

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Hall Project Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
10:00 on 12 September 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce, Bernadette Rappensberger and Elise Youngman. Non-Councillor member Ben Porter (East Suffolk Council)

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Also in attendance: Sheila Moss-King (Town Hall Project Manager)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

48. Welcome

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

49. Approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sonia Barker and Neil Coleby, and non-Councillor member Helen Johnson, with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

50. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

- 50.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from members on items on the agenda – There were none.
- 50.2. Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

51. The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 8 August 2024

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the minutes and confidential note; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

52. Public forum

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

53. An update report from the Project Manager, including the following:

- 53.1. An update on the main build contract (some aspects may be confidential) – Tenders were being evaluated and further details would be provided during the confidential session.
- 53.2. Project funding and forming recommendations for Full Council (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.
- 53.3. Any planned actions to be authorised for progression – There were no planned actions to be authorised, but the Project Manager provided an update on activities which had taken place over the past month. The consultant filmmaker had been appointed and had produced a short film of the heritage skills market which had taken place the previous weekend. The Project Manager would provide a link to the film. The market was well attended despite it clashing with the opening of the Gull Wing bridge. The Project Manager had given two talks on the project which had been well attended, and the public in attendance were engaged and supportive of the project.
- 53.4. The risk register – A limited number of tenders had been submitted for the main contract, but which were compliant with the eligibility criteria, thus removing this risk from the register. Cllr Brooks gave positive feedback on the heritage skills market, and it was understood this would become an annual event. Thanks were offered to the Town Council team who made the arrangements for the market.
- 53.5. Updates on any revisions to the Business Plan – There were no revisions at this time,

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but the business operational models for the café and co-working space were being looked at.

- 53.6. Reviewing and approving PLB's RIBA 4 report for interpretation in the Town Hall – The Project Manager explained the interpretation is the exhibition material, equipment and themes which will appear in the Town Hall. This was similar to the RIBA Stage 3 report, but the detail was being refined. The graphics and text will be done in the next stage, with the Heritage Project Manager will take forward in conjunction with local historians. A scriptwriter will be engaged to ensure the text is written in an accessible way, and an accessibility consultant will review designs, colours and fonts to avoid any barriers to engagement. Committee members had not seen the RIBA 4 report. The Project Manager advised there had been no significant changes, and no amendments to the layouts or proposed themes within the heritage gallery. There would still be the opportunity to make amendments in the next stage, and the Project Manager therefore suggested that the Committee agree to move forward, with all Committee members being given the opportunity to see the report. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the Project Manager's suggestion, and requested that the Waveney Disability Forum be engaged for input; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

It was confirmed the Heritage Officer would attend Committee meetings.

It was anticipated that review of the design documentation would be a day's work for the access consultant, but the aim was to have them available for liaison, including with the Waveney Disability Forum, going forward, which will include a walk through of the building to review signage, colour contrasts and general accessibility.

54. Finance, budget monitoring and payments (see report):

- 54.1. Income and expenditure, including:

54.1a. Monitoring the budget – The budget figures had been provided in the Project Manager's report. The spend to date was £663,294.26.

54.1b. Any payments for approval – There were no specific items of expenditure coming up for approval which were out of the project scope.

55. An update on the Heads of Terms for the Registrars, including consideration of the rent appraisal (some aspects may be confidential)

The Project Manager was due to meet with the registrars the following week, and would provide further detail during the confidential session.

56. The Volunteer Policy and Handbook, and its implementation

The documents had not been made available to members ahead of the meeting, so it was therefore agreed to defer this item to the next meeting. The documents would be provided to the Heritage Officer upon commencement of their employment.

57. Matters relating to employment and recruitment (confidential)

To be considered during the confidential session.

58. Any recommendations to Full Council

There were no specific recommendations to Full Council.

59. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 10 October 2024 – 10:00 – The Project Manager, Acting Town Clerk and Cllr Brooks would not be able to attend a meeting on this date. It was instead agreed for the meeting to take place at 10:00 on Tuesday 15 October. Cllr Youngman gave her apologies for this meeting in advance.

60. Items for the next agenda and close

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There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda, other than the items carried forward from this meeting.

Cllr Pearce proposed to move the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

61. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

61.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required:

53.1. An update on the main build contract (some aspects may be confidential) – An update was provided and the financial position of the project discussed.

53.2. Project funding and forming recommendations for Full Council (confidential) - The Project Manager requested the Committee’s feedback on some value engineering items, including works related to the substation. The Project Manager asked the Committee to consider whether it would like to retain the PV panels in the project. Cllr Pearce proposed to ask the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to consider making a recommendation to Full Council on making a direct contribution towards the PV panels from the Town Council’s climate budget; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

The proposed pond for the courtyard and its effect on the soakaway was discussed. Cllr Pearce proposed for the relocation of the soakaway to be explored as the preferred option, but if not the Committee would be open to the idea of considering a water feature in a design other than a sunken pond; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

55. An update on the Heads of Terms for the Registrars, including consideration of the rent appraisal (some aspects may be confidential) – An update on the current position was provided.

57. Matters relating to employment and recruitment (confidential) – The Heritage Officer had been appointed and would likely be starting after 1 October. There was a discussion regarding the Heritage Officer’s terms and conditions.

The meeting was closed at 11:39.

Signed:
10 October 2024