

Lowestoft Town Council
Full Council Meeting
Waveney District Council offices at Riverside, 4 Canning Road NR33 0DE
6.30 pm on Thursday 16 August 2018

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Allyson Barron, Neil Coleby, Tracey Eastwood, Amanda Frost, Ian Graham (Chair), Peter Knight, Graham Parker and Keith Patience

In Attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were six members of the public present

366. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed.

367. To receive and consider acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Nasima Alam, Baz Bemment, Peter Byatt, Tara Carlton, Peter Collecott, Alan Green, Peter Lang, John Pitts and Alice Taylor. Cllrs June Ford and Dick Houghton were noted as absent as no apologies were received. Proposed by Cllr Barron; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

368. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Patience declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 370.1, as he is a representative on the Members' Board for Waveney District Council, in his position as a District Councillor.

Three members of the public arrived 18:33

369. Public Forum

The members of the public were offered copies of the agenda and maps for reference at item 370.1. They were invited to speak but no one wished to raise any matters at this stage. The Mayor advised that any queries or comments would be permitted during the meeting.

370. Consultations

370.1 The Local Boundary Commission for England consultation on draft recommendations on warding arrangements and numbers of councillors: *New electoral arrangements for East Suffolk Council*: <http://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Reviews/Eastern/Suffolk/East%20Suffolk/Draft%20Recs/East%20Suffolk%20Report%20web.pdf> – Cllr Patience attended a meeting of the Members' Board yesterday, to discuss the booklet which he had circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting; which provides an explanation as to how decisions were reached regarding the proposals. The Members' Board comprises representatives from Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council across several political parties. The proposals were discussed and it was commented that there seemed to be a lack of information relating specifically to the impact on Lowestoft Town Council and its electorate, and it would therefore be very difficult for Lowestoft Town Council to submit a robust response to the consultation without being presented with all the necessary information. It was queried that the number of Councillors for the Gunton ward may be reduced by one, but the future electorate could increase. It was suggested that a request be made to defer the closing date of the consultation of 27 August for more information to be requested and reviewed and for enquiries to be made for a representative from the Local Boundary Commission to attend a meeting to provide a presentation regarding the decisions and answer any questions. Lowestoft Town Council had

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previously been advised that no changes would be made to its ward boundaries. Cllr Patience provided contact details for a representative of the Local Boundary Commission for this to be discussed further. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Patience for all the information he had provided. The new Tom Crisp Parish was discussed but information regarding this had again not been provided with the paperwork received.

Cllr Parker proposed that the consultation be discussed now, but that a representative from the Local Boundary Commission be contacted to provide a presentation to the Council and more information regarding the specific impact on Lowestoft Town Council; seconded by Cllr Barnard. Before the vote took place, the Clerk advised that she had started to draft a response. This would ensure Lowestoft Town Council still had the opportunity to submit its comments, should the Local Boundary Commission decline the request to defer the closure date for responses. The draft response was read out to Councillors and reflects the feeling that insufficient and incorrect information has been provided and that Lowestoft Town Council was advised that boundaries would not be changing. The response also requests an extension of the deadline and for a representative from the Local Boundary Commission to attend a special Full Council meeting. It appears they may be referencing an out of date map and the maps displayed on their website are unclear. Some of the explanations around their decisions are also not clear and the concern has been raised as to the number of Councillors in the Gunton Ward. All Councillors then voted in favour of Cllr Parker's proposal. It is understood this will also impact the Neighbourhood Plan and the budget. It was queried how the criteria is decided with regard to which wards are split into sub-areas. Councillors would like to review this. It appears decisions have been reached with local knowledge, which is adversely affecting Lowestoft Town Council, particularly regarding the pairing of wards which appear to have very little in common.

A member of the public left the room 19:05

Cllr Graham proposed the submission of a request to defer the closure date for responses to the consultation, to request that the Local Boundary Commission provide a presentation to explain the reasoning behind their proposals, especially those that do not reflect the geography of Lowestoft, such as the pairing of areas and communities with very little in common; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

The member of the public returned 19:06

The response as outlined in the discussion is being submitted tomorrow. It has been amended to also include the comments Cllr Graham raised in his proposal. The response will state that Lowestoft Town Council is against the proposals but wants to work with the Local Boundary Commission to resolve the issues.

Cllr Parker proposed that a request be sent to the leader of Waveney District Council for he and/or Cllr Barnard, and the Clerk, to attend the Working Group meetings for the boundary changes; seconded by Cllr Graham; all in favour.

Cllr Coleby proposed that Lowestoft Town Council's response is also sent to the press, as well as the other parishes who are affected by the changes, as they may add their support to the Council's request for an extension to the deadline for the consultation; seconded by Cllr Graham; all in favour.

370.2 The consultation on the future of policing in Suffolk:

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/news/latest-news/17-07-2018/suffolk-constabulary-announces-its-blueprint-future-community-policing> - This could result in the loss of Police Community Support Officers, but the proposals state there will be an increased police presence on the streets. However, it is understood there will be no increase to the total number of officers, they will just be moved from other areas. A meeting is being held in Ipswich regarding this in the next couple of months. The police have advised they will not be attending individual Council meetings. Two members of the public spoke about the increased level of drug and violent

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crimes and gang culture in Lowestoft they have witnessed, particularly involving young people. The police have been advised on numerous occasions but it is felt that situations have not been adequately resolved, which has led to a loss of faith and lack of trust in the police. It also seems to be difficult to reach the police via the 101 telephone number and often contact details are taken but no follow-up is ever completed. The police have advised that they will be changing to more intelligence led policing but members of the public are reluctant to report crimes for fear of reprisals. Cllr Graham is meeting with a representative from the police on 21 August and will take these issues forward. The police have also suggested that Councillors could form a group with members of the public to look at crime hotspots and discuss potential solutions. Lowestoft Town Council's response to the consultation will outline that cuts have led to a reduction in service at a grass roots level, which is having a detrimental effect on communities. This has led in a loss of faith in the police and the service being provided. It also appears Ipswich is receiving more resources and Councillors would like to see more proactive policing. It was queried whether members of the public could also respond individually to the consultation. This is possible and the appropriate link will be made available on Lowestoft Town Council's website. It was also suggested that Peter Aldous MP should be made aware of Lowestoft Town Council's response. A public statement will be made to the press.

372. Date of the next meeting

4 September 19:30 – The first part of agenda may be in confidential session, as it is anticipated that a representative from Waveney District Council will be in attendance.

373. Items for the next agenda

No matters were raised for consideration.

374. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

There were no items for discussion in confidential session.

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:37

Signed:.....
4 September 2018