

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:00 on 10 January 2019

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Allyson Barron, Neil Coleby, Ian Graham, Alan Green (Chair), Graham Parker and Alice Taylor

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk), James Cox (Communications Assistant) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were four members of the public in attendance

408. Welcome

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

409. To receive and consider acceptance of apologies for absence

No apologies had been received. Cllr Alam had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Coleby proposed noting of the absence; seconded by Cllr Graham; all in favour.

410. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

The Clerk, Communications Assistant and Committee Clerk declared a pecuniary interest in item 423.1.

411. To consider the accuracy of the Minutes:

13 December 2018 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

412. Public Forum

None of the members of the public in attendance wished to speak.

The members of the public were in attendance to hear the Committee's decision on grant applications which had been submitted, so it was agreed to discuss item 416.5 at this point in the meeting.

416.5 Consideration of any grant applications, including:

416.5a Allsorts Support Services CIC and Allsorts Community for £2,000 – This exceeds the usual £500 limit for grant applications but Councillors were impressed with the application and could see no issues with the project.

Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the grant application from Allsorts Support Services CIC and Allsorts Community for £2,000.

416.5b Gunton Community News for £500 – Cllr Graham proposed approval of the grant application from Gunton Community News for £500, on the condition that the funding from Lowestoft Town Council is acknowledged in the first issue of the magazine; seconded by Cllr Barron; all in favour.

416.5c Further information from Lowestoft Boxing Academy regarding a previous grant application for £2,000 – Further information has been received, upon request of the Finance and Governance Committee at the previous meeting. It was confirmed that there is a constitution and appropriate insurance, and the founder of the academy has had a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the grant application from Lowestoft Boxing Academy for £2,000; seconded by Cllr Graham; all in favour.

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An invitation was also extended to the Lowestoft Boxing Academy for the Annual Assembly of the Town. The Committee Clerk will send further details of this with the formal approval of the grant application.

416.5d – Further information from the Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association regarding a previous grant application for £500 – Further information was provided upon request of the Committee at the previous meeting. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the grant application from the Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association for £500; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

The members of the public left the meeting 18:40

413. Consideration of risk management and compliance, including the following:

413.1 Compliance – A report of the interim internal audit was circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting, along with a recommended action plan from the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). In May, the Annual Return will need to be considered, however this will coincide with the elections, which means that there will potentially be at least some new Councillors at this point. Advance preparation was therefore recommended. Thanks were offered to staff for their work which led to the positive report, and particularly to the Communications Assistant for assisting the Internal Auditor.

Cllr Coleby proposed noting of the internal audit report and a recommendation to Full Council to implement the RFO's action plan; seconded by Cllr Graham; all in favour.

413.2 Condition Surveys – There was a reminder for Councillors who have not already done so to read the condition survey for the Marina Theatre.

414. Noting of any updates on banking

It was noted that the service charges being applied to the bank account have increased. On 30 June 2018 it was £28.50. On 30 September it was £31.65, and on 31 December it was £39. This is being monitored. A 30p charge has been introduced for depositing cheques and there is now a 50p charge for every £100 worth of cash deposited.

With regard to bank signatories, Cllr Parker's access has been suspended and removed at his request. It has been confirmed that the current active signatories are Cllrs Ian Graham, Alan Green, Peter Knight and Alice Taylor. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk can prepare payments for authorisation and the Communications Assistant can view the account. The bank signatories will be reviewed at the Annual Meeting.

The Clerk has been researching further investment options for the funds returned from the Debt Management Office account. It was agreed that CCLA and Unity Trust presented the most favourable options. It was suggested that a basic linked savings account could also be set up. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council to set up a savings account with CCLA or Unity Trust, depending on further research regarding charges and interest rates; seconded by Cllr Graham; all in favour.

415. Budget:

415.1 Monitoring of the budget for 2018-19 and note any bank reconciliations – It was noted that a bank reconciliation was completed on 7 January. There were no updates to report on the 2018-19 budget from the last Full Council meeting, other than the addition of the December payments. It was requested that areas of significant variation be highlighted and reported at February's Finance and Governance Committee meeting.

415.2 Consideration of progress with the 2019-20 budget – With regard to the loan option, it has been confirmed that a maximum of £500,000 per year can be accessed. A repayment schedule over ten years was displayed to Councillors at the meeting. It has been calculated to avoid any

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large increases to the precept over the course of the repayment period. It was agreed that an explanation of the options and their impact on the precept would be produced tomorrow and circulated to Councillors. If necessary a Budget Working Group meeting could be arranged following this.

415.3 Consideration of progress with the Council decision on a loan for capital works, including for the Marina Theatre, Town Hall and Denes Oval – This was covered by the discussion of the previous item.

416. Payments:

416.1 Noting of any payments made (schedule) – There were no payments to note.

416.2 Consideration of any payments for authorisation – These were displayed as follows:

Person	Amount	Details
Norfolk County Council	£1000.00	AAT Level 2 Training Course
The Bugle Magazine	£184.00	The Lowestoft Bugle January 2019

There had previously been an agreement by Full Council to make the payment for the Council's information page in The Bugle for 2019. However, due to developments, which will be discussed in further detail during the confidential session, an invoice for January alone has been submitted instead, for the article which has already been submitted for the January issue.

Funds are available in the training budget for the AAT Level 2 Training Course, which the Communications Assistant has already completed.

CLlr Coleby proposed approval of the payments to Norfolk County Council and The Bugle magazine; seconded by CLlr Graham; all in favour.

Lowestoft Town Council is reviewing its utilities providers via an open procurement process. The Facilities and Contracts Manager (FCM) has put together a spreadsheet of existing costs across the Council's assets and has obtained quotes from other providers. This information was displayed to Councillors at the meeting. For water and for sewerage there is only the option of one provider for each. For gas and electricity, Bulb provided the most cost effective option. They also supply 100% renewable electricity and 10% green gas.

CLlr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council to select Bulb as the gas and electricity supplier; seconded by CLlr Taylor; all in favour.

416.3 Any other payments (schedule) – There were two scheduled payments, as detailed below:

Date	Person	Amount	Details
14 th January 2019	HMRC	£4055.10	December PAYE
21 st January 2019	Public Works Loan Board	£7390.00	Loan Repayment for Marina Theatre Box Office Repayment

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These were noted.

416.4 Noting of the petty cash log:

Amount	Details	Income/Expenditure	Balance
£180	Payments from Waveney Norse re leisure fees	Income	£180
£16.75	25 first class stamps	Expenditure	£163.25

An updated petty cash log was provided as follows:

Date	Details	Cash In	Cash Out	Balance
11/12/18	Sports/Leisure Till Money	£180.00		£180.00
11/12/18	25 x 1 st Class Stamps		£16.75	£163.25
23/11/18	6 x 2 nd Class Stamps		£3.48	£159.77
4/12/18	Envelopes		£4.99	£154.78
4/12/18	20 x 2 nd Class Stamps		£11.60	£143.18
17/12/18	Milk and Coffee		£5.58	£137.60
3/1/19	Coffee		£4.47	£133.13
3/1/19	Stamps		£6.96	£126.17
7/1/19	Triangle Market Income	£18.00		£144.17
10/1/19	Tea/Coffee/Sugar Canister		£6.00	£138.17

Councillors had previously agreed to a £100 rolling balance, with a maximum of £500 for the year. Expenditure is to be in line with delegations given to the Clerk. Lowestoft Town Council's Financial Regulations specify a rolling balance of £250. £180 was received in the office unexpectedly from Waveney Norse from leisure fees and this was put into petty cash rather than deposited in the bank, due to the recently introduced charges which were discussed earlier. Waveney Norse also now deliver the rental income from the Triangle Market to the office every Monday, which is approximately £18 per week.

Cllr Coleby left the room 19:25

A proposed amendment to the Financial Regulations was displayed at the meeting, should Councillors agree to increase the rolling balance and authorise the payment of the money from Waveney Norse into petty cash.

Cllr Coleby returned 19:26

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The Clerk has produced a petty cash policy and procedure and explained the petty cash vouchers. The voucher will be kept with the corresponding receipt and the policy and procedure will be updated to reflect this if it does not already. Cllr Coleby will reconcile the money in the tin against the receipts and the bank signatories will check the receipts, vouchers and log.

Cllr Barron proposed a recommendation to Full Council for the approval of the addition of the money from Waveney Norse to petty cash, increasing the rolling balance to £250 and the adoption of the petty cash policy and procedure; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

416.5 Consideration of any grant applications, including:

416.5a Allsorts Support Services CIC and Allsorts Community for £2,000 – This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

417. Consideration of the following items relating to income:

417.1 Receipts – The only income received thus far in January was from Waveney Norse, as detailed in the petty cash log.

417.2 CiL and S.106 payments – Statutory information regarding CiL is published on the website as required. CiL money has been received and discussions are being held with Sentinel Leisure regarding the Council's wishes for expenditure. Full Council have previously agreed expenditure for public conveniences at Sparrows Nest and Fen Park, using S.106 money (and CiL money if necessary).

417.3 Any updates on any financial funding streams affecting Council assets – The first half of the grant funding for the Town Hall has been received. Purcell have been appointed as the contractor. Cllrs Coleby, Taylor and the Clerk are completing a site visit with Purcell and Historic England on 14 January.

417.4 Capital programme – There were no updates to consider.

417.5 Management of the Historic England grant for the Town Hall – This was covered by earlier discussions.

418. Consideration of any progress with the lease for the first floor of Hamilton House

Lowestoft Town Council has submitted its final comments, but has not yet received a response. The Clerk will ask the Council's solicitors to follow this up.

All Councillors voted in favour of moving the meeting into confidential session at this stage.

419. Legal:

419.1 An update on any relevant legal issues (confidential) – A confidential paper regarding The Bugle magazine was handed to Councillors at the meeting.

Cllr Graham proposed that, following the earlier decision to pay January's invoice, no further payments are made following this, to be considered again following the elections in May; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

There was an update regarding the legal dispute with Waveney District Council. Cllrs Graham and Green declared a local non-pecuniary interest in this item. The Committee discussed the issue and agreed the most appropriate course of action to be taken forward with Waveney District Council.

Cllr Taylor proposed Cllrs Coleby and Graham meeting with representatives from Waveney District Council; seconded by Cllr Barron; all in favour.

419.2 Consideration of the budgetary implications of the 2019/20 Waveney Norse contract (confidential) – It was previously agreed by Full Council that the Real Living Wage would be applied to its staff. However, with regard to Waveney Norse, the minutes refer to the Living Wage and not the Real Living Wage.

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Cllr Graham proposed a recommendation to Full Council to apply the Real Living Wage to contractual arrangements; seconded by Cllr Coleby; five Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.

Clarification is being sought from Waveney Norse regarding figures they have provided.

419.3 Consideration of the CCTV contract with Waveney Norse (confidential) – The CCTV Committee is meeting on 16 January.

419.4 Consideration of a lease for the Lowestoft Tennis Association and other clubs (confidential) – The Deputy Clerk has been looking to obtain a standard lease the Council can use. It is understood there may be an existing lease with one of the clubs. The Clerk will look into this.

420. Consideration of other financial matters including

420.1 Planned and urgent works on assets – Repair work is required at Kensington Gardens. It was queried whether such work would be covered by insurance and whether the Council should go through a tender process and select an approved builder for works such as this. The Clerk will discuss this further with the FCM. It was suggested that work should be completed in time for the First Light Festival.

420.2 Commemorative plaques – Cllr Coleby is progressing this and will be producing a paper to present to the Council.

420.3 A report regarding adult outdoor gym equipment – This was discussed by the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee at their meeting on 7 January and it was agreed that at least three companies should be invited to give further information and proposals to the Committee.

420.4 Further investment of the sum of £300,434.71 transferred from the Debt Management Office account to the current account – This was already covered by discussions earlier in the meeting.

421. Date of the next meeting

12 February 2019 18:00

422. Items for the next Agenda

There were no items raised for discussion.

423. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

423.1 Any employment matters –

The Communications Assistant and Committee Clerk left the room 20:08

It was confirmed the Clerk did not need to leave the room as there were no matters for discussion which affected her. Changes to the Committee Clerk and Communication Assistant's terms and conditions were noted.

The Communications Assistant and Committee Clerk returned 20:11

423.2 Any legal matters, including those listed with item **419** above – There were no further matters for discussion.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:12

Signed:

12 February 2019