

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**15:00 on 9 December 2024**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby (Deputy Chair), Graham Parker, Andy Pearce (Chair) and Bernadette Rappensberger

**In Attendance:** James Cox (Finance Manager) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

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

**89. Welcome**

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

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

Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Page with reasons provided. Cllr Parker proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.  
Cllr Connor Blowers was absent with no apologies received.

**91. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

91.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllrs Pearce and Coleby declared they were Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) representatives on Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership. Cllr Pearce declared he had prior knowledge of the grant application under item 96.1d and had met with applicant and suggested they present the project to LTC, however he was not involved with the organisation or the application and had directed the member of public to the application process. Cllr Parker declared he was a member of Northern Parishes Community Partnership as an East Suffolk Councillor.

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

**92. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 12 November 2024**

The 28 October minutes had been completed and would also be considered for approval. It was requested item 72.2 of the 28 October minutes be checked to confirm if the maximum budget for Councillor business cards was set to either £350 or £250. Grammatical errors were reported for the 12 November minutes. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of both 28 October and 12 November minutes and confidential notes, subject to the amendments as highlighted; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

**93. 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 presentation had been received prior to meeting from the grant applicants of item 96.1d. Cllr Barker was in attendance as a member of the public to provide an update on item 97.2c. No advance comments had been received.

97.2c. To receive an update on governance of the Lowestoft Youth Forum Working Group – It was agreed to bring this item forward and discuss it under public forum and Cllr Barker was invited to speak on the item.

Cllr Barker had spoken with the Communities Officer at East Suffolk Council (ESC) regarding its Youth Forum and which schools were involved and were seeking a steer on the governance of the group and whether to focus on schools, which was already covered by ESC, or youth clubs and other social groups.

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The Committee agreed it would rather receive a recommendation from the Working Group which Full Council could consider, instead of providing a steer and suggested the Working Group continue to work with ESC to learn any obstacles a Youth Forum may face and consider the purpose of a Lowestoft branch.

Cllr Pearce proposed the Youth Forum Working Group consider its own Terms of Reference, including how it would be constituted, its structure and members and make a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee in January 2025. If working with ESC and its Youth Forum fulfilled the focus on Lowestoft, as opposed to setting up a new group, then that should be discussed and built into the Terms of Reference. Cllr Coleby seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

It was suggested the Events and Communications Sub-Committee consider a Youth Event as an opportunity to bring young people together.

### 94. Budget and Loan

94.1. To monitor the budget for 2024-2025, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – There were no comments on the budget.

94.1a. To consider legal costs still to be invoiced (confidential) – The invoice has been received and the item would be discussed in confidential session.

94.2. To note any bank reconciliations – October was due to be completed by Cllr Page and November was underway.

94.3. To review progress with preparation of the 2025/2026 budget and consider associated timescales and communications (some aspects may be confidential) – The deadline for the precept demand to be submitted was 27 January, therefore an Extraordinary Full Council meeting would be required to decide on the precept demand, which officers would schedule in. It was suggested the ordinary Full Council meeting for January be cancelled and an Extraordinary meeting scheduled as the only meeting of the Full Council for January to ensure high attendance of members.

### 95. Payments and Receipts:

95.1. To note the income and expenditure reports for November 2024 and December 2024 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – The reports had not been circulated therefore approval of the reports would be deferred to Full Council.

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

### 96. Grants and Sponsorships

96.1. To consider the following grant applications:

96.1a. True Colours of Lowestoft - £888 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger. Cllr Pearce requested an amendment for the grant by funded from the Community Engagement budget, which was accepted by Cllrs Brooks and Rappensberger. A vote was held with all in favour.

96.1b. St Luke's Whitton Pantry - £2,000 – It was noted there had been a large number of applications for food and social relief in spring and summer of 2024. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the application, with the funding to be allocated from the Food and Social Relief; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger. It was agreed to have an item on January's Full Council to discuss how food and social relief would be covered in Lowestoft with the possible funding gaps. A vote was held with all in favour.

96.1c. Use It All - £1,360 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval and for a request to be sent to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to consider funding the grant from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget as the initiative promotes recycling. If this is not agreed by the Climate and Ecological Emergency

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Committee, then the budget would be allocated equally from the Grants and Community Engagement budgets in order to enable officers to pay the grant. Cllr Parker seconded the proposal and a vote was held with four votes in favour and one vote against.

- 96.1d. Barge Preservation Community Project CIC - £5,375.17 – A presentation had been provided to the Committee prior to the meeting. It was noted Lowestoft Town Council were unable to approve grants to fund ongoing running costs of an organisation, but funding could be approved for a finite, defined period as startup costs. If the Committee were minded to support the application, then it would need to be on the basis of covering startup costs and any commitment for further funding would require a separate discussion on wider sponsorship arrangements.

Concerns were expressed on whether the organisation were over-reaching financially and it was felt the application was more focussed on work with Re-Utilise and Time Bank rather than the restoration of the barge.

It was clarified that the application was not requesting funds for restoration of the barge and the applicants had confirmed in their earlier presentation that they had completed a significant amount of work on the barge in this first year. The community activities listed on the application form would eventually be hosted on the barge. Whilst the barge was not moored in Lowestoft it would benefit the area.

Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the application; seconded by Cllr Pearce. The applicants had confirmed they had contingency to cover the costs of the project if alternative funding not forthcoming. Cllr Pearce requested an amendment for the funding to split between the Grants, Community Engagement and Arts & Heritage budgets, with a request to the Excelsior Trust to invoice Lowestoft Town Council directly for the mooring fees and utility costs and for a copy of the quote for the insurance premium to be provided, with a delegation to officers to pay upon receipt. Cllr Coleby agreed to the amendment. A vote was held with four in favour and one abstention.

- 96.1e. Lowestoft Town Tennis & Pickleball Club - £504 – A comment had been provided by an officer regarding the grant application. Cllr Pearce proposed to refuse the grant application on the grounds that there would soon be a BoxUp locker installation on the site that would provide free equipment to both the public and the club and would complement the facilities at Denes Oval, thus negating the need to purchase their own; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Further information regarding box up and availability for members will be provided.

- 96.1f. St Andrews Church - £1,500 – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the application with £833.33 to be funded from the remaining Food and Social Relief budget and £666.67 from the Community Engagement budget; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

Full Council had previously resolved to make £10,000 available for Food and Social Relief should the demand exceed the set budget. An item was requested for the next agenda to consider the budget allocation of this £10,000 should further Food and Social Relief grant applications be received.

### 97. Other financial and governance matters, including:

#### 97.1. Financial

- 97.1a. To receive a recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee and consider a budget for Suffolk Day 2025 and necessary officer delegations – LTC had recently been approached to host Suffolk Day 2025 in Lowestoft and the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee (AID) had

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conditionally agreed to host the event, but as the date would coincide with the First Light Festival, the event would be hosted at a discreet location in the town and for both projects to cooperate and coordinate in order to promote each other and share the footfall to avoid Suffolk Day being conflated with the First Light Festival. Officers confirmed the budget required would be approximately £10,000.

Cllr Brooks proposed LTC do not fund Suffolk Day 2025 due to the difficulties of making the event a success as it would be held on the same weekend as the First Light Festival.

Cllr Parker proposed to endorse the conditional recommendation from AID and host Suffolk Day 2025 in a separate venue to the First Light Festival, with the two events to cooperate and for LTC to allocate a budget of £10,000 for the event; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; four votes in favour and one vote against.

- 97.1b. To consider the funding allocation for the Lowestoft Town Council, Lowestoft 10k Run – This event would be held in June 2025. Whilst there would be no net cost to LTC, since the event costs would be recouped by the entry fees for the race, a budget allocation needed to be agreed for funds required in advance of the event.

Cllr Pearce proposed £10,000 be allocated from the Events Earmarked Reserve to provide advance funding to the event, on the basis that the entry fees are used to replenish the reserve; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

- 97.1c. To consider a commitment to a six-year 'Grass Maintenance Fund' for the Normanston Park football pitches in conjunction with the Football Foundation – LTC had received a proposal from the Football Foundation to contribute to a funding plan to maintain the football pitches, noting their current and anticipated increase in footfall. There would be no cost to LTC in the first two years and the contributory cost would commence from the third year.

Cllr Brooks proposed to approve and commit to the fund; seconded by Cllr Pearce who requested an amendment for the Finance Manager to create a budget stream or reserve to anticipate when the financial liability occurs and track the cost. Cllr Brooks accepted the amendment and a vote was held with all in favour.

- 97.1d. To receive an update from the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership meeting of 5 December 2024 and to consider financial and contractual implications for BoxUp installations at Normanston Park, Denes Oval and possibly future sites (some aspects may be confidential) – The Community Partnership had applied for a community fund to exercise the right to buy the Normanston Park BoxUp locker after its year one rental. If this grant is unsuccessful there would be no funding to maintain the locker.

Cllr Pearce proposed the Budget and Loan Working Group be asked to make a contingency allowance should the funding for the Normanston Park locker be unsuccessful, with further information to be provided to the Working Group on usage and costs of the locker; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

A BoxUp installation was being considered for Denes Oval, which has existing sports facilities and an established footfall, therefore it would be more likely to have an initial higher uptake in use of the locker. Community Partnership Funding was confirmed to be available to cover the year one rental (and potentially purchase after year one but that would need to be verified) and would therefore only require landowner permission to site the locker at Denes Oval. AID had previously resolved to provide permission to site the locker and, if funding was not available, for LTC to directly fund and install a four-box locker. Cllr Pearce proposed as funding was confirmed for a four-box locker at Denes

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Oval, to delegate the decision to officers whether to accept the funding or for LTC to directly fund the locker. If the officers opt to accept the funding, then they would need to decide whether to proceed with a four-box locker or pay the extra amount to install an eight-box locker, with the budget allocation to be brought to this Committee in January 2025 once the final decision and costs are known, including whether funds were required before April 2025. If the funds were not required before April 2025, then the information would instead be provided to the Budget and Loan Working Group as part of the budget consideration process. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

The Sports and Development Officer would make recommendations to LTC on any future locations for BoxUp Lockers, including a programme to develop the footfall of the area if there were no existing sports facilities to capitalise.

- 97.1e. To consider the identification and sourcing of grant funding within the Town Council's wider financial planning and strategy (some aspects may be confidential) – It had previously been resolved to delegate to officers to submit grant applications and accept funding when appropriate to deliver an LTC project without requiring Committee approval, so long as there were no caveats to the funding, the funding would not cause reputational issues and there would be no change to existing policy.

To integrate this further within LTC's financial planning, grant funding would need to be considered as part of the wider strategy of LTC, rather than ad hoc applications being made.

Officers were asked to consider how to embed this strategy over the next twelve months as a potential means to alleviate the burden on the precept. It was suggested for officers to also consider applying for training on how to write successful funding bids.

It was clarified it was not only the responsibility of officers to identify and apply for funding, Councillors and Committees could also consider grant applications, the intention was to avoid the delays of awaiting a Committee decision on a grant application.

It was suggested one officer be designated the main officer for grant applications and receive the relevant training.

Officers were asked to consider this comment, but the decision would be with officers on who would be appropriate to take on grant applications and how many members should be trained and designated responsibility for the applications.

- 97.1f. To consider a request from the Marina Theatre for replacement of a projector, based on hire for two years with an option to purchase from Year Three (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session as it related to confidential financial issues.

### 97.2. Governance:

- 97.2a. To consider a paper on Committee and Sub-Committee structure – Cllr Brooks had provided a meeting paper on suggested adjustments to the current Committee and Sub-Committee structure and proposed the Standing Orders and Policies Working Group discuss the structure at the scheduled meetings in December or January.

Cllr Pearce responded to the submitted paper and stated there would be difficulty and confusion in separating the duties between the AID, Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and Events and Communications Sub-Committee.

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The Allotments Sub-Committee needed to remain to allow for a dedicated meeting with the Allotments Association and to effectively monitor the fourteen allotment sites.

The Community Safety Sub-Committee needed to remain whilst LTC were actively considering security measures across its assets and open spaces, before recommendations could progress to AID and Full Council.

Abolishing any of the Sub-Committees and accommodating their business within the AID agenda would increase the workload for the Committee.

Furthermore, the role of the Standing Orders and Policies Working Group was to consider and make recommendations on the policies of LTC, therefore there was no standing term of reference for the Working Group to consider the Committee structure, furthermore the Working Group has too much work left to do to finish the annual review of LTC's policies.

Cllr Pearce proposed to maintain a watching brief of the governance structure for the remainder of the civic year and for the Standing Orders and Policies Working Group to not carry out a review until the 2025/2026 civic year, if it has been deemed necessary.

*At 17:02 Cllr Pearce proposed to suspend Standing Order 3y for fifteen minutes; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.*

Cllr Rappensberger seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal and a vote was held with three votes in favour and two abstentions.

97.2b. To consider a recommendation to Full Council to submit a response to the Government consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at Local Authority Meetings – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to Full Council to state LTC broadly welcomes allowing remote attendance as an option should there be another pandemic or legislation that prevents public gatherings and so would enable the council to continue functioning. LTC would not oppose the option to allow for individual members to remotely attend meetings if circumstances, such as illness, prevented those members from participating, however, this should not be applied as a broad option and in-person meetings should still be encouraged as they remained important to the democratic process. Furthermore, each council should be allowed to decide if and how it implements remote attendance, it should not be imposed on councils.

The Committee was not in favour of allowing proxy voting and members should either participate via the means permitted by law or send their apologies to meetings. The concept of proxy voting was deemed to be akin to pre-determination.

*At 17:15 Cllr Pearce proposed to further suspend Standing Order 3y for five minutes to conclude item 97.2b; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.*

Cllr Coleby seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

97.2c. To receive an update on governance of the Lowestoft Youth Forum Working Group – This item was brought forward to the beginning of the meeting.

### **98. Date of the next meeting**

13 January 2025 - 15:00

### **99. Items for the next agenda and close**

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No items were requested.

**100. 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:**

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

*At 17:19 Cllr Pearce proposed Standing Order 3y be suspended for a maximum of ten minutes to resolve the confidential items; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all.*

*The chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 17:19*

94.1a. To consider legal costs still to be invoiced (confidential) – There was a confidential discussion regarding legal costs to be invoice. This item would be discussed further by Full Council.

97.1f. To consider a request from the Marina Theatre for replacement of a projector, based on hire for two years with an option to purchase from Year Three (confidential) – There was a confidential discussion regarding the replacement of a projector for the Marina Theatre and it was noted the final decision would be made by Full Council.

Cllr Coleby made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; three votes in favour and two abstentions.

*The Chair closed the meeting at 17:36*

Signed: .....  
13 January 2025