

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council

Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE

Tuesday 23 June 2026 18:30

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Kinsey Foster, Joseph Hynes, Jen Jones, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger, Deborah Ray and Elise Youngman

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

Also in attendance: Emma Bellward (Marina Theatre Project Manager, East Suffolk Council) and Sheila Moss King (Town Hall Project Manager)

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

49 Welcome

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

50 To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence from any councillors not in attendance

Apologies were received from Cllrs Neil Coleby, Christine Moore, John Murray, Christian Newsome, Paul Page and Nick Webb with reasons provided. Cllr Jones proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

Cllrs John Pitts and Dom Taylor were absent.

51 Declarations and dispensations

51.1 To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests, and of bias and pre-determination on items on the agenda – Cllr Parker declared he was a member of East Suffolk Council (ESC) and would not participate in item 63.1 as ESC have submitted their own nominations.

51.2 To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

52 To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the Full Council meeting on 26 May 2026

Cllrs Brooks reported there was a factual inaccuracy in the minutes (item 32.3.1) due to an error in the proposal recommended by the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee (CEEC). The proposal had requested a bus stop be established for Artillery Way, this was incorrect and the proposal should have requested support for a bus stop in Jubilee Way. It was established the minutes of the meeting on 26 May 2026, whilst factually inaccurate, correctly reported what had been submitted by the Committee.

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the draft minutes subject to an amendment of a typographical error under item 32.3.1 and for Jess Asato MP to be contacted with the correction that a bus stop was being sought for Jubilee Way, not Artillery Way; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the confidential note; seconded by Cllr Barker; ten votes in favour and one abstention.

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53 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. No member of public in attendance wished to speak to items on the agenda.

54 Finance and Governance

54.1 To receive and consider the following:

1. 2026 - 2027 budget and reserves – Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the budget report as a true and accurate record; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
2. Any bank reconciliations – April and May have been completed.
3. Payments and income for the month ending May 2026 and June 2026 to date (see schedules) – Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the report as a true and accurate record of income and expenditure for the specified period; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.
4. Payments for approval – There were no payments for approval.

54.2 To receive and note the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting on 8 April 2026 and 13 May 2026 – The minutes were received and noted.

54.3 To consider the following matters from the Finance and Governance Committee:

1. A recommendation to amend the Committee's Terms of Reference accordingly:
 - To include the officer delegation (under delegations) of the legal budget which is monitored by Finance and Governance – Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
 - To only include Finance and Governance actions in Section 9 – It was agreed for officers to take this recommendation away under advisement and discuss required changes, then submit the amended version to Full Council for approval.

Examples provided included 9.1.4 (which was considered to be under the remit of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee (AID)), 9.1.6 (which was considered to be under the remit of CEEC in conjunction with officers), 9.1.7 (which was considered to be under the remit of AID in conjunction with officers) and 9.1.10 (which was considered to be under the remit of AID in conjunction with the Grounds Maintenance Team).

2. If an additional financial contribution should be made to support an event (confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

55 Audit and Year-End Returns

55.1 To note receipt of the internal audit report for year ending 31 March 2026 – The Finance Manager and all other involved staff members were thanked for their work and for securing a favourable audit report.

55.2 To accept the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026 – Cllr Rappensberger proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

55.3 To consider the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025-2026 and associated papers and processes for external audit, including:

1. To approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 AGAR) – The Town Clerk read all ten questions. Cllr Pearce proposed to respond 'YES' to all questions and approve section one of the AGAR; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. The Chair signed the Annual Governance Statement.
2. To approve the Accounting Statement (Section 2 AGAR) and note the associated papers, including statement of significant variances and bank reconciliation – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the Accounting Statement; seconded by Cllr Foster; all in favour. The Chair signed the Accounting Statement.

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3. To note the period for the exercise of Public Rights – The period for the exercise of Public Rights was noted.

56 Town Hall Project

- 56.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Town Hall Project Committee meeting on 11 June 2026 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 56.2 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager (some aspects may be confidential) – The Project Manager reported the continued progress onsite and highlighted the completion of the roof over the New Market Inn building, with the air source heat pumps installed, and the completion of the repair and redecoration of sash windows.

The agreement to lease has been sent to the Registrars and should be signed by the end of August or in early September.

Expressions of Interest have been received for catering provision for the Town Hall and were being reviewed by the Town Hall Manager.

£6.1million has been spent and £6.45million remained in the budget. The Project Manager noted the continued pressure on the contingency budget due to variations and additional instructions, however these costs were still within the budget.

- 56.3 To consider procurement and funding of enhanced equipment to support council meetings (some aspects may be confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

57 Marina Theatre

- 57.1 To receive and note a progress report from the Project Manager – The Project Manager reported the snagging works for the seating had been undertaken the previous week by a specialist contractor. This work would not be an additional project cost as it would instead be deducted from the contractor's final account.

The installation of the extra base plate at the bottom of the fire escape, per the rectified design for compliance, has been agreed with the contractor. This would not be at additional cost. This was due to be installed by Monday 29 June and then checked by the Structural Engineer on Tuesday 30 June, then signed off by Building Control.

The Quantity Surveyor has issued the final account to Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) and the contractor for acceptance, once accepted a final accounts statement would be issued to be signed by both parties. It was hoped this would be completed in the next few weeks alongside practical completion.

58 Assets, Inclusion and Development

- 58.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee meeting on 8 June 2026 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 58.2 To consider a recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to not take on the responsibility of creating a Community Emergency Plan
This recommendation included communicating this resolution to ESC

Cllr Parker left the chamber at 19:09 due to his declared interests

Cllr Brooks proposed to endorse the recommendation due to the scale of such a task and the burden it would place on LTC resources.

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Cllr Ray requested an amendment be made to clarify with ESC and Suffolk County Council how the existing emergency plans would be communicated to residents.

Cllr Pearce requested an amendment to the proposal to clarify that recommendation included the caveat that should ESC want to assist LTC to produce a plan for the town, then they should approach LTC to start this process.

Cllr Brooks amended the proposal with both requests. Cllr Pearce seconded the amended proposal.

It was confirmed the existing emergency responses were multi-agency in Lowestoft and any emergency plan would need to fit within the existing structure. A vote was held with all in favour.

Cllr Parker returned to the chamber at 19:15

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 19:15

59 Planning

59.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 16 June 2026 –
The draft minutes were received and noted.

59.2 To consider the appointment of further members to the Planning Committee
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables Town and Parish Councils to make representations on planning applications. To fulfil this power, it would be beneficial to have increased membership on the Committee due to the number of inquorate meetings.

Cllr Foster requested to join the Committee. Cllr Rappensberger proposed Cllr Foster be permitted to join the Planning Committee; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

60 Personnel

60.1 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting on 9 June 2026 –
The draft minutes were received and noted.

Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 19:17

60.2 To consider a recommendation from the Personnel Committee to make the following amendments to their Terms of Reference:

1. To amend and delete either 6.1.5 (Para 1) or 6.1.6 (second bullet point) as they are duplicate items – Cllr Pearce proposed approval and for the deleted section to be at the discretion of staff; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; ten votes in favour and one abstention.

2. 6.1.12 to amend "annual" to "annually or on other occasions as appropriate" – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the amendment; seconded by Cllr Foster; all in favour.

3. 7 Financial delegations.

a) To confirm a financial delegation was made to the Personnel Committee in 2024 to authorise commissioning and associated costs of Occupational Health reports where required, in accordance with its responsibility to manage longer-term sickness absence and amend the Terms of Reference accordingly – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the amendment; seconded by Cllr Foster; all in favour.

b) To confirm a delegation to the Town Clerk on the staff contingency budget which is monitored by the Personnel Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

Cllr Foster left the chamber at 19:20

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- 60.3 To consider a recommendation from the Personnel Committee for all Councillors to be DBS checked – The rationale for having all Councillors DBS checked was queried. It was explained this was to provide basic safeguarding in any interactions with public, noting LTC already mandated safeguarding training for all Councillors. The Personnel Committee had considered it a reasonable assumption for a member of public to make that any Councillor they interact with are DBS checked.

Cllr Pearce proposed Full Council confirms it supports this recommendation and requests the Personnel Committee develop a detailed specification on the scope of the check, what type of DBS check would be undertaken and what action would be taken if a Councillor refused the check or if a check raised issues in relation to a Councillor; seconded by Cllr Hynes; nine votes in favour and one abstention.

61 Climate and Ecological Emergency

- 61.1 To consider a recommendation from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to make the following amendment to their Terms of Reference:
To amend 6.1.2 so the statement reads 'declaration of a climate and ecological emergency'.
Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the amendment; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.
- 61.2 To consider a recommendation from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to extend the bulky waste contract for two years from 1 August 2026 – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

62 To consider nominations for the Suffolk Community Awards 2026 (some aspects may be confidential)

This item would be discussed in confidential session.

63 Outside Bodies

- 63.1 To consider the appointment of a representative to East Suffolk Planning Alliance – Cllr Hynes proposed himself for the appointment; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

64 To consider the following legal matters (confidential):

An update report on legal matters – This item would be discussed in confidential session.

65 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 28 July 18:30

66 Items for the next agenda and close

No items were requested for the next agenda.

67 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 legal and employment issues relating to the matters on this agenda, including the following:

Any matters, including those above as required – Cllr Jones proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 19:43

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- 61.2 To consider a recommendation from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to extend the bulky waste contract for two years from 1 August 2026 – Cllr Brooks proposed to endorse the recommendation and extend the contract for two years; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

The Town Hall Project Manager joined the meeting at 19:50

- 56.3 To consider procurement and funding of enhanced equipment to support council meetings (some aspects may be confidential) – This item related to LTC's audio and visual equipment within the Council Chamber. The Project Manager requested this item be deferred to the next meeting whilst further information was compiled. Full Council agreed to defer the item.

Cllr Jones temporarily left the chamber at 19:56

Cllr Jones returned to the chamber at 19:58

The Town Hall Project Manager left the meeting at 20:03

- 54.3 To consider the following matters from the Finance and Governance Committee:
2. If an additional financial contribution should be made to support an event (confidential) – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the additional financial contribution; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger. Cllr Pearce requested the proposal be amended to include a delegation to officers to spend within budget at their discretion. Cllr Brooks agreed to amend the proposal and Cllr Rappensberger seconded the amended proposal. A vote was held with all in favour.

64 To consider the following legal matters (confidential):

A confidential update was provided on a legal matter.

Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal to endorse a recommendation from the lawyer; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

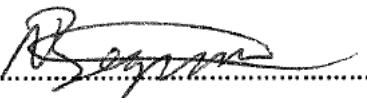
A further confidential update was provided on a lease renewal.

Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

62 To consider nominations for the Suffolk Community Awards 2026 (some aspects may be confidential)

Cllr Pearce proposed to submit all agreed nominations based on the drafts provided, with a delegation to officers to amend the submissions per the feedback from Councillors, subject to those amendments being within the set word count; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:24

Signed: 
28 July 2026