from the junction. A narrow D class road, houses have mainly been built back from the road, with significant front gardens, drives and parking spaces.

West Bexington has the only public Car Park in the parish. There is little on road parking which does impact the local hospitality businesses, something that is exacerbated in summer when the area is at its most popular.

Swyre, also a single road, an extension of the route from West Bexington Swyre Road leads to Church Street in Puncknowle and connects the three primary villages. Swyre has a collection of historic stone cottages and a couple of newer developments (1980's). People have created small garages, or off-road parking where they can, but most of the older homes rely on the street, which is slightly wider than West Bexington. There clearly aren't enough parking spaces for families and grass verges on the opposite side of the road remain congested.

Puncknowle, has a similar problem in so much as where there is a stone cottage, on road parking is required. Larger old houses have their own drives and parking spaces, and in some instances common land has been grabbed to create parking spaces. Development between the 1950's, 1990's and 2000's considered off street parking, drives and garages, although whether these spaces are enough is dependent upon the size of the family. The combination of growing numbers of car users in families and limited capacity in older parts of the village does mean cars fill roads. The hot spots are Hoopers Lane, Church Street, Looke and Clay Lane.

The Local Plan looks at future development rather than parking congestion in rural locations. It is out of scope for Highways and resident comments state that whilst recognising the parking problem in parts of the village, they do not want to impose measures that would structure parking and involve road markings.

Policy – Might be REQUIRED
Little or no influence on parking. The issue of public charging points for electric vehicles might be a longer term issue – at the moment they are likely to be located at west Bexington. The Parish Council may wish to look at parking improvements.

Organisation	Contact
West Dorset Local Plan	Available on: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Residential Car Parking Study (Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset)	Car Parking Study
Highways	Available at: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Highways

7. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) & Cycle Routes

a) Local Plan

The Local plan states:

Walking, cycling and horse riding have a valuable role in recreational and leisure trips, and in meeting local access needs. Existing strategic routes exist within the plan area including parts of the National Cycling Network (NCN). There is considerable potential to make horse riding, cycling

and walking more attractive alternatives for short journeys, providing a healthy alternative option to the car. Such routes can also provide wildlife corridors and form part of a green infrastructure network.

There are opportunities to improve route connectivity, particularly in Dorchester, Weymouth, Portland and out into the wider countryside, to bring about a comprehensive public rights of way route network, providing safe routes for regular and leisure trips. For example, there is a lack of bridleways on Portland, and multi-user routes in West Dorset. Where possible, we need to provide multi-user routes (those that can be used by walkers, cyclists and equestrians) and better integrate paths with the wider highway network and also with public transport and parking facilities. These opportunities will be explored with Dorset County Council as the local Highway Authority.

b) Responsible organisations

Dorset Council, through their highways department, are responsible for Highway Footways, if adopted or part of Highway Rights (the point where the highway joins a footpath), unless they are countryside rights of way which are the responsibility of the landowner to maintain. Highways are responsible for footpath signposts and wayfinding. Landowners are responsible for the maintenance of stiles, gates (unless they form part of Highway Rights), and the cutting back of hedges and removal of any obstructions. Cross Field Paths can be ploughed as long as the path is reinstated within 14 days.

Dorset Highways have stated here are no plans, and unlikely to be any for new footways to be established by Highway.

The Dorset Council Senior Ranger for the West and Coastal has commented that from a 'Rights of Way perspective there are not too many outstanding issues in the area or particularly problem areas that I am aware of. We are still awaiting confirmation of the King Charles the Third England Coast Path from Natural England, but this will largely follow the existing route of the Southwest Coast path in this area.' Having reviewed the route for the coastal path the section from Lyme Bay to Portland hasn't been highlighted, but there is a Devon section that stretches from Torquay to Lyme where it stops until Portland, where it starts again, heading east.

The Parish Council have two (Rights of Way) footpath officers, one for each parish. Footpaths have Parish map references (Dorset Explorer) – W17 for Swyre and W14 for Puncknowle and West Bexington. In the case of Swyre, the footpath officer is also a primary landowner. Footpath Officers inspect footpaths through each season to ensure they are accessible and maintained by the responsible landowner. They also report issues to the Parish Council or Dorset Council for resolution. Residents and members of the public can also report problems. It is felt by the Parish Council and residents that the management of footpaths is

c) Public Rights of Way Puncknowle (inc. West Bexington)

The public and ancient rights of way are long established and plot the movements between villages and smaller hamlets in the parish of Puncknowle for workers to the east, the Knowle on the top of the ridge and over to West Bexington. There are couple of bridleways, but mostly routes across farmland are footpaths, some of which is National Trust (exclusively West Bexington). Farming is mainly arable in Puncknowle, with some pastural routes frequently used by residents moving between villages and hamlets, or for the purpose of exercise. In the summer season tourist will use the same routes, although primary through the coastal village of West Bexington.

Puncknowle Village and surrounding Bride Valley are used by ramblers, walking groups and the like through Spring to Autumn.

The number of footpaths is thought to be adequate for the purpose (whilst this is an assumption as there is no evidence to suggest otherwise), and the fact they have been built from the need to move between settlements they are extensive enough. As a means of transport, they are limited by distance. Whilst it might be possible to walk to the local market town it isn't practical to do so as a means of getting to work or education.

The maintenance of the paths is undertaken by the landowner routinely in autumn when the hedges are cut back. Walls and stiles are maintained throughout the year there may be a lapse between reporting problems and resolving them.

d) Public Rights of Way Swyre

Swyre, like Puncknowle has a network of Rights of Way footpaths connecting with Puncknowle, on to Litton, Berwick on to Modbury and eventually Burton Bradstock. Swyre Manor Estate is owned by a family who have a long association with Swyre and the surrounding area. They also have good links with neighbouring landowners and the National Trust.

There are several footpaths north that link to the south, giving access to the coast. W17-11 (fig 6) is linked by a permissive path from the coast road, and a second permissive path that forks off to join the national trust path to Cogden Beach via Othena (spiritual retreat on the west boundary of the parish). To the north of the Coast Road there are the historic links with Berwick from Swyre via Back Road. There are a cluster of unlinked short footpaths running from W17/11 to Back Road on the opposite side of the Coast Road, whilst not a right of way the landowner allows access. Further along Back Road the landowner has joined W17/1 to W17/8 and allowed access through the remainder of the road to join W17/8.

The footpaths are well maintained, serviced and accessible under the current arrangements. Frequently used by resident's, holiday makers, walkers and their dogs.

e) Improvement Plan

'Outside of the Local Plan Dorset Council have a Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIP) are the prime means for the Local Highway Authority to identify and prioritise actions to bring outdoor access up to date. This addresses the public need for recreation, sport, transport, health, economy, land-management, tourism and planning. Meaning it can fully benefit our way of life today.'

The RoWIP lapsed in 2021, when work started on the new plan scheduled for publication late 2025 – running from 2026 till 2035. The former plan is still in place until the new plan is available. This plan has a strong connection to the local plan and the approach and policy of Highways to the approach they take to managing these assets. The components of the plan will not drift far from the principles detailed above. It is worth noting that the focus of the plan is linked to the core principle of the Local Plan in terms of health and wellbeing and the infrastructure needed to make footpaths available to all – which includes mobility issues and impaired vision. Whilst the plan does address rural as well as urban areas in terms of green infrastructure, but the link to development (by this I mean new footpaths, wider, even surfaces etc – as the footpaths aren't the responsibility of Highways) is primarily in towns or linked to specific tourist attractions.

The equality act 2010 places a duty on local authorities to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. Dorset Council must make reasonable adjustments to ensure paths are as accessible as possible. Under section 147 of the Highways Act 1980, the highways authority (National or Local) to approve structures such as gates and stiles to control livestock and, when approving new structures, they must consider people with limited mobility. Stiles which have been approved by the local authority in the past can be replaced with a less restrictive option. Parish Councils have funded the replacement of stiles with gates to facilitate better access. The Senior Ranger for Dorset West and Coastal stated, 'I appreciate Puncknowle & Swyre are relatively small parishes, but other parishes are funding the replacement of stiles with gates to aid access on popular footpaths, which is something we can assist with.' I believe this was aimed at the West Bexington and Swyre Coastal areas which, as previously stated are more popular with tourists. Stiles and gates which have been in place since the time the path was dedicated for public access cannot be changed without the permission of the landowner.

Puncknowle and Swyre have stone stiles similar to those found in North York Moors and Derbyshire Dales and have been in place for hundreds of years, forming part of the parish's rich heritage, and whilst there is no desire to move them, there may come a time when their condition means an alternative may be required adjacent to them to slow the wear and tear. Some are already in poor condition and need to be repaired or protected.

f) Definitive Map

The Definitive Map is the official record of Public Rights of Way, listing numbered paths by Parish. Changes, upgrades, removals, or diversions are made via Modification or Public Path Orders, usually for development reasons. Anyone may apply, but must provide evidence for changes, which the local authority reviews.

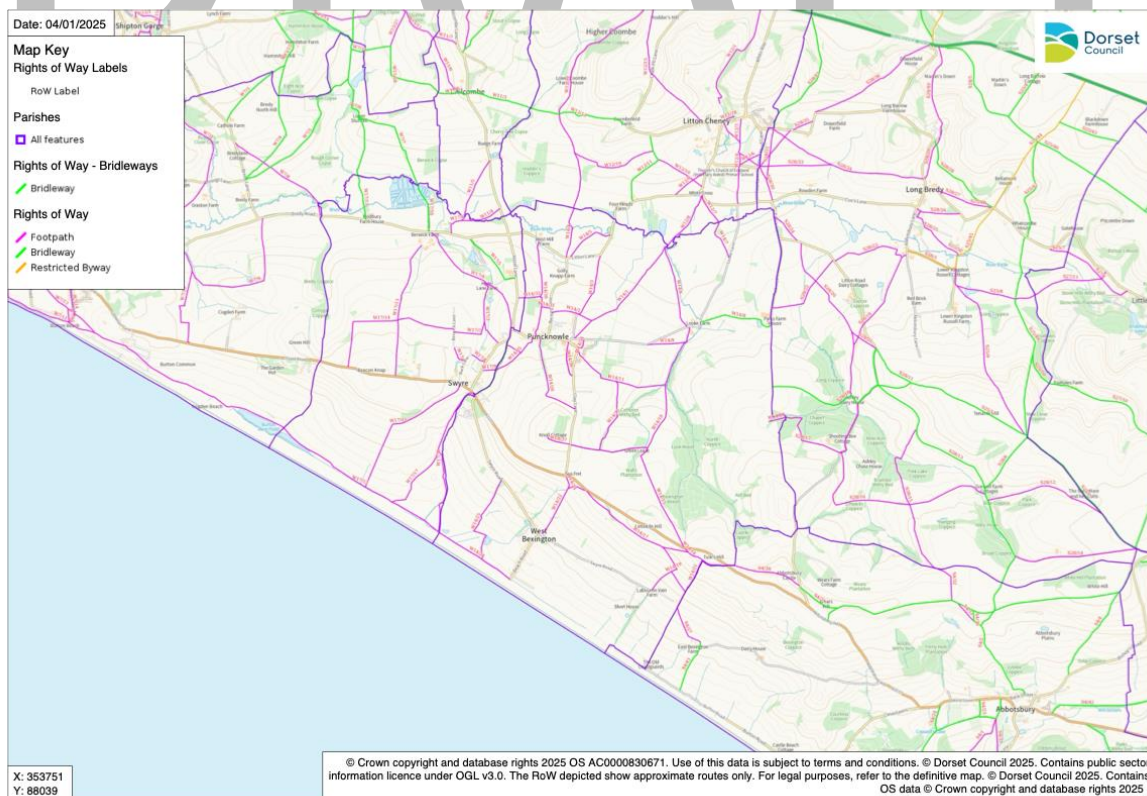
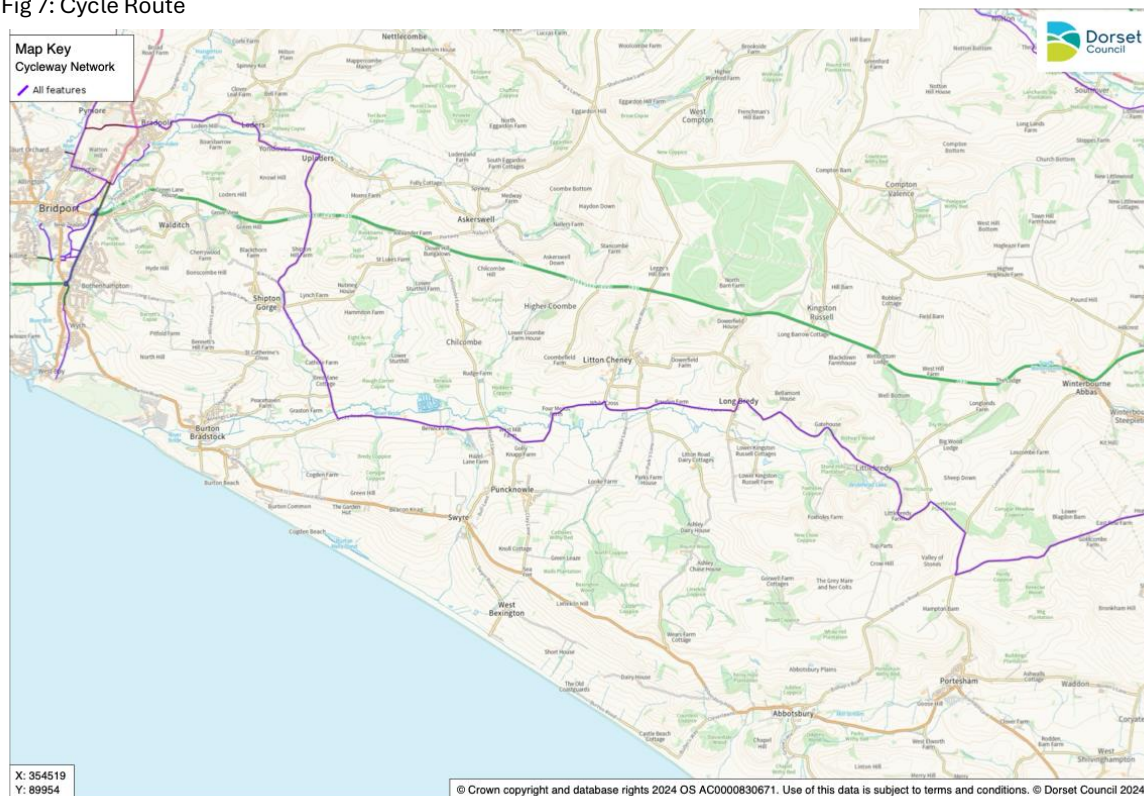


Fig 6: Public Rights of Way and Bridleway – Puncknowle & Swyre

Fig 7: Cycle Route



g) Cycle Routes

The Bride Valley has a single designated cycle route through Little and Long Bridy until it joins with Litton Lane (Puncknowle) and on to Modbury, eventually taking the road to Shipton Gorge, across the A35 to Uploaders and then Bridport. The route will be known to cyclist, and would serve as an alternative to the Coast Road and the associated dangers.

The parish has C/D class roads which are shared between, farm vehicles, cars, vans, pedestrians, livestock (on occasion) and horses. They are narrow, with road markings limited to junctions. The villages and connecting roads are used by cyclists (even the Coast Road) – which is neither promoted nor discouraged, but does compete with all modes of transport, footpaths however, remain the domain of the walker, for the moment at least.

Rights of Way – Heritage & Environment Policy Might be Required

There may be a need to reference the role of landowners and Parish Council – accessibility. Heritage and Environment elements – also need to be determined – one policy to rule them all!

Parish Council may wish to consider new stiles on the more popular coastal walking routes.

Organisation	Contact
--------------	---------

West Dorset Local Plan	Available on: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Dorset Rights of Way Improvement Plan	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/rights-of-way-improvement-plan
Footpath Officer – Puncknowle (Parish Council post)	David Bird - davidbird105@btinternet.com
Footpath Officer – Swyre (Parish Council Post)	Martin Yeates - martin@manorfarmswyre.co.uk
Dorset Senior Ranger – West Dorset & Coastal	Stephen Semper - stuart.semple@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Dorset Highway	Stuart Smith – stuart.smith@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Natural England	https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/england-coast-path-south-west/trail-information/
Ramblers – disabled access	https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/disabled-access-public-rights-way
Definitive Map – Dorset Council	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/definitive-map-and-statement

8. Road Safety

a) Local Plan

The local plan does not state, in any detail the approach to road safety other than in terms of new development, but it does set out priorities in terms of safety. The first being pedestrians, followed by cyclist, equestrian and finally motor vehicles, as detailed below.

Consider FIRST	Pedestrians
	Cyclists
	Equestrians
	Public transport users
	Specialist service vehicles – eg emergency services, waste etc
Consider LAST	Other motor traffic

*New development should not create significant highway safety problems. Local road layouts should therefore be designed carefully to discourage through traffic, reduce vehicle flows and restrain vehicle speed. Proposals for accesses and roads serving new development should be designed to be visually attractive, to meet the requirements of all road users, **and minimise vehicle speed and the risk of accidents, particularly to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians**. The following road-user hierarchy is reflective of the road users commonly found in the plan area. This hierarchy should be applied where appropriate.*

While the Local Plan generally seeks to concentrate development in areas which are most accessible, it is recognised that some growth will continue in rural areas. In considering such proposals, the benefits of development will be weighed up against any disadvantages arising from its location. Proposals which are likely to generate a significant amount of movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised.

b) Speed Limits

National Highways are responsible for setting speed limits on the Strategic Road Network (A roads and above). Local authorities determine local speed limits on local roads (B,C,D). The parameters of these limits are defined by central government as *single and dual carriage ways with streetlights, unless there are signs to the contrary, have a speed limit of 30mph in the United Kingdom, apart from Wales where it is 20mph*. There are a suite of limits and how they apply dependent upon road type and vehicle size, and the number of people they carry. In built up areas.

Speed limits are set by the classification of the road, and it is the responsibility of the local Council to ensure signage is in place to identify the speed limit.

Speed limits are monitored and enforced by the police.

c) Speed Limits

The roads in the parish are primarily C or D Class Roads and therefore narrow but allow two-way traffic in some areas albeit at slower speeds.

Both West Bexington and Swyre have a 30mph speed limit that is sign posted, and in the case of West Bexington has the limit printed on the road surface as you enter residential areas. This might be because both villages are accessed by the Coast Road which has a 30mph limit on the stretch that passes Swyre (it is 50mph beyond the Village). All of which is consistent with central policy, except for the Coast Road 50mph, which is presumably lower than the 60mph due to the structure of the road.

Puncknowle has no signage displaying the speed limit, in fact as you leave Swyre Village there is a national speed limit sign as you leave. It is unclear what the speed limit might be at this point, but it is likely to be 40mph and upwards. As you travel through Puncknowle there are no speed limit signs either in the village or the connecting roads until you reach Litton to the east and Burton Bradstock to the West.

Puncknowle has a gateway signage on Church Street, just before Boundary Cottage, and another on Rectory Lane – announcing they are entering the village and requesting that people drive carefully. West Bexington has a similar sign at the entry to the residential part of the road. Swyre has one on the Coast Road.

d) Speed of Vehicles in Villages

Road Traffic Definition of a village: 20 or more houses over a minimum length of 600 meters and a minimum of 3 houses in each 100 meters. This qualifies for a speed limit of 30mph.

Dorset Council have the following to say on vehicle speed in villages: *Fear of traffic can affect people quality of life in villages, and it is self-evident that villages should have comparable speed*

limits to similar roads in urban area. It is, therefore, government policy that a 30mph speed limit should be the norm through villages.

It may also be appropriate to consider 20mph limits or zones in built up village streets that are primarily residential in nature, or where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high, where there is a safety case and local support. Such limits should not, however, be considered on roads with a strategic function or where movement of motor vehicles is the primary function.

e) Road Use

Most of the land surrounding the villages is farmed in one way or another, although Puncknowle is primarily arable and therefore subject to a wide variety of farm machinery, as is Swyre and West Bexington in parts, but the focus is more pastoral in these areas.

As previously mentioned, the roads are shared by local business, delivery vans, motor vehicles and bikes, cycles, pedestrians. Whilst the villages have relatively small populations to offset the risk of combining this groups on a single carriageway, there are limited pavements and no calming measures other than the build-up of parking. There are no streetlights, and as a dark sky area no desire to have any installed, but the movement of people is greatly decreased at night.

The Coast Road is the busiest road in the parish linking Weymouth and Portland with the market town of Bridport, Lyme, Axminster, Exeter and the West. It hosts the single bus route, HGV's, higher volumes of motor vehicles and business vehicles. The road is 30mph whilst passing through the village of Swyre, but 50mph outside of residential areas.

f) Speed Watch

The Parish operates a speed watch initiative on the Coast Road – twice monthly, at variable times, with a group of volunteers. They record the speed of vehicles as they pass through the 30mph speed limit trained and supported by the police.

On each occasion they monitor and record speeds over an hour. The percentage of motorists who exceed the threshold varies from, but it is higher in the winter months circa 6-7%, with a higher figure in winter of between 9 -13%. The volume of traffic is higher in summer, which may account for the slowing down of vehicles, and lower in the winter. The range of excess speeds are 40 -44, 45-49 and 50+. The minority are at the higher end with the majority 40+.

Data sheet attached as appendices B.

g) Physical Measures

There are physical measures available to manage the speed of vehicles in built up areas but they are both expensive and would need to be assessed against the use of the roads. Farm machinery precludes road bumps and road narrowing points.

Physical measures are unlikely to be agreed for the Coast Road.

The Traffic Advisory Leaflet – Speed in Villages states that signage should be educational, that variable speed limits can be used to slow the traffic down, hatching, speed cameras, vehicle activation signs are also methods that can be deployed. These measures would be unsuitable

for the villages but might be considered for the Coast Road if they aren't physical (bumps in roads, narrowing as they require street lighting, which removes the option.

h) Reducing the Speed Limit

The Department of Transport would not recommend the introduction of a 20mph limit on a through road – to gain approval there would need to be extensive speed reduction features. It seems that the current speed limits on this stretch of road will not change.

A 20mph limit for the villages is feasible and would go some way to mitigating the shared use of the roads. Whilst the Local Plan doesn't factor in speed reduction as a tool to improve road safety, this may have been a central government political position. The policy of 20mph is now actively promoted by Dorset Council, who have rolled out several 20mph schemes. They have assessed the cost to be circa £5K for road markings and signs for a scheme.

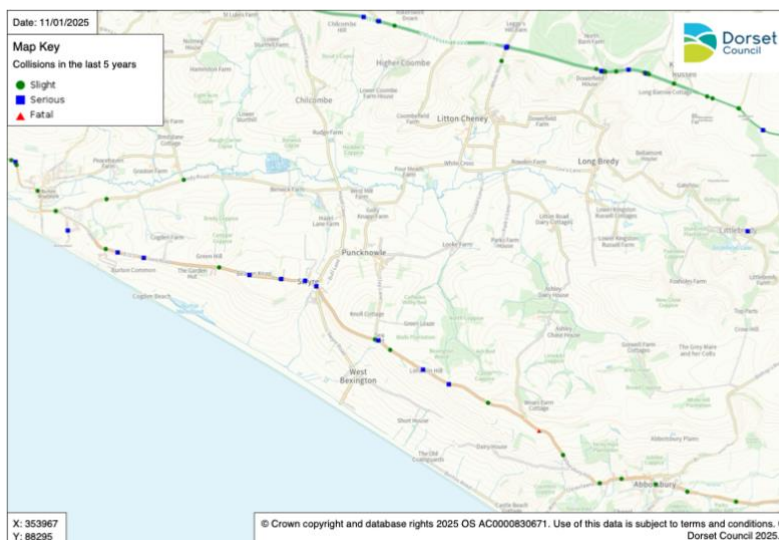
The criteria for applications to the scheme is as follows:

- history of collisions
- road geometry and engineering
- road function
- composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users)
- existing traffic speeds
- road environment

The policy also considers density, and therefore increased risk, a high chance of compliance and strong public support.

i) Accident Statistics

I have asked for some data via Dorset Council but never received a reply. The map of accidents is detailed in the



Road Safety – No Policy

Parish Council may wish to consider Road Safety Measures.

Organisation	Contact
Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP) – 2011- 2026	Available on: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset LTP (3) Implementation Plan – 2017 – 2020 (published May 2017)	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/288596/IP3+2017-2020+_Final+160517.pdf/ad607757-6672-26e5-d044-8212a2245d22
Gov.UK	https://www.gov.uk/speed-limits https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits/setting-local-speed-limits
Dorset Council Approach to setting speed limits. Inc: Traffic Advisory Leaflet	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/our-approach-to-setting-speed-limits
20mph policy Dorset Council	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/20-mile-per-hour-mph-policy?p_l_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dtraffic%2Bcalming%2Bmeasures#overview https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/20mph-limits-and-zones

Appendices

a) West Dorset Plan – Transport Policy

COM7. CREATING A SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORT NETWORK

- Development that generates significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes including public transport, walking and cycling can be maximised.
- Development should be located where the volume of traffic likely to be generated can be accommodated on the local highway network without exacerbating community severance.
- Development will not be permitted where the residual cumulative impacts on the efficiency of the transport network are likely to be severe.
- Development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that it would not have a severe detrimental effect on road safety, or measures can be introduced to reasonably mitigate potentially dangerous conditions.
- The delivery of a strategic cycle network and improvements to the public rights of way network will be supported. Development should not result in the severance or degradation of existing or proposed routes. Where development degrades the attractiveness of a route, compensatory enhancements will be sought such that there is a net improvement to the public right of way network. Where development proposals provide the opportunity to significantly improve links within the public rights of way network, an appropriate link through the development will be required.

COM8. TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES AND COMMUNITY TRAVEL EXCHANGES

- Proposals which involve the improvement of the public realm around public transport interchanges will be encouraged and supported as long as there is no detriment to the function of the interchange.
- Proposals for community travel exchanges in urban and rural areas will be supported, provided that:
 - it can provide safe access to the public right of way network, cycle network
 - and highway network and can accommodate and provide safe access and egress for large vehicles;
 - it has space to accommodate sufficient car and cycle parking; and
 - it will support existing community facilities located in the local area.

COM9. PARKING STANDARDS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

- Parking should be provided in association with new residential development. The amount of car parking to be provided will be assessed under the methodology set out in the Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset Residential Car Parking Study (or its replacement), taking account of the following factors:
 - Levels of local accessibility;
 - Historic and forecast car ownership levels;

- The size, type, tenure and location of the dwellings;
- The appropriate mix of parking types (e.g. unallocated, on-street, visitor - etc).
- Cycle parking facilities should be provided where suitable private storage is not provided, at a ratio of one cycle space per 2 dwelling units.
- Parking standards for non-residential development should be agreed through joint discussions between the local Highway Authority and the Local Planning

Authority in accordance with published local parking guidelines.

DRAFT