

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr B. Larcombe

Members: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr P. Evans, Cllr P. May, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Turner

Officers: M. Green (deputy town clerk), A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Smith (property and projects assistant) P. Williams (acting operations manager)

23/40/TMH Public Forum

N. Ball

N. Ball thanked the council for the fantastic clean-up after the storm, he said the team was very efficient and it was a major job. He said the hedge cutter in the cemetery was now wrapped up in a sheet, but he would like to know if it was going to be used as it was £10k worth of machinery. He said if the council wasn't going to use it, it should get rid of it and he asked which hedges it was needed for.

The acting operations manager said the hedge cutter arrived quite late in the year when birds were nesting so it couldn't be used at that time. He said the team had taken it out for training, then it was the nesting season, followed by beach cleaning, but the flail would now be put back on the tractor and be used from now onwards. He said it would be used on hedges including Cobb Road, Strawberry Field and coming into Lyme Regis.

23/41/TMH Apologies

Cllr C. Reynolds – illness
Cllr D. Ruffle – personal commitment
Cllr G. Stammers – personal commitment

23/42/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 September 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

23/43/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr P. Evans declared a pecuniary interest in the MUGA at Anning Road Playing Field as he lived close to the proposed site.

Cllr B. Bawden declared the same interest.

23/44/TMH Dispensations

There were none.

23/45/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 20 September 2023

Traffic and Travel Working Group

The deputy town clerk said he intended to go back to Dorset Council (DC) about the status of Cobb Road because there was a suggestion locally that the weight restriction had been removed, as had the signs, and this was linked with the proposed pedestrianisation of the Cart Road. He said the weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes was introduced some time ago before the area was piled and although vehicles over this weight chose to use the road, they did so illegally. As such, the Cart Road was intended to be the route for heavy vehicles to get to the harbour area.

Energy Performance Certificates and Let Commercial Buildings

The property and projects assistant said he had arranged for an energy performance assessor to undertake an assessment of eight of the council's buildings within the next two weeks. A report was expected a week after, to include recommendations on the measures that could be taken to improve their energy performance.

Use of Personalised Water Craft (PWCs) from Lyme Harbour

The deputy town clerk said Natural England had now been consulted on the proposed issuing of licences for PWCs to launch from the harbour, having not been consulted previously, and they had also notified the Rousdon Estate, who had also not been consulted previously.

Cllr B. Bawden, the DC ward member, said this issue was no longer going to be discussed at the November meeting of DC's Harbours Advisory Committee and it was likely to be deferred to the following meeting. She said it was probably worth also notifying Axmouth and Seaton Councils, so DC had the viewpoints of all those potentially affected.

MUGA at Anning Road Playing Field

The deputy town clerk said the survey report for the MUGA had been done and it accurately plotted the boundaries, the pavilion, the existing pitch, the BMX humps and playing area. He said it was drawn at a scale which allowed him to establish what could be fitted and where in terms of a multi-use games area (MUGA). He could say with some confidence a MUGA could be fitted in.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if moving the pitch would add substantially to the cost.

The deputy town clerk said it would add to the cost but not substantially.

The support services manager said a consultation would be carried out on the proposed MUGA and this would include a letter-drop to residents who surrounded the play park.

23/46/TMH Update Report

Drainage at Woodmead car park extension

The deputy town clerk said the recent flooding in the car park was significant and severe, caused partly by surface water run-off from the council's land and equally by blocked drains serving the emergency services centre.

Cllr M. Ellis left the meeting due to her pecuniary interests.

The deputy town clerk said on the day of the flood, the drain serving the emergency services centre's system was completely blocked, which caused it to overflow, including foul discharge, and run across the car park and through the garden of the adjacent property. He said Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue dealt with the issue immediately and the drains were now unblocked, although he felt they were insufficient to cope with surface water run-offs from the large roof area in periods of heavy rain.

Cllr P. May asked if the foul misconnection had been dealt with as it was illegal.

The deputy town clerk said he didn't know if it was illegal when it was done. He emphasised the council also had a significant issue of its own, relating to surface water and drains in the car park, so it wasn't just about the emergency services centre. He said he met with the adjacent property owner who had been affected by the flood and he had taken a reasonable position, but he felt there could only be so many occurrences before legal action was taken. He added the council's insurance would not cover damage to third-party property by surface water run-off.

The deputy town clerk said a survey had been carried out and a scheme was being designed to address the problems. This would be discussed with Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue as there were likely to be benefits to both parties. He said a sum had been identified in the 2024-25 budget for this work and although he would like to start work before 1 April 2024, there needed to be a detailed design first.

Cllr B. Larcombe said as this was an urgent issue, the council should re-visit other spending and look to prioritise this work.

The deputy town clerk agreed it was a significant issue and as such, officers had made it a priority one objective for 2024-25 with a budget of £50k. He said the work couldn't be started before 1 April 2024 because a procurement process had to be carried out. He believed £50k would be enough, but until there was a preferred design, he couldn't guarantee this.

Cllr M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 7.32pm.

Town Mill Steps

The deputy town clerk said DC was intending to install bike racks in the car park at its own expense, with the intention of using the new concrete space to the left of the steps. The space would also be used for motorcycle parking.

CCTV Project

The deputy town clerk said the meeting scheduled with DC's property team, when the electricity supply to the skatepark would be discussed, had been postponed until 14 November 2023 so he couldn't report back yet.

The property and projects assistant said he had a meeting with the contractor Scutum West on 17 November 2023 to progress the installation.

Jubilee Pavilion

The acting operations manager said the roof had been exposed to the elements for some time because the contractor had not completed the work, so water was getting into the Jubilee Pavilion and had tripped the electrics. He said officers were trying to push through the completion.

Amenities Hut Building and Plans

Cllr D. Sarson asked if the building work would affect the Easter holidays.

The deputy town clerk said the likely programme would affect the Easter holidays and beyond and as such, there would need to be a temporary solution for accommodation for the amenities staff and gardening team who used the existing building. He said the architect was finalising the tender documents and intended to get them out the following week, with a return date before Christmas. The likely period of works was 10 to 12 weeks and the best-case scenario was the works would run into late-April or early-May.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked what the options were for downscaling the project and looking for a different solution for staff accommodation, perhaps the Langmoor Room, if the costs were unreasonable.

The deputy town clerk said as the additional cost of running through the tender return process was relatively small, officers thought it best to do this, so members would know for sure if the current scheme was affordable.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the current hut could be retained for another year if the cost was too high.

The deputy town clerk said the hut was falling apart and had been repaired over a number of years so something needed to be done about it now.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the council should be waiting until the end of the year for tenders to be returned if it was so urgent.

The deputy town clerk said a different solution would still require going through the planning and building regulations process but the additional time in establishing the costs of the current proposal wasn't much more than a month. He said it was officers' view that it was sensible to go through this process to sense check some of the figures that had been suggested.

Office and options feasibility study

The deputy town clerk said there would be a further report to the Strategy and Finance Committee on 29 November 2023.

Cllr P. Evans asked if officers had made any progress on securing temporary accommodation at St Michael's Business Centre.

The deputy town clerk said he had made enquiries about Unit 2 and separate enquiries about another unit there.

Cemetery Lodge and Harbour Store

The deputy town clerk said if the harbour store didn't require planning permission, work would start in February or March 2024, with completion in April or May 2024.

The deputy town clerk said the cemetery lodge was more complicated because it was in a conservation area and there was a potential problem involving bats. He said a bat survey couldn't be carried out until 1 May 2024 at the earliest, which meant it could be well into 2024 before works could be undertaken.

Park and Ride 2023

The deputy town clerk said he had written to nine bus companies and expressions of interest should be returned by the end of November 2023.

Works to paths in gardens

The acting operations manager said emergency works had recently been carried out on a trip hazard in the path.

Monmouth Beach Garages

The deputy town clerk said the debt would run up until the garage was empty and re-let. He said subject to legal advice, it was the intention to dispose of any remaining items in the garage.

Perimeter wall – Churchyard

The deputy town clerk said repair works were about to commence but had been delayed due to the weather.

23/47/TMH Town Management and Highways Committee – Objectives

Members noted the report.

23/48/TMH To receive the minutes of the Traffic and Travel Working Group meeting held on 18 October 2023

Cllr B. Bawden said she had invited the person in charge of the Local Transport Plan at DC to attend the next meeting of the working group. Although there was a briefing via the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, she didn't feel this was the best way to get the information to town and parish councillors.

Cllr M. Ellis suggested the residents' newsletter could invite residents to suggest changes to the town bus route.

The support services manager said the newsletter already included a reference to the upcoming town bus consultation but she could include a specific invite for people to contact the office with suggestions.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, the minutes of the Traffic and Travel Working Group meeting held on 18 October 2023 were **RECEIVED**.

24/49/TMH Emergency Planning Procedure Review

Cllr P. May said Western Power Distribution no longer existed, it was now called National Grid and this needed to be amended in the procedure.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had recently attended a briefing on emergency planning and the DC officer concerned had offered to talk to communities about it. She said she had liaised with Uplyme and Charmouth Parish Councils to join in and the offer still stood.

Cllr B. Larcombe said if there were further amendments required to the procedure after the talk, it could be reviewed at that point.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the Emergency Planning Procedure and to replace the reference to Western Power Distribution with National Grid.

23/50/TMH Town Management and Highways Committee – Request for use of the Langmoor Room

Cllr C. Aldridge said her understanding was the council had agreed in principle not to rent out the Langmoor Room anymore because of the problems with disabled access, so allowing the rowing centre to use it would present the same issue. She felt it would be better for the council to use it for its own purposes.

Cllr B. Bawden said the rowing centre would be providing a facility for the community and would be adaptable to other uses. She said it would be a good facility for young people learning to row and would provide an opportunity for people to do indoor sports in the winter.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the council's asset needs came before anything else. He didn't think the organisation could promote itself in the way it was if there was no disabled access and suggested St Michael's Business Centre as an alternative.

Cllr M. Ellis agreed the council should use the room for its own purposes. She felt there was an opportunity for this organisation to work with those who would be running the Jubilee Pavilion welcome point, so when events were not taking place there, the rowing centre could be accommodated.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the council would be liable for not providing a lift if it entered into an agreement with the rowing centre and someone asked for disabled access.

The deputy town clerk said even if members were minded to support this request, there could be no question of the council spending what was previously costed at £60-80k to replace the lift. He said the rowing centre had used the Langmoor Room with the current access arrangements and he didn't believe the council would be liable; the rowing centre would need to provide for this and this would be made clear in any agreement. He added that the council hired out the Langmoor Room and the lift hadn't worked for around five years.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. May, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** not to commit to any arrangement for the Langmoor Room until the council has determined the situation with the amenities hut and whether the room is needed for staff, and then to consider its availability to anyone else.

23/51/TMH Request to Incorporate Raised Walkway Outside of Amusement Arcade Within Leased Area

The deputy town clerk said he wouldn't want the council to agree there was no commercial value to the walkway, other than the replacement of the railings, and he suggested this could be reviewed by the independent valuer who would also be looking at the rent in the context of the renewal of the lease. He said the valuer could assess whether the incorporation of the walkway had any commercial value above the offered replacement of the railings.

Cllr P. May asked if the walkway was included in the amusement arcade's lease, whether this would mean the public who were not going into the arcade would be told they couldn't use the walkway. He said the council would need an undertaking from the leaseholder that this would not be the case.

Cllr B. Larcombe said there had been instances where people had fallen off the walkway because the railings didn't go all the way along it. He said there would need to be a discussion with the tenant about what he wished to put on the walkway.

The deputy town clerk said he wasn't sure if it was a legal requirement to have railings along the entire length, but he would need to have a discussion with the tenant about extending the railings if the council wanted this.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the council could extend the railings for public safety but stipulate to the tenant it does not want any equipment on the walkway to ensure it was kept clear as a public walkway.

The deputy town clerk said the walkway was currently not in the lease so any equipment that protruded onto it shouldn't be there and he assumed this was the tenant's desire. He advised the council to establish in principle what it was willing to agree, subject to separate discussions about the proposed use of the area, and to receiving independent valuation advice.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to instruct officers to have further discussions with the tenant of the amusement arcade regarding the raised walkway and to bring a further report to members.

23/52/TMH Outdoor Gym Equipment and Monkey Bars

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold the outdoor gym equipment and monkey bars in abeyance until the council has an idea of the expenditure it is committing to.

23/53/TMH Parking Issues and Anti-Social Behaviour In-and-Around Queens Walk

Cllr B. Bawden said she had already raised this request with DC. As far as she was aware, the bottom part of Queens Walk should already be residents' parking but it wasn't marked out as such, so the matter was with DC's parking services manager to resolve.

The deputy town clerk said the clear message from DC was it wouldn't progress any requests without written support from the town council, so it would be helpful if the council was to support it, or it wouldn't move forward.

Cllr M. Ellis said she supported the request for residents parking but felt it should be the whole of Queens Walk, or the problem would just be moved elsewhere. She said the residents needed to approach Magna Housing about improved lighting.

Cllr B. Bawden said where houses had driveways, they were not deemed to be eligible for residents' parking. She said she was already talking to the West Dorset MP and police and crime commissioner about the anti-social behaviour in the area. She agreed it would be good for the town council to reinforce the requests already made to DC, but said she hadn't made a request to Magna Housing about lighting.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to support the request from residents of Queens Walk to provide better lighting and parking controls in Queens Court car park and to implement residents' on-street permit parking in Queens Walk and advise Dorset Council and Magna Housing accordingly.

23/54/TMH Complaints, Incidents and Compliments

The acting operations manager said a specific complaints log had been set up in the office to record dog-related complaints, which would then be passed on to DC.

Cllr B. Larcombe thanked staff who cleaned up the seafront after recent storms.

The meeting closed at 8.51pm.