

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
17:00 on 9 January 2020

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Chair), 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

130. Welcome

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

131. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Parker. Cllr Taylor proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

132. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none. Staff may have interest may need to leave on staffing matters

133. Accuracy of the Minutes

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

134. Public Forum

There were no members of the public in attendance.

135. Updates on banking

Statements have been received. There is a balance of just over £450,000 in the Instant Access Savings Account and just over £843,000 in the Main Current Account. Interest of £453 was earned in the first quarter.

136. Budget:

136.1. Monitoring the budget for 2019-20 – This was displayed at the meeting and circulated beforehand. The Committee commented that the document was quite difficult to follow, due to how the software was displaying some of the figures. In particular, there seemed to be a discrepancy between the projected and actual figures for property lettings at Kensington Gardens and Normanston Park. Clarity will be sought for all sites. There is an area of land on Turnberry Close under the Town Council's ownership which has no play equipment but is maintained by East Suffolk Norse. The Council will consider how to maximise the potential of its smaller pieces of land. It was queried how much land the Town Council owns of the London Road play area. This will be checked and confirmed. The consideration of the replacement of part of the boundary fence for the Nightingale Road play area is on the Full Council agenda. East Suffolk Norse has advised that it would be difficult to establish turf at the site now but will do what it can. Consideration will be given to which play area(s) to focus on in the 2020 – 2021 year.

136.2. Bank reconciliations – Cllr Green has today checked and signed off the bank reconciliations to the end of November 2019.

136.3. The 2020 – 21 budget, including any recommendations from the Budget and Loan Working Group – Cllr Green gave his thanks to the Budget and Loan Working Group for their work in preparing the 2020 – 2021 budget. A 2% increase from 2019 – 2020 is being recommended to Full Council. Funds have been set aside for The Ness, including provision for a toilet at a time when this can be progressed. Leisure fees and grant awards are included in the draft budget

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spreadsheet, but the figures cancel each other out. The spreadsheet will be amended to reflect the Council's decision to waive leisure fees for the 2020 – 2021 year, and this will be clarified at the Full Council meeting. Cllr Coleby proposed to amend the budget spreadsheet to reflect the Council's decision to waive leisure fees for 2020 – 2021 and future years; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Sports clubs will be formally contacted and this will be included in the press release accompanying the precept announcement. The Events and Communications Sub Committee and Deputy Clerk are looking in to a letter being included with the Council Tax demand explaining what the Town Council has achieved in the 2019 – 2020 year and what its ambitions are for 2020 – 2021.

136.4. The 2020 – 21 precept – This was included with the discussion of item 136.3

137. Payments:

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

137.1a. A payment of up to £2,143.65 for electrical work at the Marina Theatre to disconnect and remove old storage heaters and install new heaters – The dressing room heaters and the boiler in the box office building have already been replaced. This expenditure would be to replace the remaining storage heaters, which the Theatre says are barely fit for purpose. Only one quote has been obtained so far, so this will be the maximum expenditure, although it may be less. Cllr Coleby proposed authorising the sum of £2,143.65 (+VAT) as the maximum expenditure for electrical work at the Marina Theatre to disconnect and remove the old storage heaters and replace them with new; with delegated authority to the Clerk to review further quotes sought by the Theatre; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

The Council previously voted to open a Unity Trust Instant Access Account, a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund and a CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund. Cllr Green and the Clerk have now received further advice on the Property Fund. A suitability assessment from an Independent Financial Advisor is required to establish the Town Council's right to deposit in the Property Fund as an Elective Professional organisation. The maximum cost of this is £395 (+VAT) and the expenditure is on the payments schedule to be considered later on the agenda. The suitability assessment provides evidence to the CCLA that the Town Council is eligible to enter the fund. Cllr Pearce proposed approval for the maximum expenditure of £395 (+VAT) for a suitability assessment from an Independent Financial Advisor, and the following recommendations to Full Council:

- To agree that the application can be made to establish a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account with a sum of £200,000, drawn from sums currently deposited in the Unity Trust Current Account.
- To agree that the application can be made to establish a CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund account with a sum of £100,000 deposited for a minimum of 5 years, drawn from sums currently deposited in the Unity Trust Current Account.
- To agree that the authorising signatories for all CCLA accounts and any related transactional matters for both of the above accounts be Cllrs Alan Green, Alice Taylor, Peter Knight and Peter Lang (two signatories required for each authorisation), with the Clerk as the contact for correspondence.
- To note that the Clerk is authorised to transfer between Unity Trust accounts including to ensure cashflow if necessary, including following drawing of the CCLA funds from the Current Account, with normal safeguards applying for transfers outside of the Unity Accounts.

This was seconded by Cllr Coleby and all Councillors voted in favour.

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Cllr Green advised that there is a recognised course on environmental management, which he would like the Clerk to complete. The maximum cost of the course is £805 (+VAT), although it is understood the Clerk would receive a 10% discount as it is the same provider through which she completed her NEBOSH course. The course covers managing positive change in the environment. The Clerk would like to complete the course to provide support to her with supporting the Council in actioning its declaration of a climate emergency. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the maximum expenditure of £805 (+VAT) to complete the environmental management course; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

There was one payment on the schedule of payments to authorise, which was £115 to Blachere, in addition to the £4,821.70 (+VAT) previously authorised for year two of the contract for the Christmas lights. The sum of £115 had been omitted from the original invoice, but an amended invoice had been received. It was thought the year three cost may change from that which was originally agreed, as the Council is looking to extend the Christmas lights provision to London Road South. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the total payment of £4,936.70 (+VAT) to Blachere for year two of the Christmas lights contract and approval for the same amount in year three, if there is no change to the contract; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

137.2. Expenditure reports up to 20 December 2019 (schedule) – These were circulated ahead of the meeting and displayed at the meeting as follows:

December 2019 Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park NNDR Dec 19	£184
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield St PC NNDR Dec 19	£120
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR Dec 19	£115
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR Dec 19	£108
2 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR Dec 19	£206
2 December 2019	Great Yarmouth Heating Co Ltd	Whitton Meeting Hall radiators	£1,886.97 + £377.39 VAT = £2,264.36
2 December 2019	Urban Vision Enterprise CIC	Professional planning support	£5,256.85 + £945 VAT = £6,201.85
2 December 2019	Npower	Town Hall electric Oct 19	£282.38 + £14.12 VAT = £296.50
2 December 2019	Npower	Triangle Market electric Aug 19	£153.74 + £30.75 VAT = £184.49
2 December 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest electric Aug – Oct 19	£100.68 + £5.03 VAT = £636.80
2 December 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest elec Aug – Oct 19	£606.48 + £30.32 VAT = £636.80
2 December 2019	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage Nov 19	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
2 December 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest elec Aug – Oct 19	£236.92 + £11.85 VAT = £248.77

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2 December 2019	Suffolk Pension Fund	November 2019 pensions	£4,965.33
16 December 2019	Lloyds Bank	Council credit card transactions	£308.19 + £11.57 VAT = £319.76
17 December 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	General legal advice	£779 + £155.80 VAT = £934.80
17 December 2019	Great Yarmouth Heating Co Ltd	Marina Theatre boiler replacement	£2,964.20 + £592.84 VAT = £3,557.04
17 December 2019	Purcell Architecture Ltd	Town Hall works	£217.02 + £43.40 VAT = £260.42
17 December 2019	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas Nov 19	£41.45 + £2.07 VAT = £43.52
17 December 2019	MS Oakes	Town Hall repairs	£15,098.48 + £3,019.70 VAT = £18,118.18
17 December 2019	Npower	Sparrows Nest elec Aug – Oct 19	£695.75 + £34.79 VAT = £730.54
17 December 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	North Denes legal advice	£110.93 + £22.19 VAT = £133.12
17 December 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	CCTV legal advice	£315.40 + £63.08 VAT = £378.48
17 December 2019	Nicholsons Solicitors	Marina Theatre legal advice	£190.08 + £38.02 VAT = £228.10
17 December 2019	Npower	CCTV electric Nov 19	£165.23 + £33.05 VAT = £198.28
18 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Contested elections May 2019	£13,331.87
18 December 2019	Binder Ltd	Uplands septic tank emptying	£285 + £57 VAT = £342
18 December 2019	Need2Store Ltd	Civic storage Dec 2019	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
18 December 2019	A Hill Electrical	Hand dryer install Ken Gardens	£2,588 + £517.60 VAT = £3,105.60
18 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership Charge June 2019	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
19 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership Charge July 2019	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
20 December 2019	Shona Bendix	Council expenses reimbursement	£16
20 December 2019	HMRC	HMRC liability Nov 2019	£5,208.87
20 December 2019	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House rent Q4 19 – 20	£3,675 + £735 VAT = £4,410
20 December 2019	Shona Bendix	Reimbursement NEBOSH exam	£44.20
20 December 2019	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House capital repay	£3,357.40 + £671.48 VAT = £4,028.88
20 December 2019	Marina Theatre Trust	MTT management fee Q4	£37,500 + £7,500 VAT = £45,000
20 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge April 19	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
20 December 2019	East Suffolk	Partnership charge August 19	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480

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23 December 2019	Salaries	Salaries December 2019	£9,793.10
23 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge Sept 19	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
24 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge May 19	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
27 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge Nov 2019	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
30 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge Oct 19	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
31 December 2019	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge Dec 19	£60,400 + £12,080 VAT = £72,480
31 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowl NNDR Jan 2020	£108
31 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Kens Gardens PC NNDR Jan 2020	£206
31 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield St PC NNDR Jan 2020	£120
31 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR Jan 2020	£115
31 December 2019	East Suffolk Council	Links Rd car park NNDR Jan 20	£184
31 December 2019	Unity Trust Bank	Banking charge	£6
31 December 2019	Unity Trust Bank	Service charge	£36.75

January 2020 Expenditure

Date	Payment To	Description	Amount
6 January 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions December 2019	£4,615.29
7 January 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal advice regarding Marina Theatre	£291.33 + £58.27 VAT = £349.60
7 January 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal advice regarding Hamilton House lease	£2,311.67 + £462.33 VAT = £2,774.00
7 January 2020	Liquid DJ	Sound systems for Remembrance and Armistice Day 2019	£550.00
7 January 2020	NPower	Kensington Gardens Electric Sept-Nov 19	£128.96 + £6.45 VAT = £135.41
7 January 2020	NPower	Town Hall Electric November 2019	£273.41 + £13.67 VAT = £287.08
7 January 2020	Pearce and Kemp	Triangle Market Electrical Socket Repairs	£110.64 + £22.13 VAT = £132.77
7 January 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	General Legal Advice	£411.67 + £82.33 VAT = £494.00
7 January 2020	Lowestoft Armed Forces Day	Armed Forces Day event grant	£5,000
7 January 2020	Gazprom Energy	Denes Oval Gas September 2019	£29.93 + £1.50 VAT = £31.43

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7 January 2020	Sarah Foote	Reimbursement for office and meeting expenses	£6.00
Scheduled	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Charge	£6.00
Scheduled	Lloyds Bank	Office equipment and meeting expenses	£55.31
Scheduled	MS Oakes	Town Hall Roof Works	£3,728.99 + £745.80 VAT = £4,474.79
Scheduled	NPower	Triangle Market Electric Dec 19	£305.47 + £15.27 VAT = £320.74

137.3. The petty cash log – There was no schedule presented at this meeting as there had been very little movement through petty cash and it had not been topped up.

138. To consider the following items relating to income:

138.1. Income reports up to 20 December 2019 (schedule) – These were circulated ahead of the meeting and displayed at the meeting as follows:

December 2019 income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
2 December 2019	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
4 December 2019	Eventbrite	Monthly market income 23/11/19	£25.89
17 December 2019	Eventbrite	Monthly market income 7/12/19	£34.52
20 December 2019	Market income	Market income Nov – Dec 19	£395.50
20 December 2019	Market income	Market income Dec 19	£78.50
27 December 2019	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£5,000
30 December 2019	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
31 December 2019	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£1,000
31 December 2019	Eventbrite	Monthly market income 21/12/19	£25.89
31 December 2019	Rapid Result	Training material refund	£18

Income from the CCTV service was queried. It is understood this is incorporated into the East Suffolk Norse figures but this will be checked.

138.2. Update on the Pocket Parks application for Whitton Green – The application has been submitted but the result is not yet known.

139. Legal and compliance

139.1. Employment budgets (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

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140. Other financial matters, including:

140.1. Planned and urgent works on assets – The Clerk reported an issue at the Town Hall, which may require some expenditure under the emergency works budget if it cannot be resolved. Work on the Belle Vue Park wall and work to remove asbestos from the Yarmouth Road entrance of Belle Vue Park is being progressed, and the Clerk is sending regular updates to Councillors about such matters.

140.2. Whether delegates from Lowestoft Town Council should attend the NALC Spring Conference in Central London on 17 March 2020 and, if so, to agree the number of delegates and an overall budget (non-member rate is £332.87 per person including fees and VAT), plus travel – This was discussed and the Committee agreed it favours the NALC Annual Conference. Cllr Pearce proposed that no delegates from Lowestoft Town Council attend the NALC Spring Conference; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

141. Date of the next meeting

13 February 2020 17:00

142. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for inclusion of items on the next agenda. All Councillors voted in favour of moving the meeting into confidential session.

143. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

143.1. Any employment matters, including those at item 139.1

The Clerk and Committee Clerk left the room 18:12 for part of the discussion of this item

A confidential proposal regarding the current staffing arrangements was made to Full Council.

The Clerk returned 18:12

There was a confidential discussion regarding the current staffing arrangements.

143.2. Any legal matters, including those at item 139 above as required – There were no further confidential legal matters to discuss, which had not already been covered during the discussion of item 143.1.

The Committee Clerk returned 18:18

The Chair closed the meeting 18:18.

Signed:

13 February 2020