

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2019

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe

Councillors: Cllr Ms B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr L. Howe, Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr Ms G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: Mr M. Adamson-Drage (operations manager), Mrs A. Mullins (administrative officer), Mr P. Williams (operations supervisor/lengthsman), Mr J. Wright (town clerk)

19/01/C **The Election of the Chairman (Town Mayor) and Vice-Chairman (Deputy Town Mayor) for the Council for the Council Year 2019/20**

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis opened the meeting as the mayor for the 2018/19 council year and asked the town clerk if any nominations for the office of mayor had been received in advance of the meeting.

The town clerk said Cllr R. Doney had nominated Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and Cllr S. Williams and nominated Cllr J. Scowen.

A signed ballot was requested for the voting of the mayor by Cllr J. Scowen and Cllr G. Turner.

Cllr S. Williams also nominated Cllr B. Larcombe for the office of mayor.

The town clerk said Cllr S. Williams could not nominate another member as he had already nominated Cllr J. Scowen.

Cllr S. Williams's nomination for Cllr B. Larcombe was withdrawn.

Cllr S. Williams nominated Cllr J. Scowen for the office of mayor for the 2019/20 council year, seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe.

Cllr R. Doney nominated Cllr Mrs M. Ellis for the office of mayor for the 2019/20 council year, seconded by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds.

Members discussed whether Cllr Mrs M. Ellis should be allowed to stand for mayor as she had already served two terms.

Cllr Ms B. Bawden drew members' attention to standing order 5.k. which said the office of chairman would not be held by the same person for more than two consecutive years unless there are no other nominees.

Cllr G. Turner nominated Cllr B. Larcombe for the office of mayor for the 2019/20 council year, seconded by Cllr Ms G. Stammers.

The town clerk said standing order 5.k. was not mandatory so there was no legal obligation to follow it. He said the precedent had been set for a mayor to serve for more than two years on more than one occasion. He added a standing order could be suspended, if members wished.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr Ms B. Bawden to refuse the nomination for Cllr Mrs M. Ellis for the office of mayor for the 2019/20 council year due to standing order 5.k.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis asked for a recorded vote.

Voted for – Cllr Ms B. Bawden, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr L. Howe, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr G. Stammers

Voted against – Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis

Abstentions – None

The motion was not carried and the nomination for Cllr Mrs M. Ellis stood.

The town clerk advised members they would need to formally suspend standing order 5.k. to allow Cllr Mrs M. Ellis's nomination to stand.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to suspend standing order 5.k. for this meeting, only.

The town clerk emphasised to members that a signed ballot was not the same as a secret ballot and each member would have a ballot paper with their name already printed on it. He said if one candidate had a majority, they would be elected as the mayor, but if there was no clear majority, the person with the lowest number of votes would be eliminated and a vote would be taken again. He reminded members the current mayor had the casting vote.

A vote was taken and the candidate with the least votes was Cllr J. Scowen.

A second vote was taken and the candidate with the most votes was Cllr B. Larcombe.

Cllr B. Larcombe was duly **ELECTED** as the mayor for the 2019/20 council year and he took the chair.

Cllr J. Scowen asked if the numbers of votes for each candidate could be made public.

The town clerk said members did not ask for a recorded vote so this information should not be provided. However, if all members indicated they were happy for this information to be made public, he would do so.

Proposed by Cllr Ms B. Bawden and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members **RESOLVED** that the number of votes for each candidate was made public.

As all members voted in favour of this resolution, the town clerk said Cllr B. Larcombe won the vote by eight votes to Cllr Mrs M. Ellis's six votes and Cllr J. Scowen's two votes.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked the town clerk if any nominations had been received in advance of the meeting for the office of deputy mayor.

The town clerk said Cllr D. Sarson had nominated Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis.

Cllr B. Larcombe also nominated Cllr J. Scowen for the office of deputy mayor for the 2019/20 council year, seconded by Cllr S. Williams.

A signed ballot was requested for the voting of the deputy mayor by Cllr J. Scowen and Cllr Ms B. Bawden.

A vote was taken and Cllr J. Scowen won by eight votes to six.

Cllr J. Scowen was duly **ELECTED** as the deputy mayor for the 2019/20 council year.

Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds made a statement and said she felt she could no longer continue as a councillor following the vote. She resigned with immediate effect and left the meeting.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe thanked Cllr Mrs M. Ellis for her time and commitment as mayor for the previous two terms.

19/02/C **Declarations of Acceptance of Office**

The town clerk confirmed he had received declarations of acceptance of office from all members.

19/03/C **Public Forum**

Mr K. Gollop

Mr K. Gollop said he was disappointed to see so few people in the public forum as he thought more people may attend following the election. He welcomed the new councillors and said he enjoyed his time on the council and hoped they would too. He asked them to be fair and open and asked they didn't go into closed session too much. Mr K. Gollop said he hoped the council had a successful year and he congratulated Cllr B. Larcombe on becoming mayor.

Mr K. Gollop said he had heard a rumour that the money paid to the council for the filming of Ammonite had already been allocated to a statue of Mary Anning. He said he believed the money would be well spent on the youth of the town. He said they

were growing up in an age when teenagers were having a lot of trouble and he was aware of several arrests of young people in the local area. As such, he said the money should be spent on character building for young people, and there were several organisations which could be supported. Mr K. Gollop said he hoped the council would bear this in mind when the money was received.

Mr N. Ball

Mr N. Ball congratulated the new councillors and mayor and said he valued all councillors, which he felt wasn't demonstrated by the low turnout at the annual meeting of electors. Following the procedural discussions during the election of mayor and deputy mayor, he asked the council to review its standing orders.

Mr N. Ball said he felt the council was failing in its finances as it did not get a licence for the park and ride, and the café on the seafront was not open, resulting in a loss of income of £26k.

Mr N. Ball said it would be good for the councillors to meet somewhere else and with other councillors and officers, and more clarification and transparency was needed.

Mr N. Ball said he had concerns about gardening issues as the council had failed to recruit a head gardener and was now advertising for a gardener. He said the council had spent £700 on compost to make the gardens look nice, but they needed to be a real signature for Lyme Regis. He said he had offered his help to the council for free as a horticulturalist and it would take some time to bring the standard back up if everyone worked together.

Mr N. Ball thanked former councillor and deputy mayor Steve Miller for chairing the annual meeting of electors. He said it was one of the best meetings he had attended and Mr Miller had done very well. He said he was disappointed there had been no reports from the Dorset councillors or the police to the meeting.

Mr N. Ball asked for an update on the audio recording of meetings as the issues he raised in the public forum at a committee meeting had not been minuted because they were not on the agenda.

The town clerk said there was an item on the agenda to allow members to agree the protocol for audio recording of meetings and the item could be brought forward at the chairman's discretion to allow the recording to start immediately.

Mr G. Symonds

Mr G. Symonds congratulated all members on being elected. He said when he had attended previous meetings and asked questions he had not received a reply, so he asked if the council could review standing orders so that if the public asked a question, an officer could give a reply. He said this may encourage more public to attend meetings. Mr G. Symonds said standing orders were very important and they could be misconstrued or read in different ways. He asked that when they were reviewed, they were made very clear so there was no confusion.

The town clerk said responses could be given to questions by an officer or members. He said there was a 12-week induction programme for members and the first session would be about governance, which included standing orders.

Cllr D. Turner – Dorset Council (DC)

Cllr D. Turner thanked the public of Lyme Regis for voting for him and said he would be attending his first meeting the following day. He congratulated the new and returning councillors.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe brought forward agenda item 16, Protocol for the Audio Recording of Council Meetings.

19/04/C Protocol for the Audio Recording of Council Meetings

The town clerk said this was similar to the previous protocol but references to filming had been removed. He stressed that the recordings would supplement the minutes of a meeting, not replace them, and that recordings would be available from the council office for a year.

Cllr J. Scowen asked when the recordings would be available on the town council website.

The town clerk said there were some areas of the website still under development and he anticipated the recordings would be on the website after the summer recess.

Proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to approve the Protocol for Audio Recording of Council Meetings.

The meeting was audio recorded from this point.

19/05/C Questions from Councillors

Cllr J. Broom

Cllr J. Broom asked the mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe that as he was now the mayor and also the chairman of Comeytrove Parish Council, which council would get priority.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said Lyme Regis would get priority.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis asked the mayor and deputy mayor who the mayoress and deputy mayoress would be.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said given the meeting was still in session, his wife was not yet aware he had been elected mayor but he anticipated she would be mayoress.

Cllr J. Scowen said he was not sure yet.

Cllr S. Williams

Cllr S. Williams said the Charmouth Road park and ride was open on the Bank Holiday weekend but passengers were not charged, and someone had been allowed to collect money in a bucket for another cause. He asked how much it cost the council to run the park and ride, who gave permission to not charge and who allowed someone to collect donations.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said the council had agreed the dates of operation but this didn't include the early May Bank Holiday weekend. She said the town clerk had discussed the operation of the service with her but it was not possible to charge passengers, so he felt it was an opportunity for someone to collect for a charity and had suggested the Mary Anning statue.

Cllr J. Scowen

Cllr J. Scowen asked if the person who collected donations at the park and ride had a collectors' licence. He asked if Mary Anning Rocks was a registered charity.

Cllr J. Broom said he had also supported the decision to operate the service because it was the Fossil Festival weekend and the Mary Anning statue seemed an appropriate cause. He added that a collectors' licence was not required on private land.

The town clerk said the council had decided there would be no park and ride between Easter and the Whitsun holiday but it was felt necessary due to the Fossil Festival and the good weather forecast. He said the bus could operate but as it didn't have the consent of the Traffic Commissioners, no charge could be made. He said the council had the option of not operating the service at all or running a service and collecting donations for a charity.

Members agreed the times of operation needed to be reviewed to include the Fossil Festival and consideration needed to be given to the benefits of operating on a continuous basis through the peak season.

The town clerk said this would require careful consideration as it would cost a considerable amount of money to have buses on standby.

Cllr J. Scowen

Cllr J. Scowen asked how much money had been collected for Mary Anning Rocks.

Cllr J. Broom said £480 was collected.

In response to Cllr S. Williams's earlier question, the town clerk said it cost the council around £1,500 to run the park and ride.

Cllr J. Scowen

Cllr J. Scowen asked if the mayor's parlour had been re-decorated.

The operations supervisor/lengthsman said it was re-decorated four months ago but there was a significant damp issue which required expert advice.

19/06/C Apologies for Absence

There were none.

19/07/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 17, List of Payments, specifically appendix B, which included payments to Woodmead Halls, of which she was an employee, and also the mayor's allowance. She said a dispensation had been granted in the past to allow her to stay and vote on the List of Payments.

19/08/C Dispensations

The town clerk said he was happy to grant Cllr Mrs M. Ellis a dispensation to vote on the List of Payments and he would arrange for this to be confirmed in writing as an ongoing dispensation.

19/09/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 5 May 2019

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 5 May 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/10/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 5 May 2019

Location filming request

Cllr J. Scowen asked if there was any update on the joint press release from the council and film company.

The town clerk said a short press release would be issued to confirm the amount paid to the council, but a further release would be issued when the council had had an opportunity to consider how the money should be spent.

Langmoor Gardens pillar

Cllr J. Scowen asked for an update on this.

The operations manager said a darker mortar had been used to improve its appearance. He said in the stonemason's professional opinion, the inscribed slab had to be removed and replaced and had suggested York or Portland stone. He said this would mean the inscribed slab would look different to the other pillar.

Hydrock report

Cllr J. Broom gave a brief report on the meeting he and the deputy town clerk had had with Hydrock. He said Hydrock had promised a new draft of the report would be with the council by 7 June 2019 but it would not include recommendations on signage as this involved having discussions with other councils. He said this would take a further two months.

Cllr J. Scowen asked if there would be a public consultation. He said lessons should be learned from this as he believed the contract was inadequate.

Cllr J. Broom said the report would go to the Town Management and Highways Committee, followed by public consultation.

19/11/C Update Report

There were none.

19/12/C Reaffirmation of the Eligibility Criteria required to hold the General Power of Competence

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members **RESOLVED** to reaffirm that Lyme Regis Town Council meets the eligibility criteria to hold the General Power of Competence.

19/13/C Council Committees – Delegation arrangements, Terms of Reference, Appointments and Review

The town clerk said the council may wish to review its committee structure, but it needed to start somewhere to be able to conduct business.

Members agreed to appoint to committees using the current structure for the time being.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members **RESOLVED** to appoint members to committees as follows:

- Human Resources – Cllr G. Turner, Cllr Ms G. Stammers, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Williams
- Town Management and Highways – Cllr Ms B. Bawden, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Williams
- Tourism, Community and Publicity – Cllr Ms B. Bawden, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr L. Howe, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr Ms G. Stammers
- Planning – Cllr G. Turner, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Williams
- Christmas Lights – Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr Ms B. Bawden, Cllr S. Williams

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to accept the terms of reference and scheme of delegation.

The town clerk said the previous administration had suggested this administration looked at its governance arrangements and committee structure early in its term. He suggested drafting a report in the autumn after several cycles of meetings to allow members to start considering any new arrangements.

Cllr R. Doney said the council couldn't sustain the current structure and most councillors were on all the committees, which neutralised the power of the Full Council. He said he wanted to see fewer meetings to free up officers' time for more creative work. He added that he was looking to the mayor to drive the change forward.

Cllr J. Scowen said he didn't agree with working groups as the press and public were not allowed to attend and they created more work for officers. He said the work could be absorbed into the committees.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said working groups were necessary for single issues, such as the National Park issue, where the public could be involved, which he felt was likely to happen in September/October 2019.

Cllr J. Broom suggested members could have laptops instead of hard copies of agendas to free up staff time.

Cllr S. Williams suggested one Full Council meeting a month with no committees and he also had concerns about working group meetings arranged at short notice.

The town clerk suggested the committee structure was reviewed before the budget-setting process concluded, with any new arrangements to take effect from the new council year in May 2020.

Cllr R. Doney suggested a group of members worked together to come up with ideas, driven by the mayor.

It was agreed the town clerk would facilitate a group of members with a view to bringing a report to the Full Council in October.

19/14/C Calendar of Meetings 2019/20

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to approve the calendar of meetings for May 2019 to May 2020.

19/15/C Mayor's Announcements

Former mayor, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said she had attended the performance of Anything Goes by Lyme Regis Musical Theatre with her daughter, not her consort, and she encouraged others to see the show.

19/16/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 30 April 2019.

19/17/C List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments for February and March 2019 for the sums of £111,381.33 and £179,672.53, respectively.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe formally thanked former members for their contribution to the council during the last administration.

The meeting closed at 9.01pm.