

Minutes of the inaugural meeting of Lowestoft Parish Council
held at 6.00 pm on Tuesday 16 May 2017 at Riverside, Canning Road, Lowestoft.

Present: Councillors Desmond Baldry, Allyson Barron, Nasima Begum, Baz Bemment, Neil Coleby, Tracey Eastwood, June Ford, Ian Graham, Alan Green, Peter Knight, Peter Lang, Bill Mountford, Keith Patience, Alice Taylor and Nick Webb.

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk), Sarah Foote (Support Officer), Stephen Baker (Chief Executive, Waveney District Council) (left 18.30), Brian Mew (Finance Support Officer) and Kelly Wigley (Waveney District Council)

Also present: Suffolk County Councillors and 11 members of the public.

The meeting had been convened by Stephen Baker. Prior to the start of the meeting Mr Baker welcomed the newly elected Councillors and gave an overview of how the election of Chair would be carried out. The Fire Evacuation Procedure was read.

1. Election of Chair

CLRs Nasima Begum, Desmond Baldry, Ian Graham, Alice Taylor and Peter Knight had all expressed an interest in being nominated for the position of Chair and provided brief personal details. Cllr Alice Taylor and Cllr Ian Graham were both duly proposed and seconded for the Chair. A vote took place and Cllr Ian Graham with eight votes was elected to the role of Chair of the Council. Cllr Alice Taylor received seven votes.

2. Cllr Graham duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Councillors and members of the public were reminded that in the interests of openness and transparency, the law permits filming, recording or other means of reporting at meetings. The Council's protocol for the recording of meetings was on display.

Cllr Graham read a tribute to Cllr Colin Law, Leader of Waveney District Council, who had sadly passed away. The meeting paused for a moment's silence to mark the passing of Cllr Colin Law.

4. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Graham Parker and accepted. It was noted that Cllr Parker had completed his Declaration of Acceptance of office.

5. Appointments of Vice Chair – Cllr Keith Patience and Cllr Alice Taylor both expressed an interest in the position of Vice Chair. Cllr Patience stated that his intention was to serve as Vice Chair for one year and he had no wish to become Chair. Both Councillors were proposed and seconded for this role. A vote took place and Cllr Patience was duly appointed with eight votes in favour. Cllr Taylor received six votes.

6. Declarations of Acceptance of Office were received from all Councillors ahead of the meeting and witnessed by the Proper Officer (Clerk).

7. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

The following declarations of interest were declared:

Cllr Alan Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13 – Council representation.

Cllr Graham declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13 – Council representation.

Cllr Alice Taylor declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13 – Council representation/board membership.

Cllrs were reminded to submit their election expenses forms. Cllrs had been provided with an electronic link to complete their Register of Interests which should be completed within 28 days.

8. The status of the Council

a. Among the comments made, Cllr Patience spoke against the option to change of status of the Council to Town Council naming the expenses of the mayoral role, officer time, and other priorities for the Council to focus on as reasons and Cllr Taylor spoke in favour stating that the Mayor would be the face of the Town Council and would help the electorate to understand the nature of the Town Council.

Cllr Ford proposed that the status of the Council be changed to Town Council. Cllr Taylor seconded this proposal which was agreed 13 votes in favour, one against and one abstention and as such the status Lowestoft Town Council was adopted.

b. The adoption of the status of Mayor for the Chair was debated. Cllr Lang proposed that there was not a Mayor, seconded by Cllr Patience and not agreed with four votes in favour, nine against, one abstention. It was proposed by Cllr Begum that the status of Mayor be adopted for the Chair of the Council. This was seconded Cllr Baldry and agreed with nine votes in favour, three against and three abstentions. It was noted that the

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new Council could debate and agree any mayoral budget. Cllr Ian Graham was therefore duly elected as Mayor of Lowestoft Town Council.

9. The civic regalia from the Lowestoft Charter Trustees was formally handed to the Town Council. Cllr Webb, as outgoing Mayor and Mary Rudd, outgoing Deputy Mayor of the Charter Trustees presented the civic regalia to the Mayor Cllr Graham and Deputy Mayor, Cllr Patience. Photographs were taken.

Cllr Webb spoke on his pride of being Mayor of Lowestoft for the last year. As Mayor, he had attended some 160+ events representing the town at various functions and wished the new Mayor all the very best.

The newly elected Mayor thanked Cllr Webb, and his predecessors, for all they had done for the town.

10. It was unanimously agreed to adopt the Council's Code of Conduct. It was noted that Councillors had been briefed on the Code of Conduct at their induction session.

11. The following vacancies remained on the Council and these could be filled by co-option.

Gunton Ward – one vacancy

Pakefield Ward – two vacancies

St Margaret's Ward – one vacancy

It was agreed that relevant public notices would be displayed and potential Councillors would be invited to attend future meetings. **ACTION:** Press to be informed, notices to be displayed. Future agenda item would be co-option to the Council.

12. Committee membership and terms of reference were unanimously agreed as follows:

Committee	Councillors	Comment
Finance and Governance	Alan Green, Allyson Barron, Peter Lang, Alice Taylor, Nasima Begum, Neil Coleby, Graham Parker (subject to his agreement) and The Mayor.	It was noted that any co-opted Councillors with an interest in Finance would be able to join the committee.
Personnel and sub-committee (to be appointed by the Committee once it meets)	Nasima Begum, Neil Coleby, Nick Webb, Graham Parker (subject to his agreement) and The Mayor.	It was noted that the decision for appointment of Permanent Clerk would be a full council decision.
Planning and Environment	Keith Patience, Allyson Barron, June Ford, Alan Green, Tracey Eastwood, Peter Knight, Alice Taylor, Desmond Baldry, Nasima Begum and Graham Parker (subject to his agreement)	
New Council Implementation	Desmond Baldry, Peter Knight, Allyson Barron, Keith Patience, Neil Coleby, Bill Mountford, June Ford and Graham Parker	After discussion it was agreed that the terms of reference would include to 'investigate and make recommendations on neighbourhood plan and to make recommendations on how the council manages its assets' would be the remit of this committee and not Planning and Environment.

18.54 Cllr Baldry briefly left the meeting and returned at 18.55.

13. Council Representation on other Bodies - All bodies on which the Charter Trustees had previously been represented had been contacted and a response was awaited to confirm if these bodies would like to have a Town Councillor on their membership. Comments included that these councillors would have to be active and represent the Town Council and attendance at meetings would be expected.

ACTION: Future agenda to include Council representation on other bodies. Protocol for representation to outside bodies to be written.

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14. The appointment of Shona Bendix as Clerk (Proper Officer) and Responsible Financial Officer under the interim arrangements with Suffolk Association of Local Councils was unanimously agreed.

15. Appointment of permanent Clerk. It was agreed that the Personnel Committee would progress this and make recommendations to full council for approval. **ACTION:** option papers to be compiled including, draft job descriptions and advertisements. Interim arrangements would remain in place until new permanent arrangements were in place.

16. The following governance documents were unanimously agreed for adoption: **ACTION:** Policies to be uploaded to website.

Title	Comment
Complaints Procedure	
Data Protection Policy	
Document Retention Policy	
Equality and Diversity Policy	
Financial Regulations	
Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme and availability schedule	
Grant Awarding Policy	
Health and Safety Policy	
Media Policy	
Member/Officer Protocol	
Public Participation Protocol	
Reporting at Meetings Policy	
Risk Assessment and Management Policy and Corporate Risk Assessment	
Standing Orders – an amendment was required at SO3 that meetings would start at 7.00 pm and be on the third Tuesday of the month. ACTION: Issue revised Standing Orders.	i. SO13E It was agreed that decisions on requests for dispensations would be delegated to the Proper Officer. ii. SO15Bi It was agreed that Councillors would be summoned via email to attend meetings. electronic summons agreed.
Training and Development Policy and initial programme.	

17. General Power of Competence – the Council declared that this was an eligible council to use the General Power of Competence; having two thirds elected Councillors and a qualified Clerk. Adoption of the General Power of Competence was therefore duly agreed.

18. Finance

a. The Council's budget was noted with Mr Mew providing a commentary on the pack of summary budget figures that the Councillors had been provided with for the meeting. These reports could be developed as the Finance Committee looked in detail at its finance and assets. Clarification was sought about what 'allowance' had been provided – Brian Mew explained a Precept of £1.4m had been arranged by the District Council. A question was also asked about why business rates were being charged on the parks. **ACTION:** Brian Mew would investigate. Brian Mew committed to ongoing financial officer support to the Town Council under interim arrangements and would attend Finance and Governance Committee meetings.

b. Expenditure to date was noted as £70,556 for April only. Mr Mew stated that he would be able to provide a report on a monthly basis to the Council. **ACTION:** Monthly financial reports to be provided.

c. Income to date was noted as including a receipt of £9,480 against an original budget figure of £7,543 from the Charter Trustees.

d. The Clerk provided a quotation for financial software but this was a significant sum of money suggested that a full paper would be provided to the Finance Committee for full consideration prior to purchase.

ACTION: To be carried forward to the agenda for the next meeting.

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- e. It was noted that the Parish Council had been registered with the ICO as a Data Controller and the related payment of £35.00 was approved. Legal Power for payment LGA 1972 s111.
- f. It was noted that a subscription had been paid for membership to the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (including National Association of Local Councils payment). **ACTION:** Councillors to be provided with website passwords to access documents and information from the SALC website. Legal Power for payment LGA 1972 s143.
- g. The Reorganisation Order was noted. The Order had given the Town Council a range of assets (as detailed in the Order) and these assets had been formally transferred to the Town Council. The Town Council duly adopted the assets and associated contractual transfers. It was agreed that clarity was required on the assets and the associated contractual transfers and how the Council fulfilled their duties in relation to them. **ACTION:** full asset register to be progressed and provided to Councillors and meetings would be arranged with Waveney District Council Officers to ascertain more details.
- h. Asset Transfer Paper was noted. As agreed above some further work was required on the detail relating to these assets.
- i. The ongoing contract arrangements for asset management were noted and were continuing for the time being with Waveney District Council. Assurances had been received from Waveney District Council that any problems with contract assignments would be addressed in consultation with the Council. **ACTION:** Full confidential contract information on future arrangement would be provided to Councillors. Arrangements would be made for contract review along with meetings with relevant Officers.
- j. The leaseback arrangements for assets under the Reorganisation Order was noted but, as with the item above. further discussions and information would be required.
- k. The arrangements for the ongoing maintenance of buildings was noted and would continue as under existing arrangements for the time being.
- l. It was noted that the Lowestoft Porcelain Collection was currently housed in the Broad House Museum in Oulton Broad. A new loan agreement needed to be put in place and was in the process of being worked up. It was unanimously agreed to delegate authority for the signing of the new agreement to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. **ACTION:** Loan agreement to be completed and signed.
- m. Insurance – it was noted that the mandatory insurance arrangements were in place and further discussion would be needed in a confidential session to confirm future insurance arrangements.
- n. It was agreed that Unity Trust would be appointed as the Town Council's bankers.
- o. It was agreed that the Town Council would operate with internet banking.
- p. It was agreed that a short-term savings account would be set up with the Debt Management Office. **ACTION:** Clerk to set up account as a temporary solution pending the Town Council deciding its longer-term arrangements. Clerk to provide paper on options for savings accounts to a future Finance Committee.
- q. It was noted that the Town Council would need to consider its own investment strategies in relation to permanent savings accounts. **ACTION:** Options and issues paper to be provided to a future Finance Committee.
- r. It was agreed that Mr Mew of Waveney District Council would continue to provide financial support to the Town Council in the short term.
- s. It was agreed to appoint the Clerk, Shona Bendix, as Responsible Financial Officer, Brian Mew of Waveney District Council as the Supporting Finance Officer and these two individuals would act as administrative signatories with Sarah Foote as a substitute signatory. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of Finance and two members of the Finance Committee would be appointed as signatories and it was agreed that the two members who would act as signatories would be Cllrs Begum and Taylor. Two signatures would be required on all financial transactions. **ACTION:** Financial Regulations to be amended to include arrangement for signatories as agreed above.
- t. It was noted that the VAT registration was being processed and Mr Mew explained one query needed to be dealt with to finalise the registration that would be backdated to 1 April 2017.
- u. The availability of s106 funding for play improvement in Normanston was noted.

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19. Public Forum

The Chairman of Lowestoft in Bloom reported that they needed to make a decision by a month yesterday about representation from the Town Council. Any representative would have to be available to attend meetings and take an active part in the group's work. **ACTION:** protocol for representation to outside bodies to be written as agreed at item 13 and accepted by Councillors when appointments to outside bodies were made.

Cllr James Reeder (also Lowestoft and Waveney Chamber of Commerce) and Keith Robinson, Craig Rivett from Pakefield, the newly elected County Councillors wished the new Council well and offered their support.

20. Annual Meeting of the Electors would take place on 1 June. This would be a meeting of the town but facilitated by the Town Council. There would be a meet your Town Councillor opportunity and the Third Crossing project would make a presentation.

Cllr Patience had publicised this meeting in particular to *Ponda*, *Lowestoft Vision*, and *the Chamber of Commerce*. It was agreed that community organisations, such as the Church, Faith Groups and Tourist industry should be invited to attend and give a report. **ACTION:** Councillors to email the Clerk with suggestions of Lowestoft organisations to be invited to present at the meeting.

21. Programme of meetings – to be provided by the Clerk and there was agreement the full Council would meet on the third Tuesday of every month and committee meetings would be arranged subject to meeting room availability. **ACTION:** Clerk to arrange meetings.

22. Date of next meetings: 20 June 2017. **ACTION:** Clerk to confirm venues and book accordingly.

23. Agenda items for next meeting were requested as:

Community engagement - how would the new Council consult with the electorate.

The Clerk confirmed that the website would now go live. Councillors would be provided with individual Town Council (.gov.uk) email addresses.

24. At 20.14 it was proposed and agreed that Pursuant to the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960 the meeting was closed to the public and press. The Chair invited Kelly Wigley and Brian Mew of Waveney District Council to join the meeting. The Mayor requested that all future confidential papers be printed on a different colour paper (not white).

a. Contract proposals for management of assets - it was unanimously agreed that Waveney District Council contract arrangements, for a minimum period of three months, renewable monthly, would continue (as per the terms in the confidential paper provided) giving the Town Council the opportunity to review the contract and ensure ongoing management and compliance at those facilities. **ACTION:** Clerk to confirm this resolution to Waveney District Council and progress the contract for the Town Council.

b. Contract proposals for s.106 expenditure by Waveney District Council – new play space for Normanston Park would be funded, from design through to delivery and installation from the s.106 fund but was deadline sensitive. It was unanimously agreed to give approval for a project delivery plan to be developed and brought to a future meeting. **ACTION:** Agenda item for next meeting would be consideration of the project delivery plan. Cllr Alan Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

c. Transferred contract for interim Clerking support – it was noted that the details of this contract would be included in the Waveney District Council recharge to the Town Council. As from 16 May the contract would be directly between the SALC and the Town Council.

d. Contract arrangements for financial support – it was noted that the details of this contract would be included in the Waveney District Council recharge to the Town Council.

e. Contract arrangements for insurance – the quotation for the insurances which needed to be in place for 1 June was considered and the Clerk reported the additional items which still needed to be included in the premium. It was unanimously agreed to commit to a premium of up to £30,000 (policy to run to 31 March 2018). **ACTION:** Clerk to confirm insurance arrangements and be given delegated powers to take necessary action prior to the next meeting to ensure Council has the appropriate insurance in place from 1 June 2017. Any action taken and full premium would be reported at the next Council meeting. The insurance expenditure is under legal power LGA 1972 s111, s114 and s140(i).

20.33 The Mayor asked if the Council were content to suspend Standing Order 3W and for the meeting to continue. As there was unanimous agreement for this, the meeting continued.

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20.39 Cllr Keith Patience left the meeting.

Triangle Market – Kelly Wigley reported that Waveney District Council had a process for the submission of applications to hold events on Council owned land. An application had been received, at short notice, to hold a 'flea market' at the Triangle Market which was now owned by the Town Council. After debate about the lateness of the application and the need for full and proper procedures being followed, including consultation with other authorities, it was agreed that the event on 21 May and 18 June could proceed subject to insurance confirmation being received (in the correct name as previously supplied document did not match applicant name) and that full event details and risk assessment were submitted by Friday 19 May. A deposit of £300 would be required but there would be no charge for the market to take place on these two dates **ACTION:** Kelly Wigley and Clerk to confirm arrangements with event organiser. **ACTION:** Agenda item for next meeting would be consideration of event charges and booking procedures.

20.48 Councillor Mountford left the meeting.

Details of the construction work at the rear of the Town Hall site and that work was due to recommence in four to six weeks were noted. The developer currently had a licence to store materials on land that was owned by Waveney District Council and now transferred to Lowestoft Town Council. The licence was due to expire at the end of May. There was unanimous agreement that the licence should be extended. **ACTION:** Clerk to, in conjunction with Waveney District Council Officers, to ensure the licence was issued.

Meeting closed: 20.57.

Signed

Town Mayor

Date