

Minutes of a meeting of Lowestoft Town Council
held at 16.00 on Friday 7 July 2017 at Riverside, Canning Road, Lowestoft.

Present: Councillors Desmond Baldry, Sue Barnard, Allyson Barron, Nasima Begum, Baz Bemment, Peter Byatt, Neil Coleby, Peter Collecott, Tracey Eastwood, June Ford, Ian Graham (Mayor), Peter Knight, Peter Lang, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Alice Taylor

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Town Clerk)

Public: 2 members of the public were present (3 for part)

49. Welcome – The Fire Evacuation Procedure was explained by the Mayor and all were welcomed to the meeting.

50. Announcement on Reporting – Was read by the Mayor.

51. Apologies for absence - Apologies were received from Cllrs Alan Green, Tess Gandy and Nick Webb and were accepted by the Council.

52. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

The following declaration of interest was declared: Cllr Peter Lang declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 56a pursuant to his employment. Cllr Graham note that this item was only to note a meeting and was unlikely to necessitate departure from the meeting. There were no requests for dispensations.

53. Minutes

The minutes of the inaugural meeting held on 20 June 2017 were considered and approved, subject to the following amendments:

Page ten line 4 – Time changed from 20:20 to 21:20.

Page ten line 5 – Time changed from 20:21 to 21:21.

Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Ford; All in favour.

54. Public Forum and Public Service Report – A written report from District Councillor Louise Gooch had been circulated in advance of the meeting and she had indicated that advice on the best format for reports from district councillors would be welcome. The Mayor expressed thanks to Cllr Gooch for providing a report which was written. Written reports were the preference of the Council. There was a discussion about the best way to rationalise interaction with District and County Councillors. Comments included that there was a value in engaging but that other means might be more productive. Owing to the pressure on the Town Council's agendas, there were concerns about the best way to engage especially given the number of principal authority councillors. There had not been guidance given about the best way to report to the Town Council as there had been an expectation that they would sort this out amongst themselves. However, guidance would be provided requesting a focus on information about matters affecting the town and excluding party political matters. There was a comment made that written reports on the mayoral diary would also be welcome. **ACTION:** It was agreed to invite district and county councillors to provide written reports which would be posted to the Town Council's website and in relation to which councillors could ask questions if wished and any relevant matters can go to an agenda. Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Coleby; Majority vote in favour with one against.

55. The completion of period for the Notice of Casual Vacancy for Elmtree – This was noted and councillors were provided with a copy of the co-option advertisement for the appointment process at the 18 July Full Council meeting. The Mayor requested that councillors advertise this widely. Peter Lang would ensure it was advertised within Elmtree.

56. Assets

a) The arrangement of meetings with Sentinel and Waveney Norse.

It was noted that a meeting was taking place on 12 July 2017 14:30 at Riverside with Sentinel. Subsequently, a meeting would be arranged with Waveney Norse. It was requested that in future 3 dates were offered for such meetings and the date chosen to meet the majority.

b) Amendments to the Councils' Events Guidelines:

- Removal of example charges for assets retained by Waveney District Council (pg 18)
- Replacement of funfair charges for specific assets to a range of £200 to £560 (pg18)

It was noted that the Guidelines had been adopted at the previous Council meeting and would be provided to the recently co-opted councillors. The amendments were agreed. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; Seconded by Cllr Land; Majority in favour with one abstention.

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c) Events considered for permission:

- Two town trail events (turtle and Halloween)
- Christmas lights

It was noted that it was a fish not turtle trail and that permission was unlikely to be needed as the event involved normal walking routes for pedestrians in the town. This will be a Lowestoft Vision event. In relation to the Christmas lights, it was not clear that there would be an extra cost and if there were, the Town Council would need to be approached with details. It was agreed that both events would be ones that could be permitted after consideration through the Council's events procedure. Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Lang; All in favour.

d) Tour of the Town Hall on 5 July and consider next steps in deciding future use.

It was noted the councillors had a tour of the Town Hall. There was a discussion about the need for a survey of the Town Hall to independently assess the state of repair so that it could be established what work was needed before applying for grants. Decisions about the future of the Town Hall at the earliest reasonable stage were essential particularly given the potential deterioration while it has been left empty which might be worsened if left through the next winter. There was also discussion about the need to explore grants for the building and to obtain the information held by Waveney District Council on the Town Hall. The Council wanted to ensure it acted as a good guardian of this important asset. It was agreed to go out to tender to obtain a minimum of three quotes for a condition survey. This to be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; Seconded by Cllr Byatt; All voted in favour.

e) Progress with the s.113 agreement with WDC for compliance work.

It was noted that there was no progress to report and this would be taken forward to the next agenda.

f) The impact of the Wayfinder proposals on Council noticeboard interests.

Cllr Taylor noted that Wayfinder project was underway before the Town Council came into existence and that now permission to place signs might be required from the Council as the new landowner. The project involved erecting a range of colour coded way-markers in different parts of the signs as part of an attempt to promote key sites of interest to visitors. The noticeboard in the Triangle is one which is planned for use by the Wayfinder project but it was noted that the noticeboard might well not be in the ownership of the Council as it is probably classed as 'movable' and would remain with Waveney District Council. Following concerns being expressed, the Clerk reassured the Council that any permissions for activities on Council land would carry caveats relating to proper use, maintenance and liabilities arising from any movables placed. It was noted that Waveney District Council should be providing full details of what they understand to be the position on all the assets, following recent meetings. However, in due course each councillors would wish to assess the assets on their own ward and there is also the full Council tour of assets to help with the assessment.

g) Proposals for s.106/Community Infrastructure Levy expenditure (including Normanston Park, Stoven Close and Granville Road).

This will be further considered at the meeting with Sentinel on Wednesday 12th at 14:30, Riverside.

57. Finance:

a) Draft minutes of the Finance Committee

These were noted. Cllr Coleby had been appointed with the responsibility for checking quarterly bank reconciliations.

b) Payments made by the Finance Committee

- Up to £50 for a Council memory stick was approved.
- Finance software was not being progressed until the permanent Responsible Financial Officer was in post.
- Civic protocol training costs were approved.
- Costs at £340 associated with the asset induction tour were agreed. However, the Council agreed that this budget should be increased to up to £680 maximum as the time needed for the tour had doubled. Proposed by Cllr Graham; Seconded by Cllr Barron; Majority vote in favour with one against.

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- c) Consider adopting any recommendations from the Finance Committee:
- Reserves policy
The Clerk's advice had been circulated to the Committee and would be on their next agenda. For this size of Council, the conclusion was unlikely to be less than 3 months in reserves and 4 months plus was likely to be more realistic given the uncertainty associated with the Council being new. However, its potential to accrue reserves was limited at this stage. It was also noted that the Council could have additional earmarked reserves for specific purposes.
 - Chair's allowance
This had been agreed at £500 and, following consultation with the Mayor, it was clear that this would solely be a budget for reimbursement of receipted travel and other expenses directly attributable to the costs of the Council in providing this service. The budget for reimbursement was agreed; it would also include the reimbursement to the Deputy Mayor and would be called the mayoral allowance. Proposed by Cllr Lang; Seconded by Cllr Taylor; All voted in favour.
 - Changes to the Financial Regulations
The Regulations had been reviewed and no changes were needed.
 - Recommended payments
A recommendation was made that a laptop, software and backup facility is bought not exceeding £1200. Cllr Taylor was progressing a paper with recommendations on suitable equipment. This budget was proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Taylor; All voted in favour.
 - Terms of reference
These had been reviewed by the Committee and no changes were needed.
58. Recruitment
- a) Draft minutes of the Personnel Committee
These were noted.
- b) Amended terms of reference, as recommended, and increase in the membership
It was agreed to change the terms of reference so that para 6 5) read 'Overseeing the recruitment process of the Clerk and making recommendations on appointment, terms and contractual matters to the Council for all staffing.'
Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Taylor; All in favour.
Cllrs Barnard and Bemment offered to join the Committee, as did Cllr Lang if the meetings were held in the evenings. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; Seconded by Cllr Barron; All voted in favour.
- c) The need to consider which pension scheme will apply to employees
This was noted along with the fact that the pension budget was too low if the Council were to opt for the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- d) Proposed recruitment documents, processes and timescales
- e) Consider the following recommendations from the Committee:
- The recruitment of the Clerk should proceed and a salary recommendation would be made to Full Council (SCP58-60 with some flexibility for an exceptional candidate).
 - The recruitment of the Responsible Financial Officer should also proceed, given the importance of this post and a salary recommendation would be made to Full Council (SCP37-40).
 - The Clerk and RFO post should be separate posts and potentially the latter could be subsumed within a Deputy post
- It was noted that there was a need to progress office space for staff and this was currently being looked into. The potential timescale and structure were included within the Personnel Committee minutes and the salaries were agreed in line with the recommendations above. It was also agreed to delegate authority to the Committee to agree the Job Descriptions and Person Specifications. Proposed Cllr Lang; Seconded Cllr Barron; All voted in favour.
- f) To set a budget for the recruitment process (particularly advertisement and interviews) with delegated authority to the Committee to authorise expenditure.
This was agreed at a maximum budget of £3000. Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Taylor; All voted in favour.

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Cllr Baldry left the meeting at 17:22 and did not return.

59. Other Committee Minutes and consideration of matters relevant to committees

a) Membership of Committees

A revised list would be sent to councillors following the changes agreed within this meeting.

b) Draft minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee.

The draft minutes of 21 June and 4 July were noted.

c) Delegating exploration of neighbourhood planning to the Planning and Environment Committee and noting the Neighbourhood Planning Research Group findings.

The delegation was agreed. Proposed by Cllr Graham; Seconded by Cllr Barron; All voted in favour. Cllr Taylor reported that initial research had been conducted and further meetings were being planned bringing in expert help. It was suggested that Cllr Martin from Kessingland might be a useful speaker. Cllr Taylor noted that consultation on the Waveney District Council revised Local Plan was about to commence which meant the framework for neighbourhood planning was changing.

d) Consideration of involvement with Waveney District Council in an application for a Heritage Action Zone for the historic High Street Area.

It was noted that the application had fallen last year for lack of inclusion of the Town Hall. The support of the Town Council is requested to try to help secure a successful application for a significant sum of 'feeder' money benefiting the heritage area in the north of Lowestoft. Cllr Taylor had drafted wording for support for consideration by the Council – "Resolved that the Lowestoft Town Council supports the efforts of the Waveney District Council in its bid to secure a grant from Heritage England for historic High Street, scores and parks within the North Lowestoft Conservation Area. The Lowestoft Town Council understands this grant application is part of the Heritage Action Zone Plan and will feed into the brief for a regeneration/masterplan for the wider town centre, to include the Town Hall and the Triangle area. The LTC reserves the right to withdraw from the grant bid if the bid is not in the best interests of the Council." It was noted that greater clarity was needed on the detail and scope of the bid, including the geographical areas it would cover and there were concerns about potential clashes with any future plans the Council might have for the Town Hall. It was proposed that a councillor from the Harbour ward (or in the absence of this, the Gunton ward) took responsibility and attended meetings for the Council on this matter. Cllr Knight noted that he would be prepared to do this but his business was located in the area which might benefit. It was noted that this would be true for the other Harbour councillor. It was agreed Cllr Taylor's proposed resolution of support should be on the next agenda for consideration and that both Harbour councillors should attend the next meeting with the Heritage Action Zone group. Cllr Taylor who had conducted the initial liaison and also Cllr Graham might also attend. Proposed by Cllr Lang; Seconded by Cllr Byatt; All voted in favour.

e) Consideration of membership and terms of reference for the Councils Implementation Committee.

This would be on the next meeting agenda.

f) To note the Cefas consultation and the whole Council visit opportunity.

It was noted that some councillors had attended.

60. Consideration of whether the Hornsea Project Three cabling route affects Council interests

It was noted that the Planning and Environment Committee had considered the consultation on whether the cabling plans affected the Council's interests and had concluded that it does not.

61. Training and induction

The completion of the first set of training and induction sessions and the need to arrange training and induction sessions for new councillors was noted.

62. Date of next Council Meeting

- 18 July

63. Items for the next Agenda

- The Third Crossing project could attend to talk with the Council about its consultation at the September Council meeting.
- A representative would be invited to attend to speak about the Heritage Action Zone.
- Charter Tree update

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- Delegation to Mayor and Deputy Mayor of decision on allocation of the Lowestoft plaques.
- Allyson Barron provided her apologies for the next meeting and had already advised the Clerk of the reason.

A suggestion was made that a representative from Health East should be invited to talk with the Council about what will happen to the hospital site. For example, previously it had been understood there would be a blood test centre on site. It was noted that, given the pressures on the Council agenda, this presentation could take place as part of the Planning and Environment Committee's agenda with all councillors invited to attend.

64. Resolution 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.

No resolution was made.

Signed.....

Date 7 July 2017