

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:30 on 22 September 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Robert Breakspear, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Mayor), Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, Alice Taylor and David Youngman

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

86. Welcome

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.

87. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Amanda Frost, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Graham Parker and John Pitts. Cllrs Tara Carlton, Peter Collecott and Tracey Eastwood had not provided apologies and were absent. Cllr Knight proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

88. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard, Coleby and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 92.3. Cllr Patience declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 93.2a. Cllrs Breakspear and Taylor declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 93.2b.

89. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meetings on 25 August and 17 September 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

Regarding the minutes of 25 August 2020, the item regarding amplification and recording options was not considered during the confidential session of that meeting, it was agreed that the item would be deferred to this meeting whilst a third quotation was still pending.

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

Comments from a member of the public had been received and were displayed. Regarding item 99.1 it was commented that this item could not be considered fully without the street name boundaries and numbers of constituents in each ward. Regarding item 98.2 it was queried why this item is marked as confidential. The comments were noted and will be taken into consideration. It was explained that the Place Board report is marked as confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

91. Finance

91.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 10 September 2020 – The draft minutes were noted and have not yet been considered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

91.2. Receipt and consideration of the following:

91.2a. The 2020 – 2021 budget position – The budget monitoring documents had been circulated ahead of the meeting and there were no comments.

91.2b. Any bank reconciliations – The latest bank reconciliation, for August, has been sent to the relevant Councillor to check and sign off.

91.2c. Payments, income and expenditure reports for the month ending 31 August 2020 and September 2020 to date, including any payments made under delegated authority and any COVID-19 grant awards – The income and expenditure reports had been circulated ahead of the meeting and were noted as follows:

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Table 1 August Income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
3 August 2020	Lamarti	Hire of Links Road Car Park for sale of ice cream	£120 + £24 VAT = £144
3 August 2020	Market Income	Market Income 3 August 2020	£54.50
10 August 2020	Market Income	Market Income 10 August 2020	£18.50
10 August 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
14 August 2020	HMRC	VAT Return Q1 2020-2021	£49,832.09
17 August 2020	Market Income	Market Income 17 August 2020	£42.50
21 August 2020	East Suffolk Council	Grant to refurbish project of The Green	£5,287
24 August 2020	Market income	Market income 24 August	£42.50
26 August 2020	Market income	Market income 26 August	£24
28 August 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pocket Parks grant	£3,000

Table 2 August Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
3 August 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR August 2020	£117
3 August 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NNDR August 2020	£187
3 August 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR August 2020	£110
3 August 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR August 2020	£210
3 August 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC NNDR August 2020	£122

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
6 August 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£290.48 + £14.52 VAT = £305
6 August 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	North Denes Legal Advice	£1260 + £237.60 VAT = £1497.60
6 August 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Hamilton House Legal Advice	£215.50 + £43.10 VAT = £258.60
6 August 2020	SCC Pension Fund	Pensions	£3860.90
6 August 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	General Legal Advice	£495 + £99 VAT = £594
6 August 2020	Archant	Lowestoft Journal Adverts	£145 + £29 VAT = £174
6 August 2020	Urban Vision	Draft non-planning section of the Neighbourhood Plan	£525 + £105 VAT = £630
6 August 2020	Need2Store	Civic Artefact Storage August 2020	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
6 August 2020	Sandy Lane Nursery	2x Cherry Trees	£39 + £7.80 VAT = £46.80
6 August 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	North Denes Legal Advice	£930.60 + £186.12 VAT = £1,116.72
7 August 2020	NPower	Town Hall electricity charges	£95.23 + £4.76 VAT = £99.99
17 August 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall Gas	£43.52 + £2.18 VAT = £45.70
17 August 2020	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Payments	£92.39
19 August 2020	Marina Theatre Trust	Covid-19 Grant	£1,880
20 August 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£27.54 + £1.38 VAT = £28.92
21 August 2020	Salaries	Salaries August 2020	£7,842.02
21 August 2020	HMRC	HMRC July 2020	£3750.59
24 August 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest Electricity Charges	£96.68 + £4.83 VAT = £101.51
24 August 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest Electricity Charges	£171.72 + £8.59 VAT = £180.31

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Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
26 August 2020	Great Yarmouth Heating	Whitton Hall radiator work	£289.73 + £57.95 VAT = £347.68
26 August 2020	BSA Security	Town Hall alarm service	£170 + £34 VAT = £204
26 August 2020	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership Charge Sept 2020	£36,525 + £7,305 VAT = £43,830
26 August 2020	SLCC	National Conference webinar x3	£75 + £15 VAT = £90
26 August 2020	RSF Support Services Ltd	Giardino asbestos survey	£365

Table 3 September Income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
1 September 2020	Mr Lamarti	Use of Links Road Car Park	£120 + £24 VAT = £144
1 September 2020	Tingdene	Rental Income	£47,713.07
1 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 1 September 2020	£30.50
7 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 7 September 2020	£18.50
7 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£1,562.50
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£775
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£625
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£583
14 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 14 September 2020	£18.50
21 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 21 September 2020	£42.50

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Table 4 September Expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR August 2020	£117
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NNDR August 2020	£187
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR August 2020	£110
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR August 2020	£210
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC NNDR August 2020	£122
1 September 2020	Lowestoft Mens Shed	Covid-19 Grant	£600
1 September 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£138.60 + £27.72 VAT = £166.32
1 September 2020	Lowestoft & District Allotments Association	Allotments Lease	£1,000
4 September 2020	SCC Pension Fund	August Pensions	£3,431.87
8 September 2020	Archant	Lowestoft Journal Adverts	£993.50 + £198.66 VAT = £1,192.16
11 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	ESC Lowestoft Vision BID	£1,185
16 September 2020	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Charges	£20.39
18 September 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£105.71 + £5.29 VAT = £111
21 September 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall Gas	£45.70
21 September 2020	HMRC	HMRC Charges August 2020	£3,124.47
21 September 2020	The Hygiene Bank	Covid-19 Grant	£500
21 September 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage September 2020	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
22 September 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage August 2020	£200 + £40 VAT = £240

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

91.4. The following recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee:

91.4a. Amending the COVID-19 grant awarding policy to include a 90 day deadline to progress and receive funds

Cllr Taylor temporarily left the meeting 19:40

This recommendation was made to avoid funds being ringfenced which could be used elsewhere if the applicant does not respond to queries raised or requests for additional information. Cllr Coleby seconded the proposal from the Finance and Governance Committee and all Councillors voted in favour.

91.5. Amplification and recording options for face-to-face meetings at Hamilton House – In light of the latest Government advice it does not appear that face-to-face meetings will be resuming imminently. The livestreaming and recording of meetings has received a generally positive response from the public.

Cllr Taylor returned 19:41

This would be a large financial commitment to something which is not going to be used straight away, although the Council would like the equipment in place ready for when face-to-face meetings can resume. Staff have reviewed the quotations and have found it difficult to compare owing to the differences between them. It is difficult to assess what the requirements are, and it is felt that more information is required before this can be considered fully. Cllr Pearce proposed approval in principle for amplification and recording options for face-to-face meetings to be progressed, taking account of the right to be forgotten, and to continue to make recordings available for the civic year. Officers should gather more information for this matter to be considered at an appropriate Full Council meeting, ahead of the resumption of face-to-face meetings; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

91.6. Whether there has been any changes to the advice previously given regarding offering thanks to keyworkers and appropriate ways to commemorate the impact of COVID-19, including Suffolk County Council plans for a memorial woodland – The proposals discussed previously by the Town Council relate to offering thanks to keyworkers, whereas the Suffolk County Council plans appear to be for a memorial to those who have lost their lives. There have been no further updates with the Suffolk County Council plans. There are still restrictions in place over public events in general, which will need to be considered carefully in the planning of civic events, such as Remembrance. Other proposals, such as the offering of thanks to keyworkers, can be considered as a policy decision. It was suggested that with Christmas approaching and the number of cases rising again, it would be appropriate now to revisit some of the proposals which were deferred earlier in the year. It was however suggested that it may still be too early as the pandemic is not subsiding, although the Council does not have to necessarily wait until it is over to offer thanks. Cllr Pearce proposed implementing the remaining items from Cllr Green's initial seven-point proposal, which were deferred earlier in the year, including sending luxury hampers to the staff at the James Paget Hospital's Intensive Care Unit and to local care homes; eight Councillors voted in favour; three Councillors voted against; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Coleby proposed that his original proposal for a commemorative piece of art, and the proposal from the Friends of Kensington Gardens for a memorial rose garden be considered next year; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.

91.7. Noting that a 2.75% agreement on salary increases has been agreed and applies to all staff backdated to 1 April 2020 – This is in line with the Council's previous decision and was noted.

92. Governance

92.1. Actions by the Town Council in response to the COVID-19 pandemic – The COVID-19 grant

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awarding policy is continuing and there will be further partnership work on what should happen from here, as the situation is ever-changing and Government policy changes frequently. The Triangle Market is ongoing and will be reviewed in December. The priority for the Council will be the setting of its budget for the forthcoming year to continue to offer support to the town. The Council will also need to consider its communications if a lockdown is imposed again, including liaising with local support groups.

- 92.2. Whether to extend the Town Clerk's emergency delegated authority – The delegated authority was granted before the new regulations about Town and Parish Councils holding video meetings were brought in. The Clerk noted that where possible most substantive matters have come to meetings since the Council has been meeting by Zoom but having some form of emergency delegation remains helpful for Council flexibility when needed and as a last resort. It was suggested that the emergency delegated authority could be extended to a group of Councillors, so as not to burden staff, but it was explained that the emergency delegated authority is only used as a last resort anyway and also that there are pre-existing delegations for urgent repairs where this could potentially create large liabilities for the Council, which cannot wait for a meeting. The Clerk clarified that she is still happy to have the emergency delegated authority, but would always prefer to take matters to Council for consideration in the first instance where reasonably possible. Cllr Taylor proposed that the emergency delegated authority to the Clerk continues as it is for the next six months; seconded by Cllr Frost. Cllr Coleby proposed that the emergency delegated authority granted in March be removed and that the Council reverts back to the previous process. Cllr Taylor's proposal was voted on and nine Councillors voted in favour, and three Councillors voted against.
- 92.3. Partnering with the Friends of Dip Farm – The Friends of Dip Farm are developing a business plan and are not necessarily requesting a formal partnership, just creating a list of organisations with shared interests and aspirations who they could work with in the future. Dip Farm is an East Suffolk Council asset and the Friends Group is liaising with them, but the Town Council also has an interest in the site through the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the site being registered as an Asset of Community Value. Cllr Pearce proposed accepting the invitation to partner with the Friends of Dip Farm, using the Town Council's relationship with the Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association as a model as to how the partnership will work; seconded by Cllr Green; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

93. Assets, Inclusion and Development

- 93.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 7 September 2020 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 93.2. The following recommendations from the AID Committee:
- 93.2a. A request from the Suffolk County Councillors (Gunton Division) to install a bench in Belle Vue Park – The Suffolk County Councillors will fund the bench, the Town Council can choose the style and location. Cllr Coleby proposed offering thanks to the Suffolk County Councillors and approving their request; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour other than Cllr Frost who had temporarily left the meeting and returned after the vote was taken. Cllr Patience advised that a letter is required from the Town Council to formally accept the request. A further letter would be required to give East Suffolk Norse permission to install the bench in Belle Vue Park. Cllr Green proposed proceeding with the letters as required; seconded by Cllr Coleby; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Coleby has sent some designs to the County Councillors, from the company who designed and supplied the benches for the Poppy Garden.
- 93.2b. Approving Kensington Gardens as the location for the 'Talking Bench' (note this is contrary to the decision of Full Council) – Full Council requested that the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee consider locations, as it was felt that

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Kensington Gardens already had an abundance of benches. The Friends of Kensington Gardens have said they would be happy for the 'Talking Bench' to be installed in Kensington Gardens. Stoven Close was put forward as a suggestion, but East Suffolk Council wanted it to be installed in a busier and more central park. Belle Vue Park had also been suggested as an alternative, and it was queried whether Arnold's Bequest had also been discussed.

Cllr Coleby left the meeting 20:27

Cllr Taylor proposed siting the Talking Bench in Kensington Gardens, and it was agreed there was no reason it could not be installed there if that is the Council's desire; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 93.3. A request for tree works at the Great Eastern Linear Park (note this is contrary to the Town Council's Tree Policy), taking account of the conclusions of the AID Committee – The resident has offered to fund the cost of the work. The AID Committee has suggested that the resident seek advice and a schedule of works at their own expense, but requires a decision of Full Council regarding the exercise of the Tree Policy. The Tree Policy was key in East Suffolk Norse's Arborist's recommendation not to approve the works. The Tree Policy is very specific that trees will not be removed/pruned because of leaves being deposited in gutters or loss of light. It was commented that the Council has granted permission for two trees to be removed from Normanston Park which are not dead, diseased or dying. The resident is requesting pruning of trees which have grown large and is offering to pay for it. Unless an amendment is made to the Tree Policy, approving this request could set a precedent. Cllr Barnard proposed deferring a decision on this matter until the Tree Policy has been reviewed by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

A comfort break was taken 20:39 and the meeting resumed 20:45

Cllr Hardie joined the meeting 20:45

94. Planning and Environment

- 94.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 25 August and 8 September 2020 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

- 94.2. The following recommendation from the Planning and Environment Committee:

94.2a. A response to East Suffolk Council's consultation on cemetery/burial availability in East Suffolk as follows:

1. The maintenance and upkeep of the existing ESC run cemeteries in Lowestoft needs to be reviewed. Better communication of re-wilding areas is needed including why areas are being left longer and explanation of ESC environmental policy.
2. New cemetery land for the people of Lowestoft does not need to be in the LTC parish area. Any spare land within the Lowestoft parish boundary should be kept as public open space and/or allotments and cemeteries should be provided in neighbouring parishes where there is more available open space.

There were concerns with the East Suffolk Council policy of re-wilding certain areas within cemeteries, particularly the Lowestoft and Kirkley cemeteries, as this can be seen as disrespectful and upsetting for visitors. This had been raised at a Liaison Meeting and East Suffolk Council agreed that better communication regarding its re-wilding policy was needed.

Cllr Pearce temporarily left the meeting 20:50

It was also considering mowing access paths into the longer grass. It was suggested these concerns could form part of the consultation response.

Cllr Pearce returned 20:52

Rather than stopping the wildflower areas at these cemeteries, it was suggested that wildflower seeds could be planted as well, to promote biodiversity. Cllr Knight proposed

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that points 1 and 2 are put forward as the Town Council's response to the consultation; seconded by Cllr Pearce; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Knight proposed that a third point be added that re-wilding areas in Lowestoft are developed in consultation with the Town Council where possible; seconded by Cllr Pearce; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

95. Climate Emergency

95.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 1 September 2020 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

96. Community Safety

96.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 1 September 2020 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

96.2. The following recommendations from the Community Safety Committee:

96.2a. Adoption of the Terms of Reference, with amendments to the Committee's responsibilities – Cllr Knight proposed adoption of the Terms of Reference as amended; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

97. Personnel

97.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meetings on 24 August and 17 September 2020 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

97.2. The following recommendations from the Personnel Committee:

97.2a. Adoption of the Terms of Reference, with an amendment regarding the appointment of substitutes – Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the Terms of Reference as amended; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

98. Representative Roles

98.1. Appointing a representative from the Town Council to attend a Zoom meeting (7 October 17:30 – 20:00) with Peter Aldous MP for Town and Parish Councils in Waveney, to discuss the effects of the pandemic – Cllr Green has provisionally put his name down to ensure that the Town Council is represented at the meeting. Cllr Hardie nominated herself as the representative and this was seconded by Cllr Taylor. Cllr Knight seconded Cllr Green, but Cllr Green confirmed that he was not nominating himself, he just wanted to ensure that the Town Council had a representative at the meeting. The vote was taken to appoint Cllr Hardie as the representative and all Councillors voted in favour.

98.2. A report on the Lowestoft Place Board including consideration of the Town Investment Plan (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

99. Consultations

99.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission draft recommendations for new division boundaries across Suffolk County Council. <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/18495> - This will have implications for the Town Council, and there were concerns that if the wards are made too big, even with more councillors, individual communities within them will struggle to have a voice. It was commented that it is difficult to identify on the maps where the boundaries are. If the plans proceed there could be elections two years apart in 2023 and 2025. It was suggested that Councillors elected in 2023 could remain in post for six years, to save the Town Council the cost of the additional election fees. It was however suggested that six years could be too long a commitment. It was queried whether the Town Council's assets would be affected. The assets cannot be taken away from the Town Council, but they may be in a different parish. It was agreed that this should be carried forward to the next agenda for further consideration.

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100. Date of next meeting

27 October 2020 19:30

101. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests in addition to the items identified during the meeting.

Cllr Knight proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The Mayor 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.

102. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

98.2 A report on the Lowestoft Place Board including consideration of the Town Investment Plan (confidential) – The Town Investment Plan was discussed. Cllr Barnard made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour. Cllr Patience will feed this decision back to the Place Board.

The Mayor closed the meeting 21:24.

Signed: 

27 April 2021