

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2022

#### Present

**Chairman:** The Mayor, Cllr M. Ellis

**Councillors:** Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

**Officers:** N. Cleal (finance manager), A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

#### **22/16/C Public Forum**

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

#### **22/17/C Apologies**

Cllr T. Webb – illness

#### **22/18/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

#### **22/19/C Dispensations**

There were none.

#### **22/20/C Internal Audit Report, Visit Three 2021-22**

Members acknowledged the all-round improvement over the last four years and thanked the staff for their efforts, especially the finance manager.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members **RESOLVED** to note the internal auditor's report and approve the management responses and note the number and priority levels of recommendations made to the council by the internal auditor 2018-19 to 2021-22.

#### **22/21/C Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2022**

The town clerk said the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) showed a total income of c.£2.2million and a reserve of £1.3million, which was in line with previous forecasts. He said the internal auditor had no comments or qualifications against the report.

The town clerk said if members approved the AGAR, it would be signed by himself and the mayor and sent to the external auditor by 1 July 2022. He said the relevant notices and documents would be posted on the council's website and the external auditor would then have until 31 September 2022 to respond.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2022 and authorise the mayor and town clerk to authorise and sign the document on behalf of the council.

## **22/22/C Support for Ukrainian Refugees**

The town clerk said this report followed discussions with Alan Vian and Cllr Philip May, who were both supporting Ukrainian families, with the biggest issue being immediate access to cash. He said there was support from a number of government agencies and tremendous volunteer support but there were no financial resources to meet the immediate needs of families. As such, it was suggested the council made a budget of £2,000 available, with expenditure being approved by two people who were part of the Ukraine Support Group.

Cllr B. Bawden said at the last support group meeting, the possibility of funding bus passes was discussed, and a contribution towards resources for English language tuition.

The town clerk said the funding could be spent on those kinds of things. He added that he would also monitor what was being spent.

Members were fully supportive of the proposal to create an emergency fund of £2,000 for this purpose.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if there was any idea of how many refugees would be coming to Lyme Regis, what kind of support the council might be asked to continue providing if the government's refugee scheme was extended beyond six months, and whether £2,000 would be enough if this was the case.

Cllr P. May said this was a temporary situation and government routes to funding were expected to be available in time. He said the funding would provide small amounts to each family for things like school uniform or travel expenses to the job centre or bank. He said if the situation continued for more than six months, some other source of support other than the town council would have to be put in place.

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis said the council could commit £2,000 at this point and if more was required in the future, this could be reviewed.

Cllr R. Doney felt the council should be showing the same level of support for Afghan refugees. He suggested the council also gave £2,500 – the amount which the council originally donated to the British Red Cross for the Ukraine crisis – to a suitable Afghan fund, in addition to the £2,000 emergency fund for Ukrainian refugees.

Cllr M. Ellis said the report on the agenda specifically dealt with support for Ukrainian refugees so this couldn't be added into any decision.

The town clerk said he would discuss this with Cllr R. Doney before the next meeting of the Full Council and bring a report to that meeting on 27 July 2022, including background information and statistics, to allow members to consider the proposal.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members **RESOLVED** to establish a £2,000 budget to allow Ukrainian refugees immediate access to cash where no other government agency can assist, to be administered by two members of the Ukraine Support Group and overall monitoring delegated to the town clerk.

*The meeting closed at 7.16pm.*