

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 15 April 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray (Deputy Chair)

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

155. Welcome

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

156. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Page with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

Cllr Craig, Ms. Rachel Bunn and Mr. John Sillett were absent with no apologies received.

157. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

157.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from members on items on the Agenda – Cllrs Barker and Brooks declared they were members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Cllr Parker declared he was an East Suffolk Councillor and the Deputy Chair of the Gunton Residents Association. Cllr Pearce declared he was Chair of the Gunton Residents Association.

157.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

158. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 18 March 2024

Cllr Brooks requested clarification in the minutes under item 149.2 as she felt Cllr Pearce's comment was unclear, and under 150.4c she requested pollinators be removed from the record as she had only raised a query the use of on planters.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Parker; three votes in favour and two abstentions.

159. 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 no members of the public were in attendance.

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

Funds had been ring-fenced for the kittiwake ledges which would affect the availability of uncommitted expenditure. Officers were asked to verify if the quote considered at the previous meeting also quoted for the ledges or if the two quotes were separate.

161. 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

Responses had been received to the queries raised in the previous meeting concerning the biodiversity net gain of East Suffolk Council (ESC) and the acoustic panel for the McDonalds unit in Gunton.

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The acoustic panel for the McDonald's unit had been specified in the application form and it was requested officers refer to that in their response to ESC.

ESC confirmed they had committed to the 10% biodiversity net gain. Cllr Pearce proposed officers respond to ESC asking them to confirm if they would aspire to exceed this minimum target, noting that the Head of Planning had previously stated they would not opt for 20% due to the demands for housing and to clarify if this was their current stance; seconded by Cllr Barker; four votes in favour and one abstention.

162. To consider the following items:

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

162.1a. Receive an update on the formation of a Lowestoft Pupils Climate Committee – It was agreed to defer this item to the next agenda.

162.1b. Plans for the 'Big Green Weekend' for 2024 – Cllrs Page and Ray were due to meet with officers to discuss the event further.

Cllr Parker proposed representatives from the surrounding parishes be invited to attend the event, in anticipation of direct collaboration with them next year; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

162.2. To consider Lowestoft Town Council's draft Climate Action Plan and relevant actions:

162.2a. Whether to commission an updated Carbon Report – The Committee agreed an updated report was required as the original report was based on 2019 data and did not cover all Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) operations and a sufficient baseline was required to achieve net zero.

The report needed to encompass all buildings owned by LTC, including contracted out, tenanted and leased buildings, to understand the trajectory of carbon neutrality for LTC. Furthermore, the specification would need to inform the contracted company that LTC were in a transitional stage with projects such as the Town Hall and Marina Theatre refurbishment. It was agreed that the company should also be made privy to information on the energy efficiency for the projects, including the theatre green book in relation to the Marina Theatre.

An update may be required post-April 2026 after occupation of the Town Hall regarding mitigations and post-construction operations.

The costs were expected to be under £10,000 and would therefore require officers to obtain three quotes per standard procurement procedures, with the budget allocation to be decided after the quotes have been received.

Cllr Pearce proposed to commission a new report and for officers to obtain three quotes, including the author of the original report, and then confirm the budget allocation; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

162.3. To consider the following in relation to the Earth Protector Town Status of Lowestoft Town Council and relevant actions:

162.3a. Setting up a steering group to audit, plan and monitor the activities and projects undertaken to protect and enhance the environment in and around the town – Officers confirmed that whilst LTC could undertake the work of the steering group, as the Earth Protector Town declarations were for change within the town and have a wider remit than LTC with liaison required between authorities, organisations and the community, which could not be accommodated within a standard Committee

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meeting. The role of LTC would be to facilitate and allow for these different groups to network. The role of the steering group and its purpose would be clearly defined and publicised per the declarations and objectives of the Earth Protector Town.

Cllr Brooks proposed to facilitate the setting up of a steering group to progress the aims of the Earth Protector Town declaration, with officers to contact interested groups within Lowestoft; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

162.4. To consider issues relating to the energy and water supply of the built environment of Lowestoft and relevant actions:

162.4a. Receive an update on the installation of water refill stations – The company chosen to source the refill stations from had recently rescinded installation of the stations from their services, therefore officers were seeking alternative installation options and would request an updated quote. Any further costs would be brought back to this Committee for consideration.

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

162.5a. Receive the notes from the Public Transport Working Group meeting – The plan had been to conduct a survey with the public concerning public transport, arrange small meetings in the different wards and then have a large public meeting.

The Committee noted the comments received from the Acting Town Clerk regarding authorities that have the statutory duty to provide a bus service and for LTC to be careful on the mechanism by which they assist or fund bus services. The Committee agreed with the advice and suggested that Suffolk County Council take the lead on this issue and LTC provide support, such as with the survey. Cllr Parker proposed the Working Group discuss this and develop a plan before speaking with Suffolk County Council again; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

162.6. To consider issues relating to waste and pollution:

162.6a. To consider a policy for dog waste bins – Cllr Pearce proposed there be no policy developed at this stage as more information was required on how many bins were required and if a collection service would be needed to support this, especially since some waste collectors do not collect dog waste; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

162.6b. A request for dog waste bins in alley ways between Edinburgh Road and Park Road, Edinburgh Road and St Margaret's Road and Edinburgh Road and Cambridge Road – It was agreed to in principle be willing to support the request, but more information was required from the resident as to the specific reasons for these locations to have dog waste bins. Per the new procedure LTC would then advise ESC if they would fund the new bin or if ESC would need to add it to the list of requested bins.

It was requested this be taken into confidential session for further discussion.

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

It was agreed that the perspective of nature had been considered in all decisions.

164. Date of the next meeting

Monday 20th May 2024 15:30

165. Items for the next agenda and close

An item was requested to review Suffolk County Council's proposed weed treatments and the impact on the environment.

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- 166. 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 Brooks; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 17:09

162.6b. A request for dog waste bins in alley ways between Edinburgh Road and Park Road, Edinburgh Road and St Margaret's Road and Edinburgh Road and Cambridge Road – Cllr Pearce proposed a site visit be conducted with Harbour & Normanston (and any other interested LTC Councillor) and District Ward Councillors in attendance with officers to write to the member of the public informing them of the site visit should they wish to attend. The District Councillors who joined the site visit can then progress consideration of the request. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:29

Signed:

20 May 2024