



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF LYME REGIS ELECTORS
Friday 19 April 2024 at 7pm
To be held at the Woodmead Halls, Hill Road, Lyme Regis

AGENDA

1. **Introductions and welcome from the mayor, Cllr David Sarson**
2. **To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 21 April 2023 (attached)**
3. **To receive the Corporate Plan 2024-29 (attached)**
4. **Feedback from local organisations in receipt of grants and support from Lyme Regis Town Council**
5. **Reports from:**
 - a) **Dorset Council ward member – Cllr Belinda Bawden**
 - b) **Dorset Police – PC Kirsti Frecknall**
6. **Open Session**

Priority will be given to written questions received in advance of the meeting.

 - a) Questions from young people
 - b) Questions from Lyme Regis electors
 - c) Questions from others present at the meeting
7. **Lyme Regis Town Council annual return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 (attached) comprising:**
 - The statement of accounts
 - Annual governance statement
 - External auditor's certificate and opinion (a copy of the external auditor's report is available for inspection)
 - Annual internal audit report

Cllr David Sarson
Mayor
02.04.2023

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON FRIDAY 21 APRIL 2023 AT THE WOODMEAD HALLS

1. **Introductions and welcome from the mayor – Cllr M. Ellis**

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis welcomed those attending.

2. **To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 8 April 2022**

Proposed by Cheryl Reynolds and seconded by Belinda Bawden, the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting on 8 April 2022 were **APPROVED** by the majority as a correct record of the meeting.

3. **To receive the Corporate Plan 2023-28**

The Corporate Plan 2023-28 was received.

4. **Feedback from local organisations in receipt of grants and support from Lyme Regis Town Council**

R. Cohen – B Sharp

R. Cohen said B Sharp would like to express their gratitude to the town council for the term grant received in 2022-23, and for its ongoing support. With the current cost of living crisis, they were very aware of how privileged the charity was to receive this support. She said B Sharp worked with local young people in the community to support their personal and social development through making music together. The grant had supported B Sharp to run after-school music clubs for young people aged eight to 18 and supported their work with local pre-schools and schools. In the last year, they had supported all the local primary schools and Woodroffe with music provision. The grant also supported them to run the annual Busking Festival and their new work with the youngest children in the community through early years music sessions with babies, toddlers and families at the library and in the children's centre. They started this work straight after lockdown to try and bring babies and toddlers and parents together who had been so isolated during Covid at this crucial time of children's development. The grant also supported their traineeship scheme, which provided local young people with work experience and transferable skills, and young musicians with employment that allowed them to stay working locally. In 2022-23 they had worked with over 900 young people and supported 280 in their regular clubs in Lyme, in local schools and preschools, and early years sessions, and through one-to-one work. Nearly 40% of the young people who took part in their music making sessions this year were experiencing challenges including special needs, mental health issues, economic disadvantage or had experience of the care system. Parents had told them that coming to B Sharp had particularly helped young people who struggled with social anxiety, made worse by Covid lockdowns. Having a term grant settlement had provided stability in a difficult and fragmented funding climate. Most grant funding that was available was for short term projects, so having the stable bedrock of support from the town council had been invaluable to help B Sharp lever in additional funding for young people in the area.

E. Holt – Lyme Regis Town Band

E. Holt thanked the town council for providing them with a grant last year and for supporting the band for many years. The town band had formed in 1983 on the request of the town council and was still here. The grant enabled them to put on a workshop, something they hadn't been able to do with their own funds, so it was essential for this event. They had 50 players from 10 brass bands from four counties attending the workshop. Some town

councillors and the mayor attended the concert at the end to hear what they had achieved in one day. The band was grateful to the council to enable them to put this event on and they hoped to do it again next year, but bigger and better.

C. Reynolds – Lyme Regis Community Support

C. Reynolds thanked the council and said since beginning Lyme Regis Community Support, the council had supported them in everything they had done. They continued to collect prescriptions, do shopping and signposted people to other services and last year bought five iPads with the council grant. They were trying to get volunteers to set up a car service to help local people get to hospital appointments and the council had awarded £500 to help them do this. They couldn't have done this without the town council's support and were very grateful.

M. Kahn – Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support

M. Kahn thanked the council for the grant they had received and also the mayor, Cllr M. Ellis for choosing them as her mayor's charity, as these donations had meant a lot. The organisation had seen a huge increase in requests for their support in the last year and as a community charity, they relied on continued donations from the council, local businesses and individuals. They were grateful for all the support.

Sarah Dean – Powder Monkeys Explorer Sea Scout Unit (read out by an officer)

We are very grateful to the town council for their support last year and the generous grant that we were awarded; we were able to purchase two feather flags and four expedition tents for the Explorer Unit. The feather flags have been on display at many local fetes to promote the unit and also proved useful for identifying our camping area at a large event we attended in Cirencester last year. We have lots of fundraising planned for this summer where they will continue to be used and displayed. The expedition tents have been a big hit with the Explorers and they have been well used on both DofE expeditions and at our unit camps when young people would rather not share tents. Three of our Explorers have successfully completed their Silver DofE expeditions and we hope that they will shortly move on to their Gold Award which involves a longer, more demanding expedition where small, lightweight tents are essential. On behalf of the Powder Monkeys, we would once again like to thank the town council for their ongoing support of the unit; it is really appreciated by us all.

Gabrielle Rabbitts – Marine Theatre (read out by an officer)

The financial support of Lyme Regis Town Council is invaluable to the Marine as it has enabled hundreds of people from the Lyme Regis community to be included in creative activities throughout the year. After the effects of Covid these projects enabled some of the most vulnerable within our community to get together once again in a warm and safe environment to participate and learn creative skills. The funds are used specifically to support community activity, with an emphasis on those with least access to culture.

- **Marine Youth Theatre** – We currently have 50 children aged seven to 13 in our 'Juniors' class on Saturday morning between 10am until midday. The group is divided into two groups for acting and singing. The children are currently working towards a performance of Annie. The response from parents has been incredible with stories of many children growing in confidence at school and within their peer groups after joining the Marine Youth Theatre. Our Seniors group is for ages 14 to 18 and currently has 20 members. We are incredibly pleased to have so many teenagers in the seniors' group as this age group can be the hardest to reach. Our Seniors are currently working towards an evening of one act plays. They also volunteer to help on the Juniors Saturday classes and the Play In A Day sessions which we offer for free to local children on Pupil Premium.
- **Senior Creatives** – Our Senior Creatives events are for members of our community over 60. With many older people in Lyme Regis living alone, loneliness and isolation has been one of the major tragedies of lockdown. Our Senior Creatives events are

almost every month and offer our senior community the opportunity to get together in a warm environment for a range of events such as tea dancing, singing, listening to live music. We offer free tea and cakes and a chance to chat. We have approximately 60 people attend each event. As well as single people, many couples attend as well as people bringing their parents.

- **Acting To Camera** – We ran two 10-week acting to camera courses for young people aged between 16 and 25. As well as being taught the skills of acting to a film camera, the young people acted as 'crew' for each other, and gained valuable hands-on experience operating professional cameras, sound equipment and lighting. On completing the course, each member received a professional show reel to send to agents. One of our students gained a part in a Ridley Scott feature film after they saw her reel.
- **Technical Theatre Course** – Young people were able to be trained in the art of sound and lighting for all types of live performance. The course ran alongside B Sharp and completed in the staging of a concert - organised by young people for young people. One of the young people on the course had been struggling at school and took to technical training brilliantly. He has now been accepted onto a degree course for technical theatre at a London university.
- **Community Play** – Over 100 local people took part in the Community Play over a six-month period. After Covid, the community play was a way for people from our community to start coming together again. We intentionally had a longer rehearsal period to give people more of a chance to be together and become familiar with sharing a space again. The play offered opportunities not only on the stage but in wardrobe, make up, props, lighting, sound, music and much more.

Sarah Causley – Lyme Regis Pantomime Society (read out by an officer)

With the generous donation received last year, we were able to purchase lightweight collapsible flats. For many years we have used painted flats made of wood and canvas, but it has become apparent in recent years, that these have become less and less practical. They are incredibly heavy for our stage crew to move and switch between scenes, taking two strong men to lift, added to this they have been painted so many times the canvas has begun to crack and break. We readdressed their practicality in 2021 and decided that a simpler option should be sought. Our company has grown from strength to strength and we noticed that in the last show we used them, much of the painted area was not actually visible due to the amount of people on stage and the curtains and tabs we also require. Hence, the decision was made to purchase these new flats which fold up into a small bag, have reversible coloured covers that can be switched in seconds and can be moved by one person. We strive to provide an inclusive, friendly group which is welcoming to any members of our community who would like to get involved in theatre. We are entirely run by volunteers and rely totally on grants, donations and fundraising to produce our shows which cost around £12,000 to stage each year. Thanks to your help, we can continue to produce a high-quality show, the main aim of which is to be as professional an amateur production can be. We are continually grateful to the council for their support of our society.

Jim Moseley – Lyme Regis Bowling Club

Very many thanks to Lyme Regis Town Council for their generous grant to the bowling club of £500 towards new chairs in the clubhouse. This grant stimulated interest within the club to the extent that a widow of a recently deceased member donated a generous sum in his memory. This in turn prompted club members to either sponsor a chair or donate towards one. This enabled the club to purchase 48 new chairs. So, without the original grant we would be looking at several years before purchasing our new chairs.

Grenville Barr – Turn Lyme Green/Plastic Free Lyme

Turn Lyme Green and Plastic Free Lyme Regis were once again supported by Lyme Regis Town Council with a grant of £500 during the financial year 2022 to 2023. This enabled us to continue our work, extending the public knowledge of important environmental matters in and around Lyme Regis, as well as global environmental concerns. Specific items that your grant supported were the expansion of the Boomerang bag project providing cloth bags made from donated materials for shops to loan out rather than use plastic bags. Materials are donated by the community and the bags are made by our members in a community workshop at members houses. Your money went towards purchase of thread, labels and for professional servicing of some of the sewing machines (the owner of the machine paid 50% of the servicing cost). It also went on maintaining our websites and keeping them up to date. During the year Plastic Free, Lyme Regis was awarded the prestigious Jurassic Coast business award for the best eco-business in the region. Engagement with social media and traditional media enabled us to publicise our events, talks, litter picks, beach, cleans as well as maintain our accredited status under the Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free communities scheme. Turn Lyme Green has increased its paid up membership during the past year and this is in no small part due to the ongoing support of Lyme Regis town council for our activities. Our newsletter currently goes out to over 500 addresses most months and we have over 60 paid up members. We are grateful for the councils continuing support of our important and locally focused activities.

Derek Wellman – Uplyme and Lyme Regis Cricket Club

Uplyme and Lyme Regis Cricket Club would like to thank Lyme Regis Town Council for the £1,000 grant awarded to the club in 2022/23, it was very much appreciated by everyone at the club. The grant, along with another £1,000 raised by the club, was spent in redecorating the ladies toilets and completely refurbishing the club's showers. This was desperately needed and has proved to be a great benefit to the club. Many ladies have commented on how well the toilets are presented, not always the case when you visit a cricket pavilion. The showers have also had a great response from not only our own members but visiting teams alike, saying they are one of the best in the league, something the club is very proud of. The club's committee and all members are dedicated to improving all aspects of the club and building it up as a pillar of the community. In this respect, we are delighted this year that junior cricket in the form of All-Stars (5-8 year olds) and Dynamos (9-11 year olds), is returning to Uplyme. We hope to inspire a new generation of cricketers and become a hub for locals during the summer months. On the pitch, we will continue to run a Devon League XI on a Saturday, a Sunday friendly XI and a midweek T20 XI. The Talbot Arms will continue to play regular matches on Monday evenings throughout the season. Again, many thanks to Lyme Regis Town Council, not only for the 2022/23 grant but for previous years' grants that have helped the club keep going.

Rovarn Wickremasinghe – Bridport and District Citizens Advice Bureau

We would like to thank the council for their ongoing support and long-term funding of our outreach work in Lyme Regis. The grant enables us to provide a weekly outreach session by appointment This is currently based at the town council offices on Wednesdays, 10am to 3 pm. The grant helps towards the costs of volunteer training and expenses, supervision, management time and equipment costs. Generalist advice is provided on a broad range of issues. In 2022/23 we had 108 contacts at the outreach. We can get a breakdown of more detailed data by ward from our case monitoring system which shows that overall assistance for Lyme and Charmouth ward residents in 2022-23 was as follows:

- We assisted 149 clients with 206 separate issues
- The top 3 issues people contacted us about were:
 - 1) benefits (31%)
 - 2) debt (27%)
 - 3) Charitable and food bank support (12%)
- The top benefit issue we assisted with was Personal Independence Payment.

- 54% of the people we saw reported a disability or long-term health problem.

In terms of outcomes, we helped residents achieve £59,000 in additional income and £70,000 in debts written off.

John Marjoribanks – Lym Valley Croquet Club

The Lym Valley Croquet Club is pleased to have had the offer of a grant of £938 from the town council and delighted that we have completed our project on time and 31% under budget, spending only £639, thanks to a great deal of effort from our members. We now have flood defences along the Lym River that have successfully protected the croquet lawn throughout the past winter and which we expect to protect us for years to come. This has allowed us to invest in lawn improvements with confidence. We are looking forward to welcoming a delegation from the town council to visit our club on a date to be agreed during National Croquet Week (21 to 28 May), when we also hope to offer a special opportunity to Lyme Regis residents to come and enjoy the facilities that their council has helped us to protect. Meanwhile, we have introduced special sessions each Saturday morning at 10am to allow those who can't get away during the working week to turn up and have a go.

David Tucker – Lyme Regis Development Trust

Lyme Regis Development Trust would once again like to thank the town council for the generous annual grant of £10,000 to help meet the running costs of keeping the Hub open for groups of all ages, from toddlers to our weekly 'Use it or Lose it' sessions for older Lyme people. As many of you will know, the Hub is not an easy building to operate. It is expensive to heat, difficult to maintain and many improvements and repairs are challenged by the difficulty of access to the site. Your support helps us mitigate these matters – and it is very much appreciated. During 2022-23 we investigated the possibility of very serious capital investment into the Hub, but sadly, the current economic climate prevents this work being developed. However, we have been awarded significant funding by the Abbeyfield Trust, which will be used to improve the Hub Hall. Lyme Regis Development Trust, like all other small and medium-sized charities is working to develop a model of operation that is in tune with these difficult times. We very much hope that the new council will continue its strategic support for the town's significant charities. In the meantime, we will continue our work to enhance the lives of Lyme people irrespective of personal circumstances.

5. Report from Dorset Council ward member – Cllr Belinda Bawden

Cllr Bawden spoke about being voted onto Dorset Council (DC) for the Green Party with 44% of the vote, also as the first new councillor since DC had become a unitary authority in 2019. Highlights of her 2022-23 year as DC member included:

- Organising a series of Community Conversations as part of the 2030 Vision project, highlighting traffic, transport and parking as the main concerns overall in Lyme Regis.
- Housing and anti-social behaviour had been an issue, which led to a meeting involving Magna Housing, the West Dorset MP, the police and crime commissioner, Dorset Police and Dorset Council to discuss levels of response.
- The new Housing Strategy was being developed and the Green Party was calling for DC to buy and build more social housing.
- The government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and proposed planning reforms were looking at second homes and short-term letting and the impact on rural and coastal communities.
- Community Energy Champions were established in Lyme Regis, carrying out thermal imaging, signposting to solutions and advice and attending community events. They had also been part of the Home Energy Workshop.

- St Michael's Primary School had created an animation as part of the 2030 Vision to outline how they would like to see Lyme Regis in the future, and discussions were taking place with Woodroffe School about how they could get involved.
- Dorset Climate Action Network had talked to neighbouring councils about their climate and ecological action planning.
- The town council's Environment Committee had supported various green community groups, including the River Lim Action Group, Great Big Dorset Hedge, and the eRIB Round Britain Challenge.
- The River Lim Action Group had been monitoring data on sewage and pollution incidents and working with the town council, Environment Agency, water companies and DC to secure action. The group was also working to redesignate Church Cliff Beach as a bathing beach to achieve year-round monitoring of the River Lim.
- Setting up a Community Speedwatch initiative in response to residents' concerns.
- Helping to co-ordinate the Lyme Regis response to the Ukraine crisis.
- Delivering carbon literacy training to town and parish councils across Dorset.
- Co-chairing the government's Place-based Net Zero and environmental initiative.

Report from Dorset Police – PC Kirsti Frecknall and PC Jamie McClements

PC Kirsti Frecknall said she was Lyme Regis neighbourhood policing and PC McClements was Bridport but they did come under the bigger umbrella of West Dorset and due to staffing levels, they were drawn out to other areas including Weymouth, Dorchester, Sherborne, Swanage and Blandford. They were still a PCSO down in Lyme Regis as PCSO Amanda King was still on secondment in Weymouth so it was only PC Kirsti Frecknall in Lyme Regis.

They continued to work closely with Magna and the youth outreach workers to try and help with anti-social behaviour and housing issues. They had carried out a positive drugs' warrant in Queens Walk, which included other officers from the West Dorset Neighbourhood Policing Team and patrols in Langmoor Gardens, which resulted in the arrest of two males for possession of drugs. They would continue to carry out patrols in the gardens and other areas of Lyme, especially as the nights were lighter. However, they encouraged people to continue to report issues either to officers, on the Dorset Police website or to Crimestoppers because if they didn't know about it, they couldn't deal with it and put resources in the area.

There were 246 crimes reported in the last year, 58 more than the previous year. Of those, eight were burglaries, which included six residential burglaries. There were 37 reports of criminal damage, up 17 on the previous year, which included several incidents of graffiti, especially on the seafront and Marine Parade, damage to vehicles and to a memorial bench. There were seven incidences of drug offences, which had all been dealt with positively, and this was up three on the previous year. There had been 60 incidences of theft, 40 up on the previous year, including 11 thefts from motor vehicles, a rise in thefts of catalytic converters, and 18 shoplifting incidents. There had been 95 reports of violent crime, up nine on the previous year, which included low level public order offences and harassment. There had been 36 incidences of anti-social behaviour, down six from the previous year, and the majority were neighbour related, although some were youth related in Langmoor Gardens and issues around the gazebo.

6. Open Session

(a) Questions from young people

There were none.

(b) Questions from Lyme Regis Electors

Nigel Ball

1. N. Ball acknowledged the passing of Cllr John Broom, who he said played a vital role on the council and would be missed.
2. N. Ball said conduct in the council chamber had been horrendous and the in-fighting was not setting a good example.
3. N. Ball thanked the office staff and councillors for all the time and effort they put into the town. He thanked the ground workers and gardeners for looking after the gardens, community and town council property. He gave special mention to the gardener in the cemetery for keeping it in such good condition and the gardener who had cleared the river path. He also thanked all other employees involved in keeping public areas tidy.
4. N. Ball said cracks were appearing in the gardens' paths and needed filling in. There were also weeds on the banks in the gardens but he said the gardens were much improved in general.

Ken Gollop

1. K. Gollop said the turnout to this meeting was poor and he asked what could be done to encourage more people to attend. He was also disappointed there were not more town councillors present.
2. K. Gollop asked if the council could use the noticeboard in Broad Street as there was now only one noticeboard in a dark alley under the Guildhall.
3. K. Gollop said he was disappointed the hedge was cut back around Strawberry Field.

The town clerk said there was a problem with the hedge which meant it had to be cut down, but the council was intending to plant new trees there.

Nigel Ball

N. Ball thanked the police for their work but said the issue of drugs particularly concerned him.

PC Frecknall said the police were aware of the issues and were trying to work together with other agencies, however they needed to be informed of the problems so they could act on it. They could then go to a court with several pieces of intelligence about the same property or person. They were already aware of several addresses and people in Lyme Regis which they were targeting.

PC Frecknall said even if someone reporting didn't have evidence, it would be logged as intelligence. Officers could then do plain clothes patrols based on intelligence.

PC McClements stressed how important it was to report any issues. He said there was a reason there were more officers in places like Weymouth but with increased reporting, someone higher up in the organisation would be able to see there was a problem.

c) Questions from others present at the meeting

Suzi and Phil Lloyd (submitted by email)

1. Is there an opportunity to run a community shop in the high street, a local delicatessen? This would be so valuable for residents on top of Tesco and could support local produce in the area. The community shop could become a blueprint for green and

carbon footprint reduction, with only supporting local farmers and growers. It could be run by volunteers, a great way for local people to meet new people and could become a valuable resource for the town. Ideally, the location would be on the high street, using one of the empty building. I/we would be happy to support and help in any way. Since we lost the butchers, this would be so useful for locals.

The town clerk said if there was a proposal, the council could consider it.

2. We understand the River Lim and sewage discharge is being raised as an issue by our local MP and recognise all the hard work Turn Lyme Green has been undertaking. Is there any more we can do as a town to bring back life into the River Lim and put pressure on the sewage works to clean up the river and ultimately the sea?

Cllr Bawden said partnership meetings were taking place regularly between the town council, Dorset Council, South West Water, the Environment Agency and the River Lim Action Group, which had been collaborative and positive. She felt those involved were doing everything they could and it was paying dividends.

3. Is there any update on the town bus, extending the route and offering a weekend service?

The town clerk said the council was looking at the route and considering extending the service to Uplyme and Charmouth and he hoped a decision could be made by the summer. However, extending the service to weekends was probably not viable because during the week, it was both a school bus service and a town bus service, but there were no drivers available at the weekend, or if they were, it would cost several tens of thousands.

4. Is there an opportunity to close Bridge Street and run a farmers market in the town every month? Or more frequently? It would also be an opportunity to have a traffic free day through the town and be a great market for locals and tourists.

The town clerk said there used to be a farmers' market in the Marine Parade Shelters but this stopped as the rental prices were increased. However, the council had reduced the prices again so an approach had been made to the organiser to see if they would like to run a market again.

5. Could the community hub be extended to provide a hot desk centre for local people? Experienced professionals, many who now work at home could hot desk and also support young people with skills training.

The town clerk said this used to be provided by LymeNet but it didn't get a lot of traction and since then, people's IT and connectivity had improved. The council could approach the Hub but he wasn't sure there was demand for this kind of facility.

7. Lyme Regis Town Council Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2022

The meeting noted the annual return.

The meeting closed at 8.21pm.