

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2023

##### Present

**Chairman:** Cllr B. Larcombe

**Members:** Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

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

**Guests:** M. Wilson (RNLI, lifeguard contracts and services manager), H. Irvine (RNLI, regional lifeguard lead)

##### **23/01/TMH Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

It was proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle that Cllr C. Aldridge is chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson that Cllr M. Ellis is chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

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

Cllr B. Larcombe was duly **ELECTED** as chairman.

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

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds that Cllr C. Aldridge is vice-chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

Cllr C. Aldridge was duly **ELECTED** as vice-chairman.

##### **23/02/TMH Terms of Reference**

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, the committee's terms of reference were **RECEIVED**.

##### **23/03/TMH Public Forum**

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

##### **23/04/TMH Apologies**

Cllr B. Bawden

**23/05/TMH Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr D. Ruffle and seconded by Cllr P. May, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 April 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

**23/06/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

**23/07/TMH Dispensations**

There were none.

**23/08/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 19 April 2023**

**Trailer Park at Monmouth Beach, Accreted Land**

The deputy town clerk said a site meeting had taken place with Natural England and Dorset Council (DC) and although they expected Natural England to say the boats had to be removed from the accreted land, they appeared to be willing to compromise. He believed Natural England would be willing to allow a limited amount of boat storage on the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), but he didn't think they would agree to the current arrangements, and they would expect some changes to how the space was used.

The deputy town clerk said Natural England had asked questions about why the tarmac area was used for parking instead of boat storage. He said Natural England seemed to understand the importance of the harbour to the town, the commitment to a working harbour, and the importance of the harbour to the various clubs that used it. He added that Natural England would now look at further ecological reports and would take expert advice from people working at a national level so their response might take some time.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked what this meant for the boats and equipment that were currently on the accreted land.

The deputy town clerk said what was there could stay for the time being, but Natural England had received a complaint about the use of the land, and they were responding to that. He said the town council hadn't finalised terms for the use of the land with DC because it wasn't yet known what it could be used for. The amount DC would pay would be driven by how much of the land could be used.

**Jubilee Pavilion**

The deputy town clerk said the contractor expected to complete the works within two weeks, at which point the scaffolding tower and heras fencing would be removed from the lower level. He said the contractor had found other problems beneath the slabs at roof level, but it wasn't as bad as first feared, although the area beneath the parapet would need to be repaired. However, the total cost of the works would still be significantly less than the approved budget of £55k.

The deputy town clerk said the roof membrane repairs would be undertaken by a separate specialist roofing contractor commencing on 14 August 2023, so the heras

fencing would be removed until that time. The duration of the roofing work was likely to be no more than 2 weeks.

### **Amenities hut building drawings**

The operations manager said planning permission had been granted with some conditions so the project would go out to tender shortly.

### **Office and options feasibility study**

The deputy town clerk said he would shortly be going through the process of procuring building services and would report the results to the Full Council on 26 July 2023.

### **Park and Ride 2023**

The deputy town clerk said the application had been submitted to the Traffic Commissioners and he was now much more confident about the service being up and running by 22 July 2023.

### **Lister Room**

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if all the issues with the tenant had been resolved.

The deputy town clerk said there were some issues with how waste was being dealt with but a solution had been found which would mean bags would not be left outside the room. He said there had also been some issues with a vehicle being left on the parade for long periods of time, primarily to bring supplies to the Lister Room, but conversations had taken place with the tenant and access would only be allowed during the permitted times.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked where tables and chairs were permitted outside the room.

The deputy town clerk said they were only allowed on the concrete area outside the room and that was now clearly understood.

## **23/09/TMH Update Report**

### **Perimeter wall – Churchyard and Insurance Claim**

The deputy town clerk said the whole 65 metre length of the wall was in a poor condition so as part of the 2024-5 budget-setting process, members would need to consider a phased plan for its repair.

Cllr D. Sarson asked if there was any indication of cost to repair the whole length of the wall.

The deputy town clerk said the section which had initially collapsed could be repaired for £15-20k, but the cost to repair the whole length was likely to be a six-figure sum.

Cllr G. Stammers asked if there were areas of the wall that needed to be fenced off for public safety in case it collapses.

The deputy town clerk said he didn't think this was necessary and he didn't feel it would be necessary to close the nearby footpath at this stage. However, the initial collapse had been caused by an exceptional weather event so if there was another one, it may have to be reassessed.

### **Post Office**

The deputy town clerk said the space that may have been available in a shop premises in the town was not suitable for a Post Office but the postmaster at Crewkerne who ran various other outreach services in other villages may still be interested in providing some kind of service in Lyme Regis. He said a Post Office wasn't viable unless it was subsidised by another business or some other input of funds.

### **Town Mill steps**

Cllr D. Ruffle asked if there was any idea of when a permanent repair might happen as he didn't think the current repairs looked particularly safe.

The operations manager said Cllr B. Bawden was pushing for its repair as the ward member but other than that, DC might not inform the town council when it was doing the repairs, but he would try and find out.

Cllr P. May said the trustees of the Town Mill had looked at it and felt it wasn't a big job; he said DC should be encouraged to get on with it.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if the town council could ask to see a surveyor's report.

The operations manager said he could ask but DC might not release it as it was their land.

Cllr P. May said it was important to the viability of the mill and the businesses in the area that the steps remained open and he suggested the town council wrote to DC to press the matter.

## **23/10/TMH Town Management and Highways Committee – Objectives**

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if some objectives might have to take priority due to budget constraints.

The deputy town clerk said firm figures would only be available once a project had been subject to competitive quote or tender. If those figures were in excess of the approved budget, then options to limit cost or increase budget would have to be looked at. However, he wouldn't expect costs to increase significantly even though the initial figure was, of necessity, an estimate.

Cllr P. May said the recent internal auditor's report referred to the problem of getting data from the parking machines and it noted there were no other machines to be installed, but it was still on the list of objectives to replace one machine.

The operations manager said the completion date had been changed to March 2024 and it was dependent on whether the council continued with the current providers Flowbird or replaced all the machines.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked why the installation of CCTV at the skatepark would be the last to be installed given the problems in the area.

The operations manager said this was because the council was waiting on the National Grid to do the dig to connect the electricity.

### **23/11/TMH Gardens Land Stability Reporting**

Cllr B. Larcombe felt the town council should be working with DC as it was the authority that dealt with land stability and it was useful to have common data, rather than doubling up. He also felt it would be useful to have monitoring points all over the town, rather than just in the gardens.

Cllr P. May said if the town council did its own monitoring, it would have a lot more data on the gardens as there would be more monitoring points.

The deputy town clerk said he didn't know what analysis the town council would see of the data from DC and he would also be reluctant to lose the input of the geotechnical experts the council currently used, PCRM, into what was happening on town council land. He suggested the council did its own monitoring and also contributed to DC's monitoring because this would provide a greater degree of monitoring of the gardens, the council would continue to have PCRM's input, and the council would have a wider perspective beyond the gardens from DC's reporting, although he acknowledged this would cost around £4k more than currently.

The operations manager said the current monitoring costs were paid from the outside works' budget, but if members were considering increasing the budget, this would need to be considered as part of next year's budget-setting process.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council couldn't be sure DC was monitoring areas that were relevant to this council and it didn't require information about DC land.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to engage a town council gardens' land stability monitoring contractor for 51 ground markers.

### **23/12/TMH Gazebo in the Gardens**

Members acknowledged the anti-social behaviour that was taking place at the gazebo, which seemed to be related mainly to one group of people.

Cllr B. Larcombe said there had been complaints from the public about the state of the gazebo and he would rather see it taken down and some benches put in its place due to the problems it brought.

Cllr M. Ellis felt it would be a shame to remove the gazebo as there was nowhere else in the gardens that provided shade for people. She also felt removing the gazebo would only move the problem elsewhere. She said in Weymouth, many of the areas such as this had gates on them so they could be closed at night.

Cllr C. Reynolds said no one else wanted to use it at the moment anyway, due to the anti-social behaviour which was taking place in there.

Cllr C. Aldridge said it had become custom and practice for certain groups to meet there and she wasn't sure if removing the gazebo would resolve the problem.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to remove the gazebo in the gardens in principle, subject to funding in the 2024-5 budget.

Cllr P. May clarified the proposal didn't rule out putting something else in place of the gazebo.

### **23/13/TMH Seafront Evening Litter Bin Collections**

Cllr C. Aldridge said she had asked for this item to be brought to the committee as she had noticed litter was a big issue in May so she felt the seasonal litter bin collections needed to be extended beyond July to September. She felt the seafront was a vital part of the town's offering so even if it meant paying a bit more, this should be a priority.

Cllr M. Ellis said extra litter collections wouldn't be needed every day so she didn't think a six-month appointment was necessary.

*Cllr M. Ellis left the meeting at 8.18pm.*

Cllr B. Larcombe said most of the council's income came from visitors, through things like beach huts, car parking and amenities, so he felt it had an obligation to give some of that income back to support the town.

*Cllr M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 8.20pm.*

The operations manager said on quiet days, if the staff were not required for litter removal, they could be deployed elsewhere. He said the current arrangements were to have evening litter bin collections for four months of the year so this would extend the provision for a further two months, which took into account that more people were visiting out of season.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to introduce, in principle, a regular seasonal seafront evening litter bin collection across six months every year which should be further discussed at 2024-5 budget-setting.

### **23/14/TMH Oil Painting**

Cllr P. May suggested loaning the painting to the family of the subject, making it clear it was still the property of the council, but they could look after it on the council's behalf and it would be up to them if they chose to repair it.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if there would be any implications in giving the painting to the family as it was listed as being held by the council and whether the council was allowed to do this.

The deputy town clerk said paintings were included in the council's asset register generally but not listed individually. He said the family member who had seen the painting was willing to pay £2.5k to have it restored, but only if the council sold it to him for a nominal sum. He said if the council was open to this, the council should make it a condition that the relative must repair the painting.

The deputy town clerk said the relative was not willing to pay a significant sum of money for the painting because it would cost at least as much to repair it as it was worth and equally, the council was not going to repair it, nor was it something the council could claim against its insurance due to the increased premiums which would result.

Several members were concerned about giving away an asset that effectively belonged to the residents and that it might set a precedent.

Cllr M. Ellis felt the council should retain the painting in its current condition and if another council administration wanted to repair it, they could choose to do this.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the painting should be seen as a council asset and assets came to the end of their life or got damaged and were disposed of. He said the council would naturally dispose of things that had lost their value.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis to retain the oil painting of Robert William Hillman in its current condition.

This motion was not seconded.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to offer the family of Robert William Hillman the opportunity to purchase the oil painting for a nominal sum on condition that they have it professionally repaired.

#### **23/15/TMH Mini-Golf AED**

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr P. May, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree, in principle, to purchase an AED for the amenities hut, to be further discussed at 2024-5 budget-setting.

#### **23/16/TMH Signs for Spittles**

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to support the Dorset Council ward member's initiative to ask Dorset Council for more signs to alert the public to the dangers presented by the old rubbish tip by asking officers to write with its support.

#### **23/17/TMH Complaints and Incidents Summary**

Cllr B. Larcombe referred to the complaint about the amusement arcade wall and said the suggestion of railings was perhaps something the council needed to look at.

The operations manager said this was discussed by the Health and Safety Committee and due to the fall heights involved, railings were not required.

The deputy town clerk said the council had been written to by the tenant, who had offered to replace the railings that were there. He said this would be something to look at when the lease was renewed.

#### **23/18/TMH RNLI Lifeguards – Presentation**

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. May, 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 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.

### **23/19/TMH Fishing College Winter Parking Permits**

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. May, 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 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.

### **23/20/TMH Exempt Business**

#### **a) RNLI Lifeguards – Presentation**

The chairman invited M. Wilson and H. Irvine from the RNLI to give a presentation about the lifeguard service.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he considered the sandy beach to be a safe beach and he felt the lifeguards should be covering the more dangerous areas of Church Cliff Beach and Back Beach. He said he didn't consider the purpose of the lifeguard service was to deal with lost children and anti-social behaviour. He asked why the takings from the lifeboat shop, which was one of the best performing in the country, couldn't be used for the lifeguard service in the town.

H. Irvine said the RNLI was contracted by the town council to provide the lifeguard service on the sandy beach but if the council would like them to look at other areas, they could risk assess them. He said the physical risk of the sandy beach was low but it was elevated to medium risk because of the high number of visitors in the water and the potential for conflicting activities in the water. He said lifeguards were there to serve the community so they were there to deal with whatever issues came their way on the beach, which may include lost children or anti-social behaviour. He added that having lifeguards on an amenity beach was a draw to people.

M. Wilson outlined the overall cost of providing a lifeguard service and the proportion the council contributed. She said the RNLI was asking the council to commit to paying a RPI uplift plus 4% each year for the next five years on top of the current amount, and she outlined what the possible costs would be based on the assumption RPI was at 10%.

*H. Irvine and M. Wilson left the meeting.*

Members agreed the lifeguard service was a valuable asset as it provided reassurance to families that Lyme Regis was a safe beach. They also acknowledged the amount requested by the RNLI was reasonable.



Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to enter into an agreement for the provision of RNLI Lifeguard services at the 2023 rate, plus annual uplifts of RPI plus 4% for the next five years, starting from 2024.

**b) Fishing College Winter Parking Permits**

Some members were concerned allowing the fishing college to have concessionary permits would set a precedent as it was a business and other businesses might also request the same.

It was also unknown how many days the permits were likely to be needed to be able to estimate the subsidy.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that officers find out how many days the Fishing College would need winter parking permits and what the total cost is likely to be.

*The meeting closed at 8.25pm.*