

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Via Video Meeting
16:30 on 9 July 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Neil Coleby, Alan Green, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce (Chair), John Pitts, Alice Taylor and David Youngman

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

32. Welcome

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

33. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Keith Patience. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

34. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard, Parker and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 43.3, and item 38.3, should this involve discussions regarding the telephone kiosk on Gunton Drive.

35. Noting that the minutes of the meeting of 11 June 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

Regarding item 28.2, the decision was taken to defer the gifting elements of Cllr Green's proposal, but the decision was made to progress all other elements of the proposal, whereas the minutes just refer to progressing letters of thanks. Publishing expressions of thanks in the local newspaper was agreed at Full Council, but the minutes of this Committee will be checked and amended if necessary.

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

A comment regarding item 43.6 had been received. A freedom of information request had been submitted asking for information about membership of The Ness Steering Group, to which the member of the public said they had not received a response. It was thought that East Suffolk Council had responded, as the Steering Group and its membership are not managed by the Town Council. The Clerk will respond to the member of the public accordingly and will apologise if an error has been made by the Town Council.

37. Any updates on banking

There were no updates to report.

38. Budget:

38.1. Monitoring the budget for 2020 – 2021, and receiving feedback on amendments to budget costs centres and descriptions – The amendments previously requested have been actioned, relating to the costs centres for The Ness and the Drying Racks. The Committee should see those reflected in the budget papers which were circulated. CCTV has now been amended to Community Safety.

38.2. Any bank reconciliations – These have been sent to one of the bank reconciliation signatories to review.

38.3. Receiving the notes of a meeting of members of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee, and considering budget implications relating to the implementation of the Defibrillator Policy – Officers have put together a spreadsheet of anticipated costs, which does not include staff costs. Cllr Barnard has also looked into this and has found some different costs, and understands the type of defibrillator identified on the spreadsheet is not endorsed by the ambulance service. Cllr Barnard's research suggests defibrillators do not need to be serviced

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or fitted by an electrician. Cllr Barnard will send the information she has to officers to review. The Council would need to ensure close monitoring of defibrillators on its land, especially if they were used, vandalised or required replacement parts. It is understood that certain defibrillators can test themselves daily, have a four year battery life and are equipped with replacement pads. The meeting of the members of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee was not a formal meeting, but they did review the current budget position. Inadvertent savings have been made in some areas due to the pandemic, but in other areas there has been additional expenditure. No issues were identified. The defibrillator costs will be considered again by this Committee once the new information from Cllr Barnard has been reviewed. A potential issue for the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to consider when the Council sets its precept is that there may be less people able to pay council tax.

38.4. The application of the Reserves Policy, including the allocation in general and earmarked reserves – Officers have put together information on the current position, which was circulated to the Committee. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the current reserves position, including the application of the Reserves Policy and the allocation in general and earmarked reserves; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

39. Payments:

39.1. Noting the income and expenditure reports for June 2020 and July 2020 to date – These were circulated and noted as follows:

Table 1 June Income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
15 June 2020	Market income	Market income	£18.50
15 June 2020	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
18 June 2020	Armed Forces Day Lowestoft	Grant repayment	£5,000
18 June 2020	NPower	Electricity refund	£631.27 + £31.56 VAT = £662.83
18 June 2020	Market income	Market income June 2020	£97
26 June 2020	East Coast Community Healthcare	Hiring of Council Chamber March	£420

Table 2 June Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market Public Conveniences NDR June 2020	£117
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NDR June 2020	£187
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowling Pavilion NDR June 2020	£110
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens Public Conveniences NDR June 2020	£210

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street Public Conveniences NDR June 2020	£122
4 June 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions May 2020	£3860.90
5 June 2020	MS Oakes	Town Hall Repairs	£700.23 + £140.05 VAT = £840.28
16 June 2020	Lloyds	Credit Card Expenses	£8.94
17 June 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall Gas May 2020	£43.52 + £2.18 VAT = £45.70
17 June 2020	Wave	North Denes Water April 2019 – October 2019	£60.50
17 June 2020	Wave	Town Hall Water April 2019 – October 2019	£60.50
17 June 2020	Wave	Sparrows Nest Water April 2019 – February 2020	£159
17 June 2020	Wave	Town Hall Water April 2019 – October 2019	£60.50
17 June 2020	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Rent Q2	£3,675.00 + £735.00 VAT = £4,410
17 June 2020	Wave	Kensington Gardens Water November 2019 – May 2020	£58.84
17 June 2020	Wave	Kensington Gardens Water May 2019 – November 2019	£60.83
17 June 2020	YMCA	Covid-19 Grant	£1,300
17 June 2020	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Capital Q2	£3,357.40 + £671.48 VAT = £4,028.88
17 June 2020	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Service Charge	£6,841.75 + £1,368.35 VAT = £8,210.10
18 June 2020	NPower	Triangle Market Electric May 2020	£82.28 + £4.11 VAT = £86.39
19 June 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage June 2020	£200.00 + £40 VAT = £240
19 June 2020	HMRC	HMRC May 2020	£3,750.39
23 June 2020	The Seagull	Covid-19 Grant	£1,492.53
23 June 2020	Salaries	Salaries June 2020	£8,725.47
23 June 2020	Lowestoft in Bloom	Covid-19 Grant	£300
30 June 2020	NPower	Town Hall electric	£106.75 + £5.34 VAT = £112.09
30 June 2020	Unity Trust Bank	Bank charges	£35.85

Table 3 July Income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
6 July 2020	Market Income	Market income	£54.50

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Date	Received from	Description	Amount
Pending	East Coast Community Healthcare	Meeting room hire	£900

Table 4 June Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 July 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR July 2020	£117
1 July 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NNDR July 2020	£187
1 July 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowling Pavilion NNDR July 2020	£110
1 July 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR July 2020	£210
1 July 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC NNDR July 2020	£122
3 July 2020	SCC Pensions	Pensions June 2020	£3,860.90
4 July 2020	Archant	Lowestoft Journal adverts for vacancies and Covid-19	£1,501.00 +£300.22 VAT = £1,801.22
Pending	Lowestoft Arts Ltd	Coivd-19 grant	£250

- 39.2. Noting payments made under delegated authority (see schedule) – It was noted that all the payments on the schedule were made under delegated authority.
- 39.3. Noting receipt of any applications made under the COVID-19 Grant Awarding Policy and any payments made – The latest position had been circulated to the Committee. It was confirmed that payment details for Lowestoft Arts Ltd had been received, following approval of their application.

40. Audit

- 40.1. Any progress with the External Audit and the conclusion of the period for the exercise of public rights – The period for the exercise of public rights concluded on 2 July. The External Audit report had not yet been received.

41. Events and Communications Sub-Committee

- 41.1. Confirming composition of the Events and Communications Sub-Committee and considering a recommendation from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee for Cllr Frost to become a member – Cllr Coleby proposed approval for Cllr Frost to Join the Events and Communications Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 41.2. The draft minutes from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee on 25 June 2020 – The Sub-Committee has not yet met to review and comment on the draft minutes.
- 41.3. A delegated budget and any recommendation from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee – The Events and Communications Sub-Committee previously reported to the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee, but was moved to the Finance and Governance Committee as it was felt this would be more appropriate due to its delegated budget. The Terms of Reference were displayed at the meeting, which included notes to explain the previous decisions regarding the delegated budget. Much of the budget for events has been diverted to COVID-19 grant awarding fund and it was queried whether this Sub-Committee required a delegated budget at this stage with no events happening at the

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moment. The expenditure for Remembrance last year was £1,300. It was queried whether a delegated budget of £2,000 should be considered for this purpose. The recommendation from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee is for a maximum delegated budget of £8,100, which is the amount remaining in the events budget. There is a current delegation to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to progress arrangements for Remembrance. There will also be Holocaust Memorial Day to consider. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the recommendation from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee to delegate a maximum budget of £8,100 to the Events and Communications Sub-Committee, working with relevant staff; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

42. Noting that any recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee will be considered at the Finance and Governance Committee meeting on 13 August 2020

This was noted.

43. Other financial matters, including:

43.1. How to implement the Infrastructure Investment Plan as a working document, following its adoption by Full Council, including to receive and consider the following:

43.1a. Any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee – Two allocations of s106 funding have approaching deadlines, one in October and one in November, expenditure needs to be committed before the deadlines. One of the allocations has a specified expenditure location as Kirkley Cemetery; this is already allocated so the Town Council is not able to spend that money. The AID Committee is seeking suggestions for expenditure in the St Margarets East ward vicinity. This Committee will consider any recommendations from the AID Committee. Cllr Coleby proposed that officers contact the St Margarets East ward Councillors for suggestions for expenditure to be considered by the AID Committee, particularly with regard to play areas; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

43.1b. The up to date CIL and s106 positions and any deadlines for expenditure – This was covered by the discussion of item 43.1a.

43.2. Noting that an application has been submitted to the Tree Council for additional trees, and to consider additional costs, including up to £5,052.72 (+VAT) for a two year maintenance plan at Rosedale Park – It was suggested that alternative options for the maintenance of the Rosedale Park trees should be considered. It was suggested that District and County Councillors may be able to offer support with funding, or enquiries could be made with the fire service into adoption of the park. The application was submitted on 30 June, and the outcome should be known within fourteen days. The Climate Emergency Committee will also be looking at the associated cost and management of the new trees, should the application be successful. This can be considered further once the outcome is known. There may well be alternative arrangements which could be made, but there was not an opportunity at the time of completing the application to explore these and seek quotes. This item will be added to August's Climate Emergency Committee and Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meetings, when the outcome of the application should be known. The commemorative trees will have the same cost implications. Cllrs Barnard and Coleby will look into alternative maintenance options to watering, for the Climate Emergency Committee and Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to consider.

43.3. Whether to progress environmental surveys of the Fen Park, Kensington Gardens, land at Uplands Road North and Gainsborough Drive ponds within a maximum budget of £560 (+VAT), including to consider any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee – The Council has been exploring options for some time on how to best manage its ponds. A quotation has been received within this budget, and the AID Committee made a recommendation at its meeting to progress this. Cllr Coleby thanked officers for seeking quotations and proposed approval of the recommendation from the AID Committee to progress environmental surveys of the Fen Park, Kensington Gardens, land at Uplands Road

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North and Gainsborough Drive ponds, within a maximum budget of £560 (+VAT); seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Officers have ensured that the land at Uplands Road North has been included in the quotation, which provides an overall cost for all sites, rather than a per site cost.

- 43.4. Submitting an application to East Suffolk Council for Government funding for unexpected expenditure incurred due to COVID-19 – East Suffolk Council has received Government funding to support Town and Parish Councils who have incurred extra expenditure due to COVID-19, although this cannot cover loss of income. Further clarification as to what the funding can and cannot cover will be sought. This may include grant funding the Town Council has provided and tenant relief. Some elements of this may require confidential discussion. Councillors were invited to submit suggestions to officers. A policy decision as to whether the Town Council should apply for funding is needed. Officers will put together a paper with additional information for this Committee to consider further, should it agree in principle to apply for funding. Cllr Taylor proposed approval in principle for an application to be submitted to East Suffolk Council for Government funding for unexpected expenditure incurred due to COVID-19; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 43.5. The cost of repair work to the Jubilee Bridge (confidential) – There was no further information available at this stage to take this item forward.
- 43.6. The design and construction features for completion of The Ness, including any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development and Climate Emergency Committees (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 43.7. The framework for seasonal work in parks, including any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development and Climate Emergency Committees (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 43.8. Trading arrangements in Links Road car park (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

44. Date of the next meeting

13 August 2020 16:30

45. Items for the next agenda and close

It was queried whether the Government charging VAT to the hospitality sector at 5% will affect arrangements between the Town Council and its tenants. Officers will look into this. It was requested that provision be included on the next agenda to see if the advice previously given from the National Association of Civic Officers regarding gifting has changed by the time of the next meeting.

Cllr Coleby proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

46. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

- 46.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required

The VAT position between the Town Council and its tenants was explained, in response to the query raised at item 45.

43.5 The cost of repair work to the Jubilee Bridge (confidential) – The latest position was explained.

43.6 The design and construction features for completion of The Ness, including any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development and Climate Emergency Committees (confidential) – The AID Committee has proposed that an Extraordinary meeting should be called to give this matter the required attention. The agenda will also cover the managed retreat of the Northern coastline, which was considered by the Climate Emergency Committee.

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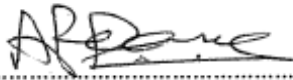
Cllr Green left the meeting 18:00

It was noted that the bank reconciliations for April and May 2020 had been completed. As the meeting was not in public session these will be noted at the Full Council meeting.

43.7 The framework for seasonal work in parks, including any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development and Climate Emergency Committees (confidential) – Both Committees were in general agreement regarding the framework for seasonal work in parks. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal, which was seconded by Cllr Coleby and all Councillors voted in favour.

43.8 Trading arrangements in Links Road car park (confidential) – The latest position was explained and will be formalised by Full Council.

The Chair closed the meeting 18:18.



Signed:

20 May 2021