

**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 March 2025**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Connor Blowers, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby (Deputy Chair), Graham Parker, Andy Pearce (Chair) and Bernadette Rappensberger

**In Attendance:** Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk), James Cox (Finance Manager) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

**Public:** Four members of the public were in attendance in person

In the Chairs absence, Cllr Brooks proposed Cllr Parker be appointed to preside over the meeting; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

**129. Welcome**

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

*Cllrs Pearce and Coleby arrived at 15:03 and Cllr Pearce resumed the meeting as Chair*

**130. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Page with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

**131. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

131.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Rappensberger declared she was acquainted with the two owners of Claremont Pier per item 137.1a, but clarified she was not involved with the CIC and was not predetermined, furthermore, in relation to item 137.1d, she was aware of Lowestoft and District Independent Archives (LADIA) and was acquainted with some of the members, but was not a member of the group and was not predetermined. Cllr Pearce declared he was an ordinary member of LADIA, not a Committee member, but he would leave room for item. Cllr Brooks declared she would also leave the room for item 137.1d as she had been involved with the predecessor organisation Save Our Records Office. Cllr Coleby declared he was acquainted with individuals of LADIA but had no involvement with the organisation and was not pre-determined.

131.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

**132. To consider the confidential note of the meeting on 12 November 2024 and the draft minutes of the meeting on 10 February 2025**

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the confidential note and draft minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

**133. 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 – A representative of LADIA spoke on item 137.1d and highlighted the need for a dedicated public archive centre in the town, which they intended to deliver, and this grant would help to consolidate LADIA's presence and improve the public archive offering. There were no questions on the grant application. It was queried, should the grant be approved, if the organisation would be agreeable to receiving the funds in April 2025 as part of the new financial year. The representative of LADIA confirmed that would be agreeable.

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A member of the public spoke on item 137.1e as a representative of Pakefield Coast Protection CIC. It was noted the current coastal protection not adequate and this grant would enable the group to be more professional in contacting organisations and making the public aware of what is happening on the coastline. It was confirmed five to six people were involved in the group. It was queried if the group would be agreeable to wait until April to receive the funds as it was the end of the financial year, it was confirmed this would be agreeable. It was noted that Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) did not normally fund running costs but would be able to fund project costs.

A member of the public spoke on item 138.1 as a representative of the Youth Forum Working Group and made members aware of the following issues raised at their last meeting: the age range for membership should be 10-25 to allow for the inclusion of SEND students, full details of safeguarding needed to be considered, and advice was requested on what the procedure should be to elect members for the Forum.

**134. Budget and Loan**

134.1. To monitor the budget for 2024-2025, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – It was confirmed £7,790 remained in the Grant budget for the financial year and in April 2025 the new Grant budget total would be £50,000.

134.2. To note any bank reconciliations – November and December 2024 had been completed and January 2025 was underway.

*Cllrs Brooks and Pearce left the meeting for the consideration of item 137.1d at 15:27*

It was agreed to bring items 137.1d, 137.1e and 138.1 forward in the agenda.

137.1d. Lowestoft & District Independent Archive - £2,210 – Cllr Rappensberger proposed approval of the grant application and for the funding to be allocated from the April 2025 budget; seconded by Cllr Blowers; all in favour.

*Cllr Pearce returned to the chamber at 15:29*

137.1e Pakefield Coast Protection C.I.C - £1,285 – Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the application and for the funding to be allocated from the April 2025 budget.

*Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 15:30*

Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal. It was requested the group report their progress to the Town Council every six months. A vote was held with all in favour.

138.1 To receive an update from the Youth Forum Working Group on its Terms of Reference – The three points raised concerning the age range for membership, safeguarding details and the procedure to elect members was discussed. Cllr Coleby proposed the working group consider what organisations would be involved in the forum and how these bodies would be appointed, with full details to be brought to the April meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for a recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Pearce. The Working Group were advised that the LTC Safeguarding Policy should cover the meetings of the Youth Forum. A vote was held with all in favour.

**135. Payments and Receipts:**

135.1. To note the income and expenditure reports for February 2025 and March 2025 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce

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proposed approval of the report as a true and accurate record of income and expenditure; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

135.2. To consider any payments for approval (see schedule), including the following:

135.2a. STIHL MH445 Petrol Tiller at a cost of £584.38 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the purchase; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

A further payment for approval was reported to the Committee. Full Council had previously authorised repairs to the grounds maintenance van, however, further issues had been identified and failure to complete these repairs would cause the vehicle to fail its MOT. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the payments to repair the vehicle; seconded by Cllr Blowers; all in favour. The Committee requested the Parks and Ground Maintenance Manager monitor the state of the van ahead of the next budget.

### 136. To consider adoption of the following:

136.1. Sponsorship Application

136.2. Sponsorship Terms document

Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. It was requested the documents be kept in the same batch as the Grants Policy for the annual review and the documents be monitored throughout the year.

### 137. Grants and Sponsorships

137.1. To consider the following grant applications:

137.1a. Friends of Claremont Pier CIC - £5,000 – Concerns were raised on the negative impact of fireworks, in particular the effect on wildlife (particularly as the displays may coincide with the kittiwake nesting season) and people who suffer post-traumatic stress, and it was requested the organisation consider alternatives to fireworks. Furthermore, the applicant had not submitted all the supporting documents required for consideration of the application.

Cllr Pearce declared he was the LTC representative on the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership and confirmed the Kittiwake Officer had spoken to the Friends of Claremont Pier and advised them to have the display further along the seafront and not on the pier due to its proximity to the nests.

It was suggested if the grant was approved, that it include a stipulation for the fireworks be of a lower noise level to decrease distress to wildlife and the public.

A further concern was raised on the damaging effects of fireworks on the climate, particularly as Lowestoft was an Earth Protector Town.

It was confirmed the CIC was separate to the ownership of the Claremont Pier and was legally registered to raise funds to restore the pier. The event itself was a free-to-access event for the public and not to benefit a private business owner.

There were disruptive comments made by Cllr Brooks and Cllr Pearce gave a verbal warning to Cllr Brooks that he would enact Section 2 of the Standing Orders to maintain the order of the meeting if the comments did not desist. The comments were repeated and a warning was administered.

Cllr Brooks proposed refusal of the application.

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Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the application, subject to supporting documents being submitted and officers being satisfied of the contents, there being no remaining kittiwake fledglings on the dates of displays (else the displays would need to be moved further on the seafront, away from the kittiwake nests) and the applicant is asked to consider using low noise fireworks for the display.

Cllr Brooks' proposal was not seconded.

Cllr Rappensberger seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal.

Cllr Coleby queried if the wording of the proposal could be amended, rather than asking the applicant to consider use of low noise fireworks, that LTC recommends they use low noise fireworks. The proposer and seconder approved the amended and a vote was held with five votes in favour and one vote against.

Cllr Brooks requested an item go on the next Climate and Ecological Emergency agenda to consider LTC's stance on fireworks.

- 137.1b. Lowestoft & Oulton Broad Motor Boat Club Limited - £2,000 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the application. Cllr Pearce noted the event would have an adverse effect on the climate but seconded the proposal due to the amenity the event would provide. A vote was held with all in favour. It was requested the invoice for payment be submitted in April 2025.
- 137.1c. Sunrise Film Festival c/o Access Community Trust - £5,000 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the application; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. It was agreed the decision on whether to request the invoice be submitted this month or next month in the new financial year be left to the discretion of officers.
- 137.1d. Lowestoft & District Independent Archive - £2,210 – This item was brought forward in the agenda.
- 137.1e. Pakefield Coast Protection C.I.C - £1,285 – This item was brought forward in the agenda.
- 137.2. To receive a draft form of the Grant Applications matrix and note applicants due to provide their six-month update – Cllr Pearce proposed the Committee authorise the development and maintenance of this matrix as an operational document, with a request for an additional box to specify if the project covered a longer period and if the applicant was required to provide more interval updates as opposed to a six-month review; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.  
It was noted a large number of recipients had not provided a six-month report.

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

- 138.1. To receive an update from the Youth Forum Working Group on its Terms of Reference – This item was brought forward in the agenda.
- 138.2. To review fees and charges from 1 April 2025 – The fees and charges had been reviewed by the Budget and Loan Working Group and recommendations had been submitted to make the fees more equitable, whilst LTC-owned sports and recreation facilities would continue to be free-at-point-of-access for the public. The office would correspond with individual commercial operators and traders as appropriate regarding changes to fees and the fees would be published on the website. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the recommendations; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 138.3. To consider development and implementation of a Town Council business plan (consultant-led project) – The Acting Town Clerk requested this be discussed in confidential session due to ongoing sensitivities.

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- 138.4. To consider strategic financial planning and make arrangements for necessary meetings – As the transition to the Town Hall neared, there would need to be consideration of severance costs from Hamilton House, the servicing of the public works loan, operational figures for the Town Hall and timescales. It was suggested this be discussed over four to five meetings over spring and summer 2025, with further consideration of the timescale to achieve the General Reserves target.

Cllr Parker proposed, in addition to the usual budget rounds, three meetings be held in May, June and July, with a possible further meeting in August, this year to consider the strategic issues related to reaching the General Reserves targets and maintaining them, managing the financial transition from Hamilton House to the Town Hall, including directly funded aspects. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

- 138.5. To give initial consideration to the annual review of officer delegations for the civic year 2025/2026

*Cllr Parker left the chamber at 16:31*

All existing delegations would lapse at the Town Council's Annual General Meeting, therefore, officers would review and submit recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee in April on which delegations were they felt were necessary to continue, for onward recommendation to Full Council.

It was requested the Sports Development budget be considered for delegation to officers.

It was requested the Acting Town Clerk review the Clerk's delegations in the Financial Regulations and advise if the thresholds were still adequate.

It was requested officers consider publishing the agreed delegations on the new website in an appropriate location.

- 138.6. To consider costs for additional software to enable document accessibility – This was suggested as an interim arrangement for Councillors who experienced issues accessing documents, prior to the Decisions software being introduced. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed the purchase of the additional software would be a per month charge. It was agreed the Committee would make no decision at this time and requested documents be uploaded in PDF format where possible, and any Councillor who continued to have access issues would need to speak with the office.

### **139. To review the following policies:**

- 139.1. Financial Regulations – As requested, the signing arrangements had been considered by officers and it was noted the Procurement Act 2024 was due to come into force and the National Association of Local Councils would issue updated financial regulations to reflect this new act. In the interim, officers confirmed the current document was fit for purpose.

Cllr Pearce proposed, providing the signing arrangements had been verified, that the document be retained in its current state until the next annual review and it be recommended to Full Council for adoption; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

- 139.2. Reserves – It was agreed to have the Budget and Loan Working Group review the policy and targets. A suggestion was made to insert a table in the policy with statements of purpose for each reserve, rather than detail each reserve through an appendix.

### **140. To receive recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Working Group on the following policies:**

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140.1. Infrastructure Investment Plan – Officers were reviewing this document internally and it was agreed to defer consideration to the next meeting.

140.2. Investment

140.3. Sponsorship and Advertising

140.4. Memorial Planting

140.5. Memorial Benches

140.6. Ponds and Waterways

140.7. Employee Handbook – Officers were asked to review the Employee Handbook, in particular Section two, and return with a draft for review that is more informative and supportive to staff.

140.8. Member/Officer Protocol – The protocol was considered too heavy-handed and Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to Full Council that the protocol be archived and requested officers consider if any elements from the protocol need to be included in the Employee Handbook; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

Cllr Brooks proposed the remaining policies (items 140.2 to 140.6) be recommended to Full Council for adoption with the amendments suggested; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

**141. Date of the next meeting**

14 April 2025 - 15:00

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

No items were requested for the next agenda.

*At 16:57 Cllr Pearce proposed to suspend Standing Order 3y and extend the meeting for a maximum of fifteen minutes; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.*

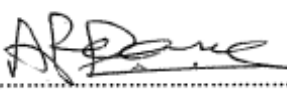
**143. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any employment matters and legal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

143.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required – Cllr Coleby proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

*The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 16:58*

138.3. To consider development and implementation of a Town Council business plan (consultant-led project)

*The Finance Manager and Committee Clerk left the chamber at 17:00 due to the confidential nature of the discussion.*

Signed:   
12 May 2025