

**Minutes of the meeting of Lowestoft Town Council Finance and Governance Committee
held at 14:30 (meeting commenced at 14.20) on Wednesday 28 November 2017
at Riverside, 4 Canning Road Lowestoft**

Committee Members: *Cllrs Allyson Barron, Alan Green, Alice Taylor, Nasima Begum, Neil Coleby, Ian Graham and Graham Parker*

Present: Cllrs Alan Green (Chair), Nasima Begum (left 15.30), Alice Taylor, Neil Coleby, Ian Graham and Graham Parker.

Also attending: Mr Brian Mew (Waveney District Council) and Sarah Foote (SALC Support). Public in attendance: None. Cllr Houghton arrived as an observer at 15.20.

Apologies: Were received from Cllr Barron and were accepted.

98. Welcome and apologies

The meeting was welcomed. The fire evacuation procedure was outlined and the meeting was reminded of the public rights in relations to filming, recording and reporting at the meeting. The apologies were noted as above.

99. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

None.

100. The minutes of the meeting of 1 November 2017 were agreed. It was noted that Cllr Amanda Frost was no longer a committee member.

101. Public Forum - there were no members of the public present.

102. Capital Programme Funds

Following a meeting with Waveney District Council on 23 November, the Mayor reported that information was still lacking and a further meeting would be held on 30 November

103. S106 Fund expenditure on Nightingale Road, Pakefield – with the absence of a Town Council Play Strategy it was agreed to support Waveney District Council’s existing play strategy and endorse works to the value of approx. £9808 at Nightingale Road.

104. Internal Control Process – it was reported that a draft document was being developed by Mr Mew and the Town Clerk. This would be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee at a future meeting.

105. Internal Audit arrangements – three quotations were being sought and would be considered in due course by the Finance and Governance Committee.

106. Banking arrangements – it was reported that the savings account was being progressed and the current s113 agreement with Waveney District Council had been referenced for explanation of Waveney District Council’s staff involvement in the banking arrangements.

107. Insurance – it was noted that insurance quotations were being obtained for the Council for 2018/19 including additional insurance as required for the Lowestoft Collection. Consideration will be needed on if the Town Council proceeds with one policy or two separate policies.

108. Town Council Waveney Norse Key Performance Indicators Working Group – Cllr Parker reported on the work to date and presented a paper. Cllr Parker reported that the Working Group were still considering the benchmarks but felt that they should be between 90% and 100% but with health and safety matters being set at 100%. Cllr Parker would like the Working Group to consider KPI software and future review meetings with Norse. It was suggested that this may be undertaken by the Facilities and Contract Manager, when appointed.

109. Funding:

109.1 Heritage Lottery Fund bid – Cllr Taylor reported that she had drafted an expression of interest and was seeking advice on the content. She had spoken with a HLF expert who had advised that the Town Council must take a holistic approach including not just the Town Hall, but the parks, markets and other assets in the area. The document would be progressed via the Implementation committee and full Council.

109.2 Radioactive Waste Management Fund – Cllr Graham stated that there was no report available and proposed that the Town Council consider this at the appropriate time.

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109.3 Kirkley People's Forum, including options for toilets including Healthmatic toilets – Cllr Taylor reported that Kirkley's People Forum may be willing to offer financial support for running and maintenance of toilets but could not provide new toilets at Fen Park (it was noted that the current facility had not been in use for ten years). A Toilet Strategy needed to be developed by the Town Council and as part of this Cllr Graham and the Clerk would meet with Healthmatic and other suppliers.

110. Council Grants:

110.1 A revised Grant Awarding Policy and application form was being produced which would include an application form to apply to the Town Council for funding. It was agreed that the Town Council set an annual budget of £50,000 for grant awarding which would be awarded twice a year; £25,000 in June and £25,000 in December.

110.2 Grant requests from DIAL, Community Choir and Twining Association were noted. It was agreed that the above policy, when adopted, would be sent to the above organisations to complete to start the formal process of a grant payment being made.

111. Town Hall Clock – it was agreed that the servicing of the clock should be progressed by the Clerk to a total budget of £273 +VAT.

112. Lowestoft Collection

112.1 A confidential asset plan for the Lowestoft Collection was noted.

112.2 Existing budgetary provision for the Lowestoft Collection

112.3 It was noted that Durrants would be providing an updated valuation for the Collection.

112.4 Recommendations for a budget for the Collection enhancement and care with delegated authority were considered. It was agreed that the following items should be actioned:

a) A budget to a maximum of £2,000 be set for immediate improvement works at the Museum (including new keys, cabinet improvements, storage boxes). It was noted that this would be drawn from the current financial year's budget.

b) A loan agreement be drafted based on one year with a further year by agreement of both parties.

c) A budget of £13,000 was agreed for care and condition improvements in 2018/19 and £15,000 for enhancements to the collection, although this was likely to roll forward to future years unless significant pieces come on the market. However, it was likely that grant funding would cover the cost of any future acquisitions.

d) The Committee also authorised the Town Clerk to progress work to obtain funding from Waveney District Council to offset against the above expenditure.

113. Cost for advertisements/arts on the Town Hall hoardings – it was noted that there had been no response from the Marina Theatre to advertise on the Town Hall hoardings. Cllr Taylor was optimistic that art work could be display at sometime in the future which should not be subject to any planning conditions.

114. Financing of one Town Council Christmas market and budget implications

The maximum expenditure of £500 for advertising agreed by the Town Council in relation to the original plan for seven markets had previously been agreed. It was noted that if just one market was to run the costs could be just as high and would therefore not be financially viable. The Clerk had confirmed that there would not be any additional insurance costs but risk assessments must be provided before any market could take place. The absence of detailed risk assessments would invalidate the insurance. It was understood that Cllr Houghton was pursuing matters relating to the Christmas market.

115. CEFAS property list – Cllr Taylor reported that there were no developments on the property list, however, Norse had confirmed that they were unable to offer any storage of items that the Town Council may acquire. Cllr Graham suggested storage at the Town Hall.

116. Charges for all leisure facilities – Cllr Graham reported that £30,000 per annum was currently collected via Norse from users of facilities such as bowls and tennis. A discussion took place around the cost of collecting this income and use of the facilities and how free facilities may encourage

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greater use and facilitate future external funding. It was suggested that an online booking system be developed and that priority be given via this to main users such as sports clubs and associations. It was then unanimously agreed that the Council should move to lift charges for all leisure facilities from April 2018 for a trial period. The draft budget would be amended accordingly.

At this stage in the meeting Agenda Item 123 was considered in order for Mr Mew to depart from the meeting at 16.00.

117. East of England Park – it was likely that the park would be completed in September 2018 and it was agreed to make a 2018/19 budget allowance of £75k for any running costs.

118. Apprentices for outdoor work - discussion took place around the merit of the apprenticeship scheme and it was agreed that the Council may progress this item further. It was agreed that £30,000 be added to the 2018/19 budget in relation to this item.

119. Condition surveys for the Town Hall it was envisaged that a condition survey report would be produced by Waveney District Council. Cllr Taylor would need surveys for her work with the Heritage Lottery Fund and was seeking quotations for basic, full and full including asbestos surveys.

120. Potential costs in relation to identified works from the 2016 condition surveys had been received for

Belle Vue Lodge, Sparrows Nest Bowls Pavilion, War Memorial Museum (external only), Sparrows Nest Bandstand, RNPSA Museum (external only), Kensington Gardens Bowls Hut, Kensington Gardens Café, Kensington Gardens Boating Lake Kiosk, Links Road Car Park, Lowestoft & East Suffolk Maritime Museum (external only) and Triangle Market.

However, only one written report had been provided and electronic copies had now been requested. It was agreed that these reports be considered by the Implementation Committee to consider and make recommendations to Finance and Governance/Full Council.

121. Budgets for the following items were agreed as:

121.1 Meeting refreshments with delegated authority to the Clerk - £500 for the remainder of the financial year and £1,500 for the 2018/19 financial year.

121.2 Annual Meeting with other public service providers (11 December) - £200 unless a venue can be hired free of charge.

121.3 A meeting to consider the future of CCTV provision (12 December) - £150 to include refreshments.

121.4 Council mobile phone contract - £25 per month including phone and calls. Clerk delegated authority to progress.

At 15.15 Cllr Houghton arrived as an observer of the meeting and passed at note to the Chairman relating to agenda item 114 was had already been dealt with. It was agreed that a report would be given to Cllr Houghton at the close of the meeting.

122. Other matters which might affect the 2018-19 budget were noted as discussed during the meeting. A discussion took place on the tax base and how the new tax base for 2018/19 would impact on the budget.

Cllr Begum asked for consideration of funding for Christmas lights for this year for the top of the High Street (as requested by the High Street Traders). It was agreed it was too late to progress this for this Christmas and that a grant application should be made for next year.

123. Finance Reports

123.1 The Budget and Monitoring Report was presented by Mr Mew and the following items were noted:

a) The handover of Charter Trustee funds were to transfer to the civic and ceremonial budget. No update was available on the civic robes.

b) Telephone and IT budgets. Needed to be explored in more detailed when the number of staff and move to new premises were finalised.

c) Personnel budgets. This would be affected by staff appointments being made.

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d) Repairs and maintenance including fire doors for Whitton and Gunton Halls and Town Hall clock and alarm services.

Mr Mew reported that the Council was in a healthy financial position to plan for the year ahead. He also reported that the VAT reclaim to 30 September had successfully been submitted and repayment was awaited. It was requested that a report detailing all earmarked reserve funds be produced by Mr Mew.

123.2 Bank reconciliations – Mr Mew and Cllr Coleby had met and Cllr Coleby had accepted and signed the latest bank reconciliation.

124. The following payments were noted and approved:

Invoices received –

a) THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL: Poppy wreath £50 donation, Full Council minute 2017/134.2

Total of £50, VAT £0 (letter dated (27/10/17)

b) SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS: Recruitment advertisements (second round for 4 staff), Full Council minute 2017/155.1: £1555 + VAT
SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS: Local Councils Explained publication £14.99 (no VAT), postage £5 & VAT, Local Council Administration publication £72.60 (no VAT), publication and postage costs, Full Council minute 2017/134.2 **Total of £1,647.59, VAT £312.00** (invoice no.19831)

c) WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL: Recruitment advertisements (first round for Clerk & Deputy), Full Council minute FC 2017/58f . **Total of £1,061.40, VAT £212.28**

Payments made: As agreed at Full Council 10 November: SPS membership £35 agreed Full Council 2017/152.2 and Clerk's salary Full Council 2017/152.2.

125. Income was noted as

a) Tenant rent £1562.50 (chq No 006157 and to be banked)

126. 2018-19 Budget

a) A report was received from the Budget Working Group.

b) Budget recommendations for 2018-19 were considered in their draft format and it was agreed that these should be presented for full Council comment at the meeting on 5 December.

c) The Budget Working Group would meet again at 12 noon on 15 December prior to the next Finance and Governance meeting. ACTION: Town Clerk to confirm room booking.

127. Date of the next meeting 2.30 pm on 15 December 2017.

128. Items for the next agenda

Cllr Parker asked for consideration of Councillors' expenses particularly in relation to the costs of hold public surgeries.

Cllr Taylor asked for a review of the Clerk's delegated authority in terms of expenditure on sundry items to enable to Clerk to proceed with purchasing essential items without prior authorisation of the Council. It was agreed that this would be pursued in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

129. It was resolved that there were no confidential items of business to be transacted.

Meeting closed 16.20

Signed

Date : 15 December 2017.