

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2023

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr D. Sarson

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Turner

Officers: M. Green (deputy town clerk), A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Smith (property and projects assistant), P. Williams (acting operations manager)

The mayor, Cllr D. Sarson read out the town prayer.

23/83/C Public Forum

R. McLaughlin

R. McLaughlin, chairman of the Town Mill trustees, spoke in relation to agenda item 21, Town Mill Regeneration Funding Request. He said the Town Mill had successfully been operated by the trust since it was saved in the 1990s from demolition and was restored and re-opened in 2000. The mill had had regular maintenance over the years but it needed refurbishing and updating and improvements to meet health and safety requirements, which was all part of the post-Covid recovery plan. He said they were successful in the summer in getting planning and listed building permission for some of the works and he thanked the town council for its support in this. R. McLaughlin said one of their key aims was to engage more closely with the local community and clubs and groups of people who didn't necessarily think the Town Mill was for them. They had started working already on some taster days, for example Pilates sessions and a community day and were working with Lyme Regis Development Trust to develop this aspect. He said they also wanted to engage a part-time engagement and events' officer to deliver their community engagement plan to bring in people who didn't normally visit and to give a better understanding locally of the important heritage of the mill. R. McLaughlin said an artist had designed wheatsheaf metal gates for the mill and steps to link the lynch with the gardens at the mill, so there would be a new entrance into the mill. They also wanted to replace the railings so they were safe to protect the public, to update interpretation within the mill, to replace the outdated signage so visitors were more aware of the mill, to provide safer and more energy efficient lighting around the site and improve the hydroelectric plant. He said all these improvements would support the tourist economy by making the Town Mill more attractive, increasing visitor numbers, increasing income into the mill and safeguarding its viability. R. McLaughlin said the mill relied heavily on public donations through tours and shop sales but these improvements would also benefit the small artisan businesses on the site as they rely on the whole operation being successful. He said all the proposed works had been costed and the total funding requirement was £186k. They had started to apply to charitable trusts and funds but they would need match funding, especially if they made a bid to the Heritage Lottery

Fund in the new year. He said they would be grateful if the town council would support Town Mill, in addition to the support already given, so they could demonstrate local support from the council when they submitted the bids. He said they didn't need any money at this stage but rather a commitment to fund in 2025. He also invited members to go to the mill either to look around or to see the plans in more detail.

N. Ball

N. Ball thanked the council for resurfacing the cemetery paths, which he said had made a huge difference to mobility and to people visiting graves. He said it was a lot safer and a lot better all round. He also thanked the council for employing a groundsman to look after the cemetery. N. Ball thanked the gardening team for the continued improvements to the gardens and said he was aware there was work planned to the paths. He said the improvements were making a huge difference to residents and visitors. He said he was concerned about the hedge cutter in the cemetery lock-up, machinery worth £10k which had been sitting on a pallet for two years. He said this wasn't good enough and he would like to see it used more to justify spending this amount of money. He said this was not a criticism of staff, just a comment about maintenance and maintenance of machinery. N. Ball said he had not yet had a response from the council about the town bus service, which he had raised at the Town Management and Highways Committee, an issue which he said scored highly in the public consultation in 2017. He said he had also not had an answer to who made the decision to allow a bike show on the seafront roof during Regatta and Carnival Week, when there were signs in the area saying no bikes or skateboards. He said this concerned him as it was a health and safety risk and he was concerned for the safety of the public. N. Ball said this was not what the roof was designed for, it was a public viewing platform.

O. Chuter and M. Dixon (read out by an officer)

O. Chuter and M. Dixon said they and the current users of the indoor rowing centre were disappointed to hear the council members had unanimously decided against the idea of the Lyme Regis Health and Fitness centre, which would have been set up, coordinated from and run from the Jubilee Pavilion. They felt their proposal strongly supported the demographics within the local area, rather than visitors alone, and offered a wide ranging number of benefits to the community which included fitness for all ages, social interaction, mental wellbeing and specific exercise for women, children and those with health conditions. They said they remained passionate about pursuing their idea and asked members to reconsider their proposal. They said they would ideally like to gain the wider views of the community via Lyme Voice, allowing all members of the community to be represented. O. Chuter and M. Dixon said if members felt unable to review this decision, they would like to ask if they could use the Langmoor Room on a more permanent basis. They currently had approximately 65 gig club and indoor rowing members that used the indoor rowing machines on a weekly basis with sessions/classes held six days a week. They said enquires to attend these classes were increasing week by week via word of mouth and via the gig club, who were training for the World Championships next year. They said they had no doubt the demand would increase if they were able to advertise fully, develop stronger links with local schools and youth groups and liaise with local medical practices and support groups, thus benefitting the community further. O.

Chuter and M. Dixon said they remained extremely passionate about maximising the use of this fantastic community asset for the local people on a year-round basis.

23/84/C Dorset Council Matters

Cllr B. Bawden gave the following updates:

- The recommendation from Dorset Council (DC) officers to remove the 'on leads' restriction for the winter months for the front beaches in the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was discussed at the Place and Resources Overview Committee on 5 October 2023, which she attended and asked a question, along with the mayor. The committee voted against the recommendation and Cabinet would make the final decision on 7 November 2023. She said the wording of the survey suggested DC wanted the same rule for all beaches across Dorset. She had walked around Lyme with two DC officers on 17 October 2023 to discuss the accessibility concerns raised by the local pro-dog campaigners.
- The Harbours Advisory Committee would discuss the proposal from the Powerboat Club for a trial for 10 licences for personalised watercrafts (PWCs) on 22 November 2023. The local Harbour Users Committee had met recently and discussed it and this was attended by Cllr S. Cockerell on behalf of the town council.
- At the Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG) meeting on 28 October 2023 it became apparent that the Axe Valley Ring and Ride (AVRR) proposed to stop serving West Dorset at the end of this year, except Lyme Regis because it received funding from the town council. DC had said AVRR had not applied for any of the grants they had suggested as the community transport grant was only available for start-ups. She said her counterpart in Marshwood Vale and MP Chris Loder were campaigning on this and blaming DC.
- Both she and the town clerk and I had sought support from senior DC management following several unsatisfactory responses from DC in certain areas. The corporate director for place services visited on 19 October 2023, meeting a few harbour users and the town clerk and she would follow up on the matters discussed.
- Residents and regular users of the footpath from Uplyme across Wooroffe School playing field had applied for a Definitive Map Modification because the path was being blocked by the Woodroffe School. The school said it wasn't blocking the route, it just didn't want people walking across the sports pitch.
- Speedwatch volunteer training and monitoring sessions were underway at Queen's Walk/Anning Road and Sidmouth Road. The deterrent effect of volunteers in high-viz jackets was clear as the volunteers were not recorded anyone going over the speed limit. She said this monitoring had to be done for 12 months in order to apply for a 20mph speed limit.
- She had received a proposal from Litter Free Coast and Sea to work with local schools and undertake an awareness campaign on engine idling. The quote was very high so she would approach the local schools to run an awareness campaign and apply for DC for signage.
- She had asked the police and crime commissioner for an update on the re-opening of the police station in Lyme Regis as she understood this was a trial until October. She didn't know how well it had been used but it was still open.

- She would be offering joint Carbon Literacy Organisation accreditation training with Weymouth Town Council in January. She would be asking members already accredited for evidence of how it had impacted their decision-making so this could be added to the application for silver accreditation.
- She had attended a 'budget café' to discuss DC's 2024-25 budget and the next one in December would look at feedback from members on the proposals and focusing on obtaining financial sustainability. The third session in January would consider the government's financial settlement. At the end of quarter 1, DC's forecast overspend for the current year was £12.7million but reserves of £34million mean DC wasn't at immediate risk. However, the situation could become unstable in three to four years' time if the government didn't fund the expected growth of adult and social care needs.
- She had asked the officer responsible for the Local Transport Plan 4 development to come to the next Traffic and Travel Working Group meeting.
- In November, Cabinet would be considering the PSPO, quarter 2 financial modelling 2023-24, 'Our Future Council – putting our customers first', making care experience a protected characteristic, expansion of funded childcare offer from April 2024, and local council tax reduction review. In December, it would consider the housing strategy.
- Current consultations: council tax reduction scheme 2024-25 consultation closed 25 October 2023; Gambling Policy closed 9 November 2023, review of polling districts and polling places closed 13 November, call for sites closed 1 December 2023, and Better Days – day opportunity survey closed 8 December 2023.

23/85/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

23/86/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr P. Evans – family commitments
 Cllr B. Larcombe – family commitments
 Cllr P. May – illness
 Cllr C. Reynolds – illness
 Cllr D. Ruffle – personal commitment
 Cllr G. Stammers - personal commitment

23/87/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

23/88/C Dispensations

There were none.

23/89/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 6 September 2023

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 6 September 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

23/90/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9 September 2023

Members noted the report.

23/91/C Update Report

Accreted land

The deputy town clerk said Natural England had looked at the documents submitted by DC for use of the accreted land and they had responded with broadly positive views, but had made some suggestions for clarification. He would anticipate Natural England supporting the continued use of the accreted land for boat storage but on a much reduced area and with conditions applied.

23/92/C Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report.

23/93/C Town Mill Regeneration Funding Request

The mayor, Cllr D. Sarson brought this item forward on the agenda.

Cllr M. Ellis said she had sympathy with organisations who came to the council for grants but there was a grants' process in place and she felt the council should stick to it and not accept applications outside that process.

Cllr B. Bawden said her understanding was this wasn't a request for funding, it was a request for support in principle and to give an indication about whether members would like to visit the mill to hear more about the project.

The deputy town clerk said an indication of support in principle was unlikely to be sufficient for the Heritage Lottery Fund, for instance, as it would need a commitment of funding. He said if the council was to support this request, it would be unbudgeted expenditure. More generally, he felt there was a gap in the council's grants' process; there was a process for minor grants up to £1k and term grants for major amounts over a number of years, but there wasn't anywhere for organisations like the Town Mill to go. He added the council used to award medium grants but this changed several years ago so members probably ought to look at the grants' process itself.

Cllr C. Aldridge agreed there seemed to be a gap in the grants' system and suggested this be reviewed. She was in favour of supporting the Town Mill and as they were only looking for a commitment in principle, the expenditure wouldn't fall in 2023-24 and therefore wouldn't be unbudgeted.

Cllr R. Smith said he also supported the Town Mill but he acknowledged there was a grants' cycle. He said if the council made a commitment now for funding in 2025, it

was making a commitment for the next administration and it might have a different opinion.

Cllr M. Ellis said she wasn't against the Town Mill but she emphasised there was a process to follow and approving funding might set a precedent for others to apply for funding outside of the process.

Cllr B. Bawden said the Town Mill Trust was doing all the right things in talking to the council in advance and although she realized this request didn't fit in with the current process, one of the main things funding providers looked for was partnership working. She asked if there was a timescale for the funding to be in place.

The mayor, Cllr D. Sarson invited R. McLaughlin to answer the question.

R. McLaughlin said they were currently applying to charitable trusts for grants of between £5k and £15k and intended to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund in the New Year for £180k, within which they would need to show match funding and that the local council was on board. He said this didn't mean a commitment for the council to provide funding right now, but a commitment in 2024-25 would bolster their efforts.

Cllr S. Cockerell asked what the process was for changing the grants' process and whether this could be done by January.

The deputy town clerk said he didn't think it could be done by January. He said if members were minded to give a commitment in principle, it would have to be allocated in the budget and this would potentially impact on other expenditure.

It was proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden to allocate £5,000 from the 2023-24 budget to support the Town Mill Trust in the pursuit of match funding from other funders.

This motion was not voted on.

Cllr R. Doney asked as the council had already agreed a draft budget for next year, what the process was for adding in further expenditure.

The deputy town clerk said the council could agree the expenditure from the current year, which would affect the year-end closing balance. However, the council should expect the funding to be drawn down in the current financial year, but the impression he got from the presentation in the public forum was that this was unlikely. He said if members wanted to include it in next year's budget, when it came to that item on the agenda, a recommendation should be made to include an additional sum in the budget. He added that it would potentially affect the delivery of other objectives as it was extra spend.

It was proposed by Cllr R. Smith to include a £5,000 grant to the Town Mill Trust as an objective for 2023-24.

This motion was not seconded.

The deputy town clerk suggested the request could be discussed at the next Strategy and Finance Committee meeting when members would go through the second cycle of budget-setting.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members **RESOLVED** to defer the funding request from the Town Mill Trustees to the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting on 29 November 2023 to be considered as part of the budget and whether it should be included as an objective.

23/94/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 22 August, 19 September and 3 and 17 October 2023, to note the committee's comments made on planning applications under the power delegated by Full Council and to note the recommendations made under the chairman and vice-chairman's delegated authority following the cancellation of the meeting on 5 September 2023.

23/95/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee held on 4 October 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/22/ENV – River Lim Action Group Reports

RESOLVED: that the council writes to South West Water to ask them about the recent problem requiring the movement of sewage by tankers and high E Coli levels measured by the Environment Agency in the River Lim at that time and to ask for a full explanation for this.

RESOLVED: that the council further investigates the interceptor trap outside the Boat Building Academy, establishes who is responsible for it, and instigates by whatever means necessary any remedial work.

RESOLVED: to thank the River Lim Action Group and associated groups for all the work they do to support the natural environment of the town.

23/23/ENV – Environment Policy

RESOLVED: to refer the draft Environment Policy back to the working group for further development, with support from the appropriate officer.

23/24/ENV – 2024-25 Budget Proposals

RESOLVED: not to suggest any Environment Committee objectives for 2024-25 to feed into the budget-setting process.

23/25/ENV – Promoting Wildlife and Biodiversity

RESOLVED: to introduce further wildlife friendly and biodiversity planting in the Lister Gardens next to the table tennis compound, in the area on the lower side of the gazebo, on land adjacent to the Marine Theatre, and on the bank next to Lyme Regis Football Club, at a total cost of £7,448, to be funded from the environment budget.

23/26/ENV – Electric Vehicle Charging Points

RESOLVED: that the report on electric vehicle charging points is re-presented to the Environment Committee with more accurate and researched data to outline the true cost of what the council is paying for each kwh on the charging points and to re-emphasise the council's stated policy that it will charge cost plus 10p per kw and not exploit their use.

23/96/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 13 September 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/22/HR – 2024-25 Budget Proposals

RESOLVED: to allocate £20,000 in the 2024-5 budget for induction and development work with the new council administration.

23/24/HR – Pregnancy Loss Policy

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed pregnancy loss policy, with an amendment to paragraph 4.2 to replace 'pregnant people' with 'pregnant women'.

23/26/HR – Employee Assistance Programme

ORIGINAL MOTION: to approve the introduction of an employee assistance programme, to appoint PAM Wellbeing to provide this service, and to look into whether the service could be extended to members.

The support services manager said following enquiries, the employee assistance programme could be extended to members at no extra cost.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION: Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members **RESOLVED** to approve the introduction of an employee assistance programme, to appoint PAM Wellbeing to provide this service, and to extend the service to members.

23/28/HR – Employee Exit Interviews

ORIGINAL MOTION: to ask the two former administrative and community engagement assistants if they would be willing for members of the Human Resources Committee to see their full exit interviews.

Cllr R. Doney asked why only the members of the Human Resources Committee would see the full exit interviews, if agreed, as the issues affected all members.

It was agreed all members would see the exit interviews, if agreed by the employees.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION: Proposed by Cllr B. Bawden and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to ask the two former administrative and community engagement assistants if they would be willing for members to see their full exit interviews.

23/29/HR – Gardener and Maintenance Person (post holder 204), Six-Month Probation Review

RESOLVED: to approve the gardener and maintenance person's (post holder 204) continued employment with the council, effective from 20 August 2023.

23/30/HR – Gardener and Maintenance Person (post holder 215), Six-Month Probation Review

RESOLVED: to approve the gardener and maintenance person's (post holder 215) continued employment with the council, effective from 20 August 2023.

23/97/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 11 October 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/33/SF – Statement of Internal Control, Risk Management Policy and Annual Risk Assessment

RESOLVED: to note the statement of internal control and the town clerk's observations, to approve the risk management policy, the standard annual risk assessment and the risk register.

23/35/SF – Office Project and Associated Issues

RESOLVED: to take out a short-term lease of Unit 2 to safeguard its availability.

RESOLVED: not to proceed with the project to refurbish the council office and to look for alternative office facilities, subject to a further report to the Full Council meeting on 25 October 2023.

23/36/SF – Budget and Precept 2024-25 and Five-Year Financial Plan 2024-29

RESOLVED: to approve the 2024-25 base budget and assumptions and approve the base five-year financial plan.

23/37/SF – Review of Charges

RESOLVED: not to increase the precept for 2023-24, set at £132,779.

RESOLVED: to set 2025 Cart Road beach hut hire charges as follows:

	Daily Rates 2025	Weekly Rates 2025
January– Easter	£6	
Easter Holiday		£70
April – Spring Holiday	£13	
Spring Holiday		£75
June		£70
2 July – 16 July		£100
23 July- August		£180
September	£16	
October	£9	
November- December	£7	
Christmas and New Year		£100
Winter Season	£200	
Summer Season	£1,300	
Annual	£2,000	

RESOLVED: to set alfresco licence charges for 2024-25 as follows:

	2023/24
Covers	£143
Single Chairs	£20

RESOLVED: to set Bell Cliff advertising board charges for 2024-25 at £150.

RESOLVED: to set the 2024-25 charges for the market area at £150 and the performance area at £200.

RESOLVED: to set Marine Parade Shelters charges for charities, not-for-profit organisations and schools for 2025-26 as follows:

Categories	2024-25
DT7 postcodes	£20
Within a 10-mile radius of the offices	£25
Outside a 10-mile radius of the offices	£30
National charities (per hour)	£25
Not-for-profit community events and festivals hiring the shelters	At the discretion of the town clerk

RESOLVED: to set Marine Parade Shelters charges for commercial or private hire for 2025-26 as follows:

Area	2024/25
Langmoor Room	£15
Market area	£150
Performance area/ top of shelters (Commercial)	£200
Hire of Performance Area for Performance	£70
Hire of any section on top of the shelters	At the discretion of the town clerk

RESOLVED: to set amenities charges for 2024-25 at adult mini golf, £4.50; child mini golf, £2.50; and table tennis, £2.50 per person.

RESOLVED: to set weddings and civil marriages charges for 2025-26 as follows:

Monday-Friday	£450
Weekends/BHs	£550

RESOLVED: to set car parking permit charges for 2024-25 as follows:

Residents	£200
Non-residents	£450
Holiday accommodation	£750

RESOLVED: to set parking charges for 2024-25 as follows:

Monmouth Beach	£1.90 per hour
Woodmead	£1.50 per hour
Woodmead three-day ticket	£45
Woodmead weekly ticket	£80

RESOLVED: to hold the penalty charge for 2024-25 at £60 or £40 if paid within seven days.

RESOLVED: to hold cemetery charges for 2024-25 as follows:

Inter still born child or under 2 years	Inter child under 16 years	Inter over 16 years	Inter cremated remains	Exclusive right of burial in earthen grave	Exclusive right of burial of cremated remains	Installation of headstone / footstone/ tablet
No Charge	No Charge	£225.00	£50.00	£455.00	£276.00	£90.00

Installation of vase	Additional inscription on memorial	Scattering ashes on existing graves	Scattering ashes beneath turf of existing graves	Genealogy searches	Certified copy of entry in burial books	Double interment fee
£45/£60	£30.00	£20.00	£20.00	£25.00	Not Offered	No Extra Charge

RESOLVED: that the charge for a memorial bench in 2024-25 should be the same as the purchase cost.

RESOLVED: to set the charge for Monmouth Beach garages for 2024-25 at £1,500.

23/38/SF – Objectives and Projects 2024-2025

RESOLVED: to agree the proposed list of objectives for 2024-25 as the basis for setting the budget and to increase the budget for the sculpture trail to £6k for 2024-25 and 2025-26.

23/39/SF – Request from Dorset Council for a Financial Contribution Towards the Future Cost of Harbour Dredging

RESOLVED: not to make a contribution towards the future cost of harbour dredging.

23/40/SF – Request for Funding – Fireworks

RESOLVED: to contribute £2,500 to the cost of the November fireworks' display and note this is unbudgeted expenditure.

23/41/SF – Expressions of Interest for Use of the Jubilee Pavilion

RESOLVED: to accept the proposal from Alan Vian to use the Jubilee Pavilion as a welcome point for visitors and for use by community groups for events.

23/42/SF – List of Payments

RESOLVED: to approve the schedule of payments in July 2023 for the sum of £148,016.64 and August for the sum of £277,558.42.

23/98/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 27 September 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/26/TCP – Cinema at the Marine Theatre

ORIGINAL MOTION: to approve the request from the Marine Theatre for a grant of £25,000 and to support a project to operate a cinema.

Cllr M. Ellis said she was concerned about the amount of money the council was giving away, especially considered another funding request discussed earlier had been deferred to the Strategy and Finance Committee. She said the council already gave the theatre a term grant of £22k per annum and it wasn't fair on other organisations to then give a further £25k. She felt the request should go back through the budget-setting process.

Cllr C. Aldridge said it was a one-off opportunity to develop something which some people felt would be good for the town, for people of all ages, for local people and tourists and it would enhance the theatre. She said the theatre did have a reserve but there were a lot of essential works to be done to the building with that money. She added that if the council didn't provide the funding, the theatre would lose its other grant funding as it needed to be match funded.

Cllr M. Ellis said £100k was required in total, £50k of which was for chairs. She felt the theatre could have done without the chairs and therefore would only need to raise £50k.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had never heard of DC giving a grant, which was conditional on the local council giving funding. She agreed consideration of the request should be deferred to the Strategy and Finance Committee as she didn't think it was

appropriate to award such a large amount to an organisation the council was already funding if there were questions about the level of its reserve. She said it was presented to the committee that if the council didn't approve the funding, the theatre would lose its other grants, which she didn't believe was likely.

The deputy town clerk said the difference between this request and the one from the Town Mill Trust was the latter was proposing to make grant applications to other bodies, whereas the theatre had made an application, which had been granted. He said the award of grant was some time ago and had already been extended significantly, although he acknowledged there was an issue over what date it had been extended to. However, the earliest date mentioned would still give time for refer the matter to the Strategy and Finance Committee for further discussion.

Cllr G. Turner said the council had propped up the theatre for many years and the council needed to carefully consider how much funding it gave to the organisation compared to others.

Cllr M. Ellis asked that all members had sight of the information Cllr B. Bawden referred to about the theatre's reserve and the status of the DC grant.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION: Proposed by Cllr B. Bawden and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of the request from the Marine Theatre for a grant of £25,000 to support a project to operate a cinema to the Strategy and Finance Committee to be considered as part of the budget-setting process.

23/27/TCP – Replacement Beach Wheelchair

RESOLVED: to agree in principle to purchase a Sandcruiser beach wheelchair, subject to further discussion at 2024-25 budget-setting.

23/28/TCP – D-Day 80

RESOLVED: to form a D-Day 80 working group and appoint Cllrs P. Evans, M. Ellis and D. Ruffle to the working group.

23/29/TCP – Review of Community Fund Policy and Procedure

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed changes to the Community Fund Policy and Procedure.

23/30/TCP – Seagull Control

RESOLVED: that Max Redwood is invited to demonstrate his ideas for seagull deterrents at the next meeting of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

RESOLVED: to put forward flags and covered eating areas as a proposed budget objective for 2024-25.

23/31/TCP – Sculpture Trail, Arts and Culture in the Gardens and 'Parklife' Community Engagement Event on 30 September

RESOLVED: that the sculpture trail working group meets as soon as possible.

23/99/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 20 September 2023 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/30/TMH – 2024-25 Budget Proposals

RESOLVED: to identify Woodmead car park drainage and implementation of the traffic and travel working group recommendations as potential objectives for 2024-25.

23/32/TMH – Traffic and Travel Working Group

RESOLVED: to approve the speed survey locations as Sidmouth Road, Queens Walk, King's Way, Silver Street, Charmouth Road, and Anning Road and to add Timber Hill as an additional location, at a cost of £200 plus VAT.

23/33/TMH – Parking Places Orders, Monmouth Beach and Woodmead Car Parks

RESOLVED: to support the introduction of new parking places orders for Monmouth Beach and Woodmead car parks and authorise the town clerk, in conjunction with the chairman of the committee, to approve the draft orders prior to public and stakeholder consultation.

23/34/TMH – Energy Performance Certificates and Let Commercial Buildings

RESOLVED: to authorise obtaining Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for all qualifying council-owned and let commercial buildings, together with recommendations for improving their performance, where required, in order to enable proper planning and investment to safeguard the council's long-term commercial income and to help meet the council's agreed environmental targets.

23/35/TMH – Use of Personalised Water Craft (PWCs) from Lyme Harbour

RESOLVED: to re-state the council's position that it opposes the launching and use of personalised water craft from Lyme Regis harbour or any other location along the seafront at Lyme Regis and to oppose the licensing, for a temporary/trial 12-month period in the first instance, by Dorset Council of personalised water craft launched from Lyme harbour.

23/36/TMH – Voluntary Beach Cleans

RESOLVED: to agree the suggested position on requests for voluntary beach cleans and to prepare a basic handout to give to those wishing to carry out a beach clean.

23/38/TMH – MUGA at Anning Road Playing Field

RESOLVED: to support locating the multi-use games area on the northern side of Anning Road playing field, adjacent to the children's play area.

23/100/C Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the external auditor's certificate for the year ended 31 March 2023

The deputy town clerk said it was a very successful result and credit was due to those who made the submission and to the council as it was a reflection of the whole council that a clean bill of health had been given.

Proposed by Cllr B. Bawden and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members **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 2023, and to note the actions required at the conclusion of the review have been undertaken.

23/101/C Co-ordinating policy and projects in the town council's gardens and cemetery

The deputy town clerk said various committees had thoughts about what might happen in the gardens so to co-ordinate this, it had been suggested that either a working group was established or it could be done via the chairmen's meetings.

Cllr B. Bawden said the Nature Recovery Strategy was being rolled out, which included clear targets to improve nature by 30% by 2030 and all counties now had Nature Recovery Partnerships. She said she didn't want the group to be part of the chairmen's meetings as she wanted to be involved.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Bawden to form a working group to progress ideas as part of the Nature Recovery Strategy and to invite members of the community and guests to speak on specific issues.

It was pointed out by officers this was not on the agenda for discussion and could not be voted on.

Cllr M. Ellis said she thought the point of chairmen's meetings was to discuss which committees discussed which items to avoid overlapping. She said years ago the council had got rid of all working groups because there were too many and they usually took place in the daytime when some people couldn't attend.

Cllr R. Smith said he could see this becoming another committee if the council wasn't careful. However, he said the intention was to make sure the staff were not being pulled in different directions by each committee. He felt there needed to be an instruction to chairmen to organise their input so there was one place staff could refer to.

Cllr C. Aldridge said she felt it was too much detail for the chairmen's meeting and felt it would be useful to just try a working group.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Bawden that the Environment Committee takes on the issue of nature recovery and how the council was going to meet the targets of nature recovery and biodiversity gain.

This motion was not voted on.

Cllr R. Doney said the council was getting too bureaucratic with too many groups being set up. He said his interpretation of the report was a plea from staff to members to get their act together and be more co-ordinated. He added that all the working groups needed to be serviced so this was more officer time that could be spent doing something more valuable.

The deputy town clerk suggested as the Town Management and Highways Committee was responsible for the management of assets, if another committee had a proposal that affected those assets, of which the garden was one of the council's primary assets, it should go through the proposing committee and then feed into the Town Management and Highways Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell that the Town Management and Highways Committee takes a lead on issues that affect the council's assets but other committees can make proposals but they need to be co-ordinated via the Town Management and Highways Committee as the responsible committee.

However, the support services manager said this would add another layer of decision-making as any recommendations would have to go through three processes of approval, which would further complicate matters and delay decisions.

The motion was not voted on.

It was proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden that at chairmen's meetings, where items that affect the green spaces of the town are foreseen, the meeting identifies which committee is the best place to discuss the proposals.

This motion was not carried.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Doney to continue dealing with projects in the gardens and cemetery in the same way as currently.

Cllr R. Smith suggested the council could carry on as it was but to better co-ordinate its communication with staff.

Cllr M. Ellis withdrew her proposal, with the agreement of the seconder.

Members voted on the earlier motion, which had not been carried.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members **RESOLVED** that at chairmen's meetings, where items that affect the green spaces of the town are foreseen, the meeting identifies which committee is the best place to discuss the proposals.

23/102/C Office Project and Associated Issues

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

23/103/C Park and Ride 2024 and Outturn 2023

Cllr M. Ellis asked as the service would stop at 7.30pm, whether there would be discussions with the operator to stay open later when there were events on. She also asked whether the council could offer an operator a two or three-year contract to provide security and hopefully encourage more operators to apply to run the service.

The deputy town clerk said most things could be agreed by negotiation and at extra cost but if extra hours were required, this would either restrict the number of hours the drivers could work during the day or the council would have to pay for an additional driver to cover the extra hours. He agreed it would be beneficial to have a longer-term agreement in place with any operator, but there would also need to be a longer term arrangement with the landowners; they were keen to do this but it had not yet been confirmed.

Cllr R. Smith said as Dartline were driving from Exeter to drive around Lyme and then back to Exeter at the end of the day, whether there was any way the council could encourage operators bidding for the service to reduce pollution by having buses from a closer location or operating more environmentally friendly buses. He asked if this could be included in the selection process.

The deputy town clerk said the council could include whatever it wanted in the selection process. He said the council could look at whether it would be possible to find a safe and secure location for buses to be housed in-and-around Lyme Regis.

Cllr B. Bawden suggested this could be discussed with the caravan parks in Charmouth.

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members **RESOLVED** to approve obtaining quotes from potential operators for the 2024 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 on the following dates.:

- 30 March to 14 April inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover Easter and school half-term (16 days)
- 4-6 May to cover any Fossil Festival and bank holiday (3 days)
- 25 May to 2 June inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover school half term (9 days)

- All other June and July weekends from 8/9 June to 20/21 July inclusive (14 days)
- 24 July to 2 September inclusive, i.e., the entire school holiday period (every day, including weekdays) (41 days)

amounting to a total of 83 days; to approve the deployment of the same AA advanced signage as used in previous years at an estimated total cost of approximately £1,000 + VAT; to authorise officers to negotiate a longer-term arrangement for the use of the existing privately-owned park and ride site subject to final approval of the detailed arrangements by the appropriate committee; to defer approval of the charging arrangements for the 2024 park and ride service until the negotiations with the landowner have been concluded and the possibility of and pros and cons of moving to a pay to park mechanism have been fully explored; and to note the outcome information for the 2023 park and ride service, including about 15,000 passengers carried during 44 days of operation at a total net cost for the bus service of £10,901.

23/104/C Request for Family Funfair

Cllr B. Bawden said the funfair was already going to be in Charmouth and the park and ride bus would be going to Charmouth.

Cllr M. Ellis felt Strawberry Fields was too far out of town as she didn't think people would walk there, but there was nowhere else in the town she could think of as a suitable venue.

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members **RESOLVED** to refuse the request from Herbert's Family Funfairs to hold a family funfair in Lyme Regis in 2024.

23/105/C Consultation on Dorset Council's Gambling Policy

Cllr R. Doney said he found it difficult to imagine the council would have any comments to make on the policy because it was not the licensing authority. He said DC had a policy and apparently it worked.

Cllr B. Bawden felt the council should comment on the policy as gambling was such a big problem for those who had an addiction.

The deputy town clerk said it wasn't something the council could respond to without spending a significant amount of time reading the policy.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members **RESOLVED** to delegate the council's response to Dorset Council's Gambling Policy survey to the town clerk in consultation with Cllrs S. Cockerell, B. Bawden and C. Aldridge.

23/106/C List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments in September 2023 for the sum of £150,965.38.

23/107/C Exempt Business

a) Office Project and Associated Issues

The deputy town clerk said the figure quoted by the quantity surveyor (QS) for the office project excluded VAT and there was no absolute certainty it could be reclaimed for certain aspects of the work. Issues which might arise as a result of asbestos were also not included in the estimate, and no intrusive asbestos tests had been carried out. Although the QS had provided an estimate, he said the council wouldn't know the figure until the tenders came back, but it was unlikely to be less than the estimate.

The deputy town clerk said the council could look at reducing the scope of work so only repairs were carried out to the building, but the likely cost of those repairs could be over £600k. The more the scope of work was reduced, the worse the value for money became because much of the preliminary work remained the same. He said this would still leave a building that was very poor in terms of configuration, layout and utility and he couldn't recommend the council proceeded with this.

The deputy town clerk said if members decided not to proceed with the refurbishment and they needed to look at alternatives, there would need to be separate reports giving members more details about the alternatives and likely costs and suggestions about what to do with the existing building, which might mean disposal. He urged members not to defer the decision until they had that information because as long as some work continued, the costs would continue to build.

Cllr B. Bawden asked if officers had spoken to Low Carbon Dorset about whether they could help and whether there was grant funding available for de-carbonising heritage buildings.

The deputy town clerk said he had met with them on site but he felt the likelihood of getting a grant significant enough to affect the works was slim. He had also looked at other potential sources of funding but as it was a listed building, because it was Grade II listed and only listed in the context of the street scene, and because this was a local authority, the likelihood of meeting the criteria was also slim.

Cllr R. Doney said once work started on the building, the costs would increase further so the council needed to make a decision now to leave the building and find another location.

Cllr G. Turner asked if members could see the specification on which the QS had based his estimate.

The deputy town clerk said it wasn't based on a detailed specification because this would require proper plans to be drawn up and to then submit those plans to have that confidence. The costs were based on the QS's professional experience and standard industry rates for working on this kind of building. He said he had worked on various property projects and he had never known one to come in less than the

initial QS report; they always went up, especially when dealing with heritage buildings.

Members were concerned about the public relations implications of any decision made as whatever decision was made would require expenditure to improve office accommodation.

Cllr C. Aldridge said the council needed to have a cleverly prepared public relations strategy whatever the decision. She felt the council should now move forward with the decision it had made to leave the office and move to the next stage as quickly as possible.

Cllr R. Smith asked if there was anything beyond the recommendation from the Strategy and Finance Committee, which had already been approved, that the council needed to do at this point to bring the project to a close and to look for alternative office accommodation.

The deputy town clerk suggested if members endorsed the recommendation, given that it was subject to a further report to this meeting, a further report would then be taken to the next Strategy and Finance Committee meeting starting the process of looking at the alternatives. He said a purpose-built alternative could be smaller, greener and could work better for local residents and everyone who used the building, so he didn't think it need be a public relations disaster.

Cllr G. Turner asked how the council would sell the building if so much work was required to it.

The deputy town clerk said the council would need to be able to demonstrate there was no demand for office space. He believed it would be bought for residential or holiday let use and any buyer would be likely to gut the building. Some informal valuation advice was taken but he felt this would need to be refreshed. He said it would also need to be determined if there was value to the development site.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to endorse the recommendation from the Strategy and Finance Committee not to proceed with the project to refurbish the council office and to look for alternative office facilities.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of whether to include a sum of £50k in the 2024-25 budget for urgent repairs to the western wall of the Guildhall passageway and the roadside first floor window adjacent to the office building to the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting on 29 November 2023.

The meeting closed at 9.26pm.