

**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 20 January 2025**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Janet Craig, Paul Page (Chair), Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray. Non-Councillors members John Sillett and Cathy Williams

**In Attendance:** Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

**Public:** Two members of the public were in attendance in person

**110. Welcome**

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

**111. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Parker and non-Councillor members Rachel Bunn and Benjamin Poole, with reasons provided. Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

**112. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

112.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from members on items on the Agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he was the Chair of Gunton Residents Association, which was involved in the efforts to establish a 20-mph zone outside the school on Gainsborough Drive, and was on the School Committee of a local primary school, which was concerned with speeding and congestion. Cllr Page declared he was also on the School Committee of the same local primary school. Cllr Craig declared she was a member of East Suffolk Council (ESC). Cllrs Brooks, Page, Ray and non-Councillor member Cathy Williams declared they were members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

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

**113. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 16 December 2024**

Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

**114. 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 – The member of public in attendance would speak on item 118.

The member of public informed the Committee he had investigated the demolition of St Peters Court and made a Freedom of Information request on matters relating to the demolition to understand how the decision for demolition was made, and had been informed by ESC the reply duration had been extended to early February. The member of public had also receive legal advice on securing a junction to prevent the demolition (a complaint to ESC would be required and if no sufficient information was provided, then the matter could be referred to the Government Ombudsman before moving to secure the junction). The member of public commented the cost of demolition and replacement was likely higher than the cost of refurbishment. The member of public had contacted the Fire and Safety Department, who were satisfied with the safety of the building. The member of public requested that the Committee, if appropriate, recommend this matter to Full Council to put in a formal request to hold back the demolition so the public have an opportunity to scrutinise the decision.

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Cllr Page proposed item 118 be brought forward in the agenda and addressed with the close of Public Forum; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

*At 15:44 Cllr Craig temporarily left the chamber due to her declared interest as a member of ESC*

**118. To consider issues relating to waste and pollution:**

118.1. The climate implications of building demolition, in light of current demolitions taking place in Lowestoft – It was noted the Planning Committee had considered the Prior Notice to Demolition application for St Peters Court in November 2024 and had recommended refusal with a request for evidence to show reasonable alternatives had been explored, though no response had been received from ESC.

Cllr Pearce proposed this item be tabled for the Full Council meeting in January 2025 with a recommendation to make representations and express concerns on the lack of openness and accountability in the manner this was handled and communicated, with particular reference to the concerns of the Planning Committee not being addressed and the extension on the Freedom of Information request from the member of public; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

*The member of public left the chamber at 16:06*

*Cllr Coleby temporarily left the chamber at 16:06*

It was felt ESC should be urged to recognise that demolition should be the last resort and all opportunities for renovation and repurposing must be explored first. Cllr Pearce proposed this be addressed to the Leader and Cabinet rather than the Planning Committee, for an explanation on the scale of demolition (taking place and proposed) in Lowestoft in relation to their declaration of a climate emergency and how they justify this; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

*Cllrs Coleby and Craig returned to the chamber at 16:08*

*Cllr Page temporarily left the chamber at 16:08 and Cllr Ray presided over the meeting as Deputy Chair*

**115. Finance and Budget**

115.1. To monitor expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority - As part of the annual budget review, the recommendation to be made to Full Council would be for budgets delegated to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to be maintained in real terms and include an uplift for inflation.

**116. To consider the following matter to raise with the appropriate East Suffolk Council Cabinet member:**

116.1. Obtain information from the Local Planning Authority on what Government Housing Targets, which override Local Planning Authorities, mean in practical terms of planning and climate perspectives – A response had been received from ESC, confirm the housing need figure for East Suffolk, calculated in January 2025, was 1,644 dwellings. ESC also notified the office they intended to produce a new East Suffolk Local Plan (to replace the existing Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and Waveney Local Plan) and hope for positive engagement from Lowestoft Town Council as the plan is developed.

*Cllr Craig temporarily left the chamber at 16:11 due to her declared interest as a member of ESC*

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*Cllr Page returned to the chamber at 16:11*

Cllr Pearce proposed the Committee note the response received from ESC and their commitment to publish a new Local Plan and the timetable for this work and the Town Council looks forward to engaging with ESC on this process; seconded by Cllr Ray.

Cllr Coleby seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal with a requested addition to ask ESC to make a real effort to consult with the parish councils and involve them in the process of the new Local Plan. Cllr Pearce approved the amendment to the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

An item was requested for the next Planning agenda to understand the changes in the new National Planning Policy Framework and the new standard method for calculating housing need and the implications for Lowestoft. It was requested the Planning Committee refer back to Climate and Ecological Emergency on any matters concerning climate issues.

*Cllr Craig returned to the chamber at 16:27*

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

117.1. Discuss the decision by National Grid to build pylons as opposed to laying underground cables through Waveney Valley and whether to support Suffolk County Council's opposition to the proposal – The Committee noted this item did not relate to the parish of Lowestoft but would affect the county. Concerns were expressed on the pylons taking up important farming land and some members felt it would be preferable for underground cabling to be used instead.

Cllr Brooks proposed to support the position of Suffolk County Council (SCC) on the proposal to build pylons.

It was queried if SCC's position was based on environmental matters and if the decision by National Grid to opt for pylons was publicly known, and if it was due to logistical or financial factors. A member confirmed National Grid had made to decision due to the costs of underground cabling and SCC's opposition was based on the destruction of the Waveney Valley.

Cllr Brooks proposed to support SCC's opposition and suggested National Grid be asked to consider offshore options and take into account the destruction of the Suffolk countryside and tourism.

Cllr Pearce proposed to invite the MP to explain the proposal to the Committee, answer queries from the Committee and be prepared to provide feedback to Central Government as the representative of the area, subject to the availability of attendees; seconded by Cllr Ray. Cllr Coleby noted that representatives from SEAS and nearby councils also be asked to attend the meeting.

Cllr Brooks maintained her proposal to make a recommendation to Full Council that Lowestoft Town Council supports SCC's opposition to the building of pylons.

Cllr Brooks requested a time limit of the end of February 2025 on Cllr Pearce's proposal to receive confirmation from the invited representative. Cllr Pearce agreed and noted it

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could be arranged as a stand-alone meeting to secure availability of attendees. Cllr Pearce agreed and set the deadline to February's meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee meeting. If the meeting has not been arranged by then, the Committee would make the recommendation to February Full Council to take a position. It was suggested Rosie Pearson from Essex and Suffolk Pylons Campaign be invited as well to offer the opposing view.

Cllr Pearce proposed a stand-alone meeting be arranged between now and the February meeting of this Committee where questions on this matter would be raised with the MP and consider the responses at the next Committee meeting, alongside the suggestion to recommend supporting SCC's position to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

**118. To consider issues relating to waste and pollution:**

118.1. The climate implications of building demolition, in light of current demolitions taking place in Lowestoft – This item was brought forward and considered earlier in the meeting.

**119. To consider avenues of community engagement and relevant actions:**

119.1. Discuss inviting Jess Asato MP to speak with the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee regarding Lowestoft's coastal defences – It was agreed that the meeting to be arranged per item 117.1 would include this issue. It was clarified the meeting would be open to all Councillors to attend.

119.2. Receive an update on the litter pick for 8 February 2025

*The Events and Office Manager entered the chamber at 16:59 (1:26:46)*

The Committee's previous resolution to hold the litter pick on Saturday 8 February would conflict with the Triangle Market event and officer resources were limited, though there would be officer availability the following week on 15 February.

Cllr Pearce proposed to reschedule the litter pick for the morning of 15 February to avoid a clash in events and ensure officer availability; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

The intention of the litter pick was to give residents along the alleyway a sense of what it would be like if kept clean and was in keeping with the Plastic Free Communities requirement to undertake two annual litter picks. Efforts would be made to gather data on the types of litter picked.

Officers confirmed at the previous meeting the Committee requested the litter pick be held in the alleyway between Queens Road and Cambridge Road.

Cllr Brooks requested this be changed to Cambridge Road and Oxford Road.

Equipment would be provided by ESC, and it was requested fifteen units of each piece of equipment be provided.

*The Events and Office Manager left the chamber at 17:14*

119.3. Discuss Lowestoft Town Council convening a public meeting to ascertain public views on reduction in traffic speeds in set areas of Lowestoft – Cllr Ray had been approached by the Most Easterly Community Group to put this item on the agenda as the 20s Plenty organisation were encouraging workshops around the country to consider traffic speeds.

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It was stated this was related to the remit of this Committee as speeding traffic discouraged active travel with walking and cycling. The Committee agreed a public meeting with a broad agenda could help gather public views of areas in the town where reduction of traffic speed would be beneficial, so long as public expectation was managed by making it clear any implementation would be challenging and Lowestoft Town Council were not the authority making the decisions and delivering outcomes. The meeting should be held in a community venue in central Lowestoft, such as the library.

Cllr Pearce proposed a public meeting be arranged on the basis it is held in a central community location to ensure there would be no perception of bias.

*At 17:30 Cllr Coleby proposed to suspend Standing Order 3y for fifteen minutes maximum; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.*

*Cllr Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 17:30*

Cllr Coleby seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal and a vote was held with all in favour. It was agreed 20s Plenty and related experts should not be invited to oversee this meeting, such expertise should be sought after the meeting when all views have been collated.

*Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 17:32*

*Cllr Page temporarily left the chamber at 17:32*

**120. To review the following policies and provide feedback to Full Council:**

120.1. Investment Policy (section 2.5) – One suggestion was to strengthen the language of the policy and use terminology such as 'will' and 'endeavour' to emphasise climate matters were key factors in decisions.

*John Sillett left the chamber at 17:35*

*Cllr Page returned to the chamber at 17:36*

Cllr Pearce proposed the policy be further considered and built into the Climate Action Plan, then have section 2.5 re-written to cross-reference the Climate Action Plan; seconded by Cllr Brooks; six votes in favour and one abstention (as the member was absent during the debate).

120.2. Town Infrastructure Investment Plan (Community Infrastructure needs and/or aspirations) – One suggestion was made for the third paragraph to include the declarations of the climate and ecological emergency.

Cllr Pearce proposed to take the policy under active consideration as part of the Climate Action Plan and for any specific measures identified to be cross-referenced in the policy; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

**121. Date of the next meeting**

Monday 17 February 2025 – 15:30

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

Items were requested to receive feedback from the meeting with the MP per item 117.1 and 119.1.

An item was requested to discuss enforcement of bins in Lowestoft. It was suggested ESC be notified of this discussion and offer them time to speak on the item.

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- 123. 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**

There were no resolutions.

*The Chair closed the meeting at 17:45*

Signed: .....  
17 February 2025