

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 11 December 2019
MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Alan Green, Peter Lang (Chair) and David Youngman, plus non-Councillor member Emma Bateman

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Also in attendance: Richard Hackney (Operational Manager Grounds – East Suffolk Norse)

Public: There was one member of the public in attendance

43. Welcome

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

44. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Barnard, Coleby, Hardie, Pearce and non-Councillor member Ashley Ford-McAllister. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

45. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

46. Accuracy of the Minutes

12 November 2019 – Mr Hackney raised a query with item 35 of the minutes. There has been no agreement that East Suffolk Norse will plant trees free of charge at London Road South for the Kirkley Residents Association. The minutes reflect the discussion which happened at the meeting, but the clarification from Mr Hackney was noted. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

47. Public Forum

The member of the public in attendance did not have any matters to raise.

48. Restrictions on voting for non-Councillor committee members

The Clerk advised that the voting rights of non-Councillor committee members are restricted to management of land owned or occupied by the Town Council, the function of the Council as a harbour authority, any function under s.144 of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the promotion of tourism and any function under s.145 of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the management of a festival. S.145 is very broad so the Clerk will clarify voting rights under this section. However, Ms Bateman advised that she would prefer not to participate in voting, unless specifically requested to do so, but will participate in the discussions.

49. A discussion with East Suffolk Norse on how the Town Council may continue to address the climate emergency on its grounds, including the following:

- 49.1. Action East Suffolk Council is taking to encourage biodiversity within its cemeteries and to consider what action the Town Council could take to encourage biodiversity within its own parks and open spaces – East Suffolk Norse is aware of the measures being taken by East Suffolk in its cemeteries to improve biodiversity. East Suffolk Council's letter refers to churchyards, but it is understood this should be cemeteries instead, as the maintenance of churchyards is different. In older, less visited areas of cemeteries, grass is consciously being left to grow during the summer months to support wildlife. Although this has been met with some resistance, feedback from the public has been generally favourable. The Council is

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considering what approach to take with The Ness, which areas will be actively managed and which may be consciously left to grow. It was agreed that the Council requires a clear policy position, in consultation with East Suffolk Norse, so that it can explain to the public what measures are being taken and why. Firstly, appropriate areas will need to be identified. East Suffolk Norse will need to be informed by April. Areas of Britten Park, Clarkes Lane, Normanston Park and Fen Park were suggested as potential locations. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee will consider this further and the Finance and Governance Committee will consider how this will affect the grounds maintenance contract and the financial implications. East Suffolk Norse's policy on the use of pesticides was queried.

Cllr Youngman left the room 15:59

East Suffolk Norse use glyphosate around obstacles, some footpaths and to combat Japanese knotweed, and it is used in compliance with regulations governing the use of pesticides.

Cllr Youngman returned 16:01

Lowestoft Town Council has not yet adopted a pesticide policy and it was agreed that this should be considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and the Finance and Governance Committee, in consultation with East Suffolk Norse. Mr Hackney's advice was to use pesticide only in limited circumstances, such as to combat Japanese knotweed. It was also suggested that advice could be added to the Town Council's website on the appropriate use of pesticides domestically. There was a discussion about future uses for the Parklands play area, which is currently not in use, as well as other land nearby which could be used as areas to increase biodiversity. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee will consider areas for biodiversity in more detail.

50. A report from the Lowestoft Climate Action Group

The group met yesterday. Part of their discussion included glass recycling provision and schemes being run in other areas. Enquiries are being made into the cost and feasibility of putting more bottle banks in the town. Tree planting was discussed, including the feasibility of a service being set up for people who have saplings or fruit trees they do not want. There would be safeguarding and insurance complexities for any such scheme to be run through the Council and it may be more practical for such a scheme to be community led. Transport and the new trains were discussed. There is provision for bicycle storage on the trains, but no racks for them to be secured. With regard to cycle routes in the town, Suffolk County Council have advised the Group that they do not have funds available in their budget to mark out new routes in Lowestoft, but the Group has been discussing ways that members of the public can identify and advertise routes in the town. Funding options are being explored for activities the Group would like to progress.

51. Advice received from East Suffolk Council about its monitoring of air pollution in Lowestoft

Mr Hackney left the meeting 16:31

The Clerk left the room 16:31

East Suffolk Council has provided data on its air pollution monitoring, which is also available through its website. Although the readings from Lowestoft do not require further action under European Union regulations, there were still concerns as to the level of air pollution in the town. The Committee would like to know what action East Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils are taking since declaring a climate emergency and whether any measures have been put in place to reduce the level of air pollution, such as charging points for electric vehicles. Cllr Green proposed that formal contact be made with East Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils to formally request confirmation of what actions are being taken to address the climate emergency; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

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52. The impact of light and noise pollution in Lowestoft, and any measures the Town Council can take against this in relation to its own assets

The impact of noise and light pollution caused by the Town Council's assets or affecting the Town Council's assets was considered. It is understood that street lighting could be causing an issue for wildlife but there were no particular concerns identified specific to the Town Council's assets. The Planning and Environment Committee consider biodiversity, environmental and climate emergency matters as standard in their consideration of planning applications, but it was requested that the Planning and Environment Committee's Terms of Reference be checked to ensure this is covered robustly.

53. The current provision and costs of bottle banks for glass recycling in Lowestoft and whether this should be increased to appropriate Lowestoft Town Council sites

The Lowestoft Climate Action Group is trying to establish where bottle banks are currently located in Lowestoft.

Cllr Green left the room 16:57

This information would be required to consider the current provision and where there may therefore be a requirement for additional provision.

Cllr Green returned 16:59

The location of any bottle bank must meet certain criteria, such as sufficient vehicular access and sufficient clearance of any overhead cables. The Council would need to consider whether it has any suitable locations, should it wish to increase the number of bottle banks in the town. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting, for the Committee to gather further information about the current provision.

54. How the Town Council can identify and promote cycling routes in Lowestoft

This was discussed earlier in the meeting. The current maps are out of date. It was requested that the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee considers this also.

The Clerk returned 17:02

55. An update on the Neighbourhood Plan

The Sub-Committee is making good progress. A revised timetable is on the Town Council's website. The Council will need to consider whether it would like to set a budget aside to continue to support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

56. Date of the next meeting

The Lowestoft Climate Action Group has not yet set a date for its next meeting and will do so based on the scheduling of the next meeting of this Committee. The date of the next meeting of the Climate Emergency Committee was agreed as Monday 13 January at 15:30.

57. Items for the next agenda and close

Some items were raised in discussions earlier in the meeting. The Lowestoft Climate Action Group is researching the disposal of food waste and hope to report on this at the next meeting.

58. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

There were no confidential matters for consideration.

The Chair closed the meeting 17:19.

Signed: 13 January 2020