

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### COASTAL FORUM MEETING

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 MAY 2014

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

**LRTC:** Cllr C. Clipson, Cllr Mrs. L. Jenkin, Cllr Mrs A. Bradbury, Cllr S. Williams

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

**Halcrow:** Mr. C. Evans (contract supervisor)

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

**Guests:** Mr J. Bragg, Mrs A. Boothroyd, Mr C. Boothroyd, Mrs C. Clipson, Mr J. Cook, Mr K. Dibben, Mrs I. Etherington, Mr M. Etherington, Mr K. Gollop, Mr R. Gollop, Mr D. Hallett, Ms M. Hedges, Ms J. Holdstock, Ms R. Katz, Mrs P. Kaxe, Mrs C. Lowe, Mr P. Lowe, Mr T. Sweeney, Cllr D. Turner (WDDC and DCC), Mr D. Venes, Mrs J. Waldron, Ms G. Whiteley, Miss S. Whitemore, Mrs C. Williams, Mr P. Williams, Mr D. Wilson (WDDC)

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ms R. Austin, Cllr Miss L. Campbell, Mr C. Davies, Mrs S. Davies, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Mr M. Furber, Cllr M. Gage, Mr T. Gedge, Mr J. Moseley, Cllr T. O'Grady, Mrs G. Peed, Mr P. Peed, Cllr Mrs M. Penfold, Cllr G. Symonds, Mr J. Tesoriere, Mr G. Thomas, Mr B. Thornber.

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

There were none.

#### **Phase IV Coast Protection Scheme – Update on progress and methods of working, programme to completion, opening arrangements and ground conditions**

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

Mr Browning said the work was still well within the programme and £19.4million budget approved by the Environment Agency.

He said the volume of site traffic was reducing, the temporary closure of East Cliff would be in place until November, control of site traffic had worked well in spite of difficulties such as the closure of Church Street. The limited pedestrian access to Gun Cliff had worked reasonably well and people had been able to get access to East Cliff and the foreshore. He added that they took an interest in all events going on in the town and tried to accommodate them whenever possible.

Mr Browning said ground monitoring of Phase IV indicated that the completed parts of the scheme were working well and behaving as they were expected to. The Phase II ground monitoring was also well within the expected range.

Also in relation to Phase II and the beach profile, Mr Browning said there had been a gradual decline in the volume of beach material over the past few years, but a lot of it had come back after

the February storms. He added that the Cobb structure still appeared to be remarkably sound although there was extensive storm damage to the surfaces.

Mr Browning said through the wet weather there had been considerable movement below the allotments and this had a significant impact on progress in the area for safety reasons.

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

Mr Cartwright said the current plan was to finish the main civil engineering works in August 2014 with a target to open a footpath to the beach from Charmouth Road car park in July. Mr Browning added that there will be times when landslips are active above the eastern end of the new seawall and the walkway there will be closed to the public for safety reasons.

Mr Cartwright said the main compound in the car park would be gone by the end of the summer holidays, with completion anticipated in December.

He said there were four more weeks of work to be done on the new sea wall.

Mr J. Cook said the condition of the road surface on the A35 near to Strawberry Field, known locally as the corkscrew, was very poor due to heavy machinery, and he asked if there was any intention to repair this at the end of the works. Mr Browning responded that he was not aware of the condition of the road in that area. He said the general position was that contractors were entitled to use the road, but if exceptional damage was brought to their attention, they would take this to Dorset County Council (DCC). He added that DCC was paying 20 per cent of the costs of the project so between DCC and WDDC, they would look at which areas needed to be repaired at the end and incorporate that into DCC's programme.

Mr J. Bragg asked who would maintain all the planting and landscaped areas once the work was finished. Mr Browning responded that there was a year's maintenance for the civil engineering works, and two years for the planting and landscaping; after that, it was the responsibility of WDDC. He added that there was a formal requirement for WDDC to maintain some areas, while other areas would come under the general maintenance programme.

Mr J. Bragg said with the pathway open between Charmouth Road car park and the sea wall, there was likely to be extra litter and he asked whose responsibility it would be to clear this up. Mr Browning responded that it was the eventual aim to get it formally adopted as a footpath, and it would then be taken over by DCC.

Mr D. Venes questioned the gradient of the footpath and whether it would be possible to have disabled access. Mr Browning responded that the gradient was very steep, and to take more land to decrease the gradient would mean going into ecologically sensitive, unstable areas. He added that it was investigated whether it was possible to have wheelchair access, but unfortunately there had to be steps.

Cllr Mrs L. Jenkin asked who is responsible in the long-term for the land at the eastern end of the seawall. Mr Browning responded that it was the responsibility of WDDC to keep the seawall safe and close the eastern end of the walkway when necessary. He said there would be gates and a warning sign where the footpath meets the sea wall to stop people going along the seawall to the east when the landslips are active. He added that work would be required to the footpath from time to time to keep it safe.

Mr J. Cook asked how people could be kept off the cliffs. Mr Browning responded that parts of it would be fenced and there would be barrier planting to stop people climbing up the hillside to people's houses. He added that they would provide good information and an explanation that if

people do go off the footpath, they would damage the surface of the coast protection works and the habitat.

Mr K. Gollop asked if there would be seating along the footpath. Mr Browning responded that there would be a few seats for people to have a rest, but it was not intended to be a picnic area. Mr C. Evans also responded that there would be seats along the sea wall.

Mr R. Gollop asked if there was enough rock armour at the end of the sea wall to stop the sea coming in at the back of the wall, and why was it altered. Mr Browning responded that the initial proposal was to extend the sea wall and rock armour by about 60 metres but this wasn't considered acceptable. He said 380 tonnes of rock armour had been put in at the end of the sea wall. He said the design of the piles at the top of the slope had been strengthened to act as a retaining wall as the ground below is lost. He said the decision was taken in order to protect extremely important geological exposures at the base of the cliff and get the consents required.

Cllr D. Turner challenged Mr Browning's earlier comments that a lot of the beach material had replenished during the February storms and said he believed the sand had depleted by 4ft. Mr Browning said they were not able to measure sand and shingle volumes separately. As the two were mixed together they could only measure overall volumes of sand and shingle.

A member of the public asked if there was any possibility of community involvement for the planting scheme, perhaps with children and youth groups. Mr Browning responded that most planting was being done for ecological or landscaping reasons or was within private gardens, so there would be no opportunity for community involvement.

A member of the public asked what was being done to stop people clambering up the cliff at the back of the seawall. Mr Browning responded that there would be preventative planting, such as bramble and blackthorns, and underneath the vegetation would be slippery wire mesh. The bramble would also provide good habitat, particularly for dormice.

Mr D. Hallett thanked various people who had helped and supported the Phase IV works, with a special thanks to the workmen who had worked incredibly well. He said the town was extremely grateful to all involved, to the workforce, and to the town council. Mr Browning responded that this would be passed on to the workforce.

Cllr S. Williams said church jetty appeared to be in a very bad state and he had previously been assured there would be a new jetty. He also said the erosion of the cliffs this year had been the equivalent of seven years' of erosion. Cllr Williams also asked why 50 metres of Beacon Rocks was vetoed. Mr Browning said he was aware of the state of the jetty but they did not want to start a separate contract while this work was ongoing, so it was the intention to come back and carry out repairs to keep it safe. He said other work was required, such as the repairing of the handrail going down the steps and the repair of the lighting. Mr Browning said they could not justify any further work to Beacon Rocks at the moment but they were keeping an eye on how the beach performs. He added that the original modelling work indicated that there may be a need to import further beach material about every 10 years.

Cllr Ms S. Holman wished the team all the best to take them to the completion of Phase IV and praised the work that had taken place so far.

Cllr Mrs L. Jenkin asked if there was any chance that the new footpath would ever lead onto the coastal footpath route. Mr Browning responded that to be adopted as a footpath it has to connect with a footpath or highway at both ends, and that they were talking to DCC about the possibility but it was a slow process.

## **Proposals for Phase V – The Cobb**

Mr J. Bragg said repairs made to the 'junction' three years ago were poor, and he asked if the public would have any say on the type of stones that would be put in to try and remedy the previous repairs. Mr Browning responded that the repairs done over the years had been very variable and they were trying to ensure that future work would be done to a high standard, compatible with the Grade 1 listing.. He said there had been discussion about how to involve the public in the Phase V proposals and they would like to start another consultation process before the formal consultation process begins with the planning and listed building applications. He added that he would like another Coastal Forum meeting in the winter when he hoped the idea would be better formulated and the detail can be discussed before formal applications are submitted.

Cllr Ms S. Holman said after the storm damage, it was important that funding was secured to repair superficial damage to the Cobb, with thanks due to Oliver Letwin MP who was instrumental in securing the funding. She asked if there was any indication that funding for Phase V would be available.

Mr Browning responded that an application had been made to the Environment Agency for funding of the structural elements and that had been favourably received but there was no confirmation that it was in the agency's programme yet. He added that it would be more difficult to secure funding for the cosmetic and heritage work. He said he hoped WDDC would fund the lead-in work and an enhanced level of monitoring.

Mr T. Sweeney said when a new footbridge was needed to Charmouth, a count was taken of how many people walked over it. He said this might be useful for the Cobb. Mr Browning responded that this kind of information could help tip the balance, but only if there is a sound economic case.

### **Any Other Business**

Cllr Ms S. Holman said the date of the next meeting and the opening of Phase IV would be publicised.

### **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held in the winter, date TBC.