

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 21 April 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Alice Taylor (Chair) and David Youngman

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

197. Welcome

The right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol were explained and noted, and the meeting was welcomed. Councillors were reminded that the meeting was being streamed live online.

198. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Bob Breakspear, Peter Collecott, Tracey Eastwood and Peter Lang. Cllr Knight proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. Cllr Breakspear had made an attempt to join the meeting, but issues with the device he was using prevented him from participating.

199. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none. At this stage in the meeting, Cllrs Breakspear and Parker were noted as not being present, as although they were visible they could give no indication that they could hear what was being discussed or respond to it.

200. Adoption of the Video Meeting Protocol (version two) and the Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings)

Cllr Patience raised a point of order and requested that the meeting be adjourned for five minutes. Due to difficulties setting up the live streaming, a new link for the video meeting platform had to be issued to Councillors shortly before the start of the meeting, and a couple of Councillors were having difficulties joining the meeting. Cllr Patience proposed a five minute adjournment of the meeting; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

The meeting was adjourned for five minutes at 19:37

As the meeting resumed, Cllr Breakspear left the meeting, and Cllrs Parker and Pitts, who had been experiencing issues, both confirmed they were able to hear and participate.

Cllr Coleby proposed adoption of the amended Video Meeting Protocol and the Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings); seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

201. Noting that the draft minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments or suggested amendments. The minutes were noted and will be considered at the next appropriate meeting.

202. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

No advance comments had been received from the public regarding matters on the agenda. Councillors have received general comments querying how the Town Council is responding to the COVID-19 crisis. It was suggested that at the next suitable meeting, the Council could consider what action it is taking and what action it can take, and particularly how it can effectively communicate information to those without access to the internet. The Town Council's role is to support East Suffolk Council's and the community's efforts, and is using all

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of its available platforms to do so. Councillors have also individually been using their own platforms to distribute information. Some Councillors have been liaising with the local press to publish important information which those who are not online may otherwise miss. It was queried whether the Council can take this further to ensure important information and contact details for relevant organisations are featured more prominently in the local press. The Deputy Clerk will liaise with East Suffolk Council, the Home But Not Alone initiative and Cllr Pitts to progress this. If a list of registered local support groups can be compiled, enquiries can also be made with local radio stations to advertise the services available. It was suggested that Councillors should feed back details of any verified local groups they are aware of to staff, to consider how to appropriately manage and distribute this information. It was suggested that CIL funding could be used to produce a piece of artwork as a lasting tribute to the NHS, after the pandemic. The Clerk will check with East Suffolk Council if CIL funding can cover this purpose and will report back to the Council. Positive feedback has been received from members of the public following the live stream of the earlier Planning and Environment Committee meeting.

203. Finance:

203.1. Noting that the following have been circulated in advance:

203.1a. The year end reports for the financial year ending 31 March 2020 – Several reports were circulated in advance of the meeting, many of which have been reviewed and approved by the Finance and Governance Committee. A detailed report of the 2019 – 2020 budget was produced by James Cox. Cllr Green, as Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee, encouraged all Councillors to review it and thanked James for the detailed report.

203.1b. The 2020 – 2021 budget position – It was previously agreed that the Budget and Loan Working Group would scrutinise the budget in detail quarterly. It was agreed that this Working Group should still do this as planned, via video meeting if necessary.

203.1c. A payments, income and expenditure report for the month ending 31 March 2020 and April 2020 to date – The income and expenditure reports were presented and noted as follows:

March income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
6 March 2020	East Suffolk Council	Capital works for Lowestoft Town Council at Sparrows Nest, Triangle Market and Kensington Gardens	£11,196.80
20 March 2020	Historic England	Neighbourhood Plan Grant	£21,000
23 March 2020	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16

March expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
28 February 2020	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	Omega software and support 20-21	£943 + £188.60 VAT = £1,131.60
4 March 2020	HMRC	HMRC February 2020	£3,716.75

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5 March 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions February 2020	£3,830.56
16 March 2020	Lloyds Bank Account	Credit card transactions	£50.47
19 March 2020	Breckland Council	Council tax leaflets	£1,192.32 + £238.46 VAT = £1,430.78
19 March 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas Feb 2020	£40.06 + £2 VAT = £42.06
19 March 2020	NPower	CCTV electricity	£158.22 + £31.64 VAT = £189.86
19 March 2020	NPower	Triangle Market electricity	£96.47 + £4.82 = £101.29
19 March 2020	Sarah Foote	Travel and meeting refreshments reimbursement	£32.29
19 March 2020	Great Yarmouth Heating	Gunton Residents Hall boiler service	£62.50 + £12.50 VAT = £75
19 March 2020	Great Yarmouth Heating	Whitton Hall boiler service	£100 + £20 VAT = £120
19 March 2020	HMRC	HMRC February 2020	£3,574.63
23 March 2020	Salaries	Salaries March 2020	£8,401.40
24 March 2020	Land Registry	Land Registry documents	£30
27 March 2020	NPower	Kensington Gardens electric	£190.56 + £9.53 = £200.09
27 March 2020	Urban Vision	Neighbourhood Plan advice	£3,675 + £735 VAT = £4,410
31 March 2020	Unity Trust Bank	Bank charge	£4.30
31 March 2020	Unity Trust Bank	Bank charges	£38.55

April income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
3 April 2020	First Light Festival C.I.C.	Refund of grant for the First Light Festival 2020	£5,000
8 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Historic England event lunch and refreshments	£140

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April expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market NNDR Apr20	£119.65
1 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NNDR Apr20	£188.25
1 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR Apr20	£107.80
1 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR Apr	£205.80
1 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC NNDR Apr20	£124.55
1 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR Apr20	£108.20
1 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Reversed payment – S.N. Bowls NNDR Apr20 refund	-£108.20
3 April 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions March 2020	£3,871.95
7 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Reimbursement of CIL overpayment	£2,827.59
7 April 2020	Marina Theatre Trust	MTT Management Fee Apr-Jun 20	£37,500 + £7,500 VAT = £45,000
7 April 2020	Marina Theatre Trust	MTT Management Fee Jul-Sep 20	£37,500 + £7,500 VAT = £45,000
7 April 2020	East Suffolk Norse	Arnold's Bequest tarmac work	£1,738.58 + £347.72 VAT = £2,086.30
7 April 2020	Suffolk Cloud	Website hosting 2020-21	£110
7 April 2020	McCormack Benson Health and Safe	Fire Risk Assessment HH	£342
7 April 2020	East Suffolk Council	Harbour and Normanston By-Election	£11,567.95
7 April 2020	East Point Business Services	Capital repayment 20-21 Q1	£4,028.88
7 April 2020	East Point Business Services	HH Service Charge 20-21 Q1	£8,210.10
7 April 2020	East Point Business Services	HH rent 20-21 Q1	£4,410
7 April 2020	The Society of Local	Zero Carbon NHood Plan webinar	£72

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	Council Clerks		
7 April 2020	The Society of Local Council Clerks	Accessible Documents webinar	£42
7 April 2020	The Society of Local Council Clerks	Energy Projects webinar	£72
7 April 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage April	£240
7 April 2020	Zurich Municipal	Insurance 2020-2021	£20,770.19
7 April 2020	East Suffolk Norse	Nightingale Road play park refurbishment	£42,000
7 April 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	General legal advice	£237.60
7 April 2020	McCormack Benson Health and Safe	Asbestos sampling	£765.60
8 April 2020	Binder Ltd	Uplands sewage disposal maint	£298.50
8 April 2020	Binder Ltd	Uplands sewage disposal	£406.20
8 April 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	North Denes legal advice	£2,578.08
8 April 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors LLp	Marina Theatre legal advice	£1,116.72
8 April 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage March	£240
8 April 2020	Marina Theatre Trust	MTT Management Fee Oct-Dec 20	£37,500 + £7,500 VAT = £45,000
8 April 2020	East Suffolk Norse	Norse Partnership Charge Apr 20	£36,525 + £7,305 VAT = £43,830
8 April 2020	NABMA	NABMA subscription 2020-21	£358
8 April 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal advice for HH lease	£169.80 + £30.36 VAT = £200.16
14 April 2020	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	Year End closedown 19-20	£560 + £112 VAT = £672

203.2. Payments (see schedule) for approval – The schedule of payments for approval was presented as follows:

Payment to	Description	Amount
East Suffolk Council and Lowestoft Vision	BID Levy	£1,185

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Railway Paths Ltd	Annual rent for access under bridges	£24.78 and to consider delegating authority to the Clerk to pay invoices annually as they are received
Boggis Electrical	Replace the remaining storage heaters in the Marina Theatre	£2,761.58 (+VAT)
	Estimated upfront cost for two water fountains (in Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens), in addition to the £2,000 grant funding awarded	Maximum budget of £10,000
	Improvements to the Whitton Green play area	£25,294

The first three payments had been recommended for approval by the Finance and Governance Committee, including to delegate authority to the Clerk to pay annual invoices from Railway Paths Ltd as they are received. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the payments to East Suffolk Council and Lowestoft Vision, Railway Paths Ltd and Boggis Electrical as presented in the schedule, including granting delegated authority to the Clerk to pay annual invoices from Railway Paths Ltd as they are received; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

The play area refurbishment budget for 2019 – 2020 was unspent and went into general reserves, as the £15,000 allocated to Stoven Close and £35,000 allocated to the Nightingale Road play area were subsequently funded through s106. £50,000 has been allocated to the play area refurbishment budget this year, and the Council may wish to consider allocating a maximum of £25,294 for the improvements to the Whitton Green play area, although this may be less, subject to available CIL and s106 funding. Cllr Coleby proposed allocating a maximum budget of £25,294 to the Whitton Green play area improvement work, from the play area refurbishment budget; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

It was suggested that the Finance and Governance Committee's recommendation of progressing two water fountains – for Kensington Gardens and Sparrows Nest – is funded through this same budget. £2,000 is being funded through a grant, leaving an estimated total of £7,590 to be funded by the Council, based on research completed by the Clerk and considered by the Finance and Governance Committee. The recommendation was made to proceed as both parks have high visitor numbers, and this would provide an opportunity to pilot whether to extend the provision of water fountains to other parks. As there is only an estimated cost at this stage, a maximum budget of £10,000 has been suggested, excluding the £2,000 grant, with delegated authority to the Clerk, who would ensure due effort is made to keep costs down, whilst still ensuring robustness of the product, with due reporting and referral back to the the Finance and Governance Committee and Full Council where required. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of a maximum budget of £10,000 from the play area refurbishment budget, with delegated authority to the Clerk to progress two water fountains – one for Sparrows Nest and one for Kensington Gardens; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

203.3. Diverting funds from the Events and Major Events budgets to support the local community during the COVID-19 pandemic - £14,000 has been allocated to a major events budget. £10,000 of this was shared between the First Light Festival and Armed Forces Day, but has since been recovered following the cancellation of these events. It was agreed that having a

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specific fund for the purpose of providing community support would be a positive step, although it has not yet been decided how the money will be used. It was suggested that this could be taken forward by the Finance and Governance Committee, who could also immediately start looking at how to adapt the grant programme. There is £14,000 in the major events budget, £1,200 in the reserve, and £9,197 in unspent funds from last year. There is also a separate events budget of £10,000, from which civic events like Remembrance and Holocaust Memorial Day are funded. Cllr Coleby proposed diverting a total of £25,000 to the fund to support the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, using the £14,000 and £1,200 from the Major Events budget and reserve, the £9,197 in unspent funds from last year, and the remainder to be made up from the Events Budget; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

204. Governance

- 204.1. The renewal of Lowestoft Town Council's registration with the Information Commissioner's Office – This was noted. A £5 discount is applied for paying via direct debit, bringing the renewal cost to £35.
- 204.2. Whether and when to hold the Annual Meeting of Lowestoft Town Council, subject to Regulation 4(2) of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 – There were three options to consider: cancelling the meeting altogether, deferring the meeting until such a time as the Council is able to meet face-to-face again, or proceed in May with a video meeting. Cllr Page proposed proceeding with the Annual Meeting of Lowestoft Town Council on 12 May 2020, as previously scheduled, but remotely via video meeting, with online streaming for members of the public to observe; seconded by Cllr Pitts; twelve Councillors voted in favour; two Councillors abstained from the vote. It was clarified that the date of the Annual Meeting is 12 May, with a Full Council meeting following on 26 May. As Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee, Cllr Green offered his formal thanks to all of the Town Council's officers, but particularly to James Cox for the reports he had produced.

205. Date of next meeting - to be confirmed

12 May 2020 19:30 (Annual Meeting).

206. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

There were no confidential items. The Mayor offered thanks to those who had observed the live stream of the meeting.

The meeting was closed 20:30.

Signed:

12 May 2020