

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Tara Carlton, Neil Coleby, Tracey Eastwood, Amanda Frost, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Peter Lang, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Alice Taylor and David Youngman

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk), Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

1. Election of the Mayor

Cllr Taylor, as the current Mayor, presided over the meeting for this item. Cllr Breakspear proposed Cllr Taylor for the position of the Mayor and this was seconded by Cllr Frost. Cllr Lang proposed Cllr Green for the position of the Mayor and this was seconded by Cllr Barnard. As the proposal for Cllr Taylor had been made first this vote was taken first. Councillors were reminded that an absolute majority would be required for a motion to be carried, and Councillors were asked to vote via a physical show of hands, rather than by electronic poll. Seven Councillors voted in favour of the election of Cllr Taylor as the Mayor. The vote for Cllr Green was taken and eleven Councillors voted in favour of the election of Cllr Green as the Mayor. This was an absolute majority and Cllr Green was elected as the Mayor. Cllr Green thanked Cllr Taylor for her services to the town and the Council over the last year as Mayor, and thanked the Council for its support. It was agreed that Cllr Green's Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be signed and accepted at a later meeting, when current COVID-19 restrictions permit.

2. Mayor's 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.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Collecott. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

4. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none. All Councillors were reminded to check their Register of Interests and update if necessary.

5. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting of 21 April 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

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

6. Appointment of the Deputy Mayor

Cllr Youngman proposed Cllr Lang for the position of Deputy Mayor and this was seconded by Cllr Patience. Cllr Carlton proposed Cllr Eastwood for the position of Deputy Mayor and this was seconded by Cllr Frost. As the proposal for Cllr Lang had been made first, this vote was taken first. Eleven Councillors voted in favour, and as this was an absolute majority, Cllr Lang was appointed as the Deputy Mayor. Congratulations were offered to Cllr Lang.

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

There were none.

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

8. Noting that the Councillor vacancy for Elmtree is pending election when COVID-19 restrictions permit

It was noted that the election is now due to take place in May 2021. Should any other Councillors resign from the Town Council and an election called to replace them, this would also take place no earlier than May 2021.

9. Review and adoption of the Council's policies and procedures, including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

A table of all the policies and procedures had been prepared and circulated ahead of the meeting, confirming the last review date and the reviewing Committee. Cllr Coleby proposed adoption of all the policies and procedures, pending review during the year by individual Committees as directed in the table, excluding those policies and procedures which are due for review by the Finance and Governance Committee at their meeting on 14 May, as stated in the table; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

10. Review and adoption of delegated authority and Committee arrangements

10.1 Committees, including the following:

10.1a Terms of Reference – Cllr Coleby proposed adoption of the Terms of Reference, subject to review during the year by the individual Committees, and a review of the Town Council's Standing Orders; seconded by Cllr Patience; all in favour.

10.1b Composition – Cllr Collecott was not present at the meeting. He was previously a member of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee and Chair of the CCTV Committee (now the Community Safety Committee). It was agreed to provisionally add Cllr Collecott as a member of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee and Community Safety Committee, subject to officers seeking confirmation from Cllr Collecott. Composition of the Committees was confirmed as follows:

Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby, Peter Collecott, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor.

Planning and Environment Committee: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Tara Carlton, Tracey Eastwood, Amanda Frost, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Alice Taylor and David Youngman.

Climate Emergency Committee: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and David Youngman.

Finance and Governance Committee: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Neil Coleby, Alan Green, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Alice Taylor and David Youngman.

Personnel Committee: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Tara Carlton, Neil Coleby, Tracey Eastwood, Amanda Frost, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Peter Lang, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor.

Community Safety Committee: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Neil Coleby, Peter Collecott, Peter Lang, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience and Andy Pearce.

Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the Committee compositions; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

10.1c Any delegations – Currently delegations are defined in the Committees’ Terms of Reference. Cllr Coleby proposed that the Finance and Governance Committee liaise with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chairs of each Committee, to discuss financial delegations to the Committees, for this to then be considered by Full Council; seconded by Cllr Patience; all in favour. It was agreed that the current Terms of Reference will apply in the interim.

10.1d Appointment of Chairs – It was noted that the Town Council’s Standing Orders stipulate that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor cannot Chair any standing Committees, and a Councillor cannot Chair more than one standing Committee. The Chairs were appointed as follows:

Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee: Cllr Barnard proposed Cllr Coleby for the position of Chair of the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Patience. Cllr Hardie proposed Cllr Taylor for the position of Chair of the AID Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Eastwood. As the proposal for Cllr Coleby was made first this vote was taken first. Twelve Councillors voted in favour of Cllr Coleby being appointed as Chair of the AID Committee. As this was an absolute majority, Cllr Coleby was appointed as Chair of the AID Committee.

Planning and Environment Committee: Cllr Parker proposed Cllr Knight for the position of Chair of the Planning and Environment Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Taylor. There were no other proposals. All Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Knight as Chair of the Planning and Environment Committee.

Climate Emergency Committee: Cllr Lang proposed Cllr Youngman for the position of Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Hardie. There were no other proposals. Seventeen Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Youngman as Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

Finance and Governance Committee: Cllr Green proposed Cllr Pearce for the position of Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Pitts. There were no other proposals. Thirteen Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Pearce as Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee; one Councillor voted against; four Councillors abstained from the vote.

Personnel Committee: Cllr Taylor proposed Cllr Eastwood for the position of Chair of the Personnel Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Frost. Cllr Barnard proposed Cllr Parker for the position of the Chair of the Personnel Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Pearce. Cllr Youngman proposed Cllr Lang as Chair of the Personnel Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Knight. As the proposal for Cllr Eastwood was made first this vote was taken first. Five Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Eastwood as Chair of the Personnel Committee. Eight Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Parker as Chair of the Personnel Committee. Three Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Lang as Chair of the Personnel Committee. Cllr Lang withdrew his candidacy for the position and a vote was taken again to secure an absolute majority. Eight Councillors voted in favour of Cllr Eastwood and nine Councillors voted in favour of Cllr Parker. One Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Parker received an absolute majority and was appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Community Safety Committee: Cllr Youngman proposed Cllr Lang for the position of Chair of the Community Safety Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Pearce. Cllr

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

Parker proposed Cllr Patience for the position of Chair of the Community Safety Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Barnard. As the proposal for Cllr Lang was made first this vote was taken first. Six Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Lang as Chair of the Community Safety Committee. Nine Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Patience as Chair of the Community Safety Committee. Three Councillors abstained from the vote.

- 10.2 Officer delegations and signatory delegations – It was previously agreed that delegations made to the Clerk relating to business of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic would be reviewed in September 2020. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the delegations, subject to the scheduled review in September taking place; seconded by Cllr Page; fourteen Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against; three Councillors abstained from the vote. The signatory delegations were included within the list of delegations. It was requested that these be reviewed separately by the Finance and Governance Committee, and that, ahead of this, any Councillor names be replaced with their positions instead. Cllr Pearce proposed that the signatory delegations be reviewed by the Finance and Governance Committee, along with the Standing Orders; seconded by Cllr Coleby; fifteen Councillors voted in favour; three Councillors abstained from the vote.

11. Review and appointment of representatives of the Council on other bodies

It was suggested to maintain the current position, unless there are any new roles which require an appointment, or any directly linked to the role of Mayor. Cllr Patience's term of Trustee of the Lowestoft Charity Board has ended and requires a new appointment from Lowestoft Town Council, which will be a four year term as Trustee. It was confirmed this is a single appointment with no substitutes. Cllr Hardie proposed she would like to be appointed to this position, this was seconded by Cllr Taylor. Cllr Barnard proposed she would like to be appointed to this position, this was seconded by Cllr Pearce. As Cllr Hardie's proposal had been made first this vote was taken first. Nine Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Hardie as Trustee of the Lowestoft Charity Board. Nine Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Barnard as Trustee of the Lowestoft Charity Board. As Mayor, Cllr Green used his casting vote and voted in favour of appointing Cllr Hardie as Trustee of the Lowestoft Charity Board. Cllr Hardie was duly appointed. It was noted that Cllr Collecott is the appointed representative to the Lowestoft Vision Board and the Lowestoft Regeneration and Growth Board. It is understood that the Lowestoft Regeneration and Growth Board is now obsolete but officers will check this. Cllr Butler offered to step in as a second substitute for the bodies on which Cllr Collecott is the Town Council's appointed representative, in case he and the first substitute are unable to attend the meetings. This was agreed. Cllr Coleby proposed maintaining the current representative roles, unless any are directly linked to other roles, such as the Mayor, or there are any new appointments to be made; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

12. The meeting schedule for 2020 – 21

It was agreed that the Committees and Sub-Committees should review their meeting schedules.

Cllr Frost left the meeting 20:22

Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the meeting schedule for 2020 – 21, subject to review by the individual Committees and Sub-Committees; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

13. Receipt of summonses to meetings electronically

This is included in the Town Council's Standing Orders and should be reviewed annually.

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

Electronic summonses to meetings befits the Town Council's declaration of a climate emergency. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the receipt of summonses to meetings electronically; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

14. The register of land and assets including building and office equipment

This was circulated in advance of the meeting, and is up to date to the year ending 31 March 2020. The register of land and assets will be updated for the current financial year as there are amendments to be made, including with regard to CCTV. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the register of land and assets, subject to a review by the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

15. Arrangements for insurance cover

Insurance cover is in place and details are within the Clerk's report, which was circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting. The Council is in its final year of a three year agreement, and will need to enter into an open procurement process next year for the contract. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the current insurance arrangements; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

16. Finance and Governance:

16.1 Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 16 April 2020 and consideration of financial matters for the year ending 31 March 2020, including the following: - There were no comments on the minutes. These were noted and will be considered at the next appropriate meeting.

16.1a The end of year accounts and completion of the bank reconciliation for the year ending 31 March 2020 – Cllr Green has completed the bank reconciliation for the year ending 31 March 2020. The end of year accounts were circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the end of year accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ending 31 March 2020; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It was requested that, going forward, the bank reconciliation signatory should not be a bank signatory as well. Appointments to these roles will be considered later on the agenda.

16.2 Any audit matters, including the following:

16.2a Internal audit:

16.2ai Completion of the internal audit and receipt of the detailed report – It was noted that the internal audit report had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting and all Councillors had seen it. The internal audit report was prepared by an independent third party, following a two-day audit and earlier interim audits. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the internal audit report; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

16.2aii Receipt of the RFO's action plan – This was circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting, as part of the Clerk's report. The plan has identified seven points of action for the Council to take forward. It was suggested this could provisionally be confirmed by the Finance and Governance Committee at their meeting on 14 May, depending on the outcome of the review of the Reserves Policy. Should the Committee wish to review the Reserves Policy first, the Chair may change the order of items on the agenda to accommodate this.

Cllr Eastwood left the meeting 20:35

Cllr Hardie proposed approval of the RFO's Action Plan, subject to a review of the Reserves Policy by the Finance and Governance Committee; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

16.2aiii Reviewing the provision of internal audit services and noting the commencement of the second year of the agreement for internal audit services with Trevor Brown – It was noted that the second year of a two year agreement had commenced. Cllr Pearce proposed a formal vote of thanks to Trevor Brown for his professional, independent and competent service; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. Cllr Green also offered a formal vote of thanks to the Clerk as RFO and to James Cox for all their work in preparation for and during the audit. Thanks were also offered to the Finance and Governance Committee and individual Councillors for supporting the process.

16.2b Completion of the Internal Controls review and receipt of the report – Cllr Green has completed the Internal Controls review. The report had been circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting and there were no comments or issues. The appointment of Internal Controllers will be considered later on the agenda. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the report and approval for Cllr Green to sign the report; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

16.2c The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2019 – 2020 and associated papers and processes for external audit, including:

16.2ci The internal audit report (AGAR) – It was noted that this is different to the report referred to at item 16.2b. This report is the Internal Auditor's report for the AGAR. It was noted that page three of the AGAR had been completed and signed by Trevor Brown, as the Internal Auditor, to confirm Lowestoft Town Council had met the necessary criteria. Cllr Green proposed noting the internal audit report for the AGAR; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

16.2cii Approval of the Annual Governance Statements (Section 1 AGAR)

Cllr Barnard temporarily left the meeting 20:45

Section One of the AGAR was circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting and displayed at the meeting. Cllr Hardie proposed that each of the statements, numbered 1 – 9, should be marked 'yes' to indicate Councillors are in agreement that Lowestoft Town Council has met the necessary criteria; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Barnard returned 20:47 and did not participate in the vote

16.2ciii Approval of the Accounting Statements (Section 2 AGAR) and noting the associated papers, including significant variations and bank reconciliation – Section Two of the AGAR, as completed and signed by the Clerk as RFO, and all the associated papers had been circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting. Cllr Lang proposed noting that all Councillors had seen Section Two of the AGAR (the accounting statements), and the associated papers, and approval of them; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

16.civ The period for the exercise of public rights – As per the Clerk's report this must be a period of thirty days, which has been decided by the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, as being 20 May – 1 July 2020. Starting the period from 20 May will allow time beforehand for the completed forms to be distributed to Councillors who can safely put them in the Town Council's noticeboards. Officers will endeavour to put as much information as possible on the website as well, to ensure transparency.

Cllr Carlton left the meeting 20:54

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the period for the exercise of public rights as 20 May - 1 July 2020; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

16.3 Urgent financial matters for the current year, including the following:

16.3a Bank signatories – Cllr Taylor advised she no longer wished to be a bank signatory and it was noted that officers will taking administrative steps to progress this. The

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

current bank signatories were confirmed as Cllrs Frost, Green, Knight and Lang. Cllrs Coleby and Pearce advised they would like to become bank signatories. Cllr Pearce proposed the bank signatories as Cllrs Coleby, Frost, Green, Knight, Lang and Pearce, with Cllr Taylor to be removed as a bank signatory at her request; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

- 16.3b Bank reconciliation signatories – Cllr Green has been fulfilling this role, but suggested that going forward, it would be more transparent if the bank reconciliation signatories were not bank signatories also.

Cllr Patience left the meeting 21:01

Cllr Green proposed that the bank reconciliation signatories should be members of the Finance and Governance Committee and should not be bank signatories also; seconded by Cllr Coleby; thirteen Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. It was agreed that it would be preferable to have two signatories. As the bank reconciliations were up to date, Cllr Green proposed that the bank reconciliation signatories should be appointed at a future Full Council meeting, following a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee of an appointment of two signatories from amongst its number; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 16.3c Internal controllers – This can be up to two Councillors, who will need to follow a similar process as previously, of checking that the internal controls are in order. Cllr Hardie proposed that she would like to be appointed to this role, and this was seconded by Cllr Pearce. No other proposals were forthcoming and it was agreed that a substitute Internal Controller should be sought at the next Full Council meeting. All Councillors voted in favour of appointing Cllr Hardie as an Internal Controller and seeking a substitute at the next Full Council meeting.

- 16.3d Confirmation that fees and charges will remain at 2019 – 2020 rates, pending review if necessary by the Finance and Governance Committee – It was suggested that the current fees and charges remain as they are for now, with review later in the year, particularly at the COVID-19 recovery stage. There have been some discussions with tenants about their circumstances and this can be discussed further by the Finance and Governance Committee. Cllr Green proposed that fees and charges remain at the 2019 – 20 rates, subject to review during the year; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

17. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 26 May 2020 19:30

18. Items for the next Agenda

It was requested that a meeting of the Budget and Loan Working Group be scheduled, as it was previously agreed that the Group would meet quarterly to scrutinise the budget in detail. Following a query, it was confirmed that there will be provision for discussion about outstanding matters relating to The Ness on the next Full Council agenda.

19. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

There were no confidential matters for consideration. The Mayor offered thanks to those who had observed the live stream of the meeting, and thanks were offered to officers for their assistance.

The meeting was closed 21:14.

Signed:

Lowestoft Town Council

Annual Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 12 May 2020

26 May 2020

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