

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Extraordinary Meeting of the Personnel Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**10:00 on 7 March 2024**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Christian Newsome (Chair), Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce and Elise Youngman

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

**Public:** There were no members of the public in attendance

**108. Welcome**

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

**109. Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received. Cllr Jen Jones had not provided apologies and was absent.

**110. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

110.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Youngman declared a pecuniary interest in any matters relating to the cleaning contract.

110.2. Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

**111. The draft minutes of the meeting on 1 February 2024**

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Barker; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

**112. Public forum**

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

**113. An update on the recruitment of the Grounds Maintenance Operatives, Seasonal Workers and Workshop Operative**

The closing date for applications was the following day. Officers had attended the Lowestoft Jobs Fair the previous day, which was well attended and several application forms had been requested. There had been interest in all vacancies. Shortlisting would be taking place next week and interviews the following week.

**114. Job specification, advertisement and recruitment timetable for the following:**

114.1. Assets/Facilities and Contracts Officer – The Acting Town Clerk had provided a draft job specification. Cllr Pearce considered the role should be referred to as the Facilities and Contracts Manager, and commented on the draft job specification as follows:

- Supported inclusion of lease, landlord/tenant relations and rent reviews as part of the role. Typographical error identified under this section.
- Roles in capital projects and asset identification will be important, and it was suggested this should include maintenance of the Asset Register.
- Suggested the Facilities and Contracts Manager should attend Marina Theatre and Town Hall meetings, including Design Team meetings once construction is underway, with or without the Facilities Maintenance Officer.
- The Facilities and Contracts Manager should lead on the Town Council's directly-funded capital buildings projects.
- Once the Town Hall opens, consider how the role interacts with the Town Hall Manager. It was suggested the Facilities and Contracts Manager should be

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responsible for the physical structure and fabric of the building, plus grounds and security, whereas the Town Hall Manager would be responsible for operations within the building and grounds. There would be overlap on certain matters, such as fire drills and opening/locking of the building, therefore it would be prudent to include co-operative working with other staff members in the job specification.

- A wide advertised salary band was suggested, between SCP 32 – SCP 46, depending on skills and experience, and to attract the desired professional interested, then advertise appropriately.

Cllr Pearce proposed inclusion of these points in the job specification. Cllr Brooks had issues accessing confidential documents on the members' area and would contact the office. It was confirmed that it was intended that the Facilities and Contracts Manager would manage the Parks and Community Officer and Facilities Maintenance Officer, and would undertake their appraisals. Cllr Newsome seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

114.2. Finance and Office Administrator – The role had been agreed by Full Council. Cllr Pearce proposed to delegate authority to the Acting Town Clerk to draft and present the job specification to March's Full Council meeting. It was suggested the Finance and Information Officer should have input into this. Full Council will make the decision on the full-time salary range and specification. The Acting Town Clerk requested a discussion during the confidential session and it was agreed to hold the proposal until then.

114.3. Cleansing Operatives –

*Cllr Youngman temporarily left the meeting 10:15 for the consideration of this item*

The role had been agreed by Full Council. There had been a short deferral, as officers had been exploring installing auto-locks on all the Town Council's public toilets, but established it would be expensive and prohibitive to refurbishment works. The job specification would therefore include locking/unlocking and cleaning. Cllr Pearce proposed to delegate authority to the Acting Town Clerk to draft and present the job specification to March's Full Council meeting. It was suggested the Parks and Community Officer should have input into this. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

*Cllr Newsome temporarily left the meeting 10:19 and returned 10:19*

*Cllr Youngman returned 10:19*

### **115. The possibility of partnership working and supported placements**

Cllr Barker had been asked as the Mayor to speak with foundation students at the College. The College was keen to support students into various roles, but this may be difficult for the Town Council to accommodate currently, due to other work pressures. It was understood the College was looking at potential roles when the Town Hall opens. Cllr Pearce proposed asking the College to prepare a formal proposal, and the Council can then consider implementation, dates and resourcing; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

### **116. Policies:**

116.1. Training and Development – It had been agreed that appraisals training for the Mayor, Chair of Personnel and their respective Deputies would take place annually, within three months of the Annual Meeting, and regardless of prior professional qualifications or experience. Regarding the return of service agreement for professional study, which will apply from 1 April, it should be clarified that it only applies to new studies, not those which commenced prior to the policy coming into effect. Cllr Pearce suggested that 'within two years of completion' be amended to 'within a defined number of years following qualification', as this will vary based on the particular qualification, length of study, and the extent of the Town Council's financial commitment to the cost of the

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study. Following 'each case to be reviewed by the Personnel Committee', Cllr Pearce suggested adding 'terms and conditions attaching to the study to be agreed with the student, prior to the commencement of study', which is where the length of any return of service agreement can be determined. At point 2.2, Cllr Brooks suggested the wording should be strengthened to reflect that new Councillors are expected to attend an induction. Cllr Pearce proposed to implement the identified amendments to the policy; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

116.2. Cycling and Use of Cycles for Town Council Business – This was a new policy, which the Committee was happy to support. It was noted the Government operates workplace schemes to support the purchase of cycles. Officers had however already looked into this and decided it was not worth pursuing. Cllr Pearce proposed to recommend adoption of the policy. There was a discussion regarding access to safely charge electric bicycles, which would be considered further between now and the Town Council's move to the Town Hall. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour. Staff were asked to explore options for staff and Councillors to access cycling proficiency training, which could then be built into the policy if appropriate.

116.3. Use of Town Council Vehicles – If individual vehicles are to be listed in the policy, Cllr Pearce proposed to defer release of the policy pending acquisition of the tipper, and proposed adoption of the policy itself; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

116.4. Absence from Work – It was agreed to consider this item during the confidential session.

116.5. How the Equality and Diversity policy is implemented by the Council – Inclusivity workshops had been run but had not been well attended. Cllr Pearce proposed for the devising of the policy to become a consultant-led project; seconded by Cllr Brooks. It was suggested equality, diversity and inclusivity should be routinely applied to all the Town Council's decision making, and consideration given to improving accessibility to the Council's services for members of the public and those who may wish to stand as Councillors. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour.

116.6. The continuation of the trial scheme for Essential Car User Allowance – It was agreed to consider this item during the confidential session.

116.7. If appropriate, consideration of an Essential Car User Policy – It was agreed to consider this item with the previous item.

### **117. An update from the Acting Town Clerk on any staffing issues (confidential):**

117.1. Staff absence, cover arrangements and financial considerations – To be considered during the confidential session.

117.2. Completion of training - To be considered during the confidential session.

117.3. Implementation of the three-tier staffing structure - To be considered during the confidential session.

### **118. Matters relating to the terms and conditions of staff (confidential)**

To be considered during the confidential session.

### **119. Appraisals**

119.1. Appraisal arrangements for the Acting Town Clerk (confidential) - To be considered during the confidential session.

119.2. How corporate objectives can be linked to continuing professional development for individual staff members – Some objectives will be individual, whilst others will be aligned to the corporate body. Cllr Pearce proposed asking the Acting Town Clerk to consider how the appraiser will ensure this happens and is fed back to the Personnel Committee in an appropriate way; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

### **120. Date of the next meeting**

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Extraordinary Meeting in April – date to be confirmed –

*Cllr Patience temporarily left the meeting 10:57*

The Acting Town Clerk could not make the proposed date of 4 April. Officers were asked to circulate dates via email, keeping the meeting to a Thursday if possible and ahead of the issuing of the Full Council agenda.

*Cllr Patience returned 10:59*

Next scheduled meeting - Thursday 2 May 10:00.

**121. Items for the next agenda and close**

Cllr Brooks had requested discussion regarding implementation of the Code of Conduct. An item had been added to the Finance and Governance Committee’s agenda to consider whether to adopt a bespoke Code of Conduct, but management and implementation of the Code of Conduct was the statutory function of another authority and could not therefore be considered by the Town Council.

Cllr Barker proposed to move the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

**122. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:**

122.1. Any employment matters relating to items on this agenda, including those above as required:

116.4. Absence from Work Policy – Currently, the only provision around absence from work was in officers’ contracts of employment. A draft policy had been created for consideration. Cllr Pearce suggested amendments to the policy, noting any references to the Clerk were to the Clerk of the day and not the current incumbent. Cllr Pearce proposed to adopt the policy with the amendments as identified; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

116.6. The continuation of the trial scheme for Essential Car User Allowance – Cllr Pearce proposed not to make the Allowance permanent on conclusion of the trial and to set up a new policy, with eligible officers to be identified by the Acting Town Clerk. There was a suggestion regarding the terms and conditions. It was further proposed this would be cross-referenced in the Absence from Work Policy. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

116.7. If appropriate, consideration of an Essential Car User Policy – Cllr Pearce proposed for officers to draft a policy based on the terms as discussed in the previous item; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour. The Acting Town Clerk advised that a draft policy had been prepared and this would be deferred to the next meeting.

*The Project and Committee Clerk left the meeting 11:23 for the consideration of the remainder of the agenda items*

Signed: .....

16 April 2024