

# Lowestoft Town Council

## Full Council Meeting

Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, NR33 0EQ  
19:00 on 6 February 2018

### MINUTES

**Present:** Cllrs Baz Bemment, Peter Byatt, Tara Carlton (arrived 19:15), Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Ian Graham (Chair), Alan Green, Dick Houghton, Peter Knight, Peter Lang, Graham Parker, Keith Patience and Alice Taylor

**In Attendance:** Shona Bendix (Clerk), Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

**Public:** Waveney District Councillor Linda Coulam.

**201. Fire evacuation procedure and welcome**

The fire evacuation procedure was explained and the meeting was welcomed.

**202. Announcement on Reporting**

The public right to report was explained.

**203. To receive and consider acceptance of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Barnard, Barron, Begum, Collecott, Ford and Eastwood. Cllr Owen was absent.

**204. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

Cllr Patience declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in item 211.1.

Cllr Byatt declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in item 208.1c.

Cllrs Graham, Green, Patience and Byatt declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in item 208.3.

**205. Minutes**

23 January 2018 – accepted as accurate with one abstention.

**206. Public Forum and Public Service Reports**

Cllr Coulam enquired as to who is responsible for maintenance of the public conveniences situated at Gordon Road, the Triangle Market Place and Rotterdam Road, as they are reported as in a state of disrepair. Advice was given that Waveney District Council are responsible for the Gordon Road facilities, but those at the Triangle Market Place and Rotterdam Road are under the jurisdiction of Lowestoft Town Council and the issues would be addressed forthwith. It was noted that a toilet strategy is being devised to introduce a future maintenance plan.

*Cllr Carlton arrived at 19:15*

**207. Finance:**

207.1 The minutes of the previous Finance and Governance Committee (23/01/2018) were noted, in particular the following financial matters:

207.1a Agreed delegated expenditure of £2000 to the Clerk for Town Council public events material (including gazebo, banners and flags)

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207.1b Agreed delegated expenditure of £250 to the Clerk for the Charter Tree initiative

207.1c Agreed expenditure of £408 for the Survey Monkey annual fee

207.1d The bank reconciliation had been completed – it was noted that Cllr Coleby has completed the bank reconciliation up to 31 January 2018.

Items 207.1a, b, c and d were noted and agreed. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

207.2 The following payments were considered:

207.2a An application for a grant of £5000 for Lowestoft Summer Festival – A query was raised over whether this sum could be used in making improvements to Lowestoft Town Council's assets, some of which are deteriorating. It was noted that the budget includes funds set aside for this and providing support to local events and this particular event would be positive in encouraging tourism to the town, particularly the South Lowestoft area. Cllr Byatt proposed granting the sum of £5000 for the Lowestoft Summer Festival; seconded by Cllr Taylor; 8 voted in favour, 5 voted against.

The motion in favour of granting £5000 for the Lowestoft Summer Festival was carried.

207.2b A donation of £500 to North East Suffolk Citizens Advice – It was noted this could be defrayed partly in respect of legal fees incurred. Cllr Graham proposed approving the donation of £500 to North East Suffolk Citizens Advice; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

207.2c A donation of £100 to Lowestoft in Bloom for the Mayor's Shield – Proposed by Cllr Lang to approve the donation of £100 to Lowestoft in Bloom for the Mayor's Shield; seconded by Cllr Graham; all in favour with one abstention.

207.3 Payments – no matters for discussion.

207.4 Any income – The VAT claim is being submitted tomorrow for the next quarter.

207.5 Progress of lease for temporary office location at Hamilton House for the Town Council – The required paperwork has not yet been received. A meeting with the contractors was held last week but feedback from the meeting has not yet been received. The Mayor advised that an extraordinary meeting would be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> February if the paperwork was received in time. If not this would be carried forward to the next agenda.

207.6 Costs and office design for the temporary office location at Hamilton House – No further updates at present.

207.7 Progress with a Town Hall condition survey – Mr Speller is looking into this, and comparing the quotes received against the existing survey to see if a new one would be of benefit. An asbestos survey is also being considered but this is again being looked into to see if it is necessary at this stage.

### **208. Assets and contracts**

208.1 The minutes of the previous Implementation Committee (22/01/2018) were noted, in particular the following matters:

208.1a Leases being progressed for the community halls – no matters for discussion.

208.1b Ongoing work and recommendations on asset plans and strategies – Pond and Tree Strategies have been approved by the Implementation Committee and require signing off from the Full Council. A 'Friends of' policy was also approved at yesterday's meeting of the Implementation Committee, subject to review from Mr Speller.

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The Pond and Tree strategies will be made available for review in time for the next meeting of the Full Council, and the 'Friends of' policy will follow once it has been reviewed. Next agenda.

208.1c Possible closure of the Lowestoft Records Office – Concerns were raised about personal attacks directed at Waveney District Councillors by some campaigners who are against the threatened closure of the Records Office.

*The Clerk left the room at 19:41*

It was noted that personal attacks were not appropriate, even if there are differing opinions.

*The Clerk returned at 19:42*

*The Clerk left the room at 19:42*

There was a discussion about potential alternative locations for the Records Office and it was suggested that the Town Hall might be an option. The importance of preserving the Town Hall and other areas of Lowestoft was noted, to restore pride in the town and encourage tourism.

*The Clerk returned at 19:44*

The Implementation Committee have proposed a statement which the Clerk read out to the Council. It stated that Lowestoft Town Council is disappointed not to have been consulted on the threatened closure of the Records Office but is pleased the decision has been placed on hold and looks forward to being consulted in the future, along with the rest of the community, about keeping this historically important collection in Lowestoft.

208.1d Procedure for bestowing Freedom of the Town – It was noted that an open and transparent decision-making process is required. Criteria for such awards are being drafted. It was agreed that this should be an occasional, possibly annual, event.

208.1e Recommendation that Cllrs Taylor and Knight be authorised signatories for the Heritage Action Zone Memorandum of Understanding – This was noted. The Memorandum has not yet been received.

208.2 Any further land registration issues – no matters for discussion.

208.3 Any further developments on Charity registration (Arnold's Bequest) – Waveney District Council have held a meeting of Charities Board and have proposed to transfer Arnold's Bequest to Lowestoft Town Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April. A discussion was held as to whether the Council can decline this and re-negotiate the transfer, requesting that issues with the land (including handrails to be replaced and a natural spring affecting the footpath) are addressed first. A query was raised as to whether this would have to be accepted in its current form as it was included in the original Reorganisation Order. The original order was referred to in the meeting and the caveats explained. It was unanimously agreed to refute and decline the transfer.

208.4 Any progress with the Wayfinder proposals – It was noted that this was progressing and signs in the town centre had been replaced, including on Lowestoft Town Council land.

208.5 Any progress with the Heritage Action Zone and Heritage Lottery Fund bid – The Clerk has spoken with the person managing Lowestoft Town Council's application and has been given advice as to how to strengthen the application. The Clerk will progress this with the Heritage Action Zone working group.

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### **209. Planning and Environment**

209.1 The minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee (23/01/18) were noted – no further comments were added.

### **210. Personnel**

210 Latest staffing position – There still remains a vacancy for the finance position but the possibility of securing a secondee from Waveney District Council to work with Lowestoft Town Council one day per week is being explored.

### **211. Consultations**

211.1 The Informal Electoral Review Consultation – There was a concern raised that the amalgamation of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils in 2019 would reduce the number of councillors, and with the boundaries being reviewed some parishes may disappear altogether, and this could mean that Lowestoft is not as strongly represented. The point was raised that the emergence of Lowestoft Town Council has ensured that residents of the town will be represented, and Lowestoft Town Councillors can ensure matters are raised on behalf of constituents and taken forward. A District Council survey has been created on Survey Monkey for Councillors and the public alike to complete and give their views on the changes.

### **212. Regulatory and risk management**

212.1 The following matters were considered:

212.1a Data Protection requirements – The Clerk advised that a member of staff will be allocated this role (probably not the Clerk or Deputy Clerk) with full training and support provided. It was noted that with regard to Freedom of Information requests the Council is well resourced and should be able to fulfil obligations.

It was questioned whether documents required for each meeting, in addition to the agenda, could be uploaded to the website to make them more accessible. It was agreed that this could be ensured in due course, unless their content is of a confidential or sensitive nature.

212.1b Training and adoption of the Safeguarding Policy – Safeguarding training is being arranged for all staff and Councillors. The safeguarding policy is being progressed, and insurers are being consulted regarding requirements for volunteers, to protect the Council as well as others. It was also noted that the public speaking procedure does not reference vulnerable members of society and therefore needs to be reviewed.

212.1c Approaches from street sellers in the town centre – Waveney District Council can address this if it becomes a concern to ensure street sellers are not in breach of their licence by how they are approaching members of the public. It was also noted that some members of the public may not have a clear understanding of what they are signing. The benefit of a PCSO in the area was noted. It was agreed for the Clerk to take this forward by contacting Lowestoft police's Safer Neighbourhood Team, Lowestoft Vision and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner.

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### **213. Service Level Agreement**

213.1 Content and signatories for the Lowestoft Vision Service Level Agreement – A concern was raised that paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5 seemed to suggest Lowestoft Town Council losing control of the triangle area. It was suggested that this could be referred to the Implementation Committee to review in detail, renegotiate and report back, and Waveney District Council could be consulted under the Section 113 Agreement.

### **214. Other Committee and Governance Matters**

214.1 Any changes in the membership of Committees – Cllr Patience has joined the Personnel Committee.

### **215. Written reports from Councillors including from representative roles**

- 215.1 Any update on the Charter Tree initiative – The Charter Tree planting took place yesterday and the event was successful; an article covering the event has been uploaded to the Lowestoft Journal website. Thanks were expressed to staff for their work in organising the event and it was suggested that flowers be sent to Giardino restaurant for kind use of their premises and the buffet they generously provided.
- 215.2 Any report on the Coastal Communities Team – no matters for discussion.
- 215.3 Any report on the Kirkley People's Forum – A litter pick took place on 20<sup>th</sup> January and was very successful, and a Charities Group Meeting was held last week.
- 215.4 Any report on the Lowestoft Development Group – no matters for discussion.
- 215.5 Any report on the Transport Steering Group – no matters for discussion.
- 215.6 Any report on the Plaisir Twinning Association – The AGM is being held on 20<sup>th</sup> February, which Cllr Lang will be attending. It was noted that Millennium edition Lowestoft Porcelain items will be presented as a gift for the next visit, and the Clerk will contact Kelly Wigley at Waveney District Council to discuss the possible loan of previous gifts, to be placed on display. A discussion regarding ownership of the items can then be held at a later date.
- 215.7 Any report on the Cefas neighbourhood group – Demolition work has started.
- 215.8 Any report on the Lowestoft Transport Infrastructure Partnership – no matters for discussion.
- 215.9 Any report on the Lowestoft Railway Partnership – The importance of having a representative from Lowestoft Town Council involved in the discussions for the development of Station Square was noted. Martin Halliday will be attending the meeting of the Implementation Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> February and all Councillors will be invited to attend also, with further details being circulated shortly.
- 215.10 Any report on First Light Festival Board (17 January 9:30-11:00 meeting) – The meeting scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> January was cancelled.
- 215.11 Any other reports and attendance – Cllr Coleby commented that following the planting of the Charter Tree, Councillors and staff from Lowestoft Town Council were invited to see The Lowestoft Movie Makers Club and were shown a short film charting the decline of the town's fishing industry. Everyone in attendance found the visit most interesting.

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### 216. Date of next Council Meeting and other key meetings

6 March 2018 Full Council

16 February 2018 CCTV Meeting

28 February 2018 Local Plan Meeting

There may be an extraordinary meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> February if the required paperwork has been received in time for the office lease.

### 217. Items for the next Agenda

An enquiry was raised as to whether there would be a legitimate Lowestoft Town Council Facebook page set up. It was noted that this is currently in development.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to include a chart on the Lowestoft Town Council website to assist residents in how to report issues.

It was suggested that Lowestoft Town Council could consider developing a lobbying role directed at Waveney District Council with regard to the amount of litter around Lowestoft, as well as treatment of weeds and repairing damage to walls and footpaths. It was acknowledged that many organisations, including Norse, have seen reductions in their workforce. Next agenda.

The Council have authorised expenditure for a condition survey on the Marina Theatre. The quote has now been received but it also includes proposals for potential future development. It has been sent to the Councillors on the Marina Theatre Trust Board for consideration. Cllr Graham proposed referring this to the Finance and Governance Committee for their consideration and to make negotiations within the budget; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

It was noted that there are unused noticeboards on Lowestoft Town Council's land which could potentially be used.

*Cllr Coulam left the meeting at 20:41*

### 218. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

218.1 Employment matters relating to members of staff

218.2 Legal matters relating to the council's assets

218.3 Consideration of application for a certificate of lawful use in relation to council land

There were no confidential matters for discussion.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:42

Signed: .....

6<sup>th</sup> March 2018