

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council

Lowestoft Town Council
Tuesday 22 July 2025 18:30

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum (Mayor), Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, John Murray, Christian Newsome, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernie Rappensberger and Nick Webb

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

Also in attendance: Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager – via Teams)

73 Welcome

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

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Connor Blowers, Neil Coleby, Janet Craig, Christine Moore, Paul Page, Deborah Ray and Elise Youngman with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

75 Declarations and dispensations

- 75.1 To receive declarations of disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests, and of bias and pre-determination on items on the agenda – Cllrs Parker and Patience declared they were East Suffolk Council (ESC) members. Cllr Patience declared he was a member of the Resilience Board.
- 75.2 To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

76 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the Full Council meetings on 24 June and 15 July 2025

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the draft minutes and requested a query she had on the confidential note be addressed in confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce with a request to amend the proposal to correct a grammatical error under item 54.2, Cllr Brooks accepted the amendment and a vote was held with all in favour.

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

78 Finance and Governance

78.1 To receive and consider the following:

- a. 2024 - 2025 budget and reserves – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the budget and reserves report as a true and accurate record; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.
- b. Any bank reconciliations – May 2025 was up-to-date and June 2025 was in progress.
- c. Payments and income for the month ending 30 June 2025 and July 2025 to date (see schedules) – Budget and Loan were due to review the Grants and Events budget due to concerns on the expenditure to-date, with recommendations to be made to the Finance and Governance Committee.

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Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the report as a true and accurate record, with the following clarifications to be provided to the Finance and Governance Committee (F&G): to clarify why an invoice was received for the cancellation of a hired vehicle and to confirm the net income for Whitton Hall and clarify if rental income for Community Halls was credited to the Community Hall reserves; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllr Brooks requested a query on payments be raised in confidential session.

d. Payments for approval – There were no payments to consider for approval.

78.2 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting on 14 July 2025 – The minutes of the meeting were in progress.

78.3 To consider the Peer Challenge Initiative – F&G has recommended for officers to engage on the development of the initiative, but for no decision to be made until the new Business Plan has been adopted.

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse this recommendation on the basis it would not be instituted until the Business Plan has been agreed and adopted; seconded by Cllr Jones; twelve votes in favour and one vote against.

78.4 To consider a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee to amend its meeting schedule - The recommendation was to amend the schedule to the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the recommendation schedule the Committee to meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

79 Town Hall Project

79.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Town Hall Project Committee meeting on 10 July 2025 – The minutes were received and noted.

79.2 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce requested a query in relation to the progress report be taken to confidential session.

A delay notification had been received from Barnes Construction due to the condition of the roof with the ongoing damp, dry rot and insect infestation to be dealt with. This has necessitated extensive replacement of timbers in all roofs, except for the Council Chamber, and as the roof plates need to be supported from the ground floor level to enable these works, there has been a delay to project timeline.

The Project Manager confirmed more detail on the implications of this delay in terms of timeline and budget would be given at a later date, but noted that it would require use of the contingency provision in the budget.

UK Power Networks (UKPN) would begin installing the power for the substation from 4 August. No lease was signed at this time, but the Project Manager confirmed the intention was to progress at risk (if UKPN agreed, as they may decide to not commence the work until a lease was in place) as a substation was required for a functioning Town Hall.

The tender was out for a Pop Culture Project Facilitator to lead an inter-generational project, which including curating an exhibit at the Town Hall.

The job specification for the Town Hall Manager was nearing completion and it was intended to bring the Town Hall Manager onboard in autumn 2025 in order to build up the team and to understand the policies, procedures and documentation needed for opening the Town Hall.

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The Project Manager was invited to attend the confidential session at the end of the meeting.

80 Marina Theatre

- 80.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Marina Theatre Project Committee meeting on 10 July 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 80.2 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager – The progress report was received and it was requested a related matter be discussed in confidential session.

81 Assets, Inclusion and Development

- 81.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting on 7 July 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 81.2 To consider a recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to re-allocate funding from a trailer to a woodchipper – Cllr Pearce proposed approval and noted the budget was already allowed for and the rationale for the reallocation had been provided to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee (AID); seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.
- 81.3 To consider a recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee regarding future use of the Belle Vue Park thatched cottage (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

82 Planning

- 82.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meetings on 26 June and 10 July 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

83 Personnel

- 83.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting on 3 July 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 83.2 To consider a recommendation from the Personnel Committee to join a Cycle to Work Scheme – Cllr Brooks proposed approval to join the scheme; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 83.3 To approve recommendations from the Personnel Committee regarding staff terms and conditions (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

84 Climate and Ecological Emergency

- 84.1 To receive an update on appropriate activity to raise the profile of the flood risk to Lowestoft – The following activity had been proposed to raise the profile of the flood risk to Lowestoft:
 - A strong letter to be written to Jess Asato MP, Emma Hardy (Under Secretary of State for Water and Flooding), DEFRA and the Environment Agency, ESC and Suffolk County Council (SCC) to state that Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) represents the people of Lowestoft and are concerned by the cancellation of the flood barrier and the town's consequent vulnerability to the ravages of the North Sea. Attention should also be brought to the effect this has had on restricting inward investments to the town due to the uncertainty over flooding.
 - Engage with ESC and SCC to request an updated flood risk assessment for Lowestoft is conducted with the maps used to be updated to reflect the current infrastructure and have greater usability than maps used in previous surveys.
 - Engage with ESC and SCC to ask what their plans are to protect Lowestoft against further flooding.
 - To compile a list of, and consider engagement with, local active groups regarding the flood risk to Lowestoft.

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- Seek clarification on the reason why the Lowestoft Flood Defence Group was inactive.
- Identify a list of national bodies with flood risk interest and consider appropriate engagement.
- Consider contact with Crown Estate as a potential funding body for completion of flood defence.
- Engage with Associated British Ports regarding their position on current and future development of flood defence for Lowestoft.
- LTC to arrange a meeting with Jess Asato MP to seek clarification as to whether the pre-election pledge to establish a Flood Resilience Taskforce that meets before every winter to protect communities, has been honoured, what measures it is taking and what it proposes for Lowestoft.
- Build on the meeting with Jess Asato MP and invite the four MPs to discuss this matter further, as the flood risk concerns the east coast and requires a coordinated effort.

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendation; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllrs Parker and Patience temporarily left the chamber at 19:11 due to their declared interest as East Suffolk Council members

85 Outside Bodies

- 85.1 To request any agenda items and appoint attendees to the Quarterly Liaison Meeting with East Suffolk Council on 28 July – It was requested a fourth bullet point under the first item be added to have a strategic discussion on the approach to parking availability. It was requested an item be added to receive an update on the Crown Hotel.

Cllrs Brooks, Jones and Pearce volunteered to attend.

Cllr Begum registered her apologies for the meeting and it was agreed to contact Cllr Youngman to attend as the Deputy Mayor.

As Cllr Murray was unable to attend to speak on the flood risk, it was suggested Cllr Page be contacted to attend as the Chair of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee.

Cllr Pearce proposed to appoint Cllrs Brooks, Jones, Page, Pearce and Youngman as attendees for the meeting; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

Cllrs Parker and Patience returned to the chamber at 19:15

86 To consider the Town Council's position on the former Lowestoft Hospital

As LTC did not own the building it was limited on the action that could be taken, but as a stakeholder it could be an advocate for views on the matter.

Cllr Pearce proposed the Planning Committee have an item on the agenda every few months to track the progress of the site, members of the Committee and members of the public would be able to speak to the current updates, but it would be emphasised that this was not a lobbying forum and would be concerned with current updates and not reflecting on past events; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

Cllr Murray proposed the relevant community group be contacted to confirm if they would like a representative of LTC to join the group to facilitate communication and liaison between the group and the Council; seconded by Cllr Brooks.

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Cllr Pearce requested an amendment to nominate Cllr Murray as the representative. Cllr Murray accepted the nomination and amended the proposal, and declared his spouse attended the community group meetings.

LTC concluded it had no position at this time, furthermore, having a representative attend the community group meetings would not obligate LTC to agree with the community group, this was a means of representation and for the two parties to discuss the matter. A vote was held with all in favour.

87 To consider an update report legal matters (confidential)

This item would be discussed in confidential session.

88 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 18:30.

89 Items for the next agenda and close

No items were requested for the next agenda.

90 Admission to meetings

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 – Cllr Jones proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 19:29

76 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the Full Council meetings on 24 June and 15 July 2025

There was a discussion on the confidential note for the meeting on 24 June and it was agreed to amend the confidential note to add a comment made by a Councillor in the meeting.

78.1c. Payments and income for the month ending 30 June 2025 and July 2025 to date (see schedules)
– A concern was raised in relation to the budgets and it was concluded that F&G would continue to review the budget closely with a relevant standing item on the agenda.

79.2 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager (some aspects may be confidential) – There was a confidential discussion with the Project Manager regarding the progress report.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 19:38

Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 19:40

80.2 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager – There was a discussion on an item in the progress report. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

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- 81.3 To consider a recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee regarding future use of the Belle Vue Park thatched cottage (confidential) – AID had made a recommendation on the future use of the property.

Cllr Patience temporarily left the chamber at 19:51

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendation; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

Cllr Patience returned to the chamber at 19:52

87 To consider an update report on legal matters (confidential)

Cllrs Parker and Patience left the chamber at 19:53 due to their declared interests as East Suffolk Council members

The legal report had been provided with items highlight for Council consideration.
There was a discussion on lease renewals for several assets owned by LTC including Kensington Gardens, Uplands Community Centre and the Marina Theatre.

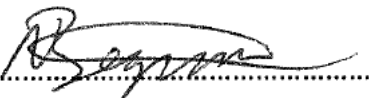
Cllrs Parker and Patience returned to the chamber at 19:57

Cllrs Parker and Patience left the chamber at 20:12

Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal in relation to the Uplands Community Centre; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

The Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant left the chamber at 20:20 for the consideration of the remaining items

- 83.3 To approve recommendations from the Personnel Committee regarding staff terms and conditions (confidential)

Signed: 
26 August 2025