



John Wright
Town Clerk

Lyme Regis Town Council

Town Council Offices
Guildhall Cottage
Church Street
Lyme Regis
Dorset
DT7 3BS

email: townclerk@lymeregistowncouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01297 445175
Fax: 01297 443773

Notice is given of a meeting of **Lyme Regis Town Council** to be held at the **Guildhall, Bridge Street, Lyme Regis** on Wednesday 1 April 2026 commencing at 7pm when the following business is proposed to be transacted:

John Wright
Town Clerk
27.03.26

The open and transparent proceedings of Full Council and committee meetings will be audio recorded and recordings will be held for one year by the town council.

If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded.

If members of the public have any queries regarding audio recording of meetings, please contact the town clerk.

Members are reminded that in reaching decisions they should take into consideration the town council's decision to declare a climate emergency and ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and beyond.

Prayers

A prayer will be offered

AGENDA

1. Public Forum

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

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

2. Dorset Council Matters

To receive updates from the Dorset Council ward member

3. Questions from Councillors

4. Apologies for absence

To receive and record any apologies and reasons for absence

5. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

6. Dispensations

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

7. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11 February 2026 (attached)

8. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 11 March 2026 (attached)

9. Matters arising from the minutes of Full Council meeting held on 11 February 2026 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 11 March 2026

To inform members of matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11 February 2026 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 11 March 2026 that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues in those minutes

10. Update Report

There are no updates

11. Mayor's Announcements

To note the mayor's announcements

12. Planning Committee

To note the cancellation of the meetings on **17 February 2026 and 10 March 2026** and to note the comments made on planning applications under the chairman vice-chairman's delegated authority

13. Environment Committee

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on **11 March 2026** and consider the recommendations therein.

14. Human Resources Committee

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on **18 February 2026** and consider the recommendations therein.

15. Strategy and Finance Committee

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on **18 March 2026** and consider the recommendations therein.

16. Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on **4 March 2026** and consider the recommendations therein.

17. Town Management and Highways Committee

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on **25 February 2026** and consider the recommendations therein.

18. Selection of Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect

To allow members to select a mayor-elect and deputy mayor-elect for the 2026-27 council year

19. Calendar of Meetings

To allow members to approve the calendar of meetings for 2026-27 council year

20. Review of Financial Regulations

To allow members to consider the council's revised financial regulations

21. Corporate Plan 2026-31

To present the text for the draft Corporate Plan 2026-31

22. Cleaning Contracts

To inform members of the lack of progress on the transfer of toilets from Dorset Council and authorise the tendering of a combined cleaning contract for the council's toilets and offices for one year from 4 May 2026

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded while members consider this item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

23. Flexible Retirement Request

To consider a flexible retirement request from postholder 208

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded while members consider this item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

24. Outside Seating Progress Report

To inform members of the progress made since the Full Council considered outside seating on 18 March 2026

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded while members consider this item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

25. Exempt Business

To move 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 in view of the likely disclosure of confidential matters about information relating to an individual, and information 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.

- a) **Agenda item 22 – Cleaning Contracts**
- b) **Agenda item 23 – Flexible Retirement Request**
- c) **Agenda item 24 – Outside Seating Progress Report**

Dorset Council ward member for Lyme Regis & Charmouth, Belinda Bawden

LRTC Full Council 1 April 2026 - current priorities & activities

1. Responsibilities for assets and infrastructure in Lyme

I invited Jan Britton, Executive Director of Place, to visit Lyme to walk round the main areas where the assets and infrastructure ownership and maintenance responsibilities need to be resolved between Dorset Council, LRTC and others (Crown Estate, South West Water and Natural England, for example).

The town clerk, deputy town clerk and I joined Jan, Carly Galloway, Service Manager Strategic Asset Management and Sam Hoida, Service Manager Estates, on 23 March to explain the historical anomalies resulting in less than effective ownership and maintenance around:

- Theatre Square and East Cliff Walkway areas
- Broad Street car park, Town Mill steps area and the Lynch to Gosling Bridge
- Monmouth Beach area

LRTC has been invited to submit a list of the areas visited and discussed, expressing suggestions for more effective ownership, maintenance or licensing options, including asset transfers.

The Dorset Council team was grateful to visit the sites to understand the complexities and anomalies and undertook to consider the suggestions submitted.

2. Community Highways Officer site visit

Dave Carey, our Acting Community Highways Officer, visited Charmouth and Lyme again on 20 March, meeting two Parish Council representatives to highlight areas of concern and visiting different places in Lyme:

- Road from Charmouth roundabout (overflowing drains); 'Corkscrew' (potholes); top road opposite golf range (dirt on road from waste contract site); Park & Ride/Strawberry Fields road (speed limit reduction to be considered)
- Colway Lane (building site entrance; drainage causing erosion and potholes)
- Holmbush car park – pedestrian crossings to be considered for Sidmouth Road and Cobb Road; condition of pavement from there all the way into Broad Street

Dave emphasised the need to report online so it is logged on the system and provides the data needed to direct scarce resources. Inspections are made fortnightly and any defects can be repaired as long as they comply with highway regulations. However, if public areas look dreadful, reporting helps as these areas could be prioritised.

3. Taxi ranks

I met a new member of the Traffic team on teams on 20 March to discuss the requests for taxi ranks, having liaised with taxi operators and the deputy town clerk to suggest preferences and options. The previous rank outside the Cobb Arms is relatively straightforward but Broad Street is more complex and harder to disassociate from business delivery pressures so I've suggested a site visit and meeting with the taxi operators to explore suitable options, bearing in mind the long term 'Vision' to reduce the impact of traffic and improve pedestrian access and safety in the town centre.

4. Multiple requests for road closures in Lyme

Dorset Council's senior traffic co-ordinator is doing a sterling job juggling multiple applications for road closures, which the deputy town clerk and I are supporting. We have agreed some closures between Easter and the summer but think we've largely avoided school holidays, including May half term for a small section of Coombe Street. I've been liaising with the business community to ensure understanding for this.

Much better signage is being agreed and DC, LRTC and I are working hard to plan ahead and give as much notice as possible.

5. South West Water investment in Lyme

Thanks to the persistent work of the [River Lim Action](#), the Bathing Water Partnership Alliance and better government legislation on the water industry, South West Water (SWW) announced a [major investment programme 'Turning the Tide'](#) last year to separate the surface water and sewage systems in Lyme. SWW is conducting investigations currently before major works so RLA and I continue to ask for more advance notice of road closure requests to minimise the inevitable disruption.

6. Connecting 'Citizen Science' to authorities

As Dorset Council's reserve member on the [Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee](#) and [Local Nature Partnership](#), I'm working with the managers of the [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), [Dorset National Landscapes](#) and [Dorset Catchment Partnership](#) to explore ways to connect the work of Citizen Science river monitoring and ecosystem restoration groups to the government catchment work. There is substantial place-based voluntary enthusiasm and expertise which could and should be better connected to the partnering authorities on rivers, water quality, ecosystem restoration and flood mitigation and to Dorset Council's flood risk, highways and planning duties.

Dorset Council's Cabinet agreed to join the South West Flood and Coastal Shared Service on 3 March with BCP Council & East Devon District Council.

Reason for decision: “Joining the partnership would deliver climate resilience, increased external funding, stronger local networks, improved service capacity, and reduced reliance on consultancy support, whilst enabling closer collaboration with local councils and the Environment Agency.”

It is all the more important that the place-based voluntary water quality and ecosystem restoration work of the local river and beach groups are linked up into Dorset Council, the Local Nature Partnership, Dorset Catchment Partnership and the other significant stakeholders working in these areas. Excellent progress is being made on this.

7. [Future Coast Charmouth](#)

The DEFRA-funded project in assessing community priorities to adapt to having no coastal protection in future is working with residents, visitors and key stakeholders to focus on outcomes from nature-based flood mitigation to asset rollback.

There are challenges arising from misunderstanding around the urgency of the need to adapt to ‘No Active Intervention’ Shoreline Management Plan designation from 2025 – this also applies to Monmouth Beach.

We are seeking clarity from DEFRA as to whether town and parish councils take on responsibility for maintenance of existing coastal protection assets under the changed designation.

8. [Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service proposed cuts](#)

Ironic then, that we are fighting to prevent the closure of **Charmouth Fire Station**, one of the most available crews in DWFRS at 95% and the one most closely supporting the Marshwood Vale, East Devon (Axminster and Colyton fire stations), Lyme and Bridport.

The [public consultation](#) on the proposed closure of 8 fire stations in the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service runs until 13 May so please do add your views.

A view from LRTC requesting better government funding for Fire and Rescue Services and rejecting the proposed closures pending a strategic review would be very welcome.

9. **Public Transport and improved accessibility**

I’m involved with WATAG (Western Area Transport Group) and Dorset Council’s Bus User Group, which met on 9 March. Dorset Council receives substantially less funding than neighbouring authorities as rurality is not part of the assessment. Improvements to bus stops have been requested, including Real Time Information Systems, better information and accessibility for passengers with mobility, visual or auditory challenges.

Please let me know if you’d like a copy of the slide presentation to the Bus User Group.

10. Accessibility and mobility generally

I've been trying to find solutions for residents with mobility challenges who need parking spaces close to home. Magna is only prepared to create spaces at their tenants' cost so I'm trying to see whether other charitable or partnership options might be viable.

Lyme has many areas unsuitable for a range of physical or hidden disabilities so I'm interested in any organisations who could help us improve their access around town and to services and facilities e.g. hospital transport, safer crossing points, better quality pavements, fewer unsafe dark spaces.

11. Dorset COP and Youth COP - DCAN

We held the first meetings of the Dorset COP working group on 6 March and 1 April, led by [Dorset CAN](#) and this year including [Dorset Council](#) (DC), the [Local Nature Partnership](#) and the director of [Coastland College](#).

Please save the date and attend – **Sat 14 November** at Kingston Maurward College.

We've also set up a Youth COP working group, hoping to run an event with schools and youth groups on Friday 13 Nov at the end of Coastland College's Environment Week. We're also looking to improve volunteering opportunities in environmental activities and find better ways to measure and report the positive impact on people's lives of climate and nature projects.

Please contact me if you're able to support and help with any of these priorities:

Email: cllrbelinda.bawden@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01305 216511

Belinda Bawden
26 March 2026

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

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

Officers: A. Mullins (assistant town clerk), J. Wright (town clerk)

Guests: Cllr B. Bawden (Dorset Council ward member)

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

25/132/C Public Forum

L. Gibbons

L. Gibbons said he had challenged the council for 14 years over excessive and potentially unlawful pavement licence charges and his position had now been vindicated. He had been contacted by the town clerk to request a meeting with himself and the mayor but he was not comfortable with meeting without representatives of Cobb Traders present. He said the town clerk would only meet him and he asked why other members were excluded, whether they understood what was taking place and why he was denied the right to representation. L. Gibbon said he subsequently received written confirmation that the Marine Parade is a highway and therefore subject to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. This meant the maximum pavement licence fee was £350, not £4,500, payable to Dorset Council, not the town council. He said this belated admission represented an embarrassing climbdown and exposed a troubling level of incompetence in the handling of the matter. He said the town council had adopted an unnecessarily confrontational approach throughout, entirely at odds with the constructive, professional, solution-focused discussions he had had with Dorset Council. He said the town clerk had said to him in October he would never win this, but how wrong he was. He said only public scrutiny, media attention and BBC coverage had forced the reversal, although the council's public statement did not take responsibility and incorrectly attempted to blame Dorset Council. He urged the council to take ownership of the mistake, acknowledge it was wrong and ensure he and other affected businesses were refunded in full. He said the issue had left a stain on the town council's reputation and he hoped lessons were learned and affected businesses were treated fairly, transparently and lawfully going forward. He thanked those who had supported him through this process.

T. Robinson

T. Robinson, chef patron and director of Tom's Lyme Regis, spoke about hospitality, which creates places where people want to visit, work, live and invest. He said following on from the government's last two budgets, businesses had been held back, investment cut, jobs lost and venues closed. There had been 100,000 jobs lost in the sector nationally, with west Dorset hospitality employing 5,848 workers, 600 of which were in Lyme Regis, which needed protecting. He said hospitality provided local social benefits, a place to go, socialise, make friends and reduce social isolation. It was a non-prejudiced employer, giving unskilled or low-skilled people a platform for career development. He said hospitality had seen several directly regressive employment taxes, with business rates and national insurance contributions increasing and wages increasing faster than inflation. He said the sector paid 10% of business rates while being responsible for 3% of turnover, and the UK had one of the highest rates of VAT in Europe. Hospitality provided jobs from first time roles to leadership roles, and it was the largest employer of people aged under 24, providing jobs, training, opportunity and rewarding careers. He said hospitality was one of the most gender-balanced and diverse employers in the UK, employing people with disabilities, providing part-time roles and allowing staff to have other commitments. He said local hospitality establishments helped the wider economy, benefitting fishermen, farmers, brewers, vineyards, food service companies and other local artisans, providing a market for trade and growth. He said given the right conditions and support from local and national government, growth could be generated, creating greater economic benefits in the local community. He said he appreciated the council's decision on the matter of outside seating, which would eventually benefit him, but he was frustrated it had taken this long to come to a decision. He understood this was based on the council being caught out, as opposed to working with local businesses to enable stability and growth. He hoped for a swift refund before businesses had to apply for new licences and pay further fees. He criticised the council's public statement saying it had no obligation to help local businesses and said the council needed to stop biting back when opposed and to work constructively with the people it represented. He thanked those involved in bringing the matter to a resolution.

T. Mayers

T. Mayers said the pavement licence issue was a stark reflection of the contempt the council appeared to hold for local businesses and said it was not a minor administrative error, but a serious failure of governance, for which someone must take responsibility. He said the council's public statement that it had no statutory responsibility to support local businesses was particularly shocking, because although this was correct, he felt it was an extraordinary and ill-judged statement. He said it made it clear the council had no intention of supporting the local economy, reading as a deliberate act of defiance towards businesses which underpinned the town's prosperity.

T. Mayers also spoke about parking, referring to the Cobb Traders' request for free parking on Saturday 12 December for the Big Christmas Weekend. This was declined by the town council as Dorset Council did not allow a Saturday in December, but he said this was incorrect. He said Dorset Council had subsequently confirmed it would be willing to accommodate this and asked why the assistant town clerk did not verify this before the request was dismissed. He noted the council had chosen Christmas Eve as a free parking day, when most shopping was complete and many businesses closed early. He

said the Cobb Traders had also requested a winter parking discount, in line with schemes elsewhere, and they awaited a response. They had also asked for detailed parking data, including vehicle numbers and average stay to build a credible business case for reform. However, they had received a single page revenue summary, which was inadequate and prevented meaningful analysis.

T. Mayers also spoke about the LymeLiving magazine, which he felt was a gross misuse of public funds. He asked how the council could justify spending over £62,700 on a publication with a readership of around 800, while rejecting the opportunity for a full-time police community support officer (PCSO). He understood from the mayor and town clerk this £93,000 opportunity, which was equivalent to two officers, was declined on cost grounds, despite the clear benefits to public safety and community wellbeing. He urged the council to scrap or significantly scale back the magazine, abandon the failed Party in the Park event, and redirect funds into a PCSO that would deliver real, measurable benefits.

B. Bawden

B. Bawden said she was raising concerns brought to her by the Cobb Traders. She asked if the LymeLiving magazine was good value for money and whether the costs of £62,700, plus the costs of a new communications officer and photographer, were justified for a readership of around 800. She asked if the £10,000 for Party in the Park was the full budget or whether there were additional costs and whether this was justified for around 200 people. She asked why it was claimed 2,000 attended when the event licence was for 500 people. She asked whether these budgets would be better spent on dedicated PCSOs for Lyme Regis. She said real time information systems showing bus arrival times would be a huge improvement for residents, workers and visitors, therefore a better budget priority.

B. Bawden said she was concerned about a graphic which had been included in the council's business bulletin, which presented a misleading picture of the delivery of council services and suggested a parity with Dorset Council. She listed some of the services carried out by Dorset Council that were not included and said it did not refer to the town council's statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, asking what actions the council had undertaken.

S. Lloyd

S. Lloyd spoke about the LymeLiving magazine, for which she had received two different figures for the annual forecast: £40,000 and £65,200. This included a communications role of around £38,000 but it was not clear what proportion of that role was dedicated to the magazine. She said 1,200 copies were printed for the February edition, of which 458 were posted to households, 742 were placed at community collection points, and 500 were distributed digitally by email. She said this showed a high cost per unit for a council publication and asked if the magazine represented good value for money, given the number distributed. She had suggested alternatives, including an A5 format, with more pages if content volume required it, tighter print runs aligned to demand, charging for the magazine, and greater use of digital distribution, which had been pushed back in favour of retaining the current format, without a clear financial comparison. She said modern marketing and publishing tools meant a brochure of this calibre could be produced using

templated digital workflows, automating submission collection and editorial processes, and a PDF prepared efficiently for print in hours. She would be happy to demonstrate how this process worked. She said a 32-page A4 publication with 1,200 copies was £550 for printing alone, illustrating how significantly lower the base production cost can be when separated from wider overheads. She said other councils managed costs differently, including reduced publication frequency, using a capped contract, using less polished materials, and generating advertising revenue that covers design, print and distribution, helping to offset or minimise the cost to residents. She said this demonstrated the current model was not the only option and £65,000 was significant. She requested a formal comparison between the current approach and lower cost alternatives before further public funds were committed.

L. Jenkin

L. Jenkin said in 1948, an officer worked on identifying and registering footpaths in Lyme Regis as part of a national post-war effort, but the officer died in office and his work was left unfinished. From 1999 to 2008, when she was a town councillor, she and the late Cllr Spencer Hogg worked to identify and register footpaths missing from the official map. They interviewed many residents from Lyme Regis who testified that in previous years, they had used Bagsters Steps and were successful in registering it as a public highway. She said the recent owners had installed a gate and gateposts, although a highway must not have either, as it suggested it is a private entrance. She said a highway must also not have obstructions such as bins. The Open Spaces Society had on its website a similar case in Somerset, which went into case law; the owners of the path in Somerset were required by magistrates to remove all obstructions, including gateposts and to return the lane to public use. She said in that situation, Somerset County Council supported the wealthy owners. She had met with someone from Dorset Council's rights of way team but he was not helpful and said the steps were dangerous and young children would come to grief, neither of which were relevant issues to the footpath. She asked for the town council's help in going to Weymouth Magistrates to require Bagsters Steps to be open for public use, and to have the gateposts and obstructions removed. She said the steps were the only pedestrian access to the River Lym between Jordan Flats and the sea. She was willing to approach the magistrates court and asked if the town council would support her in this action.

N. Ball

N. Ball read out a poem he had written.

G. Symonds

G. Symonds said Cobb Traders had had enough of what they perceived as an anti-business approach and they wished to work constructively. He said they formally requested a meeting with all members and members should lead the agenda, not officers. They were seeking an open, collective discussion without officers stifling debate. He said local businesses were not the enemy, they were partners in the success of this town and should be treated as such.

A. Ball (read out by an officer)

Referring to the statement of internal control and risk management, A. Ball said there seemed to be conflict between senior officers and councillors regarding those who produced reports and those making the decisions. He suggested if assessments were better produced, informed decisions could be made constructively and safely. He felt this highlighted a possible disconnect or complacency between officers and councillors, it raised concerns and could be deemed risky or high risk. He noted the remit of a clerk and remit of a councillor.

Referring to internal audit, he noted the discussion on the selection of an auditor and suggested change would be a positive thing, as the current auditors had worked with the town council for a number of years. He suggested this was important in a changing landscape with different challenges ahead. He referred to the audit findings and listed some of the issues, which he said seemed a fairly extensive list which had occurred in a short space of time. He suggested this be carefully monitored to avoid these errors in future.

Referring to the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee meeting and specifically the item about the Lyme Regis Visitor Hub, he asked members to compare the draft minutes to what was actually said at the meeting. He said everything discussed should be reasonable and thoroughly minuted and suggested this was not the case for these minutes. He listed some of the comments which had not been minuted but he felt were relevant. He said although it may seem insignificant, it could make a difference to future decisions, with minutes remaining as a record for generations to come, while recordings were for support and transparency. He said he had been told recordings would be made available on the council website soon, as per the audio recording protocol.

A. Ball referred to the item on the agenda which recommended an informal and confidential member workshop due to the sensitivity of issues to be discussed. He felt this was against the council's objective to be more transparent and appeared secretive and distrustful. He felt the timing of this discussion was distasteful as there were a number of ongoing issues regarding possible unlawful charges, which may mean the council cannot collect the income. He asked if this was why there was an urgency to look for income elsewhere. He suggested some of the larger projects being pursued were not seen as the best decisions by the townspeople.

A. Ball noted the council was paying £681 per month for business rates on Guildhall Cottage, although he understood all business activity was now being carried out from St Michael's Business Centre. As such, he believed the Grade II Listed Guildhall Cottage was eligible for 100% rates' relief and he asked for confirmation of why this wasn't the case.

A. Spargo (read out by an officer)

A. Spargo expressed his dismay about charges made to seafront businesses for tables and chairs outside their premises. He said it seemed legally dubious and in these difficult times, where empty restaurants and shops would deter tourists, it would make the town less appealing. He was aware money was tight but the town needed these people.

25/133/C Dorset Council Matters

Dorset Council (DC) ward member Cllr B. Bawden gave the following updates:

- DC's Full Council had agreed the 2026-27 budget, which included a £5million flood resilience fund and £250k for a new gully cleaning crew.
- The highways team had been working hard, with 34 days of gritting followed by constant rain, while trying to keep the highways open. They were now focusing on hot spots to fix damage, improve drainage and reduce disruption.
- The final government local authority settlement and special educational needs funding had been announced but it would not solve the problem long-term. The government had agreed to take existing debt from local authorities but not determined how it would be paid for. Many local authorities would have to declare bankruptcy if the high needs funding was not sorted out.
- The electoral review was agreed, with the same number of Dorset councillors as currently. The next step would be to review the boundaries with others.
- An amended motion was made requiring registered housing providers to review their policies on selling houses, prioritising sales to local families and replacing them with properties in the same area.
- There had been an announcement of the proposed closure of eight fire stations in the Dorset and Wiltshire area, including four in Dorset. There had been a public meeting in Charmouth organised by the Fire Brigades Union, attended by 120 people. There would be a 'save Charmouth Fire Station' campaign and she asked people to support this.

25/134/C Questions from Councillors

Cllr A. Wood

Cllr A. Wood asked if DC had allocated any extra money to highways for potholes as the roads were in a bad state.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC had announced the prioritisation of fixing potholes.

25/135/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr S. Cockerell – away
Cllr M. Ellis – personal commitment
Cllr P. May – holiday
Cllr C. Reynolds – illness

25/136/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

25/137/C Dispensations

There were none.

25/138/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17 December 2025

Proposed by Cllr D. Holland and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17 December 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

25/139/C Matters arising from the minutes of Full Council meeting held on 29 October 2025

Members noted the report.

25/140/C Update Report

Members noted the report.

25/141/C Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report.

25/142/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr C. Alridge, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2025 and 27 January 2026, to note the committee's comments made on planning applications under the power delegated by Full Council, and to note the cancellation of the meeting on 6 January 2026.

25/143/C Environment Committee

Members noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 28 January 2026 was cancelled.

25/144/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2026, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/39/HR – The Town Clerk's Objectives 2026-27

RESOLVED: to approve the town clerk's objectives for 2026-27.

25/42/HR – Operations Manager, Six-Month Probation Review

RESOLVED: to approve the operations manager's permanent employment with the council, effective from 8 November 2025.

25/43/HR – Gardener and Maintenance Person (post holder 211), Six-Month Probation Review

RESOLVED: to approve the gardener and maintenance person's (post holder 211) continued employment with the council, effective from 7 December 2025.

25/145/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2026, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/46/SF – Internal Audit Report, Visit One 2025-26

RESOLVED: to note the internal auditor's report for visit one of 2025-26 and approve the management responses.

25/50/SF – Debtors

Members discussed the level of debt related to the accreted land, currently at £37k and growing, and the length of time DC was taking to agree the lease, currently at around two years. It was suggested members gave officers a clear instruction to take legal action.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, members **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to take legal action against Dorset Council relating to the debt for the accreted land.

25/146/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr G. Caddy, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/59/TCP – Free Parking Days

RESOLVED: the non-charging days in Lyme Regis car parks for 2026 as follows:

- Sunday 10 May (Blessing of the Boats)
- Sunday 6 September (Lyme Splash)
- Sunday 8 November (Remembrance Sunday)
- Saturday 5 December (Small business Saturday)
- Saturday 21 November (Christmas Lights switch on)
- Thursday 24 December (Christmas Eve)

25/60/TCP – Request to Explore a Sister-Municipality Relationship

RESOLVED: to agree to receive a further report in spring 2026 on the feasibility of a sister-municipality relationship with the Municipality of Fundy Albert, New Brunswick, Canada.

25/147/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Members noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 14 January 2026 was cancelled.

25/148/C Community Safety Accreditation Scheme

The town clerk clarified that the existing enforcement officer would move to part-time hours on 1 April 2026, which meant there were vacancies for 1.5 people, allowing the council to move to a different kind of service. He said there would be no increase in the current enforcement officer salary as it was already equivalent to a PCSO's salary. He added that joining the scheme would cost the council £300 for accreditation.

It was clarified the council had looked at funding a PCSO via Dorset Police but this would have cost in excess of £90k for just one officer, so this scheme appeared to be a good alternative.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to approve an 'in principle' decision to join Dorset Council's Community Accreditation Scheme and appoint 1.5 enforcement officers with a declared intent of redesignating their posts to comply with the conditions of the scheme.

25/149/C Development of a Transport Strategy for Lyme Regis

The town clerk said this was not the final plan and there would be plenty of scope for more discussion moving forward.

Members agreed it seemed a sensible strategy and supported the recommendations within the Dorset Council report.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to take forward the three recommendations made by Dorset Council in its report about the Lyme Regis transport workshop.

25/150/C Ideas to generate more income and/or reduce costs and/or improve operating efficiency

The town clerk said some of the ideas needed to be explored further, which would be difficult to do at a committee meeting, so it was proposed to have a separate session to review them. Any ideas would then be brought forward to the council for consideration.

If members had any ideas of their own, they should let the deputy town clerk know.

Proposed by Cllr M. Denney and seconded by Cllr G. Caddy, members **RESOLVED** to hold an informal, single-purpose briefing session to which all members are invited and at which ideas to increase income and/or reduce operating costs and/or improve operating efficiency can be discussed and considered in more detail before feeding into the budget-setting process for 2027-28.

25/151/C List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr D. Holland and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments in December 2025 for the sum of £203,634.74.

25/152/C Seafront and Beach Concessions

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe 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 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.

25/153/C Sale of Former Office Building

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe 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 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.

25/154/C Park and Ride 2026 and Outturn 2025

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe 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 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.

25/155/C Legal Advice

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe 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 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.

25/156/C Exempt Business

a) Seafront and Beach Concessions

Proposed by Cllr M. Denney and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to award the trampolines (or similar) concession to Henry Herbert and the children's games and activities concession to United Beach Missions at the tender prices offered, both for 2026 to 2028.

It was noted United Beach Missions normally operates only in the summer holidays and suggested they could be asked to also operate in the Easter holidays.

b) Sale of Former Office Building

Proposed by Cllr G. Caddy and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, members **RESOLVED** to note the position with the marketing of the former council office and delegate authority to approve the next steps of a marketing and disposal process to the town clerk in consultation with Alder King, the mayor, deputy mayor and the chairman and vice-chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee

c) Park and Ride 2026 and Outturn 2025

Members discussed the potential to move to a pay-to-park model but noted this was not straightforward as the park and ride land was not the council's, therefore it wasn't in its gift to implement this model, although this was still being pursued.

Members discussed the park and ride charges and it was suggested the fees were increased as the service had run at an increased net cost in 2025.

The town clerk said it was a delicate balance, as the aim was to encourage people to use park and ride instead of driving into town and increasing prices would discourage people from using it.

Members discussed the period of operation and whether park and ride was required for Easter, the May Bank Holiday and the June weekends.

Members discussed the park and ride signage.

Cllr G. Stammers left the meeting at 8.29pm in line with her pecuniary interests.

It was suggested digital signage was used in future to let people know car parks were full and to use the park and ride.

Proposed by Cllr G. Caddy and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to:

- approve First being appointed to operate the 2026 park and ride service for Lyme Regis at a cost of last year plus inflation, per bus per day, i.e., a maximum potential cost of last year plus inflation,
- ask officers to obtain prices for 83 or 67 days of operation and with a timetable operating between approximately 10.30am and 7pm to a service frequency of approximately 13 minutes and on the following dates:

- 28 March to 12 April inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover Easter and school half-term (16 days) (possibly to be removed if 67 days is agreed)
 - 2-4 May to cover the bank holiday weekend (3 days)
 - 23 May to 31 May inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover school half term (9 days)
 - All other June and July **weekends** from 6/7 June to 18/19 July inclusive (14 days)
 - 22 July to 30 August inclusive, i.e., the entire school holiday period (every day, including weekdays) (40 days)
- approve the deployment of the same AA advanced signage as used in previous years at an estimated total cost of approximately £1,000 + VAT.
 - to authorise officers to investigate the options for the future delivery of a park and ride service for Lyme having regard to any changes which may emerge through the local plan process and report back to the appropriate committee in due course.
 - to approve the following ticketing arrangements for the 2026 park and ride service:
 - Adult single - £2.00 – unchanged since 2024
 - Adult return - £3.50 – unchanged since 2024
 - Child single - £1.50 – unchanged since 2024
 - Child return - £2.50 – unchanged since 2024
 - Group return (up to four people, not more than two adults) - £10.00 – new tariff introduced in 2024 and unchanged since then
 - Group return (up to five people, not more than three adults) - £12.00 – Unchanged since 2024
 - Concessionary passes NOT accepted – unchanged since 2024
 - to note the outcome information for the 2025 park and ride service, including a total net cost to the council for the bus service (excluding land costs) of approximately £20,590 (increased from £8,517.00 in 2024 and £10,901 in 2023, but reduced from approximately £22k in 2022).

b) Legal Advice

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, members **RESOLVED** to obtain legal advice regarding a confidential matter.

The meeting closed at 8.47pm.

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11
MARCH 2026**

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr M. Denney, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr D. Holland, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr A. Wood

Officers: A. Mullins (assistant town clerk), J. Wright (town clerk)

25/157/C Public Forum

A. Ball (read out by an officer)

A. Ball said concerns surrounding the handling of outside seating charges on Marine Parade raised significant questions about administrative oversight, communication, and accountability. He said reports that businesses may have been overcharged or potentially charged for provisions that were not legally required pointed to a failure of due diligence by officers. Basic regulatory checks should have been undertaken before fees were imposed. He said this lack of scrutiny suggested either a misunderstanding of the permissions framework or a failure to coordinate with the licensing authorities. He was also concerned about the conduct and tone of officers in dealing with businesses and the public, with responses to questions appearing defensive rather than transparent. He said public bodies had a responsibility not only to administer rules correctly but to engage respectfully and constructively with those affected by their decisions. He believed officers appeared dismissive or unwilling to acknowledge potential errors, which undermined confidence in the council. He criticised public statements on the issue for their ambiguous language and careful phrasing, aimed at minimising responsibility instead of a clear explanation. The public expected clarity on what decisions were taken, on what authority, and whether the decisions were correct. He said if mistakes had been made, they must be acknowledged plainly. He advised the council to carefully manage potential refunds or corrective action, and said reimbursement must be transparent, consistent, and prompt. Attempts to delay, complicate, or partially address refunds could further damage trust. He said the issue raised questions about governance and oversight within the council and that internal review mechanisms should be in place to prevent officers from implementing policies or charges without a sound legal and administrative basis, or otherwise strengthened. He said there needed to be accountability if responsibility rested with decisions or advice provided by officers. He said the issue extended beyond the financial impact of outside seating but also on the reputation of the town and the credibility of the council. He referenced the importance of public confidence and the need for acknowledgement of what went wrong and a commitment to ensuring similar mistakes were not repeated.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans said there was an assertion officers had been responsible for the overcharging for outside seating. He pointed out there had been four successive councils that had approved the charges and accordingly delivered the decisions. He said local councils expected to get criticism but the amount of criticism officers had received over this issue was inappropriate.

25/158/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr G. Caddy – away
Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold – holiday
Cllr S. Larcombe – work commitments

25/159/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

25/160/C Dispensations

There were none.

25/161/C Outside Seating on Marine Parade

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, 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.

25/162/C Exempt Business

a) Outside Seating on Marine Parade

Members considered the options for repayments and agreed each business should be repaid the amount it had paid since April 2012; this was schedule A in the papers.

Members discussed whether to refer the claim from Largigi's to the council's solicitor Porter Dodson due to its complexity and to therefore deal with it separately to other businesses.

The town clerk said he had met with the majority of affected businesses, who had been understanding of the situation. He had had the opportunity to explain the situation from the town council's perspective and had committed to making any repayments as swiftly as possible once the council had made a decision. Each business would be asked to sign a settlement agreement to that effect.

Members were concerned there had not been a public statement clarifying the council's position and felt this would be beneficial as there was a lot of misinformation in the public domain.

The town clerk suggested the council should also refund legal costs incurred by businesses in the past, when challenging the fees.

It was proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge that having noted the report on outside seating on Marine Parade, particularly the relevant legal considerations, to approve an unbudgeted sum to cover schedule A of payments, with the exception of Largigi, which will be dealt with separately.

This was not voted on as a member was concerned about approving an unlimited budget sum and suggested a limit of £100k.

The town clerk confirmed the repayments would total c.£90k, plus legal disbursements, excluding Largigi, so the suggested £100k would be sufficient.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members **RESOLVED** that having noted the report on outside seating on Marine Parade, particularly the relevant legal considerations, to approve an unbudgeted sum up to a maximum of £100k to cover schedule A of payments, with the exception of Largigi, which will be dealt with separately.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** that due to the complexity of the claim from Largigi's, to instruct the town clerk to refer the claim to the council's solicitor Porter Dodson for advice and a final settlement, to be brought to the Full Council for approval.

It was noted there were other issues affecting Marine Parade that still needed to be discussed with Dorset Council, such as memorial benches, events in the shelters, maintenance and lighting.

Cllr P. May left the meeting at 8.11pm.

The town clerk said there were other provisions within the Tripartite Agreement that might come unstuck and further discussions were taking place with Dorset Council.

Cllr P. May returned to the meeting at 8.12pm.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Committee: Full Council

Date: 1 April 2026

Title: Matters arising from the minutes of Full Council meeting held on 11 February 2026 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 11 March 2026

Purpose of Report

To inform members of the matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11 February 2026 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 11 March 2026 that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues in those minutes

Recommendation

Members note the report and raise any issues on the minutes of the meeting that they require further information on

Report

25/148/C – Community Safety Accreditation Scheme

Recruitment for enforcement officers is underway, and interviews are scheduled for 8 April 2026. The advert makes it clear the council is seeking to achieve community safety accreditation and the applicants appointed will be subject to police vetting.

25/150/C – Ideas to generate more income and/or reduce costs and/or improve operating efficiency

The deputy town clerk will shortly be notifying members of the date of the meeting to discuss the ideas.

25/152/C – Seafront and Beach Concessions

The successful concessionaires have been notified and in the case of the trampolines and deckchairs, are already in operation.

25/154/C – Park and Ride 2026 and Outturn 2025

Having reviewed the passenger data from previous years, numbers are typically low for the Easter period. Given the disproportionate cost to operate, it was agreed with First that the park and ride service would not operate during the Easter holidays. The service will commence on 2 May 2026, as per the rest of the agreed schedule.

John Wright
Town clerk
March 2026

Town council comments made under delegated authority arising from the cancelled meeting of the planning committee scheduled to be held on 17 February

1. P/FUL/2025/07423

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

External and internal alterations and refurbishment works to part of school, including replacement facade materials, doors and windows and new external deck area
St Michaels Ce Va Primary School Kings Way Lyme Regis DT7 3DY

The town council recommends approval of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan, its scale and design is in keeping with the subject property and it has no detrimental effect to neighbours

2. P/HOU/2026/00059

HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION

Erect single storey extension with dual pitched roof and low profile roof lights; construct new entrance door on the northern boundary, replacement windows and doors and repairs to the existing slate roof; installation of air source heat pump
5 East Cliff Lyme Regis DT7 3DH

The town council recommends approval of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan, its scale and design is in keeping with the subject property and it has no detrimental effect to neighbours

3. P/FUL/2026/00490

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

Installation of air source heat pump, ductwork and vent louvres; replacement window
Lyme Regis Baptist Church Silver Street Lyme Regis DT7 3HR

The town council recommends approval of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan, its scale and design is in keeping with the subject property and it has no detrimental effect to neighbours

Town council comments made under delegated authority arising from the cancelled meeting of the planning committee scheduled to be held on 10 March 2026

1. P/LBC/2026/01110

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Remove the mid-20th century sliding glass storm shutters to the three first floor windows; Remove the mid-20th century opening casements, incorporating a hopper vent, from each of the three first floor windows and replace them with casements that match exactly the surviving original fixed casements

5 Marine Parade Lyme Regis DT7 3JE

The town council recommends approval of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan and does not involve unacceptable or material harm to the Conservation Area or heritage assets.

2. P/HOU/2026/01177

HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION

Extension and conversion of existing garage to create additional bedroom and bathroom. Changes to parking arrangements

12 Blue Waters Drive Lyme Regis DT7 3EU

The town council recommends approval of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan, its scale and design is in keeping with the subject property and it has no detrimental effect to neighbours

3. P/LBC/2026/00395

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Internal alterations to include the replacement of ceiling with plasterboard; installation of vinyl sheet flooring; lighting; cabinetry and equipment

Temple House 63 Broad Street Lyme Regis DT7 3QF

The town council recommends approval of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan and does not involve unacceptable or material harm to the Conservation Area or heritage assets.

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2026

Present:

Chairman: Cllr P. May

Members: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr P. May, Cllr M. Denney, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr A. Wood, Cllr G. Turner

Co-opted members: G. Barr, V. Elcoate

Officers: K. Newman (administrative and community engagement assistant), S. O'Connell (operations manager)

Guests: P. Benfield (Turn Lyme Green)

25/56/ENV Public Forum

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

25/57/ENV Apologies

Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold – holiday
J. Breeze – illness

25/58/ENV Minutes

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr P. May, the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

25/59/ENV Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

25/60/ENV Dispensations

There were none.

25/61/ENV Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2025

Monitoring and Bathing Water Quality Church Beach Notices

Although it was a Dorset Council responsibility to display the notices, it was suggested the town council could contribute financially to an electronic display system.

A member asked for a future agenda item to allow members to consider approving unbudgeted expenditure for the electronic display.

Carbon Literacy

Members who hadn't already done Carbon Literacy training were encouraged to do it now that the operations manager would be accredited to deliver the training.

The operations manager said he has asked for clarification on how many members from the town council needed to be trained in order to remain a carbon literate organisation.

Food security discussion

A member asked this to be flagged as a potential objective for the next financial year.

25/62/ENV Update Report

Garden QR codes and Signs project

The operations manager was concerned QR codes could be easily tapped into for criminal use and that the technology may become obsolete over time. He didn't think it would be achievable to spend the allocated budget within the necessary timeframe and that the objective may need to take a different steer towards something long-term and self-managing.

It was noted the budget would need to be accrued to the next financial year.

25/63/ENV Environment Committee – Objectives

Members noted the report.

25/64/ENV Bathing Water Quality Meeting Minutes

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, the minutes from the Bathing Water Quality meeting held on 13 January 2026 were **RECEIVED**.

It was noted there were still no confirmed details or dates for South West Water's Turning the Tide works and it was suggested the council put pressure on them to confirm this.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Turner members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that officers write to Allan Burrows and Sarah Sharpe at South West Water to ask for an update on their progress of the Turning the Tide works in Lyme Regis, as well as another letter asking for them to engage with officers to minimise impact on the town.

25/65/ENV River Lim Action Group Report

A member asked the operations manager if the external works team would benefit from having a Bactiquick monitor, as mentioned in the report, for events like Big Paddle Out or Lyme Splash.

The operations manager said the team wouldn't have the need for it because it was external organisers that set up the events.

The operations manager was asked if the external works team would be able to assist in pulling up the Himalayan balsam.

The operations manager said the external works team would not be doing the work as it was Magna land but he suggested an external contractor could do the work. It was noted there was £7,000 in the budget to assist with river maintenance, which had not yet been spent.

A member asked for an item on the next agenda to consider this expenditure.

25/66/ENV Bee Friendly Lyme Regis

P. Benfield from Turn Lyme Regis was invited to present a report on the Bee Friendly Lyme Regis initiative. She asked for the council's support to collaborate and publicise the project.

It was suggested this project could work hand in hand with the existing Great Big Dorset Hedge project and that the council could assist with both.

The operations manager said funding would need to be put forward in a budget for this. It was suggested the council could identify areas on town council land for solitary bees.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the council recognises the importance of bees to local ecology, endorse and support the Bee Friendly Lyme Regis project, and promote its activities through council communication channels.

25/67/ENV Riparian Owners (River Lim) - Stakeholder Briefing Session

It was noted the consultation had a deadline of 30 April 2026 and the council, as a riparian owner, needed to submit a response.

The operations manager said he would ensure a response was submitted.

25/68/ENV Big Paddle Out 2026

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2026

Present

Chairman: Cllr G. Caddy

Members: Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr C. Reynolds

Officers: A. Mullins (assistant town clerk), K. Newman (administrative and community engagement assistant)

25/46/HR Public Forum

N. Ball

N. Ball asked if members could say their names for the benefit of the audio recording. He suggested gardener Alan Legg should get recognition for his service. He said the cemetery looked the best it had ever looked, it must remain in the state that it is and hoped nothing changes in relation to the way that it is cared after. N. Ball drew members' attention to appraisals on the agenda and noted high risk audit items, ongoing issues with businesses, and the attitude and conduct of some individuals and how they conducted themselves in dealing with sensitive and serious matters. He said members should look at this carefully when making decisions for the town. He said members had the final say and officers were paid staff doing a job for the town as a whole, including businesses and townspeople, although this didn't seem entirely so at the moment.

25/47/HR Apologies

Cllr M. Ellis – personal commitment

25/48/HR To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 7 January 2026

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2026, were **ADOPTED**.

25/49/HR Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

25/50/HR Dispensations

There were none.

25/51/HR Matters arising from the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 7 January 2026.

Members noted the report.

25/52/HR Update Report

Members noted the report.

25/53/HR Human Resources Committee – Objectives

Members noted the report.

25/54/HR Employee Benefits

Members were generally in support of offering health benefits and medical cover to employees and noted the officers' recommendation to agree a health cash plan, with firm costings to be confirmed.

A member asked that the committee was given the opportunity to agree how the remainder of the approved budget for employee benefits would be spent, with a menu of options to be provided. It was agreed members needed to have more oversight and scrutiny of the options.

Proposed by Cllr C Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve taking out a health cash plan for employees and to delegate authority to officers to determine the appropriate level of cover, within the approved budget, and to ask officers to bring options for other employee benefits back to this committee following consultation with employees.

25/55/HR Employment Rights Act 2025

A member said it would be good to see what the laws were changed from.

The assistant town clerk agreed to email members to clarify what the previous and new laws were.

25/56/HR Town Clerk's Annual Appraisal

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, 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 information relating to an individual 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.

25/57/HR Deputy Town Clerk, Spinal Column Point Progression

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, 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 information relating to an individual 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.

25/58/HR Assistant Town Clerk, Spinal Column Point Progression

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, 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 information relating to an individual 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.

25/59/HR Finance Manager, Performance Appraisal Summary

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, 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 information relating to an individual 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.

25/60/HR Operations Manager, Performance Appraisal Summary

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, 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 information relating to an individual 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.

25/61/HR Spinal Point Column Progression and Pay Arrangements for Other Employees for 2026-27

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, 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 information relating to an individual 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.

25/62/HR Confidential Staffing Update

Proposed by and seconded by, 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 information relating to an individual 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.

25/63/HR Exempt Business

a) Town Clerk's Annual Appraisal

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the town clerk's annual appraisal summary.

b) Deputy Town Clerk, Spinal Column Point Progression

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the deputy town clerk's annual appraisal summary.

The assistant town clerk left the meeting at 7.21pm.

c) Assistant Town Clerk, Spinal Column Point Progression

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the support services manager's annual appraisal summary and approve her progression to spinal column point 32 on 1 April 2026.

The assistant town clerk returned to the meeting at 7.22pm.

d) Finance Manager, Performance Appraisal Summary

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the finance manager's annual appraisal summary and approve her progression to spinal column point 32 on 1 April 2026.

e) Operations Manager, Performance Appraisal Summary

Proposed by Cllr S. Cockerell and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the operations manager's annual appraisal summary and approve his progression to spinal column point 32 on 1 April 2026.

f) **Spinal Point Column Progression and Pay Arrangements for Other Employees for 2026-27**

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the spinal column point progression for post holders 217, 104, 106, 109, 205, 204, and 211.

g) **Confidential Staffing Update**

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.41pm.

DRAFT

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. May

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr G. Caddy, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr P. Evans, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr A. Wood

Officers: C. Austin (communications officer) M. Green (deputy town clerk)

25/52/SF

Public Forum

T. Meyers

T. Meyers spoke in relation to agenda item 9, Request from Cobb Traders – Parking Concessions, Free Parking Days and Autumn/Winter Parking Scheme. He said several businesses had stated that footfall had been down for the past couple of winters and this concern was now supported by the feedback gained from the Cobb Traders social media consultation with over 500 comments. He said it was clear from the hundreds of responses that many people were either visiting the town less frequently or staying for shorter periods of time. He said a common concern raised was the parking is cheaper in other nearby locations, particularly during the winter off-peak months. He said the Cobb Traders were very disappointed by the decision to extend winter parking charges from 6pm to 9pm in Monmouth Beach car park. They had reviewed other coastal towns in the area and they had struggled to find any that apply similar evening charges. He said Dorset Council had recently reversed its plans to introduce evening parking charges across its car parks. He said the town had to remain competitive to continue to attract visitors, particularly outside of the summer period, and that the town council couldn't be complacent and assume people would come irrespective of the price hikes in parking. He said East Devon offered a 50% winter discount and Swanage Town Council charged just £2 all day in their car parks during the off-peak months. He believed offering a similar discount in line with East Devon or Swanage would be an incentive for people to visit outside of the peak times and bring considerable benefits to the local economy. He said there was also a strong case to suggest that reduced parking charges may increase overall usage of the car parks, discourage parking on residential streets and encourage visitors to stay longer and increase revenue for Lyme Regis. He said the Cobb Traders had previously requested parking data to build a robust business case but the information provided limited to the total revenue figures did not allow for meaningful analysis of key metrics such as transaction volumes, average spend per visit, or occupancy rates. He said the Cobb Traders assumed data had been used to model the potential revenue impacts put forward on this agenda and the group would welcome the opportunity to review the data. He encouraged the council to introduce a winter parking discount, which could be introduced for a trial period of only a few months. He said it

could take the form of a daily rate, as in line with Swanage, or a percentage discount as in line with East Devon. He also requested on behalf of Cobb Traders that the parking benefits available to Lyme Regis residents were extended to those business owners who traded in Lyme Regis but reside outside of the boundary area. He said the Cobb Traders were pleased to hear the council was now allowing free parking on the Saturday of the Big Christmas Weekend and said the traders would also welcome this being extended to the Sunday in all town council car parks. He said it was a great opportunity for the council to show the council does support local businesses.

G. Symonds

G. Symonds spoke on the same agenda item. He said car parking charges in Lyme Regis could affect the entire economy of the town. He said charging for car parking in the evening, especially in the winter months would mean that Lyme Regis has some of the most expensive car parking in the country. He said not many people visited in the evenings, and that car parking should not be seen as a cash cow. He said the town council used Swanage Town Council as the benchmark for other decisions, but he felt this time the council had ignored Swanage and decided to have a different charging structure. He said soon people would start parking in other places where they didn't have to pay. He questioned the different figures in reports on this agenda; item 20 stated there would be a projected loss of income of £236,361 across both Woodmead and Monmouth Beach car parks, but he said this was incorrect because that figure was the entire takings of those car parks over a period of time and he wanted to challenge the council on the reported figures.

N. Ball

N. Ball said his son had sent five emails to five councillors, and only two had replied. He said even if councillors couldn't always answer questions, it would be courtesy for the council to engage with the public. His son was very interested in the town and what happens within the council chamber, and as the council wanted people to be interested in what it does, responding would be a good way to engage. He also spoke in relation to agenda item 9 and said the council needed to help businesses. He said the cost of living was going up, the cost of fuel was rising, and that the town was in for a difficult season. He referred to a previous comment that the town council had no statutory responsibility to help businesses and that businesses in the town paid business rates to Dorset Council, which was the case, but it was still a negative attitude. He recalled the last time the Cobb Traders had challenged the council over concessions in the gardens and that the council had squashed that idea to help local businesses, but it had now overcharged for outside seating. He said nobody was talking to each other and trust needed to be regained between the parishioners, the traders, and Dorset Council. He said people were getting fed up in the town with too much power from council officers and not enough discussion between councillors and the public. He felt the council was not going about the situation in the right way. Referring to the list of payments, he queried why business rates were being paid on the Guildhall.

R. De-Voisey

R. De-Voisey supported those who had already spoken and confirmed a survey on Facebook about parking was a true reflection of what she heard in her shop on a day-to-

day basis. She was concerned about claims some of the comments on social media were false and said she heard these kinds of comments she was hearing herself in her business, from hundreds of people. She urged the council to read all the comments if they had not done so already.

A. Ball (read out by an officer)

A. Ball expressed support for the three parking requests put forward by the Cobb Traders. He said extending the parking concessions to businesses with a registered trading address in Lyme Regis would provide meaningful support to the local business community, particularly during the quieter trading periods. He said many local traders relied on regular access to the town for operational needs, and enabling fair access to parking helped to strengthen the viability of local. He said the proposal for an additional free parking day on Sunday 13 December in support of the Big Christmas Weekend was also a positive initiative as events such as these relied on strong physical visitor turnout. Removing the barrier of parking charges could encourage greater attendance and increased footfall, helping to create a vibrant and successful event. He said the introduction of a discounted autumn and winter parking charge of £2 per day was a sensible and pragmatic approach during the off-peak season. He said during the off-peak months, parking demand was lower, and many spaces would otherwise remain unused, therefore if the council offered a lower daily rate, it was unlikely to represent a significant loss of income to the council. He said it had the potential to attract additional visitors and encourage longer stays in the town, by supporting local businesses at a time when trade was slower. He said many of those who would benefit from these concessions were likely to be parking during quieter periods and in spaces that might otherwise remain empty. He said in those circumstances, the reduced rate or concession did not necessarily replace existing revenue, it helped make productive use of parking capacity that would otherwise generate no income at all. He referred to a previous comment that the town council has no statutory responsibility to support local businesses and received no financial support to do so and said while this was correct in a legal sense, it reflected a short sighted and self-interested view of the council's role within the community. He said local businesses were not separate from the town, they were a fundamental part of its identity, economy and daily life. He said they created employment, attracted visitors and maintained the vitality of the high street and contributed a significant amount to the overall prosperity and appeal of Lyme Regis. He said a thriving business community benefited residents, visitors and the council itself and for that reason, the question should not be whether the council had a statutory obligation to support local businesses, but whether the council had a broader civic responsibility to act in ways that encouraged the town to thrive. He said the measures proposed by the Cobb Traders were modest, practical steps that foster success without placing a significant financial burden on the council. He said the proposals represented a constructive and common-sense approach to supporting local businesses, encouraging visitors during quiet months and strengthening the local economy, while making effective use of available parking spaces. He said the requests put forward by Cobb Traders deserved serious consideration and support.

25/53/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr M. Denney – illness
Cllr D. Holland – prior commitment
Cllr C. Reynolds – illness

25/54/SF Minutes

It was noted Cllr C. Aldridge had given her apologies for the meeting and was not absent without apology.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2026, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

25/55/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

25/56/SF Dispensations

There were none.

25/57/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 4 February 2026.

Beach replenishment

The deputy town clerk said Dorset Council (DC) had started the beach replenishment works and it was currently operating to programme.

There was some concern about the fencing remaining in place after the works were completed, as this closed off the beach to the public. The deputy town clerk said it was expected to be taken down within a couple of days of the work completing but it was agreed he would raise the concerns with DC and request it was taken down before the coming weekend.

25/58/SF Update Report

There was no update report.

25/59/SF Request from Cobb Traders – Parking Concessions, Free Parking Days and Autumn/Winter Parking Scheme

The chairman brought this item forward on the agenda.

Members discussed the request for businesses with a trading address in Lyme Regis to have a concessionary permit and noted there was already a non-residents' parking permit, which would be available to businesses and their employees at a discounted rate.

It was also noted DC offered a permit for two of its Lyme Regis car parks, which was cheaper still.

It was noted Monmouth Beach car park was classed as the short stay car park and Woodmead as the long stay car park, which is why the permits had historically been issued for Woodmead car park only. At Monmouth Beach car park, spaces went so quickly so it remained a short stay car park because of the turnover of people wanting to park.

The deputy town clerk suggested the non-residents' permit should be publicised more, because it did not seem that people were aware of the permit or who could benefit from it, although it was noted they were already advertised on the council website.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** not to make any changes to the current parking permits.

Members discussed the request to provide an additional free parking day in town council-owned car parks on Sunday 13 December to support the Big Christmas Weekend in Lyme Regis.

It was clarified that DC was not offering free parking on the Sunday, so the town council would be offering something more than DC. It was suggested if the council was encouraging people to stay and park for longer, it would be better for visitors to park in the long-stay Woodmead car park.

Members noted there would be less impact on the council's income if the free parking was restricted to Woodmead car park.

Proposed by Cllr A. Wood and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to offer an additional free parking day in town Woodmead car park only on Sunday 13 December to support the Big Christmas Weekend in Lyme Regis.

Members discussed the request for a discounted autumn/winter parking charge of £2 per day in town council-owned car parks.

Referring to earlier references to Swanage Town Council and East Devon District Council, the deputy town clerk said their business model was very different to this council as they received roughly 50% of their total income from the precept and a much smaller percentage of their overall income from car parking. He said car parking was the single largest source of income for this council and anything that affected the car parking income was potentially a much greater risk. He said it was very difficult to predict the outcome and that a reduction in car parking charges could entice more people to visit the town if it was combined with additional marketing and promotion at further cost.

A member asked if there was any data from other councils that supported more trade and footfall after introducing a concessionary rate.

The deputy town clerk stressed that the impact of parking charge changes was difficult to predict and what had worked for other towns may or may not work for Lyme Regis.

Members discussed the potential impact on income and noted the council's finances had recently come under scrutiny; any loss of income and potential impact on future budgets would need to be justified if it affected what the council could deliver for the town.

Members were reminded the 2026-27 budget had already been agreed and if changes were made now, the council would go straight into deficit. It was suggested it would be more appropriate to consider requests like this as part of the budget-setting process for the following year.

Members agreed it would be unpopular with residents if the council had to increase the precept to cover the shortfall on parking charges.

Members discussed the price suggestions for a blanket autumn/winter parking charge and the impact that could potentially have on the council and the town.

Members said residents already benefitted from the concessionary permit that allows free winter parking in town council-owned car parks and therefore only visitors and businesses would benefit from the blanket autumn/winter parking charge. They said although the council wanted to support local businesses, it needed to look at the bigger picture and agreeing to this request without a fully thought-out business plan and more data could bring a great risk. They asked to see weekly income figures from each car park instead of figures based on a period of a few months.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to defer the decision to offer a discounted autumn/winter parking charge of £2 per day in town council-owned car parks to a future meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee and for officers to provide further data on car parking income and variations, and comparisons to other towns in order to make an informed decision.

25/60/SF Strategy and Finance Committee - Objectives

Members noted the report.

25/61/SF Budget Performance, 1 April – 28 February 2026

Members noted the report.

25/62/SF Investments and Cash Holdings

Members noted the cash position at the end of February 2026,

25/63/SF List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the schedule of payments in January and February 2026 for the sums of £217,790.10 and £348,865.07, respectively.

25/64/SF Debtors

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr P. May, 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.

25/65/SF Exempt Business

a) Debtors' Report

Members were concerned about the debt relating to the accreted land, noting that the longer the situation carried on, the debt owed to the council would increase.

The meeting closed at 8.23pm.

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOURISM, COMMUNITY AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2026

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

Members: Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr A. Wood, Cllr G. Caddy, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Larcombe

Officers: A. Mullins (assistant town clerk), K. Newman (administrative and community engagement assistant), J. Wright (town clerk)

25/66/TCP Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

25/67/TCP Apologies

Cllr D. Holland – holiday
Cllr M. Denney – work commitments
Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold – holiday

25/68/TCP Minutes

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Caddy, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

25/69/TCP Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr M. Ellis declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 6, Grant Review, Woodmead Halls.

Cllr A. Wood declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 14, Breakdown of Expenditure for Lyme Living.

25/70/TCP Dispensations

There were none.

25/71/TCP Matters arising from minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2025

Cllr M. Ellis left the room at 7.02pm in line with her pecuniary interests.

Grant Review, Woodmead Halls

The assistant town clerk said the treasurer of Woodmead Halls had confirmed they were no further with the recruitment of trustees and a part-time manager. The committee agreed that if there was no movement by the end of the financial year, a report would be brought back to members to consider future funding, as the grant objectives had not been met.

A member asked what the main issues with recruitment were.

The assistant town clerk said the four current trustees had limited capacity and there was generally not enough manpower to progress the items that needed work on. The council had offered support for trustee recruitment via the Lyme Living magazine, social media, and town council website, but this had not yet been actioned.

A member asked how many payments the organisation had received to date.

The assistant town clerk said payments to Woodmead Halls had been made for the first two quarters but the last two payments had not yet been released.

Cllr M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 7.05pm.

25/72/TCP Update Report

New sculpture

The assistant town clerk said more photographs of the new sculpture had been provided by Michael Fairfax and these would be circulated to members.

Further enhancing weddings at the Guildhall

The committee formally recorded its appreciation for the administrative and community engagement's efforts at the recent Guildhall wedding fair, which was considered a great success

Lyme in Bloom

A member suggested officers contact the Uplyme and Lyme Regis Horticultural Society for suggestions for additional judges, and another member said he would contact the Lyme Regis Allotment Society directly for the same.

25/73/TCP Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee – Objectives

Members noted the report.

25/74/TCP To receive the minutes of the Party in the Park working group meeting held on 21 January 2026

Proposed by Cllr G. Caddy and seconded by Cllr S Larcombe, the minutes of the Party in the Park working group meeting held on 21 January 2026 were **RECEIVED**.

25/75/TCP Free Parking Days

Members discussed the annual allocation of free parking days in Woodmead car park and members agreed that the 'Small Business Saturday' initiative had not had a large following in Lyme Regis over the last few years. The traders' request to have free parking on Saturday 12 December instead therefore seemed reasonable.

The assistant town clerk said an additional request from the Cobb Traders for further free parking days as well as a request for an additional concessionary permit would be considered by the Strategy and Finance Committee.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to change one of the non-charging days in Lyme Regis car parks from 5 December (Small Business Saturday), to 12 December (Big Christmas Weekend).

25/76/TCP Honoured Citizens' Award

Members discussed the potential structure and frequency of the Honoured Citizens' Award and the potential introduction of an additional Mayor's Certificate of Recognition. It was agreed in principle to keep the Honoured Citizens' Award for significant achievements, typically linked to national events or special occasions, and to introduce a Mayor's Certificate of Recognition to be awarded annually at the end of the mayor's term with up to 12 certificates awarded each year, at the mayor's discretion, with suggestions from councillors and officers. Members agreed that some guidelines needed to be put in place.

Members agreed that the award was intended to recognise both long service and exceptional contributions to the community, with flexibility for the mayor to increase the number in exceptional circumstances. The process will avoid public nomination to prevent disappointment and maintain the value of the award.

Proposed Cllr A. Wood and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the Honoured Citizens' Award be reinstated and that it be linked to national events or special occasions, as well as to introduce a Mayor's Certificate of Recognition to be awarded annually at the end of the mayor's term with up to 12 certificates awarded, at the mayor's discretion.

25/77/TCP Youth Council

The assistant town clerk provided an update on efforts to establish a Youth Council as previous attempts to work with Woodroffe School had stalled. It was therefore suggested the council pursued an independent Youth Council, by recruiting through schools, youth clubs, scout groups, the town magazine, and social media.

A member asked about safeguarding requirements. The assistant town clerk told members said signed parental consent forms would be required from parents and only DBS checked staff could liaise with students.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that officers pursue a Youth Council independently of Woodroffe School by recruiting through schools, youth clubs, scout groups, the town magazine and social media, and review the progress as interest develops.

25/78/TCP Barfleur Visit

The chairman said he had heard rumours of public concerns about council expenditure for the visit, and he wanted to clarify that no council funds were used for the visit; all costs were personally covered by him as the mayor.

25/79/TCP Breakdown of Expenditure for Lyme Living

Cllr A. Wood left the room at 7.59pm in line with his pecuniary interests.

The assistant town clerk said the communications officer spent around 60% of her time working on the magazine, and the rest of the time was spent doing other work. The actual production costs for the magazine were closer to £24k excluding the communications officer's wage.

A member asked for clarity on the secondment and journalist support.

The assistant town clerk said no money had been paid to any journalists and that the secondment was for the communications officer because her pay was uplifted, and the secondment referred to the increased spinal column point.

A member said the initial distribution costs were high.

The assistant town clerk said the costs were higher because they were initially posted to every address in Lyme Regis and a distribution company was used. She said the council was now posting the magazines from the office but were only sent to those that had requested it. She said a partial refund had been received from the distribution company because the service was not up to standard and had been cancelled.

A member asked who the external photographer was.

The assistant town clerk said local photographer Max Redwood was the external photographer, and that three quotations had been obtained.

Cllr A. Wood returned to the meeting at 8.05pm.

25/80/TCP Grant Review, Lyme Regis Regatta and Carnival Committee

Members noted the report.

25/81/TCP Grant Review, Lyme Regis Christmas Lights Committee

Members noted the report.

25/82/TCP Managing Consultation Exercises

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 8.08pm.

DRAFT

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2026

Present

Chairman: Cllr M. Ellis

Members: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr P. Evans, Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold, Cllr D. Holland, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr A. Wood

Officers: A. Mullins (assistant town clerk), S. O'Connell (operations manager)

25/52/TMH Public Forum

N. Ball

N. Ball raised the issue of dog bag dispensers. There had been no bags available in the dispensers since the autumn and if they were not going to be used, they should be taken down because they were getting rusty.

Cllr G. Stammers arrived at 7.01pm.

N. Ball said he looked forward to positive feedback to the offer of having the Sunbeam boat in the gardens. He also commented on the cemetery noticeboard, which was in a poor state because it could do with some maintenance on the outside but the information inside was also out-of-date. He said there were a lot of weeds in the Jane Austen Garden and on the steps next to SWiM, as well as brambles in the beds to the left of the cherry tree walk. N. Ball said he had still not been provided with figures for Party in the Park and under Freedom of Information, he would like to know this. He said Dorset Cleaning Services were doing a good job of the Marine Parade toilets, but the silicone around the basins needed some attention. He said the proposed dog signs on the seafront were a good idea. He also asked how much the council had to refund traders for overcharged seating arrangements because this might affect the council's balance sheet.

25/53/TMH Apologies

Cllr G. Caddy – personal commitment
Cllr P. May – holiday

25/54/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

25/55/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr G. Stammers declared a pecuniary interest in signs on the A35 related to the park and ride.

25/56/TMH Dispensations

There were none.

25/57/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 24 September 2025

The Three Cups

The operations manager said officers had tried again to get an update but nothing had been forthcoming and they would continue to pursue this.

25/58/TMH Update Report

Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Clothing Banks

The operations manager confirmed that if the clothing bank created an obstruction when it was in place, it would be moved.

MUGA

It was noted some Lym Close residents had not received the consultation letter about the possibility of additional netting on that boundary of the football pitch and suggested this could be re-visited at some point.

It was noted the junior football teams were playing at other venues for this season but would hopefully be back at Anning Road next season, so netting was not required immediately.

20mph Speed Limit Proposals

A member asked if the town council would be consulted or involved in discussions before the scheme was implemented.

As the consultation period was over and Dorset Council (DC) had agreed to implement the scheme, it was suggested there would be no further consultation. It was also noted DC intended to implement the scheme by Easter.

Joint works to the Lynch

The operations manager said at a meeting of riparian owners, the Environment Agency (EA) agreed it would work with DC and continue to be involved, but discussions would continue with DC.

Bell Cliff Steps

A member asked if the town council should be doing this work, given the situation with Marine Parade, which had now been confirmed as a highway.

The operations manager said it was believed this area was not a highway but this needed to be confirmed. In the meantime, the council would continue with the works unless told otherwise.

25/59/TMH Town Management and Highways Committee – Objectives

Members noted the report.

25/60/TMH Proposal to Repurpose Sunbeam as a Floral Display in Langmoor Gardens

Members were generally in support of repurposing Sunbeam as a floral display but were concerned about the maintenance it would require as the boat was made of wood and would rot.

The operations manager shared these concerns and said although it was a fantastic opportunity, the Langmoor Gardens might also not be the best location for it. If members wanted to take up the offer, he would need to go away and consider other suitable locations. He noted it would need to be on substantial hard-standing as it was a large boat, and would require a lot of ground works to make it secure. He added that it would be a cost to the council to establish the floral display and for its ongoing maintenance.

A member suggested it could be displayed in the roof space of the Boat Building Academy (BBA), as it would be under cover but still on display.

Members agreed every effort should be made to try and repurpose the boat, noting the challenges, and asked the operations manager to give further thought to a suitable location and detailed costs. It was also agreed he should speak to the BBA.

25/61/TMH Cadet Hut Demolition

The operations manager said once the demolition had taken place, shipping containers could be placed in the area temporarily until it was decided what to do with it in the long-term. The containers would not require planning permission, they were cost-effective and could be moved to another location when it was decided what to do with the site.

A member asked if there was likely to be some opposition from nearby residents to the shipping containers.

The operations manager said the exterior could be cladded to make them less imposing.

It was noted this was one of the areas where South West Water was putting in attenuation tanks, which might stabilise the area.

The operations manager said this was another reason why shipping containers were preferable as they could be removed if that work took place.

As there was asbestos in the building, a member asked if the potential contractors were competent in dealing with this.

The operations manager said an asbestos specialist had been consulted and would come in as a sub-contractor, which was included in the prices given.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree, in principle, to proceed with demolishing the unsafe cadet hut, to appoint Bagwells Ltd to carry out this work, and to authorise officers to obtain quotations for resecuring the boundary fence and installing suitable secure storage for the external works team's vehicles and equipment.

25/62/TMH No Dogs on the Beach Signs

Members agreed large 'no dogs on the beach' signs were needed at various locations around Front Beach and on the approaches to the beach, which could be put out during the exclusion period and taken down in the winter.

Cllr A. Wood had produced some mock-ups and suggested locations but clarified that he would not be involved in their production.

The mock-ups included the DC logo and it was noted DC would need to be consulted before the logo was used or it could be removed to avoid this.

Members discussed possible locations for the signs but it was agreed this could be finalised by officers, in consultation with the chairman of this committee and Cllr A. Wood.

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to improve the clarity and visibility of the current 'dogs on the beach' signage, ask officers to seek quotes for new signs, and to agree the final locations for the signs in consultation with Cllr M. Ellis and Cllr A. Wood.

25/63/TMH Tesco Delivery Arrangements – Request to Support Changes to Loading Restrictions on Broad Street

Members felt they didn't have enough details to make a decision on whether to support the request. Their concerns included how the changes would impact disabled parking and whether this would set a precedent if one business was given more flexibility.

It was also noted deliveries should be taking place early in the morning but Tesco deliveries were sometimes taking place later in the day, which would also result in a penalty notice.

Tesco had already indicated it could supply both existing and proposed layout plans so it was agreed officers should request this. Officers should also clarify how many penalty notices had been issued so members could have an idea of the scale of the issue.

It was agreed a further report would be brought to this committee with this information.

25/64/TMH Complaints, Incidents and Compliments

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

DRAFT

Committee: Full Council

Date: 1 April 2026

Title: Selection of Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect

Purpose of Report

To allow members to select a mayor-elect and deputy mayor-elect for the 2026-27 council year

Recommendation

Members appoint a mayor-elect and deputy mayor-elect for the 2026-27 council year

Report

1. An email requesting nominations for mayor-elect and deputy mayor-elect for the 2026-27 council year was sent to all members on 13 March 2026.
2. Nominations were to be received by Wednesday 25 March 2026.
3. By the closing date, there was one person nominated for mayor for the forthcoming year: Cllr P. Evans.
4. By the closing date, there was one person nominated for deputy mayor for the forthcoming year: Cllr M. Ellis.

Voting arrangements

5. Standing order 3.t states 'Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda. If at least two members request, voting may be by signed ballot'.
6. Standing order 3.s states 'The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote'.
7. Nominations may also be made at the meeting.

Adrienne Mullins
Assistant town clerk
March 2026

Committee: Full Council

Date: 1 April 2026

Title: Calendar of Meetings

Purpose

To allow members to approve the calendar of meetings for 2026-27 council year

Recommendation

Members approve the calendar of meetings for the 2026-27 council year

Background

1. Standing order 5.j.xxi requires the council to ‘determine the time and place of ordinary meetings of the council up to and including the next annual meeting of the council’.

Report

2. The proposed calendar of meetings for 2026-27 is at **appendix 19A**.
3. The calendar includes the normal summer recess and as requested in 2023, the first meeting after the recess will be a Full Council meeting to avoid there being such a large gap between Full Council meetings.
4. Planning Committee meetings are normally held every three weeks but there will be a four-week gap in August/September 2026 to allow for the summer recess.
5. The calendar also includes a break at Christmas/New Year, an extraordinary Full Council meeting on 17 June 2026 to allow the council to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), an extraordinary Full Council meeting on 24 March 2027 to consider community grants, and the annual meeting of electors on 23 April 2027. The calendar takes us up to the mayor-making ceremony in May 2027 and the first meeting of the 2027-28 council year, also in May 2027.
6. The draft calendar assumes there is no change to the current committee structure. However, a governance review is underway, which may change the current structure. If or when that happens, a new calendar will be brought to the Full Council for approval.

Adrienne Mullins
Assistant town clerk
March 2026

Lyme Regis Town Council

Calendar of Meetings 2026/27

All meetings of the Full Council are to be held in the Guildhall, Bridge Street, Lyme Regis, and all committee meetings are to be held at The Council Offices, St Michael's Business Centre, Church Street, Lyme Regis at 7pm unless otherwise stated

Wednesday 20 May 2026	Full Council (mayor-making)
Wednesday 27 May 2026	Full Council (annual meeting)
Tuesday 2 June 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 10 June 2026	Human Resources
Wednesday 17 June 2026	Extraordinary Full Council (annual return) Town Management and Highways Committee
Tuesday 23 June 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 24 June 2026	Tourism, Community and Publicity
Wednesday 1 July 2026	Environment Committee
Wednesday 8 July 2026	Strategy and Finance Committee
Tuesday 14 July 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 22 July 2026	Full Council
Tuesday 4 August 2026	Planning Committee
Tuesday 1 September 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 9 September 2026	Full Council
Wednesday 16 September 2026	Human Resources
Tuesday 22 September 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 23 September 2026	Town Management and Highways Committee
Wednesday 30 September 2026	Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee
Wednesday 7 October 2026	Environment Committee
Tuesday 13 October 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 14 October 2026	Strategy and Finance Committee
Wednesday 28 October 2026	Full Council
Tuesday 3 November 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 4 November 2026	Human Resources Committee
Wednesday 11 November 2026	Town Management and Highways Committee
Wednesday 18 November 2026	Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee
Tuesday 24 November 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 25 November 2026	Environment Committee
Wednesday 2 December 2026	Strategy and Finance Committee
Tuesday 15 December 2026	Planning Committee
Wednesday 16 December 2026	Full Council

Tuesday 5 January 2027	Planning Committee
Wednesday 6 January 2027	Human Resources
Wednesday 13 January 2027	Town Management and Highways Committee
Wednesday 20 January 2027	Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee
Tuesday 26 January 2027	Planning Committee
Wednesday 27 January 2027	Environment Committee
Wednesday 3 February 2027	Strategy and Finance Committee
Wednesday 10 February 2027	Full Council
Tuesday 16 February 2027	Planning Committee
Wednesday 17 February 2027	Human Resources Committee
Wednesday 24 February 2027	Town Management and Highways Committee
Wednesday 3 March 2027	Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee
Tuesday 9 March 2027	Planning Committee
Wednesday 10 March 2027	Environment Committee
Wednesday 17 March 2027	Strategy and Finance Committee
Wednesday 24 March 2027	Extraordinary Full Council (grants)
Tuesday 30 March 2027	Planning Committee
Wednesday 31 March 2027	Full Council
Wednesday 7 April 2027	Human Resources Committee
Wednesday 14 April 2027	Town Management and Highways Committee
Tuesday 20 April 2027	Planning Committee
Wednesday 21 April 2027	Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee
<i>Friday 23 April 2027</i>	<i>Annual Meeting of Electors, Woodmead Halls, 7pm</i>
Wednesday 28 April 2027	Environment Committee
Wednesday 5 May 2026	Strategy and Finance Committee
Tuesday 11 May 2027	Planning Committee
Wednesday 12 May 2027	Full Council
Wednesday 19 May 2027	Full Council (mayor-making)
Wednesday 26 May 2027	Full Council (annual meeting)

Committee: Full Council

Date: 1 April 2026

Title: Review of Financial Regulations

Purpose of Report

To allow members to consider the council's revised financial regulations

Recommendation

Members consider and approve the proposed financial regulations

Background

1. The financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial management of the council.
3. The council's standing orders requires, under 5.j. x, annual 'review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations'.
4. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) produced a revised model of its financial regulations in 2025.
5. Officers have reviewed NALC's model financial regulations and produced a new set of financial regulations that incorporate revisions in legislation and good practice; this has required a major revision of the financial regulations.

Report

7. The proposed financial regulations are at **appendix 20A**.
8. The proposed changes are shown in red in the appendix.

Naomi Cleal
Finance manager
March 2026

Financial Regulations

1. General

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the authority's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. These financial regulations are designed to demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities.
- 1.2 The responsible financial officer (RFO) is a statutory office and shall be appointed by the council. The town clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly. The RFO, acting under the policy direction of the council, shall be responsible for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices. **He/she has overall responsibility but may not complete the work themselves.** He/she shall determine on behalf of the Council its accounting records, and accounting control systems. The RFO shall ensure the accounting control systems are observed and that the accounting records of the council are maintained and kept up-to-date in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information as required by council.
- 1.4. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**
- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
 - **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
 - **approving accounting statements;**
 - **approving an annual governance statement;**
 - **borrowing;**
 - **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
 - **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**
- 1.5 ~~At least once a year~~ Prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council shall conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6 **In addition to its preparatory work for the annual governance statement, the council will consider a comprehensive review of internal control as part of its budget-setting process.**
- 1.7 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations shall mean the regulations issued under ~~the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and then in force.~~ **Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified**

- 1.8 In these financial regulations, the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- 1.9 Deliberate or wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.10 Members of the council are expected to follow the instructions within these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

2. ~~Annual Estimates~~ Budget and Precept

- 2.1 Detailed estimates of all income and expenditure including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year shall be prepared by the RFO in the form of a budget to be considered by council. At the same time, the RFO will produce a five-year forecast of income and expenditure.
- 2.2 The council shall review the budget not later than the end of December each year and shall set the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority **and no later than the end of February.** ~~shall supply each member with a copy of the approved budget.~~
- 2.3 The annual budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.
- 2.4 **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

3. ~~Budgetary Control~~

- 2.5 Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.
- 2.6 **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 2.7 Unless under the circumstances outlined in paragraph 2.9, no expenditure may be incurred which will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, ~~unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate,~~ **unspent and available amounts will be returned to the general reserve.**
- 2.8 The finance manager shall regularly provide the council with a summary of receipts and payments to date along with a forecast for the financial year. The statement will compare expenditure and income against the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least four times a year; as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December, and as soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March.

- 2.9 The clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £10,000. The clerk shall report the action to the council as soon as practicable thereafter. Should expenditure above this limit be anticipated before authority can be obtained at the next scheduled council meeting, the chairman of the council should convene an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council to seek authority for the expenditure. Where possible, the council will maintain a reserve to cover such eventualities.
- 2.10 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year; they should be moved to the council's general reserve, or to a specific reserve in the case of on-going projects.
- 2.11 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 2.12 Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the RFO to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.
- 2.13 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. Accounting and Audit

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011–2021 and any subsequent amendments thereto.
- 4.2 The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:
- day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;
- 4.3 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the RFO will verify bank reconciliations for all accounts. The RFO will sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar documents) as evidence of verification.
- 4.4 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual financial statements of the council, including the annual return, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the council.
- 4.5 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the accounts of the council contained in the annual governance and accountability return (as supplied by the auditor appointed from time to time by the Audit Commission) and shall submit the annual governance and accountability return for approval and authorisation by the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011–2021 as amended, or set by the auditor.

- 4.6 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with ~~Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011~~ **proper practices**, and any subsequent amendments thereto. Any officer or member of the council shall, if the RFO or internal auditor requires, make available such documents of the council which appear to the RFO or internal auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or internal auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or internal auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.6 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work required by the council in accordance with proper practices. The internal auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the council, shall report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report in respect of each financial year. To demonstrate objectivity and independence, the internal auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest and have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 4.7 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers and for the display or publication of any Notices and Statements of Account required by ~~Audit Commission Act 1998~~ **Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014** and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 4.8 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from the internal or external auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative nature.
- 4.9 The council shall carry out a review of the effectiveness of internal audit on an annual basis in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations ~~2011~~ **2021** and any subsequent amendments thereto.

5. Banking Arrangements and Cheques and payments

- 5.1 The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council and be regularly reviewed for efficiency. The bank mandate will include the mayor, deputy mayor, chairman and vice chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee. The bank mandate for members will be amended on election to these offices.
- 5.2 A schedule of payments made, forming part of the agenda for the meeting shall be prepared by the finance manager. Petty cash reimbursement will be reported as a total when reimbursement takes place, unless this exceeds £200 per month, when full details will be provided. The relevant invoices will be made available for inspection at the council's offices. If the schedule is in order, it shall be approved by a resolution of the council.
- 5.3 Payments under £25,000 (other than petty cash or debit card as per paragraph 5.6) should normally be paid through online banking using BACS; two authorisers are required to make payments. The authorisers are the town clerk, deputy town clerk, finance manager, operations manager and ~~support services manager~~ **assistant town clerk**. The only exception is where a creditor is unable to provide their banking details.

- 5.4 Payments over £25,000 should be paid by cheque and authorised by two persons: a member and the RFO or two members. Email authorisations are acceptable and **copy invoices will be presented in order to make the payment via BACS.**
- 5.5 Cheques drawn on the bank account shall be signed by two authorised signatories, i.e., members of the council and authorised officers.
- 5.6 The bank debit card can be used for payments up to £1,000, providing two of the authorisers from 5.3 approve payment. **The council will have two debit cards: in the name of the RFO and the finance manager.**
- 5.7 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the authorised officers to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.8 The RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items, provided that a list of such payments is submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the council or Strategy and Finance Committee.
- 5.9 In respect of grants, the council will approve expenditure within set limits.
- 5.10 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

6. Payments of Accounts

- 6.1 The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments
- 6.2 All payments shall be effected by BACS, cheque, debit card, direct debit or other order drawn on the council's bankers.
- 6.3 Payments should normally be made against authorised invoices after the receipt of goods and services; the following exceptions apply:
- 6.3.1 Payments using the debit card (see paragraph 5.6) may be made in advance of the receipt of goods and/or services.
- 6.3.2 Some new suppliers of goods and/or services may not grant the council credit. If the council still needs to go ahead with the order, payment may be made in advance of receipt of the goods or services using a pro forma invoice. A full invoice must be produced by the supplier and retained by the council after receipt of the goods/services.
- 6.3.3 Some smaller suppliers may require an advance or deposit to be paid (to allow the purchase of materials, for example). The finance manager must obtain references to minimise the risk of loss to the council and authorise an advance or deposit. In such event, an invoice from the supplier will be dual authorised in the same manner, and a deposit paid prior to receipt of goods or services.

- 6.4 All payments, where the invoice is not disputed, should be made within payment terms, and earlier if practical and cost effective.
- 6.5 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and finally certified for payment by the town clerk, deputy town clerk or finance manager. The officer who placed the order shall certify that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.6 The finance team shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetical accuracy and shall post them to the appropriate expenditure heading. They shall take all steps to settle invoices submitted within payment terms.
- 6.7 ~~The finance team~~ **The Finance manager, town clerk and deputy town clerk** may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other minor expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the finance team with a claim for reimbursement: operational floats, for example, in respect of the amenity area may be maintained as necessary. Petty cash should only be used for minor expenditure items and where no other payment method is appropriate.
- 6.8 Payment for other supplies or other obligatory payments such as business rates may be made by variable direct debit provided the instructions are signed by two authorised bank signatories and any payments are reported to council.
- 6.9 No employee or councillor should disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.10 Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question ~~preferably off-site~~ **and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer.**
- 6.11 The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.12 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking, may only be changed on written confirmation by the supplier, which may be by email.

7. Payment of Salaries

- 7.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the current rules of PAYE and National Insurance. Salaries shall be as agreed by council. Progression through the salary scales is delegated to the town clerk, with the exception of the town clerk, deputy town clerk, operations manager, finance manager and ~~support services manager~~ **assistant town clerk**, where progression through the salary scale is on the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee.

- 7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available council meeting.
- 7.3 **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 7.4 Payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary reductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- 7.4.1 by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know
 - 7.4.2 by the internal auditor
 - 7.4.3 by the external auditor
 - 7.4.4 by any person authorised under the ~~Audit Commission Act 1998~~ **Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014**, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5 The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6 Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the council.
- 7.7 **Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.**

7. Treasury Management

- 8.1 Lyme Regis Town Council aims to hold a minimum reserve of 50% of budgeted income. With the approval of the council, this reserve can be varied in response to external and internal events, e.g., major programmed expenditure, financial uncertainty. In addition to this reserve, the council also holds surplus funds as a result of the timing of income and expenditure. It is important that such funds are invested prudently with regard to the council's fiduciary responsibility to local council taxpayers the priority for security and the liquidity of investments.
- 8.2 The council will undertake a review of its investments and loans, reporting to the chairman and vice chairman of the Strategy and Finance and determine its appetite for investment risk, i.e., low, medium or high. This will be reported to the council **at least** annually. This approach may be varied by the council from time to time as circumstances dictate. The strategy will be a public document as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 8.3 All the town council's investments will be specified investments, i.e., they are:
- 8.3.1 Made in sterling
 - 8.3.2 Short term; investments will not normally exceed 12 months.

8.3.3 Made with a recognised and reputable financial institution.

8.4 All investments will be at the discretion of the RFO and will be reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee at each meeting.

8.5 Risk Management

8.5.1 Liquidity risk management

The council will ensure it has adequate cash resources, overdraft or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available which are necessary for the achievement of its service objectives.

8.5.2 Legal and regulatory risk management

The council will ensure all of its treasury management activities comply with its statutory powers and regulatory requirements. The council recognises future legislative or regulatory changes may impact on its treasury activities and, so far as it is reasonably able to do so, will seek to minimise the risk of these impacting adversely.

8.5.3 Fraud, error and corruption, and contingency management

The council will ensure that it has identified those circumstances that may expose it to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings. Accordingly, it will employ suitable systems and procedures, and will maintain effective contingency management arrangements.

8.6 External borrowing

If the council wishes to borrow funds it should consider whether approval is required from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. All investments and borrowings will be reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee at each meeting.

8.7.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

8.7.2 Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

8.7.3 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

8.7.4 The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

9. Income

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be affected by the finance team and shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the finance manager.
- 9.2 The council will review all fees and charges annually, as part of the budget-setting process.
- 9.3 Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts shall be reported to the council. The RFO shall have delegated authority to write off sums, both debtors and creditors, of less than £250, which should be reported to the council retrospectively.
- 9.4 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the finance team. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the finance team considers necessary.
- 9.5 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.6 The finance ~~team~~ **manager** shall promptly complete any VAT return that is required.
- 9.7 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the finance team shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash. **In the absence of a member of the finance team, a manager should be present.**
- 9.8 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

10. Orders for Works, Goods and Services

- 10.1 An official order shall be issued for all goods over ~~£1,000~~ **£1,500**, and for all services over ~~£2,000~~ **£3,000**.
- 10.2 All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times, including achieving the best terms available in respect of each transaction. For all items over the purchase order threshold (see paragraph 10.1), this will usually be by obtaining three or more written quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any provisions in Regulation 11 (1) below, with the exception of preferred suppliers (see paragraph 10.3).
- 10.3 A level playing field should be given to all suppliers approached, and once the quotes have been received and evaluated, no new quotes from outside the process should be considered, except in exceptional circumstances. Any such circumstances should be reported to members. Once quotes have been received, consideration should be given to going back to suppliers to request best and final quotes; this opportunity should be given to all suppliers who provided quotes. Sensitive commercial information should not be shared with potential suppliers.
- 10.4 For regular purchase items, such as staff clothing, plants, and building supplies, the council may enter into a preferred supplier relationship, following suitable market testing. This should streamline the procurement process and provide the council with the opportunity to secure discounts. Any such agreement will be for a period of up to three years and will be notified to the council.

- 10.5 Officers shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order.
- 10.6 A member may not issue an official order or make or imply any contract on behalf of the council.

11. Contracts

- 11.1. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, except in an emergency or where contracts relate to items 11.1.1 to 11.1.5:
 - 11.1.1 For the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services, no purchase order is required, but the requirement to obtain value for money remains as per paragraph 10.2
 - 11.1.2 For specialist services or equipment such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants, no purchase order is required, but the requirement to obtain value for money remains as per paragraph 10.2
 - 11.1.3 For work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant where no other supplier can reasonably provide the service
 - 11.1.3 For work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council
 - 11.1.4 For additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £1,000 (in excess of this sum the RFO shall act after consultation with the chairman or vice-chairman of council)
 - 11.1.5 For goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
- 11.2 For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation (“the Legislation”), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 11.3 Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £100,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph 11.1 the clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms.
- 11.4 When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- 11.5 Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the clerk either by email or post. All tenders will remain unopened until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- 11.6 All sealed tenders shall be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the proper officer and at least one member of the council.

- 11.7 The council's tender documents will state that the price submitted by the successful contractor or consultant will be made public. However, prices submitted for component parts of tenders will not be made public.
- 11.8 Tender prices submitted by unsuccessful organisations will not be released into the public domain.
- 11.9 If less than three tenders are received for contracts above ~~£60,000~~ **£100,000** or if all the tenders are identical, the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works. Tenders are evaluated by officers and appointment recommendations are made to the appropriate meeting of the council or committee.
- ~~11.11 Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is likely to be valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.~~
- 11.10 For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 11.11 The full requirements of the Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in the Regulations set by the ~~Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU~~ **the Procurement Act 2023** (which may change from time to time)².
- 11.12 The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 11.13 The thresholds for the award of contracts are:
- 11.13.1 Less than £10,000 – town clerk, and in their absence deputy town clerk
 - 11.13.2 Between £10,000 and ~~£60,000~~ **£100,000** – town clerk, and in their absence deputy town clerk, and reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee
 - 11.13.3 More than ~~£60,000~~ **£100,000** – reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Full Council for resolution
- 11.14 Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 11.15 Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules**

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder and Find a Tender websites to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts.

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

a) For public supply and public service contracts ~~£214,904~~ **£207,720**

b) For public works contracts ~~£5,372,609~~ **£5,193,000**

These new thresholds are applicable from 1 January 2026.

12. Payments Under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works

- 12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the finance team upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the finance team shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case when it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. Stores and Equipment

- 13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2 Delivery notes must be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 Officers shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

14. Assets, Properties and Estates

- 14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry certificates of properties owned by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations ~~1996~~ 2015 as amended.
- 14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item of tangible moveable property does not exceed £1,000.
- 14.3 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the register shall be verified at least annually and reported with the council's annual return.
- 14.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any consents required by law. In each case, a written report shall be provided to the council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

- 14.5 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case, a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants), together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.6 Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case, a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

15. Insurance

- 15.1 Based on the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17) and a review of insurance requirements, the finance ~~team~~ **manager** shall affect all insurances. Officers will negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 15.2 The finance ~~team~~ **manager** to be promptly notified by officers of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 15.3 The finance team shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 The finance manager shall be notified of any loss or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report any significant items to council at the next available meeting.
- 15.5 All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council.

16. Charities

- 16.1 Where the council is sole trustee of a charitable body, the RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

17. Risk Management

- 17.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 17.2 When considering any new activity, the clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.
- 17.3 **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**

17.4 At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.

17.5 The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:

- ensure that risk is appropriately managed;
- ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;
- prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and
- allow the reconstitution of any lost records;
- identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and
- ensure division of responsibilities.

18. Revision and Suspension of Financial Regulations

18.1 It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the authority annually. The clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.

18.2 The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of the council.

19. Review

19.1 This document will be reviewed in April 2027 or sooner if there are changes in legislation or best practice.

Implementation date: 1 April 2026

Review Date: April 2027

Committee: Full Council

Date: 1 April 2026

Title: Corporate Plan 2026-31

Purpose of Report

To present the text for the draft Corporate Plan 2026-31

Recommendation

Members approve the text for the draft Corporate Plan 2026-31

Background

1. The Corporate Plan considers the challenges the council faces, reviews performance in 2025-26, details objectives for 2026-27 and outlines its finances.
2. The draft text for the draft Corporate Plan 2026-31 is attached, **appendix 21A**. Graphics to support the written content will be added to the final version of the plan, which will be signed off in consultation with the mayor.
3. The corporate plan will be posted on the town council's website and social media platforms, made available to the public at the town council's office and presented to the Annual Meeting of Electors on 24 April 2026.

John Wright
Town clerk
March 2026

Corporate Plan

Introduction

Cllr Philip Evans MBE, Mayor of Lyme Regis

As another council year draws to a close, I want to tell you about what is going on at the town council.

When I drafted my contribution to the Corporate Plan last year, I identified our main challenges as land movement at Ware Cliff, fall-out from financial pressures on Dorset Council, member behaviour, the low regard many residents have for the council, and a general lack of understanding about what we do.

Reflecting on the last year, has anything changed? It has.

The immediate issue of land movement at Ware Cliff was addressed with the removal of an estimated 3,000 tonnes of earth. Is this a permanent solution? No, it is not, but it does provide further protection to the chalet park below. Will there be further cliff movement? Yes, there will, and there is some evidence of this already. We are monitoring the situation closely.

Did the town council suffer from any fall-out from financial decisions made by Dorset council in 2025-26? Thankfully not, but the extent of Dorset Council's 2026-27 budget shortfall is concerning and something we will monitor closely.

Has member behaviour improved? This is and remains my top priority for this council and the answer is a definite yes. Since May last year, meetings have been cordial, and decision-making has been less fraught. Disagreements still exist, and some members remain more passionate than others but, we are getting along most of the time.

Is public perception about the council still negative? In some parts of the town, negativity remains and to be honest, whatever we do, some people will never change their opinion about the council.

But, over the last year I have received an increasing number of unsolicited positive comments about the council's achievements. These include, the reintroduction of the town bus service, the building of a children's multi-use games area in Anning Road Playing Field, the Party in the Park, and LymeLiving.

In addition, the financial support given by the town council to local organisations and projects is really appreciated. These grants have benefitted 38 organisations and have helped to make possible the launch of a repairs' café, and the reintroduction of a post office. Beneficiaries from council grants are detailed elsewhere in this report.

The corporate plan goes on to further detail our achievements in 2025-26, identify our objectives for 2026-27 and to explain how we fund ourselves.

As I said last year, what I want, more than anything, is for this council to be recognised for the good work it does.

Last year's achievements

Despite the complexities of running a council which largely operates as a business, and the inevitable distraction of events and unforeseen issues, the town council has delivered several significant projects in 2025-26.

The most notable include the office move to St Michael's Business Centre, the re-introduction of the town bus service, the refurbishment of the cemetery lodge, the launch of a community-based magazine, Lyme Living, repairs to the footpaths in the Langmoor and Lister Gardens, the installation of a multi-use games area in Anning Road playing field, Party in the Park, VE and VJ Day events, and the financial support given to the Waffle House to reintroduce a post office.

Less visible but equally important projects include investments in the sculpture trail, the launch of an employee assistance programme, preparatory work for Sporting Lyme 2026, the response to Dorset Council's Local Plan which could mean the development of housing at Strawberry Fields, the installation of town-wide CCTV, and a clean bill of health from the external auditor.

The delivery of projects tends to dominate discussions, and not enough recognition is given to the day-to-day management of the council.

So, to put the record straight, council meetings take place most weeks and up to 180 decisions are actioned by staff each year, staff are trained and developed, external relations are managed, the office is open all day Monday to Friday, the council performs to budget, suppliers get paid on time, health and safety events are managed, recruitment takes place on a timely basis, people issues are dealt with, press enquiries are responded to, briefings get issued to members, businesses and community groups, events are managed, repairs to buildings are undertaken, enforcement is effective, the grass gets cut and the cemetery is a credit to the council. All of this doesn't happen by accident.

One last point, and one the town has always been mindful of, is that tensions in the council chamber, that have plagued the council for years, have eased; business is conducted cordially and decision-making is less fraught. Long may this continue!

What are we doing in 2026-27?

The council's objectives and projects are centred around its key business activities which are essential to the proper running of the organisation and include major repairs to its assets and support for the community.

In 2026-27, the council has agreed a projects' budget of £154,000.

The town council believes it should use its surplus finances to maintain its assets and support its local community and economy; the council invests significant resources in its cemetery, playing fields, seafront, and gardens to create a highly presentable town for residents and visitors. It also subsidises the summer park and ride service.

Starting in April 2026, the town council aims to link its CCTV cameras to Dorset Council's control centre in Dorchester, achieve Community Safety Accreditation for the council's enforcement officers (this extends their powers to deal with low-level policing issues), secure the transfer of Dorset Council toilets to the town council and establish a local cleaning service, between 1 May and 30 September trial a weekend shuttle bus between Bridport and Lyme Regis, install new webcams at the Jubilee Pavilion and The Cobb, deliver a sporting festival from May to September, run Lyme in Bloom,

undertake a biodiversity audit, and undertake repairs to the steps and railings at Bell Cliff, a section of the Church wall, and the passageway and windows at the Guildhall.

Money Matters

Lyme Regis Town Council operates a unique business model; for the year ending 31 March 2025, 94% of the council's income came from commercial trading activities.

Unlike most councils, only a relatively small amount is raised through the precept; the precept is the amount residents pay for the services delivered directly by town or parish councils.

The council's business model has its origins in the local government reorganisation of 1974; the reorganisation saw the abolition of Lyme Regis Borough Council and the absorption of most of its functions into a newly created West Dorset District Council. At the time, the council won the argument that Lyme Regis should keep some income-generating assets, particularly car parks, to offset the high cost of maintaining a seaside town.

This has meant that, compared to other councils, Lyme Regis Town Council has had a high degree of financial independence. Moreover, successive town councils have worked hard to ensure the cost of delivering services aren't onerously borne by its residents, who share this beautiful town with visitors.

To put this into context, Lyme Regis Town Council's precept has only been increased twice in the past 15 years and currently stands at £70 for a band D property. This compares favourably with local town councils.

If you check your council tax bill for 2026-27, you'll notice the Lyme Regis precept has reduced; this is mainly because there has been an increase in the number of properties in the town, while the total charge to residents for services provided by the town council has remained the same as the previous year.

Budget Report 2025-26

The prudent assumptions that inform the council's budget-setting generally mean financial performance exceeds budget, i.e., the surplus at the end of a financial year is greater than we estimated when we put the budget together.

On 1 April 2025, the council started the financial year with a reserve of £1,665,046; this included £553,705 accrued for projects not completed in 2023-25, leaving a net reserve of £1.111 million. The council set its reserve at £1 million for 2025-26.

Officers forecast a reserve of £126,642 at 31 March 2025.

In addition, after routine operating expenditure, e.g., paying staff, maintaining the gardens and cemetery, administering the council, the council budgeted for an annual surplus of £168,485 in 2025-26.

In total, the council had £295,127 available for projects in 2025-26. It was decided that the council would install two new beach huts on Marine Parade that would be available for purchase. These were anticipated to generate approximately £120,000 in further income. The additional income would be used for the implementation of further projects in 2025-26, bringing the total available to £415,127.

The projects are principally aimed at maintaining the council's assets and supporting the community. Details of the council's 2025-26 projects are detailed on the previous page of the Corporate Plan.

During the course of 2025-26, some areas of income have exceeded budget, e.g., car parking income and the council received unbudgeted income from chalet and beach hut sales.

The estimated surplus increases the council's budget reserve from £1 million at 31 March 2026 to £1,185,285. The probability is the council's financial position will improve during the last three months of the financial year.

Budget Report 2026-27

The council is reasonably confident it can continue to reduce its total reserve to £1 million; a reserve of £1 million represents over 40% of the council's annual income.

This allows the release of the excess reserve, i.e., £185,285, for projects in 2026-27.

After routine operational and staffing expenditure, the council has a 2026-27 budget deficit of £7,296.

The additional 2025-26 year-end surplus minus the 2026-27 budget deficit allows the council to release £154,000 to invest in its assets and the community in 2026-27.

The Precept

The precept, which is the charge Lyme Regis residents pay for services delivered by the town council, has remained the same at £163,254. Lyme Regis Town Council has only increased the precept twice in 13 years.

To place this increase in context, the amount payable for a Band D council tax property has decreased from £68.82 to £66.10 due to the tax base increasing from 2,382.30 to 2,469.90.

Treasury management

The council's historic approach to treasury management is for low-risk investments, only. This means the council's reserve is tucked away in reputable high street banks.

Increases in the Bank of England's base rate over the last two years means treasury management is now a more important part of the council's overall financial management.

The majority of the council's reserve now attracts an interest rate in excess of 3%.