

Dorset Council

Shipton Gorge and Loders Community Governance Review

Initial submissions received

A consultation exercise ran from 3 November to 5 December 2025. There were 29 responses received as set out below:

	Respondent	What is your view on the current boundaries and structure of existing parish areas	Proposals for boundary changes	Should the parish be divided into wards
Residents who believe the parish boundaries should remain as they are or “don’t know”:				
1	Resident	Don't know	Not answered	Don't know
2	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
3	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
4	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	Don't know

5	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
6	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
7	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
8	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
9	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	I think each village in the parish would benefit from having its own ward making more relevant suggestions or ideas from residents living in them.
10	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
11	Resident	I think the current parish	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided

		areas should stay the same		
12	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
13	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	With reference to the Parish Boundary of Shipton Gorge and Loders , I am in favour of the boundary staying as drawn in 2023 (using the A35 as the boundary line). The boundary directly impacts us, as our house and land are situated on the boundary line.	Not answered
14	Resident	I think the current parish areas should stay the same	Not answered	The parish should remain undivided
Residents who believe changes should be made to the parish boundaries:				
1	Resident	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	There was no need to change the boundary in 2024. A request from one household in Shipton Gorge to amend an anomaly in ownership of land that spanned two parishes does not merit the boundary change that then ensued. There was no rationale to justify the ensuing change by Dorset Council other than relating to the physical feature of A35. Yet this makes no sense as the boundary at the Walditch end was not included. Look carefully at the amended boundary and there is a strange loop by Shipton making no sense and not in line with the A35. The original boundary followed the historical ridge (surely a more permanent feature of landscape unlike a road that can be changed), incorporates an historic church parish field and the road names refer to the historic association with Loders	Don't know

			<p>Parish. Given the majority of residents affected by this boundary change wish to return to Loders Parish and given there was no rational reason for the change in 2024, it seems reasonable to accord to their request. Furthermore it is understood that those residents have been very much more involved in the community of Loders and consider themselves to be part of the Loders community. Any historic documents or media would report them as Loders residents.</p>	
2	Loders Parish Church	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	<p>I think the boundary should be returned to the pre 2023/24 boundary along the ridge over Shipton Hill. This is a clear boundary that has existed for centuries that both pre-dates and will post-date any man-made road that could be moved in the long term.</p> <p>The people of the area in question are part of the community in Loders in all sorts of ways, including being the mainstays of Uploders chapel for many years. they also support the Parish church in various ways. There is a general feeling amongst all the residents that there was no need to change the boundary, and the houses in question feel part of Loders parish. The change in boundary has created a difference between civic and ecclesial boundaries, which will create confusion, and potential errors in marriage preliminaries. Having the civic and ecclesial boundary matching provides clarity and convenience.</p> <p>I am also chair of the Loders Relief of Need Charity and this owns a field in the area affected and it has owned this field since 1620. Whilst the ownership of the field is not in dispute, being out of Loders Parish and in Shipton Gorge parish could provide a dispute in the future, with Shipton</p>	Don't know

			<p>residents asking why is Shipton land is being used for Loders charitable benefit.</p> <p>In summary, it is my opinion that there was no substantial desire among the residents to change the boundary and some strong desire to return to being part of Loders parish.</p> <p>Rev Chris Grasske B.Eng B.A. Rector The Benefice of Eggardon and Colmers Incorporating the parishes of Askerswell, Powerstock, Loders and Symondsburry.</p>	
3	Resident - On behalf of residents affected by the previous change of boundary	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	<p>Return of Boundary to Original pre 2023 Position</p> <p>History</p> <p>During 2021 to 2023 Dorset Council held a Community Governance Revue (CGR) for the whole of Dorset. One of the changes that was considered was the boundary between Loders Parish and Shipton Gorge Parish which was moved from its original route over Shipton Hill to along the A35. 12 households were effected.</p> <p>There was a lot of misunderstanding and confusion amongst the councils about what was being proposed and what was not, with the result that neither Loders Parish Council, Shipton Gorge Parish Council nor Dorset Council informed any of the residents affected by the boundary change of the ongoing CGR. I have talked with every one of the effected households and no-one, not even those who requested the initial change,NO-ONE, knew anything about either of the consultation periods and so no responses were made.</p> <p>If we had been notified I believe we would have responded strongly and stopped the change.</p>	The parish should remain undivided

			<p>It would have taken only 1 letter, the same letter, sent to each of the 12 households to render the whole of this current CGR superfluous.</p> <p>In 2025, 88% of the voters within the effected area felt strong enough to sign a petition requesting that the boundary be returned to its original pre 2023 position. This was the earliest we were legally allowed to raise a petition. This has lead to the current CGR and shows how strong those signing the petition feel about being moved out of Loders Parish, and wanting the boundary to return to its pre 2023 position.</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>If we now look at the Terms of Reference for this CGR, and in particular the description of the last CGR (1st complete paragraph on page 2). They give the wrong impression. It correctly states that there were no adverse comments. But that implies that there were favourable comments whereas there weren't any comments at all. As I explained above. It also implies that we couldn't be bothered to comment. Nothing could have been further from the truth! We, those affected, knew nothing at all about the consultations and so couldn't comment.</p> <p>Petition</p> <p>The Petition Area covers the area between the original, pre April 2023, boundary and the post April 2023 boundary. In both cases the Ward and Parish boundaries are aligned, one directly above the other (co-terminus).</p> <p>The area contains twelve households, with 25 people on the electoral register.</p> <p>The requested change affects the Parishes of Loders and Shipton Gorge, and the Wards of Eggardon and Chesil Bank.</p>	
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			<p>The Recommendation</p> <p>To revert the new 2023 boundary between Loders and Shipton Gorge to its original pre 2023 boundary.</p> <p>Reason for Proposed Boundary change</p> <p>Prior to the Boundary change in 2023, two individual responses were received by Dorset Council from householders, one whose property was in the Parish of Loders and his neighbour whose house was in Shipton but part of his land was in Loders, but they felt more connected to Shipton Gorge . Both Shipton Gorge and Loders Parish Councils recognised this anomaly and supported a Parish Boundary change to move the properties identified in the submission. A change in the boundary was devised which only affected them. However this proposed boundary was discounted by Dorset Council. We then think Dorset Council decided that the A35 would form a good boundary. We believe that this was an incorrect assumption.</p> <p>There is a road that goes under the A35 at Loders Cross, which rather like a bridge over a river, nullifies the boundary. This bridge connects most of the households in the petition area readily to Uploders and then Loders. This means that the new 2023 boundary along the A35 does not provide a good boundary.</p> <p>The original Boundary is via Shipton hill which has a ridge on both the east and west sides, which the boundary follows. Most of this boundary follows public right of ways. This provides a boundary which is both permanent, tied to the ground and easily identifiable and covers an area of low population. Indeed lower than the applicable part of the A35.</p> <p>Personally</p>	
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			<p>Both XXXX and XXXXXX, from Gribb Farm, served on Loders Village Hall committee for several years. They currently run the Loders Short Mat Bowls club.</p> <p>They both have been on the committee for Uploders Methodist Chapel for many years, XXX since 2008.</p> <p>She has also been on the committee of Loders WI again for a similar number of years, many of them holding the posts of either Chair or Treasurer.</p> <p>XXXXX was heavily involved in the preparation of the Loders Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>They have many friends in and around Loders. In contrast they hardly know anyone in Shipton Gorge and have never belonged to any clubs or societies that are based in Shipton.</p> <p>Others</p> <p>Others have held the Carols in the Barn event (a Loders based activity) in their barn for several years, whilst others attend at least one club in Loders.</p> <p>Geographically</p> <p>Why would households with names like Uploders Farm, or Higher Uploders Farm or have Loders Cross in their address consider themselves anything but belonging in Loders.</p> <p>Visually we can now all see Shipton land to the south and Loders land to the north, whereas with the old boundary virtually all of us could only see Loders land. Shipton land was always on the other (south) side of the hill. This is not true of the two houses, one on the east and one on the west end of the boundary. Here they were close to three parishes, and remain that way whatever the boundary.</p> <p>Historically</p>	
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			<p>The Church and civil parishes were the same (co-terminus) for centuries and now they are not, so for church matters (birth, death and marriage) we now have to go to the church in Loders as we are in the ecclesial parish of Loders while for civic matters (most other things including voting) we have to go to Shipton. This is confusing to say the least.</p> <p>The Loders Parish field is now in Shipton Parish. It was bequeathed to the Loders parish in 1620, so it will be difficult to establish which parish now benefits or even has the right to administer it. This field needs to be returned to Loders parish.</p> <p>The road between Shipton Gorge and Uploders has two names. It is Loders Lane at the Shipton end (it is the lane in Shipton going towards Loders) and Shipton Lane at the Loders end. Where do the names change? Obviously at the boundary between Shipton and Loders. That was true, at least until the boundary was moved. Now it has no meaning at all because both ends of the road are in Shipton.</p> <p>The Uploders sign indicating the village is just over 500 metres from those five households that are on the old A35 near the bridge, whereas the sign for Shipton is nearly three times further away. Why would we go to Shipton Gorge in preference to Loders?</p> <p>Some of those living in the the households have been here only a short time while others have lived here 40, 50 or even almost 60 years. One householder has lived here all his life. Why have we been forced to break our ties with Loders when, for whatever reason, not one of us (the 25 people being moved) knew the change was even being contemplated let alone being effectively forced on us.</p>	
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			<p>Current situation</p> <p>Of the 25 people in the petition area 22 (88%), the vast majority, have signed the petition asking for the boundary to be reversed.</p> <p>Loders Parish Council have fully supported a change back to the old boundary. In the minutes of the meeting held on 20/05/25, Councillors agreed that “Loders Parish Council support the resident’s community governance petition and the process by whatever means necessary to reverse the boundary change.”</p> <p>Shipton Gorge Parish Council has also endorsed it. In the minutes of their meeting held on 23/06/25, “Cllr Thimont proposed to support the petition for the boundary change, and all councillors agreed.”</p> <p>Our Rector, also supports the return to the old boundary and expects formal confirmation at the next PCC meeting.</p> <p>In Conclusion</p> <p>The original boundary better reflects the local identities and interests of the vast majority of the community in the Petition Area. It also better reflects the sense of place, civic values, responsibilities and pride and consequently would secure a more effective and convenient governance of the area. It improves the community cohesion of both Parishes as a whole, and restores the community links broken by the 2023 boundary. It also better reflects the history of the area.</p>	
4	Resident	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	One of our residents wants the boundary change. I'm OK with that with the proviso that Innsacre Farm and Innsacre House remain in Shipton Gorge boundary	Don't know

5	Resident	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	The properties which were in the Loders parish prior to the 2023 change should be returned except the property known as Innsacre Farm House which should remain in Shipton Gorge parish	Don't know
6	Loders Parish Council	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	<p>Loders Parish Council supports the petition submitted to Dorset Council to revert the new 2023 boundary between Loders and Shipton Gorge to its original pre-2023 boundary.</p> <p>Representations from two households, one in Shipton Gorge to amend an anomaly in ownership of land where the house was in Shipton while part of the land was in Loders Parish, did not merit the boundary change that followed affecting 12 households. Dorset Council decided to amend this boundary by using the 'fixed physical feature' of the A35 road. This makes no sense as the boundary at the Walditch end was not included and there is also now a strange loop by Shipton not in line with the A35. The original parish boundary followed the physical feature of the ridge which is a more permanent landscape feature, unlike a road which can be altered.</p> <p>Some of the properties affected are named as Uploders Farm, Higher Uploders Farm etc so very much part of the Loders Parish community.</p> <p>Loders Parish Church owns the Loders Field, gifted to them centuries ago and now in a different parish due to the boundary change.</p>	Don't know

			<p>Those households affected have had a great deal of community involvement within the parish of Loders. They have been active members of community groups such as bowling, WI (president), Uploders Chapel committee (used for community events) and one resident particularly was instrumental in the formation of Loders Neighbourhood Plan. It seems harsh to remove someone from this community they have been so supportive of and involved with over the years without their agreement. Those affected responded immediately on finding that they were to become Shipton Gorge residents.</p> <p>The majority of affected residents affected by this strange boundary change are reasonably requesting to return the boundary to its former line. Loders Parish Council support this request for all the given reasons above. It makes sense historically and geographically while providing these residents with the sense of community pride and belonging they have worked so hard over the years to achieve.</p>	
7	Resident	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	We have been in Loders parish council all our time here which is about 60 years. One of our properties is actually called Uploders Farm. We are quite away from Shipton so it did seem daft to change us to Shipton parish a couple of years ago! Change the boundary a bit so the households that want it changed back are happy.	Don't know
8	Parish Councillor	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	Not answered	Don't know

9	Resident living along the boundary line – previously in Uploders and now in Shipton Gorge	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	<p>I have lived in the parish of Uploders for 35 years and have attended the community functions and taken part in the building of the current Village Hall and The Queens Shelter at Well Plot plus various other fundraising events, together with the Church and the Chapel.</p> <p>Our address has Uploders in its title.</p> <p>We are part of a strong community in Uploders.</p>	The parish should remain undivided
10	Shipton Gorge Parish Council	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	<p>One of our residents wants the boundary change.</p> <p>The parish council mainly support the change back to the original boundary prior to the change, however other residents at Innsacre Farm and Innsacre House wish to remain within Shipton Gorge.</p> <p>If both views can be accommodated, the Parish Council would support a change.</p>	The parish should remain undivided
11	Resident and Loders Local History Group	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	<p>The south boundary should be returned to pre-c2022 (see attached), when it was changed to the current arbitrary boundary (A35) without proper consultation of all parish residents. Most people were unaware until it was too late. Tampering with history has knock-on effects. I live in Loders, but my post code says West Milton. At the last census we were counted under West Milton. My family moved to Loders in 1947.</p> <p>These properties were governed by Loders PC for the past c130 years. The Poor Lot field for Loders is now in Shipton. See map at Appendix A</p>	The parish should remain undivided

12	Resident	Not answered	<p>With reference to the Parish Boundary of Shipton Gorge and Loders, I am in favour of the boundary staying for the present as drawn in 2023 (using the A35 as the boundary line).</p> <p>Objections to the 2023 changes, and objections to the Council considering resiling from the 2023 changes are both very understandable. Clearly those residents with properties on roads that lead directly to either Loaders or directly to Shipton Gorge wish to be associated with those respective parishes.</p> <p>There are therefore a fair and logical grounds for a further reassessment to see whether the split of opinion noted above can be reconciled through an alternative amendment.</p> <p>I am therefore in favour the Council returning to this matter whilst leaving the 2023 changes in place.</p> <p>I have to say that the Council has not handled this well. Its explanation material is confusing and complicated, and its questions are ambiguous.</p> <p>The Council must therefore not rely on responses to its multiple-choice questions until it is able to become considerably clearer in its communications and intentions.</p>	Not answered
13	Resident	I think changes should be considered to	The parish boundaries should return to their pre-2014 status as I understand the last changes were made after inadequate consultation with residents. Some active members of the Loders village community found	The parish should remain undivided

		one or more parish areas	themselves under the jurisdiction of Shipton Gorge parish for no good reason or apparent benefit.	
14	Resident	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	All properties that were moved into Shipton Gorge from Loders at the previous review should be returned to Loders as that is where they feel they belong and were moved against their wish.	The parish should remain undivided
15	Resident	I think changes should be considered to one or more parish areas	I think that the boundary should be restored to its original position to align Parish Council and Parochial Church Council boundaries.	The parish should remain undivided

APPENDIX A

