

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 JULY 2025

Present:

Chairman: Cllr S. Cockerell

Members: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr P. May, Cllr M. Denney, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr A. Wood, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr G. Stammers

Officers: K. Newman (administrative and community engagement assistant), S. O'Connell (operations manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

Guests: G. Roberts (River Lim Action Group), Vicki Elcoate (River Lim Action Group)

25/01/ENV Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

It was proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers that Cllr S. Cockerell is chairman of the Environment Committee.

Cllr S. Cockerell was duly **ELECTED** as chairman.

It was proposed by Cllr A. Wood and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers that Cllr P. May is vice-chairman of the Environment Committee.

Cllr P. May was duly **ELECTED** as vice-chairman.

25/02/ENV Terms of Reference

Members agreed to receive the terms of reference.

25/03/ENV Public Forum

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

25/04/ENV Apologies

Sean Larcombe – family commitment

25/05/ENV Minutes

It was noted Cllr G. Stammers was recorded as being in attendance twice.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2025, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

25/06/ENV Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

25/07/ENV Dispensations

There were none.

25/08/ENV Matters Arising

Environment Objectives

A member asked the chairman when last the council reviewed its own performance against its environmental policy.

The operations manager said he would find out and advise at the next meeting.

Lighting in the Lister and Langmoor Gardens

A member asked if there was any further progress on the lighting in the gardens.

The operations manager said this was currently in review.

25/09/ENV Update Report

Electric vehicle charging

A member asked about the feasibility for a Dorset Council (DC) rapid charger, even if it was only 50kw.

The operations manager said he would discuss the capacity issue this with the deputy town clerk but any decisions on the capacity of electric vehicle charging points would be Dorset Council's.

Use of Biodiesel/HVO in council vehicles

The operations manager said biodiesel should be in use by 25 July 2025.

Carbon Literacy Organisation Accreditation

A member asked if there was a carbon literacy renewal course that needed to be taken every few years.

The town clerk said this was optional but not compulsory. The town clerk said the last round of training was not taken up by any members. He said up-to-date training slides could be sent to members and evening training dates were being considered for members.

25/10/ENV River Lim Action Group Report

The chairman brought this item forward on the agenda.

G. Roberts from River Lim Action Group presented the report and thanked the town council for their continued support.

He said whilst there was a slight improvement in water quality there were still issues with discharge from Marine Parade. He said river water quality was improving slightly and there was a better response from South West Water.

He said the Environment Agency had notified owners along the River Lim that it was no longer responsible for maintenance and that a fee would apply going forward. G. Roberts said the RLAG would be seeking political input and legal advice and had already written to the local MP. He hoped the town council would adopt the same stance and write to the Environment Agency and challenge them on the matter.

The town clerk said legal advice needed to be sought first but his opinion was the Environment Agency was likely acting lawfully.

G Roberts said Himalayan balsam was starting to appear below Gosling Bridge and asked the council if it could remove it as the location was inaccessible and slightly dangerous.

The town clerk said the standing arrangement was for volunteers to remove the Himalayan Balsam and the council to then remove the debris.

G. Roberts asked for confirmation of the arrangement in writing.

G. Roberts gave an update on the fish passage and said there was an ongoing dispute between the Environment Agency and the Town Mill.

Cllr P. May declared a non-pecuniary interest as was a Town Mill trustee.

It was suggested a meeting could be held between the Town Mill, the Environment Agency, RLAG and the town council to progress this.

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge seconded by Cllr M. Denney, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the town council facilitates a meeting between the Environment Agency, Town Mill, River Lim Action Group and Lyme Regis Town Council to discuss issues with the fish passage in the river.

Cllr P. May abstained from voting.

G. Roberts said the grant from East Devon National Landscape to support further work by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group to work with farmers and landowners to reduce pollution had been approved.

25/11/ ENV Environment Committee – Objectives

2030 Carbon Net Zero Plan

It was noted further clarity was required on the funding set aside for improvements to the river and the term grant to RLAG.

The town clerk said he would present a report to the next meeting.

Electric hedge trimmers

The operations manager said the next demonstration would take place on Friday 18 July 2025.

Follow up on EPC recommendations

The town clerk said work on EPCs had been undertaken and details on the proposed improvements would be presented to the next meeting.

Undertake biodiversity projects

The operations manager said bird boxes had been installed in the woodland walk and an owl box would be added soon.

Undertake a hydro feasibility study

The town clerk said a report from c.2007 had been found during the office move, which stated that hydroelectric power was not feasible.

25/12/ENV Co-option

It was proposed by Cllr P. May that the council adopts the following policy for co-opting members to the Environment Committee:

1. At the last Environment Committee meeting of the council year members can decide how many places they wish to advertise for non-members to sit on the committee in the following council year. If members do not make a decision, the default number of places is 6 (as stipulated in the committee's terms of reference).

2. The availability of the agreed or default number of places for non-members to sit on the committee will be publicised in suitable accessible local media at least 4-6 weeks before the first Environment Committee Meeting of the new council year [the Meeting]. Officers will decide the appropriate means of publicising the places, however, options could include the council's website and the council's magazine.

3. Non-members who wish to apply to sit on the committee must supply a CV and a declaration (see clarification below) that they meet the requirements to be appointed, at least 1 week before the Meeting. No more than two people from one organisation can apply.*

4.1 If the number of valid applicants is less than or equal to the number of agreed spaces, then they will automatically be appointed as non-voting members of the Environment Committee.

4.2 If more applications than the advertised spaces are received, then at the Meeting, a two- or more stage voting process will be entered into.

Members cast a single vote for their preferred candidate in one or more rounds of voting. The purpose of each voting round is to eliminate the candidate with the lowest number of votes until the number remaining is equal to the available spaces. Those remaining applicants will then be appointed as non-voting members of the Environment Committee.

5. Members of the Environment Committee will have the right to vote to remove non-members in any subsequent Committee meeting by a majority vote.

**Each candidate must provide a written declaration to certify they meet the eligibility criteria set out in s79 of the Local Government Act 1972 and are not disqualified under s80 of the 1972 Act.*

This motion was not seconded.

The town clerk said the committee needed to decide arrangements for the remainder of this year.

The town clerk said his priority was to protect the council and members and non-members of this committee, especially as previous non-members of the committee were members of community groups in receipt of funding from the council. He advised members to take his advice and that of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils. He said it was possible the council could come under scrutiny from the auditor and/or the public if it pursued the proposal outlined earlier.

The town clerk suggested the starting point should be for the council to issue a public notice, asking for applications from those interested in becoming non-members and that applications should be considered at the next meeting of this committee.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, members **RESOLVED** to issue a public notice for the co-option of non-members to the Environment Committee and that applications should be considered at the next meeting of the Environment Committee.

Proposed by Cllr M. Denny and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members **RESOLVED** the co-option of three members.

As the previously co-opted members were no longer on the committee, it was clarified that they could continue to contribute as guests.

25/13/ENV Appointment of Members to the Net Carbon Zero Emissions Working Group

The operations manager suggested quarterly meetings.

The town clerk suggested a working group meeting was held before the next meeting of this committee to discuss funding ideas for the budget-setting process.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the working group to oversee the action plan to obtain net carbon zero emissions by 2030 is continued.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that V. Elcoate and J. Breeze be invited to sit on the working group together with Cllr P. May and Cllr S. Cockerell.

25/14/ENV To receive the minutes of the Bating Water Quality Meeting on 24 June 2025

The operations manager said a response had been received from South West Water to the letter sent by the council regarding concerns about Environment Agency data, and he read the response out.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr M. Denney, the minutes from the bathing water quality meeting held on 24 June 2025 were **RECEIVED**.

25/15/ENV Action Plan for Achieving Net Carbon Zero Emissions by 2030

The town clerk reiterated another working group meeting would be held before the next committee meeting.

25/16/ENV EcoVend Reverse Vending Recycling Machines

The operations manager felt this could be a beneficial initiative for the council and would likely benefit local community and businesses, although it would involve a lot of work to deliver and set up.

It was suggested there was a trial of the machine before the council committed to it.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that an EcoVend machine is considered as part of the 2026-27 budget-setting process and instruct officers to undertake a feasibility study.

25/17/ENV Planning and Costings for the Biodiversity Plan

Members agreed that a biodiversity audit should be put forward as an objective in the 2026-27 budget.

24/18/ENV Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy

It was noted Dorset Climate Action Network had done a lot of work on this and there wasn't much mention of hedgerows; it was suggested this was included in the response. It was also noted water quality was not sufficiently addressed in the strategy.

Proposed by Cllr S. Cockerell and seconded by Cllr P. May, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to delegate the response to Dorset Council's draft local nature recovery strategy to the town clerk in consultation with Cllr P. May and V. Elcoate.

25/19/ENV Food Security

It was suggested a few members of the committee looked at the paper in detail and emailed their suggestions to the chairman and vice-chairman by 1 September 2025.

25/20/ENV Solar Roofs Update

It was noted the public event had been a success, generating lots of interest from residents.

A Greener Open Homes would take place at the end of September and it was requested information about this was included in LymeLiving.

The town clerk said the deadline for the the August edition had passed and there was no September edition, but publicity could be given via the council's social media channels, website and noticeboards.

25/21/ENV SAS Paddle Out Protest

Members noted the report.

The meeting ended at 9pm.