

## **LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON FRIDAY 7 APRIL 2017**

#### **1. Introductions and welcome from The Mayor – Cllr O. Lovell**

Cllr O. Lovell welcomed all those attending the meeting and introduced PCSO Luke White of Dorset Police, Cllr George Symonds of West Dorset District Council (WDDC), and Cllr Daryl Turner of WDDC and Dorset County Council (DCC).

#### **2. To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 8 April 2017**

Proposed by Steve Miller and seconded by Jeff Scowen, the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting on 8 April 2017 were **APPROVED** by the majority as a correct record of the meeting.

#### **3. To receive the Report to Electors 2016/17**

Cllr O. Lovell presented the report to the meeting and highlighted the key points.

#### **4. Feedback from local organisations in receipt of grants and support from Lyme Regis Town Council**

##### **Stan Williams – Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride**

Mr Williams thanked the council for its donation but said the suggestion the town council might not donate as much in future years was a great concern. He said it was a marvellous service, picking people up from their homes, some of them in wheelchairs.

Mr Williams said a second bus had been bought. He said a recent advert had resulted in 18 new passengers, 14 of which were from Dorset, demonstrating the demand for the service in this area.

##### **Stan Williams – Bridport and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)**

Mr Williams thanked the council for its grant to the CAB and said the service would need the council's continued support. He said the CAB's main office was being re-developed at the rear, which would give the CAB more space but it involved some costs. Mr Williams said funding from WDDC and DCC was reducing, but the service was vitally important to the town.

##### **Philip Sankey – Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG)**

Mr Sankey said WATAG covered Bridport and Lyme Regis and the group had produced a timetable for the Exeter-Lyme Regis-Bridport corridor, which was now available at the tourist information centre. He said this was making good the gap as the county council no longer produced timetables. Mr Sankey said there was a small charge for the timetables and the group was grateful for the town council's support.

#### **4. Open Session**

Cllr D. Turner gave an update on proposals for a unitary authority in Dorset. He said following consultation on the local government review, six authorities were in favour of moving to two unitary authorities, and three authorities were not in favour.

Cllr D. Turner said the six authorities made a submission to the Secretary of State for two unitary authorities. He said a 'minded to' decision was expected, although this decision had been held up following the major security incident at Westminster.

Cllr D. Turner said it was hoped the Secretary of State would make a decision by 13 April 2017. If not, the decision would be made after the DCC elections on 4 May 2017.

Cllr D. Turner said it was anticipated pre-Parliamentary orders would be made in summer 2017, with executive appointments in January 2018. In 2018/19, interim arrangements would be in place, preparing to deliver services, followed by the dissolution of the county, district and borough councils.

##### **(a) Questions from young people**

There were none.

##### **(b) Questions from Lyme Regis Electors**

###### **Mr N. Ball**

Mr Ball said many of the signs around the town were looking grubby, and he and his son had recently cleaned some. He thanked Cllr D. Turner for arranging two new signs for the end of Talbot Road.

Mr Ball asked if the town council could smarten up the town.

Cllr D. Turner said many communities in the Marshwood Vale were doing this kind of work themselves. He said the town council had budgeted for additional staff, including a lengthsman to look after roads, verges, signage, etc.

###### **Mr J. Scowen**

Mr Scowen asked if there was any indication how a proposed one-way traffic system would work in the town.

Cllr D. Turner said the town council would need to formulate proposals to take forward to DCC.

Cllr O. Lovell said he had already had initial discussions with Cllr Ian Thomas, of East Devon District Council, and Cllr Chris James, chairman of Uplyme Parish Council and it was intended to hold a meeting with them, with a view to moving forward the idea of a one-way system. He said any solution would

require the involvement of the county councils in Devon and Dorset, as well as Uplyme, Charmouth, and Rousdon parish councils.

### **Ms R. Pope**

Ms Pope said following an incident with a loose dog by the skatepark area, she had been made aware the local enforcement officer didn't cover that area. She asked why and whether anything could be done about this.

Cllr O. Lovell said enforcement officers were employed by the town council, but the area referred to was WDDC land. He added despite requests to WDDC for the town council's officers to take on WDDC's responsibilities, this hadn't happened. He said the town council's officers were trained to handle dogs but they had no pound facilities, so the responsibility for out of control dogs was with WDDC.

Cllr O. Lovell said there had been discussions with DCC several years ago about rationalising enforcement across the county, but DCC decided to retain on-street enforcement. He said the local government reorganisation might provide an opportunity to move this matter forward.

Cllr D. Turner said WDDC would be considering draft Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) in June, which included dog controls. He said there was the intention to re-visit the idea of rationalising enforcement across Dorset, so all officers would be trained to the same standard. However, he said Weymouth was now forming a town council and had scuppered this plan, as it wanted to have its own enforcement officers.

### **Mr K. Gollop**

- (i) Mr Gollop asked if there were any plans to solve traffic problems and whether there would be any public consultation. He said he had emailed DCC around eight months ago with some suggestions to improve the traffic problems, but nothing had been done.

Mr Gollop said there were many things that could be done to alleviate traffic problems in Lyme Regis besides talking to the bus companies, such as moving the bus stop up Broad Street, a stop line at the top of Hill Road, asking funeral hearses not to park outside the parish church during a service, signs in Charmouth Road advising drivers of narrow roads, and preventing double decker buses going through the housing estate.

Cllr O. Lovell said DCC had agreed to install a pedestrian crossing in the town, and he believed a one-way system would help alleviate the problems. However, he said some traffic schemes may be beyond the means of the town council and would require support from DCC.

Cllr D. Turner said the Stagecoach was a commercial service and it wouldn't go through the housing estate if it wasn't making money. He said there was already an advisory sign to drivers outside the London, and a request for double yellow lines outside Fairfield Park would need to be put forward by the town council.

Cllr D. Turner said many highways' improvements had been made recently, including a box junction and keep clear signs in Church Street and box junctions at the bottom of Broad Street.

Cllr D. Turner said First buses now had telemetrics on their vehicles and fleet tracking, which should help prevent buses meeting in Church Street.

- (ii) Mr Gollop asked if there were any plans to clean up the town, such as weeds growing on pavements and unswept areas. He said the lengthsman wasn't in place yet and the season had already started.

The town clerk said part of the lengthsman's role would be to generally tidy up the town. He said the council would also be employing a seasonal litter picker to concentrate on the seafront, while some other tidying up responsibilities lay with other councils and private individuals.

Cllr O. Lovell said it was also hoped to have a storage area where waste could be taken in the evenings, which would enable Dorset Waste Partnership to do another collection at the end of the day on the seafront. He said the town council would also be helping with litter collections in the evenings during the summer.

Mr Ball said this wasn't an issue just on the seafront, but across the whole town, and people should be encouraged to look after their own areas.

Cllr G. Symonds said there used to be large wheelie bins on the seafront and he had suggested they were put back so people could put their litter in them after the last collection by Dorset Waste Partnership.

### **Lyme Regis Society**

- (i) How is the town council progressing the opportunities afforded by a neighbourhood plan, which was first discussed by the town council in summer 2016?

Cllr Steve Miller, chairman of the Planning Committee, said this was something the council had considered and retained an open mind over, although the benefit to Lyme Regis wasn't clear, given the geology and restrictions. He said it also involved a huge amount of work. He said that wasn't to say the council wouldn't do a plan, but it would take a lot of effort and complexity to put one together for Lyme.

Cllr D. Turner said he believed it would be of huge benefit to Lyme and the average time taken to complete a plan was two years. He said Uplyme, Bridport and Charmouth were doing plans and he believed Lyme should too.

Cllr O. Lovell said there was considerably less development land in Lyme than in Uplyme and Charmouth and he had doubts over producing a plan. Although the council was split, he said there were people who were willing to take it on.

The town clerk said in the next council year the council should make its mind up once and for all if it wishes to produce a plan.

- (ii) The recent West Dorset consultation on a strategic plan for the district referred to the need to have views about the requirement or non-requirement for further housing development in Lyme Regis. Does the town council have a view on which areas of the town might be developed if housing development was required?

Cllr S. Miller said the council's response to the Local Plan consultation identified two main areas for housing; to the rear of Talbot Road and Timber Hill. He said both sites had limitations and the council had reservations about either site being developed.

Cllr S. Miller said on the Uplyme Road trading estate there was an area of land that hadn't been used for some time, which could be considered for future development. He said Lyme Regis didn't offer much opportunity for anything other than incremental growth.

Cllr O. Lovell said the town needed rented accommodation for younger people and people working in the town. He said the council was concerned about the Lyme Regis Community Land Trust's (CLT) allocations' policy, as it didn't ensure the Timber Hill homes would go to Lyme Regis families or people with local connections. He said as the development had received government funding, the CLT had to stick to national policy. He said if the allocations' policy couldn't be changed, there was little point in the council supporting new development in Lyme Regis.

- (iii) Were there to be additional development in Lyme Regis or its hinterland, would the roads, pavements sewage system and other local services be adequate for the new needs?

Cllr O. Lovell said the local pumping station had built-in capacity for 20% extra development in Lyme Regis.

Cllr D. Turner said the biggest issue would be services such as the medical centre and schools as they were almost at capacity.

- (iv) Does the town council see a role for the amenity groups such as the Lyme Society and Turn Lyme Green?

Cllr O. Lovell said Turn Lyme Green had offered to assist with a neighbourhood plan, and the council would be foolish to refuse this, if a plan was progressed.

### **Mr D. Hallett**

Mr Hallett said he believed the council was being too hard on the four clubs at Monmouth Beach with regards to rent and parking charges. He was concerned they would not be able to survive if their charges were increased.

Cllr O. Lovell said the council had been more than reasonable as the rent had barely increased on the bowling club and green for many years. However, he said parking was a different matter and it was in the town's interest to ensure there was a return on reserved parking.

Mr A. Nabarro said he had been involved in discussions with the council for the last two years as a representative of the bowls club. He said he agreed with Cllr O. Lovell that the rent on the green and clubhouse was low, although there was a dispute over the number of parking spaces the council should charge for; the club believed they were paying for more spaces than they had.

Mr A. Nabarro said when WDDC ran the car park, the standard rate was 30% of the income, but when the town council took back the car park the charge was 50%. He said the new charges were 270% higher than the club was currently paying. He said the club was self-financing and the proposed figures were not sustainable.

Mr A. Nabarro said the town council was helping young people, but he asked what it was doing for older people in the town. He said the club wanted the council to review the situation and have a sensible discussion to agree a figure for the benefit of the town.

Cllr O. Lovell said the lease didn't expire until 2019 so there was still time to come to an agreement.

### **Mr C. Bell**

Mr Bell said he was not a resident but he spent most of his summers at Timber Vale and the biggest attraction for him was the bowls club. He said the shops in Broad Street used to cater for people's needs and although they still did, it had changed dramatically. He said Lyme Regis was a victim of its own success; it attracted so many visitors that it couldn't cater for them all. Mr Bell said Lyme Regis was renowned for a number of things, including the warmth and reception people received, especially at the bowls club. He said it was known as one of the best greens in the south west. He said people who visited the club also spent their money in the town and enjoyed the goodwill in the town. He said if the council changed the club's car parking arrangements, it would undoubtedly bring about the slow death of the club, as it couldn't function without the car park.

### **Mr N. Ball**

- (i) Mr Ball thanked the town council for picking him at random to take part in Lyme Voice, as he believed it was a way for Lyme Regis residents to say what they actually wanted.
- (ii) Mr Ball said residents were not made aware of when the Marine Theatre rotunda was taken down. He asked where it would be re-sited.

The town clerk said it was taken down by the external works' team. He said officers were told by the council to remove it with as little fuss as possible.

Mr J. Scowen said he had been informed by the operations manager that the rotunda was not going to be re-sited and there would be advertising boards instead.

- (iii) Mr Ball said on Mother's Day many people were visiting the cemetery but the gates were locked and there were only two watering cans available. He said he was also concerned about the state of some of the gravestones.

The town clerk said the council did carry out memorial inspections and one of the council's employees was trained to do this.

**Ms R. Pope**

Ms Pope asked if the council could do anything to encourage cafes in the town to improve their scruffy and dirty toilets.

Cllr O. Lovell said this was the responsibility of individual businesses.

**Mr D. Hallett**

Mr Hallett asked PCSO Luke White if he was based back in Lyme Regis and whether there were one or two PCSOs in the town.

PCSO White said he had been in Bridport between November and January but back in Lyme since then. He said PCSO John Burton had retired in December so there was a short period when there were no PCSOs in Lyme. He said the neighbourhood policing team consisted only of himself and there were no plans to replace John Burton or PC Kirsti Frecknall at the moment. PCSO White said there were police resources in Axminster and Bridport.

Mr Hallett said there had been incidences of young people on top of the pavilion seating at the play park and he asked why the police had not dealt with this.

PCSO White said there had not been any calls about issues at the play park. He said people needed to report these issues and officers would be deployed there, although bigger issues elsewhere would take priority.

Cllr D. Turner said the Dorset police and crime commissioner was willing to come to Lyme Regis and he suggested the town council could arrange this.

**6. Lyme Regis Town Council Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016**

The document was noted.

*The meeting closed at 8.57pm*

*Total attendance approx. 25*