


**Strategy and Finance Committee**

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee to be held in the Guildhall, Bridge Street, Lyme Regis, on Wednesday 18 March 2020 commencing at 7pm when the following business is proposed to be transacted:

  
John Wright  
Town Clerk  
13.03.20

*The open and transparent proceedings of Full Council and committee meetings will be audio recorded and recordings will be held for one year by the town council.*

*If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded.*

*If members of the public have any queries regarding audio recording of meetings, please contact the town clerk.*

**AGENDA**

**1. Public Forum**

Twenty minutes will be made available for public comment and response in relation to items on this agenda

*Individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each to address the committee*

**2. Apologies**

To receive and record apologies and reasons for absence

**3. Minutes**

To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 5 February 2020

**4. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Members are reminded that if they have a disclosable pecuniary interest on their register of interests relating to any item on the agenda they are prevented from participating in any discussion or voting on that matter at the meeting and to do so would amount to a criminal offence. Similarly, if you are or become aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter under consideration at this meeting which is not on your register of interests or is in the process of being added to your register you must disclose such interest at this meeting and register it within 28 days.

**5. Dispensations**

To note the grant of dispensations made by the town clerk in relation to the business of this meeting

**6. Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 5 February 2020**

To update members on matters arising from the meeting that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues raised within the minutes of the meeting.

**7. Update Report**

To update members on issues previously reported to this committee

**8. To receive the minutes of the Dorset Council working group meeting on 25 February 2020 and consider the recommendations therein**

**9. Draft Corporate Plan 2020-25**

To present the Draft Corporate Plan 2020-25

**10. Internal Audit Report, Visits Two and Three 2019-20**

To inform members of the outcome of the internal auditor's second and third visits for 2019-20, which took place on 20 and 22 January 2020 and 25 and 26 February 2020

**11. Finance Progress Review**

To inform members of the progress made against the 7 November 2019 internal audit report

**12. Budget Performance, 1 April-31 January 2020**

To inform members of performance against budget from 1 April to 31 January 2020 and to provide a forecast to 31 March 2020

**13. VAT and Option to Tax (for VAT)**

To allow members to consider whether to opt to tax (for VAT purposes) any, or all, of its currently non-opted 'commercial' properties

**14. Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

To allow members to consider the possible impact of Coronavirus on the council and Lyme Regis

**15. Grant Allocation to Recipients of 'Ammonite' Filming Money**

To allow members to consider an arrangement which has been negotiated with Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support to use of a beach hut on Marine Parade

To allow members to consider information provided by the Mary Anning Rocks committee and agree the funding on that basis

**16. Renewal of Lease for Power Boat Club, Monmouth Beach**

To allow members to consider how to proceed with possible terms for the renewal of the lease of land and premises at Monmouth Beach to the power boat club

*That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded while members consider this item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960*

**17. Exempt Business**

*To move 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 in view of the likely disclosure of confidential matters about information relating to an individual, and information 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.*

- a) **Agenda item 13 – VAT and Option to Tax (for VAT)**
- b) **Agenda item 16 - Renewal of Lease for Power Boat Club, Monmouth Beach**

**LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020**

**Present**

**Chairman:** Cllr B. Larcombe MBE

**Councillors:** Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

**Officers:** Mr M. Green (deputy town clerk), Mr J. Wright (town clerk)

**Absent:** Cllr L. Howe

**19/82/SF Public Forum**

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

**19/83/SF Apologies for Absence**

Cllr K. Ellis – illness

Cllr M. Ellis – another commitment

Cllr R. Smith

Cllr S. Williams – holiday

**19/84/SF Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 17 December 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

Under minute number 19/70/SF, it was noted Cllr M. Ellis's interest should be 'pecuniary', and not 'non-pecuniary' as minuted.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

**19/85/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Cllr J. Broom declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10, Service Level Agreement with Woodmead Halls' Management Committee as he was a member of the committee.

Cllr D. Sarson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10, Service Level Agreement with Woodmead Halls' Management Committee as he was the council's representative on the committee, and also agenda item 6, matters arising, as he was a member of the bowling club.



**19/86/SF      Dispensations**

There were none.

**19/87/SF      Matters arising from the minutes of the extraordinary Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17 December 2019**

**Monmouth Beach**

Cllr B. Larcombe asked that formal thanks were conveyed to Dr K. Buchan of Dorset Council (DC) for dealing with the issues at Monmouth Beach so quickly and for a job well done.

**Bowling club**

The town clerk confirmed he would be meeting with bowling club representatives on 7 February 2020 to start the process of agreeing the car park lease and to discuss the lease for the clubhouse and green, which had been held over since December 2019.

**19/88/SF      Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 18 December 2019**

**Powerboat club**

The town clerk said agreement had not been reached between the two valuers about the rent.

**19/89/SF      Update Report**

Cllr B. Larcombe asked when the meeting about the proposed Dorset National Park would be and what the council's input would be.

The town clerk said a date had not been set but the manager of LymeForward had been asked to arrange this. He confirmed there would be speakers both for and against and it would be an early evening meeting.

Cllr B. Larcombe confirmed the council hadn't formally agreed its position on the proposal and no formal process requesting comments had taken place yet.

Cllr J. Broom asked if an area for the national park had been defined or if this had been specified in the Glover Report.

The town clerk said he would review the report and feed back to members.

**Legal proceedings**

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, 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 legal proceedings 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.

**19/90/SF Finance Progress Review**

The town clerk said he was pleased with the progress the finance team had made. He said officers knew how much money was in the bank and were keeping track of the budget but trying to do reconciliations on payments made several months ago was time-consuming.

The town clerk said weekly finance meetings were taking place to review progress against the self-agreed objectives.

The town clerk said officers intended to review the coding structure in 2020/21.

**19/91/SF Service Level Agreement with Woodmead Halls' Management Committee**

The town clerk said there had been several complaints about the toilets, which the operations manager had followed up on, but overall, officers were satisfied with the service provided.

It was noted that if members of the public found any issues with the toilets, they should be reported to the Woodmead Halls' Management Committee, rather than the council.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Doney, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve a five-year service level agreement with Woodmead Halls' Management Committee to allow the public to use its toilets at the front of the building, the agreement starts on 1 April 2020 and the initial annual payment is £9,940, which is uplifted annually by the retail price index.

**19/92/SF Progress Report Climate and Environmental Emergency Declaration**

Cllr B. Bawden gave a summary of what had been achieved in the six months since the council had declared a climate and environmental emergency, both by the council and the One Planet Working Group (OPWG). She highlighted forthcoming events, including the Totally Locally Campaign at the end of February and a public information workshop on energy efficiency.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had discussed with the town clerk about how best to move this forward and the council's relationship with OPWG.

The town clerk said the council may wish to consider the respective roles of the council and OPWG and pull out some of the initiatives which could realistically be achieved. He also recommended an environmental audit of the council to understand what carbon neutrality meant to the organisation and to identify a goal to work towards.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had been trying to find a method of measuring the carbon footprint but had so far found only a simplistic measure which applied population to

the average carbon usage. She said this was not practical in Lyme Regis because the population increased so much in the peak season.

The town clerk said a matrix for measuring the carbon footprint had been provided by Low Carbon Dorset and this could perhaps be used as a starting point by a consultant employed to carry out an environmental audit.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to instruct the town clerk to obtain costs for a consultant to undertake an environmental audit of the council's activities and to define carbon-neutrality, and report back to the Strategy and Finance Committee.

**19/93/SF Dorset Council's Review of Voluntary Community Sector Grants**

The town clerk said the council needed to be mindful of the possibility of an overall reduction in grants, the current uneven distribution of voluntary community sector funding across the county, and the possibility of DC re-distributing money away from west Dorset organisations.

The town clerk said the council should respond to the consultation and members should also be encouraged to respond as individuals. He said a letter representing the council's views would be drafted alongside the council's response and sent to DC, and this would be circulated to members for information.

The town clerk said he and the mayor would be meeting with representatives from the affected local organisations to discuss how to get the best for Lyme Regis.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to delegate to the town clerk to respond to Dorset Council's consultation on the review of voluntary community sector grants in consultation with Cllrs B. Larcombe and B. Bawden.

**19/94/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 May, June, July, August and September 2019 for the sums of £277,882.81, £147,760.23, £211,920.05, £154,135.01 and £175,470.59, respectively.

**19/95/SF Debtor's Report**

**a) Update Report**

**Legal proceedings**

The town clerk said a court date had been set in April and the council's position remained positive.

*The meeting closed at 8.14pm.*

**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 5 February 2020

**Purpose of the Report**

To update members on matters arising from the meeting that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues raised within the minutes of the meeting.

**Recommendation**

Members note the report and raise any other issues on the minutes of the meeting that they require further information on.

**Report**

**19/87/SF – Matters arising from the minutes of the extraordinary Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17 December 2019**

**Monmouth Beach**

An email was sent to Dr K. Buchan of Dorset Council (DC) on 25 February 2020 thanking him and his team for dealing with the issues at Monmouth Beach so quickly.

**Bowling club**

The town clerk met with representatives of the bowling club on 7 February 2020. The council's solicitors Kitson and Trotman have been asked to draft leases for both the car park and the clubhouse/green and they are expected back shortly.

The town clerk intends to meet with the bowling club to go through the draft leases and will aim to take them to the Full Council on 1 April 2020 to approve the signing and sealing.

**19/89/SF – Update Report**

A link to a map of the proposed Dorset National Park was emailed to members on 12 March 2020.

There remains an outstanding commitment from LymeForward to organise the national park debate. This has been expedited by the town clerk.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6**

### **19/91/SF – Service Level Agreement with Woodmead Halls' Management Committee**

The draft service level agreement will be issued to the Woodmead Halls' Management Committee w/c 16 March 2020. The office is in the process of arranging a meeting with the committee w/c 30 March 2020 to finalise the agreement.

### **19/92/SF – Progress Report Climate and Environmental Emergency Declaration**

Officers are in the process of obtaining quotes for an environmental audit.

### **19/93/SF – Dorset Council's Review of Voluntary Community Sector Grants**

The town clerk met with Cllr B. Larcombe and Cllr B. Bawden on 11 March 2020 to respond to the consultation on the council's behalf.

The town clerk and mayor met with representatives of the museum, Marine Theatre, LymeForward and The Hub on 12 March 2020 to talk about the impact of potential grant reductions and about the possibility of working together on issues and projects that affect the town.

### **19/95/SF – Exempt Business**

With regards to the legal proceedings, a barrister has been appointed and statements of truth have been completed ahead of the court date in April.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
March 2020



**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Update Report

**Purpose of Report**

To update members on issues previously reported to this committee

**Recommendation**

Members note the report

**Report**

**Sea sports and adventure centre proposal**

A meeting took place with Lyme Regis Gig Club trustee Marcus Dixon on 6 February 2020, when the mayor and town clerk reiterated the council's position, i.e. the council believes the idea has merit but the gig club needed to develop the proposal further to allow the council to consider it alongside other proposals for the Monmouth Beach area.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
March 2020

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

DORSET COUNCIL WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2020

**Present**

**Members:** Cllr B. Larcombe (chairman), Cllr J. Broom, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr M. Ellis

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

**1. Apologies**

Cllr B. Bawden  
Cllr K. Ellis  
Cllr C. Reynolds

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2019**

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

The town clerk confirmed Dorset Council (DC) had removed the structures from the beach in early-January. He said he and Cllr J. Broom met on site with the council's geotechnical engineer and were satisfied with the works. He added he had emailed Dr J. Buchan to thank him but reminded him the council was starting to think about the hardstanding area and the harbourmaster's store.

**3. Accreted land, progress and future use**

The town clerk said as DC had removed the structures from the land, the council was now being asked to consider whether it would allow DC to use the land in future, and if so, for what purpose.

Cllr J. Broom said DC should be allowed to use the land for a suitable rent and suggested a seven-year lease.

Cllr B. Larcombe said this would prevent the town council using it for its own purposes, but other members questioned what the council would use the land for and felt it would be hard work to manage it.

Cllr J. Broom suggested a survey was carried out to formally establish the council's boundaries before coming to any agreement with DC.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO THE STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** to have a survey carried out of the accreted land at Monmouth Beach to establish exactly how much land

the town council owned and to get a sense of its value, with a view to leasing the land to Dorset Council at a realistic rent, and to report the findings directly to the council.

**4. Winter Boat Storage**

The town clerk said DC had decided not to store boats on the eastern end of Monmouth Beach car park in 2019/20, which meant lost income of around £5,000 this year and potentially in future.

Members agreed the council should remain firm on its charges and if DC wanted to use the car park, they could approach the council again.

**5. Harbourmaster's Store**

The town clerk said the operations manager wanted to use the store for the town council's equipment, especially as there were structural issues with the cadet hut. He said DC's garage next to Woodmead car park could also be an option to pursue.

The town clerk said he didn't believe the harbourmaster's store was subject to the Landlord and Tenant Act but he would check this.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO THE STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** that the town clerk informs Dorset Council the town council intends to take back the harbourmaster's store, and instruct the town clerk to progress discussions on the garage next to Woodmead car park.

**6. Land Opposite Harbour Inn**

The town clerk said the council leased this land off DC, which it then sub-let to the Harbour Inn. However, he said the council had had difficulties getting the lease renewed and without this, it couldn't formally sub-let the land to the Harbour Inn. As such, the lease with the Harbour Inn had now expired.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO THE STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** to no longer maintain an interest in the land opposite the Harbour Inn and end the lease with Dorset Council.

*The meeting closed at 7.36pm.*

**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Draft Corporate Plan 2020-25

**Purpose of Report**

To present the Draft Corporate Plan 2020-25

**Recommendation**

Members approve the Draft Corporate Plan 2020-25, appendix 9A, and delegate any amendments to the final version of the plan to the town clerk, in consultation with the mayor

**Background**

1. The draft Corporate Plan 2020-25 is attached, **appendix 9A**.
2. The draft Corporate Plan reviews the council's performance against its objectives and details the issues the council will address.
3. The corporate plan will be posted on the town council's website and made available to the public at the town council's office, the tourist information centre, and the library, and presented to the annual town meeting of electors.
4. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 April 2020.

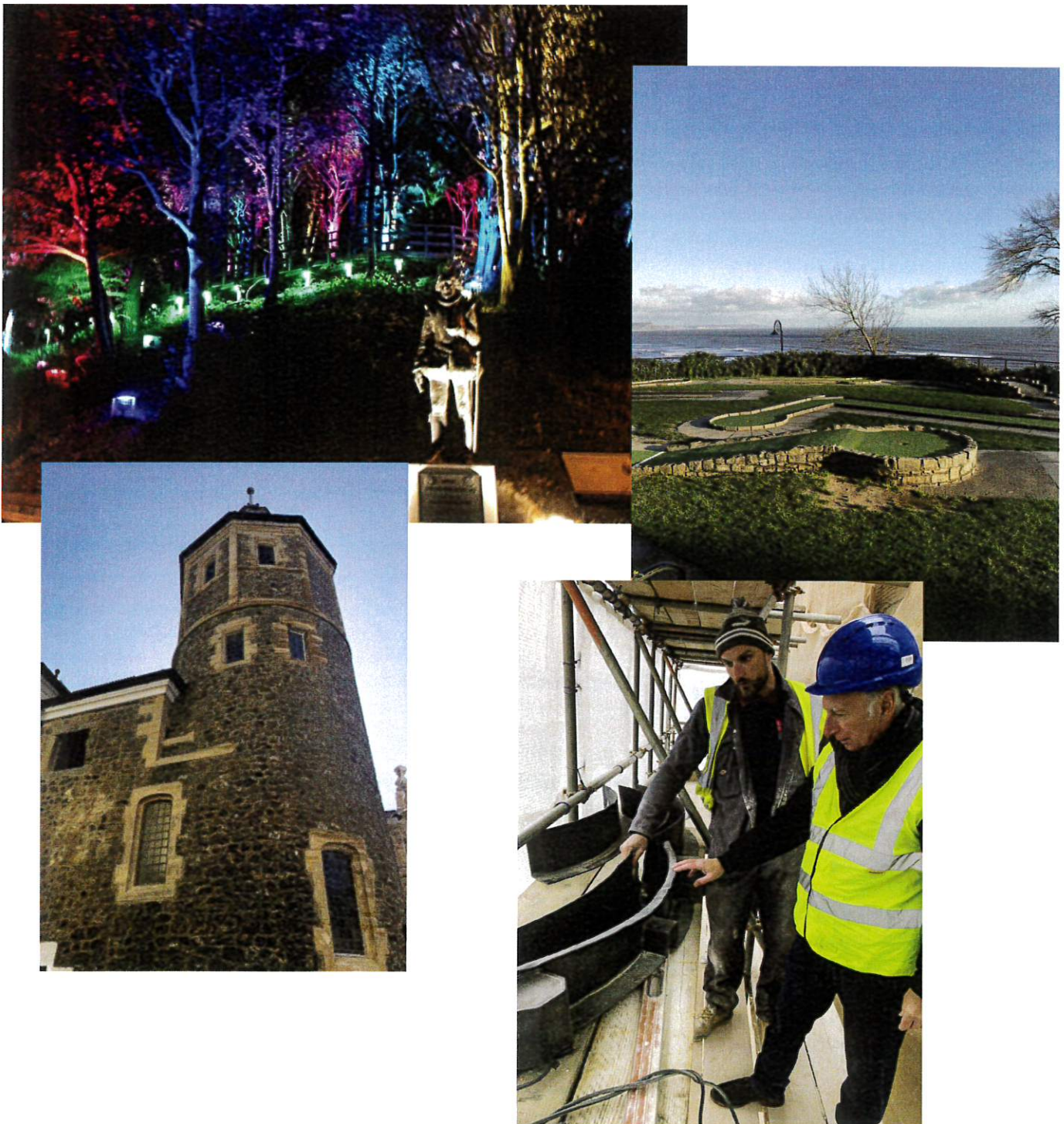
John Wright  
Town clerk  
March 2020





# Lyme Regis Town Council

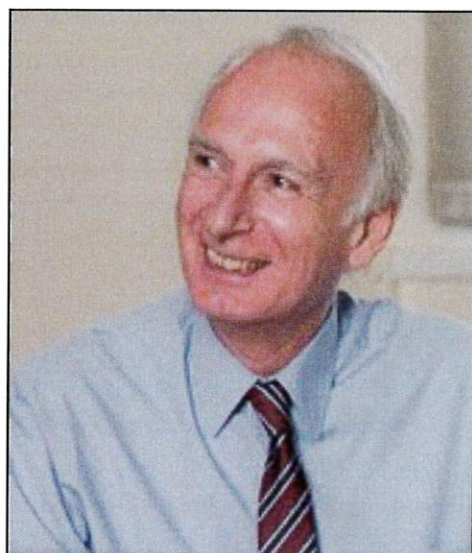
## Corporate Plan 2020-2025





# Foreword

## Cllr Brian Larcombe MBE, Mayor of Lyme Regis



We are approaching the end of the first year of the new council administration and the number of council achievements continues to grow.

The council has spent a lot of time determining plans for the next five years and how to fund them; more about this later.

Behind the scenes, the council received a clean bill of health from its external auditor. There have been difficulties in the finance team but these are now largely resolved and a new finance manager has been appointed.

In addition, the council has further improved its health and safety arrangements and there has been a significant amount of staff and member training.

Our main achievements this year include the lighting scheme in the seafront gardens, the refurbishment of the Guildhall, and the revamping of Henry's Way play area. The council has declared a climate and environmental emergency, and our 'green' initiatives so far have included adding an electric vehicle to our fleet, wildflower planting, and banning the use of potentially harmful chemicals to tackle weeds. We are about to install electric vehicle charging points, drinking water points on the seafront, and bike racks.

Works to replace the roof above the Marine Parade buildings has started and are progressing well. We have also supported the parish church with funding to help repair the tower of the town's only Grade I listed building.

The council has continued to provide financial support to local organisations, including the Marine Theatre, The Hub, B Sharp and Lyme Regis Football Club. Other local organisations who benefitted from grant funding in 2019 include Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Hallett Court Social Club, and Lyme Regis Gig Club.

The council always welcomes views from the local community and would be pleased to see people at our council meetings.

***Cllr Brian Larcombe MBE***



# The Challenges

Controlling the costs of two major projects have been and will continue to be one of the council's main challenges. In January 2020, work started to repair and enhance the roof above several of our Marine Parade tenants. With a budget of £300,000, these works have been closely monitored and are progressing well and on-budget.

In 2020/21 the major project will be the refurbishment of the council offices, incorporating the ground floor of Guildhall Cottage to provide better accessibility. The council has budgeted £300,000 for this project. An architect has been appointed and it is hoped work will commence in autumn 2020.

The future of non-statutory services run by Dorset Council is uncertain and could present us with some challenges. Dorset Council is currently reviewing funding to the voluntary community sector, which includes organisations such as the Marine Theatre and Lyme Regis Museum. Dorset Council is also considering the future of the tourist information centre.



## Our 2020/21 Objectives



The council has some exciting projects planned for the next year.

In addition to the office refurbishment, the Langmoor and Lister Gardens will undergo significant replanting as part of a four-year improvement programme. Alongside this, a plan will be developed for tree planting, re-wilding and wildflower planting in town council green spaces.

Elsewhere in the gardens, toddler play equipment will be installed on one level of

the putting green to make better use of the area.

The Gateway Card, which offers discounts and offers to Lyme Regis residents at participating local businesses, will be re-launched and hopefully extended to Uplyme and Charmouth.

There is a long list of environmental initiatives planned for 2020/21, including the replacement of another of the council's vehicle with an electric version and the installation of electric vehicle charging points at Woodmead and Monmouth Beach car parks.

It is also proposed to provide a free town bus to local residents with a Gateway Card.



# The Money

Lyme Regis Town Council is different from the majority of other councils in the country; it makes a surplus. It makes a surplus because it owns assets; over 90% of the council's income comes from these assets. The income from these assets gives the town council financial strength and independence. It has also allowed the town council to freeze the precept it charges to local householders in recent years and embark on the ambitious projects which are detailed elsewhere in the corporate plan. In 2020/21 there will be an increase in the precept of £12 per year for an average band D property.

Due to an increased spend on the two major projects - the roof and the office refurbishment - this will deplete the council's reserves. The council has changed its policy to reduce the level of reserve from 50% of turnover to 20%.

The council's annual budget for 2020/21 is £1.6 million. As well as an annual budget, the council has a five-year financial plan from 2020 which runs concurrently with the life of the corporate plan. This approach was adopted in late-2015 to allow the town council to properly consider its future income and expenditure and allow it to earmark funds for future projects.

The council is allocating £80,000 in grants in 2020/21 and committing to funding agreements for up to five years with several local organisations: the Marine Theatre, The Hub, LymeForward, B Sharp, Bridport and District Citizens' Advice Bureau, Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride, and Lyme Regis Museum. More than 20 other local organisations will be allocated smaller annual grants.



**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Internal Audit Report, Visits Two and Three 2019-20

**Purpose of Report**

To inform members of the outcome of the internal auditor's second and third visits for 2019-20, which took place on 20 and 22 January 2020 and 25 and 26 February 2020

**Recommendation**

Members note the internal auditor's report and approve the management responses

**Background**

1. Internal audit is an important part of the council's governance and managerial framework and, as such, it is important the town clerk takes responsibility for any observations and recommendations arising from the internal auditor's visits.
2. The council's internal auditor is Darkin Miller – Chartered Accountants. The internal auditor's remit is to establish there is proper book-keeping, risk management arrangements, bank reconciliation and year-end procedures, and controls are in place for payments, budgets, income, petty cash, payroll and assets.
3. Darkin Miller was appointed as the council's internal auditors for the financial years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 at the Full Council meeting on 22 July 2015.
4. Following a recommendation from this committee, on 13 December 2017 the Full Council appointed Darkin Miller as the council's internal auditor for a further two years, i.e. 2018/19 and 2019/20. On 8 January 2020, the council approved Darkin Miller's appointment for a further three years.
5. The council normally engages Darkin Miller for up to eight days a year; this covers four audit visits which usually last for two days.

**Report**

6. Darkin Miller's report is attached, **appendix 10A**. The report contains nine recommendations; two high, four medium and three low.
7. The internal auditor's comments and management responses are detailed on the report.

## **AGENDA ITEM 10**

8. A new finance manager has been appointed and a review of all internal audit recommendations from 1 April 2019 will be undertaken and reported to the first Strategy and Finance Committee in the new council year.
9. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 April 2020.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
March 2020



**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Finance Progress Review

**Purpose of Report**

To inform members of the progress made against the 7 November 2019 internal audit report

**Recommendation**

Members note the report

**Background**

1. On 18 December 2019, this committee received an internal audit report dated 7 November 2019.
2. The report highlighted the internal auditor's concerns about financial control. At that meeting, members emphasised the need to receive regular updates demonstrating that targets were being met and that progress was being made.
3. Progress was previously reported to this committee on 5 February 2020.

**Report**

4. Attached, **appendix 11A**, are the finance sections of that internal report which has a column added to inform members of progress.
5. The council's overall financial position is reported elsewhere on this agenda.
6. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 April 2020.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
March 2020

## Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/Medium/High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Progress
1.1 – Consider additional finance resource to bring accounts back up to date	<p>As noted above, a number of significant key financial controls are not up to date as a result of historic staff absence.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council considers whether additional temporary resources are required to enable all financial controls to be brought back up to date prior to the start of the budget-setting process.</p>	H	<p>An administrative assistant has been moved into the finance team for three days a week to speed up the processing of sales and purchase invoices.</p> <p>Two additional audit days have been commissioned for November 2019 to quantify back logs and identify areas of weakness and create a comprehensive work programme to ensure future compliance.</p> <p>Finance manager recruitment has commenced. An interview date of 13 November 2019 has been set for interviews for a six-month fixed term contract finance manager.</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>JW</p> <p>JW</p> <p>JW</p>	<p>28.10.19</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>Nov. 2019</p>	<p>The administrative assistant remains in the finance team for three days a week; to back-fill this arrangement, a six-month fixed-term contract for an administrative assistant commenced in December 2019</p> <p>Officers continue to work to the additional action plan drawn up by the council's internal auditor.</p> <p>An interim finance manager was appointed on a six-month fixed-term contract in November.</p> <p>On 10 February 2020, the interim finance manager was appointed as the permanent finance manager. He takes up his permanent appointment mid-May 2020.</p>

## APPENDIX 11A

5.1 – Coding of precept			Recruitment for a six-month fixed-term administrative assistant to support reception and provide additional support to the finance team has commenced. Interviews are scheduled for 14 November 2019.		Nov.19	
I checked to see that the precept in the accounts agreed with that approved in last year's budget. The precept agreed was £120,708, which is paid in two equal instalments of £60,354. I found that the £60,354 receipt had been coded as a receipt in advance on the Dorset Council debtor account, and that a separate £80k receipt had been coded to the precept code in error. The Interim Finance Manager has confirmed that the coding for both receipts will be amended to ensure that they are reported against the correct budget line.  I recommend that the amendments are made as soon as		L	Agreed	NC	30.11.19	Complete.
			Agreed	MG	31.01.20	

## APPENDIX 11A

	possible, and that a detailed review of income codes is undertaken during the budget monitoring process in order to ensure that receipts have been correctly coded in the accounts.						
5.2 – Clear suspense account	<p>I checked to see that income due to the council is being collected. As part of the review, I checked to see whether or not any bad debts had been written off in the year. I found that no debts had been written off, but that there is a balance of £25,670.69 on the suspense account as at 25/09/19. The suspense account is used to post receipts and payments that have gone into the bank account but where there is some query over allocation. They are posted to suspense temporarily pending investigation. Most of the balance relates to one £24k bounced cheque re Poultons, there are 14 uncleared items, and the oldest of the balances is 176 days (to 25/09/19).</p> <p>Items in suspense need to be investigated and posted to the</p>	M					Complete. The suspense account remains clear.

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	<p>correct nominal code or debtor/creditor account as soon as possible in order to ensure that management accounts information, and the aged debtor and creditor reports are up to date. The Interim Finance Manager has confirmed that the suspense account will be cleared as soon as possible as part of the process of catching-up the finance system postings.</p> <p>I recommend that the suspense account is cleared as planned.</p>		Agreed	NC	30.11.19	
5.3 – Worldpay debtor reconciliation	<p>During the year, the Council started to receive receipts made via Worldpay in relation to parking fines and amenities. Card machines are held at the Council's reception desk, the amenities hut and payments may also be made online. There are several timing differences in relation to Worldpay income which have made it difficult to reconcile, and as the balance is still relatively small (£1482 at the end of September 2019), the reconciliation has been deferred</p>	M				Complete.



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	<p>until the Council's main bank accounts are up to date. The balance is currently shown as a debtor on the balance sheet as they are a payment service provider (rather than a bank which holds deposits).</p> <p>I recommend that the account is reconciled as soon as possible in order to ensure that the income received in relation to various Council services, and the end of period debtor, are correct.</p>		Agreed		NC	31.01.20	Reconciliation undertaken monthly.
I checked to see that all income owed to the Council is being collected. As part of this process, I reviewed the Council's aged debt report as at 31/08/19, as compared to 31/08/18 (both excluding any future receipts). I found that whilst the profile of debt has improved significantly year on year (only 19.9% of the total debt of £195k is shown as older than 120 days, compared to 88% of £268k last year), there are still a significant number of issues within the debtor system. The main issues are noted below in separate recommendations.							
5.4 – Consider legal action in relation to overdue balances	<p>There are a number of balances which are 12-18 months old and which relate to charges raised on the Chalets. Some of the new Chalet tenants have still not paid the balance of the fees owing for the construction of the new Chalets, with £67k of debt still showing. One tenant insists that he has paid, but the funds do not appear to have been received in</p>	H					One of the two largest overdue balances relating to the re-provision of Chalets at Ware Cliff has been settled in full, along with the corresponding overdue site fees. This amounts to a total of £29,159.96. The second similar overdue balance has been settled in full in respect of overdue site fees (£5454.75) and the sum relating to the final payment for

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	<p>the Council's bank account. Two tenants are still disputing the amounts to be paid. Some tenants sub-let their chalets and so are generating income whilst still not having paid the amounts due to the Council.</p> <p>A number of Bowling Green hut licensees are disputing the amount owed followed the re-valuation of the chalets. £8.5k is still owed in relation to this debt.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk has confirmed that he is in discussion with the Chalet owners and that, if necessary, legal action will be commenced before the end of the calendar year.</p> <p>I recommend that legal action be taken to recover the debt at the earliest opportunity.</p>		<p>Agreed. Officers believe the larger debts relating to new chalets will be settled shortly but legal action may be required in relation to some of the smaller disputed debts.</p>	MG	31.12.19	<p>the chalet itself (£25,606.81) hasn't been received. A verbal update will be provided.</p> <p>The other overdue balances reported to the meeting of this committee on 18 December 2019 are being pursued as instructed.</p> <p>Recently sent invoices relating to 2019/20 continue to be paid well and the position is being closely monitored. Letters have been sent to all those with outstanding balances for 2019/20. In each instance, they have until 31 march 2020 to clear any outstanding debt.</p>	
5.5 – Reconcile and merge WDDC and Dorset Council debtor accounts	<p>At the start of the financial year, West Dorset District Council ceased to exist as a separate legal entity. A new debtor account for Dorset Council was set up, but the balances owed/owing from</p>	M				Complete.	

## APPENDIX 11A

	<p>the former West Dorset District Council have not been fully transferred across. The debtors' ledger currently has a net £39k credit balance across the two Council accounts, indicating that invoices need to be raised to the Dorset Council to be matched against receipts.</p> <p>I recommend that the two balances are reconciled and merged, and that any invoices due to be raised are raised, as soon as possible.</p>		Agreed	NC	31.01.20	
5.6 – Reclassify receipt as debtor receipt	<p>A sales invoice was raised in relation to the payment of monies from a film company using the Council's property. The related receipt has been processed in error as a bank receipt (rather than a debtor receipt) which means that income and debtors are currently overstated by the receipt.</p> <p>I recommend that the bank receipt is recoded to be set against the debtor account.</p>	L	Agreed	NC	13.11.19	Complete.

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5.7 – Reconcile and post invoices relating to car park income paid by card and mobile phone	<p>Monies received from Six Payment Services (re car park income on cards) and Just Park (car park income by phone) have been posted to debtors as receipts in advance, but the related invoices have not yet been processed. This means that the income has not been booked to the income &amp; expenditure account, and the related VAT has not yet been accounted for. Total receipts of £136k would give £113k of car park income and £22k VAT to be declared to the end of August 2019.</p> <p>I recommend that the invoices for both debtors are processed as soon as possible in order to ensure that the VAT liability has been correctly accounted for, and that the correct amount of income is shown in relation to the Council's car parks.</p>	H	Agreed	IFM	31.01.19	Complete.
5.8 – Consider write off of small debtor balances	<p>There are a number of small overpayments and underpayments (less than 50p each) on several debtor accounts. If the balance is not likely to be</p>	L				Complete.

## APPENDIX 11A

	cleared, these balances should be written off in order to ensure that the ledger is an accurate reflection of monies owed. The Council's Financial Regulations allow the Clerk to write off sums less than £250, which should be reported to the Council retrospectively (s9.3).  I recommend that the RFO considers writing off small irrecoverable balances as permitted in the regulations.		Agreed	JW	30.11.19	
5.9 – Allocate receipts against invoices	There are a number of receipts which have not been allocated against the related invoice in the debtor account. Allocation of the balance will clear it from the aged debt report, leaving only true debtor balances and making it easier to review aged debtors.  I recommend that this process is carried out as soon as possible.	L	Agreed	NC	31.01.19	Complete. Receipts are now allocated at the time of posting.
9.1 – Bank reconciliation to be brought up to date	I checked the bank reconciliation to confirm that there is a bank reconciliation for each account, which is done regularly and in a timely fashion, that there are no	H				All bank accounts are reconciled up to 29 February 2020.

	<p>unreconciled transactions, and that all investment balances are included. The testing of the bank reconciliations was carried out on 10/10/19, by which time I would ordinarily expect that all bank accounts which are updated during the year should be reconciled to the end of August 2019, and that the Council's two current accounts should be reconciled to the end of September 2019 (as these are the accounts which are usually monitored on a daily basis).</p> <p>I found that all major accounts (including the two current accounts, and those accounts with balances over £1k) have been reconciled up to the end of June 2019, but that there are retrospective differences of £3.8k and £6.2k on the two current accounts as between what the reconciled cashbook balance was at the times the reconciliations were done, and what the trial balance (the list of all balances including the bank accounts) now</p>					
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# APPENDIX 11A

	<p>show as at 30/06/19. These differences are likely to relate to items posted to the bank account (as payments or receipts which were dated prior to 30/06/19) which had not cleared the bank statement (and which should therefore form part of the list of unreconciled items at that date).</p> <p>The two Lloyds accounts have been reconciled to the end of July. The Natwest current account has been reconciled to the end of the first week in September, but I was unable to confirm this as the Trial Balance can only be printed to the month end. The Natwest Special Interest account has been reconciled to the end of September.</p> <p>All bank accounts should be reconciled promptly after the month end, in order to identify and act on any fraud or error. The process of reconciling the bank accounts is also integral to the production of accurate budget monitoring reports: only once all</p>		<p>Agreed. Catch up will not be immediate. By 31.03.20, the finance team target is to have bank reconciliation complete to 31.01.20.</p>	NC	31.03.20	
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# APPENDIX 11A

	<p>of the cash has been accounted for (and all balance sheet items reconciled) can the Council be confident that the figures that it is comparing to budget are accurate.</p> <p>I recommend that the bank reconciliations are brought up to date as soon as possible.</p>						
9.2 – Post bank interest received	<p>The statement balance for one of the fixed term deposit accounts does not agree to what is shown in the cashbook. The statement balance is £248.71 higher. This appears to relate to bank interest on the account which has not yet been posted to the finance system.</p> <p>I recommend that the bank interest is posted as soon as possible as part of the bank reconciliation process.</p>	L	Agreed	NC	30.11.19	Complete. Interest is posted up to 29 February 2020.	

**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Budget Performance, 1 April-31 January 2020

### **Purpose of Report**

To inform members of performance against budget from 1 April to 31 January 2020 and to provide a forecast to 31 March 2020

### **Recommendation**

Members consider the report and instruct the town clerk on any measures they wish to introduce to reduce the forecast budget deficit

### **Report**

1. The budget from 1 April to 31 January 2020, together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2020, is attached in **appendix 12A** and summarised below.

<b>£000s</b>	<b>Actual to 31.01.20</b>	<b>2019-20 Budget</b>	<b>Forecast 31.03.20</b>
Income	1,565	1,602	1,646
Expenditure	1,475	2,171	1,905
Surplus/(Deficit)	89	(569)	(259)

### **Analysis**

2. There are some forecast differences with the budget performance report presented on 13 November 2019. These are because the actual expenditure for the roof works for this financial year is likely to be around £200k (not £400k), as expected. The £200k difference is now forecast to be spent in the 2020-21 financial year. Similarly, the office refurbishment works were expected to be £100k in 2019-20 but is likely to be nearer £15k.
3. Income is forecast to be up on budget as there has been an increase in penalty charge notices. It should also be noted where the finance team have caught up it was found there was £35k of parking income that related to 2018-19.

4. The main changes to the 2019/20 budget are detailed in the table below:

Project	Budget	Estimated/ Actual Cost	Overall Variance on Budget	In Year vs Budget	19/20 in-year Cost	20/21 in-year Cost
Marine Parade building roof (incl. professional fees but excl. any compensation costs)	£400,000	£611,000	+£211,000	- £200,000	+£200,000	+£411,000
Blue Sea Café roof repairs	nil	£27,000	+£27,000	+£27,000	+£27,000	nil
Office refurbishment	£100,000	Est. £300,000	+£200,000	-£85,000	+£15,000	Est +£285,000
Church tower grant	nil	£40,000	+£40,000	+£40,000	+£40,000	nil
Electric vehicle	£7,000	£12,000	+£5,000	+£5,000	+£5,000	nil
Beach rake	nil	£51,000	+£51,000	+£51,000	+£51,000	nil
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£507,000</b>	<b>£1,001,000</b>	<b>+£494,000</b>	<b>- £162,000</b>	<b>+338,000</b>	<b>+£696,000</b>

5. This will impact on the 2020/21 budget; a re-based 2020-21 budget will be brought to this committee on 6 May 2020.
6. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 April 2020.

Mark Russell  
Finance Manager  
March 2020

**January 20**

	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>Yr Budget</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Forecast</u>	Variance Favourable / (Unfavourable)	%age variance Favourable / (Unfavourable)	Note
<b>Income</b>							
Precept	120,708	120,708	120,708	120,708	0	0%	
Car parks	715,313	724,674	603,895	765,000	111,418	15%	2
Chalets/Beach huts/Caravar	338,607	334,032	278,360	350,000	60,247	18%	1
Concessions	44,501	40,447	33,706	44,500	10,795	27%	
Commercial rents	178,863	212,651	177,209	185,000	1,654	1%	
Marketing	18,976	18,315	15,263	19,000	3,714	20%	
Amenity area	77,472	86,346	71,955	90,000	5,517	6%	
Cemetery	6,780	4,866	4,055	6,800	2,725	56%	
Licences	10,540	13,452	11,210	10,540	(670)	(5%)	
Other	49,080	42,616	35,513	50,000	13,567	32%	
Income from Investments	4,451	4,028	3,357	4,700	1,094	27%	
	<b>1,565,291</b>	<b>1,602,135</b>	<b>1,355,231</b>	<b>1,646,248</b>	<b>210,061</b>	<b>13%</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Office administration	125,407	126,423	105,353	135,000	(20,055)	(16%)	5
Rents	2,450	7,050	5,875	2,500	3,425	49%	
Licenses/Leases	2,119	3,950	3,292	2,200	1,173	30%	
Democratic representation	10,875	33,278	27,732	11,500	16,857	51%	
Outside works	395,500	273,792	228,160	630,000	(167,340)	(61%)	3 & 3F
Grants/SLA	130,059	146,014	121,678	150,000	(8,381)	(6%)	6
Utilities	115,590	141,495	117,913	138,000	2,323	2%	
Staffing	605,840	666,333	555,278	722,000	(50,563)	(8%)	4
Marketing & Tourism	34,989	60,274	50,228	55,000	15,239	25%	
Other	21,340	14,000	11,667	22,000	(9,673)	(69%)	7
Loan charges inc interest	31,250	37,500	31,250	37,500	0	0%	
	<b>1,475,419</b>	<b>1,510,109</b>	<b>1,258,424</b>	<b>1,905,700</b>	<b>(216,995)</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	
<b>Gross Profit/(Loss):</b>	<b>89,872</b>	<b>92,026</b>	<b>96,806</b>	<b>(259,452)</b>			
<b>Trading Surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>89,872</b>	<b>92,026</b>	<b>96,806</b>	<b>(259,452)</b>	<b>(6,934)</b>	<b>(8%)</b>	

NOTE:

- 1 30k Transfer - not budgeted  
Initial Budget allowed for Non Payment
- 2 35k Pr Yr  
Fixed Penalties up
- 3 50k Surface Rake not in budget  
25k Lighting - still to claim back s106  
24k being Crosby - Blue Sea Café
- 3F 85k Roof works (Feb)  
90k Roof works (March)
- 4 KW Compensation not Budgeted  
IFM Agency Costs & Karen (locum)
- 5 27k being Crickmay Stark Blue Sea Café - Prof Fees
- 6 Includes 40K Towards Church Tower
- 7 20k Play Park - not in 19/20 Budget, was provisioned for 22/23 (in 20/21 Draft 5 yr Plan)



**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Coronavirus (COVID-19)

**Purpose of Report:**

To allow members to consider the possible impact of Coronavirus on the council and Lyme Regis

**Recommendation**

Members note the report

**Background**

1. On 11 March 2020, 456 cases of the coronavirus had been confirmed in the UK. The number of confirmed cases increased by 83 from the previous day; the largest daily increase, so far. The number of confirmed coronavirus cases is anticipated to increase significantly by the time this report is considered on 18 March 2020. The prime minister has said the outbreak will present “significant challenges” to the country.
2. At the time of writing, the concern expressed by the prime minister is reflected in the budget and Bank of England interest rate reduction on 11 March 2020.
3. In his budget speech, the chancellor of the exchequer warned the outbreak will bring a “significant” short-term impact and pledged £30bn to help the economy respond to coronavirus
4. Earlier in the day, the Bank of England announced an emergency cut in interest rates from 0.75% to 0.25% to shore up the economy amid the coronavirus outbreak. The governor of the Bank of England said he would also free up billions of pounds of extra lending power to help banks support firms.
5. The government’s response to the epidemic is based on a four-part plan: containment, delay, mitigation and research. The research phase runs alongside the other phases.
6. Different services and government agencies are responsible for leading the response to Coronavirus:
  - Department of Health and Social Care: the Chief Medical Officer for England confirms each incident
  - Public Health England co-ordinate the response, information and advice on Coronavirus
  - NHS: local and national NHS are working on the frontline to test individuals, and provide advice through calls to NHS 111
  - Dorset Council in association with the director of public health.

7. Other organisations and professional bodies are offering up and passing on advice, these include: the Health and Safety Executive, the Chartered Institution of Personnel and Development and the National Joint Council for local government services.
8. The United Kingdom is currently in the “containment” phase, but the expectation is the government will announce a move to the “delay” phase, imminently.
9. Delay is where “social distancing” measures will be considered. These could include restrictions on public gatherings above a certain number of people, although this is not thought likely at this stage.
10. The move could also result in people who show minor signs of respiratory tract infection, such as a cough or a fever, being told to self-isolate.
11. Coronavirus does not pose an immediate threat to the council and Lyme Regis, but the potential spread of the virus could impact on us shortly; on 9 March 2020, the chief medical officer confirmed three residents from the Dorset-area had been confirmed as having contracted the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

### **Report**

12. The report centres on four areas: employees and members, services, finance and decision-making.

### **Employees and members**

13. On 12 March 2020, the town clerk wrote to employees outlining the council’s position on coronavirus, **appendix 14A**. The letter addressed: taking measures to reduce virus spread, travel plans, self-isolation, sending employees home, what to do if you think you may have contracted coronavirus, school closures, and closing the work place. The themes running through most of these headings are absence arrangements and pay.
14. The letter is based on coronavirus guidance issued to the council, the ‘Green Book’, which advises on national employment terms and conditions, and employees’ contracts of employment.

### **Services**

15. There is the possibility employee absence or government-imposed restrictions on establishments, people movement or events could impact on the services the council delivers. This is referred to as “social distancing”.
16. In all instances, the council must respond to events and act in accordance with the government guidance it receives.
17. There is a possibility one or more factors could severely restrict the council’s ability to deliver services. For example:

- if an employee contracts coronavirus, the whole of their team could need to go into self-isolation
  - if local schools close, several employees may have to stay at home to look after their children
  - the council has relationships with suppliers, service providers and contractors and there may come a point where the council may not be able to rely on these organisations to fulfil their obligations.
18. The council can put in place arrangements to keep some services going. For example, if the whole office team is in self-isolation, staff can perform most of their functions remotely, e.g., emails, video conferencing, mobile phones, posting information on the website and social media and the establishment of a dedicated public contact number.
19. In some instances, service provision would cease, e.g., if both the council's enforcement officers contract coronavirus or were in self-isolation.

### Finance

20. The town council's business model exposes the organisation to a degree of risk, i.e., over 90% of the council's income comes from its commercial activity.
21. Approximately 50% (£800k) of the council's annual income (£1.6m) is reasonably secure, i.e., it derives from tenancies and the precept. I have described this as "reasonably secure" because the coronavirus could impose financial pressures on council's tenants which, in turn, affect their ability to pay rent to the council.
22. Approximately 50% (£800k) of the council's income isn't so secure. This principally relates to car parking income and, to a lesser extent, amenities income.
23. The council's car parking income budget for 2020-21 is £714k. Historically, the council receives approximately 75% of this income between 1 April and 30 September; in the first six months of 2020-21, the council estimates car parking income at £535,500.
24. The existence of the coronavirus alone may reduce the number of visitors to Lyme Regis, but the imposition of "social distancing" could have a significant impact on the local economy and council income.
25. Estimates of when the coronavirus will peak vary, but there seems to be a consensus that this will be 10-14 weeks, i.e., a worse-case scenario of end-June 2020. If imposed measures and/or public apprehension reduce visitor numbers to Lyme Regis between 1 April and 30 September, this will impact on council income. For illustration, 10%, 20% and 40% reductions in car parking come are detailed below:

Reduction	£
10%	53,550
20%	107,100

30%	160,650
40%	214,200

26. The 2020-21 income from amenities (mini golf and table tennis) is budgeted at £83,000. Applying the same percentage reductions, losses would be £8,300, £16,600, £24,900 and £33,200, respectively.
27. Any significant loss of income would have a disproportionate impact on the council's reserve<sup>1</sup> which is budgeted at £454k for 2020-21.
28. The council has options: it can defer or cancel programmed works and objectives, or it could seek loan finance to cover one or more projects. For example, the office refurbishment project could be deferred; this would reduce 2020-21 expenditure by approximately £250,000. In this calculation, I have calculated for the completion of plans and obtaining consents.
29. Other 2020-21 objectives which could be cancelled or deferred include: the gardens' refurbishment, electric vehicle replacement and the free town bus service.
30. Not all these decisions need to be made immediately; for example, a decision on the office refurbishment could be made as late as end-June 2020, i.e., before the works are tendered.
31. On 12 May 2020, the deputy town clerk and finance manager met with the council's insurer and discussed the council's cover for loss of business income; the council is insured for business income loss, but this applies to commercial tenancies, only.

### Decision-making

32. It's possible that as part of the government's "delay" plans restrictions may be placed on public meetings. Alternatively, coronavirus infection, self-isolation, precaution or apprehension could result in council meetings not taking place or being inquorate. If this is the case, the council needs to consider how it will make decisions during this period.
33. There are no provisions in the council's standing orders to cover an extended absence of council meetings although financial regulations allow the town clerk to authorise emergency expenditure up to £10,000.
34. Many routine decisions can be deferred and information to note can be circulated electronically.

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<sup>1</sup> On 18 December 2019, the Strategy and Finance Committee considered the impact of its objectives for 2020-2025 on its budgets and reserve for the same period. The agreed objectives reduced the council's forecast reserve for this period from £454k (29% of turnover) at 31 March 2021 to £313k (20% of turnover) at 31 March 2025. On 8 January 2020, the Full Council approved the following recommendation from the Strategy and Finance Committee, 'that the council's policy on the holding of a reserve be amended, temporarily, to permit a reserve no lower than 20% of annual turnover for the period up until 2024/25.'

## AGENDA ITEM 14

35. On issues which do need a decision, reports can be circulated electronically for member opinion with the final decision delegated to the town clerk, in consultation with the major.
36. Video conferencing or conference calls could be an option but would prove difficult with the number of decision-makers involved.
37. Events are moving quickly; the town clerk will provide members with a further report which explores and expands on the options put forward in this report.
38. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 April 2020.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
March 2020



John Wright  
Town Clerk

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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12 March 2020

Dear *insert name*,

Due to the recent increased focus on Coronavirus (COVID-19), we would like to take the opportunity to set out the council's position on the various issues that may arise.

We would firstly like to reassure you that the number of cases of the virus in the UK remains very low, as does the risk of exposure. However, we appreciate the situation has been developing quickly so we have included some information below we hope will answer some questions you may have.

### **Taking measures to reduce virus spread**

Please follow the following guidelines from the World Health Organisation on infection control:

- frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- when coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw the tissue away immediately and wash your hands
- avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

### **Keeping us updated on travel plans**

You may have plans to travel in the near future, including pre-booked holidays. Certain countries have been identified as having been severely affected by the virus and we would ask that you consider, for your own health reasons, whether your travel is necessary. If you do travel, please let your line manager know of the countries you intend to visit so we can manage your return appropriately. Additionally, please keep yourself up-to-date on the countries which require self-isolation upon return. If you would like to cancel any pre-booked annual leave, please speak to your line manager.



**Self-isolation**

The Government is currently advising people to self-isolate if they have recently returned from certain countries or have been in contact with someone who has coronavirus, even if they have no symptoms, which means staying at home and not having contact with other people. In the event this applies to you, you must not attend work during the isolation period. You must contact your line manager as soon as possible to let them know you have been required to self-isolate and you must keep them updated on any developments.

Where feasible, we may consider whether you can work from home during this period. Where no other agreement is made, this time off will be treated in accordance with our normal sickness absence policy and you will receive contractual sick pay subject to normal qualifying criteria.

If you return from an area which does not require automatic self-isolation and you have no symptoms, or you do not want to attend work because you are afraid of catching coronavirus, you should attend work as normal. However, we will listen to any concerns you have and it may be possible to arrange time off as holiday or unpaid leave.

If you do have symptoms including a cough, fever or difficulty breathing, you should self-isolate, call 111, and follow our normal sickness reporting procedures. You will be treated as being on sickness absence.

We will exercise as much flexibility as possible in dealing with this situation and take all reasonable measures to protect the health and safety of employees.

**Sending employees home**

If we are concerned you may have been exposed to the virus even though you are not displaying symptoms, we may take the decision to send you home and require you not to attend work. You will receive full pay during this time off.

**Contracting the virus**

If you develop symptoms at any time, you should call 111 and follow the advice given to you, keeping us updated on your condition. If it is confirmed you have contracted coronavirus, your time off work will be treated in the same way as any other sickness absence. You must comply with our normal rules on sickness notification.

**School closures**

If your child's school closes and you need to look after them or arrange childcare, you are entitled to time off work for this purpose. There is no statutory right to pay for this time off, but we will operate a flexible approach and can consider working from home, flexible working or annual leave.

### **Closing the workplace**

If someone with coronavirus comes to work, the workplace does not necessarily have to close but Public Health England will be informed. In the unlikely event the council needs to close down, you will continue to receive full pay during this time.

We do not wish to cause any worry in sending this letter. We are monitoring any developments to the situation and will provide updates where necessary.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Wright', written in a cursive style.

John Wright  
Town clerk

**Committee:** Strategy and Finance

**Date:** 18 March 2020

**Title:** Grant Allocation to Recipients of 'Ammonite' Filming Money

**Purpose of Report**

To allow members to consider an arrangement which has been negotiated with Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support to use of a beach hut on Marine Parade

To allow members to consider information provided by the Mary Anning Rocks committee and agree the funding on that basis

**Recommendation**

- a) Members approve Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support's use of a beach hut on Marine Parade from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2025 for a rent of £0.00 per annum, and that for the duration of the arrangement the town council maintains the beach hut and Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support allocates the hut
- b) Members approve the release of a £5,000 grant to Mary Anning Rocks

**Background**

1. On 8 January 2020, the Full Council resolved, 'that the £15,000 donation from Fossil Films is split equally between Axminster and Lyme Regis Cancer Support, Mary Anning Rocks, and the Mary Anning Scholarship Legacy Fund.'
2. At that meeting, the town clerk said, 'more discussions needed to take place with the organisations concerned and he requested a member was involved in these discussions. He said a report would then be brought back to the council so there was clarity over what was involved and the details could then be signed off.'
3. Cllrs Larcombe and Bawden agreed to be involved in discussions with the three groups.

**Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support**

4. The town clerk and Cllrs Larcombe and Bawden met with the group on 26 February 2020<sup>1</sup>.
5. At that meeting it was agreed:
  - the council would provide a beach hut for the exclusive use of Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2025
  - the hut would be on Marine Parade, next to and on the east side of the disabled beach hut

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<sup>1</sup> Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support were represented by Mary Kahn, chairman, Nigel Ball and Karen Ball.

- the rent would be £0.00 per annum
  - the town council would maintain the beach hut
  - Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support would allocate the beach hut.
6. It was agreed this arrangement would replace the town council's decision to provide Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support with an equal share of the £15,000 donation from Fossil Films, i.e., £5,000, which was received for the use of council-owned land for filming in 2019.
7. Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support were informed this negotiated agreement was subject to approval by the Full Council.

**Mary Anning Rocks**

8. It has not been possible to set up a meeting with Mary Anning Rocks. Instead, a list of questions was sent to the committee, which they have provided answers to, **appendix 15A**.
9. Assuming members are satisfied with the responses, it is recommended the funding is released to the group.

**Mary Anning Scholarship Legacy Fund**

10. It has not been possible to set up a meeting with the Mary Anning Scholarship Legacy Fund. As such, a list of questions will be sent to the organisation and the details will be brought to a future meeting of this committee to sign off the funding.
11. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 April 2020.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
March 2020



**i) Name of account to which we would be paying the sum?**

MAR: Mary Anning Rocks  
(Account details provided)

**ii) State of funding raised so far?**

MAR: To date we have raised approximately £10,000 and have pledges of over £9,000 ready for our crowdfund launch. We have commissioned a crowdfund campaign film created for us by film maker Natasha Mattocks fronted by our patron and TV personality Professor Alice Roberts which we believe will generate much publicity and PR when we launch. We are also in the process of registering as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which will allow us to apply for grants previously not available to us. And we are currently applying for The Curry Fund and looking at the Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Trust and the Valentine Charitable Trust. We are also in the very early stages of discussions with a Dorset based company about sponsorship of the campaign.

**iii) Level of confidence that the necessary target figure will be reached and when?**

MAR: We have talked to a number of artist and have a sliding scale of quotes to enable us to be more flexible once fundraising has ended. As it stands we are nearly half way to the lower estimated quoted and this is without crowdfunding, possible funding from grants and our pending discussions about sponsorship from a Dorset based business. We are very confident that we will hit our targets.

**iv) Pre-determined project cut-off point if struggling to reach the necessary funds?**

MAR: A review will be undertaken at the end of 2020

**v) Establishing the condition that failure to bring the statue to fruition would mean payment would not be forthcoming from the council - or if needing to pay anything up front we would seek a refund if the project were to fail for any reason - which we hope would not happen.**

MAR: Should the project fail to reach its targets then all donations would be refunded.

**vi) Planned dates for the statue's location and installation?**

MAR: We understood that our ex Chair Cllr Cheryl Reynolds and one of our former committee members Cllr John Broom confirmed that they had agreed in a LRTC meeting at the beginning of 2019 that the statue would be positioned next the big anchor on the elevated area of the sea defences where she would be over looked by the Anning wing of the museum. Cllr Broom at that time confirmed that he would work on the architects drawings, help with planning permission and structural surveys needed but this was put on hold until we were nearer to understanding the style, size and approx weight of the statue. Since their departures from the committee we have

had a structural engineering company offer their help with this on a pro bono basis when we are ready to engage.

This location is the perfect setting for Mary as it places her at the heart of Lyme with the back drop of the landscape where she figuratively and literally carried out her ground breaking work. Footfall and interaction with the statue is key so making her as easy to find and accessible as possible is important, everyone will want to seek her out and see her.

We would also like to point out that the commissioned statue will not be placed on a traditional high podium but will instead be placed at floor level allowing for interaction and connection from the general public and tourists visiting Lyme. We have spoken to a number of organisations who themselves in recent years have commissioned interactive statues and they all say the same thing. There is far more interest and appreciation generated for the sculpture and the subject matter when interaction is allowed. There is a palpable link between subject and the public when a statue is not placed on high allowing for tourists and locals to really engage with Mary and her story. Please see below a montage of some of the most loved and talked about statues in the UK as examples of where this has worked with great effect and generated much interest.



**From the top:** Tom Weir, Loch Lomond, by Sean Quinn-Hedges. Paddington Bear, Paddington Station, by Marcus Cornish, The Beatles, Liverpool, by Andrew Edwards. Cilla Black, Liverpool, by Andrew Edwards. Amy Winehouse, Camden Town, by Scott Eaton. Amy Johnston, Herne Bay, by

Stephen Melton. Rudyard Kipling, East Sussex, by Victoria Atkinson. Emmaline Pankhurst, Manchester, by Hazel Reeves. Sir Nigel Gresley, King's Cross, by Hazel Reeves.

We anticipated fundraising timescales will take us to the end of 2020, and then we would look to approximately a 12 month turn around by an artist subject to their availability. We would hope for the statue to be unveiled in 2022.

**vii) Future ownership, liability, and any maintenance and upkeep arrangements?**

MAR: The statue will ultimately be owned and looked after by the CIO Trustees but we would look to give the sculpture at some point in the near future to the people of Lyme Regis as a gift to the town as with the George Somers statue currently residing in Langmoor and Lister gardens which was gifted to the town by The Twinning Association chairman Bob McHardy.

**viii) Does 'the group' dissolve once the statue's built?**

MAR: No, part of the reason for registering MAR with the Charities Commission as a CIO is so we can continue promoting and championing Mary's achievements and discoveries with a learning legacy after the statue has been unveiled.