

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 21 August 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Janet Craig, Paul Page (Chair), Deborah Ray (Deputy Chair) and non-Councillor member John Sillett

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

Public: One member of the public was in attendance (in person)

53. Welcome

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

54. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Barker, Pearce and Ms Bunn with reasons provided. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Craig; all in favour.

55. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

55.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Brooks declared she was a financial contributor and supporter for Stop Sizewell C. Cllr Craig declared she was an East Suffolk Councillor.

55.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – There had been no requests for dispensations.

56. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 17 July 2023

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the draft minutes and confidential note; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

57. 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 – No advanced comments had been received and no comments were made by members of the public in attendance.

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

Expenditure was reported to the Committee and there were no comments.

59. To consider any matters to raise with Cllr Rachel Smith-Lyte (Cabinet Member for the Environment) or Cllr Caroline Topping (East Suffolk Council Leader with responsibility for Parish Liaison) and/or the Environment and Waste Group, and to receive feedback on any matter previously raised including the following:

59.1. An update on the cleaning arrangements for London Road North –The Committee noted that the streets looked cleaner, possibly due to the departure of the kittiwakes, and were pleased with the letter received from East Suffolk Council in response to the concerns raised and the state of the street would continue to be monitored. Cllr Brooks requested an update be received on the bulky waste trial in confidential session.

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60. To consider the following items on the agenda:

60.1. To consider the following in relation to the Earth Protector Town Status of Lowestoft Town Council and relevant actions:

60.1a. Lowestoft's plastic-free commitment, per the Earth Protector Town requirements -The Plastic Free Community would attempt to contact the named website lead for Lowestoft and if unsuccessful would appoint the Town Council as the lead. A steering group needed to be created as per the Earth Protector Town requirements and Cllr Brooks suggested to involve the Greenprint Forum as part of the network. Cllr Brooks proposed to work with the Greenprint Forum and other bodies as part of the Town Council's pledge to reduce plastic; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.
An item was requested for Full Council in September for the Town Council to join the Greenprint Forum.

60.2. To consider Lowestoft Town Council's draft Climate Action Plan and relevant actions:

60.2a. Review changes to the Climate Change Draft Action Plan – Changes requested at the previous meeting had been added to item GM10 on the plan, with an additional note on fires added at this meeting.

In the event of fires in open spaces, the member of public in attendance queried the provision of fire evacuation points and procedures, which the Clerk confirmed would be handled by the District and County Council as per their emergency plans. A suggestion was made for a representative from the fire brigade to speak with the Town Council on actions to be taken in the event of fires or floods. The Communications Officer was already working to increase the Town Council's preparation for emergency situations and develop the emergency and business continuity plan by liaising with the Emergency Planning Officer for the area. An update would be provided to the Committee on the emergency procedures.

Cllr Page proposed the Climate Change Action Plan be recommended to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

60.2b. Discuss how to update the 2019 Carbon Report – The work to increase efficient energy performance was being progressed in conjunction with the review of energy suppliers and works for building improvements, for which quotes need to be obtained.

Cllr Ray suggested Groundwork Norfolk be engaged to either review the 2019 Greenhouse Gas Report or produce a new report from 2022 onwards as some figures were not consistent in the 2019 report, so that the Town Council has the data to monitor the progress of achieving net zero by 2030. The Clerk explained that new assessments would be costly and risked repeating existing data, therefore it would be beneficial to keep the 2019 report as a monitoring document and prioritise actions that can be undertaken such as engagement of specialists for air source heat pumps and solar energy to assess the buildings. Cllr Ray proposed the Greenhouse Gas Report 2019 be reviewed every year from 2024 onwards; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

60.3. To consider the natural environment with regards to LTC parks and open spaces and relevant actions:

60.3a. Methods to avoid light pollution in parks and buildings – A New Landscape Lighting Design guide had been published by Coast and Heaths and was provided to the Committee. Cllr Brooks proposed to endorse the document and send it to Lowestoft Town Council Planning Committee for review and recommend it to East Suffolk Council Planning for considerations in planning applications; seconded by Cllr Ray who suggested the red lights mentioned in the report be considered in the parks; all in favour.

60.4. To consider issues relating to the energy and water supply of the built environment of

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Lowestoft and relevant actions:

- 60.4a. The Town Council's ethical stance regarding its energy supply – The company needed to be fully renewable whilst also being a robust company at no risk of closure. It was agreed to arrange a delegation to officers to obtain quotes from a company to be selected in confidential session and recommended to Full Council for consideration.
- 60.4b. Receive an update on the water refill scheme of Lowestoft Vision – Lowestoft Vision had been contacted and confirmed they would re-send information on the scheme via their newsletter.
- 60.4c. Receive an update on the provision of water bottle refill stations including the following:
 - 60.4ci. Provision of the stations on the seafront, town centre and owned parks - Cllr Brooks proposed to progress the installation of refill stations with MIW Water Cooler Experts with Fen Park and Normanston Park to be the pilot sites; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour. If the site visits with MIW conclude that the suggested sites are not feasible for water supply, then alternative sites would be assessed and brought back to the Committee.

The Clerk confirmed that the estimated cost of the refill stations, their installation and relevant water works would be £8,000, due to be allocated from the Water Improvements budget, for which appropriate delegations would be needed to progress on the selected sites.

Cllr Brooks proposed a delegation to officers to progress the refill stations, in conjunction with this Committee, with a maximum budget of £7,500 per this Committee's financial delegation; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour. A suggestion was made to raise the installation of a refill station at the beach with Cllr Rachel Smith-Lyte per item 59.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 16:35

- 60.4cii. An update on the possibility of Essex and Suffolk Water funding the water stations - As Essex & Suffolk Water were involved in the refill scheme and its promotion in Essex it was queried if they could be approached for funding the refill stations. The Clerk confirmed officers could query if they would promote and work with Lowestoft on the refill scheme and refill stations.

Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 16:37

- 60.4d. Receive an update on water storage in parks – Further information was required on costs to include water storage in the Town Council's annual checks. Advice had been sought from Suffolk Wildlife Trust whilst Greener Suffolk and Essex and Suffolk Water had been approached again for advice.
- 60.4e. The provision of balanced information on Sizewell C in Councillor Updates communications – Cllr Brooks noted that information from Stop Sizewell C had not been circulated as quickly as information from sources such as Sizewell EDF and had requested a balanced approach, which the Clerk noted and apologised for the oversight from the office.
- 60.5. To consider issues relating to waste and pollution and relevant actions:
 - 60.5a. Receive an update regarding liaison with Peter Aldous MP and East Suffolk Council on Lowestoft's Blue Flag status – As requested from the previous meeting, Cllrs Caroline Topping and Rachel Smith-Lyte had been contacted and Cllr Smith-Lyte confirmed she

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would make enquiries on how to assist with this. It was agreed to no longer have this as a standing item with updates to be provided once received.

- 60.6. To consider public transport and alternative methods of travel and relevant actions:
- 60.6a. The provision of bicycle storage at various locations to encourage cycling amongst those unable to store bicycles at home – The feasibility of bicycle storage hangers was queried, and the Clerk noted that bicycle racks were preferable due to the environmental resources required for such storage, alongside other issues such as the cost and the storage only being an advantage to those living close to the hanger. The member of public in attendance suggested this be provided at the Triangle Market, however there were plans to increase the bicycle rack provision on that site.
- 60.7. To consider avenues of community engagement and relevant actions:
- 60.7a. Receive an update on the formation of a Lowestoft Pupils Climate Committee – As Ms Bunn was not in attendance this item was deferred.
- 60.7b. The production of climate and nature posters to be used for future events to engage the public with the work of the Town Council and this Committee – Posters were being produced by the Communications Officer and the templates on the climate emergency and biodiversity would be provided to Committee members via email for review. Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Countryside Protection were suggested as a source of information and examples of graphics. Digital mediums should be used as much as possible rather than paper.
It was agreed for the posters to provide local information on effects and actions being taken, such as the support for the Kittiwake Partnership and the necessity to insulate the Town Hall. Posters could be provided for the Big Green event in 2024 and the Clerk suggested the posters be used for the next market with the new stalls, with the posters to include the Town Council's green credentials.
- 60.7c. Plans for the 'Big Green Weekend' for 2024 – It was agreed to hold the event on the 14, 15 and 16 June 2024, with initial suggestions of working with schools, an event day on Saturday taking place on London Road North around the re-developed Triangle Market site, perhaps with a simultaneous event at Sparrows Nest, and finishing with a wide-scale litter picking event on the Sunday. Cllr Brooks suggested Bridport's Big Green Week be reviewed by officers. Councillors would liaise with the Office Administrator so that the event can be planned between this Committee and the Events & Communications Sub-Committee.
- 60.7d. Receive feedback on the Terms of Reference of this Committee regarding a minimum age requirement – This item was not discussed in the meeting.

61. To review the decisions on this agenda from the perspective of nature

The Committee agreed that all decisions made had considered the perspective of nature.

62. Date of the next meeting

Monday 18 September - 15:30

63. Items for the next agenda and close

Mr Sillett requested an item on the provision of buses, with considerations on the state of bus stops and shelters. Cllr Ray queried if a Town Planner would speak to the Committee on planning issues, perhaps via a stand-alone zoom meeting with members of the Planning Committee invited, to discuss environmental aspects of planning and resilience.

64. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public

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interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda

Cllr Brooks proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour. Cllr Brooks proposed non-Councillor member John Sillett be invited to attend the confidential session; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

The meeting was closed to the public and moved to confidential session at 17:13

Cllr Craig temporarily left the chamber at 17:13

A confidential update was provided to the Committee concerning contractors for the bulky waste trial.

Cllr Craig returned to the chamber at 17:15

60.4a The Town Council's ethical stance regarding its energy supply Energy supplier – Discussions were held on the different suppliers and Cllr Page made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Craig; three in favour and two abstentions.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:29

Signed:

18 September 2023