

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2026

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. Evans

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

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

The Rev Fi Budden gave a prayer.

25/188/C Public Forum

G. Rabbitts

G. Rabbitts, director of LymeArts Community Trust, spoke in support of the organisation's large capital grant application. She spoke about the Marine Theatre's wide-ranging programme, its audiences, support for young people, and its financial stability. She spoke about the challenges that came with an older building and financing large infrastructure and maintenance projects. She outlined the funding application, which comprised a new boiler, replacement roof tiles and associated scaffolding and access, and improving the safety of current cellar arrangements. She said the application was all about people, with the improvements aimed at maintaining opportunities within the town, helping to reduce loneliness, provide opportunities for children, and support its volunteers. She confirmed the theatre would fund 50% of the project costs through fundraising and its reserves.

F. Hulbert

F. Hulbert spoke in support of the KGV Trustee's large grant application. The application related to Uplyme Playing Fields, where there was an issue with river erosion, also affecting the children's play area. He said Uplyme Parish Council was prepared to invest in the play area but the erosion was a risk. He explained the trustees plans to resolve the issue, working with various organisations and councils to find a green solution. Although the trustees could fund the work, it would deplete their funds significantly, with further expenditure expected in future due to erosion behind the old cricket pavilion.

F. Hulbert also spoke in support of Lym Valley Croquet Club's large grant application. Also based at Uplyme Playing Field, the club would like to buy a new machinery shed as the current one was no longer waterproof. This was essential to protect equipment and maintain the lawns. He said the club had done a lot of outreach, including a weekly roll-up, working with youth organisations and supporting Sporting Lyme.

P. Street

P. Street spoke in support of Lyme Regis/St George's Twinning Association's large capital grant application. The funding would support the 30th anniversary of the twinning arrangement and he explained the history of the twinning. The anniversary events would coincide with the annual civic parade in July, to include a commemoration stone, a new information board for the Somers statue, a new beer at the local brewery, and new plants in the Bermudan garden. The events would also mark the 10th anniversary of the tripling with Jamestown. Local organisations would also be involved, including the Town Mill, Lyme Regis Gig Club and Lyme Morris. He said the organisation had not previously asked the council for financial support.

D. Flett

D. Flett spoke in support of Lyme Regis Bowling Club's large capital grant application. He spoke about the club's demographic of older members and its desire to attract junior players, helped by its participation in Sporting Lyme. The funding would help refurbish the accessible toilet to comply with current standards and legislation, provide facilities for disabled people, including members, visitors and visiting bowlers, and comply with safeguarding legislation to provide separate facilities for young people.

A. Ball (written submission)

A. Ball spoke in relation to agenda item 21, Public Representation at Council Meetings, and supported the provision for the public to submit written representations to support inclusion and participation. He said some people were not able or comfortable to speak at meetings and public engagement should not be discouraged. He supported clear processes to support written submissions, and said both written and verbal representations supported inclusivity, democracy, openness and responsiveness.

H. Britton

As chairman of the Lyme Regis Society, H. Britton referred to an error in the events' listing of the LymeLiving magazine, for which the editor had apologised. She highlighted various other errors in the May edition of the magazine. She suggested proofreading, fact checking, grammar and page reference links needed to be improved.

R. De-Voisey

R. De-Voisey spoke about democracy, accountability and transparency of decisions and decision-makers, who must be open and accepting of scrutiny. She said although not personal, scrutiny should be viewed positively and members should also carry out their own scrutiny, an essential part of their role in representing the town. She felt some members were not engaged in scrutiny, allowing decisions to be made without examination, interrogation or analysis. She encouraged members to enquire about officers' decisions and information provided by them, ensuring confidence and

assurance in decision-making. She said she would be happy to discuss any points raised further and was sure the Cobb Traders would too.

R. James

R. James spoke in relation to agenda item 19, Governance Review, particularly the proposal to delegate low-level decisions to officers. Although effective in some instances, he was concerned about how it would be determined which decisions should be made by officers and which should be made by members. He suggested a review of the council's Scheme of Delegation was required to ensure transparency, consistency and accountability and outline which decisions could be delegated. He suggested this should happen before any proposals were voted on. He encouraged the live streaming of meetings to support openness and transparency, especially as the council was not currently publishing audio recordings of meetings on its website in line with its own policy. He asked for a written response as to why the council was not complying with this policy.

G. Symonds

G. Symonds asked for clarification of the council's policy on responding to questions raised in the public forum as it appeared questions were not being answered. If questions could not be answered from the floor, he suggested answers were posted on the council's website and added to the next agenda. He felt this would ensure the public felt they were being listened to and not ignored. He was also concerned some members were not declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests when voting and asked for clarification on the policy regarding this.

T. Mayers

T. Mayers, speaking as a resident, businessman and chairman of Cobb Traders, clarified that the Cobb Traders was inclusive of the whole town. He was aware another member of the organisation had received a letter from the mayor, reportedly agreed by councillors, asking for an apology for comments made during public meetings, implying there would be repercussions if not. He asked what right the mayor had to restrict freedom of speech and felt the audio recording of the meeting did not warrant such a letter. He said individuals had the right to hold and express opinions, delivered courteously and respectfully, regardless of whether the council agreed or not. He asked if others who had spoken would receive a similar letter and emphasised that the Cobb Traders were not going anywhere and would continue to challenge. He believed the letter reinforced the individual's views on control. He felt it was ironic the letter had come from the mayor, a former journalist who openly criticised the council.

S. Lloyd

S. Lloyd spoke in relation to the LymeLiving magazine and wanted to place on record the response she had received to her questions. The council had confirmed it had no plans to change its approach, the community response had been excellent, and she was among a handful of people to have raised concerns. She said concerns had been raised about the cost of the magazine at meetings she had attended and there had

been no consultation with residents. She had received different information regarding print demand and undistributed copies and quoted some of the figures. She asked for clarification on how surplus copies had been disposed of, were they recycled or disposed of in another way? She asked why the council would not carry out a formal survey or properly assess lower cost options before continuing the level of spend.

B. Larcombe

B. Larcombe spoke in relation to agenda item 19, Governance Review. He agreed with the proposed merging of the Human Resources and Strategy and Finance Committees as it would free up resources and improve efficiency. However, he did not support the proposal for portfolio holders as it was a difficult concept to manage. He said members were the employer, decision-makers and those who put items on agendas and he believed this should continue. He pointed out this was a small council that happened to have a large income. He urged members to throw out the idea of portfolio holders and asked how the council would make it work, who would be appointed and how they would be appointed.

B. Larcombe also spoke in relation to agenda item 22, Consultation on Electoral Review of Dorset Council. He had previously advocated that Lyme Regis and Charmouth should be separated from Marshwood Vale, at the time a twin ward with two ward members. He urged the council not to advocate a return to this as the current arrangements worked well, with two distinctly different wards, one agricultural, the other tourism and seaside. He said population changes drove boundary reviews and Lyme had not had any significant changes.

25/189/C Dorset Council Matters

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

25/190/C Questions from Councillors

Cllr D. Holland

Cllr D. Holland asked why bins along the Cart Road had been removed, specifically near to the trampolines. He asked when they would be replaced.

25/191/C Apologies for Absence

Cllr M. Denney – work commitments
Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold – work commitments
Cllr C. Reynolds – illness

25/192/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

25/193/C Dispensations

There were none.

25/194/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 25 March 2026

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 25 March 2026 were **ADOPTED**.

25/195/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 1 April 2026

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 1 April 2026 were **ADOPTED**.

25/196/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 6 May 2026

Proposed by Cllr A. Wood and seconded by Cllr P. May, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 6 May 2026 were **ADOPTED**.

25/197/C Matters arising from the minutes of Full Council meeting held on 1 April 2026 and the extraordinary Full Council meetings held on 25 March and 6 May 2026

Members noted the report.

25/198/C Update Report

There were no updates.

25/199/C Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report.

25/200/C Planning Committee

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 31 March and 21 April 2026 and to note the comments made on planning applications under the chairman vice-chairman's delegated authority.

25/201/C Environment Committee

Proposed by Cllr S. Cockerell and seconded by Cllr P. May, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2026, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/78/ENV – Co-option

RESOLVED: that for the council year 2026/27, the Environment Committee offers three places for the co-option of non-voting members and that the advertisement date for these places is Thursday 21 May 2026, with a closing date of 19 June 2026.

Applicants will be required to submit a CV and a statement to confirm disqualification criteria do not apply as stated in the selection procedure.

RESOLVED: that this council adopts a selection procedure for applicants to be co-opted as non-voting members of the Environment Committee as follows:

1. Non-members who wish to apply to sit on the committee after it has been advertised for must supply a CV and a declaration that they meet the requirements to be appointed, at least one week before the meeting when selection is to take place. Ideally this will be the first Environment Committee meeting of the new council year. No more than two people from one organisation could apply to be co-opted.
2. If the number of valid applicants is less than or equal to the number of agreed spaces, then they will automatically be appointed as non-voting members of the Environment Committee.
- 2.2 If more applications than the advertised spaces are received, then at the meeting a two or more-stage voting process would be entered into. Members cast a single vote for their preferred candidate in one or more rounds of voting. The purpose of each voting round is to eliminate the candidate with the lowest number of votes until the number remaining is equal to the available spaces. Those remaining applicants will then be appointed as non-voting members of the Environment Committee.
3. Members of the Environment Committee would have the right to vote to remove non-members in any subsequent Environment Committee meeting by a majority vote.

25/79/ENV – Biodiversity Policy – Draft for Consideration

RESOLVED: to adopt a draft Biodiversity Policy but ask officers to integrate it into the existing Environment Policy and bring it back for approval at the next Environment Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: that biodiversity actions be incorporated into the current climate action plan, rather than having a separate plan.

RESOLVED: that the climate action working group takes on the biodiversity action plan to be incorporated into the existing climate action plan.

25/80/ENV – Action Plan for Achieving Net Carbon Zero Emissions by 2030

RESOLVED: that the Action Plan for Achieving Net Carbon Zero Emissions by 2030 document be renamed the 'Lyme Regis Town Council Climate Action Plan', recognising it as a working plan.

25/81/ENV – Carbon Literacy Accreditation and Training

RESOLVED: that the council approves an unbudgeted spend of c.£2,250 + VAT to retain the silver carbon literacy accreditation.

25/202/C Human Resources Committee

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2026, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/72/HR – Employee Benefits

RESOLVED: not to agree any additional employee benefits.

25/73/HR – Regrading

RESOLVED: to approve a regrading of post 209 from spinal column points 10-13 to spinal column points 16-19, and make the appointment at spinal column point 19, effective from 1 April 2026.

25/203/C Strategy and Finance Committee

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2026, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/73/SF – Request from Cobb Traders – Autumn/Winter Parking Scheme

RESOLVED: to introduce a parking discount trial at Woodmead and Monmouth Beach car parks in February 2027, where parking is paid at the normal hourly rate for the first two hours, and then capped after the third hour, with a maximum £6 charge, recognising that the potential loss of income would be up to c.£12k, and to work with Cobb Traders on an initiative to attract visitors with other local discounts and to work collaboratively on promoting this.

25/75/SF – Renewal of Insurance Provision for 2026-2028

RESOLVED: to authorise the town clerk to enter into a negotiated insurance agreement with Clear Councils from 1 April 2026.

25/76/SF – Breaches of Financial Regulations

RESOLVED: to note the report and approve the management actions proposed to ensure greater compliance with the Financial Regulations.

25/77/SF – Potential Fire Station Closures' Consultation

RESOLVED: to delegate a response to Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority's consultation on the closure of fire stations to the town clerk, in consultation with Cllrs A. Wood, P. Evans and M. Ellis.

25/78/SF – Civic Reception

RESOLVED: to approve unbudgeted expenditure of £600 for a civic reception for the RNLI on 2 May 2026.

25/80/SF – List of Payments

RESOLVED: to approve the schedule of payments in March 2026 for the sum of £381,067.96.

25/81/SF – Strawberry Fields Budget for Valuation and Appraisal Work

RESOLVED: to approve the use of the existing approved £10k budget for an options appraisal at Strawberry Fields for obtaining detailed valuation and development appraisal advice relating to the potential allocation of the site in the emerging Dorset Local Plan for housing purposes.

25/204/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2026, and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

25/92/TCP – Town Map Reprint

RESOLVED: to approve unbudgeted expenditure of up to £3,000 for the reprinting of the town map.

25/93/TCP – Tourism Microsite Membership Packages

RESOLVED: to approve maintaining a free basic listing on the tourism website and not to increase the cost of an enhanced entry for 2026-27.

25/94/TCP – Fundy Albert

RESOLVED: to instruct officers to arrange a video conference with members from Fundy Albert and, following that meeting, consider if the council should enter a sister-municipality arrangement with Fundy Albert.

25/205/C Town Management and Highways Committee

It was noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 15 April 2026.

25/206/C Large Capital Grant Awards

The mayor brought this item forward on the agenda.

There were concerns about supporting grant applications from Uplyme-based organisations, especially as the grants were oversubscribed. Members felt Lyme Regis-based organisations should be prioritised, but recognised Lym Valley Croquet Club, although based in Uplyme, had members from Lyme Regis.

It was suggested Lym Valley Croquet Club be awarded £1,050, Lyme Regis Bowling Club be awarded £2,451, the Lyme Regis/St George's Twinning Association be awarded £2,000, and LymeArts Community Trust be awarded £4,500.

It was proposed by Cllr D. Holland and seconded by Cllr A. Wood that the Lyme Regis/St George's Twinning Association is awarded a large capital grant of £2,375.

This motion was not voted on.

Proposed by Cllr G. Caddy and seconded by Cllr P. May, members **RESOLVED** to award large capital grants as follows:

- Lym Valley Croquet Club - £1,000
- LymeArts Community Trust - £4,500
- Lyme Regis Bowling Club - £2,200
- Lyme Regis/St George's Twinning Association - £2,300

25/207/C Governance Review

Members were generally in favour of streamlining the council by merging committees to create two main committees, but there was some concern about how it would be determined which low-level decisions would be delegated to officers.

Members were generally not in favour of the suggestion for portfolio holders but there was support for forming a Partnership Board to strengthen community input.

Several members supported having a separate Environment Committee because of its work with community organisations, to take place on a 12-week cycle.

It was also recognised there would need to be a separate Planning Committee due to Dorset Council's timescales for responding to planning consultations.

Members were concerned they had not agreed enough of the principles to go ahead with all the proposals in the report, such as the number of members on committees and how members would be appointed to committees. It was suggested there needed to be more concrete proposals for members to consider at the next meeting.

The town clerk said the proposals had been agreed by the chairmen and vice-chairmen but the report made it clear there were still some matters to consider. He advised members to at least make some in principle decisions at this meeting, or the issue was at risk of drifting.

It was proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr P. May to ask that the new committee structure, including separate Environment and Planning Committees, is taken away to be worked up with a more detailed proposal to discuss further, to include membership and how the voting would work, and to agree in principle to moving to two principal committees for resources and operations.

This motion was not voted on.

It was proposed by Cllr P. May to move to a structure of two principal committees to cover resources and operations and to ask officers to come back with detailed proposals about how members would decide how to elect people to those committees, how often those committees would meet and how that would interact with the Full Council cycle.

This motion was not voted on as it was suggested there needed to be a further meeting of the working group to agree some of the details mentioned.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members **RESOLVED** to have two principal committees for operations and resources, with separate committees for environment and planning, and that the working group is reformed to determine how members will decide how many members are elected to committees and how they are elected to committees.

The town clerk suggested a briefing with the rest of the members following the working group meeting, before the proposals are brought back to the Full Council. He said it might require an extraordinary meeting.

Any members who were not on the working group but would like to feed in suggestions were asked to do so.

25/208/C Internal Audit Report, Visit Two 2025-26

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to note the internal auditor's report and approve the management responses following visit two of 2025-26.

25/209/C Public Representation at Council Meetings

Members agreed letters from the public should continue to be read out at meetings, although they urged people to attend in person if possible. It was also agreed any letters should be restricted to three minutes, in the same way an in-person representation would be.

Members also agreed officers should not be asked to read out letters that are critical of staff as the council had a duty of care to its employees; these should be read out by a member.

Members agreed a response should be provided, if possible, to questions asked in the public forum.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to continue to allow written representations from the public to council meetings, to be restricted to three minutes, that officers should not be asked to read out letters that are critical of staff, and this be written into the council's standing orders at the next review.

25/210/C Consultation on Electoral Review of Dorset Council

Cllrs M. Ellis, G. Caddy and A. Wood agreed to help formulate a response to the consultation.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** to delegate a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on new council wards for Dorset Council to the town clerk in consultation with Cllrs M. Ellis, G. Caddy and A. Wood.

25/211/C Market Proposal

Members were fully in support of the proposal to explore the possibility of a weekly market on Theatre Square and the sea defence walkway, but there were some concerns about the use of the land, given the previous issues with Dorset Council on Marine Parade. Members asked for assurances that the town council could legally progress this.

The town clerk said he had met with the relevant service manager at Dorset Council and there was a clear commitment to progress this and the leader of Dorset Council had also discussed it with officers, giving his full support. He said officers were pushing Dorset Council for a timetable on when they could provide an update on the legal process they wanted to adopt.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to explore the option of a weekly market on Theatre Square and the sea-defence walkway and report back to the Town Management and Highways Committee, on the proviso all the legal processes are agreed.

25/212/C Contract and Service Level Agreement for Tourism Microsite

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Holland, members **RESOLVED** to approve the updated cost of the tourism microsite, payable to Dorset Council at £8,100 plus VAT per annum for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29, and to give authorisation to sign and seal the service level agreement with Dorset Council for the provision and management of the Lyme Regis tourism microsite, in line with standing order 23a and b.

25/213/C Internal Audit Report, Visit Two 2025-26 - Confidential

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis 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.

25/214/C Sale of Former Offices

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis 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.

25/215/C Exempt Business

a) Internal Audit Report, Visit Two 2025-26 - Confidential

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** to note the confidential recommendation and approve the management responses following the internal auditor's second visit of 2025-26.

b) Sale of Former Offices

A member asked how much land next to the Guildhall would be used to create a parking area.

The town clerk said he would circulate a map to members.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to accept the offer of £225k + 50% contribution towards access works for the purchase of the former council offices.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.