

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOURISM, COMMUNITY AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present

Chairman: Cllr C. Reynolds

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr K. Ellis, Cllr T Webb

Officers: J. Wright (town clerk), A. Mullins (support services manager), K. Weekley (administration assistant)

21/15/TCP Public Forum

S. Davies

S. Davies, chairman of LymeForward, spoke in detail about how the organisation had worked through the pandemic by setting up services to help the public, including the food bank and support to local schools. She said there had been issues with HR and difficulty with finances whilst other lockdown issues had emerged and they needed to step up services for clients. She said there had been intimidation and harassment which had been previously raised and informed members that all financial data had been compiled in accordance with the Community Interest Company (CIC) Regulator. S. Davies said Dorset Council had terminated funding to LymeForward and she had made the town council aware of this.

G. Baker (read out by an officer)

G. Baker asked if it was appropriate that town council members closely linked with LymeForward should vote on any proposal for grant funding for that organisation and asked if this was not a conflict of interest.

J. Breeze (read out by an officer)

J. Breeze asked what the town council's policy was on funding a CIC while in knowledge of concerns over governance and asked for reassurance that public funds were allocated appropriately.

C. Aldridge (read out by an officer)

C. Aldridge asked for consideration on the purpose of the LymeForward grant and a report back on the spend. As a previous volunteer of the foodbank, she recalled numbers ranging from 19 to six families per week. She said many donations of food and money were given, and it was run largely by volunteers so additional funding was

minimal. C. Aldridge expressed concerns that money was spent on salaries and development not in keeping with a food bank of this size. She said she would like the council to share information if the grant was given on proposed plans for LymeForward.

21/16/TCP Apologies

Cllr D. Ruffle – illness
Cllr S. Williams – illness

21/17/TCP Minutes

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2021, were **ADOPTED**.

21/18/TCP Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Following comments in the public forum, Cllr C. Reynolds said she would not be abstaining from the vote regarding LymeForward.

21/18/TCP Dispensations

There were none.

21/19/TCP Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 June 2021

Cllr B. Larcombe asked when the tourism microsite would be working.

The support services manager it was hoped it would be ready for November as it was currently being worked on.

21/20/TCP Update Report

Cllr B. Larcombe ask if the sculptures were previously viewed before they went up.

The support services manager said the deputy town clerk saw every sculpture before it was installed, therefore if there was anything that could be offensive to anyone it would be vetted first.

Members agreed art was subjective, and everyone saw art in a different way.

It was agreed by members to change the running order of the next two items on the agenda.

21/21/TCP LymeForward Grant Agreement

Cllr C. Reynolds explained a meeting which was to discuss the LymeForward grant had been held but she had left halfway through meaning that it could not be completed as she had felt some distress.

She was concerned that there were no previously set objectives for LymeForward and as Dorset Council had withdrawn funding, the town council should support the organisation.

Cllr M. Ellis felt LymeForward should not be treated differently from other grant recipients as it had previously been resolved to give the grant without conditions.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if there were objectives for LymeForward in place now and if not, did that mean that there was no grant agreement for LymeForward.

Cllr M. Ellis said as nothing was resolved at the Full Council meeting when the grant was awarded, no objectives had been set.

Several members said the grant was for core running costs and not to carry out council objectives.

Cllr B. Larcombe gave examples of other grant recipients that had had conditions set. He said in a previous grant agreement which contained conditions of the grant, LymeForward had community engagement as an objective.

Cllr C. Reynolds said as LymeForward was no longer part of the local area partnership the community engagement could not be achieved.

Cllr R. Smith asked about the visibility of finances of the organisation and said members of LymeForward had expressed concerns and wanted to know how money was spent within the organisation.

Cllr C. Reynolds said this information only needed to be shown at the AGM.

Cllr C. Reynolds invited S. Davies and N. Sarahs from LymeForward to speak.

N. Sarahs said financial information would be made available and had been presented to Companies House.

The town clerk clarified the grant was originally given to LymeForward because community engagement was an objective within the articles of association.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council should pay someone for community engagement or pay LymeForward additional funding to carry out community engagement.

N. Sarahs said the application was costed and any extra work that was added to the application would need more funding.

The support services manager said LymeForward had told the council it was not doing some of the activities that were set out in the February 2020 application, such as an industrial strategy, and this was why some alternative objectives were included in the draft grant agreement. She also pointed out the articles of association related to the organisation at the time of the application in 2020 but officers were aware there were proposed changes to the articles, to be agreed at the upcoming AGM, which would make the organisation a different one.

S. Davies said all other services were continuing, other than the Death Cafe.

Cllr B. Bawden said as the food bank was funded separately, the grant was for community engagement.

Cllr J. Broom asked if the town council could pay the quarterly payment and review after LymeForward had had its AGM.

The town clerk said it would be easier to pay for the whole year.

The issue of financial transparency was discussed, and it was felt by some members that LymeForward was already meeting this objective.

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

- LymeForward's grant agreement includes an objective to work with the town council to deliver its community engagement strategy
- If LymeForward's articles of association are changed, the town council reserves the right to review the grant agreement to check it is working to the same objectives
- The town council continues to pay the grant on this basis.

The meeting was adjourned for a break at 8:55pm.

Cllr T. Webb left the meeting at 8.55pm

The meeting resumed at 9pm.

21/22/TCP Community Engagement Strategy

Cllr C. Reynolds said she felt the council was not good at community engagement and gave examples of its weaknesses.

Cllr B. Larcombe was encouraged by the list of community engagement already undertaken by the council.

Cllr K. Ellis asked for more information about what the council did well and what gets the best community involvement.

The town clerk said members needed to look at what the council did, if it delivered and what members wanted to achieve. He gave examples of how to engage and perhaps create a different image and a dialogue with the community. He suggested the council take views from different sectors of the community, such as the faith community, and as the council tended to hear from the same people. He said it was important to hear from others to get a more rounded view.

Cllr B. Larcombe said council members were open and available, but the council needed to have a sense of direction and help people to understand what the council could deliver.

Cllr M. Ellis talked about bringing organisations together and asking them to go to their members with questions so that it was not too onerous a task on any one organisation. She said the council ask grant recipients to engage with their members on behalf of the council.

Cllr. K Ellis said rather than wait for the community to come to the council, the council should go to them, such as attending events and discussing future plans gauge public opinion.

The town clerk said it would be good to achieve a wider perspective and it must be driven by the council to get a holistic view from the public.

The support services manager said the council needed to go out in the community rather than expecting them to come to the council. She spoke about Lyme Voice being successful and good cross section of the community and explained to the members how it worked.

Cllr K. Ellis said the council could agree to a specific amount of engagement every year. She said Lyme Voice should be better used.

Cllr R. Smith asked the cost of Lyme Voice and asked if committees could use it to help inform their decisions.

The support services manager said it was cost effective and was paid by annual subscription to Survey Monkey. She suggested going through the electoral register again to update the list and get more people involved.

The town clerk said it would be good to stick with what the council already had and to better use Lyme Voice. The town clerk said that if members were in broad agreement, he could turn this proposal into a strategy to take to the next committee.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to instruct officers to bring a draft community engagement strategy to the next Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee.

21/22/TCP

Newspaper column

Cllr D. Sarson said he felt the newspaper column should continue on a monthly basis as he felt an item of news may get outdated if it was every two months.

The support services manager said all the guidance suggested a council should do a newsletter no more than four times per year but the council was currently producing a column 12 times a year. She said it was time-consuming, it was often hard to fill the space, and by the time the column went to print, most of what had happened in the council chamber had already been reported on. She added that by having it every other month there could be press releases in the intervening period.

Cllr M. Ellis suggested half a page instead of a full page and one section could be about what the councillors had been up to this month.

Cllr K. Ellis said she would support a column every two months but an extra column could be done if required.

Members discussed the commitment to the paper and the idea of half a page. They also agreed they should help provide material for the column.

The support services manager said it would be a good idea to have a councillor profile each month and encouraged members to submit pictures for the column as it was difficult to find pictures for the column.

21/23/TCP Publicity Group

Cllrs B. Larcombe and B. Bawden volunteered for the publicity group

The support services manager said there only needed to be a short meeting to discuss publicity and suggested a week before publication of the newspaper column.

Proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr R. Smith members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to appoint Cllrs. B. Bawden and B. Larcombe to the Publicity Group.

21/24/TCP Seasonal Concessions

Cllr M. Ellis supported the suggestion for a new fitness concession as it would provide more income for the council.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the council was not charging enough for the current concessions and should be setting the prices instead of giving it to the highest tender.

Cllr M. Ellis said the concessionaires bid for the tender based on the running costs and may not be able to afford the rates the council may set.

Members agreed to look in more detail at any potential new concessions at the next meeting.

Proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree the existing concessions continue and defer discussions concerning new concessions until the next meeting.

21/25/TCP Visitor information

Cllr D. Sarson said this was a good idea but needed careful consideration as the reception area could become overcrowded. He suggested a separate area for the information should be considered.

Cllr B. Larcombe said council staff should do council work and should not be confused with a tourist information centre. He added that the cost of an iPad was unbudgeted.

The support services manager said the volume of people asking for tourist information was not great and gave examples of the kind of information they were looking for. She said rather than add work to the office, an iPad and some information leaflets would make life easier as staff would not be involved in protracted conversations. Also, it would not be advertised as a tourist information centre but the council staff wanted to be able to provide helpful information to people who went into the office.

Cllr M. Ellis said leaflets should be provided but not an iPad, and that the way forward would be to have volunteers on the seafront.

Cllr D. Sarson said it may be difficult for some people to use the iPad.

The administrative assistant said it would be set up in a way that was very easy and both she and other staff members would be able to talk through the process with those that needed more help.

Cllr K. Ellis said it would be much cheaper and more environmentally friendly to buy an iPad than to have leaflets. She pointed out that staffing time costs money too and this suggestion would save staff time.

The town clerk said there was no drive in the community to run a volunteer service and the cost of the iPad was minimum and would make life easier for the staff.

The administration assistant said although the work load was roughly the same; as a result of the pandemic the vast majority of town council work came via email rather than face-to-face and therefore most of the people who came through the door were looking for information about the town. She said this meant the reception area was not busy.

Several members felt that as it was not much money, it would make life easier for the staff and provide a good service, then it should be agreed.

Proposed by Cllr K. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to purchase an iPad and secure stand and sign up to the TIC pop up service to provide information leaflets on the local area for visitors.

Cllr B. Larcombe left the meeting at 10.24pm.

Cllr B. Larcombe returned to the meeting at 10.25pm.

21/26/TCP Seagull Control

Cllr K. Ellis talked about the big issues that were going on in the town regarding seagulls and the possibility of using falconry or a “bleep box” to deter seagulls by sound.

Several members agreed the bleep box was a good idea and more cost effective than a falconer.

Cllr K. Ellis said the falconer was just one option and wanted officers to investigate other options.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** not to use a falconer to deter seagulls, but to instruct officers to investigate all options of seagull deterrent including bleep boxes and to make sure children are not affected by any possible deterrent.

21/27/TCP Jubilee Pavilion Christmas Event

Cllr C. Reynolds said she had involved many people, including other members, to help on a Christmas event which she hoped would take place at the Jubilee Pavilion, to include a Santa’s grotto, Christmas lights, and a gift for the children. To put this in place, she would asked if the council would consider contributing some money.

Cllr C. Reynolds said it would be a two-day event, to take place on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 December 2021.

Cllr K. Ellis asked if this was just for local children or if visitors were included.

Cllr C. Reynolds said if there was enough money, she would like to include visitors too.

Cllr R. smith asked how many people were expected and how much money it would cost per child.

Cllr C. Reynolds said it would be 95 children from St Michael’s Primary School and if there was enough money, she would like to include children from Uplyme. She said that a selection box priced at about £1 each would be an estimate.

Cllr M. Ellis suggested other rooms at the Marine Parade Shelters could be used in case they needed extra room and suggested a donation of £500 from the council for presents. She also suggested a donation pot could be put out at the event in case anyone wanted to contribute.

Cllr C. Reynolds said they wanted it to be free for the children, but a donation pot would be there for anyone that wanted to donate.

The town clerk suggested £1,000 would cover the costs, which members agreed.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr K. Ellis members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the use of the Jubilee Pavilion for a

Christmas event at no cost, to award a donation of £1,000 for the event, and to allow use of other areas of the shelters if required.

21/28/TCP Managing Consultation Exercises

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 10.52pm.