

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 21 November 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks (Chair), Peter Lang, Graham Parker and Andy Pearce, plus non-Councillor members Deborah Ray, Rachel Bunn and John Sillett

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were two members of the public in attendance (one via zoom and one in person)

95. Welcome

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

96. Approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Page with reasons provided. Cllr LeGrice was absent with no reasons provided.

Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of apologies; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

97. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

97.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda.

Cllr Pearce declared a registerable interest in items 103 and 104 as a representative of the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership. Cllr Barker declared an interest in items 103 and 104 as a volunteer and member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Cllr Brooks also declared she is a member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and interest in item 101 as a former member of the Environment and Waste Group.

97.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted.

None received.

98. The draft minutes of the meeting on 17 October 2022

Cllr Barker proposed acceptance; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

99. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public.

It was decided to bring item 106 forward in the meeting.

106. To consider how the Planning Committee should incorporate climate issues in its decision making

This item was brought forward and the member of the public was invited to speak. The member of the public commented that there was no record on a prior Planning Committee meeting of considering biodiversity with regards to the McDonald's application. It was noted that the area considered was near a county wildlife site and that the climate crisis can be mitigated by enhanced biodiversity, therefore it is important to conserve biodiversity and particularly to restore ecological links between wildlife sites. The Committee considered that the issue of no record being made of considerations for biodiversity could be raised with the Planning Committee in relation to the statutory obligation of what is recorded in minutes and considerations could be given on biodiversity concerns being recorded.

It was queried if other applications, such as from residential areas for extensions into gardens, should be reviewed with consideration for biodiversity. The member of the public confirmed

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that mature, large gardens were important for biodiversity. It was confirmed areas are assessed on where to protect and recreate habitats as well as land connected to wildlife sites as many sites aren't self-sustainable. It was queried if the Town Council could receive general advice on what should be considered when reviewing applications and advice on how gardens integrate with the wider environment when reviewing applications that are received from residents.

It was confirmed Suffolk Biological Information Service (SBIS) verify the quality of a site and provide a biodiversity check list for applicants to determine if any biodiversity features are present that would require a report. The Committee queried if East Suffolk Council (ESC) would share those reports if the Committee requested visibility. It was suggested James Mayer, the Ecologist for East Suffolk Council, be contacted for advice.

100. To monitor expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority

It was confirmed there has been no spending since the last meeting.

101. To consider any matters to raise with Cllr James Mallinder (East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment) and/or the Environment and Waste Group, and to receive feedback on any matters previously raised, including the following:

101.1.A request from Full Council to further consider proposals from the Environment and Waste Working Group regarding a bulky waste collection service – It was confirmed the Committee approved this and Full Council had sent it back to reconsider. It was confirmed the initial costings for a one year free trial, with one collection a week, totalled £15-20,000 and that the proposal requested funding from the Climate budget, with the conditions to request a discount or waive the handling fees at the County Council depot and for the Council to agree on the criteria for measuring the outcome and success of the trial. It was confirmed if Suffolk County Council did not agree to the request or if the measurement criteria couldn't be agreed then either the trial would not proceed or a new proposal would be submitted with an increased budget. It was suggested that if the proposal does go back to Full Council with a recommendation then the above confirmations needed to be clear in the presentation. It was clarified the proposal required approval from the Town Council, who is funding the trial, and Suffolk County Council as the owner of the recycling depot who can waive or discount the handling fee as a community benefit.

Cllr Parker noted that the Environment and Waste Working Group (E&W Group) sent a letter to the Town Clerk with queries on how the success of the bulky waste service would be monitored and that the E&W Group are prepared to approach Suffolk County Council on Lowestoft Town Council's behalf to get an agreement to waive the £100 charge. E&W Group also wanted to ask the Committee to consider adding Whitton to the trial period. It was agreed that the trial should apply across the entire parish.

Cllr Pearce proposed to seek conditional approval from Full Council for the trial to be run across the parish, subject to two conditions of waiving the handling fee at the recycling centre and the Council agreeing on a monitoring and measurement criteria, with a deferred commencement date of April 2023, to allow the Town Council and E&W Group to collaborate and clarify these conditions and if unable to reach agreements on the conditions, then the proposal either does not progress or is amended and re-budgeted. Seconded by Cllr Brooks. All in favour.

101.2.Further information regarding the pollution risk warning issued by the Environment

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Agency for the area north of the Claremont Pier – The Town Clerk confirmed the risk was temporary and likely caused by a run off from drains and livestock, and the agency were continuing to monitor the bacteria levels with the north and south of Claremont Pier passing the checks. It was remarked that the site is a regeneration area close to a conservation area. Cllr Lang proposed contacting those responsible for communicating the pollution risk warnings and request they specify the exact areas that are affected. The Town Clerk confirmed staff can enquire about this. Cllr Pearce added to request feedback on what actions are taken to ensure prevention; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

The Town Clerk noted new legislature was being planned to control sewage discharge into the sea, Cllr Brooks proposed a delegation to the Town Clerk to write to Peter Aldous MP to exert pressure to have this legislature brought forward; seconded Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

101.3. Requesting water bottle refill stations along the seafront, including to consider advice from the Town Council's Health and Safety Consultant – It was noted ESC had confirmed if the refill stations were installed on their land the Council needed to specify the locations for the stations and how it will be managed. Cllr Lang proposed approval and delegation to staff in conjunction with members of this Committee and Planning Committee to select the locations and send documentation to ESC; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

101.4. Requesting recycling bins along the seafront – It was confirmed this is being requested of ESC as the site is not Town Council land. It was suggested there be educational notices to advise people to dispose of waste in these bins. Cllr Parker proposed a delegation to staff to write to ESC requesting recycling bins and general bulky waste disposal bins and educational signage; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

102. To receive an update regarding liaison with Peter Aldous MP on Lowestoft's Blue Flag status

It was confirmed there was no further information or update of the blue flag status. Cllr Pearce suggested, as writing to Petr Aldous MP concerning 101.2, to include a request for an update on the blue flag status. Cllr Parker proposed this communication also include a request for support for item 101.4 to have recycling bins and signage on the seafront; seconded Cllr Lang; voted six for and one against.

Cllr Barker left the chamber at 16:59

103. To consider the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership Agreement

To be discussed in confidential.

104. To receive a written report from the 'Seabirds on the Move' Urban Kittiwake Conference

To be discussed in confidential

105. To receive feedback from the Coastal Partnership East Conference and to consider the Town Council's involvement

Cllr Brooks proposed this item be deferred which was agreed by the Committee.

106. To consider how the Planning Committee should incorporate climate issues in its decision making

This item was brought forward to the start of the meeting.

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107. To note the need for repairs to the Kensington Gardens boating lake, prior to it being refilled

It was confirmed there was an issue raised on the use of tarmac with regards to the climate. Cllr Pearce suggested if there was a climate view on the use of tarmac then the Committee needed to understand alternative materials without delaying repairs in the interim. Cllr Pearce proposed this specific repair using tarmac goes to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee or to Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to progress under the current Town Council approach with an item on December's agenda to consider the use of tarmac as part of the net zero goal, what alternatives are available and how to transition to them with advice from the Facilities Maintenance Officer. Seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

108. To consider any methods of water conservation, including to receive advice from the Town Council's Health and Safety Consultant

It was confirmed the Town Clerk was reviewing the production methods and sustainability alongside the effect of chlorine on pipework and if it will affect the longevity of products used. It was agreed this item be on December's agenda pending information received from staff.

109. To consider joining the Nuclear Free Local Authorities network

It was noted that waste disposal issues are part of the ecological emergency. It was suggested this item be deferred to the next meeting and have a debate with the participation of the Chair of this Committee who requested this item be on the agenda. It was suggested the Committee requested representatives from the nuclear industry and experts against nuclear energy provide a brief to the Committee. Rachel Bunn confirmed she can bring in a representative from EDF to provide a presentation for discussion and that moving forward the Council would need to consider any decision and its impact on the community and supply chain on employers in Lowestoft. Cllr Parker proposed external representatives to present arguments for and against nuclear energy are brought in for a zoom meeting in January 2023, with a delegation to staff to bring in these contacts. Staff will liaise with Rachel Bunn for contacts from EDF and Deborah Ray for contacts at UEA. It was agreed to have the zoom meeting before the Climate meeting with all Councillors invited to attend; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

The Town Clerk confirmed the Nuclear Free network will be contacted to clarify the fee of the network and a list of their current members.

110. To consider environmental aspects of the specification for surfaces in open spaces

As this was connected to the tarmac issue, it was agreed this item be deferred.

111. Date of the next meeting

19 December 2022 15:30

112. Items for the next agenda and close

It was requested any items further to what was discussed be emailed in to staff.

113. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 17:26

Cllr Parker left the chamber at 17:27

17:30 Cllr Brooks proposed to suspend standing orders for five minutes; seconded by Cllr Lang; all

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in favour.

103. To consider the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership Agreement

104. To receive a written report from the 'Seabirds on the Move' Urban Kittiwake Conference

Cllr Pearce confirmed details of the report will be circulated and suggested an update is provided at the December meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:38

Signed:
19 December 2022