

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
13:00 on Friday 7 October 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks (Chair), Alan Green and Andy Pearce

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Town Clerk)

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

13. Welcome

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

14. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies and all Sub-Committee members were in attendance.

15. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared an interest in item 15.1 as treasurer of the Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society.

16. The draft minutes of the meeting on 4 July 2022

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

17. Public forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance.

18. Reviewing the following Town Council policies:

18.1 Booking Form for Hire of Community Halls – it was noted that the application form had been amended to details the same safeguarding requirements as the events application form. Amendments had also been made regarding statutory licensing arrangements.

18.2 Code of Conduct – it was noted that the revised code had been adopted by Full Council in June. Cllr Pearce stated that implementation of the code and interpretation were ambiguous and that there was no mechanism to defend yourself, for example, if the outcome of a complaint was falsely reported to defend yourself you would have to breach the confidentiality requirements within the code. Cllr Brooks did not understand why there had to be confidentiality on the outcome of a code of conduct complaint. The code of conduct as a policy document is adopted by the council, but the council is not the administering body, this is with the legal officer at the District Council (Monitoring Officer). It was agreed to ask the monitoring officer for an informative response on that given that confidentiality is an element covered by the code, if code of conduct proceedings are adjudicated and one party misrepresents the outcome, how can the other party represent themselves with breaching the confidential. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. Clarification was also required on Other Registerable Interests when a councillor is representing the Council on an outside body. Officers were asked to seek guidance on this and advice was given that councillors should submit an application for a dispensation to be granted if they felt that their appointment to an outside body, on behalf of the town council, may preclude them from participating in a town council meeting. Cllr Brooks was unhappy about the use of the word well being in the new guidance on declaring interests. Officers would provide information to councillors on the definition of well being in the context of declaring interests.

Agenda item 18.9 was considered a this point of the meeting.

18.3 Cycling Pledge – it was agreed that this policy did not need to be reviewed.

18.4 Data Protection Policy – it was agreed that this policy would be submitted to Finance and Governance to recommend adoption by Full Council.

18.5 Data Retention Policy – it was agreed that this policy would be submitted to Finance and Governance to recommend adoption by Full Council.

18.6 Defibrillator Policy – it was agreed that this policy be amended to match the commitment made by Community Safety regarding funding for defibrillators.

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18.7 Disciplinary and Grievance Policy - it was agreed that this policy would be submitted to Finance and Governance to recommend adoption to Full Council.

18.8 Heritage Plaques Policy – this item was deferred until outcomes of Events and Communications Sub-Committee

18.9 Standing Orders - this item had been added to the agenda to deal with amendments relating to declaring interests, however, the whole document was reviewed at the meeting. It was suggested that the following amendments were made:

- 1.f replace 'original' with 'amended'
- Officers to check at 3.c do the inclusions for Sundays, and bank holidays etc as per 3.b apply to committee meeting and 3.c to be amended if required. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 3.e remove the word 'standing' as all committees are now standing committees and therefore the word standing is superfluous.
- 3.v replace 'another' with 'other relevant'
- 3.y grammatical change regarding time duration of meetings
- 4.e It was noted that both this clause and 4.f should be enforced at the start of the new council term of office. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour
- 4.f delete the word 'the'
- 4.gii change 'which' to whose
- 4.giii deleted this standing order regarding the Deputy Mayor having ex officio membership and voting rights
- 4.gvi (former vii) substitute members are usually appointed at the annual meeting and not used on an adhoc basis. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation that for all committee meetings, standing order 4.gvi should be applied when a member cannot attend they are able to send a substitute to attend on their behalf, however, this arrangement must be confirmed by the member to the proper officer three days before the meeting they are unable to attend. The recommendation is that this should be applied from the start of the new council term of office. Seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour
- 4.gviii (former ix) delete the first sentence 'shall permit other than a standing committee, to appoint its own Chair at the first meeting of the committee'. Delete the word 'standing' in all instances
- 9.b this standing order to be deleted. Cllr Pearce proposed this, seconded by Cllr Brooks; and agreed two votes in favour, one abstention (Cllr Green).
- 9.b (former 9.c) delete 'before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9.b above'. Add words 'for the agenda' at the end of paragraph
- 9.c (former 9.d) delete 'received in accordance with standing order 9.b above'
- 13.b add 'or other relevant interest'

Items 18.1 to 18.7 and 18.9 were proposed, with any amendments made above, to be recommended for Finance and Governance Committee to consider with a recommendation to Full Council for adoption. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

19. Date of the next meeting

19 October 2022 at 16:00

20. Items for the next agenda and close

21. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 16:59.

Signed: 

21 December 2022