

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 MAY 2022

Present

Chairman: Cllr B. Bawden

Members: Cllr J. Broom, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers

Officers: M. Adamson-Drage (operations manager), A. Mullins (support services manager)

Other members: Cllr G. Turner

Absent: Cllr T. Webb

21/60/ENV Public Forum

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

21/61/ENV Apologies

Cllr C. Reynolds - appointment
A. Bristow (Turn Lyme Green rep)

21/62/ENV Minutes

Cllr B. Bawden said there was a spelling mistake in minute number 21/58/ENV as 'insulation' was spelled incorrectly.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

21/63/ENV Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

21/64/ENV Dispensations

There were none.

21/65/ENV Matters arising from the previous meeting held on 16 March 2022

Lyme 2030 Vision Community Conversation

Cllr B. Bawden said she needed clarification on the discussions between the town clerk and the chief executive of Lyme Regis Development Trust as she had had different reports.

21/66/ENV Update Report

Turn Lyme Green

L. Davis was invited to give an update on Turn Lyme Green (TLG). She said the group had been attending lots of fayres to talk about the environment and about Boomerang Bags, and they had led beach cleans which had been well supported. She said they were doing a lot of work with businesses in the town because most places had Boomerang Bags, many were allowing people to refill their plastic bottles and were trying to get rid of non-biodegradable materials.

L. Davis said TLG had been growing sunflowers to plant at the library and this would take place on Saturday morning, they had a stall at the May Fete, and a talk about wildlife, plant life and farms on 24 May 2022. She said they were pleased to be working alongside this committee to hopefully fulfil some of the things it was aiming for and they would welcome feedback from the council on what it would like people to get out doing.

21/67/ENV River Lim Project Monitoring – April 2022 report

V. Elcoate was invited to give an update on the project. She said the group recently met with Wessex Water to discuss releases in the River Char which had affected the beach in Lyme Regis. She said there was now a River Char monitoring group and Wessex Water was very proactive in engaging with the community and discussing with others their plans; unfortunately, they had not had a similar experience with South West Water. As such, she felt it would be helpful if the town council pressed South West Water too.

V. Elcoate said there was currently a government consultation on the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan, the deadline for which was 12 May 2022, and she urged the town council to respond. She said there was a good briefing on the Surfers Against Sewage website which would help with any response. She said they were asking for more urgent action and that more money should be spent on it, and rather than it coming out of the public's pocket, it should come from the water companies.

V. Elcoate also spoke about the possible re-designation of Church Beach as a bathing beach, which in 2014 failed to meet the minimum water quality standard and following a government consultation, it was then taken out of the bathing water system in 2015 because it wasn't used very much as a bathing beach. She asked whether the council might consider championing the re-designation of Church Beach as a bathing beach. If there was any prospect of the council supporting this, she said the river monitoring group would work hard to get support from the public and various local groups, such as swimming groups.

Cllr R. Smith suggested that any letter to the West Dorset MP Chris Loder could inform him that the council wanted Church Beach to be redesignated as a bathing beach but

to do this, South West Water needed to perform better on sewage discharges in the River Lym.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the idea of any beach area being improved was beneficial. However, no matter what the quality of the water, it wasn't going to attract many people to swim because of the ledges and rocks.

The support services manager gave some background to the de-designation of Church Beach. She said the beach had continually been receiving poor water quality reports and this was generating bad publicity for Lyme Regis as it was being reported nationally, even though the water quality at Front Beach was much better. As a result, the council supported the proposal to de-designate Church Beach as a bathing beach because it would no longer be tested and reported. Although this didn't address the water quality issues, it protected the town's reputation.

The operations manager said if the water quality of the River Lim was improved, it would improve the situation on Church Beach because the river flowed into this beach.

V. Elcoate said the water quality at Church Beach was currently unknown because it was no longer monitored. She said she wasn't sure if there was the appetite for people to use it as a bathing beach but she asked if the town council would keep the door open to the idea while they did some research into this.

Cllr R. Smith said he was sure the council wouldn't want to open the beach for bathing if the water wasn't a sufficient standard, but he would like to see the water at a sufficient standard for this to happen.

Cllr B. Bawden suggested the council write to Chris Loder to say the council would like to work towards re-designating Church Beach as a bathing beach, therefore it would like Mr Loder to write to South West Water to help improve water quality on the River Lim to help achieve this.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the council writes to Chris Loder MP to say the council would like to work towards re-designating Church Beach as a bathing beach, therefore it would like Mr Loder to write to South West Water to put pressure on them to improve water quality on the River Lim to help achieve this.

V. Elcoate said there was also an issue with plastic pollution and packaging in the river. She asked who would normally clear rubbish from the river or whether the group could do this themselves. She also said there was a problem with Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed in the river, which was causing problems for the local ecosystem, and they would like advice on what could be done about it.

Cllr J. Broom said the riparian owners were responsible for the Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed and it was very difficult to get them to deal with it.

With regards to the rubbish in the river, the operations manager said as long as the river monitoring group had done a risk assessment, they could get in the river and clear it themselves. He advised them to inform the Environment Agency first.

P. May, one of the community energy champions, was invited to give an update. He said the champions were not claiming to be experts and they tried where possible to signpost people to other sources. He said they were focusing at the moment on sharing simple tips that would save energy, ranging from controlling thermostats to preventing moisture and damp building up.

P. May said the five energy champions had met a couple of times as a group and they were continuing to meet with the Bridport champions to get ideas. He said they were creating a questionnaire that they could give to residents and were also intending on purchasing thermal imaging cameras to carry out surveys on properties to find out where the most heat was being lost from. He said they probably needed three cameras and were looking for funding for these.

P. May said the champions had been at the Fossil Festival recently and intended to be at the May Fete. He said the biggest challenge was knowing what grants were available to residents, as national schemes seemed to lapse and change quite quickly. He said any help the town council could give them in getting to that information would be gratefully received.

Members asked questions about insulating homes, eliminating drafts, eliminating moisture, local contractors, and how energy efficiency affected property value.

Cllr D. Sarson asked for more information on the questionnaire the champions intended to give to residents.

P. May said it was intended to use the questionnaire at community engagement events, such as the May Fete because they didn't have the resources to go door-to-door. He said the Bridport energy champions had used Bridport Town Council as their entity but they had decided to do it on an individual basis.

Cllr R. Smith asked if they intended to become a group, remain as individuals or become part of another group.

P. May said at this stage they didn't know but for now, they had decided to remain as individuals, covering Lyme Regis, Uplyme and Charmouth. He said they recognised the cameras were valuable and had decided how they would manage this.

The operations manager said the thermal imaging cameras were £370 including VAT and he asked if the council was minded to purchase one for the community energy champions to use.

P. May said the model referred to by the operations manager was a standalone device so it wouldn't require a mobile phone to operate and it was an entry level device just to get a snapshot of a house. He said they were applying for grants to purchase another one and would also approach Uplyme and Charmouth Parish Councils.

The operations manager clarified that the council would own the camera but the community energy champions would loan it.

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to purchase a thermal imaging camera for £370 from the climate action budget, to be loaned to the community energy champions.

21/69/ENV United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report 2022

The operations manager said there was a lot more movement in the green environment among the nations to tackle the issue of climate change but as yet, the manifestation of major changes in the world's climate were yet to be experienced.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.