

Lowestoft Town Council
Personnel Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 04 September 2025 at 10:00

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, John Murray, Christian Newsome (Chair), Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger and Nick Webb

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Town Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Senior Committee and Project Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

39 Welcome

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

40 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Jen Jones and Keith Patience, with reasons provided. Cllr Elise Youngman had resigned from this Committee. Cllr Rappensberger proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

41 Declarations of interests and dispensations:

41.1 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests, and of bias and pre-determination on items on the agenda – There were none.

41.2 Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

42 The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 7 August 2025, and the confidential note of the meeting on 3 July 2025

Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the minutes of the meeting on 7 August, and the confidential note of the meeting on 3 July, and requested for all confidential notes to be labelled with their dates when uploaded. Cllr Pearce seconded the proposal and had a comment regarding the confidential note of the meeting on 7 August, which he would raise during the confidential session. All Councillors voted in favour.

43 Public forum

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

44 Monitoring expenditure from the staffing contingency budget

There were no comments.

45 Monitoring the risk register and receiving an update on the implementation of control measures

A typographical error was identified at item 4 on the document. It was considered a full review of the register each quarter by the Clerk may be an onerous task. The Finance and Governance Committee retained oversight of the whole register, but each Committee had its own responsibilities to review relevant risks and control measures, so the Clerk did not consider that a quarterly review would be too onerous. The purpose of this agenda item was for this Committee to review the relevant risks and control measures.

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The Town Council's website did not identify that this Committee was responsible for matters relating to Councillors as well as staff.

It was suggested an agenda item should be tabled periodically to remind Councillors to update their Register of Interests.

The Finance and Governance Committee was due to consider the rationale behind how risk ratings were calculated. The ratings assigned to the risks relevant to this Committee would be considered further during the confidential session. Ratings could be amended as appropriate. Any relevant points arising from the business plan would be fed in to considerations, and it was requested Council be notified of any new risks added to the register as a result of the business plan.

As the draft business plan was due to be presented to Council this month, Cllr Pearce proposed for risk 5.1 on the register to be considered again by the Personnel Committee at its October meeting; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

46 Consideration of the following relating to Councillors:

46.1 A report of training completed – Planning training and Chairing Meetings Effectively training had been completed. The report from a training provider had identified some Councillors as 'no shows'. It was understood this meant they had been absent from the training without having provided apologies. Cllr Barker advised she had been in attendance but was late. Cllr Begum had not been in attendance as she had already undertaken this training. Cllr Brooks had recently undertaken training which she had not been happy with, but had not been given the opportunity to provide feedback, and considered that all Councillors should be provided with the opportunity to evaluate all training received.

46.2 Schedule for completion of Councillor training programme for 2025/2026 – The dates provided on the schedule were to meet with the requirements of the training policy and programme. All Councillors were required to attend, so where possible training sessions had been grouped together, and sessions offered at different times of the day. Cllr Brooks proposed that it become standard practise for attendees to evaluate training sessions. Cllr Pearce seconded the proposal on the basis that change would be driven by consensus, not individual feedback. All Councillors voted in favour.

47 Consideration of the following regarding staffing (some aspects may be confidential):

47.1 A recommendation to Full Council regarding leave arrangements for the Christmas and new year period – To be considered during the confidential session.

47.2 Terms and conditions: – To be considered during the confidential session.

a. Pay reviews

b. Support for wellbeing

47.3 An update on recruitment:

a. **Town Hall Manager** - The advertisement for the Town Hall Manager would be published at the end of the week, with interviews taking place on 1 October. The Town Clerk and Town Hall Project Manager would be on the interview panel, and it was considered members of the Personnel Committee and Town Hall Project Committee should be given the opportunity to express an interest in joining the panel also. Cllr Pearce proposed for Councillors to express their interest in joining the interview ahead of the next Full Council meeting, for a decision to be made there. Cllrs Barker, Brooks, Murray, Pearce, Rappensberger and Webb put their names forward. Cllr Pearce offered to withdraw his interest, however it was noted that substitute members would be

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required, and the date and time of the interviews may not be convenient to all those who had expressed an interest. Councillors not in attendance at this meeting would also need to be given the opportunity to put their names forward.

47.4 Arrangements to cover staff absence – To be considered during the confidential session.

48 Date of next meeting

Thursday 2 October 2025 at 10:00 – Cllr Begum advised she would be late to this meeting.

49 Items for the next agenda and close

The risk register would be considered again at the next meeting, as per the resolution at item 45.

Cllr Webb proposed to move the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

50 Admission to meetings

42 The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 7 August 2025, and the confidential note of the meeting on 3 July 2025 - Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the confidential note of the meeting on 7 August 2025 with an amendment to item 33.3g to clarify the approval of a budget; seconded by Cllr Murray; all in favour.

45 Monitoring the risk register and receiving an update on the implementation of control measures – Certain risks to the Town Council and the Town Council's responsibility in mitigating them insofar as it could were considered.

47.1 A recommendation to Full Council regarding leave arrangements for the Christmas and new year period – This item would be moved to the end of the meeting, to be considered without officers present.

47.2 Terms and conditions:

a. Pay reviews – This item would be moved to the end of the meeting, to be considered without the Senior Committee and Project Clerk present.

b. Support for wellbeing – The Town Clerk had started to research options for a service to support employee wellbeing, and had made enquiries with the Town Council's HR provider as to whether a similar service could be extended to Councillors. It was requested an item be added to the next agenda to consider adopting a Union.

Cllr Parker left the meeting 11:07

Standard and premier options were available for the service. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to sign-up to the premier package on a thirty-six month contract. Cllr Begum made a counter proposal to sign-up to the standard package initially and monitor the take-up before deciding whether to upgrade to the premier package. Upon reviewing the content of the standard and premier packages, Cllr Begum withdrew her proposal. Cllr Brooks seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

The Committee was asked to consider whether to offer the same terms for hearing tests for officers as it does for sight tests. The Town Clerk also noted that a free online hearing test was available. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to

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offer the same terms for hearing tests for officers as the Council does for sight tests; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It was requested that the offer of sight and hearing tests for Councillors be added to the next Personnel Committee agenda.

The Senior Committee and Project Clerk left the meeting 11:15 for consideration of the remaining agenda items

47.2 Terms and conditions:

- a. Pay reviews** – The Committee was asked to consider pay reviews for two members of staff. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve both; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Arrangements for cover during any period of leave or absence by the Town Clerk had now been agreed. The Town Clerk was still exploring options to cover forthcoming staff changes.

47.1 A recommendation to Full Council regarding leave arrangements for the Christmas and new year period

The Town Clerk left the meeting for consideration of this item

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'L' shape followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Signed:

02 October 2025