

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council

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

Tuesday 28 October 2025 at 18:30

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum (Mayor), Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Janet Craig, Jen Jones, John Murray, Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, Deborah Ray, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman

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

Also in attendance: Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager)(remotely via Teams)(for part) and Emma Bellward (Marina Theatre Project Manager)(remotely via Teams)(for part)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

133 Welcome

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

134 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Connor Blowers, Christine Moore, Paul Page, Graham Parker, 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.

135 Declarations and dispensations:

135.1 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable

interests, and of bias and pre-determination on items on the agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he had received an approach regarding item 145.3, to ask if he would attend, and had passed the details to the office and advised that representatives would be appointed by Full Council. Cllr Pearce did not consider himself to be biased or pre-determined. Cllr Ray declared she also had prior knowledge of this item but also did not consider herself to be biased or pre-determined. Cllr Craig declared she is an East Suffolk Councillor. Cllr Newsome declared he is a member of two trade unions.

135.2 Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted –

There were none.

136 The draft minutes and confidential note of the full council meeting on 23 September 2025

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes and confidential note. Cllr Pearce seconded the proposal but with two amendments. Item 128.1 finished with a proposal from Cllr Pearce, but no record of whether it was seconded and voted upon. Regarding item 124.2a, Cllr Pearce understood he had voted against, rather than abstained. Cllr Brooks agreed to amend her proposal to accept these amendment, which officers would check. All Councillors voted in favour.

137 Public forum

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

138 Finance and Governance:

138.1 Receipt and consideration of the following:

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1. 2025 - 2026 budget and reserves – These were being actively monitored by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee and Finance and Governance Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the budget and reserves document provided as a true and accurate record of the current position; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
2. Any bank reconciliations – July's bank reconciliation had been completed. August's bank reconciliation was with Cllr Page to check and sign.
3. Payments and income for the month ending 30 September 2025 and October 2025 to date (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the income and expenditure reports as a true and accurate record for the period in question; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
4. Payments for approval, including the following:
 - 4a. £2,300 for a fence post puller – The request had been submitted to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee with requests from the Grounds Maintenance Team for the 2026 – 2027 budget. The Council had been asked to consider if there were any scope for this piece of equipment to be purchased now, to assist with the Grounds Maintenance Team's winter working. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve this purchase, with the expenditure to be made from the parks capital budget; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

138.2 Recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee:

- a. Moving £5,000 from the 2025-2026 Community Engagement budget to a new 'Communications' budget line, for promotional work for the Neighbourhood Development and Business Plans – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.
- b. Approving a three-year lease of two new vehicles, at an annual cost of £13,516 (£6,275 within the current financial year), to be allocated to the Repairs and Maintenance budget – Detail had been provided by the Grounds Maintenance Team to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Pearce. In future years this would be explicitly budgeted for. All Councillors voted in favour.

138.3 The external audit report for the year ending March 2025

The external audit report was noted. Cllr Pearce proposed to thank the Finance Manager and all staff involved with preparation for the audit; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

138.4 Approval of the executive summary for the Business Plan

Cllr Brooks considered the document summarised the Council's intentions and priorities well, and proposed to approve it. A typographical error was identified page three (the Council had committed to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, not 2023). Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the document, subject to this amendment; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The Business Plan itself had previously been adopted as a working document, but it had been agreed an executive summary would be published on the website, as some of the financial content of the Business Plan itself was confidential.

138.5 The outcome report from the Working Group formed to take forward actions following receipt of a complaint (confidential)

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The report had been provided and was noted. The actions listed within would be taken forward and would be discussed during the confidential session.

139 Town Hall Project:

139.1 The draft minutes of the Town Hall Project Committee meeting on 9 October 2025 –

The draft minutes were received and noted.

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

The Town Hall Project Manager joined the meeting 18:49

Construction work was continuing, with an increase in the quality of the conservation work. The Design Team was being supported by a Conservation Architect from Historic England, as part of the recent grant award. The plaster condition in certain areas was worse than anticipated. The issues were resolvable but would take time, particularly as winter was not the ideal time of year for lime plastering. The restoration of the stained glass windows had been completed, and these would be returned early in the new year when the window frames were complete. Overall progress was still behind plan. Barnes had appointed a second site manager due to the complexity of the site. Barnes were re-programming the work, and that should be available to review shortly. Not sure of exact delays until have new programme. Regarding the activity plan, a lot had been happening over the last month, which had been well received by the community. A free youth workshop and film-making workshops were upcoming. Recruitment of the Town Hall Manager was ongoing, and the business plan would receive an in-depth review once the Town Hall Manager was in post. A grant reclaim had been submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which should see approximately £270,000 for this tranche of expenditure. The spend to date on the project was £2.557million.

Approximately £333,000 of contingency funding had been utilised or ring-fenced. Cllr Brooks raised concerns that the hoardings were starting to look tatty, and the exposure of the windows. The Project Manager would raise these concerns with Barnes.

139.3 Recommendations from the Town Hall Project Committee:

- a. A recommendation regarding the drawing down of funds from the Public Works Loan (confidential) – The Town Council had been transparent about taking out the loan, and had been granted permission to borrow up to £5million. The draw down amount and repayment terms would be discussed during the confidential session, as this could be contractually sensitive. The expiry date of the loan was 4 December, as permission could only be granted for twelve months at a time. The Town Council would need to look at interest rates and consider how much to draw down at this time, to avoid submitting an extension request, which could be denied. The Town Hall Project Manager would return to the meeting for the confidential session.

The Town Hall Project Manager temporarily left the meeting 18:58

139.4 Forming a Working Group to develop collection management framework policies for the

Town Council – Cllr Coleby proposed to form the Working Group, and put his name forward to become a member. The need for the Working Group was discussed and this was considered necessary, as this would be a new policy which would require the expertise of an external consultant. The Town Council's existing Arts Policy and Acquisitions and Disposals Policy had been provided to the external consultant for reference. Cllrs Brooks and Pearce also put their names forward to join the Working Group. Cllr Coleby proposed to form the

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Working Group and approve Cllrs Brooks, Coleby and Pearce's membership; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

140 Marina Theatre:

140.1 The draft minutes of the Marina Theatre Project Committee meeting on 9 October 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

140.2 A progress report from the Project Manager –

The Marina Theatre Project Manager joined the meeting 18:59

The Theatre had reopened to the public the previous week. There was a substantial snagging list which would be managed over the coming weeks.

140.3 The appointment to the Marina Theatre options appraisal contract –

The Marina Theatre Project Manager left the meeting 19:01

It was noted that an external consultant had been appointed for this piece of work.

141 Assets, Inclusion and Development:

141.1 The draft minutes of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting on 6 October 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

141.2 Recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee:

a. Endorsing the recommendation from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee regarding the Normanston Park changing rooms, to proceed with Option D as presented on the meeting paper, and to consider the additional cost of cladding/screening options – Different options had been presented. The recommendation to proceed had been made by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and endorsed by the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee. As well as being more cost effective, it was considered that this option provided more flexibility and future proofing. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Webb; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

b. Proceeding with the installation of a refreshments kiosk in Fen Park in the 2026 - 2027 financial year – As well as providing an amenity, it was anticipated the increased footfall and additional presence in the park may also act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour. Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

c. Proceeding with the installation of two pieces of outdoor fitness equipment in Fen Park in the 2026 - 2027 financial year – The Sports Development Officer had provided a meeting paper, further to discussions held in the AID Committee meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the recommendations in the Sports Development Officer's meeting paper; seconded by Cllr Jones; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

d. Proceeding with the reinstatement of the Belle Vue Park public toilets in the 2026 - 2027 financial year (provisionally half of the funds to be included in the precept and half to be taken from reserves) – It would not be feasible to install public toilets in the thatched cottage, regardless of its future use, though reinstatement of the former toilets would support proposals for future use of the cottage. It had been proposed for the toilets to be reinstated as a unisex facility, and the anticipated cost would be £80,000. The recommendation had been made by the AID Committee on the basis that not all of

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the funds would be precepted. There was also a large unassigned capital reserve for Sparrows Nest which could be redirected. Given other demands on the budget, there were concerns about the project proceeding in the coming year, particularly given the vandalism and anti-social behaviour which had occurred at other sites. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the recommendation of the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Coleby; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

e. A recommendation regarding the Kirkley Cliff Road public toilets (some aspects may be confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

141.3 Whether to proceed with a project to develop a fully inclusive play area at Clarkes Lane, and deciding the development timescale

A meeting paper had been provided, and the project had been considered by the relevant Committees and Sub-Committees. It was anticipated the project would be funded over two to three years. The Senior Committee and Project Clerk had identified potential sources of external funding, and had had a positive discussion with a potential funder earlier that day. Applications for external funding could only be submitted once there was a fully formed project plan. A car park was also under consideration to complement the play area, and East Suffolk Council had confirmed civil parking enforcement would be possible, at a cost. The Town Council would need to therefore consider what terms would apply to the car park. It was considered there should not be a significant gap between the development of the car park and development of the play area, and engagement with local residents would be important. Cllr Brooks proposed to proceed with the project; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

141.4 Closure and future management of a wooded area at Fen Park

A meeting paper had been provided. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the works on the phased approach as set out; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

142 Planning:

142.1 The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meetings on 9 and 23 October 2025 –

The draft minutes were received and noted.

142.2 The Planning Committee's meeting schedule – There had been issues with meetings being inquorate, however it was considered this may not be entirely to do with scheduling. Cllr Begum was happy to attend meetings ex-officio as required, but would need to undertake the necessary training. Whilst some members would prefer for meetings to take place earlier in the day, other members had commitments which would prevent them from attending earlier meetings. It was suggested for existing members, and any Councillors potentially interested in joining the Committee, to email the office with their availability. Any appointed substitutes would also need to undertake the necessary training.

142.3 The appointment of substitute members to the Planning Committee and changes to Terms of Reference – Cllr Ray put her name forward as a substitute member.

Councillors were reminded to give the office as much notice as possible if they were unable to attend a meeting, however, it was not always known in advance that meetings would be inquorate and Planning Committee meetings often required

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attendees to undertake a lot of reading and preparation in advance. Members of the Committee were reminded they were making important decisions affecting the town, and of the importance of responding under delegation via email to applications, where meetings had been inquorate. Cllr Pearce proposed to amend the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference to allow the appointment of substitute members; seconded by Cllr Jones; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.

142.4 A request from Cllr Pearce to join the Planning Committee as a substitute member –

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this request, and he may consider joining the Planning Committee fully at a later date; seconded by Cllr Murray; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.

Cllr Begum proposed to approve Cllr Ray's request to join the Planning Committee as a substitute member; seconded by Cllr Youngman; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.

143 Personnel:

143.1 The draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting on 2 October 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

143.2 Recommendations from the Personnel Committee:

a. For sight tests to be offered to Councillors upon request, on the same basis that they are made available to staff – Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse this recommendation. It was clarified this was not intended as a 'perk' for Councillors, but was in connection with Councillors fulfilling their roles, particularly as there was often a significant amount of reading to do. As with staff, this would cover the sight test only, and would not extend to any equipment needs arising. This would be offered upon request, therefore Councillors could choose whether or not to take up the offer. Cllr Coleby seconded the proposal; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against; two Councillors abstained from the vote.

b. Making a statement that the Town Council recognises Trade Unions, and arranging for an appropriate representative to speak with staff – Cllr Murray proposed to endorse this recommendation, with a delegation to the Town Clerk to select the appropriate representative to speak with staff; seconded by Cllr Pearce. The Town Clerk was not comfortable with this delegation and requested clarity on who the Council considered to be an appropriate representative. It was considered more appropriate for the speaker to not be a representative of an individual Trade Union, and it was suggested this could be a local representative of the Trades Union Congress, or a member of one of the local Committees which brings together Trade Unions. Cllr Coleby would send details of these organisations to the office. Cllr Murray proposed to endorse the recommendation, with a delegation to the Town Clerk to select the appropriate representative to speak with staff, which could be a member of the Trades Union Congress or representative body; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

c. A recommendation regarding a pay review (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

143.3 A recommendation from the interview panel regarding the appointment of the Town Hall Manager (confidential) – This process was still in progress and would be brought back to the Council at the appropriate time.

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144 Climate and Ecological Emergency:

144.1 The minutes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee meeting on 15 September 2025 – The minutes were received and noted.

144.2 A request from Cllr Pearce to join the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve this request; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

145 Outside bodies:

145.1 Appointing two representatives to attend the launch of East Suffolk's Marmot Place Programme on Thursday 27 November at High Lodge, Darsham (10:00-15:30) – Cllr Barker had previously expressed her interest in attending. Cllr Pearce also expressed his interest. Cllr Youngman proposed to appoint Cllrs Barker and Pearce as the Town Council's representatives; seconded by Cllr Jones; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

145.2 Appointing a representative to attend a meeting on One Suffolk proposal for Local Government Reorganisation and to form a position statement to be reported at meeting – The Town Council had not yet formed a position statement on Local Government Reorganisation, and it was suggested this should not be done prematurely. It was considered that appointing Town Council representatives to attend this particular meeting could be seen as lobbying, or the Town Council supporting One Suffolk's position, and all parties should be treated even-handedly. A meeting paper had been provided and invitation extended to the Town Council, which was duly added to the agenda for consideration. Cllr Pearce proposed not to appoint any representatives from the Town Council to attend this meeting, and not to commit to a position statement prematurely, until further information on the model for Local Government Reorganisation had been received from central Government; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

145.3 Appointing two representatives to join the East Suffolk Council and Joint Emergency Planning Unit webinar 'emergency preparedness and building community resilience' – Cllrs Murray and Pearce expressed their interest in attending. Cllr Ray declared she had previously met with East Suffolk Council's Community Resilience Officer, who would be running the session. Cllr Begum proposed to appoint Cllrs Murray and Pearce as the Town Council's representatives; seconded by Cllr Coleby; ten Councillors voted in favour; two Councillors abstained from the vote.

145.4 Cllrs Barker and Ray's report of the First Light Festival Steering Group meeting on 18 September 2025 – The report had been received and was noted. Cllr Barker had notified the festival organisers that the Town Council was not responsible for the provision of wi-fi on the promenade.

146 Legal matters (confidential):

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

146.2 Legal advice regarding tree works at Gunton Cliff – To be considered during the confidential session.

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147 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 25 November 2025 at 18:30.

148 Items for the next agenda and close

Following a meeting with Associated British Ports, Cllr Murray requested the addition of an agenda item to consider establishing a Working Group to discuss the flood defences and to sanction that Working Group to meet with officers to consider the progress against the agreed action list items. Cllr Murray requested the addition of a further item to consider the usability of the action list and its further evaluation as a tool of value to the Town Council. The Town Clerk understood a meeting regarding the flood defences was being arranged for all stakeholders, however this would not preclude the Town Council from forming a Working Group.

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

149 Admission to meetings

139.3a. A recommendation from the Town Hall Project Committee regarding the drawing down of funds from the Public Works Loan (confidential)

The Town Hall Project Manager re-joined the meeting 20:07

The options which had been considered by the Town Hall Project Committee and Budget and Loan Sub-Committee were discussed. Cllr Coleby made a proposal following this; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

The Town Hall Project Manager left the meeting 20:12

138.5 The outcome report from the Working Group formed to take forward actions following receipt of a complaint (confidential) – The outcome report was discussed. The Town Clerk would contact the local Member of Parliament for an update, following the consultation the Town Council previously responded to on the new model Code of Conduct.

143.2c. A recommendation from the Personnel Committee regarding a pay review (confidential) – A meeting paper had been provided. Cllr Youngman proposed to endorse the recommendation of the Personnel Committee; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

141.2e. A recommendation regarding the Kirkley Cliff Road public toilets (some aspects may be confidential) – The AID Committee had received and discussed the detail and had made a recommendation. The reasoning behind the recommendation was discussed. Cllr Brooks proposed to endorse the recommendation of the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Pearce; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

146.1 An update report on legal matters – The legal update report had been provided and was noted.

146.2 Legal advice regarding tree works at Gunton Cliff – Cllr Brooks made a proposal based on the legal advice received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour

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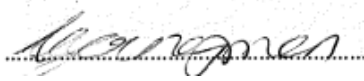
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The meeting was closed at 20:28.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M. Morgan', written over a dotted line.

7 November 2025