

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2025

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

Councillors: Cllr G. Caddy, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr M. Denney, Cllr D. Holland, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr A. Wood

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

Guests: Cllr B. Bawden (Dorset Council ward member), Cllr N. Ireland (Leader of Dorset Council), T. Robinson (Lyme Regis Business Group and Tom's Restaurant)

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans read out the town prayer.

24/144/C Public Forum

C. Savory

C. Savory spoke about drainage issues at Holmbush car park. He said where the road narrowed before Pine Walk, vehicles were going over the edge of the tarmac and destroying a land drain, so water was pumped to an adjacent land drain. He said this was a potential risk and danger and Dorset Council (DC) officers had seen the problem and knew what needed doing. However, there was no point in repairing the drain unless there was a barrier to stop vehicles. He asked that this work was undertaken. He understood the deputy town clerk and the DC ward member had tried to resolve the matter and asked if the town council would be willing to make a financial contribution.

Cllr N. Ireland, leader of DC, was invited to respond. He said although DC did plan to continue clearing and maintaining the drain, there was no funding for a barrier at the moment. He said works to car parks were funded by car park charges and DC was raising these, so hopefully the funds could be found.

K. Gollop

K. Gollop asked what steps the town council and DC intended to take to make sure the town entered the next season in a clean state. He also asked what the councils were doing about bins, as there were over 35 along the seafront, which were locked and used by private traders, but they smelled and were an eyesore. He felt there was surely a solution to this and suggested building bin stores on Gun Cliff and at the harbour. He said they were a health risk and it was no wonder there was a rat problem. He also said roads were not swept properly.

Cllr N. Ireland said so many bins were required due to government rules around recycling. He said DC offered commercial waste collection, which businesses had to pay for, and the storage of bins was also the responsibility of businesses. He said the bin store at Broad Street car park was no longer in use but it could continue to be used, as long as it wasn't for food storage, which the town council had agreed to help maintain.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans said members would be invited to walk around the town to look at the areas K. Gollop had highlighted.

L. Gibbons

L. Gibbons said there was a directive from the government regarding chairs on the seafront, which could be charged at a maximum of £500, and DC was following that directive. He said the Tripartite Agreement said DC and the town council had responsibility for the Marine Parade. He said this defined 1.5metres of highway, which had become a problem.

S. Holman

S. Holman said the Harbour Consultative Group were alarmed that there would be further delay to essential structural works to the high wall of the Cobb, as part of the phase 5 works, which had been included in the coastal protection works from the beginning. She said the integrity of the high wall was vital, not just to the harbour but to the very existence of Lyme Regis. She was aware DC had received money from the government in the past to repair the wall, and planning for phase 5 had started in 2016 when phase 4 finished, although in 2022 there were funding problems. She said the work had been put off in 2023, 2024 and 2025 and the wall was clearly getting worse. If something wasn't done urgently, the wall would breach and it would be much too expensive to repair. She understood there had been problems with the change from West Dorset District Council to Dorset Council, including the loss of experienced engineers, difficulty in getting government funding, a lack of effective consultation and a financial shortfall at DC, which had all contributed to the delays. The harbour group was told there were further delays but had not been given details, although they were aware there were possible objections from English Heritage. She said if the group could be clear on what was happening and what was needed, they could make decisions about lobbying or publicising the issue, and they hoped the town council would come on board with this.

Cllr N. Ireland gave a detailed response from the DC officer leading on the phase 5 works.

24/145/C Dorset Council Matters

Cllr B. Bawden presented her report. She added that DC had agreed its budget and reported that the community highways officer for this area was taking early retirement.

24/146/C Questions from Councillors

Cllr C. Reynolds

Cllr C. Reynolds asked why agenda item 21, Town Council Magazine, had been brought straight to Full Council and she asked for support for all possibilities to be taken to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee before the Full Council.

Cllr A. Wood

Cllr A. Wood asked why members were not informed of the Royal Mail error which meant some of the town had not received the previous newsletter.

The town clerk said this issue had only been resolved two weeks ago so it would be reported to the next Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee meeting, although discussions had taken place with some members.

24/147/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr C. Aldridge – travel delays
Cllr M. Ellis – personal commitment
Cllr S. Larcombe – holiday

24/148/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

Cllr N. Ireland left the meeting at 7.24pm.

24/149/C Dispensations

There were none.

24/150/C Leader of Dorset Council, Cllr Nick Ireland, to receive questions from members and the public

As Cllr N. Ireland had taken questions earlier in the meeting during the public forum, no further questions were asked.

24/151/C Presentation – Tom Robinson, Chef Patron and Director of Tom's Lyme Regis

T. Robinson was invited to give his presentation about the challenges currently facing the hospitality industry, on behalf of Lyme Regis Business Association. Issues raised included high business rates, the revaluation of VAT, and the increase in National Insurance. He said the sector provided up to 500 jobs in Lyme Regis, benefitted the wider economy, and was a diverse employer.

T Robinson asked the council to take these issues into consideration when it made decisions that affected the hospitality sector.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans, asked the support services manager to read out a letter related to this issue from A. Oliver.

A. Oliver said she couldn't see how the high charges for Marine Parade seating were justified as it was a public highway, which benefited the whole town and tourists. She believed the maintenance of the area should not be passed on to businesses by increasing seating charges, when they occupied a small area and kept their outside areas clean and litter-free. She said the council should be encouraging businesses to come, stay and thrive in Lyme Regis and asked that it reconsidered the charges for outside seating.

24/152/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11 December 2024

Proposed by Cllr A. Wood and seconded by Cllr G. Caddy, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11 December 2024 were **ADOPTED**.

24/153/C Matters arising from the Full Council meeting held on 11 December 2024

Members noted the report.

24/154/C Update Report

Members noted the report.

24/155/C Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report.

24/156/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025, and 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 7 January 2025.

24/157/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr S. Cockerell and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/54/ENV – Climate and Nature Survey, Dorset Town and Parish Councils

RESOLVED: to delegate Cllrs P. May and S. Cockerell to work with officers to formulate a response to the Town and Parish Council – Climate and Nature Survey.

24/55/ENV – New Waste Regulations (Simpler Recycling in the Workplace, England)

RESOLVED: to delegate Cllr P. May, Cllr S. Cockerell and J. Breeze to set up a meeting to bring together local businesses, the town council and Dorset Council to discuss the new waste regulations and practical solutions.

24/56/ENV – Solar Communities

RESOLVED: to set up a meeting with Dorset Climate Action Network to progress the idea of a scheme to install solar panels on residential properties, to include Cllr M. Denney and V. Elcoate.

24/57/ENV – Strategic plan for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030

RESOLVED: that Cllr P. May, Cllr S. Cockerell and V. Elcoate develop the council's climate action strategy, to be presented to the Environment Committee for approval.

24/158/C Human Resources

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2024, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/55/HR – Technology for In-situ Dynamic Risk Assessments

ORIGINAL MOTION: to agree the council subscribes to a risk assessment platform provider (cost not exceeding £2,500 per annum) and purchases four smart tablets (cost not exceeding £4,500) to operate the preferred system as soon as practicable.

The support services manager said there was a typing error in the recommendation and 14 smart tablets would be required.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION: Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to agree the council subscribes to a risk assessment platform provider (cost not exceeding £2,500 per annum) and purchases 14 smart tablets (cost not exceeding £4,500) to operate the preferred system as soon as practicable.

24/56/HR – The Town Clerk's Objectives 2025-26

RESOLVED: to approve the town clerk's objectives for 2025-26.

24/59/HR – Gardener and Maintenance Person (post holder 204), Six-Month Probation Extension Review

RESOLVED: to approve the gardener and maintenance person's (post holder 204) continued employment with the council, effective from 19 November 2024

24/60/HR – Request to Transfer Pension Rights

to refuse postholder 210's request to transfer previous pension rights into the Local Government Pension Scheme after the deadline date.

24/159/C Strategy and Finance

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/62/SF – Internal Audit Report, Visit One 2024-25

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

24/63/SF – Corporate Plan 2025-30

RESOLVED: to approve the Corporate Plan 2025-30.

24/66/SF – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England

RESOLVED: to delegate the final response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England to the town clerk in consultation with Cllrs C. Aldridge, P. Evans and P. May.

24/68/SF – List of Payments

RESOLVED: approve the schedule of payments in December 2024 for the sum of £301,981.95.

24/69/SF – Works to New Council Offices

RESOLVED: to instruct officers to write a letter of intent prior to formal approval at Full Council on 12 February 2025 to appoint Bagwells Ltd to carry out the planned works at the council's new offices at St Michael's Business Centre on the basis of negotiated rates and at an estimated total cost of no greater than the approved budget of £100k, and to note and approve the exception to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations involved in this process.

24/160/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

23/141/TCP – Free Parking Days

RESOLVED: the non-charging days in Lyme Regis car parks in 2025 as 9 November (Remembrance Sunday), 22 November (Christmas Lights' Switch-on), and 23 December (Carols Round the Christmas Tree) and to approach Lyme Regis Business Association for their input to decide the remaining two dates.

23/142/TCP – Lyme Regis Visitor Hub

RESOLVED: to approve a five-year agreement for Lyme Regis Visitor Hub to occupy the Jubilee Pavilion.

23/143/TCP – Sporting Festival

RESOLVED: an inaugural meeting of sporting organisations in Lyme Regis, Uplyme and Charmouth is organised to progress the idea of a sporting festival called Sporting Lyme.

23/152/TCP – Seafront and Beach Concessions

RESOLVED: to award the deckchair concession to Darren and Jessica Herbert, to award the non-motorised watersports concession to Simon Lippett, and to award the henna tattooing and hair braiding concession to Tia Shoemark and Jessica Palmer.

23/153/TCP – Welcome to Lyme Regis Signs

RESOLVED: to accept the quote and design concept from Creative Solutions and to ask officers to work with them on further development of the design, with the final decision to be taken by the delegated members, Cllr C. Reynolds and Cllr G. Caddy.

24/161/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Caddy and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/62/TMH – Memorial Benches

RESOLVED: to introduce a 20-year lifespan on new and existing memorial benches on town council-owned land

24/66/TMH – Monmouth Beach Land Stabilisation Works

RESOLVED: to delegate authority to the town clerk, in consultation with the chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee and the mayor, to appoint a contractor to carry out the removal of slipped material from the land above Ware Cliff at the town council-owned chalet and caravan park.

24/67/TMH – Chalet and Day Hut Sites at Monmouth Beach

RESOLVED: to approve up to £6k of unbudgeted expenditure to provide a replacement day hut at 23 Monmouth Beach on a 'invest to earn' basis.

24/162/C Appointments to External Bodies 2024-25

Cllr D. Holland said he would like to be the representative on the Lyme Regis Harbour Consultative Group and Cllr C. Reynolds said she would like to be the substitute member.

As there was another member representative on the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, it was agreed an appointment would not be made at this point as new representatives would be nominated in May 2025 anyway.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr D. Holland as the council's representative on the Lyme Regis Harbour Consultative Group and Cllr C. Reynolds as the substitute member.

24/163/C Council Offices

The town clerk said officers had had a site meeting with the chosen contractor, Bagwells, who confirmed they would start work at the end of February and aimed to complete by the end of May. During this time, the office would need to shut down to accommodate the move between offices and it would also be an opportunity to progress the digital office project. The public would still be able to contact the council by email or phone but council meetings would not take place at the beginning of the new council year from May 2025.

A member asked how many parking spaces would be available to the council at the new offices.

The town clerk said there would be two spaces but officers were trying to secure a further one as the council was taking on more units. Parking would be retained at the Guildhall and one of the spaces at the new offices would be kept free for members, where possible.

24/164/C Town Council Magazine

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, 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.

24/165/C Appeal Following a Member Complaint

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, 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.

24/166/C Exempt Business

a) Town Council Magazine

One member was concerned this item had been brought straight to Full Council and felt it should have been considered by the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee first. They suggested it was referred back to the committee for further consideration.

The town clerk said it had not been possible to get the report together for the committee meeting on 16 January 2025, so it was brought to the Full Council for expediency. Referring it back to the committee would mean a final decision would not be made by the Full Council until 2 April 2025, so realistically the publication would not be launched until June 2025.

It was suggested members could consider the staffing matters at this meeting, so progress could be made on advertising any vacancies.

However, members felt they should have an opportunity to discuss the publication first, before deciding any staffing changes.

The town clerk said the staffing element of the report would then need to be considered by the Human Resources Committee in April, which would further delay the launch.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Caddy, members **RESOLVED** that the proposal for a town council magazine is taken back to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee and discussed in full, with all the possibilities that were suggested for publicity.

The town clerk and support services manager left the meeting at 8.30pm.

b) Appeal Following a Member Complaint

Proposed by Cllr M. Denney and seconded by Cllr G. Caddy, members **RESOLVED** to defer the appeal and asked the mayor to try one more attempt at mediation between the member and employee.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.