

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### COASTAL FORUM MEETING

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2015

**Chairman:** Cllr Ms. S. Holman, Mayor of Lyme Regis

**LRTC:** Cllr Mrs A. Bradbury, Cllr O. Lovell

**WDDC:** Mr N. Browning (client project manager)

**Halcrow/CH2M Hill:** Mr. C. Evans (supervisor), Mr G. Davis (consultant project manager)

**Dean & Dyball/Balfour Beatty:** Mr J. Cartwright (main contractor)

**Guests:** Mrs A. Boothroyd, Mr C. Boothroyd, Mr K. Dibben, Mr C. Douglas, Mrs I. Etherington, Mr M. Etherington, Mr K. Gollop, Mr R. Gollop, Mr E. Holdstock, Mrs G. Holdstock, Mrs P. Kaxe, Mr J. Moseley, Mrs P. Moseley, Mrs G. Peed, Mr P. Peed, Cllr Mary Penfold, Mrs S. Poupard, Mrs A. Sankey, Mr P. Sankey, Mr T. Tesoriere, Cllr D. Turner, Mrs J. Waldron, Ms S. Whitemore, Mr J. Cook, Mr J. Dover, Mrs J. Dover, Mr M. Smith, Mrs Y. Smith, Mr I Eagland, Mr J. Bragg, Mrs C. Lowe, Mr P. Wiles, and eight other members of the public.

#### Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr S. Williams, Mr M. Furber, Mr T. Gedge, Mr D. Hallett, Mrs M. Hedges, Ms J. Hedley-Tuffs, Dr Jepson. Mrs Jepson, Mr G. Thomas, Mr D. Venes

#### Matters arising from the notes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2013

The Mayor, Cllr Ms S. Holman thanked WDDC for replenishing the beach during dredging and she was pleased with the beach profile.

#### Overall Phase IV progress

Mr Browning's presentation is available from the town council office.

Mr Browning said that under the main contract there would be a one-year maintenance period on Phase IV civil engineering works, two years maintenance of the coastal slope landscaping and that there would be five years of post scheme ecological monitoring. The scheme was within the budget and target dates set at the grant application stage. Following the scheme, the district council will continue to carry out phase IV and phase II ground monitoring, which were well within the predicted ranges. The phase II beach profile monitoring results were generally satisfactory. Monitoring of water quality in the phase II ground water drains showed improvement, possibly due to work by South West Water. Cobb structural monitoring is continuing.

Mr Browning said the general performance of the beach profile has been good throughout the winter, although he was slightly concerned about reduced sand volumes. He said it would be re-surveyed following the recent dredging and re-profiling work.

The official opening was going to be in June 2015, when representatives from West Dorset District Council (WDDC), Dorset County Council (DCC), the Environment Agency, Lyme Regis Town

Council (LRTC) and contractors and consultants would be invited to attend. Mr Browning welcomed suggestions for the name of the walkway.

Mr K. Gollop asked who would be deciding on the name of the walkway. Mr Browning said he would feel more comfortable if the politicians decided. Mr Gollop said he believed the Coastal Forum attendees should decide. It was agreed a vote would be taken on the three suggested names: Mary Anning Walk, East Cliff Walk, and Church Cliff Walk. Mr J. Dover also suggested Thomas Hollis Walk or Hollis Walk.

Mr Browning said they had avoided calling it a beach as this might attract visitors with buckets and spades. Mrs S. Poupard was concerned that calling it East Cliff Walk might cause confusion and encourage people to climb up to East Cliff lane.

The vote was as follows:

East Cliff Walk – 4  
Mary Anning Walk – 9  
Hollis Walk – 1  
Church Cliff Walk – 17

Mr Browning said he would put forward Church Cliff Walk to WDDC's communications team and although he could not promise it would be the final name, it would be influential as it had come from the forum.

Mr Browning added that he would be retiring on 27 March 2015.

### **Completion of Phase IV design and construction**

Mr Cartwright's presentation is available from the town council office.

He said although they no longer had a full time presence in Lyme Regis, they had a contractual commitment to complete maintenance and repair work. He said some of the joints had opened up on the seawall as the concrete had been poured in the summer when it was warm, so they would be returning to re-seal them.

### **Post scheme slope stability and monitoring**

Mr Davis said the scheme has allowed a certain amount of slippage to continue, so if the public see some soil behind or beyond the seawall, they should not be worried. He said that it was intended to allow the natural processes to continue above the eastern end of the seawall. Mr Davis said they would be keeping a close eye on land movements using instruments in the ground. One instrument would measure the water level in the ground at depth, and a probe would measure the shape of a tube in the ground and compare the shape with the results from six months previously. This would show the depth of any ground movement, how much it has moved, and in what direction.

Mr Davis said most of the engineering works are not visible, but there was a huge amount of concrete and engineering structures in the ground.

He said the monitoring would give reassurance that the structures are behaving as designed.

## **Cobb storm damage repairs and Phase V**

Mr Browning said phase V is to strengthen and restore the Cobb. He said movement was being measured over a period of time and the cracks were being monitored, which showed some gradual progressive movement on the southern arm.

He said repair work following the storms was being used to trial techniques and materials to be used for phase V. Mr Browning said £170,000 Defra funding had been used for the repairs, and there was £20,000 left to spend. He said that special lime mortar mixes had been used where large areas of masonry were washed away during the previous winter's storms and some large blocks of Portland stone were replaced. Mr Browning said in many areas it was difficult to see where the repairs were made, and this had been the intention. The structure should now be stronger than before the storms.

Mr Browning said WDDC had resolved to support phase V in principle and a bid for £200,000 for preparatory work would be included in the corporate planning process. He said they may also request funding from English Heritage. The Environment Agency had made a provisional allowance of £2million in year 7 of its medium-term plan.

Mr J. Dover asked if there were any learning points from repairs made following the 2014 storms.

Mr Browning said it helped to demonstrate things they already knew, and they had learnt a lot about how to meet English Heritage's requirements. He said they believed most of the repairs would last tens of years, and it was a question of getting to know what works and what doesn't, and what will or will not be accepted by English Heritage.

Mr J. Dover asked what the engineers would have preferred to have done rather than compromise with English Heritage, and whether English Heritage's requirements were more expensive.

Mr Browning said the consultation process needed to be allowed to progress, but English Heritage had made a valuable contribution throughout the scheme. He said dealing with English Heritage, wasn't always easy but WDDC did have a good working relationship with them and their input was necessary for the use of expensive, appropriate materials to be justified. For example, the appearance and materials of phase I were very much due to English Heritage's influence.

Mr J. Dover said at times during the Cobb repairs it didn't seem that the various contractors were joined up and there were times when there was a lot of dead space.

Mr Browning said WDDC were not in control of all the contractors. The several contractors brought in by Western Power to replace a section of the cable to the Cobb buildings did a good job at a good price. WDDC will be in control of the phase V contractors and will be able to plan and coordinate the work.

Mr P. Wiles said there was an ugly lamppost near to the Cobb steps. Mr Browning said he would look into this. WDDC was also looking at the lighting and hand rails on Gun Cliff Walk in the next few months.

Mr R. Edmonds asked what the works to the Cobb were being designed to defend against, what would happen if that event was exceeded, and whether there was a contingency.

Mr Browning said the Cobb structure had stood up remarkably well to last winter's storms and that most of the storm damage had been relatively superficial, but there are potential storms that it wouldn't stand up to, and once the structure failed storm damage might progress rapidly.

The Mayor, Cllr Ms S. Holman said the £4million budget didn't seem much in comparison to the cost of phases II and IV. Bearing in mind the importance of phase V, she asked Mr Browning how confident he was of being able to find the £2million over and above the £2million to come from the Environment Agency, and where it might come from.

Mr Browning said the £2million requested from the Environment Agency was an arbitrary amount which would be adjusted as the preparatory work proceeds, but he would expect the agency to make a substantial contribution towards the coast protection elements. He said the remaining £2million was less certain and the extent of conservation and heritage work could be adjusted to achieve good value for the available money. Mr Browning said although the condition of the surface is generally deteriorating, the recent repairs had improved the situation and there is still time to secure the funding.

Mr R. Gollop said he had formally been involved with the Cobb for many years, and as new materials had come along it was used, therefore English Heritage should allow new materials should be used for phase V.

Mr Browning said they were expecting English Heritage to allow them to use some new techniques, but it is the surface materials where there was most difficulty. He said they had been using traditional lime mortar for years but it had always washed out. 'Prompt' lime mortar set more quickly and reliably but turns brown. They were getting closer to the desired result by improving the mixes. Mr Browning said they are co-operating with English Heritage and working towards solutions acceptable to both parties.

Mr K. Gollop said there were lots of different materials used on the surface of the Cobb and asked why English Heritage could not accept a few new things. He asked if WDDC could press them to put a decent pathway all the way along the Cobb.

Mr Browning said they had previously raised the possibility of putting a relatively smooth path in but they didn't have agreement on that yet. He said there needed to be a proper consultation process on the Cobb. This would not start until after the elections when WDDC would set a new budget. Mr Browning said he expected English Heritage and WDDC to be able to agree practical solutions.

Mr J. Dover said he would like to think English Heritage would be involved in any face-to-face consultation.

Mr Browning said English Heritage would be involved in any consultation.

### **Brief review of overall scheme**

Mr G. Davis showed photographs of Lyme Regis from the early to mid 1900s, and of the coastal protection works carried out over the last 25 years, including phase I from 1993 to 1995, phases II and III from 2005 to 2007, and phase IV from 2012-2014, and emergency works carried out in 2004 to prevent loss of property before phases II and IV were built.

### **Date of next meeting**

Mr Browning suggested the Coastal Forum met in one year's time following the elections and the setting of the budget.

The Mayor, Cllr Ms S. Holman thanked the Phase IV partnership scheme of: West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council (DCC), the Environment Agency/Defra funding, Nick Lyness, Neil Watson, Geoff Davis and Clive Evans of Halcrow/CH2M Hill, Chris Hill and Jon Cartwright of Dean and Dyball/Balfour Beatty, DCC's earth sciences manager Richard Edmonds, John Stobart of

Natural England, and county ecologist Phil Sterling. She also thanked Mr Browning and his teams on behalf of the town and personally, having working with him since the start of phase II.

Mr R. Gollop said he remembered getting involved 26 years ago when the Coastal Forum was formed. He said he had the privilege of being in the technical group, working together with the engineers, and the engineers took on board what the locals wanted. They had to do the technical side, but the local group got 95 per cent of everything they put forward for the town. He said it had been a privilege to have worked with the engineers and the council since they started.

Former WDDC chairman, Cllr Mary Penfold, said it had been a great pleasure to work with Mr Browning and everyone was very grateful for the time and care he had given them. She especially thanked the people of Lyme Regis. She said the forum had been a success and Lyme Regis had the proof of what has been achieved.

Mr Browning said he remembered the first meeting at Woodmead Halls when he was operating the slide projector and since then he felt quite privileged to have worked on good, useful, interesting work in Lyme Regis and elsewhere in West Dorset, such as West Bay. He said he enjoyed having this work to do and enjoyed the people most of the time. He hoped the Coastal Forum would continue through the years and the scheme would continue to produce good results for the Cobb.

The Mayor, Cllr Ms S. Holman asked to be kept informed of whether the scheme wins any of the awards it was entered into. She said it had been a pleasure to work with Mr Browning and she was glad to have had him in Lyme Regis. She wished him well in his retirement and invited residents to join her after the meeting in an informal thanks to Mr Browning and the teams involved in delivering phase IV.