

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Marina Theatre Project Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
14:00 on Thursday 11 April 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Graham Parker and Andy Pearce. Non-Councillor members Sam Vallerius, Andy Gallant, David Blythe and Robin Townley (Marina Theatre Trust), Emma Bellward (Project Manager) and Darren Newman (East Suffolk Council) (observer)

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

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

26. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained, and the meeting was welcomed. It was noted Mr Newman would be an observer for this meeting.

27. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Christine Moore, with reasons provided. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

28. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

- 28.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from members of the Committee on items on the agenda – Cllr Parker declared he is a member of East Suffolk Council. Cllrs Barker and Brooks declared they are members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. East Suffolk Council had not yet decided whether the Marina Theatre Trustees in attendance needed to complete a Register of Interests.
- 28.2. Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – It was noted the Marina Theatre Trustees had a standing dispensation.

29. The draft minutes of the meeting on 7 March 2024

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Brooks; one Councillor abstained from the vote, but all other voting members voted in favour.

30. Public forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance.

31. A report from the Project Manager, including:

- 31.1. The notes of the pre-commencement meeting held on 28th March 2024 – The notes had been made available to Committee members. The note at point 5.1 was incorrect, as it referred to the Town Council's threshold for obtaining three quotations as £2,500. This was the threshold for obtaining three estimates, in line with the Local Government Finance Act. Cllr Brooks considered the reference to Battery Green and the Marina Centre at the start of the document could be misleading. The Project Manager advised that the first Design Team meeting had taken place and the actions arising had been carried out, including the signing of the Design Team contract. They had provided quotations for associated survey work to assist with the technical design work. Quotations had also been sought for statutory items, such as building control. The quotation for UK Power Networks, regarding the power supply beneath the building, was being updated. During the meeting it had been agreed it would be beneficial for Foster Wilson Size to meet with the Architects working on the Battery Green and Marina Centre projects to discuss co-ordination of works to share information, schedule works and minimise disruption. Foster Wilson Size had provided their fee schedule, which confirmed when payments would be due. It was noted the Design Team was currently two weeks behind on the programme as submitted at the tender. The Project

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Manager and Acting Town Clerk were due to meeting shortly to look at finalising the grant agreement, which would enable the drawn down of the first allocation of Towns Fund funding. The Project Management contract was being worked through.

Amendments should be applied by East Suffolk Council's lawyer over the next couple of weeks. The Communications Plan was due to be actioned in the next period and would be scoped out. Regarding point 4.1.4 of the report, Cllr Pearce declared he is the Town Council's appointed representative to the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership. The linked demolition works would be scheduled for November, outside of the kittiwake nesting season and in line with owner consent restrictions. It had been agreed an ecological report of the building would assist with understanding of any mitigation measures which may be needed for the welfare of wildlife. This would also be included in the risk register.

31.2. The timetable for project delivery – It was noted this was two weeks behind, and a new programme would be issued.

31.3. The extent of additional surveys required for RIBA Stage 4 – A meeting paper had been supplied, detailing items out of the Foster Wilson Size approved cost. The most significant was a cost to UK Power Networks. For the Town Hall Project, most of the payment to UK Power Networks would be refundable were the project not to proceed. The timeframe to programme the work in would be extensive, but an enquiry could be raised with UK Power Networks to check how much of the £30,000 would be refundable if the works did not proceed. It was confirmed the payment would be made from the Towns Fund funding. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this payment, as identified as urgent works to be completed early in Stage 4; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

32. The appointment of a procurement consultant

This had been discussed briefly at the pre-commencement meeting. Lowestoft Town Council would be undertaking the procurement and had to ensure this was done correctly, as it could be open to challenge. It had been agreed at that meeting that it would be beneficial to have an external consultant assist with the appointment of a main contractor, if the project reaches that point. The detailed design work would take place until the end of July. The tender process for the main contractor would follow, but simultaneously the decision would be made whether or not the project would continue. If not, the contractor would not be appointed. It was considered expenditure could come from the Towns Fund, although this had not been listed under the professional fees. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve Towns Fund funding being spent on a procurement consultant; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

33. A communications plan

Mr Gallant had concerns regarding reputational risks, if it were decided not to proceed with the project once the break clause was reached. It was considered important to highlight the fact the Trust, the Town and District Councils were working together and to mitigate the risks to all parties. Several visitors had mistaken the Marina Centre for the Marina Theatre, and it was agreed all parties needed to be communicating the same message. It was suggested the Marina Centre and Theatre could brand separately, though this was only a short-term challenge. It was noted the Annual Assembly would provide a good opportunity to communicate a public message. It was agreed all partners should synchronise their communications and identify any particular target groups or outlets to send communications to.

34. Any additional recommendations to Full Council

There were none.

35. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 9th May 2024 - 14:00

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36. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda, and no confidential items for consideration.

The meeting was closed at 14:51.

37. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

37.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required

Signed:

9 May 2024