

Lowestoft Town Council

For the attention of all Councillors

You are summoned to attend a **Events and Communications Sub-Committee** meeting of Lowestoft Town Council, which will be held at **Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE** at **10:00 AM** on **Wednesday, April 22, 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
16 April 2026

Lowestoft Town Council
Events and Communications Sub-Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
10:00 AM on Wednesday, April 22, 2026

AGENDA

97 Welcome

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

98 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

99 Declarations of Interests and dispensations

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

99.2 To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted

100 To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 28 January 2026

101 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.

102 Finance

To monitor expenditure by the sub-committee from its delegated budget.

103 To consider implementation of the objective of the Business Plan pertinent to this Sub-Committee

104 To review the Risk Register, consider the relevant risks and ensure implementation of the control measures

105 Communications

105.1 To review the outcomes of the Communications Tools Workshop and to consider any recommendations and actions

106 Events

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106.1 To note attendance at events of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor

106.2 To consider any applications for events on Town Council owned land.

106.3 To receive a report of permissions granted for events on Town Council owned land.

106.4 To review and consider the following timetable of events:

Date	Item
8 March 2026	International Women's Day
10 March 2026	Annual Assembly
16 May 2026	Wild Lowestoft - Climate Event
12 June 2026	Awarding of Freedom of the Town Ceremony
14 June 2026	Lowestoft 10K
11 July 2026	Lowestoft Pride
July - August 2026	Summer Activities
29 August 2026	Lowestoft Maritime Festival
30 August 2026	Wellness Festival
11-20 September 2026	Heritage Open Days 2026
October 2026	Black History Month
3 October 2026	Royal Naval Patrol Service Association Commemorative Event
8 November 2026	Remembrance Sunday
11 November 2026	Armistice Day
22 November 2026	Benjamin Britten Day
December 2026	Santa Dash
27 January 2027	Holocaust Memorial Day
2027	Civic Event

106.5 To receive a report on the World Book Day Trail

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106.6 To receive a report on the recent themed Markets and consider any recommendations

106.7 To consider an event to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) Day on 17th May

106.8 To consider support for a standalone Holocaust Memorial Day Event

107 To review Mayoral Handbook including Robes, Chains and Badges of Office protocol and precedence for attending events when neither Mayor or Deputy can attend

108 To receive an update on the information board for Gunton Cliff featuring Vera Brittain

109 Date of next meeting and reports
To be confirmed

110 Items for the next agenda and close

111 Admissions to Meetings

To resolve 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.

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Wednesday 28 January 2026 AT 10:00 AM

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker (Chair), Wendy Brooks (arrived at 10:04), Andy Pearce, Nick Webb, Neil Coleby

In attendance: Christopher Meek (Events and Office Manager) and Michael Winter (Communications and IT Officer)

Also in attendance: No members of public were present.

84 Welcome

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

85 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies with reasons were provided by Cllrs Begum, Rappensberger and Pitts. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies, seconded by Cllr Webb, all in favour.

86 Declarations of interests and dispensations

86.1 To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda

Cllr Barker declared that she was the Town Council's representative on the First Light Steering Committee.

86.2 To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted

None were received.

Cllr Brooks joined the meeting at 10:04

87 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 17 December 2025

Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Webb, all in favour.

88 Public forum

It was noted that some comments had come in but these would be looked at during the appropriate agenda item.

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89 Finance

The budget spreadsheet was displayed and noted.

90 Communications

90.1 To review the Town Council's Communications Tools

The Communications and IT Officer reported that a workshop had been arranged for all Councillors to attend. The outcomes of this workshop would then be collated and presented to this sub-committee at its next meeting.

91 Events

91.1 To note attendance at events of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor

The list of events attended was noted.

91.2 To consider any applications for events on Town Council owned land.

The Events and Office Manager reported that an application had been received from First Light Festival to use Kensington Gardens in June. It was understood that there may be a change to the approach for collecting fees in the area.

Cllr Pearce commented that this would be a new development as a condition of approving the use of Kensington Gardens in the past has been that there are no pitch fees.

Cllr Pearce proposed for the application to be accepted in principal, with the same conditions as previous years attached, including no charge to the public or to stalls, remedial works are carried out and a site visit is organised between the organisers and officers. This was seconded by Cllr Barker, all in favour.

91.3 To receive a report of permissions granted for events on Town Council owned land.

The Events and Office Manager reported that Essex and Suffolk Water would be using several parks owned by Lowestoft Town Council for outreach work.

91.4 To review and consider the following timetable of events:

Date	Item
21 December 2025	Santa Dash 2025
Notes of thanks were shared to the Grounds Staff and Councillors who helped with the event, and to the Sports Development Officer for organising.	
Cllr Coleby mentioned that the Town Council should look at an event to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) Day.	

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The Communications and IT Officer reported that the event raised over £1000 for the Food Bank. Cllr Brooks commented that it would be good to look at ways the event could raise more money.

Cllr Pearce proposed for this event to become an annual event, seconded by Cllr Barker, all in favour.

27 January 2026	Holocaust Memorial Day
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Cllr Barker thanked officers for organising this event. It was noted that the Primary School did not attend the afternoon event due to the adverse weather.

Cllr Brooks thanked the Key Speaker from “Generation 2 Generation” and the schools who attended in the morning.

Thanks was also extended to the Grounds Team for their support in preparing the Holocaust Memorial Bed in Kensington Gardens.

4 March 2026	International Women's Day
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The Events and Office Manager reported that he had had a conversation with a local boxing provider who would be able to provide something that compliments the Sports Development Officer’s Circuit Training, whilst also looking to expand on the speaker event from last year.

Cllr Brooks commented that there may be ways for encouraging local businesses to apply for funding to help promote any activities, events or actions they are taking for International Women’s Day. Cllr Pearce commented that he supported this idea but noted that the timings would not allow for any grant applications to be submitted in time for the next Finance and Governance Committee. It was suggested that this Sub-Committee could set aside a pot of money with a delegation to staff to support this initiative.

Cllr Pearce proposed for a maximum pot of £1500 from the Events Budget with a delegation to staff to consider any applications, including risk assessments and safeguarding, with a view of publicising any events. This was seconded by Cllr Brooks, all in favour.

The Communications and IT Officer queried what the maximum amount of grant funding per application would be. It was agreed that £200 per event would be the maximum.

16 May 2026	Wild Lowestoft - Climate Event
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The Events and Office Manager reported that he had recently been on a site visit with Lowestoft Vision to discuss the use of the Town Centre. Good feedback from local organisations interested in taking part had been received.

Cllr Brooks asked if it would be possible to support Lowestoft Vision in creating new planters for the area. It was suggested that this aspiration should be relayed to Lowestoft Vision with discussion on whether this was a temporary or permanent fixture.

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14 June 2026	Lowestoft 10K
The Events and Office Manager reported that the Sports Development Officer was looking to increase the numbers of participants due to demand last year. It was noted that sponsorship packages were now available. Cllr Pearce asked if could be checked whether a delegation was in place for any upfront costs to be spent.	
11 July 2026	Lowestoft Pride
It was noted that the Lowestoft Pride event in 2025 had been shortlisted for the EAFN Festival Awards 2025.	
July - August 2026	Summer Activities
It was noted that additional events for Fen Park were being looked at.	
11-20 September 2026	Heritage Open Days 2026
It was noted that this was being organised by the Town Hall Project Team with discussions and bookings already underway.	
October 2026	Black History Month
It was commented that no national theme had been decided yet. Cllr Brooks commented that it would be good to get some engagement from local secondary schools, especially as they engage well with other commemorative events. Various ideas were discussed, including offering to lead assemblies. It was agreed that these should be explored further.	
3 October 2026	Royal Naval Patrol Service Association Commemorative Event
It was noted that this event would be smaller than last years. It was agreed that the rest of the events timetable could be deferred.	
8 November 2026	Remembrance Sunday
11 November 2026	Armistice Day
22 November 2026	Benjamin Britten Day
2027	Civic Event

91.5 To consider arrangements for holding the Annual Assembly on Tuesday 10 March, and any budget requirements

A briefing paper of venue options was circulated.

Cllr Brooks commented that she was not convinced that the Battery of Ideas was a good location, and would prefer to see the Library used. The Events and Office Manager

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commented that the Library did not have a suitable room for holding a large meeting and information stalls. It was noted that work would be needed to make the Battery of Ideas look warm and welcoming, as it did for the Suffolk Day event.

Cllr Peare proposed to endorse the staff recommendation for the venue, alongside a maximum budget of £1500, seconded by Cllr Webb. Four voted in favour with one against.

91.6 To consider arrangements for awarding the Freedom of the Town following the Full Council decision in September 2025 (some aspects may be confidential)

It was agreed to discuss this item in confidential.

91.7 To note the arrangements for the Wellness Festival in 2026

The Events and Office Manager reported that Norfolk and Waveney MIND had been in touch to advise that they would not be able to organise the event this year due to a change in their outreach strategy.

Cllr Pearce propose for officers to look at the feasibility for organising this event in-house, seconded by Cllr Coleby, all in favour.

91.8 To consider support for a Lowestoft photo exhibition

Cllr Brooks asked for confirmation on whether this was for an individual or for a group of people. It was confirmed that this was for an individual.

Cllr Brooks proposed to support the event with a maximum budget of £500, seconded by Cllr Pearce, all in favour.

91.9 To consider supporting and promoting the world book day "national year of reading" campaign in the high street

The Communications and IT Officer commented that this as a national campaign and that the commitment would be to fund resources that could be positioned in local shops to encourage families to explore the town. It was noted that the trail would start at the beginning of February Half Term and run for several weeks.

Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the staff recommendation with the £500 coming from the Events Budget, seconded by Cllr Coleby, all in favour.

92 To receive an update on the information board for Gunton Cliff featuring Vera Brittain and other notable people

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The Communications and IT Officer commented that this Sub-Committee had previously looked at asking the residents of Gunton Cliff for their opinion on notable people that could be including, following suggestions already received by the Heritage Focus Group.

Cllr Brooks suggested that it would be better to stick to the original idea of an information board focusing just on Vera Brittain. The Communications and IT Officer commented that there could be a risk of the information board becoming a list of names rather than giving any information.

Cllr Pearce proposed to return to the original idea of creating an information board for Vera Brittain, with consideration given to suitable locations, seconded by Cllr Barker, all in favour.

93 To consider progression of the heritage plaque programme for 2026/27

The Events and Office Manager reported that there were concerns around the location for the first plaque in the schedule due to finding a suitable place to put the plaque, especially considering the amount of words on the plaque. Cllr Pearce commented that this is something that the Heritage Focus Group should look at as this was a sensible concern.

Cllr Pearce proposed to give a delegation to officers to have a conversation with the Heritage Focus Group to discuss the text and location, seconded by Cllr Coleby, four voted in favour with one abstention.

Cllr Pearce commented that officers should raise any comments on practicality for future plaques with the Heritage Focus Group.

Cllr Brooks commented that she had been approached by a member of public around having a plaque to honour Robert Hook. It was commented that this request should be submitted to the office.

94 Date of next meeting and reports

Wednesday 25 February 2026 10:00am

95 Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Barker asked for an item on the use of mayoral robes and regalia

96 Admissions to meetings

To resolve 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.

Cllr Coleby proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session, seconded by Cllr Webb, all in favour.

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The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 11:57

Cllr Coleby proposed to suspend Standing Orders 3Y by 15 minutes, seconded by Cllr Webb, all in favour.

Item 91.6

The Events and Office Manager commented that a decision was needed on whether there would be one event or two for the different recipients. Cllr Pearce proposed for the awarding to take place during one event, seconded by Cllr Coleby, all in favour.

Cllr Brooks proposed Sparrows Nest Gardens as a suitable venue, seconded by Cllr Pearce, all in favour.

It was agreed that officers should look at arranging a suitable date.

The meeting was closed at 12:08

Signed:
25 February 2026

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Review of Communications Tools and Audiences, and Actions

The Lowestoft Town Council Business Plan asks for a review of Communications Tools within the first six months of adoption.

The Town Council uses a variety of tools for communication. The table below notes the discussions by Councillors at the Communications Tools Workshop on Thursday 5th February, alongside the Communications and IT Officer's comments and recommended actions.

The Events and Communications Sub-Committee are asked to review the table and the recommended actions. This will be the basis for a Communications Plan with targets that can be reviewed on a quarterly basis by this sub-committee.

Communication Tool	What is good?	What is bad?	How could we improve?	Communications and IT Officer Comments and Recommendations
Website	- New website has had good public feedback - Good visuals	- Accessing meetings - People knowing about our website - Encouraging/notifying the public of where information can be found - People not using websites in the same way as in previous years	- Labelling of pages – “meetings” - Reminding the public about our website - Introduction of search bar – linked to news items and meetings	<i>The website is most successful when it is being used for people to find out more information via a link shared on social media. This should become regular practice and would highlight the website as the place for people to find out more information on the work of the Town Council.</i> <i>The naming of pages can always be reviewed but I would be wary of changing main page names too often or making it unclear (a label can't have all the information on it!)</i> <i>The search bar function has been looked at for the website and is being</i>

				<i>discussed with the developers as the default search bar is not user friendly.</i> Actions: • Ensuring all social media posts share a website link, where applicable (immediate) • Reviewing webpage naming (ongoing) • Introduction of search bar on website (within 6 months)
Facebook	• Sports and Events promotion • High quality of products promoted	• Town Hall – not attracting high level of public views • People accessing via phones (so have a narrowed view) • Need to implement a timely removal/management of comments	• Could look at tying the different “brands” together • Capture recurring concerns to feedback to committees • Promote decisions/agenda items for comments	<i>Each of the Social Media “brands” (LTC, Town Hall, Sports) should maintain their own unique voice and style. They should be tied together by the use of LTC logo, theming and an agreed colour palette.</i> <i>The LTC Facebook page could definitely include more sharing of meetings, although it would be too much to share every meeting. Key points that could be looked at are:</i> • Opening of grant funding windows (quarterly) • Full Council Meetings • Canvassing opinions on upcoming projects (a guideline steer on what and when these

				<i>should be canvassed is needed on a case-by-case basis)</i> Actions: • <i>Expand the approved LTC branding guidelines internally to reflect the new “brands” – noting that the Town Hall has its own guidelines in place (within 6 months)</i> • <i>Promoting when Full Council is and the livestream (new civic year – starting with AGM)</i> • <i>Encouraging public engagement with meetings through promotion (new civic year)</i>
Instagram	• “In the moment” event stories		• Dedicated content • Targeting younger people – campaigns	<i>Whilst not our biggest social media account, the Town Council’s Instagram page is its fastest growing. The page has great interaction on event days, especially with short clips of performers.</i> Actions: • <i>Explore ways that Instagram could be used to compliment the Town Council’s Comms, specifically around</i>

				<i>engagement with different audiences (within 6 months)</i> • <i>Continue to use Stories on event days (ongoing)</i>
YouTube <i>(including livestreaming)</i>		• Main page is taken up by Livestreams	• A new page for promotional materials such as Grounds Videos, Events • Utilise YouTube Shorts	<i>Creating a new YouTube channel for promotional material would be key. This would also allow for videos to be embedded into our website – with an emphasis on the short form video format.</i> <i>Actions:</i> • <i>Create a new YouTube Channel for promotional materials (within 6 months)</i> • <i>Experiment with the use of YouTube Shorts – which can also be used on Instagram etc. (within 6 months)</i>

Local Press		• Lowestoft Journal is no longer a local paper with local stories • Getting through the advertising on Lowestoft Journal • Time-pressure on major media	• Creating visual hooks for stories	<i>It is accepted that the local press is not in the same place it was 5+ years ago with a move towards “clickbait” headlines to gain advertising revenue. Major Media outlets such as the BBC and ITV, remain good comms tools when they are engaged with a story.</i> Actions: • <i>Ensure that any press releases have a clear message and visuals to produce a “hook” (ongoing)</i>
Other Print Media (e.g. Council Tax Leaflet)	• Council Tax Leaflet – cost effective, is received by everyone and well produced	• Challenge is cost for delivering to all	• Town Hall having print advertising • Production of a Community Newsletter (Quarterly) – digital with a limited print run for community centres • Targeted Communications (leaflet drops) • Signage at Parks	<i>A key outcome of the Business/Communications Plan is to produce an online Community Newsletter. An idea is to also look at targeted booklets for key events/promotion, such as collating the Summer Activities programme</i> Actions: • <i>Production of Quarterly Community Newsletter for digital (first edition after AGM/start of new civic year)</i> • <i>Review signage in parks (within 1 year)</i>

				Producing targeted print media such as a Summer Programme of events for July/August for online and community centres/cafes/schools etc. (within 6 months)
Noticeboards		- Each noticeboard is a different size - Priority needed on statutory notices (AGAR, Elections)	Look to introduce uniformity in size as noticeboards need replacing	<i>The lack of uniformity for noticeboards makes designing a layout for the noticeboards difficult. Noticeboards are regularly checked when the meeting schedules are published (every two months) with noticeboards in high footfall area (such as Sparrows Nest Gardens) receiving more checks to refresh event posters.</i> Actions: Review all noticeboards and look for uniformity (ongoing)

Events	• Good variety of events • Calendar published in advance			<i>Events remain a strong communication tool. Thought is needed on having a regular LTC stand at all events to promote the Town Council's work, increase engagement and act as a councillor drop-in. Enough councillors to be at this stand would be needed to ensure this can function.</i> Actions: • Continue publishing of events calendar as information updates (ongoing) • Consider LTC stand at all LTC events (ongoing)
Markets		• Promotion of Markets	• Transitioning from themed to regular to increase presence • Creating a Market "Brand"	<i>Creating a strong identity for the Market is a clear goal. The Market having its own Social Media presence gives the opportunity for it to have its own voice and allow for greater stallholder interaction (Social Media Takeovers etc.)</i> Actions: • Creating a Triangle Market Social Media page to increase presence (within 6 months)

				• Create branding guidelines for Triangle Market (within 6 months)
Grounds and Buildings Maintenance Team	• Creates Brand Awareness • Public Presence		• More public comms (such as the videos or project updates)	<i>It is clear that updates from the Grounds and Buildings Maintenance Team generates high engagement and lets people know of the work being down by the Town Council. Care is needed to ensure that the generation of video content is manageable.</i> Actions: • Regular creation of new public content (ongoing) • Tie communications in with national campaigns (#LoveParks, #GroundsWeek) (ongoing)
Councillor-led events	• Have gazebo equipment		• Targeted engagement events for campaigns and projects • North/South Councillor Drop-In Day	<i>Having more organised Councillor Drop-Ins is a good way of hearing the public's concerns. Care around safeguarding would mean that these events should be organised with groups of councillors with officer support. To encourage the best attendance of councillors, it is agreed that separate sessions with North and</i>

				<i>South Councillors during the year are organised at suitable locations.</i> Actions: • <i>Schedule drop-in sessions for North/South – twice a year (new civic year)</i> • <i>Create resources for drop-ins that highlight current projects, engagement, events etc. (ongoing)</i>
Grants and Sponsorships	• Enable/Empower Community • Give LTC a presence			<i>Grants and sponsorship is a great way of promoting the Town Council. One thing that could be looked at is creating a “tiered grant award system” where organisations that receive a higher award or sponsorship should ask for an LTC quote in press releases</i> Actions: • <i>Continue to ensure LTC is properly acknowledged after successful grant applications (ongoing)</i>

External Bodies		• Not a lot of feedback from reps	• Encouraging different ways of sharing feedback (minutes, notes etc.)	<i>Further thought is needed on how External Bodies that the Town Council have representatives on can be a more active communications tool</i> Actions: • <i>Consider different methods for sharing feedback from External Bodies, and how these are reported (within 6 months)</i> • <i>Consider how Town Council communications can be best shared with External Bodies (within 6 months)</i>
Internal	• Councillor Update – All in one place	• Councillors “Replying All” for apologies	• Meeting Schedule first in update • Communication of key decisions made – Monthly round-up (possibly after Full Council) • Ward Councillors being copied into relevant communications • Further training on IT systems	<i>All-in-all, councillors are in favour of the weekly update email, with some suggestions for tweaks to the layout and content. Some consideration in the future could be given to a portal-style interface for councillors.</i> <i>There is a reminder that all councillors are welcome to attend the monthly “I-Tea Club” drop ins for IT related issues, alongside councillors contacting the Communications and IT Officer for assistance. Thought could be given to regular IT refreshers or a tightening of IT Policy/Best Practice.</i>

				Actions: • Summarise key decisions made on a monthly basis – aiming for the Councillor Update after Full Council (immediate) • Provide regular IT refresher training for Councillors (drop-in sessions are organised monthly)
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MEETING PAPER

Subject: Agenda Item 105.4 – International Women’s Day 2026
Meeting: Events and Communications Sub- Committee
Date: 18 February 2026
Author: Chris Meek – Events Manager

Purpose

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide an update on the International Women's Day (IWD) 2026 Small Grants Programme, following an unprecedented level of interest from community organisations.

Key Updates

1. High Volume of Applications

We have received a significantly high volume of applications for this year’s Small Grants Programme. This demonstrates strong community engagement and a widespread commitment to celebrating IWD 2026 across the town.

2. Notification of Successful Applicants

Our Events Manager will be contacting all successful applicants via email on Monday 23 February. These notifications will confirm their grant award and will include important supporting materials, such as the IWD 2026 branding guidelines, to ensure consistency across all events and promotional activity.

3. Promotional Material Request

As part of the grant conditions, all successful applicants have been asked to submit any promotional material (e.g., posters, social media graphics, press releases) to the LTC officers for review. This step will help us maintain quality assurance and amplify our collective marketing efforts.

Next Steps

- **Events Manager** to distribute successful application emails and branding guidelines.
- **Successful Applicants** to develop their promotional materials and forward them to LTC officers as requested.
- **LTC Officers** to collate materials and coordinate a central marketing push in the lead-up to IWD 2026.



MEETING PAPER

Subject: Agenda Item 105.4 – Wild Lowestoft
Meeting: Events and Communications Sub- Committee
Date: 18 February 2026
Author: Chris Meek – Events Manager

1. Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the planning progress for the upcoming "Wild Lowestoft" event. Specifically, it outlines the status of operational logistics (security and sanitation) regarding the London Road location and provides a comprehensive overview of confirmed and pending stakeholder participation.

2. Event Overview

"Wild Lowestoft" is scheduled to take place on Saturday 16 May. The event aims to celebrate and promote environmental awareness, local green initiatives, and community well-being. A key element of the event includes a standalone activation by the Job Centre Plus leading up to the main date.

3. Operational Update: London Road Location

Officers are currently finalising the logistical arrangements for the event footprint on London Road.

- **Security:** We are in the process of obtaining quotes from licensed security providers to manage the site and ensure public safety.
- **Sanitation:** Concurrently, officers are sourcing quotes for the provision of temporary toilet facilities for both public and exhibitor use.

4. Stakeholder & Exhibitor Engagement

Engagement with local groups, charities, and statutory bodies is progressing well. Below is the current breakdown of confirmed participants and those we are awaiting responses from.

4.1 Confirmed Participants

The following organisations have confirmed their attendance and participation:

- Use your Voice

- Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT)
- Job Centre Plus (DWP) – *Leading a standalone event leading up to 16 May*
- Lowestoft Library – *Book Display*
- Met Office
- Environment Agency – *Confirmed in principle*
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- Litter Free Lowestoft
- Greenprint Forum
- Uncle Sids
- East Suffolk Lines
- The Way to Go (BIKE)
- Friends of Fen Park
- East Coast College
- Deben Climate Centre
- Gavin the Gull
- Marina Community – *Eco activity*
- Suffolk County Council (SCC) – *Confirmed, further details to follow*
- Kittiwake Partnership

4.2 Pending Responses

Contact has been made with the following organisations; we are awaiting a response:

- FirstBus
- Groundworks East (*Email sent x2*)
- Greenlight Trust (*Email sent x2*)
- River Renewables
- Woodland Trust
- Waveney River Trust
- Essex and Suffolk Coastal Heaths (*Email sent x2*)

4.3 Other Contact

- **East Suffolk Council – Economic Development Team:** Email sent; team has been asked to circulate details to their green contacts.

5. Recommendation

Councillors are asked to note the contents of this report. If you have relationships with any of the organisations listed in the "Pending Responses" section, please forward relevant contact details to the Events Manager to assist in finalising the planning or if you know of any other organisations that may benefit in being part of this day- please do share our website link with them.



MEETING PAPER

Subject: Agenda Item 105.4 – Freedom of the Town
Meeting: Events and Communications Sub- Committee
Date: 18 February 2026
Author: Chris Meek – Events Manager

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this briefing paper is to update members on the acceptance of the Freedom of the Town by Mr. Bunn and Mr. Butcher, and to seek the committee's direction on the funding, format, and logistical arrangements for the official ceremony scheduled for 12 June.

2. BACKGROUND

Following the resolution of the Council to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Town upon Mr. Bunn and Mr. Butcher, an official invitation letter was sent to both recipients.

We have now received an email response from both individuals, formally confirming their acceptance of the honour. Furthermore, they have both indicated that **12 June** is their preferred date for the ceremony.

3. KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR DECISION

Officers require the committee's guidance on the following aspects of the event to proceed with the planning:

3.1. Ceremony Funding

The committee is asked to decide how it wishes to fund the event. Options may include:

- Allocation from the existing committee budget.
- A request to the Finance department for a supplementary/virement approval.
- Seeking external sponsorship (though this is not typical for civic ceremonies).

Decision Required: *How will the event be funded?*

3.2. Venue – Sparrows Nest Gardens

The committee previously expressed a desire to hold the ceremony at Sparrows Nest Gardens.

- **Outdoor Option:** Officers can investigate the specific locations within the Gardens (e.g., the bandstand, a specific lawn area). This is weather-dependent and may require a marquee as a contingency, which adds significant cost.
- **Indoor Option:** As an alternative, the committee may wish to consider an indoor venue, either at Sparrows Nest (if a function room is available) or elsewhere, to guarantee comfort regardless of weather.

Decision Required: *Do we proceed with an outdoor ceremony at Sparrows Nest Gardens, or do we wish to consider an indoor venue?*

3.3. Catering

If the committee wishes to host a reception following the ceremony, a catering budget will be required. This could range from a light buffet to a formal reception.

Decision Required: *Is catering required? If so, what is the approximate scale/budget?*

3.4. Audio Amplification

If the ceremony is outdoors, or even in a large indoor hall, a sound system will be essential to ensure the speeches and presentations are audible to all guests.

Decision Required: *Do we require audio amplification?*

3.5. Medals

The Town Council does not currently hold the necessary insignia in stock.

- **Medals:** These must be specially ordered from the official suppliers. This process can take several weeks.

4. NEXT STEPS

To ensure a smooth and dignified event on 12 June, the following actions are time-sensitive:

1. **Confirm funding** to allow for booking of venue and suppliers.
2. **Order medals** immediately due to lead times.
3. **Provisional booking** of the chosen venue for 12 June.

5. RECOMMENDATION

That the committee:

1. **NOTES** the acceptance of the Freedom of the Town by Mr. Bunn and Mr. Butcher and their chosen date of **12 June**.
2. **AGREES** the funding source for the ceremony and other associated other costs
3. **CONFIRMS** whether the ceremony should be held at Sparrows Nest Gardens (outdoor) or an indoor venue.
4. **AGREES** to the provision of catering and/or amplification as deemed appropriate.
5. **AUTHORISES** the Officer to order the Freedom Medals and any associated insignia immediately.



MEETING PAPER

Subject: World Book Day Trail

Meeting: Events and Communications Sub Committee

Date: 22 April 2026

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/NON-CONFIDENTIAL

From 12th February to 15th March, Lowestoft hosted a World Book Day Treasure Hunt. Lowestoft was one of fourteen towns to host the trail nationally.

This interactive trail encouraged people to explore London Road North and High Street to find the 10 characters by scanning the coloured window stickers hidden inside 10 shops.

The businesses who took part were:

- Lowestoft Ceramics Studio
- Fab Fabrics
- PJ Gillman
- Moral of the Story Bookstore
- Marina Theatre
- Rudy's Café, Bar and Grill
- Salty Crow
- Waterstones
- Lifestyle and Mobility Lowestoft
- Nightingale Homecare

Impact Figures

Following the completion of the trail, High Street Safari (the company who organised all the resources) gave the following report:

Now that the 2026 World Book Day Treasure Hunt has officially concluded, I am delighted to share the impact figures for your location.

First, a huge thank you for being a pioneer in our first year. We reached over 100,000 impressions through our national Instagram campaign alone, and the feedback from families has been incredible.

Looking Ahead to 2027: Next year's event is going to be even bigger and bolder. We are planning a much longer lead-in window and a wider national reach. This will allow World Book Day to activate a massive marketing campaign reaching every school in the UK.

As a gesture of our appreciation for supporting the launch year, I would like to offer you a special loyalty discounted price for the 2027 Treasure Hunt if you choose to join us again.

Your Impact Report:

- **Unique Groups:** 45
- **Total Estimated Players:** 180 (Approx.)

Key Insight for 2027: Our research across all 14 locations shows two clear drivers of success that we will be using to design next year's event:

1. **Physical Rewards:** Locations that offered physical sticker prizes (Premium Tier) saw an average of **147% more engagement** than those without. The physical incentive is a massive driver for family participation.
2. **Compact Routes:** The most successful trails tended to be compact, with a total walking time under 30 minutes. When stops were more spread out, participation dropped. This is especially vital for a trail like this where players are motivated to complete the full set to earn their prize.

Points to Consider

It may be worth considering similar or varied trails throughout Lowestoft to help promote the town centres (in the broadest form from London Road South through to the top of High Street). In the future, the Town Hall could become a HQ for this type of trail, offering a place for people to pick up physical trail maps and be awarded physical stickers. However, the cost per user would need to be considered to ensure best value for money.

Another consideration would be that Lowestoft Vision already run trails during the peak holiday periods (Easter, Summer and Christmas) so any future trail would need to avoid these.

Briefing Paper on the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to provide a background to the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) and to provide information in order that councillors consider commemorating the day could as part of the council's annual calendar.

Historic Context

The International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) was founded in 2004, although some countries already had national days, in response to the lack of formal recognition and action against homophobia following on from some very high profile, violent and fatal attacks on the gay community. The day has always encompassed the whole LGBTQIA+ community but now specifically includes other groups in the day's title. It is also known as May 17th Day.

Tragedies like Matthew Shepherd's shocking 1996 murder in the US; the Snowtown murders in Australia between 1992-1999; the 1999 bombing of the Admiral Duncan in Soho, London; the murder of Jeff Whittington in Wellington, New Zealand on May 8, 1999, who was beaten, kicked, and stomped to death by two men who reportedly later boasted of beating up a "faggot"; the 2000 murder of Damilola Taylor; Aaron Webster, a gay man in Vancouver, British Columbia, was beaten to death with baseball bats and pool cues on November 17, 2001; Bertrand Delanoë, the openly gay mayor of Paris, being non-fatally stabbed in October 2002 because of his sexuality; the January 2003 Sizzlers massacre at a gay massage parlour in Cape Town, South Africa where nine men were brutally butchered to described by police as one of the most vicious and bloodiest massacres the city of Cape Town had ever seen; are all crimes which made international headlines. There are many more that gain national or local news but the majority are never reported in the media.

These all took place in countries where being gay is legal but there are still 65 countries where LGBT people are criminalised, there are also countries where

homosexuality has been decriminalised but it is still not safe for the LGBT community. And there are countries where LGBT rights are regressing.

What is the purpose of IDAHOBIT?

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT) is a global moment of solidarity and visibility for LGBTQIA+ individuals and communities. It is observed every year on 17 May, and brings together individuals, organisations, and governments from around the world to raise awareness about the issues facing LGBTQIA+ people, and to advocate for policies and laws that protect their rights.

The broader aim of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia is to foster a global moment for collective action, awareness, solidarity, and visibility, enabling organisations worldwide to frame their activities in ways that resonate with local contexts and needs, all while uniting under a shared global theme.

IDAHOBIT represents a major global annual landmark for diverse stakeholders—grassroots activists, organisations, institutions, and allies—to come together, each in their own way, to amplify calls for change while highlighting the alarming situation faced by people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, and sex characteristics.

It is a day which looks forward but also remembers those who are no longer here, who lost their lives or suffered because society did not accept them and indeed penalised them for being who they were. Each year has a specific theme, 2026 is “At the heart of democracy”, it serves as a powerful reminder that truly democratic societies must be rich in meaningful equity and justice for all, fostering the flourishing of the entire community.

So why should the council include IDAHOBIT as part of its annual calendar?

This is not a political matter nor would the council be favouring any section(s) of its community by marking the day but, at present, many (if not most) of the LGBTQIA+ community look at what is happening in the world, and even within this country, and are very concerned. The LGBTQIA+ is not alone in this but it does

feel at the forefront. Gay and Transgender rights and communities are under attack whether that be from populist governments in eastern Europe, those countries in Africa which are reinstating the death sentence for being gay or the actions of the current administration in the US. How easily rights and acceptance have been stripped makes the LGBTQIA+ community in the UK very aware that hard won equality can be lost a lot more easily than it was won.

In 2009 ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Intersex Association) began compiling a ranking system across Europe taking in consideration things such as LGBT Laws, crime, lifestyle etc. Between 2009 and 2015 the UK was either at the top or near it. 2015 was the last time that was the case, in 2025 the UK slipped to 22nd place with only Hungary and Georgia experiencing a greater fall.

This isn't due to new legislation or because of organised targeting of the LGBTQIA+ community. The Legal Sex & The Supreme Court 2025 ruling will have had an impact but it is more because of misinformation arising from it rather than the ruling itself as most protections sit within the Gender Recognition Act 2004. However, some of the outcomes arising from that decision do place the UK lower than most Western European countries. In fact, the UK is now ranked 2nd worse for LGBTQ+ laws in Western Europe and Scandinavia with only Italy ranked lower. In fact, the UK's overall score at 45.65% is lower than the European average.

It does take into account the delay to the enactment of law to ban conversion therapy within the UK which has been promised by successive governments but not delivered despite a private member's bill passing its first reading.

One of the main concerns is the rise in homophobic, biphobia and transphobic hate crimes many of which do not get reported to the police and, if they do, many are not recorded as hate crimes but assault or anti-social behaviour. Even if it is reported the number of cases which proceed to trial is low and the sentences which can be applied are lower than those for religious abuse.

LGBTQ+ people in the UK face significantly higher rates of poor mental health, with over 50% experiencing depression in the last year compared to 32% of the general population. LGBTQ+ youth are over three times more likely to experience depression than their peers, with 44% reporting suicidal thoughts (compared to 26% of heterosexual non-trans youth). High rates of self-harm, anxiety, and substance misuse are driven by bullying, discrimination, and barriers to accessing

healthcare. 52% of young LGBT people have reported self-harming compared to 35% of their peers.

13% of LGBTQ+ people aged 18-24 attempted to take their own life.

16% of LGBTQ+ people reported drinking alcohol almost every day, increasing to over 33% for those over 65.

In the year ending March 2025, police in England and Wales recorded over 18,000 hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation and over 3,000 trans-related hate crimes. The Office for National Statistics recorded sexual orientation hate crimes decreased slightly by 2% but they are still up 112% over the five years but transgender hate crimes increased by 11% compared to the previous year and over the same five-year period increased by 186%. Under-reporting is high, with some estimates suggesting fewer than 1 in 10 LGBTQ+ people report such incidents. Reports of sexual orientation hate crime rose from 4,345 in 2011/12 to over 26,000 in 2022, in the last two years of that period, LGBT+ hate crime grew faster than any other hate crime.

Galop, the national helpline for LGBT+ victims and survivors of abuse and violence reported that only 1 in 8 LGBT+ people speaking to them had reported the abuse to the police. When it came to those who report it, 3 in 5 LGBT+ people experiencing hate crime want and need help, but only 1 in 5 are able to access any support. Despite almost half of hate crime victims (45%) requiring emotional support, only 15% received any, leading to a sense of isolation and powerlessness. This is against two-thirds of LGBTQ+ people having experienced Violence or abuse specifically relating to their sexuality or perceived sexuality.

Of these, 9 in 10 (92%) had experienced verbal abuse, 3 in 10 (29%) had experienced physical violence and 2 in 10 (17%) had experienced sexual violence.

Conclusion

The figures make damning reading and the LGBTQIA+ community are not alone in the experiencing increasing hate crime, almost all minority groups are also experiencing similar increases in hate crime. Stonewall has call on all politicians to pull back from divisive 'culture wars' which can be heightened by the media.

Commemorating IDAHOBIT is not about arguing rights or taking sides but is about public safety. All members of our community should feel safe, unless they are an

abuser themselves. A community which is inclusive is usually a stronger community especially if prejudice, stereotypes and false information prevent community cohesion.

It was mentioned at the beginning that IDAHOBIT is also known as May 17th Day, in countries where being LGBTQIA+ is illegal or not culturally accepted. The date of 17 May was specifically chosen to commemorate IDAHOBIT, as it marks the day in 1990 when the World Health Organization (WHO) removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. WHO's decision was a major milestone in the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights.

If the Council decides to adopt IDAHOBIT, this year may possibly be too soon and looking to 2027 may allow the committee/council to decide of what the day could consist. In marking IDAHOBIT it is not duplicating Pride although both have grown out of campaigning groups for better LGBT rights. Pride started as a gay march on parliament and a protest call for LGBT rights and then morphed into a celebration of those hard one rights and the successful movement towards equality. It was a grassroots, community-led event and has largely remained that way wherever it is celebrated. IDAHOBIT grew out of outrage over the appalling crimes (as well as incalculable more) across not only the gay community but the wider community including governments, corporations, businesses, the media and community groups. It holds a silence for those who are no longer with here and looks to build bridges between communities based on what people have in common rather than what divides them.

By adding the day to the calendar, the Council would meet the theme for this year even without an event as this year's theme is "At the heart of democracy".

Prepared by Cllr Neil Coleby



LOWESTOFT TOWN COUNCIL

Civic Ceremonial

Mayoral Handbook and Guidance Notes

CIVIC CEREMONIAL

Mayoral Handbook and Guidance Notes

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Introduction

Congratulations on your election as Mayor of the Council for the Town of Lowestoft. As Mayor you will often receive queries concerning the Town, its history, the insignia, the Town Hall and the history of the Mayoralty when you attend events and represent the people of Lowestoft and Lowestoft Town Council. Similarly, you as Mayor will have your own questions about the Mayoralty.

This handbook has been produced to provide information and guidance in your new role.

The notes and information have been compiled from various sources and should you have any queries that have not been addressed in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the office and we will endeavour to find the answer for you.

History of Mayoralty

The words “Mayor” and “Major” derive from the same Latin word “Magnus”, meaning great. The office of Mayor, together with the Domesday Book and the feudal system, were brought to this country by the Normans (the office has existed on the European continent since at least the fifth century).

The position of Mayor is one of the most ancient offices in British history and has undergone many changes in its role, importance, and public perception throughout the centuries. The first English Mayor was the Mayor of London, Henry Fitz-Ailwin, appointed in 1189 by Richard I.

A few important dates relating to the Mayor of Lowestoft:

- The first Mayor of Lowestoft was William Youngman, elected in 1885 upon the establishment of the Lowestoft Borough Council.
- By 1974 when the Borough was abolished, fifty-five Mayors had served Lowestoft.
- During the First World War (1914-1918) the position of Mayor was held by J. W. Brooke (1913-1916) and Mayor F. Spashett (1916-1918).
- During the Second World War (1939-1945) the position of Mayor was held by S. W. Humphrey.
- After its formation in 2017, the first Mayor elected to Lowestoft Town Council was Ian Graham.

Female Mayors

The style of address for civic posts is largely a matter of custom and tradition and is for each Council to decide, so long as it is consistent.

Most Councils and office holders choose between Mayor, Madam Mayor or Lady Mayor. However, it is important to note that a female Mayor is not referred to as a Mayoress and a female Lord Mayor is not a Lady Mayor.

Lowestoft Town Council has commonly adopted ‘Mayor’ or ‘Madam Mayor’ as the style of address for female Mayors.

Duties and Precedence

A Mayor, by virtue of the office, can use their position to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector and mould social cohesion, through their meetings with dignitaries and numerous engagements.

The Mayor is seen by many as the embodiment of the Council and as such should uphold the highest standards in all aspects of public life. The Mayor must be capable of enhancing the Council's reputation as it is such a public position.

Roles and responsibilities

Mayor:

- To chair meetings of the Full Council and enable its business to be carried out in an orderly and proper manner, having regard to statutory obligations and the standing orders of the Council.
- To preside, as ceremonial head of the whole Council and the Town, over its civic functions, and community events.
- To host events, receive and welcome members of the royal family, dignitaries, and visitors, observing civic protocol.
- To attend functions as a representative of the Council.
- To promote, raise the profile and gain publicity for projects and events that are of a good charitable or voluntary nature that benefit the citizens of the town, particularly smaller organisations.
- Carry out the duties of the post fairly and without discrimination, and in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Council.

Mayor's Consort:

Whilst not a role recognised by law, this role, titled as Mayoress, was originally bestowed on the Mayor's wife. Lowestoft Town Council's approach has been to bestow the title of 'Consort' to the Mayor's partner.

On rare occasions when the Consort is unable to accompany the Mayor to an appointment, the Mayor can choose to attend alone or take another person with them. Anyone accompanying the Mayor other than their Consort is dubbed the 'Mayor's Guest' and is **not** permitted to wear the consort chain/badge. The office should be made aware of who will be accompanying the Mayor so that they may inform the organisation who submitted the invitation.

It is generally understood the Consort will provide assistance as follows:

- Personal support to the Mayor
- Accompany the Mayor on engagements
- Observance of Civic Protocol

Deputy Mayor:

- To assist the Mayor of the Town of Lowestoft.
- Deputise for the Mayor, when the Mayor is unable to fulfil the duties of that post, at the request of the Mayor.
- Support the Mayor at annual civic events and other events hosted by the Council, at the request of the Mayor.
- Carry out the duties of the post fairly and without discrimination, and in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Council.

In carrying out their roles, the Mayor, Consort or Deputy Mayor, should consider the public nature of their office. Appropriate behaviours, manner and dress should be observed so as to not bring the Council into disrepute. They should follow the advice and guidance issued by the Officers and should not:

- Attend any functions or otherwise give support to any organisation or person whose objectives are contrary to law and/or Council policy.
- Solicit engagements or visits or otherwise procure favours by virtue of office.
- Attend any functions/events without being booked through the office. All invitations **must** be booked in the Mayoral Diary and the necessary protocol form completed for each event.

The effect of becoming Mayor

The Mayor's personal life will inevitably be affected by their post as it requires more working hours than an ordinary councillor, and often more unsocial hours.

The pomp, circumstance, and protocol

The traditional robes and chains worn to events and the numerous protocols trace back to the history of the town a Mayor represents and are important to its residents. However, uniformity and constraint are not the aims of protocol, and most Mayors are able to operate within these constraints whilst adding their own personality and flair to the proceedings.

Mayoral Precedence

Mayors and the Town Council Officers should seek to ensure that the host of functions, ceremonies and events accord the Mayor proper precedence. Similarly, although the Consort has no legal status, they customarily take precedence immediately after the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor assumes the precedence of the Mayor when they are deputising for the Mayor, rather than when acting as a Deputy.

The Consequences of Mayoral Precedence

The rights of precedence enjoyed by the Mayor do come with duties and obligations:

- The Mayor should consider with great care the acceptance of office for any local organisation during the year of office, although the acceptance of traditional posts (e.g., President, Vice-Chairmanship of long-standing organisations) is generally acceptable. The office of Mayor should not be allowed to be used by organisations to confer favours; the honour and dignity of the office of Mayor being associated with that organisation should be sufficient.
- The Mayor should lead the citizens in an appropriate and dignified manner. Throughout the year of office, many people or organisations may wish the Mayor to open their business or attend events relating to their project, as the office of Mayor carries a large amount of status. The Mayor should not give patronage to any appeal or society unless they are satisfied of its relevance to the area, its non-party political nature, and its propriety.
- The Mayor enjoys precedence in their own area – but not that of neighbouring towns/parishes. Therefore, the Mayor should not accept an invitation to attend, in an official capacity, a function in another area without the express consent of that area. Such consent should be discussed between the appropriate Officers. If consent to attend in another area is forthcoming, the Mayoral robes and chains should not be worn unless approved by the Mayor/Chair of the area to be visited.

Engagements/Invitations

It is essential that every appointment is organised through the Town Council Officers. The Mayor must not attend any event that has not been planned through the Town Council Office. Lowestoft Town Council will provide a Mayoral Engagement form to any invitation made to the Mayor. Should the Mayor be approached in person, by letter, over the phone or an organisation asking them to attend a function, the Mayor **must not make any commitment**, but refer the inquirer to the Town Council Office, who can advise on the availability of the Mayor, inform them of the proper procedures and send out the engagement form to be completed. This prevents the possibility of a clash of functions and helps to plan the Civic Year.

Just as it is important to give the Mayor's hosts as much information about the Mayor as possible, it is vital for the Mayor to get as much information from the host.

The booking form is sent to every host for completion and return to the Town Council Office. This engagement form consists of questions such as:

- Date and title of event
- Purpose of event
- Venue address and if reserved parking will be provided for the Mayor
- Name of the organisation
- Contact name, email and telephone number of the organisation
- Event start and finish time, including the requested arrival time for the Mayor
- If refreshments will be provided
- Dress Code, including if the Chain and/or Robes are to be worn
- The name of the person to receive the Mayor
- If a guest of the Mayor is invited
- What duties are requested of the Mayor for the event. If a speech is required, then information on its contents and supporting information on the organisation is requested
- Whether the press have been invited to the event

Once an invitation has been properly accepted, it should not be cancelled unless there is an extreme emergency. All engagements are important, no matter how small. Organisers often put in a lot of effort to make their events successful and the Mayor's role in promoting their activity is vital, it is not acceptable to "change your mind" if another invitation is more to the Mayor's liking. The Mayor should attend punctually, wearing the chain and robes as appropriate. The timing of the event will have been taken into consideration when completing the protocol form. The Mayor should endeavour to arrive on time at the agreed place.

The number of engagements fulfilled by a Mayor is not an indication of quality. If the Mayor wishes to propose a visit, then this must first be raised with the Town Council Officer before the organisation is contacted. The Mayor should not attend commercial functions where their name might be used for advertising purposes, except in cases where they are clearly for the benefit of the Town.

The Deputy Mayor

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is entitled to the Mayor's right of precedence within the town, although the Deputy wears their own chain, not those of the Mayor. It therefore follows that:

- All invitations should be sent for consideration to the Mayor and if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to "pass down" an invitation.
- If there is any doubt, the invitation should be sent to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, it should be shown to the Town Council Office for advice on how or if to accept.

Robes, Chains and Badges of Office

The Mayors of the great majority of Towns and Boroughs wear a robe of office on ceremonial occasions, the majority wearing either a black robe with gold embellishments (customary for Lord Mayors) or a scarlet robe trimmed with fur. There is some debate in civic offices as to whether the fur on robes should be real or fake, which is a matter for each Council to decide. (Lowestoft Town Council's previous robes were trimmed with fur. This robe is no longer used and the current robes, commissioned in 2021, do not have fur).

The Chain and Badge are universally worn with the robes. The hat most generally worn with robes at outdoor ceremonies is a black tricorn hat with red and gold embellishment. A lace jabot is also usually worn at the neck.

The important point to note is that the dignity of the office is maintained and that the use of the robe is not overdone and only used for ceremonial occasions.

The Mayor should not wear the civic insignia in another area without express permission of that Council.

Civic chains should never be worn with a military uniform. However, a Mayor who is a member of the clergy may wear full canonicals with the chain over the gown. Similarly, the chain may be worn over academic dress.

When wearing the official robe and hat, the Mayor should remove the hat when:

- acknowledging salutes;
- during the playing of the National Anthem;
- in the presence of a member of the Royal Family.

During march pasts, the Mayor should remove and replace the hat:

- as each section passes the salute;
- when the Colours pass; or
- on an inspection when the Mayor passes the Colours.

The Mayor will be advised by Officers when the robes and/or chain is required for an event hosted by Lowestoft Town Council. It is standard practice for the Town Mayor of Lowestoft to wear the robe and chain on the following occasions:

- Remembrance Sunday
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Commemoration of military events
- Public functions at which royalty is present

There may be occasions when such events last for several hours or there is inclement weather, in which case it may not be practical to wear the robes for the entire duration of the event, or the robes may need to be removed to ensure they are not damaged during an event. In such cases, the Mayor may revert to wearing the chains and their customary smart clothing. To help prepare for this, the Mayor should have discussions with officers as to when it would be appropriate to remove the robe. Ultimately, it is important to ensure the dignity and gravitas of the office is maintained.

The Mayor may wear the Chain of Office at any event they are invited to attend, as long as it has been requested by the organisers. However, permission must be obtained from the appropriate Council to wear the Civic Chain if in another town/parish.

Robes are also worn by the Deputy Mayor in most Towns/Boroughs, as is a chain of office. The rules for wearing the Robe and Chain for the Mayor, also apply to the Deputy Mayor.

Many argue that medals, other than civic badges, should not, in any circumstances, be worn on civic robes, whilst others argue that medals should be worn on all ceremonial occasions. The most frequent compromise is that medals are not worn on robes except when attending robed at Remembrance Sunday or other commemorative services, when full medals (not miniatures) should be worn.

Chain and Badge (Insignia) – Safe Custody Rules

It is important that the insignia is used and seen by the public on appropriate occasions, but it is also vital that they are protected for future generations.

- When not in use, the insignia must carefully stored in a secure location.
- It must be handled with great care and attention.
- The insignia **must not** be left in an unattended vehicle.
- The insignia, unless being worn, should be kept in the case provided by the Council and not left unattended.
- The insignia must not be loaned or placed in the custody of any other person other than an appropriate officer of the Town Council.
- No attempt should be made to clean or repair the insignia. Any damage or wear and tear must be reported to an Officer of the Town Council as soon as possible.
- The Mayor/Consort/Deputy Mayor must inform an Officer of the Town Council immediately if the Chain or Badge of Office are lost, mislaid, stolen, or otherwise missing.

Robes – Safe Custody Rules

Please ensure the following rules are observed.

- When not in use the Robes must be carefully stored in a secure location.
- The Robes **must not** be left in an unattended vehicle.
- The Robes must not be loaned or placed in the custody of any other person other than an appropriate Officer of the Town Council.
- No attempt should be made to clean, repair, or alter the robes. Any damage or wear and tear must be reported to an Officer of the Town Council as soon as possible.
- The Mayor/Deputy Mayor must inform the Council Offices immediately if the Robes are damaged, lost, mislaid, stolen, or otherwise missing.

Making Speeches

A

Mayor will often be required to make a public speech.

As Mayor, you will need to consider at the beginning of the year the style, length, and willingness to speak at functions.

Speeches will come across much better if:

- They are written in your own words.
- If you have read the speech through, practised it aloud and generally familiarised yourself with it. This also helps to put you at ease which will lead to better clarity and delivery.

You are an ambassador for the Council and so it is important that you make the best impression possible at all public engagements. If you feel you are lacking in background information for a particular engagement, ask the Town Council Officers to do more research for you.

Of course, the Town Council Office will assist you in any way possible either by obtaining information on the subject, typing any speeches drafted by the Mayor or even writing speeches for you.

Most speeches will be of thanks or welcome. If you are required to make a speech on the work of the Council, this must be limited to factual information which will be provided by the Town Clerk. Speeches must always avoid political or controversial subjects as the Mayor speaks on behalf of the Council as a corporate body, not on their own feelings or priorities.

Planning Mayoral Events

As well as attending engagements, the Mayor may also wish to hold their own events to raise funds for their chosen charity or charities, although there is no obligation to do so.

The Mayor will need to decide at the beginning of their year what sort of event or events they wish to hold. Whatever the event serious consideration needs to be given to:

- The likely net benefit to the Charity.
- How many people will support the event by buying tickets.
- The costs of running the event, including taxes.
- The people who will assist you prior to and at the event.

Mayoral Allowance

The Local Government Act 1972 states -

“A Parish Council may pay the Chairman for the purpose of enabling them to meet the expenses of their office such allowance as the Council think reasonable.” (Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972.)

There is no set formula for deciding the level of the civic allowance and Mayoral allowances vary dramatically across the country, with some small Councils paying large allowances and other Councils expecting the Mayor to meet all expenses of the office, including personal hospitality, civic hospitality and civic gifts, whilst others may draw upon other Council funds to meet these expenses.

What Can the Allowance Be Used For?

The Local Government Act 1972 does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the civic allowance may be used by the Mayor, except that it is for meeting the “expenses of their office”. There is no universally accepted list of items “acceptable” for purchase out of the Mayoral allowance, however, some of the more general items may include:

Mileage and car parking costs; church service collections; raffle tickets at events; flag day flags, poppies; sending flowers; personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners); childcare expenses; one-off events held by the Mayor.

Lowestoft Town Council does not set a Mayoral Allowance, instead we permit Mayors and Deputy Mayors to claim back on expenses accrued from travel for civic events outside of Lowestoft.

Civic List

The “Civic List” is a list of names and addresses which have been compiled over the years, and is used when sending out invitations and other Civic related matters.

The list is not available to the public, although on very rare occasions a request can be made by a dignitary or organisation to use it for a forthcoming event.

The list is made up as follows;

- Members and Officers of the Council
- Surviving past Mayor of the Town
- Local Police and Fire Officer
- Mayor’s/Chairman of surrounding Towns and Districts
- Civic Guests, including recipients of The Freedom of the Town
- Local Member of Parliament

Acceptance of Gifts

In the course of the duties of being Mayor, it is likely that gifts will be offered to the Mayor either as a personal gift or for the Council in general. You should treat with extreme caution any offer of gift, favour or hospitality that is made to you.

There are no hard or fast rules about the acceptance or refusal of hospitality or tokens of goodwill. For example, working lunches may be a proper way of doing business, provided that they are approved by Council and that no extravagance is involved. Likewise, it may be reasonable for a member to represent the Council at a social function or event organised by outside persons and bodies.

You are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in local government. All gifts should be declared as per the requirements of a Councillor's Register of Interests. For a full guidance on accepting gifts, please refer to the Code of Conduct. Further advice on Gifts and hospitality can also be obtained from the Town Clerk.

Flag Flying

The flying of flags may be governed by local custom but guidelines are also adhered to in respect of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport who issue instructions for the hoisting of the Union and other Flags. It should also be noted that Remembrance Sunday the Union Flag is flown at full-mast and not at half-mast.

Occasions on which flags are to be flown at half-mast

- From the announcement of the death until after the funeral of the Sovereign, except on Royal Proclamation when they are hoisted right up
- The funerals of members of the Royal Family, subject to special commands from His Majesty in each case
- The funerals of Prime Ministers and Ex-Prime Ministers of Great Britain.
- Other occasions by special command of His Majesty

The Town Council may decide on other occasions when it would be appropriate to fly flags from the Town Hall or any other location.

Coat of Arms – Brief History

A Coat of arms is a heraldic device that was developed in northern Europe in the mid-twelfth century and was used by the monarch, knights and aristocracy for identification purposes. A coat of arms consists of a shield (which bears the iconography) topped by the crest (the three-dimensional device borne on top of a helmet resting on a two-toned wreath) and a motto displayed either below the shield or above the crest.

The Arms of Lowestoft were granted to the Borough Council in 1913. The blazon (description) reads as follows:

“Argent on a Chevron Sable between in chief an Antique Crown between two Roses Gules each Rose charged with another Rose Argent all barbed and seeded proper and in base a Sun issuant Or three Lowestoft China Plates all proper” and “On a Wreath of the Colours a demi figure representing St. Margaret holding in the hand a Pearl all proper”. With the motto “Point du jour”.

The demi figure featured on the coat of arms is St Margaret, the patron saint of childbirth and pregnant women, to whom the parish church of Lowestoft is dedicated.

The plates represent the Lowestoft Porcelain Factory, which was established in Bell Lane (Crown Street) in 1757 and operated until 1802.

The rising sun at the base refers to Lowestoft’s location, as the most easterly town of the country it is the first place to see the sunrise. “Point du jour” translates to “daybreak”.

When the Borough Council was abolished in 1974 the Coat of Arms fell into disuse.

In 2023, Lowestoft Town Council made the decision to appeal to the College of Arms for the Coat of Arms to be transferred over from the Borough Council. This transfer was finalised in 2024.



Town Insignia – Brief History

The term “civic insignia” refers to the formal robes, chains of office, mace, swords, badges of office and other ceremonial possessions of the local authority. It should be noted that whilst ‘regalia’ is often used to denote these items the correct term is ‘insignia’ as regalia is defined as “the Crown, Sceptre, and the Cross, and other jewels and ornaments used at a Coronation”.

The history of robes and gowns dates back to biblical times where one of the earliest records of the use of robes as a symbol of authority appears in The Book of Exodus, Chapter 28, where God commanded the use of vestments for the priests.

Mayoral robes and civic insignia are a tradition dating back to the 14th century and served as a symbol of their authority in upholding law and order in their districts. In the Medieval period the colour red was expensive to produce and therefore it indicated wealth, thus it was often the colour used for the Mayoral robes.

The Town of Lowestoft owns various items of insignia, below I have given a brief description of each item.

Mayor’s Robe, Tricorn and Jabot – The robe is of red cloth with gold, black and blue trim. The tricorn is trimmed with red and gold. Purchased in 2021.

Mayor’s Robe, Tricorn and Jabot – The robe is of red cloth with gold, black and blue trim. The tricorn is trimmed with blue and gold. Purchased in 2021.

Mayor’s Consort Badge – Gold plating and enamel colouring with the Town Council logo central on the badge. Burgandy neck ribbon. Purchased in 2024.

Deputy Mayor’s Consort Badge – Gold plating and enamel colouring with the Town Council logo central on the badge. Turquoise Peacock Blue neck ribbon. Purchased in 2024.

Mayor’s Chain of Office – Acquired in 2017.

Deputy Mayor’s Chain of Office – Acquired in 2017.

The Town Hall (Civic Building)

Civic and ecclesiastical activity has been carried out on the site of the Town Hall since the 16th century, where a building dated to approximately 1570 accommodated a market cross for corn-trading and a 'chapel-of-ease' for worship during the winter months. This civic and religious use continued from the 16th to the 17th century where the building was variously known as the Town Chapel, the Town Chamber and the Town House. In 1698 a new Town House was built with a Corn Cross on the ground floor, the Town Chamber above, where parish business was discussed, and an adjoining Chapel.

The Town Hall as it currently stands was built between 1857-1860 to the designs of J L Clemence and opened on 6th March 1860. It was built in the Italianate style, a 19th century phase of Classical architecture that drew inspiration from 16th century Italian Renaissance architecture.

The building was later altered in 1869-1873 by W Oldham Chambers with the improvement works, including the removal of the porch and the rebuilding of the High Street façade, eventually costing £4,000. With the High Street widened in 1899, much of the Town Hall was demolished, rebuilt and extended in 1899-1905, with only the Council Chamber being retained.

The Council Chamber is located on the first floor and is the only surviving aspect of J L Clemence's designs, containing the original stained-glass window given by Sir Morton Peto to commemorate the Anglo-French alliance against Russia during the Crimean War. This window depicts St George and St Denis, separated by a panel depicting the Field of the Cloth of Gold. There are two small windows that commemorate Peto's links with Lowestoft.

Housed in the upper section is the Town Clock, which houses the bell recast during the 18th century from the 1644 original. This bell would toll a curfew at eight in the evening each night, according to an old custom started in the 17th century following a major fire in the town.

The Town Hall was vacated by Waveney District Council and has been unoccupied since 2015. It is a Grade II listed building and there is an ongoing refurbishment project to re-open the Town Hall as a multi-functional and inclusive centre for the community and visitors, and the seat of Lowestoft Town Council.

The Town of Lowestoft - Brief History

Lowestoft's history likely dates back to the mid-9th to 10th century as the name Lowestoft has Old Scandinavian roots, often translated to 'Hloover's toft' or 'the homestead of Hloover'. However, it is likely that there was already a pre-existing settlement.

Some of the earliest signs of settlement in Britain have been found here, with flint tools tracing human habitation back 700,000 years.

Lowestoft is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book as "Lothuwistoft", having sixteen households in three families, the manor of which formed part of the King's holding in the Hundred of Lothingland.

By 1212, Lowestoft had gained manorial status with authority over another holding as Beccles was listed in the Book of Fees as royal demesne. There seems to have been no resident lord, and the manor was instead managed by a bailiff. In the Middle Ages, Lowestoft became an important fishing town with its trade, particularly in herring, continuing until the 20th century.

In 1308 Lowestoft was granted a market and fair.

In 1376 Edward III granted the manor and hundred to John de Surrey, later passed to Michael de la Pole during the reign on Henry IV (1399-1413) and remained with his family for a century.

Henry VI granted a market charter to William de la Pole in December 1445, which gave Lowestoft the rights to a weekly Wednesday market, two week-long fairs centre on the feasts of Saints Philip and James (3rd May) and Michaelmas (29th September), and the privileges of a market town. This brought further wealth to Lowestoft, as attested by the rebuilding and enlarging of the parish church of St Margaret in the later fifteenth century.

After the execution of Edmund de la Pole for treason in 1513, the hundred was forfeited to the crown and Henry VIII passed Lowestoft to Edmund Jernegan of Somerleyton Hall.

Prior to the establishment of the Borough Council, Lowestoft was under the jurisdiction of the Town Improvement Commissioners, with membership consisting of landowners and merchants from the town, who were empowered by an Act of Parliament. This group succeeded the clergy and churchwardens who had previously performed their duties.

Lowestoft was granted a Borough status, marked by a ceremony, at a public meeting on 29th August 1885, with the first municipal elections held 1 November 1885, where Mr William Youngman was elected as the Town's first Mayor.

Town Population

The first known population census in 1801 recorded a population of 2,332. The latest 2021 census recorded a population of 71,327. Lowestoft is the seconded largest town in Suffolk and is represented in Parliament as the Lowestoft constituency.

Vera Brittain and Lowestoft



Who was Vera Brittain?

Born: 29 December 1893 in Newcastle-under-Lyme

Died: 29 March 1970 in Wimbledon

Occupation: English Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse, writer, feminist, socialist and pacifist

Best known for: Writing her best-selling memoir *Testament of Youth*, recounting her experiences during the First World War. This would be turned into a film in 2014 starring Alicia Vikander and Kit Harington.

Photo of Heather Cliff?

The Lowestoft Connection

"As the train drew slowly into Lowestoft that evening, my nervousness at the prospect of meeting Roland's family was intensified by the grim strangeness of the shrouded east coast."

Vera Brittain, Testament of Youth

Although best known as the author of *Testament of Youth* and one of the most powerful voices of the First World War generation, **Vera Brittain (1893–1970)** also had a strong personal link to Lowestoft. That connection came through her fiancé, **Roland Leighton**, whose family made the town their home during the early years of the war.

A Place of Love and Loss

Shortly after winning her scholarship to Oxford, Vera fell deeply in love with Roland, a close friend of her brother Edward. Roland's parents, Robert and Marie Leighton, owned a summer residence called **Heather Cliff** on **Gunton Cliff** in Lowestoft, which became their permanent home in 1913 after leaving London. During 1914, Roland lived there while serving as recruiting officer for Lowestoft, coordinating enlistment efforts as war broke out.

"Tall and round and turret-like, the house, Heather Cliff, had been built with an immense number of seaward-looking windows"

Vera Brittain, Testament of Youth

Vera visited Lowestoft in **August 1915**, spending time with Roland and his family before he returned to military duties. Their letters and diaries from this period reveal the depth of their relationship and the emotional strain of the conflict. A detailed diary entry written by Vera on **22 August 1915** describes her visit to the Leightons' Lowestoft home, conversations about her engagement to Roland, and time spent together before he returned to France.

Tragically, Roland was killed later that year in December 1915. His death, followed by those of Vera's brother Edward and close friends Victor Richardson and Geoffrey Thurlow, shaped her writing and her lifelong pacifism. Though brief, Vera's time in Lowestoft became intertwined with some of the most important emotional turning points of her life.

"...the house was darkened owing to the prevalence of Zeppelin raids. All Lowestoft suffered in the same way, but they especially because the house had so many windows and standing by itself at one end of town was a landmark far out to sea."

Vera Brittain's War Diary, 1913–1917, Chronicle of Youth