

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council

Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE

Tuesday 23 September 2025 at 18:30

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Connor Blowers, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Christine Moore, John Murray, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Deborah Ray, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman (Deputy Mayor)

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

Also in attendance: Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager) and Emma Bellward (Marina Theatre Project Manager)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

116 Welcome

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

117 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Nasima Begum, Robert Breakspear, Neil Coleby, Janet Craig, Christian Newsome, Paul Page, Keith Patience, John Pitts and Bernie Rappensberger, with reasons provided. Cllr Jones proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

118 Declarations and dispensations

118.1 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests, and of bias and pre-determination on items on the agenda – Regarding item 124.2b, Cllr Pearce declared he was one of the two nominating Councillors for the Freedom of the Town applications, but this was not an outside interest, and he did not consider himself to be biased or pre-determined. Regarding item 124.4, Cllrs Barker, Brooks, Ray and Webb declared they are members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Cllr Moore declared she is an East Suffolk Council officer.

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

119 The draft minutes and confidential notes of the Full Council meetings on 26 august and 9 September 2025

Cllr Brooks proposed to approve both sets of minutes and confidential notes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

120 Public forum

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

121 Finance and Governance:

121.1 Receipt and consideration of the following:

1. 2025 – 2026 budget and reserves – The budget was being reviewed regularly by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee, the Finance and Governance Committee and the Finance Manager, and there were no current concerns.

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2. Any bank reconciliations – There was no update to report.
3. Payments and income for the month ending 31 August 2025 and September 2025 to date (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the income and expenditure reports as a true and accurate record of the period in question; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. It was explained that payment marked ‘REV’ on one of the reports referred to a reversed payment.
4. Payments for approval – There were none.

121.2 The minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting on 13 August 2025 – The minutes were received and noted.

121.3 Recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee:

- a. Amending the IT Policy to include necessary security measures regarding lost equipment (some aspects may be confidential) – The Finance and Governance Committee had considered this and made a proposal to amend the IT Policy for any lost Town Council device to be wiped at the point it is reported missing, to avoid any potential data breaches. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- b. Applying the following amendments to Standing Orders:
 - bi. For the rules of debate to be applied to all meetings – Section 1 of Standing Orders referred primarily to motions, however very little of the Town Council’s business arose from pre-submitted motions. At the Annual Meeting, it had been agreed that Standing Orders should refer to proposals made in meetings, as well as pre-submitted motions, and the Finance and Governance Committee had subsequently recommended for the rules of debate to apply to both. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this recommendation, for a trial period of six months, with a review at the half-way point; seconded by Cllr Jones; ten Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the meeting 18:53

- bii. Amending Section 6d to allow for two members to convene an Extraordinary Meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, if not convened by the Chair – There appeared to be an anomaly in Standing Orders, in that two Councillors could convene an Extraordinary Full Council meeting, should the Chair of the Council refuse to do so, however, five Councillors were required to call an Extraordinary Meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, should the Chair refuse to do so. Some of the Sub-Committees did not have five members. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the amendment, for consistency; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.
 - biii. Amending Section 7a to allow the motion to reverse a prior resolution to be submitted by the quorum of the Committee or Sub-Committee –

Cllr Brooks returned 18:55

- This related to the rule that decisions of the Council, its Committees or Sub-Committees could not usually be revisited within six months. Section 7a currently stated that written notice had to be provided by at least eleven Councillors, however it was considered this should be amended to clarify this should only apply to Full Council, and for Committees and Sub-Committees the quorum number of Councillors should instead apply. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this amendment; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.
- biv. Amending Section 7a to add that a motion to reverse a prior resolution could be brought about by pertinent new information – It was explained this should be information relevant to the resolution, which may have led to a different decision if it

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had been available at the time. This would apply to Full Council, Committees and Sub-Committees, though Committees and Sub-Committees would not be able to overturn a Full Council decision. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the amendment; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

121.4 Adoption of the Business Plan (some aspects may be confidential)

To be considered during the confidential session.

122 Town Hall project:

122.1 The minutes of the Town Hall Project Committee meeting on 14 August 2025 – The minutes were received and noted.

122.2 A progress report from the Project Manager (some aspects may be confidential) –

The Town Hall Project Manager joined the meeting 19:01

Roof works were progressing well and the foundations for the event hall had been laid. UKPN would be installing the substation the following week and there would be no power outages for surrounding properties. The legal work surrounding this had also been completed. A schedule of the condition and necessary repairs to the lime plaster in the Council Chamber was being prepared, and was a complex piece of work. The acoustic ceiling in the Council Chamber had been completed and the audio-visual designs for the building had been signed off. The Heritage Apprentice had started and had been involved in engagement and outreach activities. The Heritage Skills Market had recently taken place and was well attended. Two tours of the Town Hall had been offered to members of the public as part of Heritage Open Days, and the feedback had been positive. A drop-in session had also been arranged for members of the public to find out more about the project from the Barnes Construction and Town Hall teams, and this had been well attended, despite poor weather conditions. The Town Hall Manager role was being advertised, with applications to be submitted by 1 October. The spend to date was £2.278million. As of 9 September, £221,000 had been expended from the £1.58million contingency funding. The Project Manager was calculating the impact of the Town Hall project on the 2026 – 2027 budget, and integrating the finances with the Business Plan. Cllr Brooks had had a conversation with a member of the Project Team who had a good insight into the High Street, and requested arrangements be made for this individual to speak with the Project Committee. Cllr Brooks would pass details to the Project Manager to progress this. Thanks were offered to the Project Manager for her work on the finances and budgeting.

The Town Hall Project Manager left the meeting 19:12

122.3 The budget and delegation to proceed with the Council directly funding PVP panels

for the Town Hall – This was understood to be a maximum budget of £90,000 over two to three years. £40,000 - £45,000 was already available in the budget. It was clarified this would be an energy efficiency measure which would result in a cost saving over time. An application for external funding had been unsuccessful, however other sources of funding may be available. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve this item; seconded by Cllr Pearce, on the basis that the first half of the funding was already available in the budget; all in favour.

123 Marina Theatre:

123.1 A progress report from the Project Manager –

The Marina Theatre Project Manager joined the meeting 19:16

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Cllr Parker temporarily left the meeting 19:16

The Theatre was due to reopen on 23 October. The Fire Service were a critical consultee and would liaise with Building Control prior to the building re-opening.

Cllr Parker returned 19:19

It was considered the contingency funding appeared to be quite low. Ahead of the next Project Committee meeting, it was requested for the Project Manager and Facilities and Contracts Manager to give a view on whether there was still a risk with the link building, or whether it had since been capped. An updated cost report would be provided for the next Project Committee meeting. Cllr Brooks had items relating to the Risk Register to raise in confidential session and it was agreed for the Project Manager to re-join the meeting at that time.

The Marina Theatre Project Manager temporarily left the meeting 19:21

124 Assets, Inclusion and Development:

124.1 The draft minutes of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting on 1 September 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

124.2 The following matters arising from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee:

- a. An approach from a member of the public regarding the purchase of a piece of Lowestoft Porcelain (some aspects may be confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.
- b. A recommendation to approve two applications for Freedom of the Town (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

124.3 Noting the project tracker is now in operation – Thanks were offered to officers who had been involved in developing the tracker. This included meeting resolutions made since the Town Council had moved to the Decisions system, but officers were manually adding ongoing projects prior to the move to Decisions.

124.4 Gunton Cliff:

- a. The completion of tree works – This was noted.
- b. Further works, cost and environmental impact (some aspects may be confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

124.5 A request from Cllr Newsome to join the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this request; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

125 Planning:

125.1 The draft minutes of the planning committee meeting on 11 September 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

126 Personnel:

126.1 The draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting on 4 September 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

126.2 Recommendations from the Personnel Committee:

- a. Offering the same terms for hearing tests as currently offered for sight tests – This was considered particularly important for members of the Grounds Maintenance Team, who were working with machinery. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- b. A recommendation regarding pay reviews (confidential) – To be considered during

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the confidential session.

c. Approving the adoption of a premier package Employee Assistance Programme, on a 36 month contract, at a cost of £1,771 (pro rata for remainder of 25-26 financial year) plus VAT per annum until 31 March 2028 to work in conjunction with Town Council HR support contract – Cllr Brooks considered this to be good value for money, in terms of the support the package would offer to staff, and proposed to approve the recommendation; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

d. A recommendation relating to terms and conditions for annual leave entitlement (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

An external training provider had recently recorded Cllr Barker as a ‘no show’ to a training session. Though Cllr Barker had been late, she had attended the session and requested this be amended.

126.3 Appointing the interview panel for the Town Hall Manager position – Some Councillors had put their names forward at recent Personnel and Town Hall Project Committee meetings. The interview panel would consist of three Councillors and the Acting Town Clerk, with the Town Hall Project Manager providing advisory scoring. Five Councillors had put their names forward. Cllr Pearce offered to withdraw his name. Cllr Pearce proposed to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to contact the remaining Councillors to check their availability to attend the interviews on 10 October, then draw names for the interview panel at random, should it still be oversubscribed. With some previous recruitment processes, it had been agreed that those not selected for the interview panel would undertake the shortlisting instead. Cllr Pearce amended his proposal to include this. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

127 Climate and Ecological Emergency:

127.1 The minutes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee meeting on 18 August 2025 – The minutes were received and noted.

127.2 A recommendation from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to approve three applications for non-Councillor members – Cllr Brooks considered that the three who had applied had a commitment to the environment and relevant experience, and proposed to approve all three applications; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

128 Outside bodies:

128.1 Lowestoft Town Council's representation on the Lowestoft Place Board – It was considered that the Place Board's position to specifically request the Mayor as the Town Council's representative was dictatorial. The Mayor had been unable to attend a recent Place Board meeting, which had left the Town Council without a voting representative in attendance. One officer from each organisation was able to attend meetings as an observer. Each organisation had one voting representative but could send a substitute. Cllr Pearce proposed for the Deputy Mayor to attend Place Board meetings as substitute, should the Mayor be unable to attend, or another named substitute if the Deputy Mayor is also unavailable; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

129 Legal matters (confidential):

129.1 An update report on legal matters – To be considered during the confidential session.

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129.2 A consultancy brief and budget to explore future options for lease and management of an asset – To be considered during the confidential session.

130 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 28 October 2025 at 18:30.

131 Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Barker had an agenda item request to make in confidential session.

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

132 Admission to meetings

A comfort break was taken 19:50 and the meeting resumed 19:56

The Marina Theatre Project Manager re-joined the meeting 19:56

123.1 A progress report from the Marina Theatre Project Manager – It was observed there was an 'x' percentage on the report with no figure against it. This was the progress through the project programme, but the figure had been omitted and would be included in the next highlight report. The project was nearing the end of its timeline. A matter regarding the Risk Register was considered, and it was agreed for the Project Manager to liaise with the Town Clerk regarding the wording and take this to the next Project Committee meeting.

The Marina Theatre Project Manager left the meeting 20:13

121.4 Adoption of the Business Plan (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce was generally supportive of the Plan and had raised some comments when it was reviewed. Cllr Pearce proposed to adopt the Business Plan as an internal working paper rather than a public facing document at this stage, with an executive summary to be published on the website, subject to it being shared with Councillors and the Town Clerk first. Cllr Webb seconded the proposal. It was requested that the 'Climate Action Plan' be referred to by its full title (Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan). The vote was taken and ten Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Murray had been unable to open the document and would be provided with a copy.

124.2a An approach from a member of the public regarding the purchase of a piece of Lowestoft Porcelain (some aspects may be confidential) – It was considered this would be a significant expenditure. Advice had been sought from independent experts. Cllr Youngman proposed not to proceed with the purchase of the item of Lowestoft Porcelain; seconded by Cllr Brooks; seven Councillors voted in favour; four Councillors abstained from the vote.

124.2b A recommendation to approve two applications for Freedom of the Town (confidential) – The applications were considered in detail by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee, which had made a recommendation to Full Council to award Freedom of the Town to the two named individuals. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

124.4b Gunton Cliff further works, cost and environmental impact (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Brooks had been lobbied by a resident, but had responded to

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advise that the matter would be considered by Full Council, and she did not consider herself to be pre-determined. The Town Clerk was seeking legal advice on the Town Council's options.

At 20:30, Cllr Pearce proposed to suspend Standing Order 3y for thirty minutes, to enable the meeting to continue; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed to progress seeking the legal advice, and in the meantime for the Town Council to show solidarity with the stance of its Grounds Maintenance Team; seconded by Cllr Murray; all in favour.

Cllr Parker left the meeting 20:35

126.2b A recommendation regarding pay reviews (confidential) – A meeting paper had been provided, giving details of the recommendations of the Personnel Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the recommendations; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

126.2d A recommendation relating to terms and conditions for annual leave entitlement (confidential) – It was agreed to move this item to the end of the meeting, to be considered without officers in attendance.

129.1 An update report on legal matters – The legal update report had been provided. Two legal documents were to be signed after the meeting. The number of outstanding legacy issues was reducing. The UKPN matters relating to the Town Hall had been resolved. The Town Clerk provided an overview of the remaining outstanding legal matters.

129.2 A consultancy brief and budget to explore future options for lease and management of an asset – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the recommendations in the meeting paper and proceed accordingly; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

At the August Full Council meeting, Cllr Barker had made a proposal for the Town Council to receive information regarding a workshop. An East Suffolk Council officer had delivered a presentation to an East Suffolk Clerks' meeting on this subject, and the Town Clerk had asked for the officer to deliver the same presentation to the Town Council.

126.2d A recommendation relating to terms and conditions for annual leave entitlement (confidential) –

The Town Clerk and Senior Committee and Project Clerk left the meeting 20:44 for the consideration of this item. Cllr Pearce recorded the notes for this agenda item

Cllr Pearce summarised the recommendation from the Personnel Committee meeting of 4 September 2025.

Cllr Brooks said that this was different to her understanding of what had previously been discussed. She further suggested that Councillors might not have been clear on what they were voting on, and that this needed further discussion.

Cllr Pearce asked that Full Council not be misled in this matter - if Councillors did not agree with the proposal, they were free to vote against it, but it had been made

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perfectly clear during detailed discussion at the Personnel Committee meeting on 4 September 2025 what this proposal was and what it wasn't.

Cllr Pearce explained that the Personnel Committee was perfectly aware of what it was considering in this regard when it made its recommendation on 4 September 2025, and that this had been discussed and considered at length during that meeting. Cllr Barker also attested to the fact that the detail of this proposal had been considered exhaustively by the Personnel Committee before making its recommendation to Full Council.

The matter then proceeded to vote as follows:

Proposer: Cllr Pearce

Seconder: Cllr Webb

Voting on the proposed recommendation: One abstention, all others present in favour

The meeting was closed at 20:53.

Signed:



7 November 2025