

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. May

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

Officers: N. Cleal (finance manager), S. Cox (finance assistant), M. Green (deputy town clerk), A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

23/24/SF Public Forum

M. Dixon

M. Dixon, chairman of Lyme Regis Gig Club, spoke in relation to agenda item 18, Expressions of Interest for Use of the Jubilee Pavilion.

Cllr M. Ellis arrived at 7.01pm.

M. Dixon said Lyme Regis Gig Club was established in 2007 as a way of offering people of all ages a low-cost way of keeping fit and having fun by using the sea as a medium and rowing Cornish pilot gigs. He said they had since expanded and now had over 150 members, primarily local people, and providing a low-cost way of keeping fit continued to be central to the way the club was run. He said he had been involved in looking at how important keeping fit was to the health and wellbeing of people, both local people and visitors. M. Dixon referred to all the problems the NHS was having in providing services and he said the best way to avoid being put into difficult positions was for people to not go there and to maintain fitness and wellbeing if they could. He said the club had expanded over the last few years to provide indoor rowing with Concept 2 rowing machines and it was now a British Rowing accredited indoor rowing club. He said Olivia Chuter ran the indoor rowing club and they had been fortunate over the last 18 months to be able to use the Jubilee Pavilion as a fitness suite. M. Dixon said they would like to expand what they were doing and look at ways to provide more integrated opportunities for people to keep fit by using existing infrastructure and using the Jubilee Pavilion as a focal point. This would involve continuing to run rowing and helping people to understand what other fitness opportunities there were in town. He asked members to look favourably on the proposal.

O. Chuter

O. Chuter spoke on the same agenda item. She said she was an indoor rowing instructor and physiotherapist working with patients with a neurological condition. She had been working as an indoor rowing instructor for a year and she was passionate about developing a local health and fitness centre and to continue to help residents of Lyme Regis and the local community. She said for the last 18 months, the Lyme Regis Indoor Rowing Centre had been run from the Jubilee Pavilion and they had

implemented regular gig club competitive training sessions, learn to row fitness sessions, pay as you go classes to the local population, a Woodroffe School rowing club and Scouts and Explorers fitness sessions. O. Chuter said this had offered the community an accessible venue to meet and exercise. She said it had already provided individuals new to exercise or those returning to exercise a safe, fun and socially interactive opportunity to reconnect with physical activity. She said in a recent survey with current pay as you go members, the main reasons to attend a rowing class were fitness, group exercise, social interaction and mental wellbeing. She said they were extremely keen to extend health and fitness opportunities to all ages and abilities. O. Chuter said further plans included developing links with local GPs to offer those who may ordinarily struggle to access exercise classes and developing links with local services supporting those with illnesses such as Parkinson's, cancer, mental health conditions and strokes. She said they also planned to increase links with schools and youth services to provide an avenue for younger community members, to empower them and provide them with healthy hobbies and interests. She said they wanted to develop junior and young adult gig teams to provide the younger generations with competitive opportunities and provide exercise classes specific to young women, mothers and ladies to improve self-esteem, lessen anxiety and encourage a return to exercise, as well as providing the opportunity to mix with like-minded individuals. O. Chuter said they wanted to work alongside existing local community health and fitness specialists, allowing community members to access multiple interests and fitness opportunities and they would advertise and disseminate information through social media, online forums and public shop window displays. She said the pavilion was originally designed and gifted to the community and they were passionate about retaining it for community use. She said they wanted to develop the Jubilee Pavilion not as a money-making venture but as a modern community asset for all those living in Lyme Regis and the surrounding area. She said members were welcome to go and observe a class, speak to current class members or even participate in a class themselves.

N. Ball

N. Ball said he wanted to highlight priorities and outcomes from engagement surveys. He referred back to council consultations in 2017, 2019 and 2022 when one of the priorities that came in the top three of each of these surveys was the improvement and development of the town bus service, with it being ranked as the second most important thing in 2022. He said unfortunately this project seemed to have become stagnant and the improvement didn't seem to have been encouraged to increase its use, both with locals and visitors. N. Ball said he wasn't sure why some simple changes to an existing commitment had not been explored and put into place as it was six years since the initial consultation took place. He said if this related to funding, this did not go down well with many people, due to the regular demands for funding on an unbudgeted basis for projects that were not necessarily the priority or responsibility of the town council. He said a recent ad hoc grant of £25k came to mind. N. Ball said perhaps it was time to step back and reconsider the priorities on the council's list and look at them in a more simplified, common sense sort of way. He said perhaps officers who were analysing the results wished to influence the priorities of the townspeople. He said this came across in a report in 2022 when the opening line in the analysis of the results for improvement to the bus service was as follows: 'There was general agreement that the service was not to be reduced in any way. There was a small number who were unsure or did not feel any improvements were required'. N. Ball said this didn't come across as encouraging, for the suggestion to then be the second most important priority. He asked members if they felt they had the final decision over

officers and whether all points were put across fairly and neutrally for them to analyse on agendas and reports as he would consider this wasn't always the case. He said he would like to meet with two members from the traffic and travel working group and the deputy town clerk to discuss the possibilities and highlight some of the issues and he looked forward to someone contacting him to arrange this.

Cllr R. Smith arrived at 7.10pm.

C. Matheson (read out by an officer)

C. Matheson spoke in relation to agenda item 18, Expressions of Interest for Use of the Jubilee Pavilion. She said Little Green Change was a new, non-profit social enterprise based in Lyme Regis. She said since they launched on 1 September 2023, they had already linked with numerous national and local charities, organisations, and schools and also featured in a number of press articles including in the Dorset Echo, and the Bridport and Lyme Regis News for their work with children from both secondary and primary schools. She said they had submitted an expression of interest to use the Jubilee Pavilion on a regular, part-time basis, as they felt the building would benefit from multi-organisational use, and they hoped to host many local events, competitions and environmental activities from there in the coming months and years.

L. Pritchard (read out by an officer)

L. Pritchard spoke on agenda item 14, Review of Charges. She said she wished to ask once again for the council's leniency when considering the hire charges for the Marine Parade Shelters by keeping them at the current rates through to 31 March 2025. She said an increase of any sort would be detrimental and businesses were unable to keep absorbing increases. She said a review of her turnover showed a downturn of over 40% based on the previous year, which was no real surprise given the ongoing state of the economic climate. L. Pritchard said a common remark made by customers and visitors was the cost of car parking because now at £15 per day, it was stopping many from staying the whole day, thus not giving them time to eat, stay, relax or shop, missing all that all the unique businesses had to offer. She asked that traders were not required to pay all fees up front in advance as this was forcing them to borrow money in order to secure their trading. She said shops didn't pay their rates in advance and with reduced sales turnover and the actual cost of living, it was harder and harder to get and stay ahead for financial stability. L. Pritchard said she agreed traders should complete forms for the year but she felt it was fairer to pay two months in advance at a time. She said she had some further ideas she would like to put forward and officers had agreed to receive these in due course.

23/25/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr B. Larcombe – holiday
Cllr C. Reynolds – illness
Cllr D. Ruffle – holiday
Cllr D. Sarson – holiday
Cllr G. Stammers – holiday

23/26/SF Minutes

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

23/27/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr R. Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 18, Expressions of Interest for Use of the Jubilee Pavilion, as he was a member of Lyme Regis Gig Club.

23/28/SF Dispensations

There were none.

23/29/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 12 July 2023

Dog-related Public Space Protection Order

Cllr B. Bawden said she and Cllr D. Sarson had attended the committee meeting at Dorset Council (DC) when the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was discussed and make strong representations that the recommendation for dogs to be allowed off lead on the beach in the winter didn't reflect the local preference. She said the committee voted to listen to them but it was only a recommendation to the Cabinet in November.

Cllr B. Bawden said she was meeting the following week with the relevant DC officers to show them the areas that were safe for dogs to exercise off-lead, even if the owner had limited mobility.

The town clerk said he had written separately to DC about the construction of the consultation survey and how it restricted the respondent's options.

23/30/SF Update Report

There were no updates.

23/31/SF Strategy and Finance Objectives

Cllr R. Doney was concerned the committee wasn't focusing enough on strategy and the future and all the objectives were based around maintaining and doing things.

The town clerk said if the council agreed to allocate funds for member development at the beginning of the new administration, one of the things which would be picked up was the development of strategy and purpose. He said if the council was stuck on an issue, it would then have an overarching strategy to refer to.

23/32/SF The Process for Approving the 2024-25 Budget¹ and Five-Year Financial Plan 2024-29

The town clerk outlined the process for approving the 2024-5 budget and five-year financial plan 2024-29.

¹ The 2024-25 budget includes the precept.

Statement of Internal Control, Risk Management Policy and Annual Risk Assessment

Cllr R. Doney asked if any of this was materially different to what had been presented in previous years.

The town clerk said in terms of risk, the issues with DC were greater than last year, which was related to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council being under financial pressure, which could lead the government to direct DC to intervene. He said this would have a significant knock-on effect on the town council and DC still had financial pressures of its own.

The town clerk said although there had been other changes in the risk register, none of them were material.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had been assured DC would not be asked to take responsibility for BCP Council. The town clerk said it was sensible to keep this in the risk register.

Cllr M. Ellis was concerned the score for expenditure control had been reduced in the risk register, especially as there was a recommendation from another committee to give £25,000 to the Marine Theatre. She said there were too many items of unbudgeted expenditure being agreed in-year.

The town clerk said although there were items of unbudgeted expenditure being agreed, the mechanism was working as requests were brought to the council and members were informed of the consequences of approving the expenditure. He said there was good control over finance and expenditure and it was a political decision whether to approve unbudgeted expenditure.

The town clerk said member behaviour was still a risk; although things had become calmer, there were still some underlying issues.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked whether there needed to be some kind of mitigation for the operations manager being on sick leave as he was the health and safety officer.

The town clerk said having one person in the organisation who was health and safety trained was sufficient so he wouldn't propose anyone else being trained at this point, although it was perhaps something the council could consider in the future for the acting operations manager. He said the council was still on top of its health and safety requirements; the annual health and safety audit had been commissioned and the Health and Safety Committee was still meeting.

Cllr B. Bawden said an emergency planning officer from DC was coming to speak to Lyme Regis and Uplyme councils so this might help with the town council's emergency planning procedures.

The town clerk said the council already had an emergency planning procedure, which was reviewed annually and involved council employees acting as the first response in an emergency.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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.

23/34/SF Budget Performance, 1 April – 31 August 2023

The finance manager said the council started the year with a cash position of £1.634million but this was reduced to £1million to release funds for projects. She said the report updated members on projects and variances on income and expenditure throughout the year; income was up and expenditure was on target.

Cllr C. Aldridge questioned the expenditure of £13,500 on the sculpture trail as she hadn't realised the council had spent anything on the project this year.

The town clerk said £18,000 had been allocated to the sculpture trail over three years. He said a discussion had taken place with members about a coronation bench in conjunction with the Boat Building Academy and the expenditure needed to come from somewhere, so it had been allocated against this budget. He said members had been updated through the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

Cllr C. Aldridge said she didn't understand the council had agreed this and asked if the sculpture trail still had its allocation of £18,000.

The town clerk said the project still had an allocation of £18,000, minus the £13,500 spent. However, if members wanted to allocate that spend to another budget, this could be done.

The deputy town clerk clarified that the £13,500 expenditure in 2023-24 included the bench and also assumed the £6,000 for this year, which had yet to be spent. He said some of the £6,000 would be spent on the Parklife event which took place recently, although the final amount wasn't known yet. He added that all the sculptures currently in the gardens had been retained for the current year at no charge to the council, other than repair costs.

It was agreed a report on the sculpture trail and related expenditure would go to the next Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

23/35/SF Office Project and Associated Issues

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, 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.

The deputy town clerk said members were being asked to consider this report at this point in the meeting because the potential cost of the office project was significantly higher than any other item of expenditure in the budget, so members needed to think seriously about the project before discussing the 2024-25 budget. He said the council had previously agreed this would be the only project for 2024-25, with an estimated

cost of £500k, but a quantity surveyor had since been appointed, who estimated the amount was likely to be £750k, which had been included in the draft budget.

The deputy town clerk said he and the quantity surveyor felt that inevitably, unexpected issues would come to light during the works, so costs were likely to increase further. He said contractors would have a pessimistic view about the risks involved with this project, such as the age of the building, its condition, its location next to a main road, the requirement to work during the winter, and the strict timescales on road closures, and they would price that risk into the project, if they were prepared to price at all.

The deputy town clerk said a price could be estimated but until the tenders were returned, the actual figure was unknown and it was possible the figure included in the budget would not be enough. He felt it was entirely possible the cost could reach £1million and he advised members to be very conscious of this in deciding whether to proceed with the project.

The deputy town clerk said if the council did decide to proceed, it would also need to make decisions about decant space and the need to pull forward some of the budget allocated to the project for next year to this year, because work was already being carried out on the project. He suggested £50k would need to be pulled forward.

Cllr P. Evans said when a decision was first made to proceed with the project, he couldn't believe members thought it would potentially cost £1million and suggested the council should now consider alternatives.

Cllr M. Ellis agreed the council shouldn't go ahead with the project and felt it would be better to sell the building and go elsewhere.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the council would be able to sell the building, given its condition and potential problems.

The deputy town clerk said there had been previous suggestions the council couldn't sell the building without incurring some of this expenditure but he fundamentally disagreed. He said most of the work the council would do was about creating a better office but the demand for office space in Lyme Regis was negligible and at a very low value; spending a lot of money on it wouldn't do much to increase its value as an office.

The deputy town clerk said if the building was sold, its most likely use would be as a residential dwelling or holiday let and he pointed out there was also a development site next to the building. He said if someone bought it for these purposes, spending a lot of money altering it would be entirely wasted and would not increase its value because the buyer would want to gut it.

Cllr R. Doney felt the building should be sold and staff should be put into a more modern setting.

Cllr R. Smith said although he was previously in favour of retaining the office, he saw the warning lights of a public sector project getting out of control and he felt it would create a great deal of embarrassment for the council.

The deputy town clerk said the quantity surveyor's full report would be available in time for the Full Council meeting on 25 October 2023, so whatever recommendation came from this meeting, there would be a full report to the Full Council.

Cllr S. Cockerell asked if it was possible to have the building assessed for saleability.

The deputy town clerk said this was done as part of an earlier process, although it was a desk-top exercise rather than market tested. He said the figure was surprisingly low and in his opinion, understated as it didn't consider the value of the site to the side of the building.

Cllr B. Bawden didn't feel the council could make a decision on the office without knowing what the alternative options were.

The town clerk advised members not to delay making a decision while it looked at other options. He said this committee could make a recommendation to Full Council and supplementary information would be provided to Full Council.

Cllr M. Ellis suggested the council secured Unit 2 at St Michael's Business Centre at this point to ensure there were options for accommodating staff.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to take out a short-term lease of Unit 2 to safeguard its availability.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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

The finance manager said only known costs had been included in the budget and Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases had been taken into account. She said the budget excluded any objectives and any assumptions on fees and charges. She said the effect of inflation would hit the council hard, so this would affect the surplus over the next five years.

The town clerk said the council may have to make some unpopular decisions in terms of discretionary charges and to give serious thought to material increases to ensure the council's financial position wasn't weakened. He said the council had a good reputation of supporting local organisations and maintaining its assets and it needed to ensure it didn't lag behind.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the 2024-25 base budget and assumptions and approve the base five-year financial plan.

23/37/SF Review of Charges

The finance manager said the council's expenses had increased by £126k from last year so it was important for members to bear this in mind while setting charges.

The town clerk reminded members the council's approach had always been to minimise the impact of increases on residents as much as possible and to look at increasing charges for services which primarily benefited visitors.

Precept

It was suggested the precept shouldn't be increased as the council was a profit-making organisation and it gave grants to local organisations. However, it was pointed out this council's precept was lower than any other council in the area and it had only been increased once in the last 12 years.

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** not to increase the precept for 2023-24, set at £132,779.

Cart Road beach hut hire

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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	

Alfresco licences

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to set alfresco licence charges for 2024-25 as follows:

	2023/24
Covers	£143
Single Chairs	£20

Bell Cliff advertising boards

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to set Bell Cliff advertising board charges for 2024-25 at £150.

Several members raised concerns about several of the advertising boards for taxi companies being owned by the same company, which was based in east Devon. It was agreed a report would be brought to the relevant committee to discuss this further.

Marine Parade Shelters

Cllr M. Ellis said she acknowledged the comments made in the public forum about the traders' costs increasing, but costs were also increasing for other businesses in Lyme Regis and traders in the shelters were taking business away from the local traders.

Cllr C. Aldridge said she understood the traders' costs were increasing, but the council's were too.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to set the 2024-25 charges for the market area at £150 and the performance area at £200.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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

Amenities

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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.

Weddings and civil marriages

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to set weddings and civil marriages charges for 2025-26 as follows:

Monday-Friday	£450
Weekends/BHs	£550

Car parking permits

It was proposed by Cllr P. May to set car parking permit charges for 2024-25 as follows:

Residents	£200
Non-residents	£400
Holiday accommodation	£700

Cllr R. Doney said they had started with the logic that the council looked to non-residents to raise charges but the proposed charges would mean residents saw an increase but non-residents didn't.

Cllr P. May said these charges had been suggested because cheaper permits were available for DC car parks.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to set car parking permit charges for 2024-25 as follows:

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

Car parking

Cllr R. Doney said any increase the council made on car parking charges would have the biggest impact because it was the biggest revenue stream. He said the five-year financial plan showed the council's surplus going down in several years' time so increasing parking charges would help prevent that situation.

Cllr P. May said although the council increased parking charges last year, they were not increased in line with inflation.

The town clerk said to keep up with inflation, members should consider increasing the charge by 20p per hour and to make good the deficit of not increasing charges in line with inflation last year, members should consider increasing the charge by 30p an hour.

Cllr M. Ellis said she wasn't in favour of extending the charging hours in the winter from 6pm to 9pm because it was previously set at 6pm to try and bring people into the town in the evening. She said she was not in favour of increasing parking charges too much as DC had received a lot of criticism about increasing its charges and she didn't want the town council to experience the same. She said people based their stay in the town on how much the parking was per hour and the longer they stayed, the more they would spend in the town.

The deputy town clerk said the business rates on the car parks were increasing and a 10p per hour increase on parking wouldn't cover this.

Cllr B. Bawden suggested increasing the charges at Woodmead car park by less than the seafront car parks because it was mostly visitors using the seafront car parks and people coming to shop or work who used Woodmead.

Cllr P. May said there was already a differential between the charges at the two car parks.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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

Penalty charge

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold the penalty charge for 2024-25 at £60 or £40 if paid within seven days.

Cemetery

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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

Memorial benches

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the charge for a memorial bench in 2024-25 should be the same as the purchase cost.

Monmouth Beach garages

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to set the charge for Monmouth Beach garages for 2024-25 at £1,500.

23/38/SF Objectives and Projects 2024-2025

The deputy town clerk said if the council was to carry out all the suggested objectives in 2024-25, it wasn't possible to maintain a reserve of £1million, although a reasonable level of spend could be achieved.

Following on from the discussion about the office project, the town clerk said if the Full Council agreed not to go ahead with it, practically everything on the proposed list of objectives could be carried out, a reserve of £1million could be maintained and there would be scope for in-year projects that would inevitably come up.

Cllr R. Smith asked if due to a final decision being required on the office project, whether objectives should be discussed at the next meeting of this committee.

The town clerk said it would be helpful for officers to know if members agreed this was a sensible list of objectives so a more accurate budget could be presented to the next meeting.

Cllr M. Ellis felt some of the objectives were health and safety issues and maintenance of buildings, which should be a higher priority.

The town clerk said if the Full Council decided not to go ahead with the office project, all the objectives on the list could be achieved anyway.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if there was scope to increase the amount allocated to the sculpture trail.

Cllr M. Ellis felt £20k for induction and development with the new council administration was excessive.

The town clerk said this was a budget sum. He said the objective had been discussed by the Human Resources Committee and it would involve an induction programme with training, support and development for new members after the elections in May.

Cllr R. Smith asked for clarification that members were not being asked to sign off on detailed costs but were being asked to agree indicative costs.

The town clerk confirmed this and said it was important to get everyone's ideas on the list at this point. He said if objectives were not on the list after the Full Council meeting in December, nothing further would be added but items could be removed at a later date.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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.

The meeting was adjourned for a break at 9.23pm.

The meeting resumed at 9.26pm.

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

The deputy town clerk said a formal written request for a contribution had not yet been received from DC as it was apparently waiting to be signed off by a director, but members could take the request as stated in the report.

Cllr R. Smith asked if members should be discussing the request if it hadn't been signed off because the request DC sent might be based on the town council's discussions.

The town clerk advised members to consider the request as it needed to be part of the budget discussions.

It was proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden to make a contribution of £5,000 towards the future cost of harbour dredging.

This motion was not carried.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** not to make a contribution towards the future cost of harbour dredging.

23/40/SF Request for Funding – Fireworks

Cllr M. Ellis said although this was unbudgeted, she felt it would be good for the council to give something to the town and a contribution could be made every year. Although the Regatta and Carnival Committee gave grants to local organisations, she said by helping to fund the fireworks, the committee could help more organisations which would mean they might not need as much support from the council.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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

Cllr B. Bawden asked if there was the possibility a welcome point could combine with a health and fitness centre because a health and fitness centre would be more likely to use the pavilion early in the morning and later in the day.

The town clerk advised members to keep things simple and whichever organisation the pavilion was allocated to, they should run the operation.

Cllr P. Evans said his preference was for a welcome point as this was what the Jubilee Pavilion was originally intended for and there were no facilities for information on the seafront. He said this proposal could be implemented at little or no cost to the council. He felt the operation should be managed by the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee and Alan Vian, who put forward the proposal, could be a representative sitting on the committee. He asked what the rates were for the pavilion.

The deputy town clerk said the rateable value of the pavilion was £34.5k so the rates payable were half of that. He said he didn't think the council could off-set all of this cost for a temporary charitable use of the building; for a charitable user to be able to claim rates' relief, it would have to be a more permanent let on a formal arrangement.

Cllr M. Ellis agreed a visitor information point would be the ideal use for the building and if Alan Vian wanted to incorporate any other uses into the building, that would be for him to organise.

Cllr C. Aldridge also supported the idea of a visitor information point but said she had a slight reservation about the volunteer help required, although this was up to Alan Vian to co-ordinate.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** 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.

23/43/SF Investments and Cash Holdings

Members noted the report.

23/44/SF Debtors

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, 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.

23/45/SF Exempt Business

a) Debtors

The finance manager said since the report was drafted, debt related to al fresco seating had been paid.

Cllr M. Ellis asked why officers were recovering caravan and chalet site fees through debt recovery processes as the council had previously said anyone who didn't pay their fees would have their licence revoked.

The deputy town clerk said the council had to go through a due legal process. He said although the lease did allow for forfeiture in the event on non-payment of rent, any court would expect the council to go through a reasonable process of debt recovery before that, otherwise the council's actions would be deemed to be unreasonable and unlawful.

The meeting closed at 9.56pm.