

LYNTON AND LYNMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, LYNTON ON THURSDAY 28TH APRIL 2005 @ 2.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Mrs C G Bowden (Town Mayor)
B Hobbs (Deputy Mayor)
Mrs S Hibbert
C Lethaby
T Parker
B Peacock
T Prosser
Mrs E Rodway
Mrs C F Sim
J F Travis
B O Windsor

Officer: Town Clerk

Apologies: Apologies were received from County Councillor Knight

The meeting opened with Prayers led by the Town Mayor Councillor Mrs C Bowden.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Prior to the commencement of the formal Council meeting there was an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions.

Due to the amount of media coverage regarding the goats, a large number of members of the public were in attendance.

Mr Peter Haynes requested that the meeting be moved to a larger venue but Councillor Bowden informed him that the meeting had been advertised as being held in the Council Chambers.

Mr Roland Gold asked (1) if the Council had received a reply from English Nature and what their recommendations were (2) if the Council was going to accept the judgement of the monitoring officer and (3) what the Council were proposing to do about the goats in the light of the low number of goats stated in Ray Werners report. He then handed to the Mayor a signed petition:

*'To Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council, re: Decision made at Full Council 31 March 2005. We the undersigned strongly believe that yet another goat cull will do nothing to safeguard residents' property and the Lynton Cemetery. The existing goats are all needed for conservation grazing of their ancient home in the Valley of Rocks. They are also vital to the needs of the modern tourist industry in our area. **The problem of damage could be entirely and***

humanely solved by the subsidised fencing/cattle grid scheme which you have rejected. We appeal to the Council to think again about this important local issue – and get it right this time.'

The Chairman accepted the petition on behalf of the Council and felt that they would make the right decision in the light of further information and advice. The Chairman went on to express her disappointment at the way she and her fellow Councillors and staff had been treated by the press and general public over this matter, having received death threats and threats of personal injury etc.

A member of the public asked how many letters had been received and if these had been logged and replied to. The Chairman replied that all letters had been logged but had not been counted. Only those letters requiring a reply would receive one

Mrs Mary Carter felt that the goats were a great tourist attraction and kept the grass on the paths down, she asked who would pay for this service if the goats went.

Representatives from Friends of the Earth and also the League Against Cruel Sports expressed their objections to a cull.

The Chairman explained that this was a very complex issue that had taken up many Council hours but it had always been the intention of the Council to try and re-home as many goats as possible.

Councillor Hobbs stated that he would be putting forward a resolution to amend the previous recommendations.

A local shop keeper asked the Council's position with regard to shop keepers advertising adverse press cuttings. Councillor Sim reported that she had spoken to shop keepers as a private individual and not as a Councillor.

The 15 minutes allocated to question time then ended and the majority of the members of the public left the room.

321/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 31st March 2005 copies of which had been previously circulated be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

322/04 POLICE REPORT

Inspector Shaun Kenneally introduced himself to Councillors as the new Inspector serving the North Devon Coastal Area. He felt that the local Council supported the police very well and he had given the Town Clerk his direct telephone number should he need it. He asked that the police be informed of any events that needed police coverage as quickly as possible as they had a 'summer strategy policy' to cover major events but needed as much notice as possible. The Chairman welcomed Inspector Kenneally and expressed the

appreciation of the people of Lynton & Lynmouth for all the work that the local Police Force do for the twin villages and surrounding area.

323/04 MATTERS ARISING FROM COUNCIL MINUTES

Items 292/04 Item 263/04 Matters arising from Council Minutes dated 24th February 2005. Councillor Travis asked the present position with regard to Garson House and if the Town Clerk had heard back from the Devon Community Housing Society. The Town Clerk reported that he had received an interim letter stating that the Association were actively marketing the property as a residential home to be family run as opposed to a consortium. The Town Clerk would keep Councillors informed.

Councillor Travis also asked the present position with regard to the lease on the Manor Grounds and the Town Clerk reported that the Solicitors had confirmed that the lease could only be assigned as a Hotel or Residential Home for the elderly.

The Chairman then read a letter of resolution signed by 8 members of the Council as follows:

'We request that Council resolution 296/04 (March 2005) which was an amendment to Policy & Finance recommendation 288/04 (March 2005) be rescinded. This document will be attached to a copy of these minutes. The recommendation in minute 318/04 of Policy & Finance Committee (April 2005) to be considered by the Council meeting and if adopted become a resolution of the Council.

With members agreement item 10 on the Agenda, *Police: to receive any observations of the Police representative*, was considered at this point

324/04 COMMUNICATIONS

There were several items of correspondence which the Chairman brought to the attention of the meeting:

- Many letters including one from English Nature with regard to the goats had been received. These to be discussed at the special meeting recommended by Policy & Finance.
- A letter had been received from the North Devon Journal with regard to the Smugglers comments about the elderly people of Lynton & Lynmouth. It was felt that this was not sufficient and an official apology should be published in the paper.
- The Mayor had received a letter of thanks from Councillor Knight for the use of the Town Hall for tea following his civic service.
- A letter of resignation had been received from Councillor R Gold.
- A letter from the Exmoor Society reference the goats, which would be put before the special meeting.

325/04 OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

There was no outstanding business

326/04 COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESOLVED:

That the open reports of the following committees, having been circulated, be received and noted and the recommendations contained therein adopted, subject to any matters annotated.

Estates & Amenities Committee 13th April 2005

Minute number 311/04 Matters for Recommendation item e Request to hold a Summer Fete on Manor Grounds on behalf of the National Trust on Sunday 28 August 2005.

Councillor Hibbert had been requested to enquire if the National Trust could hold this fete on another day as it was the bank holiday weekend. The Town Clerk informed her that this was the particular day they had requested and if they could not hold it here they would look elsewhere. Councillor Hibbert acceded the point.

Policy & Finance Committee 20th April 2005

Minute number 317/04 Matters for Recommendation item e JCC Minutes. Councillor J Travis felt that it was vital these minutes, which were produced by North Devon District Council, should be made available whilst items were still fresh in peoples mind. The Town Clerk was asked to chase these minutes as a matter of urgency.

Minute number 317/04 Matters for Recommendation item f Youth Club – Request for Grant to fund new initiatives.

Councillor B Peacock declared a prejudicial interest as he is a Committee Member of the Lyn Youth Group. He left the room and did not take part in the debate or vote on same when this item was discussed.

Councillor Mrs C Bowden declared a prejudicial interest as she is the Chairman of the Lyn Youth Group. She left the room and did not take part in the debate or vote on same when this item was discussed.

Councillor T Prosser declared a personal interest but did not leave the room.

Councillor Lethaby asked for reassurance that by grant aiding this project, it would not be detrimental to the other members of the Youth Group. He was assured that these projects were to be handled by experienced leaders and would not disrupt the normal Youth Group users.

Minute Number 381/04 Matters referred from Estates & Amenities, item a Valley of Rocks –Fencing and Cattle Grid, confirmation of Council resolution 288/04. Councillor Parker requested that the Recommendations in this minute be numbered the same as the proposals.

The question of the Valley of Rocks Goats was then discussed.

Councillor Mrs E Rodway declared a prejudicial interest in the Valley of Rocks Goats as she is the Commoner. She left the room and did not take part in the debate or vote on same when this item was discussed.

It was stated that all meetings were advertised within the twin Villages on notice boards but prior to a referendum being held, the Council would hold a special Council Meeting to discuss the main relevant points. Consultation meetings would also be held with members of the public prior to a referendum should Council decide that a referendum was the best way forward.

RESOLVED

The Council would hold a Special Council Meeting on Wednesday 25th May at 6.30pm.

327/04 REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were none.

328/04 MOTIONS

There were no notices of motions

329/04 QUESTIONS

There were no questions pursuant to standing Order Number No. 24

330/04 ENQUIRIES AND REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

There were no enquiries of the District Councillor.

Councillor Travis reported that he had two matters to bring to members attention:

1. Although he had not been able to attend the presentation by the Hydro-generation Company, he had been told that this was very successful. One site on the East Lyn had been identified as being suitable and could recoup the installation costs within 7 years. The next stage was that the District Council were instructing an engineer to prepare a feasibility study with particular reference to the old leat, as no cost to the Town Council. He felt this was very good news and would keep members informed of progress.
2. The second matter he brought up was that he had attended a conference in Harrogate to discuss how small communities could survive in the future. It was important that money earned in each local community returned to, and was circulated, within that community. He felt that it was important to look at ways to achieve this and to promote local shops and manufacturers. It was felt that this might make a suitable article for the Lyn Valley News.

331/04 ENQUIRIES AND REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

In the County Councillor's absence there was no report and there were no enquiries of the County Councillor.

It was noted that there would be a new County Councillor next month and the Council looked forward to meeting their new representative.

Councillor Hobbs asked the Town Clerk to enquire when the road between Blackmoor Gate and Parracombe was to be resurfaced.

Councillor Hibbert reported that the surface of Lynmouth Hill was getting very bad in places and requested the Town Clerk to enquire when this was likely to be resurfaced and also when the damage to the road junction between Lynmouth Hill and Castle Hill would be repaired

332/04 REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST REPRESENTATIVE

Councillor Bowden had been unable to attend the last meeting but Councillor Parker had attended and there was no points to report.

Councillor Parker had attended a meeting with the District Council reference the Pavilion.

Councillor B Hobbs declared a prejudicial interest as he is the owner of the property next adjacent to the Pavilion. He left the room and did not take part in the debate or vote on same.

Councillor Mrs S Hibbert declared a prejudicial interest as she is the owner of a property in Lynmouth. She left the room and did not take part in the debate or vote on same.

Councillor J Travis declared a personal interest as he used to sell books in the Pavilion.

Councillor Parker reported that the Pavilion site was to be offered for sale through a local estate agent, 'to test the water' and see who would be interested in such a project. Exmoor National Park had stated that they 'would have a presence in Lynmouth' without committing themselves to the Pavilion site. Councillors asked if there would be any restrictions on what the site could be used for and if they would be allowed any input. Councillor Travis reported that he had also attended this meeting as District Councillor and had been given assurances that when the District Council were informed of the expression of interest, another meeting between the project partners would be called. He had also been assured that any funding that came from the lease, would come back into the community.

Councillor Prosser asked if a suitable location for the housing of the lifeboat had been found. Councillor Travis stated that the Memorial Hall had been proposed along with 2 offers for temporary storage.

Councillor Hibbert reported that she was meeting with North Devon district council as a member of the LCDT regarding their financing. It was noted that the accounts had now been approved by the Auditor. She also reported that Mrs Anne Thorne had done a wonderful job at Middleham Gardens and thanked Mrs Thorne for making another very attractive garden for Lynton & Lynmouth.

333/04 REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk reported that

1. He had seen a draft copy of the JCC Minutes to which he had suggested amendments and would ask North Devon to distribute the final minutes as a matter of urgency.
2. He reported on a spate of vandalism in Bottom Meadow by youths damaging the play equipment and a wall.
3. The goat issue was taking up a lot of his time, he had spent the last three days dealing with the press and correspondence. Councillor Travis felt that as so much time had been devoted to the goats, other work including the Quality Council which was very important, had been put back. He suggested that the Town Council should consider extending the Town Clerks hours to allow him to catch up with the quality Council work.
4. A meeting had taken place between Combe Martin Parish Council and Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council, representative from Brendon and

Parracombe had been invited but were unable to attend. He briefly outlined the contents of that meeting :

- A joint letter be written to Malcolm Wilkinson asking the Ilfracombe & Northern Rural Committee to reinstate the old forum meetings with Parish and Town councils.
- A letter to be sent to the Chairperson at South Molton & Barnstaple Town Councils indicating that they might like to consider requesting the same from their area committees.
- The possibility of revising the North Devon Association of Parish Councils
- A letter be sent to Devon County Council and other interested bodies asking for a meeting to consider the implications of signage for the new Downstream Bridge, in particular concern had been expressed at the implications of traffic diversions through Braunton.

RESOLVED

1. The Town Clerks hours to be discussed with recommendation to go to Personnel Committee.
2. A joint letter be written to Malcolm Wilkinson asking the Ilfracombe & Northern Rural Committee to reinstate the old forum.
3. A letter to be sent to the Chairperson at South Molton & Barnstaple Town Councils suggesting they might like to consider requesting the same from their Area committees.
4. A letter be sent to Devon County Council and other interested bodies stating the implications of signage for the new Downstream Bridge if all traffic diverted through Braunton.

334/04 REPORTS OF ANY OTHER COUNCILLORS

There were none

335/04 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business

**336/04 EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK PLANNING
RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were none

The meeting closed at 3.45pm

Chairman