

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. May

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr B. Larcombe, 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), J. Wright (town clerk)

Absent: Cllr T. Webb

Guests: J. Breeze (Turn Lyme Green)

22/81/TMH Public Forum

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

22/82/TMH Apologies

Cllr C. Aldridge – holiday

22/83/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

22/84/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr D. Sarson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12, Repair Works at The Bowls Club – Request for Contribution Towards Costs as he was a member of the bowling club, and a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 16, Bin Your Butt Pavement Art, as he was a member of Turn Lyme Green.

22/85/TMH Dispensations

There were none.

22/86/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 1 March 2023

RNLI Lifeguard Service

Cllr B. Larcombe said he had raised this issue at the Harbour Consultative Group as the lifeguards were based on the safest beach in Lyme Regis, while there was no proposition of the most dangerous areas, such as Back Beach and Church Cliff Beach, being manned by lifeguards. He asked if the discussions with the RNLI presented the operations manager with any difficulties as he was a member of the RNLI. Cllr B.

Larcombe also asked why funds generated from the RNLI shop in Lyme Regis were not being used to fund the lifeguard service, as it was one of the top performing shops in the country.

The operations manager said his role as a volunteer with the RNLI did present a conflict but he had discussed this with the town clerk and agreed as long as he remained impartial, he could continue to have those discussions, although he could step back if members wished. He said all funds raised went back to RNLI headquarters in Poole and were not distributed locally.

Plan Bee

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if the Plan Bee garden would be established next to the table tennis area as she was concerned about attracting bees to this area.

Cllr P. May said there was no intention to encourage bees to come to the garden and the council had decided there was no more risk of someone being stung in this part of the gardens than in any other part; the previous use of this area for food and drink would have encouraged wasps anyway. He said in future the area would be referred to as the invertebrate garden.

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

The operations manager said the deputy town clerk intended to bring a confidential report to the next meeting of this committee to update members on discussions with Natural England and Dorset Council (DC).

Antiques and Craft Centre leaks

The operations manager said work had been carried out that day to address the leaks and it was hoped this would cure the problem.

22/87/TMH Update Report

Amenities hut building drawings

The operations manager said the planning application had been resubmitted.

Replacement chalets – rotting wood

The operations manager said KEOPS, who supplied the chalets, were visiting site the following week.

Lister Room

The operations manager said Keeley Glazing visited the site that day and hopefully all issues regarding leaks into the room were now resolved.

Park and Ride 2023

The operations manager said at least one operator would submit a quote to provide the service this year and further discussions were taking place with another operator.

Cllr B. Bawden asked if anyone had spoken to DC as she had offered to do this. She said park and ride was an issue elsewhere and in some other towns, DC paid for a bus and driver.

The town clerk said the deputy town clerk had intended to speak to DC although he wasn't optimistic about getting any support.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC also had experience in dealing with bus operators so she would discuss this further with the deputy town clerk.

Jubilee Pavilion

Cllr D. Sarson asked if the arrangement with Garry Sutherland to use the Jubilee Pavilion as a rowing centre was an open-ended arrangement as members had received an email from Marcus Dixon, of Lyme Regis Gig Club, about the pavilion being used in the long-term as a sports centre.

The town clerk said he had met with Marcus Dixon and Garry Sutherland to discuss the future of the rowing centre and as the works to the pavilion were to a lesser extent than originally thought, the facility could remain there for up to three months longer. He said he had spoken to them about where it could go after that as the council's current position was to commercially let the pavilion, but this decision was made some time ago when the council was under severe financial pressure. As such, members needed to re-visit this decision when the work was finished.

The town clerk suggested members could start to look at a complex in the shelters, including use of the Langmoor Room, to create more sporting facilities on the seafront for rowing, sea swimming and spinning, for example. He said he also spoke to Marcus Dixon and Garry Sutherland about storage of the gigs and whether there could be any discussion with Natural England, which would free up the wooden shed at Monmouth Beach. However, these were all just discussions and Marcus Dixon was welcome to put a proposal to the council. He added this might also help members in considering the future of the Marine Parade lift.

Office and options feasibility study

Cllr B. Larcombe was concerned the detailed programme of work would not be brought to members until the next committee meeting as he didn't want any further delays.

The town clerk said the decision to remain in the office was only made on 5 April 2023 so the deputy town clerk needed some time to pull the programme together. He said officers had also had discussions about how to resource such a significant project.

22/87/TMH Town Management and Highways Committee – Objectives

Cllr M. Ellis asked that the objectives be put in completion date order.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he understood some of these objectives would have to go back to committees for discussion as they had never been debated and members had only allocated a budget for potential objectives.

The town clerk said the council went through two committee cycles to agree its objectives, as well as a briefing session for members, and all the objectives were agreed

through that process. He said some of the objectives would need to come back for more discussion and they had been allocated to the relevant committee but there was no intention to start new discussions on objectives totalling £750k.

Cllr G. Turner asked if the paths in the gardens would be tarmac or gravel.

The operations manager said they would be compacted gravel.

The town clerk said members shouldn't expect to see much progress on the objectives at this point as they were projects from April 2023 and the completion dates were throughout the financial year.

Cllr S. Cockerell asked if contractor availability was an issue as this had been mentioned several times.

The town clerk said this was an issue; the council had struggled to secure contractors post-Covid, especially in professional services.

22/88/TMH Outdoor Gym Equipment and Monkey Bars

Cllr C. Reynolds said she supported the idea of outdoor gym equipment and spoke about the physical, mental and social benefits. She said every holiday destination abroad had this kind of equipment and seaside locations didn't seem to be an issue elsewhere.

Several members said they would not like to see any equipment for younger children removed at Anning Road play park to make way for monkey bars.

Cllr D. Ruffle said if the gym equipment was at Anning Road play park, it could be aimed at adults as well as children, although it wouldn't be as accessible as on the seafront or in the gardens.

Cllr C. Reynolds said the council had talked previously about removing the BMX humps at Anning Road playing field and this would be an ideal place to put gym equipment, as well as monkey bars, which would mean no other equipment would have to be removed from the play park.

The operations manager suggested members considered this equipment as part of the major £150k project for 2023-24 as space for these projects was limited and whatever was decided on the larger project might affect where the gym equipment or monkey bars went.

Cllr M. Ellis said there was a covenant on Anning Road Playing Field which restricted its use to children so this may prevent gym equipment being located there. However, she supported the idea of gym equipment and felt it should be spread out over a larger area rather than grouped in one area.

The operations manager agreed members could look at locating the equipment in one location or spread it out so it becomes a trim trail for people to move along.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had spoken to DC about the possibility of putting gym equipment on East Cliff Walkway because lots of people went running along there.

The town clerk said at the next Strategy and Finance Committee meeting, members would be asked to consider the major project for 2023-24 and this might impact Anning Road playing field or the gardens, after which, he suggested members re-visited the idea of gym equipment and monkey bars as this would help inform the location.

Cllr B. Larcombe said when members looked at equipment, it was important to assess maintenance and durability and to think carefully about the location in terms of adults and children mixing and its positioning on regular running routes.

Cllr B. Bawden said when the play park was designed at West Bay, children at Mountjoy School were involved, which meant the park was suitable for all ages and abilities. She hoped the council would involve children in the planning of the major project so it was accessible for all.

Members agreed the discussion would take place at the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting about the major £150k project and once this was scoped out, it would help inform discussions about gym equipment and monkey bars.

22/89/TMH Monmouth Beach Garages Policy

Members agreed the Monmouth Beach garages should be restricted to the use of Lyme Regis residents and acknowledged those on the waiting list who lived outside the town would be informed they would no longer be eligible. However, those who already had garages but lived outside Lyme Regis would be allowed to continue renting them.

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to restrict the hire of Monmouth Beach garages to Lyme Regis residents and to inform those on the waiting list who live outside Lyme Regis they are no longer eligible.

22/90/TMH Gardens Land Stability Reporting

Cllr G. Stammers felt the council should engage its own land stability monitoring contractor as there would be more markers and the cost was not prohibitive.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he would feel more comfortable if the town council was in partnership with DC regarding land stability, rather than the town council determining the issues itself. He felt there was value in having that shared role with DC in monitoring land stability.

Cllr M. Ellis said in the same way the town council could contribute to DC's ground monitoring, the town council could engage its own land stability monitoring contractor and ask DC to contribute 50% of the cost, which would provide more thorough information.

The town clerk said the council needed to know how much DC would charge for the monitoring and he agreed shared responsibility was important.

Cllr M. Ellis said more negotiation was needed and suggested officers found out from DC how much it paid for monitoring and to ask if it would consider contributing to the town council's monitoring.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that officers engage with Dorset Council to find out how ground monitoring information in the gardens is received and processed, how much the ground monitoring costs, what contribution the town council would be required to make, and to establish if Dorset Council would be interested in contributing to the cost of the town council's ground monitoring.

22/91/TMH Repair Works at The Bowls Club – Request for Contribution Towards Costs

Cllr B. Bawden left the meeting at 8.01pm.

Cllr G. Stammers felt the council should make a contribution towards the repair works as it was the council's wall.

Cllr M. Ellis said the bowling club had responsibility for all maintenance and repairs and she was concerned that making a contribution would set a precedent for other works in the future and with other organisations. She also felt the bowling club should have come to the council for a community grant for this work.

The town clerk said it could be argued both ways as to whether the council should contribute to the costs and agreed it would have been helpful if the club had applied for a community grant. If any contribution was agreed, he suggested the council made it clear it was a one-off, without prejudice or without accepting any liability. He said if the council accepted any liability, there could be further issues with other damp penetration, which could cost tens of thousands of pounds.

Cllr B. Bawden returned to the meeting at 8.03pm.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if there was any residual legal requirement for the council to maintain the boundary wall.

The town clerk said it could be argued either way but in reality it came down to what the council chose to do. He said the club had obtained a quote for £1,420 and had asked the council to consider paying all or part of this, so it could consider a lesser amount.

Cllr M. Ellis reminded members this would be unbudgeted expenditure.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to make a 50% contribution towards the cost of repair works at The Bowls Club, Monmouth Beach and to make it clear this was a one-off payment, without prejudice, and the council accepts no liability.

22/92/TMH Future Use of the Langmoor Room

The operations manager said since drafting the report, he had spoken to the DC officer who was bidding for funding for Changing Places toilets; although round two funding had been allocated, he believed £24k would be available so the town council could bid for this, if a suitable location was identified. He said around £16k was required to fit out a room as a Changing Places toilet but none of this resolved the issue with the lift. However, it would give the Langmoor Room a proper use to possibly justify repairing the lift.

Cllr B. Larcombe felt this kind of facility should be put on ground level where there wasn't an issue with a lift and suggested the Jubilee Pavilion. He also felt the Langmoor Room

should be taken out of use as it wasn't earning any money and used instead for staff or as a store.

The operations manager said he had walked around the town with the DC officer last year and there was no other location in the town to put this facility.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she supported the idea of a Changing Places toilet but didn't feel the council could consider it, or any other suggestions for the use of the room, until a decision had been made about the lift.

The town clerk said officers would like more time to explore the options, of which a Changing Places toilet was one and a proposal from the gig club was another, but he agreed the council needed to decide what to do about the lift first. However, if the council kept the lift, it would be tied to maintaining it, regardless of what the room was used for. He added that the council might be forced to make a very difficult decision it didn't want to make.

Cllr B. Bawden asked if the room could also accommodate sea swimmers if it was a Changing Places toilet.

The operations manager said the room was 3 x 4m² so it could accommodate both uses.

Cllr M. Ellis said an option was put forward when the shelters were built to extend the ramp on the opposite end to the top level, which would mitigate the need for a lift to that level, and then perhaps a plate lift could be installed just for access to the Langmoor Room.

The operations manager clarified the legal position; he said any public building built after 2000 had to have disabled access but the lift installed at the shelters was not fit-for-purpose. He said the council could choose to remove the lift but it would potentially open itself up to legal challenge.

Several members suggested re-configuring the area so the room would be removed entirely.

Several members suggested de-commissioning the room and using it for storage or staff, but it was acknowledged it would still require disabled access as people would be still be accessing the room.

The operations manager said the lift also provided access to the top level of the shelters so it wasn't simply a matter of taking the Langmoor Room out of use.

Members agreed officers should be given more time to explore the options for use of the Langmoor Room and the implications on the lift.

22/93/TMH Dorset Council Highways Meeting and Highways issues

Cllr B. Bawden said the request for funding for two further speed indicator devices (SID) would come from next year's budget, if agreed, rather than reserves.

She said although Sidmouth Road scored low in the impact assessment for double yellow lines, residents were being encouraged to keep reporting concerns and near misses to DC as the more issues reported, the more enforcement there would be from police and it would move up DC's list of priorities.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she understood a Speedwatch couldn't operate in areas without pavements.

Cllr B. Bawden said it wasn't proposed to operate in any areas without pavements; Sidmouth Rosd and Queen's Walk had been requested and King's Way and Anning Road were also possibilities.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to conduct five potential speed indicator device site surveys at a cost of £950 from the external works' budget.

Members discussed the request to purchase two further SIDs to cover potential new sites.

The town clerk said members should not commit funding from the next financial year at this point; normally any potential projects suggested by members would be considered at budget-setting time. He said in 2024-5, most of the council's spare funds would be spent on the office refurbishment but the purchase of SIDs could be considered as part of the budget discussions.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to send a letter of support on the proposed road widening scheme on Lyme Road to Uplyme Parish Council for enhanced pedestrian and school children's safety.

22/94/TMH Bin Your Butt Pavement Art

The chairman brought this item forward on the agenda and invited J. Breeze from Turn Lyme Green (TLG) to speak.

J. Breeze said TLG had been awarded £600 to support a cigarette butt disposal campaign, which would involve installing three pieces of artwork; one near Theatre Square, one near the Rock Point Inn, and one near the new cigarette bin on the Cobb Arms toilets. She said they chose these areas, subject to permissions, because during their regular litter picking, these areas were most littered with cigarette butts.

J. Breeze said the other element of the campaign was to advertise for a local artist to design some pavement art, which would last for three to six months, educating people to dispose of cigarette butts responsibly. Other options were to stencil artwork along the seafront or attach signs to railings which could be moved between areas. She said her preference would be to have the three pieces of artwork because the stencil art wouldn't allow much messaging to be included and signs would be crowded out by other signs.

J. Breeze said she understood DC Highways would be happy to have the artwork on its land as it had approved similar projects in Weymouth and Wimborne. She said it was really a question of which option the town council preferred.

It was noted the three locations proposed for the artwork were not town council land and therefore didn't require this council's approval. However, members were generally supportive of the proposals.

Cllr B. Bawden asked if TLG planned to put more cigarette bins at the other two locations, e.g. Theatre Square and the Rock Point.

J. Breeze said TLG could look into this.

22/95/TMH Traffic and Travel Strategy Working Group

Several members felt a lot of effort had been put in and plans drawn up in the past to improve traffic issues but it had made no difference, so they didn't feel it would be any different now.

Cllr P. May said there were still solutions which could be implemented, such as a 20mph speed limit in Broad Street to make it safer for pedestrians.

Cllr G. Stammers said if members wanted to form a working group, there was no harm in this but she felt the traffic issues were an unsolvable problem.

Cllr C. Reynolds said the biggest issue was lack of enforcement of existing regulations.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC was recruiting more people and she had spoken to officers about training for the town council's enforcement officers. She said there were a lot of legislation and regulations being introduced, such as decarbonising transport, so there was provision for a changed hierarchy of users and active travel initiatives. She agreed it wasn't going to be easy to implement changes in Lyme Regis but she felt doing nothing wasn't an option. She said the town council could ask DC to look at various options and it now had a huge amount of data which could be used to support any requests.

Cllr B. Larcombe said there were certain initiatives which he felt would make a big difference, such as size restrictions on vehicles allowed into the town as well as weight restrictions, but the working group needed to be limited to things the town council could influence.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC had a new 20mph speed limit policy so this was something the town council could pursue. She suggested external experts could join the working group.

Cllr P. May said he wasn't against external people joining the working group but felt they could be co-opted by members of the working group.

The town clerk suggested the working group should focus on several things that could make a difference so it was achievable and realistic.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to form a traffic and travel strategy working group and to appoint Cllrs P. May, B. Larcombe, C. Aldridge, S. Cockerell and B. Bawden to the group.

22/96/TMH Langmoor Gardens Planting Signs

Cllr B. Bawden said the aim was to make more of an amenity of the gardens, to expand the educational opportunities and explain the planting schemes, especially the sensory

aspects. She said the operations supervisor had suggested something simple with QR codes to link to information on the council's website.

The operations manager said phone apps were available which allowed you to take a photo of a plant and identify it.

However, Cllr B. Bawden said it was more than just identifying plants, it was also about the rationale for the different areas of the gardens.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked that the community garden be included in any scheme as lots of people asked for information about it. She felt it was a good idea as long as the information could be accessed by everyone, which wouldn't be possible if QR codes were used.

Cllr B. Larcombe felt it would be sufficient to just name the plants, restricted to the unusual species, and someone could then look up the information themselves.

It was agreed Cllrs C. Reynolds and B. Bawden would discuss the options with the operations supervisor and come back to this committee with suggestions and costs for signing the most important plants.

22/97/TMH Complaints, Incidents and Compliments

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 9.22pm.