

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2021

Present

Chairman: Cllr J. Broom

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: M. Adamson-Drage (operations manager), M. Green (deputy town clerk) A. Mullins (administrative officer), J. Wright (town clerk)

Guests: S. Horsler (environmental health officer, Dorset Council)

20/01/TMH Public Forum

N. Ball

N. Ball asked if the council knew who owned the drain culvert at the back of the beach huts as water was pouring out across the pathway and not going into the drain.

N. Ball asked if the council was doing an evaluation of the pathways in the cemetery from King's Way going up the slope as it was in a bad state and growing weeds.

N. Ball also spoke in relation to agenda item 14, Roof Glass Incident. He asked if the council's insurance company was aware of the incident. He said he wasn't happy about the surface of the roof due to the standing water and he believed it was a poor job, especially as it cost £660,000. N. Ball said the building regulations' application stated the roof was only allowed for a viewing platform and therefore shouldn't be used by skateboards, for football or markets. He said he had spoken to a building control surveyor at Dorset Council (DC) about vehicles being allowed on the roof. He said the railings were not designed for vehicles and markets shouldn't take place on there as it would damage the surface. N. Ball said he understood it was the type of surface used in multi-storey car parks but he didn't think the council could afford to do the work again if it was damaged. He said there was very little income from markets so he believed it would be better not to let them happen.

20/02/TMH Apologies

Cllr R. Doney
Cllr K. Ellis – exam revision

20/03/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 March 2020 were **ADOPTED**.

20/04/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr G. Stammers declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13, Charmouth Road Allotments, as her son had an allotment.

20/05/TMH Dispensations

There were none.

20/06/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 4 March 2020

Cemetery gate

The operations manager said there was no date set for the instalment of the new gate but he would ensure it was done soon.

Office refurbishment

Cllr B. Larcombe asked for clarification over whether the planning application was for the frontage windows and not the oriel window in the Guildhall.

The deputy town clerk confirmed the application for the oriel window, mayor's parlour and keystones was a separate application.

20/07/TMH Update Report

Guildhall frontage and oriel window

Cllr B. Larcombe asked why it had taken so long to submit the planning application for these works.

The deputy town clerk said the preparatory work had taken some time to complete and as it was a Grade II listed building, the heritage report was very complex. He said the application was submitted 12 weeks ago but a decision was still awaited from DC.

Electric vehicle charging points

Cllr B. Larcombe said he was aware of government funding for this purpose and asked if the council would be pursuing this.

It was confirmed a funding application had been made.

Cllr R. Smith asked when Western Power Distribution would be installing the infrastructure for the points.

The operations manager said he was chasing this up and a date was yet to be confirmed.

Park and ride 2021

Although she felt it was unlikely the park and ride would operate this year, Cllr M. Ellis asked that the landowner's consent was in place promptly and not left until last minute.

The deputy town clerk said discussions had already taken place with the landowner, who understood the difficulties, and officers would continue to liaise closely with him.

Additional beach huts on Cart Road

Cllr B. Larcombe asked when the process for selling the huts would be determined.

The deputy town clerk said he had spoken to local estate agents and the view was to wait until planning permission had been obtained before advertising them for sale. He said the planning application had been drafted.

20/08/TMH Charmouth Road Allotments

The chairman brought this item forward on the agenda and invited S. Horsler, DC's environmental health officer, to speak on this item.

S. Horsler said although the study had shown no evidence of any risk of substances or contamination migrating from the landfill site and affecting the allotments, some samples showed elevated lead levels. He said there needed to be a balanced approach to these findings and no hasty conclusions should be drawn.

S. Horsler said WPA, which had carried out the original study, was acquiring more information through a further study. He said it was common for allotments to have elevated levels of contaminating species like lead, so it was important the council took a cost-effective and reasonable approach.

S. Horsler said WPA had been asked to collate more information about the national picture to compare levels in Lyme Regis with elsewhere.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if there was a level above which was unacceptable.

S. Horsler said there was government guidance and advisory levels but they were not absolute and needed to be interpreted in the context of other many other factors. He said the government guidance made it clear the figures had to be subject to further analysis.

Cllr G. Stammers asked if there was any way of knowing how long the land had had this level of lead, if it was increasing over time, and what could be done in future to keep the levels down.

S. Horsler said it was difficult to draw conclusions about timelines but he believed changes over time would be quite slow. He said future prevention and management could be controlled through liaison with the allotments association and providing education and advice about what allotment holders could bring to the site. He said WPA would help the council understand if something needed to be done about it now.

S. Horsler stressed there was no indication the allotments were contaminated land, just that elevated levels of lead were found and the town council was now obtaining more information to ensure it was managed correctly and in accordance with good practice.

20/09/TMH Memorial Ideas and Memorial Trees

Members agreed there was space on 'memorial walk' in Langmoor Gardens for further cherry trees. The operations manager said there was space for 14 more trees but there were 33 people on the waiting list, so members may wish to consider other options for memorials.

Cllr D. Sarson asked if the new memorial trees would be available only to local people.

The operations manager said trees had always been available to everyone.

Members were generally supportive of the idea of a tree of life but felt it needed further consideration, specifically the location, the size and the material it would be made of. It was felt the shelters would not be an appropriate location but the wall at the top of the gardens near the cinema did receive some support.

Members agreed further proposals for a tree of life should be brought to a future committee meeting.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree an allocation of 14 memorial cherry trees and instruct officers to bring proposals for a tree of life to a future Town Management and Highways Committee meeting.

20/10/TMH Dorset Council Car Park Consultation

The operations manager said he would be part of the consultation group along with one member.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to appoint Cllr B. Larcombe to sit on the Charmouth and Lyme Regis working group to inform phase two of Dorset Council's parking charges' review, with Cllr B. Bawden as a stand-in if required.

20/11/TMH Dorset Council Car Parks – Free Parking Dates

Cllr B. Larcombe felt the town council shouldn't automatically follow suit because free parking days at the busiest times of year would cost a lot of money, and therefore dates in the medium and high season should be avoided.

Cllr B. Bawden suggested free parking coincided with the Totally Locally dates and she could provide these as soon as they were confirmed.

Members supported DC's proposals for six free parking days and it was agreed the Totally Locally dates and any other relevant dates should be sent to the operations manager as the council's four preferred days for free parking.

20/12/TMH Burial of Non-parishioners in Lyme Regis Cemetery

The support services manager said she would advise against restricting burials to parishioners, only, as this was a sensitive matter and many people who had moved away from Lyme Regis would wish to be buried in their hometown. She said there were very few people buried in the cemetery with no links to Lyme Regis.

Cllr S. Williams said the council needed to make a plan for the future as space would run out in the cemetery.

The support services manager said at some point in the future the council could restrict burials to ashes, only, as this took up less space.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he could relate to people moving away from Lyme Regis later in life but wishing to be buried here and suggested a compromise that non-parishioners could be buried if they had a family connection or origins in Lyme Regis.

The support services manager said although the fees had already been agreed for 2021-22, members were also asked to give thought to this during future reviews as they were low compared with many other councils in the local area.

As members were inclined to restrict the definition of a non-parishioner to someone with a link to Lyme Regis, the deputy town clerk questioned whether it would also be necessary to charge double fees for non-parishioners.

Cllr B. Bawden felt it was unnecessary to charge double fees if there was to be a new restriction, but this was not agreed.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to restrict the burial of non-parishioners in the town cemetery to those with a proven family connection or origins in Lyme Regis.

20/13/TMH Showers on the Beach

Members agreed the showers should not be reinstated during the pandemic and while there were continuing restrictions as they were high frequency touch points.

However, several members wanted an assurance the showers would be reinstated when it was safe to do so.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr S. Williams, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** the showers on the beach remain closed until pandemic restrictions are eased.

20/14/TMH Roof Glass Incident

The operations manager said the process hadn't been completed yet as the Health and Safety Committee hadn't met since the report was received from the contractor, but officers wanted to bring the information to the first available formal council committee.

Cllr B. Larcombe was concerned about the possibility of similar incidents in future and suggested a beech hedge was planted at the bottom edge of the gardens where they met the roof to help prevent stones hitting the glass. He also suggested a small fence was installed while the hedge was established. He felt this would also deter people on bikes and skateboards from coming down the hill onto the roof.

Cllr M. Ellis did not support a hedge being planted as the roof area was used as an amphitheatre for various events and other planting had previously been removed from the area to support this kind of use. She suggested signs were put in the area to discourage any activities which could damage the glass.

The operations manager said it would also create an extra burden for the gardeners to strim under the hedge.

Cllr C. Reynolds was concerned the roots from the trees would go under the roof surface and cause other problems.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he had suggested hedges, not trees, so the roots would be proportionate but if this was a concern, he would suggest a fence.

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

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr S. Williams to plant a beech hedge at the bottom edge of the gardens where it meets the roof to prevent stones hitting the glass.

Voted for – Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr R. Smith

Voted against – Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr B. Bawden

Abstentions – None

The chairman, Cllr J. Broom, used his casting vote and the motion was not carried.

Cllr B. Larcombe requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds to leave the roof area as it is and for the existing precautionary measures to continue.

Voted for – Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr R. Smith

Voted against – Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

Abstentions – None

The chairman, Cllr J. Broom, used his casting vote and the motion was not carried. He felt a hedge would not be suitable as stones could still go under the hedge but said a fence would be preferable.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Broom to install a fence at the bottom edge of the gardens where it meets the roof to prevent stones hitting the glass.

This motion was not seconded.

Cllr M. Ellis said a fence would prevent people sitting on the bank and enjoying events on the roof and would also spoil the view out to sea.

Cllr B. Bawden said a fence would change the character of that area of the gardens as it provided a safe grassed play area and somewhere people could gather to watch events.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the council had a responsibility to prevent accidents from footballs, bikes and skateboards and as well as preventing stones from hitting the glass, he felt a fence would also deter these activities.

Cllr C. Reynolds said these activities were not banned from the area so the council shouldn't be actively discouraging them.

The operations manager suggested these kinds of activities could be discouraged if picnic benches and planters were placed on the roof.

The deputy town clerk said he believed the measures currently being taken in terms of netting was enough to stop stones hitting the glass. He said there were issues about the effectiveness of any barrier at the back of the roof and people could still come down the ramp onto the roof, which was installed to provide an accessible route through the gardens. He suggested officers brought to members a proper management plan about how the roof could be used in the future.

Cllr D. Sarson asked if a glass consultant could consider what other items could crack the glass.

The deputy town clerk said this could be picked up as part of the management plan and how the glass might react may inform the uses of the roof.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to instruct officers to draft a management plan for the future use of the roof which takes into account the glass incident and for this to be brought back to a future Town Management and Highways Committee meeting.

20/15/TMH Circus Request

The operations manager said he had already spoken to the landowner of Strawberry Field and he would support the circus being located there.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to open discussions with Circus Ginnett to operate at Strawberry Field, subject to further discussions with the landowner.

20/16/TMH Stile Lane

The deputy town clerk said DC was aware of the issues affecting this route and although the definitive route of the footpath was unavailable because of stabilisation works and the route passing through the Marine Parade retaining wall and commercial premises, the view was there was an equally commodious route on public land and therefore no need to take any steps to formally divert the route.

The deputy town clerk said he was waiting to receive this formally in writing from DC, which would be reported to the next meeting, although it was unlikely there would need to be a report to consider diverting the definitive route.

20/17/TMH 17 Monmouth Beach Chalet

The deputy town clerk said the footprint would remain the same as the current structure but the neighbour was objecting to the plans, regardless of whether there was a pitched or flat roof. He said 70% of the chalet would remain as is and the only proposed change was the elevated section at the back, but the height of the ridge would be higher than any nearby chalet.

Members were concerned about the increased ridge height, that the proposed new structure no longer looked like a chalet, and it would set a precedent on the site.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to reject the plans for changes to the structure of 17 Monmouth Beach chalet.

20/18/TMH RPI Rent Increases Applied to Chalet Leases Since 2018

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, 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 the consideration of 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.

20/19/TMH Complaints and Incidents

Cllr M. Ellis asked if there could be a more detailed description of how an issue was resolved.

Members generally agreed they liked seeing compliments as well as complaints and incidents.

20/20/TMH Exempt Business

a) RPI Rent Increases Applied to Chalet Leases Since 2018

The deputy town clerk said the issue related not to day huts and caravans, only chalets which had been moved to lease arrangements. He said there had been significant improvements in collecting arrears since the last report to members but one of the most contentious issues had been the application of RPI rent increases.

Members acknowledged that although it would be a financial loss to the council, the settling of debts was a bigger objective.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to waive any RPI-related rent increases applied to Monmouth Beach chalet rents for the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 for the reasons set out in the report and at a maximum total one-off cost to the council of £20,903.73 + VAT.

The meeting closed at 9.38pm.