

## LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 MAY 2024

#### **Present**

**Chairman:** The Mayor, Cllr D. Sarson

**Councillors:** Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr P. Evans, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

**Officers:** A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

The mayor, Cllr D. Sarson read out the town prayer.

#### **23/181/C Public Forum**

*Cllr M. Ellis left the meeting at 7.03pm.*

#### **N. Ball (read out by an officer)**

N. Ball thanked the mayor and mayoress for doing such a good job and for hosting a great civic night, including council staff. He and his wife were honoured to be at the event representing Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support. He also thanked the members and staff for keeping the town in order and said he looked forward to a new administration, which he hoped would be reflective of the mayor's gentle and considerate approach.

*Cllr M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 7.04pm.*

#### **23/182/C Dorset Council Matters**

A request was made that future reports are more succinct and relevant to how Dorset Council (DC) issues affected Lyme Regis.

A member asked if Cllr B. Bawden could chase up the double yellow lines at Clappentail as it wasn't clear if they were going to be done or not.

*Cllr C. Reynolds arrived at the meeting at 7.06pm.*

#### **23/183/C Questions from Councillors**

There were none.

#### **23/184/C Apologies for Absence**

Cllr R. Doney – holiday  
Cllr D. Ruffle – illness

Cllr B. Bawden – personal issue

**23/185/C Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Cllr G. Stammers declared a pecuniary interest in matters relating to A35 sigange as she worked at Uplyme post office and this would take traffic away from Uplyme.

**23/186/C Dispensations**

There were none.

**23/187/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13 March 2024**

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13 March 2024 were **ADOPTED**.

**23/188/C To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 20 March 2024**

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, the minutes of the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 20 March 2024 were **ADOPTED**.

**23/189/C Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13 March 2024 and the extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 20 March 2024**

In response to a member question, the town clerk said the deputy town clerk was continuing to negotiate with Lyme Regis Development Trust about parking. Although there were other locations for staff and visitors to park, such as the cadet hut and the Guildhall, it was important to provide parking to the public and people with disabilities.

**23/190/C Update Report**

The town clerk said the town crier's badge would be collected the following day.

**23/191/C Mayor's Announcements**

The mayor, Cllr D. Sarson thanked members and staff for supporting him and the mayoress, he welcomed the new members and wished the council well for the next five years.

On behalf of the council, the deputy mayor Cllr P. May thanked the mayor for the role he had played, acknowledging the huge number of events he had attended, helping to enhance the reputation of the town and council.

**23/192/C Planning Committee**

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, it was **RESOLVED** receive the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2024, to note the committee's comments made on planning applications under the power delegated by Full Council,

and to note the recommendations made under the chairman and vice-chairman's delegated authority following the cancellation of the meeting on 9 April 2024.

**23/193/C Environment Committee**

It was noted the meeting scheduled to take place on 17 April 2024 was cancelled.

**23/194/C Human Resources Committee**

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr C. Aldridge, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 27 March 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

**24/71/HR – Review of the Councillor Code of Conduct**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Councillor Code of Conduct unchanged.

**24/72/HR – Review of the Code of Conduct for Staff**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Code of Conduct for staff, as amended, and to include a cross-reference to the council's bullying and harassment policy and procedure.

**24/73/HR – Review of the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations, as amended, and to further amend paragraph 2.3 so if a complaint against the town clerk also involved the mayor, it would be dealt with by the deputy mayor.

**24/74/HR – Flexible Working Request**

As this item required further discussion, it was agreed to discuss it in exempt business.

**23/195/C Strategy and Finance Committee**

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 24 April 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

**23/115/SF – Review of Standing Orders**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the standing orders, with an amendment to 8c to include 'The councillor must provide written notice in advance that they wish to seek election'.

**23/116/SF – Review of Financial Regulations**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the financial regulations.

**23/117/SF – The Annual Review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure, with the deletion of section 7, Council column.

**23/118/SF – The Annual Review of the Complaints’ Policy and Procedure**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the complaints’ policy and procedure and note the volume and nature of complaints received since May 2023.

**23/119/SF – Information Policy**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Information Policy.

**23/120/SF – Equality and Diversity Policy**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the equality and diversity policy, with an amendment to paragraph 9.2.1 to include members and to renumber the document from section 9 onwards.

**23/121/SF – Review of the Protocol for the Audio Recording of Council Meetings**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the protocol for the audio recording of council meetings.

**23/122/SF – Debt Management Policy and Procedure**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the debt management policy and procedure.

**23/124/SF – Appointment of Signatories for Wilkinson Legacy account**

**RESOLVED:** to approve changing the bank signatories for the Wilkinson Legacy Account to the mayor, town clerk, deputy town clerk and finance manager.

**23/125/SF – List of Payments**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the schedule of payments in March 2024 for the sum of £404,300.05.

**23/196/C Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee**

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee held on 10 April 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

**23/74/TCP – Review of the Events on Council-owned Land Policy and Procedure**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Events on Council-owned Land Policy and Procedure with an amendment to paragraph 2.1, bullet point 5 to remove ‘for noting only’.

### **23/75/TCP – Review of the Busking Policy**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Busking Policy.

### **23/76/TCP – Permission to Erect a Gazebo**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the request from the Oyster and Fish House to erect a 3m x 3m gazebo on the beach for approximately two hours on 4 May 2024.

### **23/77/TCP – Free Parking Days**

**RESOLVED:** to agree the non-charging dates in Lyme Regis car parks as follows:

- Saturday 12 October 2024
- Friday 22 November 2024
- Saturday 23 November 2024
- Sunday 24 November 2024
- Sunday 29 December 2024

## **23/197/C Town Management and Highways Committee**

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, it was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Town Management and Highways Committee held on 3 April 2024 and adopt the recommendations, as follows:

### **23/104/TMH – Policy Reviews**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Policy, the Control of Substances Harmful to Health (COSHH) Policy, the Management of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and the Legionella Flushing Policy, with minor spelling and typing amendments to the Legionella Flushing policy.

### **23/105/TMH – SWiM – Request for Additional Outside Seating**

**RESOLVED:** to refuse the request from SWiM for additional outside seating.

### **23/108/TMH – Commercial Properties – Lease Renewals and Rent Reviews**

**RESOLVED:** to approve agreed terms for new leases for the National Trust Shop, Boylo's, Guildhall Shop, Lyme Regis Gig Club, and the Amusement Arcade.

## **23/198/C Reports from External Bodies**

Members noted the report.

## **23/199/C The Establishment of a Working Group**

Several members were concerned about having another working group and felt matters concerning the gardens should be dealt with by the Town Management and Highways Committee.

Several members felt as the gardens were such an important asset, a working group would allow ideas from all committees and as many members as possible to be explored in detail.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** that given the range of ideas being expressed by members and different council committees, in order to arrive at a consensus and an holistic approach, a working group dedicated to the Langmoor and Lister Gardens is formed and reports to Full Council with the remit to maintain the amenity and protect the nature and integrity of the gardens while exploring ideas to further enhance the special place it represents as the council's largest and most sensitive area.

It was agreed the membership of the working group would be agreed by the new administration so the new members had an opportunity to sit on it.

#### **23/200/C Data Breach**

The town clerk said the letter he intended to send to the resident affected had not been sent yet but it would be sent this week. He confirmed the council had deleted the data it held on that person and discussions had started with third party organisations the council worked with about also deleting the resident's personal data.

In response to a member question, the town clerk said officers had done the basics in terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) but full compliance would be met within 12 months, along with full digitisation. He added that data protection training would be given to staff and members as part of the new administration's induction programme.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members **RESOLVED** to approve the actions of officers following the data breach and approve the recommendations in the Information Commissioner's Office's letter of 26 April 2024.

#### **22/201/C End of Administration and Handover Report**

Members noted the report.

#### **22/202/C Extension of Service Level Agreement for Tourism Microsite**

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members **RESOLVED** to approve the extension of the service level agreement with Dorset Council for the provision of a Lyme Regis tourism microsite for an additional period of 24 months to 1 May 2026 and to authorise the support services manager to sign the letter on behalf of the council.

#### **22/203/C Approval of Unbudgeted Expenditure**

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

## **23/204/C Exempt Business**

### **a) Approval of Unbudgeted Expenditure**

Several members were concerned an external organisation had been asked to deal with an internal complaint and it should have been dealt with in-house. There was also concern members were being asked to approve the expenditure retrospectively so they had no real choice.

Several members felt given the amount of time already spent trying to resolve the issue internally and having taken advice from a higher level, the independence of an external body was required to deal with it.

It was noted the outcome of the investigation would be reported back to the council to manage and a further report would be considered by the Human Resources Committee at the appropriate time.

Cllr C. Reynolds requested a recorded vote on the following motion:

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to retrospectively approve unbudgeted expenditure of up to £5k + VAT to procure specialist external consultancy services from South West Councils to assist in dealing with a member complaint and to note the departure from standing orders and financial regulations involved in not obtaining at least three quotes because of the specialist nature of the work.

**Voted for** - Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers. Cllr P. May, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr D. Sarson

**Voted against** – Cllr P. Evans, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr C. Reynolds

**Abstentions** – Cllr C. Aldridge

### **b) 24/74/HR – Flexible Working Request**

A letter from the employee was read out.

Members discussed the operational requirements of the council and the potential implications of approving the flexible working request.

Members also discussed the council's responsibility to support employees' and their wellbeing and how to balance this against the operational requirements.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** to refuse the flexible working request from postholder 218 because the work cannot be reorganised among other staff, there will be a negative effect on quality, there will be a negative effect on the council's ability to meet customer demand, and there will be a negative effect on performance.

*The meeting closed at 8.28pm.*