

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
13:00 on 1 July 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Paul Page, Graham Parker and Andy Pearce (Chair)

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance (either in person or via Zoom webinar)

31. Welcome

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

32. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sonia Barker, Alan Green, Keith Patience and Alice Taylor. Cllr Parker advised he may have to leave the meeting at short notice. Cllr Brooks proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

33. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

34. The draft minutes of the meeting on 10 June 2021

Cllr Brooks proposed acceptance of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

35. Public forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance (either in person or via Zoom webinar).

36. Budget and Loan:

36.1. The budget for 2021 – 2022, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – The budget papers had been circulated and were noted.

36.2. Any bank reconciliations (April and May noted by Full Council 22 June 2021) – There had been no further updates since June's Full Council meeting.

36.3. Adopting the Terms of Reference of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

36.4. Draft commentaries for the general and earmarked reserves, and associated review of the Reserves Policy – The Council has a number of earmarked reserves and needs a commentary for each to explain under what circumstances it can be used, what will be allocated to it and where from. Cllr Pearce has drafted and circulated some commentaries and has some suggested amendments to the Reserves Policy itself, which can be brought to the next meeting. There is a statement in the policy that the Council assesses its need to run facilities and services carefully and precepts accordingly. It was suggested that, once agreed, the commentaries could be appendicised to the policy. The policy should reference proper practices as per the Governance and Accountability Guide and the Clerk will check this. Cllr Pearce proposed carrying this item forward to the next agenda; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour. The Council previously committed to maintaining general reserves equivalent to four months' worth of precept, then increased this target to six months' worth of precept. The Council had not previously agreed a target date to achieve this. Cllr Pearce will be suggesting a timeframe for the interim target of achieving general reserves equivalent to four months' precept. If approved this will be built into the policy.

36.5. Increasing the target of the earmarked reserve for the staff budget – This was considered by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. The current target is £100,000 but this was based on there being four members of staff. Since then an additional member of staff has been appointed and three more should be appointed shortly. The Clerk has been asked to consider

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB

13:00 on 1 July 2021

what an appropriate target would be and advise. This will coincide with the review of the Reserves Policy. The impact of the delay to the recruitment process this year will also be considered.

- 36.6. Increasing the target of the repairs and maintenance earmarked reserve – This earmarked reserve has not previously had a target. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee has suggested that it should. The current total of the reserve is almost £240,000. Based on this, Cllr Begum proposed a recommendation to Full Council to set a target at this stage of £300,000; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 36.7. Setting a target for the capital works earmarked reserve – The current total of the reserve is £408,000, but there are significant items of expenditure ring-fenced within it. The difference between the repairs and maintenance and capital works budgets were considered. Capital works is primarily for major structural enhancement of Town Council property. Funds can be ring-fenced within the reserves for specific projects but there will always be some element of contingency. The Council is moving to a five-year budgeting plan so longer term projects can inform these budgets. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to set a target at this stage of £500,000; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.
- 36.8. The adequacy of the compliance budget and the allocation of the expenditure on legionella management of £2,759.15 plus VAT for the risk assessment programme for 2021, and £7,127.52 plus VAT for the monitoring and maintenance programme – The payments have been approved by Full Council. This Committee has been asked to determine which budget the payments will be made from. The compliance budget for 2021 – 2022 is approximately £3,600, which is inadequate for the Council's requirements. In 2020 – 2021 it was £5,000 so it is not clear why the budget was reduced. The provisional figure for 2022 – 2023 is £7,000, but that still may not be adequate. Some aspects of the legionella management will be annual. It is not yet known how regularly the risk assessments will be carried out. This should be advised after the first ones are completed and will likely differ for each premises. As Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk recommended that the Council should have at least another £10,000 set aside for compliance. Approximately £370,000 of extra work has just been identified for one complex of buildings over the next few years, some of which is urgent. The Council would benefit from more expertise and specialist support. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee will be asked to consider increasing the compliance budget to £20,000 per annum. Cllr Parker proposed that the sum of £2,759.15 plus VAT for the legionella risk assessment programme for 2021 be taken from the 2021 – 2022 compliance budget, and the sum of £7,127.52 plus VAT for the legionella monitoring and maintenance programme be taken from the 2021 – 2022 repairs and maintenance budget; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 36.9. Any additional recommendations relating to general and earmarked reserves – Cllr Pearce has some suggestions which he will circulate ahead of the next meeting. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee will also consider this item.

37. Payments:

- 37.1. The income and expenditure reports for June 2021 and July 2021 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) –

June and July income

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
1 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£90.50
7 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£90.50
14 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£90.50
14 June 2021	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
15 June 2021	Lamarti	Use of Links Road car park	£576
21 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£42.50
28 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£42.50

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB

13:00 on 1 July 2021

29 June 2021	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£775
29 June 2021	Lamarti	Use of Links Road Car Park	£576

June and July expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 June 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Hamilton House June 2021	£2,008
1 June 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR June 2021	£187
1 June 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR June 2021	£110
1 June 2021	Gazprom Energy	Gas charges	£44.22
1 June 2021	Stroud Associates	Great Eastern Linear Park site survey	£540 + £108 VAT = £648
1 June 2021	SLCC	Committee Clerk membership	£208
1 June 2021	GYH Plumbing	Gunton Meeting Hall boiler works	£94.95 + £18.99 VAT = £113.94
1 June 2021	SLCC	Town Clerk membership	£538
3 June 2021	Competitive Scaffolding	Scaffolding for Marina Theatre	£680
3 June 2021	East Suffolk Norse	May partnership charge	£37,550 + £7,510 VAT = £45,060
4 June 2021	NPower	Electric charges	£1,450.86
4 June 2021	SCC Pension Fund	May pensions	£4,403.67
4 June 2021	East Suffolk Norse	June partnership charge	£37,550 + £7,510 VAT = £45,060
7 June 2021	Philip Pointer	Belle Vue Cottage Lodge timber works	£1,260 + £252 VAT = £1,512
7 June 2021	NABMA	NABMA membership 2021	£369
10 June 2021	BSA Security	Whitton Meeting Hall fire extinguisher and PAT tests	£226 + £45.20 VAT = £271.20
10 June 2021	BSA Security	Whitton Meeting Hall smoke detectors	£397.13 + £79.43 VAT = £476.56
15 June 2021	Total Conflict Management	Inclusivity Review	£4,795 + £995 VAT = £5,970
16 June 2021	Lloyds Bank	Credit card charges	£308.45
18 June 2021	HMRC	HMRC May 2021	£4,358.93
21 June 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£1,217.95
23 June 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£4,116.98
23 June 2021	Salaries	Salaries June 2021	£10,455.06
25 June 2021	BSA Security	Annual maintenance charge for fire detection and alarm for Whitton Hall	£157.50 + £31.50 VAT = £189
25 June 2021	BSA Security	Call out for fire alarm and replacement smoke detector	£128 + £25.60 VAT = £153.60
28 June 2021	Eon	Electricity for Whitton Hall	£44

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
13:00 on 1 July 2021

28 June 2021	Gazprom	Gas charges	£45.70
28 June 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£396.15
28 June 2021	MossKing Associates Ltd	Town Hall business development project	£11,510
28 June 2021	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£414.72
28 June 2021	Hudson Architects	Lowestoft Town Hall work	£1,290 + £258 VAT = £1,548
30 June 2021	Unity Bank	Bank Charges	£46.05
1 July 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Hamilton House July 2021	£2,008
1 July 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Links Road Car Park July 2021	£187
1 July 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Sparrows Nest Bowls Pavilion July 2021	£110

37.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were no payments for approval.

38. Standing Orders and Policies

38.1. The draft minutes of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting on 16 June 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.

38.2. Changes to the membership of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee – Cllr Lang had advised that he no longer wished to be a permanent member of this Sub-Committee, but is happy to be a substitute member. Cllr Parker advised that he would like to join this Sub-Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of Cllr Lang's change of status, and Cllr Parker's request to join the Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

38.3. The following recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee:

38.3a. Adopting the Terms of Reference of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

38.3b. Adopting the following Town Council policies: - Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the policies as listed in items 38.3bi – 38.3bx, with the exception of item 38.3bv; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

38.3bi Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings), as amended

38.3bii Video Meeting Protocol, as amended

38.3biii Sustainability Strategy, as amended

38.3biv Infrastructure Investment Plan, as amended

38.3bv Defibrillator Policy, as amended – Full Council has agreed that the responsibility for administering this policy should transfer from the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee to the Community Safety. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Defibrillator Policy and requested that officers review it in the interim to ensure any references to the Committee responsible for administering the policy are updated as necessary; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

38.3bvi Community Engagement Policy

38.3bvii Co-option Policy, as amended

38.3bviii Mulch Policy

38.3bix Social Media Protocol

38.3bx Training and Development Policy

39. Other financial matters, including:

39.1. Grants:

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB

13:00 on 1 July 2021

- 39.1a. Additional information from Sunrise Studios with regard to the grant application previously submitted – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this application, subject to officers seeking confirmation that Access Community Trust (ACT) is aware of the application (as Sunrise Studios is a social enterprise of ACT and is using its governance documents for the purposes of this application), and that the library is also aware and happy for its facilities to be used for the project; seconded by Cllr Page; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote..
- 39.1b. Additional information from The Peoples Carpet Bowls Club with regard to the grant application previously submitted – As requested, the applicant has provided a breakdown of the equipment purchased, and a bank account for the club is being set up. It was suggested that as part of its policy the Council should request a breakdown of costs where applicable, or receipts/invoices where purchases have been made. The Council has not requested this information from applicants previously, but does require evidence of how the funds have been used, within six months of the funds being awarded. The Council does reserve the right to recall funds if not used for the purpose as stated in the application. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this application, subject to the club opening its own bank account before payment is made, and evidence being provided within six months that the funds have been used for the intended purpose; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Begum proposed a recommendation to Full Council to amend the Grant Awarding Policy that for any grant being sought with a breakdown, an invoice or similar should be provided to support the cost; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. For any applications received in the interim, the applicant will be advised that this proposed amendment is being considered, and will be requested to provide a breakdown of costs and supporting invoices or similar.
- 39.2. The cost of providing smartphones to all Town Council officers – The Clerk will be meeting shortly with the Council's IT provider to discuss this matter, plus CCTV arrangements at Hamilton House, laptops for Councillors and amplification and video solutions for the Council Chamber. It was queried whether there would be a tax implication if the smartphones had personal use as well. This will be checked and taken into account if it does still apply. The Council does have a policy on the type of use permitted. Any additional charges for personal use would be charged to the individual.
- 39.3. The cost of providing laptops to all Councillors – This will be discussed as part of the meeting mentioned in the previous item. There had been some differing views amongst Councillors on an appropriate screen size. If individual Councillors do not want a laptop at all this will be for the Council to consider, particularly regarding data management and security arrangements for Councillors' individual personal devices. Corporately, the advice would be that every Councillor should have a Council issued device. Regarding screen sizes it was suggested that Councillors should be offered a choice. Based on the information received so far, the cost is approximately £17,000, which would likely increase if a range of screen sizes were purchased.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the meeting 14:05

It is understood there is no discount for bulk purchase. The laptops are intended to enable Councillors to access data securely, negate the need for meeting papers to be printed (in line with the Council's climate emergency declaration) and communicate more effectively.

Cllr Brooks returned 14:07

Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the purchase of laptops for all Councillors, within an overall budget of £20,000. Once the result of the upcoming by-election is known, the Clerk will email all Councillors to enquire as to any specific requirements they may have (Cllrs Parker and Pearce have already provided this information). Cllr Pearce further proposed that the £20,000 maximum budget be put together as follows: £1,500 from the current IT budget earmarked reserve, £15,129 from the current IT budget, £355 miscellaneous amount from the officers tab under admin, with the remaining amount to come from the officers earmarked reserve, which must be replenished in the 2022 – 2023

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
13:00 on 1 July 2021

budget. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Brooks; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against. Cllr Pearce proposed that the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee reviews the IT Policy in anticipation of Full Council approving the purchase of the laptops; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

- 39.4. Recommendations for a payroll provider – The Clerk is meeting shortly with a provider who can link in with the existing software. Further information should be available for July's Full Council meeting.
- 39.5. An update on the request to apply for District Council locality funding in respect of the memorial lecterns for Belle Vue Park and Kensington Gardens – The only response so far has been from Cllr Patience, in his capacity as a District Councillor, who has advised he will not be able to contribute funding to this project. It was agreed that the County Councillors for the relevant wards should be contacted also, and thirty days allowed for a response from all. It was noted that other sources of external funding may be available for other parks projects, such as via Tesco and Community Action Suffolk. Cllr Pearce proposed provisionally authorising a maximum budget for the purchase of the memorial lecterns, with delegated authority to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to determine which budget to make the expenditure from, assuming a negative or no response from the District and County Councillors in next thirty days, or any shortfall in funding; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 39.6. A funding request from the Lowestoft Museum (some aspects may be confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 39.7. Insurance arrangements for benches, bins, bicycle racks and play equipment (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 39.8. The lease and financial arrangements for a tenant (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

40. Date of the next meeting

12 August 2021 13:00

41. Items for the next agenda and close

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

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour. The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the live stream was closed as the meeting went into confidential session. It was confirmed the meeting would end following the confidential session.

42. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

39.6 A funding request from the Lowestoft Museum (some aspects may be confidential) – A funding request from the Lowestoft Museum was considered.

Cllr Begum left the meeting 14:32

Cllr Pearce proposed a commitment to the match funding and ring-fencing the funds within the earmarked reserve for the Lowestoft Collection; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. It was requested that officers liaise with the Museum to request periodic meetings with the Council to receive an update on how the project is progressing.

39.7 Insurance arrangements for benches, bins, bicycle racks and play equipment (confidential) – The insurance arrangements for benches, bins, bicycle racks and play equipment were discussed. As the Council is transitioning to a five year budgeting plan it was requested that the AID Committee considers the priorities for play areas. It should be possible to synchronise the five year budgeting plans with the five year plans for parks and play areas. It was agreed to carry this item forward to August's Finance and

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
13:00 on 1 July 2021

Governance Committee meeting. The Council will need to consider building up a capital reserve fund to replace the items being purchased now.

39.8 The lease and financial arrangements for a tenant (confidential) – There were no updates for consideration at this meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 15:07.

Signed:
12 August 2021