

Lowestoft Town Council
Finance and Governance Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Wednesday 13 August 2025 10:00 AM

Minutes

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Paul Page, Andy Pearce (Deputy Chair) and Bernie Rappensberger

In attendance: James Cox (Finance Manager), Jill Hook (Finance Assistant) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

Public: Two members of the public were in attendance (in person)

32 Welcome

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

33 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Connor Blowers, Graham Parker and Deborah Ray with reasons provided. Cllr Page offered his apologies as he may be late to the meeting. Cllr Jones proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

Cllrs Neil Coleby and Keith Patience were absent with no apologies received.

34 Declarations of interests and dispensations

34.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from Councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he was the Secretary of the Save Our Records Office (SORO) and Lowestoft Independent Archives (the predecessor organisations) and was an ordinary member of the Lowestoft and District Independent Archives (LADIA) and would not participate in the discussion or vote for item 41.1. Cllr Brooks declared she was a member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and was previously a member of SORO and would not participate in the discussion or vote for item 41.1. Cllr Rappensberger declared she was the Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) representative to the Friends of Fen Park group, but had not been involved in their grant application.

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

35 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 14 July 2025

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

36 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 – Cllr Pearce proposed the two members of the public be permitted to speak to item 41.1 in the agenda rather than in public forum, as some members would need to leave the chamber for its consideration and at this time there were not enough members in attendance to ensure the meeting would remain quorate; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

37 Budget and Loan

37.1 To review and adopt Budget and Loan Sub-Committee arrangements, including the following:

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It had been decided at the previous meeting to constitute Budget and Loan as a Sub-Committee but meetings would not be held in public session due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

a. To consider composition – Requests for membership had been received from Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce and Bernie Rappensberger. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the composition; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

b. To review and consider adoption of the Terms of Reference – Cllr Brooks proposed the Terms of Reference be amended to state the Sub-Committee would usually meet on a weekly basis; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the Terms of Reference with the requested amendment; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

c. To agree the meeting schedule – Cllr Pearce proposed the Sub-Committee meet weekly on Monday afternoons at 13:00, noting meetings could be rescheduled as needed; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllrs Begum and Page entered the chamber at 10:15

37.2 To monitor the budget for 2025-2026, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets

a. Staffing contingency budget (some aspects may be confidential)

b. Legal budget

The management and expenditure of these budgets were delegated to officers, whilst this Committee reviewed expenditure against the budget to anticipate if the budgets would be challenged. Staffing contingency has already been reviewed by the Personnel Committee.

Cllr Brooks proposed the legal budget be individually itemised for this Committee to review; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

37.3 To note any bank reconciliations – June 2025 was with Councillors and July 2025 was in progress.

38 Standing Orders and Policies

38.1 To review and adopt Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee arrangements, including the following:

It has been agreed at the previous meeting for Standing Orders and Policies to be constituted as a Sub-Committee, but meetings would not be open to the public for general business.

a. To consider composition – Requests for membership had been received from Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger and Nick Webb. Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the composition; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

b. To review and consider adoption of the Terms of Reference – Cllr Brooks proposed the Terms of Reference be amended to schedule the meetings on a monthly basis; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the Terms of Reference with the requested amendment; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

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c. To agree the meeting schedule – Cllr Brooks proposed the meeting schedule be set for the first Wednesday of the month 10:00; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

39 Payments and Receipts:

- 39.1 To note the income and expenditure reports for July 2025 and August 2025 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – The July 2025 report had been received and the August 2025 report would be circulated and received at Full Council.
Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the July 2025 income and expenditure report as a true and accurate record for the period, with August to be received at Full Council; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 39.2 To consider any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were no payments for approval.

41 Sponsorships

To consider the following sponsorship applications

- 41.1 Lowestoft and District Independent Archives - £6,420 – The Committee agreed to bring this item forward in the agenda and permitted members of the public to speak on the item.
The members of the public informed the Committee of their recent acquisitions and thanked them for considering their application which was seeking a sponsorship to cover the running costs of their office at 3 St Peter's Street.

Cllrs Brooks and Pearce temporarily left the chamber at 10:32 due to their declared interests

A Chair would need to be elected from the remaining members to preside on this item.

Cllr Jones proposed Cllr Rappensberger preside as Chair.

Cllr Rappensberger did not accept the nomination and proposed Cllr Page preside as Chair. Cllr Rappensberger declared she had been a member of SORO and Lowestoft Independent Archives, but was not a member of LADIA and was not pre-determined on the item. Cllr Jones seconded the nomination and a vote was held with all in favour.

As the organisation were seeking other sources of funding, Cllr Begum proposed a year's sponsorship of £5,000 be provided as an initial amount, in anticipation that LADIA would be able to source the remaining amount, with a review of the situation at the end of the sponsorship year; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

Officers would contact the organisation to determine the schedule of payments for the sponsorship.

Cllrs Brooks and Pearce returned to the chamber at 10:46

40 Grants

To note the following grant applications have been received and discuss if any require urgent consideration

- 40.1 Friends of Fen Park - £337.98 – Cllr Rappensberger proposed approval of the grant; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 40.2 Lowestoft North Cliff Community Garden (CIO) - £300 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the grant; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; five votes in favour and one vote against.

41 Sponsorships

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- 41.1 Lowestoft and District Independent Archives - £6,420 – This item was brought forward in the agenda.

42 Other financial and governance matters, including:

- 42.1 To note the Lord Kitcheners Gala dinner will not proceed and consider re-allocating the Mayoral ticket fees to the Remembrance Ball in November - The committee previously approved funding two tickets for the mayor and a guest at £75 per ticket, the remembrance ball tickets were £60 and therefore a partial refund would be made.
The Committee queried if the fundraiser was still for Lord Kitcheners or if it would be for the Royal British Legion.

Cllr Brooks proposed the item be deferred whilst officers ascertain the purpose of the fundraiser.

Cllr Page proposed to approve the re-allocation for ticket purchase in principle with a request to officers to ascertain the purpose of the fundraiser, which would be reported at the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

- 42.2 To review Financial Regulations (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce requested a query on this item be taken into confidential session.
- 42.3 To consider items in the Risk Register which this committee is responsible for reviewing – Cllr Pearce queried item F3 on the risk register, specifically its combined score of eight and its consequent red status, and requested item F3 be considered at the next meeting with further information from officers.

Cllr Jones temporarily left the chamber at 11:05

Cllr Jones returned to the chamber at 11:08

An item was requested for the September meeting to receive supporting information for how the risk ratings and thresholds for red status were determined, with the rationalisation of the two risks highlighted red to be provided and discussed, along with a general discussion on the thresholds for red ratings.

- 42.4 To consider a maximum budget for the Mayor to visit Plaisir to represent Lowestoft as part of a twinning event – Cllr Brooks declared she was the LTC representative on the Plaisir Twinning Association.

The event was scheduled for 18 to 21 September and the Mayor would be representing the town of Lowestoft.

Cllr Begum confirmed the budget would need to cover the flights (which were estimated to be £60) and fuel for the drive to and from the airport.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval for the costs be covered under Mayoral Expenses, on the basis it would only cover the flight and fuel to and from the airport; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

It was requested there be more press coverage on the visit and for a report to be requested following the visit.

Cllr Pearce proposed the maximum budget be set to £200; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

- 42.5 To give early consideration to possible financial and governance support to a third-party charitable organisation (some aspects may be confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

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43 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 10 September 10:00

44 Items for the next agenda and close

No items were requested for the next agenda.

45 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 Rappensberger; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 11:22

- 42.2 To review Financial Regulations (some aspects may be confidential) – Due to a prior decision to separate the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) roles, the Financial Regulations would need to be updated to reflect this. Officers confirmed the updates had been made and noted a major change would be the addition of the Finance Manager as a bank signatory for emergencies.

Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to Full Council for both the Town Clerk and RFO to be bank signatories when required; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the Financial Regulations as amended; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

- 42.5 To give early consideration to possible financial and governance support to a third-party charitable organisation (some aspects may be confidential) – There was a confidential discussion on possible financial and governance support to a third-party charitable organisation.

Cllr Jones made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; five votes in favour and one abstention.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:45



Signed:

10 September 2025