

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2018

Present

Chairman: Cllr S. Miller

Councillors: Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr P. Hicks, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: Mrs A. Mullins (admin officer), Mr J. Wright (town clerk)

Absent: Cllr P. Ridley

18/59/SF Public Forum

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

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis arrived just after 7pm.

18/60/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr O. Lovell
Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds – illness
Cllr D. Hallett – holiday

18/61/SF Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2018 were **ADOPTED**.

18/62/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis declared a pecuniary interest in any matters related to the Woodmead Halls as she was employed there.

18/63/SF Dispensations

There was no grant of dispensations made by the town clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

18/64/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 24 October 2018

Power boat club

In response to a member question, the town clerk said there had still been no response from the club's solicitor.

Review of Charges

Cllr B. Larcombe asked why reports on non-use of single-use plastics by concession holders and management of the shelters would be coming to this committee as late as 13 March 2019 as this would cause these issues to run into the new council administration.

Cllr B. Larcombe also said he had photographs of tables being placed outside the studded areas on Marine Parade, with A boards also beyond the tables.

The town clerk said there were several items already deferred to the meeting on 30 January 2019 so the agenda was quite full. He said he was happy to meet with the chairman to discuss the priority of agenda items.

The town clerk asked members to supply him with any evidence they had of licensees putting chairs, tables and A boards outside the studded areas.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the enforcement of non-use of single-use plastics would be in place by the main season in 2019.

The town clerk said the council already had agreements in place with its licensees and the council would need the licensees' consent to vary. However, there were some concessionaires or licensees the council could influence immediately.

Bowling club car park

Cllr B. Larcombe said the council's three options were put to the club, which came back with a fourth option. He said the club had been asked to put its ideas in writing to the town clerk so they could be considered by the council, but this was still awaited.

Cllr S. Williams believed the council should further investigate allowing the bowling club to use land on the beach, currently leased to West Dorset District Council (WDDC).

The town clerk said he intended to bring a report to the meeting on 30 January 2018 reviewing all the town council's relationships with WDDC.

18/65/SF Update Report

Park and ride review

Cllr J. Scowen asked when the traffic and transport report by Hydrock, which would include park and ride data, would be made available to the council.

The town clerk said it was hoped the report could be taken to the next cycle of meetings.

18/66/SF Filming and Audio Recording of Council Meetings

Cllr J. Scowen said he didn't believe there was a need to film meetings but felt they should be audio recorded, and he believed members' behaviour would improve. The majority of members agreed with these points.

Cllr B. Larcombe said an audio recording could be used to fill in any gaps in the minute-taker's notes and could be referred to if any comments were refuted, therefore improving efficiency and accuracy.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said she would need to be convinced of the purpose of recording meetings before she would consider agreeing to it and she didn't believe a recording was necessary to improve the accuracy of the minutes.

Cllr S. Larcombe suggested obtaining costings and investigating whether the existing equipment was fit-for-purpose.

Cllr S. Miller said the council needed to be sure of the reasons it wanted to return to recording meetings. He said the ability for someone to listen to the debate at a meeting was a valid reason, but using a recording to scrutinise properly-taken minutes was not.

Cllr B. Larcombe said there were instances where the record hadn't shown enough of how decisions had been reached and there had to be an efficient way of refuting something if necessary.

The town clerk said if the council chose to record its meetings, it would need to be clear about the relationship between the recordings and the minutes. He said there was no intention of changing the format of the minutes to give a verbatim report of a meeting, however, using a recording for confirming accuracy was valid.

Cllr S. Williams said as every comment was not included in the minutes, a recording would show exactly who said what.

Cllr R. Doney said the minutes only needed to record the decisions made and the actions given and introducing another system would have an impact on staff time.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Scowen to look into audio recording council meetings.

This motion was not seconded.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said the implications of recording in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation would also need to be checked.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to take advice on the costs of audio recording council meetings and reinstate audio recording after costings have been agreed.

Voted for – Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr P. Hicks, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr J. Broom

Voted against – Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr S. Miller

Abstentions – Cllr R. Doney

18/67/SF Council Office Accommodation

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. Hicks, 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 the financial or business affairs of a 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.

18/68/SF Budget and Precept, 2019/20 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2019-2023

The town clerk advised of some changes to the 2018/19 and 2019/20 budget. He said the £11,000 set aside in the 2018/19 budget for the park and ride was unlikely to be required as the operator had reported a profit.

The town clerk said there was originally £67,770 in the 2018/19 budget to underwrite the repairs to the church tower, which had previously been moved to 2019/20. However, as the church's funding application to Coastal Revival Fund had not been successful, the funding would no longer be required.

The town clerk said the council could further strengthen its financial position by removing funding of a combined £53,000 from the 2019/20 budget for gym equipment, a stage and a boules area in the gardens.

Cllr J. Scowen asked if the £2,000 budget for drinking water taps would also be removed from the 2019/20 budget as the council had not agreed to this project.

The town clerk confirmed this allocation would be removed.

Cllr B. Larcombe proposed removing funding in 2019/20 for a stage, boules area and gym equipment.

This motion was not seconded.

Members also discussed the level of members' allowances.

The town clerk said the allowance for town and parish councils was recommended by a remuneration panel and was likely to be reviewed when the new unitary authority was created.

Cllr R. Doney asked for two extra items to be added into the 2019/20 budget: rubbish disposal and recycling on the seafront (£5,000) and new town signage at the three main entry points to publicise the town's plastic-free community status (£1,000).

It was noted the detail of these two projects would be discussed at a later date and all members were being asked to do at this point was approve the budget provision.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to:

- approve the 2019/20 budget with the removal of the allocation to underwrite repairs to the parish church tower (£66,770), and with the addition of £5k for rubbish disposal and recycling on the seafront and £1k for new town signage to incorporate plastic-free community status
- to approve a precept of £120,708 for 2019/20
- to approve the following objectives for 2019/20: Marine Parade day huts over a three-year period; roof repairs above the amusement arcade, Swim and antiques centre; new office accommodation; bin store on the seafront; tipper for the lengthsman; and lighting at Langmoor and Lister Gardens offset by £30k s106 monies
- to remove the following objectives: concert bowl/stage (£25k), gym equipment in the gardens (£25k), boules area in the gardens (£3k), and drinking water taps on the seafront (£2k)

18/69/SF List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the schedule of payments for July and August 2018 for the sums of £127,554.95 and £129,709.95, respectively.

18/70/SF Debtors Report

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, 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 the financial or business affairs of a 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 noted the report.

18/71/SF Exempt Business

(a) Council Office Accommodation

Cllr S. Miller said the availability of the Lloyds Bank building provided the council with an opportunity to consider moving office accommodation, with plans already in place to convert upper floors into residential accommodation.

Cllr S. Larcombe said paying rent for the Lloyds building was a waste of money and the £100k earmarked would be better spent on refurbishing the existing building, with the added benefit of being able to expand into the ground floor, currently occupied by the tourist information centre (TIC).

This view was supported by the majority of members.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he had originally floated the idea of the Three Cups building to help kick-start its development. However, he agreed with Cllr S. Larcombe and added that moving into the TIC would allow level access. He added that he wasn't convinced it would be necessary to decant during refurbishment work to Guildhall Cottage, but the Guildhall or St Michael's Business Centre could be used if necessary.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said she didn't think staff would be able to remain in the existing offices while refurbishment work was carried out and moving to Lloyds would save money in the long-run due to the work involved to refurbish the existing offices and the opportunity to sell Guildhall Cottage.

Cllr S. Williams said plans were drawn up to extend the existing building and it made more sense to add value to a property the council owned.

The town clerk said if the office remained in the existing building, there would be no need to extend it because there was an opportunity to move into the TIC. He emphasised it would be a major building project, warned of the difficulty in delivering a service when staff were working in a building site, and the difficulties associated with two office moves.

Some members were concerned the council would be committing to ongoing rental costs if it moved to Lloyds, with the added uncertainty of rent upgrades.

Cllr S. Miller said the Lloyds building would be a modern space in the centre of the town, and the rental costs were advantageous for Lyme Regis high street, with a further opportunity to off-set those costs by converting Guildhall Cottage into residential accommodation.

The town clerk said if members chose to refurbish Guildhall Cottage, someone would need to be employed to project manage this.

Cllr R. Doney said he wanted to see the two business cases alongside each other. However, it was pointed out a decision needed to be made now as the agents were looking to find a tenant for the Lloyds building by the end of the year.

Cllr S. Williams requested a recorded vote on the following motion;

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** not to pursue the opportunities to occupy either the former Lloyds Bank premises or the Three Cups, and to refurbish the existing office, to include expansion into the ground floor currently occupied by the tourist information centre.

Voted for – Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr P. Hicks, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr J. Broom

Voted against – Cllr S. Miller, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis

Abstentions – None

(b) Debtors Report

The town clerk said many of the issues were now being dealt with by the council's solicitor, working towards a position to take specific legal action to recover property or revoke licences, if necessary.

The meeting closed at 8.34pm.