

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOURISM, COMMUNITY AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2021

Present

Chairman: Cllr K. Ellis

Members: Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr M. Ellis

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

20/69/TCP Public Forum

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

Cllr B. Larcombe arrived at 7.02pm.

20/70/TCP Apologies

Cllr R. Doney.

It was also noted Cllr B. Bawden would be joining the meeting later.

20/71/TCP Minutes

Cllr G. Stammers said she had arrived at the meeting at around 7.20pm but this had not been recorded.

It was also noted Cllr R. Doney was recorded as being absent and having sent his apologies; he had sent apologies.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021, with the above amendments, were **ADOPTED**.

20/72/TCP Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr D. Sarson declared an interest in agenda item 15, LymeForward CIC Grant Review as he was a volunteer and member of the organisation.

Cllr M. Ellis declared an interest in the same agenda item as she was a volunteer at the foodbank but she would be speaking on the item.

20/73/TCP Dispensations

There were none.

20/74/TCP Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 February 2021

Tourism microsite

The support services manager said a further contract extension with Simple View due to the delay in building the microsite would be at no cost to the council as the delay was on their part.

The support services manager said the service level agreement from Visit Dorset had not yet been received.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Jazz Jurassica

Cllr D. Sarson asked if a date had been set for the working group meeting.

The support services manager said a date had not yet been set as the organiser of Jazz Jurassica was discussing with the director of Marine Theatre if it would be necessary for her to attend as many of the Jazz Jurassica events took place at the theatre anyway.

Cllr B. Bawden arrived at 7.09pm.

20/75/TCP Update Report

eat: Lyme Regis

The support services manager said a meeting had taken place with the event organisers and it was still going ahead on 24 April 2021.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he felt it was a mistake to let the event go ahead for various reasons, including the continuing Covid-19 restrictions, the need to support local businesses over those outside of Lyme Regis, the low fees being charged and the associated costs to the council, the size of the event, and the potential reaction from the public.

Cllr C. Reynolds agreed and said it was too early for the event to take place safely. She was concerned that when the council agreed to the event on this date, there was nothing in the resolution regarding compliance with Covid-19 guidelines. She added that she had attended the meeting with the event organiser and she had only agreed it went ahead due to the costs the council could be liable for if it cancelled the event.

Cllr J. Broom said as there was no reference to Covid-19 regulations in the resolution, the council had no choice but to let it go ahead.

Cllr M. Ellis said it was possible the situation would change with regards to the easing of restrictions which might prevent the event happening anyway.

The town clerk said the council had had two lengthy discussions about the event in autumn 2020 and agreed it could take place. He said those discussions about being Covid compliant had taken place with the organisers and a plan to that effect had been produced.

20/76/TCP Improvements to Beach Hut Booking System

Members agreed the identified improvements should be made at the same time for a one-off cost as it would produce savings in staff time and may cost more if the work was split over two years. It was also acknowledged it was part of the ongoing improvement of the system.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked that the expenditure was itemised so it was not lost in the overall figures.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the proposed changes to the beach hut booking system on the town council website, and the re-allocation of the 2021-22 social media campaign budget for this purpose, and the transferred expenditure is identified in the budget.

20/77/TCP Lyme Regis Museum Grant Review

Cllr M. Ellis asked why there was no member representative for the museum, who would normally attend the grant review meetings.

The support services manager said the member appointments to external bodies were rolled over from 2019-20 to 2020-21 due to Covid-19, and as the museum was a new grant recipient, there wasn't an existing representative. However, members would be re-appointed in May 2021 and this would include the museum.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked where the council's grant had been spent; he understood there may be standing charges but the museum had furloughed its staff and he hoped the money wasn't sitting in the museum's bank account.

Cllr M. Ellis said if events and services were not going ahead as per the grant application, organisations shouldn't be paid.

The support services manager said the museum had already committed some of the grant funding to pay artists and materials and the remainder would be deferred for payment in early 2021-22, as previously agreed by the council.

The town clerk said when the first grant review meetings took place six months ago, members were asked if they were comfortable with paying grants as some organisations would have a real issue if they were withdrawn. He said members were happy to pay the grants but it was entirely within the council's gift to withdraw funding, although officers had an overview of where organisations were financially.

Cllr D. Sarson said although he wasn't against giving the museum a grant, he asked if the council was aware it had received several large grants.

The town clerk said officers had been encouraging all organisations to apply for available funding to strengthen their finances and if they were successful, it might give the council the opportunity to review its grant funding. He said the council had to take some of this on trust and accept the funding was being used as intended.

Proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr B. Bawden, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve continued grant payments to Lyme Regis Philpot Museum.

20/78/TCP B Sharp Grant Review

Cllr B. Bawden, the council's representative for B Sharp, said the organisation was continuing to pay its youth music leaders and had adapted its teaching styles. She said they had held some in-person activities in between lockdowns.

Cllr K. Ellis said youth organisations like B Sharp were a key service which meant they had been able to operate to a certain extent.

Proposed by Cllr B. Bawden and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve quarterly grant payments to B Sharp in April and July 2021.

20/79/TCP The Hub Grant Review

The town clerk said he was not aware if Lyme Regis Development Trust (LRDT), which ran the Hub, would be receiving further funding from Dorset Council (DC) as at the time of the meeting with LRDT, the decision had not yet been made. He said he would find out.

Cllr M. Ellis asked for clarification over the purpose of the grant as she thought the funding was for the youth of the town, not the upkeep of the building. She was also aware LRDT was using the Hub as its office and felt it should be paying a rent.

The town clerk said the grant application had stated it was for the core running costs of the building, which the council had agreed, but he agreed there had been a shift in emphasis to support the infrastructure of youth provision rather than hands-on activities for young people.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if in funding the Hub, the council was funding LRDT.

The town clerk said LRDT had provided its governance and staffing structure and this could be included in the briefing. He said it was clear LRDT ran the Hub and it was within LRDT's gift how they chose to organise themselves.

Cllr J. Broom suggested reducing the grant payment by the amount LRDT would pay in rent for the office.

The town clerk said the time to negotiate the level of funding was when the grant was approved.

Cllr M. Ellis felt the council needed to accept it at the moment and hope they would run the youth club as before; if not, the council could re-consider the grant at the next review.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if there was a seasonal element to the level of activity at the Hub. The town clerk said he could find this out.

The town clerk said the council could soon enter into grant agreements to properly outline the relationship the council had with all grant recipients.

Cllr B. Bawden said the Hub had been open when it was allowed so some youth activities had continued. She said they had worked hard to make sure essential things they were able to do could continue.

Cllr K. Ellis said it needed to be clearly laid out for the council where LRDT ended and the Hub began as the difference had become blurred.

Cllr G. Stammers asked if the council could see an itemised account of how the grant money had been spent. The town clerk said he would ask for this.

Members discussed the ongoing grant payments and Cllr M. Ellis suggested approving the April 2021 payment and then to review the situation again.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to pay the quarterly grant payment to the Hub for April 2021 and ask Lyme Regis Development Trust for a breakdown of how the grant will be spent on youth provision going forward before any more funding is released.

20/80/TCP Lyme Arts Community Trust Grant Review

Cllr D. Ruffle, the council's representative on Lyme Arts Community Trust (LACT) said they had secured funding from other sources but it was for specific projects. He said they were in a fairly healthy financial position but this was because the theatre had not been open, although everything was looking good for re-opening.

Cllr M. Ellis asked if the council's grant was sitting in LACT's bank; if so, it was not being used as intended.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the money was being spent in preparation for the re-opening.

The town clerk said LACT had provided a timetable for re-opening and he could ask for more details. He said LACT was building up a reserve but he didn't know to what extent that was the council's funding.

Cllr M. Ellis said it was not the council's responsibility to provide funding to build up LACT's reserves. She said there were many other organisations in the town who had not been able to fundraise and would benefit from council funding, rather than it being used to build up one organisation's reserves.

Cllr B. Bawden declared a pecuniary interest as she worked at the Marine Theatre and would not be voting. She confirmed the theatre did re-open when it was able to but due to social distancing, the capacity, and therefore the income, had been reduced.

Cllr G. Turner asked for clarification over whether the theatre would soon be owned by the trustees under the terms of the sale by the town council.

The town clerk said he understood the theatre would revert to the council in 2023-24 if it failed but he would clarify this.

Proposed by Cllr D. Ruffle and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve quarterly grant payments to Lyme Arts Community Trust in April and July 2021.

20/81/TCP Bridport and District Citizens' Advice Bureau Grant Review

Cllr B. Larcombe said there had never been a more important time for the Citizens' Advice Bureau as there was now and it was doing all the things the council would want it to do.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve quarterly grant payments to Bridport and District Citizens' Advice Bureau in April and July 2021.

20/82/TCP Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride Service Ltd Grant Review

Proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve quarterly grant payments to Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride Service Ltd in April and July 2021.

20/83/TCP LymeForward CIC Grant Review

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested this item be discussed in exempt business due to some sensitive issues which had been raised among members.

Several members felt it should be discussed in public like the other grant reviews and that all the council needed to be concerned with was what its funding was being spent on; all other issues which had been raised in emails were separate.

Cllr B. Bawden said there were too many concerns about LymeForward's governance which shouldn't be discussed in public.

Cllr B. Bawden asked for a recorded vote on the following motion:

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 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.

Voted for – Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr K. Ellis

Voted against – Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr M. Ellis

Abstentions – None

20/84/TCP Sculpture Trail in Lister and Langmoor Gardens

Cllr B. Larcombe said as the council was providing free gallery space for sculptures that were there to be sold and also provided the plinths, it was not the council's responsibility to have discussions with potential funders.

Cllr K. Ellis asked why the Arts Development Company didn't continue to try and secure funding for the trail and asked if they had worked with the local schools as previously intended.

The support services manager said discussions had started with potential local funders but those discussions had halted when the staff were furloughed and businesses were no longer in a position to provide funding. She said conversations had also started with the Woodroffe School but these also halted for the same reason.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council should be looking at working with the schools to provide sculptures. She also suggested some artists might be willing to display their sculptures for free.

The town clerk said if the council agreed to fund the trail, it was unbudgeted expenditure. However, he was aware of £6 million government funding available for seaside recovery and the town council would be submitting an application, which could include the sculpture trail.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr K. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** provide funding of £2,500 to the sculpture trail in the Lister and Langmoor Gardens, to be match-funded, with the possibility of providing more funding if the council's application to the seaside recovery fund is successful, and for the Arts Development Company to work with the Woodroffe School to fill any unused plinths.

20/85/TCP Managing Consultation Exercises

The support services manager said there was also a consultation by the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service on its community safety plan and this would be considered at the next meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee.

Cllr M. Ellis declared a pecuniary interest as her husband worked for the fire service but the item was not discussed further.

The meeting adjourned for a break at 9.31pm.

The meeting resumed at 9.40pm.

20/86/TCP Exempt Business

a) LymeForward CIC Grant Review

The town clerk said there had been some developments since the report was drafted in terms of information provided to the council and emails circulated. However, he said the council was not responsible for running the organisation; all it needed to know was whether it was a sound organisation, if it was financially viable, and if it was delivering what it said it was going to deliver. He added LymeForward was concentrating on the foodbank and he found that to be acceptable in the circumstances.

The town clerk said he had received a response from the LymeForward director relating to his report, which had given him cause for concern, specifically around the receipt of payment and the recording of the grant meeting.

Cllr B. Larcombe said there was an expectation the council would own the problems the organisation found itself in, but its only responsibility was to review the effectiveness of the grant. He said LymeForward's AGM was on 31 March 2021, which could indicate where the organisation was going. He suggested the council deferred grant payment for a quarter to allow LymeForward to demonstrate they were running with all the appropriate governance controls, and to re-consider the funding at the next meeting.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she was concerned some council members were too involved in the issues with LymeForward and had a conflict of interest. She said the council should only be concerned about what it spent the grant money on.

Cllr B. Bawden shared her concerns and felt the council's grant was not the best use of public money. She said she was concerned about LymeForward's financial sustainability and governance and the lack of answers from the director to the council's questions.

Cllr M. Ellis asked if LymeForward had been informed it could use Unit 1A, as per the council's decision.

The town clerk said they had not yet been informed as the Full Council actions hadn't yet been implemented. Several members felt the rental of Unit 1A had no relation to the grant funding and the town clerk confirmed the arrangement was still as agreed.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the quarterly grant payment to LymeForward for April 2021 and review the position following the organisation's annual general meeting on 31 March 2021.

The meeting closed at 10.56pm.