

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**15:00 on 10 October 2022**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Keith Patience and Andy Pearce (Chair)

**In attendance:** Shona Bendix (Clerk) (remotely via Zoom webinar), James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

**Public:** There was one member of the public in attendance (in person)

**69. Welcome**

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

**70. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Paul Page and Graham Parker, who had provided reasons. Cllr Green proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

**71. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

71.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 78.5. Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 78.9. Cllr Patience declared he is an East Suffolk Councillor and a paid Auditor for the GMB in the London region. Cllr Pearce declared that he, Cllr Barker and Cllr Green would have a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Town Hall, as members of the Project Board.

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

**72. The draft minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting on 26 September 2022**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting. Cllr Patience advised there was one meeting where his apologies had not been recorded.

**73. Public forum**

A member of the public was in attendance regarding item 76.1a. It was agreed to bring that item forward on the agenda. The member of the public presented visual plans of how the project would look should it proceed. The aim of the project was explained. In line with the Council's Grant Awarding Policy, the Committee would like an acknowledgement of the Council's contribution, if approved.

76.1a. Grant application from Woodwork Art Café CIC for an online resource simulating a walk up both sides of the Historic High Street – Cllr Pearce advised the Committee had agreed to consider applications at quarterly intervals, but reserved the right to consider any urgent ones in the interim. This application was originally submitted before this decision was made. Cllr Pearce proposed considering the application at this meeting; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the application, and liaison with the applicant to mutually agree a press release and how progress will be monitored as the project progresses; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

**74. Budget and Loan:**

74.1. The draft minutes of the Extraordinary Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting on 3 October 2022 – The draft minutes were not yet available.

74.2. Recommendations from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee:

74.2a. Making a recommendation to Full Council to transfer funding reclaim from Lowestoft Town Council Capital cash flow at end of Phase 1 of Town Hall project to Marina

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Theatre budget towards expenditure on flying rig – Cllr Pearce advised that the flying rig is owned by the Town Council, and it is understood the rig is due to reach end of life next year. The estimated cost of replacement is approximately £215,000. The Council has so far set aside £100,000 for this, minus expenditure of £15,000 for the lighting desk. Cllr Pearce advised the Town Council has £200,000 in a budget for the Town Hall. Approximately £90,500 is the Town Council's contribution, but the remainder of the funds are in place to manage the cash flow. Assuming the project does not go over budget, the Council should have approximately £109,500 reimbursed by the end of the development phase in May 2023. Cllr Pearce proposed transferring the £109,500 to the Marina Theatre capital budget, following completion of the development phase, and to precept £20,500 for 2023 – 2024 as the remaining amount. Alongside this, Cllr Pearce requested that officers seek an updated quotation and refers the item back to this Committee if the quotation exceeds £215,000. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

- 74.3. Reviewing budgets which are particularly vulnerable to overspend, and making recommendations to Full Council on the movement of funds between earmarked reserves and budgets that are projected to have overspends and underspends at year end – Cllr Pearce advised this had been reviewed by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee at its meeting today. Recommendations have been established regarding the grants, community engagement and events budgets, based on the fact that the Council has CIL funding available for some of its parks and play areas projects and transferring the equivalent amount from the parks budget to the grants and events budgets. Cllr Pearce proposed endorsing this recommendation as a recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Patience; all in favour. The Finance and Information Officer will notify the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee if any other budgets become vulnerable to overspend.
- 74.4. Monitoring the budget for 2022 – 2023, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – There were no additional items, further to the previous item, for consideration. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee will continue to monitor the budget.
- 74.5. The impact of the rising cost of inflation on the 2022 – 2023 budget – It had agreed to use ten percent as the working figure for inflation for the draft 2023 – 2024 budget. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee had considered those budgets particularly vulnerable to overspend and can consider others one by one.
- 74.6. Bank reconciliations – It was noted that August's had been completed and September's was underway.
- 74.7. Whether to request to re-join Lowestoft Rising with effect from 2023 – 2024 – Further to discussions at the last meeting, Lowestoft Rising had provided further information and had confirmed the Town Council's contribution would be used towards running costs rather than specific projects. Cllr Barker was concerned as to the lack of information regarding income received, how it is used and the outcomes, but this information had not been specifically requested. Cllr Pearce had heard positive feedback from a couple of organisations on the support they had received from Lowestoft Rising. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council not to re-join Lowestoft Rising at this point; seconded by Cllr Patience; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 74.8. Income shortfall for the Town Hall development (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 74.9. Assessing and considering Town Hall capital funding requirements during 2023 – 2024, including project expenditure not covered by grant funding (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 74.10. The budget allocation for previously approved expenditure to appoint a VAT adviser for the Town Hall and Marina Theatre projects – The Finance and Information Officer advised that approximately £20,000 remains in the consultancy budget, pending health and safety consultancy expenditure. Cllr Pearce proposed using the consultancy budget for initial expenditure, if the total sum of approximately £9,000 is not all payable from the outset, and

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asked the Finance and Information Officer to notify the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee should that budget become vulnerable to overspend. Cllr Barker seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

74.11. The budget allocation(s) for previously approved expenditure linked to the hire of a works van for six months – The expenditure should not exceed £3,600 over six months. Cllr Brooks proposed taking expenditure for this from the parks reserve; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

*Cllr Barker left the meeting 15:59*

### 75. Payments and Receipts:

75.1. The income and expenditure reports for September 2022 and October 2022 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – The income and expenditure reports were received and noted as follows:

*Table 1 September and October Expenditure*

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 September 2022	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park NNDR 22/23	£187
1 September 2022	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR 22/23	£110
1 September 2022	East Suffolk Council	HH NNDR 22/23	£948
1 September 2022	Royal Society Prevention of Ac	NEBOSH general certif training	£606
1 September 2022	Liz Ballard	Equipment and materials	£426.12
1 September 2022	Binder Ltd	Uplands sewage tank repairs	£477.08
1 September 2022	SJ Geomatics Ltd	TH measured building survey	£6,180
2 September 2022	Sarah Foote	Parking, Wi-Fi and compost reimbursement	£41.31 + £6.67 VAT = £47.98
2 September 2022	Paul Connew	Travel reimbursement	£54.45
2 September 2022	Poetry People Community Intere	Town Hall video poem	£4,750
5 September 2022	Suffolk Pension Fund	August pensions	£6,543.46
5 September 2022	Jonny Hawes	Travel and parking reimbursement	£65.19 + £2.41 VAT = £67.60
6 September 2022	Land Registry	Land Registry search	£6
7 September 2022	Waveney Concert Band	Jubilee concert entertainment	£200
7 September 2022	MJ Training	Big Green Weekender first aid	£384
7 September 2022	Gearhire Sound and Light	Big Green Weekender audio	£948
7 September 2022	MJ Training	First aid course x2	£230.40
7 September 2022	Archant Community Media Ltd	Committee Clerk advert	£1,047.72
7 September 2022	Tom Tonks Music	Big Green Weekender Entertain	£125
7 September 2022	Pearce & Kemp Ltd	RNPSA Museum remedial works	£474
7 September 2022	Archant Community Media Ltd	Committee Clerk advert	£144
7 September 2022	Archant Community Media Ltd	Committee Clerk advert	£60
8 September 2022	Jonny Hawes	Access cover reimbursement	£52.97 + £10.59 VAT = £63.56
12 September 2022	Wave Ltd	Town Hall water	£131.84
12 September 2022	Chris Meek	OLB and office reimbursement	£21.65
12 September 2022	HMRC	Land Registry Search	£6
12 September 2022	MJ Training	Level 3 first aid at work x2	£230
14 September 2022	Lauren Elliott	Parking and travel reimbursement	£10.08 + £0.67 VAT = £10.75
14 September 2022	AJ Builders	Normanston Park fencing	£3,386.40

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
14 September 2022	AJ Builders	TH, Gunton Hall, Rosedale R&M	£246
16 September 2022	Credit card account	Credit card purchases	£568.83
19 September 2022	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
19 September 2022	HMRC	HMRC August 2022	£6,481.68
20 September 2022	Scenic Projects Ltd	TH Stories Boat	£5,760
20 September 2022	MossKing Associates Ltd	TH development phase Aug 22	£3,275
20 September 2022	HAT Projects Ltd	TH development phase stage 1	£12,178.19
20 September 2022	Broadland Group Ltd	TH refurbishment survey	£8,220
20 September 2022	MossKing Associates Ltd	TH development heritage Aug 22	£2,310
20 September 2022	Waveney Norse Ltd	Install Jubilee beacon SN	£7,808.22
21 September 2022	NPower	Triangle Market electric Aug 22	£203.20 + £10.16 VAT = £213.36
21 September 2022	NPower	Denes Oval electric Aug 22	£533.45 + £26.67 VAT = £560.12
21 September 2022	AJ Builders	Concrete bin base Fen & St Mar	£312
21 September 2022	AJ Builders	SN Bandstand paint medium grit	£1,674
21 September 2022	AJ Builders	OLB flag movement and fencing	£690
21 September 2022	AJ Builders	Repair Normanston Park fence	£420
21 September 2022	AJ Builders	Gunton Park fencing	£4,620
21 September 2022	AJ Builders	Pakefield Green fencing	£5,947.46
21 September 2022	Matta Products	20x Matta tiles and glue	£414
21 September 2022	Glasdon UK Ltd	St Margs Plain bin	£520.85
21 September 2022	MJ Training	2x Lvl 3 First Aid at Work	£600
23 September 2022	NPower	Low Cem PC electric Aug 22	£126.75 + £6.34 VAT = £133.09
23 September 2022	NPower	KG electric Aug 22	£113.97 + £5.70 VAT = £119.67
23 September 2022	NPower	KG electric Aug 22	£92.06 + £4.60 VAT = £96.66
23 September 2022	NPower	SN RNPSA Museum elec Aug 22	£1,658.40 + £331.68 = £1,990.08
23 September 2022	NPower	Pakefield St PC elec Aug 22	£88.62 + £4.43 VAT = £93.05
23 September 2022	British Gas	Whitton Hall gas	£122.10
23 September 2022	C & C Consulting Services Ltd	H&S support	£49.50 + £9.90 VAT = £59.40
23 September 2022	Salaries	Salaries September 2022	£16,327.67
27 September 2022	HMRC	Land Registry search	£3
27 September 2022	Alan Green	Mileage reimbursement	£50.85
27 September 2022	Alan Green	Mayoral reimbursement	£43.20
27 September 2022	Eon Energy	Whitton Hall electric	£97.80
28 September 2022	Chris Meek	Big Green Weekend reimburse	£11.23 + £1.17 VAT = £12.40
28 September 2022	Shona Bendix	Travel reimbursement	£31.66 + £1.84 VAT = £33.50
28 September 2022	Sarah Foote	Training, Wi-Fi and travel reimbursement	£80.81 + £10.59 VAT = £91.40
28 September 2022	NPower	Normanston electric Aug 22	£120.28 + £6.01 VAT = £126.29
28 September 2022	AJ Builders	Fen Park gates and matting	£8,880
28 September 2022	AJ Builders	KG outer wall repair	£5,100
28 September 2022	AJ Builders	Repair pathway step SN	£462
28 September 2022	AJ Builders	Repair coping stone SN	£144

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
28 September 2022	AJ Builders	Repair to SN pathway	£1,200
28 September 2022	The Marina Theatre Trust	Quarterly management fee	£45,000
28 September 2022	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit 2021 – 2022	£2,880
28 September 2022	Seletar Signs	GELP H&S signage	£132
30 September 2022	Unity Trust Bank	Bank charge	£57.60
30 September 2022	Great Yarmouth Heating Company	Denes Oval hot water service	£100
30 September 2022	Kompan Ltd	CN history board installation	£35,720.91
3 October 2022	C&C Consulting	H&S Support	£49.50 + £9.90 VAT = £59.40
3 October 2022	SEFE Energy	Town Hall Gas	£59.45 + £2.97 VAT = £62.42
3 October 2022	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NNDR	£187
3 October 2022	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowl Pavilion NNDR	£110
3 October 2022	East Suffolk Council	Hamilton House NNDR	£948
3 October 2022	Paul Connew	Reimbursement	£243.64
3 October 2022	Jonny Hawes	Reimbursement	£65.14
4 October 2022	Wave Utilities	Town Hall Water	£40.73
4 October 2022	Gearhire Sound and Light	Full Council Amplification	£400 + £80 VAT = £480
4 October 2022	M Miles	Big Green Weekender Performance	£150
4 October 2022	B Davies	Big Green Weekender Performance	£150
5 October 2022	Land Registry	Land Registry Search	£3
5 October 2022	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions September 2022	£6,835.16

*Table 2 September and October Receipts*

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
5 September 2022	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
5 September 2022	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£6,300
13 September 2022	Use of electricity at Sparrows Nest	Use of electricity at Sparrows Nest for an event	£15
28 September 2022	Whitton Hall hire	Whitton Hall hire (incl £100 deposit)	£170
30 September 2022	East Suffolk Council	Precept 2 <sup>nd</sup> install	£933,614
30 September 2022	Whitton Hall hire	Whitton Hall hire (incl £100 deposit)	£128
3 October 2022	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
6 October 2022	R Young	Whitton Hall Hire	£42

75.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were none.

**76. Grants:**

76.1. Whether the following grant applications are urgent for consideration at this meeting:

76.1a. Woodwork Art Café CIC for an online resource simulating a walk up both sides of the Historic High Street – This item had been considered earlier in the meeting.

76.2. The schedule for the consideration of grant applications – The Committee would like to consider applications quarterly, but reserve the right to consider any urgent or time sensitive applications in the interim. Officers had suggested consideration of applications at the September, December, March and June meetings, to tie in with year-end. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to amend the Grant Awarding Policy to consider grant applications quarterly, with provision for time sensitive or urgent applications to be considered in the interim; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

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76.3. Submitting applications for grant funding, including from Suffolk Coast and Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Greenprint Forum – The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee had deferred this item to its meeting on 18 October. Cllr Pearce proposed supporting this in principle and asking the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to work up the detail of any specific application. Full Council would ultimately need to decide whether to submit an application as there are no delegations to specific Committees to apply for external funding. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

**77. Audit**

77.1. The report from the External Auditor on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2021 – 2022 – The Committee had received and read the report in advance of the meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve the report; seconded by Cllr Patience; all in favour.

**78. Other financial and governance matters, including:**

78.1. Any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee which exceed that Committee's financial delegation or where a budget allocation needs to be decided – These had been added to the agenda as individual items.

78.2. Any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee regarding a budget for a deep clean and painting of the Whitton Residents' Hall – Two quotations had been received from a contractor, one for repairs (approximately £6,700) and one for a deep clean (approximately £2,500). Cllr Pearce proposed asking the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to consider an annual budget for cleaning, including to assess if the current budget for regular cleaning is adequate. Cllr Pearce further proposed approving a maximum budget of £9,500 to progress the deep clean, painting and repairs, using £4,750 from the Community Halls capital budget and £4,750 from the general repairs and maintenance reserve. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposals and all Councillors voted in favour.

78.3. The date of purchase, location and any hire options for a storage container (initially for the Town Hall site) – The Clerk advised this information was not available for this meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed adding an item to the Full Council agenda to consider delegating authority to the Clerk to make these decisions, within the budget previously approved; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

78.4. A maximum budget for installing a gate at the Town Hall – This would be for the storage container as per the previous item, and access for the works van. Cllr Patience has details of contractors who may be able to provide quotations. Cllr Pearce proposed approving a maximum budget of £5,000, with delegated authority to officers to select a quotation and contractor; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed taking the expenditure from the Town Hall repairs and maintenance budget; seconded by Cllr Patience; all in favour.

78.5. The cost of work to address drainage issues in Sparrows Nest – The Project and Committee Clerk advised this related to the area to the rear of the northern building complex. The indicative cost of works exceeded £16,000. Cllr Pearce proposed adding an item to the Full Council agenda, informed by the quotations received at the time, to consider approving a maximum budget and a delegation to the Clerk to progress; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

78.6. Approval of a maximum budget of £8,500 to progress the Sparrows Nest Sensory Garden and any related planning applications – The Deputy Clerk advised that planning permission would be required at least for any proposed structures. The Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee has recommended approval but the budget exceeds its financial delegation. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the recommendation from the AID Committee, with expenditure to come from the parks development budget; seconded by Cllr Brooks; three Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. It was clarified that expenditure for any planning applications should also come from the parks development budget.

78.7. Quotations to replace areas of wet pour matting in Fen Park – Cllr Pearce considered this work

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should go ahead regardless of whether the play equipment is replaced next year. The AID Committee has recommended approval of the higher of the two quotations received to Full Council, to include works to area around the gate. Cllr Pearce proposed endorsing this recommendation, with half of the funds to come from the parks reserve and the other half from the repairs and maintenance reserve; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

- 78.8. The budget and scheduling for a replacement footbridge in Fen Park – Officers have recommended this work should be undertaken within the current financial year, on health and safety grounds. Quotations have been received ranging from £27,000 - £35,000. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with replacing the footbridge on health and safety grounds, within a maximum budget of £36,000, with half of the expenditure to come from the parks reserve and half to come from the capital works reserve. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee will need to consider recovery of those reserves via the precept, though not necessarily all in the same year. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.
- 78.9. The cost of progressing intrusive geo-environmental surveys for land at Britten Road – The Project and Committee Clerk advised the detail would need to be discussed during the confidential session, but the cost of this site alone would be approximately £16,000 - £20,000.
- 78.10. Making a recommendation to Full Council on whether to extend the current policy on not charging for use of Town Council sports and leisure facilities to the 2023 – 2024 financial year, or whether to re-introduce charging – The AID Committee has made a recommendation to Full Council to extend the policy not to charge. Decisions to charge previously were not intended to generate income for the Council, which offered grant funding to clubs to offset the fees. Clubs must demonstrate how they have used the funds saved to reinvest in their facilities or boost their membership. A proposed operator model will be considered at tomorrow's Finance and Governance Committee meeting. The online model can be configured to align with Council decisions whether or not to charge leisure fees. Cllr Brooks proposed supporting the recommendation of the AID Committee to extend the current policy on not charging for use of Town Council sports and leisure facilities to the 2023 – 2024 financial year; seconded by Cllr Patience; all in favour.
- 78.11. Quotations to install fencing and 'no parking' signage at Stoven Close – Cllr Patience queried how 'no parking' signage would be enforced. This would be accompanied by fencing. The AID Committee has made a recommendation to this Committee to proceed. The quotation for the fencing was £7,200 plus VAT, with an additional £100 - £150 for signage. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the recommendation from the AID Committee, within a maximum budget of £8,000, with half of the cost to come from the repairs and maintenance reserve, and the other half from the parks reserve. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee will need to schedule recovery of these reserves. Cllr Pearce further proposed delegating authority to officers to select a quotation and appoint a contractor. Cllr Green seconded the proposal.
- 78.12. A request from the Personnel Committee to consider whether to apply an officer vehicle allowance rather than mileage reimbursement – The Project and Committee Clerk clarified that an allowance would provide a core payment for the costs of providing a vehicle but there would still be a mileage payment, which would be lower than it is currently. This had been considered by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. In terms of Council policy, Councillors may feel differently about officers deemed as essential car users and those Council would like to have access to a vehicle during work hours, to those who are not required to have access to a vehicle as part of their working day. This has not yet been explored fully. Cllr Patience advised Unison had referred to the Green Book with regard to an allowance for National Health Service employees. Cllr Patience had researched Local Government policy on this and advised the Committee that any allowance would be subject to tax and National Insurance. This would be handled through payroll. Six out of eight officers currently use their own cars for work purposes. A works van would be shared between officers, but personal vehicles would still need to be used. An appropriate amount for any allowance would be determined by the Council. Cllr Pearce proposed asking Full

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Council to consider this for all staff who use a personal vehicle for work purposes, with effect from 6 April 2023 if approved, and expenditure to come from the Climate Emergency budget. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal; three Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

At 17:10, Cllrs Green and Patience had to leave the meeting. It was agreed to schedule an Extraordinary Meeting for 19 October at 14:00, with any items not considered at this meeting or the meeting on 11 October to be added to its agenda. The Chair closed the meeting at 17:11.

- 78.13. The budgetary allocation for any further recruitment
- 78.14. An update on appointing an HR consultant
- 78.15. If and how to budget for replenishment based on life expectancy of recent capital upgrades and anticipated replacement dates
- 78.16. The leaseback provisions in the Waveney District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2017 (confidential)
- 78.17. The IT services contract, including any transitional costs (confidential)
- 78.18. An update on progressing the lease for the workshop/storage premises (confidential)
- 78.19. An update on non-payment of rent by a tenant and to consider next steps (confidential)
- 78.20. The purchase of an item of Lowestoft Porcelain (confidential)

**79. Date of the next meeting**

- 11 October 2022 15:00 (Extraordinary Meeting)
- 14 November 2022 15:00

**80. Items for the next agenda and close**

**81. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:**

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

Signed: .....  
14 November 2022