

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

COASTAL FORUM

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2008

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr Ms. S. Holman

LRTC: Cllr P. Williams, Cllr S. Williams and Miss V. Stickler (Admin. Officer)

WDDC: Mr. N. Browning (Principal Engineer), Cllr Mrs. M. Penfold (Frome Valley Ward), Cllr D. Turner (Lyme Regis Ward)

Guests: K. Dibben, I. Etherington, M. Etherington, T. Evey (Football Club), K. Gollop, R. Gollop, D. Hallett, M. Hedges, J. Hedley-Tuffs, A. Kennard, R. Murray (Chideock Parish Council), J. Neubert, Mrs. G. Peed, P.J. Peed, C. Rimmington, Mrs. A. Sankey, Mr. P. Sankey, J. Tesoriere, D. Venes, N. Williams (Passenger Boatmans Association).

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ms. M. Bolton (Lyme Regis Environment Group), C. Davies, Mrs. S. Davies, R. Edmonds, Mrs J. Finch, R. Finch, M. Furber, D. Gatley, T. Gedge (Boat Building Academy), F. Lestner, O. Letwin MP, S. Lissaman-Hill, Mr. Moyes, C. Salter, Mrs. A. Sargent, J. Sargent, Mrs. C. Thomas, G. Thomas, B. Thornber, Cllr Mrs. A. Bradbury, Cllr Miss L. Campbell and Cllr M. Ellis.

Matters arising from the notes of the previous meeting

There were no items raised for discussion.

Brief update on Phase 2

Mr. N. Browning reported that the maintenance contract for Phase 2 (Cobb Gate to Harbour) had ended except for some remaining planting in the gardens (which would be handed to WDDC and subsequently LRTC on the 4th April 2009). There were also two snagging items which needed to be addressed before the final contract payment was made. These were drainage repair work to Harbour Height and works on the drainage channel behind the day huts on Cart Road. These were due to be completed shortly. St. Vincent had been sold at auction recently. The maintenance period for 14/15 Marine Parade was also ending but the future of the site had not yet been decided and WDDC would be discussing this with LRTC. Finally, slope monitoring equipment showed no significant ground movement and a contractor had been appointed for future monitoring of this equipment.

Mr. Browning advised that the Phase 2 scheme had cost around £28.4 million including consultants fees, most of which was recovered from grants and contributions, leaving the remaining £800,000 to be paid by WDDC.

Update on phase 4 proposals

A copy of Mr. N. Browning's presentation with detailed data and plans is available to view in the Lyme Regis Town Council Offices.

Mr. N. Browning reminded members of the proposals for Phase 4 works as outlined in the notes from the meeting held on the 24th July 2008.

Consents and Funding

Mr. Browning advised that since the last Coastal Forum meeting, work has continued to look at potential funding. A proposal had been submitted to the Environment Agency for support towards the additional lead-in work. The Environment Agency approved limited funding, but required the submission of further information on grant eligible work.

Further details of the Outcome Measures used to assess projects nationally had been received and WDDC were working to improve the score for Phase 4. The current score was 1, which was not sufficient for grant approval. However, there was £110 million allocated over a 3 year period to local authorities for coast defence works and the authority's record of delivering projects would be taken into account. The Environment Agency carried out a formal assessment of the sea wall and labelled it as being at grade 4 condition (grade 5 is the worst condition). They gave it a 10-15 year residual life. The urgency to replace this wall would aid the search for funding.

Dorset County Council was considering awarding some lead-in funding and is aware of the need for long-term funding for the scheme. The main funding for Phase 4 should come from Defra and the Environment Agency.

Programme

Mr. Browning advised that with the current scoring system under Outcome Measures and Defra definition of coastal defence, the scheme may have to be phased. Three areas were being considered:

- 1) The sea wall and rock armour at its eastern end and soil nailing, piling and drainage on Church Cliff
- 2) The western sidescarp of the mudslide area between Charmouth Road car park and Church Cliff
- 3) The area below the allotments and Charmouth Road car park, possibly including the eastern end of the sea wall

The broad options remaining to WDDC were:

- 1) Submit proposals for the entire scheme which may be turned down for funding by Defra
- 2) Apply for funding for areas 1 and 2 (Phase 4a)
- 3) Reduce the scheme to those elements clearly meeting the coastal defence definition to achieve government funding, which would be a last resort

The possible start date for the works had been moved back to 2011.

Discussion

- Q) Cllr S. Williams expressed a concern that a large amount of beach material had been lost at Back Beach since the Phase 2 works were completed. He believed that if the groynes were removed then this would increase the loss of the beach.
- A) Mr. Browning responded that the loss of the beach was something that the Engineers would look into. However, there was evidence that groynes were not providing much protection and did not do what they were intended to do. They were also considered an obstacle to people getting trapped by a rapidly incoming tide. He asked Cllr Williams to write to him with details of his concerns.
- Q) Mr. K. Dibben asked if there would be access from the top of the new wall to the beach at the eastern end.
- A) Mr. Browning confirmed that this was in the design of the scheme.
- Q) Mr. N. Williams was concerned about the condition of Church Cliff Jetty and that Cobb Gate Jetty had not been rebuilt as a landing jetty.
- A) Mr. Browning advised that the condition of Church Cliff Jetty would be looked at in more detail in the future.

- Q) How do you put a value on St. Michael's Parish Church?
- A) Mr. Browning replied that this was proving difficult, because valuers had given significantly different appraisals of the value of the church. There were also issues in the valuation of the infrastructure such as Charmouth Road. WDDC was looking to get more accurate values for both of these.
- Q) How can the community and LRTC help with the funding applications?
- A) Mr. Browning replied that there would be a time when support from both the community and LRTC would be essential but that he would explain more at the right time.
- Q) Cllr S. Williams was concerned that the work in areas 1 and 2 would have a negative impact on the eastern end of the Phase 4 area and may even speed up erosion.
- A) Mr. Browning reported that expert advice had been sought on all aspects of the design to determine the impact on erosion.
- Q) How much will the scheme cost?
- A) Mr. Browning advised that in total the construction costs of the scheme would be around £10 - £11 million for areas 1 and 2, and £3 - £4 million for area 3. However the risks of working in on unstable land in area 3 were very considerable.
- Q) Are Archaeologists involved in the works?
- A) Mr. Browning advised that Archaeologists were involved from the very beginning of construction with all capital projects like this in West Dorset.

Mr. Browning requested that any specific concerns be made to him in writing so that he can discuss them further.

Brief update on phase 5 proposals (Cobb structures)

Mr. Browning reported that Phase 5 plans were still in an early stage with more investigation needed. The investigation would look at the structure of the Cobb including monitoring of movement and using ground penetrating radar and borescopes to identify voids inside the Cobb wall. English Heritage and the Environment Agency had been approached for funding for the investigation work. English Heritage had added some extra work to the plans leaving the cost at £58,000. English Heritage and the Environment Agency were asked to fund half of the £58,000 cost each.

WDDC hoped to appoint a consultant shortly to manage the work and then subsequently proposals for Phase 5 could be developed.

Any other business

Ms. J. Neubert was concerned about a smell of sewage in the sea water. Mr. Browning advised that the bathing water was tested regularly by the Environment Agency, during the bathing season, and during construction of Phase 2 any trace of pollution was followed back through the new drainage system so that the source could be identified and dealt with. The results of the tests were published and on display in the Town Council offices, noticeboards in the town and on the internet. Ms. Neubert had been advised that a further test was scheduled to be carried out, but that these usually only took place during the summer months.

The Chairman advised that LRTC would enquire about year-round testing of the sea water.

Date of next meeting/Future meetings

The next Coastal Forum meeting will be held on Thursday 12th February 2009, agenda to follow in due course.