

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOURISM, COMMUNITY AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr C. Aldridge

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr P. Evans, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith

Officers: C. Austin (administrative and community engagement assistant), A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

23/17/TCP Public Forum

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

23/18/TCP Apologies

Cllr C. Reynolds - illness

23/19/TCP Minutes

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

23/20/TCP Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

23/21/TCP Dispensations

There were none.

23/22/TCP Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 June 2023

Fossil Festival

The support services manager said officers had met with the team from the museum to discuss next year's event. Fossil Festival 2024 would be taking place between 6 and 9 June. Lyme Regis museum would be looking to the town council for funding towards the event and would bring a draft budget proposal to the Strategy and Finance meeting on 11 October 2023. The museum would involve local schools for a school's day on the Friday, and the 2024 event would be a much bigger event than 2023.

Cllr M. Ellis asked whether the additional funding for the event would come to budget setting or whether it would be considered as a term grant.

The support services manager said the funding would be considered during budget-setting and the museum had been encouraged to apply for a term grant from 2025-26.

Annual event for residents

The support services manager said a meeting had been held to discuss the annual event for residents. It was agreed a consultation would be held to ask the residents what type of event they would like the town council to provide.

Cllr M. Ellis said it would be nice to ask the school children what they would like.

The support services manager said the consultation would be in digital and paper format to reach as many residents as possible.

23/23/TCP Update Report

Tourism Microsite

Members noted the visitor numbers were improving every month.

The support services manager said visitor numbers were expected to start dropping again now as the town was heading out of season, although the year-on-year figures indicated the microsite was going from strength to strength.

Totally Locally

The support services manager said the town council had promoted the scheme in the business briefing newsletter but she wasn't sure of the response that Cllr B. Bawden had received from local businesses.

Cllr D. Sarson asked if it was the same concept as before.

The support services manager said it was the same concept as last year, however, businesses were struggling to offer something for £5 and under, so increasing it to £10 could potentially see more businesses take part.

23/24/TCP Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee – Objectives

Residents' Newsletter

The support services manager said she had been in touch with the clerk of Uplyme Parish Council to confirm the partnership for the residents' newsletter and it was planned to launch in October.

Repairs Café

The support services manager said the town clerk had met with Will Reed from the Boat Building Academy (BBA). The town clerk said the BBA planned to set up the repairs café in early 2024 on site at the BBA premises. The model would be based on the repairs café already in operation at Axminster, run by volunteers and the town council would have a remote role in overseeing the operation.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked how they would source the volunteers.

The town clerk said the town council would advertise what skills were needed and ask for volunteers to come forward with specific skill sets that could be beneficial to the repairs café. He said he thought Lyme Regis had a broad range of skilled people who may be able to volunteer their time.

23/25/TCP Budget proposals

The support services manager said there were some suggested items of expenditure elsewhere on the agenda that would feed into the 2024-25 budget, so any proposals members made would be in addition to these.

There were no other budget proposals.

23/26/TCP Cinema at the Marine Theatre

The support services manager said G. Rabbitts and C. Betteridge from the Marine Theatre were in the public forum and encouraged members to ask questions.

The town clerk said the Marine Theatre was looking to operate a cinema and had been successful in securing grant funding commitments; £50k had been secured so far, the theatre had raised £12k itself and was confident it could raise a further £13k, but it had to have £100k in place by 31 December 2023 to make the venture work. If the funding was not in place Dorset Council would withdraw its funding commitment. As such, the theatre had asked if the town council could help with a one-off grant of £25k. He reminded members the cinema was a top priority that came out of the community consultation on objectives.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked G. Rabbitts and C. Betteridge whether they had a business plan in place for the project.

G. Rabbitts said the business plan was currently being written and would include an element of the cinema. She said it was important to understand that introducing a cinema at the Marine Theatre was not a commercial venture because the amount of money they would take on tickets was very small. She said the theatre felt it would benefit the community, by preventing the need to travel outside of town to watch blockbuster screenings.

Cllr M. Ellis said she had grave concerns about the request and although the theatre needed to secure the rest of the grant funding, she felt it was a lot of money for potentially only 50 screenings a year. She said she was concerned the theatre already had commitments for shows and weddings and that it might not be possible to fit in film

screenings. She said she didn't think it was a good idea to spend public money on this venture and it was not in the budget for the current financial year.

Cllr P. Evans asked how long the current term grant to the Marine Theatre would be in place for.

Cllr M. Ellis said the current term grant was £22k per annum and it was in place for another year.

Cllr P. Evans asked how much the ticket prices would be.

G. Rabbitts said the theatre wanted to keep ticket prices as low as possible because it was not a financial venture for the theatre but a venture for the community. She said they would receive the film titles in advance and the benefit of having a digital projector meant the theatre could screen films at any time, adding flexibility around the schedule of other shows, weddings and commitments.

Cllr P. Evans asked whether the town council received an annual report on the theatre's finances as part of the term grant review process.

The town clerk said the term grant reviews normally took place every six months and as part of those reviews, governance, finance and risk were discussed.

Cllr G. Turner said the former owner of the theatre placed a covenant on the building to ensure it was never turned into a cinema. He suggested checking if this covenant was still in place.

The town clerk said the covenant was an issue for the theatre. However, his view was it was taken out some time ago, he suspected the people involved were no longer around to receive the benefit of the covenant and the cinema in the town had ceased to exist. Therefore, he wasn't sure what the argument against the theatre would be.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if other activities at the theatre would subsidise the cinema and whether there was a limit that if reached would mean the theatre would no longer pursue the cinema project.

G. Rabbitts said it had taken a lot of time and effort to secure the funding commitments. She said they felt they should have comfortable seats and a proper projector and although they were not a cinema, they would do their best to provide that as the town's theatre. The theatre was asking for an investment from the town council to support this.

Cllr B. Bawden asked whether there would be an annual licence fee or maintenance costs that would require more funding.

G. Rabbitts said maintenance costs would be covered by the theatre and there was no annual licence fee.

Cllr M. Ellis felt the cost of the chairs was excessive and suggested the total cost could be reduced to £50k, which the theatre already had in place.

C. Betteridge said the project cost couldn't be altered to £50k because the funding from Dorset Council was match funding.

Cllr P. Evans asked where the money would come from as it had not been budgeted for.

The town clerk emphasised how tight the budget was with other projects already committed, including the office refurbishment project. However, the funding could be taken from the reserve or the surplus, although whatever decision members made would impact on the amount of money available for next year.

Cllr C. Aldridge said the proposal would benefit the community and achieve an objective that was a high priority from the residents' survey.

Cllr M. Ellis requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** the request from the Marine Theatre for a grant of £25,000 and to support a project to operate a cinema.

Voted for: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr B. Bawden

Voted against: Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr P. Evans

Abstentions: None

23/27/TCP Replacement Beach Wheelchair

Cllr M. Ellis said the town council must maintain the beach wheelchairs and it was no different to maintaining other assets.

Cllr D. Ruffle said he had seen the seafront attendant struggling with the current beach wheelchair.

The support services manager said the "Sandcruiser" was the seafront attendant's preferred choice.

Members asked if the wheelchairs were regularly serviced and maintained and what condition the other wheelchairs were in.

The support services manager confirmed they were regularly serviced and maintained, and the other wheelchairs were in good condition.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked whether the beach wheelchairs were included in the asset inventory.

The support services manager confirmed they were.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree in principle to purchase a Sandcruiser beach wheelchair, subject to further discussion at 2024-25 budget-setting.

23/28/TCP D-Day 80

The support services manager said events for D-Day 80 and the Fossil Festival would not clash; the D-Day celebrations would take place on one day and were intended to be modest.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if there was a rough plan for the event.

The support services manager said there would be a proclamation at a certain time with lighting of the beacons and there was guidance available to help plan the event. Any planning would involve members from the Royal British Legion.

Cllrs P. Evans, M. Ellis and D. Ruffle said they wanted to be on the working group and it was agreed other people could be pulled into the group as and when required.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to form a D-Day 80 working group and appoint Cllrs P. Evans, M. Ellis and D. Ruffle to the working group.

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

Cllr M. Ellis said there were a lot of organisations that would struggle to ask for support solely for environmental projects and she was glad it did not exclude groups that did not have an environmental element as she felt it would stop a lot of local organisations coming forward for support.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the proposed changes to the Community Fund Policy and Procedure.

23/30/TCP Seagull Control

Cllr D. Ruffle said the noise from the speakers may deter the seagulls temporarily but thought should be given to how much it would irritate other users of the seafront.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if M. Redwood would use his drone or just walk around the seafront with the speaker.

The support services manager said M. Redwood had already trialled the drone which was unsuccessful, and this was his latest proposal. She said he was more interested in the proposal for flags and covered seating areas and reminded members covered seating areas were on the list of objectives put out to community consultation.

Cllr B. Bawden said the idea of flags had some merit and she suggested using some of the existing flags that organisations used at peak times.

Cllr C. Aldridge said the real issue was the food waste from businesses in the area.

Several members were concerned about how frequently M. Redwood would use the speakers and how long the trial would last.

Cllr M. Ellis said more information was needed before making a decision. She suggested using the tannoy system already in place, to enable the sound to be broadcast further.

Cllr P. Evans said the tannoy system already received a number of complaints and it would not be good publicity for the council. He suggested inviting M. Redwood to a meeting to outline his idea further.

Cllr C. Aldridge suggested flags and covered eating areas were put forward as an objective for 2024-25.

Cllr M. Ellis said flags were in place during Regatta and Carnival Week and she wasn't sure if they deterred seagulls. She also had safety concerns about free standing flags.

The support services manager said the committee could suggest flags and covered eating areas as a budget objective but this did not commit to following through with the idea.

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that Max Redwood is invited to demonstrate his ideas for seagull deterrents at the next meeting of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to put forward flags and covered eating areas as a proposed budget objective for 2024-25.

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

The support services manager said officers had anticipated the three-year plan would be available by now but the Arts Development Company wanted to carry out a public consultation to inform this. She said the 'Parklife' event to be held in the seafront gardens would help inform the plan.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked who had been making decisions regarding the sculpture trail and raised concerns about the publicity of the 'Parklife' event. She said it had been advertised as an arts event and not a consultation about the sculpture trail.

Cllr P. Evans asked how much money was given to the Arts Development Company and how much of that money was given to the artists.

Cllr C. Aldridge said it was £6,000 per annum for three years.

The support services manager said the money was paid directly to the Arts Development Company and officers were working alongside the organisation to establish how much artists would be paid. She said the model would work similarly to the model in place at Bridport, where the council would chose a theme and the sculptors would make pieces around the theme.

Cllr P. Evans asked why there were currently only three installations in the gardens.

The support services manager said the damaged sculptures had been taken away for repairs and would be returned once they had been fixed.

Cllr B. Bawden said she was concerned the Parklife event hadn't been publicised well enough to get enough members of the public involved.

Cllr C. Aldridge said she thought the council should have more control over the sculpture trail and would like the working group to be reconvened as soon as possible.

The support services manager said although the working group hadn't met recently, the deputy town clerk had weekly conversations with the Arts Development Company. She felt the Parklife event had been well publicised and the council had helped with this but it had not officially come through this committee because arrangements were put in place over the summer when no meetings were taking place, so the deputy town clerk agreed that the event could go ahead.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the sculpture trail working group meets as soon as possible.

Cllr C. Aldridge said as issues relating to the gardens were being discussed by three different committees, it was suggested there should be a regular meeting of the committee chairman to create a uniform approach for the development of the gardens.

The support services manager said there would be a report to the Full Council to set up a working group.

Cllr M. Ellis asked for a list of all sub-committees, working groups and which committees they reported to.

23/32/TCP Lyme Eats Boutique De-Brief

The support services manager said Lyme Eats Boutique were very positive about the event that took place in 2023 and looked forward to more dates put forward for 2024. She said the town council currently did not have any input on the suggested dates as the event would take place on Dorset Council land. However, it was intended the town council took over management of events on Dorset Council land in Lyme Regis but the umbrella licence was being held up by Dorset Council's legal team. She asked if the ward member Cllr B. Bawden could help move this along.

Members were concerned the events were not publicised well enough and were not well attended.

The support services manager said the organiser acknowledged she needed to better advertise the events and the council would help to advertise future events including an article in the residents' newsletter.

Cllr P. Evans asked whether the council was comfortable attracting external traders into the town and whether the council received any payment for these events. He said

existing traders in the town would have to compete with external traders and the council needed to be mindful of this.

The support services manager explained there was no income from these events as they took place on Dorset Council land. She said existing traders had been contacted to participate but Lyme Eats Boutique had very little response partly because they were not set up for street food trading. She said if the council was granted the umbrella licence, it would have more authority over which events it supported within the town.

23/33/TCP Managing Consultation Exercises

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.