

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:30 on 8 October 2019

MINUTES

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

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

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

83. Welcome

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

84. Receipt and consideration of acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Parker. All Councillors voted in favour to accept the apologies.

85. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

86. Consideration of the accuracy of the Minutes

12 September 2019 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Pearce; seconded by Cllr Hardie; five Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

87. Public Forum

There were no members of the public in attendance.

88. A revision to Terms of Reference to accommodate climate emergency actions

The Climate Emergency Committee has recommended for adoption a Climate Emergency Structure document prepared by the Clerk, which makes recommendations for actions and principles that each Committee can build in to its Terms of Reference, to support the Council's declaration of a climate emergency. The document covers the Town Council's overall obligations and more specifically how each Committee, Sub-Committee and Working Group can contribute to this. The proposed actions for the Finance and Governance Committee, Events and Communications Sub-Committee and Standing Orders Sub-Committee were read out by the Clerk. Revised Terms of Reference will be drafted and considered at the next Full Council meeting.

89. Any updates on banking

It was noted that interest is being paid on the savings account.

90. Budget:

90.1. Monitoring the budget for 2019-20 – The Budget and Loan Working Group has suggested that the budget should be scrutinised in detail quarterly, either by the Finance and Governance Committee or the Budget and Loan Working Group. It has been requested that when the budget monitoring documents are prepared, any areas which may require particular scrutiny are highlighted. No formal proposal regarding the budget scrutiny has been made at this stage. The Finance and Governance Committee received the budget monitoring documents for review at this meeting. These were scrutinised and noted.

90.2. Bank reconciliations – Arrangements had been made with Cllr Coleby, as the bank reconciliation signatory, to check and sign off the bank reconciliations ahead of this meeting,

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but alternative arrangements will now be made.

- 90.3. A report from the Budget and Loan Working Group and consider any recommendations – The Working Group is still working through the budget. There were no recommendations to be considered. The Working Group will meet again at 09:00 on 21 October.
- 90.4. Any update following a request to East Suffolk Council regarding arrangements for the Triangle public car park on market days – East Suffolk Council has responded positively to the concept, but has suggested offering free parking on market days at the Britten Centre instead, to encourage visitors to other shops. The Finance and Governance Committee would like to suggest that free parking be offered at the Britten Centre and the Triangle public car park and the Clerk will take this suggestion back to East Suffolk Council.
- 90.5. An event management budget for transition from the current work under The Ness Steering Group – The final analysis of this year’s events at The Ness has not yet been received. The Committee would like to see which events were the most successful to help inform the decision of which ones to continue. An associated budget would need to be considered.
- 90.6. Expenditure and anticipated expenditure from the Civic and Ceremonial budget – The expenditure from this budget in 2018 – 19 and the current financial year was displayed at the meeting. Budgetary arrangements for 2020 – 21 are still being considered by the Budget and Loan Working Group.

91. Payments:

91.1. Payments for authorisation (schedule), including the following:

- 91.1a. £124.42 (including VAT) to hire transportation for the NALC Annual Conference – The Councillors attending this year’s conference and have decided, if the Finance and Governance Committee are agreeable, that it would be easier and more cost effective for them to car share using their own transport. Cllr Taylor proposed approval for this year’s attendees of the NALC Annual Conference to make arrangements to car share using their own transportation; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. There was another payment to consider for authorisation, as follows:

Payment to	Description	Amount
Purcell	Town Hall Repairs Interim Fee	£420.07 + £84.01 VAT = £504.08

Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the payment to Purcell of £504.08; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

91.2. Expenditure reports for the month ending 30 September 2019 and October to date (schedule) – These were noted as follows:

Expenditure September 2019

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
2 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Links Road NNDR Sept 19	£184
2 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC NNDR Sept 19	£120
2 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR Sept 19	£115
2 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest PC NNDR Sept 19	£108
2 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR Sept 19	£206
2 September 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest electric July 19	£230.70 + £11.54 VAT = £242.24
2 September 2019	Npower	Triangle Market electric May 19	£307.63 + £15.38 VAT = £323.01

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2 September 2019	Npower	Town Hall electric May 19	£282.38 + £14.12 VAT = £296.50
2 September 2019	Npower	Triangle Market electric June 19	£294.69 + £14.73 VAT = £309.42
2 September 2019	Npower	Pakefield St PC electric Q1 19	£338.92 + £16.95 VAT = £355.87
2 September 2019	Npower	Kensington Gardens elec Q1 19	£181.16 + £9.06 VAT = £190.22
2 September 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest PC elec May-Jul 19	£88.36 + £4.42 VAT = £92.78
2 September 2019	Npower	Denes Oval electric Q1 2019	£927.80 + £46.39 VAT = £974.19
2 September 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest electric Q1 2019	£229.66 + £11.48 VAT = £241.14
2 September 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest PC elec May-Jul 19	£694.40 + 34.72 VAT = £729.12
2 September 2019	Npower	Town Hall electric July 2019	£282.38 + £14.12 VAT = £296.50
2 September 2019	Npower	Town Hall electric June 19	£273.41 + £13.67 VAT = £287.08
2 September 2019	Npower	Triangle Market electric Jul 19	£308.49 + £15.42 VAT = £323.91
2 September 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest elec May – Jun 19	£629.52 + £31.48 VAT = £661
2 September 2019	Npower	Normanston Park elec Mar-Jun 19	£537.96 + £9.56 VAT = £547.52
2 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Uncontested Elections May 19	£76.16
2 September 2019	Energy Assets Ltd	Denes Oval gas meter removal	£262.64 + £52.53 VAT = £315.17
2 September 2019	ETI Ltd	Legionella kit calibration x2	£156 + £31.20 VAT = £187.20
2 September 2019	Npower	Low cemetery PC elec Apr-Jun 19	£249.19 + £12.46 VAT = £261.65
5 September 2019	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions August 2019	£4,615.29
10 September 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	General legal advice	£3,043.16 + £608.63 VAT = £3,651.79
10 September 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	Marina Theatre legal advice	£1,387 + £277.40 VAT = £1,664.40
10 September 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	North Denes legal advice	£57 + £11.40 VAT = £68.40
10 September 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	CCTV legal advice	£294.50 + £58.90 VAT = £353.40
10 September 2019	Nicholson Solicitors	Hamilton House legal advice	£1,140 + £228 VAT = £1,368
10 September 2019	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas Aug 19	£94.81 + £4.74 VAT = £99.55
10 September 2019	Gazprom Energy	Denes Oval gas Aug 19	£38.66 + £1.93 VAT = £40.59
10 September 2019	Seletar Signs	Play area and radar	£312 + £62.40 VAT =

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		key signs	£374.40
10 September 2019	Npower	CCTV electric August 2019	£170.73 + £34.15 VAT = £204.88
10 September 2019	Mark Speller	Council travel and meeting reimburse	£10.12
16 September 2019	Lloyds Bank	Credit card charges and office stationery	£128.91 + £17.09 VAT = £146
18 September 2019	HMRC	HMRC August 2019	£4,105.69
20 September 2019	Zurich Municipal	Town Hall repair insurance	£112
20 September 2019	SLCC	SLCC degree 2 nd install 2019	£1,470
20 September 2019	Npower	KG electric Jun-Aug 19	£414.77 + £20.74 VAT = £435.51
20 September 2019	Npower	Town Hall electric Aug 2019	£282.38 + £14.12 VAT = £296.50
23 September 2019	Salaries	Salaries September 2019	£10,134.44
23 September 2019	Broadland Security Alarms	Whitton Hall annual maintenance	£147.50 + £29.50 VAT = £177
23 September 2019	Broadland Security Alarms	Whitton Hall emergency light repair	£228.93 + £45.79 VAT = £274.72
25 September 2019	HMRC	Correction of allowance	£3,000
27 September 2019	HMRC	Interest	£0.43
30 September 2019	East Point Business Services	20x Samsung tablets and Sophos	£3,910 + £782 VAT = £4,692
30 September 2019	Marina Theatre Trust	MTT management fee Q3	£37,500 + £7,500 VAT = £45,000
30 September 2019	Ensure Fire Safety Ltd	2x fire extinguishers	£230 + £46 VAT = £276
30 September 2019	Sarah Foote	Council meeting and stationery reimbursement	£61.68
30 September 2019	Zurich Municipal	Remembrance Day insurance	£112
30 September 2019	Need2Store	Civic artefact storage Sep19	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
30 September 2019	PKF Littlejohn LLP	18 – 19 external audit	£2,400 + £480 VAT = £2,880
30 September 2019	Unity Trust Bank	Service charge	£45.15
30 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	SN Bowling Green NNDR Oct 19	£108
30 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield St PC NNDR Oct 19	£120
30 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	KG PC NNDR Oct 19	£206
30 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park NNDR Oct 19	£184
30 September	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR Oct19	£115

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Expenditure October 2019

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
2 October 2019	Npower	Triangle Market Electricity August 2019	£302.55 + £15.92 VAT = £318.47
4 October 2019	SCC Pension Fund	September 2019 Pensions	£4,566.05

Credit Card Payments

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
4 September 2019	Greater Anglia Trains	Travel for Training	£95.65
4 September 2019	Identibadge Co Ltd	Table Name Place Holders x5	£6.80 + £1.36 VAT = £8.16
4 September 2019	M&S	Historic England Lunch	£90.50
9 September 2019	Dash	Parking for Training	£3.10
13 September 2019	ASDA	Historic England Lunch	£17.11
18 September 2019	Amazon	Meeting Expenses	£35.69
25 September 2019	Amazon	Heavy Duty Clothes Rail and Accessories	£55.79 + £11.16 VAT = £66.95
29 September 2019	Amazon	White Paper 2x 5x500 sheets	£35.42 + 37.08 VAT = £42.50
2 October 2019	Lloyds Bank	2x Credit Card Fee	£6.00

91.3. Expenditure of £112 for additional insurance cover for the Remembrance Sunday service – This had previously been authorised and was noted.

91.4. Noting that a payment of £188 + £37.60 VAT = £225.60 is being made to Seletar signs for replacement play area signage, and will be reimbursed by East Suffolk Norse – This was noted.

91.5. The petty cash log (schedule) – This was noted as follows:

Petty Cash Log

Date	Description	Amount
8 August 2019	Special Delivery of legionella kits	£26.60
9 September 2019	2x Stamps	£1.22
13 September 2019	Flowers and food for Historic England	£7.00
9 September 2019	Neighbourhood Plan Meeting Expenses	£11.15
9 September 2019	Spare Keys for the Town Hall	£8.88
16 September 2019	Postage	£0.83
26 September 2019	12x Stamps	£7.32
26 September 2019	Meeting Expenses	£4.50

92. Consideration of the following items relating to income:

92.1. The income reports for the month ending 30 September 2019 and October to date (schedule) – These were noted as follows:

Income received September 2019

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
9 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
17 September 2019	Market income	Market income 16 August, 23 August, 30 August and 6 September	£437

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27 September 2019	East Suffolk Council	Precept 19-20 2 nd install	£891,768.50
27 September 2019	Rental income	Rental income from tenant	£5,000
30 September 2019	Unity Trust Bank	Interest from savings account	£98.63

Income received October 2019

Date	Payment From	Description	Amount
30 September 2019	Unity Trust Bank	Interest from Savings Account	£98.63
1 October 2019	Suffolk County Council	Grant for Rosedale Park Replacement Bench	£528.50
7 October 2019	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
8 October 2019	Eventbrite	Market Income 28 th September 2019	£51.78

92.2. An update on any grant-funding streams affecting Council assets – Once the Town Hall feasibility study has been received, options for further grant funding can be explored.

93. Audit

93.1. Noting the interim internal audit report and consider an action plan and any recommendations from the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer – The action plan was displayed to the Committee at the meeting. The internal audit report emphasises the requirement for the Council to ensure that it has sufficient staff resources to cope with its demands. A staffing proposal is being developed for consideration. Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations are being reviewed. There are several ongoing legal matters, for which the Clerk currently has delegated authority for a budget of up to £50,000 to address. The current legal budget is £15,000 and there is an earmarked legal reserve of £24,000. The Committee was asked whether it would prefer for the Clerk to use some of the earmarked legal reserve if necessary to deal with the outstanding legal matters, or whether it would prefer her not to progress the legal matters if the expenditure exceeded £15,000. Cllr Frost proposed a recommendation to Full Council for the Clerk's delegated authority for expenditure for legal matters of up to £50,000 to include expenditure from the earmarked legal reserve if necessary; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The internal audit report acknowledges that the Town Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a public authority. Following the approval of Full Council, Councillors are no longer individually registered as Data Controllers. Appropriate measures are being taken to ensure compliance with the new website accessibility regulations. The internal audit report has acknowledged the measures the Council has taken since declaring a climate emergency. At the recent meeting of the Climate Emergency Committee, a recommendation was made to Full Council to support the formation of the Lowestoft Climate Action Group. If so it was suggested the group could meet at Hamilton House free of charge and Cllr Lang will facilitate the first few meetings. The internal audit identified some accounting issues. The Clerk and Communications Assistant are working through these and safeguards are being put in place to prevent recurrence. The Clerk has been notified that the employer's pension contribution will be decreasing, and will be attending a meeting for further information. The Budget and Loan Working Group will be looking at this in more detail. The Clerk is reviewing the risk management and health and safety. The Clerk has arranged for the Council to use an energy broker who can source an appropriate energy supplier for the Council, based on parameters determined by the Council, including green credentials, in line with the Council's declaration of

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a climate emergency. Additionally, the Clerk advised that Salix Finance can provide interest – free Government funding to the public sector to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and lower energy bills. This could be applied to several of the Town Council’s assets and could reduce the amount of the loan being applied for, for capital works. The Clerk’s action plan presented the Committee with two recommendations to consider, as follows:

- That the Finance and Governance Committee note and adopt the report.
- That the Finance and Governance Committee note that the Clerk/RFO has reviewed the internal audit process, service delivery and report and commends the service compared to other known main service providers to town and parish councils, and the Committee is requested to review whether it believes the Internal Auditor has provided a competent independent service and make a recommendation on whether to use this service next year.

Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the two recommendations, and that the Committee approve the use of the same internal auditor next year; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

93.2. Noting the external audit report – This has already been received by Full Council. This was circulated to the Committee ahead of the meeting and the original copy was displayed at the meeting and noted. The original annual report from the external auditor, following the submission of the Council’s annual return (AGAR) was considered. It had been approved and signed by the external auditor and there were no actions for the Council to take.

94. Legal and compliance

94.1. An update on any compliance issues and asset management (some aspects might be confidential) – There were no matters for consideration.

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

94.2a Any progress with the lease for the first floor of Hamilton House, including the following:

94.2ai The IT service charges and cost implications (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

94.2b The Supplemental Agreement between East Suffolk Council, the Marina Theatre Trust and Lowestoft Town Council (confidential) – There were no updates to consider.

94.2c The future of the CCTV service (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

94.3. Making a proposal to East Suffolk Council regarding a land transfer (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

94.4. What policy should apply to the retention of email accounts for ex-Councillors – The Clerk has previously expressed her view via email and suggests that this is now considered by a solicitor as the issue has become contentious. Cllr Hardie proposed that this matter be referred to a solicitor; seconded by Cllr Pearce; five Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.

95. Other financial matters, including:

95.1. Planned and urgent works on assets – Delegated authority has already been granted to the Clerk for expenditure up to £5,000 for emergency repair work to the Town Hall. Agenda item 95.10 will ask the Committee to consider whether to increase this to £10,000 or consider works individually as they arise. It was agreed to discuss this matter further under that agenda item.

95.2. Options for an amplification system in the Council Chamber – There have been issues with members of the public and some Councillors struggling to hear. The option of individual desk microphones has previously been explored but was very expensive. The Committee agreed it would still like alternative systems to be explored, and their cost, to allow for a comparison and a more informed decision. Cllr Hardie proposed that further quotes be sought for different options of amplification system in the Council Chamber; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all

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in favour.

- 95.3. Adoption of the pre-existing East Suffolk Council policy forbidding traders to trade in public car parks (with a steer from Full Council to consider applying the policy to static traders only and to include provision for deviation for Town Council organised events) – The Clerk has provided wording to suit the requirements of the Town Council. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the pre-existing East Suffolk Council policy forbidding traders to trade in public car parks, with acceptance of the tailored wording for this policy to the Town Council; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 95.4. Progress with the removal of items from CEFAS – This is being progressed between CEFAS and the reclamation company.
- 95.5. Purchase of a business property (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 95.6. A new approach to commemorative plaques – This requires further exploration.
- 95.7. The feasibility study for the Town Hall – This has not yet been received.
- 95.8. A recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to replace play area signage – This is to replace signage which is still displaying obsolete Waveney District Council contact details. The cost of replacement signage is £832, but this does not include the installation cost. Cllr Pearce proposed referring this matter to Full Council, for the installation cost to be included; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.
- 95.9. A recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to remove asbestos from the Belle Vue Park Yarmouth Road entrance, within a maximum budget of £2,500 – It was clarified that the maximum budget would be to remove the asbestos and replace the ceiling. Cllr Pearce proposed approval for removal of asbestos and replacement of the ceiling at the Yarmouth Road entrance to Belle Vue Park, within a maximum budget of £2,500; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 95.10. Increasing the delegation to the Clerk for Town Hall emergency repair work to £10,000 – It was agreed that the delegation should be increased, as it is likely further, unanticipated issues could be discovered. Cllr Taylor proposed increasing the delegation to the Clerk for Town Hall emergency repair work to £10,000; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

96. Events and Communications Sub-Committee

- 96.1. Minutes of the meeting of 23 September 2019 and consider any recommendations – The minutes of the previous meeting were noted and there were no recommendations to consider.
- 96.2. Terms of Reference and consideration of delegations – These were previously approved but were incomplete. Confirmation is required as to whether this Committee would like the Events and Communications Sub-Committee to keep its £10,000 delegated budget. It was agreed to discuss this in more detail at the next meeting. At the moment, there is no specific budget in place for commemorative events to mark Remembrance Day. Cllr Taylor proposed a budget of £5,000 for expenditure related to commemorative events for Remembrance Day, with delegated authority to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour. Cllr Frost proposed further consideration of whether to delegate a £10,000 budget to the Events and Communications Sub-Committee at the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

97. Frequency of meetings of the Finance and Governance Committee

It was queried whether this Committee feels it needs to meet more frequently. If meetings were held fortnightly there would be a Full Council meeting and a Finance and Governance Committee meeting in the same week. The Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee reduced the frequency of its meetings from fortnightly to monthly, as it has Sub-Committees and Working Groups which can meet in the interim. It was agreed that no amendments should be made to the meeting schedule for the Finance and Governance Committee for now.

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98. Date of the next meeting

14 November 2019 17:00

99. Items for the next agenda and close

It was queried whether the Council needs to make any preparations for Britain's exit from the European Union. This will be added to the next Finance and Governance Committee agenda for further consideration.

Cllr Taylor proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

100. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

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

100.2. Any legal matters, including those listed with items 94 and 95.5 above –

94.2a Any progress with the lease for the first floor of Hamilton House, including the following:

94.2ai The IT service charges and cost implications (confidential) – Stamp duty land tax is payable under the lease. The Town Council's solicitor will be calculating the cost. Cllrs Green and Taylor have reviewed the lease and are happy to now sign it.

94.2c The future of the CCTV service (confidential) – The latest update was provided.

94.3 Making a proposal to East Suffolk Council regarding a land transfer (confidential) –Cllr Pearce proposed a confidential recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

95.5 – Purchase of a business property (confidential) – An enquiry made by a member of the public was discussed. This will be added to the Full Council agenda for further consideration.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:49.

Signed:

14 November 2019