

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2025

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr G. Caddy, 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: N. Cleal (finance manager), A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

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

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

25/107/C Public Forum

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

25/108/C Dorset Council Matters

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

- Following the recent ward meeting, she had enquired about the cost of a police community support officer (PCSO) and also raised it with the MP. The cost provided by Dorset Police for a PCSO was for two officers, because Lyme Regis is so remote, so it would require two people to cover the duties.
- She had raised the issue of the accreted land debt with DC's chief executive, the head of legal services and the leader of the council but not yet had a reply.
- A meeting was taking place with the Environment Agency about the lynch, which would also be attended by DC's coast and greenspace manager. A pre-meeting was taking place on 19 December 2025 and she asked members to let her know if they had any particular questions.
- Contractors would be fitting new lights on the harbour and the repairs would take place soon.
- South West Water's investment plans for Lyme Regis were uncertain as they had now been taken off the website, but River Lim Action Group were trying to find out the new timescales.

Cllr M. Ellis arrived at 7.06pm.

- DAPTC would be sending out a survey to town and parish councils to highlight where any additional support is needed for emergency planning and community resilience work.

- The Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Dorset National Landscape Management Plan had been approved by Cabinet.
- She was working on a myth-busting Q&A on climate and nature policies as there was a lot of misinformation in the public domain.

25/109/C Questions from Councillors

There were none.

25/110/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold – illness
Cllr S. Larcombe – illness

25/111/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr D. Holland declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 20, Approval of Unbudgeted Expenditure, as he was a RNLI volunteer.

25/112/C Dispensations

There were none.

25/113/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 29 October 2025

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 29 October 2025 were **ADOPTED**.

25/114/C Matters arising from the minutes of Full Council meeting held on 29 October 2025

Lyme Regis to Bridport Shuttle

Members asked to be updated on the service following the scheduled meeting on 19 December 2025.

Cllr G. Stammers arrived at 7.11pm.

25/115/C Update Report

20mph speed limit

A member asked if the outcome of the 18 December 2025 meeting would be available to members before Christmas.

The town clerk said any update will be provided in the briefing as soon as it was available.

25/116/C Mayor's Announcements

One further engagement was added to the list – a meeting of the Dorset Coast Forum on 27 November 2025.

25/117/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 4 November 2025, to note the committee's comments made on planning applications under the power delegated by Full Council, and to note the recommendations made under the chairman and vice-chairman's delegated authority following the cancellation of the meeting on 25 November 2025.

25/118/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/51/ENV – River Lim Action Group Report

RESOLVED: that officers engage with South West Water about their revised timescales for the Turning the Tide works in Lyme Regis; that the council continues to press South West Water to carry out the much-needed upgrade at Uplyme Sewage Treatment Works; and for resources to be put into public engagement and key stakeholder briefings to ensure support for the proposed works and minimum disruption while they are taking place.

25/53/ENV – Town Public Drinking Water Tap Provision

RESOLVED: that town public drinking water tap provision be added to the proposed list of objectives for 2027-28.

25/119/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Caddy, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/26/HR – Job description and person specification for a permanent post to support the management of the council's commercial properties and other assets and to assist with the delivery of property-related, project and asset management work

RESOLVED: to approve the job description and person specification for the permanent post to support the management of the council's commercial properties and other assets to assist with the delivery of property-related, project and asset management work.

25/27/HR – Administrative Assistant (post holder 110), Six-Month Probation Review

RESOLVED: to approve the administrative assistants (post holder 110) continued employment with the council, effective from 7 November 2025, until the end of the fixed term period on 31 March 2026.

25/28/HR – Update on Postholder 207

RESOLVED: to note the update on postholder 207 and identified three members of the committee, Cllr G. Caddy, Cllr M. Ellis and Cllr G. Stammers to potentially be involved at the next stage of the process.

25/120/C Strategy and Finance Committee

It was noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 3 December 2025 was cancelled.

25/121/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

It was noted the minutes stated several members were both present and had sent apologies and that this would be clarified before the minutes were approved by the committee.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/46/TCP – Council of the Year Application 2026 – Delegation of Members

RESOLVED: that Cllr M. Ellis and Cllr P. Evans work with the town clerk on the application for the Town Council of the Year 2026 award and request one other member from the Full Council to work alongside them.

25/122/C Town Management and Highways Committee

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2025 (there were no resolutions).

25/123/C Budget and Precept 2026-27 and Five-Year Financial Plan 2026-31

Members were concerned about the budget deficit of £7k in 2026-27, which would be taken from the reserve, and there was a suggestion some of the discretionary charges or the precept could be revisited to prevent this.

It was also suggested an additional £7k could be estimated on the parking income for 2026-27 as this income was always underestimated, which would then balance the budget.

The town clerk said taking the £7k out of the reserve was more straightforward and it was a relatively low sum. He said budget assumptions were very prudent and in reality, the budget was likely to be exceeded by £100k to £200k. However, he agreed members needed to think about increasing charges the following year, principally car parking charges, and increasing income in other ways.

The town clerk said he would be proposing changes to the standing orders and financial regulations to clarify the setting of the budget was a two-stage process, so members would be allowed to make alternative decisions at the second round of meetings.

A member suggested the council should also be looking at its costs and how money could be spent differently, with reference to various projects which had been added into the base budget and two additional staffing posts added permanently to the establishment. A current staff structure chart was requested.

The town clerk said officers had recently carried out some analysis of staffing costs compared with other town and parish councils in Dorset; with staffing costs of 40% of turnover, this town council was one of the lowest cost organisations in the county. He said he would take a report to the Human Resources Committee to allow members to review this in detail.

The town clerk said he agreed the council also needed to look at its costs. He urged members to attend future budget briefings as this gave them the opportunity to scrutinise where the council's money comes from and how it is spent.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members **RESOLVED** to approve a budget for 2026-27, including a precept of £163,254.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to note the five-year financial plan for 2026-31 and to maintain the council's reserve at £1million for 2026-27.

25/124/C Revision of lost property policy

It was suggested mobile phones could be restored to factory settings and re-used instead of being destroyed.

The finance manager said she had spoken to the police about the same thing but there might still be personal information stored on the device. Therefore, destroying it was the only option.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, members **RESOLVED** to approve the revised lost property policy.

25/125/C Commissioning of a New Sculpture

A member felt the opportunity to create a new sculpture should be offered more widely.

Several members felt it would be acceptable to work directly with the suggested artist because of the work involved in creating designs and in recognition of him previously gifting a sculpture to the town.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to suspend financial regulation 10.2 to allow the commissioning of Michael Fairfax to design and make a sculpture without the need to obtain three quotes.

25/126/C Approval of Unbudgeted Expenditure

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members **RESOLVED** to approve unbudgeted expenditure of up to £1,000 to host a civic reception to mark the 200th anniversary of the RNLI in Lyme Regis, on the condition match funding is received from the Lyme Regis Guild of the RNLI.

25/127/C Dorset Council's Licensing Policy Consultation

Cllrs S. Cockerell, G. Caddy and P. May agreed to work with officers on a response to the consultation.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, members **RESOLVED** to delegate the council's response to Dorset Council's licensing policy to the town clerk in consultation with Cllrs S. Cockerell, G. Caddy and P. May.

25/128/C Investments and Cash Holdings

Members noted the report.

25/129/C List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr D. Holland and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments in April, September, October and November 2025 for the sums of £246,207.03, £230,208.48, £220,141.11 and £302,803.02, respectively.

25/130/C Debtors' Report

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, 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.

25/131/C Exempt Business

a) Debtors' Report

Members discussed debts relating to an alfresco licence and a parking permit and the steps being taken to recover them.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.