

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

MINUTES

Present: Nasima Begum, Christian Newsome, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger and Dom Taylor

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

The Chair of the Committee was absent. Cllr Taylor nominated Cllr Pearce to Chair the meeting; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

1 Welcome

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

2 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Neil Coleby, Jen Jones, Paul Page and Deborah Ray with reasons provided.

Cllr Parker proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour. Cllr Begum advised she would need to leave the meeting by eleven am.

3 Declarations of Interests and dispensations

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

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

4 To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 13 May 2026

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the draft minutes; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

5 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.

6 To review and adopt Committee arrangements:

6.1 To note the membership of the Finance and Governance Committee - The members of the Committee were noted as Cllrs Begum, Coleby (Chair), Jones, Newsome, Page, Parker, Pearce, Rappensberger, Ray and Taylor.

6.2 To appoint the Deputy Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee – Cllr Begum proposed Cllr Pearce; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

6.3 To note the Terms of Reference – Monitoring the legal budget could be included under delegations as an officer delegated budget. Within section 9 Climate and Ecological Emergency, only include the Finance and Governance actions. Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the Terms of Reference subject to the offered amendments; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

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- 6.4 To agree the meeting schedule – The current meeting schedule was the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00. Cllrs offered their availability. Cllr Pearce proposed the new regular meeting would be scheduled for the second Thursday in the month at 13:00 but the July meeting would be arranged as an extraordinary meeting on Wednesday 8th July at 10:00 due to the new time and date being unavailable; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 6.5 To review the delegations of this Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed this was dealt with under matter 6.3 'Terms of Reference'; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 6.6 To note the financial responsibilities of this Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed this was dealt with under matter 6.3 'Terms of Reference'; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.
- 6.7 To note responsibilities with reviewing the Risk Register and consider the relevant risks and ensure implementation of the control measures
F1 Precept Inadequate – The intensive annual budget process could be added to the controls.

F3 Council spend is not aligned to Council priorities – The threshold of 8 determining the red rating was questioned as being a high enough threshold. If a rating was red the risk would need to be actioned immediately to drive the risk down. As with F1, the intensive annual budget could be added to the controls. Officers were requested to consider whether risk controls were current and to discuss at the next meeting.

F6 Incorrect VAT claim – In addition to the controls, the Town Council has two capital projects generating substantial VAT reclaims. Specialist VAT advice was taken along with subsidy advice before the projects began. Officers were asked to consider including the projects on the register due to their high values. The numerical scale of the VAT reclaim was included within the impact rating, being over £100,000. An additional control was suggested to include 'Particular consideration is taken of high value projects and specialist VAT advice is sought'.

F8 Fraud by staff – The impact score of two was questioned as potentially being too low.

G1 Breach of Standing Orders – Officers were requested to consider including training and work being in place on the application of Standing Orders in addition to the familiarisation of the content.

G2 New members not sufficiently trained – Officers were requested to consider including defined mandatory training for specialist roles such as Chairs and Appraisals, within the controls, and to check whether Deputies were required to complete appraisal training.

G4 Conflict of Interest or Councillor bias – If failing to declare a pecuniary interest was a criminal offence, the training would need to emphasise that.

G5 Multiple referenda or by-elections required – Officers were requested to consider whether the risk rating was high enough due to multiple bi elections being called in the past.

Cllr Begum left the chamber at 10:54

IT3 Breach of data – The Personnel Committee had already considered the likelihood rating being too high. It was agreed to endorse the recommendation from the Personnel Committee and await feedback from officers.

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R2 Negative feedback received about Council governance – The impact would depend on the individual circumstance comparable with IT3, so officers were requested to review the rating in line with IT3.

R4 Lack of community engagement and recognition – Officers were requested to include the Community Engagement Policy and Business Plan in the controls.

7 To review and adopt Budget and Loan Sub-Committee arrangements, including the following:

- 7.1 To consider composition – A summary of the commitment and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee were discussed. Cllrs Parker, Rappensberger, Taylor and Pearce confirmed their interest to become members. Officers were requested to invite further Cllrs for additional members.
- 7.2 To review and consider adoption of the Terms of Reference – The Sub-Committee does not meet in public session, so officers are to determine whether this should be stated within the Terms of Reference. Cllr Pearce proposed to adopt the Terms of Reference subject to the aforementioned clarification; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 7.3 To agree the meeting schedule – Cllr Pearce proposed meeting at 13:00 on Wednesdays; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

8 Budget and Loan

- 8.1 To monitor the budget for 2026-2027, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – Cllr Pearce proposed the budget was accurate; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.
- 8.2 To note any bank reconciliations - April had been completed and approved. May had been completed and was being reviewed.

9 Payments and Receipts:

- 9.1 To note the income and expenditure reports for April, May and June 2026 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed the reports provide an accurate record of income and expenditure; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 9.2 To consider any payments for approval (see schedule) – there were no payments for approval.

Cllr Pearce proposed Cllr Taylor to Chair the meeting when he left at approximately 11:30; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

10 Grants and Sponsorships

To consider the following grant applications and receive feedback forms

- 10.1 St Luke's Whitton Pantry feedback form and grant application - £2,000
Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the grant application and for it to be taken from the social and food relief budget; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 10.2 Suffolk FA - £3,000
Cllr Pearce declared he has connections with a local primary school that uses the facility so would abstain from the vote. Cllr Taylor proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; four in favour, one abstention.

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- 10.3 Waveney Valley Athletics Club - £5,000
Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce left the chamber at 11:25.

- 10.4 21 Young Hearts CIC - £2,274.46
Questions were again raised as to whether the grant entirely benefitted the residents of Lowestoft. Cllr Taylor proposed to reject the grant application but to advise the organisation to re-apply if they could provide for the residents of Lowestoft; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

- 10.5 Lowestoft North Cliff Community Garden - £200
Cllr Taylor proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

- 10.6 Music Prescription CIC feedback form and grant application - £4,800
Cllr Taylor declared he had no interest in the organisation but had a strong, favourable opinion on the way they operate. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the application; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

11 Other financial and governance matters, including:

- 11.1 To note DBS check requirements for Councillors – This matter was discussed at the Personnel Committee and was proposed to be endorsed.
11.2 To review the Business Plan – Cllr Taylor proposed to defer the matter to the next Finance and Governance meeting as only four members were present; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

12 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 8th July 2026 - Following the earlier discussion, this meeting will be actioned as an extraordinary meeting.

13 Items for the next agenda and close

None

14 Admission to meetings

To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any employment matters and legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda

The meeting was closed at 11:39



Signed:

08 July 2026