

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:00 on 11 October 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Graham Parker 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)

82. Welcome

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

83. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Paul Page, who had provided a reason. It was noted that Cllr Nasima Begum and Cllr Keith Patience had resigned from this Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

84. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

84.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Brooks declared an interest in items 89.3 and 89.6. Cllr Pearce declared he is Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association. Cllr Parker declared he is the Vice Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association.

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

85. The draft minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2022

The draft minutes were not yet available. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

86. Public forum

A representative of the Racket Sports Academy had been invited by the Committee to discuss the items relating to the tennis courts. The Lowestoft Town Tennis Club will be putting contributory funding of £8,000 - £9,000 towards the installation of floodlights at the Denes Oval. The Club is seeking security of tenure and details of rent and terms and conditions before committing the funds it has raised. The Club would also struggle to seek external funding without a licence in place. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to pay the invoice received for the fifty percent deposit, on the understanding that the Club will pay fifty percent of its contribution upon presentation of the licence, and both parties will pay the remainder of their contributions upon completion of this aspect of the works. The specification, energy efficiency and environmental impact of the products has been considered. Ongoing maintenance options will need to be discussed. It was agreed to bring forward items 89.6 and 90.9 and consider them together.

89.6. If and how to budget for replenishment based on life expectancy of recent capital upgrades and anticipated replacement dates

90.9. An update on progressing licences for the Lowestoft Town Tennis Club and the Lowestoft Cricket Club – Cllr Pearce suggested that the outcome of the earlier Zoom meeting can be considered by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. There has so far been no discussion about changing the current terms, but there should be an agreement as to the scheduling and frequency of rent reviews. In the interim, the licence should formalise the current position. Cllr Brooks seconded Cllr Pearce's earlier proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

The member of the public left the meeting 15:53

87. Standing Orders and Policies:

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- 87.1. The draft minutes of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting on 7 October 2022 – The draft minutes were not yet available.
- 87.2. Any recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee regarding the following: - The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee had deferred making a recommendation on the Heritage Plaques Policy as it was to be considered by other Committees. The Sub-Committee had recommended adoption of the other policies with amendments to take effect upon adoption by Full Council, other than the Standing Orders, where any agreed amendments should take effect as of the next Annual Meeting. Cllr Brooks no longer supported a proposed amendment to Standing Orders regarding members appointing a stand-in to attend a meeting on their behalf. Cllr Green had suggested this amendment but clarified it was not politically motivated. Cllr Brooks proposed to abandon this particular proposed amendment, but no one seconded the proposal. With the exception of the Heritage Plaques Policy, Cllr Green proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the policies and procedures listed as amended, with amendments to take effect from adoption, other than the Standing Orders, where amendments should apply with effect from the next Annual Meeting; seconded by Cllr Barker; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.
- 87.2a. Booking form for hire of Community Halls
 - 87.2b. Code of Conduct
 - 87.2c. Cycling Pledge
 - 87.2d. Data Protection Policy
 - 87.2e. Data Retention Policy
 - 87.2f. Defibrillator Policy
 - 87.2g. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure
 - 87.2h. Heritage Plaques Policy
 - 87.2i. Standing Orders

88. The Marina Theatre:

- 88.1. Any outcomes from the Quarterly Management meeting on 15 July 2022 – Don't think there were any outcomes not already covered by other items.
- 88.2. Reviewing the rent and management fee on a four-yearly basis, aligned with Town Council terms – The Theatre had advised it would need time to prepare should the Council decide to start reducing the management fee. On the basis that the Council is terminating the existing two leases and progressing a single lease, Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to review the rent and management fee at the same time, every four years, at the start of the new Council year, with any change to take effect from the following financial year after that. If agreed, this should be incorporated into the lease. Cllr Green seconded the proposal; two Councillors voted in favour; three Councillors abstained from the vote.
- 88.3. Any unbudgeted capital funding requirements for the current financial year – The Council has been asked to consider a lighting upgrade. The current lighting needs to be replaced, partly due to energy efficiency reasons. LED lighting would also reduce electricity costs. The next quarterly liaison meeting is due to take place this week. The Theatre Green Book provides guidance on improvements in line with the climate emergency. Cllr Pearce proposed deferring this item to the next meeting, pending any outcomes from the quarterly management meeting, and adding a placeholder to the Full Council agenda to receive any recommendations; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 88.4. Capital funding requirements during 2023 – 2024 (some aspects may be confidential) – This item will be discussed at the quarterly management meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed deferring this item to the next agenda and adding a placeholder to the Full Council agenda to receive any recommendation. This item can also be considered by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. Cllr Parker seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.
- 88.5. An update on progress with the new lease (some aspects may be confidential) – The Clerk has asked for a draft to be provided to Full Council and this will also be discussed at the quarterly

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management meeting, and the next meeting of this Committee.

88.6. An update on the requested meeting with the Marina Theatre Trust and East Suffolk Council regarding the Towns Fund project and recent media announcements (confidential) – East Suffolk Council has announced it will be bringing in consultants to work on its Towns Fund funded projects. This will not include the Marina Theatre. A feasibility study is in progress for the Theatre.

89. Other financial and governance matters, including:

89.1. Giving early consideration to what community financial support (including grant provision and support for food relief and warm places initiatives) the Town Council should put in place for 2023 – 2024, particularly in light of the cost of living crisis – Cllr Brooks had suggested the Council could make separate funding available to support grant applications from the food support network. Cllr Green declared that he volunteers at a local food bank. Cllr Pearce proposed asking the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to consider what funding the Council should make available for this purpose, and make a recommendation to November's meeting of this Committee; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. The Council has agreed to make some of its premises available for the Warm Places initiative. The Council will need to consider safeguarding when supporting such initiatives. It is not yet known whether the initiative will be funded beyond March 2023 and Cllr Pearce asked officers to liaise with East Suffolk Council regarding this, so the Town Council may consider the type of support it would want to make available. The risk of the spread of illness has been discussed by the Community Safety Committee. The response received regarding how an outbreak of illness would be managed will be circulated.

Cllr Green left the meeting 16:26

89.2. Making a recommendation to Full Council to make a representation to national Government via the local Member of Parliament, the local Food Network and other local outlets as required regarding concerns about the need for Local Councils to provide support previously available through central Government – Cllr Pearce proposed deferring this item to next week's meeting; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

89.3. The budgetary allocation for any agreed bulky waste collection project – The detail of the proposal will be considered by the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee. Cllr Parker suggested that, if approved, the project should commence from April 2023, giving the Town Council the opportunity to budget specifically for it. This is likely to include the cost of signage. Cllr Pearce proposed awaiting any recommendation from the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee to Full Council. If approved, Full Council could consider a delegation to this Committee to consider the budget allocation and when the project should commence; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

89.4. An update regarding the recent email outage, and to review associated communication from the Council's IT provider – It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

89.5. Reviewing the protocol that was followed during the official period of mourning following the death of Her Majesty The Queen, and understanding what is statutory requirement and what is discretionary - It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

89.6. If and how to budget for replenishment based on life expectancy of recent capital upgrades and anticipated replacement dates – This item had been considered earlier in the meeting.

89.7. The repair, maintenance and replenishment of the Denes Oval tennis courts once refurbished – It was agreed to defer this item to November's meeting. This will be informed by decisions on future grounds maintenance arrangements and a decision from Full Council on whether to extend the current policy of not charging leisure fees.

89.8. An operator model proposal for the tennis courts (some aspects may be confidential)

90. Lease and licence arrangements for the following (some aspects may be confidential):

90.1. War Memorial Museum – It was agreed to consider items 90.1, 90.7 and 90.8 at this meeting and defer the others to next week's meeting.

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- 90.2. Royal Naval Patrol Service Association Museum
- 90.3. Martello and Giardino
- 90.4. Moviemakers Theatre
- 90.5. Maritime Museum
- 90.6. Gunton Estate Residents' Meeting Hall
- 90.7. Lowestoft and District Allotment Association
- 90.8. Land to the east of Whapload Road and North Denes
- 90.9. An update on progressing licences for the Lowestoft Town Tennis Club and the Lowestoft Cricket Club – This item had been considered earlier in the meeting. The licence for the Cricket Club will be taken forward on the same timetable. An item will be added to November's agenda to receive an update.

91. Date of the next meeting

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

92. Items for the next agenda and close

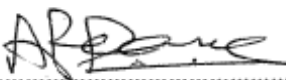
Committee members were asked to email any requests to officers.
Cllr Brooks proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

93. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

- 90.8. Land to the east of Whapload Road and North Denes Tingdene – Cllr Brooks considered there were a number of items in the lease requiring review by the lawyer. Cllr Brooks will contact officers regarding a clause which seemed to be missing. Cllr Pearce requested clarification from the lawyer on certain provisions in the lease, and clarification that the tenant is complying with certain provisions. The Clerk will also put some information together for the next meeting regarding an ongoing issue.
- 90.7. Lowestoft and District Allotment Association Allotments – Certain provisions will be considered further at the next meeting as part of the consideration of the renewal of the lease.
- 90.1. War Memorial Museum – At 17:03, Cllr Pearce proposed suspending Standing Order 3y for a maximum of five minutes to enable the meeting to continue; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed seeking legal advice on the current status of the lease, and asking the Trustee to confirm obligations in the lease are being fulfilled; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

The meeting was closed 17:07.

Signed: 
14 November 2022