

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2022

Present

Chairman: Cllr M. Ellis

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

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

21/50/SF Public Forum

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

21/51/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr B. Bawden – illness
Cllr D. Ruffle – illness
Cllr T. Webb – work commitments

21/52/SF Minutes

Cllr C. Aldridge said she was at the previous meeting but was not on the list of those present.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2021, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

21/53/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr R. Smith asked if he would be able to vote on agenda item 10, Electric Vehicle Charging Structure, as he owned an electric vehicle.

Cllr M. Ellis said it was Cllr R. Smith's decision.

Cllr G. Stammers declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 14, Park and Ride 2022, as the AA signs directing people to the site would take vehicles away from Uplyme where she worked. As such, she would leave the room for the item.

21/54/SF Dispensations

There were none.

Shoppers' permits

Cllr B. Larcombe said some members were concerned about how the shoppers' parking permits would work and he asked for more details.

Cllr R. Doney said in the winter, residents had free parking in town council car parks at any time and in the summer, residents had free shopping hours at Woodmead from 8am to 10am and 4pm to 6pm, plus free parking in all town council car parks after 6pm. He said the scheme that would replace it would allow residents to park in any town council car park for two hours at any time of the day, as well as free parking after 6pm, rather than being restricted to the two hours in the morning and evening. He said he had talked it through in detail with the support services manager and enforcement officer and they felt they could make the permit system work.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked what the estimated cost was of allowing residents to have two free hours of parking in the height of the summer.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council didn't know what the cost would be but she saw it as giving something back to the residents who gave over the town to visitors in the summer and that was of far more value than anything else.

It was clarified that the permit would only allow residents to park for free for two hours a day and they would not be allowed to return.

Cllr R. Doney said a lot of residents tended to avoid the centre of town in the day so he couldn't imagine it would be a significant cost.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the council was actually taking away potential parking as instead of having two two-hour slots, there was now only one two-hour window.

Cllr R. Doney confirmed this was the case but said it offered residents more flexibility.

CCTV

Cllr D. Sarson asked if the £40,000 grant had been confirmed from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to help pay for the CCTV.

The town clerk said there had been a commitment from the police and crime commissioner for the funding and the scheme had been discussed with Dorset Council (DC) but around two months ago, DC's lighting contractor said the council couldn't put cameras on any of the lampposts. He said officers had a meeting to try and resolve this on 19 February 2022 and he had escalated the issue to director level at DC.

Cllr J. Broom said apparently the lampposts were not strong enough so it was up to the council if it took the risk or it might have to put separate columns up.

Cllr M. Ellis asked that members were updated on developments via the briefing.

21/56/SF Update Report

Members noted the report.

21/57/SF Budget Performance, 1 April – 30 November 2021 and year-end forecast

The finance manager said this was a good news report and drew members' attention to the year-end forecast. She said it was different from previous reports because it was now close to the end of the financial year and actual and anticipated income and expenditure had been included in the year-end forecast.

The finance manager said the spreadsheet showed a surplus of £333,787 after all project work agreed in December 2021 had been accounted for and this surplus would be added to the cash position at 31 March 2021, leaving the council with a reserve of just over £1.2million.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the financial picture was one the council should have a degree of confidence in and it indicated there was no need to sell any beach huts. He urged the council not to repeat this in future unless it was absolutely essential.

Cllr M. Ellis said the decision to sell the huts was taken when the financial situation was uncertain due to Covid-19 and the income had effectively paid for the replacement huts.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the fact the council would be debt-free was a remarkable achievement. He pointed out the overspend in outside works was £128,000 but the report didn't account for the full amount and asked where the remaining overspend had happened.

The town clerk said there had been small amounts spent here and there. He said he and Cllr B. Larcombe had talked separately about the outside works' budget and felt the council needed to gain a proper understanding of expenditure, including the possibility of delegating budgets to committees. For next year, the town clerk felt it would be a good idea for the supervision of this budget to be delegated to the Town Management and Highways Committee to create additional scrutiny.

The town clerk said he and the finance manager would be approaching the budget in a different way next year, with more emphasis placed on profiled income and expenditure. He said they would be focusing on the external works' budget and if the conclusion was it needed to be increased, that would be presented to members.

Cllr M. Ellis said councillors were also guilty of overspending and they needed to be more careful about sticking to budgets.

Cllr J. Broom agreed and said there needed to be more budget headings so there was a more detailed understanding of where the money was being spent.

21/58/SF Membership Packages for Tourism Microsite

Cllr C. Reynolds said she had met with the Visit Dorset team and made it very clear the council had to give local businesses the best possible deal with advertising. She felt they had come up with a fair assessment of what people should pay and the costs were reasonable.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the membership package prices for the tourism microsite for 2022-23 as follows, with a 70/30 split in Visit Dorset's favour:

Accommodation or Things to do (Attraction or Activity)

Level	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Lyme Regis Annual rate	£110	£175	£290	£530
Combined package same level 20% percentage discount	20% £58 = £232 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £82 = £328 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £134 = £536 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £242 = £968 or 10% off each level if different levels requested

Shopping, Food & Drink, Transport (possibly featured event in future)

	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Gold+
Lyme Regis	£50	£80	£160	Price dependent on location of highlight
Combined package 20% percentage discount	20% £24 = £96 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £38 = £152 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	20% £76 = £304 or 10% off each level if different levels requested	NA

21/59/SF Electric Vehicle Charging Structure

Cllr R. Smith said the council was currently charging 25p per kWh but the electricity was costing the council 15p, so it was making 10p. He suggested the council could use the system to encourage Lyme Regis residents to take up electric vehicles by allowing them to pay the amount the council pays for electricity, i.e. 15p.

Cllr R. Smith said Pod Point had a 'white list' of vehicles and vehicles on that list didn't get charged anything. He suggested while the numbers taking up electric vehicle charging remained low, Lyme Regis residents who were on the residents' parking scheme could be on the white list to get free charging. He said people with a charger on their driveway wouldn't use it but those living in the town would and if the council found the scheme was getting out of hand or it was being taken advantage of, it could be withdrawn. He saw this as an interim benefit.

Other members were generally not in agreement with giving free charging to residents as they felt everyone should pay to charge their vehicles. It was pointed out if a resident had a parking permit, they would be able to park for free and pay for the electricity, only.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked how vehicle charging would be policed if a vehicle was fully charged but it was left in the space all day.

Cllr M. Ellis said it could only be policed if both the electricity and the space were charged for. However, she felt even if the car was fully charged, if the space had been paid for all day, it should be allowed to remain in the space.

Cllr R. Smith said remaining in a space after a vehicle was charged would be frowned upon by other owners as it blocked a space.

Cllr J. Broom said if a car was charged and it stayed in a space, it should be issued with a fixed penalty notice regardless of whether it had paid for the whole day.

However, the town clerk advised members to keep it simple and said how difficult it would be for visitors to have found a space on a busy day, to then have to move their vehicle and find another space.

Members also agreed it would make things difficult for the enforcement officers to determine how long the vehicle had been fully charged for before issuing a fixed penalty notice.

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested the electric vehicle bays could have a premium rate to discourage people from leaving their vehicles there after they are charged.

The town clerk said this would complicate matters in terms of the parking orders and the charges on the parking machines and app.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the following charges should apply in all town council electric vehicle charging parking bays:

- Pay to park at the normal rate in the parking bay
- Pay for the electricity used to charge the vehicle at cost, plus 10p per kWh.

21/60/SF Investments and Cash Holdings

The finance manager said the forecast reserve of £1.2million was £371k greater than the target reserve.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he didn't see any issue with letting the reserve go beyond the target because the council had things to be mindful of, such as the impact of Covid and rising inflation. He asked if officers needed a recommendation from members to allow the reserve to go beyond the target.

The town clerk said a recommendation wasn't necessary as the message from members to 'bank it, don't spend it', was clear.

21/61/SF List of Payments

Cllr M. Ellis said she was concerned about two payments to repair sculptures on the sculpture trail as she didn't feel it was down to the council to pay for this. She asked for a separate report so members could consider it further.

Cllr J. Broom said he was also concerned and asked if the council was allowed to insure other people's property.

The town clerk said the council made a decision to insure the sculptures and they were included on its insurance policy. He said officers had made a commercial decision to pay for the damage to the sculptures rather than claim on the council's insurance. He added that the council had accepted liability for the sculptures and

needed to consider whether it wanted to continue accepting responsibility for those assets.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked what the payment to Poultons was for.

The finance manager said it was a 30% deposit for the new beach huts.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the schedule of payments for November and December 2021 for the sum of £221,575.04 and £141,291.16, respectively.

21/62/SF Debtors' Report

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, 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.

21/63/SF Park and Ride 2022

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, 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.

21/64/SF Exempt Business

a) Debtors' Report

The finance manager said there was a continued reduction in debt and since the report had been written, several payments had been received.

Cllr M. Ellis asked that members received a report by the end of March on outstanding beach hut, chalet and caravan debt because the council had agreed it was going to take a tough stance on this.

Cllr G. Stammers left the meeting at 8.02pm in line with her pecuniary interests.

b) Park and Ride 2022

The town clerk said some discussions had taken place with Charmouth Parish Council and one of the three main holiday parks about whether they would be interested in getting involved in the service and helping to pay for it. He said this would be at no

additional risk or cost to the council and it was a good example of a town and parish council working together to deliver services.

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

- a) to approve the appointment of First Group as the operator for the 2022 park and ride service and subject to recommendation e) below, it operates to the indicative timetable and frequency provided by the operator, at a cost for three buses of £1,045 per day and incorporating the fare tariff set out below:
- Adult single - £2
 - Adult return - £3.50
 - Child single - £1.50
 - Child return - £2.50
 - Group (up to 5 people) - £8.00
 - Concessionary passes accepted
- b) Members approve the operation of the 2022 park and ride service on the following dates:

Lyme Regis

- 9 April to 24 April inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover Easter and school half-term
- 30 April to 2 May to cover Fossil Festival and bank holiday
- 28 May to 5 June inclusive (every day, including weekdays) to cover school half term and Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- All other June and July **weekends** from 11/12 June to 16/17 July inclusive
- 23 July to 4 September inclusive, i.e., the entire school holiday period (every day, including weekdays)
- Weekend of 11/12 September to cover Food Rocks (provisional date)

Charmouth (subject to recommendation e))

- As for Lyme Regis with the exception of the Food Rocks weekend
- c) Members approve the deployment of the same AA advanced signage as used in 2021 at an estimated total cost of approximately £800 + VAT.
- d) Members approve the renewal of the licence for the use of the privately-owned park and ride site at Charmouth Road at an annual licence fee for 2022 of £9,545.90.
- e) Subject to it being at no cost to this council, members authorise the town clerk, in consultation with the chairman of this committee and the chairman of the Town Management and Highways Committee, to agree

the precise basis of any agreement with Charmouth Parish Council about the running of a third bus to that town or to any private holiday parks en route and wishing to be served by the park and ride service

The meeting closed at 8.09pm.