

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 17 October 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Paul Page and Andy Pearce, plus non-Councillor member Deborah Ray

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Also in attendance: Cllr David Le Grice (via Zoom webinar)

Public: There were two members of the public in attendance (in person)

71. Welcome

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

72. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Peter Lang and Graham Parker. Cllr Page proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Le Grice was in attendance via Zoom, was not able to participate in vote due to that reason.

73. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

73.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Pearce declared an interest in items 81.1, 83 and 84. Cllr Barker declared an interest in items 80.2 and 81.1. Cllrs Brooks and Page declared an interest in item 80.1.

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

74. The draft minutes of the meetings on 2 August 2022 and 25 August 2022

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

75. Public forum

No advance comments had been received, other than the written submissions from applicants regarding item 76. A member of the public spoke in support of the Great Big Green Weekender but considered it was not well attended and could be held in an alternative location in future years. The member of the public suggested a Council magazine to improve the Council's communication with the public. The member of the public spoke of the impact of avian flu and spoke in support of the Earth Protector Town initiative. Cllrs Barker and Pearce spoke of the guidance being offered by Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership with regards to avian flu. Cllr Brooks would not support a magazine when there are other ways of communicating with the public. Cllr Page welcomed the comments regarding the Great Big Green Weekend. It is anticipated next year's event will be held in June.

76. Appointing the second non-Councillor member to the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee

Two applications had been received. Cllr Page considered that both applicants would bring different perspectives and knowledge to the Committee and would like to appoint both. The Project and Committee Clerk advised the Committee would need to recommend an amendment to its Terms of Reference to Full Council to enable this. Cllr Page proposed inviting both applicants to join the Committee, and an associated recommendation to Full Council to amend the Committee's Terms of Reference to enable this; seconded by Cllr Page; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

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77. Monitoring expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority

The budget monitoring spreadsheet was displayed. The cost of street cleaning outside the Marina Theatre in June was clarified. Cllr Pearce advised that the Committee will need to consider what contingent allowance it makes annually to progress towards the Council's target of achieving net zero by 2030. It had been recommended by the Personnel Committee that the budget for staff travel expenses reimbursement should sit under the Climate Emergency budget, rather than the staffing budget, so that this Committee can monitor mileage as part of determining the Town Council's carbon footprint.

78. Making recommendations to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee regarding the 2023 – 2024 Climate Emergency and Ecological Budget

The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee had also considered this at its earlier meeting. The Council has not yet decided whether to continue with the current method of mileage reimbursement to staff or introduce an allowance, and a recommendation from the Clerk has been requested. Regarding the Lowestoft Kitiwake Partnership, Groundworks will be providing a detailed report on expenditure against the Town Council budget. Members of the Partnership have been asked whether grant funding may be available towards year two costs. Cllr Pearce had information regarding other funding which had been secured, which will be discussed in the confidential session. Cllr Brooks considered that the proposal regarding bulky waste disposal (to be discussed later on the agenda) will also need to be considered by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee.

79. A recommendation from the Personnel Committee for the budget for staff travel expenses to sit under the Climate Emergency budget

The Personnel Committee had considered it more appropriate for this budget to sit with the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee, as monitoring mileage would form part of the Committee's work to assess the Town Council's carbon footprint. Cllr Pearce proposed endorsing this recommendation. Six officers currently use their own vehicles for work purposes. Contractors' mileage has so far not been calculated. Cllr Barker seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

80. Any matters to raise with Cllr James Mallinder (East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment) and/or the Environment and Waste Working Group, and to receive feedback on any matters previously raised, including the following:

80.1. A proposal from the Environment and Waste Working Group regarding bulky waste collection to target fly tipping – Cllr Brooks had circulated a document providing further information. A cross-Council group had been established to tackle the issue of fly tipping. East Suffolk Council will collect three items of bulky waste at a cost of £47.50. The Kirkley and Harbour Wards have been identified as those experiencing the biggest issues with fly tipping. The proposal is for the Town Council to offer a bookable service, one day per week, whereby a licensed contractor would collect bulky waste free of charge and dispose of it at the Recycling Centre. The Town Council would pay the contractor a fee to cover costs including labour and fuel. Two contractors have expressed an interest in working with the Council. The cost to the Council would be approximately £20,000 per year for approximately fifty collections. Suffolk County Council has agreed in principle to waive the fees for the waste to be disposed of at the Recycling Centre. The Group has also been considering complementary signage. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve this proposal to a maximum budget of £25,000, subject to the in-principle agreement by Suffolk County Council to waive its fees for this purpose being confirmed, and measurement criteria being agreed and put in place before the trial begins; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed 1 December 2022 as a tentative start date for the trial,

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subject to fulfilment of the conditions stated in the previous proposal enabling this; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

- 80.2. The North Beach pollution risk warning issued by the Environment Agency – Cllr Barker observed a link with item 82, which she had been researching in a personal capacity, particularly water companies being able to discharge raw sewage into the sea at certain times.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the meeting 16:29

Concerns are being raised nationally regarding the impact of wildlife living in and feeding from the sea.

Cllr Brooks returned 16:31

Cllr Pearce referred to the media report advising people not to bathe in the sea in this area, and clarified that the North Beach in this respect refers to the area north of the Claremont Pier and not Gunton. Cllr Pearce proposed seeking factual information about this issue before considering what stance the Town Council should take.

Cllr Le Grice left the meeting 16:38

Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

- 80.3. Requesting water bottle refill stations along the seafront – A presentation prepared by Ms Ray was displayed. The Town Council had previously considered installing similar on its land but did not progress this due to issues with Legionella management. With regard to the seafront, Cllr Pearce suggested asking East Suffolk Council if it would consider installing water bottle refill stations or giving the Town Council permission to do so. Cllr Pearce suggested seeking the advice of the Town Council's health and safety consultant. Ms Ray also made the Committee aware of the Refill Campaign, where local businesses agree to provide free tap water in customers' reusable water bottles. Other refill resource initiatives are also running, such as coffee shops and takeaways providing discount to customers who bring their own cups or containers. Ms Ray advised rental options are available for water refill stations, which includes arrangements for ongoing maintenance, servicing and sanitisation. Cllr Pearce proposed in-principle support for all the initiatives discussed, and to seek advice from the Council's health and safety consultant on how to manage the risks, liaison with Lowestoft Vision with regard to businesses in the town centre offering free tap water, and liaison with East Suffolk Council as to whether it would consider installing water bottle refill stations along the seafront, or giving the Town Council permission to do so. It was requested that an item is added to November's meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to consider a provision of water bottle refill stations in the Town Council's own parks. Ms Ray suggested the Town Council could also liaise with Lowestoft Vision with regard to accessing funding through sponsorship. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.
- 80.4. Requesting recycling bins along the seafront – Cllr Brooks advised that segregated bins had been provided previously but were often used incorrectly. Cllr Pearce proposed discussing the idea with Cllr Mallinder to understand if this could be progressed and how the waste collection would work. The Town Council may be able to put contributory funding towards this; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. Cllr Barker will be attending a meeting at the East Point Pavilion shortly and will make enquiries there also.

81. Recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee:

- 81.1. For expenditure to install kittiwake ledges on the Marina Theatre (maximum budget of £3,000 approved by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee) to be taken from the Climate Emergency budget – The budget monitoring spreadsheet was displayed and reviewed. It was noted that £29,843.86 was remaining in the climate budget once all committed expenditure had been deducted.

The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 17:04

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Cllr Pearce asked officers to confirm the budget allocation for the £10,000 contribution towards the Kittiwake Officer. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

- 81.2. For expenditure to purchase twelve hedgehog houses and insect hotels for allotment sites (maximum budget of £200 approved by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee) to be taken from the Climate Emergency budget –

The Clerk returned 17:08

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

82. An update regarding liaison with Peter Aldous MP on Lowestoft's Blue Flag status

The Project and Committee Clerk will request an update, following a Zoom meeting held previously.

83. A report on the work of the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership to date, with additional feedback from the 'Seabirds on the Move' Urban Kittiwake Conference

Cllr Pearce will supply a written report and had further, commercially sensitive, information to provide in the confidential session. Groundworks has been assigned to undertake the Kittiwake Officer work and this has started. The RSPB will be receiving a full breakdown as to how the grant funding is being spent, and this will be supplied to the Town Council. East Suffolk Council has provided match funding to continue the work through the winter. Cllr Pearce attended a two day conference in Gateshead as the Town Council's appointed representative and networking from this event will continue. The Hornsea Three offshore windfarm project has secured Government approval. There are specific conditions built in to the approval regarding environmental mitigations. Cllr Pearce will provide further details in confidential session and will provide a written report which should be treated as confidential.

The members of the public left the meeting 17:14

Cllr Pearce requested the addition of an item on the next agenda to consider the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership Agreement, which would ultimately require the approval of Full Council.

84. The Community Benefit Fund consultation for Hornsea Three

This was covered with the discussion of the previous item.

85. A schedule of works for assessing and reducing the Town Council's carbon footprint

The Clerk observed that one of the priorities will be addressing issues with the Town Council's buildings. The initial assessment only covers the Town Council managed assets, not tenanted properties or operations which are currently outsourced. Work still needs to take place to establish what should be measured. The Clerk advised a proposal could be brought back to this Committee but there are some fundamental issues with the expertise the Town Council has around this internally. Tenanted properties and outsourced operations may require consultancy work. The Town Council has assessed the environmental credentials of its bank and energy suppliers. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with members of this Committee, to review each of the Town Council's buildings in turn and decide where additional support may be required; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

At 17:26, Cllr Pearce proposed suspending Standing Order 3y for thirty minutes, once the meeting had reached two hours; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

86. Asking Councillors to voluntarily provide details of their mileage for carrying out Council duties, to be used for the purpose of helping to calculate the Town Council's carbon footprint

Cllr Pearce proposed requesting this information from Councillors, making it clear that it is voluntary and anonymous, and only to be used to help calculate the Town Council's carbon footprint. A reporting cycle is to be agreed. Cllr Barker seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

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87. Any methods of water conservation

The Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee had suggested seeking the advice of the Town Council's health and safety consultant. The Clerk has started writing a Water Management Policy.

88. A request from the YMCA for a member of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee to speak with a group of youths regarding how Lowestoft Town Council is addressing the climate emergency

The YMCA had sent a request to Cllr Page, who was not able to attend. Cllr Brooks volunteered. Cllr Page will relay this to the YMCA.

89. Whether the Town Council should declare itself an Earth Protector Town

The Clerk had provided a meeting paper. Ms Ray advised that this initiative enforces the framework the Town Council has adopted in its Sustainability Policy. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the Earth Protector Town declaration, noting the initiative's alignment with the Town Council's Sustainability Policy; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

90. Joining the Nuclear Free Local Authorities network

Cllr Page attended a recent talk and has some information to circulate to the Committee. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

91. Noting Suffolk County Council's consultation on changes to waiting restrictions and movement restrictions within Lowestoft town centre, including noting the Planning Committee's response to the consultation on behalf of the Town Council

This was noted by the Committee.

92. Date of the next meeting

21 November 2022 15:30

93. Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Brooks requested an item to consider how the Planning Committee incorporates climate issues in its decision making.

Cllr Pearce requested an item to consider making a recommendation to Full Council regarding the adoption of the Partnership Agreement for the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session and inviting Ms Ray to stay for the confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

94. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

84. The Community Benefit Fund consultation for Hornsea Three – Cllr Pearce gave a confidential update regarding the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership.

The meeting was closed at 17:57.

Signed:

21 November 2022