

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 AUGUST 2025

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

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

Officers: J. Wright (town clerk)

Guests: Sophie McLachlan, Waffle House

25/54/C Public Forum

Nigel Ball said he was concerned about the use of a mace in the carnival procession, he thanked the carnival committee for organising the event, and he welcomed the town bus's participation in the procession.

Nigel Ball thought the chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee should have been present at earlier financial discussions with The Waffle House and questioned whether public money should be used to fund the post office project

25/55/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr G. Turner.

25/56/C Disposable Pecuniary Interests

Ahead of the meeting Cllr G. Stammers declared a pecuniary interest in the Grant Funding for The Waffle House report. Cllr G Stammers removed herself from the meeting for the discussion and vote on this matter.

25/57/C Dispensations

There were none

25/58/C Grant Funding for the Waffle House

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A Wood, 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.

Members of the public were invited to wait in the mayor's parlour so they could return to the meeting to be informed of the council's decision.

25/59/C Exempt Business

25/60/C Grant Funding for the Waffle House

The town clerk gave a presentation which covered the withdrawal of 'set-up' funding from the Post Office, the decline in revenue at the Axminster Waffle House, the company's recovery plan, the improvement in the Lyme Regis Waffle House's current financial performance, the 2025-26 financial forecast for the Waffle House's operations in Axminster and Lyme Regis, including an explanation of the financial ratio EBITA which was used in the forecast, the Waffle House's tax and hire purchase liabilities, its lease arrangements for its premises in Lyme Regis, its staffing arrangements, and proposed changes to its company status.

The town clerk pointed out that new businesses were often subject to early financial losses, councils often step-in as funders of 'last resort', the post office project has popular support in the town, and if the council didn't provide the capital funding for the post office project, then it probably wouldn't go ahead.

At 7.32pm, Cllr G. Stammers arrived at the meeting and left immediately in line with her previously declared pecuniary interest.

Sophie McLachlan gave a presentation which detailed the Waffle House's mission, its year one plan and operational details including, the location of the post office counter within the building.

Members considered the presentations and the financial risks posed by a grant award of £10,500.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and Seconded by Cllr Neil Hampton-Rumbold, members **RESOLVED** to approve a capital grant of £10,500 to the Waffle House to provide a post office counter. In making their decision, members acknowledged the financial risks this project posed but considered that, on balance, these concerns were mitigated by the Waffle House's action plans and the need for the re-introduction of a post office in the town.

At 8.06pm, Cllr G Stammers returned to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.08pm