

Lowestoft Town Council
Town Hall Project Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 11 December 2025 10:00

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Nick Webb. Non-Councillor members Helen Johnson and Ben Porter (East Suffolk Council)

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

Also in attendance: Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager)

As the Chair was not in attendance, a member of the Committee would need to be nominated to preside over the meeting. Cllr Coleby nominated Cllr Webb; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

74 Welcome

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

75 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

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

76 Declarations of interests and dispensations

76.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from Councillors on items on the agenda – There were no declarations.

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

77 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 13 November 2025

Cllr Brooks proposed approval but requested a typographical error be corrected in the confidential note (item 68.1, third paragraph); seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

78 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.

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

79.1 An update on contractual matters (some aspects may be confidential) – The main construction phase was making visible, good progress with the temporary roofing being removed and scaffolding being reduced, which would allow for further works to proceed such as the reinstatement of the clock faces in mid-January 2026.

Further to the discussion at the previous meeting regarding Barnes Construction's inspection by the Considerate Contractor Scheme, further orders had been placed within the Lowestoft constituency, bringing the total spend in the constituency to £1.187million, combined with the spend in the wider area of Suffolk, the total spend is £2.36million.

The construction phase continued to run behind programme and the Project Manager met with Barnes Construction to review possible mitigations and the implications. Due to the contractual nature of the issues to be discussed this would need to be moved into confidential session.

Lowestoft Town Council
Town Hall Project Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 11 December 2025 10:00

As the programme delay may affect conservation elements that were planned to be funded by Historic England, the team had reviewed the programme of conservation elements of the project and identified enough works to ensure all grant funding would be used. Architects have developed an extract programme of conservation items with estimates of work done and work remaining, with an accompanying cost plan.

A concern was raised on the lack of street lighting on Mariners Street. As some streetlights had been removed due to the works, the Project Manager would raise this with Barnes Construction and query if lighting could be added to the scaffolding to illuminate the area.

- 79.2 Any planned actions to be authorised for progression – There was a list of planned actions, but no authorisation was required as all tasks were within the Project Manager's delegated responsibilities. For the next month the Project Manager would focus on understanding the potential for time delays, the resulting cost implications for Barnes Construction and Lowestoft Town Council (such as professional fees and the joint works insurance) and working with Historic England to ensure all grant money is spent.
- 79.3 The Risk Register – There were no updates, the ongoing risk of delay remained but had not been escalated on the register. Cllr Brooks requested a potential risk for inclusion on the register be discussed in confidential session.
- 79.4 Updated Business Plan – The operational financials had been updated to support the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee with 2026-2027 expenditure, primarily this would cover the staff costs for the Town Hall Manager from 2 March 2026.
- 79.5 An update on the Activity Plan – The Heritage Officer's report had been submitted to the Committee. The Project Manager confirmed the team were doing well and attending various events around the town, such as the Carols on the Quay event. The Suffolk Artlink Workshops at the Battery of Ideas had been well received. The team continued to work with consultants on the Pop Culture projects that would commence in 2026 with a series of events and activities, which would culminate in the first exhibition in the Town Hall gallery.

There had also been positive engagement via social media with recent posts to promote upcoming events at the Town Hall.

The Committee thanked the Heritage Officer, Heritage Apprentice and the team for their work.

A suggestion was made in relation to the Hall of Fame to consider having the recognitions in terms of themes rather than specific people in Lowestoft, such as singers and artists.

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

To note and consider income and expenditure

- 80.1 Monitoring the budget – £3.27million had been spent to date with further invoices to be settled before the Christmas period. A second Extension of Time claim had been received, which would have a financial impact on project. This would be discussed further in confidential session.

£603,000 had been spent from the Contingency budget, the Project Manager explained the figure had increased since the last report as the method to report contingency spend had been changed.

The previous Extension of Time had been assessed by the Contract Administrator, as the impartial body, and eight of the twelve weeks requested had been awarded and the cost plan would be amended accordingly. This extended the project completion date to September 2026.

Lowestoft Town Council
Town Hall Project Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 11 December 2025 10:00

£4.1million had been drawn down and received from the Public Works Loan.

80.2 Any payments for approval – There were no payments to be approved.

81 Date of next meeting

Thursday 8 January 10:00

82 Items for the next agenda and close

No items were requested for the next agenda.

83 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 – Cllr Coleby proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 10:40

79.1 An update on contractual matters (some aspects may be confidential) – The Project Manager provided a further update on confidential contractual matters.

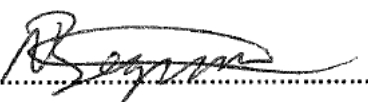
Cllr Webb temporarily left the chamber at 10:56

Cllr Webb returned to the chamber at 10:59

79.3 The Risk Register – There was a confidential discussion regarding a possible addition to the risk register, the Project Manager would discuss this further with the Town Clerk.

Cllr Webb thanked all in attendance and the wider team for their work over the past year on the project.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:26

Signed: 
8 January 2026