

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
10:30 on 10 September 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum, Connor Blowers, Andy Pearce (Chair), Bernadette Rappensberger and Deborah Ray

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk) (remotely via Zoom), James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

42. Welcome

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

43. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Paul Page and Graham Parker, with reasons provided. Cllr Rappensberger proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

44. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

44.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Regarding item 50.5, Cllr Blowers declared he is an employee of the Marina Theatre.

44.2. Written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

45. The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 19 August 2024

The draft minutes were not available for this meeting.

46. Public forum

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

47. Budget and Loan:

47.1. Monitoring the budget for 2024 – 2025, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – The Budget and Loan Working Group had met the previous day and focussed particularly on challenged budgets. Preparation for the 2025 – 2026 was underway. An early draft would be presented to this Committee once available, and individual budgets and reserves would be discussed as required.

47.2. Bank reconciliations – Cllr Rappensberger was reviewing July's bank reconciliation.

47.3. Approving the minutes of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting on Monday 12 August 2024 – The minutes were not yet available and would be presented to the Budget and Loan Working Group for comment, but would need to be formally approved by this Committee.

48. Payments and Receipts:

48.1. The income and expenditure reports for August 2024 and September 2024 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – September's schedule was being produced and would be made available for the Full Council meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed to accept August's report as a true and accurate record of income and expenditure; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

48.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were none.

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Table 1 August and September Payments

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
20/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Triangle Market Electric July	£472.07 + £23.60 VAT = £495.67
21/08/2024	East Suffolk One	East Suffolk One Grant	£272.80
21/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Kensington Garden Electric Jul	£91.24 + £4.56 VAT = £95.80
21/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Kensington Garden Electric Jul	£112.07 + £5.60 VAT = £117.67
21/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Denes Oval Electric July	£437.69 + £21.88 VAT = £459.57
21/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Pakefield St PC Electric July	£75.15 + £3.76 VAT = £78.91
21/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Sparrows Nest Electric July	£997.12 + £199.42 VAT = £1,196.54
21/08/2024	Rouse Forestry	GELP Tree Works	£790.00 + £158.00 VAT = £948.00
21/08/2024	Mulberry & Co	Planning Training	£50.00 + £10.00 VAT = £60.00
21/08/2024	Munnings Supplies Ltd	R&M Supplies & PPE	£104.34
21/08/2024	Charles Roberts and Sons	PAT Testing	£480.00 + £96.00 VAT = £576.00
21/08/2024	Cloudy Group Ltd	Staff Laptop	£847.50 + £169.50 VAT = £1,017.00
21/08/2024	Rouse Forestry	Sparrows Nest Tree Works	£740.00 + £148.00 VAT = £888.00
21/08/2024	Seletar Signs	H&S Signs	£260.00 + £52.00 VAT = £312.00
21/08/2024	Community Heartbeat Trust Ltd	Defib Pads	£57.95 + £11.59 VAT = £69.54
21/08/2024	Ace Clearance East Anglia Ltd	Bulky Waste August 24	£2,074.50 + £0.00 VAT = £2,074.50
21/08/2024	Smith Bros Timber (East Anglia)	Silicone	£85.50
21/08/2024	AJ Builders	KG Store Room Repair	£548.00 + £109.60 VAT = £657.60
21/08/2024	Sarah Mai	Rock n Roll Performance	£240.00 + £0.00 VAT = £240.00
21/08/2024	Travis Perkins Trading Company	Gravel	£28.52 + £5.70 VAT = £34.22
21/08/2024	Fleet 96 Rentals Ltd	Van Hire	£900.00 + £180.00 VAT = £1,080.00
21/08/2024	Travis Perkins Trading Company	Sand	£44.20 + £8.84 VAT = £53.04
21/08/2024	Rouse Forestry	St Margarets Tree Works	£790.00 + £158.00 VAT = £948.00
21/08/2024	East Coast Mower Services	John Deere Blade Sharpen	£123.92 + £0.00 VAT = £123.92
21/08/2024	R J Pryce & Co Ltd	PC Supplies	£161.08
23/08/2024	Salaries	August Salaries	£48,480.98
23/08/2024	David Coates	Rock n Roll Performance	£400.00
23/08/2024	British Gas	P/Ledger Electronic Payment	£132.06
27/08/2024	Fuel Card Services Ltd	Vehicle Fuel	£160.89 + £32.18 VAT = £193.07
27/08/2024	EE Limited	Mobile Phones August	£826.99 + £165.40 VAT = £992.39
27/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Low Cemetery PC Electric July	£57.46
27/08/2024	NPower Ltd	Normanston Electric July	£132.14 + £6.61 VAT = £138.75
28/08/2024	Eon Energy	P/Ledger Electronic Payment	£5.00
30/08/2024	Michael Winter	August Reimbursement	£35.07
30/08/2024	J Wright	Rock n Roll Performance	£200.00
30/08/2024	Ruby & Shake Rattle N Roll	Rock n Roll Performance	£200.00

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30/08/2024	Charlie Houghton	Pride Event Performance	£75.00
30/08/2024	The Lockerbillies	Rock n Roll Performance	£400.00
30/08/2024	Darrel Higham	Rock n Roll Performance	£1,100.00
30/08/2024	Neil Thomas	Rock n Roll Performance	£400.00
30/08/2024	Paul Connew	August Expenses	£202.85 + £1.90 VAT = £204.75
30/08/2024	Origin Amenity Solutions	PA1 & PA6 Training x4	£2,260.00 + £452.00 VAT = £2,712.00
30/08/2024	Taylor Williams	Parking Reimbursement	£14.00 + £2.80 VAT = £16.80
30/08/2024	Lauren Elliott	August Expenses	£30.48 + £4.90 VAT = £35.38
30/08/2024	Sprinkler Irrigation Systems L	Dosatron	£618.71 + £123.74 VAT = £742.45
30/08/2024	Glasdon UK Ltd	Bicycle Racks	£280.00 + £56.00 VAT = £336.00
30/08/2024	Glasdon UK Ltd	Bicycle Racks	£560.00 + £112.00 VAT = £672.00
30/08/2024	Glasdon UK Ltd	Bicycle Racks	£1,280.00 + £256.00 VAT = £1,536.00
30/08/2024	Northumbrian Water Group Ltd	Legionella Management August	£1,548.30 + £309.66 VAT = £1,857.96
30/08/2024	Cooks Blinds and Shutters Ltd	MT Door Service	£246.00 + £49.20 VAT = £295.20
30/08/2024	East Coast Waste	Waste Collection July	£299.25 + £59.85 VAT = £359.10
30/08/2024	East Coast Waste	Waste Collection July	£288.75 + £57.75 VAT = £346.50
30/08/2024	Peter Colby Commercials Ltd	Unit 2 Rent September	£1,708.33 + £341.67 VAT = £2,050.00
30/08/2024	Mary Moppins Ltd	PC Cleaning August	£789.60 + £157.92 VAT = £947.52
30/08/2024	AJ Builders	SN Drainage Work	£4,000.00 + £800.00 VAT = £4,800.00
30/08/2024	Norfolk Security Ltd	Rock n Roll Event Security	£430.00 + £86.00 VAT = £516.00
30/08/2024	Norfolk Security Ltd	SN Bowls Security August	£84.00 + £16.80 VAT = £100.80
02/09/2024	Fuel Card Services Ltd	Vehicle Fuel	£128.08 + £25.62 VAT = £153.70
02/09/2024	Novuna Business Finance	Ford Transit Lease 2024-25	£1,137.61
02/09/2024	Novuna Business Finance	Ford Transit Tipper Lease 2024	£1,207.38
02/09/2024	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NNDR 24-25	£212.00
02/09/2024	East Suffolk Council	SN Bowls NNDR 2024-25	£104.00
02/09/2024	East Suffolk Council	Hamilton House NNDR 2024-25	£998.00
05/09/2024	C&C Consulting Services Ltd	Health and Safety Support	£934.92
06/09/2024	Chris Meek	Q2 Expenses	£114.02
06/09/2024	Emigrant Frames	Tour of Britain Services	£361.00
06/09/2024	Ewen Gallagher	August Expenses	£94.81 + £9.28 VAT = £104.09
06/09/2024	HMRC	HMRC August	£15,588.12
06/09/2024	Suffolk Pension Fund	August Pension	£16,670.35
06/09/2024	Citizens Advice East Suffolk	Citizens Advice East Suffolk Grant	£3,000.00
06/09/2024	Ibbot's Uniques	HODs Market Performance	£811.25 + £0.00 VAT = £811.25
06/09/2024	Cloudy Group Ltd	Decisions Software	£5,998.75 + £1,199.75 VAT = £7,198.50
06/09/2024	Anglia Print Ltd	Tour of Britain Posters	£101.00 + £20.20 VAT = £121.20

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06/09/2024	Zsig Sports	Sports Equipment	£156.50 + £31.30 VAT = £187.80
06/09/2024	R J Pryce & Co Ltd	PC Indicator Bolt	£62.65
06/09/2024	Folkes Plant & Aggregates Ltd	Topsoil	£47.16 + £9.44 VAT = £56.60
06/09/2024	Travis Perkins Trading Company	Barrier Fencing	£185.40
06/09/2024	Smith Bros Timber (East Anglia	R&M Supplies	£49.55 + £9.91 VAT = £59.46
06/09/2024	Technix Rubber & Plastics Ltd	Play Area Tile Pegs	£125.17
06/09/2024	Cloudy Group Ltd	IT Service Charge September	£1,506.78 + £301.36 VAT = £1,808.14
06/09/2024	V.C. Cooke	Waste Disposal August	£709.80
06/09/2024	Excite Solutions Ltd	Grass Cutting August	£1,150.00 + £230.00 VAT = £1,380.00
06/09/2024	OPR Consulting Ltd	Project Delivery Support	£4,248.75 + £0.00 VAT = £4,248.75
06/09/2024	Garden Discount Centre Ltd	Strimmer Wire	£92.79 + £18.56 VAT = £111.35
06/09/2024	St John Ambulance	Pride Event First Aid	£734.00 + £146.80 VAT = £880.80
06/09/2024	Evolve Business Solutions Ltd	Printer Setup	£225.49
06/09/2024	S&S Sound and Lighting Hire Lt	Rock n Roll Stage & Sound	£4,880.00 + £976.00 VAT = £5,856.00
06/09/2024	Broadland Security Alarms	TH Alarm Callout	£83.00 + £16.60 VAT = £99.60
06/09/2024	Charles Roberts and Sons	Maritime Museum Electric Works	£2,796.88 + £559.38 VAT = £3,356.26
06/09/2024	East Suffolk Council	Whitton Hall NNDR 2024-25	£176.00
06/09/2024	East Suffolk Council	Unit 2 NNDR 2024-25	£761.00
06/09/2024	Aartwork	HODs Market Performance	£400.00 + £0.00 VAT = £400.00
06/09/2024	Rouse Forestry	Fen Park Tree Work	£390.00 + £78.00 VAT = £468.00
06/09/2024	Garden Tearooms	R Page Retirement	£340.00
09/09/2024	Fuel Card Services Ltd	Vehicle Fuel	£152.26 + £30.45 VAT = £182.71

Table 2 August and September Receipts

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
30/08/2024	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£300.00
30/08/2024	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£18.50
02/09/2024	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
06/09/2024	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£300.00
09/09/2024	Stripe	Denes Oval Floodlights	£1.44
10/09/2024	Resident	Whitton Hall Hire	£70.00

49. Grants and Sponsorships

49.1. Received grant applications:

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- 49.1a. Home-Start in Suffolk - £5,000 – In response to a question from Cllr Begum, it was confirmed the Town Council could award grant funding towards the recruitment of volunteers, as the purpose of the funding was not the payment of staff salaries. Cllr Pearce asked the Finance and Information Officer to check the funds remaining in the grants, community engagement and social and food relief budgets. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this grant application, to be funded from the grants, community engagement and social and food relief budgets; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 49.2. Grant application feedback forms:
- 49.2a. The Hygiene Bank Waveney – Cllr Pearce asked officers to pass on the Committee's thanks for providing the feedback. Discussions were taking place with East Suffolk Council and Community Action Suffolk on food and social relief generally, and a resolution had been made to contact the local Member of Parliament regarding particular concerns over the withdrawal of Government funding. In view of the Hygiene Bank's feedback, officers were asked to seek their views about the need over the coming winter, which can be fed into the Budget and Loan Working Group for the social and food relief budget.

50. Other financial and governance matters, including:

- 50.1. Reviewing and considering a recommendation to Full Council on the rationalisation of 9.1 and 9.2 of the Financial Regulations, including current authorised users and scenarios, protocol for reviewing and adding new authorised users and review of authorisation limits – The Acting Town Clerk noted this related to points 6.18 and 6.19 of the new Model Financial Regulations, and read them out to the Committee. It was considered that corporate debit card use should not be restricted in perpetuity to two posts, and Cllr Pearce proposed to amend the wording to allow use of the corporate card to any post authorised by the Finance and Governance Committee or Full Council. Additionally, it was considered the per item expenditure limit specified in the Model Financial Regulations was too low and Cllr Pearce proposed an amendment to bring the per-item expenditure limit in line with prevailing officer delegations. If this needed to be a fixed amount, Cllr Pearce proposed this should be the per-item expenditure limit for Committees, which is currently £7,500. Regarding item 6.19, pre-paid debit cards are not currently used by the Town Council, but the Acting Town Clerk saw no reason to remove this provision from Financial Regulations. Personal debit and credit cards are used by officers when necessary and claimed back under expenses, particularly as there is a limit on how much can be spent on the corporate credit card each month. Cllr Pearce proposed an amendment to the wording to enable the use of personal credit/debit cards with prior consent from the Finance and Governance Committee or Full Council. In conjunction with this, Cllr Pearce proposed to treat those staff, including the Clerk, the Acting Town Clerk, members of the Grounds Maintenance Team who use personal debit/credit cards to buy fuel and equipment and claim it back, and the Events and Administration Officer as having continuing authorisation in those circumstances. The Acting Town Clerk will re-word those provisions in the Financial Regulations for approval by Full Council. It was suggested that officers make an enquiry with HMRC regarding declaration of expenses, and it was suggested the Town Council may wish to consider issuing prepaid credit cards to authorised officers instead. Cllr Rappensberger seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.
- 50.2. Interim storage arrangements for the 36" Britten as a Boy maquette and any associated costs – Long term, it was intended for the maquette to be displayed at the Town Hall. In the interim, it was suggested it could potentially be stored with the existing Town Hall artefacts. Officers also had another potential location and it was understood there would be no additional cost for either option. Specific potential storage locations would be discussed during the confidential session.

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- 50.3. Purchase of a facilities management software programme and setting an appropriate budget – The Facilities and Contracts Manager (FCM) had provided a report for the meeting. A quotation for the software and services had been received. There would be initial set-up costs and officer time to get the system live, but officers considered it a much more efficient and effective method of logging and reporting tasks. Officers were due to meet with another provider later that week. It was understood the software would be an ongoing annual cost. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to purchase a facilities management software programme, within a maximum budget of £20,000, with a delegation to the Acting Town Clerk to make the procurement within that budget; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 50.4. The budget allocation to run skateboarding lessons at Normanston Park Skate Park – The concept of the skateboarding lessons had been approved by Council. The Finance and Governance Committee had been asked to determine the budget allocation. The cost to run a ten week block of sessions was £2,500, with the option of an eleventh session at an additional cost. The Sports Development Officer had been asked to provide the cost of the eleventh session to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee. Cllr Pearce reviewed the budget headings with the Finance and Information Officer. Cllr Pearce proposed for the sessions to be funded from the parks development budget for the remainder of this year, and to ask the Budget and Loan Working Group to set an appropriate sports development budget going forward, with input from the Sports Development Officer; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 50.5. A report on Heating Venting Air Conditioning System at the Marina Theatre and costs for servicing and operations –

Cllr Blowers temporarily left the meeting 11:09 for the consideration of this item

The FCM had provided some notes, following a site visit with an engineer to look at an air circulation/heating system which had not worked in some time. They managed to get the system working for a short time and a quotation had been provided to repair the system.

Cllr Begum temporarily left the meeting 11:10

Given the Town Council's climate emergency declaration, officers considered the investment would be worthwhile to get the system working.

Cllr Begum returned 11:12

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the quotation, with costs to come from the Marina Theatre repairs and maintenance budget; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

Cllr Blowers returned 11:13

- 50.6. The increase in Health and Safety Support Service fees (some aspects may be confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session, due to discussions regarding the contract.
- 50.7. The increase in legal fees and budget implications (some aspects may be confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

51. Date of the next meeting

8 October 2024 - 10:30 – Meetings of this Committee on the current schedule remained vulnerable to being inquorate. The Committee asked the Committee Clerk to check the availability of members ahead of the meeting, in case the substitute members needed to be contacted again.

52. Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Pearce requested an item to receive an update on the procurement of the cricket net training area. Officers were due to meet shortly to discuss the procurement process. Cllr Rappensberger proposed to move the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Blowers; all in favour.

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53. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

53.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required:

- 50.2. Interim storage arrangements for the 36” Britten as a Boy maquette and any associated costs Maquette – Officers suggested a secure storage solution. On the basis there would be no additional cost for either storage option, Cllr Pearce proposed to delegate authority to the Acting Town Clerk to decide where to store the maquette; seconded by Cllr Blowers; all in favour.
- 50.6. The increase in Health and Safety Support Service fees (some aspects may be confidential) – A meeting paper had been provided. The health and safety support the Town Council had received was discussed, and the ongoing need for support. Cllr Pearce proposed to renew the package of support on an ongoing basis; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 50.7. The increase in legal fees and budget implications (some aspects may be confidential) – A meeting paper had been provided. The increase in fees and service the Town Council had received were discussed. The Acting Town Clerk was due to meet with one of the partners. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the increase in legal fees if officers consider the increase acceptable, noting the upcoming meeting where certain matters would be discussed; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

The meeting was closed at 11:32.

Signed:
8 October 2024