

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr R. Smith

Members: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

Officers: M. Green (deputy town clerk), A. Mullins (support services manager)

Other members: Cllr D. Sarson

Guests: V. Elcoate (River Lim Action Group)

23/01/ENV Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner that Cllr R. Smith is chairman of the Environment Committee.

There being no other nominations, Cllr R. Smith was duly **ELECTED** as chairman.

Cllr D. Sarson left the meeting at 7.39pm.

It was proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner that Cllr S. Cockerell is vice-chairman of the Environment Committee.

There being no other nominations, Cllr S. Cockerell was duly **ELECTED** as vice-chairman.

23/02/ENV Terms of Reference

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

23/03/ENV Public Forum

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

23/04/ENV Apologies

Cllr D. Ruffle – illness

23/05/ENV Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. May, the minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2023, were **ADOPTED**.

23/06/ENV Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr P. May declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10, River Lim Action Group Report, as he was a member of the group.

Cllr B. Bawden declared a non-pecuniary interest in the same agenda item for the same reason.

23/07/ENV Dispensations

There were none.

23/08/ENV Matters arising from the previous meeting held on 3 May 2023

Members noted the report.

23/09/ENV Update Report

Round Britain eRIB project

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the council had paid the agreed funding to the project, given the record attempt was delayed until next summer.

Cllr R. Smith said the council had paid the agreed £5k sponsorship.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the sponsorship was conditional if the project collapsed and if the council had anything that secured its contribution.

The deputy town clerk said there was a detailed legal agreement relating to the council's support for the project and he believed the contribution was deemed to be for specific costs.

Members discussed whether the contribution was to provide an electric charging point at the harbour, which would also benefit other harbour users, although it was believed this was something Dorset Council (DC) was looking into separately.

As the ward member, Cllr B. Bawden said she had been speaking to the harbourmaster and the relevant DC officer about whether the provision for charging boats would be included in the works to the Cobb. She said DC hadn't budgeted specifically for it but it had the infrastructure in place when the time came.

The deputy town clerk said there wasn't currently sufficient electricity in that part of town to install an electric charging point at the harbour and it would be reliant on the upgrade to the Ozone Terrace substation.

The deputy town clerk said he would confirm exactly what the council's sponsorship had paid for, including clarification of whether it was linked to the electric charging point, and send a note to members.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked when grant applications came from local groups, whether the council gave consideration to environmental issues.

The support services manager said this wasn't stated in the council's community grants policy and procedure; however, it was probably due for review so this could be referred to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee, with a suggestion that environmental considerations should be included in the criteria.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the council could also include environmental elements into its contracts.

The deputy town clerk said many of the council's tenants were on long leases so it was difficult to make changes to those leases, but the council could have discussions with its tenants.

Carbon Literacy Organisation Accreditation

Cllr B. Bawden said she was concerned the council's submission for carbon literacy organisation accreditation was biodiversity focused, whereas it should be specifically about reducing carbon emissions. She said there needed to be further discussions with the operations manager about the feedback he had had.

It was agreed this should be an item on the next agenda to allow the operations manager to update the committee.

Transit Route for boots/hooves/wheels/mobility scooters etc

Several members said they found the route difficult to follow, in some areas they thought it might not be safe to cross major roads, and some areas wouldn't be suitable for wheels and mobility scooters.

Cllr R. Smith said he applauded the effort, but there didn't seem to be a safe off-road route into Lyme Regis.

Members agreed they would like to support the idea in principle and requested an item on the next agenda to allow further discussion, with a request for more information about the safety issues surrounding major roads.

23/10/ENV River Lym Action Group Report

The chairman invited V. Elcoate from the River Lim Action Group (RLAG) to present her report.

Cllr G. Stammers said much had been said in the media about any improvement to water quality nationwide would be added to customers' water bills and she asked if South West Water (SWW) had said anything about this.

V. Elcoate said it was going to be funded by shareholders and borrowing money, so customers would end up paying some of the bill.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the lynch was full of weeds, some of which he believed could be Japanese Knotweed, which was now getting into the structure of the walls. He said the

leat was milky in colour, which was increasingly so as it got closer to the Town Mill. He said the flow of the river and clearance of some of the weed was also bad from Woodmead Road, through Jericho, up to Horn Bridge.

V. Elcoate said the council had funded an ecological survey of the river and the consultant had been asked to look at these kinds of issues and make recommendations so hopefully there would be some answers on this.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC had fixed the river wall at Jericho, but it was denying responsibility for the water flow from Woodmead Road car park through properties which had blocked at the river. She said DC hadn't cleared the pipe and claimed it was the town council's responsibility.

Regarding the Church Beach redesignation, V. Elcoate said the RLAG had been following the guidelines for bathing beach applications but two days ago the government released revised guidelines, changing the goalposts dramatically. Previously, all they had to do was monitor the beach and if there were enough users, it would be redesignated. She said they now needed a minimum average of 100 bathers every day during the bathing season, which was mid-May to September. However, instead of having to monitor for 20 days and provide evidence, they now had to monitor for two days. V. Elcoate said they were confident there would be 100 bathers in a day in the summer holidays.

V. Elcoate said they would continue to promote the campaign and it would be helpful if the town council also continued to do this. She said the Times was coming to Lyme Regis to do a video about the campaign so this would also be good publicity.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the council continues to promote the Church Cliff Beach redesignation survey on the website and social media.

V. Elcoate said they had finally found out what the problem was at Woodmead Road and it had been fixed on 16 June 2023, which meant there was now no discolouration in the water. However, there was another illegal discharge behind Mill Green, which SWW agreed was giving off contamination and they were investigating it. She said the three other discharges that were causing concern down to Gosling Bridge were now clear. However, there were still the permitted discharges to tackle.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to thank the River Lim Action Group for all their achievements and hard work in making the environment of the town and the River Lim better.

23/11/ENV Bathing Water Quality Meeting 3

V. Elcoate was also invited to speak on this item.

V. Elcoate said storm gullies had been blocked up outside the food outlets near the harbour, which was the responsibility of DC. She asked if the town council would approach DC to encourage them to sort it out as it was a health and safety issue near food outlets.

She said sewage was coming out of the groyne on the sandy beach intermittently; it had been tested and it should just be rainwater. She said DC said it was not their responsibility but the RLAG believed it was and SWW was also chasing them.

Cllr B. Bawden said she wasn't aware DC was denying responsibility for the issue at the groyne and she suggested there was a joint approach to someone senior at DC.

The deputy town clerk said the town council may have inadvertently made the situation worse by working with SWiM, which had problems with blocked drains. He said SWiM had re-engineered its drains which had enabled them to discharge more into the problem areas.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the town council meets with Dorset Council to ask them to ensure there is an adequate outlet for the storm gullies on Front Beach so the overflows in front of the food outlets are eliminated.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the town council meets with Dorset Council to ask them to take ownership of intermittent sewage discharge at the concrete groyne on Front Beach to ensure they are addressed urgently.

23/12/ENV Climate Emergency Mindset

Cllr B. Bawden said there was quite a lot of new legislation being introduced this year and she wanted the council to consider the role it should have in informing people about it. She said she would like to see the council be more proactive in letting people know about these kinds of things, especially now it had community and business bulletins, even if it was just a link to another webpage.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the council needed to avoid getting involved in areas of dispute.

The deputy town clerk said planning issues should be left to the planning authority, e.g. DC, because with the best intentions, the town council could give people the wrong advice. He said he had no issue in principle with writing to tenants to make sure they were aware of the single-use plastic legislation but it had to be made clear the council was not responsible for enforcing it.

Cllr B. Bawden said she was happy to go back to DC to ask for web links the council could promote in its bulletins so it could show leadership and point people in the right direction, but not to act as an enforcement agency.

Cllr R. Smith suggested this kind of information could also be provided on the environment tab on the council website.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the council includes in its business briefings links to signpost businesses to Dorset Council or other third-party websites where environmental guidance is available on future legislation.

The meeting closed at 9.04pm.