

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2021

Present

Chairman: Cllr J. Broom

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr K. Ellis, 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)

20/21/TMH Public Forum

M. Hix

M. Hix spoke in relation to agenda item 9, Use of Town Council-Owned Land. He said the Oyster and Fish House would re-open on 12 April but didn't have sufficient seating on the decking with social distancing in place. He said he had been thinking for a couple of years and had spoken to the town clerk about acquiring the narrow slope to the left of the table tennis for rental. He said he would propose levelling it out and installing some decking, so it would become an extension of the restaurant's existing deck, which it already rented from the council. M. Hix said they would use the area during the six weeks people were only allowed to eat outdoors and after that he would like a discussion about permanently renting the land. He said the land currently wasn't being used for anything and putting in decking would elevate it slightly so the hedge wouldn't obstruct views to the sea. He also suggested a small horse box to do takeaway, so the section in between the horse box and restaurant became extended seating with steps down. He said that area would suit them better operationally for serving meals.

Cllr J. Broom asked what size the gazebo would be.

M. Hix said it would be approximately 3m x 12m.

N. Ball

N. Ball said he had received a reply from the council following his comments to the last meeting of this committee regarding the seafront roof and glass and he hoped all members were aware of this. He said the council's reply stated its insurer had not been made aware of the glass breaking due to the minimal cost of replacement and excess on the policy, although the council was in the process of renegotiating its package and a further claim would not be a cost-effective deal. He said he hoped members were aware of this as there seemed to be a difference between council staff and members. N. Ball said on the planning application, the architects stated 10mm clear glass but it was actually 12mm clear toughened, heat soak tested glass. He said he didn't know how Dorset Council (DC) could approve two different materials. He said there were no structural calculations, no proof of suitability for the glass, no documents on the glass to prove what was applied for and no conditions approved. He said in his opinion, the council had put cost over risk because laminated glass would have cost 40% more. He

added the roof should only be used for performances and film shows because of the high risk.

N. Ball also spoke in relation to agenda item 9, Use of Town Council-Owned Land. He said his concern was the number of people who would be coming to Lyme Regis and he questioned whether it was a good idea to have extra seating with all the restrictions. He was concerned people wouldn't be able to socially distance and asked if the council would be liable if this was the case.

N. Ball also spoke in relation to agenda item 10, Traffic Speed in Residential Areas. He said Colway Lane was a rat run because there was a better road surface and he felt the council should look into traffic calming measures, such as sleeping policemen, and take it up with Dorset Highways. He also thanked those who had picked up rubbish along Colway Lane.

N. Ball said he had been working with Dorset Countryside during Covid-19 and in May there would be a footpath from Talbot Road kissing gate up to the Bloor Homes development. He said he had been working on this for around two years and it had been a health and safety issue as someone had fallen over.

Cllr B. Larcombe arrived at 7.11pm.

W. Davies (read out by an officer)

W. Davies spoke in relation to agenda item 13, Complaints, Incidents and Compliments, specifically the operations manager's response to a complaint about dogs now having to be on a lead on the main beach. She said she took issue with the response given and although it had become the 'standard' response, it gave a very false impression to anyone not knowing the area well. She quoted the operations manager's response: "Beaches are available either side of the town to exercise dogs off lead and there are many countryside walks available". W. Davies said the only beaches were Church Cliff beach, which was only accessible at low tide and then only down many steep steps, a hazard for small or elderly dogs as well as for owners with any sort of mobility problem, even just stiff knee joints. Also the beach at the end of East Cliff walkway, which had the same issue of tides and steps, and Monmouth beach where again, sand was only accessible at low tide, and even then owners needed to cross over the expanse of large stones, again needing a high degree of mobility. W. Davies said as for the 'many countryside walks', there was now the accessible Lim Way but the only open ground often had livestock in it, or the coastal path, access to which was either over a stile or through kissing gates and steepish slopes. She said in other words, all the options given were totally inaccessible to anyone in a wheelchair or even pushing a buggy, and impossible for anyone unable to tackle slopes and steps. She said it may be that such people should avoid Lyme, but in a century where hotels and lodgings were required to compile an accessibility guide, surely the council should give a more truthful description of the alternatives they offer. W. Davies asked if the council had considered creating a more positive approach by making fenced land available for off-lead exercise and training and she suggested Strawberry Fields.

H. Britton (read out by an officer)

As chairman of the Lyme Regis Society, H. Britton spoke in relation to agenda item 12, Replacement of a Section of Seafront Railings at Marine Parade. She said the society's aim was to safeguard the natural and architectural beauty of Lyme Regis. She said they fully supported Simon Williams' report proposing that the iconic Victorian seafront

railings be renewed on a like-for-like basis. She said the Jane Austen garden at the far end of Marine Parade featured the same railing design, powder coated to protect them against the elements, and these recent additions fitted in perfectly with the surrounding architecture on the seafront. H. Britton said retaining the original design maintained the balance with the surrounding Marine Parade architecture, was less intrusive in terms of installation and also more cost-effective. She said the original railings had been in situ for approximately 120 years and although in recent years they had required more maintenance, any replacement would have a more robust, modern finish. She said retaining the design of the original railings also offered potential filming and artistic opportunities to both promote and produce valuable revenue for the town. H. Britton said the society was extremely pleased to endorse the recommended option to retain the existing design of seafront railings to enhance and maintain Lyme Regis' architectural beauty.

20/22/TMH Apologies

Cllr R. Doney.

20/23/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 February 2021 were **ADOPTED**.

20/24/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

20/25/TMH Dispensations

There were none.

20/26/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 3 February 2021

Charmouth Road Allotments

The deputy town clerk said the report from WPA regarding elevated levels of lead had been delayed and was expected by 26 March 2021.

Circus request

Cllr M. Ellis asked if the circus would be using the park and ride field or Strawberry Field.

The operations manager said it was intended to use Strawberry Field as it was still not known if park and ride would operate this year, although officers were in discussion with the landowner about renting the field for only six weeks for this purpose.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he was concerned about the circus as he didn't realise it was going to be operating for six weeks. He asked how much the council was charging for the use of the land, and how things like traffic management and toilets were being managed, as he didn't feel the council should be out-of-pocket. He also asked if the circus would be required to put the land back as they found it as it might be in a poor state after six weeks of use.

Guildhall frontage and oriel window

The deputy town clerk said planning permission for the oriel window had still not been received and he would be having a discussion with the architect about how to proceed with the other works. He said based on how long it had taken to get decisions on the Guildhall, Reed Holland Architects needed to start work now on submitting plans for the council office to allow works to take place in the autumn. The deputy town clerk said the planning and listed building process would need to take place simultaneously with the procurement process.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he didn't feel work on the stonework on the Guildhall frontage should have been delayed while planning permission was awaited for the oriel window.

The deputy town clerk said as the Guildhall was a Grade II listed building, those works couldn't take place without listed building consent and planning permission.

Beach profiling

The deputy town clerk said officers had expressed concern with DC that the dredging works were scheduled for the Easter Bank Holiday and school holidays but it was clear this wasn't going to change, although there might be some flexibility with dates within the period identified.

Cllr J. Broom said if the council received any complaints, they should be sent to DC or the harbourmaster.

New harbourmaster's store for Dorset Council

Cllr J. Broom felt the time had come to inform DC they needed to vacate the current harbourmaster's store after July 2021.

The deputy town clerk said it had been made clear to DC the council wanted the site back as quickly as possible. He said the council could acquire possession of the building but there would be a requirement for 'reasonable notice'. He agreed it would be helpful to put down a clear marker at this stage.

Park and ride 2021

The deputy town clerk said the situation was complicated because of the financial risk to the council, which depended on factors the council had no control over, such as the extent of ongoing social distancing and the public's attitude to getting on a bus. He said the potential capacity under the current social distancing rules, even at the busiest times would mean the service would operate at a loss, which would be at the council's expense.

Cllr D. Sarson said he strongly objected to any of the suggested uses of the roof and didn't feel there should be any events or permanent use of the area, as the council needed a solution to protect the glass. He said the glass outside the Langmoor and Lister Rooms was toughened and laminated and this should be looked at for the roof.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he was opposed to vehicles, horse boxes and trailers going on the roof and his main concern was not the effect on the glass if it was hit, but the potential for it to fall on the areas below. He questioned if the building regulations approval stated there should be no vehicles.

The deputy town clerk said he had checked with the architect and there was no such reference in the application and no comments to that effect from DC.

Cllr R. Smith asked if the surface would be able to take fuel spills and how gazebos and marquees would be prevented from blowing over the side of the roof.

The deputy town clerk said the material was standard in municipal car parks so he was sure it would be capable of withstanding fuel spillages. With regards to gazebos, he said the uprights supporting the glass panels had fixing points built into them and were designed to be able to take tie-down loadings, and water containers would usually hold the structure down on the other side.

Several members were in favour of the roof being used for pop-up cinema, theatre and music performances.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the council was going to restrict unauthorised access for things like football and skateboarding.

The support services manager said those activities were not unauthorised as there were no byelaws in place to prevent them. She said byelaws to restrict these activities were in the gift of DC and in the past when the council had tried to introduce them, DC had shown no appetite to pursue it.

Cllr R. Smith said having picnic planters and benches would be an easier way to deter these kinds of activities rather than going down the legal route.

The deputy town clerk said officers had asked all the parties involved about the suitability of the specification of the glass in that location and had been reassured it was suitable. He said officers had looked already at what measures could be taken to give further protection to the glass and he could bring more information back to members.

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that a management plan for the seafront roof comes up with constructive proposals to protect the glass panels before consideration is given to what can and cannot take place on the roof.

20/29/TMH Use of Town Council-Owned Land

The deputy town clerk said an expression of interest for outside seating had been received from Red Panda, in addition to the requests from SWiM and the Oyster and Fish House.

Cllr B. Larcombe said it was quite clear the provision of council land for this purpose was expected of councils who had the ability to help businesses and the request from the Oyster and Fish House would have very little impact on the council as the area was unused.

Members generally agreed with this but several members stressed they wouldn't agree to any permanent use. Cllr G. Stammers suggested any permanent use of the land would need to go out to tender.

Cllr M. Ellis was concerned about SWiM putting tables and chairs on the Marine Parade as it was the route for emergency vehicles and suggested a maximum of six tables, each with two chairs, as the area near to the barrier gate was too narrow for seating.

Cllr S. Williams said he was against any extra seating as the gardens were intended for the benefit of local people and the seafront was becoming overcrowded.

Cllr K. Ellis questioned whether there would be enough room to socially distance if Red Panda had outdoor seating as the Bell Cliff Restaurant already had seating in that area.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the request from the Oyster and Fish House to use town council-owned land in the Lister Gardens for extra seating subject to temporary measures under the terms of the Secretary of State's letter until September 2022, and then to be reviewed.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis to approve the request from SWiM to use town council owned-land on Marine Parade for extra seating, with a maximum of six tables to be placed against the raised seating area and all A boards to be removed.

This motion was not seconded.

The deputy town clerk agreed the width of the Marine Parade varied from one end of SWiM to the other and it therefore might not be possible to maintain a sufficient width at one end. He said if members were not fundamentally opposed to extra seating, they could approve in principle, subject to maintaining adequate width and to delegate the precise number, layout and location to the town clerk, in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman of this committee. He suggested an agreement for up to 10 tables to provide some flexibility.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr K. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the request from SWiM to use town council-owned land on Marine Parade for extra seating subject to temporary measures under the terms of the Secretary of State's letter until September 2022, up to a maximum of 10 tables and with all A boards to be removed, with final approval to be given by the town clerk in consultation with the chairman and vice chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner to refuse the request from Red Panda to use town council owned-land at Bell Cliff for extra seating because of difficulties with social distancing in that area.

This motion was not carried.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the request from Red Panda to use town council-owned land at Bell Cliff for extra seating subject to temporary measures under the terms of the Secretary of State's letter until September 2022, with final approval to be given by the town clerk in consultation with the chairman and vice chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

20/30/TMH Traffic Speed in Residential Areas

Cllr B. Bawden said the council had enquiries about Pound Road two years ago and there were many other areas in the town which were a concern, so perhaps they could all be dealt with at the same time. She added that the Future Towns consultation could include specific ideas and the pros and cons of what people wanted.

The operations manager said Dorset Highways looked at Pound Road at the time and deemed it to be safe.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she had previously raised £300 for a speed watch camera and got a group of people together but they were reluctant to use the camera because they didn't want to catch their friends. She said there was a perception vehicles were travelling faster than they actually were because of the way the roads were in Lyme and with cars parked along the roads.

Cllr J. Broom suggested putting devices across the roads to monitor vehicle speeds so there would be accurate information about the actual speed vehicles were travelling.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the issue with monitoring devices was they measured the average speed of vehicles, so while most cars could be travelling at 20mph, if one car travelled at 50mph, it would skew the results. He said it was about how you weigh up the risk and determined if one person driving too fast warranted restrictions across the town.

The deputy town clerk confirmed an engineering loop did provide an average and/or 85 percentile speed but the specific individual figures could be requested. He said DC would charge for the set-up of a device and it would cost around £300.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr K. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to ask officers to find out how much it would cost to put an engineering loop on Colway Lane, Queens Walk and Anning Road to monitor traffic speed.

Cllr B. Larcombe said if the council agreed to collect speed data, it would need to be clear about the period it was captured as there were seasonal differences in the traffic.

20/31/TMH Seafront Audit Signs

Cllr B. Larcombe said there were too many signs around the town, especially on the seafront, which were competing for people's attention and losing emphasis.

Cllr K. Ellis questioned the need for the seagull signs if the council wasn't enforcing the rules.

The operations manager said the enforcement officers preferred to have signs to refer to when they were enforcing various rules as they could point to a sign close by.

Cllr B. Larcombe said it should first be determined if signs were mandatory or just public information, and to then consider removing some of the discretionary signs and taking a harder line with businesses and the number of signs they placed out.

Cllr S. Williams said the council had a right to enforce rules about signs as part of its commercial leases.

The deputy town clerk confirmed the leases included some words about signs generally but the main problem was the boards were not on the leased area so it couldn't be enforced under the terms of the lease. However, he said the town council owned the Marine Parade so it could take some reasonable steps anyway.

Cllr G. Stammers said she wouldn't like to remove any signs which would make the enforcement officers' job difficult and suggested liaising with them about which signs were most important to them.

Cllr K. Ellis also suggested looking at the placement of signs as there didn't need to be several of the same sign in the same area.

It was agreed the operations manager would rationalise the signs on the seafront, keeping mandatory signs but ensuring there were no more than needed, removing discretionary signs where possible, and dealing with signs associated with businesses.

20/32/TMH Replacement of a Section of Seafront Railings at Marine Parade

Cllr B. Bawden left the meeting at 9.01pm.

The deputy town clerk said the council would never get planning officer support for the modern design; it would only be possible to get approval by committee or on appeal. He said like-for-like replacement would be much more straightforward.

Cllr B. Bawden returned to the meeting at 9.06pm.

Cllr B. Larcombe felt the modern design would look better and save maintenance costs. He said he wasn't sure what like-for-like would look like as the existing railings had been changed so much and he wasn't sure if the old style would comply with regulations because the space between the rails may be bigger than current requirements.

Cllr C. Reynolds said the most important considerations were the cost and what DC was likely to approve. She felt most people would like to see the older design kept and given the deputy town clerk's advice, applying for a modern replacement was a waste of time.

Cllr M. Ellis said the town council had pushed for what it wanted and although it would have been better to have the same modern design all along the seafront, it was now time to consider the health and safety implications and get on with a like-for-like replacement.

The deputy town clerk said the spacing in between the rails may need to be different to comply with modern requirements and there may need to be slightly larger horizontal rails because the existing ones were weak and bent easily.

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested officers engaged in pre-planning discussions with DC's planning officers to find out how close they could get to like-for-like before submitting an application which DC might not support.

The deputy town clerk said advice was given by DC previously so the process could be speeded up by clarifying with the planning officers if that was still the position. It might

also be the case that like for like replacement constituted 'permitted development', in which case no application would be required.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to apply for planning permission to install replacement seafront railings to match the existing, as far as current legislation will allow.

20/33/TMH Complaints, Incidents and Compliments

Members noted there were two complaints regarding skateboarding but it was felt these issues would be alleviated when the skatepark could re-open on 29 March 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.23pm.