

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 JULY 2022

Present

Chairman: The Mayor, Cllr M. Ellis

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr B. Larcombe MBE, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

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

A prayer was given by the Rev Chris Martin.

22/16/C Public Forum

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

22/17/C Dorset Council Matters

Cllr B. Bawden gave the following updates:

- Dorset Council's (DC) Cabinet had met the previous day and discussed the quarter one financial management report. The 2021-22 financial year ended with a small overspend, which brought the council into a relatively confident planning position but the risk remained high due to external events and uncertainty internationally. The projected overspend at the end of quarter one was £6.57million. Although inflation had reached 9.1%, the rate was lower at the time of writing the financial management report; it was therefore decided at the Cabinet meeting not to revise the figures in light of increased inflation but to take a careful look at the end of quarter two. The forecast overspend was mainly in the place directorate because although there was an increased number of special needs children and increased adult social care, these services were covered by government grants.
- The Local Plan update had been moved to 2026 and DC was optimistic it could be a pioneer under the new government planning method.

Cllr C. Reynolds arrived at 7.05pm.

- The new footpath between Lyme Regis and Charmouth had new signage, although the path had been open for some time.
- Free swimming was available for under 16s in Dorset, including at Bridport, and there were a wide range of activities which were free for eligible families.
- New Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) had taken effect recently. The anti-social behaviour order affecting Lyme Regis covered consumption of alcohol, feeding of gulls and anti-social behaviour within the controlled zone.

Another PSPO was taking effect and would cover lighting of fires, but it didn't concern Lyme Regis.

- The community governance review was discussed at the Audit and Governance Committee recently. There were no changes proposed for the Lyme Regis and Charmouth ward but major changes were proposed for Bridport and some of the surrounding parishes to be included into a larger Bridport Town Council. The Weymouth area proposals were deferred for further discussion.
- Cllr B. Bawden had attended the members' briefing on the library strategy consultation. The main findings of the first stage of the public consultation had been published and there were over 7,500 submissions, including school workshops and focused interviews. An abridged strategy with an embedded survey would go out to focused consultation over the summer, and a public consultation of the Let's Talk Libraries phase two would go out between autumn and winter. Community-run libraries were part of the strategy and key to the service provision.
- The Dorset year of culture was in 2023.
- A refresh of the Dorset Plan was taking place to simplify it and change some of the priorities.
- A Dorset Household Support Grant was being administered for DC by the Citizens' Advice Bureau.
- Cllr B. Bawden was meeting with John Sellgren, the executive director of place, on 29 July 2022 for a walk around Lyme Regis and Charmouth.
- Cllr B. Bawden had been doing a monthly surgery in Charmouth Library and a weekly surgery at the Community Café in the Hub on Thursdays, but this would move to monthly surgeries in September.
- DC's communications team had pointed out DC as an organisation was politically neutral so they would also like to hear from people who were opposed to what DC was doing.

22/18/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

22/19/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr R. Doney – personal commitment
Cllr D. Sarson – unwell
Cllr T. Webb – personal commitment

22/20/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

22/21/C Dispensations

There were none.

22/22/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 25 May and 1 June 2022

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 25 May and 1 June 2022 were **ADOPTED**.

22/23/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 20 June 2022

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 20 June 2022 were **ADOPTED**.

22/24/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 25 May and 1 June 2022 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 20 June 2022

Appointments to External Bodies 2022-23

Cllr G. Stammers said she and Cllr R. Smith were the representatives for Plastic-Free Lyme Regis and as it was part of the same organisation as Turn Lyme Green, she had suggested they were the representatives for the whole organisation.

Members noted this change.

Support for Ukrainian Refugees

The town clerk said since the meeting, Uplyme Parish Council had agreed a contribution of £250.

22/25/C Update Report

Members noted the report.

22/26/C Mayor's Announcements

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis reminded members of the bowls evening on 24 August 2022 and that RSVPs were needed as soon as possible.

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis said her chosen charities for the year were Lyme Regis Pantomime Society and Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support. She said she would be joining the pantomime society on their fundraising stall on the seafront on 18 August 2022 and on 1 September 2022 she would have a stall of her own. She also had a Christmas bingo booked for 9 December 2022.

22/27/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 3 May, 31 May and 28 June 2022.

22/28/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee held on 6 July 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

22/09/ENV – Carbon Literate Organisation Accreditation

RESOLVED: that the Human Resources Committee considers ways of integrating Carbon Literacy into the performance management and assessment systems of the organisation.

RESOLVED: to approve the proposal to seek Carbon Literacy organisational accreditation at Silver level.

22/29/C Human Resources Committee

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

22/11/HR – Appointment of Members to the Health and Safety Committee

RESOLVED: to appoint Cllrs D. Sarson, G. Stammers and J. Broom to the Health and Safety Committee.

22/12/HR – Review of Employee Handbook – Part 3

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed amendments to the employee handbook related to maternity/adoption/paternity support leave; shared parental leave; adoption leave; parental leave; and parental bereavement leave.

22/14/HR – Pay Review

Cllr B. Larcombe said he would like to see more clarity in the recommendation as he felt members should be aware of the scope of the exercise before commissioning South West Councils, or they may be presented with something they didn't know enough about or the consequences of. He asked if it was a full job evaluation or a pay review; if it was the former, it was important there was a scoping document that outlined the extent of the evaluation, the method and commitment.

Cllr G. Stammers said the committee had agreed to a full job evaluation and the town clerk was discussing the details with South West Councils.

The town clerk said the committee had asked him to start discussions with South West Councils straight away, which he had done. He said it was agreed they wouldn't be asked to provide recommendations, but comments and observations instead.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the evaluation was across the whole council structure or specific posts, and how it would make comparisons with other organisations. He said

the evaluation may have consequences and the council would have no choice but to acknowledge its findings. He said there may also be a requirement to consult with employees who were trade union members.

The town clerk said South West Councils had been asked to draw comparisons, particularly in the local government sector. He said South West Councils would only make comments and observations and any decision on pay would be taken by the Human Resources Committee and then the Full Council.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked which members would see the scoping document before the review was undertaken.

The town clerk said in line with the discussions at the Human Resources Committee, he had been having discussions with the chairman and vice-chairman of that committee and unless he was instructed otherwise, this was how he would continue to operate.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the review would be cost neutral to the council, if it would be an additional burden on the wage bill, or if it would be something the council would grow its wage bill to accommodate or not.

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis said this would not be known until the review was completed.

Cllr B. Larcombe said it was possible to determine at the outset that any findings must be cost neutral.

The town clerk said this restriction had not been placed on the brief. He said members wanted to know if the council paid its staff fairly and did not want recommendations that would bind the council in any way.

RESOLVED: to commission a full independent review of employees' pay by South West Councils.

22/15/HR – Ex Gratia Payment

RESOLVED: to make a £100 ex gratia payment to the lengthsman for early morning work for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations

22/16/HR – Request for Unreduced Early Pension Payment

RESOLVED: to approve the request from a former employee for early payment of an unreduced pension.

22/30/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 13 July 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

Cllr P. May asked if there was a date set for the members' away day.

The town clerk said three consultants had been approached and a favoured consultant had been agreed. He said the away day was expected to take place in September or October but the date was being finalised.

22/09/SF – Gipsy and Traveller Encampments

RESOLVED: to approve the Gipsy and Traveller Encampments' policy and procedure.

22/10/SF – Motions for Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils Annual General Meeting

ORIGINAL MOTION: to put forward the following motions for Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils' Annual General Meeting which takes place on Saturday 19 November 2022:

- to pursue better reconciliation between the views of the building regulations and conservation teams on planning matters.
- to pursue an alternative to physical meetings that satisfies the regulations so councils could continue to transact its business remotely
- a motion regarding housing policy and rural exception sites, the wording for which will be presented by Cllr C. Reynolds to the Full Council meeting on 27 July 2022.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she had not yet formulated the wording related to rural exception sites and it was agreed the town clerk would work with her to do this. The wording would then be circulated through the members' briefing and comments invited.

RESOLVED: to put forward the following motions for Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils' Annual General Meeting which takes place on Saturday 19 November 2022:

- to pursue better reconciliation between the views of the building regulations and conservation teams on planning matters.
- to pursue an alternative to physical meetings that satisfies the regulations so councils could continue to transact its business remotely
- a motion regarding housing policy and rural exception sites, the wording for which will be formulated by Cllr C. Reynolds and the town clerk and circulated through the members' briefing for comment.

22/11/SF – Objectives and Projects 2023-2025

RESOLVED: to hold an informal member-only meeting to discuss objectives and projects.

22/12/SF – Outside Seating

RESOLVED: to reinstate outside seating charges at the previous level when the temporary pavement licence provision ends on 30 September 2022 and to charge businesses for six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

22/31/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 29 June 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

22/07/TCP – Seagull Control

RESOLVED: to agree a budget of £350 to fly a drone during the summer to deter seagulls.

22/10/TCP – Seafront WiFi

RESOLVED: to bring a report to the first meeting of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee of 2023 to allow members to consider the way forward for the seafront WiFi.

22/12/TCP – Seafront and Beach Concessions

RESOLVED: to award the concession for a fitness and exercise concession to Rosie Jackson for 2022-2024, to be backdated to March 2022, and to confirm the days of operation so it doesn't operate on the same days as the existing fitness and exercise concession.

22/13/TCP – Sculpture Trail Insurance

RESOLVED: to continue with the current insurance arrangements for the sculpture trail but to instruct officers to take a report to the next meeting of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee about the future of the trail.

22/32/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 22 June 2022 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if members would see the plans for the proposed new amenities hut.

Cllr J. Broom said members would see the plans and he would chase them up.

Cllr B. Bawden asked if there was any update regarding the child who was injured at the bowls club.

The town clerk said it was an insurance matter and therefore it was not appropriate to talk about it in public session.

22/09/TMH – Review of the CCTV Policy

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve CCTV Policy unchanged.

22/10/TMH – Civil Enforcement Officer Training

RESOLVED: to request that Dorset Council trains the town council enforcement team to civil enforcement officer level.

22/11/TMH – Kitchen Garden

RESOLVED: to confirm the kitchen garden has improved enough to remain a part of the Langmoor and Lister Gardens.

22/12/TMH – Hedgecutter/Flail Mower

RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of a hedgecutter/flail mower at the revised cost of £14,000 + VAT, to be purchased from the reserve.

22/15/TMH – Kawasaki Mule 4x4 replacement

RESOLVED: to purchase an ex-demo Hi-Sun Vector at £19,800+VAT as a replacement for the Kawasaki mule.

22/16/TMH – Advertising Boards

RESOLVED: that under the Road Traffic Act Section 149, to apply to a magistrate for a removal and disposal order of an advertising board owned by a business refusing to remove it.

22/33/C Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation

Cllr B. Bawden said references to West Dorset District Council needed to be amended to Dorset Council.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to approve the terms of reference and scheme of delegation and to replace all references to West Dorset District Council with Dorset Council.

22/34/C Visit Lyme Regis Membership Review

Cllr B. Larcombe said Lyme Regis was an important visitor destination in Dorset and it was important it continued to get the exposure it was having. He said it represented extremely good value for money.

Cllr C. Reynolds said things were very difficult for local businesses at the moment with the cost of living crisis and energy prices so they were taking a careful look at how much they spent on advertising.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to approve the charging structure for the Visit Lyme Regis website as follows:

- The reintroduction of free but basic website page listings, which could be re-marketed on the basis that the tourism industry has seen a very difficult and erratic early season period and that the council is aware of the national insights about this
- Running alongside the free options there is an opportunity for an enhanced business website page listing, enabling a priority listing which would be ranked in website display above other businesses, and have more features like additional photos, reviews, etc, and enable them to be included in the highlighted, high-use areas of the website.

22/35/C Request for access through Langmoor Gardens to facilitate works to 19a Broad Street

Cllr G. Turner said the owners of 19a Broad Street had made a step from the gardens to get over the wall into the property.

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis said this issue was not up for discussion at this meeting but it needed to be looked at separately by officers.

Cllr J. Broom said he supported the request but felt there should be restrictions on the times deliveries could be made.

The mayor, Cllr M. Ellis said if agreed, there needed to be a date by which the work had to be finished and if it overran, there was a financial penalty for each week.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to approve the request for access through Langmoor Gardens to facilitate works to 19a Broad Street on the following conditions:

- That access be not permitted until after the end of the busy school holiday period, i.e., not before 4 September 2022
- That no parking of contractors' vehicles be permitted within the gardens
- That access be permitted solely for the delivery of materials to 19a Broad Street and for the duration of the works only
- That agreement of any further detailed terms and conditions be delegated to the town clerk in consultation with the chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee
- That deliveries can only be made between set times, to be agreed
- That a start and end date is agreed and financial penalties are imposed, at a level to be agreed, for every week the work overruns.

Cllr B. Bawden left the meeting at 7.51pm.

22/36/C List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments May and June 2022 for the sums of £217,361.08 and £132,519.58, respectively.

Cllr B. Bawden returned to the meeting at 7.53pm.

22/37/C Future Use of Strawberry Fields and Consultancy Brief

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

22/38/C Lease Renewal for Trailer Park, use of Accreted Land at Monmouth Beach and the 'Harbourmaster's Store'

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

22/39/C Exempt Business

a) Future Use of Strawberry Fields and Consultancy Brief

The deputy town clerk outlined the proposed brief to the consultant to help determine future uses for Strawberry Fields. He said the scope of the brief would need to be tightly drawn in order to be deliverable and within the agreed budget of £10,000.

The deputy town clerk said the council needed to be realistic about the size of the site, what it may be able to contain and what may be commercially deliverable. He said various uses had been suggested for the land that would require external funding, but the funding environment was more challenging than it had ever been. It was therefore important the council focused on something it could realistically achieve.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he would like to see the land used as a park and ride to ensure the long-term viability of the service and alongside this a transport hub, so coaches and lorries would decant at the site to a smaller service so they wouldn't block up the town.

Cllr B. Bawden said she didn't want the possibility of a learning centre to be excluded at this stage, which could also subsidise a community sports facility. She said there were people looking for homes for substantial fossil collections which could be part of an environmental and earth science centre run by Lyme Regis Museum and Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre, with input from local universities and environmental groups.

The deputy town clerk said he sensed everyone would agree a long-term park and ride facility was important but he didn't think Strawberry Fields was big enough to accommodate a park and ride along with another use as it was roughly the same size as the current park and ride site in Charmouth Road. He also felt a park and ride and a sport and leisure facility were not compatible on the same site.

The deputy town clerk suggested now was an appropriate time to have a conversation with the owner of the Charmouth Road park and ride site about his willingness for a long-term commitment to park and ride on the site.

Cllr R. Smith suggested the conversation needed to take place with the owner of the Charmouth Road site before any decisions could be made about Strawberry Fields; if the council knew it could secure a long-term park and ride at Charmouth Road, it could then look at other uses for Strawberry Fields.

The town clerk suggested a timescale of six months was given for officers to have this discussion and also explore other possible park and ride sites so that the issue didn't drift. He said if there was anything officers needed to consult with members on in the meantime, they could talk to the chairmen of the Strategy and Finance and Town Management and Highways Committees.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to defer discussions on future uses of Strawberry Fields until after there has been a discussion with the owner of the existing park and ride site about his willingness to enter into a long-term agreement for the use of the field, and to set a timescale of six months for officers to have these discussions as well as exploring other possible park and ride sites.

b) Lease Renewal for Trailer Park, use of Accreted Land at Monmouth Beach and the 'Harbourmaster's Store'

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to:

- Reiterate their support for a working harbour
- Note the position of Natural England with regard to the use of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and authorise officers to submit an application for consent to regularise the use of the land for boat storage and other existing uses
- Agree that the trailer park lease be renewed for a period of 10 years and at a commercial rent which reflects its existing use, including the mobile sauna, rather than potential alternative uses

- Agree that the extent of the accreted land which Natural England is willing to grant consent for be also let to Dorset Council at a commercial rent which reflects its existing use for boat storage and based, pro-rata, on the rent agreed for the trailer park, rather than potential alternative uses
- Note that notice has been served on Dorset Council requiring their vacation of the 'Harbourmaster's Store' by 31 January 2023 and the latest advised position with the progress by Dorset Council to provide a replacement building on their land for use by the harbourmaster
- Note the position on both compensation and dilapidations with regard to the 'Harbourmaster's Store' and agree, in principle to offset one against the other.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.