

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2025

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr G. Caddy, Cllr M. Denney, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold, Cllr D. Holland, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr A. Wood

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

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans read out the town prayer.

24/194/C Public Forum

S. Baxter

S. Baxter, owner of the Slipway said she was disappointed with the council's apparent lack of communication regarding outside food and drink traders. Although she understood there was communication with the business association, it didn't represent the majority of businesses that would be mainly affected. She said none of the businesses at the Cobb or seafront were aware of the proposals until the council's social media post inviting tenders. She noted the recommendation to go ahead with the concession had not yet been resolved by the Full Council and asked if it was a done deal. She suggested the council could have put something on social media or contacted business owners directly to consult with them about the proposal. She said all local businesses should be a priority, not just a few and the council should work alongside them, not against. These businesses were open 12 months a year and facing increasing costs, relying on the peak season to subsidise the winter months, and to invite outside vendors to directly compete with established businesses would have detrimental consequences across the whole season. She felt it would not enhance the town, it would create more rubbish and more seagulls, with bins already overflowing. She said a more effective form of communication and transparency needed to be established between the council and all businesses in Lyme Regis, as Cobb and seafront traders played a full and active role in the town.

L. Taylor

L. Taylor, a representative of Herbie's, expressed his total dismay at the council's invitation for applications from food vendors, allowing outside businesses to compete with local businesses who traded all year round and employed local people. He said this was a kick in the teeth. He said operating costs had increased significantly and they relied on a good summer. Although the council had said there were no objections, most of the businesses on the seafront were unaware of the proposal and he felt the council could have made businesses aware via social media or face-to-

face. He noted the council had forced the Oyster and Fish House to remove its decking as it believed the gardens should be kept free of commercial development and asked why this position had now changed. He had listened to the audio recording of the committee meeting when this matter was discussed and said the committee appeared to have pre-determined the outcome and there was a presumption members would vote to accept the recommendation, which was a breach of procedure. He said he was disappointed with one member who had told them they were against the plans but had said otherwise at the committee meeting, which had undermined his trust in that member. He said there were hundreds of comments on social media in support of traders and this was an opportunity for the council to put things right and vote against the recommendation.

S. Postles

S. Postles said he owned seven businesses in Lyme Regis, employing 25 people. He noted the council had talked about outside food vendors around five years ago and it was now being discussed again. He said Lister and Langmoor Gardens were meant to be peaceful, not to have businesses operating in them. He said people only had so much money to spend and if there was another food unit, it wouldn't get spent in a local business. He was aware members would consider the type of concession but it was still taking money away from local businesses. He said he never objected to food traders coming in as part of events, but he didn't agree with the council giving a vendor a licence for five months at the best time of the year so they had the prime business and left for the winter. He was also concerned about where the additional traders would park and felt they would use residential areas. He wished the council would think about what it does and speak to businesses. He said there was a Cobb Traders group so the council could have contacted them and he asked that the council considered and supported local businesses. He couldn't see how the proposal would promote the town and noted there were already five food businesses on the market in the town and those that were open were employing local people, so what would be the purpose of introducing more.

N. Ball

N. Ball asked if the council had consulted with traders over proposals for a food and drink concession. He said it was far better to talk face-to-face. He said the gardens were for peace and tranquility and asked if food stalls were needed as there were plenty on the Marine Parade. He encouraged the council to look after the tenants and traders already in place.

N. Ball also spoke in relation to Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support's (ALCS) application to continue using a beach hut on Marine Parade. He encouraged members to support a local charity and to re-allocate the hut to ALCS.

T. Mayers

T. Mayers said he was chairman of the Cobb Traders, which had been running since the early 1990s. He was very disappointed with proposals for food traders, especially as a councillor had attended several of their meetings. He said there was no need for there to have not been communication from the council to the Cobb Traders.

G. Symonds

G. Symonds, owner of the Amusement Arcade, asked if the council would consider a recorded vote on the item about food traders if the matter was discussed in exempt business.

The town clerk clarified that the members would have the discussion about the principle of the food and drink concession in open business in the first instance, so it may not be necessary to go into exempt business.

S. Hanbury

S. Hanbury, from Baboo Gelato, said he supported everything others had said about the food and drink concession proposal. He said there had been no communication, but the traders were very visible and it was easy to contact them in multiple formats, so he was disappointed no one had spoken to them about it. He said businesses were facing increases in the minimum wage, national insurance and rent, as well as outside seating charges and it was tough for all of them. He said local traders were employing local people and keeping the town going. He said businesses were investing in the town and it was disappointing to bring in businesses that would take away trade. He hoped members would make the right decision.

E. Carr

E. Carr, who worked with the Fossil Festival, said the event generated income by selling food and drink concessions in the Marine Parade Shelters. If there was a permanent trader there, it would make it very difficult to work around them, so she asked members to consider the use of this area specifically. She said it was a community space for community events and bringing in traders to support events was very important. She said other traders being present would make their job much more difficult.

C. Burgess

C. Burgess asked members to be careful not to kill the town because businesses were here all year round and were keeping people in work. She said Costa was closing because it couldn't stay here and a lot of local people were affected by that. She urged members to look after local businesses that stayed all year round.

24/195/C Dorset Council Matters

The ward member, Cllr B. Bawden sent her apologies for the meeting.

24/196/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

24/197/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr S. Cockerell – illness

24/198/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

24/199/C Dispensations

There were none.

24/200/C Food and Drink Concession Tenders

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans brought this item forward on the agenda.

A member encouraged local businesses to join together as one group and also to sign up to the council's business briefings to be kept informed.

It was reiterated that the council had consulted with Lyme Regis Business Association about the proposal but it wasn't understood at the time how many businesses were not part of the association and therefore would not have been aware of the consultation.

Several members said they had initially been in favour of the proposal, on the understanding that any concessions would not be in competition with existing businesses, but having seen the applications and the tenders, they felt none of them were suitable and the amounts offered were not enough.

The town clerk said he wasn't aware of a meeting of the Cobb Traders taking place since before Covid, but the business association had around 90 members. He was aware the business association had tried to generate support from local businesses but some had chosen not to be part of the group. He added that the council wanted an organisation to talk to and would welcome a single organisation that represents a diverse range of businesses, rather than multiple groups with different views.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members **RESOLVED** not to re-introduce a static and mobile vendors' concession and to reject all applications.

24/201/C Applications for the use of Beach Hut 44

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans brought this item forward on the agenda and invited K. Vernon from ALCS to speak.

K. Vernon outlined how the beach but had been used by ALCS over the last five years and said they would like to continue to offer their clients the opportunity to use it.

As there were applications from two charities, ALCS and The Living Tree, a member asked if ALCS would be prepared to administer the booking of the hut if it was offered to both charities.

K. Vernon said there was significant administration involved and they currently used Eventbrite to do this, with certain groups of people getting priority booking and a waiting list if the hut is cancelled. She felt it would be very difficult to administer for two charities because of this.

A member asked if a second beach hut could be made available so both charities could be accommodated.

The town clerk said the council had already agreed one hut would be available and there was also the accessible beach hut.

It was noted ALCS had had use of the hut for the last five years, so perhaps another charity should be given the opportunity. It was also noted ALCS specifically covered the local area but The Living Tree covered West Dorset, East Devon and South Somerset.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members **RESOLVED** to allocate the free use of beach hut 44 to Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support for a period of two years, starting from 1 July 2025.

24/202/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 3 April 2025

It was noted Cllrs C. Aldridge and G. Stammers should be added to the list of members present at the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 3 April 2025, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

24/203/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 26 March 2025

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 26 March 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

24/204/C Matters arising from the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 26 March 2025 and the Full Council meeting held on 3 April 2025

Members noted the report.

24/205/C Update Report

Members noted the report.

24/206/C Mayor's Announcements

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans encouraged members to attend the Civic Service on Sunday 8 June 2025, which would be preceded by a procession from the Guildhall to the church and followed by refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour.

24/207/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on **29 April 2025**, and to note the committee's comments made on planning applications under the power delegated by Full Council.

24/208/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/81/ENV – River Lim Action Group Report

RESOLVED: that that the council write to Southwest Water expressing concerns about the data provided by the environment agency and the uncertainty within it and the increased discharges from the Uplyme sewage treatment works and the Horn Bridge pumping station.

24/83/ENV – Lighting in the Lister and Langmoor Gardens

RESOLVED: to instruct officers to pursue the installation of a metered electricity supply for the footway lighting in the Lister and Langmoor gardens.

24/209/C Human Resources

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/84/HR – Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

RESOLVED: to approve the Sexual Harassment Policy and note the reasonable steps the council will take to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

24/85/HR – DBS Checks for Relevant Employees

RESOLVED: to approve carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service checks on the enforcement officers, seafront attendant and amenities assistants.

24/87/HR – Finance Manager Pay Review

RESOLVED: to approve the re-grading of the finance manager post to spinal column point range 30-33, with appointment at spinal column 31.

24/88/HR – Support Services Manager Pay Review and Redesignation

RESOLVED: to approve the redesignation of the post of support services manager to assistant town clerk and to renumerate the post at spinal column point 30-33 with appointment at spinal column 31.

24/210/C Strategy and Finance

It was noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 30 April 2025 was cancelled.

24/211/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Members discussed the new council magazine and it was noted there had been issues with the distribution of the first edition as the company had pulled out of the contract mid-way through distribution.

The support services manager asked if any members would volunteer to deliver magazines to properties that had not yet received them and Cllrs N. Hampton-Rumbold, G. Stammers, P. May and C. Aldridge agreed. The remainder would be delivered by staff.

Members asked how much refund was received from the distribution company. The support services manager said she would provide the details by email.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/181/TCP – Additional Free Parking Days

RESOLVED: to agree the two additional non-charging days in Lyme Regis car parks in 2025 as suggested by Lyme Regis Business Association, the association has requested Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 October 2025.

24/182/TCP – Static and Mobile Vendors' Concession

ORIGINAL MOTION: to re-introduce a static and mobile vendors' concession and to invite applications.

This matter was discussed earlier in the agenda and the motion was not carried.

24/183/TCP – Sporting Lyme – Delegation of Members

RESOLVED: to delegate Cllrs G. Caddy, M. Denney, C. Reynolds, A. Wood and D. Holland to work on the organisation of Sporting Lyme.

24/185/TCP – Additional Seafront and Beach Concession

RESOLVED: to refuse the additional application for the fitness and exercise concession.

24/212/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

24/95/TMH – Seasonal Evening Seafront Attendant

RESOLVED: to approve the recruitment of one temporary part-time seasonal evening seafront attendant and overtime payments to existing employees to provide evening cover from 24 May to 7 September 2025 at an unbudgeted cost of £8,831.21.

24/96/TMH – Broad Street Bin Store

RESOLVED: to approve entering into an agreement with Dorset Council to take on the management of the Broad Street bin store for commercial waste storage.

24/99/TMH – Consultation on the Future of Street Lighting

RESOLVED: to delegate the detailed response to Dorset Council's consultation on the future of street lighting to the town clerk in consultation with Cllrs M. Ellis and S. Cockerell.

24/213/C Governance Arrangements

The town clerk said there were a number of things the council could look at relating to its governance structure, such as the committee structure, the number of members on the council, the scope and remit of committees, the number of people on committees, and the level of delegation to officers. He said there was a lot of work involved and suggested a working group was set up, possibly including the committee chairmen, to develop proposals to bring back to the council. He suggested the proposals be considered in autumn 2025, with a view to making any changes for the start of the new council year in 2026.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to set up a working group consisting of committee chairmen to consider the council's governance arrangements and to present its proposals to the council.

24/214/C SW Councils – What Next?

The town clerk said he had now received proposals from SW Councils about how to take forward the organisational development programme and he would circulate these to members. He said he would shortly be organising a meeting with the delegated group to go through the proposals in more detail.

24/215/C Future Directions for Dorset's Towns and Parishes

The town clerk said a meeting was taking place the following day, when the Future Directions report would be discussed between town and parish councils and Dorset

Council (DC). The town clerk summarised the main points of the report and gave his views.

A member asked if the town council was being supported by the DC ward member in its position.

The town clerk said the ward member had been in favour of devolution of services from DC to the town council, but he wasn't aware of her current position. He said the meeting the following day was between DC and town and parish council officers, so it didn't involve members.

Members supported the town clerk's views on the report and agreed the council needed to be cautious about how this was taken forward so it wouldn't have a detrimental impact on the council and local residents, noting that although the town council would like to take on services, it would need to be accompanied by funding streams.

24/216/C Non-Residents' Parking Permits

It was noted the council had previously made the decision to no longer offer a non-residents' parking permit due to the decreasing numbers of permits being issues and the disparity between the cost of this permit and DC's permit.

However, members noted the feedback which had been received and now better understood the importance of the permits.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to re-introduce the non-residents' parking permits at a cost of £475, pro-rata from 14 May 2025.

24/217/C List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments in March 2025 for the sum of £438,690.23.

24/218/C Investments and Cash Holdings

Members noted the report.

24/219/C Staffing and the Gardening Team

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to 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.

24/220/C Council Offices

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to 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.

24/221/C Re-tendering of Legal Services

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to 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.

24/222/C Debtors' Report

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to 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.

24/223/C Exempt Business

a) Staffing and the Gardening Team

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to approve the request from postholder 203 to reduce their contracted working days from five to four a week, and to approve the appointment of an internal candidate to the gardening team for one day a week.

b) Council Offices

The town clerk said there had been a material overspend on the project for new council offices for a number of reasons, including the acquisition of unit 6, the inclusion of the council meeting room, and additional building work which was not on the original specification. He said although actual building works were at the expected cost, mechanical and engineering works and the need for specialist consultants had increased expenditure.

The town clerk said some other projects from the 2024-25 financial year had come considerably under budget, which would partially offset the overspend on the council offices.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to note the latest position with the agreed move to alternative office premises, note the projected total cost of that move and agree to an increase in the approved budget from £100k to £190k.

c) Re-tendering of Legal Services

The town clerk informed members of the chosen new legal advisers, Porter Dodson.

Members asked how big the firm was and where they were based.

The town clerk said Porter Dodson had several branches, including one in Bridport, and they could bring together specialist teams and experts for specific cases. He said the firm would be used for three years initially, with an option to extend for a further two.

d) Debtors' Report

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 9.12pm.