

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOURISM, COMMUNITY AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2023

Present

Chairman: Cllr C. Reynolds

Members: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers

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

Guests: E. Carr (Unique Boutique Events), C. Wyman (Jurassic Fibre)

22/55/TCP Public Forum

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

22/56/TCP Apologies

Cllr B. Larcombe
Cllr G. Turner – personal commitment

22/57/TCP Minutes

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 were **ADOPTED**.

22/58/TCP Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

22/59/TCP Dispensations

There were none.

22/60/TCP Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 November 2022

Members noted the report.

22/61/TCP Update Report

Members noted the report.

22/62/TCP To receive the minutes of the Coronation Working Group meeting on 2 December 2022

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, the minutes of the Coronation Working Group meeting held on 2 December 2022 were **RECEIVED**.

22/63/TCP Jurassic Fibre

The chairman invited C. Wyman from Jurassic Fibre to give a presentation to members.

C. Wyman said Jurassic Fibre's network covered over 140,000 homes and businesses in the south west. She explained what fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) was and why it was needed, primarily to replace copper cables, which were less effective than fibre and would be retired in future. She said FTTP would bring higher download speeds, faster connections and greater reliability.

C. Wyman talked about Jurassic Fibre's build approach and said the network was joined by Point of Presence (POP) sites, which were currently located at Honiton, Bridport, Seaton and Chard.

C. Wyman talked through the plan for Lyme Regis and said they hoped to have the lower parts of the town completed by March. She outlined the roadworks that would be necessary to complete the works over the next three months but said they aimed to create minimum disruption.

C. Wyman gave examples of the kinds of community engagement Jurassic Fibre was involved in and said if there was a local event or project the council felt they could be involved in, she would like to hear about it.

C. Wyman gave details of the latest offers and said people could register their interest at jurassic-fibre.com.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked how long it was expected to be before people could sign up to Jurassic Fibre and how much disruption the work would cause.

C. Wyman said she couldn't give definite dates but she could provide updates. She said they aimed to minimise disruption and any road closures would be communicated to the town council.

Cllr G. Stammers asked what the range of each POP was and whether there were any plans to have one in Lyme Regis. She said due to Lyme Regis being a tourist town, a network would have high usage in the summer and low usage in the winter and asked if there would be any allowance made for this.

C. Wyman said Lyme Regis would be connected to the Seaton POP as it wasn't necessary to have one in every location. She said there would also be one in Axminster which would serve the surrounding areas. She said a certain number of properties could be connected to each POP, rather than it being a matter of distance from a POP. However, she would find out more information about the limitations on POPs and report this back to the council.

Relating to the summer and winter usage, C. Wyman said each premise that connected to the POP had their own fibre so it didn't matter how many people were using it and there wouldn't be a problem of signal dropping off if more people were using it.

Cllr R. Smith asked if fibre would allow phone lines and pylons to be taken down.

C. Wyman said perhaps when copper cables were switched off but she would ask for more information and report back.

C. Wyman said Jurassic Fibre aimed for 90% coverage in the towns they covered but it was subject to surveys. She said they didn't currently provide television packages but they could work in conjunction with television providers.

22/64/TCP Pop-Up Street Food Market

The support services manager emphasised Unique Boutique Events were not asking the council's permission to hold the event, as it was on Dorset Council (DC) land, but they wanted the support of the local council before approaching DC for permission.

Cllr C. Reynolds informed members DC was going to hand over management of events on its land in Lyme Regis to the town council. She asked if the town council would therefore receive the income from those events to rent the land.

The town clerk said DC was happy to delegate to the town council the management of events and if there was a financial consideration for this, the town council would want to benefit from that as it spent time and money in preparing the town for events and managing them while they took place.

The chairman invited E. Carr from Unique Boutique Events to present her proposal and take questions.

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the traders would be from the surrounding area or already based in the town.

E. Carr said she had a database of traders that she had built up over the years and because it was an evening event over four or five hours, it tended to be businesses within a 20 or 30-mile radius. However, she liked to give local businesses an opportunity to trade too, as long as they were able to operate in the same way as a regular street trader, and she would offer a small discount to encourage them to get involved. She said perhaps the town council could help to publicise the opportunity with local businesses.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if there were any Lyme Regis traders on the database and whether she proposed to increase the number of traders in the future.

E. Carr said she didn't have any Lyme Regis traders but the word would go out once she had permission. She said Theatre Square was a flexible space so she would start with up to six traders so everyone did well and maybe bring in one or two more each

time. She said she also aimed to have a turnover of traders so they weren't the same at each event and she tried not to replicate food that was already available in the town.

Cllr M. Ellis said the Marine Theatre was parking vehicles on the lower level and if the town council was going to manage events on DC land, this needed to be addressed. She asked if traders operated from gazebos, trailers or vehicles.

Members discussed whether Friday was the best day for the event but E. Carr said she was happy to discuss with the council the best day and possibly involve the Marine Theatre. She said traders normally operated from gazebos.

Cllr G. Stammers asked if it was feasible to involve local businesses if there were only going to be three events this year and she already had a large database of businesses that might take part.

E. Carr said she didn't think this was a real issue. In her experience, there were lots of reasons local businesses couldn't participate but it was a gesture to invite them.

Cllr D. Ruffle asked what the feedback from local businesses had been in other places where she had run the event.

E. Carr said some businesses had raised concerns about the event taking footfall away from them but she hadn't seen this in her experience. She said the event was finished by 9pm and people often went somewhere else afterwards.

Cllr R. Smith raised concerns about increased pressure on parking.

E. Carr said the event was very much set up for local people and was about regular and local footfall so she wouldn't expect many people to come from outside the town.

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Ruffle, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to support the proposal from Unique Boutique Events to set up a pop-up street market in Theatre Square between May and August 2023.

22/65/TCP Beach Hut Booking System

The support services manager emphasised the complaints received about the beach hut booking process had been related to the booking of annual, summer and winter packages over the telephone, not related to daily and weekly bookings using the online system. She said various booking processes had been tried over the years and there seemed to be no perfect solution, there were always going to be people who were unhappy and generally it was those who didn't manage to secure the package they wanted.

The administrative assistant explained some of the issues she had experienced on beach hut booking day and felt drawing names out of a hat might help alleviate some of the problems, although she agreed there would always be people who were unhappy.

Cllr M. Ellis said she didn't agree with drawing names out of a hat and suggested there was one dedicated phone line where staff could take calls and ask which package they wanted, then call them back later to make the bookings.

The administrative assistant said one of the major issues was the current phone system, which needed updating and might help alleviate some of the issues, but as the future of the office accommodation was yet to be determined, the new phone system had not yet been installed.

Cllr D. Ruffle acknowledged that even if there were extra phone lines and staff taking calls, the council couldn't please everyone. He agreed the system needed to be tweaked somehow but felt there would be accusations of fixing even if names were drawn from a hat.

Several members felt a draw was a fairer system because phoning in was prejudiced against those who were unable to stay on the phone for a long period.

Cllr M. Ellis said if a new phone system was needed, the council should go ahead and install it, regardless of whether a decision had been made on office accommodation.

The town clerk said the council didn't want to waste thousands of pounds installing a phone system if it was then decided to move offices. However, a decision was expected to be made on office accommodation in February 2023 and if members decided the office should remain in the current premises, South West Communications could be asked to install the new system immediately.

Cllr M. Ellis suggested people could be asked to submit sealed bids for packages, although members felt this would be unfair as they would go to people with the most money.

The support services manager said members didn't have to change the system at all; the report was on the agenda as members had seen complaints from the public and wanted to consider if there was a better way of administering bookings. She felt a better phone system with a queuing system would improve the system, as people would know exactly where they are in the queue and could decide if they wanted to wait or not, although there were likely to always be complaints.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to defer consideration of how to administer the beach hut booking system for 2023 onwards until a decision has been made on office accommodation.

22/66/TCP Uplyme Gateway Shoppers Card

Cllr C. Reynolds said she supported the idea of a shoppers' card for Uplyme residents to encourage community spirit with the village and many people from Lyme Regis lived in Uplyme. However, to ensure there were more benefits for precept payers in Lyme Regis, she proposed the town council's discounts would only be available to Lyme Regis residents.

Cllr M. Ellis said she had been approached by Uplyme residents who felt they were part of the community in Lyme Regis and used the town as much as Lyme Regis residents used their village. She felt a shoppers' card would be a good compromise as Uplyme residents could get discounts from local businesses but only precept payers would benefit from the council's discounts as a 'gift' to them. She said the only cost to the council would be to pay for the cards, which would be different from the normal Gateway Cards, and staff time to issue them.

Cllr G. Stammers said Uplyme Garage was already launching its own discount scheme so it may not want to be involved in the Gateway scheme.

Cllr C. Reynolds said she would speak to the garage about how the two schemes could work alongside each other to ensure Lyme Regis residents could also have discounts.

The support services manager said although it was good for the council to review its initial decision to exclude Uplyme residents following criticism, she was concerned allowing Uplyme residents to only be involved partially in the scheme could reflect badly on the council as it was expecting local businesses to provide discounts but didn't want to offer discounts on its own services. She suggested Uplyme residents should be included in the scheme entirely or not at all.

Members felt a shoppers' card demonstrated the council wanted to do something for Uplyme residents and only offering town council discounts to Lyme Regis residents gave the precept payers something extra.

Cllr G. Stammers said if the council allowed Uplyme residents to have discounts on its own services, this could then lead them to ask for the parking concessions.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to produce a new shoppers' only Gateway Card for Uplyme residents which they can collect from the office by showing proof of residency in a DT7 postcode.

It was clarified it would be a plain white card with 'Uplyme Shoppers' Gateway Card' written on it and that it would be available to anyone with a DT7 postcode, which would include Rousdon and Yawl.

22/67/TCP Seafront WiFi

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the current situation with the seafront WiFi and leave the existing arrangements in place until the availability and timing of a full fibre option can be established, and instruct officers to continue to monitor the line speeds and levels of public usage with a view to making a firm decision about whether to continue to provide free-to-use public WiFi on the seafront and on what basis as soon as the information about the full fibre option is available.

22/68/TCP Grant Review, B Sharp

Members noted the report.

22/69/TCP Managing Consultation Exercises

Members noted the report.

22/70/TCP Seafront and Beach Concessions

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.

22/71/TCP Exempt Business

a) Seafront and Beach Concessions

Cllr C. Aldridge asked if the applicants suggested a figure, whether they were given guidance on how much to offer, and whether the amount they offered was challenged. She also noted the applications were for varying lengths of time.

The support services manager said as it was tender process, the applicants offered the council the amount they felt was appropriate for the concession and this was either accepted or not, there was no negotiation process. She said the council offered one or three-year concessions so applicants could choose either.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the deckchair concession for 2023 to Gemma Manders for the amount offered.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the trampolines (or similar) concession for 2023-25 to Henry Herbert for the amount offered.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to award the children's games and activities concession for 2023-25 to United Beach Missions for the amount offered.

The meeting ended at 8.39pm.