

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 9 April 2026**.

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

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Sarah Foote, Town Clerk
07 April 2026

Lowestoft Town Council
Town Hall Project Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
10:00 on Thursday 9 April 2026

AGENDA

118 Welcome

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

119 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

120 Declarations of Interests and dispensations

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

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

121 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 12 March 2026

122 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.

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

123.1 An update on contractual matters

123.2 Any planned actions to be authorised for progression

123.3 The Risk Register

123.4 Updated Business Plan

123.5 An update on the Activity Plan

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

To note and consider income and expenditure

124.1 Monitoring the budget

124.2 Any payments for approval

Lowestoft Town Council
Town Hall Project Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
10:00 on Thursday 9 April 2026

125 Date of next meeting

Thursday 14 May 10:00

126 Items for the next agenda and close

127 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 12 March 2026 10:00

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Andy Pearce and Nick Webb. Non-Councillor members Helen Johnson and Ben Porter (East Suffolk Council Officers)

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Town Clerk), Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant) Francis Guildea (Town Hall Manager), John Chamberlain (Heritage Officer) and Holly Bryant (Heritage Apprentice)

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

The Chair was not in attendance. Cllr Pearce proposed Cllr Webb preside as Chair; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

107 Welcome

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

108 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby and Bernie Rappensberger with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

109 Declarations of interests and dispensations

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

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

110 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 12 February 2026

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

111 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.

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

112.1 An update on contractual matters – The Project Manager welcomed the Town Hall Manager to the team.

The main construction contract was progressing according to its current programme and work was underway on the restoration of the historic building and the new build construction, these elements were being progressed simultaneously to reduce the overall construction time.

The second Extension of Time application has been concluded with a total of four weeks (of the twelve weeks requested) awarded. One week related to the replacement of rotten wall plates and three weeks related to variations of structural design which affected temporary

Lowestoft Town Council
Town Hall Project Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 12 March 2026 10:00

works. The Project Manager requested further discussion on this matter be in confidential session.

The funding from Historic England was due to expire by 31 March 2026, whilst the lime plaster work has progressed well, the sash windows were taking longer than expected and it was unlikely the Project Team would be able to claim the full amount of funds for that work. The Project Manager anticipated there would be a shortfall and has submitted a grant application to another conservation funding body for additional support to offset the shortfall.

Barnes Construction has awarded £1.3million in contracts within Lowestoft and £1.2million within wider Suffolk.

- 112.2 Any planned actions to be authorised for progression – There were no actions to be authorised.
- 112.3 The Risk Register – There were no formal updates and the risk register continued to be monitored. The Project Committee noted that decisions on matters such as contingency, interims office arrangements and any other matters before the Town Hall was open for occupation and public use, would need to be made before the 2027 pre-election period. Therefore, the Project Committee would need to know what timeframe will be available to make those decisions before the pre-election period begins.
The Project Manager expected to have a clearer view on potential moving dates by September 2026, depending on how well the progression of completion of internal works and the new build construction has gone.
- 112.4 Updated Business Plan – There were no updates for the Business Plan.
- 112.5 An update on the Activity Plan – The Heritage Officer noted the recent engagement via workshops and Town Hall talks. Positive feedback had been received from the Lowestoft History Day held on 28 February. The local museums also felt this was a positive event. The team felt this would be a worthwhile annual event.
It was suggested the Town Hall team consider using a beach hut on the South Beach for a Town Hall exhibition. Helen Johnson offered to discuss this further with the team.

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

To note and consider income and expenditure

- 113.1 Monitoring the budget – Total spend to date was £4.6million and £7.9million remained. A repayment of £247,000 had been received from Historic England.
- 113.2 Any payments for approval – There were no payments to approval.

114 Staffing and business planning (some aspects may be confidential)

- 114.1 Staffing structure and timelines – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

115 Date of next meeting

Thursday 9 April 10:00

116 Items for the next agenda and close

An item was requested to receive an update on setting up the working group for the Mayoral Roll of Honours board.

117 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

Lowestoft Town Council
Town Hall Project Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Thursday 12 March 2026 10:00

the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any employment matters and legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda – Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Helen Johnson; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public at 10:43

The Heritage Officer and Heritage Apprentice left the chamber at 10:43

112.1 An update on contractual matters – The Project Manager provided further confidential information on contractual matters.

114.1 Staffing structure and timelines – Considerations were underway on the staffing structure and timelines.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:11

Signed:
9 April 2026

Lowestoft Town Hall Project

Progress Report for April 26 Steering Committee

This report covers the period 11 March to 1 April 2026.

Construction

- Lime plastering in the Council Chamber continues, with several walls largely complete and now drying. Areas around the windows are awaiting the new mouldings, prior to plastering completing. Further repair work is required around the bases of the pilasters.
- New rounded mouldings are required for the window reveals in multiple locations around the building – the originals were either in poor condition or were lost during removal of various plaster finishes. Stephenson's of Norwich will make bespoke mouldings to match the original.
- One of the appointment rooms is to be fully plastered and painted to provide a benchmark standard for all other rooms. This work has begun.
- The New Market Inn roof has now had all carpentry completed ready for flat roof finish installation. This area will house plant to service much of the south side of the building.
- Scaffolding on the High Street façade will be reduced once the street lighting boxes have been secured. UKPN are due to visit to connect up the heritage lights on the front of the Town Hall to a power supply fed from Compass Street. Suffolk Highways are progressing.
- Scaffolding has also been struck on the eastern façade in the courtyard to enable underpinning of the Council Chamber wall to begin.



Grant Funding

- Following discussions with Historic England, I have secured agreement from the National Lottery Heritage Fund that they will not fund any of the Historic England grant-funded works. This enables us to claim 100% of costs expended on these works, meaning that we will secure the entire grant ie no shortfall.
- From an NLHF perspective, this makes no material difference: they fund just over 35% of the entire project and are relaxed about any notional allocations that enable other funders (eg Towns Fund) to support elements of the project.

Activity & Interpretation

- An update on the activity plan will be provided by the heritage officer.
- Jess Johnston, Heritage Project Manager, has handed over the activity plan oversight to the Town Hall manager, but will continue to provide backup where necessary. This means that Jess' primary involvement with the project is now restricted to interpretation.
- A review session with PLB is scheduled for mid-April on interpretation. This will look at new timings, given the delays in the capital works, and will assess what budget implications this may have. The manufacture of the interpretative displays, including interactives, has not yet been placed (as a result of delays) and there is likely to be some inflation. We will also plan the installation, in relation to practical completion on the build project, seeking opportunities to reduce the overall timescales where practicable.

Business

- I have begun working with the Town Hall manager on development of the café offering, looking at how to structure the offer to the market, what is included/not, and how this will support both a good income stream and a service that is fitting for the Town Hall etc. Recommendations will be brought to a future project committee meeting for discussion.
- We have also started looking at staffing the Town Hall, taking into consideration the roles and responsibilities within the council team, identifying opportunities to share resources and/or offer additional hours to existing staff. This work will continue, in liaison with the Clerk and Karen Chapman.

Financials

- Total spend to date is below. Note that, due to the early reporting this month, many of the regular consultancy invoices have not yet been received, and are excluded from the total.

Lowestoft Town Hall Project (NL-21-00031)	
Spend to date	TOTALS
Budget	£ 12,561,234
Actual spend to date	£ 5,182,703
Balance remaining	£ 7,378,531

- Invoices for this period are:

Lowestoft Town Hall Project (NL-21-00031)		Delivery Stage	Invoice control sheet				
Invoice Date	Inv Ref N	Supplier	Description	Amount	VAT	Total inc VA	Project PO
25/03/26	LTH363	Barnes Group	Main construction cert 13, Mar 26	£ 565,267.01	£ 113,053.40	£ 678,320.41	TH99
25/03/26	LTH364	Julian Claxton	Filmmaking Mar 26	£ 531.91	£ -	£ 531.91	TH83
10/03/26	LTH365	Lowestoft Arts Centre	Room hire photography workshop	£ 20.00	£ -	£ 20.00	TH87
01/03/26	LTH366	Free Range Collective	2nd invoice re Lowestoft Rocked activity Mar 26	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ 2,500.00	TH111

- The final repayment from Historic England is due in early May, subject to completion of all the necessary reporting.

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.
 - Finalising the Historic England grant process, filing completion reports.
 - Supporting the Town Hall Manager on knowledge transfer.
 - Working with the Town Hall Manager to develop the café solution further.
 - Instigating discussions with Suffolk County Council on parking including blue badge.
 - Financial control over expenditure to support the above (in line with approved budgets).
 - Reporting as necessary to funders.

Sheila Moss King

Project Manager