

Lowestoft Town Council
Finance and Governance Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
Wednesday 14 January 2026 at 10:00

MINUTES

Present: Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Jen Jones, Graham Parker and Andy Pearce

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Town Clerk), James Cox (Finance Manager and RFO) and Jill Hook (Finance Assistant)

Public: Three members of the public were in attendance (in person)

98 Welcome

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

99 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Paul Page, Bernie Rappensberger and Deborah Ray with reasons provided. Cllr Parker proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

Cllr Keith Patience was absent with no apologies received.

100 Declarations of Interests and dispensations

- 100.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he was the Town Council representative on the Kittiwake Partnership and would not participate in the discussion or vote for item 105.3. Cllr Brooks declared she has no financial interest on item 105.3 but was a member of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The Kittiwake financial arrangements were explained. Cllr Jones declared she was a friend of one of the named applicants at item 105.1 so would leave the chamber. Cllr Parker declared he was an East Suffolk Councillor and would leave the chamber for item 105.3
- 100.2 To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

101 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 10 December 2025

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

102 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.

The members of the public thanked the committee for considering their grant application and summarised the future plans of the organisation. It was confirmed the grant was required to pay for DBS checks and website enhancements.

Cllr Jones temporarily left the chamber at 10:26 due to her declared interest.

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Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the grant application with a condition that the members of the public return in six months to update the committee on their progress; seconded by Cllr Parker; three in favour, one against and one abstention.

Members of the public left the chamber at 10:30

Cllr Jones returned to the chamber at 10:30

103 Budget and Loan

- 103.1 To monitor the budget for 2025-2026, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – there were no matters to discuss.
- 103.2 To note any bank reconciliations – there were no updates.
- 103.3 To receive the minutes of the Budget and Loan Sub Committee meetings from 9th December 2025 to 8th January 2026 – due to the late attachments, this item was deferred until the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting.
- 103.4 To consider a recommendation to Full Council to amend the General Reserves target in the Reserves Policy – Cllr Pearce proposed to recommend to Full Council to amend the General Reserves target in the Reserves Policy to the equivalent of four months of revenue expenditure; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour. It was requested the Finance Manager informs the committee of the latest revenue expenditure position when the reserves targets are reviewed annually.
- 103.5 To consider making a recommendation to Full Council on the 2026-2027 budget and precept – The budget process was summarised. Cllr Pearce recommended to Full Council a precept increase for 2026-2027 of 9.9% equating to a total precept of £2,664,909. Summarised, this would equate to a Band D property increasing by £17.96 per annum (total annual cost £199.17) and a Band B property increasing by £13.95 per annum (total annual cost £154.91). Seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. Cllr Coleby thanked everyone involved in the budget process.

104 Payments and Receipts:

- 104.1 To note the income and expenditure reports for December 2025 and January 2026 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the December 25 income and expenditure as an accurate record; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 104.2 To consider any payments for approval (see schedule) – Three items were considered for approval:
 - Pressure washer £6,036.38
 - COSSH cabinet, up to £400

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- Fuel store, up to £800

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve all three items with delegation to the Finance Manager to allocate funds from the current year's budget; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

105 Grants and Sponsorships

To consider the following grant applications:

105.1 Living with Mental Health - £1,346.82 - The Committee agreed to bring this item forward in the agenda and permitted members of the public to speak on the item.

105.2 Lydia Eva and Mincarlo Trust - £7,000
Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the grant application. Discussions were held as to whether the questions asked from the previous Finance and Governance Committee Meeting had been sufficiently addressed. Concerns were raised on the high value of the application request with it being higher than many other grant awards. Potential future sponsorship was discussed. Seconded by Cllr Parker; four in favour; two abstentions.

Cllr Parker left the chamber at 10:56.

Cllr Pearce temporarily left the chamber at 10:56

105.3 Kittiwake Partnership - £2,000 – The response from the Kittiwake officer regarding the small contribution from East Suffolk Council was accepted with the kittiwakes and the Partnership considered a positive for the town. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the application; seconded by Cllr Begum; four in favour.

Cllr Pearce returned to the chamber at 11.01.

It was requested for the Town Council representative to discuss with the Kittiwake Partnership the possibility of including information on the Kittiwake hotels on information boards by liaising with the offshore wind farm companies.

105.4 To note the grant feedback form from Citizens Advice East Suffolk – Officers were requested to pass on thanks to the Citizens Advice Bureau for their thorough feedback. An agenda item for the next Finance and Governance meeting was requested for officers to provide information on grant feedback forms received within the last financial year. All grant recipients will be requested to attend the Annual Town Meeting to provide an update on work that has been funded by the residents of Lowestoft.

106 Other financial and governance matters, including:

106.1 To agree the scope of the insurance tender – The insurance procures from 1st April 2026 with tenders going live from 16th January 2026. Cllr Brooks proposed approval

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of the scope of the insurance tender; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour. It was established the Finance and Governance Committee will be required to scrutinise the tenders when they have been received and recommend to Full Council.

- 106.2 To consider terms of contract renewal for IT support services – Cllr Begum proposed to recommend to Full Council to renew the IT support services contract for 3 years; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

The Finance Manager agreed to discuss with the IT and Communications Officer whether the placement of attachments on agendas could be amended for ease of use.

107 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 11 February 2026

108 Items for the next agenda and close

- Receive the Budget and Loan minutes for 9th December 2025 to 8th January 2026
- Update on grant feedback forms

109 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

The meeting was closed at 11:17



Signed:

11 February 2026