

# Annual Assembly of the Town

Lowestoft Town Council Offices, First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE  
Tuesday 3 March 2020 19:00

## Minutes

### Presiding:

Cllr Alice Taylor (Mayor)

### Present:

#### 1. Mayor's welcome

The Town Council Mayor, Cllr Alice Taylor, presided. The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed. Those in attendance were reminded that this is not a meeting of Lowestoft Town Council but a meeting of electors registered on the electoral roll. Only those registered to vote in Lowestoft Parish would be able to participate in any votes called at the meeting. It was advised that the Town Council is taking sensible and proportionate precautions in response to the coronavirus and signs had been put up to give advice to attendees.

#### 2. Lowestoft Town Council report to the electors

Cllr Taylor gave details of the Town Council's achievements and activities over the past year and its aspirations for the coming year. The work of the Friends Groups was praised and the Friends of Kensington Gardens were congratulated for their Lowestoft in Bloom gold award. The Town Council has a systematic plan to make improvements to its assets, including rejuvenation of play areas and a bulb and tree planting plan. The Town Council continues to work closely with the Marina Theatre. The public events which the Town Council has supported or staged were detailed and there was a reminder about this year's civic events, including VE Day on 8 May. In 2019 the Town Council declared a climate emergency and its activities since doing so were explained. Some of its goals regarding this will also be reflected in the Neighbourhood Development Plan, which is still ongoing. Cllr Taylor thanked the people of Lowestoft for supporting the Town Council's work and reminded those in attendance that there will be a public consultation event on Friday 13 March, regarding the Feasibility Study for the Town Hall.

#### 3. Suffolk County Council report to the electors

Cllr James Reeder provided a report on behalf of Suffolk County Council. The impact of coronavirus is one of their top priorities at the moment and ensuring that the response is effective but proportionate. Cllr Reeder praised the work of the local public health team. Suffolk County Council's growth, highways and infrastructure projects were explained, including the purchase and development of the South Lowestoft industrial estate. The Hold is being built in Ipswich and should be open in May. The efforts of local groups to protect the Lowestoft records office were praised, and has resulted in Lowestoft becoming a staffed facility for twenty hours per week, rather than having no staff at all. The County Council recognises it still has work to do in this area with regard to flood risk management and resilience and will be investing more into this. The County Council has been working with East Suffolk Council to identify homes in fuel poverty, and is already working to address this. An update was given on young peoples' services, and the careers advice being given to schools. Suffolk County Council has been working closely with healthcare partners to improve home social care and non-clinical interventions. It was reported that civil parking enforcement will be coming into force from 6 April. Questions on each of the presentations will be taken after all presentations have been completed.

#### 4. Police report to the electors

Sgt Gary King spoke on behalf of Suffolk Constabulary's Safer Neighbourhoods Team. The structure of this team was explained with regard to how emergencies are responded to. In terms of the

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challenges being addressed over the past year, there was a low score for this area for public confidence, and more of a demand for visible policing. The number of officers is now rising. There have been successes in tackling complex and organised crime, such as cyber crime, fraud and drug dealing. A new crime co-ordination centre has just launched, which will give a more user-friendly experience to those reporting crimes. There has been a big increase in proactive work, such as in addressing knife crime, but there is still more to be done. There are currently no active county lines in Lowestoft but the Police are remaining vigilant.

### 5. Lake Lothing Third Crossing presentation

Interim Project Manager Andrew Pearce gave an update on the project. It was reported that there have been delays and the lack of decision by the Secretary of State has been frustrating for all. The general election also delayed progress. An update on the progress made since last year's presentation at the Annual Assembly was given. A Development Consent Order has not yet been granted. The final design on the bridge is being worked on and is being tested robustly. A competition is being launched in local schools to name the bridge. A summary of the remaining actions was given and it is hoped that a decision will be imminent. Questions were taken from the public. It was queried whether the archaeology of the site is being examined. An architect has been involved and has made recommendations. There was an enquiry into costings of the project. This will be included with the final business case, which is being drawn up currently. It was queried why a tender figure had been turned down, and this was because the project team wanted to secure a more competitive construction price for the taxpayer. This will have some impact on the overall timeline, but the Development Consent Order is the main issue at the moment. Clarification was sought on whether the current design has changed the separate cycle route over the bridge to a shared facility. It was confirmed that this is now a shared facility as this presented a better value option. It was queried whether motor vehicles could use this route if the road were blocked for any reason. It has not been considered in this way but theoretically this would be possible.

### 6. Suffolk Wildlife Trust presentation

It was reported that Carlton Marshes' new visitor centre will be opening in June. The presentation looked at nature-led solutions to address climate change in Lowestoft. Even urban areas can provide good opportunities to support and boost wildlife. Suffolk Wildlife Trust encourages linked up community projects to support wildlife, such as enabling hedgehogs access to move freely from one garden to another. Several rare species have been found in and around towns, many of which prefer scrubby areas, which the public may consider unsightly. A complexity of structure is important for many invertebrates and insects and much of that has been lost. Local authorities and members of the public were encouraged to consider plant species which benefit pollinators. Some authorities have trialled leaving verges uncut to encourage wildflower growth, and there were examples of areas of land which Suffolk Wildlife Trust has purchased and managed to successfully increase biodiversity. Even smaller actions taken by individuals can cumulatively have a significant impact. Some suggestions were to plant orchards rather than ornamental plants, to favour native species, to allow verges to grow longer where possible, to have ponds on private land, where possible, however small, and to communicate with neighbours to think about connectivity between gardens for hedgehogs and small mammals. Suffolk Wildlife Trust is working to increase learning and awareness. Questions were welcomed for Suffolk Wildlife Trust and other speakers who had presented so far. It was queried what Suffolk Wildlife Trust's stance on Sizewell C is. The Trust's formal position is on its website. They are non-statutory consultees but have had communication with EDF.

There was a question for the Police about recruitment. It has not yet been determined where the extra officers will be deployed and there will be further recruitment later on. The Police will be

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sending out more considered responses to reports of crime. A new system of recording crime should address previous issues regarding this. There was a request for Police patrols after dark and more action to stop cyclists after dark with no lights. Sgt King will brief his Neighbourhood Teams about this.

Cllr Taylor requested that the minutes of the Annual Assembly 2019 be considered for approval. There was a proposal from a member of the public to accept the minutes of the meeting of 5 March, which was seconded by another member of the public and approved.

### **7. Lowestoft Climate Action Group presentation**

Emma Bateman gave a presentation on behalf of the Lowestoft Climate Action Group (LCAG), to explain who the group is, its aims and achievements. The group was set up through volunteers who had expressed an interest in the non-Councillor positions of Lowestoft Town Council's Climate Emergency Committee. It was recognised that each of the applicants had a wide range of skills, knowledge and enthusiasm and the Council suggested they should form an Action Group. Two of the group's members have been appointed to the Town Council's Climate Emergency Committee, and are responsible for feeding back the group's activities and exploring ways it can work with the Town Council. It was explained there are lots of small actions everyone can take to make a difference. LCAG has started looking at the Town Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan and its small parcels of land, to see how these can be made as biodiverse as possible. Suffolk Wildlife Trust's earlier presentation provided advice for this. LCAG has already liaised with the Town Council and East Suffolk Norse about the use of pesticides, and how to balance keeping areas both user friendly and biodiverse. LCAG will be looking at the provision of cycle routes in Lowestoft and public transport services. LCAG is keen to network with other groups and is designing a survey for schools to encourage them to consider how they can make the most of their environment. LCAG has been looking at what development is happening in the town and looks at planning applications to ensure environmental impact is being considered. The group recently fed into the Heritage Action Zone Design Guide consultation. LCAG has been looking at how to improve recycling provisions locally, including bottle banks. The Government is looking to make changes to recycling and household waste from 2023. Emma explained the importance of LCAG, which is able to work with the community and look at wider District and County Council matters, as well as making suggestions to the Town Council. Anyone interested in joining the group was invited to get in touch.

### **8. Community organisation forum**

Cllr Taylor invited representatives from local organisations to give a brief overview of their activities over the past year and for the coming year. This began with the First Light Festival, which was very successful in 2019 and has been confirmed as going ahead again in 2020, with several new elements being planned.

The Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association is celebrating more than forty years of twinning between the two towns. It was explained that each year they alternate visits between Plaisir and Lowestoft and they always welcome new members. Anyone interested was encouraged to get in touch.

The Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society is looking to preserve and enhance Lowestoft's heritage, and has been working with the Town Council on a programme of heritage plaques. A portrait of Jack Rose has been created to commemorate twenty years since his passing. The Society is looking for somewhere to safely store the portrait temporarily. Any request for this to the Town Council would have to be made formally to the Council for consideration.

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Lowestoft in Bloom has been working towards entering the town for the Anglia in Bloom competition. It is keen to engage with young people and has also been working the Community Payback Scheme. Next year marks the twenty fifth anniversary of Lowestoft in Bloom and it is hoped an event will be organised to celebrate this.

A member of the public spoke of the importance of celebrating and preserving Lowestoft's heritage, and thanked the Town Council for funding and supporting local heritage projects. It was requested that the Town Council continue its efforts to protect the town's heritage.

The Lowestoft Museum is pleased to have a large collection of Lowestoft Porcelain on display and thanked the Town Council for supporting its recent purchase of museum quality storage boxes for items not currently on display.

It was queried whether East Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils have engaged with the Lowestoft Climate Action Group as the Town Council has. It was explained that East Suffolk Council's cabinet member for the environment has engaged with them and both Councils should be publishing their climate emergency plans by the summer.

Cllr Taylor thanked everyone for their attendance and commented that the common theme across the evening was how much people care for this town and how joint working can bring about the improvements people would like to see. Thanks were expressed to the Town Council and its officers for organising the event.

The meeting was closed 21:20.

Signed: .....

Date: .....