

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency Committee
Via Video Meeting
15:30 on 3 November 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Andy Pearce and David Youngman (Chair)

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

73. Welcome

Councillors and members of the public were reminded of the right to report and application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed.

74. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Green, Page and Parker. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

75. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 86, specifically the Gainsborough Drive pond.

76. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 6 October 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments and the draft minutes were noted.

77. Advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

A public comment had been received and was displayed at the meeting. With regard to item 78, the comment expressed concern about the poor condition of the cycle lanes in Lowestoft and the poor facilities between neighbouring towns, and the need for more bicycle racks. The comment also suggested that rental bicycles and suggested routes could be provided in the town.

78. Cycling:

78.1. Noting that East Suffolk Council has launched its map-based consultation on the Cycling and Walking Strategy, and consideration of any actions for the Town Council following the presentation which preceded this meeting – It was suggested that the Town Council should publish a link to the consultation on its Facebook page, and encourage as many people as possible to participate. The Planning and Environment Committee will be providing a formal response on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr Hardie joined the meeting 15:39

It was requested that officers make enquiries to see whether there are any plans to reinstate the former bicycle rental scheme at Lowestoft Train Station, and if so to explore joint promotion with local visitor attractions.

78.2. The draft Cycling Strategy – Officers have put together a the draft document, Councillor feedback is required to develop it, and it will be circulated to the whole Council for input. Cllr Barnard has found a source of grant funding, which may be used to produce maps, or towards bicycle racks in the Town Council's parks. Cllr Barnard will send the details to officers.

79. How to progress the following actions towards implementation of the Town Council's Health and Wellbeing Emergency Declaration:

79.1. Implementation of the Sustainability Strategy – This requires updating with the Council's intention to be 'net zero' by 2030. The Committee reviewed the Health Emergency Declaration and discussed what action has been taken so far. The former Parklands play area will become

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a community orchard, and the Council will explore more ways to increase the presence of beneficial trees. The Clerk is seeking advice about water management and storage options. There has been a commitment by the Council to assist East Suffolk Council and partner organisations with their package of support for food delivery, and officers have been liaising with East Suffolk Council about how this can be implemented. Although plans for public events and gatherings cannot be implemented at this time, plans can be made for the spring, and other Committees and Sub-Committees are considering this, alongside the Town Council's Events and Communications Officer. A defibrillator is due to be installed within the former telephone kiosk on Gunton Drive. The Council has waived fees for the use of its sports and leisure facilities. Suffolk County Council's policy on replacing trees it has to remove was queried, particularly regarding trees recently removed from the Waterloo Road area. Cllr Hardie will query this with Suffolk County Council.

79.2. Supporting the reduction in pollution – Before it considers measures to reduce pollution, this Committee would like a clearer understanding of the current levels and the measures already in place. It is understood that a monitoring device is located on Belvedere Road, but has not been functioning for some time. Cllr Pearce proposed that enquiries be made with East Suffolk Council as to what action they are currently taken to monitor and reduce pollution levels; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour. The Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee has discussed the use of mulch as a measure to reduce water usage.

79.3. Any recommendations from other Committees and Sub-Committees on the implementation of other aspects of the Health and Wellbeing Emergency Declaration – Communication and access to services is becoming more difficult for those with no internet access. It was suggested that organisations such as the Samaritans could be more promoted in the town. Cllr Pearce knows of other organisations in the town working to support the community, and will forward their details to officers to see if there is anything the Town Council can do to support their activities. It was agreed that the Town Council should promote the Home But Not Alone service through the website and Facebook. It was requested that this item remain on the agenda to receive any recommendations. No specific recommendations from the other Committees and Sub-Committees have been received so far. Cllr Pearce proposed taking a five minute comfort break at this point in the meeting; seconded by Cllr Lang all in favour.

A five minute comfort break was taken at 16:18 and the meeting resumed 16:23

80. Developing a policy which takes account of climate emergency considerations for utility procurement and contracts

The Council would like a supplier who produces only one hundred percent renewable energy. Several suppliers make this claim, but further research is needed. The Council has been working with someone who can assessments and can give recommendations, based on criteria set by the Council. Issues with leaks in the Town Hall are preventing the meter being changed, but once this has been resolved progress can be made. Consideration needs to be given to the parameters put in place to justify decisions taken which may not be the most environmentally friendly option. The Clerk is trying to put together a balanced and appropriate framework, given climate emergency and health emergency declarations. Councillors were welcomed to submit any ideas or comments to the Clerk. The Council may wish to adopt a policy position on the use of nuclear energy, but this could cause difficulties in progressing electric vehicles and charging points, and may bind future Councils. Lease arrangements with tenants will need to be considered, but some tenants have their own energy supplier arrangements in place. It was queried whether this should start with smaller, more immediate actions, such as using LED lightbulbs only on premises owned by the Town Council. A specific budget provision for climate emergency related adjustments will need to be considered by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee.

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81. Progress with the public campaign to promote the local beneficial impact of trees

The Events and Communications Officer has recently been appointed. A lot of information has been received from Councillors, with a steer on how the webpage should look. Progress will be reported at the next meeting.

82. A review of the Tree Policy, noting a request from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee for officers to review the policy to clarify the legal rights of members of the public

The Tree Policy currently allows for tree removal or pruning only where there is a health and safety risk or a risk of structural damage to property. It was queried whether the policy should be amended to give the Council more discretion to consider individual requests. Some minor administrative amendments are also required and more clarity required about the public's legal rights. East Suffolk Norse can offer advice, but will not currently carry out any work which contravenes the policy. Officers will review the policy and it will be presented to the relevant Committees and Sub-Committees to consider.

83. The development of a 'net zero' policy, subject to Full Council's approval of this Committee's recommendation for the Town Council to achieve 'net zero' status by 2030

The Clerk can put a policy together based on achievable actions the Town Council can work towards. The Sustainability Strategy and other related policies also need strengthening in this respect.

Cllr Pearce left the meeting 16:57

84. Making amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Town Council's Committees and Sub-Committees to more appropriately reflect how the Town Council's climate emergency declaration is being taken forward

The Terms of Reference of each Committee and Sub-Committee have been divided up amongst members of this Committee to review. Some of the Terms of Reference may only require minor amendments, some require officer advice and some may depend on the provisions of related leases, such as the Allotments Sub-Committee. The Open Spaces Strategy already covers such matters as pesticide use. It was agreed to carry this item forward to January's meeting for further consideration.

85. Any advice received on how to manage water usage in the Town Council's parks

The Clerk has contacted Essex and Suffolk Water initially, and can seek the advice of consultants if required. This item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

86. The results of the environmental assessments of the Town Council's ponds, if received

The reports have not yet been received and officers are chasing.

87. Any environmentally-friendly alternatives to Christmas lights for 2021 onwards

It is understood the current lights are LED and biodegradable. In future years the Council could consider alternatives such as a tree and Christmas trail, encouraging businesses to decorate their windows with recyclable decorations, and a carol service. Businesses on London Road South are being encouraged to decorate their windows this year, and Cllr Hardie will send details to officers. The Council is in the final year of its current contract and may wish to still provide lights, but officers have been trying to find more cost effective and environmentally friendly options, which may include projectors. Full Council will need to consider the budget provision. Any suggestions or information from Councillors should be emailed to officers as

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soon as possible. It was suggested that any alternatives should still carry the same impact as Christmas lights and should be able to be widely enjoyed in the town.

88. Whether to support a recommendation from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to divert the £7,000 budget for electric vehicles and bicycles to the £16,000 provisionally agreed budget for amplification and recording options for face-to-face meetings at Hamilton House

It was clarified that the Committee was not being asked to make a choice between the provision of electric vehicles and amplification improvements. The Council has already decided it would like the amplification improvements and provision to record meetings once face-to-face meetings resume, whereas electric vehicles are unlikely to be progressed so soon, particularly as the provision of charging points may be affected if the Council adopts a position on the use of nuclear energy. Cllr Youngman proposed support for the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee's recommendation to divert the £7,000 budget for electric vehicles and bicycles to the £16,000 provisionally agreed budget for amplification and recording options for face-to-face meetings at Hamilton House; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

89. Whether to make any formal recommendations to Full Council on the installation of bottle banks on land owned by the Town Council

There have been mixed views on the provision of bottle banks, with some concerns expressed about broken glass, wasps, and whether people will drive to these sites to dispose of their glass. The Council has no information on the environmental impact of the manufacturing process and collection of the bottle banks, and there has been no assessment of the demand. It was queried whether the provision at existing locations could be increased. It was agreed to make enquiries with East Suffolk Council as to whether they would consider the provision they offer to be adequate, and if not whether they are taking any steps to address this.

90. Noting that the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee is considering Committee and Sub-Committee structures and Terms of Reference, and consideration of whether to submit any comments

This review will examine whether there is an effective governance structure within the Council, whether there is any unnecessary duplication and where can improvements be made. Some items do require the consideration from the different perspectives of several Committees and Sub-Committees.

91. Date of the next meeting

1 December 2020 15:30

92. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items for the next agenda, in addition to those already being carried forward. The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 17:41.

93. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

1 December 2020