

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2021

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe, MBE

Councillors: Cllr J. Broom, Cllr K. Ellis, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr T. Webb, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: A. Mullins (support services manager), M. Russell (finance manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

19/401/C Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The town clerk confirmed Cllr Tara Webb had signed her declaration of acceptance of office.

19/402/C Public Forum

D. Conibere (read out by an officer)

With regards to the winter dog restrictions Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), D. Conibere asked what dog owners could do to work with the council to get the restrictions of dogs on leads changed back to dogs off leads during the cold wet winter months to keep dog owning residents and visitors of all ages, family groups and abilities safe from the hazards of the alternative beaches and help bring trade back to the local businesses. She said there was now daily photo and video evidence from 1 January 2021 that showed the proactive dog owners who cared for their dogs, undertook daily litter picks and were anti-fouling, who were no longer able to use the only safe and accessible Lyme Regis sandy beach due to the on-lead restrictions which went against the animal welfare act. D. Conibere said this meant the dog community had disbanded, with dog owners forced to face dangerous beaches with huge rocks, uneven ground, graffiti, broken glass partly buried in the sand and unattended bonfires on the remote Monmouth Beach or tidal beaches with slippery rocks and steep access steps, or driven away to neighbouring beach towns.

S. Davies

S. Davies referred to the minutes of the Full Council meeting on 22 April 2021 and the public forum session, in which she and Lesley Jelleymen, the second LymeForward director who accompanied her, were unhappy with the way their input was handled at that meeting. She said they stated they would consider their response and had subsequently submitted a letter to the mayor, copied to members for information. She said the LymeForward report was prepared by their nominated representative Cllr B. Bawden and released into the public arena without any accountability for accuracy or voracity. S. Davies said the report was critical of

herself as chairman but she was prevented from refuting its contents and was unfairly timed out during proceedings. She said she wished to reiterate that neither herself or LymeForward CIC were party to the contents of the report and had no input, which therein lay a gross injustice. She said the directors of LymeForward were adamant that an apology by the council was warranted for spurious facts, a personal attack on herself as chairman and the acceptance of the report from an individual who had no current knowledge or experience of the workings of LymeForward. S. Davies said there was further comment in the letter she submitted to the mayor and at the next Full Council meeting, with regards to nominations of members to external bodies, she would be raising this matter. She said there were a number of other issues raised in the letter and she would wait for a response.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the submissions members put forward were their view as the liaison on the group; it was not the council's view of the group.

19/402/C Dorset Council Matters

Cllr D. Turner sent his apologies as there was nothing to report.

19/403/C Questions from Councillors

Cllr C. Reynolds

Cllr C. Reynolds said if the council was going to continue with proper confidential meetings, she asked for the following: a chairman; for members to be muted; to ensure members had no one else in the room; that everyone is aware of the aforementioned; and that the meetings are recorded.

The town clerk said if Cllr C. Reynolds was referring to the briefing regarding the cinema, this was a briefing, not a council meeting and there was no reason they couldn't continue to be held virtually. He confirmed the briefing was confidential and he understood the deputy town clerk had made this clear at the beginning of the meeting. However, he said officers had spent a lot of time talking to members about confidentiality and behaviour and they couldn't start every meeting with a lecture.

The town clerk said individuals needed to hold themselves responsible for their behaviour and how they represented the council.

19/404/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr R. Doney
Cllr B. Bawden – attending another meeting
Cllr D. Ruffle – illness

19/405/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

19/406/C Dispensations

There were none.

19/407/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 22 April 2021

Relating to comments made by M. Ward and L. Charleton in the public forum, Cllr C. Reynolds said she had stated she had not had a meeting with them, it had been a chat in a café and there had been no talk about the community and how it worked. She asked for this to be included in the minutes.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 22 April 2021, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

19/408/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 22 April 2021

Cllr D. Sarson asked if the cost of an engineering loop to monitor speed in residential areas had been obtained.

The town clerk said he would find out.

19/409/C Update Report

There were no updates.

19/410/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the decisions made under the chairman's delegated powers following the cancellation of the meeting scheduled to take place on 13 April 2021.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 11 May 2021.

19/411/C Human Resources Committee

It was noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 21 April 2021 was cancelled.

19/412/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 12 May 2021 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

20/50/SF – List of Payments

RESOLVED: to approve the schedule of payments for March and April 2021 for the sums of £113,927.00 and £134,393.25, respectively.

20/51/SF – Receipt of Claim for Business Support

RESOLVED: not to give a discount on rent to SWiM but to allow the business to clear its outstanding debt by the end of the 2021-22 financial year, and to give officers delegated authority to agree the terms of the repayment.

19/413/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

It was noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 5 May 2021 was cancelled.

19/414/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 28 April 2021 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

20/41/TMH – Roof Management Plan

RESOLVED: to approve a temporary roof management plan outlining the following:

- There will be no vehicles, horseboxes or trailers of any kind allowed on the roof, unless required in connection with essential maintenance
- There will be no marquees allowed on the roof
- There will be no gazebos allowed on the roof
- There will be no concerts or mass gatherings on the roof while Covid restrictions continue.

20/42/TMH – Beach Accessibility Matting

RESOLVED: to defer consideration of beach accessibility matting until the 2022-23 budget and objective-setting process.

20/43/TMH – Review of Busking Policy

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed new Busking Policy.

20/44/TMH – Anti-social Behaviour

RESOLVED: to approve a plan to request government money allocated to Dorset Council available to pay for summer security patrols and increased seafront attendant support.

20/45/TMH – Electronic Point of Sale for the Amenities' Hut

RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of an electronic point of sale for the amenities' hut using the 'Square' system.

20/46/TMH – Storage Container at the Amenities’ Area

RESOLVED: to pursue a permanent storage hut behind the amenities’ hut, which doesn’t necessarily feature in any future amenities’ hut.

RESOLVED: to allow the external works’ team to use the Langmoor Room until 21 June 2021.

20/49/TMH – Park and Ride 2021

RESOLVED: to defer consideration of whether to run a reduced-period park and ride service for summer 2021 until the end of May 2021.

20/50/TMH – Request for Taxi Ranks

RESOLVED: to support a request from a local taxi operator for the provision of two taxi ranks in Lyme Regis and communicate the council’s support to Dorset Council.

20/53/TMH – The Provision of a Third RNLI Lifeguard

RESOLVED: to meet the cost of a third RNLI lifeguard during the summer seasons if the Government funding for seaside resorts was obtained via Dorset Council.

19/415/C Calendar of Meetings

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said each cycle of meetings was quite long and he encouraged members to think about how it affected the council’s decision-making and how long it would take to get resolutions for officers to action.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to approve the calendar of meetings for the first cycle of the 2021-22 council year.

19/416/C Financial Regulations

The town clerk said in reviewing the main governance documents, officers looked at the models provided by the national organisations and then applied them to this council, as the models were normally suited to councils with a smaller budget.

The town clerk said a further amendment was required to paragraph 5.4 of the regulations as officers wanted to move to electronic payments instead of cheques for payments over £10,000. He said this would require authorisation from either two members or one member and the RFO.

Cllr M. Ellis asked if there would be paperwork for the audit trail and if the authorisers would be present when the payment was made.

The town clerk said the authorisers wouldn’t need to be present but appropriate information about the payment would be provided electronically to the authorisers.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed financial regulations, with a further amendment to paragraph 5.4 to allow payments over £10,000 to be made electronically.

19/418/C Standing Orders

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed standing orders.

19/419/C Information Policy

The town clerk said the main proposed changes were due to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the processing of personal data. He said compliance with the policy was difficult in terms of the retention of documents but officers did make best attempts to review the main documents.

Cllr M. Ellis asked how the threshold of £450 was arrived at, after which the council could charge for answering Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

The town clerk said this was set by the Information Commissioner's Office. He said this may not necessarily be £450 in money if the officers' time in dealing with the requests was costed out in terms of both pay and value to the organisation.

In response to a member question, the town clerk confirmed he was the organisation's data controller.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed Information Policy.

19/420/C External Audit Report

The finance manager said there was a delay in the 2019-20 external audit being signed off by the external auditor because issues were raised by a member of the public which caused the external auditor to ask the council for more information. He said the external auditor had decided there was no case to answer and had issued a certificate confirming the council had a clean bill of health.

The town clerk clarified that the issues raised by the member of public didn't reach the 'challenge' stage because the person didn't pursue it far enough with the external auditor; however, the council was still required to pay for the external auditor to carry out the review.

Cllr J. Broom questioned the over-payment to staff as he didn't understand how the daily rate of pay was calculated.

The finance manager said this was the standard method HMRC used to calculate daily rates.

The town clerk added the internal and external auditors were happy with this method of calculation and concluded there had not been any overpayment to staff.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr K. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to approve the external auditor's report and certificate for 2019-20

19/421/C Dorset National Park

The town clerk said this issue went back several years but the council had never actually determined its position on the proposed national park. He said the issue was gathering pace with the local MP intervening and the council should determine its position on the proposals.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe felt it wouldn't be of any value to invite the national park team to give another presentation to the council as they would repeat the same arguments as before, he felt it would be difficult to gauge opinion from a public debate, and a public ballot would not be representative of the town. He said if the public had a view on the national park, they should be encouraged to send it directly to Dorset Council (DC), and the council should form its own view on the impact of the proposals on the organisation as a functioning council.

Cllr M. Ellis said she was against a national park because house prices would go up and it would add an extra layer of local government.

Cllr R. Smith said he had a lot of sympathy with the MP's view about house prices and the holding back of economic development and re-growth in the area, and from an environmental perspective, it would add extra planning regulations which may prevent people making environmental improvements to buildings due to conservation requirements.

Cllr G. Stammers said she was concerned the national park organisation would be run by boards, whose members would be paid and not representative of the population, with predominantly white retired males sitting on them. She felt it would be a disadvantage to take planning decisions away from the local authority. She was also concerned the national park would make affordable housing for young people even harder to achieve.

Cllr J. Broom was also concerned that the board would not be elected by the public and it wasn't yet clear if the national park would cover the whole of or part of Dorset.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members **RESOLVED** not to support proposals for a Dorset National Park.

19/422/C Dorset Council Parking Order Application

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked what the motivation was for DC to make this application and said he was concerned the town council could put itself in a more difficult position in future discussions about the area if it agreed to the parking order.

The town clerk said the harbour master felt it would help him regulate parking in the area. He said the council could ask to conclude discussions with DC about the land at Monmouth Beach and the area could then be included in the order.

Cllr J. Broom said survey of land at Monmouth Beach should be carried out before the council made any decisions.

The town clerk said South West Surveys had undertaken to do the survey in three weeks so it was intended to report back to the next cycle of meetings. He agreed it would be sensible to get a formal view on exact ownership of the land before starting discussions with DC.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to hold discussions with Dorset Council about the long-term future of land in the Monmouth Beach area and once concluded, to re-visit the request from Dorset Council's harbour master to apply for a parking order that includes land adjacent to the RNLI building.

The meeting closed at 8.19pm.