

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 JULY 2019

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe

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

Officers: Mr M. Green (deputy town clerk), Mrs A. Mullins (administrative officer), Mr M. Stainer (temporary finance officer), Mr J. Wright (town clerk)

19/40/C Public Forum

Mr T. Bacon

As a member of Lyme Regis Parochial Church Council, Mr T. Bacon spoke on behalf of St Michael's Parish Church relating to the grant request for repairs to the church tower. He said the church was the only Grade I listed building in Lyme Regis, it was the civic church, and it had been central to the life of the town for nearly a thousand years. He said the church architect carried out a detailed inspection of the church buildings every five years and made recommendations for repairs. He said the most recent report detailed more routine repairs totalling £25,000, which would be paid for as part of normal church expenditure. Mr T. Bacon said the report also highlighted the urgent need to replace the render on the tower. He said this was the oldest part of the church, Saxon at the base, with Norman additions. He said water ingress had damaged stonework and internal timbers, and recent falls of plaster in the baptistry were further evidence of ongoing deterioration. Mr T. Bacon said this was an urgent capital repair project beyond the church's resources without financial support from other sources. He said all permissions and approvals had been obtained and the project cost was estimated at £150,000. He said funds raised so far, including grants, totalled £80,000, including a recent £4,000 donation. Mr T. Bacon said they were delighted and grateful the Strategy and Finance Committee had recommended a grant of £25,000, which would bring the total raised so far from the town to £105,000. However, he said this would still not enable the church to proceed with the works because the faculty from the diocese required them to raise 80% of the total cost before work could commence, and as such, they were £15,000 short. Mr T. Bacon said it was understood the contractor could start work in September. He said the removal of the old render could be done at any time of the year but applying new lime water render could only be done when there was no risk of frost, so September was the latest the works could start if the work was to be done this year. Mr T. Bacon asked the council to approve a grant, but to also increase it to £40,000, which would take them to their 80% target and enable them to give the go-ahead for the work to be carried out this year. He said the church would still face the

challenge of having to raise the £30,000 balance, but if the council gave the £40,000 grant, the tower would be protected from the elements by Christmas, and all being well, the clock would be telling the right time and chiming the quarters and hours again.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked what the consequences would be beneath the tower if the work was delayed.

Mr T. Bacon said the rendering was cracked all around the tower and the south west corner was particularly vulnerable because it faced the incoming, predominant weather. He said in the bell-ringing chamber above the baptistry, the interior walls were damp and mouldy and there were heavy timbers which were wet, so where they met the walls there was some evidence of movement. Mr T. Bacon said it was getting worse, and if the work wasn't done to stop the water coming in, the deterioration would continue.

Mr S. West

Mr S. West thanked the Strategy and Finance Committee for recommending that the town council declared a climate and environmental emergency. He said the promised formation of a working group had gone ahead and 15 people were signed up to the newsletter, most of which he hoped would attend the inaugural meeting on 26 July 2019. He said he would like Full Council to approve the recommendation.

Mr N. Ball

Mr N. Ball said he was delighted to see the council out for the Sir George Somers parade. He said he had never been to one before and he was pleased to see everyone dressed up in their formal robes. He said it made him feel proud to live in Lyme Regis.

Mr N. Ball said the tidy up of the gardens was moving slowly and people could now see the time being spent on them by the external works' team, but some things still needed to be dealt with. He said brambles were growing over the path near Hix's restaurant and around the commemorative plaques.

With regards to the proposed electric vehicle, Mr N. Ball said he hoped it would be well maintained and kept under cover for the winter. He asked if the hedge cutter and beach rake was being kept under cover for the winter.

Regarding the new roof above the Swim, amusement arcade and antique and craft centre, Mr N. Ball said he wasn't too pleased to see vehicles going through the gardens and onto the roof. He said if the council was going to spend the money on the roof, this had to stop.

Mr N. Ball said he didn't believe the lengthsman and works supervisor/lengthsman should have been working on the lighting scheme as he didn't think it was their job, and it should have been put out to contractors.

Cllr D. Turner – Dorset Council (DC)

Cllr D. Turner said it was a difficult time in terms of staffing, with tranche 2 redundancies being implemented. He said there was no structure chart so it was difficult for the public to identify who to speak to, and it was likely to go on until January or February before this was finalised. He said if the town council needed a specific officer, to go through him and he could forward it to the relevant person.

Cllr D. Turner said DC had also declared a climate emergency, with the executive advisory panel (EAP) making recommendations to the council about how to tackle the issue. He said a motion had been put to council the previous week, laying out a timetable and the percentage reductions in the council's carbon footprint over a period of time. He said the EAP was looking at benchmarking to see where DC was and what it had done over the last two years towards climate change. He said DC was working with groups in communities and Dorset Youth Council.

Cllr D. Turner said work had started on the Dorset local area plan and all the other plans had been scrapped, apart from Purbeck. He said there was no five-year land supply in many areas, which opened up the potential for speculative development. He said the new plan had to be in place by 2024.

Cllr D. Turner said a cross-party EAP, led by Cllr Tony Alford, was looking at how DC could work more closely with town and parish councils, and a Scrutiny Committee working group was also looking at the issue, but more towards development of services. He said he believed town and parish councils could deliver some services better at a local level.

Cllr D. Turner said DC's budget had been published, which showed significant savings had been made as a result of local government reorganisation, although there was still an overspend of £12.6million, most of which was in the adult social care budget. However, he said there was a reserve of £29million.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked Cllr D. Turner if there was an update on the old landfill site and the slippage onto the beach.

Cllr D. Turner said the site monitoring report went to the town council and he then read out some of the highlights of the executive summary. He said he had also asked for the allotments to be tested as the old landfill site went to the edge of them.

Cllr Ms B. Bawden asked if DC was removing metal from the beach.

Cllr D. Turner said DC removed a lot of the metal in March. He said he would be asking how it was being monitored and how frequently.

The town clerk said the town council's operations supervisor also carried out regular inspections and any issues were reported to DC. He said DC was monitoring at the edge of the allotments to establish whether there was any land contamination.

It was agreed the report would be circulated to members through the weekly briefing.

19/41/C Questions from Councillors

Cllr S. Williams

Cllr S. Williams asked if the town clerk had made any progress in dealing with DC's encroachment onto the accreted land at Monmouth Beach following the Dorset Council working group meeting.

The town clerk said he had contacted John Sellgren, DC's executive director of place, as directed by the working group, and the matter was delegated to another officer. He said he had a site meeting with Ken Buchan, head of environment and wellbeing, on 12 August 2019, who was aware of the encroachment.

Cllr S. Williams asked if the town council would allow DC to store boats on Monmouth Beach car park in the winter or allow free use of the accreted land.

The town clerk said this was a decision for the council. He said after his site meeting in August, he could arrange a further meeting of the working group.

19/42/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr R. Doney
Cllr G. Turner – holiday

19/43/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 14, the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee, which included a recommendation relating to a feasibility study of Woodmead car park, which was next to her house.

19/44/C Dispensations

There were no dispensations.

19/45/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 29 May 2019

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 29 May 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/46/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 19 June 2019

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 19 June 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/47/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24 July 2019

By-election

Cllr D. Sarson said he had not yet received a polling card.

The town clerk said he would contact electoral services to check if there were any problems with dispatching the cards.

19/48/C Update Report

Members noted the report.

19/49/C Mayor's Engagements and Meetings

Members noted the report.

19/50/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 28 May 2019.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 25 June 2019.

19/51/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 19 June 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/10/HR – Health and Safety Committee Membership

RESOLVED: that Cllrs J. Broom, Ms. G. Stammers and S. Williams be appointed as members of the Health and Safety Committee.

19/11/HR – Employees' Pay Period

RESOLVED: that the council's pay period be changed to the last day of each month, i.e., that staff be paid on or before the 25th of each month for that entire calendar month.

19/12/HR – Finance Manager Recruitment

RESOLVED: that the recruitment timetable, job description and person specification for the post of finance manager be approved and that Cllrs B. Larcombe, Mrs M. Ellis and J. Scowen be appointed to sit on the recruitment panel alongside the town clerk.

The town clerk said four applications had been received but none of the candidates were suitable for interview. He said the council needed to establish a position to avoid there being no finance manager and he intended on bringing a report to the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 21 August 2019 to resolve the situation.

19/13/HR – Staffing Structure and Pay Review

RESOLVED: that a review of the staffing structure and pay be undertaken by South West Councils subject to a budget/cost being reported to and approved by Full Council.

19/14/HR – Human Resources' Annual Review

RESOLVED: that the human resources annual review for 2018/19 be noted and a sample work programme for the external team for the summer and winter periods be brought to the next meeting of the Human Resource Committee.

19/52/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 10 July 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and Cllr Ms G. Stammers abstained from voting due to their pecuniary interests.

19/11/SF – A Review of the Information Policy

RESOLVED: to approve the Information Policy.

19/12/SF – The Annual Review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure

RESOLVED: to approve the Communications/PR policy and procedure.

19/13/SF – Sidmouth Road Park and Ride

RESOLVED: not to pursue Sidmouth Road park and ride any further due to the figures in the Hydrock report not supporting the need to keep it, and that all efforts should be made to maximise the effectiveness of Charmouth Road park and ride, including necessary signage.

19/14/SF – Request from St Michael's Parish Church for Grant Funding

ORIGINAL MOTION: to award £25k of grant funding to St Michael's Parish Church towards works to the church tower, subject to a review of grant funding in the autumn.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said further to comments made in the public forum, the council should consider increasing the funding to £40,000.

The town clerk said members could consider making a loan for the additional £15,000.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked Mr T. Bacon if the diocese would consider a loan to be 'fundraised' money.

Mr T. Bacon said the faculty stipulated 80% of the project costs had to be 'raised' and he wasn't convinced a loan would qualify as such.

The town clerk advised members the council had the funds available in its reserves to find an additional £15,000, if it wished.

Cllr Ms G. Stammers asked Mr T. Bacon if the diocese would intervene if the funds were not forthcoming and the church deteriorates to a point.

Mr T. Bacon said there were charities the church had applied to and received funding from, but if the council was to provide a £40,000 grant, there was potential for those charities to provide a further grant. He added that there was sufficient money in the contingency to cover the 3% increase in the contractor's costs.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked if in looking at the repairs to the tower, there had been an assessment of the general state of the church and he asked for confirmation that the church was not likely to come back for more money.

Mr T. Bacon the church carried out routine repairs of around £5,000 to £10,000 each year, but the tower was a more of a capital project. He said this was the pressing issue and the church would hope it wouldn't need to come back to the council for more funding.

The town clerk said in considering a grant, the most important thing was to consider the risk faced by the council in making this decision.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION: Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members **RESOLVED** to award £40k of grant funding to St Michael's Parish Church towards works to the church tower.

19/15/SF – Climate and Environmental Emergency

RESOLVED: to declare a climate and environmental emergency.

RESOLVED: that Cllrs B. Bawden, L. Howe and K. Ellis sit on the Lyme Regis One Planet Working Group.

19/16/SF – Request from Lyme Regis Community Land Trust to undertake a feasibility study over the Woodmead car park area for possible affordable housing for rent to local people

RESOLVED: to approve the request from Lyme Regis Community Land Trust to procure a feasibility study; this is entirely without prejudice to the council's subsequent consideration of any proposals which might emerge from the study.

19/17/SF – Filming Money

RESOLVED: to invite interested parties to submit expressions of interest for the £15,000 filming money.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said further to her comments at the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting regarding money donated to the town from previous filming, she was now aware where the instruments for the junior band were and she was in talks with the chairman of the Woodmead Halls Management Committee to get the instruments to the halls to be used by others.

19/53/C Tourism, Community and Publicity

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr Miss K. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 3 July 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/10/TCP – Lyme Regis Guide 2020

RESOLVED: to instruct officers to obtain quotes for producing the 2020 Lyme Regis guide based on 12,500, 15,000, 17,500 and 20,000 copies.

19/11/TCP – Sculpture Trail in Lister and Langmoor Gardens

RESOLVED: to provide funding of £5,000 in 2019/20 towards the continued development of the sculpture trail in Lister and Langmoor Gardens, providing there is match funding for this amount, on the condition the company does community outreach work with schools and on approval of the three to five-year management and business plan referred to by The Arts Development Company in its proposal.

Cllr Ms B. Bawden asked how the council would know if the sculptures had been match-funded.

The deputy town clerk said he had already been in contact with The Arts Development Company about how it would demonstrate match funding and it had given its commitment to provide that funding.

19/54/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 26 June 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/10/TMH – Beach Disabled Access

RESOLVED: to agree in principle to introduce rubber matting to the pebble side of the groyne to allow easier access to the shoreline, and to purchase two ordinary wheelchairs to enhance the council's offer for disabled people on the seafront, subject to further details on costings being considered by the Full Council on 24 July 2019.

19/11/TMH – Gardens Handrail Replacement

RESOLVED: to replace wooden handrails and posts in the seafront gardens with metal.

19/12/TMH – Weed Spraying

RESOLVED: that the town council bans the use of glyphosate-based products immediately.

19/13/TMH – Speed Indicator Device

RESOLVED: to agree the speed indicator device is located in Charmouth Road and in the old location in Sidmouth Road, in addition to Timber Hill and instruct officers to consult local residents before pole installation; to approve the purchase of a solar-powered Vario speed indicator device; and to offer the obsolete device to Thorncombe Parish Council.

19/14/TMH – Henry's Way Play Park

RESOLVED: to approve the designs from Proludic for the refurbishment of Henry's Way play park at the lower quote, which includes black wetpour surface but no finger sign panels or talk tubes.

19/55/C Christmas Lights Committee

Members were supportive of the request to disband the Christmas Lights Committee but were concerned about making a commitment to future funding to the newly-constituted organisation.

The town clerk suggested the council agreed to funding for this financial year as it was already in the budget, but it was right and proper to put the marker down that all grants would be reviewed as part of the 2020/21 budget-setting process.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members **RESOLVED** to approve the request to disband the Christmas Lights Committee and to transfer monies held in the council's Christmas Lights' bank account to the newly-constituted organisation.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to continue to support the newly-constituted Christmas lights organisation with funding in 2019.

19/56/C Bank Mandates

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said there would normally be up to six different chairmen, but as there were only four, she didn't believe this was enough people.

The town clerk said if members didn't consider four people to be enough, vice-chairmen could also be authorised.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to approve changing the bank mandates, with each of Lloyds and NatWest, to accept the following councillors as authorised to sign, and to enquire, on the council's bank accounts: Brian Larcombe MBE (mayor; Strategy and Finance chairman; Human Resources chairman; and Planning vice-chairman), Jeff Scowen (deputy mayor; Tourism, Community and Publicity chairman; and Town Management and Highways vice-chairman), John Broom (Town Management and Highways chairman; and Strategy and Finance vice-chairman), Graham Turner (Planning chairman), Gill Stammers (Human Resources vice-chairman), and Kelsey Ellis (Tourism, Community and Publicity vice-chairman); and to remove any other councillors from the mandates.

19/57/C Lyme Regis Community Land Trust Limited, S38 Agreement, Land at Timber Hill

The deputy town clerk said the council was only being asked to do this in its capacity as custodian trustee to align with plans in the original document. He said the issue was between the developer and the highway authority, who had agreed the correct alignment. He said it did not impact the town council in any way.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to approve the signing and sealing of amended documents and plans relating to the Community Land Trust development at Timber Hill, Lyme Regis.

19/58/C Beach Disabled Access

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis was concerned the two wheelchairs wouldn't be suitable for everyone as they were usually measured to the individual. She said the existing beach wheelchairs were sufficient, as wheelchair users would tend to bring their own chair.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the wheelchairs would be able to withstand salt and sand.

The town clerk said the cost of the wheelchairs was relatively low so they could be replaced on a reasonably regular basis. He added that the tourist information centre had been approached by visitors asking if they could hire a wheelchair.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis asked if the council's insurance would provide cover if anyone had an accident while using a wheelchair.

The town clerk said this would be queried with the insurance company but he believed cover would be provided at low or no cost; if not, officers would come back to the council.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked who would be managing the hiring out of the wheelchairs and their maintenance and servicing.

The town clerk said there was already provision for hiring out beach wheelchairs, so it would be combined with that function. He said officers would look into whether a servicing and maintenance programme was needed, but bearing in mind the cost of the wheelchairs, the council would be looking at replacement rather than servicing.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of rubber matting and two wheelchairs for hire to the public.

19/59/C Electric Vehicle for Waste Collection

Cllr J. Broom asked for clarification on what the vehicle would be used for as another vehicle had recently been adapted which appeared to also be for rubbish disposal.

The town clerk said the existing pick-up truck was converted into a tipper truck and a smaller vehicle was required to allocate to the cleansing operative to collect bags of rubbish.

There was some confusion over whether the proposed electric vehicle would be an additional or replacement vehicle.

The town clerk confirmed it was an additional vehicle and the council had agreed a budget of £12,000 in 2019/20 for that vehicle; of that sum, £4,500 had been spent on modifying the existing pick-up truck, leaving £7,500 left in the budget for an additional vehicle.

The town clerk said following the council's declaration of a climate emergency, members were being asked to consider an electric vehicle instead of a diesel one. He added that as the proposed electric vehicle would cost c.£12,000, officers were asking members to consider increasing the budget.

Some members were concerned about the increasing number of vehicles in the council's fleet and asked what their purposes were. The town clerk listed all the vehicles and their purposes and said there was currently no vehicle for the cleansing operative.

Some members questioned whether it was necessary to purchase another vehicle at this point and whether it could be deferred until later in the year when the council could look further into what is required.

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr Ms B. Bawden, members **RESOLVED** to purchase an ePower Trucks AMP XL with cage (option A) at £11,800 plus VAT and delivery £450 plus VAT for waste collection, and to approve the extra unbudgeted expenditure.

19/60/C Option to tax (for VAT) SWiM, the Antiques Centre and the Amusement Arcade

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, 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.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis left the meeting at 8.45pm.

19/61/C Exempt Business

a) Option to tax (for VAT) SWiM, the Antiques Centre and the Amusement Arcade

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 8.46pm.

The temporary finance officer explained the issue in further detail, outlining the cost implications to the council if it opted not to tax the three properties, and the potential impact on the tenants if the council opted to tax.

Members agreed they needed a greater understanding of what this issue meant to the council and its tenants, but there was acknowledgement that the council needed to be consistent in how it treated all its commercial tenants.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Scowen to opt to tax (for VAT purposes) each of SWiM, the antiques centre and the amusement arcade.

This motion was not seconded.

The town clerk said members needed to properly understand the VAT process and the implications of choosing whether or not to opt to tax. He suggested a separate briefing session was held for members to discuss this in detail. He suggested a session w/c 12 August 2019 to enable a further report to be considered at the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 21 August 2019.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked for information to be brought to that session on all the council's tenants and the potential impact on them.

The town clerk said a summary of all tenants and whether they are opted to tax or not could be provided, but members needed to focus on the issue of these three properties and the roof repairs because the decision could not be delayed.

Cllr J. Scowen questioned why the decision couldn't be made now as he didn't believe any further information was required.

The town clerk said it was important the council made the right decision and it was recorded properly because the council may be challenged by the tenants or the auditor.

It was agreed a confidential members' briefing session would be held on Monday 12 August 2019 at 7pm in the Guildhall. Officers would provide contextual information but there was no intention to start determining VAT policy.

The town clerk said he also intended to bring a VAT report to the council as part of the budget-setting process.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members **RESOLVED** to hold a confidential members' briefing session to allow further discussion on the option to tax (for VAT purposes) SWiM, the antiques centre and the amusement arcade.

The meeting closed at 9.24pm.