

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
13:00 on 13 January 2022

MINUTES

Present (in person): Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce (Chair) and Alice Taylor

In attendance (remotely via Zoom Webinar): Shona Bendix (Clerk), James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Lauren Elliott (Committee and Project Clerk)

Public: There was one member of the public in attendance (in person)

107. Welcome

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

108. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Paul Page and Graham Parker. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

109. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 112.5, 114.1 and 115. Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 116.5 and in item 115.3j, specifically with regard to Gainsborough Drive and Fen Park. Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Gunton Ward.

110. The draft minutes of the meeting on 30 November 2021

Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

111. Public forum

No advance comments had been received. A representative from the Cricket Club had been invited to the meeting by the Committee to discuss item 116.5, specifically the improved net training facility as considered by the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee at its last meeting, and four additional proposals sent in separately. The Cricket Club had received a third quotation since sending the proposals through, which they will send separately to officers. As part of the proposals, the Club would like the Council to consider installing an additional storage unit or alternative storage of the contractors' equipment which is currently stored in a section of the spectators' area. The Cricket Club would like to make improvements to the spectators' area and the presence of the equipment is a health and safety concern. The Cricket Club proposes to install a metal storage container on a concrete base which the Club can use for its equipment, thereby enabling storage of the contractors' equipment in the container currently used by the Club. The Club has obtained a quotation for the container and floor paint and have allowed £1,000 for the concrete base. It is proposed that Club members carry out the labour where they can.

The second proposal is to level out and add a new layer of gravel to the entrance of the Oval, which would also benefit the Tennis Club. The surface has become particularly worn and uneven in front of the pavilion. It is proposed that labour is completed by Club members where possible. The Club has sought quotations for twenty, one tonne bags of gravel, and the cost is approximately £891.

The third proposal is to replace the Heras fencing which currently stands in place of a section of the wall, to improve the security of the site. The Club would instead like to install 2.4m high green security fencing. The net cost of materials would be £1,737.31 and it is proposed that Club members would complete installation where possible.

The final proposal is to replace all the windows and doors in the pavilion. Two quotations have been provided to the Council. The Club has since received a third quotation, which they will

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pass to officers. The Club is aware that this work may be progressed at a later date, in line with wider refurbishment of the pavilion. Replacement windows would improve the security of the pavilion. It was suggested that the Police may be able to visit the site to offer advice on measures that can be taken to improve the security of the site.

The Club is seeking landowner permission to install its new net training facility. If approved, the Club would fund the works but would welcome any sponsorship. The Club is aware that planning permission would be required.

Regarding the fencing, the representative from the Cricket Club was advised that there had been public objection to other fencing which had been erected in the North Denes. The site is in a conservation area, which may affect how all of the proposals are progressed. It was agreed to bring forward the consideration of item 116.5

- 116.5. A request from the Cricket Club for assistance/support of their proposals to improve the Denes Oval cricket and clubhouse facilities – Regarding the replacement net training facility, Cllr Pearce proposed approving the Cricket Club’s request for landowner permission, subject to planning permission being given; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the proposals regarding the gravel drive, replacement security fencing - pending a long term decision regarding a more permanent solution, taking account of the heritage of the site and the wall – and the storage facility, subject to the necessary planning permission being sought; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. Regarding the windows and doors, the Council has committed to look at a longer term refurbishment of the site. Repair work which may be needed to the roof has been mentioned previously. The public conveniences will be included as part of the wider renovation of the pavilion. It was suggested that there should be a follow-up meeting with the Club, either in person or via Zoom, to discuss the timescales for the longer term refurbishment of the building. The replacement windows and doors may need to be included as part of the wider refurbishment. In the interim, the Club was advised to liaise with officers regarding any repair and maintenance issues. It was reported that several of the external walls have damp issues. It would need to be checked when a condition survey was last completed, but addressing damp issues would need to be a priority for the refurbishment works. A sponsorship arrangement had been previously discussed. Cllr Pearce proposed that the follow-up meeting includes a discussion as to how that may be taken forward; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

The member of the public left the meeting 13:38

112. Budget and Loan:

- 112.1. Monitoring the budget for 2021 – 2022, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – The cost for storage of items is understood to be approximately £240 per month. The budget monitoring document seemed to show that more than half of the annual budget for storage of items had already been spent, and there would likely therefore be an overspend from this budget. It is understood this may be an administrative error, which officers will confirm to the Committee.
- 112.2. Bank reconciliations – November and December’s bank reconciliations had been sent to the relevant Councillor to check.
- 112.3. The draft minutes of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meetings on 7 and 14 December 2021 – Much of the discussions in these meetings had been confidential. The vote to accept the minutes however is to approve the public record of the meeting. Confidential notes and documents cannot be published but could be shared with Councillors.
- 112.4. Updates to the Reserves document to reflect the previous decisions of the Council (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce has been keeping a working document of all decisions from Full Council affecting the reserves. Cllr Pearce will be updating the document with the decisions arising from December’s Full Council meeting. It was agreed to carry this item forward to February’s meeting.
- 112.5. The treatment of Marina Theatre income and loan repayment for 2022/23 Budget and

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precept – It is understood that an incorrect formula may have been entered into the budget spreadsheet, which, when corrected, would increase the precept from the agreed percentage of 2.77%. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to keep the adjustment with the costs for the Marina Theatre, and to take the additional amount of £12,000 off of the earmarked reserve recovery for the Marina Theatre, to retain the precept increase of 2.77% previously agreed by Full Council; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

113. Payments:

113.1. The income and expenditure reports for December 2021 and January 2022 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – The Clerk has raised an enquiry regarding BID Levy payments relating to the Town Hall but has not yet received a response.

The income and expenditure reports were received and noted as follows:

December income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
6 December 2021	Market	Weekly Market Income	£42.50
13 December 2021	Market	Weekly Market Income	£43.50
20 December 2021	Market	Weekly Market Income	£54.50
22 December 2021	Waveney Foster Care Support Group	Whitton Hall hire	£36
24 December 2021	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
30 December 2021	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£625

December expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 December 2021	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park Business Rates December 2021	£187
1 December 2021	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls Club Business Rates December 2021	£110
1 December 2021	East Suffolk Council	Hamilton House Business Rates December 2021	£2,008
3 December 2021	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions November 2021	£5,530.94
6 December 2021	Wave	Water Charges	£133.67
6 December 2021	East Suffolk Norse	Whitton Hall Cleaning	£120 + £24 VAT = £144
7 December 2021	Paul Connew	Reimbursement for expenses	£126.60
8 December 2021	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£306 + £61.20 VAT = £367.20
8 December 2021	M Ryan	Memorial Film Filming	£154.20
8 December 2021	Andy Pearce	Travel Reimbursement	£27.50
8 December 2021	East Suffolk Council	Elmtree By-Election July 2021	£8,001.24

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10 December 2021	C&C Consulting	Health and Safety Consultancy	£735 + £147 = £882
10 December 2021	Sarah Foote	Reimbursement	£218.40
10 December 2021	Chris Meek	Reimbursement	£2.58
13 December 2021	Shona Bendix	Reimbursement	£21.30
14 December 2021	Lowestoft & District Allotment Association	Allotment Management Fee	£1,000
14 December 2021	Wave	Kensington Gardens Water 2018-2021	£6,262.35
15 December 2021	Anglian Water	Water Charges	£133.67
15 December 2021	Northumbrian Water	Legionella Maintenance	£593.97 + 118.79 = £712.76
15 December 2021	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£562.50 + £112.50 VAT = £675
16 December 2021	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Purchases	£603.91
20 December 2021	NPower	Electricity Charges	£224.77
20 December 2021	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership Charge December 2021	£37,550 + £7,510 VAT = £45,060
20 December 2021	HMRC	HMRC November 2021	£5,683.94
20 December 2021	Fatstickman Ltd	Community Warden Equipment	£126.84 + 25.37 VAT = £152.21
20 December 2021	Odd Bods	Whitton Hall Gutter Works	£295 + £59 VAT = £354
21 December 2021	C&C Consulting	Health and safety support	£69.30 + £13.86 VAT = £83.16
21 December 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£697.20 + £34.86 VAT = £732.06
21 December 2021	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
22 December 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£117.54 + £5.88 VAT = £123.42
22 December 2021	Blachere Illumination UK Ltd	Christmas lights installation	£3,550 + £710 VAT = £4,260
22 December 2021	Waveney Glass Company	Marina Theatre works	£231 + £46.20 VAT = £277.20
22 December 2021	Sandy Lane Nursery Ltd	Trees	£1,239 + £189.40 VAT = £1,428.40
22 December 2021	Lowestoft Shopmobility	Grant	£337
23 December 2021	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas	£57.11 + £2.86 VAT = £59.97
23 December 2021	British Gas	Whitton Hall gas	£9.52 + £0.48 VAT = £10
23 December 2021	Salaries	Salaries December 2021	£12,271.21
23 December 2021	Waveney Norse	Partnership Charge November 21	£37,550 + £7,510 VAT = £45,060
23 December 2021	Waveney Norse	Partnership Charge January 22	£37,550 + £7,510 VAT = £45,060
23 December 2021	Claranet	Website hosting costs	£57.09 + £11.42 VAT = £68.51

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23 December 2021	Marina Theatre Trust	MTT Management Fee Q4	£37,500 + £7,500 VAT = £45,000
29 December 2021	Eon	Whitton Hall electric	£30.48 + £1.52 VAT = £32
29 December 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£1,364.06 + £272.81 VAT = £1,636.87
29 December 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£56.62 + £2.83 VAT = £59.45
29 December 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£146.31 + £7.32 VAT = £153.63
31 December 2021	Unity Trust Bank	Bank charge	£48.20

January income

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
6 January 2022	Eon	Feed in Tariff	£422.82
11 January 2022	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£12
11 January 2022	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£6,300

January expenditure

Date	Payment To	Description	Amount
4 January 2022	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park Business Rates January 2022	£187
4 January 2022	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls Club Business Rates January 2022	£110
4 January 2022	East Suffolk Council	Hamilton House Business Rates January 2022	£2,008
4 January 2022	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions December 2021	£5,152.98
5 January 2022	Sword and Trowel	Payslips	£146 + £31.20 VAT = £187.20
5 January 2022	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£1,358.48 + £270.10 = £1,620.58
5 January 2022	Paul Connew	Reimbursement	£63.55
5 January 2022	Northumbrian Water	Legionella Management	£593.97 + £118.79 VAT = £712.76
5 January 2022	East Suffolk Council	Kirkley By-Election	£8,435.15
5 January 2022	Stroud Associates	GELP Survey	£360 + £72 VAT = £432
7 January 2022	Blachere	Festive Light Removal and Storage	£2,744.80 + £548.96 VAT = £3,293.76
10 January 2022	C&C Consulting	Health and Safety Support	£735 + £147 VAT = £882

113.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were none.

114. Grants:

114.1. Grant applications:

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- 114.1a. First Light Festival C.I.C. for £6,000 – It was agreed that items 114.1b, c and d would be considered first, individually.
- 114.1b. Lord Kitchener’s Memorial Holiday Centre for £1,615 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this application; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 114.1c. Red Oak Primary PTA for £2,000 – The majority of the funding for the project is coming from the school. The Town Council would however be able to give funding if the Committee is satisfied that it is a genuine request from the PTA for something not covered by Government funding for the school’s statutory purpose. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the application, subject to the PTA confirming it has been able to secure the remainder of the match funding required to complete the project; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 114.1d. PIP-UK Poland Syndrome Charity for £2,500 – This is a national organisation but the application is specifically to support local people. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this application, and to enquire with the Charity if there are any other ways in which the Council could support it; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 114.1a. First Light Festival C.I.C. for £6,000 – It was clarified that this application relates to the Festival itself, rather than the wider projects the C.I.C. is involved with. A large amount of funding has already been secured. Cllr Pearce requesting a full breakdown of the overall project costs, so that the Committee has a clearer understanding of the total project cost of £477,000 and how the funding of £6,000 requested from the Town Council will be incorporated into this; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

115. Standing Orders and Policies:

- 115.1. Reviewing the following Town Council policies:
 - 115.1a. Financial Risk Assessment – It was agreed to carry items 115.1a and 115.1b forward to the next meeting.
 - 115.1b. Investment Policy – This was covered with the previous item.
- 115.2. The draft minutes from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting on 12 January 2022 – The draft minutes were not yet available.
- 115.3. Recommendations arising from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting on 12 January 2022 relating to: - Of the list below, the Sub-Committee has recommended the adoption of most, some with amendments. The Media Policy, Pandemic Recovery and Contingency Policy and IT Policy will be further considered by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting. The Sub-Committee has recommended the approval of proposed amendments to the Standing Orders. The Council’s policy on living memorials needs to be updated to reflect the recent Full Council decision. The Open Spaces Strategy is not in itself a policy and the Sub-Committee has agreed that any part of it which does constitute a policy should be removed and made available separately. Cllr Brooks presented a discussion document to the Sub-Committee regarding the Art Policy, and it was agreed to delegate responsibility to officers in conjunction with Sub-Committee members and any other interested Councillors to draft a policy for the Sub-Committee to consider. Some of the policies require health and safety guidance, which officers will work through administratively. Cllr Pearce proposed supporting the recommendations of the Sub-Committee regarding those which have been recommended for adoption. Those needing further work should be progressed accordingly. Cllr Begum seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.
 - 115.3a. IT Policy
 - 115.3b. Legionella Control and Water Hygiene Policy
 - 115.3c. Lone Working Policy
 - 115.3d. Media Policy
 - 115.3e. Member Officer Protocol
 - 115.3f. Open Spaces Strategy
 - 115.3g. Pandemic Recovery and Contingency Policy
 - 115.3h. Personal Use of the Telephone Policy

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- 115.3i. Petty Cash Policy
- 115.3j. Pond Policy
- 115.3k. Public Participation Protocol
- 115.3l. Public Participation Protocol (video meetings)
- 115.3m. Standing Orders
- 115.3n. The development of an Art Policy
- 115.3o. The Council's position on 'living memorials', including memorial tree planting

116. Other financial matters, including:

- 116.1. Reviewing the Town Council's Asset Register – Cllrs Brooks and Green requested a copy of the Asset Register. It was agreed to defer this item to February's meeting.
- 116.2. Any expenditure requests from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting of 10 January 2022 that may exceed that Committee's financial delegation – The proposals from the Cricket Club have been considered earlier. The Gainsborough Drive pond dredging will need to be considered by Full Council.
- 116.3. The implementation of approved capital projects, including progressing pond works – The quotations received for the Gainsborough Drive pond have been inconsistent, both in cost and the way the contractors intend to approach the work. The latest quote has given consideration to the preparation and safety of the site. The 2022 – 2023 budget has an allocation of £20,000 which could be spent in advance, or used for the Fen Park pond costs. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to accept the latest quotation received for the Gainsborough Drive pond; seconded by Cllr Pearce. The application of the Pond Policy will need to be considered, and the Council will need to establish what the annual maintenance requirements will be to prevent the ponds deteriorating again. This can be fed into consideration of the grounds maintenance contract. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour. It was requested that the Sparrows Nest building complex is added to February's AID Committee and Finance and Governance Committee agendas. A Zoom meeting with the Project Manager of the toilet refurbishments was requested.

Cllr Begum left the meeting 14:39

- 116.4. The cost of works required to secure a boundary of the Britten Road play area – Officers are liaising with Norse regarding planting undergrowth, which should prevent access to the area in question. If not already, it was suggested that the contractors who worked on Whitton Green should be approached. It was agreed to carry this item forward to February's meeting of this Committee and the AID Committee.
- 116.5. A request from the Cricket Club for assistance/support of their proposals to improve the Denes Oval cricket and clubhouse facilities – This was item was considered earlier in the meeting.
- 116.6. Agreeing a budget to access specialist support for the procurement of a grounds maintenance contract – Full Council agreed it would like to procure the specialist support of somebody who could work in liaison with the Norse Contract Working Group. This will be added to the Full Council agenda if required.
- 116.7. Purchasing up to five hundred 'thank you' badges, within a maximum budget of £950 plus VAT – There was a concern about the cost. The badges previously purchased have all been used and were appreciated by the recipients. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the purchase of the badges, within a maximum budget of £950 plus VAT, using funds from the community engagement budget; seconded by Cllr Green; three Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.
- 116.8. The use of software to support the publication of agendas and meeting papers – The Council has received approaches from companies offering a solution for managing meeting papers through software systems. This has so far not progressed due to the relative cost. Cllr Begum has alerted officers to a company she is aware of. The Committee would like officers to research the options, particularly as an alternative to sending confidential documents via email.

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- 116.9. An update on asset transfer matters (some aspects may be confidential) – There was no update to report and it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting. Regarding the Vermeer Close pond, the Clerk has advised East Suffolk Council, as per the decision of Full Council, that the Town Council is happy for East Suffolk Council to act as owners for this site whilst the transfer is underway.
- 116.10. Potential community asset transfers once existing land transfer matters are resolved (some aspects may be confidential) - There was no update to report and it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.
- 116.11. An update on the Hamilton House lease and business rates (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

117. Date of the next meeting

10 February 2022 13:00

118. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

Cllr Green proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed suspending Standing Order 3y to allow the meeting to continue for a maximum of ten minutes; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

119. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

119.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required:

- 116.11. An update on the Hamilton House lease and business rates (confidential) – There was a discussion regarding future options. It was agreed that discussions regarding Hamilton House and the Town Hall should be linked.

Signed:

10 February 2022