

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 21 October 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Janet Craig, Paul Page (Chair), Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray (Deputy Chair). Non-Councillor members Benjamin Poole and Cathy Williams

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

65. Welcome

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

66. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Parker and non-Councillor members Ms Rachel Bunn and Mr John Sillett with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

67. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

67.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from members on items on the Agenda – Cllrs Brooks, Page, Ray and Cathy Williams declared they were members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Cllr Craig declared she was a member of East Suffolk Council (ESC). Benjamin Poole declared he was a Committee member at Gunton Community Centre.

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

68. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 23 September 2024

Cllr Brooks proposed approval, noting there was a typo under item 56; seconded by Cllr Page; five votes in favour and two abstentions from members who did not attend the meeting on 23 September 2024.

69. 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 advance comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance. It was noted that if non-Councillor members were invited to attend a confidential session, they would need to be sent the confidential notes of that meeting.

70. Finance and Budget

70.1. To monitor expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority – Since the previous meeting there had been expenditure on van fuel and the bulky waste service. An item was requested on the next agenda to receive an update on the tender specification for the permanent bulky waste service with a view for the tender to be live before Christmas 2024.

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

71.1. To consider requesting a meeting with Excelsior Trust to discuss their recent trip (some aspects may be confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee
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15:30 on 21 October 2024

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

72.1. Possible locations for the annual climate event and further deliberation on the merits of the event being held on the same weekend as the First Light Festival – The suggestion to hold the Big Green Weekend on the same weekend as First Light was considered by the Events and Communications Sub-Committee. The benefits of the increased footfall was understood, however, there were concerns on the limited space in Kensington Gardens (should First Light submit an application to hold events on the land), the limited availability of stall holders (many may have signed up to First Light Festival). The Sub-Committee noted that changing the date would result in the event no longer being under the Big Green Weekend branding. The Sub-Committee requested the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee consider this feedback.

Cathy Williams suggested the East Point Pavilion be approached to hold an eco-fair on the Big Green Weekend.

Cllr Brooks proposed to maintain the Big Green Weekend and consider the logistics further with the Events and Office Manager and the Events and Communications Sub-Committee and explore the possibility of approaching East Point Pavilion to hold an eco-fair.

A clarification query was raised on whether the Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) Big Green Weekend would be held at the pavilion during the eco-faire or remain separate in Sparrows Nest. Cathy Williams explained the events would be separate but would coincide with each other.

Officers had provided alternative dates to hold a climate event to the Events and Communications Sub-Committee, such as April 2025, however it was felt there may be difficulties due to the shorter leading time to arrange the event.

Cllr Brooks specified her proposal was not to do a joint event with East Point Pavilion, it was to bring together different groups to hold separate events.

Cllr Brooks reiterated her proposal to maintain the Big Green Weekend as a discreet organisation organised by LTC, with the timing and location of the event to be discussed with the Events and Office Manager and the Events and Communications Sub-Committee and an approach to be made to East Point Pavilion to gauge their interest in running an eco-fair that same weekend; seconded by Cllr Ray; six votes in favour and one abstention.

72.2. To agree organisations to approach to join the Plastic Free Communities Steering Group (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

72.3. The litter picking event and required permissions – It was established that ESC had agreed to provide the equipment for the litter pick, but LTC would need its own insurance. It was confirmed that the litter pick would be in the alleyways in Harbour. A leaflet drop would be needed for the surrounding houses to request that their bins be taken in and ask them to join the event.

Cllr Pearce proposed a delegation be made to officers to check whether LTC's insurance would cover community volunteers, Councillors and officers participating in the litter pick, and if it only covered events on LTC's land, and if it does not then a policy would be taken out for this event with a delegation that it be funded from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget. As the Plastic Free Communities pledge required LTC to hold two annual events, the policy could be taken out to cover all such events.

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 21 October 2024

Cllr Ray notified the Committee that if the event was booked through ESC and located on ESC land, then the volunteers would be covered under ESC's public liability insurance.

Cllr Ray seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal.

It was agreed to amend the proposal to confirm the litter pick would be held on a Thursday in December with a maximum budget of £500 allocated from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget to cover leaflet production and mailing. The leaflet would encourage local people to join and would inform them of the date, time, location and what they needed to bring. A vote was held with all in favour.

73. To consider the natural environment with regards to Lowestoft's parks and open spaces and other ecology related matters, and relevant actions:

73.1. The Wash tidal barrier and its effect on the coastline – This item had been requested by Cllr Parker and it was agreed to defer the item to the next agenda when Cllr Parker would be in attendance.

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

74.1. Discuss the Direct Air Capture facility – John Sillett had requested the item and it was agreed to defer the item to the next agenda when John Sillett would be in attendance.

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

75.1. Note the convening of the Public Transport Working Group and consider if delegations are required to submit the Scheme On A Page document

75.2. To receive an update on the results of the Bus Usage Survey

It was agreed to address items 75.1 and 75.2 together. Over 550 responses had been received and the results were being analysed.

Cllr Pearce proposed a delegation be made to officers in conjunction with this Committee to arrange a stand-alone meeting to present the findings of the survey and for the attendees in the meeting to initiate submission for the Scheme on a Page; seconded by Cllr Page. All Councillors would be invited to the meeting. A vote was held with all in favour.

75.3. To consider participation in Suffolk's next Local Transport Plan to 2040 – Cllr Brooks proposed this Committee provide input to ensure the Lowestoft parish has a voice. Cllr Pearce requested the acceptance to be involved specifies that LTC would participate on the basis of addressing what is omitted in the plan, as there is no mention of the regeneration of community fabric and does not address the concerns of the public, namely the issue of high rents and high business rates and the need for free parking in the town.

Cllr Pearce proposed to participate in plan and whilst broadly supportive of the plan, LTC were concerned of what was omitted and would like the opportunity to contribute to the process and inform the plan of necessary additional content; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

76. Date of the next meeting

Monday 18 November 2024 – 15:30

77. Items for the next agenda and close

Lowestoft Town Council

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15:30 on 21 October 2024

An item was requested to receive feedback from the meeting with ESC regarding the proposal to implement new bins in the district.

An item was requested to receive an update on the tender for the permanent bulky waste contract.

An item was requested to discuss a scheme to borrow coffee cups.

- 78. 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 Page; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed the non-Councillor members in attendance remain for the confidential session; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 16:40

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 16:41

- 71.1. To consider requesting a meeting with Excelsior Trust to discuss their recent trip (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Ray had notified the Trust of this item and had been in contact with a representative who had suggested an informal meeting be scheduled to discuss the recent trip to the Faroe Islands.

Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 16:43

Cllr Pearce proposed representatives from this Committee visit the Excelsior Trust to have an informal talk to discuss their recent trip to the Faroe Islands; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. It was agreed for Cllrs Brooks, Page and Pearce attend the meeting.

- 72.2. To agree organisations to approach to join the Plastic Free Communities Steering Group (confidential) – The Committee approved the draft letter which would be sent to organisation as a n approach to join the steering group. The Plastic Free Communities documents would be included in the correspondence. It was agreed to have the Chair of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee be the sign off for the letter and the letter needed to address the recipients as organisations and not companies.

Cllr Craig left the chamber at 17:23

It was agreed to send the correspondence by email where possible as the addition of the Plastic Free Communities documents would substantially increase the amount of paper used.

Cllr Page proposed a delegation be made to officers to send out the correspondence; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:26

Signed:

18 November 2024