

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2022

#### Present

**Chairman:** The Mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe, MBE

**Councillors:** 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.

#### 21/146/C Public Forum

##### K. Gollop

K. Gollop said he was speaking on behalf of the Lyme people who read the council's regular newsletter in the local free newspaper and said they truly appreciated it and they read and discussed it. He said the council believed a quarterly newsletter would be preferred instead of the newspaper column and he asked where the council got that information from and whether it had done any consultation. He said it would cost more to produce a quarterly newsletter and relying on volunteers to deliver it was unreliable. K. Gollop said at the moment, the council didn't have a very good reputation, with lots of arguments, it couldn't get any members to join and was finding it difficult to recruit staff, so it needed all the publicity it could get and a regular newspaper column could do this. He said the council had control over what it put in the column, publicised all the good things it did, and could have profiles on councillors and staff. He said most of the residents knew nothing of the workings of the council and even less about its members and a regular newspaper column could do this on a regular and updated basis, whereas a quarterly newsletter was easily forgotten due to the length of time between issues. K. Gollop said the column cost nothing compared to the council income, it was equivalent to a few car parking spaces and this council was one of the richest parish councils in England. He said the recommendation to replace the column with a newsletter came from a committee where half of the members were absent and the vote was on a 3/2 basis. He asked the council to continue with the newspaper column to show it was an open and informative body, not a secretive society governed by a few.

##### J. Edmonds

J. Edmonds said she lived in a property on North Avenue, leased from Magna Housing Association. She said she was sad to say Lyme Regis had a serious problem with neighbourhood antisocial behaviour (ASB) and it was destroying lives. She said she had been a victim of ASB since July 2020 and it became so bad, she felt sick going to and from her home. She heard every noise, door slam, she had terrible

things said to her, culminating in an event which was currently being investigated by the police. J. Edmonds said Magna was ignoring reports of ASB from herself and others and while they said they took it very seriously in their published policies and procedures, they did not follow them and had in fact apologised to her for not following them. She said it had got so bad she had been forced to leave her home, another resident in the same block had moved out to stay with friends because of constant noise, intimidation and harassment and despite seeing evidence of the ill-health he had suffered as a result, Magna had done nothing to help him. J. Edmonds said she recently put out a Facebook post asking for people's experiences of how Magna had dealt with ASB and the response was horrifying. She said people had told her housing officers had accused people of being over-sensitive and questioned why people would be upset at being caused offensive names, that dealing with Magna was like dealing with a brick wall, they didn't reply to emails but if they did, it was at 4.30pm on a Friday. She said Magna had said if they were to kick people out, they would only have to re-house them anyway so it was a pointless exercise. She said Magna had told people not to record others as it was a grey area. J. Edmonds said when complaints had been made to Magna about drug use by their tenants, they had taken no action and refused to come out and speak to residents. She said they would prefer to move the victims rather than the perpetrators so innocent people had been made to leave their homes to get away from drug addicts, criminals and harassers. She said the flats were not fit-for-purpose and she could hear her neighbours in very personal terms. She said several people were suffering from depression and anxiety as a result. J. Edmonds said she had asked the MP Chris Loder to get involved and he was trying to set up a meeting with Magna but his emails were also going unanswered. She said the residents needed the town council's support and influence in tackling Magna in getting them to fulfil their responsibility to protect residents. She said she had been contacted by 15 households by one Facebook post. She said ASB was destroying lives in Lyme Regis and she asked the council for support.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he was sorry J. Edmonds had had to bring this kind of report to the council and it was aware of ASB in other parts of the town. He said the council had raised this with the Police and Crime Commissioner, who said this was one of his principal areas of focus, so the council could continue to have that dialogue with him. However, he said the issues raised by J. Edmonds were principally between Dorset Council and Magna but it was worrying so the town council would look into it and see what it could do.

#### **S. Davies (read out by an officer)**

S. Davies spoke in relation to agenda item 18, Unit 1A Rental Proposal. She said prior to April 2021, she referred to minute number 19/59/TMH when it was agreed to renew the lease of Unit 1A for a seven-year period and it was noted the use by other organisations was low, several members felt it was not advertised well enough and should be improved. She said LymeForward rented the suite of rooms from 1 April 2021 and subsequently asked to review the rental agreement on 18 January and 4 February 2022. S. Davies said on 11 March 2022, they were advised by the deputy town clerk that Lyme Regis Development Trust's (LRDT) board of trustees had not agreed to an extension and had set the final date at 31 May 2022 for LymeForward to vacate the unit, essentially giving them two months to find other accommodation. She said LRDT's board of trustees ran a company with a value of over £1million and

LRDT received £50,000 in grant funding over five years from the council. She said a report to the Charity Commission said LRDT served to promote general charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of Lyme Regis and surrounding areas. S Davies said LymeForward needed to know the reasons given by LRDT to evict them within such a short timeframe and why it had taken such a protracted period to come to this decision. She said it appeared Unit 1A was considered a community resource, the town council fronted the lease, but LRDT had all the say who occupied Unit 1A. She asked what safeguards were in place to manage any serious conflicts of interest in terms of disadvantaging organisations that sought to rent out the premises. S. Davies said the foodbank had never been in more demand; it was dedicated to improving the lives of residents in-and-around Lyme Regis by providing emergency support in times of need. She said there were no other suitable facilities available to them at this short notice and their eviction would have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of families and children who used the foodbank. She said they were asking for a six-month grace period at the very least, bearing in mind the way in which the matter had been handled by the council and LRDT over the past year.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said some of these questions would be better directed to LRDT by LymeForward.

The town clerk said the council was not the freeholder of Unit 1A, LRDT was, and it was LRDT's decision who occupied it. He said LRDT had stated its reasons for LymeForward to vacate the unit and if LymeForward wanted to have a dialogue, it needed to be with LRDT. He added that since the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting, LRDT had extended the time in which LymeForward had to vacate the unit to 31 July 2022.

#### **21/145/C Dorset Council Matters**

There was no report as there was no Dorset Council ward member in office.

#### **21/146/C Questions from Councillors**

##### **Cllr R. Smith**

Cllr R. Smith asked if the council could do anything to facilitate more hybrid or virtual meetings as he had had to miss a meeting recently due to a Covid test and there was a lot more concern as cases were rising, which could mean members were excluded from democratic decisions.

The town clerk said through the various local government associations, the council had lobbied the government about changing the position on virtual meetings but the government had said it couldn't find Parliamentary time to change the legislation. He said some councils, including one in Dorset, had continued to hold virtual meetings but they were now coming under challenge as it didn't comply with the legislation.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the legislation surrounding council meetings was in the 1972 Local Government Act, long before IT facilities, and if the government did find parliamentary time, it would take some time to enact any changes. He said any

legislation would also have to define in real terms how virtual or hybrid meetings would work.

The town clerk added that officers could join meetings virtually because they didn't vote but members had to be present in order to vote.

Cllr J. Broom confirmed the National Association of Local Councils was pursuing this issue.

**21/147/C Apologies for Absence**

None, but it was noted Cllr C. Aldridge was expected to arrive late.

**21/148/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

**21/149/C Dispensations**

There were none.

**21/150/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16 February 2022**

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16 February 2022 were **ADOPTED**.

**21/151/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 30 March 2022**

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 30 March 2022 were **ADOPTED**.

**21/152/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16 February 2022 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 30 March 2022**

Members noted the report.

**21/153/C Update Report**

There were no updates.

**21/154/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 8 March 2022.

## **21/155/C Environment Committee**

Proposed by Cllr B. Bawden and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee held on 16 March 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

### **21/59/ENV – Lyme 2030 Vision Community Conversation update and presentation**

**RESOLVED:** that Cllrs R. Smith and B. Bawden work with the town clerk to produce a project plan for the Lyme 2030 Vision - Community Conversation, to comply with the council's standing orders and financial regulations, and to report back directly to the Full Council on 6 April 2022.

## **21/156/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 23 February 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

### **21/67/HR – Deputy Town Clerk, Spinal Column Point Progression**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the deputy town clerk's progression to spinal column point 36 on 1 April 2022.

### **21/68/HR – Support Services Manager, Spinal Column Point Progression**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the support services manager's progression to spinal column point 26 on 1 April 2022.

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the extraordinary Human Resources Committee held on 15 March 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

### **21/77/HR – Staffing and Recruitment**

**RESOLVED:** to approve changes to the staffing structure to replace the current senior administrative assistant post with two part-time posts at three days a week, to incorporate community engagement work and a re-focus on more IT-based skills, based on the amended job descriptions and person specifications.

## **21/157/C Strategy and Finance Committee**

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 23 March 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

### **21/72/SF – The Annual Review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the amended Communications/PR Policy and Procedure, including changes to section 7 if a recommendation from the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee relating to the production of a quarterly newsletter is approved by the Full Council.

### **21/73/SF – Internal Audit Report, Visit Two 2021-22**

**RESOLVED:** to note the internal auditor's report for visit two of 2021-22 and approve the management responses.

### **21/74/SF – Community Governance Review**

**RESOLVED:** to note the changes to Dorset Council's community governance review process and the public response to the first phase of the consultation process; support Dorset Council's draft recommendations relating to Lyme Regis Town Council; and instruct the town clerk to complete the online survey accordingly.

### **21/75/SF – Budget Performance, 1 April – 28 February 2022 and year-end forecast**

**RESOLVED:** to note the performance against budget from 1 April to 28 February 2022 and of the forecast year-end position at 31 March 2022

### **21/76/SF – Support for Ukraine**

**RESOLVED:** to give a donation of £2,500 to the British Red Cross for Ukraine, and to show solidarity by approving the following:

- flying the Ukrainian flag
- lighting up buildings in blue and yellow
- holding vigils or moments of silence including at council meetings
- passing motions and statements of support and solidarity
- making council and community buildings available for donation of items
- signposting information on charities and aid agencies.

### **21/77/SF – Use of the Jubilee Pavilion**

**RESOLVED:** to allow Garry Sutherland to extend the indoor rowing club's use of the Jubilee Pavilion on a month-by-month basis until work is carried out on the building to resolve water ingress issues and to delegate agreement of any ongoing extensions to the town clerk.

### **21/80/SF – List of Payments**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the schedule of payments for January and February 2022 for the sums of £107,329.53 and £164,606.13, respectively.

## **21/82/SF – Unit 1A Rental Proposal**

**RESOLVED:** that the council would be willing to extend LymeForward's occupation of Unit 1A until 30 September 2022 under the existing arrangements and that Cllr C. Reynolds is delegated to negotiate with the trustees of Lyme Regis Development Trust to agree the extension.

## **21/158/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee**

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 2 March 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

### **21/70/TCP – Quarterly Newsletter**

**ORIGINAL MOTION:** to produce a quarterly newsletter to be delivered to every home instead of the monthly newspaper column; to nominate Cllr D. Ruffle and Cllr C. Reynolds, plus one other member to be identified at the Full Council meeting, to sit on a working group to help develop both the newsletter and co-ordinate its delivery; and to agree to provide items of interest to the working group which may be included in the newsletter.

Cllr B. Bawden said she endorsed everything K. Gollop said in the public forum and didn't think it was acceptable that only three people had voted on such a key decision.

Cllr C. Reynolds said the information was incorrect; it was not voted by three people, it was a unanimous decision by those present.

Cllr B. Bawden felt the column should continue in Lyme Online but said she didn't disagree with having a quarterly newsletter in addition to this. She said the column was an opportunity to present all the good things the council was doing, lots of people read it and the newspaper was delivered to homes. She added it was important to support the local newspaper as a lot of towns didn't have an independent newspaper.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Bawden to continue with the monthly column in Lyme Online.

This motion was not seconded.

Cllr C. Reynolds said the newspaper was no longer delivered to homes. She said the newsletter needed further investigation, including how much it would cost and what kind of information would go in it, which was what the committee agreed to do.

The support services manager said it would be difficult to manage the workload of both a monthly newspaper column and a quarterly newsletter, especially as she was not receiving the support from members which had previously been promised.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council had just agreed to employ two new members of staff to help with community engagement so they could help with the column and newsletter. She said she had been approached by residents who didn't realise the council's

newspaper column was written by the council and questioning why they didn't receive a newsletter, but if members felt both were needed, that was the way the council should go.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe agreed a newsletter and column could be run in tandem and they could also be published digitally online. He said if people didn't realise it was the council's column, perhaps there could be a banner on the page to state this. He added that a quarterly newsletter was a bit slow in publicising the reactive stories the council wanted to promote.

The support services manager said press releases could continue to be issued to promote news stories in between editions of the column or the newsletter.

Cllr C. Reynolds said one of the main problems with the column was members were asked to provide the support services manager with items to include but this wasn't happening.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said if there was a newsletter, members would still be expected to contribute, so it wasn't about the vehicle, it was about the contribution.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had contributed ideas for the column.

Cllr T. Webb said not everyone had a computer and would be able to access an online version of the newsletter or column. She suggested F. Evans from Lyme Online could be asked to give her opinion.

F. Evans said there was already a banner on the page to state it was the council's column and the newspaper was distributed to some households.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis to produce a quarterly newsletter to be delivered to every home instead of the monthly newspaper column; to nominate Cllr D. Ruffle and Cllr C. Reynolds, plus one other member to be identified at the Full Council meeting, to sit on a working group to help develop both the newsletter and co-ordinate its delivery; and to agree to provide items of interest to the working group which may be included in the newsletter, and to also continue producing the monthly newspaper column.

This motion was not seconded.

Cllr G. Stammers said she felt the support services manager needed the help of the two new members of staff in the community engagement roles if she was to potentially produce both a newsletter and a column, but as they were not yet in post, she suggested a decision was deferred until after they were in post.

**SUBSTANTIVE MOTION:** Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr T. Webb, members **RESOLVED** to defer a decision on the newspaper column and quarterly newsletter until the new community engagement staff are in post.



## **21/71/TCP – Publicity Group**

Cllr B. Bawden said she didn't think the publicity group should be disbanded and she had attended meetings and made herself available when requested.

The town clerk said there was a sense of frustration from officers when trying to arrange meetings and although Cllr B. Bawden generally made herself available for meetings, there was no real contribution from members. He said the support services manager felt everything was falling on her shoulders and she was putting the newspaper column together herself with support from other managers.

The town clerk said for whatever reason, the publicity group wasn't working and the last thing he wanted to see was a commitment to continue with it and it still didn't work.

Cllr M. Ellis asked who was in the publicity group.

The support services manager said Cllrs B. Larcombe and B. Bawden were in the group, along with herself and the town clerk.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the publicity group was affected by Covid but maybe the emphasis shouldn't be on the regularity of the meeting but more on the intended substance of anything that would be included in the column.

Cllr B. Bawden suggested members could be reminded a meeting of the publicity group was going to take place so they could be asked for their contributions.

The town clerk said there was no reason officers couldn't schedule meetings a year ahead as they had done in the past because it would tie in with the column. However, he stressed there were deadlines to work to because it was not fair on the support services manager to put the column together and to have to wait for items to arrive which hold up the production run. He said if there was going to be contribution from members, it had to be active contribution.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Bawden and seconded by Cllr R. Smith to continue with the publicity group.

This motion was not carried.

**RESOLVED:** to disband the publicity group.

## **21/72/TCP – Footgolf at Strawberry Field**

**RESOLVED:** to agree a sum of £1,500 per year (plus annual CPI increases) and a three-year licence for the footgolf business at Strawberry Field.

*Cllr M. Ellis left the meeting at 7.54pm.*

*Cllr M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 7.55pm.*

## **21/159/C Town Management and Highways Committee**

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 2 March 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

### **21/66/TMH – Request for Photovoltaic Panels (PV) on Roof of Chalet at 17 Monmouth Beach**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the request to install PV Panels on the roof of a chalet at 17 Monmouth Beach.

### **21/67/TMH – Public Litter Bins**

**RESOLVED:** to put seagull proof flaps on all town council bins on a rolling basis within the already approved budget for waste bins, focusing on the areas where the problem is worse, and to also ask Dorset Waste Partnership to support the council in tackling the issue by installing seagull-proof bins when they are replaced or when new ones are installed.

## **21/160/C Selection of Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect**

Cllr D. Sarson suggested as Cllr C. Aldridge had not yet arrived at the meeting, this item was deferred until the end of the meeting.

The town clerk said this could lead to an accusation that the council was trying to influence the outcome of an election because someone might vote in a particular way. He said the item was scheduled on the agenda at this point and his strong advice would be to deal with the item now.

*Cllr R. Doney arrived at the meeting at 7.56pm.*

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he wished to make a statement before any vote took place. He thanked members who had given him their support previously and had expressed their support for voting for him for the coming year. He spoke about the last three successful years when some substantial things had been delivered and said he had reflected on the remarkable things that had been done, of which he was proud. He said he had reflected personally on the time he and the mayoress had given to the roles, and also on the unacceptable behaviour which a small number of members had displayed towards himself and other members which he had persistently asked to stop.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said these were the main reasons he didn't wish to be mayor for the forthcoming year and along with this he gave his resignation, which was driven by the same three principle reasons. He thanked those who had given himself and the mayoress personal support and the support they had given the positive things that had been achieved while overcoming persistent difficulties.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said it had been an honour and a privilege to be mayor and a councillor and he was sure the council and residents could see the results of

the things the council had achieved and the difference it had made. One difference he hoped to still see in the remaining life of this council was a new name on the mayor's board from among the new members elected in 2019.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he would then proceed to the election.

Cllr M. Ellis raised a point of order; she asked how the mayor could continue to chair the meeting as he has just resigned.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he had given his intention to resign.

The town clerk confirmed a member had to provide a written resignation to him as proper officer. He said if a member intended to resign on a date in the future, he would need to receive the letter on that date, but they could signal their intention to resign on a future date.

The town clerk confirmed one nomination had been received for the office of mayor: Cllr C. Reynolds had nominated Cllr M. Ellis.

Cllr B. Bawden said she was sorry Cllr B. Larcombe had reached the decision to resign and thanked him and the mayoress on behalf of the town for all their hard work. She referred to the election in 2019 and said many new members joined because they wanted to change the dysfunctional behaviour within the council and she believed there were times when members had worked well together. However, she said she had not been attending meetings recently because she had been subjected to personal attacks and as such, she also intended to resign from the council in due course.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the council had done remarkably well in the last two years and the corporate plan reflected this good work, despite Covid and the restrictions, and he felt like it was a job done. He said he didn't wish to make this a message about behaviour and negativity, he wanted it to be about the positives.

Cllrs D. Ruffle, R. Smith, G. Turner, G. Stammers and D. Sarson thanked Cllr B. Larcombe for his service.

Referring to comments about member behaviour, the town clerk said there was still some work to do in getting a facilitator in to work with members. He said he was aiming to get through the mayoral elections and election of committee chairmen before making any firm arrangements but he was aware how important it was that this work was done as an organisation.

Cllr B. Larcombe requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

Cllr C. Reynolds nominated Cllr M. Ellis as mayor for the 2022-23 council year, seconded by Cllr T. Webb.

**Voted for** – Cllr T. Webb, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr D. Ruffle

**Voted against** – Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr B. Larcombe  
**Abstentions** – None

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe used his casting vote and Cllr M. Ellis was duly **ELECTED** as mayor for the 2022-23 council year.

The town clerk said two nominations had been received for the role of deputy mayor: for Cllr C. Reynolds and Cllr J. Broom.

Cllr J. Broom withdrew his nomination.

Cllr B. Larcombe requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

Cllr M. Ellis nominated Cllr C. Reynolds as deputy mayor for the 2022-23 council year, seconded by Cllr T. Webb.

**Voted for** – Cllr T. Webb, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr D. Ruffle

**Voted against** – Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr R. Smith

**Abstentions** – Cllr J. Broom, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr B. Larcombe

There being no other nominations, Cllr C. Reynolds was duly **ELECTED** as deputy mayor for the 2022-23 council year.

*Cllr R. Doney left the meeting at 8.17pm.*

#### **21/161/C Calendar of Meetings**

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to approve the calendar of meetings for the 2022-23 council year.

#### **21/162/C Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27**

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members **RESOLVED** to approve the Corporate Plan 2022-27.

#### **21/163/C Data Breach**

The town clerk said this was an important issue for the council and it was essential the public had confidence that any sensitive information they sent to the organisation stayed within its realms.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said this was a data breach concerning staff but the principles applied equally to members and he asked them to be careful about situations they might be drawn into, particularly on social media. He asked members to take on board the messages that were being given in relation to data protection.

Members agreed the situation had been dealt with professionally, the investigation was conducted properly and all the right procedures were followed.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** note the report regarding a data breach and endorse the recommendations made by the Information Commissioner's Office.

## **21/164/C Lyme 2030 Vision Community Conversation update and project proposal**

Cllr B. Bawden said the Community Conversations would include five dates in Lyme Regis and dates to be arranged in Uplyme and Charmouth to listen to and talk to people about what they hoped for in the future and to help prioritise what the community could do to work together. She said there would be distinct phases: April to May would be the listening phase; May to September would be the analysis phase and running alongside this would be a community online platform where people could go onto a map and pin ideas; and September to November would be the project development phase. She added that it was proposed to carry out engagement in schools in the summer term due to exams.

Cllr B. Bawden said it was hoped there would be up to five main issues that would emerge, at which point she was hoping the Royal College of Art (RCA) and Future Town stakeholders would come in to develop some costed projects. She said by the time it reached this phase, it would be the council's budget-setting process so it was possible some of the identified projects could be picked up as town council projects or something the council could work in partnership with Dorset Council (DC) on.

Cllr R. Smith said Lyme Regis Development Trust (LRDT) and volunteers were conducting the 2030 Vision community conversations this year and the Environment Committee was interested in the outcome of the consultation and would like to provide additional funding to ensure its success. He said any funding would be provided in accordance with the council's financial and procurement procedures and would not exceed the £10,000 proposed by the committee.

Cllr R. Smith said the consultation and analysis phases would benefit from funding of up to £2,000 and this would make the events as accessible as possible. He said small project proposals would be put forward to funding providers such as Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership. He said the project creation phase would benefit from funding of up to £8,000.

Cllr M. Ellis said LRDT already had funding to carry out the consultation so she felt it should be allowed to carry out the consultation phase and then come to the council to allow members to consider whether they wanted to be involved once the outcomes of the consultation were known. She was concerned the first consultation event was on Saturday but it had not been publicised very well so it would reach a limited number of people and the venues were not accessible enough. She suggested LRDT went out to the local groups and that they visited the primary as well as secondary school.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked how much funding the council would be giving to the RCA, if it was agreed, and she asked why local designers who understood Lyme Regis couldn't be asked to do this work.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the consultation could be informed by local residents but the vehicle for delivering projects might not be local, it might be shaped by someone with the relevant expertise.

Cllr B. Bawden said those helping with the consultations had a lot of experience in working with schools and relating to different age groups so they would be able to relate to them. She said she understood the project had to comply with the council's financial regulations and she was open to seeing if there were any other local people who could get involved. However, she said the town had been fortunate to have the involvement of the world-class designers from the RCA's Intelligent Mobility Design unit through the Future Town study and her concern was that if the council was seen to reject that support now, it would not be possible to go back to them in September to ask them to get involved.

Cllr B. Bawden said she wanted to preserve that relationship and so far the RCA had received no funding from Lyme Regis for the work it had done in the town. She said the council wouldn't have to put any physical money in yet but a commitment would ensure all the stakeholders were available at the project design stage.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe clarified that any projects put forward would not be imposed on the town council.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked how much the RCA would be paid and what they would be paid for.

The town clerk said LRDT had some funding to carry out the first phase of the process and the council should let the trust carry it out, and then the council could choose if it wanted to consider the data and conclusions drawn. He said the RCA would come in at the design stage, if it was commissioned, but it didn't necessarily have to be the RCA.

The town clerk said he wasn't criticising the RCA's design capability but the council was being asked to make a commitment without knowing what the outcome was going to be and how it was going to affect the organisation. He said the consultation was a two-stage process which wasn't going to end until March 2024 and the council had to understand what people in the town wanted and then consider whether it wanted to financially support anything. He said it felt too early to commit to an academic institution that was driven by its own agenda and the council might want to commission a local firm of architects to develop some proposals, or it might decide to do nothing at all because it was too big for the council as it doesn't control the infrastructure.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said a lot of projects in the town would not be within the town council's gift and it would have to go through DC.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC was working with the Dorset Climate Action Network on how to carry out community engagement on the zero carbon issue and its own climate and environmental emergency strategy and action plan so there was nothing that would be unexpected. She added that the consultations would also include reaching

out through community groups and volunteers had undergone enhanced DBS checks to be able to interview people in their own homes.

Cllr R. Smith said £2,000 would help LRDT in the consultation and analysis phases as they could purchase laptops and tablets to ensure the results were well produced.

Cllr M. Ellis said if LRDT wanted laptops and tablets, they should have requested a grant from the council through the normal grants' process rather than requesting ad hoc funding at another point in the year.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said he didn't believe it was a normal grant request, it was about the council indicating a level of support for the initiative and a budget allocation that was spent in the best way.

Cllr B. Bawden said the council had already committed £75,000 to climate and environmental action planning in the community as it took a decision that it needed to be more proactive in the community to transition to zero carbon. She said the 2030 Vision process would determine what the capacity was in the community for working together and the aim was to not only identify issues the community was most likely to be able to do something about but also draw people in. She added that she couldn't understand what the council's reluctance was to get involved in this project.

*Cllr T. Webb left the meeting at 9.02pm.*

The town clerk said committing funding now would mean the council was effectively forward committing resources to a university research project but there were other people who could do this work. He said the council needed to understand what the outcomes of the community conversations were and as LRDT was running the project, if it had a funding shortfall, it should make a formal proposal to the council for extra funding.

The town clerk said it would be hard to justify forward funding of up to £20,000 to the RCA and he believed there should be a phased approach to avoid the council exposing itself to that risk.

Cllr B. Bawden said at every stage, any request for money within the allocation agreed would go back to the Environment Committee for approval. She said without providing any funding for the project, LRDT would have no incentive to share any information with the council.

Cllr M. Ellis said it wasn't the case that the council wasn't supporting the project but the council had processes to follow and it needed to know what it would be getting for its money. She also questioned why only Lyme Regis Town Council was providing funding if the project also involved Uplyme and Charmouth.

Cllr B. Bawden said the RCA was not just an art and design university, it was also central to the government's thinking on the climate and environmental emergency crisis and the town was extremely lucky to have had that relationship, which she believed should be preserved by making a budget allocation available. She added

that the money might not even be used, but it demonstrated the council's commitment and support.

Cllr R. Smith suggested that a budget of up to £2,000 was allocated for the consultation and analysis phases of the Lyme 2030 Vision Community Conversation project, and a further budget allocation of £8,000 was made to the project development phase, which may or may not be carried out by the Royal College of Art, in line with the council's financial regulations.

The town clerk advised the council not to make any financial commitment, including any implied commitment, and said any award of work had to be through some form of competition. He said if LRDT had a shortfall to carry out the work, it needed to come to the council with a business case to request more funding.

Cllr M. Ellis was concerned that providing funding to LRDT to carry out the consultation might lead to other organisations requesting funding from the council to carry out consultations.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said any approach would be taken on its own merit and the council couldn't hold off on progress on a project in case another organisation came along with its own project.

Cllr R. Smith said the final project outcomes would go to funding agencies who would provide money to do the work to bring benefits to the town. He said whoever was chosen to do the work was irrelevant, whether it was the RCA or a local company, because ultimately it would bring work and economic development to the town.

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

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to allocate a budget of up to £2,000 for the consultation and analysis phases of the Lyme 2030 Vision Community Conversation project, and a further budget of £8,000 is allocated to the project development phase, which may or may not be carried out by the Royal College of Art, in line with the council's financial regulations.

**Voted for** – Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr B. Larcombe

**Voted against** – None

**Abstentions** – Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds

## **21/165/C Maintenance Operative Position**

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** to approve approve the advertising of the maintenance operative position.

*The meeting closed at 9.32pm.*