

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**10:00 on 30 July 2019**

**Notes from a meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group**

**Present:** Cllrs Alan Green, Peter Lang and David Youngman

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

**Public:** There were three members of the public in attendance

**1. Election of Chair**

Cllr Youngman nominated Cllr Lang as Chair; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

**2. Welcome**

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

**3. Receipt and consideration of acceptance of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Eastwood and Pearce. It was confirmed that all Councillors had been made aware of the date of the meeting.

**4. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

There were none.

**5. Public Forum**

The members of the public were advised that they could speak for up to three minutes each. A member of the public spoke to encourage Lowestoft Town Council to work with other bodies in the action that it takes as a result of declaring a climate emergency. An issue was also raised with the Melbourne Road car park, whereby weed killer has been used despite a prior agreement for this not to happen. The matter has been raised with Suffolk County Council and Waveney Norse. Cllr Lang offered assistance with taking this forward. A member of the public reported that many cycle lanes in the town have faded, but Suffolk County Council Highways has advised that this will not be addressed as a priority, which reiterated the need for joined-up thinking. It was also requested that the Mayor consider which organisations within the town she endorses, with regard to what the Town Council is aiming to achieve with its declaration of a climate emergency.

A member of the public suggested that the Town Council should launch an information campaign to explain why a climate emergency has been declared and what it intends to do as a result. It was suggested that renovating the derelict buildings in the town could encourage new business to the area, which could reduce commuting distances and create more jobs. It was reported that bus services in the area are poor and this should be addressed. It was suggested that a reduction in plastic should also be addressed.

The members of the public were thanked for their participation. East Suffolk Council has just declared a climate emergency, along with other Waveney area Parish Councils, such as Kessingland. Lowestoft Town Council will link up with other Councils in due course.

It was suggested that a joint meeting of the Parish Councils could be arranged. Another Council has recently been in contact to advise that it intends to declare a climate emergency also. The Clerk has already been in contact with East Suffolk Council's designated officer and can find out

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who is leading on this for Suffolk County Council. The Terms of Reference can include provision for working with other bodies and neighbouring towns.

### **6. Consideration of a recommendation to Council on:**

6.1. Whether the working group should be a committee – It was clarified that this would not prevent involvement by members of the public. It will ensure that there is a clear agenda and notice period so that members of the public will remain informed of when meetings are being held. The public would be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of any confidential items, but this would also be the case for Working Group meetings.

Cllr Green proposed a recommendation to Full Council for the Climate Emergency Working Group to become the Climate Emergency Committee; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

6.2. Terms of Reference with consideration to external appointments – The Council already agreed that it would welcome participation from members of the public. In order to do this, any interested parties would need to register, disclose relevant interests and abide by the Code of Conduct. The Terms of Reference would need to include suitable provision for this and provision for removal from the Committee/Working Group for non-compliance. The possibility for stakeholder representation was discussed. A member of the public requested to speak, which was approved by the Chair. The member of the public suggested that Suffolk Wildlife Trust should be approached. It was considered whether a representative from Suffolk Wildlife Trust should be invited to join the Working Group/Committee or whether they should be invited occasionally. It was agreed a representative could be invited for an initial discussion. It was queried how many people should make up the Working Group/Committee and it was agreed that Councillor membership should be a minimum of five, with three as quorum. It was agreed two members of the public should be invited to join initially. Representatives from other bodies should be invited to meetings first before being invited to join. The Terms of Reference will need to be approved by Full Council before being published.

### **7. Confirmation of Councillor Membership**

As discussed during the previous item, it was agreed that Councillor membership should be a minimum of five. Cllrs Carlton, Coleby, Eastwood, Pearce and Taylor had previously expressed an interest in joining and this can be raised at Full Council again if necessary.

### **8. Agreement of meeting arrangements**

It was agreed that meetings should be held monthly and the week before Full Council. Monday or Tuesday mornings were agreed as the preference.

Cllr Green proposed for meetings of the Climate Emergency Working Group/Committee to be scheduled monthly, a week prior to Full Council, on a Monday or Tuesday morning; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

### **9. Consideration of how to take forward the development of a policy**

It was agreed that officers can start to draft one to be considered at next meeting.

Representatives from East Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils and Suffolk Wildlife Trust will be invited to the next meeting. A parishes forum could be arranged, to include a presentation about electric vehicle charging points, but this will be considered in more detail.

### **10. Consideration of sources of relevant data and help to inform policy**

It was reported that the Waveney Local Plan has sections on sustainable living and transport.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust has policies and the Climate Emergency UK website has helpful information. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2014 report was also recommended.

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It was suggested that research into local data of pollution levels, admissions to hospital, life expectancy, public transport provision and impact of height of sea levels could be completed. The Excelsior Trust may have this information.

**11. Date of the next meeting**

As per item 8, it was agreed the next meeting should be scheduled on a Monday or Tuesday morning, ahead of September's Full Council meeting. Staff will check the diary and notify Councillors of appropriate dates.

**12. Items for the next Agenda and Close**

Some suggestions were made during the meeting and representatives from East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Wildlife Trust will be invited.

**13. Resolution to close the meeting to the public**

There were no confidential matters to be raised at this stage. The Town Council already has a duty to protect biodiversity when it enters into contracts. The Planning and Environment Committee also has a duty to consider biodiversity when it scrutinises planning applications. It can only consider material considerations but can make broader comments about the environment. East Suffolk Council does not have to take the Town Council's adhere to comments or suggestions made by the Town Council, but it could be encouraged to lobby the Government to take better account of the environment.

There were concerns regarding the site at the rear of the Town Hall, which was to be the drive-thru Burger King. It was reported that it is unsightly, with abandoned shopping trollies at the site.

The Chair closed the meeting 10:45.