

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 19 February 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Janet Craig, Paul Page (Chair), Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray (Deputy Chair). Non-Councillor member John Sillett

In Attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Public: One member of the public (in person)

127. Welcome

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

128. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Barker with reasons provided. Ms Bunn provided apologies as she may be late to the meeting and intended to join over zoom. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

129. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

129.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Parker declared he was an East Suffolk Councillor and was on the East Suffolk Council Planning Committee. Cllr Pearce declared he was Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) representative on the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership. Mr Sillett declared he was a member of East Suffolk Travel Association. Cllrs Brooks, Ray and Page declared they were members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Cllr Craig declared she was an East Suffolk Councillor.

129.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – There were no requests for dispensations.

130. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 15 January 2024

Cllr Brooks raised typing errors at items 121.1 (should read 'wanted it noted' and 'wanted to scope' needed clarification) and 122.3 (should read as 'approached') and the minutes on feedback from the Quarterly Liaison meeting should specify that data would be shared from both parties, with LTC providing information on how the free-to-access scheme works and East Suffolk Service providing data on fly-tipping in Lowestoft.

Cllr Brooks also commented that the discussion under item 121.2 was regarding the acoustic panel, which was intended to mitigate noise, and was not linked to the generator. Cllr Pearce noted that the discussion in the meeting concerned the noise from the generator and therefore the minutes were accurate.

Cllr Ray raised an error under item 122.3a as the proposal did not include tetrapaks and it was requested this be added in the minutes.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval, subject to the amendments requested and verification of the discussion on the acoustic panel under item 121.2; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

It was confirmed that there was no confidential note to consider.

Cllr Parker left the meeting at 15:44

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Cllr Brooks requested an item on the Gunton McDonald's acoustic panel be on the next agenda.

131. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – No advanced comments had been received and one member of the public was in attendance in person but raised no comments.

132. To monitor expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority

There had been recent expenditure for the avishock unit and the angled ledges, which have been installed on the Marina Theatre building. The invoice had been paid and there may be pending allocation to the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget, which would be sorted when the Finance Officer returns. Officers were following up on the refund from avishock.

133. To receive a presentation from a member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust in connection with community engagement activities and B-Lines 'insect highways'

This had initially been discussed by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee, who would remain the lead on the B-Line initiative, whilst the community engagement element be addressed by this Committee.

As the speaker was not in attendance this item would be deferred and officers would clarify if the presenter wished to speak at the next meeting of this Committee or to a standalone meeting with Committee members, including those of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee, in attendance.

134. To consider the contents and implications of Planning Application DC/23/4933/DEM and whether Lowestoft Town Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee would like to take a formal position on the matter and make a recommendation to Full Council

The Planning Committee had raised concerns on this application to demolish part of the Marina Centre as the works would disturb the nesting kittiwakes on the adjacent Marina Theatre building and could result in abandonment of the site and possible breeding failure.

A representative from Suffolk Wildlife Trust on the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership had reported that there was a two-stage demolition timetable with no works scheduled until November or December, after the kittiwake breeding season had ended. Cllr Pearce proposed LTC continue its dialogue with East Suffolk Council to confirm the above report and their mitigations for the kittiwakes and reserve the right to seek legal advice if East Suffolk Council are not forthcoming; seconded by Cllr Brooks; fives votes in favour and one abstention as the member was an East Suffolk Councillor.

Cllr Brooks raised concerns on the demolition of a relatively new building and its implications for the climate, though it was noted the property to be demolished was not under the ownership of LTC, and suggested this Committee make it known that they are disappointed in the plan to demolish a new and recently refurbished building.

This Committee had no delegation to submit consultee responses and could either query the possibility of broadening the scheme of delegation to allow this Committee to also respond to planning applications with an impact on climate, or members of this Committee could join the

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Planning Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed an item for Full Council to consider the scheme of delegation in relation to planning considerations and whether to broaden this to include the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee; seconded by Cllr Brooks; five votes in favour and one abstention. It was noted that there may be impracticalities due to restrictive timescales for the consultation periods and considerations and perhaps Committee members could submit responses as a public comments.

135. To consider any matters to raise with Cllr Rachel Smith-Lyte (Cabinet Member for the Environment) or Cllr Caroline Topping (East Suffolk Council Leader with responsibility for Parish Liaison) and to receive feedback on any matter previously raised, including the following:

135.1. To consider the decision by East Suffolk Council to halt work on the project to construct a tidal barrier in Lowestoft and its implications for Lowestoft's residents and businesses – This item was considered in conjunction with 136.2c as the article highlighted Lowestoft's vulnerable position.

The Committee needed to understand East Suffolk Council's plans to seek funding and understand the impact on the longevity for regeneration plans and how Lowestoft can regenerate with the threat of a tidal surge. As the Waveney Local Plan was due to be reviewed over the next year it needed to be based on there being no tidal barrier protection and how that risk would be managed.

Cllr Pearce proposed this initially be discussed at the next Quarterly Liaison Meeting with East Suffolk Council, particularly on the implications that the absence of a barrier has on the Regeneration Policy, the Planning Policy and the review of the Local Plan, then officers would contact Peter Aldous MP to join the Committee via zoom to discuss the issues facing the project; seconded by Cllr Page; five votes in favour and one abstention.

Officers would check if Cllr Ray, as the substitute representative on the Lowestoft Flood Protection Strategic Steering Group, could attend their next meeting and make representation to the group concerning the tidal barrier.

135.2. To consider potential dates and representatives for a standalone meeting with East Suffolk Council to discuss possible collaboration in relation to environmental matters – Cllr Pearce proposed Cllrs Page and Ray attend the meeting; seconded by Cllr Ray; five votes in favour and one abstention.

136. To consider the following items:

136.1. To consider avenues of community engagement and relevant actions:

136.1a. Receive an update on the formation of a Lowestoft Pupils Climate Committee – This item would be deferred to the next agenda for Ms Bunn to speak specifically on the formation of the Lowestoft Pupils Climate Committee.

136.1b. Plans for the 'Big Green Weekend' for 2024 – The Friday activities were being arranged by Ms Bunn, stakeholders have been contacted for the Saturday event and the Sunday event would be held at Kensington Gardens. The Committee requested details of the Sunday event be circulated to members.

Cllr Brooks suggested a stall be considered for the Public Transport Working Group to promote cycling and walking. The stall used for the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Eco Event could also be used for the Big Green Weekend.

136.1c. Approve a budget for the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Eco-Event on Sunday 28th April 2024

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- Officers had requested a maximum budget of £500. Cllr Brooks proposed a maximum budget of £1,000; seconded by Cllr Pearce who noted this would be allocated from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget; all in favour.
- 136.1d. How Lowestoft Town Council can be involved in the Plastic Action week from 9th March 2024 – This campaign would commence 11th March and intended to raise awareness of plastic waste and was aimed at households and schools. LTC would support the campaign and promote it through social media.
- 136.2. To consider Lowestoft Town Council’s draft Climate Action Plan and relevant actions:
- 136.2a. To review the Climate Emergency Action Plan prior to submission to Full Council – Cllr Ray had reviewed the plan and cross-referenced it to the sustainability strategy and Earth Protector Town framework and had noted minor amendments to be made. Cllr Ray proposed the standalone meeting with ESC on 11th March proceed first and then amendments can be discussed at a standalone meeting, with the next meeting of this Committee to recommend the plan to Full Council for approval; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
As the plan would be a public-facing document it needed to be accessible.
- 136.2b. To consider stakeholders with regards to climate input for the Annual Assembly – The Committee suggested more varied speakers such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Gunton Woods, Lowestoft in Bloom, The Time Bank and a representative of the Town Hall project.
- 136.2c. To consider the article ‘Postcards from the Edge’ in relation to the effect of climate change on the Lowestoft community – This item was discussed in conjunction with item 135.1.
- 136.3. To consider the natural environment with regards to Lowestoft’s parks and open spaces and relevant actions:
- 136.3a. To consider the rare invertebrates reported to be present on an LTC-owned site and to understand their needs and conservation status (confidential) – To be discussed in confidential session.
- 136.4. To consider issues relating to the energy and water supply of the built environment of Lowestoft and relevant actions:
- 136.4a. To receive the latest news on Sizewell C – Cllr Brooks reported the recent news on the impact of the work regarding the cost and environmental damage alongside the extension of timescales. Cllr Brooks suggested a resolution be made by the Committee stating its continued opposition and highlight the waste of resources.

The Project and Committee Clerk temporarily left the chamber at 17:05

A town and parish meeting was due to take place via zoom on Thursday 7th March 18:30. Cllr Page proposed Cllrs Brooks and Pearce be the two representatives to attend the event; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

The Project and Committee Clerk returned to the chamber at 17:09

The member of the public left the chamber at 17:09

This Committee had previously planned to discuss nuclear power with a university professor and a representative of EDF. Officers noted both representatives had been difficult to contact to arrange the meeting. It was suggested to attempt to arrange this standalone meeting again.

- 136.5. To consider procurement and funding options for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee:
- 136.5a. Suffolk Climate Action Community Match Funder – Officers raised this with the

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Committee to notify them of funding possibilities. Whilst officers had the delegation to apply for funding, it needed to be for a set project and members were asked to provide project suggestions to the office and relevant Committees.

136.6. To consider public transport and alternative methods of travel and relevant actions:

136.6a. Receive an update from the Public Transport Working Group on the public meeting, including the cycling and walking strategy – The Committee Clerk notified the Committee of organisations contacted to date, including East Suffolk Travel Association, Suffolk County Council – Enhanced Buss Partnership, East Coast College, Peter Aldous MP, East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and First Bus. Cllr Pearce requested Wherry Lines Group be contacted. Several meetings will need to take place with these groups to outline the purpose of the public meeting, before the Working Group decides on the date, time and location of the public meeting. Cllr Pearce requested Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership also be contacted for involvement.

137. To review the decisions on this agenda from the perspective of nature

The Committee agreed all decisions had considered the perspective of nature.

138. Date of the next meeting

Monday 18 March 2024 15:30

139. Items for the next agenda and close

140. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda

Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 17:18

136.3a. To consider the rare invertebrates reported to be present on an LTC-owned site and to understand their needs and conservation status (confidential) – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:26

Signed:

18 March 2024