

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 1 February 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Peter Lang and Paul Page (Chair)

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee and Project Clerk)

Also in attendance: Cllr Caroline Topping (East Suffolk Councillor and member of Beccles Give and Take Group)

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

141. Welcome

Cllr Brooks proposed that Cllr Lang should preside over the meeting, in the absence of Cllr Page as Deputy Chair; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. The fire evacuation and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed.

142. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Andy Pearce. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

143. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 148. Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 148, 149 and 153. Cllr Lang declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 149.

144. The draft minutes of the meeting on 11 January 2022

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

145. Public forum, including to receive information on Tetra Pak recycling and the Beccles Give and Take Group

Caroline Topping joined the meeting via Zoom as an invited guest. The Committee has been discussing Tetra Pak recycling, which is often confused with Terracycle. Cllr Topping explained the differences between the two. The Beccles Give and Take Group has focussed its activities more on education and encouraging consumers not to use Tetra Pak at all, as it can be difficult and expensive to recycle.

Cllr Page arrived 15:41

The Group has worked with a supermarket in Beccles and has engaged with its customers to raise awareness of packaging which is difficult to recycle or is non-recyclable. It was agreed that change would need to happen gradually over time. It was commented that there is a misconception that butchers and greengrocers are more expensive than supermarkets. Encouraging manufacturers to change their processes and materials could be challenging and would take time to achieve. In the interim it was suggested that more Tetra Pak collection points should be made available. East Suffolk Council has launched a campaign to educate residents about domestic recycling, as contaminated recycling can be difficult and costly to sort out. It was queried whether households could be provided with specific bins for Tetra Pak and a quarterly collection arranged. Cllr Topping will feed this back to Cllr James Mallinder.

Caroline Topping left the meeting 16:00

As Deputy Chair of the Committee, it was agreed that Cllr Page would preside over the rest of the meeting. The member of the public expressed an interest in the Council's plans for Climate Action Day. It was confirmed this will be a Town Council organised event, but will involve local people where possible. The Events and Communications Sub-Committee has a rolling calendar of events and will need to refer to this before a date is set for the Climate Action Day event.

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146. The provision of Tetra Pak recycling facilities

This was covered during the public forum. Tetra Pak products are not easy to recycle and it was agreed that pressure should instead be put on manufacturers to reconsider the materials they are using. Cllr Brooks proposed that the Council should continue to lobby waste collection authorities; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

147. Monitoring expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority

It was noted that expenditure for the bird, bat, hedgehog and insect houses and the carbon footprint assessment is still pending. There may also be some expenditure required to progress the public survey for Clarkes Lane.

148. Any matters to raise with Cllr James Mallinder (East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment) and/or the Environment and Waste Working Group, and feedback on any matters previously raised

The Environment and Waste Working Group has divided into three sub-groups to specifically look at dealing with bulky waste, a potential information leaflet and signage at 'hotspot' areas for fly tipping, and education on waste disposal for members of the public and schools. The sub-groups will be reporting back to the main group next week. The Group has requested data on fly tipping from Cllr Mallinder. Cllr Barker has been advised that Anglian Water is launching a £3.8million investment scheme in Lowestoft which should prevent sewage being accidentally discharged into the sea, and avoiding sewer flooding in storm events. The Committee would like Cllr Mallinder to monitor this work. Lowestoft South Beach lost its blue flag status. It is understood that a bid to regain it was unsuccessful due to the level of sea contamination. Cllr Barker proposed asking Cllr Mallinder to monitor the proposed Anglian Water works on the sewers, pumping station upgrade and new storm tank in Lowestoft, and to check with Cllr Mallinder whether there are plans to submit a new application for a blue flag for the South Beach, and whether records exist of samples taken from the sea; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

149. An update on progressing planned projects at Clarkes Lane, including community engagement and seeking professional advice

The Working Group has agreed to progress a public survey, which the Deputy Clerk is working on. With the access the Council currently has to Survey Monkey it could only progress a basic survey of ten questions with the capability of receiving forty responses. The Council may therefore need to pay to upgrade its access to Survey Monkey. This could be covered from the Climate Emergency budget or the Communications budget. It has already been discussed that Councillors could approach shops and schools in the area as well. Once published, the survey will be advised through the Town Council's website and social media pages and the Lowestoft Journal. Paper copies of the survey will be available.

150. Confirming a date for the Town Council's Climate Action Day 2022 event and details of the event

The Great Big Green Week takes place between 24 September – 2 October, which is close to the planned dates for Heritage Open Days. World Earth Day is 22 April, but that would leave insufficient time to plan an event. COP27 takes place in November, but the date is close to Remembrance Sunday. Cllr Page proposed that officers circulate details of the Great Big Green Week for Councillors to consider and feed ideas into the Events and Communications Sub-Committee, who will consider the scheduling of the Climate Action Day event alongside other planned events; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

151. An update on the Town Council's carbon footprint survey

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The consultant has advised that the data should be sent across to the Council by the end of next week.

152. A Climate Action Plan

This is being progressed by the Clerk as time permits, but does require the data from the carbon footprint survey.

153. The guidance in the Theatre Green Book

Cllr Barker is aware of the guidance in her role as the Town Council's appointed Trustee to the Marina Theatre Trust Board. It has been requested that, as part of the Towns Fund funding for the Marina Theatre, East Suffolk Council is aware of this guidance and takes account of it as part of the process. The Green Book may also contain guidance which the Town Council could refer to as part of the Town Hall development.

154. An update on the proceedings of the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership

Cllr Pearce had attended the meeting and provided a report. The Partnership agreed in principle that it values and wishes to protect the kittiwake population, but needs to manage conflict with humans. On the advice of the Partnership's scientific delegates (from the RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife Trust), the Partnership is looking to appoint a part-time project officer, initially for one year but with scope to extend. A detailed specification and business plan are being worked, after which sources of funding will be explored.

155. Noting that the 'Treebilee' tree(s) will be delivered on 15 February, and location(s) for planting

There were concerns regarding the vulnerability of the trees being planted, which take several years to establish. It was suggested that the Council should focus more on hedges, shrubs and looking after its ponds. Where trees have been planted, the Council has reached out to the community to support the nurturing of them, and young people have been involved in the planting. Trees planted in the future may require more substantial protection. Trees recently planted at Stoven Close and Gunton Community Park have either been damaged or removed. The Council has committed to receiving ten English Oak trees as part of the 'Treebilee' project, but it has not yet been determined where they will be planted. There have been issues with unauthorised tree removal at Gunton Cliff. Cllr Green proposed planting five of the 'Treebilee' trees at Rosedale Park and five at Gunton Cliff, with a maximum budget of £100 per tree to provide additional protection, and to ask Norse to carry out the watering in the short term, until a more permanent solution can be found; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. There is a no readily available water supply to Gunton Cliff. It was agreed to retract the proposal regarding planting the trees at Gunton Cliff. Cllr Lang proposed to plant five of the 'Treebilee' trees at Rosedale Park and the remaining five at Gunton Community Park, and to review the cost of watering at the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. Norse are already contracted to undertake watering for trees previously planted at both sites.

156. Applying for trees as part of The Conservation Volunteers' 'I Dig Trees' campaign

The campaign is sponsored by Ovo Energy. There were some concerns regarding the motivations behind the campaign. It was suggested that the Council should focus on nurturing the trees it has already planted for now. Cllr Lang proposed not applying for trees as part of the 'I Dig Trees' campaign at this stage; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

157. Vandalism to trees recently planted at the Stoven Close play area and Gunton Community Park

This was covered with the discussion of item 155.

158. An update on East Suffolk Council's Cycling Strategy

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A presentation was previously given to the Planning Committee regarding the Strategy. It was commented that the Strategy is well written and easy to understand. Updates have been provided to the Town Council and it is understood that the results of a recent consultation will be published when available.

159. Date of the next meeting

1 March 2022 15:30

160. Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Brooks will be attending a presentation regarding Sizewell C. This will be in a personal capacity but feedback will be provided at the next meeting.

There were no confidential items for consideration. The Chair closed the meeting at 16:57.

161. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

1 March 2022