

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2019

#### **Present**

**Chairman:** The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe, MBE

**Councillors:** Cllr Ms B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr L. Howe, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr Ms G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

**Officers:** Mr J. Wright (town clerk), Mr M. Green (deputy town clerk) and Mr M. Stainer (temporary finance manager)

#### **19/33/C Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting who wished to speak.

#### **19/34/C Apologies for Absence**

Cllr D. Ruffle – personal commitments

#### **19/35/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

#### **19/36/C Dispensations**

There were none.

#### **19/37/C Internal Audit Report, Visit Three 2018-19**

The town clerk introduced the report and invited questions from members.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe made reference to the issues which had been caused by the long-term absence of the finance manager.

In response to questions from Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, the temporary finance manager explained that bank reconciliation was completed to financial year end and that payroll, pension and HMRC returns were all up-to-date.

The deputy town clerk responded to questions about point 5.3 in the appendix to the report relating to car park income. He explained that the sum involved was approximately £8k and that the various external organisations involved had identified the extent of the problem and its

cause, which related to a card reader installed in one particular ticket machine.

Recovery measures were now in process and he said he was confident the matter would be resolved satisfactorily.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to note the outcome of the internal auditor's third visit for 2018-19 which took place on 6 June 2019.

#### **19/38/C Internal Audit Report, Visit Four 2018-19**

The town clerk made reference to the increase in the number of recommendations from 10 to 18 as compared with the previous year. This was largely explained by the finance team running at less than full complement for most of the year. He emphasised that the general trend was downwards and that even the 18 recommendations represented a much lower number than in either 2014/15 or 2015/16, when there had been 33 and 24, respectively.

In response to a query from Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, he undertook to ensure the visits of the internal auditor were more evenly spread throughout the following year; although visits 3 and 4 tended to be closer together for logistical reasons.

The town clerk responded to Cllr J. Scowen by explaining that next year would be the final year of a five-year arrangement for the appointment of the current internal auditor, following which it would need to be reviewed and re-advertised. This helped to maintain a professional working relationship.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to note the outcome of the internal auditor's fourth visit for 2018-19 which took place on 14 June 2019.

#### **19/39/C Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2019**

The town clerk explained the process for appointing the council's external auditors. He also ran through the variations between the forecast and final budgets and the reasons for those variations; primarily the use of prudent and conservative estimates of income, which had been exceeded in practice.

He informed members that the council had received its third consecutive unqualified annual internal audit report.

In response to concerns raised by Cllr R. Doney about a situation which had arisen at another local council, the town clerk explained this council's internal control mechanisms. He also highlighted that it was everyone's duty

to raise any concerns they might have, including contacting the internal auditor directly if appropriate.

The temporary finance manager invited any member to contact him to ask questions about any aspect of the council's budget. He would be happy to advise them.

Cllr J. Scowen referred to the recent member briefing session about finance, which he thought had been excellent and had given him reassurance about the council's finances and controls.

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2019, including, firstly, Section 1. Annual Governance Statement and, secondly, Section 2. Accounting Statements.

*The meeting ended at 7.39pm.*