

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr R. Smith

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

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

22/37/ENV Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

22/38/ENV Apologies

None.

22/39/ENV Minutes

Under minute number, 22/29/ENV, Matters arising from the previous meeting held on 5 October 2022, it was clarified by Cllr B. Bawden that both she and Cllr R. Smith had met with the town clerk to discuss carbon literacy.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

22/40/ENV Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr P. May declared non-pecuniary interests in agenda item 8, River Lim Action Group – Update Report as he was a member of the group, in item 10, Big Hedge, as he was a member of the Dorset Climate Action Network (DCAN), and in item 11, Use of the Town Council Logo, as he was a community energy champion.

Cllr B. Bawden declared non-pecuniary interests in the same agenda items for the same reasons.

22/41/ENV Dispensations

There were none.

22/42/ENV Matters arising from the previous meeting held on 23 November 2022

Members noted the report.

22/43/ENV Update Report

2030 Vision

Cllr B. Bawden gave updates on various projects under the 2030 Vision banner:

- Speedwatch training was taking place on 30 January 2023
- A home energy workshop was taking place on 4 February 2023, attended by two community energy champions, Ridgewater Energy, Warmer Homes Dorset, and Turn Lyme Green would be making draft excluders
- She was planning a public open workshop on traffic, transport and speeding for end-February/beginning-March, which would be attended by Dorset Council (DC) officers
- She was organising climate and environmental emergency workshops and DC would be involved in these.

22/44/ENV River Lim Action Group – Update Report

Cllr P. May gave an update on behalf of the group. He said the River Lim was cleaner now than it had ever been and it was an ongoing project to get South West Water (SWW) in particular to clean up the river by stopping illegal sewage releases and to reduce, where possible, legal releases of untreated sewage when there was stormy weather.

Cllr P. May said the River Lim Action Group (RLAG) had found a respected Dorset-based ecologist who had provided a satisfactory quote to do the river survey. He said the quote was £4,700 but this excluded some testing equipment at £500, although the group might be able to get this funded elsewhere. Therefore, the amount was within the £5,000 approved by the council. He said the report from the ecologist would be available to anyone who wanted to see it.

It was agreed the RLAG would speak to officers outside the meeting to discuss the payment terms.

Cllr B. Larcombe said if Church Cliff Beach was redesignated as a bathing beach, it would become part of the town's offering. He said having Blue Flag status wasn't just about bathing water quality, it was also about other factors such as nearby facilities and availability of lifeguards, so re-designating Church Cliff Beach might detract from that.

Cllr R. Smith said the RLAG was aware this was a potential issue but the main reason for trying to re-designate Church Cliff Beach as a bathing beach was to drive improved water quality.

Cllr P. May said Church Cliff Beach was already being used by bathers all year round for swimming. He said the reason it kept failing water quality tests was because of the quality of the water coming down the River Lim and the Environment Agency wouldn't make the resources available to monitor the river close to the beach unless it was designated as a bathing beach. He said the group had concluded it was in the best

interests of the River Lim to get the beach re-designated and they were prepared to do the work to make it happen.

Members acknowledged the importance and value of partnership working between SWW, the Environment Agency, the town council, RLAG and Dorset Council in progressing the issue of water quality and thanked the operations manager for arranging the first meeting.

22/45/ENV Bathing Water Quality Meeting 1

Cllr Belinda Bawden said Dorset Council had agreed to get quotes to carry out monitoring of the sand before and after it was dredged from the harbour to confirm if there were any contaminants present.

Members discussed the suggestion to move the water quality noticeboard from the harbour to the sandy beach.

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested tide times could be included on the same board.

The operations manager said tide times were displayed on the harbourmaster's office but he could look into also displaying them on the water quality noticeboard.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the minutes of the initial bathing water quality meeting, the actions from the meeting and the date of the next meeting, and to agree to move the water quality noticeboard from the harbour to the sandy beach entrance.

22/46/ENV Big Hedge

Cllr P. May said Dorset Climate Action Network (DCAN) had slimmed the project down and had submitted a funding application for £1,512. He said there was a public meeting last year about the Great Big Dorset Hedge project where there was a lot of interest from residents and it had received national press coverage so he felt it would be good for the council to adopt it as its biodiversity project.

Cllr D. Ruffle said he wasn't convinced about the precise benefits for Lyme Regis and he had reservations about where the money would be spent as a significant amount would go to the contractor/expert at £15 per hour.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the council had given funding to other organisations that were outside Lyme Regis so it wouldn't be setting a precedent and the amount requested was modest.

Cllr B. Bawden said the benefits of the project included engaging with people to do something positive, community volunteers learning new skills about planting and different types of hedging and trees to encourage wildlife, and education and raising awareness.

Cllr G. Stammers asked whether it was appropriate for the person submitting the funding application to be a beneficiary as the contractor/expert. She also asked if the Big Hedge could become a standalone charity in its own right as it was an ongoing project.

Cllr P. May said DCAN was in the process of applying to become a charity. He said the administrative work required to gather and process the data was quite specialist so a specialist rate had been quoted for the contractor/expert.

The support services manager said as this wasn't a community grant application, there were no rules as such. However, if it was a community grant, there was no rule against paying the wages of the person making the request. She said other community grants had been used to pay for a person's services, but it was unusual for the person submitting the application to request funding to pay themselves. She added that no funding would be released until evidence of expenditure had been provided so this may give members some comfort.

Cllr R. Smith raised a query about the mileage expenses element of the request as it stated 45p per kilometre but it would usually be per mile.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve funding of up to £1,512 to the Dorset Climate Action Network for the Great Big Dorset Hedge project, subject to clarification of the mileage element of the request.

22/47/ENV Use of the Town Council Logo

Cllr P. May said the community energy champions had information to give to residents with tips on how to save energy and where to get help to reduce energy bills. He said the community energy champions, Bridport Town Council and Dorset Greener Homes logos were on the letter but they wanted permission to add this council's logo.

Cllr P. May said the community energy champions had done around 15 home visits so far, with around 10 surveyed using the thermal imaging camera, and this would continue through January and February. He said they were trying to recruit more champions and also working with Charmouth and Char Valley to get champions up and running. He suggested members could offer their properties to be surveyed to set a good example.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if there was any indemnity against the advice given by the champions.

Cllr P. May said they didn't give advice, they gave tips, they made it clear they were not professionals and any advice they gave was in good faith. Homeowners were told to get professional advice and it was up to them if they chose to make any improvements.

Cllr B. Bawden said the champions were also working closely with the Bridport group and funding may be available from Ridgewater Energy to train new volunteers. She said the champions couldn't advertise themselves too widely as they were volunteers and didn't have the capacity to help significant numbers of people.

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to support the Lyme Area Community Energy Champions by allowing the use of the town council logo on their literature.

22/37/ENV Carbon Literacy Organisation Accreditation

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 9.03pm.