

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 16 December 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray (Deputy Chair). Non-Councillor members Rachel Bunn, John Sillett and Cathy Williams

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

Public: One member of the public was in attendance (in person)

94. Welcome

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

95. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Janet Craig, Paul Page and Graham Parker with reasons provided. Cllr Ray proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllr Neil Coleby and non-Councillor member Benjamin Poole were absent with no apologies received.

As the number of non-Councillors exceeded the number of Councillors, Rachel Bunn withdrew her voting rights for the meeting to maintain the rules of quorum for this Committee.

96. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

96.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from members on items on the Agenda – John Sillett declared he was a member of East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA).

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

97. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 18 November 2024

Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the minutes; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

98. 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 – One member of the public was in attendance as a representative of the ESTA and considered speaking on item 105.

It was agreed to bring item 105 forward in the agenda.

Cllr Pearce entered the chamber at 15:37

The number of Councillor and non-Councillor members was now equal, Rachel Bunn would be able to exercise voting rights.

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

105.1. Receive an update on the submission to Suffolk County Council about bus improvements – A consultation response has been submitted for the Suffolk County Council Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 and Lowestoft Area Transport Plan, for which the Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) bus survey results had been submitted as evidence.

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A top priority identified in the LTC bus survey was the frequency of buses and the distance between bus stops and residential areas.

The member of public agreed with the points raised, noting there had been similar discussion at a Passenger Information Group meeting where it had been highlighted there was a lack of timetables and seating in bus stops.

John Sillett noted LTC had not made its own Scheme On A Page (SOAP) submission, and instead supported an existing proposal on the reserve list for previous funding schemes.

The Committee requested this be clarified as the assumption was LTC would still submit its own SOAP bid alongside the support for the scheme from a reserve list. Cllr Pearce noted at a previous meeting it had been a conscious choice to support a scheme on the reserve list rather than submit a new SOAP bid as the latter would be less likely to be chosen for funding due to oversubscription. John Sillett informed the Committee the East Suffolk Council (ESC) portal still permitted bids to be submitted after the deadline.

Cllr Pearce declared he was Chair of the Gunton Residents Association and lives on the Painters Estate where a bus service had been cancelled. Cllr Pearce proposed LTC submit a SOAP bid based on the contents and top findings of the recent bus survey, such as a new bus service on the Painters Estate or any other issues the survey highlighted as a priority; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

It was agreed there had been a lack of young people who responded to the bus survey

Cllr Pearce proposed the Public Transport Working Group, in consultation with ESTA, East Coast College and other relevant stakeholders as required, frame the content of the next survey for young people and bring it back to this Committee for review; seconded by Rachel Bunn who offered to put it on the East Coast College Student Portal; all in favour.

105.2. The future of the Public Transport Working Group – It was agreed that the Working Group needed to continue as many areas required improvement, such as connectivity between Lowestoft and surrounding areas. Cllr Pearce proposed the Public Transport Working Group be a permanent Working Group with members to decide on their Terms of Reference and meeting frequency; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

99. Finance and Budget

99.1. To monitor expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority – The updated expenditure report for the Committee was noted.

99.2. To approve a request from the Finance and Governance Committee for the funding of a £1,360 grant to be allocated from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget – The Finance and Governance Committee (F&G) had approved a grant application from Use It All for a recycling-focussed project. Due to the nature of the project, it had been requested the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget be used to fund the grant, though F&G had agreed a second funding option should the request be rejected.

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the request and fund the grant from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

100. To consider the following matters to raise with the appropriate East Suffolk Council Cabinet member:

100.1. The new legislation arounds bins in the district (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Brooks raised concerns that the new bin legislation would cause too much confusion regarding which bins were due to be collected and how soft plastics would be sorted in

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the recycling. There may also be further issues with the general waste bin only being collected once every three weeks and the amount of space available to residents to store these bins (with many residents having little to no garden space). Overall, it was felt this would not improve recycling. Cllr Brooks felt the food and glass recycling bins should be prioritised and a fortnightly rotation maintained for all bins.

The Committee noted at the Quarterly Liaison Meeting that ESC had recognised the difficulty faced by residents with limited garden space and their ability to cope with further bins being issued, and a solution was being sought.

Cllr Pearce proposed the relevant ESC member or officer be invited to speak with this Committee concerning the proposals for new bins; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

- 100.2. Receive the response from East Suffolk Council regarding Sizewell C in relation to water shortage and coastal erosion and consider a response from the Town Council – The Committee felt the response received had not sufficiently answered their questions. Cllr Pearce proposed a representative from Sizewell C be invited, either to a Committee meeting or a standalone meeting (which all Councillors would be invited to attend), to answer the queries posed by the Committee. The invite should be phrased as an approach to communicate with Sizewell C and receive information and assurance on how to deal with the water shortage and coastal erosion. The email chain with ESC should be forwarded with the invite so that the questions posed by the Committee were clear. Cllr Ray seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

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

- 101.1. Receive an update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan – Officers were due to send out a poll to book meetings for the Climate Emergency Action Plan for January, February and March. Officers would endeavour to book two meetings per month. These meetings would be held via zoom or in person.
- 101.2. Receive an update on the carbon footprint of the Town Council – Officers were seeking three quotes for this Committee to consider.

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

- 102.1. The Wash tidal barrier and its effect on the coastline – It was agreed to remove the item from the agenda and request Cllr Parker provide a meeting paper and have the item put back on the agenda when he would attend the meeting.

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

- 103.1. Discuss the Direct Air Capture facility – John Sillett had requested this item on the agenda to discuss how technology could assist in minimising the levels of greenhouse gases. The Government had pledged to spend £22 billion on carbon capture facilities, but there was a risk since the technology was not yet proven to be effective, and it was currently being proposed to bury the waste captured in the North Sea, which presents issues. Whilst experimentation should be encouraged, the Government should not delay actions to cut down greenhouse gases now through house insulation and investment in public transport.

There was currently an experimental Direct Air Capture facility on the Lowestoft port operated by Associated British Ports (ABP).

Cllr Pearce proposed Tom Dewitt (Port Operations), or an alternative appropriate person from ABP, be invited to speak to the Committee (either in a public meeting or

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standalone meeting) and provide information on the facility in Lowestoft, the duration of the experimental stage, what would be used to measure the success of the facility and what further information could be provided at a local level on what would be done with the captured carbon; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

- 103.2. Receive an update on the purchase and installation of water butts – The Grounds Maintenance Team (GMT) had reviewed the sites proposed by this Committee (Kensington Gardens and Sparrows Nest) and provided suggestions to the Committee.

For Kensington Gardens, they suggested three water butts be installed by the boating lake pavilion with a slatted wooden storage cabinet constructed to ensure the security of the water butts. Sparrows Nest would be reviewed in the new year to determine the number of water butts to be ordered and the location for installation.

No hosepipes would be permitted to be attached to the water butts, only watering cans should be used, and for maintenance, the water butts would be registered for regular legionella checks and the GMT would undertake a yearly dismantle and clean of the equipment at the end of the season.

The water butts for Kensington Gardens were due to be ordered and it was confirmed the cost would be within the maximum budget set by the Committee.

Officers were asked to check that the maximum budget had been set on the premise that up to four water butts would be installed at each location. Should the budget seem challenged, an item would be added to the next available Committee meeting to consider funding options.

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

- 104.1. Receive an update on the decision to clean an alley way in Harbour Ward – The litter pick was set for the alleyway between Queens Road and Cambridge Road.

The Committee would need to consider the following:

- how much litter picking equipment was required.
- a sample volunteer form would need to be filled in prior to the event or by the member overseeing the event.
- any participants under the age of 18 would need a chaperone.
- a risk assessment would need to be completed.
- a time would need to be set for the duration for the pick.
- If the waste composition should be recorded.

Officers confirmed the Town Council's insurance would cover litter picking on land not under its ownership.

Cllr Ray noted ESC would be able to provide the required PPE, pickers and bags and collect the litter and green waste.

Cllr Pearce proposed Saturday 8 February 2025 be set as the date for the litter pick, with officers to contact ESC to notify them of the date of the litter pick and confirm what equipment was required. The litter pick would be advertised on the Town Council's social media pages. Cllr Ray seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

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

- 105.1. Receive an update on the submission to Suffolk County Council about bus improvements – This item was brought forward to the beginning of the meeting.
- 105.2. The future of the Public Transport Working Group – This item was brought forward to

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the beginning of the meeting.

106. To review 2.5 of the Investment Policy and provide feedback to the Finance and Governance Committee

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting to make a recommendation to Full Council on how LTC could ensure the Investment Policy reflects the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration and Earth Protector Town status.

It was requested section 2.5 of the Investment Policy be sent to all members prior to the next meeting to review.

107. Date of the next meeting

Monday 20 January 2025 – 15:30

108. Items for the next agenda and close

An item was requested to consider the climate implications of building demolition in light of demolitions taking place in Lowestoft.

An item was requested for a future meeting to obtain information from the Local Planning Authority on what the Government housing targets that override Local Planning Authorities mean in practical terms of planning and climate perspectives.

Rachel Bunn left the chamber at 17:17

109. 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 17:20

Signed:

20 January 2025