

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS WORKING GROUP

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 JANUARY 2022

##### Present

**Chairman:** Cllr J. Broom

**Members:** Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

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

**Guests:** D. Heath (senior technical officer, Dorset Highways) M. Westwood (Dorset Council service manager for parking)

##### 21/45/TMH Public Forum

###### N. Ball

N. Ball thanked the town council, particularly gardener Alan Legg who looked after the cemetery as he said it had never looked better. He said he believed the path going up the cemetery near the King's Way entrance was due to be resurfaced and he asked if this work was still going to be done. He said there was also a raised culvert on the next path over which was dangerous, and he asked if it was being addressed as it was a health and safety issue.

N. Ball said he had written a letter to the council about the beach hut booking system and asked if it had been put to a meeting.

N. Ball asked if the town council had taken back the harbourmaster's store from Dorset Council (DC) yet to be able to put the beach rake indoors.

N. Ball spoke in relation to agenda item 9, Kitchen Garden. He said unfortunately the project didn't seem to have taken off very well and he would propose it was taken back by the council. He said it would seem the novelty had worn off and people were not available to maintain it.

N. Ball suggested the lights in the gardens were switched to red, white and blue for the Queen's platinum jubilee for perhaps two months before and after June.

##### 21/46/TMH Apologies

Cllr S. Williams – illness

##### 21/47/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 November 2021 were **ADOPTED**.

## **21/48/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Cllr D. Sarson declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 7, specifically Elizabeth Close footpath.

## **21/49/TMH Dispensations**

There were none.

## **21/50/TMH Parking**

The chairman brought this item forward on the agenda and M. Westwood and D. Heath from Dorset Council (DC) were invited to take part in the discussion.

The operations manager summarised the main issues which members and the public wanted to bring to the attention of the DC officers:

- Visitor parking in Springhill Gardens
- Visitor parking in residential streets, particularly when major events were taking place – more enforcement would be helpful on these days
- Cars parked on double yellow lines on Cobb Road
- Cars parked on both sides of the road outside Woodroffe School at school pick-up time
- HGVs not being able to unload to businesses due to 'no unloading' signs in Cobb Square
- Further civil enforcement needed in Lyme Regis in general

M. Westwood said DC was short-staffed in enforcement, but it was looking to recruit; if possible, they could look to send officers when there were big events on and there were likely to be parking issues if the town council notified them of the dates.

M. Westwood said dealing with individual issues and implementing solutions in one area would only shift the problem to another area of the town so it would be better to do a more widescale, holistic parking review in Lyme Regis. He said DC was currently going through some transformation in parking, looking at various permits and charging, and once that was in place and they could see what kind of effect that had on the town, they could look at what could be done to better control parking.

M. Westwood said it would be helpful for the operations manager to send him a list of all the parking issues he was aware of. He said as part of the review, DC would carry out consultation with the council and the public.

Cllr J. Broom asked when the review would take place.

M. Westwood said there were several other towns which would be started first, but he felt some 'quick wins' could be put in place in Lyme Regis this year.

Cllr B. Larcombe raised the issue of the bus stop next to Clappentail roundabout, where cars often parked, forcing the bus to stop in the middle of the road. He said on Clappentail Lane cars were also parking on the roundabout because double yellow lines had not been re-instated following resurfacing works. He asked that the bus stop was properly delineated to show it was a bus stop and the double yellow lines were reinstated. He also asked if the lines could be further extended.

D. Heath said she would check if there was a traffic regulation order (TRO) to make it a bus stop and whether double yellow lines were not properly reinstated. However, if there was a need to increase the lines it would have to go through a process of ranking; if it was deemed a big safety issue it would go up the list. She said she would go back to the operations manager with answers on these issues.

M. Westwood also asked D. Heath to look at the issue of unloading of HGVs in Cobb Gate Square and the existing TRO.

Cllr D. Sarson asked why DC was issuing parking permits to holiday rental companies to park in residential streets. He said people were unable to park outside their homes because holiday rental companies were giving permits to customers.

M. Westwood said DC was about to change its permit scheme to only offer permits to those who live or work in Dorset; holidaymakers would not be able to get a permit and should be paying the full cost of parking. He said he would look into why this was happening as permits shouldn't be issued to people staying in holiday lets to park on residential roads. However, if all the roads were within the same area, people could use a permit to park in a different road if it came under the same order. M. Westwood said he would get something back to the operations manager within the week.

Cllr J. Broom asked how an 'area' was defined as this seemed to be one of the issues in Anning Road; people from other streets were parking there.

M. Westwood said the 'area' was defined within the order of the parking permit and the problem was more permits were issued than there were spaces, so it was first-come-first-served. He said he would also look into the orders for parking and feed back to the operations manager.

The operations manager said it had previously been mooted that the town council's enforcement officers could be trained up to civil enforcement officer standard so they could enforce on-street parking. He asked if this was something DC would consider.

M. Westwood said he was willing to look into how this could be done.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if M. Westwood could give an idea of the timescales involved with the parking review.

M. Westwood said nothing would happen before the summer and it would probably be the end of this year before anything started happening, but the initial consultations would start soon after April.

The deputy town clerk asked if an enhanced park and ride service would be something DC would be willing to work with the town council on as part of any solution.

M. Westwood confirmed DC would work with the town council if it was deemed to be part of the solution.

Cllr M. Ellis said she hoped DC would also consult with visitors as their view of how they find the town was also important. She said it was also important to assess the situation at different times of the year.

Cllr B. Larcombe said in addition to weight restriction signs, size restriction signs for vehicles were needed on the approach to Fernhill roundabout and on Sidmouth Road to prevent large vehicles coming into the town.

D. Heath said any kind of restriction which would require signage would need to go through the traffic regulation process, and any regulation relating to weight and sizing had to be backed by Dorset Police. However, she said it was very rare that an order got through which Dorset Police would agree to enforce.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if could be an advisory sign instead.

D. Heath said DC didn't have any jurisdiction on the A35 but she could get in touch with her contact at Highways England about this. However, she was aware Highways England was reluctant to put any signs on its roads.

*Cllr C. Reynolds left the meeting at 7.53pm.*

Cllr B. Bawden said she was working on community conversations through the Fossil Festival so this might be a way of DC consulting with the public on parking and she would speak to M. Westwood about how this could feed into the review.

*Cllr C. Reynolds returned to the meeting at 7.55pm.*

**21/51/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 10 November 2021**

**Request for access across Woodmead car park**

The deputy town clerk said piling work had started that day, which would take a week to 10 days to complete. He said so far everything seemed to have gone smoothly and there had been no complaints from nearby residents.

**Roof and balustrading**

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the CCTV was up to sufficient standard for policing purposes and whether there was any progress in catching those who had broken the glass.

The operations manager said the police were still investigating. He said the quality of the images depended on how close the individual was to the camera and the roof area was quite a large area for the camera to view.

The deputy town clerk said the image obtained from the incident was reasonable and was clear enough to make out the genders and the clothes they were wearing.

**21/52/TMH Update Report**

**Seafront railings**

The deputy town clerk said the contractor still hadn't received the posts from the foundry but was expecting to receive them within the next seven to 10 days. He said the contractor fully understood the urgency of the works and that they had to be completed before Easter.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the new posts would be relatively maintenance free and look the same as those in the Jane Austen Gardens.

The deputy town clerk said they were not maintenance free and would require re-painting every five to seven years. In terms of the design, he said the council had entered into a commitment of like-for-like replacement and that was part of the arrangement for being able to do the work under permitted development rather than needing planning permission.

### **Guildhall works**

The deputy town clerk said work was progressing well and the scaffolding in place was such that it allowed the contractor to continue working irrespective of weather conditions. He said they had made a start on the internal works, which hadn't revealed any particular problems in terms of the work they had to do, but it had revealed more extensive damage to the existing structure than anyone had realised from looking at it externally.

The deputy town clerk said some of the major timbers had fractured from the impacts they had received from vehicles but this wouldn't affect the length of time the work would take. He said the contractor was confident the work would be complete and they would be off site by 17 February 2022.

### **Park and ride**

The deputy town clerk said First had put a proposal to the council for two or three buses and a suggested timetable but he would take a more detailed report to Strategy and Finance on 2 February 2022 for members' consideration. He said part of the proposal included running a third bus to Charmouth and some holiday parks between.

### **Sale of Additional Beach Huts on Cart Road**

Cllr J. Broom asked if the licence could stipulate that the owners replace the hut after a certain number of years.

The deputy town clerk said a replacement clause could be included in the licence if members wished. However, this was not agreed.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the licence said anything about restricting how people spread themselves out in front of their hut as he said it was causing an obstruction for people walking along the Cart Road.

The operations manager said during the pandemic when the council asked people hiring its beach huts not to sit directly outside the huts, the enforcement officers had a lot of difficulty getting people to comply with this.

The deputy town clerk said the new licences were drawn up pre-Covid but they did include clauses about not causing a disturbance, nuisance or obstruction, although nothing specifically relating to sitting on the Cart Road. He said some additional wording could be put into the licences for the beach huts which were about to be sold but the council couldn't vary other licences.

However, no changes to the licences were agreed.

### **Elizabeth Close footpath**

*Cllr D. Sarson left the meeting at 8.22pm in line with his declaration of interests.*

The operations manager confirmed the council owned the path, but it was a very short section of footpath that was originally intended to connect the cemetery to the Henry's Way play area, which didn't come to pass.

It was noted the footpath was now used by residents living on the housing estate as a short cut through the cemetery to the school and town and was a well-used route.

The deputy town clerk said it was clear the council had responsibility for its maintenance but there may be others who also had some responsibility, albeit not Dorset Council.

*Cllr D. Sarson returned to the meeting at 8.25pm.*

### **Car park cash collection service**

The operations manager said the service had improved slightly so the council would stick with the current contractor for the time being.

### **Amenities hut replacement**

The operations manager said the replacement of the hut may fall under permitted development because it would be virtually the same footprint and he was following this up.

### **CCTV**

The operations manager said he had had the report back from Enervo, the DC streetlighting partner, and it appeared most of the lighting columns the council identified for cameras couldn't be used. He said it may require planning permission to put CCTV columns in place.

## **21/53/TMH Kitchen Garden**

Cllr C. Reynolds said since securing the bed in Langmoor Gardens, the project had suffered many setbacks such as Covid-19, volunteers going back to work following Covid, lack of access to resources, distribution problems, no financial support, and bad weather. She said they needed a councillor to liaise with Lyme Garden Growers to ensure things ran smoothly and she was prepared to do that.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked for two months to get the kitchen garden back on track, including producing a plan of how this would be done. She said students from Woodroffe School would be making sculptures of vegetables to go in the garden and a local landscape gardener had volunteered to help get the project going. She said there would be a small management group to co-ordinate the volunteers and she was happy to organise this.

Cllr M. Ellis said there had been a lot of discussion about the kitchen garden on social media over the last week and a lot of people didn't even know about it but now said they were willing to help. She felt the council needed to give them time to get it going and suggested someone from the allotments' association could help as many of those involved were home growers who didn't understand the growing seasons. She

suggested giving them until the next Town Management and Highways Committee meeting to get the garden sorted and then to review the situation.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked whether this was the time to consider whether the centre of Langmoor Gardens was the best place for the kitchen garden and he asked if there was any room at the allotments or any other land the council could influence it being set up.

Cllr G. Stammers felt it should stay in Langmoor Gardens because people noticed it and it encouraged people to think about it.

Cllr R. Smith agreed having it in a central location sent a message about food production and sustainability. He felt two months wasn't enough, especially as January and February weren't particularly good months weather-wise, and he suggested up to four months.

Cllr D. Sarson, the council's representative on the Charmouth Road Allotments' Association, said he would provide the secretary's contact details to Cllr C. Reynolds so he could put out an appeal for help.

Cllr B. Bawden said the herb garden at St Michael's Business Centre car park had worked very well because there were signs telling people what it was, and she suggested putting signs up in the kitchen garden to let the public know what it was all about.

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested the volunteers were given a whole growing season, i.e. a year, as there wasn't much you could demonstrate in a garden in three months.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council would be able to see what kind of commitment there was from volunteers within three months and that would be an indication of whether it would work or not.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to give Lyme Garden Growers six months to bring the kitchen garden in Langmoor Gardens up to an appropriate standard, with a review in three months.

## **21/54/TMH Guildhall Blue Plaque**

Cllr M. Ellis asked how many other blue plaques could be wrong if this one was wrong. She said she Guildhall plaque was put there for a reason and felt it should be left as it was.

Cllr B. Larcombe said correspondence with Mr Lacey had been going on for about eight months and historically the accuracy on the plaque was 100 years out.

Cllr D. Ruffle said as much as he admired Mr Lacey's tenacity for accuracy and he was no doubt right in what he said, he didn't feel it was enough to change the wording on the plaque.

Cllr J. Broom said the plaque was also unveiled by HRH Princess Alexandra, so this in itself was an historical event.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to leave the Guildhall Blue Plaque as it is.

## **21/55/TMH Monitoring of Ground Markers**

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the ground markers indicated ground movement after the event or whether they gave a prediction of ground movement.

The deputy town clerk said the markers would probably give some indication of major issues afoot, but they were predominately records of what had happened.

## **21/56/TMH Improvements to Town Bus Service and Possible External Funding Opportunity**

Cllr M. Ellis said the route needed to be changed because there were many people on roads where the bus didn't go.

The deputy town clerk said the council had identified some funding via the 'Tackling loneliness with Transport Fund' to improve the town bus service. He said the service was only viable as long as a bus was available for the school service funded by DC. He said in principle, if someone was offering funding to meet an objective the council had already identified, and providing it didn't create ongoing costs, it would make sense to apply for that funding.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree to submit an expression of interest to the 'Tackling loneliness with Transport Fund' as a means of supporting improvements to the town bus service and other linking services; to constitute a working group to assist the deputy town clerk in completing the submission by the deadline of 28 January 2022; and to appoint Cllrs Bawden, Aldridge and Reynolds to the working group.

## **21/57/TMH RNLI Reports – 2021 Season**

Cllr B. Larcombe said the report showed the danger rating of Lyme Regis beach was not very high and he said members should remember this when it came to requests for funding for lifeguards.

The operations manager said although the beach itself wasn't very dangerous, the population using it in the summer was high and that pushed the level higher.

## **21/58/TMH Complaints, Incidents and Compliments**

Cllr M. Ellis asked why DC's toilets had been closed on Bonfire Night.

The operations manager said the contractor didn't open the toilets as expected but DC's manager for public toilets assured him they would be open next year at busy periods. He said he would provide him with the dates of major events and DC would supply the town council with a set of keys so they could be opened if it happened again.

Cllr M. Ellis said with the number of people likely to use the toilets they would also need to be cleaned and she asked who would do this.

Members also discussed complaints related to dogs on the beach as there were particular issues with dogs being off the lead over the Christmas period and only one enforcement officer was on duty.



The operations manager said the enforcement officer from DC had come to Lyme Regis this week and was starting to take people's names and addresses with a view to issuing fixed penalty notices.

Members were concerned about the impact on the enforcement officers and discussed the possibility of training other staff to become 'authorised officers' so they could cover sickness absence and annual leave.

*The meeting closed at 9.31pm.*