

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2022

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe, MBE

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr T. Webb

Officers: A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe read out the town prayer.

21/122/C Public Forum

S. Davies

S. Davies said she wanted to raise two issues; one was from the Full Council meeting on 15 December 2021 but in view of the priority of responding to her second agenda item she would put it in writing to the mayor and Cllr B. Bawden. She also spoke in relation to agenda item 17, LymeForward Grant Agreement and said she was responding on behalf of LymeForward. She said she believed the report misrepresented LymeForward CIC and was misleading. She said she had sent correspondence to councillors detailing meetings that took place on 26 January and 8 February 2022, and her contact with the town council requesting a rental agreement and to discuss the renewal of the 2022-23 agreement, for which she had received a response today from the council. S. Davies said in line with the term grant policy and procedure, their key document was the approved grant application dated 4 February 2020, which specified their objectives, grant funding and other core costs and was approved with no reference to additional objectives or custom and practice. She said for custom and practice to be established it must be known to all parties, expressed in every agreement and continuously applied. Referring to paragraph 5 of the report, she said LymeForward CIC continued to be successful despite the pandemic and had worked tirelessly to secure projects and service grants from other bodies to fund the additional foodbank activities, the school's foodbank programme and IT infrastructure to support to support seven-day working. S. Davies said there had been enormous challenges in their roles as frontline workers, acting as an emergency hub for west Dorset, receiving referrals from Dorset Council, and maintaining access to the foodbank seven days a week. In addition, she said they had expanded their services and significantly increased their activity, providing an emergency school funds programme, homeless service and food distribution centre for the most vulnerable children, families, elderly and senior people. She said activity data had already been circulated to members. S. Davies said they had re-established the Carers' Café and would be restarting the Community Café shortly. She said since the pandemic, the landscape had changed enormously for LymeForward. She referred

to paragraph 11 of the report and the recommendation from the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee on 22 September 2021. She said the wording was unknown and the community engagement strategy was not published until 19 January 2022. Referring to paragraphs 25 and 26 of the report, she said this misrepresented what was said at the meeting as they were asked to set the objectives. Referring to paragraph 27 of the report, she said at no point did they state they were not willing to sign the grant agreement and they never reached that stage. Referring to paragraph 30, S. Davies suggested the council had to satisfy itself on whether LymeForward was fulfilling the terms of its approved grant application. She said a third director had been appointed to LymeForward and the organisation was totally committed to supporting the most vulnerable and was fully engaged in the community.

J. Dover

J. Dover spoke on the same agenda item and said he was here as a member of LymeForward CIC and wanted to know if the organisation would receive its outstanding payment of £2,500 for the 2021-22 grant year, now overdue, and when it would be received because it was critical in terms of LymeForward continuing. He asked why additional conditions had been attached retrospectively to the grant application. He said he had been a member of LymeForward since July 2021 and had attended many meetings before that when the organisation was in its different form and he was also involved in the early days of Lyme Regis Development Trust going back to 2006. J. Dover said he had watched the journey going forward with Lyme Regis Development Trust and latterly with LymeForward when it grew out of a strategic plan document which went forward in 2012. He said he was frustrated as a resident as well as a member of LymeForward CIC – and he was conscious of statements made privately – that there seemed to be two organisations who couldn't work constructively together because in his experience, more with LymeForward particularly in the last six months, there was some tremendous work going on as we came out of the pandemic which he believed complemented the work of the development trust.

P. and K. Benfield (read out by an officer)

P. and K. Benfield said they saw the council was considering its position regarding LymeForward's grant and having read the papers on the agenda, they were concerned there may be confusion over the viability of the foodbank. They said on the application by LymeForward in January 2020, it clearly stated that LymeForward 'ringfences capital and purchase costs of specific projects. This [application] purely reflects the core costs'. P. and K. Benfield said while they were members of LymeForward, they felt reassured that the foodbank was well endowed with funding, certainly at the end of 2019-2020 and they also believed the foodbank attracted donations during the pandemic, including their own, and continued receiving food donations regularly to ensure the service to families in need. They said they understood this support continued today and were pleased to see the foodbank's profile was being raised, especially on social media. However, they said without detail from the LymeForward accounts, there was uncertainty that the foodbank funding had been kept secure and ringfenced. P. and K. Benfield said when members, they repeatedly requested financial breakdowns of LymeForward accounts and specifically to see the foodbank accounts but these requests were

never met. They asked if the council had seen a detailed breakdown of these accounts for the past financial year ending March 2021 and the budget for the current year 2021-2022 to be reassured about the financial future of the foodbank. They said the annual accounts were available but it was the detail which was needed to reveal the viability of LymeForward as a whole and its leading project, the foodbank. P. and K. Benfield said their membership was terminated in December 2020 having been seen to be 'harmful to the interests of the company'. Therefore, they asked that the council should continue its due diligence of LymeForward as a whole to be reassured the foodbank was secure financially. They said the council should not feel pressured to continue with its grant to LymeForward core costs because of concerns over the viability of the foodbank, which offered an important service to the community.

21/123/C Dorset Council Matters

The town clerk said there was no report as Cllr D. Turner had resigned as the Dorset Council ward member on 14 February 2022.

21/124/C Questions from Councillors

Cllr R. Doney

Cllr R. Doney said several meetings ago he asked if mayor's announcements could be re-instated and he asked again if they could.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he would be happy to do that but he felt there was a benefit to all members letting others know what they were doing.

Cllr R. Doney also asked where the council had got to on the community governance review as he couldn't find a substantial contribution from the council to Dorset Council's (DC) consultation.

The town clerk said the council made a submission but it said no amendments were requested as there were constraints on what changes could be made. He said DC had deferred the review but he had received an email this week with a report attached. He undertook to review the report within the next week and write a briefing for members, then formally report to the next cycle of meetings.

21/125/C Apologies for Absence

None.

21/126/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

21/127/C Dispensations

There were none.

21/128/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16 December 2021

Cllr M. Ellis said Cllr C. Reynolds did not propose the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee meeting as she had sent apologies for the meeting and she had not seconded the minutes as she had left the meeting early.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she was shown on the list of members present but she was not at the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, with the above amendments, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16 December 2021 were **ADOPTED**.

21/129/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16 December 2021

Cllr M. Ellis asked if meetings would be back at the Guildhall from the following week.

The town clerk confirmed the Human Resources Committee meeting on 23 February 2022 would take place at the Guildhall.

21/130/C Update Report

There were no updates.

21/131/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 11 January and 8 February 2022 and adopt the recommendation, as follows:

21/64/P – Dorset Local Plan

RESOLVED: to approve the allocation of land for housing (extension of Woodbury Down) as proposed in the draft in the Dorset Local Plan only if all the drainage and slippage issues are resolved and the development provides affordable housing for local people.

21/132/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee held on 26 January 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

21/43/ENV – Additional Committee Members

Cllr M. Ellis asked how many additional members would be allowed to sit on the committee.

The town clerk said he believed it was six but he would check the terms of reference. He said this had been agreed by the council.

RESOLVED: to co-opt Alan Bristow, nominated by Turn Lyme Green/Plastic Free Lyme Regis, to the Environment Committee, with the agreement that in future the procedures of co-opting non-members are tightened up to include a CV of the nominated person.

21/44/ENV – Community Energy Champions

Cllr M. Ellis said she would have liked to see a criteria set for the people chosen to do the training and what they would be expected to do once they had received the training. She said the training had started on 20 January 2022 and the Environment Committee meeting had taken place on 26 January 2022, and asked how it had gone ahead before approval from Full Council. She also asked if the community energy champions would be reporting back to the council about how they were educating people and helping them to reduce their carbon footprint.

Cllr B. Bawden said community energy champions were discussed at the Environment Committee meeting in November 2021 but she couldn't officially ask for the funding at that point because it was yet to be approved by Bridport Town Council. She said the committee had discussed it in principle and agreed five places would be taken on the course if there was take up from the community. She added that the community energy champions would be reporting back to the council on what the training involved.

Cllr M. Ellis asked what would happen if the recommendation was not approved and whether the funding had already been committed.

Cllr B. Bawden said the training for the five people from Lyme Regis would not be able to continue and no payment had been made yet.

RESOLVED: to allocate up to £2,750, i.e. £500 for each person, for up to five people to train as community energy champions and £250 of optional funding for costs.

21/45/ENV – Request for EV Panels on Roof of Chalet at 17 Monmouth Beach

RESOLVED: to defer consideration of the request to install EV Panels on the roof of a chalet at 17 Monmouth Beach to the Town Management and Highways committee.

21/46/ENV – The 'Community Conversation' – Lyme's 2030 Vision

Cllr M. Ellis asked what the council would get out of the £2,000 funding to the Fossil Festival and would it in effect be paying for security, a minibus and free entry to the museum. She said she was concerned about the amount of money that would be paid to Lyme Regis Development Trust (LRDT) to carry out the project and felt the trust shouldn't be controlling the budget; she felt it would be better for the council to directly employ someone to do the work. She also felt there was an overlap with the work being done by the community energy champions. Cllr M. Ellis also asked what

the Royal College of Art (RCA) was getting out of the project and why local schools were not being asked to do art work.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the RCA's involvement was from an environmental perspective.

Cllr B. Bawden said the council had agreed a budget of £75,000 over the next three years for work in the community to transition to a zero carbon economy and the funding to LRDT would come from that budget. She said the Community Conversation was widening the scope of the consultation already carried out as part of the Future Town project to enable as many people as possible to say how they would like the town to be in a non-fossil fuel future. Cllr B. Bawden said she was requesting a large proportion of the budget up front to secure the RCA's continued involvement because when the projects started to be identified through the consultation, the stakeholders would be able to provide advice on delivering the projects.

The town clerk said before any work was awarded, it would need to comply with the council's financial regulations which would mean obtaining three quotes. He said there might be a preference to use LRDT but he didn't think that could be taken as any form of guarantee.

Cllr B. Bawden said the £2,000 for the Fossil Festival had been suggested because one of the community conversations was going to take place at the festival so the aim was to make the event as open and accessible to the public as possible by giving free entry to the museum, to Lyme Regis residents at least.

The town clerk said the council had a process for awarding grants to local organisations and it would be legitimate for the museum or another organisation to apply for a community grant. He asked members to consider whether giving a grant to the Fossil Festival from the allocated environmental budget was the appropriate mechanism to support the organisation or whether it should be done in competition with other organisations through the grants' process.

Cllr M. Ellis said she had serious concerns about the Environment Committee going above its remit. She felt a grant application should be submitted, as providing money to allow the museum to open for free would lead other organisations in the town to make the same request.

Original motion: to approach Lyme Regis Development Trust requesting a budget programme for the Community Conversation – Lyme's 2030 Vision project before the council gives funding of £10,000 in 2022-23 from the budgeted climate and environmental funding, followed by £5,000 in 2023-24 and 2024-25, as guidance; and to approve funding of £2,000 to the Fossil Festival for 2022, only from the budgeted climate and environmental funding to encourage increased resident participation in both the 2030 Vision 'Community Conversation' and the other festival events.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds that organisations will be invited to tender to carry out the Community Conversation – Lyme's 2030

Vision project and any contract award must be awarded in line with the council's standing orders and financial regulations; to allocate funding of £10,000 in 2022-23 from the budgeted climate and environmental funding, followed by £5,000 in 2023-24 and 2024-25, as guidance.

This motion was not carried.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe that organisations will be invited to tender to carry out the Community Conversation – Lyme's 2030 Vision project and any contract award must be awarded in line with the council's standing orders and financial regulations; to allocate funding of £10,000 in 2022-23 from the budgeted climate and environmental funding, followed by £5,000 in 2023-24 and 2024-25, as guidance; and to approve funding of £2,000 to the Fossil Festival for 2022, only from the budgeted climate and environmental funding to encourage increased resident participation in both the 2030 Vision 'Community Conversation' and the other festival events.

This motion was not seconded.

As there was no alternative motion, it was clarified that the original recommendation from the committee would stand.

However, the town clerk said as responsible finance officer he couldn't let the council hand an organisation money without getting three quotes.

Members asked to hear Cllr B. Larcombe's proposition again but there was still no seconder. As such, it was agreed to refer the item back to the committee for further consideration.

21/133/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 9 February 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

21/49/HR – Health and Safety Policy Review

RESOLVED: to approve the updated health and safety policy and to include in the policy that external works' staff are provided with an appropriate eyesight test if they request one.

21/50/HR – Review of Employee Handbook – Part 2

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed amendments to the staff handbook up to page 79.

21/51/HR – Member Allowances

RESOLVED: to approve a basic members' allowance and the duties for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances, as detailed below:

- payment of basic members allowances at level 3
- mileage allowances in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs Mileage Allowance Payments (MAPs), paragraph 19
- the reimbursement of the standard or actual fare for travel on public transport, paragraph 19
- the payment of parking fees at the amount incurred, paragraph 19
- subsistence allowances on reimbursement of receipted expenditure within the maximum limits set out in paragraph 20
- room only subsistence for overnight absence, other than London, should be £85.92 incl. VAT or £112.96 incl. VAT in London

the implementation of these allowances is from 1 April 2022, they are reviewed annually and displayed on the council's website.

21/55/HR – Postholder 218, Six-Month Probation Report

RESOLVED: to approve postholder 218's continued employment with the council.

21/134/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 2 February 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

21/58/SF – Membership Packages for Tourism Microsite

RESOLVED: to approve the membership package prices for the tourism microsite for 2022-23 as follows, with a 70/30 split in Visit Dorset's favour:

Accommodation or Things to do (Attraction or Activity)

Level	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Lyme Regis Annual rate	£110	£175	£290	£530
Combined package same level 20% percentage discount	20% £58 = £232 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £82 = £328 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £134 = £536 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £242 = £968 or 10% off each level if different levels requested

Shopping, Food & Drink, Transport (possibly featured event in future)

	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Gold+
Lyme Regis	£50	£80	£160	Price dependent on location of highlight
Combined package 20% percentage discount	20% £24 = £96 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £38 = £152 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £76 = £304 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	NA

21/59/SF – Electric Vehicle Charging Structure

RESOLVED: that the following charges should apply in all town council electric vehicle charging parking bays:

- Pay to park at the normal rate in the parking bay
- Pay for the electricity used to charge the vehicle at cost, plus 10p per kWh.

21/61/SF – List of Payments

RESOLVED: to approve the schedule of payments for November and December 2021 for the sum of £221,575.04 and £141,291.16, respectively.

21/63/SF – Park and Ride 2022

RESOLVED to:

- a) to approve the appointment of First Group as the operator for the 2022 park and ride service and subject to recommendation e) below, it operates to the indicative timetable and frequency provided by the operator, at a cost for three buses of £1,045 per day and incorporating the fare tariff set out below:
- Adult single - £2
 - Adult return - £3.50
 - Child single - £1.50
 - Child return - £2.50
 - Group (up to 5 people) - £8.00
 - Concessionary passes accepted
- b) Members approve the operation of the 2022 park and ride service on the following dates:

Lyme Regis

- 9 April to 24 April inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover Easter and school half-term
- 30 April to 2 May to cover Fossil Festival and bank holiday
- 28 May to 5 June inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover school half term and Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- All other June and July **weekends** from 11/12 June to 16/17 July inclusive
- 23 July to 4 September inclusive, i.e., the entire school holiday period (every day, including weekdays)
- Weekend of 11/12 September to cover Food Rocks (provisional date)

Charmouth (subject to recommendation e))

- As for Lyme Regis with the exception of the Food Rocks weekend
- c) Members approve the deployment of the same AA advanced signage as used in 2021 at an estimated total cost of approximately £800 + VAT.
- d) Members approve the renewal of the licence for the use of the privately- owned park and ride site at Charmouth Road at an annual licence fee for 2022 of £9,545.90.
- e) Subject to it being at no cost to this council, members authorise the town clerk, in consultation with the chairman of this committee and the chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee, to agree the precise basis of any agreement with Charmouth Parish Council about the running of a third bus to that town or to any private holiday parks en route and wishing to be served by the park and ride service.

21/135/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 19 January 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

21/52/TCP – Review of Social Media Policy

RESOLVED: to approve the amended social media policy.

21/56/TCP – Seafront WiFi

RESOLVED: to agree to monitor the line speeds and levels of public usage of the seafront wifi over the period to 31 May 2022 and to then consider the matter further in light of that information.

21/57/TCP – Seagull Control

RESOLVED: to instruct officers to obtain quotes for seagull proof waste bins and to report back to the Town Management and Highways Committee.

21/61/TCP – Seafront and Beach Concessions

RESOLVED: to approve the seafront and beach concessions' policy with an amendment to the numbering as there are two section 3s.

RESOLVED: to award the hair braiding and henna tattooing concession to Bridie Appleby-Gunnill for 2022-24.

RESOLVED: to award the arts and crafts concession to Dan Patterson for 2022-24.

RESOLVED: to award the non-motorised watersports concession to Lyme Kayak Hire for 2022-24.

RESOLVED: to award the non-motorised watersports concession to Boylo's Watersports for 2022-24.

RESOLVED: to award the fitness and exercise concession to Phillipa Scammell (Maitri Yoga) for 2022-24.

RESOLVED: that subject to the operators of the mobile sauna being willing or able to change the energy source away from wood burning to a suitable non-carbon generating alternative, officers are instructed to carry out further discussions with them about potential locations to site the sauna around the area of the accreted land.

21/136/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 12 January 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

21/53/TMH – Kitchen Garden

RESOLVED: to give Lyme Garden Growers six months to bring the kitchen garden in Langmoor Gardens up to an appropriate standard, with a review in three months.

21/54/TMH – Guildhall Blue Plaque

RESOLVED: to leave the Guildhall Blue Plaque as it is.

21/56/TMH – Improvements to Town Bus Service and Possible External Funding Opportunity

RESOLVED: to agree to submit an expression of interest to the 'Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund' as a means of supporting improvements to the town bus service and other linking services; to constitute a working group to assist the deputy town clerk in completing the submission by the deadline of 28 January 2022; and to appoint Cllrs Bawden, Aldridge and Reynolds to the working group.

21/137/C Appointments to External Bodies

Cllr M. Ellis left the meeting at 8.11pm.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr B. Larcombe as the councillor representative to Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride Service.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr J. Broom as the substitute councillor representative to the Lyme Regis Harbour Consultative Group.

Cllr M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 8.13pm.

21/138/C LymeForward Grant Agreement

The town clerk said the council and LymeForward were at a stalemate in terms of the grant agreement. He said he believed he was working to the council's instructions to include in the grant agreement a requirement for LymeForward to carry out community engagement work on behalf of the council but LymeForward had made it clear it had no intention of doing this.

Cllr M. Ellis said she attended the meetings with LymeForward as the council's representative and felt the report did not reflect what had taken place at those meetings. She said LymeForward had not said it would not help with community engagement but had asked for clarification of what it would involve as it couldn't commit to something it couldn't afford as any grants that were secured were ring-fenced for specific purposes. Cllr M. Ellis said when the council agreed the grant, there was no criteria set for LymeForward to carry out community engagement work and there were other organisations carrying out this function which also received funding from the council.

Cllr T. Webb and Cllr C. Reynolds spoke about how the council should be supporting the foodbank, which is run by LymeForward, as the numbers using the service were growing and the situation was likely to get worse due to rising energy prices and inflation. They felt the council would be letting the community down if it withdrew its funding to LymeForward.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said no one was disputing the value of the foodbank. He asked the town clerk how confident the council could be that the service would continue if the council decided not to continue grant funding LymeForward.

The town clerk said if the council withheld the grant, the council would be obligated to step in and work with other organisations to provide the service. However, he stressed this was not where the situation was at the moment.

Cllr J. Broom felt running the foodbank fulfilled LymeForward's community engagement requirement as people in need used the service.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said many concerns had been raised with the council about the visibility of LymeForward but this remained an issue for the organisation's members; the council's principle concern was that it needed visibility in the way the grant was spent. As such, he asked the town clerk how the current situation may be viewed by the auditor.

The town clerk said the chairman of LymeForward said they would only make available financial information that related to the council's grant and core activity, whereas every other organisation the council grant funded was open about their accounts. He said the council funded LymeForward whose objects were principally about community engagement, but the organisation was now moving away from those objects.

The town clerk gave examples of community engagement functions LymeForward was now moving away from, including disseminating information about grants to other local organisations. He said the organisation was moving towards primarily running the foodbank and some other activities, such as the carers' café, but it no longer had a chief executive officer (CEO) and this role had been replaced with a publicity co-ordinator and a foodbank co-ordinator, therefore who was going to carry out the community engagement activity?

The town clerk said he believed the auditor would be concerned if the council was grant funding an organisation and it was not delivering its stated objectives.

Cllr G. Stammers said if the council withdrew the grant and took on the running of the foodbank or asked another organisation to do this, it had a responsibility to make sure no one fell through the net. She asked if the council had a strategy for dealing with vulnerable people as any uncertainty over the foodbank would cause anxiety for people who were already in a difficult position.

Cllr C. Aldridge said in LymeForward's original grant application, the funding was to support a raft of community engagement projects, one of which was the foodbank, and the money was largely for staffing and core costs. She said at the time of the application, the foodbank didn't have any staffing costs because it was run entirely by volunteers and it had a healthy pot of ring-fenced money. Cllr C. Aldridge said LymeForward's accounts for the last financial year showed a turnover of £57,000 and a payment of over £4,300 to one of the directors to write policies, which was nearly half of the council's grant.

Cllr T. Webb left the meeting at 8.37pm.

Cllr C. Aldridge said she was concerned about how LymeForward was managing its money as it appeared the foodbank was now short of cash, even though people were making donations, and if this was the case, the council needed to step in to ensure the money was being spent on the people who needed it.

Cllr D. Sarson asked for clarification over whether the grant funding was needed for the foodbank or core costs as there seemed to be some contradiction.

Cllr M. Ellis said the funding was for core costs to run the foodbank and other services such as the carers' café. She said she didn't agree that LymeForward should be informing other organisations in the town about available grants as it wasn't its job. She said a LymeForward director was paid to write policies as it would have cost more to ask someone externally to do this.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he felt LymeForward should let other organisations know about available grants, rather than holding the information for its own interests.

The town clerk confirmed LymeForward's articles of association included an object to work with others on funding bids and it seemed appropriate for larger organisations in the town to work with smaller organisations to bring funding into the community.

Cllr C. Reynolds said this function was probably relevant before Covid but as organisations had evolved, they were all going to be bidding for the same funding and the information was there for everybody to find for themselves.

Cllr B. Bawden said LymeForward was the organisation designated to not only disseminate information about grants but also help other groups make the applications as it was a skill to write applications, all of which was expected as part of its community engagement.

Cllr R. Doney said it was entirely wrong that the members put pressure on the officers to carry out their instructions. He said whatever the decision the council came to, the role of the town clerk was to comply with the rules and the town clerk must tell members if things weren't quite right with the organisation as this was his job as responsible finance officer.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said grants were at the council's discretion and were all about the relationship it could foster with the recipient in future. He asked the town clerk if all other grant recipients had signed their grant agreements.

The town clerk confirmed all other grant agreements had been signed and there had been no issues or conflict with any other organisation in receipt of grant funding.

Cllr D. Ruffle said if the funding was withdrawn and one person in the town suffered due to the impact on the foodbank, he would not be comfortable with this.

Cllr M. Ellis felt the council should not have included such a broad objective in the grant agreement, as the onus was then put on the town clerk and LymeForward. She said it was also the council's fault that grant agreements were not written and issued during Covid.

The town clerk said a draft grant agreement was presented to members before Covid, discussions did take place during the pandemic and members agreed that as organisations couldn't act in accordance with their grant applications, the council should continue funding but review the situation every six months.

The town clerk said during discussions with LymeForward he had tried to stay true to what the council's instructions but he had made a plea to LymeForward to try and agree a way forward that was mutually beneficial and would not jeopardise its grant funding.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds to remove from the LymeForward grant agreement the objective 'to work with the town council to deliver its community engagement strategy'.

However, the support services manager said as the resolution had been passed on 29 September 2021, i.e. less than six months ago, it would require a rescission motion to change the resolution.

Cllr C. Aldridge said although everyone seemed to agree the key service that needed support was the foodbank, LymeForward seemed to have moved so far away from

its original application. She said if there was a proposal for a rescue package for the foodbank because it didn't have enough money, that was a different discussion and this was where the council's money should go.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he found it difficult to continue to pay a grant without a grant agreement in place. He said payment was conditional on the grant agreement and the council had made attempts to get the agreement signed over a long period.

Cllr J. Broom said the grant agreement stated disputes could be resolved via arbitration. However, the support services manager said as there was no grant agreement in place, this option was not open to the council.

Cllr M. Ellis requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members **RESOLVED** that in the absence of a grant agreement, the council can no longer pay a grant to LymeForward.

Voted for – Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr B. Larcombe

Voted against – Cllr J. Broom, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr D. Ruffle

Abstentions – Cllr G. Stammers

Cllr M. Ellis left the meeting at 9.19pm.

Cllr C. Reynolds left the meeting at 9.20pm.

21/139/C Renewal of the Council's Phone Contract

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, 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 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.

21/140/C Exempt Business

a) Renewal of the Council's Phone Contract

Cllr J. Broom asked if the contract included mobile phones as he felt it would be better than having lots of separate mobile phone contracts.

The town clerk said the council had very low-cost mobile phone contracts at the moment and officers didn't think they could be provided for less. However, officers

could have discussions with the chosen phone provider about whether they could provide a better all-round deal.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to to grant a new five-year contract for the provision of telephony and associated services for the council to SW Comms Ltd on the detailed terms set out in their proposal, with hardware cost paid for 'up front' and for the period 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2027 unless previously determined, and to discuss with the provider whether they could provide mobile phones at a lower cost than the council was already paying.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.