

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Riverside, Waveney District Council Offices, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ
14:00 on 24 April 2018

MINUTES

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

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk), James Cox and Sarah Foote (LTC Officers)

Public: one person arrived at 14.06

252. Welcome

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

253. To receive and consider acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Houghton

254. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Green declared a position of pre-determination in relation to agenda item 262d and would leave the room when this item was considered.

255. To consider the accuracy of the Minutes:

- a) 20 March 2018 – accepted as accurate.

256. Public Forum

None present.

257. The following Governance issues were considered:

257a. Standing Orders – The Working Group would review the new model standing orders at a meeting on 26 April and a recommendation for adoption would be made to Full Council on 8 May. ACTION: AGENDA FULL COUNCIL.

257b. Safeguarding – training for all staff and Councillors would take place on 17 May. The Committee agreed, as part of the Council's risk management plan, that a reminder should be sent to all Councillors asking for their attendance at the training. ACTION: Reminder to be sent 14.06 A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC ARRIVED.

257c. Lone Working – a policy was being developed and the extent of the cover Norse may able to provide to out of hours/lone worker support was being explored but may not be robust enough.

The parishioner was given the opportunity to address the Council. . He wanted to express concern and ask for an update on Town Council involvement with the Football Club. It was confirmed that this matter would be on the Full Council agenda for 8 May.

Cllr Green is a director of the football club but remained in the meeting as this is a non-pecuniary interest and the item was given for information only.

The parishioner asked about whether the Old Hospital Site was being considered and they were referred to the Planning and environment Committee for this matter.

258. Banking Arrangements

It was noted that both Shona Bendix and Sarah Foote were now able to administer the bank account. Cllr Alam and Green reported that they had not received their PIN numbers and this would be reported to Julian Sturman for action. Cllrs who were bank signatories now needed to visit the office to discuss how the system of payments could be implemented. ACTION: Julian Sturman to chase Unity Bank for security log in for the above.

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259. Risk Management and Compliance

259.a Insurance – whilst there was no update necessary the Clerk confirmed that the insurance would be reviewed as part of the internal audit and risk management procedures. Cllrs would need to be content with both insurance and risk management for the Council as these would be covered in Section one of the Annual Return.

259.b Contract Key Performance Indicators a meeting would take place at 12.30 on 22 May. ACTION: Meeting room to be confirmed. All Committee members to be informed of this meeting and location.

259.c Condition Surveys – the Council now had a list/‘audit’ of what surveys were in its possession and what remain outstanding.

259.d Compliance (including recommendation from the Implementation Committee for a budget to be agreed to be used in the event of a Legionella outbreak, or rectify an issue uncovered by the routine monitoring of Legionella). It was agreed to proceed with expenditure as listed below with the addition of £4090 for surveys ‘risk assessments’ for legal compliance.

260. Audit for year ending 31 March 2018

260a. Internal Controls – review would take place on 30 April 2018.

260b. Internal Audit – would be carried out on 15 and 16 May 2018.

260c. External Audit – all the documents for the new external audit regime had been received.

Section One and Two of the Annual Return needed to be approved by 11 June. It was agreed that the approval of the accounts and completion of the Annual Return would be an agenda item for the June Full Council meeting. ACTION: Agenda accordingly. The Exercise of Public Rights would begin at the latest on 2 July through to 10 August 2018.

261. Payments – in relation to associated schedules:

A payments schedule was presented to Cllrs and appended to the minutes for information. The Clerk provided a commentary where she detailed that the ICO payment could be progressed by direct debit (proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Barron and agreed).

A cost analysis would be provided on the SALC subscription detailing the benefits of membership/non-membership. ACTION: Clerk to prepare paper. AGENDA next meeting.

The Clerk also brought to the Committee’s attention the need for greater scrutiny on business rates payments, particularly for Sparrows Nest and Links Road. Sparrows Nest was currently in line with forecasted amount but Links Road needed further investigation as listed as Bowling Green. ACTION: AGENDA next Full Council meeting. Contact WDC for clarification on Business Rates.

261.bi To consider payments for authorisation, including £10,000 for deposit number one for office costs at Hamilton House (and to consider related Heads of Terms). The Clerk explained the suggested deposit was £30,000 (plus VAT) but could be paid in instalments; £10,000 immediately, £20,000 after Full Council approval. It was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Alam and unanimously agreed to make this payment. Heads of Terms would go to Full Council for consideration along with legal advice currently being sought. ACTION: Full Council Agenda.

261.bii Neighbourhood Planning Consultancy expenses of up to £200 to start the process prior to the grant being available from Locality. Proposed by Cllr Green, seconded by Cllr Coleby and unanimously agreed,

261.biii ICO Data Protection Registration £35 (no VAT) - Noted above

261.biv Suffolk Association of Local Councils subscription £3,365.04 (no VAT) - Noted above.

261.bv Legionella monitoring equipment costs of £137.50 plus UKAS calibration of £80 per annum (two sets) with the addition of £4090 for Legionella risk assessments. This work would primarily be undertaken by a consultant with Mark Speller responsible for the day to day management.

261.bvi online compliance software of up to £500 per annum

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All of above payments, with the exception of the SALC subscription which was deferred, were approved. Proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Alam and unanimously agreed.

261.c To note payments processed – there were no further payments to note. All the receipts and income for year ending 31 March 2018 were listed in paper provided to members.

262. Income

262.a Receipts

The rental income from Kensington Gardens was the only item to note. VAT reclaim for past quarter was due shortly.

262.b Community Infrastructure Levy and S.106 payments - would be reported at June meeting.

262.c Funding streams affecting Council assets

Historic England had sent a specialist architect to visit the town hall to give guidance on emergency repairs and were planning to pay for any emergency repairs. They would also fund a specialist heritage survey. The Town Council had previously budgeted £15,000 budgeted.

Discussion then took place around the possible offer from WDC to take back the Town Hall into its ownership. It was agreed that this item should be considered by Full Council. ACTION: AGENDA for Full Council meeting.

14.48 Cllr Green left the meeting and Cllr Alam chaired the meeting.

262.d Radioactive Waste Geological Disposal Facility

There was a consultation running on the process of community engagement on where RWG sites could be. The Town Council had called a meeting and a speaker from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy spoke about the consultation process only and not about any possible sites. It was agreed that the meeting had been helpful to inform the consultation process and that all principal authorities, town and parish councils were also aware of the consultation process. The Committee then discussed the advantages and disadvantages of sites in Lowestoft. Having considered the financial aspects of this matter the Committee agreed, at this stage, that there would be insufficient gain from Lowestoft taking sites as decreasing value of funding over the years and the affect on existing local economy and well being. It was agreed further investigation of alternative energy sources should be explored. The Town Council would continue to engage with future consultations and review National Planning Policy Statements as they became available. This action was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Barron and agreed with one abstention. ACTION: AGENDA for Full Council:

15.00 Cllr Green returned to the meeting.

263. Accounts information for the end of the financial year 2017/18:

Cllrs were provided with a pack of papers and asked to carefully view all the detail within. The end of year position was noted as £701,130 comprising £414,969 of general reserves and £ of earmarked reserves.

The current account balance was reported as £842,103

It was noted that the new financial software had been installed, training had been given in most aspects and reports were being produced using the new system. It was also noted that James Cox had begun his AAT Training.

Cllrs expressed their thanks to the Clerk and the team for getting the new financial systems up and running.

The Clerk asked Cllrs going forward to information they would like reported? It was agreed that as much information as possible but perhaps streamlined in a table format with a written commentary.

As well as current balances, the Committee also wanted to see spend against budget reports.

The value of contract, delivery and performance of contract needed to be looked at KPI meeting on 22 May. Mark Speller would look at SLAs and suggest the KPIS that have value and any additional KPIs to be monitored. ACTION: Mark Speller. AGENDA KPI Meeting.

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Thanks in the minutes to Shona and the team to get the new financial system up and running.

264. Budget monitoring for 2018/19 and bank reconciliations

This matter had been dealt with in the above reports.

265. Other budgetary matters

265.a Planned maintenance – most information had now been received from WDC and reasonable estimates were being worked on. As soon as this and information below was available it would be tabled to the Committee for consideration.

265.b Capital programme

As above.

A discussion took place around delegated powers for emergency repairs. It was agreed to rename the Parks repairs and maintenance budget to general repairs and maintenance. £3,000 had been delegated for repairs from the Town Hall repair budget for any building repairs and this had been agreed previously as being usable for repairs of any buildings. An additional £10,000 would be delegated to the Clerk, a total of £13,000 for emergency repairs (Deputy Clerk in the Clerk's absence). This was proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Barron and agreed.

265.c CCTV – a Committee meeting would take place on 26 April. Norse had been contacted again about assigning the costs for certain beneficiaries.

265.d Sale of land at Uplands – It was suggested that the residents, whose properties were served by the septic tank sited on this land, may like to buy the piece of land and the Town Council would relinquish responsibility for the tank. All maintenance was currently the responsibility of the Town Council. It was agreed to make a recommendation to Full Council to approach the home owners to ascertain if they would like to buy the land. Proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded Cllr Alam and unanimously agreed. ACTION: AGENDA Full Council meeting.

265.e Commemorative plaques – this item was deferred. Other matters were now reported:

Arnold's Bequest – The Clerk reported that the Trust continues to exist but what would change was the sole trustees of the Trust. WDC were sole trustees and had decided sole trusteeship should change to the Town Council. Before the Charity Commission can be informed of the change, there should be provision for the Town Council to agree they are happy to take on the land given the time that has passed and how the matter has been handled. There is income linked to the land but there are also repairs issues that have not been resolved. It is Town Council policy that any new transfers are agreed by Full Council, however, this transfer was detailed in the original reorganisation order but to date had not been completed. Cllr Coleby commented that the Council had asked for the repairs to be carried out and this should be pursued.

It was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Alam to ask WDC for any costs for the work needed prior to transfer, or a commitment to funding to work if passed to the Town Council. ACTION: Clerk to request WDC to prepare a paper. ACTION: AGENDA next Full Council

Cotman Close Play Area - the Town Council currently owned the play area but not the whole park nor a separate area where a group swing was located. WDC would like to transfer the additional area but the Council questioned why the whole park could not be transferred. It was agreed to ask WDC for a paper detailing the entire land mass, any covenants and restrictions that may affect the land. ACTION: Clerk to request WDC prepare a paper. ACTION: AGENDA next Full Council

Allotments near Normanston Park – The Council had been informed that there was a question mark over whether the verge and access path had transferred. As per the reorganisation order, WDC advised that all allotments had automatically transferred to the Town Council. ACTION: WDC to put forward a proposal of the whole allotment area.

Gunton Warren Area – part had been transferred to the Town council and part had not. The part not transferred, although WDC wished to transfer it, had been the site of oil burials in 1978. Due to coastal erosion some of these oil deposits were now visible. Suffolk Wildlife Trust are tenants of

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both sections of land. The Clerk commented that rather than the option of taking the additional piece of land, it may be that the original land transfer is returned to WDC. Cllr Coleby commented that he would be happy to recommend that proposal to Full Council. It was noted that the Town Council does not have the capacity to manage polluted land and the associated risks and should have been made aware of this status of this land during the original transfer. ACTION: Full Council Agenda.

Poppy Memorial Garden – Cllr Coleby reported that it was now anticipated that the total project, with pathways, would cost £18k. The figures would be reworked and a full proposal would be presented to Full Council. It was noted that the original £10k budget did not include the pathways. ACTION: AGENDA Full Council.

266. Date of the next meeting

22 May 2018 14:00

267. Items for the next Agenda

No items were raised.

221. 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 interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. The Clerk asked for consideration for discretion to pay additional hours to staff. This would be considered further at a future meeting.

The Chair closed meeting 15.55.

Signed:.....

22 May 2018