

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
17:30 on 20 February 2020

MINUTES

Present: Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Chair), Andy Pearce and Alice Taylor

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

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

144. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure, welcome the meeting, and remind councillors and members of the public right to report.

145. Apologies for absence

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

146. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 156.6b.

147. Accuracy of the Minutes

9 January 2020 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Frost; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

148. Public Forum

There no members of the public in attendance.

149. Updates on banking

There were no updates for consideration at this meeting.

150. Budget:

150.1. Monitoring the budget for 2019-2020 – The budget monitoring documents were circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting. The Clerk has notified NPower that electricity invoices for the CCTV cameras should be directed to East Suffolk Council from 1 April.

NPower has sent across a form which will need to be returned to them one week prior to this, which the Committee Clerk will sort out.

150.2. Bank reconciliations – Arrangements are being made for Cllr Green to review and sign the bank reconciliation.

150.3. Completion of the VAT return – A VAT reimbursement in the sum of £149,913.11 has been received from HMRC. The amount of the reimbursement is due to several of the Partnership Charges invoices from East Suffolk Norse being received within the same period, rather than monthly.

151. Payments:

151.1. Payments for authorisation, including the following:

151.1a. See schedule – The following schedule of payments for approval was presented to the Committee:

Payment to	Description	Amount
Society of Local Council Clerks	Deputy Clerk Principal Membership (Part paid for by Brome and Oakley Parish Council)	£309.00, of which £101.00 has been paid for by Brome and Oakley

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
17:30 on 20 February 2020

Society of Local Council Clerks	SLCC Practitioners Conference 2020 Deputy Clerk	£279.00 + £36.00 VAT = £315.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	SLCC Practitioners Conference 2020 Clerk	£350.00 + £50.20 VAT = £400.20
Broadland Security Alarms	Annual Maintenance Charge for Town Hall Fire Detection and Alarm System	£612.50 + £122.50 VAT = £735.00
	Neighbourhood Plan Consultancy Support	Up to £3,000

Two consultants are being considered to provide required consultancy support with the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Cllr Green proposed approval of the payments as presented in the schedule, and additionally proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to appoint a Consultant to provide support with the Neighbourhood Development Plan, within a maximum budget of £3,000; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

151.2. Expenditure reports for January 2020 and February 2020 to date (schedule) – The following expenditure reports were presented to the Committee and noted:

January 2020 Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
6 January 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions December 2019	£4,615.29
7 January 2020	Liquid DJ	Remembrance Day sound system	£550
7 January 2020	Gazprom Energy	Denes Oval gas September 19	£31.41
7 January 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	General legal advice	£494
7 January 2020	NPower Ltd	Town Hall electric November 19	£287.08
7 January 2020	NPower Ltd	Kensington Garden elec Sep-Nov	£135.41
7 January 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Hamilton House legal advice	£2,774
7 January 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Marina Theatre legal advice	£349.60
7 January 2020	M.S. Oakes Ltd	Town Hall repairs	£4,474.79
7 January 2020	Gazprom Energy	Denes Oval gas Sep 19 extra	£0.02
7 January 2020	Pearce and Kemp	Triangle Market elec repairs	£110.64 + £22.13 VAT = £132.77
7 January 2020	Lowestoft Armed Forces Day	Armed Forces Day grant	£5,000
7 January 2020	Sarah Foote	Stamps, meeting refreshments, Sellotape and Tippex	£15.75
9 January 2020	NPower	Triangle Market electric Dec19	£305.47 + £15.27 = £320.74
13 January 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas Dec 19	£41.45 + £2.07 VAT = £43.52
13 January 2020	NPower	CCTV electric Dec 19	£170.73 + £34.15 VAT = £204.88
13 January 2020	Stems Florists	Wreaths for Holocaust Memorial	£120
13 January 2020	Blachere Illuminations	Festive light display 2019	£4,936.70 + £987.34 VAT = £5,924.04
13 January 2020	HMRC	HMRC additional payments	£3,983.97
15 January 2020	Waveney Norse Ltd	Partnership charge Jan 2020	£72,480
16 January 2020	Lloyds Bank Account	Credit card transactions	£61.31
16 January 2020	Shona Bendix	Postage reimbursement	£6.50

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

17:30 on 20 February 2020

20 January 2020	Public Works Loans Board	Box Office loan repayment	£7,270.50
20 January 2020	Salaries	Dec 19 salaries correction	£676.60
21 January 2020	NPower	Low Cemetery PC electric Q3 19	£246.11 + £12.31 VAT = £258.42
21 January 2020	Wave Ltd	K.Gardens water May – Nov 19	£241.48
21 January 2020	East Point Business Services	HH shower screen & Radar lock	£515 + £103 VAT = £618
21 January 2020	NPower	Town Hall electric Dec 19	£282.38 + £14.12 VAT = £296.50
21 January 2020	HMRC	HMRC December 2019	£4,674.15
21 January 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest elec Q2 19-20	£175.13 + £8.76 VAT = £183.89
21 January 2020	NPower	S.Nest elec Q3 & Q2 Credit 19	£29.95 + £1.50 VAT = £31.45
21 January 2020	NPower	Pakefield St PC elec Oct-Dec 19	£371.63 + £18.58 VAT = £390.21
23 January 2020	Salaries	Salaries January 2020	£9,371.40
24 January 2020	RRC International	IEMA course and membership	£1,044.50 + £170.10 VAT = £1,214.60
24 January 2020	RICOH UK Ltd	Printer hire Q4 and ink Q3	£301.46 + £60.29 VAT = £361.75
24 January 2020	NPower	Kensington Gardens electric Q3	£223.77 + £11.19 VAT = £234.96
24 January 2020	NPower	Denes Oval electric Oct-Dec 19	£1,008.57 + £50.43 VAT = £1,059
24 January 2020	NPower	Normanston Park elec Oct-Dec 19	£2,642.28 + £528.46 VAT = £3,170.74
24 January 2020	Guy McGregor	Payslips Q3	£100.50 + £20.10 VAT = £120.60
24 January 2020	Working Law Solicitors	Legal advice	£350
24 January 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage Jan 20	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
24 January 2020	Shona Bendix	Mixed reimbursement	£10.80
24 January 2020	Parkinson Partnership	Retainer VAT advice 2019-2021	£200
24 January 2020	Salaries	Salaries January 2020	£2,000

February 2020 Expenditure

Date	Payment To	Description	Amount
3 February 2020	Fatstickman Ltd	Banners for the Ness, to be recharged to ESC	£380.00 + £76.00 VAT = £456.00
3 February 2020	Broadland Security Alarms	Call out to Town Hall Alarm 23/8/19	£112.00 + £22.40 VAT = £134.40
3 February 2020	Broadland Security Alarms	Call out to Town Hall Alarm 24/7/19	£123.75 + £24.75 = £148.50
6 February 2020	SCC Pension Fund	Pensions January 2020	£4,210.42
7 February 2020	NPower Ltd	Triangle Market	£102.07 + £5.10 VAT =

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

17:30 on 20 February 2020

		Electric January 2020	107.17
7 February 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall Gas January 2020	£44.21 + £2.21 VAT = £46.42
7 February 2020	NPower Ltd	CCTV Electric January 2020	£170.36 + £34.07 VAT = £204.43
7 February 2020	Lauren Elliott	Mileage Reimbursement	£41.49
13 February 2020	First Light Festival	First Light Festival 2020 Support	£5,000.00
13 February 2020	SLCC	Reducing Energy Use in Buildings Training Webinar	£60.00 + £12.00 VAT = £72.00
13 February 2020	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit January 2020	£250.00
17 February 2020	Lloyds Bank		£310.24
17 February 2020	Waveney Norse	Partnership Charge February 2020	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
Scheduled	East Coast Community Healthcare	CRT, PSLW and E&D Training 20/2/2020	£600.00 + £120.00 VAT = £720.00

It was queried why alarm callouts for July and August 2019 have only recently been paid. This will be checked. It was queried why banners for The Ness were not invoiced directly to East Suffolk Council. It was explained that this was for expediency as they were ordered from a company which the Town Council has ordered from before.

151.3. The petty cash log (schedule) – Petty cash is now rarely used but an up to date log will be made available for the next meeting.

152. Income:

152.1. Income reports for January 2020 and February 2020 to date (schedule) – The following income reports were presented to the Committee and noted:

January 2020 Income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
7 January 2020	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£9.75
13 January 2020	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£6,300
22 January 2020	Market income	Market income 20/12/19 and 3/1/20	£90.50
27 January 2020	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16

February 2020 Income

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
11 February 2020	East Suffolk Council	Banners for the Ness	£380.00 + £76.00 VAT = £456.00
11 February 2020	HMRC	VAT Repayment Q3 19-20	£149,913.11

Savings Account

Date	Interest Received	Total
30 September 2019	£98.63	£450,098.63
31 December 2019	£453.80	£455,552.43

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

17:30 on 20 February 2020

153. Audit

- 153.1. The internal audit report and any recommendations – This item will be carried forward to the next agenda and the report circulated to the Committee in the interim for review. The Clerk explained the recommendations made in the report. The report raised a concern about the sum outstanding on the Debtors List and a recommendation was made to use the Sundry Debtors System available on the RBS software to manage follow up action on this. The report noted that the petty cash log was not up to date. There was a recommendation in the report that the Council review the arrangements of its payroll service, to ensure it is being administered efficiently and effectively and that all legal requirements are being met with regard to the processing of sensitive data. It was queried whether the payroll service could be managed by the Council. This could be explored alongside alternative independent providers and would be fully auditable and scrutinised by the Council and this Committee. The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, will explore the options and report back. There was a recommendation in the report that the Council continues to monitor the Fidelity Guarantee insurance cover, and the cover should be increased if the Council's overall balances are expected to exceed the current cover of £2million. This is not an immediate issue but will be monitored closely over the next six months.
- 153.2. The audit report/action plan from the Responsible Financial Officer – This item was covered with the discussion of item 153.1 and a written action plan from the Responsible Financial Officer will be circulated.

154. Legal and compliance

- 154.1. Employment budgets and to consider and agree recruitment costs (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 154.2. Renewal of the loan agreement for the Lowestoft Collection to the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

155. Events and Communications Sub-Committee:

- 155.1. Receipt of the minutes of the meeting on 13 February 2020 and consideration of the following recommendations: The minutes of the meeting on 13 February 2020 were received and noted.
- 155.1a. A maximum budget of £400 to host guests from the Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association for a reception at Hamilton House, and to consider a budget for gifts – Cllr Taylor proposed a maximum budget of £500 to include costs of the reception and a gift, with delegated authority to the Clerk to make arrangements for the reception and purchase the gift; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. 10 July is being considered as the date for the reception.
- 155.1b. A maximum budget of £500 to purchase two plaques – to commemorate the 80th Anniversaries of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain, and a further maximum budget of £500 for the unveiling ceremonies of the plaques – It was clarified that this is separate to the heritage plaque programme and the request has not been made by a third party. If approved, the Events and Communications Sub-Committee recommended that Cllr Pearce seek advice from local history groups about suitable locations. It is likely the plaques would be made of brass, and the Events and Communications Sub-Committee would like the Battle of Britain memorial plaque to be large enough to list twelve names. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of a maximum budget of £500 to purchase two plaques, to commemorate the 80th anniversaries of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain, and with delegated authority to the Clerk to progress through liaison with local history groups via Cllr Pearce; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 155.2. To consider whether to delegate a budget of £10,000 to the Events and Communications Sub-Committee – It was clarified that the Sub-Committee would like confirmation as to whether they currently have a delegated budget in place. It was clarified that there is currently no delegation in place. The Events and Communications Sub-Committee sits under the Finance

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

17:30 on 20 February 2020

and Governance Committee so that Finance and Governance can consider and authorise any recommendations requiring expenditure. Cllr Taylor proposed adhering to the existing arrangements and Terms of Reference for the Events and Communications Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

156. Other financial matters, including:

- 156.1. Planned and urgent works on assets – There were no matters for consideration at this meeting.
- 156.2. Issues raised regarding the condition of the Marina Theatre – It was noted that the Theatre has raised concerns about potential shifting of another wall. Professional advice is required and the Theatre’s suggestions will be considered together with information the Council already possesses. The Theatre would like to progress an elevator in the building and will be exploring the cost and a feasibility study, and whether any grant funding is available. The Theatre will discuss its plans with the Council once it has more details.
- 156.3. Whether to progress the plans developed for Whitton Green, and to explore other sources of funding, following confirmation that the application for Pocket Parks funding was unsuccessful – It is understood that the application was not successful generally due to it being a very competitive fund which attracted a large number of applicants. There is already some promised funding from other sources, so it was calculated that the Town Council would need approximately £20,520 to progress these plans. There is provision in the 2020 – 2021 budget to make improvements to a play area, and the Council has not yet decided which one this will be. CIL funding may also be available. This Committee agreed that as a consultation had already been completed for Whitton Green, public expectation about improvements to this site had been raised. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to progress the plans developed for Whitton Green; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour. The Clerk will ensure clear costings and a report on CIL availability are presented to Council.
- 156.4. Changing the name of the KPIs Working Group to the Norse Contract Working Group – The Group is now meeting regularly on a Monday, and is first reviewing the Norse contract. Cllr Taylor proposed approval to the change the name of the KPIs Working Group to the Norse Contract Working Group; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 156.5. The sale and change of use of a Council building (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 156.6. Consideration of the following recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee:
 - 156.6a. A maximum budget of £2,500 to purchase cherry trees, a maximum budget of £200 to purchase peace roses and a maximum budget of £800 to plant the cherry trees and peace roses – The Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee made this recommendation subject to there being no purchases made until the relevant planting permissions and ongoing maintenance arrangements had been agreed and the Town Council’s Community Wardens appointed. These conditions exclude one symbolic cherry tree to be planted in Kensington Gardens in August to commemorate Victory Over Japan Day. The maximum budget of £800 for planting includes water bags, which East Suffolk Norse can supply for the trees so that they will not have to be watered as regularly. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of this recommendation from the AID Committee, subject to the conditions applied by the AID Committee, with delegated authority to the Clerk to progress; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
 - 156.6b. A maximum budget of £500 to purchase three rowan trees and a willow to plant at the Gainsborough Drive pond – The Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer expressed some concerns with this recommendation. Presently, the area appears to be waterlogged and the water level of the pond is high. This may be due to recent inclement weather or an underlying issue. There have been issues with existing trees at the site previously, which has led to some having to be removed. Most recently, storm damage led to two trees having to be removed as a matter of urgency, after residents

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

17:30 on 20 February 2020

raised concerns. A concern is that planting further trees at this site may create more risk. The Council has a policy covering the planting of replacement trees for those the Council has had to remove, but this does not necessarily need to be at the same site. This recommendation is to replace trees which had to be removed due to disease. Local residents are in support of this but would like advice from East Suffolk Norse's arborist as to whether the disease may still be present in the soil and the risk of it affecting the replacement trees. It was agreed that this site should be included in the site visit with Norse's Countryside Officer and Cllrs Green and Pearce advised they would like to attend.

- 156.6c. Seeking quotes to progress an intrusive geo-environmental survey of the North Denes land situated between the Tingdene Caravan Park and Links Road – Cllr Green proposed approval of the recommendation from the AID Committee for quotes to be sought; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.
- 156.6d. Consent to adopt the red telephone kiosk on Gunton Drive and to appoint signatories to sign the contract of acceptance – This item is also on the Full Council agenda. The cost of adoption is £1. There is a standing agreement from Full Council for the Mayor and Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee to sign all legal documents so this item was noted and will be dealt with by Full Council.
- 156.6e. The cost of installing a defibrillator in the red telephone kiosk on Gunton Drive – It was queried whether a formal public consultation should be considered. The suggestion of a defibrillator was made by a Councillor to local residents, who have expressed support for the idea. It may be possible for the Council to apply for external funding, but would need to demonstrate that there is a requirement for the defibrillator at that location. The cost would be approximately £1,600, including the protective cabinet, and the Council would need to consider training. It was agreed that a policy should be considered, to ensure that decisions are made strategically on whether to support defibrillators and where. The Allotments Association are exploring funding options for a defibrillator to be installed at the Normanston Allotments, and the Council would need to consider landowner permission. Cllr Pearce proposed referring this matter to the AID Committee, to consider a policy for the Council on the installation of defibrillators on its land; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.
- 156.6f. A maximum budget of £100 to purchase new storage boxes for items of the Lowestoft Collection – Since the AID Committee meeting where this recommendation was made, the Museum has proceeded to purchase the storage boxes. The Museum has purchased additional storage boxes for other items in the Museum, which has resulted in a lower per-unit price. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to liaise with the Lowestoft Museum about reimbursement for the storage boxes purchased for the Lowestoft Collection, within a maximum budget of £100; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.
- 156.6g. An application to the Sea-Changers Coastal Fountain Fund 2020, to receive up to £2,000 of funding per site for water bottle refill stations at Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens, and to consider any ancillary costs – The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, expressed some concern. The proposed location in Kensington Gardens is not clearly visible. A drinking water tap has previously been installed in Kensington Gardens and is still in use. There is a potential liability of having a tap prone to unhygienic conditions, and the potential Legionella and water hygiene risks should be considered. The tap is not currently included in the Legionella audit schedule, and the Clerk recommends that it is stopped up. An application to the Sea-Changers Coastal Fountain Fund would need to be submitted before 28 February, and ongoing costs would need to be considered. It was suggested that the application could be submitted, as it sits well with the Council's climate emergency declaration in deterring single use plastics. In the interim, more information about the associated costs can be gathered. If the Council decides that the ongoing financial commitment is too great, the application

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

17:30 on 20 February 2020

can be withdrawn. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority for the Clerk to submit an application to the Sea-Changers Coastal Fountain Fund for water bottle refill stations in Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens, up to a maximum of £2,000 per site. It was further proposed to withdraw the applications should the Council decide that the associated and ongoing costs are too great; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. Cllr Taylor proposed stopping up the existing drinking water tap in Kensington Gardens, on the basis of health, safety and hygiene concerns; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

156.6h. Locking the Town Council's public conveniences overnight and considering the cost of appropriate signage and contractual arrangements with East Suffolk Norse (some aspects may be confidential) – Further information is being sought, including the cost of the signage. The signage will not specify opening hours, but will simply state that the public conveniences will be closed overnight.

156.6i. A trial of an automatic door closure lock at the Sparrows Nest disabled public convenience, at a cost of £400 (+VAT) (including labour) – The AID Committee has recommended this trial due to recent issues of improper use. If effective, the Council can decide whether to apply this to the rest of its disabled public conveniences. Cllr Taylor proposed proceeding with trial of an automatic door closure lock at the Sparrows Nest disabled public convenience, at a cost of £400 (+VAT); seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

157. Date of the next meeting

12 March 2020 17:00 – It was noted that the meeting will now be held on 5 March at 17:00 instead.

158. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for the inclusion of items on the next agenda.

159. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

159.1. Any employment matters, including those at item 154.1 above as required:

154.1 Employment budgets and to consider and agree recruitment costs (confidential) – A budget of £3,000 was previously agreed to cover the cost of the recruitment process, including for the Community Wardens. The 2020 – 2021 budget includes provision for equipment and furniture and it was agreed that a list should be compiled of items which will be required immediately for the new staff. Cllr Pearce proposed a maximum budget of £5,000 for the cost of the recruitment process and purchase of any equipment and furniture required immediately for the new staff; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. Following recent Lone Working and Personal Safety training, the Clerk is exploring the cost of SOS alarms, particularly for the Community Wardens.

159.2. Any legal matters, including those at items 154.2, 156.5 and 156.6h above as required:

154.2 Renewal of the loan agreement for the Lowestoft Collection to the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – Cllr Taylor proposed a confidential recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

156.5 The sale and change of use of a Council building (confidential) – The Clerk provided an update on enquiries she had been asked to make. Further information will be brought back to this Committee for consideration.

The Chair closed the meeting 18:48.

Signed: 5 March 2020