

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Via Video Meeting
16:45 on 11 February 2021

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Neil Coleby, Alan Green, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce (Chair) and John Pitts

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

128. Welcome and one minute’s silence to be observed in respect of the passing of Councillor Sue Barnard

A minute’s silence to mark the passing of Councillor Sue Barnard was observed. Councillors and members of the public were reminded of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed.

129. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr David Youngman. Cllr Graham Parker had advised he would need to leave the meeting at 17:45. Cllr Alice Taylor had resigned from this Committee. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

130. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Parker and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 138.5.

131. Receipt of any comments and noting that the minutes of the meeting of 14 January 2021 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted.

132. Advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

There were no comments.

133. Budget:

133.1. Monitoring the budget for 2020 – 2021 – The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee will be looking at the budget structure going forward and will be meeting as required.

133.2. Bank reconciliations – January’s bank reconciliation is with the relevant Councillor to check and sign off.

133.3. A maximum budget for wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk – An indicative quote of approximately £24,000 has been received. The Climate Emergency Committee and Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will be looking at this in more detail. Maintenance costs will need to be factored in, although it is hoped these will not increase significantly with the current contractor. The Council may wish to consider the option of volunteer groups for ongoing maintenance.

133.4. Receipt of the draft minutes from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting of 1 February 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.

134. Payments:

134.1. The income and expenditure reports for January 2021 and February 2021 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – The income and expenditure reports were received and noted as follows:

Table 1 January Income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
4 January 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£54.50
8 January 2021	East Suffolk Council	Refund for Planning Application	£231

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Date	Received from	Description	Amount
11 January 2021	Market Income	Weekly market Income	£18.50
18 January 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£30.50
18 January 2021	Groundwork UK	Neighbourhood Plan Grant	£4,354
19 January 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£6,300
20 January 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£6,250
25 January 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£42.50
25 January 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16

Table 2 January Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
4 January 2021	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC business rates	£122
4 January 2021	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC business rates	£210
4 January 2021	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest bowls pavilion business rates	£110
4 January 2021	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park business rates	£187
4 January 2021	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC business rates	£117
6 January 2021	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions December 2020	£4,438.65
8 January 2021	NPower	Electricity Charges	£352.93
15 January 2021	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership Charge December 2020	£36,525 + £7,305 VAT = £43,830
15 January 2021	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership Charge January 2020	£36,525 + £7,305 VAT = £43,830
15 January 2021	SLCC	Deputy Clerk Membership (half being recharged to Brome and Oakley Parish Council)	£289
15 January 2021	Disability Advice North East Suffolk	Covid-19 Grant	£1,500
15 January 2021	East Suffolk Council	Membership Contribution to Lowestoft Rising Jan 2021 to Mar 2022	£15,000
15 January 2021	ID Asbestos	Removal of Asbestos Denes Oval	£470 + £94 VAT = £564
18 January 2021	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Charges	£32.03
18 January 2021	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
19 January 2021	Public Works Loan Board	Repayment of PWLB Loan	£7,151
19 January 2021	Land Registry	Land Registry Search	£3
21 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£177.76
21 January 2021	HMRC	HMRC December 2020	£4,211.42

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
22 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£351.67
22 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£74.31
22 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£69.62
22 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£68.80
22 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£378.88
22 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£105.04
22 January 2021	Salaries	Salaries January 2021	£10,273.21
25 January 2021	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall Gas	£45.70
26 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£240.14
26 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£75.12
26 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£74.26
26 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£69.58
26 January 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£170.55

Table 3 February Income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
1 February 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£42.50
8 February 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£18.50
Pending	HMRC	VAT Return Q3 2020-2021	£37,602.12

Table 4 February Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
4 February 2021	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pension January 2021	£4,450.70
9 February 2021	Land Registry	Land Registry Search	£6
Pending		Sparrows Nest Condition Survey	£2,000
Pending		Replacement Storage container at Denes Oval	£1,750
Pending	East Suffolk Norse	Extra cost for Stoven Close Play Equipment including installation (S106 and CIL funded)	£972.75
Pending	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit	£250
Pending	Archant	Lowestoft Journal Adverts	£85 + £17 VAT = £102
Pending	Rialtas	Finance Software	£59 + £11.80 VAT = £70.80
Pending	O.A. Chapman & Son Ltd	RICS valuation surveys for Asset Register	£4,750 + £950 VAT = £5,700
Pending	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£495 + £99 VAT = £594
Pending	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£1,079.40 + £2,09.88 VAT = £1,289.28
Pending	Joshua Freemantle	HMD Video	£175
Pending	Abrehart Ecology Ltd	Ecological and Biodiversity Pond Surveys	£1,863 + £372.60 VAT = £2,235.60

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
Pending	Moss King	Town Hall Business Plan Development Project (to be paid for using AHF grant)	£9,140
Pending	Anglian Water	Normanston Water	£127.01
Pending	East Coast Community Healthcare	Replacement Laptop	£675.75 + £135.15 VAT = £810.90
Pending	Ricoh	Printer Hire	£252.82 + £50.57 = £303.39
Pending	Nick Walker Thatching	Belle Vue Park Lodge Repairs	£950
Pending	Sandy Lane Nursery	Trees	£108 + £21.60 VAT = £129.60
Pending	East Point Business Services	IT Service Charge 01/10/2018 to 30/09/2019	£12,924 + £2,584.80 VAT = £15,508.80
Pending	East Point Business Services	IT Service Charge 01/10/2019 to 30/09/2020	£12,924 + £2,584.80 VAT = £15,508.80
Pending	East Point Business Services	IT Service Charge 01/10/2020 to 31/12/2020	£3,231 + £646.20 VAT = £3,877.20
Pending	East Point Business Services	IT Service Charge 01/01/2021 to 31/03/2021	£3,231 + £646.20 VAT = £3,877.20

134.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule) –

The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 16:55

The pending payments as per the above schedule were discussed and will be paid under the Clerk's existing delegated authority. It was explained that the additional £972.75 cost for the Stoven Close play equipment is for the installation and matting.

134.3. Receipt of any applications made under the COVID-19 Grant Awarding Policy – No new applications had been received since the last meeting.

135. Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee

135.1. Receipt of the draft minutes from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting of 20 January 2021 – The draft minutes were noted. It was queried why the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee had recommended renaming the Planning and Environment Committee as the Planning Committee. This will be discussed under agenda item 135.2a.

135.2. Recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee:

135.2a. Renaming the Planning and Environment Committee as the Planning Committee – This Committee will not be making decisions on any of the following recommendations, but will be submitting its own recommendations to Full Council.

The Clerk returned 17:02

There had been a suggestion that the Climate Emergency Committee should be subsumed by the Planning and Environment Committee, but the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee disagreed as the Planning and Environment Committee's environmental remit is largely centred on planning controls, consultations and policy, and other Committees, such as the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee and the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee also

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consider environmental matters. There has been no recommendation to amend the Planning and Environment Committee's Terms of Reference, just its name. The Planning and Environment Committee has considered this recommendation and has not submitted comment. The Clerk suggested that renaming the Climate Emergency Committee as the Climate and Ecological Committee may be too restrictive, and instead suggested that the Planning and Environment Committee be renamed as the Planning Committee, as recommended, as that Committee inevitably will consider those environmental matters which are material considerations, and rename the Climate Emergency Committee as the Environment Committee, which more broadly covers all the aspects which the Committee would wish to consider. There was however a concern that the broad term of environment could create some confusion over which Committee should consider certain items. There had been discussions at one of the meetings about the Community Safety Committee taking overall ownership of progressing the health emergency declaration. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to rename the Planning and Environment Committee as the Planning Committee, with no amendment to its current Terms of Reference, and for the Climate Emergency Committee to remain as a standalone Committee reporting to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

- 135.2b. Renaming the Climate Emergency Committee as the Climate and Ecological Committee – It was suggested that removing the word 'emergency' from this Committee's name could imply that the Council is no longer considering the situation as an emergency. It was agreed that this Committee would like to retain the word 'emergency' in the Climate Emergency Committee's title. The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee will be meeting again before Full Council so it was agreed that this suggestion and the Clerk's earlier suggestion should be referred back to the Sub-Committee to consider. This was proposed by Cllr Coleby; seconded by Cllr Pearce and all Councillors voted in favour. There is an item later on the agenda to consider granting delegated authority to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee to refer any final recommendations regarding Committee and Sub-Committee structures directly to Full Council, rather than this Committee.
- 135.2c. For the Climate Emergency Committee to remain as a standalone Committee reporting to Full Council – This was covered during the discussion of item 135.2a.
- 135.2d. Adopting the following meeting arrangements for the Town Council's Committees:
- 135.2di For the Assets, Inclusion and Development, Finance and Governance, Climate Emergency and Planning and Environment Committees continue to meet as per their current schedules – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Committee meeting arrangements as set out in items 135.2di – 135.2diii; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 135.2dii For the Community Safety Committee to meet every other month
- 135.2diii For the Personnel Committee to meet twice a year, with additional meetings as required
- 135.2e. Adopting the following meeting arrangements for the Town Council's Sub-Committees:
- 135.2ei For the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to continue to meet monthly Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Sub-Committee arrangements as set out in items 135.2ei – 135.2ev; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. With the recommendation going forward that the Events and Communications Sub-Committee and the Community Safety Committee should both meet every other month, Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council that the Events and Communications Sub-Committee and the Community Safety Committee should meet in alternate

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- months to streamline the frequency of meetings; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
- 135.2eii For the Terms of Reference of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to remain the same to allow the flexibility for that Sub-Committee to meet more regularly during the budget setting process, then less frequently through the rest of the year, unless required
- 135.2eiii For the Neighbourhood Development Plan Sub-Committee to meet as and when required
- 135.2eiv For the Allotments Sub-Committee to meet once every six months
- 135.2ev For the rest of the Sub-Committees, such as the Events and Communications Sub-Committee, to meet every other month
- 135.2f. For the Events and Communications Sub-Committee to report to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee, rather than the Finance and Governance Committee, but retain its delegated budget – This Sub-Committee used to report to the AID Committee, but was moved to the Finance and Governance Committee primarily due to its delegated budget. If this were to be agreed the AID Committee’s Terms of Reference would need to be amended and it would need to be given an appropriate delegation. Financial delegations will be discussed at the next meeting of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council for the Events and Communications Sub-Committee to report to the AID Committee and retain its financial delegation; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 135.2g. Removing item 6d (‘To review the Council’s policies and develop and recommend new policies (i.e. “Youth Engagement”, “Communities Engagement”) and, once approved, enact them) from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee’s Terms of Reference, as the responsibility of reviewing the Town Council’s policies is now with the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed this as a recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
- 135.2h. Adopting the following Town Council policies: The Toilet Strategy Working Group will be meeting shortly to look at the Toilet Strategy and specifications for the Town Council’s public conveniences. Cllr Coleby proposed deferring a recommendation to adopt the Toilet Strategy until March’s meeting of this Committee, to take into account any comments from the Working Group; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to adopt all of the policies and procedures as listed in items 135.2hi – 135.2hxiv, with the exception of the Toilet Strategy; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.
- 135.2hi Tree Policy
- 135.2hii Toilet Strategy
- 135.2hiii Cycling Strategy
- 135.2hiv Environmental Policy
- 135.2hv Adverse Weather Policy
- 135.2hvi Conferring of the Title of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen policy
- 135.2hvii Grant Awarding Policy, with a recommendation that grant applications be considered quarterly rather than twice per year
- 135.2hviii Health and Safety Policy
- 135.2hix Heritage Plaques Policy
- 135.2hx Incident Reporting Procedure
- 135.2hxi IT, Internet, Social Media and Email Policy
- 135.2hxii Lone Working Policy and Risk Assessment, with a recommendation that it is reviewed again ahead of the Annual Meeting, particularly with regard to staff working outdoors primarily
- 135.2hxiii Media Policy

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135.2hxiv Member Officer Protocol

135.2i. Delegating authority to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee to refer recommended financial delegations to Committees and Sub-Committees to February's Full Council meeting – The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee is due to meet again on 17 February, and the Clerk is preparing additional information for the Sub-Committee to continue its consideration of Committee and Sub-Committee structures. It is likely that additional recommendations will arise from that meeting and the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee would like them to be considered by Full Council at its February meeting, along with the recommendations arising from this meeting. The agenda item specifically refers to financial delegations, but the Sub-Committee would like any recommendations arising from its February meeting, relating to the review of Committee and Sub-Committee structures, to be considered by Full Council in February. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee to refer recommendations relating to Committee and Sub-Committee structure directly to February's Full Council meeting; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

136. Events and Communications Sub-Committee

136.1. Receipt of the draft minutes from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 27 January 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.

137. Audit

137.1. Receipt and consideration of the Second Interim Internal Audit Report 2020 – 2021 and the Responsible Financial Officer's Action Plan – The report had been circulated and there were two recommendations arising, which were regarding the website accessibility statement and the development of a debtors system. The Council does have a system in place, but the recommendation is to purchase an additional piece of software to aid debtor management. Both of these recommendations are being taken forward. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the Second Interim Internal Audit Report 2020 – 2021; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating a maximum budget of £250 to the Clerk to purchase the additional debtor management software; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

138. Other financial matters, including:

138.1. Recommending the purchase of laptops for all Councillors – Officers are seeking quotations from the Town Council's existing IT contractor and this item will be carried forward to a subsequent agenda.

138.2. A recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to carry out appropriate surveys on the Kensington Gardens Ammunition Bunker – The Committee agreed this is an important piece of work as part of the Council's risk management. Cllr Coleby proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to proceed with arranging appropriate surveys to be carried out on the Kensington Gardens Ammunition Bunker. A maximum budget was not set as this may influence the quotes received, but the Clerk will report back to this Committee and Full Council as appropriate. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Pearce and all Councillors voted in favour.

138.3. Budgeting for bicycle racks and lock-ups – The five year plans for the Town Council's parks and open spaces are being considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee. Specific proposals and recommendations will be put forward when appropriate.

138.4. Reviewing the Town Council's insurance arrangements, including to consider taking out Ill Health Liability Insurance – Specifically this is ill health liability insurance linked to pensions. The Clerk is reviewing the options. Progress is being made with general insurance, additional asset valuations are being obtained and advice has been sought from a Financial Advisor. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee would particularly like to know of any uninsurable risks and assets for budget setting purposes.

138.5. The financial implications of the environmental assessments of the Town Council's ponds –

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Advice is being sought as to what action the Council should now take having received the results of the assessments. The Environment Agency and Suffolk Wildlife Trust have been approached, and recommendations are being sought from the organisations which completed the assessments.

- 138.6. Expenditure on the Sparrows Nest pier and balustrade – A quotation was received which exceeded £3,000 for someone to put together a tender specification for the works. Offices instead sought quotations direct, which give a reasonable cost for work which is deemed as quite urgent. For a similar cost to what it would be for somebody to put together a tender specification, the Council can instead have the brick pier and balustrade repaired. Further work is required, which Cllr Coleby has identified, but this would be to address the urgent repair work required first. Cllr Coleby proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to progress the repair of the Sparrows Nest brick pier and balustrade within a maximum budget of £5,000 (including VAT); seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 138.7. The cost of a condition survey for the Sparrows Nest public conveniences building – The Council has decided that it would like to progress the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences as a priority. It has been suggested that a condition survey of the building should take place at Sparrows Nest, as wider work may be required there before the refurbishment of the public conveniences can begin. Cllr Coleby proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to seek the best quotation for a condition survey of the Sparrows Nest public conveniences building and arrange for the survey to be completed; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
- 138.8. A maximum budget for play area signage –
Cllr Parker left the meeting 16:45
Officers have been seeking quotes for signage for the Town Council's parks and open spaces. It was suggested that it should first be identified which play areas require replacement signage, so they can all be purchased at the same time. The cost should be known as this type of sign has been purchased previously. For the sites which do not currently have signage, there may be an additional cost for installation. Cllr Coleby proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to purchase one replacement play area sign for each site where required, within a maximum budget of £300, with an additional £150 budget for installation where there is currently no existing signage, including The Ness; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 138.9. A recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to appoint seasonal workers (some aspects may be confidential) – Last year was unusual and arrangements for seasonal workers were changed due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. This year it is hoped the Town Council's open spaces can be used as much as possible. The Committee was asked whether it would like to see seasonal workers appointed as normal within a maximum budget £28,270, or for options to be explored which may affect that overall cost. Cllr Coleby proposed progressing the appointment of seasonal workers, as the Council has projects which would benefit from their assistance. With the overall contract review the Council can consider how the seasonal workers are allocated in the future. Cllr Coleby further proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to progress this if the process needs to be started before Full Council meets; this was seconded by Cllr Pearce and all Councillors voted in favour.

139. Date of the next meeting

11 March 2021 16:45

140. Items for the next agenda and close

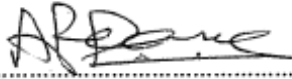
There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the livestream of the meeting. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting 17:53.

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141. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

141.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. D. ...', is written over a dotted line.

Signed: 20 May 2021