

Lowestoft Town Council
Full Council Meeting
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:30 on 27 August 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Connor Blowers, Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Paul Page, Andy Pearce, Deborah Ray, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman (Deputy Chair)

In Attendance: Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Also In Attendance: Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager) and Emma Bellward (Marina Theatre Project Manager) (both via zoom)

Public: One member of the public (in person)

82. Welcome

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

83. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence from any Councillors not in attendance

Apologies were received from Cllrs Nasima Begum, Neil Coleby, Janet Craig, John Murray, Christine Moore, Christian Newsome, Graham Parker, John Pitts and Bernadette Rappensberger with reasons provided.

Cllr Brooks requested Cllr Coleby's apologies be taken separately due to his length of absence and proposed to approval all other apologies received. The proposal was not seconded.

Cllr Blowers proposed to approve all apologies received; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; nine votes in favour; one vote against.

Cllr Patience was absent with no apologies received.

84. Declarations and dispensations

84.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Blowers declared he worked for the Marina Theatre.

84.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

85. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the Full Council meeting on 23 July 2024

Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

86. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – An advance comment was received and read out regarding the number of inquorate meetings this civic year and it was requested the comment be read out in full. Cllr Brooks agreed attendance had been poor and requested Councillor wellbeing be considered by the Personnel Committee to understand if there was anything the council could do to assist members struggling with attendance.

Apologies for meetings needed to be provided with advance notice, particularly for Committees with substitute members, to avoid late cancellations of Committee meetings.

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A member of the public was in attendance as a representative of the East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust (ESBPT) to discuss item 90.2b and answer any queries Councillors may have about the proposal.

Cllr Blowers proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session to address item 90.2b with the representative of the ESBPT; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

The meeting was closed to the public and moved into confidential session at 18:44

90.2b. To proceed in principle with a project with the East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust, following receipt of a proposal (confidential) – A recommendation was due to be considered from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee (AID) to approve the proposal subject to specified caveats recommended by AID. The representative of ESBPT answered queries from the council.

Cllr Breakspear escorted the member of the public from the chamber at 18:52

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendation from AID and proceed with the project in principle; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

Cllr Breakspear returned to the chamber at 18:54

The meeting was returned to public session at 18:54

87. Finance and Governance

87.1. To receive and consider the following:

87.1a. 2024 – 2025 budget and reserves – There were no comments.

87.1b. Any bank reconciliations – There were no comments.

87.1c. Payments and income for the month ending 31 July 2024 and August 2024 to date (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the report; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

87.1d. Payments for approval – There were no payments for approval.

87.2. To consider the following matters from the Finance and Governance Committee:

87.2a. A recommendation to not allow Councillors to access Lowestoft Town Council emails on personal devices, but allow Councillors to submit a request for a Town Council issued mobile phone, which will be considered on a case by case basis – The protection of information and reduction of security risk was paramount and it was agreed the convenience of members to access Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) emails on their personal devices should not be considered as it would be detrimental of the council's security.

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee (F&G) to maintain the existing policy and not allow access to LTC information on personal devices. If a councillor can demonstrate they need a mobile phone due to the current system disadvantaging them and provide evidence to the Acting Town Clerk. Cllr Webb seconded the proposal. A vote was held with nine votes in favour and one abstention from a member who felt phones should not be offered as an alternative.

87.2b. To consider options relating to the draft Hamilton House lease (confidential) – To be discussed in confidential session.

88. Town Hall Project

88.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Town Hall Project Committee meeting on 8 August 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

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88.2. To consider the following regarding the delivery stage of the redevelopment of the Town Hall:

88.2a. To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager, including an update on the procurement of a main build contractor (some aspects may be confidential)

The Town Hall Project Manager joined the meeting at 19:05 via zoom

The tender for the main contract closed 19th August and was proceeding to the evaluation phase.

Events would be held during the Heritage Open Days with a Heritage Skill Market on Saturday 7 September and talks on the Town Hall plans to be held at the Heritage Centre.

The Freeland Filmmaker has been appointed and recruitment was ongoing for a new Heritage Officer.

A further update would be provided in confidential session.

88.3. To consider the following matters from the Town Hall Project Committee:

88.3a. A recommendation to accept the transfer of a parcel of land from East Suffolk Council – Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendation of the Town Hall Project Committee and accept the transfer of land as a new asset; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

Cllr Blowers temporarily left the chamber for consider of item 89 at 19:13

The Marina Theatre Project Manager joined the meeting at 19:13 via zoom

89. Marina Theatre

89.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Marina Theatre Project Committee meeting on 8 August 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

89.2. To consider the following in relation to the Marina Theatre Redevelopment Project:

89.2a. To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager – The tender to appoint a contractor went live 12 August and was due to close on 16 September with a moderation meeting scheduled for 30 September to determine the recommended tender and to determine if the project would be viable. A recommendation to award the contract would be brought to Full Council on 3 October for approval and then the project would move to contractor phase.

The architects had a meeting scheduled for 30 August to review the technical work on the project.

Dates had been received from UK Power Networks regarding works to reroute the cabling under theatre, which the Marina Theatre were checking these dates to ensure the works would not impact any pre-booked performances.

A date had been offered for mid-October for the gas supply for a new meter, subject to the company receiving the necessary permits.

Recommendations for mitigations during the construction phase regarding the kittiwakes nesting season had been received from Suffolk Wildlife Trust. These measures had been agreed by the Project Committee and would be built into the tender documents.

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89.2b. To receive an update on the Licence for Alterations and to give early consideration to funding support (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

90. Assets, Inclusion and Development

90.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting on 5 August 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

Cllr Blowers returned to the chamber at 19:17

90.2. To consider the following recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee:

90.2a. To proceed with the Decisions App, subject to appropriate training being provided prior to the system going live – Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendation to proceed with the Decision App, subject to training being provided in advance of the system going live; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

90.2b. To proceed in principle with a project with the East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust, following receipt of a proposal (confidential) – This item had been discussed in confidential session at the beginning of the meeting.

91. Planning

91.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meetings on 8 and 22 August 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

92. Personnel

92.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meetings on 1 and 21 August 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

92.2. To consider the following recommendations from the Personnel Committee:

92.2a. Office closure over the Christmas holiday, or granting any officer who chooses to work the holiday period (due to service needs) the same benefit, to be taken before the end of January – Cllr Pearce proposed officers be given the 23 and 24 December off in view of the conditions they have worked under this year, and any officers required to work on those dates will receive the extra two days of annual leave and arrange to take them between Christmas and the end of January 2025; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

92.3. To note any matters relating to staff absence (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

92.4. To consider staff terms and conditions for 2024/25 (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

92.5. To receive a progress report on job profiling evaluations and further implementation of the three tier staffing structure (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

93. Climate and Ecological Emergency

93.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee meeting on 19 August 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

93.2. To consider the following recommendations from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee:

93.2a. To make the bulky waste collection scheme permanent from April 2025, subject to contract tender process, and to extend the one year trial (due to expire October 2024) to 31 March 2025 – The success of the trial was noted, with the contractor

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upcycling and recycling a large percentage of the collected items. Cllr Pearce proposed the service be made permanent with the current contract to be extended until the end of the financial year and a tender process to be undertaken for a permanent contractor to be in place for 1 April 2025; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

93.3. To consider publication of the public transport survey, or an appropriate delegation – Cllr Pearce proposed a delegation be made to officers to circulate the survey to the entire council with a deadline for responses, to choose the locations for physical copies of the survey to be distributed and to publish the survey when ready; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

94. Outside bodies

94.1. To receive Cllr Barker's report from the SLCC Youth Engagement Summit on 18 July 2024 – The report was noted.

95. To consider the following legal matters (confidential):

95.1. An update report on legal matters – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

96. Date of next meeting

24 September 2024 at 18:30

97. Items for the next agenda and close

98. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal and employment issues relating to the matters on this agenda, including the following:

98.1. Any matters, including those above as required – Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 19:37

88.2a. To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager, including an update on the procurement of a main build contractor (some aspects may be confidential) – The Project Manager provided an update to LTC on the tenders submitted for the main build contractor.

A summary of the progress and finances would be provided at the next Town Hall Project Committee meeting.

Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

87.2a A recommendation to not allow Councillors to access Lowestoft Town Council emails on personal devices, but allow Councillors to submit a request for a Town Council issued mobile phone, which will be considered on a case by case basis – A confidential update was provided to the council.

87.2b. To consider options relating to the draft Hamilton House lease (confidential) – The landlords had selected option 2 from the recommendations made by F&G.

At 20:30 Cllr Brooks proposed to suspend standing orders for fifteen minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

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Cllr Pearce proposed the lawyers be asked to proceed and draft a lease on those terms and continue discussions with the lawyer; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

89.2b To receive an update on the Licence for Alterations and to give early consideration to funding support (confidential) – The lawyers for LTC and Marina Theatre were discussing the licence.

Cllr Blowers temporarily left the chamber at 20:31

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting of the Marina Theatre Project Committee.

Cllr Blowers returned to the chamber at 20:32

95. To consider the following legal matters (confidential):

95.1. An update report on legal matters - A meeting paper had been provided, which the Acting Town Clerk provided commentary on as follows:

- Allotments – This lease has been progressed and Lowestoft & District Allotments Ltd (LDAL) need their solicitors to respond to LTC’s solicitors before the next scheduled Allotments Sub-Committee meeting on 18 September.
- Compass Street – Cllr Pearce proposed LTC officially withdraws its interest in the site and not pursue transfer of land; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- Whitton Green Park – A meeting was being arranged with ESC.
- Triangle Market – This was being progressed with ESC.
- Land Transfer behind Town Hall – It was agreed with ESC to not pay them the transfer fees.
- Links Road/Denes Oval/Ness Point – The OPR Consultant has requested a meeting with ESC and Coastal Partnership East to progress the transfers.
- Bowling Green – This was on the list for transfer.
- Cricket and tennis club licenses - Both clubs have received draft copies of their licenses. The office has received positive feedback so far and OPR Consultant would discuss this further with the Facilities and Contract Manager.
- Cotman Close – This was in abeyance.
- Uplands Children’s centre and GELP – This was in progress.
- Outstanding matter with a tenant – LTC had previously agreed to opt for one of two options provided by the solicitors. This has since been refused by the tenant and the solicitors have now provided advice contradictory to what was originally received. Cllr Pearce proposed a credit note for the legal advice be requested as the original advice LTC acted on has now been contradicted; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

At 20:46 Cllr Pearce proposed standing orders be suspended for fifteen minutes; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

Cllr Page left the chamber at 20:46

- War Memorial Museum – There was a confidential discussion regarding the lease. Unit 2 – Two options were provided on the service charge and LTC were asked to consider paragraph 20.3 where all alterations must have the consent of the landlord. Cllr Pearce proposed to agree, on the basis of the figures received, with option one and agree that there be no alterations without landowner’s consent and for the lease to be drawn up on that basis; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.
- Martellos and Giardinis – The solicitor had raised a point on the expired lease and a

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request from the tenant regarding the new lease. This was due to be discussed by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee.

The Committee Clerk left the chamber at 20:53

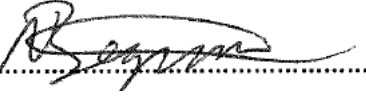
92. Personnel

92.3. To note any matters relating to staff absence (confidential)

92.4. To consider staff terms and conditions for 2024/25 (confidential)

92.5. To receive a progress report on job profiling evaluations and further implementation of the three-tier staffing structure (confidential)

The Chair closed the meeting at 21:15

Signed: 

24 September 2024