

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

Councillors: 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. Turner, Cllr A. Wood

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

Guests: Cllr B. Bawden (Dorset Council ward member), Rev Fi Budden, M. Penny (Dorset Council, service manager, flood and coastal erosion)

The Rev Fi Budden gave a prayer.

25/53/C Public Forum

S. Holman and N. Marks

S. Holman spoke in relation to agenda item 16, The Cobb, and said her comments were to inform any questions the members might like to ask of M. Penny when he gave his presentation on the structure of the Cobb and the emergency works. She said she was chairman of the Harbour Consultative Group, which was part of Dorset Council, but she worked very closely with the town council and asked for that support to continue. She said an urgent update on the emergency void works to the Harbour Consultative Group had been requested. Following the ongoing storms over the past couple of weeks, she asked where the exact location of the buoys would be, as referred to in M. Penny's report of 29 July 2025, following the meeting with the chairman of Dorset Council on 18 July 2025. She said it was difficult for the public to understand what the work was and where it was exactly.

N. Marks, as previous chairman of the Harbour Consultative Group, said he was helping S. Holman with this matter. He asked the following questions:

- Were there any close-up pictures of the urgent void
- How were Dorset Council planning to repair it
- Had a contractor been appointed
- When the work was expected to start
- How long would the work take
- What the implications were for Cobb users
- Did Heritage England have any say on the emergency repair.

S. Holman said she had taken a photo at low tide to show the area outside the high wall and she would like M. Penny to indicate exactly where those points were. With regards to Phase V, she said the leader of Dorset Council had met with Historic England in August and reported a delay due to the non-acceptance of the Dorset Council engineers' plans. She said even at this late stage, there seemed to be an insurmountable hold-up and no-one could get things moving. She said they needed to know exactly what their objections were.

N. Marks asked the following questions:

- What was the nature of Heritage England's objections – was it the materials and design of the work needed to improve the structural integrity of the Cobb or was it the design applicable to the surfacing materials and lighting
- When did Dorset Council expect to have agreement from Heritage England
- What needed to be done before Dorset Council could appoint contractors to start the final design and commence work
- What confidence did Dorset Council have that the £5million funding gap could be filled through the sources it had identified
- When did Dorset Council expect to hold public awareness events – their view was this should come as soon as possible so the Cobb users and the public know what's happening
- Could Dorset Council do some display materials that could be put up in the shelters so the public knows what has happened and what threat there was to the Cobb.

Cllr M. Ellis arrived at 7.07pm.

A. Oliver

A. Oliver thanked the council for purchasing the town bus, which had been welcomed by lots of residents. As a passenger assistant on the bus, she had seen lots of elderly people and people who were less able to walk using it. She hoped the council would agree to the adjustments the volunteers had suggested, including extra stops.

A. Oliver said she understood the council was looking at seafront bins. She said they were unsightly and hoped there would be work done on this.

A. Oliver said she hoped the council's phone system was working well and would be able to cope with the number of calls coming through for booking beach huts for 2026. If not, she asked if the council would be looking at doing something different next year, such as a ballot.

A. Oliver thanked Dorset Council highways, and the town council for persevering with them, for getting road markings at the Cobb Arms and slipway, so cars coming out of the car park could see they had to give way to cars going up the hill.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans, thanked A. Oliver and the other volunteers for the wonderful job they were doing with the town bus. He said the council intended to review the service and would take into consideration the advice from the volunteers.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans brought the next item forward on the agenda and invited M. Penny, Dorset Council (DC) service manager for flood and coastal erosion, to speak.

25/54/C The Cobb

M. Penny gave a presentation to the meeting about Phase V and emergency void works to the Cobb. His presentation included details about the scope of the Phase V works, how DC is monitoring the voids, the funding challenges and opportunities, the outline design and next steps for Phase V, the urgent void works required to the inner and outer walls, and the repair solutions for the voids.

M. Penny said there was a £4.16million shortfall for the Phase V works but DC currently had funding to take the project through the design, licensing and consent phases, but no funding was in place for the construction.

25/55/C Dorset Council Matters

Cllr B. Bawden, DC ward member, gave the following updates:

- The bathing water quality meeting the previous day had been well attended and more information was provided about South West Water's investment plans in Lyme Regis.
- DC was looking at better solutions for public bins on the seafront. If it was viable, DC would also look at commercial bins.
- She explained the problems with First Bus's reduced winter timetable, leaving long gaps in the service between Bridport and Dorchester and no connection to the early morning train at Axminster. All political parties at DC were working together to resolve this and the local MP had written a letter. Discussions were ongoing and she was optimistic the link to the train station would be reinstated. The MP was also lobbying the government for emergency funding to cover the subsidy to First Bus to allow the winter timetable to be reinstated.
- Real-time information displays for buses were expected to be implemented soon.
- Public sessions were taking place about the Local Plan and there was an exhibition at the Jubilee Pavilion.

25/56/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

25/57/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr C. Aldridge – holiday
Cllr G. Caddy – holiday
Cllr G. Stammers – illness

25/58/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none

25/59/C Dispensations

There were none.

25/60/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 6 August 2025

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 6 August 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

25/61/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 18 August 2025

Proposed by Cllr A. Wood and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 18 August 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

25/62/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 6 August 2025, and the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 18 August 2025

Members noted the report.

25/63/C Update Report

Members noted the report.

25/64/C Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report.

25/65/C Confidentiality

The town clerk gave a presentation on confidentiality and talked about why confidentiality is important to the council, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation, confidentiality in employment law, the role of the Information Commissioners Officer, guidance around the disclosure of sensitive information, and what the council must do to protect itself and those it works with.

25/66/C Civic Protocol

The town clerk said the purpose of the report was to outline how the civic party works and what was appropriate. He proposed to put a comprehensive file together of the civic protocols and issue it to members.

A member suggested this could include other council protocols.

25/67/C Dorset Local Plan and Transport Plan

The town clerk said Strawberry Field had been included in the draft Local Plan, so the council needed to have a view on it. The deputy town clerk had suggested a separate briefing took place to allow members to form a view and to then have an

extraordinary Full Council meeting to formally agree the council's response to the plan.

With regards to the Transport Plan, the town clerk said DC officers were keen to come and talk to the council so a separate session would be needed for this.

A member asked for clarification about the covenant on Strawberry Field, which restricted its use.

The town clerk said if there was consent from the freeholder to lift the covenant, a development could progress. However, if either the council or the freeholder did not want housing on the land, DC would not pursue it.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to note the current position with the production of a new Local Plan for the Dorset Council area, agree a dedicated member briefing session to consider this council's detailed response to it and the Local Transport Plan, together with an extraordinary meeting of Full Council to formally agree that response and a date and time for both.

25/68/C Devolution and asset and service transfers

The town clerk said this was becoming a live issue for DC; the leader was particularly interested and had already intervened on behalf of this council on toilet servicing. Following officer discussions, the town clerk said he had a real sense this was going to move forward, particularly in relation to toilets. DC was expected to provide some indicative costs on toilets by the end of the week.

The town clerk suggested three members were delegated to work with him and the deputy town clerk on this as the discussions were moving on rapidly.

Cllrs P. Evans, P. May and M. Ellis put themselves forward to work with officers.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to continue to pursue asset and service transfers from Dorset Council, on the proviso that sufficient funding comes with such transfers and to agree a group of members, Cllrs P. Evans, P. May and M. Ellis, be authorised to work with the town clerk and deputy town clerk to pursue the matter.

25/69/C Consultation on the Dorset National Landscape Management Plan

Cllrs S. Cockerell, P. Evans and P. May put themselves forward to work with the town clerk to formulate a response to the plan on behalf of the council.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to delegate the council's response to the Dorset National Landscape Management Plan consultation to the town clerk in consultation with Cllrs S. Cockerell, P. Evans and P. May, ahead of the consultation deadline of 22 September 2025.

25/70/C LRTC branded clothing for members

Several members were in support of branded clothing, which could be worn at events when representing the council.

Several members felt it was unnecessary and a waste of money.

A member suggested if anyone wanted branded clothing, they could either purchase it themselves or use their members' allowance to purchase it.

The town clerk said the council kept a small stock of uniform so there might be some available if members wanted to enquire.

25/71/C Grant Request

A member said any requests should be considered as part of the grants' process and other organisations had been refused previously for this reason.

However, the town clerk said the council had previously approved grants outside of that process so the precedent had been set.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to approve a £375 grant request from Little Green Change for its 2025 Children's Christmas Give and Take event in Lyme Regis.

25/72/C First Winter Bus Timetable

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to write to Dorset Council, with a copy to First Bus and the local MP, to highlight this council's objections to the reduction of services on the proposed winter timetable, in particular the early and late services to the train at Axminster that help our residents work and study.

25/73/C Receipt and Acceptance of Tenders for the Gardens Paths Project

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, 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.

25/74/C Exempt Business

a) Receipt and Acceptance of Tenders for the Garden Paths Project

The town clerk said officers would propose Hansfords, who could start the work on 3 November 2025 with a 12-week contract period.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members **RESOLVED** to accept the tender from Hansfords for the repair of paths within the seafront gardens.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.

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