

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**17:00 on 16 December 2019**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Chair) and Alice Taylor

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

**Public:** There were no members of the public in attendance

**116. Welcome**

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

**117. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jacqueline Hardie, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and David Youngman. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

**118. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

The Clerk and Committee Clerk declared a pecuniary interest in item 126.11 subject to the topics of discussion and will leave the room for discussions where appropriate.

**119. Accuracy of the Minutes**

19 November 2019 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Taylor; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

**120. Public Forum**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

**121. Any updates on banking**

There were no matters for consideration.

**122. Budget:**

122.1. Monitoring the budget for 2019-20 – The reports had been scrutinised by the Committee and there were no issues or comments. Cllr Taylor proposed acceptance of the budget monitoring reports; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

122.2. Any bank reconciliations – Cllr Green has scrutinised and signed off the bank reconciliation.

122.3. Consideration of the 2020 – 21 budget, including any recommendations from the Budget and Loan Working Group – The Group met this morning and discussed the Pocket Parks funding for Whitton Green, The Ness and staffing proposals. The staffing matters are due to be discussed in more detail during the confidential session. There were no recommendations to be considered at this stage and today's discussions did not have any financial impact on the draft budget.

122.4. Consideration of the 2020 – 21 precept – There were no recommendations for consideration regarding the precept at this stage.

122.5. An event management budget for transition from the current work under The Ness Steering Group from 19 – 20 and 20 – 21 budgets – The Ness Steering Group has provided a report based on this year's programme of events. The Council has not previously allocated events budgets to specific assets and the Committee agreed it was satisfied with the proposed events budget in the draft 2020 – 21 budget. The report provided a detailed financial breakdown of the events held this year which the Committee noted for information and this will be considered further by the Events and Communications Sub-Committee.

**123. Payments:**

123.1. Payments for authorisation, including the following (also see schedule):

123.1a. A replacement sound mixing console for the Marina Theatre, at a cost of £7,133.70

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(plus VAT) – The Theatre has expressed an urgent requirement for this. It was clarified that if this expenditure is approved, it would be from the current budget, rather than being included with any loan application in 2020 – 21. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the expenditure of £7,133.70 (plus VAT) for a replacement sound mixing console for the Marina Theatre; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. Further items of anticipated expenditure at the Marina Theatre between now and the next five years will be considered if a loan application is progressed in 2020 – 21.

- 123.1b. An invoice from A Hill Electrical Contracting Ltd in the sum of £2,588 + £517.60 VAT = £3,105.60 for installation and adaptations to the electrical installation at Kensington Gardens toilets and supply and installation of Airforce hand dryers – The work has been completed and was progressed following complaints from the public that the existing hand dryers were not functioning. Cllr Green proposed approval of the expenditure of £3,105.60 for electrical adaptations at the Kensington Gardens toilets and installation of the new hand dryers; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
- 123.1c. A payment of £600 (plus VAT) to East Coast Community Healthcare, to deliver Equality and Diversity, Conflict Resolution, Personal Safety and Lone Working training to Councillors and staff – Cllr Green proposed approval of the payment of £600 (plus VAT) to East Coast Community Healthcare, for delivery of training; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.
- 123.1d. A payment of £5,421 for Stamp Duty and Land Tax for the Council's office at Hamilton House – Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the payment of £5,421 for Stamp Duty and Land Tax; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
- 123.1e. A payment of £5,000 to Lowestoft Armed Forces Day 2020, from the Major Events budget – This was submitted as a grant application, but the Chair requested this be considered as a payment from the Major Events budget instead. Cllr Frost proposed approval of the payment of £5,000 to Lowestoft Armed Forces Day 2020; seconded by Cllr Taylor; three Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 123.1f. A payment of £5,000 to First Light Festival C.I.C. for £5,000, from the Major Events budget – This was submitted as a grant application, but the Chair requested this be considered as a payment from the Major Events budget instead. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the payment of £5,000 to First Light Festival C.I.C.; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.
- 123.1g. A payment of £1,800 to the Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association, from the Civic budget – This was submitted as grant application, but the Chair requested this be considered a payment from the Civic budget instead. Councillors were disappointed that the activities for which funding was being requested did not include any attractions in Lowestoft or the immediate surrounding area. Cllr Taylor proposed to decline the payment of £1,800 to the Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association, but encouraged them to reconsider their proposal to take into account the many attractions in Lowestoft and the surrounding area; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 123.2. Expenditure reports for the month ending 30 November 2019 and December to date (schedule) – These were presented as follows and noted:

### November expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 October 2019	Zoe Sprake	Civic spoon tray	£2,070
1 October 2019	Zoe Sprake	Civic spoon tray	Reverse payment - £2,070
1 November 2019	Need2Store Ltd	Storage of civic artefacts	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
1 November 2019	BSA Security and Fire	Supply/install fire extinguisher	£405 + £81 VAT = £486
1 November 2019	Purcell Architecture Ltd	Town Hall repairs	£448.41 + £89.68 VAT = £538.09

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1 November 2019	MS Oakes	Town Hall repairs	£12,210.33 + £2,442.07 VAT = £14,652.40
1 November 2019	Sarah Foote	Council expenditure and travel reimbursement	£17.10
1 November 2019	Zoe Sprake	Civic spoon tray	£2,070
1 November 2019	St John Ambulance	2x Emergency First Aid at Work	£470 + £94 VAT = £564
1 November 2019	Alan Green	Travel reimbursement NALC Conference	£129.15
1 November 2019	St John Ambulance	2 day Mental Health Training	£300 + £60 VAT = £360
1 November 2019	BSA Security and Fire	Supply/install fire extinguishers	Reverse payment - £486
1 November 2019	Broadland Security Alarms	Town Hall fire extinguishers	£486
6 November 2019	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions October 2019	£4,615.29
8 November 2019	Guy McGregor & Associates Ltd	Payslips and pensions Q2	£104 + £20.80 VAT = £124.80
8 November 2019	Npower	Low Cemetery PC elec Jul-Sept 19	£234.19 + £11.71 VAT = £245.90
8 November 2019	Npower	Denes Oval electric Jul-Sept 19	£862.92 + £43.15 VAT = £906.07
8 November 2019	Npower	Normanston Park elec Jul-Sep 19	£456.41 + £22.82 VAT = £479.23
8 November 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest elec Jul-Sep 19	£239.03 + £11.95 VAT = £250.98
8 November 2019	Npower	Kensington Gardens elec Jul-Sep	£221.35 + £11.07 VAT = £232.42
8 November 2019	Npower	Triangle Market electric Oct19	£249.03 + £12.45 VAT = £261.48
8 November 2019	East Point Business Services	Capital repay 01/10/18 – 31/12/19	£16,787 + £3,357.40 = £20,144.40
8 November 2019	East Point Business Services	HH parking 24/8/18 – 31/12/19 and HH rent 24/8/18 – 31/12/19	£19,905.41 + £3,981.08 VAT = £23,886.49
8 November 2019	Npower	CCTV electric Oct 2019	£170.73 + £34.15 VAT = £204.88
15 November 2019	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit Sept 2019	£250
15 November 2019	Peter Knight	Civic pen reimbursement	£15
15 November 2019	Essex and Suffolk Water	Normanston Park water Apr-Oct	£533.83
18 November 2019	Lloyds Bank	Credit card payments	£922.63 + £177.09 VAT = £1,099.72
18 November 2019	HMRC	HMRC October 2019	£4,105.49
21 November 2019	Mark Speller	Meeting expenses reimbursement	£13.02

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21 November 2019	Shona Bendix	Meeting and travel reimbursement	£183.05
21 November 2019	Sarah Foote	Meeting, civic and travel reimbursement	£45.80
22 November 2019	Salaries	Salaries Nov 19	£10,377.31

### December expenditure

Date	Payment To	Description	Amount
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park Business Rates December 2019	£184.00
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street Business Rates December 2019	£120.00
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market Business Rates December 2019	£115.00
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls Club Business Rates December 2019	£108.00
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC Business Rates December 2019	£206.00
2 December 2019	GYH Plumbing	Radiator Works at Whitton Meeting Hall	£1,886.97 + £377.39 VAT = £2,264.36
2 December 2019	Urban Vision	Neighbourhood Plan Services	£5,256.85 + £945.00 VAT = £6,201.85
2 December 2019	NPower	Town Hall Electricity October 2019	£282.38 + £14.12 VAT = £296.50
2 December 2019	NPower	Triangle Market Electricity August 2019	£184.49
2 December 2019	NPower	Sparrows Nest Electricity August – October 2019	£100.68 + £5.03 VAT = £105.71
2 December 2019	NPower	Sparrows Nest Electricity August – October 2019	£606.48 + £30.32 VAT = £636.80
2 December 2019	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage 18/11/2019 – 18/12/19	£200.00 + £40.00 = £240.00
2 December 2019	NPower	Sparrows Nest Electricity August – October 2019	£236.92 + £11.85 VAT = £248.77
4 December 2019	SCC Pension Fund	Pensions November 2019	£4,965.33

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The following schedule of payments for approval was presented:

Payment to	Description	Amount
Binder Ltd	Sewage Disposal at Uplands Community Centre	£285.00 + £57.00 VAT = £342.00
East Suffolk Council *	2 <sup>nd</sup> May Election Costs	£13,331.87
East Suffolk Norse *	Partnership Charges for October – December 2019	3x £60,400.00 + 3x £12,080.00 = 3x £72,480.00

\* These amounts are over the £10,000 limit of Finance and Governance Committee and will need to go to Full Council to be authorised.

Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the payment of £342 to Binder Ltd; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

123.3. The petty cash log (schedule) – There had been no transactions through petty cash since the last meeting.

123.4. Reimbursement to East Suffolk Council of £2,827.59 for overpayment of CIL money – This was noted. These are funds which should have been paid to Oulton Broad Parish Council which were paid to Lowestoft Town Council in error.

123.5. To consider the following grant applications:

123.5a. Lowestoft Art Group for £550 – Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the grant application from Lowestoft Art Group for £550; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

123.5b. East Coast Hospice for £500 - £1,000 – Cllr Frost proposed approval of the grant application from East Coast Hospice for £500; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

123.5c. Back 2 Life Community Fund for £8,000 – Cllr Green advised he would not be participating in the discussion or voting of this item. Cllr Taylor Chaired the meeting for this item only. The Committee was concerned that the application did not demonstrate a clear business or project plan and was not accompanied by details of the organisation's constitution and terms of reference.

*The Clerk left the room 17:52*

Cllr Taylor proposed declining the grant application from Back 2 Life Community Fund, on the basis that it does not meet the criteria as detailed in the Town Council's grant awarding policy; seconded by Cllr Coleby; three Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

### 124. Consideration of the following items relating to income:

124.1. The income reports for the month ending 30 November 2019 and December to date (schedule) – These were presented as follows and noted:

#### November income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
4 November 2019	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
5 November 2019	Eventbrite	Monthly market Oct 19	£34.52
12 November 2019	HMRC	VAT repayment Q2	£21,675.21
18 November 2019	Market income	Market income October and November 2019	£276

#### December income

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Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
2 December 2019	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
4 December 2019	EventBrite	Monthly Market Income	£25.89
15 November 2019	Market Income	Market Income	£83.50
22 November 2019	Market Income	Market Income	£71.50
29 November 2019	Market Income	Market Income	£78.50

124.2. An update on the Pocket Parks application for Whitton Green – Cllr Green attended a meeting this morning. It was agreed that one of the cages would remain and the other removed as it in a poor condition. The current plans were described to the Committee and it is hoped these will be finalised early in the new year.

### 125. Legal and compliance

125.1. Any compliance issues and asset management matters (some aspects might be confidential), including the following:

125.1a. A condition and compliance survey of the Pakefield Street public conveniences

*The Clerk returned 18:03*

Ivy has now been removed from the building, which allows for a clearer assessment of its condition. A budget should already be in place, although the cost is not yet known. The Committee noted that this will be proceeding. The Toilet Strategy Working Group will meet to consider the options for the Town Council's public conveniences.

125.1b. Appropriate locations for tree planting (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

125.1c. The management of liabilities in connection with natural features of land (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

125.2. An update on any relevant legal issues (confidential) including:

125.2a The signing of the lease for the first floor of Hamilton House between East Point Business Services Ltd and Lowestoft Town Council (confidential) – Cllrs Green and Taylor have signed the lease, and will be meeting with the Clerk to discuss the IT Service Level Agreement.

### 126. Other financial matters, including:

126.1. Planned and urgent works on assets – There were no matters for consideration.

126.2. Consideration of the following relating to the Town Hall:

126.2a. The feasibility study – This has been received and circulated to all Councillors. There was a discussion about the suggested options for the Town Hall and nearby land owned by East Suffolk Council. East Suffolk Council has requested the Town Council's views on how the study recommends East Suffolk Council should use its land. Cllr Taylor proposed a recommendation to Full Council covering the Finance and Governance Committee's preferred option on the future use of the Town Hall, and to approve writing formally to East Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils regarding the Town Council's views on their land and services; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

126.2b. The cost of repair work – It does not appear this will cost as much as first anticipated. This will be in addition to expenditure under the emergency repairs budget.

126.3. Further advice from East Suffolk Norse following a recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee for two new litter bins in Rosedale Park, including to consider the type of bin and cost – It was agreed to refer this matter back to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to select an appropriate type of bin for this park first.

126.4. A recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to replace a damaged bin at Fen Park, including to consider advice from East Suffolk Norse that a replacement bin of the same design will cost approximately £450 – The Council has not yet

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considered styles of furniture for its parks and open spaces. Cllr Taylor proposed the purchase of three bins of the same design as the one damaged in Fen Park. One to replace the bin removed from Fen Park and two for Rosedale Park, as discussed at item 126.3. It was further proposed that the expenditure be made from the Parks Development budget; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

- 126.5. A recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development to remove asbestos from the Yarmouth Road entrance of Belle Vue Park, including to consider the quotations received and explore the best way to progress this – Three quotes have been received, which vary greatly in price. Staff will ensure that whichever company is selected provides the necessary certification and licences for the safe handling and appropriate disposal of asbestos. None of the quotes include provision for making good following completion of the work. Cllr Green proposed approval for the removal of asbestos from the Yarmouth Road entrance of Belle Vue Park to be completed by ID Asbestos, at the quoted cost of £550 plus VAT of £110 (£660 in total), and a for quote to be sought from East Suffolk Norse for the making good work; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.
- 126.6. A recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to progress repairs to the Belle Vue Park wall, including to consider the quotations received – Several companies were approached but only two quotes have been received. Cllr Green proposed approval to progress repair work to the Belle Vue Park wall with Gilbert Builders Ltd, at the quoted cost of £2,674 plus VAT; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.
- 126.7. Consideration of whether Lowestoft Town Council needs to make any preparation for Britain's exit from the European Union, including to consider advice received from East Suffolk Norse – Advice received from East Suffolk Norse was noted. To their knowledge there is no immediate action the Town Council needs to take.
- 126.8. Delegating authority to the Clerk for exploring a transfer of utility providers and agree signatories – A broker has been instructed by the Council to obtain quotes. With the information they have gathered, they have advised that the Council could save up to £32,000, but this does not seem to correlate with the Council's current expenditure on utilities. The Clerk is awaiting further advice from the broker. The Committee was happy for the Clerk to continue exploring options.
- 126.9. Advice received from East Suffolk Council on unscheduled by-election costs – Upon request of the Town Council, East Suffolk Council has provided a breakdown of the cost of unscheduled by-elections for each ward. Based on this information, the Budget and Loan Working Group has added a contingency fund of £40,000 into the 2020 – 21 budget.
- 126.10. Rialtas annual fees and charges for 2020 – 21 – It was clarified that this relates to the financial software used by the Council. The information received was noted.
- 126.11. Staffing and consultant proposals (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

### 127. Date of the next meeting

9 January 2020 17:00

### 128. Items for the next agenda and close

No items were raised for inclusion on the next agenda.

### 129. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

- 129.1. Any employment matters, including those at 126.11 above as required – It was agreed to discuss item 129.2 first.
- 129.2. Any legal matters, including those listed with items 125.1 and 125.2 above as required
- 125.1b Appropriate locations for tree planting (confidential) – The Clerk relayed advice received from the Town Council's insurers on considering appropriate locations for the planting of replacement trees. It was suggested that the Town Council's policy on replacement trees could be amended to specify that replacement trees do not necessarily need to be planted in the same location from which the existing ones were

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removed.

125.1c The management of liabilities in connection with natural features of land (confidential)

– The Clerk relayed advice received from the Town Council’s insurers on action the Town Council can take to mitigate the risks associated with natural features of land.

129.1 Any employment matters, including those at 126.11 above as required

*It was agreed that the Committee Clerk would leave the room for the discussion of this item, and as it was the last item on the agenda the Committee Clerk left the meeting 18:38*

The Committee considered some employment items, including matters relating to the staffing structure, which will be considered by Full Council.

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