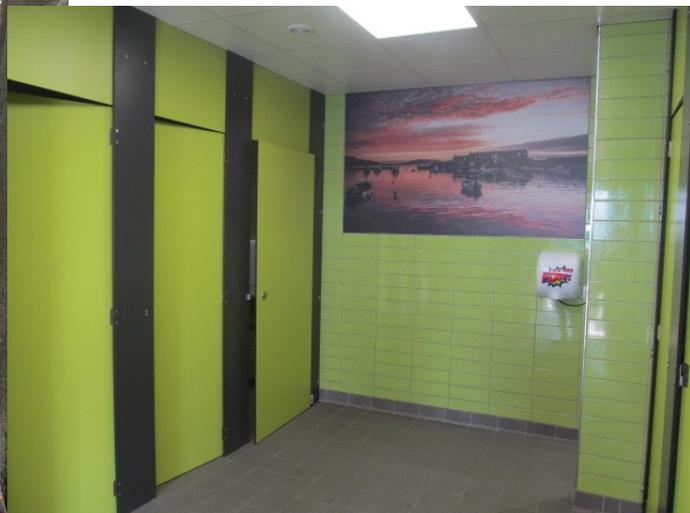
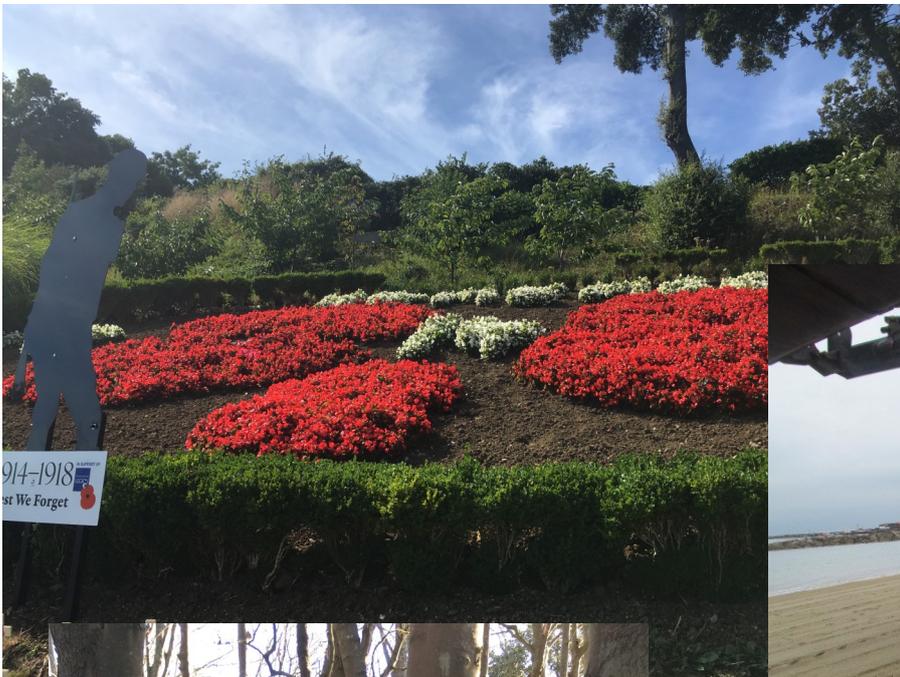


Lyme Regis Town Council

Corporate Plan 2018-2023



Foreword

Cllr Michaela Ellis, Mayor of Lyme Regis



We are approaching the end of this administration and the number of council achievements continues to grow.

Over the last 12 months, the council has refurbished Marine Parade toilets, employed additional members of staff to maintain the town, and refurbished the war memorial.

Behind the scenes, the council has also continued to strengthen its governance and finance arrangements: the council received a clean bill of health from its external auditor, the precept was held at its current level for the eighth year in a row, the council's reserve has been increased to £1.4 million and it is forecasting a budget surplus at 31 March 2019.

In addition, the council has introduced new contracts for its employees and significantly improved its health and safety arrangements.

The council's financial strength has meant a continued programme of supporting local organisations; in any one year the council supports local organisations to the tune of £125,000. This includes annual funding provided to Marine Theatre, B Sharp, the Fossil Festival, The Hub and LymeForward

Other local organisations who benefitted from grant funding in 2018 include Lyme Regis Guides, Turn Lyme Green, Guitars on the Beach, and the Get Together Club

Inevitably, not everything went to plan in 2018: most notably, the agreed plan to transfer assets, including toilets and the tourist information centre, from West Dorset District Council to the town council was rejected by Dorset Council's shadow executive.

The council always welcomes views from the local community and would be pleased to see people at our council meetings.

We are looking forward to the local elections in May, when we hope to see some new faces joining the council, and a high turnout at the polls.



The Challenges

The main challenge faced by the council in 2019 is the same as that faced in 2018; changes to local government in Dorset.



On 1 April 2019, the new unitary authority, Dorset Council, comes into being and new relationships will have to be forged.

These changes, along with the reduction in government funding to Dorset Council and restrictions on council tax increases create a dilemma for local councils like Lyme Regis Town Council, i.e., are they prepared to take on services that Dorset Council can no longer afford and, if so, how can these services be funded?

Already, Lyme Regis Town Council has found funds to ensure the future of the local town bus service, following the withdrawal of funding by Dorset County Council.

Furthermore, in response to Dorset County Council's policy decision to reduce highways' services, the town council has employed two lengthsman to take on this work.

Our 2019/20 Objectives



The council has some exciting projects planned for the next year. The first phase of a major new lighting scheme in Langmoor and Lister Gardens will be implemented, drawing out key features of the gardens and illuminating pathways. Proposals for a second phase of illuminations will also be developed.

The roof above Swim, the antiques and crafts centre and amusement arcade will be made into more useable area, with a new surface, railings with glass infills, and water and power points. Work is due to start in November.

Henry's Way play area will be refurbished, with all-new inclusive play equipment and aimed at under 9s. This will be part-funded by the town council and also through Section 106 funding, relating to planning permissions for Lyme Regis developments.

The council commissioned a traffic and transport study of Lyme Regis and will be considering the findings of the survey, and what can practically be done to improve traffic issues in the town.

Plans for a major refurbishment of the council offices will begin to take shape this year, with building work due to start in 2020.

The Money

Lyme Regis Town Council is different from the majority of other councils in the country; it makes a surplus. It makes a surplus because it owns assets; over 90% of the council's income comes from these assets. The income from these assets gives the town council financial strength and independence. It has also allowed the town council to freeze the precept it charges to local householders and embark on the ambitious projects which are detailed elsewhere in the corporate plan. The precept in Lyme Regis has been held at the same level since 2010/11 and the council has a policy commitment not to increase it until at least April 2019.

The council is forecast a small surplus in 2018/19. This will add to the council's reserve, which stands at £1.4 million.

The council's annual budget for 2019/20 is £1.6 million. As well as an annual budget, the council has a medium-term financial plan which details its financial position over four years and runs concurrently with the life of the corporate plan, i.e. until 31 March 2023. This approach was adopted in late-2015 to allow the town council to properly consider its future income and expenditure and allow it to earmark funds for future projects.

The town council's surplus increases significantly from 2020/21 onwards. This coincides with the end of the town council's current grant agreements with organisations such as the Marine Theatre and the football club. The award of grants and the identification of new projects are timed to end on 31 March 2020 to allow a new administration, which will be elected in May 2019, to determine its own priorities and objectives.

