

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
13:00 on 10 June 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Graham Parker and Andy Pearce

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

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance (either in person or via Zoom webinar)

17. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed. A one minute's silence was held as a mark of respect on what would have been the one hundredth Birthday of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

18. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Paul Page, Keith Patience and Alice Taylor. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

19. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

20. The draft minutes of the meeting on 20 May 2021

A concern was raised regarding the consideration of the Sponsorship and Advertising Policy at the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting on 28 April, particular with regard to fast food and street food vendors. This was not an issue with the minutes themselves and Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

21. Public forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance, either in person or via Zoom webinar.

22. Arrangements for the Norse Contract Working Group

22.1. Composition – The purpose of the Working Group was explained. Meetings are currently held as and when required. Cllrs Begum, Green, Parker and Pearce advised they would like to join the Working Group.

23. Budget:

23.1. Monitoring the budget for 2021 – 2022 – The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee met on 7 June and reviewed the reserves in detail. The Sub-Committee will meet again in July to continue its considerations.

23.2. Any bank reconciliations – All bank reconciliations were up to date for year end. It is understood the first one for this financial year has been submitted to the relevant Councillor bank reconciliation signatory.

24. Payments:

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

Table 1 May Income

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
4 May 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£66.50

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Date	Received From	Description	Amount
6 May 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£6,300
10 May 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£90.50
17 May 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£90.50
17 May 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
20 May 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£300
24 May 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£42.50

Table 2 May Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Triangle Market PC May 2021	£117
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Links Road Car Park May 2021	£187
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Sparrows Nest PC May 2021	£110
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Kensington Gardens PC May 2021	£210
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Pakefield PC May 2021	£122
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Hamilton House May 2021	£2,012.75
5 May 2021	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions April 2021	£4,403.67
6 May 2021	Parkinson Partners	VAT Advice	£200
7 May 2021	Omnex ProFilm Ltd	Marina Theatre Equipment	£5,970 + £1,194 VAT = £7,164
7 May 2021	McCormack Benson	Fire Risk Assessments at Hamilton House and Whitton Hall	£600 + £120 VAT = £720
7 May 2021	O A Chapman	Insurance Valuations	£500 + £100 VAT = £600
7 May 2021	MossKing Associates Ltd	Town Hall Business Plan Development Project	£9,210
7 May 2021	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit 2020-21	£450
7 May 2021	SLCC	Virtual Practitioners' Conference	£75 + £15 VAT = £90
12 May 2021	James Cox	Reimbursement for Mobile Wifi Device	£35
12 May 2021	Shona Bendix	Reimbursement for 4x Fire Safety Signs	£6.26
13 May 2021	Kompan Ltd	Stoven Close Play Equipment	£8,971.20 + £1,794.24 VAT = £10,765.44
14 May 2021	Eon	Whitton Hall Electricity	£14.10 + £0.71 VAT = £14.81
14 May 2021	Essex and Suffolk Water	Normanston Water October 2020 – April 2021	£341.80

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
14 May 2021	Ricoh UK Ltd	Printer Hire	£134.83 + £26.97 VAT = £161.80
14 May 2021	BSA Security	Whitton Meeting Hall Works following Fire Risk Assessment	£157.50 + £31.50 VAT = £189
14 May 2021	British Gas	Whitton Hall Gas	£63.69
14 May 2021	Hudson Architects	Town Hall Works	£4,160 + £832 VAT = £4,992
18 May 2021	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Purchases	£225.29
18 May 2021	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
18 May 2021	Shona Bendix	Reimbursement for Key Cutting and Stationery	£25.65
18 May 2021	Sword & Trowel Ltd	Payroll Services	£93.60
20 May 2021	HMRC	HMRC April 2021	£4,358.72
21 May 2021	ICO	ICO Registration 2021	£35
21 May 2021	Salaries	Salaries May 2021	£10,455.26
24 May 2021	NPower	Electricity charges	£1,053.63 + £52.68 VAT = £1,106.31
24 May 2021	Anglian Water	Water charges	£360.01

Table 3 June Income

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
1 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£90.50
7 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£90.50
14 June 2021	Market Income	Weekly market income	£90.50
14 June 2021	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16

Table 4 June Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 June 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Hamilton House June 2021	£2,008
1 June 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR June 2021	£187
1 June 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR June 2021	£110
1 June 2021	Gazprom Energy	Gas charges	£44.22
1 June 2021	Stroud Associates	Great Eastern Linear Park site survey	£540 + £108 VAT = £648
1 June 2021	SLCC	Committee Clerk membership	£208
1 June 2021	GYH Plumbing	Gunton Meeting Hall boiler works	£94.95 + £18.99 VAT = £113.94
1 June 2021	SLCC	Town Clerk membership	£538
3 June 2021	Competitive Scaffolding	Scaffolding for Marina Theatre	£680
3 June 2021	East Suffolk Norse	May partnership charge	£37,550 + £7,510 VAT = £45,060
4 June 2021	NPower	Electric charges	£1,450.86
4 June 2021	SCC Pension Fund	May pensions	£4,403.67

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
4 June 2021	East Suffolk Norse	June partnership charge	£37,550 + £7,510 VAT = £45,060
7 June 2021	Philip Pointer	Belle Vue Cottage Lodge timber works	£1,260 + £252 VAT = £1,512
7 June 2021	NABMA	NABMA membership 2021	£369

- 24.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule) – All payments were made under existing delegations. It was noted that a payment was pending from the consultancy budget, made under existing delegations, for work towards the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Once the payment is made it will be duly recorded in the payment schedules and relevant minutes.
- 24.3. Confirming from which budget heading to fund the contribution towards the upgrade to the Marina Theatre's alarm system (£8,800 total contribution) – Cllr Pearce proposed that the £8,800 total contribution towards the Marina Theatre's alarm system be taken from the Marina Theatre earmarked reserve; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

25. Audit

- 25.1. Progress with preparations for the External Audit – The audit papers (AGAR) have all been submitted and all relevant notices displayed publicly, including in the Town Council's noticeboards, and on its website and Facebook page.

26. Budget and Loan Sub-Committee

- 26.1. Receipt of the draft minutes from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting of 7 June 2021 – The draft minutes have not yet been circulated and will be considered by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting.
- 26.2. Any recommendations from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee regarding the general reserves and earmarked reserves position – The Sub-Committee reviewed the general reserves and earmarked reserves positions in detail. New reserves need to be created for the new budget headings established for the 2021 – 2022 year, such as Town Hall. A reserve will be needed to match the cash flow for the Town Hall phase one work. Reserves are also required for the grants, community safety and climate emergency budgets for any underspends. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee also reviewed reserves targets. Some of the earmarked reserves had no target so put provisional ones have been agreed, but can be reviewed and amended as necessary. The underspend from parks development budget of approximately £39,000 is being carried forward and amalgamated with this year's budget, as significant expenditure is expected in the first couple of years of the five year plans. Funds previously budgeted for the Fen Park pond have now been allocated to the ponds and waterways budget. Funds previously budgeted for public conveniences have also been allocated to the correct budget. The Sub-Committee had put forward some proposals to transfer funds between reserves. Cllr Pearce proposed supporting the recommendations arising from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting on 7 June and recommending their approval to Full Council. The minutes of that meeting will be circulated with the meeting papers for Full Council. It had been agreed that the Council would move to five-year budgeting plans. The Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee will feed information in regarding asset management, and this will be added to its agenda for its meeting in July. Thanks were offered to Cllr Pearce and the Finance Assistant for their work in preparation of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting.
- 26.3. Noting that any other recommendations arising from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting will be considered at the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee – The Sub-Committee recommended transferring the responsibility of administering defibrillators and the associated budget from the AID Committee to the Community Safety Committee. The Clerk advised that there should be more clarity about the purpose of each

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earmarked reserve and the circumstances under which expenditure may be made from it. Cllr Pearce offered to send some written commentary to officers to consider.

27. Other financial matters, including:

- 27.1. An amendment to the Grant Awarding Policy to give provision for any urgent grant applications to be considered outside of the standard quarterly cycle – The Council has reverted back to its standard grant awarding policy, but can still consider applications related to Covid-19 recovery. This Committee used to consider applications twice per year. It was subsequently agreed applications would be considered quarterly. This item is for the Committee to consider whether to make the policy more flexible to consider applications outside of the regular cycle where a more urgent need for the funds can be demonstrated. For ease, it was suggested that all applications could be considered monthly, or criteria would need to be agreed to determine how an application is deemed urgent. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to amend the Grant Awarding Policy to enable this Committee to consider grant applications monthly; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. Cllr Brooks proposed that officers actively promote the grant scheme on an ongoing basis through its existing channels and via the external bodies which the Town Council is represented on, making it clear that applications for Covid-19 relief and recovery can still be considered, and highlighting the eligibility criteria; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. Paragraph 1.4 of the Covid-19 Grant Awarding Policy states that individual awards would not usually exceed £1,500, whereas the standard Grant Awarding Policy states £500. The second line of that paragraph can also be removed as it relates to sports clubs, but the Council is offering its facilities free of charge this year. Cllr Pearce proposed amending the Grant Awarding Policy to align with the Covid-19 Grant Awarding Policy regarding the maximum amount which can usually be awarded per application, and removal of the reference to sports clubs; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 27.1a. Subject to the approval of item 27.1, to consider any urgent grant applications – Four applications had been received. Two were considered urgent by the Committee as they were seeking match funding, and the other two had requested urgent consideration by the Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed considering all four applications at this meeting; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour. Any decisions regarding these applications will be ratified by Full Council, as Full Council has not yet approved the amendment to the policy to enable applications to be considered outside of the quarterly cycle.
- Promoting Pakefield Group** – The total project cost is £5,445 plus VAT but the amount sought from the Town Council is £1,920. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this application, subject to the Group confirming it has been able to secure the match funding necessary to realise completion of the project; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- South Pier Lowestoft Ltd** – It has been confirmed that the applicant's lease has been renewed and this can be confirmed in writing if necessary. The applicant has been working with a Christian organisation to progress a statue on the South Pier, but it would be for general public benefit, commemorating Lowestoft fishermen who have lost their lives at sea. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the application for £1,050, subject to officers confirming there is no legal impediment preventing the Town Council from approving the application, and subject to the applicant confirming that the necessary match funding has been secured to realise completion of the project; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- The People's Carpet Bowls Club** – The club is seeking funding from the Council of £750. The club is new and does not yet have a bank account, which would be required before this application could be approved. The Committee agreed it would like some additional information from the club before considering the application. Cllr Brooks proposed that officers seek further information from the club on the type of equipment it would like

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to purchase, and how it intends to increase its membership over the next twelve months to ensure this is a viable ongoing activity, including where it intends to advertise. Officers will also ensure the club is aware that it must have a bank account in order to be considered for grant funding from the Town Council. Any information supplied by the club will be considered at the next meeting of this Committee. The proposal was seconded by Begum; five Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

Sunrise Studios – This organisation is a subsidiary or component of Access Community Trust and covered by their constitution. £1,482.33 funding has been requested from the Town Council. The Committee agreed it would like further information from the applicant before considering the application. Cllr Brooks proposed that officers seek further information from the applicant on how the project will be made available and accessible to users who do not have the necessary equipment to access the podcasts on their own. The Committee would also like clarity on whether there is a fixed end date for the project, or whether the funding is required for set up costs for an ongoing project. Any additional information supplied by the applicant will be considered at the next meeting of this Committee. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Begum and all Councillors voted in favour.

- 27.2. The cost of providing smartphones to all Town Council officers – Quotations are still pending. This will likely be an ongoing contract with support from the Council's existing IT provider. Consideration will be given to the three new members of staff due to be appointed this year.
- 27.3. Recommendations for a payroll provider – Officers are still assessing suitable alternative software provisions which would enable payroll to be dealt with 'in house'.
- 27.4. Noting available s106 and CIL funding, and any approaching deadlines for expenditure – It was clarified at the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee that the closest deadline is February – March 2022. A member of the public has suggested that the Town Council considers a sculpture trail across the town, and this will be considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee. It was suggested that CIL funding could be considered for this purpose should the Council decide to pursue the idea. This can be reviewed against the Council's Infrastructure Investment Plan.
- 27.5. Additional costs for the development of the Whitton Green play area – This is a high priority development. The Council specifically wanted a good quality provision there. The project has gone out to tender but the quotations have come back higher than expected. A meeting is being arranged with the Project Manager to discuss the tender returns. The Council decision regarding previous delegations was not completely clear and as the costs have exceeded what was anticipated this matter will be considered at the next Full Council meeting.
- 27.6. The cost of providing access to the sea wall from the Links Road car park – The cost has not yet been confirmed but a site visit has taken place. The AID Committee will consider this further and will come back to this Committee with the cost, to decide from where within the budget the funding would come from, if progressed.

Cllr Begum left the meeting 14:30

- 27.7. Any cost approval requests arising from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting on 7 June 2021, which cannot be covered by the financial delegation to that Committee – It had previously been agreed to progress the purchase of bins as per the summary document produced as part of the five-year plans. At its meeting on 7 June, the Committee agreed it would like to progress the purchase of the sixty five benches as identified in the document, so long as the total cost of the benches themselves did not exceed the £39,000 underspend from the parks development budget carried forward from 2020 – 2021, and the cost of installation, including concrete bases, did not exceed the £36,000 in the parks development earmarked reserve. The AID Committee also recommended delegating authority to officers to review the different types of benches as suggested in the summary document, check existing provisions and explore any external funding. Cllr Pearce proposed supporting these recommendations from the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

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- 27.8. Any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee regarding a maximum budget and any appropriate delegations to progress the installation of a fence in Sparrows Nest, along the border of the grass between the play area and the Movie Makers Theatre – There was no update.
- 27.9. An update on the request to apply for District Council locality funding in respect of the memorial lecterns for Belle Vue Park and Kensington Gardens – There was no update.
- 27.10. Roofing works at the Marina Theatre and to note the delegated authority granted from Full Council to enable this Committee to decide how to proceed (confidential) – The Council received a quotation covering two aspects of Marina Theatre's roof. It was confirmed that they are separate costs so would added together should the Council wish to progress both. The Clerk has not received a response from the contractor about an assessment of the roof, but Suffolk County Council has indicated that if there is no evidence of a problem with the turret area it is understandable if the Town Council would not want to proceed with that aspect. The County Council thinks the priority is the other area where it has identified issues. This Committee has been granted delegated authority by Full Council to make the final decision. Cllr Pearce proposed proceeding with the repair work to the area where issues have been identified, and delegating authority to the Clerk to liaise with all relevant third parties, including Suffolk County Council and the Marina Theatre Trust regarding the practicalities of how this will be managed and whether the turret area is included. Cllr Pearce further proposed to provisionally include the turret area, but allow the Clerk to make the final decision under delegated authority. In terms of funding, in 2020 – 2021 there were unused funds of £13,904 in the Marina Theatre repairs and maintenance and planned maintenance budget. In this budget for 2021 – 2022 there is £14,112. It is understood the earmarked reserve is approximately £12,500, from which £8,800 will be spent on the alarm system, as agreed earlier in the meeting. Cllr Pearce further proposed that funding from the roof work be taken from these sources first, before any funds are taken from the general repairs and maintenance budget; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 27.11. The cost of enhancing the arrangements for the Lowestoft Collection at the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – This will be discussed during the confidential session, but it had been clarified that the security arrangements are relating to the room containing the Lowestoft Porcelain.
- 27.12. The purchase of an item of Lowestoft Porcelain (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 27.13. The lease and financial arrangements for a tenant (confidential) – There were no updates.

28. Date of the next meeting

8 July 2021 13:00 – Cllrs Green and Parker gave their apologies in advance for this meeting.

29. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda. Any requests can be emailed to officers.

Cllr Green proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; 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.

30. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

30.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required:

27.11 The cost of enhancing the arrangements for the Lowestoft Collection at the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – The Museum had provided clarity about what the Council was being asked to fund and the cost. The Committee had already given its approval on that basis.

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27.12 The purchase of an item of Lowestoft Porcelain (confidential) – The Museum has not officially provided any further information.
The Chair closed the meeting 14:43.

Signed:  8 July 2021