



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF LYME REGIS ELECTORS
Friday 8 April 2022 at 7pm
To be held at the Woodmead Halls, Hill Road, Lyme Regis

AGENDA

- 1. Introductions and welcome from the mayor, Cllr Brian Larcombe MBE**
- 2. To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 29 April 2021 (attached)**
- 3. To receive the Corporate Plan 2022-27**

The mayor will present the report and copies will be available at the meeting
- 4. Feedback from local organisations in receipt of grants and support from Lyme Regis Town Council**
- 5. Report from Dorset Police**
- 6. Open Session**

Priority will be given to written questions received in advance of the meeting.
 - (a) Questions from young people
 - (b) Questions from Lyme Regis electors
 - (c) Questions from others present at the meeting
- 7. Lyme Regis Town Council annual return for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 (attached) comprising:**
 - The statement of accounts
 - Annual governance statement
 - External auditor's certificate and opinion (a copy of the external auditor's report is available for inspection)
 - Annual internal audit report

Cllr Brian Larcombe MBE
Mayor
08.03.2022

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON FRIDAY 29 APRIL 2021 HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

1. **Introductions and welcome from the mayor – Cllr B. Larcombe MBE**

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe welcomed those attending and clarified that an annual town meeting hadn't taken place in 2020 due to Covid-19. He said this meeting was an opportunity for the council to listen to the public.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said PCSO Amanda King had sent her apologies but had submitted a report to be read out later in the meeting.

2. **To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 26 April 2019**

Proposed by John Broom and seconded by David Sarson, the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting on 26 April 2019 were **APPROVED** by the majority as a correct record of the meeting.

3. **To receive the Corporate Plan 2021-26**

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the period to which the corporate plan related included some once-in-a-generation work, such as the seafront roof and work to the Guildhall. He said the plan was an account of the things the council had done and the amount the council had done.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the plan took the council into the opening years of the next administration so the incoming council is not starting from scratch.

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

Rovarn Wickremasinghe – Bridport and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)

Mr Wickremasinghe said the CAB would like to thank the council for its support and annual grants over the years and they were pleased to now receive long-term financial support, which was vital to the service. He said the grant was for the outreach service in Lyme Regis but they had to unfortunately withdraw face-to-face services from March 2020 and volunteers had moved to homeworking, which meant putting technology, internet and phone systems and laptops in place. He said the council's grant, in addition to funding from the national office, was used to put this in place. Mr Wickremasinghe said they were planning to introduce limited face-to-face sessions at their main office from 17 May 2021 and expand from there. He said during the pandemic they were providing full advice through remote channels; Dorset Advice Line, a local phone contact, email, webchat and video conferencing. He said they knew from services run across Dorset CAB that 64% of people wanted face-to-face services so it was really important to get back to this for the most vulnerable and those who couldn't use digital services. Mr Wickremasinghe said the number of people from Lyme Regis using the service during the pandemic was down on normal, but 108 residents were helped with advice on just over 400 issues. Of those, nearly half were reporting as disabled or with long-term health problems and the main issues dealt with were around benefits. He said there were also lots of queries about the foodbank, debt and housing problems. Mr Wickremasinghe said overall they had achieved income gains of just over £30,000 for Lyme Regis and Charmouth residents, mainly from additional benefits that were identified and claimed. He said they had been in discussion with the council about new outreach premises at the council office, which they hoped to start in June. He thanked Cllr Stan Williams, who had retired this month as a trustee after many years and had been a real support and good link between the CAB and the council.

Richard Salt – St Michael and St George RC Church (read out by an officer)

Father Anthony Cockram, the parish priest of the Parish of The Most Holy Trinity in which the church is situated, on behalf of all parishioners and visitors to the church, would like to thank the mayor and councillors for their support in restoring this historic building. A generous award of £1,000 was made in the last financial year towards the costs of repairs to the roof and stonework which, with other grants and parish contribution, has enabled the exterior of the church to be restored so that it is now safe (large cracks and dangerously loose stones were found in the roof stonework), re-rendered where necessary (major areas were loose and, in some places, falling away), repainted and generally made wind and watertight. The church is 186 years old, built in 1835, Grade 11* Listed and one of the heritage buildings of Lyme Regis; it will now be protected for years to come. The work should be completed and the site cleared of scaffolding by the end of May; it is hoped to open the church to visitors and tourists when the Covid restrictions permit. It should also be mentioned that the town council has proved its support to the protection of the town's heritage by providing a further grant of £1,000 for the current financial year towards the interior redecoration and repairs which should be completed by the end of May.

Ruth Cohen – B Sharp (read out by an officer)

B Sharp would like to express our gratitude to the council for the grant received in 2020-21. As a small local charity, that works with local young people, and in a year of great uncertainty, this funding has been vital to support the organisation. The grant has supported B Sharp to adapt to Covid restrictions and continue to work with young people throughout the pandemic. We have run our after-school clubs as socially distanced face-to-face sessions when this has been permitted under government guidelines and run our groups online when meeting in person wasn't possible. We have worked intensively with our existing participants, especially those with additional needs, to try and keep them engaged in positive creative activities during lockdowns. We have also supported home learning by creating resources for children to make music at home, which have been sent out to families via St Michael's School. We have continued to provide training online to preschools and nurseries locally and across Dorset on music with children aged 0 to 5. Our older teenage trainee music leaders have continued to work with us throughout and have taken the lead in creating resources for younger children, performing at our online Busking Festival in July 2020, and helping create our B Sharp Radio Show with Lyme Bay Radio in December 2020. The grant has also supported us to contribute to events in Lyme such as the Fossil Festival (online) and Jazz Jurassica 2021, adding value and finding ways of involving young people in these events.

Julie Sheppard – Jazz Jurassica (read out by an officer)

I would like to send many thanks to the council for the award of this year's community grant. We are very grateful for the council's continuing interest and support.

Chris Tipping – The Hub (read out by an officer)

We would wholeheartedly like to thank the mayor, town councillors and the town council staff for their continued financial support of the Hub during the last 12 months. As you will be aware this has not been particularly easy for us, and even now we are only just welcoming our groups back despite having been able to open since 12 April. However, as we have stated before, our 2021 plans now centre firmly around youth provision, and we are extremely excited to finally be able to put our plans for our Youth Academy into action. This will encompass not only youth club, but also finding those gaps for youth activity provision within the local area. We have already had several suggestions and are working on the creation of new and exciting groups for children and young adults such as an archery group, DJ training, drone flying and lots more. Not all of these groups will form part of the youth club, however this will still remain firmly at the centre of our provision and we are delighted that we will be able to welcome back both our experienced youth leaders James and Jess who have been the bedrock of the club for some years now. We have just posted an online survey which if any

parents are at the meeting tonight we would love to get your feedback from you (on behalf of your children) about what you would like to see happening at the Hub. The survey can be accessed via our Facebook page – just search for Lyme Regis Development Trust and will also feature in a forthcoming issue of the Woodroffe Rough Notes magazine.

Cheryl Reynolds – Lyme Regis Community Support

C. Reynolds thanked the mayor and town councillors for the recent grant that would help them supply internet equipment to older residents to help them keep in contact with their family, friends and the outside world. She said they had made so many of these residents their friends during the last year. While thanking the council for its help with this project, she also wanted to thank the council for the support it had given them during the last 13 months. She said the staff had been amazing, helping with all their admin and finance, and they couldn't have done it without them. C. Reynolds said the organisation was set up to help the community during Covid and with the council's help, as well as Philip Evans at Lyme Online and the Woodmead Halls, plus local chefs Alethea McLoughlin, Harriett Mansell, Dominic Moldenhauer, Lynn Martin and Tara Webb, who had made meals for both the foodbank and community support during this year. She thanked the volunteers who has shopped, collected prescriptions, sorted out and delivered birthday and Christmas meals, soup runs and advised, signposted and helped in so many ways. C. Reynolds said their aim was to form a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and thanks to two sponsors in the town, they had been able to open a bank account so they could start to work as an organisation to provide a service second to none, that they could be proud of and show that working together provides the best results for long after Covid, to look after vulnerable, lonely, disabled residents and anyone in need of any type of help, both young and old.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe paid tribute to the residents and volunteers of Lyme Regis who had helped in the community support effort and had stepped up to the mark in an exceptional year. He said he was pleased the grant to Lyme Regis Community Support would pay for laptops to get people online because so much of what was expected today required people to be online.

Mark Jenkin – Junior Parkrun

M. Jenkin thanked the council for its kind award to Lyme Regis Junior Parkrun. He said they had been delayed by Covid and in fact, most Parkruns were not running in the UK. However, Lyme Regis Cobb Gate Junior Parkrun had now raised all its funding, it was building a core team and was working with Parkrun UK on a start date, which would be some point in the summer when the team was ready. He said they were grateful to the town council and other organisations who had helped them along the way.

4. Reports from:

Cllr Daryl Turner – Dorset Council (DC)

Cllr D. Turner said DC had set a 2021-22 budget of £312 million. He said there was extra expenditure related to Covid because Government funding had not been enough to cover all the expenses. He said DC had used reserves to balance this year's budget, but it could only spend them once and doing so reduced its capacity to respond to unexpected events in the future. He said the increase in costs in adult and children's services was going to be very difficult budget to maintain.

Cllr D. Turner said there would be a council tax increase of just under 5% to generate an additional £12 million, equating to an increase of £84 a year or 1.62 per for a Band D property. He said DC had frozen staff pay for this year as a 1% cost of living increase would have cost an additional £1 million. He said £15 million of capital funding had been allocated for specific projects, and £6.3 million for highway maintenance.

Cllr D. Turner said DC declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and established an Executive Advisory Panel (EAP), which he sat on, to strategically guide the council's response. He said the draft strategy and action plan went out to public consultation in October 2020, which had a good response. He said analysis of the results highlighted a high level of agreement on the strategy but there was some debate on dates. He said there was further consideration of over 12,000 text messages and a number of key areas for the strategy were taken forward. He said a costed action plan was presented to the Cabinet in October 2020 detailing 187 actions to 2050 with an estimated budget of £127 million. Cllr D. Turner said DC recently secured £90 million from the government and to work with the Low Carbon Skills Fund. He said the strategy set out a number of interim targets in 2025, 2030, 2035, there was a carbon budget and an intention to achieve an 80 to 90% reduction in emissions before this date, and the target date remained at 2040. Examples of what DC was doing included reviewing the fleet replacement programme to replace with greener vehicles, discussions with public transport operators, and looking at responsive transport via technology.

Regarding the Dorset Local Plan, Cllr G. Turner said the consultation ended on 15 March 2021 and the plan, once adopted, would guide decisions on planning applications in Dorset until 2038. He said the real concern is 30% of the population wouldn't have access to online documentation so a number of hard copies were sent out. He said the plan considered a large number of statistics such as housing numbers, employment, distribution of housing. He said the plan would go to the Overview Committee later this year.

Cllr D. Turner said there was lots of information about Covid on DC's website. He thanked DC's officers for an effective operation, which continued today.

Cllr D. Turner said the harbour dredging was finished, sand from the harbour had been moved to the beach and would be levelled soon.

Cllr D. Turner said DC was looking at draft strategies on disposal of assets to town and parish councils. He said DC was also working on a draft protocol with town and parish councils looking at contact through town and parish clerks only.

Cllr D. Turner said schools had welcomed children back to the classrooms and the attendance rate had been excellent. He said the vast majority of children had secured their first choice school in the new intake.

Cllr D. Turner said a number of roads had been resurfaced or were in the process of being done, and funding was available for pothole repairs. He said defects on the roads should be reported through the Dorset For You website.

PCSO Amanda King – Dorset Police (read out by an officer)

Apologies that I am unable to be at the meeting in person but here is my police report. There were 566 recorded police incidents in Lyme Regis between January 2020 and February 2021. These can be broken down as follows:

- 128 -ASB incidents
- 57 -Violence and Sexual offences
- 25 -Criminal Damage and arson.
- 23- Theft.
- 14- Public Order.
- 8- Shoplifting.
- 8- Vehicle Crime.
- 2- Theft from the person.
- 1-Drugs.
- 1-Bicycle Theft.
- 1-Possession of a weapon.

- 1-other crime.

The highest number of incidents occurred in or near Broad Street, which includes Broad Street car park, with 43 incidents occurring in this area. The second highest number of incidents was 39 incidents which occurred in or around the Monmouth Beach and Ozone Terrace area. 21 incidents occurred in or around Cobb Gate and Marine Parade. Most of the incidents occurred in July 2020 with 38 incidents recorded – this was surprisingly very similar to July 2019 when 31 incidents were recorded. When comparing 2019 with 2020 there were nine incidents recorded in April 2019 but in April 2020 there were 29 incidents recorded despite the lockdown. Year-on-year the incidents recorded in May and June 2020 were also higher than the previous year, however after September and October the incident numbers were similar to those in 2019. It was a difficult policing year with the lockdown and the volume of visitors during the summer months, however the people of Lyme Regis made this easier with most residents adhering to the government's regulations during lockdown and some great community work was undertaken by many, ensuring that those vulnerable and shielding were given help with their shopping and obtaining prescriptions, and the food bank also did some sterling work. Policing-wise, we had some good results with some successful convictions. A big thank you to those that assisted us with our enquires and helped us in what has been a difficult year for everyone.

(b) Questions from Lyme Regis Electors

Ken Gollop

K. Gollop said the new crossing in Broad Street had brought about the loss of half of the parking spaces in upper Broad Street and if anyone wanted to go to the post office, food shops or chemist and could not park in Broad Street, Silver Street or Pound Street, those with limited mobility had to drive out of town, thus taking trade away from the town. He asked if the council would instigate a public consultation with Dorset County to see if there could be extra parking in Broad Street as he believed three or four more parking spaces could be created, with some near Sherborne Lane, another space in front of the Royal Lion Hotel and at least one more near the crossing.

Cllr D. Turner said the suggestions K. Gollop made had already been looked at by highways officers. He said the original officer report highlighted the parking impact on Broad Street but decided safety benefits outweighed the disadvantages. He said DC did look at moving the bus stop and putting spaces above it but it wasn't feasible. He said he personally didn't think there was room to get more spaces with all the legislative requirements. Cllr D. Turner said consultation would have to come in from the town council initially but he didn't think highways officers would approve any more spaces.

Nigel Ball

- i) Mr Ball said the cemetery was very well kept and he thanked the staff involved. However, he was concerned there may be suggestions to let the cemetery go wild for environmental reasons. He felt there was plenty of countryside around us and the cemetery needed to be respected. N. Ball said he believed the council was missing an opportunity to run a tour on the history of the cemetery as there were a lot of important people buried there.
- ii) N. Ball said the gardens had come up very well, the council was probably about 85% there with the improvements and the team had worked very hard to get to grips with the difficult topography. He said it was important to keep on top of it but he believed the town could be proud this coming season that it had gardens people could come and enjoy and sit in.
- iii) N. Ball said he was glad councillors had come to see that the shelters' roof was not the place for activities as it had been a big worry to him due to issues with the glass. He said he couldn't understand why 21mm toughened laminated glass was used for Langmoor and Lister Rooms, but the glass on the shelters' roof was only 12mm toughened. He said he hoped the council

hadn't put cost over risk but he was glad it had seen the risk involved. N. Ball asked how much the one piece of broken glass had cost to replace and he asked why the council had paid for this instead of making an insurance claim.

- iv) N. Ball said he was aware the council was having a purpose-built storage unit for its machinery so it didn't have to be transported around the town, but if the harbourmaster's store was being returned to the council, he asked why it couldn't be kept in there.
- v) N. Ball said he was in favour of having council meetings outside in the summer, weather permitting, or at the Woodmead Halls with social distancing and he would hope there would be a virtual video link so more people would hopefully join the meetings.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the temporary provisions which had allowed virtual meetings to take place ended on 6 May 2021 and after that date, the council would be back to physical meetings. He said there was no facility in the Local Government Act 1972 for virtual meetings, unless the Act was changed.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said N. Ball's thanks would be passed onto the member of staff responsible for the cemetery and his points on wildflowers had been noted.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the town clerk could provide an answer on the price of the shelters' roof glass.

Vicki Elcoate

V. Elcoate thanked Cllr D. Turner for the update on the climate and environmental emergency and all the steps DC was taking to address it. She asked how the town council could do more to engage the public in addressing it in Lyme Regis as she felt urgent action needed to be taken. For example, keeping homes warm, there was plenty that could be done, but some of it cost money or people didn't have the information they needed to take action. V. Elcoate said there were a lot of practical barriers, such as Western Power charged a lot of money to put in the electricity supply to have air source heat pumps. She said it was about enthusing and engaging people in the effort and she asked how the town council would suggest doing that.

Cllr D. Turner said DC was talking about going net zero by 2040 but it was important to remember DC omitted 1% of Dorset's CO2 emissions so its work was to influence others, and the town council's percentage would be even less. He said one of the issues was the grid capacity in Lyme Regis was extremely limited but DC was looking into that. Cllr D. Turner said there were boilers being made that were hydrogen ready but they weren't there yet and the question was where did the council step in along that line. He said he worried about putting electric charging points across Dorset when the range of vehicles was increasing and they may not be needed.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said the town council had environmental matters on its agenda and within its objectives and it could make a contribution within its means, but given the scale and costs on households, it would be a case of government legislating and regulating. He said householders could be persuaded to be conscious of environmental matters but a lot of it would be legislation coming from central government, through DC to town councils.

N. Ball

N. Ball asked again how much the replacement piece of glass was on the shelters' roof. He asked for the costings of the whole job as a crane was required to put it in place. He also asked for more information about why the council had not made an insurance claim.

The town clerk said he didn't have that information to hand but his guesstimate would be the glass cost £800-£1,000, which he could confirm in an email to N. Ball, along with the

associated costings. He said the council had to make informed decisions about when to claim and what to claim for from its insurers.

C. Armstrong (read out by an officer)

C. Armstrong said although she was not a resident of Lyme, she regularly used to bring her dogs to the beach, pay for parking and use the local businesses, but since the ridiculous PSPO not allowing dogs off lead, she has not visited. She asked why responsible dog owners were being discriminated against as 99% of dog owners picked up their dog waste as well as other litter from the beach. She said sadly, that was more than could be said for non-dog owners judging by the mess regularly left on the beach and surrounding area. She said surely any person dropping or leaving litter or causing any other breach or issue should be an offence, so she asked why wardens were only issuing fines to dog owners. She said the amount of revenue from those fines would be far in excess of just dog owners, especially as the majority of them were going elsewhere now.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said all that the restrictions required was for dogs to be kept under control but they were still allowed on the beach. He said this was not unreasonable, given the complaints the council had had.

6. Lyme Regis Town Council Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2020

The town clerk said it had been a difficult financial year, most of which was due to staffing issues, with the finance manager leaving and some interim finance managers in post. He said the final accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 had only been signed off on an interim basis by the external auditor. This was because a local resident had written to the auditor about the accounts and while it was not part of a formal challenge, it had caused the auditor to do a review. The town clerk said further information requested by the auditor had been provided to them two months ago but there had been no response, although they had issued an interim certificate with a sound bill of health.

The town clerk said in terms of the last financial year ending 31 March 2021, it was also a difficult year. In the spring the council's finances were uncertain due to lockdowns and most of the council's operations not running. He said revenue did start coming back in during the summer and the council had been reasonably prudent in stopping any capital projects that were not contractually committed.

The town clerk said this meant that at the end of the financial year the council had a reserve in excess of £850k, which was in line with its policy to hold a reserve of 50% of turnover. He said the council had started off the 2021-22 financial year after looking at cost reduction measures and it was forecasting a significant surplus to be able to commence projects and objectives.

The mayor, Cllr B. Larcombe said council officers, staff and members had held their nerve and all the measures that had been taken had put the council in a good financial position. He said as well as making savings, a lot of work had gone into chasing debts and he paid credit to this.

The town clerk said all the issues in the finance team were now resolved and he was particularly pleased with the work that had been done over the last year to get the council to a sound position, particularly by the finance manager and assistant finance manager.

The meeting closed at 8.17pm.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21 Part 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2021**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2021**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2021 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2020/21**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2021 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2021.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **you must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2020) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2021).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2021**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

Lyme Regis Town Council

www.lymeregistowncouncil.gov.uk AVAILABLE WEBSITE: 01302 460655

During the financial year ended 31 March 2021, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2020/21 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2019/20, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/20 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it publishes information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.	N/A		
M. The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes). SEE ATTACHED NOTE		✓	
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

12/10/2020 07/12/2020 05/02/2021
13/10/2020 04/02/2021 04/05/2021

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

05/05/2021

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Internal Auditor note on test N:

In order to test compliance with the Council's requirement for the exercise of public rights, I checked to see that the authority complied with the publication requirements for the AGAR 2019/20.

The authority was required to publish before 01/09/20, and at least one day before the start of its public rights period (04/08/20): the unaudited ss1&2 of the 2019/20 AGAR (the Annual Governance Statement and Accounts), along with the public rights notice and a note that the AGAR was unaudited. The Council originally set its public rights dates to run from 31/07/20 to 11/09/20, but this was revised to run from 03/08/20 to 14/09/20. The advertisement was published on the website on 03/08/20, but ss1&2 of the AGAR were published on 04/08/20 instead of one day prior to the start of the public rights period. The website audit trail shows the information being removed on 30/09/20, well after the end of the public rights period.

The 2020/21 AGAR introduced an additional element of the test, which required internal auditors to also check that the Council published the notice of conclusion of audit, and ss1-3 of the AGAR (including the external audit report) once the external audit was completed and before the deadline of 30/11/20. The External Auditor was unable to complete the 2019/20 internal audit within the deadline, but issued an interim report dated 26/11/20. The report was received into the inbox of the relevant Council officer on the same day, but after the officer had left for annual leave. Consequently, the report was not published on the Council's website until after 30/11/20. The report remains in place.

As the Council was one day late in publishing the public rights notice information, and late in publishing the interim external audit report, I have responded 'no' to this test. Council officers are aware of the publication requirements for 2021/22 and will ensure that the requirements are met.



R Darkin-Miller LLB (Hons) BFP FCA 05/05/21

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

Lyme Regis Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021, that:

	Agreed		Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
			✓

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

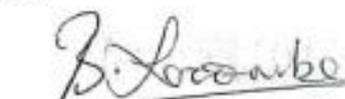
23/06/21

and recorded as minute reference:

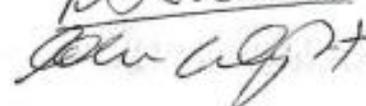
21/2010

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman



Clerk



www.lymeregistowncouncil.gov.uk

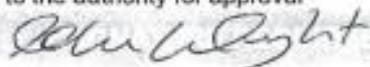
Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

Lyme Regis Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,435,449	1,226,872	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	120,708	132,779	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,643,856	1,252,872	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	699,599	642,927	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	37,500	37,500	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	1,236,043	1,089,140	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,226,872	842,956	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,228,683	882,819	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	7,898,735	7,869,419	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	217,500	187,500	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
			N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

18/06/21

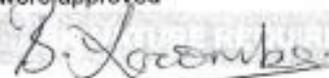
I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

23/06/21

as recorded in minute reference:

21/201c

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of **LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL – DO0098**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2020/21

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

NONE

3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

16/09/2021

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)