

Lowestoft Town Council
Finance and Governance Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
Wednesday 10 September 2025 AT 10:00

Minutes

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Deborah Ray

In attendance: James Cox (Finance Manager), Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk & Planning Assistant), Jill Hook (Finance Assistant) and Karen Chapman (OPR Consulting)

46 Welcome

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

47 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Connor Blowers, Bernie Rappensberger and Neil Coleby with reasons provided. Cllr Jones proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllrs Paul Page and Keith Patience were absent with no apologies received.

48 Declarations of Interests and dispensations

48.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he had been the Secretary to 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 leave the room for consideration of item 54.

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

49 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 13 August 2025

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the minutes and confidential note with a request to delete the duplicated text under item 42.1; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

50 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.

51 Budget and Loan

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

a. Legal budget

The recommendation from Budget & Loan Sub-Committee was to use the Grants underspend from the prior year's budget to supplement the current year's grants

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expenditure, if it was needed. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the recommended allocation; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

Cllr Brooks proposed to review grants on a quarterly cycle, unless specific reasons had been provided by the applicant to request a review at an earlier meeting than the set quarterly date; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The dates for review were confirmed as the end of June, September, December and March. Officers would notify applicants when their application would be reviewed within the quarterly schedule.

No other budgets were considered.

- 51.2 To note any bank reconciliations – July 2025 was to go to Councillors for approval and August 2025 was in progress.
- 51.3 To receive any report from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee – The Town Clerk had prepared a summary of the recent Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting:
- The appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair was put on hold
 - The budget process would use the current accounting software, Rialtas
 - The schedule of meetings would be reviewed on a weekly basis to ensure all cost centres would be agreed by the end of December 2025
 - Future budget years would be reviewed before January.

It was confirmed the meetings would be held weekly, unless there was a need to meet on a less frequent basis, and if further meetings were required then extraordinary meetings would be called.

It was agreed that members of the Grounds Maintenance Team could attend Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meetings if required.

The Committee would receive cumulative reports from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meetings.

52 Payments and Receipts:

- 52.1 To note the income and expenditure reports for August and September 2025 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the August 2025 report; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour. The September 2025 report was due to be completed.
- 52.2 To consider any payments for approval (see schedule) – A cement mixer costing £1,197 + VAT had been requested from the Grounds Maintenance Team. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the purchase; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour. The Finance Manager confirmed the cost would be allocated against the General Repairs and Maintenance budget.

53 Grants

- 53.1 To consider revisiting a prior decision to amend the caveat on a grant to the Friends of Kirkley Ham – Suffolk County Council had provided written evidence the lease would be granted to Friends of Kirkley Ham on the condition they had Public Liability Insurance in place, which would be covered by the grant. Cllr Brooks proposed to amend the caveat on the grant application and permit the grant to be paid to enable

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the Friends of Kirkley Ham to fulfil the requirements for a lease; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

54 Sponsorships

- 54.1 To consider the allocation of the Lowestoft and District Independent Archive sponsorship

Cllr Pearce temporarily left the chamber at 10:38 due to his declared interest.

Cllr Begum proposed to elect Cllr Brooks as Chair; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.
Cllr Brooks proposed to allocate the sponsorship against the Arts & Heritage budget; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce returned to the chamber at 10:39.

55 Other financial and governance matters, including:

- 55.1 To receive an update of the Business Plan (some aspects may be confidential) – The Consultant spoke on the draft plan, noting the objectives had been set out along with the actions and services required to achieve it. The draft would next be considered by Full Council on 23 September and any comments from members of the Committee should be provided to the consultant by 15 September.
- 55.2 To note the purpose of the Lord Kitchener's Remembrance Ball fundraiser – It was confirmed the Remembrance Ball fundraiser was for the Lord Kitchener's '1 in a Million' campaign.
- 55.3 To consider the budget allocation for purchase of equipment, subject to an asset transfer (some aspects may be confidential) - This item would be discussed in confidential session.
- 55.4 To consider the following in relation to the Risk Register:
- a. How the risk ratings for red status are determined – It was confirmed the red status was determined by multiplying the risk score of the likelihood of a risk occurring by the risk score of the severity of the risk.

Cllr Jones temporarily left the chamber at 10:47

- b. Discuss the rationalisation for risks F3 and G3 being rated red – The two risks related to the Code of Conduct and if spending was not aligned with the Town Council's priorities. The Town Council was now moving to a long-term strategic plan, with corporate priorities and objectives, and the development and acceptance of the Business Plan would mitigate this risk.

Cllr Jones returned to the chamber at 10:51

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- 55.5 To note the complaints log to date and determine future ownership of reviewing its data – The Committee agreed the complaints log was informative and requested officers include a separate column to track the completion of actions and outcome of the complaints. Cllr Pearce proposed a quarterly report be provided to the Finance and Governance Committee; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 55.6 To consider the replacement of IT equipment and necessary security measures (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.
- 55.7 To consider matters relating to the Hamilton House lease and transition to the Town Hall (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

56 To consider the following recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee

- 56.1 That the Rules of Debate in Standing Orders be applied to all meetings of the Council. This would be on the basis that debate would not be suppressed, and the rules be applied fairly and consistently with a review to be scheduled in six months – A query was raised on how this rule would be monitored. It was suggested any concerns from Committees could be raised with officers who would collate the information and refer back to the Standing Orders Sub-Committee. Cllr Begum proposed to recommend this to Full Council for approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; five in favour, one vote against.
- 56.2 To amend Section 6d to allow for two members to convene an extraordinary meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, if not convened by the Chair – Cllr Pearce proposed to recommend to Full Council that the number of members required to convene an extraordinary meeting be reduced from five to two; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 56.3 To amend Section 7a to allow the motion to reverse a prior resolution to be submitted by the quorum of the Committee or Sub-Committee - For Committees this would require four Councillors and for Sub-Committees this would require three Councillors. Currently the Standing Order requires eleven Councillors to submit the motion. Cllr Begum proposed to recommend approval of the amendment; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
- 56.4 To amend Section 7a to add that a motion to reverse a prior resolution could be brought about by pertinent new information. Currently the Standing Order stipulates unforeseen circumstances may require a resolution to be reconsidered – Cllr Parker proposed to recommend approval of the amendment to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

57 Date of next meeting

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Wednesday 8th October 10:00

58 Items for the next agenda and close

There would be a standing item on the agenda to receive recommendation from the Budget and Loan and Standing Orders Sub-Committees.

59 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 legal and employment issues relating to the matters on this agenda – Cllr Begum proposed the meeting be moved to confidential session; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 11:32

Councillor Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 11:32

Councillor Brooks returned to the chamber at 11:33

- 55.1 To receive an update of the Business Plan (some aspects may be confidential) – The Consultant provided an overview of the draft Business Plan to come into effect in October 2025

At 12:00 Cllr Pearce proposed to suspend Standing Order 3y and extend the meeting for a maximum of fifteen minutes; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

The Committee thanked the Consultant for her work on the Business Plan.

- 55.3 To consider the budget allocation for purchase of equipment, subject to an asset transfer (some aspects may be confidential) - Cllr Brooks proposed to allocate the cost of the equipment against the Tarmac budget; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 55.6 To consider the replacement of IT equipment and necessary security measures (confidential) – The replacement of IT equipment and relevant security measures were discussed. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
Cllr Begum proposed a recommendation be made to Full Council to adjust the IT policy so any necessary security measures for IT equipment is undertaken automatically; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
Cllr Begum made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Parker; five in favour, one abstention.
- 55.7 To consider matters relating to the Hamilton House lease and transition to the Town Hall (confidential) – There were no matters to discuss.

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The Chair closed the meeting at 12:15



Signed:
8 October 2025