

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2024

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr D. Sarson

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

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

Rev. Sarah Godfrey read out the town prayer.

23/133/C Public Forum

K. Gollop

K. Gollop said he understood the council was looking at banning parking on Cart Road. He said in 1974 there was disabled parking at Cobb Gate and as a blue badge holder, he wanted to be able to shop in Lyme Regis. He said there were five disabled parking spaces serving Broad Street, three of which you had to pay for. However, there was parking for 25 or more cars on Cart Road and 17 spaces plus one disabled space in Cobb Gate car park. He said if parking was banned on Cart Road and Cobb Gate car park was given over to disabled parking, approximately 42 spaces would be lost. K. Gollop said 50% of the parking in Broad Street had been lost due to the pedestrian crossing, leading to more people shopping out of town. He said if the council pursued its plan, it would lead to more people doing this. He said most people only needed five or six shops in Lyme Regis and he asked the council to reconsider its position and think very carefully about it. To those members who wanted to ban traffic in Broad Street, he asked them to think of the chaos it would cause in Anning Road, where there was a school and a playing field. He said traffic lights would be needed in Woodmead Road and who knew what would happen to the shops in Lyme. K. Gollop said he wanted to shop in Lyme Regis and he suspected a lot of other disabled people did too, but when it was busy, they couldn't get into the five spaces and the car parks were busy, so instead he used Cart Road but made sure he didn't go there on a Sunday afternoon. He said there wasn't a problem until the new walkway was built and people could go through the car park and walk along the seafront, they went along the ancient traffic-free promenade. He said the proposal would do a lot of harm to shoppers in Lyme Regis and he felt people should be able to park and shop in the town. K. Gollop said when it was busy, he would go to Uplyme or Charmouth. He asked the council to think about the damage it would do to local people who needed these facilities.

23/134/C Dorset Council Matters

Cllr B. Bawden's report was included in the agenda but she gave a further update on Spittles. She said the consultant's annual report confirmed there was quite a lot of material still in the old landfill site, which was contrary to claims from Dorset Council (DC) officers who believed there wasn't much material left there. She said the report recommended more frequent collection of the debris and DC had agreed to put more signs up at Lyme Regis and Charmouth warning people of the dangers.

Cllr B. Bawden said she was trying to reach a compromise over the footpath at Woodroffe School as people were being forced to walk on Sidmouth Road with no pavements. She believed a solution could be found.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC would be discussing its budget the following week. The Green Party would be proposing an amendment to change the way the budget was presented as it was claimed it was a balanced budget, but this wasn't the case. She said 300 to 400 families were declaring themselves homeless each month but the government would only subsidise one room to provide the extra accommodation needed. As there were now more families presenting as homeless as opposed to individuals, DC had to pay the difference so there were a huge number of external pressures on the budget. However, DC was better off than many.

Regarding dogs on the beaches, Cllr B. Bawden said there seemed to be a problem not just on the beaches, but all over the town. She said the pro-dog campaign had been lobbying extensively to submit positive comments to DC so she didn't feel the opposing position was being represented fairly.

23/134/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

23/135/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr M. Ellis – charity commitment
Cllr P. Evans – illness
Cllr P. May – family commitment

23/136/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

23/137/C Dispensations

There were none.

23/138/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13 December 2023

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13 December 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

23/139/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13 December 2023

Valuation and Insurance Cover of the Town Crier's Civic Regalia

The town clerk said for a few hundred pounds more than the amounts quoted, the council could get a full silver replica of the regalia which the town crier could wear, so the original could either be held in storage or possibly put on display.

Members agreed officers should take this forward.

23/140/C Update Report

There were no updates.

23/141/C Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report.

23/142/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 12 December 2023 and 9 January 2024, 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 23 January 2024

23/143/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee held on 17 January 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/48/ENV – River Lim Action Group Report

RESOLVED: that the town council supports the River Lim Action Group with the removal of Himalayan Balsam in the river, in accordance with the regulations.

RESOLVED: that subject to agreement by the town clerk and finance manager, having had correspondence from the River Lim Action Group, the council allows funds to be paid up front to purchase monitoring kit.

23/144/C Human Resources Committee

It was noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 20 December 2023 was cancelled.

23/145/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Iarcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 24 January 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/72/SF – Internal Audit Report, Visit One 2023-24

RESOLVED: to note the internal auditor's report and approve the management responses

23/74/SF – Local Council Elections 2024

RESOLVED: to note the details of the local council elections on 2 May 2024 and the role of the town council in the process, and approve the amendment of the date of the annual meeting of the council from Wednesday 8 May 2024 to Wednesday 15 May 2024.

23/76/SF – A National Park for Dorset

RESOLVED: that the town council establishes the extent of the current proposal for a national park; formally establishes Dorset Council's policy position on a national park; the council's DAPTC members formally raises the issue and requests that DAPTC co-ordinates the development of policy position; the town clerk raises the issue at the Dorset Society of Local Council Town Clerks' meeting; considers setting up a public meeting to gauge support within the community when proposals for a National Park for Dorset firm up; and reaffirms its opposition to a national park with the Dorset and East Devon National Park team.

23/77/SF – Parish Online

RESOLVED: to take out an annual subscription of Parish Online.

23/78/SF – Land Movement at Ware Cliff

RESOLVED: to note the recent land movement at Ware Cliff and the emergency works undertaken to protect properties; to approve the unbudgeted expenditure of £2,400 + VAT incurred in undertaking the emergency works; and to retrospectively approve the exception to standing orders in the appointment of Axminster Excavations to carry out these works because of the specialist nature of the works and their ability to mobilise and complete the works at very short notice.

23/80/SF – List of Payments

RESOLVED: to approve the schedule of payments in November & December 2023 for the sums of £296,953.94 and £129,612.27, respectively.

23/82/SF – Replacement Mini-Golf Building

RESOLVED: to defer a decision on the replacement mini-golf building until 6 March 2024 and explore options for a similar scale building in the meantime.

23/83/SF – Park and Ride 2024

RESOLVED: to appoint First to operate the 2024 park and ride service for Lyme Regis, with a service comprising two buses serving solely Lyme Regis, and to approve the ticket pricing arrangements as follows:

- Adult single - £2.00
- Adult return - £3.50
- Child single - £1.50
- Child return - £2.50
- Group return (up to four people, not more than two adults) - £10.00
- Group return (up to five people, not more than three adults) - £12.00
- Concessionary passes NOT accepted

23/146/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 10 January 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/59/TCP – Sculpture Trail

RESOLVED: to repair and purchase the sculpture ‘Juggler’ at £510 and £2,050, respectively, to be funded from the additional £3,000 allocation to the sculpture trail in 2023-24.

23/60/TCP – Visit Lyme Regis Membership Review

RESOLVED: to keep the current charging structure for the Visit Lyme Regis website.

23/65/TCP – Seafront WiFi

ORIGINAL MOTION: to leave the existing arrangements for public and free-to-use seafront WiFi in place until the current hardware requires replacement or until 31 March 2025, whichever is earlier, at which point it be not replaced and the contract with Club WiFi ended, and for officers to finalise options and prices for achieving a separate, secure and improved link to the card reader at the mini-golf facility and report back as soon as that information is available.

Cllr C. Aldridge said Club Wifi worked to a financial year ending on 31 January 2025, so to avoid paying for an extra year just to cover February and March 2025, she asked that the recommendation was amended from 31 March 2025 to 31 January 2025.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION: to leave the existing arrangements for public and free-to-use seafront WiFi in place until the current hardware requires replacement or until 31

January 2025, whichever is earlier, at which point it be not replaced and the contract with Club WiFi ended, and for officers to finalise options and prices for achieving a separate, secure and improved link to the card reader at the mini-golf facility and report back as soon as that information is available.

23/147/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 3 January 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/64/TMH – The Management of Marine Parade and Cart Road Motor Vehicular Access

RESOLVED: to approve the amended Marine Parade and Cart Road Motor Vehicular Access policy.

23/65/TMH – Cart Road

Following comments made in the public forum, Cllr C. Reynolds and Cllr R. Doney agreed parking should continue to be allowed on Cart Road for blue badge holders.

Cllr C. Aldridge clarified that the recommendation didn't say blue badge holders would be restricted from Cart Road; she felt the proposals were more about general traffic restrictions.

Cllr B. Larcombe said this was one of the ideas that came from the Traffic and Travel Working Group but Cobb Gate car park wasn't a town council car park so a lot more work needed to be done on this proposal.

Cllr G. Stammers suggested it was referred back to the Town Management and Highways Committee for more discussion.

It was proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds that the proposal for traffic restrictions on Cart Road is referred back to the Town Management and Highways Committee.

This motion was not voted on.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the proposal sat alongside other traffic and travel initiatives which hadn't been developed yet and referring it back to the committee would lead to the same things being discussed again. He felt there was enough flexibility in the motion to examine all options.

RESOLVED: to agree the town council would like Cart Road to be made safer and more pedestrian friendly, including further restrictions to vehicle access and for Cobb Gate car park to be given over to disabled parking and limited taxi ranks, only.

23/66/TMH – Improving Routes for Walking, Cycling and Wheeling

RESOLVED: to delegate the completion of the Active Travel Infrastructure Plan survey to the town clerk in consultation with three members from the Town Management and Highways Committee.

23/67/TMH – Monkey Bars

RESOLVED: to proceed with the installation of monkey bars at Anning Road play park and to keep to spider's web in storage in case it can be reinstated in future.

23/68/TMH – Outdoor Gym Equipment

Cllr C. Aldridge said she was surprised a decision was made to put equipment on the putting area as she thought there was going to be further discussion about what would go there.

Members discussed the accuracy of the recommendation.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe that outdoor gym equipment should continue to be an objective that has been identified as affordable within the financial year but its make up needs to be agreed.

This motion was not seconded.

The town clerk said there was a budget of £25k for this project and the equipment that would be installed would be constrained within this budget. He said there would be no expenditure above the budget, without going back to the committee. At this point, officers were looking for an instruction to proceed to engaging with companies to enter into a tender process.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the committee must reserve the right to choose the equipment.

The town clerk confirmed this could be brought back to the committee.

Members voted separately on this motion, as follows:

RESOLVED: to proceed with the installation of outdoor gym equipment on the putting green in Lister Gardens.

Voted for – Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr D. Sarson

Voted against – Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden

Abstentions – Cllr B. Larcombe

23/69/TMH – MUGA at Anning Road Playing Field

RESOLVED: to proceed with the project to build a multi-use games area at Anning Road playing field and instruct officers to obtain formal quotes from contractors on a turnkey basis.

23/70/TMH – Candles on the Cobb Pavilion

RESOLVED that:

- the Guidelines for Future Support relating to the Candles on the Cobb Pavilion is replaced with a more detailed management agreement that oversees the use of the pavilion and any agreement should be supported by an oversight mechanism, such as an annual report to a council committee, and a management mechanism to ensure routine inspections and repairs are undertaken.
- the use of the Candles on the Cobb Pavilion is broadened by actively promoting its use in the community.
- the use of electricity at the Candles on the Cobb Pavilion is capped and any additional cost above that cap is met by pavilion users.
- the council should seek engagement with a voluntary group to assist with the management of the building.

23/71/TMH – Gazebo in the Gardens

RESOLVED: to confirm the in-principle decision to remove the gazebo in the Langmoor Gardens and to leave the existing seating in situ for the time being with a suggestion to improve it in future if the budget allows.

23/72/TMH – Bell Cliff Advertising Boards

ORIGINAL MOTION: that companies with advertising boards on Bell Cliff must have a DT7 postcode, that two spaces on the Bell Cliff railings are allocated to taxi companies and the third space is reserved for taxi companies but may be taken by another business for at least 12 months, and if a taxi company wishes to take the place, they will take priority and the other business will return to the top of the waiting list.

Cllr R. Doney felt it would complicate matters to reserve a space for a third taxi company but to potentially give the space to another business, which could then be taken away again.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION: that companies with advertising boards on Bell Cliff must have a DT7 postcode and that three spaces on the Bell Cliff railings are allocated to taxi companies.

23/72/TMH – Energy Performance Certificates and Let Commercial Buildings

RESOLVED: to instruct officers to keep a watching brief on government legislation concerning energy performance and environmental targets insofar as it applies to the council's commercial buildings and to report back to the Town Management and Highways Committee should any changes be proposed that might impinge on the council's long-term commercial income.

23/73/TMH – Beach and Badger, Lister Room, Request for Canopy over Patio Area

RESOLVED: to refuse the request from the commercial tenant of the Lister Room to install a canopy over the outside patio area.

23/75/TMH – Commercial Properties – Lease Renewals and Rent Reviews

RESOLVED: to note ongoing negotiations in respect of lease renewals at the Amusement Arcade, National Trust Shop, and Lyme Rocks, and a rent review at Boylo's and approve agreed terms for a rent review at the Kiosk.

23/148/C Calendar of Meetings

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to approve the calendar of meetings for the 2024-25 council year.

23/149/C Funding Request from Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils

Cllr B. Larcombe said as the council's representative on the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC), he was not aware of the request and he would have thought it would be part of the council's subscription.

The town clerk said the request was unexpected and DAPTC's chief executive said he didn't expect a lot of councils to support it. He suspected they had exceeded the budget for the project and were looking for additional funding to cover this.

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members **RESOLVED** to refuse the crowd funding request from Dorset Association of Parish and Town Council for election training.

23/150/C Options for Alternative Office Accommodation and Associated Issues

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, 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.

23/151/C Exempt Business

a) Options for Alternative Office Accommodation and Associated Issues

The deputy town clerk said there were only two realistic alternatives for office accommodation: St Michael's Business Centre or building a new office. He said his clear view was St Michael's Business Centre was the sensible, most easily delivered and low-cost option. He said discussions had already taken place with Lyme Regis

Development Trust about the units which may be available at the centre but officers would still need to come back to members for final approval and to review costs.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked about security of tenure at St Michael's and said he would like greater security.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked that specialist valuation and marketing advice was obtained for the current offices.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to relocate the council's office facilities to alternative ground-floor accommodation at the St Michael's Business Centre, Lyme Regis, with a target date for relocation of autumn 2024, and dispose of the council's existing office building and site, excluding car parking, on the most financially advantageous basis and with a target date for any sale of no later than spring 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.09pm.