Lowestoft Town Council

For the attention of all Councillors

You are summoned to attend a **Town Hall Project Committee** meeting of Lowestoft Town Council, which will be held at **Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE** at **10:00** on **Thursday 13 November 2025**.

The meeting is held in accessible premises and open to the public and press to attend. Those attending shall be informed that the meeting may be reported on (including recording, photographing and filming). This does not apply to confidential items. Comments can also be submitting regarding any item on the agenda in advance of the meeting. Members of the public can join the meeting remotely via Teams. The meeting can also be observed via YouTube.

In providing any comments members of the public accept that, where they are suitable, they may be considered at the meeting and published in our minutes. Any individual submitting the comments should ensure that their name, address and contact details are included in their communication and should note that anonymous submissions will not be accepted. Members of the public accept that their name may be noted and recorded at the meeting. However, their contact details will not be noted and reported publicly.

Councillors must register relevant interests and declare them at a meeting if they have such an interest in a matter to be considered. Under the Localism Act 2011, a councillor with relevant interests in matters on the agenda cannot take part or vote on those matters, unless they have been granted a dispensation. Under the Council's Code of Conduct, a councillor must leave the meeting room if they have such an interest, unless they have been granted a dispensation. There may be other interests or matters in which councillors might be considered to be biased or predetermined in which case they will need to consider whether they should leave the room.

The Council has a duty to pay due regard to preventing crime and disorder and to conserve biodiversity as part of relevant decisions.

S. L. Foote

……

Sarah Foote, Town Clerk
12 November 2025

Lowestoft Town Council

Town Hall Project Committee

Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
10:00 Thursday 13 November 2025

AGENDA

63 Welcome
To explain the fire evacuation procedure, welcome the meeting, and remind councillors and members of the public of the right to report.

64 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

65 Declarations of Interests and dispensations

65.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from members on items on the agenda

65.2 To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted

66 To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 9 October 2025

67 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.

68 To receive an update report from the Project Manager, including the following:

68.1 An update on contractual matters

68.2 Any planned actions to be authorised for progression

68.3 The Risk Register

68.4 Updated Business Plan

68.5 An update on the Activity Plan

69 Finance, budget monitoring and payments (see report):
To note and consider income and expenditure

69.1 Monitoring the budget

69.2 Any payments for approval

70 To receive a recommendation from the interview panel on the appointment of a Town Hall Manager

71 Date of next meeting

Thursday 11 December 10:00

72 Items for the next agenda and close

73 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

Lowestoft Town Council

Town Hall Project Committee

Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 09 October 2025 at 10:00

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks (Chair), Neil Coleby, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger and Nick Webb, plus non-Councillor members Helen Johnson and Ben Porter (East Suffolk Council)

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Town Clerk), James Cox (Finance Manager), John Chamberlain (Town Hall Heritage Officer), Holly Bryant (Town Hall Heritage Apprentice) and Lauren Elliott (Senior Committee and Project Clerk)

Also in attendance: Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager) and Dr Harriet Foster (Evaluation Consultant)(remotely via Teams)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

50 Welcome

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

51 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sonia Barker and Nasima Begum, with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

52 Declarations of interests and dispensations:

52.1 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests from Councillors on items on the agenda – There were none.

52.2 Written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

53 The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 11 September 2025

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 11 September 2025; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

54 Public forum

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

55 An update report from the Project Manager, including the following (some aspects may be confidential):

55.1 An update on contractual matters – Two consultants from Free Range Collective had been appointed to look after the Pop Culture activity stream, following a procurement process. The consultants would be delivering a range of activities, starting in the spring, then co-curating the inaugural exhibition within the Town Hall.

55.2 Any planned actions to be authorised for progression – The roof was structurally sound, and the Compass Street elevation had been completed. The UKPN substation enclosure had been completed and the transformer delivered. Progress through the project had been slower than anticipated, and this would be discussed with the contractors. The issues discovered with the roof structure had caused a twelve-week delay. Barnes Construction had appointed a second site manager, and the Project Manager would establish the

reasoning behind this. It had been discovered there was a mix of materials on the Council Chambers walls, and it would be a major piece of work to establish what to retain and what to remove, and how best to do this without causing damage. A false wall was also being removed from the Council Chamber. The Project Manager had an item to raise regarding the AV design in confidential session.

55.3 The Risk Register – The Risk Register, quality and extension of time application would be discussed during the confidential session. The Project Manager would provide an answer on the rationale for a second site manager ahead of the next Project Committee meeting.

55.4 Updated Business Plan, including budgetary requirements for the town council for the 2026-2027 financial year – To be considered during the confidential session.

55.5 An update on the Activity Plan –

The Evaluation Consultant joined the meeting 10:16

The Evaluation Consultant delivered a presentation on the review of evaluating the Activity Plan. The public engagement which has taken place over the last year was detailed, via surveys, engaging with visitors to the High Street and at Town Hall events. The positive aspects of the project were discussed. Members of the public had been relieved and excited to see work begin on the Town Hall, and the improvements being made to the building in the plans. Members of the public had also been interested to learn more about the building's history as the project progresses. Engagement with the Heritage Focus Group and local businesses had been positive. Requirements of the Lottery funding were visibly being delivered. The challenges of the project were discussed. There was no direct bus route to the High Street and the lack of car parking facilities had also been raised as a concern. Members of the public had also expressed disappointment over the appearance of the High Street. The Town Hall tours had been well received and there was further demand for them. A dedicated blog to provide project updates had been requested. The Evaluation Consultant would continue to monitor and evaluate the Activity Plan. Details of forthcoming activities were given. Helen Johnson would feed back the comments on the visual appearance of the High Street internally to East Suffolk Council. Though not part of its statutory duties, the Town Council did have a Public Transport Working Group and was engaging with other stakeholders to try to make improvements to the public transport network in Lowestoft. Part of the frustration for residents was not knowing which authority to contact in order to effect change. Positive feedback had been received from members of the public regarding officers and their engagement with the public.

The Evaluation Consultant left the meeting 10:50

The Heritage Officer provided an update on the Activity Plan. Multimedia and Employability Workshops were scheduled. The Heritage Focus Group was holding an open day early in 2026 and was seeking volunteer support for the museums. The Town Hall talks would be resuming and speakers were being sought. Planning for the 2026 Heritage Skills Market was in the early stages.

55.6 An update on the registrars' lease and charges – To be considered during the confidential session

56 Finance, budget monitoring and payments (see report):

56.1 Monitoring the budget - £2.533million had been spent on the project so far, and £323,000 of the contingency funding had been spent, which was well within the budget for contingency expenditure.

56.2 Any payments for approval – There were none.

Lowestoft Town Council

Town Hall Project Committee

Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 09 October 2025 at 10:00

57 An update on baseline evaluation of the High Street context

This had been covered during the presentation delivered at item 55.5.

58 An update on the Towns Fund from East Suffolk Council

East Suffolk Council had been advised the Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund would be under one single fund, called the Local Regeneration Fund. Ben Porter would check the grant agreements in place to see if they needed to be varied. There was no longer a requirement to undertake any change requests and decision making had been devolved to the local level. There was also no longer a requirement to submit multiple monitoring returns. The deadline for expenditure had been extended to March 2028.

59 The future use of the land behind the Town Hall (confidential)

To be considered during the confidential session.

60 Date of next meeting

Thursday 13 November 2025 at 10:00.

61 Items for the next agenda and close

Members were advised to send any requests to the office.
Cllr Coleby proposed to move the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

62 Admission to meetings

55.3 Risk Register – The Project Manager explained a new risk which had been added.
The extension of time request and its implications were discussed.

The review of the AV design was discussed. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the use of contingency funding for the purchase of additional equipment; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

The Town Hall Heritage Officer temporarily left the meeting 11:24

55.4 Updated Business Plan, including budgetary requirements for the Town Council for the 2026-2027 financial year – The Town Council was asked to consider draw down options for the Public Works Loan.

The Town Hall Heritage Officer returned 11:26

At 11:57, Cllr Coleby proposed to suspend Standing Order 3y for thirty minutes, to enable the meeting to continue; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council regarding the drawing down of the Public Works Loan; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

55.6 An update on the Registrars' lease and charges – The Registrars' had submitted their IT requirements and the implications were being worked through.

59 The future use of the land behind the Town Hall (confidential) – Helen Johnson had been asked to write an outline business case to identify options. Cllr Pearce proposed for Helen Johnson, the Project Manager, and a Town Council officer to meet ahead of the next meeting to consider the requirements and feed back to the Committee; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

Lowestoft Town Council

Town Hall Project Committee

Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 09 October 2025 at 10:00

The meeting was closed at 12:12

Signed:
15 October 2025

Lowestoft Town Hall Project

Progress Report for November 2025 Steering Committee

This report covers the period 8 October to 11 November 2025.

Construction

- New build for the New Market Inn extension is underway. This is the area to the north of the existing building at the west end of the Compass Street range. The extension will provide sufficient space for toilets and circulation at ground floor, plus the coworking space and Council offices on the first and second floors respectively.
- Roof strengthening works are continuing to provide support for MVHR equipment to go in the loft spaces (MVHR = mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, ie the systems that will provide fresh air within the building and recover and reuse heat produced in the building when needed).
- Roof work continues, with the Mariners Street elevation now felted and battened ready for slates.
- The substation roof has been screeded and is complete.
- A sash window sample, showing the standard/extent of repair and conservation proposed, has been prepared for signoff by the conservation architects. Once agreed, this will determine the amount of work required for each window, without the need for a detailed assessment of every historic window.
- Once wallpaper had been removed from the south wall of the Council Chamber, large cracks were visible around the windows. These have now had appropriate structural repairs.
- Lime plastering in the Council Chamber will be considerably more extensive, as many areas have failed and were hidden by layers of wallpaper. There is also more plastering to do in the Registrars' suite and heritage area. Timing of the works is challenging, as lime plaster must be applied when the ambient temperature is consistently above 5C. Barnes and HAT Projects are discussing how best to progress this, as we have grant funding deadlines to meet.
- Where we have internal walls or ceilings that have been replaced, we will use standard gypsum plaster. This will be quicker and cheaper than lime plaster, which is not required in any case on internal modern walls. External walls will be lime plastered to ensure the breathability of the building.
- IT requirements for Registrars are more complex than originally anticipated as they require their own secure fibre into, and network around, the building. A meeting held with all parties last week identified several 'doable' solutions.
- The construction continues to run behind programme. A meeting was held at Barnes HQ on 10 November to review the detailed programme, and to discuss potential mitigations to reduce the delays. However, some delay is inevitable given the structural roof issues that have been encountered. I will discuss this at the meeting in confidential session given the contractual issues involved. A confidential appendix to this document will be provided.

Grant Funding

- Last month's quarterly review with National Lottery Heritage Fund identified no specific issues, and the grant reclaim has been approved, with £261,265 due to be paid over in the next day or two.
- The lead architect and conservation architect joined our monthly review meeting with Historic England, to discuss conservation issues. This meeting went well, and a good relationship is developing.

Activity & Interpretation

- Our next Town Hall tours will be scheduled in January, along with a further drop in session for local people to meet Barnes and raise any questions. The venue for this latter is yet to be finalised, but it will definitely be indoors, after our wet September experience!
- Activities since the last report include a filmmaking workshop with Julian Claxton, our resident filmmaker, and further crafting with Food in School Holidays (FISH) attendees. A free career development workshop, to be run by Menta, didn't have sufficient uptake, despite extensive advertising, and has been cancelled. We will look at other opportunities in the new year.
- John Chamberlain, heritage officer, will attend the steering committee to give an update on recent activities/current plans.

Business Plan/Staffing

- The Town Hall Manager role attracted a very high-quality field, and it was encouraging to see the level of interest in the project. A recommendation for appointment will be made to the committee and in turn to Full Council.
- I have updated the operational financials to include forecasts for budgeting purposes for the end of next financial year and into the 27/28 year. This is based on the eight-week plan on which the full eight years of operational financials are built but tuned down to reflect the early days of the Town Hall, where appropriate. It also includes those fixed costs that will be attracted from day one, such as insurance, business rates etc.
- I will attend Budget and Loans Committee on 17/11 to present this and answer any questions arising.

Financials

- Total spend to date is below:

Spend to date	**TOTALS**	
Budget	**£**	**12,561,234**
Actual spend to date	£	2,904,230
Balance remaining	**£**	**9,657,004**

- Invoices since the last report are below (note this includes several settled directly by LTC, but now incorporated in the reclaims to NLHF:

Invoice Date	Inv Ref N	Supplier	Description	Amount	VAT	Total inc VA	Project PO
19/06/25	LTH306	Danielle Morgan	Materials for hoardings for activity	£ 50.00	£ -	£ 50.00	TH97
14/03/25	LTH307	East Suffolk Council	Business rates for pop up shop (venue) part Fe	£ 536.19	£ -	£ 536.19	TH87
14/03/25	LTH308	East Suffolk Council	Business rates for pop up shop (venue) Apr/Ma	£ 740.60		£ 740.60	TH87
24/09/25	LTH309	Free Range Collective	Initial fee re Pop Culture activity/exhibition	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ 2,500.00	TH111
01/12/24	LTH310	HSPA	Final fee main contractor procurement	£ 1,100.00	£ 220.00	£ 1,320.00	TH78
12/08/24	LTH311	HSPA	Addition fee re main contractor procurement	£ 300.00	£ 60.00	£ 360.00	TH78
18/07/25	LTH312	John Chamberlain	Expenses re activities equipment	£ 180.31	£ 31.84	£ 212.15	TH97
23/09/25	LTH313	Lowestoft Town Council	Payroll	£ 949.79		£ 949.79	TH112
23/09/25	LTH314	Lowestoft Town Council	Payroll	£ 17,438.48	£ -	£ 17,438.48	TH88
17/02/25	LTH315	Atlassian	Trello software licence for heritage team	£ 288.58	£ -	£ 288.58	TH96
08/10/25	LTH316	Auravisions Ltd	Stained glass repairs & cleaning inv c	£ 7,282.00	£ 1,456.40	£ 8,738.40	TH83
25/07/25	LTH317	Auravisions Ltd	Stained glass repairs & cleaning inv b	£ 8,494.00	£ 1,698.80	£ 10,192.80	TH83
31/10/25	LTH318	Barnes Group	Main construction contract cert 8, Oct 25	£ 299,878.71	£ 59,975.74	£ 359,854.45	TH99
07/11/25	LTH319	Butler & Castell	Picture frame restorating/picture cleaning	£ 2,843.75	£ 568.75	£ 3,412.50	TH104
31/10/25	LTH320	Andrew Morton Associates	QS October 25	£ 2,556.68	£ 511.34	£ 3,068.02	TH52
06/11/25	LTH321	HAT Projects	Design team fees Oct 25	£ 12,474.14	£ 2,494.83	£ 14,968.97	TH51
06/11/25	LTH321	HAT Projects	Contract Admin Oct 25	£ 2,600.00	£ 520.00	£ 3,120.00	TH63
02/11/25	LTH322	Jess Johnston	Heritage PM Oct 25	£ 1,290.00	£ -	£ 1,290.00	TH53
31/10/25	LTH323	Dr Harriet Foster	Evaluaton Sept/Oct 25	£ 1,779.00	£ -	£ 1,779.00	TH82
31/10/25	LTH324	Julian Claxton	Filmmaking Sep/Oct 25	£ 760.76		£ 760.76	TH83
10/11/25	LTH325	MossKing Associates Limited	Project Management Oct 25	£ 6,422.00	£ -	£ 6,422.00	TH50

- The contingency spend to date is £333,545, which is within budget.

PWLB Loan

- Having taken the decision at Full Council to draw down the £4.74m agreed PWLB loan, we have been monitoring interest rates in the hope of timing a drawdown at an optimum point. Interest rates have softened to 6.12% from 6.47% reported last month, meaning an annual repayment of £257k compared to £274k on the higher rate. Note that there inevitably will be a short delay between submission of the application to DMO and the drawdown of the loan, so the applicable interest rate is somewhat outside LTC's control.

Next steps

- Over the next month, I will be managing/undertaking the following:
  - Responding to construction related queries, attending site meetings and approving instructions in liaison with nominated officers.
  - Working with the professional team and Barnes to review the time and cost implications of construction delay.
  - Continuing to drive business requirements/design issues in liaison with staff.
  - Financial control over expenditure to support the above (in line with approved budgets).
  - Reporting as necessary to funders including Historic England.

Sheila Moss King

Project Manager