

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018

Present

Chairman: Cllr S. Miller

Councillors: Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr D. Hallett, Cllr P. Hicks, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr O. Lovell, Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: Mr M. Green (deputy town clerk), Mrs A. Mullins (administrative officer), Mr J. Wright (town clerk)

18/01/SF Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The mayor, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis opened the meeting.

Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds nominated Cllr S. Miller as chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee, seconded by Cllr J. Scowen.

There being no other nominations, Cllr S. Miller was duly **ELECTED** as chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee.

Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds nominated Cllr Mrs M. Ellis as vice-chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee, seconded by Cllr S. Miller.

There being no other nominations, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis was duly **ELECTED** as vice-chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee.

18/02/SF Terms of Reference

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, the council **RECEIVED** its terms of reference.

18/03/SF Public Forum

Mrs A. Vivian

Mrs Vivian spoke in relation to agenda item 17, Request from St Michael's Parish Church for Grant Funding, a request which was necessary because of the ingress of water in the church tower. She said the church dated back 900 years on its current site and held the history of Lyme Regis within it. She said she had attended the church for some time but hadn't known the history of it. Mrs Vivian said it was very important for the town to maintain the church to the best of its ability, and inside, it was maintained to a very high standard. She said it had been modernised inside, including a children's corner, and a place for people to have coffee and play dominoes without any charge. She said the church was open all day, every day of the year, and an enormous number of tourists visited it. Mrs Vivian said the church

was a very valuable asset and was the civic church. She said it was now necessary to remove the rendering of pebble dash on the church tower and she asked the council to help get the church get started on the project.

Rev Jane Skinner

Rev Skinner also spoke in relation to agenda item 17. She said the church had supported the raising of a great deal of money towards the organ and was now responsible for trying to secure the future of the tower and the entrance porch which were pebble-dashed and had become pervious. She said they became aware of the water ingress when the plaster started falling down. Rev Skinner said unless they did the work now, it would become hugely expensive. She appealed to the council for the amount suggested in the report to allow the church to continue to be at the heart of the community and a place which the community could be justly proud of.

Cllr Brian Larcombe asked if the diocese would be making a financial contribution.

Rev Skinner said the diocese was not a grant-making body but it could provide a loan if necessary.

18/04/SF Apologies for Absence

There were none.

18/05/SF Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2018 were **ADOPTED**.

18/06/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said the church tower appeal was her mayor's charity and although this was not a pecuniary interest, she wanted to raise it in the interests of transparency.

18/07/SF Dispensations

There was no grant of dispensations made by the town clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

18/08/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 2 May 2018

Bowling club car park

Cllr J. Scowen asked why the meeting with the bowling club had taken so long to arrange.

Cllr B. Larcombe said this had not been a concern for the bowling club and they were appreciative of the opportunity to have a meeting with the council. He said he and Cllr G. Turner would put a report together to bring to the council.

It was agreed a report would be brought to the next meeting of this committee on 5 September 2018.

18/09/SF Update Report

Members noted the report.

18/10/SF Minutes of the Section 106 Funding working group meeting held on 5 June 2018

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, the minutes of the working group meeting held on 5 June 2018 were **RECEIVED**.

18/11/SF The Annual Review of the Complaints' Policy and Procedure

Cllr J. Scowen asked why there was only one complaint logged about toilets as this seemed to be something many people complained about.

The town clerk said although people may stop you in the street to complain about something, not many made a formal complaint.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the complaints' policy and procedure as they stand.

18/12/SF The Annual Review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure

Cllr B. Larcombe said there was no mention of the weekly publicity planning meetings between officers and some members and suggested this was included.

The town clerk agreed and said this would be included in the procedure.

Cllr S. Williams said the press should know about all council business to be able to inform the rate payers.

Cllr S. Miller said the weekly press meetings and the monthly column in a local newspaper showed the council's commitment to getting information into the public domain.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the amended Communications/PR Policy and Procedure, with an additional amendment to include reference to the weekly publicity planning meetings between officers and members.

18/13/SF Membership of the Section 106 Funding Working Group

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the appointments of Cllrs D. Hallett, J. Scowen and S. Williams to the Section 106 Funding working group.

18/14/SF Submission of a Funding Bid to the Dorset Leader Programme for Works to the Flat-roofed Area above the Shelters' Building

The town clerk said assuming members approved making a bid at this meeting, the completed expression of interest form would be taken to the Full Council meeting on 11 July 2018 for members' approval. He said the deadline for expressions of interest was 12 July 2018, and the deadline for final applications was 26 July 2018.

The town clerk suggested one member worked with officers on this project, and Cllr B. Larcombe suggested Cllr J. Broom.

Cllr O. Lovell asked if making an application for LEADER funding would delay the start of any works.

The town clerk said if a bid was made in July 2018, a decision would be made on 22 November 2018, and work would need to start in December 2018.

The town clerk said this was a gamble, as the application may not be successful and work couldn't be started until the outcome of the application was known, as LEADER funding couldn't be used retrospectively.

The town clerk said patch repairs to the roof would be carried out in the meantime to stop water ingress, and quotes had been obtained for this work.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked when members would see the specification of the works.

The town clerk said a company had been asked to come up with designs and an idea of costs, which was expected to be provided within the next few days. He said this information would be taken to the Full Council meeting on 11 July 2018.

The town clerk said members could also consider deferring submitting an application to the second round, the deadline for which was 29 September 2018, with a decision to be made on 7 February 2019, and work would need to start by 25 February 2019.

Members agreed the bid should be submitted as early as possible.

Proposed by Cllr S. Miller and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the submission of a funding bid to the Dorset LEADER programme for works to develop the flat-roofed area above the shelters' building and the adjoining gardens area into an amenity area in line with existing council objectives, for Cllr J. Broom to work with officers on the submission, and for the expression of interest to be taken to the Full Council on 11 July 2018 for final approval.

18/15/SF Council Office Accommodation

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr O. Lovell, 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 information relating to the financial or business affairs of a 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.

18/16/SF Possible Use of Reserves

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr O. Lovell, 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 information relating to the financial or business affairs of a 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.

18/17/SF Request from St Michael's Parish Church for Grant Funding

The town clerk said any funding should be for building works and professional fees, only, but not client contingency. He said the council could stipulate that any grant it gives would be dependent on a successful funding bid from the Coastal Revival Fund (CRF), to which the church was in the process of submitting a £50,000 bid.

Members recognised the church was an iconic building in the town and felt its Grade I-listed status meant it should be protected. Members also recognised the church was used by many people and was affiliated with the local primary school, but also acknowledged it was used by only one denomination and that there were other churches in the town.

Cllr D. Hallett said the council provided grants at a specific time in the year and the church should not be treated separately. Cllr O. Lovell agreed a precedent could be set if the council approved the funding outside of the normal grants' process.

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested the council could justify treating this request differently because it was an emergency need. However, he said the council should make a commitment to a set sum, rather than open-ended support for half of the project costs.

Members agreed any funding should be at a fixed amount as there was potential for more problems to be discovered when the work started, which may make it necessary for the church to get a loan from the diocese to cover additional costs.

The town clerk said it was a matter for the church to decide if it wanted to take out a loan and could pay it back, and any client contingency was a cost the church would have to bear. If the council wished to pay half of the total costs of construction and professional fees, this would be £66,770.50.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked that the members were informed promptly if there were any problems encountered during the works.

The town clerk said members would be kept apprised of the project development.

Members agreed any funding agreed by the council would be provided on the condition the CRF funding application was successful; if not, the church would have to come back to the council to discuss the options further.

Proposed by Cllr O. Lovell and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to underwrite the church tower project to a maximum sum of £66,770.50, for the purpose of the Coastal Revival Funding application only, and should this funding application fail, the church will need to re-set its parameters for funding overall and if it wishes, the church can come back to the council to request it underwrites a new funding proposal.

Cllrs D. Hallett and S. Larcombe voted against this motion.

18/18/SF Grant Review, Lyme Regis Football Club

Members generally agreed the need to improve drainage to the ground was more important than tarmacking the car park and replacing the perimeter fencing.

However, Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds believed this project should be prioritised over the building of a grandstand.

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the request from the football club to build a grandstand, only, in 2018 and to replace the 2019 project to tarmac the car park and replace the roadside perimeter fencing with a project to improve drainage to the ground and to widen the pitch, and to approve transferring £15,000 of Lyme Regis Football Club's grant allocation to 2019-20, increasing the 2019-20 grant allocation to £40,000.

18/19/SF Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils' Annual General Meeting

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested a motion for submission to the DAPTC annual general meeting regarding business rates, suggesting town and parish councils should receive a percentage, e.g. 5% of the rates paid by businesses within their own town or parish.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr O. Lovell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to submit a proposal to the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils' annual general meeting on 10 November 2018 to request that the National Association of Local Councils pursues the means for town and parish councils to receive a percentage, e.g. 5%, of business rates paid by businesses within their town or parish.

18/20/SF Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils Local Government Review Survey

Proposed by Cllr S. Miller and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to delegate authority to the town clerk, the chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee and the council's DAPTC representative, Cllr J. Broom, to respond to the DAPTC's survey on the local government review.

18/21/SF Investments, Cash Holdings and Loans

Members noted the report.

18/22/SF List of Payments

Cllr B. Larcombe asked for more details on the advance of a salary listed in the payments.

The town clerk said this information could be provided to members confidentially outside of the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the schedule of payments for April and May 2018 for the sums of £147,655.03 and £266,291.09, respectively.

18/23/SF Debtors' Report

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr O. Lovell, 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 information relating to the financial or business affairs of a 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.

18/24/SF Exempt Business

(a) Council Office Accommodation

Although members felt the Three Cups' building would make ideal council offices, it was acknowledged the space was not likely to be available for some time.

Members agreed the former Lloyds Bank building was more promising, especially as the owners were keen to move forward as quickly as possible. However, members felt the Three Cups should not be disregarded entirely.

Cllr B. Larcombe was concerned the floor space at the Lloyds Bank building was smaller than the current council office.

The deputy town clerk said the space at the Lloyds Bank building included the ground floor and basement, and the floor space of the current office included the third floor, which was largely unused or used for storage, and was broadly equivalent to the Lloyds basement. As such, he said the useable space of the Lloyds Bank building was bigger than the current office.

Members agreed it was worth pursuing both the Three Cups and former Lloyds Bank buildings, with no commitment to either at this point.

Cllr O. Lovell said there were previously plans for extending the current offices and he believed the option of remaining in the current premises with suitable investment should also be pursued. This was agreed by members.

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to authorise officers to explore the potential for the council and tourist information centre to remain in the current premises with suitable investment, or to move to the ground floor of either the Three Cups' site or the former Lloyds Bank building, should the opportunity arise and the business case be favourable, and to approve a budget of up to £10k in the first instance to procure, if necessary, specialist space and cost planning advice.

b) Possible Use of Reserves

Cllr S. Miller said given the position the council was in regarding the potential transfer of assets and services, he believed the council should not take any specific action to move or invest its funds and he suggested deferring this item to the next committee meeting on 5 September 2018.

Proposed by Cllr S. Miller and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to defer consideration of the possible use of the council's reserves to the next meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee on 5 September 2018.

c) Debtors' Report

Cllr S. Miller said he was concerned about the debts and he was looking for support from the committee to ask officers to produce an action plan for the recovery of the debts.

The town clerk reminded members there was a substantial amount of in-year debt as site licences could now be paid by direct debit.

The town clerk said he was meeting with the council's solicitor the following day and they would discuss the debts relating to outstanding 2017 site licence fees and debts relating to the newly-built Ware Cliff chalets.

The town clerk reassured members 2018 licences or leases had not been issued to anyone who had not paid their 2017 fees.

The town clerk said he would also discuss the debts relating to al fresco licences with the solicitor.

It was agreed the officers would work up an action plan with the council's solicitor regarding outstanding debts relating to site licence fees, chalet construction costs, and al fresco licences, and to bring this information back to the committee on 5 September 2018.

The meeting closed at 9.06pm.