

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2019

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe MBE

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

Officers: Mr M. Adamson-Drage (operations manager), Mr M. Green (deputy town clerk), Mrs A. Mullins (administrative officer), Mr J. Wright (town clerk)

19/101/C Public Forum

Mr K. Gollop

With regards to Pound Road traffic, Mr K. Gollop said he was pleased to see some councillors were concerned about traffic problems in Lyme Regis and they hoped to meet with a Dorset Council (DC) official. He said these 'walkabouts' had been taking place for years and hadn't developed into much, so he hoped the council could get something out of it. He said the recent, costly traffic report was more of a park and ride report and the council had promised there would be public consultation, which hadn't happened. He said he believed the council should arrange a public consultation on traffic in Lyme Regis, with highway officials present.

Mr J. Gollop said as the council was holding its forthcoming public consultation event on a Thursday afternoon, this wouldn't allow people who worked outside of Lyme to attend. He felt it would have been better to hold the event on a weekend and the time should be extended well into the evening.

The town clerk said this was the third public consultation event of its kind the council had held and they had always been around the same time, with few people attending after 6pm. He said the council could consider holding public consultations at weekends, but he wasn't convinced the public would be inclined to attend. He added that people could email comments and suggestions to him.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the council had commissioned a traffic survey to inform its planning application for the Sidmouth Road park and ride; it was not intended to be a traffic survey that would provide solutions to broader traffic problems. He said a public consultation needed to take place when there were specific ideas to consult on, which needed to be pursued with DC highways.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe emphasised the public consultation event was not a meeting, rather a drop-in event to put before the public the ideas the council was looking at.

Mr M. Dixon

Representing Lyme Regis Gig Club, Mr M. Dixon said he would like to explore the possibility of the gig club working with the council as part of a strategic planning process to look at developing a Lyme Regis sea sports and development centre. He said this would form part of the club's plans to extend the range of fitness, health, wellbeing and sports opportunities to local people and visitors. Mr M. Dixon said the concept of the centre would be to provide additional storage space, a gym for all the centre's users, a sea safety management space for the gig club, and a facility to support the growing number of local people and visitors participating in sporting activities taking place from the Cobb, including bodyboarding, kayaking, paddleboarding, and adventures including tall ships. He said they would envisage the centre being based in the Monmouth Beach area. He said other leading sports clubs in the town, such as the football, cricket, powerboat, sailing and bowling clubs, had their own facilities and the gig club would like to develop something on Monmouth Beach along similar lines. Mr M. Dixon said it would not be to compete with other organisations, but to become a centre for seafaring and sea sport activities. He said it would also provide formal and informal sporting opportunities for Woodroffe School students and the club was working in partnership with the school to develop the concept. He said they envisaged a single-storey building, approximately 20m x 10m, located as appropriate in the Monmouth Beach area, something broadly similar to the powerboat club. Mr M. Dixon said the centre would generate income for the town council because it would be used all-year-round, generating rental income and additional revenue from parking. He said the facility would be an investment for the council as a profit centre to generate revenue to fund other services. He said he appreciated it might not be as cost-effective as turning space into car parking, but he believed the social value made it an attractive proposition, also creating employment opportunities, particularly for young people. Mr M. Dixon said he had a background in seeking funding for projects like this and he was aware of a number of funding sources. He said he believed if they worked in partnership with the council, they could find the money to do it. As a way of moving this forward, he suggested a joint working group was set up in the new year to see whether there was space at Monmouth Beach, whether they needed to carry out a needs analysis and statement of requirement, working with the other sporting organisations, to then create a business plan and put a strategy together.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe asked how the sailing club fitted into this concept.

Mr M. Dixon said if someone joined the gig club, they were immediately a member of the sailing club too, so they used their facilities to some extent. He said they were not looking to duplicate what the sailing club had on offer, but to add value like a campus with linked faculties.

Mr G. Symonds

a) Mr G. Symonds said following the last Full Council meeting when he raised some points, the mayor had said in the past if questions couldn't be answered on the night, members of the public would receive a reply within 10 working days. He said this hadn't happened and no-one had come back to him. He asked what the council's terms of reference were for dealing with correspondence and what the timeframe was for responding.

The town clerk said there was correspondence on the way to Mr G. Symonds. He said there had been an investigation into the serious allegations which had been made. He said it involved a member of staff, which Mr G. Symonds had stated was the town clerk, but he confirmed it was the operations manager. The town clerk said he undertook an investigation, which found there had been no transfer or loan of assets from this council to Axminster Town Council. He said the investigation involved him interviewing the member of staff and writing to the Axminster town clerk, who had formally responded. He said the mayor also wrote to his counterpart at Axminster to ascertain if there had been any goods loaned, specifically the water bowser. In both instances, he said the response had been categorically no.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe confirmed a response had been sent to Mr G. Symonds that day and part of the reason for the delay was the time taken to get responses from the other parties.

b) Mr G. Symonds said he had made a couple of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to the council, some of which had been answered but one had not been, which was outside the timeframe for a response. He said he had correspondence from 30 September 2019 signed by the town clerk, but that FOI hadn't been dealt with. Mr G. Symonds said his request was regarding money outstanding to the council, for which the town clerk said he was waiting for receipts to come in at the end of September.

The town clerk confirmed there had been FOI requests from Mr G. Symonds. He said one request asked for information up to a specific date, but bank reconciliations had not been carried out to that date, which was still the case. He added that as soon as that information was available, it would be forwarded to Mr G. Symonds.

c) Following a member of the office staff recently leaving the council, Mr G. Symonds asked if members were aware why they left. He asked if there was an exit interview and whether there was a meeting of the staffing committee. He said members were not aware of why staff they were leaving. He asked if there were any meetings or questions asked by members.

The town clerk asked Mr G. Symonds to clarify which member of staff he was referring to and it was established it was the interim finance manager. The town clerk said the member of staff was on a fixed-term contract, which had expired. He confirmed members of the Human Resources Committee had been briefed about this.

Mr N. Ball

Mr N. Ball thanked the council for Henry's Way play area, specifically Cllr J. Broom and the operations manager, and he felt common sense had prevailed regarding the refurbishment. He said a good job had been done on the fencing and his request to install a bin had been dealt with promptly, which made a huge difference to the rubbish.

Mr N. Ball thanked the external works' team for the work they had done on improving the gardens, after some issues were highlighted in the spring. He said he hoped there was now a good gardening programme in place.

Mr N. Ball said he was disappointed with the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting; it was a very long meeting and he questioned if this was tactical, as he felt it was not fair for meetings to be that long. He said he was aware there wouldn't be a decision on the filming grant at that meeting, but it wasn't fair for people to have to stay for such a long time and no one was in their right mind so late in the evening.

Mr N. Ball said he was concerned about the beach rake, which had cost £51,000, being stored in the open.

Mr N. Ball said no invoices had been issued for beach huts, which would provide income of £67,000, and this had been flagged up in the recent audit. He said some owners would now have two invoices.

Mr N. Ball said item 20, Lease Extension, didn't state what lease or building the report referred to and he asked why this information wasn't public.

Mr N. Ball said he was concerned after reading the reports on the Strategy and Finance Committee agenda regarding the budget, audit and risk management, specifically as in five years' time an additional £200,000 would have to be found for staffing. He said he had concerns about the council's income and expenditure, bearing in mind the council was running into problems with the unitary authority passing down services. He said the internal audit issues outlined stemmed back to the lack of a finance team, but in the previous year, controls were working well despite a lack of resources. He asked what had changed and said it suggested an underlying root cause, questioning why the auditor hadn't picked it up in the last five years. Mr N. Ball asked what the numbers meant on the risk management report and he asked whether the members really understood what they were saying yes to. He said he hoped members read it in the way he had and took the opportunity to put it right now, before spending hundreds of thousands of pounds the council didn't have to spend.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the Strategy and Finance Committee had an extensive agenda, which was why the item regarding the filming grant had been moved to the beginning to allow people to speak, and the reason for deferring several items to the next committee meeting. He said the council was conscious about the kinds of growing commitments and expenditure it might have, and as such, it was agreed there would be an additional Strategy and Finance Committee meeting in the next cycle to deal with these matters properly.

Regarding the risk report, the mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said there was a reference to the numbers in the report and the rule was the higher the number, the bigger the concern.

19/102/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

19/103/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr J. Scowen – personal commitment
Cllr R. Smith – personal commitment

19/104/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

19/105/C Dispensations

There were no dispensations.

19/106/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9 October 2019

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr S. Williams, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9 October 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/107/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 16 October 2019

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 16 October 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/108/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9 October 2019

Members noted the report.

19/109/C Matters arising from the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 16 October 2019

Members noted the report.

19/110/C Update Report

There were no updates.

19/111/C Mayor's Engagements and Meetings

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the mayoress had accompanied him at the events on 29 October and 9, 10 and 11 November 2019.

19/112/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 15 October 2019.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 12 November 2019.

19/113/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 23 October 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/22/HR – Staffing Structure Review

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed new staffing structure; to set up a panel to look at the grading of the roles and make recommendations to the Human Resources Committee; and to appoint Cllrs B. Larcombe, J. Broom and G. Stammers to the panel.

19/23/HR – Christmas and New Year Working Arrangements

RESOLVED: to apply 3.5 days of discretionary leave from midday to 5pm on Tuesday 24 December, on Friday 27 December 2019, Thursday 2 January and Friday 3 January 2020; apply statutory leave on Monday 30 December and Tuesday 31 December 2019; agree members of the external works' team provide a full day's cover every day, except Christmas Day; and for members of the external works' team who provide cover to be paid overtime and time-off-in-lieu for the day worked.

19/24/HR – Environment Training

RESOLVED: to defer consideration of environment training for members and officers to the first meeting of the Human Resources Committee in 2020.

19/25/HR – External Works' Role Swap

RESOLVED: to approve the permanent role swap between a member of the gardening staff and a member of maintenance staff.

19/114/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 13 November 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/42/SF – Internal Audit Report, Visit One 2019-20

RESOLVED: to defer consideration of the internal auditor's report on visit one of 2019/20 to the next Strategy and Finance Committee meeting.

19/46/SF – Review of Charges

RESOLVED: to set weekly charges for 2021/22 Card Road beach hut hire as follows:

Easter holiday	£50
Spring holiday	£55
June	£50
Mid-July and August	£130
Christmas and New Year	£40
Winter season	£160
Summer season	£1,000
Annual	£1,600

RESOLVED: to set weekly charges for 2021/22 Cart Road beach hut hire as follows:

RESOLVED: to hold daily hire charges for 2021/22 Cart Road beach hut hire, as follows:

January to Easter	£3
End-April to spring holiday	£9
Early-July	£30
September	£11
October	£6
November and December	£4

RESOLVED: to hold alfresco licence charges for 2020/21, as follows:

Covers	£130
Single chairs	£12

RESOLVED: to hold website advertising charges for 2020/21, 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	

RESOLVED: to set the charge for 2020/21 for Bell Cliff advertising boards at £120.

RESOLVED: to hold amenities charges for 2020/21, as follows:

Adult mini golf and putting	£3
Child mini golf and putting	£1.50
Table tennis	£1.50

RESOLVED: to hold wedding and civil marriage charges for 2021/22, as follows:

Monday to Friday	£300
Saturday and Sunday	£400

RESOLVED: to set holiday accommodation parking permit charges for 2020/21 at £670.

RESOLVED: to set non-resident parking permit charges for 2020/21 at £335.

RESOLVED: to set resident parking permit charges for 2020/21 at £175.

RESOLVED: to hold parking charges at Monmouth, Cabanya and Woodmead car parks for 2020/21, as follows:

Cabanya and Monmouth	£1.40 per hour
Woodmead	£1 per hour
Woodmead three-day ticket	£25
Woodmead weekly ticket	£50

RESOLVED: to hold cemetery charges for 2020/21, as follows:

Inter stillborn child or under 2 years	No charge
Inter child under 16 years	No charge
Inter over 16 years	£225
Inter cremated remains	£50
Exclusive right of burial in earthen grave	£455
Exclusive right of burial of cremated remains	£276
Installation of headstone/headstone/footstone/ta	£90
Installation of vase	£45/60
Additional inscription on memorial	£30
Scattering ashes on existing graves	£20
Scattering ashes beneath turf of existing graves	£20
Genealogy searches	£25
Certified copy of entry in burial books	Not offered
Double interment fee	No extra charge

19/47/SF – Future Grant Allocation

RESOLVED: to set the total amount of grants to local organisations in 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 at £80,000 per year.

19/48/SF – Objectives 2020-2025

As a point of accuracy, Cllr R. Doney said the illustration he gave at the meeting regarding the precept was a 10% increase, not 20% as stated in the minutes. It was noted this would be amended at the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED: to increase the precept for 2020/21 by 10%.

Cllr B. Bawden said she felt more of the climate action plan should go to public consultation and she was concerned they would be excluded from the possibility of being included in the council's five-year plan.

The town clerk said when members discussed the objectives, they agreed which projects would go to consultation; he didn't believe it was the intention of the Strategy and Finance Committee for the 65 additional environmental objectives to go to public consultation.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis the council was setting the budget for 2020/21 so other objectives could be added further down the line.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the objectives were not a fixed commitment, they were the council's intended direction of travel and further objectives could be added, costed and consulted on at any time.

The town clerk said the list of objectives were reviewed on an annual basis but the council needed to create a sense of direction at this point and ask the public if it broadly agreed.

RESOLVED: to agree the list of draft objectives for 2020-25, with the addition of pursuing an alternative park and ride site, to take forward to public consultation.

19/50/SF – Grant Funding Request

RESOLVED: not to approve the request from performing societies in Lyme Regis for a grant towards the cost of a community play, 'Are you going to the Marine?'

19/115/C Tourism, Community and Publicity

It was noted the meeting of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee meeting scheduled for 30 October 2019 was cancelled.

19/116/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 16 October 2019 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

Cllr S. Williams asked if the lights in the gardens would be on for the Christmas period.

The operations manager said it had been agreed not to turn the lights on during the winter but if members wanted them on for specific dates, including Christmas, this could be arranged. It was agreed they would be on for the Christmas lights' switch-on.

Cllr G. Turner asked if the lights were repaired as there were now around nine not working.

The operations manager said he would look into this.

Cllr R. Doney asked when the speed indicator device would be operational.

The operations manager said the device had to be installed by DC's road safety team and a date was in the diary.

19/41/TMH – Marine Parade Barrier Baskets

RESOLVED: to add barrier baskets to Marine Parade railings in the season.

19/42/TMH – Pound Road – Safety for Pedestrians

RESOLVED: to forward residents' concerns about Pound Road to Dorset Council and request a meeting with highways' officers to allow the council to point out other problem areas in the town.

19/43/TMH – Section 106 Money for Play Parks

RESOLVED: to spend the leftover Section 196 money allocated to play parks on extra play equipment in the toddler area at Anning Road play park and revamping the mini golf.

RESOLVED: to bring the putting green back up to standard and give it more publicity.

19/117/C Appointments to Committees

Proposed by Cllr S. Williams and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, members
RESOLVED to appoint Cllr R. Smith to the Town Management and Highways Committee.

19/118/C Appointments to External Bodies 2019/20

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr Ms G. Stammers, members
RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Miss K. Ellis as a liaison member to the Lyme Regis branch of the Royal British Legion.

As vice-chairman of the governors at St Michael's Primary School, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said there was no longer a position for a town councillor as a sponsor governor, although there were vacancies for a local authority governor or a foundation governor. She said members would have to apply directly to the governing body.

The town clerk confirmed the Woodroffe School would also appreciate applications from town councillors.

It was agreed any interested members would contact the schools directly.

19/119/C Request to Change Purpose of Grant

Members discussed whether the pantomime society should be allowed to use the grant for another purpose, or the money should be spent on the original request and any leftover funds returned to the council.

Several members were concerned the grant money would be used for general running costs rather than a specific purpose.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe believed the pantomime society should buy the equipment as originally intended, at the reduced price, and if the society wished to spend the rest on something else, they came back to the council with a new application.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said grants had already been dealt with for 2019/20, so she asked whether the society would have to wait until applications opened again for 2020/21.

It was agreed the council could consider the reallocation of funds in the 2019/20 financial year.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to refuse the request from Lyme Regis Pantomime Society to reallocate its minor grant for a purpose other than that stated in the original application, but to allow the pantomime society to provide further details to the council about how leftover funds could be reallocated for further consideration.

19/120/C Lease Extension

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, 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 matters relating to the financial or business affairs of any 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.

19/121/C Exempt Business

The town clerk said DC's request to extend its lease for the ground floor of Guildhall Cottage would not affect the town council's plans to refurbish the office as work was not expected to start until autumn 2020. He said DC had requested an extension until the end of July 2020, but he suggested this could be extended to 6 September 2020, as it would allow the tourist information centre (TIC) to stay open for the school summer holidays.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe was concerned about extending the lease until 6 September 2020 as this was too close to when the refurbishment works were expected to start and he didn't want anything to jeopardise that.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe to approve Dorset Council's request for an extension of its lease on the ground floor of the Guildhall Cottage up until end-July 2020; the conditions of the extension are Dorset Council waive any claim it has for compensation under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, Dorset Council pay rent for the period of the extension, and Dorset Council meets any legal costs the town council incurs in granting an extension.

This motion was not seconded.

Cllr R. Doney said it would be to the town's benefit for the TIC to remain open during the peak season until the beginning of September.

Cllr J. Broom suggested an end date of 31 August 2020 as this would cover most of the peak season and give DC time to vacate the building in good time.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to approve Dorset Council's request for an extension of its lease on the ground floor of the Guildhall Cottage up until 31 August 2020; the conditions of the extension are Dorset Council waive any claim it has for compensation under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, Dorset Council pay rent for the period of the extension, and Dorset Council meets any legal costs the town council incurs in granting an extension.

The town clerk stressed the importance of the confidentiality of this matter due to DC's ongoing negotiations and the involvement of its employees.

The meeting closed at 8.29pm.