

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr C. Aldridge

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

Officers: M. Adamson-Drage (operations manager), A. Mullins (support services manager)

Absent: Cllr T. Webb

22/67/TMH Election of Chairman

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner that Cllr C. Aldridge is chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

There being no other nominations, Cllr C. Aldridge was duly **ELECTED** as chairman.

As Cllr C. Aldridge was formerly the vice-chairman, it was necessary to elect a new vice-chairman.

It was proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge that Cllr P. May is vice-chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

There being no other nominations, Cllr P. May was duly **ELECTED** as vice-chairman.

22/68/TMH Public Forum

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

22/69/TMH Apologies

None.

22/70/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 January 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

22/71/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

22/72/TMH Dispensations

There were none.

22/73/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 11 February 2023

Trailer Park at Monmouth Beach, Accreted Land and Harbourmaster's Store

Cllr D. Sarson asked if the vacation of the harbourmaster's store was discussed at the meeting with the relevant Dorset Council (DC) director on 24 January 2023.

The operations manager said the meeting did take place and the relevant director had been involved in this issue. However, the harbour staff were still waiting for shipping containers to be delivered to move the contents of the store into; the first container was expected today but it hadn't turned up.

Three Phase supply for Monmouth Beach car park and Woodmead car park

Cllr P. May said he was aware there was now a rapid charger at Holmbush car park so it might be that three phase supply was now available.

The operations manager said he hadn't had any notification from Western Power Distribution of this but he would follow it up to check if this could be available at Monmouth Beach and Woodmead car parks.

RNLI Lifeguard Service

The operations manager said the RNLI had asked to meet with him the following week to discuss the existing contract. He said when the last contract came to an end, it was agreed it would be rolled over, with a 2% increase each year. He suspected the RNLI was looking to break that contract this year and start discussions about the council's contributions as of 2024.

22/74/TMH Update Report

CCTV Project

The operations manager said planning permission had been granted for the camera on the Baptist Church, in addition to the Rock Point Inn, so he would now be moving ahead with getting the cameras installed. This would include seeking permission to dig across Charmouth Road car park to get an electricity supply for the skatepark camera.

Lister Room water leaks

Cllr D. Sarson asked if the works to repair the leaks were costed out, what the costs were and whether it was to budget.

The operations manager said a window fitting company had been out that day and were fitting a new window, which should resolve the problem. However, he wasn't able to give details about cost as the deputy town clerk was leading on this.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she couldn't understand how a new window could repair a leaking roof.

It was agreed further details of the repairs and the costs would be included in the members' briefing.

Antiques and Craft Centre leaks

The operations manager said the cause of the leaks had now been confirmed; a leak had been found where the flat roof met the vertical section between the two gradients in height. He said the deputy town clerk was talking to the roof contractor to fix the issues at no cost to the council.

22/75/TMH Town Management and Highways Committee – Objectives

Members noted the report.

22/76/TMH Marine Parade Lift

Cllr D. Ruffle said if the lift was left there, it should be repaired, but his preferred solution would be to remove it, although he acknowledged this may cause issues with accessibility.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if there was anywhere else a lift could be located as the current lift didn't really take people anywhere. She agreed removing it would raise issues with accessibility.

The operations manager said leaving the lift in its current state would almost invite the same response as it still didn't allow accessibility. He said this was about cost versus the legal requirements and asked members to consider if they felt it was reasonable to spend the amount of money required. He added there were lift companies that were no longer installing lifts within a mile of the sea because they rust so quickly and ramps at the opposite end of the shelters had been investigated but there was no solution to improve accessibility.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked what the room was used for; he said if it was solely for the council's use, the need for public accessibility wasn't as great.

Cllr G. Stammers said if the lift offered full accessibility to the gardens, there was an argument for keeping it, but this wasn't the case.

Cllr B. Bawden said if the ramp wasn't at the other end of the shelters, it would perhaps be necessary to have the lift, but the ramp did give access to the gardens, therefore removing the lift wasn't denying access. She said the space where the lift was could be used for storage.

It was proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe to remove the Marine Parade Shelters lift due to lack of utility and unreasonable replacement cost to the taxpayer, with a view to replace the lift if a future suitable solution can be found.

Cllr M. Ellis said the Langmoor Room was there to be rented to the public and if there wasn't appropriate access, the council was putting itself at risk. She felt removing it wasn't the solution as the council needed to consider the law relating to disabilities. She said either the room should not be rented to the public, which would require a council decision, or the council needed to consider other ways of people accessing the area.

Cllr B. Larcombe left the room at 7.26pm.

Cllr G. Stammers asked if the council could get a clear legal position before considering the matter.

The operations manager said he could take legal advice but he was certain it would say the council should replace the lift.

Cllr B. Larcombe returned to the meeting at 7.29pm.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if taking the Langmoor Room out of public use would resolve the issue.

The operations manager said it would alleviate the problem to a certain extent but there might still be risk of legal challenge because the lift did provide some access to the roof of the shelters.

Cllr B. Larcombe felt the only solution was to take the Langmoor Room out of public use and keep it for council use, only, therefore the use of the lift wouldn't be required. He said the room didn't get used by the public anyway.

The support services manager confirmed the room was used by the public and bookings were being taken.

Cllr P. May said his earlier proposal didn't rule out replacing the lift but at the moment it was too costly to do so, so members needed to consider if it was the kind of money they wanted to spend on this purpose.

As Cllr B. Larcombe made a counter proposal, Cllr P. May withdrew his earlier proposal.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that before considering the options for the Marine Parade lift, the council considers the future use of the Langmoor Room.

22/77/TMH Sea Swimmers Safety Box

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree to locate the sea swimmers' safety box on the seafront.

22/78/TMH Plan Bee

Cllr P. May presented the proposal for an invertebrate friendly area in the seafront gardens, which would be for all invertebrates, not just bees as the name suggested. He said it would aim to support solitary bees suffering from loss of habitat and said it was only the female solitary bee that could sting and this sting was relatively feeble in comparison to a honey bee. He said there would be no intention of encouraging honeybees or to place hives in the area, therefore people would be at no greater risk of being stung than they would be anywhere else in the gardens.

Cllr P. May said the area of land proposed by staff for this garden didn't appear to offer the necessary shelter and he suggested the area that would be vacated by the Oyster and Fish House decking. He said this area already benefited from hedges on either side

to provide wind protection for the insects and the council could offer to relieve the restaurant owner of the cost of replacing the grass. He said the council could also dedicate the garden as part of King Charles III's coronation.

Several members said they supported the idea and the area proposed by Cllr P. May lent itself to this purpose.

Cllr C. Reynolds said most of the plants suggested for the garden were herbs; she said herbs required great nutritional effort from the ground they were put in but the area suggested was where rubbish from the landfill site was put in the 1960s. She said she thought the invertebrate garden was a good idea in principle, but in another part of the gardens which she felt should be up to the gardeners to decide.

The operations manager said having suggested the area in the gardens, the gardening team were already thinking about providing shelter for that space.

Cllr C. Aldridge said she supported the idea and there were a lot of bees and insects in the hedge already. She said it could be a good exercise to consult with local people, such as naturalists, environmentalists and perhaps the school, particularly if it was a coronation garden, and this might help address the issues with the soil that Cllr C. Reynolds pointed out.

Cllr M. Ellis said if the area suggested by staff was used, the costs would be met from the gardens' refurbishment budget but she was concerned the costs for the other potential site were not in the budget. She said the council hadn't yet had the opportunity to properly consider what it wanted to do with the site to be vacated by the decking and there had been a suggestion it could be used for outdoor gym equipment.

Cllr P. May said a lot of the plants needed poor and stoney soil conditions so this would suit the kind of soil present. He was sure the council could find sufficient funds but if not, he was prepared to go to external bodies to seek support.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the environment budget was also available for this purpose.

The operations manager said officers' advice would be not to put a garden that attracts bees and insects near to where lots of people did activities such as mini golf and table tennis and next to a restaurant.

Cllr B. Bawden said this project should be part of a wider review of the gardens as there was the potential not only for a coronation garden but also to apply for Britain in Bloom.

Cllr P. May clarified there was no intention to encourage stinging insects in any greater quantity than were currently in the area.

Cllr M. Ellis was concerned about the proximity of the garden to children using the amenities area. She also felt establishing a garden so soon after asking the Oyster and Fish House to remove its decking would be a sting in the tail.

Cllr P. May said it would be good to put the land to use and do something positive with it instead of it being a wasted piece of land.

It was proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner to establish an invertebrate garden in the area to be vacated by the Hix Oyster and Fish House decking in consultation with experts about how that could best be achieved.

Before voting, the operations manager emphasised officers were advising against the garden being in this location because it opened up the debate about the decking again. He said the council needed to try and distance itself from anything that might cause negative publicity that a project of this nature and in this location might lead to.

Cllr B. Larcombe said if the council didn't come up with a use for the land, it would continue to be accused of not using the land so this was a demonstration it could be used for another purpose.

Cllr M. Ellis said members were considering just one use for the land and there had been no consideration given to any wider uses. She said the council was giving the message that it needed to fill the space because it didn't want the decking there.

Cllr B. Bawden left the meeting at 8.03pm.

Cllr G. Stammers said perhaps it could be agreed Cllr P. May works with officers to look into areas of the gardens where the invertebrate area could go, which may include the decked area, but without being so specific that it should be that area.

Cllr B. Bawden returned to the meeting at 8.04pm.

Cllr D. Ruffle said he would support a proposal that accepts the idea of an invertebrate garden in principle but without agreeing to a specific location.

Cllr C. Reynolds requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that an invertebrate garden is established in both the area of the gardens suggested by officers and the area to be vacated by the Oyster and Fish House decking in consultation with experts on invertebrate gardens.

Voted for – Cllr G. Turner, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr C. Aldridge

Voted against – Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr M. Ellis

Abstentions – Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr D. Ruffle

22/79/TMH Update on the Plans for Speedwatch Groups

Cllr B. Bawden said there were now enough volunteers to set up Speedwatch groups in Lyme Regis and Charmouth, who would be operating within their own locations but with the understanding if they are short, they could call on others to support them. She said the scheme was a recognised way of gathering data to support any request to DC for a traffic measure or speeding restriction, but it also acted as a deterrent to drivers. She said the next stage was for the volunteers to be trained and the aim was to have four approved sites each in Lyme Regis and Charmouth.

Cllr C. Reynolds was concerned the sites where people wanted to operate from wouldn't be possible because they didn't have a pavement for the volunteers to stand on. She said this was the reason volunteers withdrew when a previous attempt was made to set up Speedwatch. She said volunteers also started dropping out when drivers were caught speeding and the volunteers became known.

Cllr M. Ellis asked where the town council fitted into this issue as Cllr B. Bawden was progressing it as the DC ward member.

It was clarified the council had formally given its support to the initiative, agreed to purchase one camera for the volunteers and to support, in principle, the introduction of 20mph speed limits where possible in Lyme Regis.

22/80/TMH Complaints, Incidents and Compliments

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.