

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL 2023

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr M. Ellis

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, 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: A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

The Rev. Chris Martin gave a prayer.

22/123/C Public Forum

Cllr R. Smith arrived at 7.02pm.

D. Hallett

D. Hallett said he was speaking on behalf of the Allotments' Association. He said the allotments were broken into recently, with every shed broken into and everyone losing some property, including things which were valuable to the allotment holders, such as one lady who had her grandmother's binoculars stolen. He asked if the town council and Dorset Council would consider putting cameras on the toilet block at Charmouth Road car park, which would cover the allotments, the car park and the skatepark and put everyone's minds at rest. He said the football club recently put in around 12 cameras for £2,000 and if the allotments' association had to raise the money, they could try and do this but funding from the council would help.

The town clerk said the town council had been doing some work in the last couple of years on a CCTV project but had not yet obtained planning consent to enhance provision in the town and on the seafront. He said the project included putting a camera at the skatepark; this would require trenching, which was the expensive part of the project, but money had been made available by the Skatepark Committee to do this. He said the council could also look at a camera on the toilet block to help resolve the issue.

22/124/C Dorset Council Matters

The meeting received Cllr B. Bawden's report, which included updates on the following:

- Council tax 2023-24
- Council tax on second and empty/unoccupied properties
- Developments on Dorset Council's Climate and Ecological Strategy

- National legislative changes, including Active Travel England and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Dorset Council's news pamphlet for spring 2023
- The Community and Culture Fund
- Dorset Council securing government funding to insulate homes
- Community Energy Champions
- Speedwatch
- National initiatives, including the Carbon Literacy Toolkit for parish, town and community councils, and the government's Net Zero Forum
- Dorset Council Cabinet's Forward Plan
- Dorset councillor surgeries

Cllr B. Larcombe said in the town council's submission to the Local Plan consultation, a reference was made to concerns about connectivity, such as in travel, health and broadband, because the town was at the outreach of the county. He asked if there was any update on where this was and asked if the council could press for improved connectivity because the Local Plan would take some time to be implemented.

Cllr B. Bawden said the bus service improvement plan submitted to the government wasn't supported and bus services were one of the biggest expenses in Dorset Council's (DC) budget. Due to lack of drivers, DC had provided its own minibuses and drivers so there was funded public transport. She said there was a local transport plan process coming up and she suggested the town council fed into that. She added that the Local Plan wasn't expected to be ready until 2025.

22/125/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

22/126/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr T. Webb – illness

22/127/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr G. Stammers declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 18, Selection of Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect as she intended to nominate Cllr D. Ruffle for deputy mayor and if elected, as his partner, she would be deputy mayoress.

22/128/C Dispensations

There were none.

22/129/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 15 February 2023

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr P. May, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 15 February 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

22/130/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 29 March 2023

Proposed by Cllr D. Ruffle and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 29 March 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

22/131/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 15 February 2023 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 29 March 2023

Cllr D. Sarson asked if there was any update on DC's plans to introduce a council tax premium on second homes as the town council had asked for more details on the definition of second homes, how it would benefit Lyme Regis and whether the income would come back to the locality.

The town clerk said he had not heard anything from DC but a copy of the council's resolution had been given to Cllr B. Bawden to raise these questions on the council's behalf.

Cllr B. Bawden said she and the deputy town clerk had had a meeting with DC's head of revenues and benefits about some of the issues and the correspondence received about chalets and caravans and retirement properties but they would be defined as second homes.

22/132/C Update Report

There were no updates.

22/133/C Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report.

22/134/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 7 and 21 February, 7 and 21 March 2023.

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis said Cllr G. Turner had declared a pecuniary interest at the meeting on 7 March 2023 but it had not been noted in the minutes what his interest was, so this needed to be corrected.

22/135/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee held on 15 March 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

22/57/ENV – Designation of Church Cliff Beach as a Bathing Beach

RESOLVED: to approve the draft letter to be sent to the committee for the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in support of the designation of Church Cliff Beach as a bathing beach.

22/58/ENV – River Lim Action Group - Update

RESOLVED: to approve the funding request of £400 from the environment budget to pay for Riverfly training in May 2023, if the River Lim Action Group cannot secure funding elsewhere.

22/59/ENV – Environment Policy Review

RESOLVED: to approve the environment policy is adopted, however members recognise the policy needs updating and should be reviewed at the earliest opportunity.

22/60/ENV – Proposed budget for Invertebrate Garden

RESOLVED: approve, in principle, £3,000 for the element of the Plan Bee project by the table tennis from the environment budget.

22/61/ENV – Community Energy Champions

RESOLVED: to recognise the Lyme area Community Energy Champions deploy resources, including those funded by the town council, flexibly across Lyme Regis and the neighbouring parishes, in the interest of efficiency and volunteer availability.

22/136/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 22 February 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

22/68/HR – Town Clerk’s Annual Appraisal

RESOLVED: to note the town clerk’s annual appraisal summary and approve his progression to spinal column point 46 on 1 April 2023.

22/69/HR – Deputy Town Clerk, Spinal Column Point Progression

RESOLVED: to note the deputy town clerk’s annual appraisal summary and approve his progression to spinal column point 37 on 1 April 2023.

22/70/HR – Operations Manager, Performance Appraisal Summary

RESOLVED: to the operations manager’s annual appraisal summary and approve his progression to spinal column point 33 on 1 April 2023.

22/71/HR Support Services Manager, Spinal Column Point Progression

RESOLVED: to note the support services manager's annual appraisal summary and approve his progression to spinal column point 27 on 1 April 2023.

22/72/HR – Finance manager, Performance Appraisal Summary

RESOLVED: to note the finance manager's annual appraisal summary and approve her progression to spinal column point 27 on 1 April 2023.

22/73/HR – Spinal Point Column Progression and Pay Arrangements for Other Employees for 2023-24

RESOLVED: to note the spinal column point progression, detailed in paragraph 6, for post holders 217, 216, 203, 205, 206, 202, 210, 218, 107, 106, 104, and 109.

22/74/HR – Overtime Threshold

RESOLVED: to increase the overtime threshold to spinal column point 25, inclusive.

22/75/HR – Finance Assistant, Six-Month Probation Review

RESOLVED: to approve the finance assistant's (post holder 107) continued employment with the council, effective from 11 January 2023.

22/137/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 22 March 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

22/69/SF – Draft Corporate Plan 2023-28

RESOLVED: to approve the Corporate Plan 2023-28.

22/70/SF – Climate Action Plan Budget

RESOLVED: to carry over £10,543 of the funding allocated to carry out the council's climate action plan from 2022-23 budget to 2023-24, and that the third year of the funding rolls into the first year of the new council administration.

22/71/SF – Market and Performance Areas' Hire Charges for Traders

RESOLVED: that commercial hire charges for 2023-4 are set at £125 for the market area and £175 for the performance area.

22/72/SF – Bowling Club Parking Permits

RESOLVED: to continue to provide 12 parking permits for visitors attending Lyme Regis Bowling Club's annual tournament and to increase the price of the permit to £30.

22/73/SF – Hair Braiding and Henna Tattooing Concession

RESOLVED: to re-assign the hair braiding and henna tattooing concession to Tia Shoemark for the remainder of the concession, i.e. 2023 and 2024, under the same terms as the original.

22/74/SF – List of Payments

RESOLVED: to approve the schedule of payments in January 2023 for the sum of £99,819.24 and February 2023 £141,748.31, respectively.

22/76/SF – Office Options Appraisal Report

RESOLVED: to regard the existing council office as the first option for the office accommodation and to cost the works, but if this option is out of the question, the council will consider St Michael's Business Centre.

22/77/SF – Park and Ride 2023 and Outturn 2022

RESOLVED: to:

- a) approve the appointment of First Group as the operator for the 2023 park and ride service, using a similar three-bus system and covering both Lyme Regis and Charmouth as in 2022, with a timetable operating between 10.30am and 7.30pm to a service frequency of approximately 13 minutes and at a daily cost for three buses and drivers of approximately £1,100 (precise figure still to be finalised) and incorporating the revised fare tariff set out below:
 - Adult single - £2
 - Adult return - £3.50
 - Child single - £1.50
 - Child return - £2.50
 - Group (up to 5 people, not more than 3 adults) - £10.00
 - Concessionary passes NOT accepted

- b) approve the operation of the 2023 park and ride service on the following dates:
 - 1 April to 16 April inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover Easter and school half-term
 - 29 April to 1 May to cover any Fossil Festival and bank holiday
 - 6 May to 8 May to cover the coronation weekend
 - 27 May to 4 June inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover school half term
 - All other June and July weekends from 10/11 June to 15/16 July inclusive
 - 22 July to 3 September inclusive, i.e., the entire school holiday period (every day, including weekdays)

- c) approve the deployment of the same AA advanced signage as used in 2022 at an estimated total cost of approximately £1,000 + VAT
- d) approve the renewal of the licence for the use of the privately-owned park and ride site at Charmouth Road at an annual licence fee for 2022 of £10,825.05.

22/138/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 8 March 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

22/81/TCP – The Big Coronation Party

RESOLVED: to make a donation of £250 to the Regatta and Carnival Committee to help cover the costs of entertainment at the May Fete.

22/82/TCP – Fossil Festival 2023

RESOLVED: to approve the request from Lyme Regis Museum:

- for a grant of £3,300 to support the 2023 Fossil Festival
- to provide the Jubilee Pavilion and adjacent area free of charge
- for help in kind by providing advice, assistance with co-ordination and logistical support, and support from staff on the ground over the weekend

22/83/TCP – Request for Funding - Fireworks

RESOLVED: to approve a request from the Regatta and Carnival Committee to contribute up to £2,500 for the summer fireworks' display and note this would be unbudgeted expenditure.

22/84/TCP – Dorset Council Free Parking Days

RESOLVED: to agree the non-charging dates in Lyme Regis car parks and instruct officers to liaise with Dorset Council Parking Services, as follows:

- Saturday 29 April – Fossil Festival
- Sunday 7 May – The Big Coronation Part
- Sunday 12 November – Remembrance Sunday parade and service
- Saturday 25 November – Christmas lights' switch-o
- Saturday 3 December – Small Business Saturday
- 23 December – Carols Round the Christmas Tree

22/85/TCP – Visit Lyme Regis Membership Review

RESOLVED: to approve the charging structure for the Visit Lyme Regis website as follows:

- Free landing page on Visit Lyme Regis website

- Enhanced for Things to Do or Accommodation businesses – £305 including VA
- Enhanced for Food & Drink / Shopping / Transport – £175 including VAT

The rates if advertising on both websites with an enhanced listing would attract a further discount of 20%:

- Enhanced joint listing for Things to Do or Accommodation businesses – £568 or 10% off each Visit Dorset/Visit Lyme Regis level if choosing different level
- Enhanced for Food & Drink/Shopping/Transport – £324

22/86/TCP – Community Grants and Bid Writing

RESOLVED: to approve in principle funding bid writing sessions for local organisations and ask officers to obtain costings for this work to bring back to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

22/87/TCP – Sculpture Trail

RESOLVED: that Cllr C. Reynolds joins the group of members working with the deputy town clerk to agree, in conjunction with the Arts Development Company, the precise basis of how the sculpture trail may be delivered in future.

22/139/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 1 March 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

22/76/TMH – Marine Parade Lift

RESOLVED: that before considering the options for the Marine Parade lift, the council considers the future use of the Langmoor Room.

22/77/TMH – Sea Swimmers Safety Box

RESOLVED: to agree to locate the sea swimmers' safety box on the seafront.

22/78/TMH – Plan Bee

RESOLVED: that an invertebrate garden is established in both the area of the gardens suggested by officers and the area to be vacated by the Oyster and Fish House decking in consultation with experts on invertebrate gardens.

22/140/C Selection of Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect

The town clerk confirmed there had been two nominations for mayor: Cllr M. Ellis and Cllr D. Sarson.

Members discussed the issue of the mayor's term of office, with some members supporting the tradition of a two-year term and others supporting the democratic right to elect a new mayor each year.

Cllr M. Ellis and Cllr D. Sarson each gave their reasons for standing for election.

Cllr M. Ellis asked for a recorded vote on the following motion:

Cllr G. Stammers nominated Cllr D. Sarson as mayor for the 2023-24 council year, seconded by Cllr G. Turner.

Cllr C. Reynolds nominated Cllr M. Ellis as mayor for the 2023-24 council year, seconded by Cllr R. Doney.

Votes for Cllr D. Sarson – Cllr R. Smith, Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr P. May, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

Votes for Cllr M. Ellis – Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr R. Doney

Abstentions – Cllr D. Ruffle

Cllr D. Sarson was **ELECTED** as mayor for the 2023-24 council year.

The town clerk confirmed two nominations had been received for deputy mayor: Cllr C. Reynolds and Cllr D. Ruffle.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she wished to withdraw her nomination.

Cllr D. Sarson said he also wished to nominate Cllr P. May.

Cllr G. Stammers nominated Cllr D. Ruffle as deputy mayor for the 2023-24 council year, seconded by Cllr M. Ellis.

Cllr D. Sarson nominated Cllr P. May as deputy mayor for the 2023-24 council year, seconded by Cllr R. Smith.

Cllr P. May was **ELECTED** as deputy mayor for the 2023-24 council year.

Cllr R. Doney said standing orders had been referred to several times while members were discussing the process for election of mayor and he felt the standing order referring to a second term should be clarified; if it was the feeling of the council there needed to be an election every year, he felt this needed to be taken out of standing orders as it was confusing.

The town clerk said standing orders were clear and said there would be an election every year. He said they referred to a maximum period of two years a mayor should be in post, rather than an automatic period of two years. He said there was a tradition for a mayor to be offered a second term but the rules were very clear; members could choose whether or not to follow the tradition.

Cllr R. Doney said there was also the issue of people being proposed on the night as he felt members should have the opportunity to think about who they would vote for. He said when standing orders were next reviewed, he would raise this.

The town clerk said members could nominate people at the meeting. However, the process of giving nominations in advance was introduced to try and make the process run smoothly and people could think about how they would vote.

22/141/C Calendar of Meetings

The support services manager said since drafting the calendar of meetings, officers had realised the election in May 2024 would affect the final cycle of meetings and the first meeting of the new administration. As such, some amendments would be required to fit in the final cycle before the end of the council year.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked how purdah would affect council meetings at that time.

The town clerk said the council could still hold meetings and still undertake business but decisions couldn't be made that may be to an individual's benefit.

Cllr R. Smith asked if Full Council meetings could be avoided around Easter as there had been an extraordinary Full Council and a Full Council meeting either side of the Easter weekend.

The town clerk said the amendments to the calendar would shift the meetings slightly but as meetings were held almost every week, having a Full Council meeting around the Easter break might be unavoidable.

Cllr B. Larcombe noted there was a big gap between the Full Council meeting in July and the meeting in October.

The town clerk said this was due to the summer break but it had been suggested in the past that the cycle re-started in September with a Full Council meeting to wrap up anything that had taken place over the break.

It was agreed a new draft calendar would be brought to the next Full Council meeting on 17 May 2023, taking into account the election in May 2024.

The meeting closed at 7.52pm.