

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council

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

Tuesday 16 December 2025 18:30

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum (Chair), Jen Jones, Christian Newsome, John Murray, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Deborah Ray and Nick Webb

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

Also in attendance: Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager) and Emma Bellward (Marina Theatre Project Manager) attended the meeting via the webinar

176 Welcome

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

177 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence from any Councillors not in attendance

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sonia Barker, Connor Blowers, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Christine Moore, Paul Page, John Pitts, Bernie Rappensberger and Elise Youngman with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour. Cllrs Janet Craig and Keith Patience were absent with no apologies received.

178 Declarations and dispensations

178.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests, and of bias and pre-determination on items on the agenda – There were no declarations.

178.2 To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requested for dispensations had been received.

179 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the Full Council meeting on 25 November 2025

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the draft minutes and confidential note; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

180 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.

181 Finance and Governance

181.1 To receive and consider the following:

1. 2025 - 2026 budget and reserves – Cllr Pearce proposed the report be accepted as a true and accurate record of the budget and reserves; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.
2. Any bank reconciliations – November 2025 reconciliations were outstanding.
3. Payments and income for the month ending 30 November 2025 and December 2025 to date (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed the report be accepted as a true and accurate record of payment and income for the period specified; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.
4. Payment for approval: Sprayer - £1,615 – The sprayer would primarily be used to maintain the tennis courts. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the payment with funding to be allocated from the dedicated budget for tennis court maintenance; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour. In the interest of advance budgeting, it was clarified that items such

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as this could be included in the budget requests submitted to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee by the Grounds Maintenance Team, as those budget requests were not limited to larger expenditure items.

- 181.2 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting on 12 November 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 181.3 To consider the following recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee:
1. Amendments to item G3 on the Risk Register – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the amendments; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.
 2. Business Plan and Risk Register implementation and review by Committees and Sub-Committees – Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) had resolved to have different Committees be given responsibility for reviewing different sections of the Risk Register on a quarterly basis. It had been recommended the Business Plan also be reviewed on a quarterly basis. Cllr Pearce proposed the Business Plan be tabled on agendas on a quarterly basis for review, with the Committees and Sub-Committees to review the core objectives they are listed against, but to ensure the reviews were not tabled on an agenda at the same time as the Risk Register reviews; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.
 3. Adoption of the following policies:
 - a. Financial Regulations
 - b. Grants Awarding (and application form)Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the amendments and adopt both policies; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
 4. Agree an energy supply contract from 1 January 2026 – Officers endeavoured to obtain an alternative quote had been sought from a supplier suggested by the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee with environmental credentials, however a quote could not be confirmed in time for the meeting due to the size of the contract.

The total utility bill from the current supplier for electricity across all assets was currently £34,000 a year, this was set to increase to £45,000. Should LTC sign on to a three-year contract, the annual fee would be reduced to £20,000.

Cllr Pearce proposed to enter into the three-year contract due to the financial savings, with a request that the recently acquired piece of land, which has an electrical supply with a different provider, be moved to this contract if possible, and for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to examine the environmental and ethical considerations to inform a contract renewal for the end of this three-year period, in keeping with LTC's objectives, the climate emergency declaration and the net-zero target.

The Town Clerk confirmed the recently acquired piece of land was within an existing contract. Cllr Pearce amended the proposal to request officers monitor the inherited contract and make preparations to transfer it to the three-year contract when it nears the end. Cllr Murray seconded the amended proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

- 181.4 To consider the following recommendations from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee
1. A resolution authorising a short-investment – This item related to the drawn down amount from the Public Works Loan. The repayments of the loan would not be due for six months and it was suggested the loan be safely invested for that period to get a return before the repayments were due. It has been cleared with the regulators that to do so would be legally compliant and there would be appropriate avenues for low-volatility, low-risk investment.

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Cllr Pearce proposed the loan be appropriately put in a low-volatile, low-risk investment; seconded by Cllr Parker. It was commented that the investment would need to immune to the stock market risk. Cllr Pearce amended his proposal to add a delegation to officers to take one-off financial advice on a suitable investment avenue for a period of six months that would maximise the investment return whilst guarding against volatility and loss. A vote was held with six votes in favour and two abstentions.

- 181.5 To consider payment of charges relating to storage and maintenance of the Lowestoft Collection – LTC had been approached by a trustee of the Lowestoft Museum, where a large element of the Lowestoft Collection (including paintings, porcelain and civic insignia) was held, in relation to a significant increase in their electricity bill. As this concerned the care and custody LTC items, it was suggested it would be fair and equitable to contribute to the bill, which could be covered by the existing reserve for maintenance of the Lowestoft Collection.

Cllr Pearce proposed LTC make a contribution equivalent to 20% of the electricity bill (in proportion to the number of items in the museum) for the maintenance and upkeep of LTC items in the custody of the museum, with consideration to be given as to whether this would be an ongoing item of expenditure. The contribution would cover the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 financial years, and officers were asked to assist the museum in interrogation of the electricity bill to help reduce the amount.

Clarification was requested on what would be covered in the contribution as the supporting meeting paper listed the total bill, not just the electricity portion. Cllr Pearce amended the proposal to specify the 20% contribution would cover the total bill of the museum, not just electricity, for the years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. An item was requested for the January 2026 Full Council agenda to consider whether LTC should commit to pay an annual amount for the maintenance of the Lowestoft Collection. Officers would maintain ongoing liaison with the museum to monitor the bill. A vote was held with all in favour.

182 Town Hall Project

- 182.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Town Hall Project Committee meeting on 11 December 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 182.2 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager (some aspects may be confidential) – The Project Manager reported on the progress of the main construction phase and informed attendees the site would be closed over the Christmas holiday with full security maintained, including 24-hour CCTV.

Completion of the project was likely to go on to the end of 2026, for which the Project Manager would have more details in the new year.

A further Extension of Time request had been received and was under review by the Contract Administrator.

To date, Barnes Construction have awarded £1.2million worth of contracts within the Lowestoft constituency, demonstrating a high inward investment in the area.

Cllr Jones temporarily left the chamber at 19:09

183 Marina Theatre

- 183.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Extraordinary Marina Theatre Project Committee meeting on 18 November 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

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- 183.2 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager (some aspects may be confidential) – The Project Manager reported the theatre was in full business with the pantomime season. Since the previous meeting, further elements of the project have been completed, including the fire escape, which had been signed off by building control, the community room and the Manager's office.

Cllr Jones returned to the chamber at 19:12

Work would continue on the remaining snagging items to ensure practical completion could be issued. Work would finish onsite this week for the Christmas period and commence 5 January 2026. There were no queries raised.

- 183.3 To receive an update on legal and contractual matters relating to project completion – This item would be discussed in confidential session.
- 183.4 To receive and consider the Marina Theatre options appraisal (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

184 Assets, Inclusion and Development

- 184.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting on 1 December 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

185 Planning

- 185.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meetings on 4 December 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

186 Personnel

- 186.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting on 4 December 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 186.2 To consider the following recommendations from the Personnel Committee
1. Changes to Contracts of Employment to align notice periods for employer and employee – Cllr Pearce proposed the notice periods for employer and employee be aligned; seconded by Cllr Murray; all in favour.
 2. To consider pension provision for apprentices – This item would be discussed in confidential session.
 3. Resolve that Councillors who do not attend mandatory data protection training will not be privy to confidential data – Councillors and staff members were required to undertake annual data protection training. This recommendation had been made to protect LTC's data and minimise the legal, financial and reputational risk.

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse this recommendation and effective from the 2026-2027 Civic Year, Councillors who do not attend mandatory data protection training will not be privy to confidential documents or confidential emails. This restriction would be applied appropriately and consider the circumstances of Councillors who are unable to attend training due to illness or other explained absences. Cllr Murray seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

187 Climate and Ecological Emergency

- 187.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee meeting on 17 November 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

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- 187.2 To consider a recommendation from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee on a policy position on fireworks – It was reported the Committee had not been in favour of an outright ban on fireworks and instead recommended a licensing criteria be considered to outline what LTC could and could not support, with a resolution for officers to draft a policy with the key points raised in the meeting that would guide future event or grant applications. It was noted the exact recommendation had not included a delegation to officers to draft a policy, but it was agreed for this action to be taken forward and await a further recommendation from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee.

188 Outside Bodies

- 188.1 To consider a response to the government consultation on Local Government Reorganisation The Government consultation on LGR in Suffolk will run until 11th January. The different proposals can be viewed on the Government's website: [Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space](#)

It was noted that Councillors could submit responses as individuals, but as the largest town in East Suffolk it was agreed LTC should submit a response. Cllr Pearce declared he had been lobbied by One Suffolk but had not responded to any communications received from them.

Cllr Pearce proposed an extraordinary meeting, or a standalone meeting to which all Councillors are invited, be arranged in early January before the consultation deadline. Cllr Pearce amended the proposal so should a standalone meeting be called, then a delegation would be given to all Councillors in that meeting to agree and submit the consultee response on behalf of LTC; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

189 To consider the following legal matters (confidential):

An update report on legal matters – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

190 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 27 January 18:30

191 Items for the next agenda and close

No items were requested for the next agenda.

192 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, including the following:

Any matters, including those above as required – Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Murray; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 19:38

- 183.3 To receive an update on legal and contractual matters relating to project completion – A confidential update regarding legal and contractual matters was provided.

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- 183.4 To receive and consider the Marina Theatre options appraisal (confidential) – The options provided was reviewed and discussed.

Cllr Murray made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

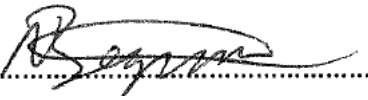
- 186.2. To consider the following recommendations from the Personnel Committee
2. To consider pension provision for apprentices – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Murray; all in favour.

189 To consider the following legal matters (confidential):

The legal update was provided.

Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:29

Signed: 

27 January 2025