

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Extraordinary Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**10:00 on 24 June 2024**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and Bernadette Rappensberger

**In Attendance:** James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

**Public:** One member of the public (in person)

**1. Welcome**

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

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

Apologies were received from Cllr Begum with reasons provided. Cllr Parker proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.  
Cllr Coleby was absent with no apologies received.

**3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

- 3.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Parker declared he was an East Suffolk Councillor. Cllr Pearce declared he was a trustee of Disability Advice North East Suffolk and would leave the chamber for consideration of the item.
- 3.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

**4. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

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

**5. 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 – A member of the public was in attendance to speak on item 10.1f and 11.7 as the applicant. For 10.1f, if successful in the grant application then they would work with East Suffolk Planning on license requirements before returning to the Committee to consider proceeding with the overall project. For the National Archives bid, they had reviewed and completed one of the applications with the Heritage Manager officer.

*Cllr Page entered the chamber at 10:07*

It was agreed to bring items 10.1f and 11.7 forward in the meeting.

10.1.f Ventura Cottage - £606 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Page. Cllr Pearce requested an amendment that the funds be allocated from the Community Engagement budget rather than the grant budget as the application was to cover planning fees. Cllrs Brooks and Page accepted the amendment and a vote was held with all in favour.

11.7. To consider a recommendation to Full Council on a partnership arrangement with Ventura Cottage regarding a bid to the National Archives – Whilst a component of the project would be delivered to areas outside the parish of Lowestoft, this should not cause an issue as the applications would specify that the project was a joint venture with Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) and Ventura Cottage as partners. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation be made to Full Council to support the project subject to the application form specifying that LTC

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and Ventura Cottage would be partners; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

**6. To review and adopt Committee arrangement:**

- 6.1. To note the membership of the Finance and Governance Committee – The current members of the Committee included Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and Bernadette Rappensberger.
- 6.2. To appoint the Deputy Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee – Cllr Pearce nominated Cllr Coleby; seconded by Cllr Parker.  
Cllr Brooks nominated Cllr Page who did not accept the position and the nomination was not seconded.  
A vote was held to appoint Cllr Coleby as Deputy Chair with four votes in favour and one vote against.
- 6.3. To note the Terms of Reference – The Terms of Reference were noted.
- 6.4. To agree the meeting schedule – The previous schedule was the second Tuesday of the month at 10:30. Cllr Pearce proposed to recommend to Full Council that the meeting schedule be changed to 18:00 on the second Monday of the month, noting that this would clash with future bank holidays and require rescheduling; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
- 6.5. To review the delegations of this Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed the delegations and Terms of Reference be accepted without amendment; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 6.6. To note the financial responsibilities of this Committee – The financial responsibilities of this Committee were noted.

**7. Budget and Loan:**

- 7.1. To review and adopt Budget and Loan Sub-Committee arrangements, including the following:
  - 7.1a. To consider composition – Requests for membership had been received from Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Bernadette Rappensberger and Elise Youngman. Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the requests; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
  - 7.1b. To review and consider adoption of the Terms of Reference – Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the Terms of Reference and note that the Sub-Committee can make any recommendations on changes at their first meeting; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
  - 7.1c. To agree the meeting schedule – The schedule would be agreed and recommended by the Sub-Committee at its first meeting. The Finance and Information Officer (FIO) requested one meeting be held in August to review the current budget. Cllr Pearce proposed this meeting be scheduled for Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 12:30; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
  - 7.1d. To review the delegations of the Sub-Committee – This Sub-Committee had no delegations and instead makes recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee (F&G).
- 7.2. To monitor the budget for 2024 – 2025, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – There were no comments.
- 7.3. To note any bank reconciliations – April 2024 was being reviewed by Cllr Rappensberger and May 2024 was due to be completed.

**8. To review and adopt Working Group arrangements for the Standing Orders and Policies Working Group**

Requests for membership had been received from Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce and Bernadette Rappensberger.

Cllr Brooks proposed the working group be elevated to a Sub-Committee to establish its status

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(as it had been a Sub-Committee previously) and to ensure full minutes are taken of its proceedings; seconded by Cllr Page; two votes in favour and three abstentions. The Committee Clerk noted the item did not provide scope to allow for this recommendation and it was agreed to have an item on the next agenda to consider a recommendation to Full Council to change the status of the working group to a Sub-Committee.

### 9. Payments and Receipts:

9.1. To note the income and expenditure reports for May 2024 and June 2024 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – It was agreed to defer a resolution as the report would be considered by Full Council.

9.2. To consider any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were no payments for approval.

### 10. Grants & Sponsorships

10.1. To consider the following grant applications:

10.1a. Promoting Pakefield Group (PPG) - £1,865 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval subject to the payment not being made until officers have confirmed that the applicant has secured match funding; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

10.1b. Robert Mayes Charity - £1,500 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour. This would be funded from the Food Relief budget.

10.1c. Lowestoft Foodbank - £1,500 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval with funding to be allocated from the Food Relief budget; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

10.1d. Keepers Daughter CIC - £1,200 – Cllr Pearce stated that the professional fees included in the grant application were not a salary and were instead project delivery fees and there was no grant eligibility issue. Cllr Page proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; four votes in favour and one abstention.

10.1e. East Suffolk One Radio - £296 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

10.1f. Ventura Cottage - £606 – This item had been brought forward in the meeting.

10.1g. Most Easterly Community Group - £100.80 – Cllr Page proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; four votes in favour and one abstention.

10.1h. Cycling in Lowestoft - £158 – It was noted they had no equal opportunities or safeguarding policy. Cllr Pearce proposed approval and to request an update from the organisation in six months with evidence of what has been accomplished; seconded by Cllr Page; four votes in favour and one abstention.

10.1i. Music Prescription CIC - £4,920 – Cllr Rappensberger raised the following queries:

- Their application form does not state their income or expenditure from the previous year.
- They have requested £4,920 from LTC and £9,841 from Peoples Postcode Lottery but not specified if the latter has been received or only requested.
- The total cost of the two grant funds leaves a shortfall of approximately £5,000 from the total budget of £19,682. Clarification was requested on how the shortfall would be fulfilled and would the section of the project that LTC were funding still proceed if they did not receive funding from People Postcode Lottery.
- Clarification was requested on the length of the workshop sessions as the breakdown of costs specifies four days for venue hire but the project details that they would be providing eight workshop sessions.
- The venue was also queried as the application stated the sessions would be held at the Mayfly, whilst the project paper stated it would be hosted at the Grit. The

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applicant needed to clarify which venue would be used and if the venue hire fees in the application were correct.

The FIO raised concerns on the fees for workshop workers and volunteers as they were classed as staff costs. As the project was finite it was suggested to treat the fees as project delivery rather than salaries.

Cllr Rappensberger proposed approval subject to clarification being received on the points raised her points being checked, if approved then the allocation would be split between the Grants budget and Community Engagement budget; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

- 10.2. To consider a recommendation to Full Council regarding a grant application from Lowestoft North Cliff Community Garden CIO and the Conservation Volunteers (TCV) for £15,000 – It was agreed for Full Council to consider this with no recommendation from the Committee.
- 10.3. To note communications from Disability Advice North East Suffolk regarding a £3,000 surplus from their £10,000 grant and consider relevant actions

*Cllr Pearce temporarily left the chamber for consideration of item 10.3 at 11:18*

Cllr Brooks proposed the money be returned to LTC and if they had intended an alternative use of the funds then they would need to submit a new grant application; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

*Cllr Pearce returned to the chamber at 11:20*

- 10.4. To consider a recommendation to Full Council on grant and sponsorship opportunities with the International Boatbuilding Training College – Cllr Brooks proposed to recommend approval to Full Council. Cllr Pearce requested an amendment to specify the sponsorship would be for three years at £17,950 per year, there would be no stipulation that the sponsorship only be allocated to the bursary and there would be no stipulation that the individual who receives the bursary had to be from the parish of Lowestoft, subject to the understanding that they would publicise and promote the courses and training within the parish of Lowestoft to maximise take-up by local people, furthermore they may use this support in their negotiations with the Charities Commission to set up their charitable arm. Cllr Brooks agreed to the amendment and Cllr Pearce seconded the proposal.

The FIO noted that the sponsorship had not been budgeted for in the 2024-2025 financial year. Cllr Pearce suggested the allocation be split between four budgets to prevent any strain on an individual budget and then be expressly budgeted for in years two and three. The budget allocation would be decided by the next meeting of this Committee or Full Council.

A vote was held on the proposal with all in favour.

**11. Other financial and governance matters, including:**

- 11.1. To note the internal control review completed on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 – This was noted.
- 11.2. To consider the internal audit report for the year ending 31 March 2024 and any matters arising – The FIO was thanked for his work on the internal audit. There were non-statutory recommendations from the internal report which would be discussed at Full Council and the next F&G meeting.
- 11.3. To consider variations in Denes Oval Smart Gate programme and reduced capital costs – The third gate for the court due to be funded by LTC was no longer required and as electrical work was needed for the two smart gates in situ, it was proposed by Cllr

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Pearce to not opt for the third gate and reallocate that funding as a maximum budget to pay for the electrical work for the other two gates; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

- 11.4. To consider the cost and budget allocation for the service costs of grounds maintenance vehicles – Officers confirmed all on-costs for vehicles were covered under the Grounds Maintenance budget with £10,000 a year for maintenance of plants and equipment and insurance was covered under a separate budget delegated to officers.
- 11.5. To receive information from the grounds maintenance team on the feasibility of hiring LTC grounds maintenance services to surrounding parishes – Cllr Pearce proposed this initiative only be progressed once the agreement for a forum meeting has been received from Carlton Colville, Oulton and Oulton Broad, where this topic can be discussed further; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
- 11.6. To consider the budget allocation for the expenditure of £18,000 for the replacement of internal fire doors at the Marina Theatre – Cllr Pearce proposed the expenditure be allocated from the Marina Capital budget, when reviewing other expenditure this may be reallocated if necessary; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.
- 11.7. To consider a recommendation to Full Council on a partnership arrangement with Ventura Cottage regarding a bid to the National Archives – This item was brought forward to the beginning of the meeting.
- 11.8. To consider a quotation for licences to install Microsoft Office on councillor laptops – Councillors were experiencing issues with accessing word or excel documents as they required a license key. Officers had reviewed and provided the following options: to maintain the current provision and keep the status quo, access Microsoft products through the desktop apps or explore the Decisions App option. Cllr Pearce proposed the Communications Officer discuss these options further with the Events and Communications Sub-Committee and provide further information on the Decisions App option, with recommendations to be made via the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 11.9. To consider fee rates for commercial business on LTC-owned assets and any officer delegations – This item would be discussed in confidential session.
- 11.10. To consider a maximum budget for potential works on a Lowestoft Town Council building asset (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.
- 11.11. To consider matters relating to office rental charges (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

### 12. Date of the next meeting

8<sup>th</sup> July 2024 18:00 - Subject to agreement from Full Council.

### 13. Items for the next agenda and close

No items were requested.

### 14. 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 employment matters and legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda, including the following:

- 14.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required – Cllr Rappensberger proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

*The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 11:51*

- 11.9 To consider fee rates for commercial business on LTC-owned assets and any officer delegations – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in

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favour.

11.10 To consider a maximum budget for potential works on a Lowestoft Town Council building asset (confidential) – It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

11.11 To consider matters relating to office rental charges (confidential) – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

*The Chair closed the meeting at 12:01*

Signed: .....

9 July 2024