

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2026

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. May

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr M. Denney, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr A. Wood

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

26/01/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr G. Caddy – personal commitment
Cllr P. Evans – appointment
Cllr D. Holland – personal commitment
Cllr S. Larcombe – personal commitment
Cllr C. Reynolds – illness

26/02/SF Minutes

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2026 were **ADOPTED**.

26/03/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr A. Wood declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 if the LymeLiving magazine was discussed.

26/04/SF Dispensations

There were none.

26/05/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 6 May 2026

Members noted the report.

26/06/SF Update Report

Devolution of assets and services

The town clerk said it felt like the council was beginning to make progress with Dorset Council (DC) for the transfer of Theatre Square and Church Cliff walkway, with a target date of September to complete the transfer of the former. He said there was still some way to go with the transfer of toilets, but this council had a temporary cleaning contract in place and he hoped they could be transferred in the next year.

A member asked that any agreement between the town council and DC was signed by both parties to avoid issues similar to those on Marine Parade and its highway status.

26/07/SF Strategy and Finance Committee – Objectives

A member asked for an update on progress with the transparency code.

The assistant town clerk said most of the information was now published on the website and the remaining information was related to the council's land and assets, which was being compiled into a detailed spreadsheet, which was taking some time to complete. However, once it was completed, it would be a very useful document to refer to.

26/08/SF The Annual Review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure

It was suggested a reference be made to the LymeLiving magazine in the policy, which referred to printed materials. It was also suggested there be an amendment to section 4.2 of the procedure, to clarify that press releases will be issued by email.

These suggestions were agreed.

A member noted there was no real reference to social media in the policy or procedure. The assistant town clerk said there was a separate social media policy and this would be circulated to members for reference.

Proposed by Cllr M. Denney and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the amended Communications/PR Policy and Procedure, with additional amendments to the policy to add a reference to the magazine under 'printed materials' and to section 4.2 to clarify press releases will be issued by email.

26/09/SF The Annual Review of the Complaints' Policy and Procedure

It was agreed the details of the four 'official' complaints would be sent to members by email, but the need for confidentiality was emphasised.

Members discussed the handling of complaints, specifically how the public could raise issues as the public forum was temporarily suspended, and whether responses should be provided to issues raised in the public forum, when reinstated.

The town clerk said if the complaint was about agreed council policy, the public would need to raise it with members, as officers couldn't deal with complaints that were contrary to council policy. As outlined in the standing orders, the chairman could provide a direction on how an issue would be dealt with.

It was suggested chairmen be reminded of this.

It was also noted the chairman could answer a question or respond to an issue raised in the public forum or allow another member or officer to do so if they knew the answer.

It was noted the council had already agreed in future, the public would need to submit a question to a meeting in advance, which would allow responses to be prepared before the meeting.

The town clerk suggested any responses came from the council, through the chairman of the meeting, who should have the discretion to direct how it was dealt with. He cautioned against getting into endless chains of written responses, as often the best way to deal with it was to have a meeting with that person.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr N. Hampton-Rumbold, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the complaints' policy and procedure and to note the volume and nature of complaints received since August 2025.

26/10/SF Biodiversity Policy – Draft for Consideration

Cllr G. Stammers arrived at 7.26pm.

A member asked how the council would envisage engaging with businesses on biodiversity, as outlined in the proposed policy.

It was suggested this be done through the Partnership Board, which would be set up alongside the council's new committee structure, by approaching businesses individually, and including items in the business briefing.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the proposed draft Biodiversity Policy and incorporate it into the council's existing Environment Policy.

26/11/SF Preferred Contractor for Architectural and Building Services Work

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to extend the appointment of Crickmay Stark Ltd of Dorchester as the council's preferred contractor for architectural and building services support work for a further period of 12 months from 1 August 2026 on the basis of no retaining fee and to the payment at agreed rates solely for work undertaken; subject to satisfactory performance and to a sufficient pipeline of relevant work, agree to delegate authority to approve up to two further extensions of 12 months each, on the same payment basis as above, to the town clerk in consultation with the chairmen of both this committee and the Town Management and Highways Committee; and at the end of the no more than three years from 1 August 2026 and subject to there being a sufficient ongoing need, the contract for architectural and building services support work be re-advertised on a competitive basis.

26/12/SF Budget Performance, 1 April – 31 May 2026

Members were concerned the marketing budget was forecast to be overspent, primarily due to a projected overspend on the council magazine.

Cllr A. Wood left the meeting at 7.33pm in line with his pecuniary interests.

A member asked how the expenditure was being managed so it could be brought within budget.

The assistant town clerk said officers shared these concerns and had already discussed ways to reduce costs. This included using a lighter paper weight, which would reduce printing costs and potentially postage costs, to review the arrangements with the photographer who had been commissioned to support the magazine, to limit the number of pages, to encourage people who received hard copies to have a digital copy or pick one up from a community collection point instead, and the potential for some bulk orders to be hand delivered locally instead of posted.

The assistant town clerk said it had been suggested to introduce advertising into the magazine, but she would advise against this because of the extra work it would create; the cost of employing someone to manage advertising would negate any income. She added that the magazine was always intended to be a community resource and making it more commercial would take away from that aim.

It was suggested people could sign up for a hard copy for a limited period, such as a year, and to renew their subscription after that period if they still wanted it.

It was also suggested the inside pages didn't need to be glossy, which might reduce printing costs.

Several members said they would be happy to hand deliver to some addresses, which would reduce postage costs and also offer a good opportunity for community engagement. It was agreed officers would email members to arrange this.

Also as part of the marketing budget, a member asked about the forecast overspend in relation to the residents' events. It was agreed a breakdown of expenditure would be emailed to members.

Cllr A. Wood returned to the meeting at 7.48pm.

A member asked if there would be any savings on expenditure on Marine Parade since its change in designation to a highway.

The town clerk said he had been trying to pin down DC on the future management of the parade but he had been ignored completely. He had a meeting with the leader of DC on 23 July 2026 so he would raise this issue with him.

26/13/SF Investments and Cash Holdings

Members noted the report.

26/14/SF List of Payments

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the schedule of payments in April and May 2026 for the sums of £210,766.07 and £247,456.90, respectively.

26/15/SF Debtors' Report

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr P. May, 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

26/16/SF Exempt Business

a) Debtors' Report

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to write-off debt of c.£2.2k relating to historic garage rent due to the person having passed away and it being very difficult to trace the money.

The finance manager confirmed the final payment had been made in relation to the outside seating on Marine Parade. It was noted the final settlement figure was confidential and although it would appear on a future list of payments, it would not specify the individual business.

The meeting closed at 8.03pm.