

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Climate Emergency Committee

Via Video Meeting
14:00 on 7 July 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, David Youngman (Chair) and non-Councillor member Emma Bateman

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

1. Welcome

The right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol were explained and noted, and the meeting was welcomed.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Lang and non-Councillor member Ashley Ford-McAllister. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard, Parker and Pearce proposed a local non-pecuniary interest in items 9.1 and 11. Cllr Hardie declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 9.2 and 11.

4. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 17 February 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

Cllr Barnard proposed receiving and noting the minutes of the meeting on 17 February 2020; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

5. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

A member of the public had submitted a comment regarding item 16, making suggestions for improved cycling routes in Lowestoft and expressing disappointment that none of the projects being progressed at this stage are in Lowestoft.

6. Committee arrangements

6.1. Noting the composition of the Climate Emergency Committee, including noting the decision of Full Council for the current non-Councillor members of the Climate Emergency Committee to continue in their roles for the 2020 – 2021 year – The composition was read out and noted as follows: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, David Youngman, and non-Councillor members Emma Bateman and Ashley Ford McAllister.

Cllr Hardie temporarily left the meeting 14:09

6.2. Appointment of the Deputy Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee – Cllr Barnard proposed Cllr Page for the position of Deputy Chair; seconded by Cllr Pearce. There were no further proposals. All Councillors voted in favour and Cllr Page was duly appointed as Deputy Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee.

Cllr Hardie returned 14:10

6.3. Terms of Reference of the Climate Emergency Committee – Cllr Barnard proposed acceptance of the Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

7. A report from the Lowestoft Climate Action Group

The Group has not met since before the pandemic. The group has lost members but Ms Bateman is keeping the group open and is liaising with other community groups. The Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee is looking to develop a Community Engagement

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Policy. Councillors offered to approach Residents' Associations and other community groups about becoming involved with the Lowestoft Climate Action Group. It was agreed it would be beneficial to have more input from the public in climate emergency and environmental matters, which can be promoted through the Town Council's website, Facebook page and weekly entries in the Lowestoft Journal.

Another comment from a member of the public had been received. Regarding item 16, disappointment was expressed that of the twenty cycle routes being prioritised by Suffolk County Council, none are in Lowestoft. Also, regarding item 8, it was queried why Lowestoft is not part of the scheme to access discounted compost bins via Suffolk County Council.

8. The current provision and costs of bottle banks for glass recycling in Lowestoft and whether this should be increased to appropriate Lowestoft Town Council sites

Should the Town Council wish to look into increasing the provision of bottle banks in the town, enquiries will need to be made with the relevant authorities to check whether this would be possible. Ms Bateman has previously put together a paper on this subject and will circulate it to the Committee. It is understood bottle banks may be installed at Village Rise. A map was displayed of the current provision in the town. Officers will contact East Suffolk Norse to enquire as to their strategy, whether it would be feasible to increase the provision, and whether they can recommend any sites.

9. How to implement measures identified to increase biodiversity across the Town Council's assets, and to consider any further actions which could be taken, including consider advice received from East Suffolk Norse's Countryside Officer, following site visits to the following areas:

- 9.1. Gainsborough Drive Pond – Two dead trees have been removed and the Council has given approval for replacement trees. East Suffolk Norse's Countryside Officer has provided advice about the presence of Water Speedwell in the pond and recommends partial removal.
- 9.2. Fen Park – It was requested that the Council looks into clearing the chalk stream, which is also impacting the marsh area. Advice is still required for the pond, although environmental surveys of all the Town Council's ponds are being considered at item 11. All issues raised regarding Fen Park have been taken forward with Norse and officers are putting an analysis together for all the parks, including all decisions made to date, plans and budgets. Officers will enquire whether the Countryside Officer is available to complete a site visit to Fen Park with Cllr Hardie.
- 9.3. The Parklands Play Area – An application has been submitted to the Tree Council. If successful, eight fruit trees will be planted here to create a community orchard. It is hoped a Friends Group can be set up to support this.
- 9.4. Daffodil Walk – It has previously been agreed that a wildflower area should be developed here, following engagement with the local residents.

10. Noting that an application has been submitted to the Tree Council for additional trees

This was noted. The application was submitted on 30 June and the Council should receive a response within fourteen days.

11. Making a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee on whether to progress environmental surveys of the Fen Park, Kensington Gardens and Gainsborough Drive ponds, and consideration of any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee

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The AID Committee agreed this should also include the Cotmer Road pond. A quotation of £355 had been received for Fen Park, Kensington Gardens and Gainsborough Drive. The AID Committee recommended a maximum budget of £500 to the Finance and Governance Committee to include Cotmer Road as well. A maximum budget of £560 had already been included on the Finance and Governance Committee agenda to ensure sufficient budget provision should this be approved. Cllr Barnard proposed supporting the AID Committee's recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

12. The managed retreat of Gunton beach

An East Suffolk Council draft Development and Coastal Change document from 2013 demonstrates the decline which could take place across the North Lowestoft coastline over the next eighty five years, as sea defences are no longer being maintained to the same extent, or at all. It is not thought that this was communicated to the Town Council at the stage when the affected assets were transferred across. The Shoreline Management Plan identifies which areas will be defended and which will not. An Extraordinary Meeting is being called to discuss the outstanding issues regarding The Ness, to which East Suffolk Council officers will be invited. It was suggested an appropriate officer from East Suffolk Council be invited to that meeting to discuss this issue also. The Council has various assets in the area which could be affected, as well as business interests, tourism interests, environmental habitats, residential areas, insurance and risk management issues to consider. This matter will be carried forward to the next agenda, following its consideration at the Extraordinary meeting, and the Shoreline Management Plan and draft Development and Coastal Change document will be circulated to the Committee members.

13. Any implications for the Town Council, following the Government ban on the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars from 2035

This should not have too great an impact on the Town Council as it has previously been agreed that only electric cars and bicycles would be considered should the Town Council wish to explore company vehicles. Contractors and suppliers may be affected. It is understood a new initiative involving electric scooters is being launched, although it is unclear whether a licence for the use of these is required. Should the Town Council wish to promote the use of electric vehicles there are concerns regarding the green credentials of one of the main suppliers. The Town Council is liaising with East Suffolk Council regarding electric charging points to ensure there is no duplication of work. Any plans for charging points would be brought back to this Committee to consider. There were concerns over the deadline of 2035 as there are still many questions about the locations and availability of charging points if the population is being expected to move to electric vehicles.

14. An update on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, including the following:

14.1. The Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee's intention to consult on environmental policies and to consider how to work with the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee on such policies – Policies will be made available to this Committee.

15. A Sustainability Strategy and how to progress carbon footprint and benchmark measurements

The Clerk has started to put together a framework of how the Council can move forward with this. The Strategy was displayed at the meeting and explained. The Strategy set out the aims the Council is looking to achieve, and the work which has taken place towards them so far. The

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Strategy is based on the Brundtland Report and the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Strategy aims to apply those principle to what the Town Council does. The starting points for implementing the Strategy, should it be adopted by Full Council, will be engaging with partners and the community, calculating the Council's existing carbon footprint (for which the Clerk has started researching consultants) and conducting a 'materiality' assessment to identify what material aspects within this process should be measured and reported on. Once the Council's carbon footprint has been calculated, the Council can determine how it assesses and reports on its progress and how it will set targets to reduce its carbon footprint and achieve the other measures identified in the Strategy. The AID Committee will be developing a Community Engagement Policy, as per its Terms of Reference, and it was requested that this be included in the Sustainability Strategy as one of the Council's initiatives. The Committee were in support of the strategy as presented. It was queried whether any work has been done so far to calculate the carbon footprints of the Town Council's assets. The Clerk is exploring consultancy support for this, which this Committee and Full Council will be asked to consider.

16. The Suffolk County Council Rolling Five Year Plan for Cycling in Suffolk

No projects in Lowestoft have been prioritised. The Deputy Clerk raised this with Cllr Patience in his role as a Suffolk County Councillor. Cllr Patience provided an explanation, which will be circulated to the Committee and this item will be carried forward to the next agenda. It is understood that many people cycle between Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth and it was suggested that this is a route which should be promoted and improved. Council tax payers may not see every service available in every area, but would expect to have access to a proportionate amount of services. It is understood that £250million in funding for walking and cycling routes in Suffolk has recently been announced, but again it appears Lowestoft will not be benefitting from this. It is understood that requests for cycle routes had been put into the new Town Plan. Officers will ensure all appropriate information is circulated to the Committee. It was suggested that support should be sought from East Suffolk Council also. The 2011 census demonstrated that more residents in Lowestoft cycled to work than was the national average, which could support Lowestoft's case for improved cycle routes.

17. A framework for seasonal work in parks (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

18. The design and construction features for completion of The Ness (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

19. Date of the next meeting

A Committee member had requested a later start time for future meetings. The Planning and Environment Committee meets fortnightly on a Tuesday. Cllr Pearce proposed for future meetings of this Committee to start at 15:30, monthly on a Tuesday where there is not already a Planning and Environment Committee scheduled; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. It was agreed that the next meeting will on 4 August at 15:30.

20. Items for the next agenda and close

It was requested that the next agenda include provision to discuss why Lowestoft is not part of the scheme to access discounted compost bins via Suffolk County Council. Public feedback regarding wildflower areas will be considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee. East Suffolk Council is also asking for public requests for conservation areas on its land to be

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considered by the Town Council first. Part of a discussion at the AID Committee meeting yesterday involved the removal of trees and it was queried whether there is any way of seeking this Committee's view on such matters without the need to wait for a meeting. There had not been a specific agenda item for that issue, but where there are delegations, particularly to the Clerk, she will seek views and matters like this should not progress without the consideration of this Committee. It was requested that consideration be given to developing a list of ancient trees in the town and planting black poplars. This will be considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee first then will be brought back to this Committee.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the live stream was closed as the meeting went into confidential session. It was confirmed the meeting would end following the confidential session.

Ms Bateman left the meeting at the close of the public session

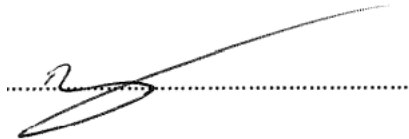
21. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

21.1. Any legal issues, including those at items 17 and 18 above as required

17. A framework for seasonal work in parks (confidential) – An update following discussions at yesterday's AID Committee meeting was given. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

18. The design and construction features for completion of The Ness (confidential) – An update on the current position of the outstanding matters was given. At the AID meeting yesterday, an Extraordinary meeting was proposed to take these matters forward.

The Chair closed the meeting 15:49.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a long horizontal stroke that curves upwards at the end. The signature is written over a dotted horizontal line.

Signed:

14 June 2021