

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2019

Present

Chairman: The Deputy Mayor, Cllr J. Scowen

Councillors: Cllr Ms B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: Mr M. Green (deputy town clerk), Mrs A. Mullins (administrative officer)

Absent: Cllr R. Doney and Cllr L. Howe

19/80/C

Public Forum

Ms R. Pope

Ms R. Pope said she had been raising concerns about the Spittles landfill site for more than a year and she asked for an update on what was happening. She said the dynamics of the site had changed and the policies for managing it needed to change too. She said very few people used to go to East Beach as groyne, tides and rocks prevented easy access and children were rarely seen there. However, since putting in sea defences and the two paths from Charmouth Road car park and the town, she said huge numbers of people had effectively been directed to a landfill site without a thought for the consequences and implications. Ms R. Pope said she photographed metal on the beach in May and photographed the same metal at the end of July. She said she made multiple requests for that metal to be removed before the school holidays as she considered some of it to be dangerous, particularly for small children. Ms R. Pope read out a section of a Southampton University report which said regular beach inspections would be undertaken and examples of triggers for inspection included prior to main holiday periods. She said this clearly didn't happen as the metal was not removed. She said there were also issues with high levels of lead, asbestos and the carcinogen benzene (a) pyrene. Ms R. Pope said she would like to know what ongoing strategies and actions were going to be put in place to ensure greater safety on the beach, particularly for children. She said she would also like to know when contamination samples were going to be taken to assess the risks of leachate for the allotment, and she requested a review of signage on the beach. She said she hoped Dorset Council would fulfil its health and safety requirements regarding rubbish.

Ms J. Mace (read out by Mrs C. Reynolds)

Ms J. Mace said on 17 September her three-year-old son found a used needle on a pathway while hunting for snails. She said he took the safety cap off and although he didn't prick himself he did admit to putting it in his mouth, believing it was something doctors used to make people feel better. She said he didn't see anything dangerous about what he did because he was three and believed she as his mother would keep him safe, which she had failed at doing. Ms J. Mace said the weeks

since then had been difficult; her son had had his first lot of blood tests and the results received that week showed negative so far. She said he was being treated as if he had been exposed to hepatitis B as it was so easily transmitted, so he was receiving a three-dose vaccine, with the first one being very traumatic for him. She said he would receive two more vaccines and a further blood test, and they would get the results around Christmas. Ms J. Mace said after this incident she was angry and scared and wanted to do something to stop another family going through this, so she started an online and paper petition for sharps' bins to be installed in public toilets in Lyme Regis, which so far had 419 signatures. She said she was asking that something was done to show her and the people of Lyme Regis their opinion mattered. She said Lyme, like any other town, city and village, was not immune to drug problems; people were injecting and hiding the fact and being careless with their needles. Ms J. Mace said her son didn't find the first needle in Lyme Regis; the local PCSO and the council's own external works' team had found needles but they didn't have to report their findings to the authorities, so there was no true representation of the problem. She asked the council to consider sharps' bins in public toilets and some kind of school and media promotion to explain to children and adults if they find a needle, where it could be taken to be disposed of safely. Ms J. Mace said she needed to know she had done everything she could to keep children safe and stop another family going through what her family had been through, and she was asking the council to help her.

Mrs C. Reynolds

Mrs C. Reynolds said she realised the issue of sharps' boxes in the council's toilets in Lyme Regis would be dealt with at the next Town Management and Highways Committee meeting, but she and Mark Ellis, of Rapid Emergency Medical Services (REMS) had been working on this together and wanted to give members as much information as they could to enable them to make considered decisions. She said she believed the problem with getting things like this accepted in Lyme Regis was many people refused to believe there was a problem, but unfortunately, the drug problem was universal and Lyme Regis did not escape this. Mrs C. Reynolds said when there was a problem in Lyme Regis in the past, the approach had been to remove the problem by moving people on and removing areas where people with problems congregated. She said this only moved the problem to another area. She said it had not been successful and the council needed to look at this kind of knee-jerk reaction more closely and decide to deal with it in a more wide-reaching programme. Mrs C. Reynolds said drug problems needed to be dealt with via a needle exchange programme, or what was now called a needle syringe programme (NSP), a community-based clinic or office where people could bring needles for safe disposal and be provided with clean needles for their own use. She said NSPs encouraged safer injecting practices by providing sterile water, alcohol wipes, condoms and health-related information. She said sharps' boxes alone would be broken into and needles left on the floor in toilets. Mrs C. Reynolds said some years ago she did a drug and alcohol counselling course and worked for Dorset Drugs and Alcohol Counselling Service in Bridport, through which she had seen many things. She said needle exchange programs were not designed to treat addiction, HIV, hepatitis C or other medical conditions, but to reduce harm by preventing the transmission of deadly diseases. She said programmes had been set up across the country since the 1980s and were now available to thousands of users, although

unfortunately with widely varying access options and opening hours. Mrs C. Reynolds said although injecting equipment had been available from a variety of chemists across the UK prior to the introduction of needle exchange programmes, the chances of securing regular clean needles depended on a person's proximity to an appropriate pharmacist and also for users to know they existed. Mrs C. Reynolds said it this problem was to be dealt with successfully, it required more than sharps' boxes in toilets. She said the problem should be dealt with head-on and facilities set up that would result in a cleaner, safer Lyme Regis for everyone.

Mr M. Ellis

Mr M. Ellis said he owned a local company called Rapid Emergency Medical Services and he wanted to propose a service where drug users could exchange used needles and syringes for clean ones. He said although he was not against sharps' bins in public toilets, he didn't think it was the only answer. He said in some neighbouring cities and towns there had been success stories of sharps' bins within public toilets but they didn't run on their own; they had a needle syringe programme running alongside. He said research showed that by having a needle syringe programme in place there was an 80% success rate. Mr M. Ellis said if a drug user couldn't source another needle safely, they would do so from the sharps' boxes, which would mean used needles could be scattered inside public toilets and exposed to children. He said this would also mean there could be a spread of HIV or other blood-borne diseases. He said a needle syringe programme would provide the drug user with clean needles, syringes and a personal sharps' box, but more importantly, it would offer drug counselling and an opportunity to be referred to rehabilitation. Mr M. Ellis said as each user would be provided with their own sharps' boxes and a safe way to dispose of these, he wasn't sure if it would be necessary to have sharps' bins in public toilets. He said he was in discussion with Dorset Public Health on the number of hours it should run, what staff were needed for this to take place and the best location. He suggested room 1A at St Michael's Business Centre as it belonged to the council and was in a discreet location. He said they were hoping to discuss this with service users, the public and the town council for opinions and input to the programme. Mr M. Ellis said this programme was not just for drug users but would also benefit the public and people who had children who may find needles that may cause them harm. He said courses could also be run for anyone who was interested, such as the family and friends of drug users. He said by working closely with the council, they could look at all this programme would entail, maybe running on a trial basis initially. He said there were also options for his company to run the programme with the council as the main investor or run as a charity with the council as the main sponsor. Mr M. Ellis said he didn't have all the answers at the moment, but he would be happy to answer the council's questions.

Mr G. Symonds

Mr G. Symonds said councillors were the employers and members of staff were the employees. He said it had been brought to his attention that a large quantity of weed killer valued at thousands of pounds had been given to Axminster Town Council, where the town clerk was a councillor and his wife was the deputy town clerk. He said Axminster Town Council had also been given use of Lyme Regis

Town Council's water bowser but he wasn't sure whether Lyme Regis staff had taken the water bowser to Axminster or not. He said these were the town's assets and were not to be given away. Mr G. Symonds asked if the town council had given permission for any assets of the town to be given away to Axminster Town Council, where there was an interest in relation to the town clerk and his wife. He asked if these things had been offered to other councils or organisations. He said members had a duty to protect the public purse and they couldn't pick and chose when they did that. Mr G. Symonds said if items were being given away without the council's permission, something needed to be done about it. He said as members were elected, they couldn't bury their heads in the sand and had to protect the public purse; if they didn't they were not fit for office. He asked that someone independent looked into this so the public was aware if items were given away.

Cllr D. Turner – Dorset Council (DC)

Cllr D. Turner said he and Ms J. Mace had met with Dorset Public Health, children's services and the police and went through most of the issues raised about needle disposal. He said public health also felt public toilets were not the best place for sharps' bins and was going to come up with a protocol to provide training to local communities about where they could dispose of needles.

Regarding the landfill site, Cllr D. Turner said he had received an email from the community safety officer on 14 August 2019, which he forwarded to the town council, responding to most of the issues raised by Ms R. Pope. He said he had received an email on 1 October 2019, telling him a report on the allotments and the contaminated land would be due in three to four weeks.

Cllr D. Turner said on 13 September 2019, he met as part of the advisory panel with Extinction Rebellion. He said DC planned to tackle climate change and had launched a new website, also looking at what Devon had been doing because they were ahead of DC and had done a lot of good work. He said there was also a meeting on 19 October 2019 at South Walks House, to which all town and parish councils should have been invited.

Regarding Brexit, Cllr D. Turner said there wasn't expected to be much disruption in Dorset but plans were in place to prepare for all eventualities. He said DC was working closely with health services, police, fire service and neighbouring counties to deliver critical services.

Cllr D. Turner said children's services had hugely overspent again so the new director had put in place a 'blueprint for change', for which more information would be available in the next few months.

19/81/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

19/82/C Apologies for Absence

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe – holiday

Cllr D. Ruffle – holiday
Cllr D. Sarson – holiday
Cllr Ms G. Stammers – holiday
Cllr G. Turner – receiving a coastguard award

19/83/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

19/84/C Dispensations

There were no dispensations.

19/85/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24 July 2019

Proposed by Cllr S. Williams and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24 July 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/86/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 4 September 2019

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 4 September 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/87/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24 July 2019

Members noted the report.

19/88/C Matters arising from the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 4 September 2019

Members noted the report.

19/89/C Update Report

There were no updates.

19/90/C Mayor's Engagements and Meetings

Members noted the report.

19/91/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 23 July 2019.

19/92/C Human Resources Committee

It was noted the meeting scheduled for 4 September 2019 had been cancelled.

19/93/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 25 September 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/25/SF – Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the external auditor’s certificate for the year ended 31 March 2019

RESOLVED: to approve and accept the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the external auditor’s certificate (Notice of Conclusion of Audit) for the year ended 31 March 2019; to note the actions required at the conclusion of the review have been undertaken; and to thank staff for their hard work.

19/26/SF – Committee Structure

RESOLVED: that environmental matters are incorporated into each committee’s remit and terms of reference are amended accordingly.

RESOLVED: that the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee is the principal link with the One Planet Working Group.

19/27/SF – Recruitment of the Internal Auditor

RESOLVED: to agree to enter into a process to appoint an internal auditor for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, with the option to extend the contract for a further two years.

19/30/SF – Programme for Refurbishment of Council Offices

RESOLVED: to note the high-level initial programme for the planned refurbishment of the council’s offices, give authority to procure the required detailed external and other surveys, together with architectural services; to include the roles of lead designer, planning agent, contractual procurement and contract/site manager, and elect to opt to tax for the purposes of VAT in respect of the property known as Council Offices, Guildhall Cottage, Church Street, Lyme Regis, Dorset, DT7 3BS and its associated curtilage.

19/31/SF – Blue Sea Café Roof Quotes, Letting, Opting to Tax and Budgetary Approval

RESOLVED: to note the preferred quote for the repairs to the roof of the Blue Sea Café, the latest position with the marketing of the premises, agree to opt to tax so that VAT can be recovered on the cost of the works, and approve the unbudgeted expenditure so that work can commence in mid-November as planned.

19/32/SF – Park and Ride 2019 and 2020

RESOLVED: to note the information about the usage of the 2019 park and ride service, authorise officers to negotiate terms with First Group for a 2020 service based on the 2019 far structure and operating period (plus May Bank Holiday and into early-September to incorporate any major events), and approve the use of the Charmouth Road park and ride site for 2020 at the 2019 price plus RPI.

19/94/C Tourism, Community and Publicity

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 18 September 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/20/TCP – Lyme Regis Marketing Proposal

RESOLVED: to support the concept of a new map-based marketing proposal and agree to officers obtaining three quotes for its production with a view to it being introduced prior to the 2020 season.

19/21/TCP – Social Media Marketing

RESOLVED: to approve a social media campaign with RH Advertising up to a budget of £10,000, and the final details of the campaign are approved by officers, in consultation with the chairman of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

19/22/TCP – Lyme Regis Guide 2020

RESOLVED: to no longer produce a printed tourism guide.

19/24/TCP – Publicity Meetings

RESOLVED: to re-establish publicity meetings between members and officers on a monthly basis, and appoint Cllrs J. Scowen, B. Larcombe, B. Bawden and D. Ruffle to that group.

19/25/TCP – Guitars on the Beach – Change of Date

RESOLVED: to approve Guitars on the Beach taking place on 27 June 2020.

19/95/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr S. Williams, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 11 September 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/24/TMH – VE Day Commemorations, 8-10 May 2020

RESOLVED: to participate in VE Day commemorations in May 2020, to form a working group to take this forward, and to appoint Cllrs D. Sarson, K. Ellis, B. Larcombe and J. Scowen to the working group, with the involvement of the Lyme Regis branch of the Royal British Legion and other relevant local organisations.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said meetings of the working group needed to take place in the evenings as several members couldn't attend daytime meetings.

19/25/TMH – Dorset Council's CCTV Project

RESOLVED: to obtain more detailed costs for the link installation for Dorset Council's pan-Dorset CCTV project which allows Dorset Police access to monitor the council's CCTV system, and for the installation of a CCTV camera at the top of Broad Street to view the majority of Broad Street and vehicle movements.

19/26/TMH – Private Beach Huts on Cart Road

RESOLVED: to instruct the operations manager to contact all owners of private beach huts on Cart Road to encourage them to bring their huts into line with the council's new 'pitched-roof specification by 31 March 2022, by which time all the council-owned huts will have been replaced, and to inform licensees of the opportunity to obtain a bulk-buy discount.

19/27/TMH – Guildhall Car Parking

RESOLVED: to support, in principle, the creation of a wider ramped access to the higher tiered land to the south and west of the council offices to allow for more on-site parking for members, staff and visitors, but that any permissions be obtained and the work be tendered and undertaken in conjunction with the planned office refurbishment project; final approval will need to come through the normal budget and objective-setting processes.

19/28/TMH – Winter Boat Storage

RESOLVED: to charge Dorset Council £6,000 for winter boat storage on the western section of Monmouth Beach car park, providing the boats are removed by the Friday before Good Friday, and it is used for the storage of boats, only.

19/30/TMH – Public Space Protection Order

RESOLVED: to raise no objection to the proposal by Dorset Council to continue the current dog-related Public Space Protection Order covering Lyme Regis in place until 31 December 2020, i.e., for six weeks beyond the expiry of the current order (15 October 2020), but to flag up to Dorset Council at this point that the town council will be requesting changes to the current regulations and an order which relates specifically to Lyme Regis.

19/31/TMH – Committee Objectives 2019-20

RESOLVED: not to identify lead members for committee objectives.

The meeting closed at 7.38pm.