

Lowestoft Town Council
Finance and Governance Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 10:00

MINUTES

Present: Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray.

In attendance: James Cox (Finance Manager and RFO) and Jill Hook (Finance Assistant)

110 Welcome

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

111 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

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

Cllr Keith Patience was absent with no apologies received.

112 Declarations of Interests and dispensations

112.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – No declarations were received.

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

113 To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2026 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the draft minutes; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

114 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.

115 Budget and Loan

115.1 To monitor the budget for 2025-2026, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – there were no matters to discuss.

115.2 To note any bank reconciliations – there were no updates.

115.3 To receive the minutes of the Budget and Loan Sub Committee meetings from 9th December 2025 to 12th January 2026 – A formal Budget and Loan Sub Committee meeting would be required to formally approve the minutes. No comments were made.

116 Payments and Receipts:

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116.1 To note the income and expenditure reports for January 2026 and February 2026 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (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 Parker; all in favour. It was confirmed the Football Foundation income was a grant received for the maintenance of the football pitches at Normanston Park.

116.2 To consider any payments for approval – There were no payments for approval.

117 Grants and Sponsorships

To receive the following grant feedback forms:

- 117.1 Barge Preservation Community Project CIC
- 117.2 Friends of Kirkley Ham
- 117.3 Friends of Fen Park
- 117.4 Lowestoft North Cliff Community Garden
- 117.5 Pakefield Community Group
- 117.6 Lydia Eva and Mincarlo Charitable Trust

The feedback forms were welcomed and received.

117.7 To receive an update on the grant feedback forms received for the current financial year (see schedule) – there were no matters to discuss.

118 Other financial and governance matters, including:

- 118.1 To consider implementation of the objectives of the Business Plan pertinent to this Committee

It was confirmed the Business Plan would be reviewed on a quarterly basis as a working document and has only recently been implemented.

The costs of bringing the Grounds Maintenance work in-house were discussed. The expectation was that it would become cost effective within three years. The first two years were expected to incur higher costs due to the need for investment in new equipment. A request was made to receive an update on whether this objective was on track to be met and to be included on the next quarterly Committee meeting.

The reorganisation of Suffolk councils was not included within the Business Plan, where the Council may be required to take on responsibility of additional assets and/or services. It was agreed this would need to be monitored through the Business Plan as details became available. It was suggested to include a box to show the council were aware of the possible changes.

- 118.2 To consider the implementation of GOV.UK Pay (see schedule) – It was confirmed the service was free but the payment service provider, Stripe, takes a small

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percentage plus a transaction fee. The current pricing from Stripe is 1.5% of the payment value plus a twenty pence transaction fee. A reduced rate may be achievable on GOV.UK Pay but this is unknown until agreeing to the trial period. The service would be trialled before entering into a commitment. It was envisaged the volume of transactions would increase with the opening of the Town Hall so the reduction of admin time would outweigh the costs of the service. Cllr Brooks proposed to sign up for the scheme; seconded by Cllr Pearce; four in favour, one abstention.

119 To receive recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Working Group on the following policies:

- Community Engagement
- Conferring the title of Honorary Freeman and Freewomen
- Conferring the title of Honorary Freeman and Freewomen - Post Award
- Heritage Plaques
- Media
- Noticeboard Protocol
- Social Media

It was suggested to amend the wording within 4.4 of the Community Engagement Policy from 'is preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan' to 'has prepared' or a suitable alternative.

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendations from the Standing Order and Policies Sub Committee following the suggested amendment and recommend to Full Council for adoption; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed, if the next Standing Orders and Policies Sub Committee meeting is after the Finance and Governance Committee meeting, to delegate to Standing Orders to make their recommendations to Full Council in March 2026; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

Officers were requested to follow up when the approved changes to the welcome statement would be adopted.

120 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 11th March 2026

121 Items for the next agenda and close

The meeting was closed at 10.36

Signed: 

11 March 2026