

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2018

Present

Chairman: Cllr S. Miller

Councillors: Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr D. Hallett, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: Mr J. Wright (town clerk), Mr M. Green (deputy town clerk)

Absent: Cllr P. Ridley

18/37/SF Public Forum

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

18/38/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr P. Hicks (prior engagement)

Cllr S. Larcombe (family commitment)

Cllr O. Lovell, (unable to attend rearranged meeting date)

18/39/SF Minutes

Cllr R. Doney referred to minute 18/30/SF about St Michael's church tower and noted that he had carried out research into grants for Grade 1 listed **churches** not buildings as mentioned in the minute. He requested that a correction be made.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Williams, with the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 were **ADOPTED**.

18/40/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr R. Doney declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 16, Review of Charges, relating to Bell Cliff advertising boards, because the Town Mill Brewery had a board. He said he would not take part in the discussion or vote.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis declared a pecuniary interest in item 19, Ambulance Response, because her husband was a paid firefighter. She said she would leave the room whilst the discussion took place and not take part in the discussion or vote.

18/41/SF Dispensations

There was no grant of dispensations made by the town clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

18/42/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 5 September 2018

Bowling club car park

Cllr B. Larcombe mentioned that the representatives of the bowling club had requested a further meeting. This would not take place until 31 October because of holiday arrangements on their side. In response to points made by Cllr S. Williams, he stated that the revised arrangements would enable more spaces available for use by the public more of the time than was currently the case.

The town clerk advised that the next meeting of the Monmouth Beach working group was likely to take place on 6 November.

St Michael's Church tower

Cllr R. Doney enquired whether other sources of funding had been identified. Officers were unable to advise on this issue.

It was reported that the outcome of the Coastal Revival Fund bidding process was expected imminently, although there was some uncertainty about the precise date.

Members **NOTED** the report.

18/43/SF Update Report

Power boat club lease

In response to various questions from Cllrs B. Larcombe, J. Scowen and D. Hallett, the town clerk advised that the lease had not yet been signed and explained the history to the issue and the position currently reached. The matter had been put in the hands of the council's lawyer who had served a Section 25 Notice on the club, something which was normal practice in such circumstances. The club had now employed their own surveyor and lawyer. He emphasised that he had a duty to protect the council's interests and to ensure that any monies properly owed to the council were recovered.

Cllr. B. Larcombe stressed that, in his opinion, the issues affecting the various council tenants on Monmouth Beach were very different and that it was wrong to make direct comparisons or draw parallels between them.

Arlingclose

In response to a question from Cllr. R. Doney, the chairman advised that other local council's had decided not to continue a relationship with Arlingclose because they perceived no particular advantage from it.

18/44SF Assets-on-and-around Monmouth Beach Car Park Working Group

Cllr B. Larcombe highlighted the comments attributed to him on page 2 of the minutes relating to the payment of the Bowling Club's rates. He stated that this was

not correct and that his comments had related specifically to the payment of *utilities* which were an unknown figure and therefore not something which this council should commit to paying.

In response to comments made by Cllrs B. Larcombe and J. Scowen, the town clerk undertook to bring a report to the next meeting of this committee about the possibility of re-introducing the recording of certain meetings, primarily Strategy and Finance and Full Council.

Members **NOTED** and received the minutes.

18/45/SF Section 106 Funding Working Group

In response to points raised by members, the town clerk advised that the council had now received confirmation from West Dorset District Council of funding totalling approximately £30k. A press release had been issued and all other applicants should be aware of the outcome of their individual applications.

Members **NOTED** and received the minutes.

18/46/SF Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the external auditor's certificate for the year ended 31 March 2018

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs. C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the council approves and accepts the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the external auditor's certificate (Notice of Conclusion of Audit) for the year ended 2018.

18/47/SF The Process for Approving the 2018-19 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan

The town clerk explained how the following six budget-related reports had been put together to guide members through the budget-setting process.

In response to questions from members, he advised that the election cycle had been amended in the light of the establishment of the new Dorset Council. The next two elections would be on a 5-yearly cycle before reverting to the 'normal' 4-yearly cycle.

Cllr B. Larcombe supported the broad principle of producing a reduced list of objectives/projects in the final year of a council, but felt that directional 'steer' was still important to minimise the time that any new council took to 'get up to speed'.

Members **NOTED** the report.

18/48/SF Statement of Internal Control, Risk Management Policy and Annual Risk Assessment

Members discussed some areas of concern, particularly relating to paragraphs 19-24 of the report. They expressed a variety of views relating to member-officer relations, decision making, in-year budget alterations, good governance, member priorities, the number of scheduled and additional meetings, the use of working groups and the exclusion of press and public from meetings.

The town clerk gave examples of where he felt issues had arisen and where the council's performance could be improved. He stressed, however, that the council made over 200 decisions each year and that its performance was generally good. He highlighted, for instance, the number of annual auditor recommendations had fallen consistently; from 33 to 9 over a relatively short period of time. If, however, members disagreed with any of his conclusions, it was important that they say so.

Some members highlighted the need for respect within the council, for views expressed at meetings, for decisions made and actions taken. The impact of other outside organisations on the decision making of the town council was also highlighted. The huge impact in terms of time taken and budgetary uncertainty caused by the West Dorset review of services and asset transfer; which now appeared unlikely to proceed after 3 years of discussions and negotiations, was cited as an example.

Members ran through the 2018/19 risk assessment in detail and raised a variety of questions relating to continuity of staff and staff cover, uncertainties around the new Dorset Council, asset management and office accommodation, adverse publicity, the potential impact of extreme weather, partnerships with the business community, capacity to deal with a wide range of tasks and the way in which the council dealt with confidential information.

Members agreed that no changes should be made to suggested risks, scores and mitigation measures.

The chairman highlighted that the date referred to in the third bullet point recommendation was incorrect and should read 31 October 2018.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the council note the statement of internal control and the observations detailed in paragraphs 12 to 46 of the report and approve the risk management policy, the standard annual risk assessment and draft risk register attached as appendices 12A, 12B and 12C of the report respectively.

18/49/SF Procurement

Members generally complimented the town clerk and finance manager on the progress made to date to improve the council's procurement arrangements and noted the work still to be undertaken.

Members **NOTED** the report.

18/50/SF Budget Performance, 1 April – 30 September 2018 and Full-Year Forecast

The town clerk emphasised that more work still needed to be done to confirm the figures, but it appeared that the council was heading towards a significant budget overspend in 2018/19 and ran through the reasons why that was the case. He emphasised that the projected income figures were deliberately quite conservative and that the budget gap may well reduce somewhat once the full year-end income figures were known. Equally, some of the expenditure figures were 'worst case' and

might reduce slightly. The figures would be more refined when the matter came back to members in the next committee cycle.

In response to questions, he advised that work to the roof of the shelters building was not included because the work was programmed for the 2019/20 financial year. He also drew attention to the cumulative impact of 'in-year' spending commitments. This was something which the council could afford given the healthy state of council reserves, but it was critical that members considered the impact of such commitments carefully at the time they were entered into.

Cllr R. Doney reinforced the concerns about 'in-year' spending commitments and felt that the council need to be more robust in future, albeit he admitted that he had promoted at least one such commitment during the current year.

The chairman stressed the importance of advising members on the financial consequences of any decisions which were made.

There was a general discussion about the level of council reserves and the need to keep them within a range which gave adequate contingency for unforeseen events but below a level which might attract adverse comment from the auditor. This was generally accepted as being within the range 25-100% of annual turnover. This council's reserves were currently towards the upper end of that range but had deliberately been built up to reflect planned projects and the potential consequences of the West Dorset service and asset review process.

Members raised a number of queries relating to specific budget items and identified several objectives which could either be set aside, for the time being at least, or phased over several financial years. Other issues were raised relating to the recently completed public conveniences on Marine Parade, the proposed ATM, memorial benches, beach huts and park and ride.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the following measures be taken to reduce the forecast budget deficit for 2018/19:

1. Phase the delivery of replacement beach huts equally over the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.
2. Set aside the £25k identified for concert bowl
3. Set aside the £25k identified for gym equipment
4. Set aside the £3k identified for boules in the gardens

18/51/SF Draft Medium-Term Financial Plan

The town clerk explained that the plan would need to be amended to reflect the decisions taken as part of the discussion about the preceding item. In addition, he considered the general assumptions made to be prudent, including no increases in charges. It also incorporated previous decisions about grants and excluded the estimated cost of the works to the roof of the shelters; which currently stood at £400k.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the timing and cost of previously agreed

objectives for 2019/20 and beyond be approved subject to the following alterations and that the detailed 2019/20 budget be prepared for consideration by Strategy and Finance at its meeting on 28 November 2018 on this basis:

1. Phase the delivery of replacement beach huts equally over the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.
2. Set aside the £25k identified for concert bowl
3. Set aside the £25k identified for gym equipment
4. Set aside the £3k identified for boules in the gardens

18/52/SF **Review of Charges**

In response to issues and concerns raised by Cllrs B. Larcombe and S. Williams respectively, the town clerk undertook to look into how the council may be able to enforce the non-use of single-use plastics by its concession holders and the number of beach huts hired at discounted rates to people producing Gateway Cards.

Cart Road beach hut hire

Members discussed charges and requested that occupancy trends be produced in future to help in the assessment of whether demand was falling or rising for any given hire period or package

Proposed and seconded by the members indicated in the table below it was **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve 2020 Cart Road beach hut hire charges as follows:

	Proposer & Seconder	Rate 2020
January– Easter	Cllr S. Miller and Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis	£10
Easter Holiday	Cllr B. Larcombe and Cllr J. Broom	£45
April– Spring Holiday	Cllr B. Larcombe and Cllr S. Williams	£35
Spring Holiday	Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis and Cllr J. Scowen	£50

June	Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis and Cllr J. Scowen	£45
July- August	Cllr S. Miller and Cllr B. Larcombe	£120
September	Cllr S. Miller and Cllr B. Larcombe	£45
October	Cllr S. Miller and Cllr J. Broom	£25
November- December	Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis and Cllr B. Larcombe	£16
Christmas and New Year	Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis and Cllr J. Scowen	£40
Winter season	Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis and Cllr S. Williams	£155
Summer season	Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis and Cllr J. Scowen	£950
Annual	Cllr J. Scowen and Cllr Mrs. M. Ellis	£1500

Alfresco licences

In response to concerns expressed by members, the town clerk undertook to check that the number of tables and chairs being put out by traders was in line with the number set out in their licence. Concern was also expressed about the 'spread' of tables and chairs beyond the permitted areas.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Miller, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to increase alfresco licence charges to £130 per cover and £12 per single chair for 2019/20.

Website advertising

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold website advertising charges for 2019/20 as follows:

	Excl VAT	Incl VAT
Bronze listing	£50.00	£60.00
Silver listing	£100.00	£120.00
Gold listing	£150.00	£180.00
Small advert subpage	£150.00	£180.00
Medium advert subpage	£300.00	£360.00
Large advert subpage	£780.00	£936.00
Small advert overview/webcam page	£200.00	£240.00
Medium advert overview/webcam page	£480.00	£576.00
Large advert overview/webcam page	£1,020.00	£1224.00
Advert + 2 nd advert (same size or smaller)	2 nd advert at half price	
Advert + listing	Listing at half price	
Listing + 2 nd listing (same price or less)	2 nd listing at half price	

Bell Cliff advertising

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold bell cliff advertising charges to £110 inclusive of VAT for 2019/20.

Marine Parade Shelters

Members raised a number of issues, including the need for occupancy and use data, the absence of a proper management strategy for the area, the need to look again at the staffing and/or use of the pavilion area, the potential to allow one of the upper rooms to be occupied on a longer-term basis, the need for better marketing and promotion, the level of charge for large commercial events and the potential for wedding use.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to amend Marine Parade Shelters' hire charges for 2020/21, as follows:

Charites, Schools and Not-for-Profit Organisations – per area,

Categories	2020/21
Lyme Regis DT7 postcodes	£15 per day
Within a 10-mile radius of the offices	£20 per day
Outside a 10-mile radius of the offices	£25 per day
National charities	£20 per hour
Not-for-profit community events and festivals hiring the shelters	At the discretion of the town clerk

Other organisations

Area		Categories	2020/21
Langmoor and Lister Room and Jubilee Pavilion	Per room	Commercial or private hire	£15 per hour
Market area		Commercial or private hire	£125 per day
Performance area/ top of shelters		Commercial or private hire	£175 per day

Members discussed the charges for the market area for commercial businesses and events which had more than one stall in the area and felt that this should be looked at further and be the subject of a separate report to committee as should a strategy for the future use and management of the area.

Amenities

Cllr D. Hallett raised concerns about the overall condition of the facility and it was agreed that a report about its improvement be taken to Town Management and Highways committee.

Proposed by Cllr S Williams and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold amenities charges for 2019/20 at adult mini golf and putting, £3; child mini golf and putting, £1.50; table tennis, £1.50, and to keep the group discount at 33%.

Weddings and civil marriages

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold wedding and civil marriage charges for 2020/21 as follows:

	2020/21
Monday – Friday	£300
Saturday	£400
Sunday	£400

Car parking permits

Cllr J. Scowen declared that he had a residents parking permit and would, therefore, not vote on the matter.

Cllr S. Williams raised concerns about the holiday accommodation permits and felt that the charge should be higher.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree car park permit charges for 2019/20 as follows:

	2019/20
Residents	£175
Non-residents	£325
Holiday accommodation	£650

Car parking

Members generally felt that parking charges should be increased for the following year and noted that they had remained unchanged for the previous two years.

In addition, Cllr R. Doney mentioned the idea of a parking disc for local residents which would permit free parking for any 1 hour period each day in Woodmead car park. This was something he had seen used on the continent and felt it might be something which could be replicated in Lyme. It was agreed that a more detailed report should be brought back to the next meeting of this committee for consideration.

Proposed by Cllr S. Williams and seconded by Cllr S. Miller, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to increase car parking charges for 2019/20 for the Monmouth Beach and Cabanya car parks, as follows:

	2019/20 (per hour)
Cabanya	1.40
Monmouth Beach	1.40

Proposed by Cllr S. Williams and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to amend car parking charges for 2019/20 for the Woodmead car park, as follows:

Woodmead	2019/20
Per hour	1.00
3-day ticket	25.00
Weekly ticket	50.00

Brochure advertising

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold brochure advertising rates for 2019, as follows:

Back cover	£1,575
Inside back over	£1,050
Full page	£525
Half page	£290
Quarter page	£215
Eighth page	£160
Line listing	£25

Cemetery

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to hold cemetery charges for 2019/20, as follows:

Inter still born child or under 2 years	Inter child under 16 years	Inter over 16 years	Inter cremated remains	Exclusive right of burial in earthen grave	Exclusive right of burial of cremated remains	Installation of headstone/footstone/tablet
No charge	No charge	£225.00	£50.00	£455.00	£276.00	£90.00

Installation of vase	Additional inscription on memorial	Scattering ashes on existing graves	Scattering ashes beneath turf of existing graves	Genealogy searches	Double interment fee
£45/£60	£30.00	£20.00	£20.00	£25.00	No extra charge

18/53/SF Objective Setting

The town clerk highlighted the roof works to the shelters, the cost estimate for which had been increased to £400k to reflect the likely cost of scaffolding.

The report provided an historic perspective on all objectives approved since 2016/17, whether completed or not.

Members discussed a range of issues, including the choice of suitable council vehicles, seafront bin storage, a gent's urinal on the seafront, the need to look at the future use of Strawberry Field, how the council would store materials and waste in future, office accommodation and the need to review some earlier objectives, such as the café in the park and the appointment of apprentices.

The town clerk emphasised that there was still some time for members to suggest ideas; the budget needed to be set by 12 November. As far as previously agreed but unimplemented objectives were concerned, it would be for the new administration to decide whether they wanted to either drop them or take them forward.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Miller, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to:

1. Phase the delivery of replacement beach huts equally over the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.
2. Set aside the £25k identified for concert bowl
3. Set aside the £25k identified for gym equipment
4. Set aside the £3k identified for boules in the gardens
5. Increase the budget for roof repairs to the shelters to £400k
6. Include a budget of £100k for office accommodation
7. Include a budget of £10k for new seafront bin store(s)
8. Further consider proposals for an additional council vehicle, measures to combat anti-social behaviour and the provision of drinking water taps on the seafront, a gent's seafront urinal, budget for looking at future uses of Strawberry Field and any other proposals which may be put forward within the next two weeks at the next meeting of this committee.

18/54/SF Seafront Concession – Ice Cream Parlour Cart Road

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

18/55/SF Ambulance Report

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis left the room at 10.15 p.m.

Cllr D. Hallett gave examples of recent local incidents, including one within his family, when the ambulance response time had exceeded 1 1/2 hours and where considerable distress had been caused as a result. He referred to adjoining areas where the fire service was allowed to act as first responder and he felt that the council should push as hard as possible to achieve a similar situation in West Dorset.

Members unanimously felt that the suggested letter should be sent to the Chief Executive of the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust and that all possible pressure should be applied to achieve improvements in local ambulance response times and to allow the fire brigade to support the response process.

Proposed by Cllr S. Miller and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to send the suggested letter attached as appendix 19a to the report to the Chief Executive of the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust and that all possible pressure should be applied to achieve improvements in local ambulance response times and to allow the fire brigade to support the response process.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis returned to the room at 10.23 p.m.

18/56/SF The Impact of Local Government reorganisation on Lyme Regis Town Council

Members **NOTED** the report.

18/57/SF Debtors Report

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S Miller, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006. Members noted the report.

18/58/SF Exempt Business

(a) Seafront Concession – Ice Cream Parlour Cart Road

Members considered the range of options referred to in the report and favoured the granting of a longer-term lease to an external tenant when the current concession expired next year.

Reference was also made to the need to develop a strategy for the use of the pavilion building.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the seafront ice cream parlour be let on a longer-term commercial lease when the current concession expires next year.

(b) Debtors Report

The chairman referred to steps currently being taken to recover debts and stated that all outstanding debts relating to the sites mentioned in the report should be recovered by 21 December 2018.

Members **NOTED** the report.