

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOURISM, COMMUNITY AND PUBLICITY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY 2022

Present

Chairman: Cllr C. Reynolds

Members: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr J. Broom, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

Officers: M. Green (deputy town clerk), A. Mullins (support services manager)

21/45/TCP Public Forum

M. Saunders

M. Saunders spoke in relation to agenda item 16, Seafront and Beach Concessions. He said he and his wife had run the watersports shop Boylos in Lyme for over 10 years and in that time they had seen the town grow massively as a watersports destination, including stand up paddleboarding (SUP). He said Lyme Regis was a great venue but it did have its dangers and they shouldn't be underestimated, with reefs, tides and wind being the three main areas of concern. M. Saunders said Boylos ensured anyone taking part in a lesson and subsequently hiring was fully aware of these before they went out. He said their business was set up so anyone paddleboarding for the first time participated in a lesson before being able to hire and in doing so, the staff ensured they were aware of any local dangers and hazards. He said as watersports had become more popular, they had seen the potential for people undertaking water activities to collide and it was recently brought up in the Harbour Consultative Group, with concerns voiced particularly about the unregulated hiring of SUPs. M Saunders said this hiring was done under a licence given by Dorset Council to a West Bay-based company off the North Wall, which was disappointing to them as their activities from the shop had always been respectful of other water users and he believed their set-up as a whole was such that they could work with and around others. He said they had never received a complaint or an ill word about operating from the beach. He said over the years they had supported local events with SUP taster events, they had raised over £2,000 for charity and they planned to continue doing this for the coming years. M Saunders said they had featured Lyme Regis in several paddleboarding publications, and offered local advice to anyone who went into the shop. He said as a long-standing tenant, a small local business and an active member of the community, he hoped the council would continue to support them as it had in the past. He said they looked forward to continuing their teaching and encouraging people to enjoy the beach and waters in a safe, respectful and responsible way.

J. Harper and N. Gallagher

J. Harper and N. Gallagher spoke in relation to the same agenda item. J. Harper said she was an events' manager with over 15 years' experience of delivering large-scale events and she worked with south west businesses to deliver growth strategies. She said she recently moved back to the area and she had thoroughly enjoyed getting involved in the sea swimming community. N. Gallagher said she moved to the area a couple of years ago and she was the CEO of a local business. She said they both had a real passion for the local area and wanted to talk about a proposal for a shoreline sauna. She said it was a mobile wood fired sauna which they hoped to be able to position on Lyme Regis seafront this summer. She said she had experience in dynamic start-up companies with a particular interest in sales and marketing and e-commerce. She said the sauna was Finnish in its origin and they were typically Scandinavian in design, but theirs was designed specifically with its location in mind, so it took its design cues from the beach huts and Victorian bathing machines. J. Harper said they were aware there were lots of things happening along the seafront so the unit was flexible and versatile in where it could be situated. She said there were a number of locations they felt would work well and the elements that were really important were access so it could be towed onto the pitch, it would also be helpful to have access to fresh water so they could hydrate their customers without bringing in plastic bottles, a small space for a wood store, and ideally access to the shoreline so customers could get the experience of the hot and cold, which was one of the main benefits of the saunas. J Harper said the locations they felt would work really well were behind the lifeboat station through the boat yard to the right of the Cobb, potentially close to the power boat club, or on the main sandy beach to the left of the groyne between the sand and pebbles. N. Gallagher said they felt it was a good opportunity that wasn't to be missed as we were in the midst of a boom of cold water swimming, along with other watersports like paddleboarding, so this would work in synergy with those other tourist attractions but also be of benefit for the local community. She said the timing was also very good as there were a handful of other businesses doing this in the UK but it was on the cusp of exploding, they had a comprehensive plan behind the business proposal and they believed they could put Lyme Regis on the map at the beginning of that trend. N. Gallagher said they were committed to bringing a new audience of tourists to Lyme Regis through their mobile sauna in the same way that maybe the glamping trend did, but she said it was vital it was just as much of an asset for the locals as the tourism industry.

D. Patterson

D. Patterson spoken in relation to the same agenda item. He said he went between London and Bridport working as a caricaturist, which he had been doing for 10 years. He said he was seeking to do caricatures in Lyme Regis as it was such a good thing to have in West Bay where he operated currently. He said it was good for tourists and children and he felt it would work in Lyme Regis because it was such a picturesque area. He said he had been doing caricatures in Trafalgar Square in London and he felt it would be a great thing for the seafront in Lyme Regis.

21/46/TCP Apologies

Cllr B. Bawden – illness

Cllr M. Ellis – pantomime rehearsals

Cllr R. Smith – working
Cllr T. Webb – illness

21/47/TCP Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021, were **ADOPTED**.

21/48/TCP Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

21/49/TCP Dispensations

There were none.

21/50/TCP Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 November 2021

Members noted the report.

21/51/TCP Update Report

Members noted the report.

21/52/TCP Review of Social Media Policy

Cllr B. Larcombe said recently there had been some scams sent around on social media and although not directly related to the social media policy, he felt the council should try and prevent this kind of thing happening. He said he had noticed some other councils didn't put councillors' telephone numbers and email addresses on their profiles but instead put a live link to click on, which in doing so, the scammers revealed themselves. He asked that this was pursued for the council's website.

Cllr J. Broom said the policy referred to a bullying and harassment policy and procedure but this was not on the council's website so he asked whether the policy existed.

The support services manager confirmed the council did have a bullying and harassment policy and procedure. She said human resources' policies were not on the website but there was a note on the policies' page which said they were available on request.

Cllr B. Larcombe said staff could also be targeted on social media so members needed to think about how they looked after staff in those circumstances and provided protection to them when they were subjected to social media abuse.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the amended social media policy.

21/53/TCP Grant Review, The Hub

Members noted the report.

21/54/TCP Grant Review, B Sharp

Members noted the report.

21/55/TCP Grant Review, CAB

The support services manager said the CAB's face-to-face service in Lyme Regis would resume as soon as the council office re-opened.

Cllr C. Reynolds said the council would regularly advertise the outreach service on its social media.

21/56/TCP Seafront WiFi

The deputy town clerk said due to decreased line speed on the seafront wifi system, the only option to increase the line speed was to invest in a leased line at considerable extra cost. He said it was difficult to justify the extra cost, especially as there was now improved mobile phone signal in Lyme Regis and the roll-out of 5G.

The deputy town clerk suggested monitoring the line speeds and level of public usage until the end of May and then review the situation in light of that information.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he didn't think seafront wifi was needed at all because most people now had their own smartphones. He didn't think the council should invest in any upgrade to the system but agreed a review in May would give a clearer picture.

Cllr G. Stammers asked if there was any explanation as to why the line speed had reduced so significantly. She asked if there was any expectation the council would need better line speeds for events and training taking place at the Lister Room.

The deputy town clerk said it was due to more people using the same general line as it wasn't exclusively used for the seafront wifi. He said when the wifi was installed, there were only a few businesses using the line but the number had increased since.

The deputy town clerk said as the Lister Room was going to be let on a permanent basis, broadband to the room would be a matter for that tenant.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree to monitor the line speeds and levels of public usage of the seafront wifi over the period to 31 May 2022 and to then consider the matter further in light of that information.

21/57/TCP Seagull Control

Cllr C. Reynolds was concerned about audio scarers affecting children and paying someone to take a boat out to lure seagulls away would cost too much and may not even work.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked how much research had been done into other places which had had success tackling seagulls. She suggested a trial of a bird of prey.

The deputy town clerk said the council had brought in birds of prey previously and while they were around, they would keep seagulls away for a short period. However, he said seagulls were also scared of birds of prey and there was another by-product of them being scared, which was also undesirable. He added that birds of prey were an attraction for tourists but there was no budget for this.

Cllr B. Larcombe felt birds of prey were not an option as they were only effective when they were in the air and the town didn't need that kind of attraction. He said the audio scarers could work as there was a café in Lyme Regis which had one and it worked. He added that the main issue was the number of takeaway outlets and the council should ensure it had enough seagull proof waste bins.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to instruct officers to obtain quotes for seagull proof waste bins and to report back to the Town Management and Highways Committee.

21/58/TCP Launch of Tourism Microsite

The support services manager confirmed the microsite had gone live earlier that day as planned.

Members congratulated the support services manager on delivering the microsite and agreed the partnership with Visit Dorset had been the right decision for the council.

21/59/TCP Harbour Consultative Group

The deputy town clerk said this report had been brought to the committee to let members know these discussions with Dorset Council and other harbour users were ongoing and there may be things coming out of those discussions that affected the town council's management of the sandy beach and the seafront area.

21/60/TCP Managing Consultation Exercises

Members noted the report.

21/61/TCP Seafront and Beach Concessions

Cllr J. Broom pointed out the numbering in the proposed policy was wrong as there were two section 3s and it was agreed this would be amended.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked how it was determined which concessions would be allowed; were there a set of concessions that were appropriate to the town that represented the Lyme Regis brand, or could anyone with an idea approach the council?

The support services manager said there were set categories of concessions and these were advertised, but if people approached the council with ideas that didn't fit within those categories, they could be brought to members to consider. She said the details of each concession, such as their location and equipment, were agreed with the operations manager.

Members agreed there needed to be fixed categories for concessions but they didn't want to stop people approaching the council with good ideas.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the seafront and beach concessions' policy with an amendment to the numbering as there are two section 3s.

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds 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.

Members discussed the application for the hair braiding and henna tattooing concession. It was agreed the concessionaire should be asked to display her prices and that the size of any storage facility is agreed by the operations manager.

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the hair braiding and henna tattooing concession to Bridie Appleby-Gunnill for 2022-24.

Members discussed the application for the arts and crafts concession.

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the arts and crafts concession to Dan Patterson for 2022-24.

Members discussed the applications for the non-motorised watersports and issues around safety and the potential for watercraft to collide with swimmers.

The deputy town clerk said once watercraft were in the water, they were the responsibility of the harbourmaster. However, he said if out of the water safety discussions with Dorset Council new areas were introduced for different uses, the town council would need to make this clear to its concessionaires.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the non-motorised watersports concession to Lyme Kayak Hire for 2022-24.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the non-motorised watersports concession to Boylo's Watersports for 2022-24.

Members discussed the application for the fitness and exercise concession.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the fitness and exercise concession to Phillipa Scammell (Maitri Yoga) for 2022-24.

Members discussed the application from Nichola Gallagher and Janie Harper to situate a wood-fired sauna on the seafront as a fitness and exercise concession.

The support services manager said she didn't feel the sauna fitted with the remit of fitness and exercise but the application had been made and it was up to members to decide if it should be considered. However, if members didn't feel it fitted the remit of the concession, she encouraged them not to dismiss the idea as she felt officers could have separate discussions with the applicants about how the sauna could be accommodated.

Cllr C. Aldridge didn't feel the sauna fitted with the council's policy of being eco-friendly because it was wood fuelled and she asked if it could use infrared.

Cllr B. Larcombe said it didn't fit the fitness and exercise category and it would be difficult to accommodate as they were asking for access to the shore and drinking water and a sizeable space.

Cllr C. Reynolds said a mobile sauna had been successful in Seatown and they would soon be in other seaside towns and Lyme would have missed out so she felt the council should at least have a discussion with the applicants about how it could work.

Several members liked the idea in general but were concerned about the burning of wood and felt it couldn't be accommodated on the beach because of its size.

Cllr J. Broom suggested the accreted land as customers would have direct access to and from the sea.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that subject to the operators of the mobile sauna being willing or able to change the energy source away from wood burning to a suitable non-carbon generating alternative, officers are instructed to carry out further discussions with them about potential locations to site the sauna around the area of the accreted land.

The public were invited to return to the meeting and were informed of the recommendations made in relation to concessions.

The meeting ended at 9.34pm.