

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
17.30 on 11 October 2018

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Neil Coleby (arrived 17.40), Ian Graham, Alan Green (Chair), Graham Parker and Alice Taylor

In Attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk), James Cox (Communications Assistant) and Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk)

Public: None present.

349. Welcome

To welcome the meeting, explain the fire evacuation procedure and remind councillors and members of the public that in the interests of openness and transparency, the law permits filming, recording or other means of reporting of meetings.

350. To receive and consider acceptance of apologies for absence – Apologies were received from Cllr Barron and Cllr Alam accepted.

351. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

351.1 To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Local Non-Pecuniary Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda

359A – Cllr Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in this agenda item.

359.5 - Officers declared they had an interest in this matter and would leave the room when it was discussed.

351.2 There were no written requests or grants of dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

352. To consider the accuracy of the Minutes:

21 August 2018 – accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Parker; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

353. Public Forum – none present.

354A. The 2018-19 meeting schedule was noted. There were currently no amendments to the composition of the Committee.

354B. To consider risk management and compliance, including the following:

355B.1 Compliance – Concerns were expressed regarding the current level of compliance work being undertaken by the contractor on behalf of the Council and this would need to be considered by the Council. It was noted emergency action had recently been undertaken to remedy a hazard at Denes Oval.

355B.2 Condition Surveys – Current surveys were still being assessed to determine the implications for the budget. All leases were being analysed for landlord responsibilities.

355C.3 Insurance – The insurance company had been responsive and flexible regarding additional insurance needs relating to events being organised by the Town Council. Cllr Coleby asked for the insurance of heritage plaques to be considered when needed.

355. To consider the following Governance issues:

355.1 Amendments made to the following policies, as recommended by the Personnel Committee, were considered:

355.1a Equality and Diversity Policy –The first paragraph would be amended to ensure that the Council were to be gender neutral whenever possible. Proposed by Cllr Green, seconded by Cllr Coleby and agreed.

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355.1b Complaints Procedure - Proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Graham and amended policy agreed.

355.1c Member Officer Protocol - Proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Graham and amended policy agreed.

355.1d Grievance Procedure - Proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Graham and amended policy agreed.

355.1e Disciplinary Procedure and Rules - Proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Graham and amended policy agreed.

355.1f Training and Development Policy

355.2 To consider any policies or procedures for review or adoption, including:

355.2a Recycling Policy

355.2b Reserves Policy

355.2c Investment Policy

355.2d Lone Working Policy

355.2e Safeguarding Policy

355.2f Data Retention Policy

355.2g Data Protection Policy

355.2h Social Media Policy

355.2i Media Policy

355.2j Health and Safety Policy

355.2k Incident Reporting Procedure and associated forms

355.2l Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

355.2m Whistleblowing Policy

It was agreed that the Clerk would make any typographical changes necessary and that Social Media training would be arranged for all Councillors to attend prior to a Full Council meeting. This was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded Cllr Graham and agreed.

356. Updates on banking – It was noted that Unity Trust would be operating paperless banking.

357. Audit

357.1 The interim internal audit report (which had been circulated to all Councillors) and the action plan recommended by the RFO was noted. The Chair thanked all the staff concerned for their work in achieving both the internal and external audit reports. The Clerk had prepared an action plan from the report and outlined the detail within it to the Councillors. A copy of the report is appended to the minutes. Particular matters to note were:

-During discussion about election costs, it was agreed to arrange two drop-in sessions for people to find out more about the opportunity to stand for election to the Town Council (one daytime, one evening).

-Arnold's Bequest – The internal auditor had advised that a separate bank account was not necessary but the original Bequest would be checked to confirm this, along with guidance from the Charity Commission. Waveney District Council would be invoiced for the sum remaining in the Bequest funds.

-An extension on the section 113 agreement with Waveney District Council had been agreed to the end of October as there were still many matters outstanding particularly to land registrations and legal matters.

-The Mayor requested that the Clerk check on bank guarantee status in the event of a bank ceasing to trade.

- A problem with one of the twenty Councillor registrations with the ICO was noted, was being remedied and it agreed to accept the £5.00 additional fee if it arose.

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- Data Protection Officer - It was clarified that the Council was not appointing a Data Protection Officer as there was no longer a legal agreement to do so, however, the Deputy Clerk was leading on Data Information Management.

- Petty Cash – It was agreed to instigate the operation of a petty cash system with a rolling £100 balance (and total spend no higher than £500 per year). Further investigation was needed on how the cash would be obtained locally, perhaps via Nat West bank. Any charges for cashing cheques should not exceed those that apply for pre-paid credit cards. This was proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Graham and agreed.

It was agreed to recommend the Action Plan to Full Council. This was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Taylor and agreed.

357.2 The external audit report – The report, which had previously been emailed to all Councillors, and was displayed at the meeting, was noted and accepted.

358. Budget

358.1 To monitor the budget for 2018-19 and note any bank reconciliations -

The most recent bank reconciliation would be scrutinised before the next Full Council meeting.

358.2 Development of the 2019-20 budget – The budget working group would meet on 17 October.

359. Payments:

359.1 The payments schedule for August and September had been circulated and the October schedule (to date) was displayed for Councillors to note. Copies of the schedules were appended to the minutes.

These payments were proposed by Cllr Coleby, Cllr Graham and agreed. Cllr Taylor left the meeting during this item as one of the payments included was to her to reimburse internet hosting costs. The future of the Lowestoft.uk email domain would be considered at a future meeting.

.gov.uk email/website – The annual payment and related direct debit had been previously agreed (£51.75 +VAT) to transfer the domain name from Waveney District Council to the Town Council. A novation agreement between WDC, Claranet and Lowestoft Town Council was needed to ensure that access to the .gov.uk website was in the Town Council's possession. It was proposed by Cllr Coleby that this was signed by Cllrs Graham and Green, seconded by Cllr Taylor and agreed.

Marina Theatre Trust rent – Was received quarterly, and it was noted that this would need to be repaid. An overpayment had also been paid by the Marina Theatre. An additional payment of VAT was due.

359.2 Payments for authorisation, including:

359.2a The following potential additional expenditure relating to Hamilton House was considered:

359.2ai £695 (+ VAT) for alteration work to the 'Ness Point' breakout area

This was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Graham and agreed.

359.2aii Two CCTV monitors, at a cost of £240 (+ VAT) each

This was proposed by Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Coleby and agreed.

359.2aiii Radar keys and associated lock mechanisms, within an overall maximum budget of £150 (+ VAT). This was proposed by Cllr Graham, seconded by Cllr Coleby and agreed.

359.2aiv Additional expenditure of £200 (+ VAT) to install the window graphics over the top of the mullions. This was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Parker and agreed. Consideration was given to repeating the existing view from the Ness Point Break out area onto vinyl once the view was obscured by the new building being constructed. This would be considered again when the building work was complete and the loss of light considered.

359.2av Meeting room bookings and associated fees

£40 per half a day plus £1.50 per person for tea and coffee had already been offered to ECCH.

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A commercial check of other meeting rooms in the area was needed and a fee structure and hire policy would be prepared.

359.2b Any other payments (schedule) –

£159.61 (+£31.98 VAT)	Reimbursement to Cllr Alice Taylor for .uk domain and emails
£40 maximum	Setting up of ICO DD
£6,000 (n.b £854.79 due in VAT income)	Rent – reimbursement for duplicate payment
£51.75 (+ £4.35 VAT)	Claranet annual fee (n.b direct debit and transfer agreement completed)
£3.50 per employee per month	Pension payroll administration

359.3 To consider any grant applications, including:

359.3a Lowestoft Community Church's Conversational English Group for £910

Cllr Green provided background on the work of the church and the reasons behind the grant application. This was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Parker and agreed to make a payment of £910 (although it exceeded the Council's normal policy amount). It was agreed to ask the Church to provide a report of the take up after the completion of the project.

359.3b Lowestoft Players to repair the sign noting that the Bethel was used during both WWI

It was noted that this project was outside of the usual work of the Lowestoft Players. It was agreed to make the payment, proposed by Cllr Graham, seconded by Cllr Parker, and agreed with one vote against (Cllr Taylor), one abstention (Cllr Coleby). The grant was made with the proviso that the organisation provide a copy of the Equality Policy.

359.4 To consider the overview of expenditure under the grants budget – an up to date over view would be provided to the next meeting.

359.5 Officers left the meeting.

Overtime rate for civic events, including the Maritime event on 7 October and Remembrance Sunday on 11 November, as recommended by the Personnel Committee were agreed as time and a half for a Saturday and double time for a Sunday. Any other overtime was to be pre-authorised by the Mayor and the Chair of Finance unless in an emergency situation. Proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Taylor and agreed. The hours accrued for 7 October were noted and agreed and agreement was made to pay overtime accrued on Sunday 11 November.

Officers returned to the meeting.

359.6 Additional expenditure for the ICO registration to include CCTV, and to note that ICO registration has been secured for all Councillors. This item was discussed and agreed earlier.

359.7 The expenditure of £432 (+VAT) for sample analysis of presumed asbestos containing materials, at sites in Lowestoft Town Council's portfolio, within an overall expenditure agreed at £5,891.50, was agreed. The deviations from the quote were noted, and came in under the quoted amount. Cllr Coleby reported that further analysis would be needed and the Clerk confirmed there was a budget for this emergency/compliance work. A sum of £2,000 + VAT was agreed for these surveys and any additional analysis. This was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Graham and agreed.

360. To consider the following matters with regard to budgets for 2018-19 and 2019-20

360.1 Working with Pathways Care Farm to decide which seeds and mother plants the Council would like for 2019-20. A budget amount was needed for this and would be considered by the Budget Working Group.

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For the 2018/19 financial year it was agreed to make a proposal to Full Council for a budget of £1500 (from overage on the Norse budget heading. This was proposed by Cllr Coleby, seconded by Cllr Taylor and agreed.

360.2 The Events and Communications Sub-Committee had previously been set a budget of £10,000 (using virement), to look at leaflets and advertising material, including to consider whether an information leaflet for Lowestoft should be produced. It was proposed by Cllr Coleby that the Committee liaise with other Town organisation to see what was already in existence. Seconded by Cllr Graham and agreed.

360.3 Lowestoft Town Council's involvement with organising and funding the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2019 – it was agreed that this would be considered at a future meeting when more detail had been obtained from Waveney District Council.

A discussion took place about acknowledging diversity as part of commemorative events. A wreath would be laid on Remembrance Sunday. Next year a communication would be extended to encourage all sectors of the community to lay a wreath and it was agreed to ask Waveney District Council to promote this initiative along with the Town Council.

360.4 The invitation to join Lowestoft Rising in April 2019 and the associated cost of £15,000 was considered. It was proposed by Cllr Green, seconded by Cllr Taylor and agreed (two abstentions; Cllr Graham and Cllr Parker) to make a recommendation to Full Council that the Town Council does not accept this invitation.

361. To consider the following items relating to income:

361.1 Receipts

Noted as above and appended to the minutes.

361.2 CiL and S.106 payments

It was noted that the FOI request response had been received and that the Clerk would write to Waveney District Council to state that policies that came into force before the formation of the Town Council were now significantly disadvantaging the Town. This was proposed by Cllr Graham, seconded by Cllr Taylor and agreed.

361.3 There were no updates on any financial funding streams affecting Council assets.

361.4 Capital programme - this was being considered as part of the budget.

361.5 Management of the Historic England grant for the Town Hall – the payment for the first half of the fund could be made without detailed information being provided. The Clerk would progress this. A list of potential surveyors would be provided to the Clerk by Cllr Coleby

362. Provision of Christmas lights in Lowestoft - it was understood that the likely cost would be less than originally agreed due to a change in installation (work on the poles). Maximum expenditure including a survey, equipment, installation and storage would be up to £25,000 as approved by Full Council (for High Street and Bevan Street East). It was proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Graham to proceed with Blachiere Illuminations at a cost of up to £22,796.70 + VAT for 2018-19, £4,821.70 + VAT for 2019-20 and £4,821.70 + VAT for 2020-21 and agreed (Four votes in favour, one against). The Committee stated that lead in time and options presented had resulted in the decision making for this project not necessarily following due process and that future projects would need more diligence.

363. Financial implications from the community survey – the Community Survey Group would meet on 23 October and any recommendations would be considered by Full Council

364. Progress with the lease for the first floor of Hamilton House and to consider the spreadsheet on rent and capital payments – Cllr Graham proposed that a decision on future years would be dependent on interest rates and further analysis and the committee noted that the first five years were a fixed charged. The review date would be established once the lease had been signed.

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- 365. Waveney Norse Supplemental Agreement** – was still subject to legal advice.
- 366.** It was noted that **Heritage Zone’s Project Manager** would be working from Lowestoft Town Council’s offices every Tuesday from 2 October
- 367. Legal advice regarding the Deed of Covenant relating to the North Denes** - it was noted that legal advice was being sought.
- 368. The draft licence for Waveney District Council to undertake work on Lowestoft Town Council owned land (“East of England Park”).** The draft licence had been received late during the day of this meeting, would be viewed by the Clerk and considered at Full Council
- 369. Revised guidance from Suffolk Highways to apply for a grit bin was noted.**
- 370.** It was noted that **Waveney District Council would be developing an Economic Plan for Lowestoft** -the Clerk would respond stating the Town Council’s expectations particularly in relation to engagement with the Town Council would be relayed to the District Council.
- 371. To consider other financial matters including**
- 371.1 Planned maintenance - the cost to replace all play equipment had been received from Sentinel and would be considered by the Budget Working Group.
- 371.2 Sale of land at Uplands - no report.
- 371.3 Commemorative plaques - Cllr Coleby reported that he had met with the various groups involved and a report was being compiled for consideration at November Full Council.
- 371.4 Arnold’s Bequest, including to consider setting up a bank account and governance arrangements - this matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.
- 371.5 Cotman Close Play Area - no report
- 371.6 Normanston Park – Allotments and Skate Park Agreement. Comments had been received from the lawyer on the agreement and an allotments site meeting was taking place on 16 October.
- 371.7 Centenary Installation at Belle Vue Park - all involved were congratulated on this project and the commemoration service which had taken place on 7 October.
- 371.8 The outcome of the consultation regarding civic artefacts - Cllr Coleby reported that Waveney District Council wanted to deliver all artefacts in one go and storage enquiries were being made. Insurance arrangements needed to be considered.
- 372. Date of the next meeting**
13 November 2018 18:00
- 373. Items for the next Agenda**
None other than those from above.
- 374. 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, including:**
- 374.1 Any employment matters - none.
- 374.2 Any legal matters - none.

Meeting Closed at 20.20.