

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MANAGEMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL 2021

Present

Chairman: Cllr J. Broom

Members: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr K. Ellis, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

Officers: M. Adamson-Drage (operations manager), M. Green (deputy town clerk) A. Mullins (administrative officer)

20/34/TMH Public Forum

N. Ball

N. Ball said there were weeds all over the seafront, for which Dorset Council (DC) was also to blame, and although this was dealt with after Easter, this was far too late as the seafront needed to be tidy for visitors. He said the new glass railings were filthy, including seagull mess over them, and he asked if there was a cleaning regime.

N. Ball also spoke in relation to agenda item 8, Roof Management Plan. He asked why it was only a temporary plan as it had gone on far too long. He said he didn't believe the truth was being told about the roof and it wasn't being sorted out. He felt it was a two-tier council, with council officers versus council members, and he felt members were not being told everything they should be. N. Ball said when he spoke to members, they didn't have a clue what was going on and he was getting very despondent. He felt the council was running to the wire on some things and councillors must be kept in touch, which he didn't believe was happening.

20/35/TMH Apologies

Cllr R. Doney – no reason given
Cllr K. Ellis – revising for an exam

20/36/TMH Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 March 2021 were **ADOPTED**.

20/37/TMH Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

20/38/TMH Dispensations

There were none.

20/39/TMH Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee meeting held on 17 March 2021

Circus request

Cllr B. Larcombe asked what the council was charging for the circus.

The operations manager said the charge was £375 per week for six weeks. He said he was awaiting confirmation of whether the park and ride would operate to determine where the circus would be sited.

20/40/TMH Update Report

Guildhall works

The deputy town clerk said he had had confirmation from the conservation officer that planning permission and listed building consent would be received shortly with one minor condition attached, which meant works would start next week as intended.

Harbourmaster's store

Cllr J. Broom asked if there was any update on when DC would vacate the harbourmaster's store.

The deputy town clerk said there was no update but he would write to the DC director concerned and he could specify a date if required. He said DC had previously said the end of July and in the absence of anything different, he assumed this was still the case.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked that the ward member was kept in the loop so he could help move things along.

Guildhall shop lease

Cllr J. Broom asked if members could have a plan showing what the tenants wanted in terms of additional outside space.

The deputy town clerk said nothing would be agreed until detailed proposals had been received and agreed by members.

Tractor

Cllr M. Ellis asked when the tractor would be returned following repair.

The operations manager said it was back and would be used for raking the beach once reprofiling works had been completed.

Survey of council-owned land at Monmouth Beach

Cllr G. Turner said there were around five large yachts on the accreted land and asked if the town council was charging DC for use of the land.

The deputy town clerk said the town council received no income because although the land was registered to the council, it was the subject of a lease to the Crown Estate, to which DC paid a nominal rent.

Electric vehicle charging points

Cllr R. Smith asked if there was an installation date for the charging points.

The operations manager said he was awaiting a wayleave on the Hill Road store from DC's estates manager as the electricity ran under the driveway.

20/41/TMH Roof Management Plan

The operations manager said based on the discussion at the last meeting, officers had put together a temporary roof management plan, although the situation with the glass specification had not yet been resolved as more information was awaited from the suppliers. As such, he said it was difficult to bring a roof management plan to members until there was a report on the glass.

The operations manager also confirmed Guitars on the Beach had withdrawn their request to use the roof and were seeking another venue.

Cllr D. Sarson said he was still unsure why toughened glass had been used and he wasn't confident about gazebos and marquees being used on the roof due to the lack of structural detail regarding the fixing points on the uprights.

While Covid-19 restrictions continued, Cllr B. Larcombe felt there should be no concerts or mass gatherings on the roof and that signs should be put up prohibiting football because of the glass panels and people sitting below. For events, he didn't want requests to use the roof to be delegated to officers as they had been recently. Regarding the suggestion to put a film over the glass to protect it, he was concerned it would go milky due to the temperatures and UV light it would be exposed to.

Cllr M. Ellis felt officers should continue to have delegated authority to manage events, providing the right plan was in place from the outset which officers could then work to.

Cllr R. Smith said planters and picnic tables would be a physical way of deterring people from doing things on the roof that might cause damage and would be more effective than signage.

The operations manager said three skateboarding signs had been put up and removed by the public.

Cllr M. Ellis said the only way to deal with skateboarding was to introduce a byelaw.

The deputy town clerk said aside from the time taken to introduce byelaws, the relevant byelaw could only be made by DC. He said a request could be made to DC but West Dorset District Council had previously declined to make any further byelaws. He added that the council was otherwise dependent on landowner's powers but these were quite weak.

Cllr B. Larcombe said that didn't stop the council giving the message that footballs and skateboards should not be used on the roof.

Cllr B. Bawden asked if it was possible to consider replacing the glass as she didn't want people enjoying themselves in the gardens to be restricted because of issues with the glass.

Cllr C. Reynolds arrived at the meeting at 7.37pm.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve a temporary roof management plan outlining the following:

- There will be no vehicles, horseboxes or trailers of any kind allowed on the roof, unless required in connection with essential maintenance
- There will be no marquees allowed on the roof
- There will be no gazebos allowed on the roof
- There will be no concerts or mass gatherings on the roof while Covid restrictions continue.

20/42/TMH Beach Accessibility Matting

Cllr M. Ellis asked if this had been budgeted for. If approved, she felt the Mobi Mat would be better as it could be rolled up and taken in, although she felt 25 metres was more than required.

The operations manager said it was not in the budget as it was originally hoped the matting could be obtained for free, so members were being asked if they wanted to use the reserve because it would improve accessibility.

Cllr B. Larcombe agreed 25 metres was too long and asked where it would go, as it would need to be somewhere as level as possible.

The operations manager said it was originally intended to go on the pebble beach, but on the sandy area next to the groyne, although it could go anywhere.

Cllr M. Ellis said most families would want to use the sandy beach but she was concerned about how much space it would take up on the sand.

The support services manager reminded members that the RNLI hut and deckchairs would also be on the sand for the main season, and the matting would be an obstruction for the beach rake.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the tidal range would also need to be taken into account so the matting could only be as long as the high tide line, or else it would need to be rolled in and out as the tides changed.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to defer consideration of beach accessibility matting until the 2022-23 budget and objective-setting process.

20/43/TMH Review of Busking Policy

The support services manager confirmed the policy would not affect B Sharp's Busking Festival, which would be subject to a separate event management plan.

Cllr B. Larcombe said busking was an issue outside the Royal Standard as it was a congested area, but it was noted this area was not in the town council's control; it was owned and managed by DC.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked how the enforcement officers knew who was allowed to busk.

The support services manager said the enforcement officers were notified of who had been given permission to busk and they had to produce their permit if asked.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the proposed new Busking Policy.

20/44/TMH Anti-social Behaviour

The operations manager said anti-social behaviour had already started in the gardens and at Monmouth Beach, with council property being damaged. He said he would advise applying to DC to use some of the government money allocated to support seaside resorts to employ security guards as in 2020.

The operations manager said the patrols would be from 8pm to 2am.

Cllr B. Larcombe felt it was good value and if the funding was secured, it would buy the council time to work with the police to find other solutions as he was aware there had been a positive reaction to the council's discussions with the police and crime commissioner about police resources.

Cllr M. Ellis felt the council shouldn't be funding security guards if the funding bid was not successful as anti-social behaviour was a police matter.

Members agreed officers should wait until the funding was in place before employing security guards. The operations manager said he had been assured the funding was coming but it wasn't yet confirmed.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve a plan to request government money allocated to Dorset Council available to pay for summer security patrols and increased seafront attendant support.

20/45/TMH Electronic Point of Sale for the Amenities' Hut

The operations manager said although this would require outlay to start with, which had not been budgeted for, it would be more cost-effective going forward.

Members agreed the system would have paid for itself within a couple of years and would make reconciliation easier for office staff.

Members discussed which system to use and agreed the 'Square' system would be best as it also included an iPad, which would also be covered under the same system.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the purchase of an electronic point of sale for the amenities' hut using the 'Square' system.

20/46/TMH Storage Container at the Amenities' Area

Members agreed storage was required in this location in the gardens so the gardeners had their equipment nearby. The operations manager said this area was preferred over the Langmoor Room because it was at the bottom of the gardens and would also introduce manual handling issues due to the steps to the room.

Members discussed the kind of container which should be purchased; some members felt a cheaper option would be better as storage could be incorporated into the new amenities' hut, while other members felt a more permanent option would be better.

Cllr M. Ellis asked how much a new amenities' hut would cost and whether the storage container could then be used elsewhere if storage was provided in the hut.

Cllr R. Smith asked what the timescales were for replacing the hut as he didn't feel the council should be spending a lot of money on a storage container if the hut was going to be replaced next year.

The deputy town clerk said it would need to be replaced sooner rather than later as the condition of the existing hut had been discussed for the last five years. He said if members were considering incorporating storage within the replacement hut, in the short term it may be worth putting up with the aesthetics of a shipping container which would be much cheaper and could be sold or re-used afterwards.

Cllr B. Bawden left the meeting at 8.22pm.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the amenities hut wouldn't have to be as big if it didn't incorporate storage for this equipment. He said the area suggested for the storage container was ideal as it was unused and surrounded by hedging. He also felt petrol shouldn't be kept in the same place staff were working in.

The operations manager clarified there was a separate bunded petrol store outside the amenities' hut. He also confirmed staff would still be able to park behind the hut if a storage container was put there.

Cllr J. Broom felt a shipping container should be purchased so a proper solution incorporating a replacement amenities' hut could be found.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to pursue a permanent storage hut behind the amenities' hut, which doesn't necessarily feature in any future amenities' hut.

Members also discussed whether the outside staff should continue using the Langmoor Room. The operations manager said it wasn't booked out very often and it could continue to be used as a rest area.

Cllr M. Ellis said she would agree to its use while Covid restrictions were in place, but not in the longer term.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to allow the external works' team to use the Langmoor Room until 21 June 2021.

20/47/TMH Weldmar Hospice Memory Jars

Cllr D. Sarson said it was a lovely idea but he was concerned about vandalism as they would be lining the pathway in the gardens at a busy time of year.

Cllr M. Ellis was also concerned about people accidentally knocking over the candles with pushchairs etc and the danger of glass then being left on the ground. She suggested it was located somewhere else as she didn't feel the gardens were the right place.

Members agreed a more discreet location would be preferable and suggestions included along the pathway of the memorial walk or hanging in trees. The deputy town clerk suggested the putting green as it was discreet and overlooked.

Cllr M. Ellis said more information was needed from Weldmar about how it would be managed and she also suggested speaking to Sherborne and Weymouth councils as they had already agreed to the memorial.

It was agreed the operations manager would obtain more information and bring a further report to the committee.

20/48/TMH Dorset Council Parking Order Application

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if it would compromise any future ideas the council may have for the land if the order was applied.

The deputy town clerk said it would be designated as a parking place but that didn't mean it couldn't be used for other things. He didn't think it would prejudice anything the council may subsequently want to agree with DC but it was a slightly unusual situation.

The deputy town clerk emphasised the order was intended to achieve better control and management of the harbour area, not about creating public car parking or income for DC. He said if the council wanted to talk to DC about land swaps and rationalising land and boundaries, the council may want to make it clear permission for the parking order would only be given on a temporary basis until those discussions take place.

Several members felt uneasy about DC being able to have control over the town council's land in this way and the possibility of it inhibiting what the council may wish to do with it.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner to inform DC the council was not in favour of Dorset Council's harbour master applying for a parking order that includes land adjacent to the RNLI building which is owned by the town council and leased to Dorset Council.

The operations manager said if the parking order was introduced, there was the potential to include Monmouth Beach and Cabanya car parks in the order. This would mean they were no longer covered by the Road Traffic Act 1984 but instead by the Traffic Management Act 2004, which meant parking would be a civil offence rather than a criminal offence. He said civil offences were easier to deal with in terms of recovering money from people who did not pay fines.

The deputy town clerk felt there wasn't enough information for members to make a decision and he suggested deferring the issue to another meeting. He said if there were

time pressures to respond, it could be taken to the next Strategy and Finance Committee or Full Council meeting.

On that basis, Cllr J. Broom withdrew his proposal with the agreement of the seconder, Cllr G. Turner.

20/49/TMH Park and Ride 2021

The deputy town clerk said First Group had been led to believe that unless there were any unexpected changes, if social distancing was removed from 21 June 2021, a 121-capacity bus would revert to full capacity. However, this didn't address the issue of whether people would be willing to get on a full bus.

The deputy town clerk said if the service ran for the school summer holiday and the week before at the current reduced capacity, it would cost the council in excess of £30k. On the other hand, with all social distancing removed and if people were willing to use busy public transport, the service could make a surplus, which the council would share equally with First.

The deputy town clerk said First's view was that given the current emergency legislation, it would be possible to leave making a decision until the end of May for the service to run from July.

Cllr B. Larcombe said there were record numbers of people in Lyme Regis last summer with no park and ride operating and it seemed to work reasonably well. He felt it was too risky to run the service.

Cllr S. Williams suggested opening the gate to the park and ride during the summer holidays and letting people park for free and walk to and from town.

The deputy town clerk said this wasn't a no-cost option as there would still be the land rental fee to pay. He said from the data in previous years, it was known people arrive and leave in a narrow period and while people might be happy to walk into town, there were limited options to get them back to the park and ride site in a short time period and in large numbers.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if officers felt the less the field was used for park and ride, the more inclined the owner would be to use it for something else.

The deputy town clerk said it was a reasonable assumption for the landowners to consider the best future use of the land.

The deputy town clerk reminded members that, Covid issues aside, it should be a bumper year for park and ride as DC had quadrupled the parking rates at Holmbush and Charmouth Road car parks, which would make park and ride more attractive.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to defer consideration of whether to run a reduced-period park and ride service for summer 2021 until the end of May 2021.

20/50/TMH Request for Taxi Ranks

Members agreed one or more taxi ranks was a good idea with the number of taxis now operating in the town.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked how many taxis it would accommodate and how it would affect access.

The deputy town clerk said the precise number of vehicles and the location of the ranks would be a matter for DC; all the town council was being asked was whether it supported the principle of taxi ranks in the general locations suggested.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked how a taxi rank for more than one vehicle would fit at Cobb Gate and at the Cobb, who would get priority on those spaces, and whether a taxi could sit there all day.

The deputy town clerk said he didn't know of any town where the number of spaces was equal to the number of vehicles and as DC was both the highway and licensing authority, it would work out all the details in consultation with the various operators. He said if the council agreed in principle, there would be extensive consultation before anything could be implemented.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to support a request from a local taxi operator for the provision of two taxi ranks in Lyme Regis and communicate the council's support to Dorset Council.

20/51/TMH Charmouth Road Allotments

The deputy town clerk said the final report had now been received and in the locations tested, the levels of lead were not found to be a particular problem. Although testing had not taken place within the allotment site, the reasonable assumption was that the levels were likely to be the same. He said the report also made reference to naturally occurring contamination and those that came with use of fertilisers and other materials.

The deputy town clerk said the report made the general recommendation that all vegetables were cleaned of mud and peeled before human consumption, but it was felt there was no reason to be concerned about the use of the land as an allotment.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the findings were what the council hoped for and expected and thanked DC for their input.

Cllr D. Sarson said as the council's representative on the Allotments Association, he had shared the report with the secretary.

20/52/TMH Complaints and Incidents Summary

Cllr M. Ellis asked if DC was sending its dog wardens to Lyme Regis as the town should be getting as much of their time as other towns.

The operations manager said they were in Lyme from time-to-time but not as often as hoped, partly because the town council had two enforcement officers who were authorised by DC to do the job.

Cllr B. Larcombe was pleased to see anti-social behaviour incidents in the gardens being reported as it helped to build up a picture of the size of the problem.

Cllr D. Sarson asked if incidents in the gardens and at Monmouth Beach were reported to the police by the council.

The operations manager said the police were involved in some of the issues anyway but the council's list of complaints wasn't regularly reported to them.

Cllr B. Larcombe said every person who had made a complaint to the council about anti-social behaviour had been told to report it to the police.

20/53/TMH The Provision of a Third RNLI Lifeguard

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, 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.

20/54/TMH Exempt Business

a) The Provision of a Third RNLI Lifeguard

Cllr B. Larcombe questioned the need for a third lifeguard as Lyme Regis beach was one of the safest on the south coast and there was a RNLI lifeboat station within yards of the lifeguard hut.

Cllr G. Turner agreed and said the coastguards and lifeboat were on call 24/7.

Cllr R. Smith said with lots of people likely to be having holidays at home, the risk of something happening had increased, and visitors were perhaps not used to swimming in cold water.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the RNLI would take away the third lifeguard if the council didn't fund it. He said if that was the case, the RNLI was obviously content with the raised risk it would be undertaking.

The operations manager said there were many incidents of lost children and if there were three lifeguards, they were able to look after the children and find the parents. If there were only two lifeguards, the council's staff were pulled away from their primary duties to deal with lost children.

Cllr M. Ellis suggested the Government funding for seaside resorts was used to pay for a third lifeguard.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to meet the cost of a third RNLI lifeguard during the summer seasons if the Government funding for seaside resorts was obtained via Dorset Council.

The meeting closed at 9.53pm.