

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Via Video Meeting
17:00 on 16 April 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Chair), Jacqueline Hardie, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and Alice Taylor

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk)

175. Welcome

The right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol were explained and noted, and the meeting was welcomed. It was noted that the numbering for the minutes would be recorded sequentially as the published agenda was incorrect. A report from the Clerk had been provided in advance, which was referred to throughout the meeting and which advised councillors that the summons had been issued prior to guidance on the implementation of new Regulations permitting video meetings and that the next Full Council will be the first meeting held under these rules. The Video Meeting Protocol applied and had been amended.

176. Apologies for absence from any councillors not in attendance

The Committee Clerk had been unable to attend the meeting owing to technical difficulties but it was agreed that she would ensure that any apologies received were recorded as accepted. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Apologies had been received in advance of the meeting by Cllr Youngman.

177. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

178. Noting that the minutes of the meeting of 5 March 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted and will be taken to the next relevant meeting where they can be formally accepted by the meeting and signed by the Chair.

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

No comments had been received by the Clerk.

180. Any updates on banking

It was noted that investment income has reduced to 0%. However, no budget assumption had been made in relation to an income from interest.

181. Payments:

181.1. Payments for authorisation, including the following:

181.1a. See schedule –The following schedule of payments for authorisation was presented to the Committee for consideration:

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

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Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the three payments as detailed in the schedule, plus the delegated authority the Clerk to pay the annual invoices to Railway Paths Ltd; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

181.2. Income and expenditure reports for March 2020 – These were circulated ahead of the meeting 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
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

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April income

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

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 Council Clerks	Zero Carbon NHood Plan webinar	£72
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

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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

181.3. Payments made under delegated authority (see schedule) – There were no payments to note.

181.4. Noting that insurance has been reviewed and has been paid under delegated authority by the Clerk – This was noted.

182. Audit and year end

182.1. Progress with preparations for the Internal and External Audits – The year end work has been concluded with the assistance of Rialtas, and the internal audit takes place on 22 and 23 April. The Council then moves to submitting its figures for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for external audit. However, this has not yet been released but the revised timetable (provided within the Clerk's report) will apply, which leaves plenty of time to ensure due completion and consideration by Council.

It was noted that two Councillor internal controllers have been appointed from amongst the Councillors (in addition to the Council having an internal and external auditor) and there were practical difficulties with accessing some of the hard copy information which they would normally consider. The Clerk would review the position and contact them with a plan regarding the best control checks that could be effected in the circumstances and a later submission of the AGAR might be better to facilitate checks if possible.

182.2. Noting the year end position and agreeing the year end figures – The year end documents were noted and the Committee thanked James Cox for his work on this. The Committee agreed to recommend the final figures within the year end report for inclusion within the AGAR. Proposed by Cllr Taylor; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

The Clerk's report noted that the budget to date was provided, although few transactions have occurred to date. Income adjustments and other impacts on the budget will need to be considered once the full impact is known. It was also noted that it was picked up during the year end work that there has been a £15,000 shortfall in the precept which will need considering going forward, as the formula in cell O8 had been incorrect as it does not

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include the £30,000 for allotment maintenance. This has the effect of the total expenditure for this tab (which then feeds into the overall total) being short by £15,000 as the final calculation for the tab is based on the total of every row divided by two. The precept payments will be paid in two instalments, the first instalment of 50% of the requested is due on 30 April 2020, and the second 50% within six months of this, around 25 September 2020.

183. Other financial matters, including:

- 183.1. The latest position with CIL and S106 – It was noted that the overpayment for CIL (rightfully belonging to Oulton Broad Parish Council) has been returned to East Suffolk Council. New play equipment at Nightingale Road play area is being funded through s106 funds. The Clerk will check the previous minutes to check whether there was a previous budget provision made for this sum, in which case any unspent budget potentially could be used to fund improvements to the Whitton Green play area. A check would also be made to ascertain whether there were any CIL or s106 money available for Whitton Green, alongside other agreed funds.
- 183.2. Consideration of the finances for water fountains in parks and acceptance of a grant of £2,000 – It was noted that the Clerk had applied for a grant of £3,500 towards the cost of two fountains, and a grant of £2,000 towards one water fountain has been awarded. The application was originally for one water fountain at Kensington Gardens and one at Sparrows Nest. The First Light Festival was an influence on the Council selecting Kensington Gardens, and the Council wants to encourage footfall at both sites. The Ness is being constructed near to Sparrows Nest, a site where the Council and third parties often have events. It was noted that aside from the policy decision on what to progress, or not to progress, the financial impact of accepting one grant has to be considered. The estimated upfront cost per fountain had been assessed by the Clerk at £4,795 and, additionally, the Council must ensure that the supply is metered. Cllr Coleby proposed proceeding with both fountains – one for Kensington Gardens and one for Sparrows Nest – as this would provide an opportunity to assess whether to extend the provision of fountains to other parks; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.
- 183.3. The current position with the potential sale of a Lowestoft Town Council asset (confidential) To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 183.4. The effect of COVID-19 on the East Suffolk Norse contract (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

184. Date of the next meeting

14 May 2020 17:00

185. Items for the next agenda and close

It was noted that the next meeting will be a formal meeting under the new regulations, and agenda items will include those carried forward to the next such meeting.

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

186. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

- 186.1. Any legal matters, including those at items including those at 183.3 and 183.4 above as required:

183.3 The current position with the potential sale of a Lowestoft Town Council asset (confidential) – The Clerk provided an analysis of the financial position for the potential sale of a Council asset, and the meeting noted that a sale could proceed at this time, despite the difficult circumstances. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council that outline planning permission be sought, as this would not require detailed

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plans; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

183.4 The effect of COVID-19 on the East Suffolk Norse contract (confidential) – The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on contractual arrangements would be considered in due course, as had been agreed with the contractors. There would be reductions in some areas but the Committee was advised that, as a matter of practicality and policy, there could be increased costs to reinstate to the standards expected by the Council. Cllr Taylor proposed a recommendation to Full Council that this is taken forward under the Finance and Governance Committee at the appropriate time; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

Signed:

14 May 2020

DRAFT