

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 16 May 2019

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Chair), Jacqueline Hardie, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Alice Taylor and David Youngman

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

Public: There was one member of the public in attendance (for part – left 19:09)

1. Welcome

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

2. Receipt and consideration of acceptance of apologies for absence

There were none.

3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

The member of the public was in attendance regarding item 10.6c – The East Point Academy. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, so it was agreed to discuss this item now. Thanks were offered to the Council for their grant of £2,000 toward the scheme, and the promise of a further £2,000 in match funding. Written evidence of the £2,000 funding secured by the East Point Academy has been provided. This has been a successful project so far and the first expedition is scheduled to take place in July. Congratulations were offered to the East Point Academy on behalf of Lowestoft Town Council.

The decision to match fund has already been made by the Council.

Cllr Hardie proposed noting that the East Point Academy have secured funding of £2,000, which Lowestoft Town Council will be match funding; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

The member of the public left the meeting 19:09

It was noted that, at item 10.6b, a decision was made by Full Council to defer the decision of the grant application from the Sparrows Nest Bowls Club, pending a decision regarding whether the Council will charge the sports clubs for coaching sessions. Instead, it was agreed that a grant application from Topcats would be considered at item 10.6b, which had been received subsequently to the agenda being issued.

4. Consideration of the accuracy of the Minutes:

a) 14 March 2019 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Parker; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

b) 28 March 2019 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Taylor; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

5. Public Forum

This was already taken at the beginning of the meeting and there were no other members of the public in attendance.

6. Review and adoption of Committee arrangements

6.1 Noting the membership of the Finance and Governance Committee – All members of the Finance and Governance Committee were in attendance and this was noted. The Terms of Reference had been circulated to Councillors previously and adopted by Full Council. There were no objections to this.

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6.2 Election of the Deputy Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed that he would like to be considered for the position of Deputy Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Frost and all Councillors voted in favour.

7. Consideration of risk management and compliance, including the following:

7.1 Compliance – The Reporting Procedure for Facilities and Maintenance had been circulated to Councillors as some minor amendments had been made to it.

Cllr Green proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the amended Reporting Procedure for Facilities and Maintenance; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

It was noted that the recent Data Protection (Charges and Information) (Amendment) Regulations 2019, as passed by the Government, states that Councillors are now exempt from paying the fee upon registering as Data Processors.

7.2 Condition Surveys – There were no matters for consideration.

8. Noting any updates on banking

The credit cards should be issued shortly. The first precept payment has been received so the investment can now be progressed.

9. Budget:

9.1 Monitoring the budget for 2019-20, including the following budget adjustments:

A meeting paper covering this item was distributed to Councillors at the meeting.

9.1a Leisure fees – Following discussions at the last Full Council meeting, it was noted that there is a shortfall in the budget for leisure fees of £4,859.50.

9.1b Business Rates for public conveniences – It was noted that there is a £5,750 shortfall in the budget, as the exemption for public conveniences does not come in to force until the next financial year, which was not the understanding of the Council at the time the budget was agreed.

It was noted that the grants budget is £30,000 and the general contingency/reserves is £25,000. It was suggested that the leisure fees and business rates shortfall could be met from either of these.

Cllr Taylor proposed a recommendation to Full Council for virement of £4,859.50 from the grants budget to cover the leisure fees budgetary shortfall and virement of £5,750 from the general contingency/reserves to cover the business rates budgetary shortfall. This was seconded by Cllr Parker and all Councillors voted in favour.

It was queried whether any decision has been made following the outcome of the public survey for the public conveniences on Kirkley Cliff Road and Pakefield Street. This will be considered by the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee.

9.2 Noting any bank reconciliations – Cllr Ardley was appointed the bank reconciliation signatory at the last Full Council meeting. He will be asked to review and sign the bank reconciliations for general funds and petty cash and this will be noted at the first available meeting of either the Finance and Governance Committee or Full Council.

9.3 Consideration of progress with the Council decision on a loan for capital works, including for the Marina Theatre, Town Hall and Denes Oval – The Council previously decided that the Budget Working Group would become the Loan Working Group, under the Finance and Governance Committee. The group will look to make recommendations as to how to progress capital works through the loan. A lot of work is required at several different assets, and everything that the Council plans to do will require an individual business plan. Some information regarding an outline of costs has been obtained, but the working group will need to assess priorities and a process for obtaining quotes, etc. Cllrs Green, Parker, Pearce and Taylor expressed an interest in

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joining the Loan Working Group. An invitation will be extended to the rest of the Council and a meeting will be arranged following this.

10. Payments:

10.1 Noting any payments made (schedule) – Items 10.1 and 10.2 were taken together, and the following schedules were presented to Councillors at the meeting:

April Income

| Date | Description | Amount |
|------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 16/04/2019 | Rental income from tenants | £6,300 |
| 18/04/2019 | Rental income from tenants | £213.16 |
| 30/04/2019 | Precept 2019 – 20 first instalment | £891,768.50 |

April Expenditure

| Date | Description | Amount |
|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 01/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council - Triangle Market Business Rates | £118.85 |
| 01/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council - Pakefield Street NNDR April | £122.95 |
| 01/04/2019 | Marina Theatre Trust - Management Fee Q1 | £45,000 |
| 01/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council - Kensington Gardens PC NNDR April | £208.20 |
| 01/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council - Town Hall BID Levy | £1,185 |
| 03/04/2019 | Lowestoft Photographic Club Grant | £500 |
| 03/04/2019 | Plants – Norfolk Herbs | £30.96 |
| 03/04/2019 | ID Asbestos - Asbestos works, Sparrows Nest | £132 |
| 03/04/2019 | Plaisir Twinning Association - Plaisir visit – two delegates | £300 |
| 03/04/2019 | ID Asbestos - Asbestos works, Kensington Gardens | £300 |
| 04/04/2019 | Suffolk Pension Fund - Pensions, March 2019 | £4,613.85 |
| 04/04/2019 | Plants for Kensington Gardens – Herb Centre Ltd | £114.75 + £3 VAT = £117.75 |
| 05/04/2019 | Purcell - Town Hall Condition Survey | £5,880 |
| 05/04/2019 | Nicholsons Solicitors LLP - Lease legal advice | £760 |
| 05/04/2019 | Mark Speller LTC travel reimbursement March 19 | £30.02 |
| 18/04/2019 | HMRC liability March 2019 | £4,355.41 |
| 23/04/2019 | Salaries April 2019 | £10,078.69 |
| 26/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council - Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR April 2019 | £108.20 |
| 26/04/2019 | Gazprom Energy - Denes Oval gas March 2019 | £37.41 + £1.87 VAT = £39.28 |
| 26/04/2019 | Gazprom Energy - Town Hall gas March 2019 | £94.54 + £4.73 VAT = £99.27 |
| 26/04/2019 | Essex and Suffolk Water - Normanston water Oct 18 – Apr 19 | £543.53 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Denes Oval electric Mar 19 | £197.61 + £39.52 VAT = £237.13 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Pakefield Street PC electric Mar 19 | £39.97 + £2 VAT = £41.97 |
| 26/04/2019 | Gt Yarmouth Heating - Gunton and Whitton boiler service | £139.99 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Normanston electric Mar 19 | £291.20 + £58.24 VAT = £349.44 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Kensington Gardens electric Mar 19 | £59.41 + £2.97 VAT = £62.38 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Kensington Gardens electric Mar 19 | £24.14 + £1.21 VAT = £25.35 |

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| 26/04/2019 | N Power - CCTV electric Mar 19 | £77.42 + £15.48 VAT = £92.90 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Sparrows Nest electric Mar 19 | £21.07 + £1.05 VAT = £22.12 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Town Hall electric Mar 19 | £146.70 + £7.34 VAT = £154.04 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Triangle Market elec Mar 19 | £163.83 + £8.19 VAT = £172.02 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power - Sparrows Nest electric Mar 19 | £3.67 + £0.18 VAT = £3.85 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power – Sparrows Nest electric Mar 19 | £93.04 + £4.65 VAT = £97.69 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power – Sparrows Nest electric Mar 19 | £62.08 + £3.10 VAT = £65.18 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power – Lowestoft Cemetery electric Mar 19 | £23.03 + £1.15 VAT = £24.18 |
| 26/04/2019 | N Power – Sparrows Nest electric Mar 19 | £53.69 + £2.68 VAT = £56.37 |
| 26/04/2019 | SLCC – Town Clerk membership 19 – 20 | £507 |
| 26/04/2019 | RICOH – printer costs Jan – Mar 19 | £432.63 + £86.52 VAT = £519.15 |
| 26/04/2019 | Shona Bendix LTC costs reimbursement | £134.42 + £3.71 = £138.13 |
| 26/04/2019 | David Ogilvie Engineering – 7 x noticeboards | £12,445 + £2,489 = £14,934 |
| 26/04/2019 | Darren Breeze Woodturning – repairs to Kensington Gardens | £3,250 |
| 26/04/2019 | ThePlaceForPlants – Plants Kensington Gardens and Commonwealth Canopy | £1,862.17 + £372.43 VAT = £2,234.60 |
| 26/04/2019 | Need2Store – Storage of civic artefacts | £200 + £40 VAT = £240 |
| 26/04/2019 | Norfolk County Council – AAT Level 3 training | £2,010 |
| 30/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council – Kensington Gardens PC NNDR May | £206 |
| 30/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council – Pakefield Street PC NNDR May | £120 |
| 30/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council – Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR May | £108 |
| 30/04/2019 | East Suffolk Council – Links Road Car park NNDR May | £184 |

May Income

| Date | Description | Amount |
|---------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 2/5/19 | Rental Income from Tenant | £625.00 |
| 2/5/19 | Rental Income from Tenant | £1562.50 |
| 2/5/19 | Market Income | £178.50 |
| 3/5/19 | CIL Income | £3435.71 |
| 8/5/19 | VAT Repayment | £62528.59 |
| 14/5/19 | Market Income | 204.50 |

May Expenditure

| Date | Description | Amount |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1/5/19 | Insurance costs 2019-2020 | £20366.40 |

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| 1/5/19 | Internal Audit Fee | £4.50 |
| 1/5/19 | Credit card setup fee | £50.00 |
| 7/5/19 | Pensions April 2019 | £4615.29 |

Petty Cash Log

| Date | Description | Amount | Running Total |
|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| 1/4/19 | Opening Balance | | £205.62 |
| 10/4/19 | Meeting Refreshments and Stationery | £41.83 | £163.79 |
| 23/4/19 | Postage | £0.70 | £163.09 |
| 25/4/19 | Meeting Refreshments | £6.00 | £157.09 |
| 29/4/19 | Meeting Refreshments | £13.77 | £143.32 |
| 29/4/19 | Folders | £6.00 | £137.32 |
| 2/5/19 | Coffee for Office | £4.50 | £132.82 |

There were no issues or queries and the Committee was happy to note these schedules.

10.2 Noting expenditure and income reports for the months ending 31 March 2019, 30 April 2019 and May 2019 to date – This was covered with item 10.1.

10.3 Consideration of any payments for authorisation (schedule), including the following: - There were no matters for consideration.

10.4 Any other payments (schedule) – There were no matters for consideration.

10.5 Noting the petty cash log (schedule) – This was covered with item 10.1.

10.6 Consideration of any grant applications, including:

10.6a St John Ambulance for £4,000 - £6,000 – The Committee was concerned that this is a substantial amount of money to commit to so early in the year. The grant awarding policy states that applications will considered twice a year, in June and December, and it was agreed that adherence to these terms would assist the Council in deciding how much can be awarded, and which applications best follow the Council’s policy. It was suggested that a representative from St John Ambulance could be invited to speak at a future Finance and Governance Committee meeting to provide more information and see if the Committee may be able to advise them regarding seeking funding from other sources or identifying priorities within their application. Cllr Taylor proposed refusal of the application owing to budgetary constraints, but to invite a representative from St John Ambulance to attend a Finance and Governance Committee meeting with a more detailed proposal. This was seconded by Cllr Frost and all Councillors voted in favour.

Cllr Taylor proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adhere to the grant awarding policy and consider grant applications twice per year, in June and December; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

10.6b Sparrows Nest Bowls Club for £3,782 – It was agreed at the last Full Council meeting to defer this item and arrange a meeting with the Sparrows Nest Bowls Club. The club has applied for a 100% rebate it what it believes its fees will be for this year. The pre-existing Council agreement is that clubs may apply for a grant equal to their anticipated fees, however further information is required from Waveney Norse as to how much clubs have historically been

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charged for coaching sessions, as this has not been considered as part of Lowestoft Town Council's fee schedule for 2019 – 20.

As agreed at the start of the meeting, a grant application from Topcats was considered here. It was unclear from the application whether the grant funding would be used directly to provide lunches to its sponsors by way of thanks, or to provide young people and vulnerable adults with catering experience.

Cllr Hardie proposed refusal of the grant application from Topcats, due to the ambiguity of its purpose; seconded by Cllr Youngman; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against; two Councillors abstained from the vote.

10.6c Noting that the East Point Academy Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme have secured funding of £2,000, which the Finance and Governance Committee previously agreed to match – This item was covered earlier in the meeting.

- 10.7 Consideration of attendance at the Why Sports 2019 Conference (at a cost of £225 per delegate), number of delegates and budget – Details of the conference were circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting and displayed at the meeting. Having considered the agenda for the conference against the cost, the Committee felt that although the conference would cover an important subject matter, it would not provide sufficient content relevant to the Town Council. Cllr Pearce proposed that Lowestoft Town Council send no delegates to the Why Sports 2019 Conference; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

11. Consideration of the following items relating to income:

- 11.1 Receipts – This was covered with item 10.1. Cllr Taylor proposed noting the schedule of payments received for April and May 2019; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 11.2 CiL and S.106 payments – The Clerk gave an explanation of CiL and S.106 for Councillors who were not familiar with it. The Council previously decided to dedicate £15,000 to purchase an extra piece of play equipment at the Stoven Close play area and £35,000 to renovate the Nightingale Road play area. Stoven Close is ongoing but two proposals have been received for Nightingale Road, one of which is within the budget of £35,000. The proposals were shown to the Committee and will be considered in more detail by the AID Committee at their next meeting.

Cllr Taylor left the room 19:58

Further information is being obtained from Waveney Norse as to why only two companies responded of the five who were approached. The Council has a separate budget for repair work and upgrades across all of its play areas.

Cllr Taylor returned 20:01

It was agreed that the Council should advertise a formal unveiling of the new play equipment by the Mayor.

- 11.3 Receipt of any updates on any financial funding streams affecting Council assets – The Making Waves Project is working with the Lowestoft Museum to enhance how it displays its exhibits. This includes the Lowestoft Collection. The Council has set aside a small budget for improvements to the storage and display of the collection. The Council and the Museum would need to consider future storage arrangements for the collection, as any funding awarded for the Lowestoft Collection may be dependent on how long the collection is to remain in its current location. A representative from Lowestoft Town Council is a trustee of the Museum and can therefore ensure the Council is kept updated with any developments. At this stage, the Making Waves Project is working with the Lowestoft Museum more generally, and the Town Council will be consulted where relevant.
- 11.4 Capital programme – This matter will be considered by the Loan Working Group once their first meeting has been arranged.
- 11.5 Management of the Historic England grant for the Town Hall – A drone survey of the roof has been completed. The images have been received and the report is pending. A grant application has been submitted to Historic England for a feasibility study of the Town Hall.

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11.6 Any updates regarding leisure fees for 2019 – 20, following the consideration of Full Council – There were no further updates, following the last Full Council meeting.

12. Audit

12.1 Noting progress with the internal and external audits – There were no further updates, following the last Full Council meeting.

13. Legal:

13.1 Receipt of an update on any relevant legal issues (confidential) – There were no further updates, following the last Full Council meeting.

13.2 Consideration of the CCTV contract with Waveney Norse (confidential) – This will be discussed at next week's CCTV Committee meeting.

13.3 Consideration of a lease for the Lowestoft Tennis Association and other clubs (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

13.4 Consideration of any progress with the lease for the first floor of Hamilton House (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

14. Consideration of other financial matters including

14.1 Planned and urgent works on assets – The Council has a general repairs and maintenance budget in place, and a repairs and maintenance reserve totalling £83,700, but compliance issues are currently being dealt with under emergency expenditure as there is no budget in place for this. Compliance issues are common due to the nature of the Town Council's assets. All Councillors voted in favour of a recommendation to Full Council of a virement of £20,000 from the repairs and maintenance budget reserve, to form a compliance budget, with delegated authority to the Clerk, so issues can be dealt with in a timely manner and reported back to the Council.

14.2 Commemorative plaques – It was requested at the last Full Council meeting that a plaque be considered following an incident at Ness Point, in which a young person assisted their injured friend. A plaque policy has been adopted by the Council and a budget agreed for new and replacement plaques. It was however suggested there may be an alternative and more appropriate way of acknowledging the young person's bravery. It was suggested this should be considered further by the AID Committee. Councillors have heard requests for a plaque to commemorate the town's fishermen. The Town Council has received no formal approaches, but any requests can be considered by the AID Committee.

14.3 A policy for tablets for Councillors – The Council has previously agreed a budget but not a way to progress this. It was suggested that if this is progressed, the Council should ensure that the public are made aware this is with a view of providing the Council with a long-term cost saving and the reduction in the amount of paper it is using. The Committee agreed that it would be easier to offer training and resolve any issues if all Councillors were using the same device, and would provide a secure way for Councillors to access confidential documents without having to come into the office. It was suggested that if this system is to work, all Councillors must be in agreement to use it. A meeting will be arranged with a representative from the IT Department. Cllrs Hardie, Taylor and Youngman expressed an interest in being involved, and the Clerk will attend also. Staff will try to arrange the meeting to take place before the next Full Council meeting. All Councillors voted in favour for this to be progressed.

15. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 13 June 18:00

16. Items for the next Agenda

It was requested that a discussion regarding the discontinuation of the '.uk' email addresses be considered at the next meeting. This process has already started and the domain will be closed

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completely on 9 June. Councillors' '.uk' email addresses have already been closed. 'gov.uk' email addresses are being set up for all new Councillors, and instructions and support will be given.

It was queried whether Lowestoft Town Council is still liable for business rates if it grants a Licence to Occupy or a lease at peppercorn rent. The Clerk will investigate this.

All Councillors voted in favour of moving the meeting into confidential session.

17. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

17.1 Any employment matters – There were no matters for consideration.

17.2 Any legal matters, including those listed with item **13** above:

13.3 Consideration of a lease for the Lowestoft Tennis Association and other clubs (confidential) –

The latest position was discussed.

13.4 Consideration of any progress with the lease for the first floor of Hamilton House (confidential)

– A meeting took place this afternoon between the solicitors representing the two parties. Cllrs Green, Taylor and the Clerk were in attendance. The matter is progressing, and the Council's solicitor is making some adjustments to the lease, which will be presented to this Committee once complete.

The Chair closed the meeting 21:05.

Signed:

13 June 2019