



**John Wright
Town Clerk**

Lyme Regis Town Council

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Notice is hereby given of an extraordinary meeting of the **Lyme Regis Town Council** to be held on the Zoom video conferencing facility <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84662733063> on Wednesday 1 July 2020 commencing at 7pm when the following business is proposed to be transacted:

John Wright
Town Clerk
26.06.20

This is a formal council meeting, where the same standards of behaviour as normal are expected and all members are bound by the code of conduct.

This meeting will be recorded and recordings will be held for one year by the town council. If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded.

If you wish to speak, please raise your hand and you will be invited to speak by the chairman, at which point your microphone will be unmuted.

Voting will also take place by show of hands and the chairman will indicate the votes have been noted.

If members have a pecuniary interest, they will be placed in the 'waiting room' where they cannot hear or participate in discussion and voting.

*Members of the public can make representations at the beginning of the meeting in the usual way. **To ensure the smooth running of the meeting, members of the public are asked to provide advance notice and details of the issue they intend to raise.***

If technical issues occur, the meeting may be paused to re-establish a connection. If a technological failure prevents the public from accessing the meeting or the meeting is no longer quorate, the chairman may adjourn the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Public Forum

Twenty minutes will be made available for public comment and response in relation to items on this agenda

Individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each to address the committee

2. Dorset Council Matters

To receive updates from the Dorset Council ward member

3. Apologies for absence

To receive and record any apologies and reasons for absence

4. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that if they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on their register of interests relating to any item on the agenda, they are prevented from participating in any discussion or voting on that matter at the meeting as to do so would amount to a criminal offence. Similarly, if you are or become aware of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter under consideration at this meeting which is not on your register of interests or is in the process of being added to your register you must disclose such interest at this meeting and register it within 28 days.

5. Dispensations

To note the grant of dispensations made by the town clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

6. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24 June 2020 (attached)

7. Re-opening the Town

To allow members to review delegated decisions made by the town clerk, in consultation with the mayor, on holiday accommodation parking permits and chalet and caravan charges, and to allow members to consider the further re-opening of the town council's assets, services and concessions

8. Use of Market Area

To allow members to consider a request from the Lyme Oyster Co. to rent the market area of the Marine Parade Shelters on a regular basis

9. Exempt Business

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe, MBE

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

Officers: M. Green (deputy town clerk), A. Mullins (support services manager), M. Russell, (finance manager) J. Wright (town clerk)

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe read out the protocol for virtual meetings and ensured all participants could hear each other.

19/170/C Public Forum**Mr A. and Mrs J. Robinson (read out by Cllr C. Reynolds)**

Mr and Mrs Robinson said they unreservedly supported the mayor's condemnation of acts of abuse towards second homeowners since 23 March, and also recognised that scenes of crowding in Lyme Regis on 21 March felt to many like a kick in the face by the visiting public, who had been asked to stay away. They said they equally condemned the actions of second homeowners who defied clear government advice to reside in their primary home location by coming to Lyme. Mr and Mrs Robinson said the effects of these actions did a great deal to foster resentment among some local people and had led to an unresolved hiatus in relations between many locals and visitors. They said they noted with concern if such second homes were able to be identified, allowing for a letter of welcome to be put through the doors, why a letter inviting visitors to stay away, or return home, when government guidance was telling them this was a social duty, was not. They felt much local resentment may have been avoided by doing so. They said it appeared Dorset Council (DC) had acted in a balanced way towards all its voters in deterring visitors through the 'lockdown' period. However, they were dismayed that Lyme Regis Town Council had solely acted in support of the pecuniary interests of local business, not always locally owned, and had failed to recognise and address the deep concerns of local residents who did not have a direct pecuniary interest in tourism, but felt that their willingness to welcome people to share the town had been abused. Mr and Mrs Robinson said social media comments regarding 'NIMBYs', 'yocals' and 'inbreds' had been equally unacceptable, in the face of genuine fears of the potential to harm the town's predominantly elderly population and most likely, reflected a deeper understanding of the true nature of the community. They said they recognised the vital importance of the local economy, however, many local residents felt their concerns had been left unaddressed and that pecuniary interests were the only concerns that gained the ear of the town council. Mr and Mrs Robinson said others felt the actions of the town council had left them overly exposed to danger from opening up the town to people mixing from across many communities, with many groups of up to 12 people now being observed on the parade. They asked for an explanation as to why there had been such a disconnect between the actions of Dorset Council, Chris Loder MP, and Robert Buckland QC MP, clearly telling people to stay away, while the town council had opened car parks and toilets to facilitate

visitors. They also asked why the town council had consistently failed to act equitably towards the concerns and interests of the wider voting public, in favour of the often loudly expressed pecuniary interests of a few.

The town clerk said in all its actions, the council had tried to act in line with government advice. He and the mayor had been involved in several video conferences with the local MP, in which they discussed co-ordinating actions. He said he had also had fortnightly meetings with the chief executive of Dorset Council to co-ordinate activities.

The town clerk said the council had tried to balance the competing interests of the local community and local businesses.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe clarified that he had sent his letter to holiday let owners, not second homeowners, distributed via a local letting agency.

S. Miller

S. Miller asked that given the substantial capital expenditure entered into this year by Lyme Regis Town Council, what pressure had that now evidenced with the impact of Covid-19 substantially reducing the council's income streams, not least from car parks. He asked what modelling had been undertaken and mitigation measures put forward to maintain the council's reserves in positive territory and with those models in place. He asked if the council believed it had the capacity to maintain its financial integrity and asked if the council was at risk of becoming insolvent or bust.

The town clerk said it was difficult to do financial forecasting because it was too early and things were changing all the time. He said the current forecast showed a surplus of £67k at the end of the financial year, but this could vary significantly as some of the assumptions needed to be firmed up.

The town clerk said mitigation measures included ceasing all non-contractual expenditure and entering into the furlough scheme for the majority of staff. He said the council had spoken to the local MP and DC about any financial support which may be available but there had been no firm commitments.

The town clerk said members would be having a single-issue discussion within the next two weeks about what the council could do to strengthen its financial position.

19/171/C Dorset Council Matters

There was no report.

19/172/C Apologies for Absence

There were none.

19/173/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr M. Ellis declared a pecuniary interest in any matters relating to the Woodmead Halls as she was an employee.

19/174/C Dispensations

There were none.

19/175/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 19 February 2020

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 19 February 2020 were **ADOPTED**.

19/176/C Planning Committee

Cllr B. Bawden pointed out titles had been dropped before members' names and she had been referred to as 'Mrs'.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10 March 2020 and note the committee's comments made on planning applications since the meeting.

19/177/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 26 February 2020 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/51/HR –Town Clerk's Annual Appraisal

RESOLVED: to approve the town clerk's progression to spinal column point 45 and note the remainder of the report.

19/53/HR – Operations Manager, Spinal Column Point Progression

RESOLVED: to approve the progression of the operations manager to spinal column point 30 from 1 April 2020.

19/55/HR – Staffing Panel Recommendations

RESOLVED: to approve the re-grading of the deputy town clerk to SCP 33-26, with progression to SCP 34 on 1 April 2020, and the Pay Review Panel reconvenes to review the grades of the support services manager and assistant finance manager posts.

19/56/HR – Health and Safety Diploma Training

RESOLVED: not to approve health and safety diploma training for the operations manager.

19/178/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 18 March 2020 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/103/SF – To receive the minutes of the Dorset Council working group meeting on 25 February 2020 and consider the recommendations therein

RESOLVED: to have a survey carried out of the accreted land at Monmouth Beach to establish exactly how much land the town council owned and to get a sense of its value, with a view to leasing the land to Dorset Council at a realistic rent, and the report the findings directly to the council.

RESOLVED: that the town clerk informs Dorset Council the town council intends to take back the harbourmaster's store, and instruct the town clerk to progress discussions on the garage next to Woodmead car park.

RESOLVED: to no longer maintain an interest in the land opposite the Harbour Inn and end the lease with Dorset Council.

19/104/SF – Draft Corporate Plan

RESOLVED: to approve the draft Corporate Plan 2020-25 and delegate any amendments to the final version of the plan to the town clerk, in consultation with the mayor.

19/105/SF – Internal Audit Report, Visits Two and Three 2019-20

RESOLVED: to note the internal auditor's report of visits two and three 2019-20 and approve the management responses.

19/108/SF – VAT and Option to Tax (for VAT)

RESOLVED: to opt to tax (for VAT purposes) all the council's currently non-opted 'commercial' properties.

19/109/SF – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

RESOLVED: to agree:

- To suspend meetings of the Full Council and committees as of 18 March 2020
- To add a statement to the scheme of delegation, giving the town clerk delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such a decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline.
- To temporarily amend financial regulation 3.4 to raise the limit to £150,0000
- To postpone the annual meeting of electors scheduled to take place on 17 April 2020 to a date on or before 1 June 2020
- To cancel the park and ride service until the beginning of the school summer holidays and review in advance
- To defer all capital projects that aren't contractually committed, with the exception of the office refurbishment project, which is progressed to the design and consent stage

19/110/SF – Grant Allocation to Recipients of 'Ammonite' Filming Money

RESOLVED: to approve Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support's use of a beach hut on Marine Parade from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2025 for a rent of £0.00 per annum, and that for the duration of the arrangement the town council maintains the beach hut and Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support allocates the hut.

RESOLVED: to approve the release of a £5,000 grant to Mary Anning Rocks.

19/111/SF – Renewal of Lease for Power Boat Club, Monmouth Beach

RESOLVED: to obtain legal advice about the separation of the leases for the power boat club and instruct an alternative valuer if appropriate.

19/179/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 11 March 2020 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/49/TCP – Green Dog Walker Scheme

RESOLVED: to support the Green Dog Walker Scheme by promoting it on the council's website and social media.

19/50/TCP – Town Signage and Branding

RESOLVED: to replace the 'welcome to Lyme Regis' signs, with the town shield replacing the fossil, the addition of one plastic-free logo, and the addition of twin town Jamestown, and mock-ups should be taken back to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

19/52/TCP – Community Engagement

RESOLVED: that Cllrs D. Sarson, C. Reynolds and B. Bawden work with the administrative officer to develop proposals on community engagement for consideration by this committee on 29 April 2020.

19/180/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Cllr B. Bawden pointed out she was not at the meeting as the minutes suggested.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 4 March 2020 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

19/84/TMH – Water Points

RESOLVED: to install water points on the seafront at the performance area and Marine Parade toilets and to select design 5 (as per the original report) at a cost of £50 per unit.

19/85/TMH – The Provision of RNLI Lifeguards

RESOLVED: to approve a five-year agreement for RNLI lifeguard provision, with annual increases of 2%.

19/86/TMH – Church Railings Replacement

RESOLVED: to accept the quote from CIS Street Furniture for the replacement of the railings to the side of St Michael's Parish Church and for officers to seek further clarification about whether the new railings should include spear tops.

19/87/TMH – Beach Nurdle Trommel

RESOLVED: to allow trommelling with a quad bike and towed trommel on the sandy beach on the weekend mornings of 18/19 April 2020 before 8am.

19/88/TMH – Request from Cancer Research UK

RESOLVED: to support the request from Cancer Research UK to sell draw tickets every weekend from June to September at the Jubilee Pavilion and to charge £15 a weekend.

19/89/TMH – Marine Parade Lift

RESOLVED: to defer a decision on the replacement of the Marine Parade lift until the council has considered the strategic use of the roof and Marine Parade Shelters' rooms before determining what needs to be done to facilitate it.

19/181/C Review of Interim Governance Arrangements

The town clerk said the purpose of the report was for members to think about how they wanted to govern themselves in the immediate future, and to also open discussions about long-term governance arrangements, as several members had expressed a desire to review this. As such, he was proposing a single-issue discussion on 30 June 2020.

Cllr R. Doney said he had concerns about the way the council had been forced to operate during the coronavirus pandemic and he was keen for the council to return as soon as possible to the normal democratic process, using video conferencing instead of physical meetings. He said he had no objection to a single-issue discussion as it was a complex subject and he believed this was an opportunity to examine how the council could run its committees and operations more efficiently. Cllr R. Doney said he also felt there should be elections for the mayor and deputy mayor for this council year.

Several members agreed there should be an election for mayor and deputy mayor to allow a democratic vote.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis suggested fortnightly or monthly virtual council meetings in the immediate future to discuss important issues and so the public could see the members were working.

Several members agreed with regular Full Council meetings as they felt they hadn't been involved in decision-making.

Cllr J. Broom asked if the meetings would be virtual or physical.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said at the moment it would have to be virtual meetings but he didn't think it would be long before physical meetings could take place, perhaps at Woodmead Halls as Cllr G. Turner had previously suggested, when the restrictions

permitted. He believed it was better to wait until the council could physically meet before discussing the committee structure.

Several members disagreed and wanted the discussion to take place sooner rather than later, but there were also concerns about the difficulty in reading information on screen and printed copies were preferred by some.

The town clerk said providing information electronically was the way forward but support could be provided to members who needed it.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said if the council moved to electronic agendas, members needed to be provided with the equipment but the council didn't have the budget for this at the moment.

Members discussed the earlier suggestion to hold elections for mayor and deputy mayor and the town clerk said it would be necessary to hold an annual meeting within the next few weeks to facilitate this. However, he said the council also needed to decide how it wanted to operate over the next few weeks as the delegation arrangements previously put in place had ceased at this meeting.

Cllr B. Bawden asked for a recorded vote on the following motion:

It was proposed by Cllr R. Doney and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis to hold elections for mayor and deputy mayor.

Voted for – Cllr K. Ellis, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr L. Howe, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr R. Doney.

Voted against – Cllr S. Williams, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr B. Larcombe

Abstentions – None

The vote was tied so the mayor used his casting vote and voted against the motion.

The town clerk asked members to consider how decisions would be made in the immediate future and he suggested leaving in place the existing arrangements until more permanent decisions were made about the council's governance arrangements.

Proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members **RESOLVED** to hold monthly council meetings but in between meetings to delegate authority to the town clerk to make decisions in consultation with the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the council and committees.

19/182/C Internal Audit Report, Visit Four 2019-20

The town clerk highlighted the three main areas in which the internal auditor said more work needed to be done: income (debtors), bank reconciliation, and public rights. He said issues with bank reconciliation had been reported to members and this task was now up-to-date in this financial year.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the report showed there had been improvement as the council came to the end of a difficult year.

Cllr M. Ellis queried the dates of the final visit and how the audit was undertaken as it took place during the lockdown.

The town clerk said they were virtual visits and all the information had been supplied to the auditor electronically.

Cllr D. Sarson asked if any progress had been made in getting an audit trail of the website.

The town clerk confirmed all the documents that needed to be made public for the previous financial year were displayed at the correct time and the auditor had confirmed this. However, the requirement for a website audit trail had been introduced after the event and there was currently no built-in audit trail on the website.

The support services manager said discussions were taking place with the website company about putting an audit trail function in place, but it was unlikely this could be done retrospectively.

19/183/C Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2020 and authorise the mayor and town clerk to authorise and sign the document on behalf of the council.

19/184/C Financial Forecast 2020-21

The town clerk said it was difficult to provide a forecast at the moment as assumptions were changing. He said the current forecast showed a surplus of £67k at the end of the financial year, and this would reduce the council's reserve significantly; the council shouldn't allow the reserve to fall below 25% of the projected income. The town clerk said measures needed to be put in place increase the forecast year-end reserve.

The town clerk said there were things the council could do to strengthen its financial position and he proposed a single-issue discussion on 8 July 2020.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council should stop the office refurbishment project for now and only carry out the immediate work required on the window lintel until members had had the opportunity to have a proper discussion about the savings which could be made.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said as an employer, the council had an obligation to its staff to ensure social distancing and the work to the office could be a minimum approach at a reduced cost.

The deputy town clerk said the lintel work had to be done and it made sense to do this work before staff returned to the office, which would cost £2-3,000. He said there was no intention of committing to the refurbishment, for which a total budget of £300k had initially been allocated. He added that an architect had drawn up plans and the invoice for this work was less than 2% of the budget.

Cllr D. Sarson queried why the opening balance on supplier payments was so high and asked if the council benefitted from any income.

The finance manager said supplier costs had reduced because the council had not been operating as normal. It was recognised that as the town begins to re-open and the

council's activities increase, further costs would be incurred. He said expenditure had progressively increased but it was still less than what the council would normally spend.

Cllr R. Doney said as there was a real concern the council could run out of money, members needed to think about the possibility of a public loan. He said the council needed to think about how low it was prepared for the reserves to go before it took out a loan.

Cllr M. Ellis said she felt the council's finances were such an important issue that the discussion should be held before the proposed date of 8 July 2020.

The town clerk said the discussion could be held on 1 July 2020 after the Full Council meeting, which members agreed.

It was agreed an email would be sent to members confirming the dates of meetings within the next fortnight.

Members also discussed the over reliance on income from the tourism industry and how the council needed to think about other income streams.

The meeting closed at 8.51pm.

Committee: Full Council

Date: 1 July 2020

Title: Re-opening the Town

Purpose of Report

To allow members to review delegated decisions made by the town clerk, in consultation with the mayor, on holiday accommodation parking permits and chalet and caravan charges, and to allow members to consider the further re-opening of the town council's assets, services and concessions

Recommendation

- a) Members review delegated decisions made by the town clerk, in consultation with the mayor, on holiday accommodation parking permits and chalet and caravan charges and instruct the town clerk
- b) Members consider the re-opening of the Candles on the Cobb Pavilion toilets, the chalet and caravan park for overnight stays, the amenities' hut, Anning Road and Henry's Way play areas, the council's offices, council meetings, the park and ride, weddings, shelters' bookings, Cart Road beach huts, alfresco seating, beach showers, beach wheelchairs, and beach and seafront concessions for hair braiding, deckchairs, trampolines and children's games and activities

Background

1. On 20 May 2020, members considered a discussion paper on 're-opening' Lyme Regis. This discussion paper considers further 're-opening' of Lyme Regis Town Council's assets, concessions and services.
2. The views expressed by members on 20 May 2020 informed delegated decisions taken by the town clerk, in consultation with the mayor. These decisions were reported to members in the daily update on 21 May 2020, see **appendix 7A**.
3. The daily update on 21 May 2020 also informed members that Dorset Council had confirmed it would re-open Holmbush car park and Monmouth Beach toilets, and Woodmead Halls toilets would re-open on Saturday 23 May.
4. On 18 June 2020, a video conference took place with members to consider those assets and services that remain closed and to form a view on when they should re-open. The intention was views expressed by members would guide the town clerk, in consultation with the mayor, in making further decisions about 're-opening' the town.
5. At that meeting, most members said they wanted the town clerk to arrange a council meeting to consider the paper.
6. However, on the advice of officers, on 18 June 2020, members did express an opinion on one service and one concession; the town bus and the kayak concession.

7. Members agreed the town bus service should be reinstated (officers were negotiating a date of 29 June 2020) and the kayak concession could operate. In each instance, the operator had to demonstrate they were Covid-19 secure.
8. Officers also informed members they had been approached by the foodbank about premises; they believed use of the Hub would be compromised by other users as Covid-19 restrictions were relaxed.
9. The foodbank's use of unit 1a, St Michael's Business Centre was considered, and members indicated the request was rejected; members suggested officers advise the foodbank to approach Lyme Regis Development Trust about the use of its facilities at St Michael's.
10. Large parts of the paper presented to members on 18 June 2020 have been amended in response to the prime minister's announcement on 23 June 2020 and to include delegated decisions made on the town bus service and kayaking concession.

What has changed since 20 May 2020?

11. Since the discussion with members on 20 May 2020, major announcements by government and other bodies have been made which impact on the town.
12. On 25 May 2020, the prime minister announced the country could move to phase two of Covid-19 restrictions and outdoor markets could open on 1 June 2020 and non-essential retail shops could open from 15 June 2020.
13. The RNLI position on providing beach services has moved; from 4 July until 6 September 2020 a lifeguard service will be provided on Lyme Regis' front beach.
14. On 23 June 2020, the prime minister announced pubs, restaurants and hairdressers can open from 4 July 2020, providing they adhere to Covid-19 secure guidelines.
15. In addition, from 4 July 2020, people can stay overnight away from the place they are living. This includes staying overnight in a second home or a holiday home. Outside play areas can also open from 4 July 2020.
16. The prime minister set out where it is not possible to stay two metres apart, guidance will allow people to keep a social distance of one metre plus, i.e., one metre apart, plus mitigations which reduce the risk of transmissions.
17. In addition, Dorset Council has now opened Charmouth Road car park and intends to open the remainder of its toilets in Lyme Regis w/c 29 June 2020.
18. So far, no further decisions have been made on funeral arrangements.
19. Following the canvassing of members' views by email, the majority view was the beach huts could be re-opened if/when the social distancing limit was reduced to one metre.
20. This report asks members to review two of the decisions made on 22 May 2020; holiday accommodation parking permits and chalet and caravan charges.
21. Normally, council decisions cannot be reviewed within six months without a rescission motion, but these are different times and the decisions made were made under delegated authority.

22. The report goes on to consider the remaining town council assets, concessions and services which have remained closed since lockdown was announced by the government on 23 March 2020.

Decisions for review

Holiday accommodation parking permits

23. Member guidance on 20 May 2020 and the subsequent delegated decision was to continue to charge the full price of £670 for holiday accommodation permits for April 2020 to March 2021; members felt accommodation owners would be able to claim a business grant to cover costs such as this. This decision has met with some opposition.
24. The objection is, accommodation owners and managers have not been able to rent out accommodation and therefore cannot make use of the permits.
25. Several owners have decided not to buy a permit this year because there's no discount.
26. Among those to have raised objections is Lyme Bay Holidays.

Chalet and caravan charges

27. Member guidance on 20 May 2020 and the subsequent decision not to allow a rent-free period in respect of the 'closed' chalet and caravan site has generated significant adverse comment and will probably result in income collection issues.
28. The council's offer to extend the period to pay 2020/21 site fees, i.e. to 30 June 2021, is not seen as fair or reasonable given the inability of residents to use the site either at all or, more recently, for overnight accommodation.
29. The residents' argument is, the council closed the site so why are they required to pay a fee for the period the site is closed period?
30. Officers have received emails from over 50 residents on this issue and there's a real possibility the council's decision could be subject to legal challenge.
31. Emails to officers suggest a 25% fee discount for the period residents have been unable to use the chalet and caravan park.
32. If members approve a discount, they may want to impose the following conditions: 2020-21 fees are paid in full by 31 March 2021, the discount will not be applied until any outstanding sums owed by residents are paid and the discount will not be applied retrospectively where debts are settled after 31 March 2021.

Remaining decisions on re-opening the town

33. The re-opening of the following assets, services and concessions is on the condition that, where appropriate, they are 'Covid-19 Secure'.
34. Risk assessments and method statements that demonstrate compliance must be produced by operators.

Candles on the Cobb Pavilion toilets

35. On 22 May 2020, the decision was that these toilets should remain closed; toilet opening was linked to the opening of the Anning Road play area.
36. On 23 June 2020, the government announced play areas can open on 4 July 2020, therefore the toilets can open.
37. The operations supervisor has provisionally arranged for a 'fogging' and deep clean of these toilets for Friday 3 July 2020.

Chalets and caravan park overnight stays

38. On 22 May 2020, the decision was to allow day visits but no overnight stays. Following the prime minister's announcement on 23 June 2020, from 4 July 2020 people can stay overnight away from the place they are living. This includes staying overnight in a second home or a holiday home.
39. Consequently, the chalet and caravan park can fully re-open on 4 July 2020.

Amenities' hut

40. On 22 May 2020, the decision was the council's amenities' services should remain closed.
41. The amenities hut can now open.

Anning Road and Henry's Way play areas

42. On 22 May 2020, the decision was Anning Road and Henry's Way play areas should remain closed.
43. Following the prime minister's announcement on 23 June 2020, play areas can open from 4 July 2020.
44. The operations supervisor will arrange for the area and equipment to be cleaned ahead of opening.

Council offices

45. On 22 May 2020, the decision was the council's offices should remain closed.
46. Non-essential shops can open from 15 June 2020 and keeping the council's offices closed could be perceived as being out of step with what's going on in the town.
47. Officers could draw up and implement plans for opening the council's offices on or around 4 July 2020. Staff occupancy would be limited, i.e., one person to each room, and some working from home would be required. Restricted opening times may be appropriate, and measures would have to be put in place to control public access to the reception area.

Council meetings

48. On 20 May 2020, the town clerk said he was preparing for the council's virtual meeting for 10 June 2020; the date was dependent on completion of the internal auditor's final report for 2019-20.
49. The internal auditor's report and Annual Governance and Accountability Return were received by the town clerk on 15 June 2020 and the virtual full council was re-arranged for 24 June 2020.
50. The agenda included a review of the interim governance arrangements and it was agreed monthly virtual Full Council meetings would be held. A single-item meeting to allow further discussion on governance arrangements has been arranged for 30 June.

Park and ride

51. On 22 May 2020 the decision was the park and ride should remain closed.
52. The main issue is the impact of social distancing on passenger numbers. This, in turn, informs the financial viability of the service. A detailed discussion with the bus operator hasn't take place on the impact of social distancing but officers believe the current two metre distancing requirement would reduce passenger numbers by around 75%.
53. The council underwrites the service, i.e., if the operator's income reduces below its operating cost, £850 per day, the council makes good the difference. To achieve an income of £850 per day, the operators would require passenger numbers significantly in excess of 25% capacity.
54. If the service operated for the school holidays, only, the council's financial exposure would be significant.
55. Officers can discuss this further with the operator and provide a more informed model forecasting loss.

Weddings

56. On 22 May 2020, the decision was to cancel weddings up until 31 May 2020; this has been extended.
57. On 23 June 2020, the prime minister announced weddings and civil partnerships would be allowed to take place from 4 July, with a maximum of 30 guests in attendance. But this applies to churches, only
58. The town council will work with Dorset Council's registration services on future wedding arrangements in the Guildhall.

Shelters' bookings

59. On 22 May 2020, shelters' bookings were cancelled up until end-May 2020. On 25 May 2020, the prime minister announced open air markets could re-open from 1 June 2020. On 27 May 2020, members were informed. On 3 June 2020, a joint statement from the town clerk and mayor clarified the opening of the market area. Traders have been notified and the first market took place on Wednesday 17 June 2020.
60. The council needs to consider if other activities should be allowed in the market and performance areas, and Langmoor and Lister Rooms.

61. Also, whether the beach wheelchairs should be made available for hire.

Cart Road beach huts

62. On 22 May 2020, beach hut bookings on Cart Road were cancelled until end-May; this has been extended. The rationale for not allowing the beach huts to re-open was to maintain social distancing on Cart Road.
63. Members were asked on 22 June 2020 to give a view by email about the re-opening of beach huts beyond 26 June 2020. The majority view was the huts could only be occupied if/when the social distancing limit was reduced to one metre, which was expected to be introduced from 4 July 2020.
64. As the prime minister has set out where it is not possible to stay two metres apart, guidance will allow people to keep a social distance of one metre plus, i.e., one metre apart, plus mitigations which reduce the risk of transmissions, beach huts will re-open from 4 July 2020 in line with members' views.
65. This should also apply to the privately-owned beach huts on Cart Road.
66. The mitigation factors will include restricting sitting and congregating to the beach huts, only, i.e., users cannot sit and congregate on Cart Road.
67. For information, the minimum and maximum distances between the front of beach huts and the edge of Cart Road is 10' and 20').

Alfresco seating

68. On 22 May 2020, the decision was alfresco seating should not be permitted.
69. On 23 June 2020, the prime minister announced pubs and restaurants can open from 4 July 2020, proving they adhere to COVID Secure guidelines; outside seating is key to their ability to trade¹.
70. In some locations tables and chairs make social distancing difficult and a concession should not be granted.
71. To help bars and restaurants to trade, the council could consider the temporary use of its land.

Beach showers

72. The beach showers remain de-commissioned. Members need to consider if they should be brought back into use.

Beach concessions

73. On 22 May 2020, the decision was concessions should not be permitted.

¹ Before agenda dispatch, a phone call was received from Dorset Council informing the town clerk about temporary government amendments to outside seating and the temporary relaxation of planning and licencing requirements. The town clerk will advise the meeting.

74. On 18 June 2020, members indicated they were happy for the kayaking concession to open and this decision has been taken under delegated authority.
75. On 18 June 2020 members indicated they were happy for the kayaking concession to operate.
76. It is now possible to operate all concessions, i.e., deckchairs, trampolines, hair braiding and children's games and activities.
77. The hair braider has contacted the council to ask if her concession could be amended; rather than braid hair, she would like to sell braiding products. In the circumstances, this seems reasonable.

John Wright
Town clerk
June 2020

APPENDIX 7A

- Monmouth Beach/Cabanya car park – re-open (with appropriate signage social distancing measures)
- Woodmead car park – re-open (with appropriate signage social distancing measures)
- Marine Parade toilets – re-open (with appropriate signage social distancing measures)
- Woodmead toilets – re-open
- Candles on the Cobb Pavilion toilets – remain closed
- Beach – remain open (with appropriate signage social distancing measures)
- Chalets and caravans – allow day visits but no overnight stays
- Monmouth Beach and western day huts - allow day visits but no overnight stays
- Marine Parade day huts – remain closed
- Amenities' hut – remain closed
- Skatepark – re-open
- Anning Road and Henry's Way play areas – remain closed
- Council offices – remain closed
- Council meetings – virtual meeting planned for 10 June (TBC)
- Park and ride – remain closed
- Town bus – remain closed
- Weddings – cancelled for May
- Shelters' bookings – cancelled for May
- Beach hut bookings – cancelled for May
- Concessions – not allowed
- Alfresco seating – not allowed
- Benches on seafront – leave in situ
- Cemetery – restrictions on numbers at burials remain in place

Committee: Full Council

Date: 1 July 2020

Title: Use of Market Area

Purpose of Report

To allow members to consider a request from the Lyme Oyster Co. to rent the market area of the Marine Parade Shelters on a regular basis

Recommendation

Members consider the request from the Lyme Oyster Co. to rent the market area of the Marine Parade Shelters on a regular basis

Report

1. The office was contacted by the co-owner of Lyme Oyster Company, trading as Lyme Oyster Co., about the potential use of the market area at the Marine Parade Shelters.
2. Due to the type of business and the request to operate on a regular basis, members are asked to consider the proposal, attached at **appendix 8A**.

John Wright
Town clerk
June 2020

Dear Councillors,

Myself, and business partner Tim Maddams (ex-River Cottage Stores Ltd, renowned chef, restaurateur, writer, journalist) own Lyme Oyster Company, trading as Lyme Oyster Co..

Following conversations with Councillor Reynolds and Kerry Weekley, I'm enclosing a letter outlining some background to our business and our intentions.

I'm a Parish Councillor in Stockland, and live in Dalwood. Devon born and bred, I've been going to Lyme since I was a child. I've owned a holiday rental in Lyme Regis since 2015 in The Gables, my wife and I chose a flat in the former self catering property as we felt it provided some form of continuity in terms of tourism, rather than being lost as a second home. We have welcomed over 250 guests in this time, employed a local cleaning agency, and used local traders for all maintenance and building work.

As part of our marketing, we provide an extensive guide to local eateries and things to do, and I'm a massive fan of what Lyme has to offer in all those respects and beyond. My wife and I run a group of PR agencies in London remotely from East Devon, we work with events (London & Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival, Ministry of Sound), festivals, salons, spas, shopping areas (Embankment and Westminster). We also have a number of friends who run their own businesses in the town and locally, and help promote them when possible.

Tim has lived and worked locally for over ten years, is an old friend of Mark Hix (who has given us his blessing), and many others in the restaurant and food trade in the town. He and I are working together on Lyme Oyster Co. as part of a number of projects, and this is our priority.

We'd now like to make a small contribution to what Lyme has to offer and open a mobile street food stall in the town, as near to the beachfront as possible. We'll be selling solely the best locally farmed oysters with simple dressing options and locally produced soft drinks.

We're currently looking at all available options, and following the above conversations, it appeared that the council run market area on the beachfront could work.

We would like to register our interest in taking a pitch in mid July for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, for 2 weeks – this is all subject to your agreement, and availability. We weren't initially considering fixed/designated days due to the risk of bad weather and cost. We have some other sites in mind, but this would be with a view to making further bookings in August and September if all current situations allow and the business is successful enough.

Please allow me to give you some brief information on us.

In short our business offering is:

- Local
- Nutritious
- Sustainable
- Eco conscious
- Socially responsible

Local

- We are currently seeking experienced local employees via Tim's food industry network in Lyme. We want to employ 2 full-time and 1 part-time staff, ideally who've been affected by the impact of coronavirus on the local hospitality economy.

- We are sourcing our oysters locally. We will also be storing our ice and product at Mark Hix's establishment.

Nutritious -

- Oysters are a fantastically nutritious natural food. They're full of vitamins and minerals that are great for the body. The popularity of oysters never goes away, but in recent years they've enjoyed a renaissance, and are a regular feature on the East and South Coasts. In contrast to many other "street food" offers this is a remarkably healthy choice.

Sustainable

- Sustainability is a word thrown around a lot these days, but oysters, in this case locally farmed Rock Oysters are not only ticking all the short term boxes for sustainability like, low impact, local, plentiful, well managed etc but because of the way that they filter food from the sea water they are actually making a positive impact on the cleanliness of the sea - this is a case of making the sea cleaner and brighter with every oyster eaten. This stacks up as several studies have shown the ensuing disasters caused by the loss of wild oyster beds - eating the oysters is a good thing as this enables the oyster farmer to grow more, meaning that in the three years it takes for the oyster to reach the perfect eating size every single one will have filtered over 200,000 litres of seawater. Farmed rock oysters are also triploid so they don't spread out into the wild habitat and threaten the native oyster population.

Socially responsible

- In addition to employing local people, we will ensure we leave as small a footprint as possible. Our aim is zero waste, though we will use and contribute towards the commercial waste facilities of another business. We use compostable food containers, and the shells can be returned to the seabed to do their next bit for ecological regeneration.

- Our product doesn't compete with an existing business or trader, it also isn't a meal, so we're not taking revenue away from restaurants, pubs and meal-based street food.

- We will make a regular charity donation to the RNLI.

Our set-up will involve the following, some of which will be transported in a van to the site, some stored in Lyme:

- Stainless steel counter with wooden crafted frontage that folds up for ease of travel, and company sign - approximately 3m by 4m
- Gazebo - approximately 4m x 3m
- Product kept on ice and boxes in back (product stored nearby)
- Customer journey left to right and all in accordance with latest covid advice from HMG.
- 2 rustic barrels with umbrellas so people can add extras - ie lemon juice, shallot vinegar, thai spicy dressing, local sauces, Henderson's relish etc.

Food Safety

There are no extraordinary food safety issues with live, fresh oyster consumption within the legal framework of correct monitoring, traceability and temperature recording that we will put in place in accordance with best practice standards.

For clarity: all oysters are UV purified for a minimum of 42 hours, are all supplied with a batch number and a safety certificate. All oyster beds are closed if a problem occurred and regular monitoring is in place to ensure safety. In many respects it is actually safer to eat fresh live oysters than many other foods as they have not been cooked, chilled and reheated which eradicates the possibility for the time required at dangerous temperatures for any pathogens present to breed to sufficiently dangerous levels.

In summary, we both have a wealth of experience in and around this sector. Tim's experience speaks for itself. My agency promoted the first wave of artisan and food markets in London a decade ago, and we've worked on projects under the banner of Westminster and Hackney council (Red Market, Soho Market Dalston Christmas Market, Embankment Summer Market), plus advised on placemaking and how to promote local areas to the benefit of the local community.

We are huge fans of Lyme Regis, and we'd love the opportunity to become a small part of the business community in the town. We would like to discuss our proposition further at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Learmouth & Tim Maddams

Founders Lyme Oyster Co.