

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Via Video Meeting
16:30 on 8 October 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Alan Green, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce (Chair), Alice Taylor and David Youngman

Also participating: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk), James Cox (Finance and Administration Officer) 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 Paul Page and Keith Patience. Cllrs Coleby and Pitts had not provided apologies and were absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

75. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard, Parker and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 83.5.

76. Noting that the minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments and the draft minutes were noted.

77. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

There were none.

78. Budget:

78.1. Monitoring the budget for 2020 – 2021 – The budget monitoring documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were noted.

78.2. Bank reconciliations – Cllr Page had confirmed that he has reviewed and signed off the bank reconciliation for August.

78.3. Receipt of the second instalment of the precept (£918,865.50) – This was noted.

78.4. Reviewing the budget, reserves and precept for 2021 – 2022 – The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee is reviewing this and reporting to this Committee. The Sub-Committee has started looking at considerations for next year, including challenges presented by Covid-19. This is still in its early stages, but the Sub-Committee is aware that the Council Tax base is likely to be reduced and the implications this will have, and this will be taken into account.

78.5. The East Suffolk Norse analysis of the monthly Partnership Fee and the proposed charges for 2021 - 2022 (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

79. Payments:

79.1. The income and expenditure reports for September 2020 and October 2020 to date – The income and expenditure reports were received and noted as follows:

September income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
1 September 2020	Mr Lamarti	Use of Links Road Car Park	£120 + £24 VAT = £144
1 September 2020	Tingdene	Rental Income	£47,713.07
1 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 1 September 2020	£30.50
7 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 7	£18.50

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		September 2020	
7 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£1,562.50
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£775
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£625
9 September 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£583
14 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 14 September 2020	£18.50
21 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 21 September 2020	£42.50
28 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income 28 September 2020	£18.50
30 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Precept 20-21 2 nd instalment	£918,865.50
30 September 2020	Market Income	Market Income February	£130.50

September expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR August 2020	£117
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NNDR August 2020	£187
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR August 2020	£110
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR August 2020	£210
1 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC NNDR August 2020	£122
1 September 2020	Lowestoft Mens Shed	Covid-19 Grant	£600
1 September 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£138.60 + £27.72 VAT = £166.32
1 September 2020	Lowestoft & District Allotments Association	Allotments Lease	£1,000
4 September 2020	SCC Pension Fund	August Pensions	£3,431.87
8 September 2020	Archant	Lowestoft Journal Adverts	£993.50 + £198.66 VAT = £1,192.16
11 September 2020	East Suffolk Council	ESC Lowestoft Vision BID	£1,185
16 September 2020	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Charges	£20.39
18 September 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£105.71 + £5.29 VAT = £111
21 September 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall Gas	£45.70
21 September 2020	HMRC	HMRC Charges August 2020	£3,124.47

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21 September 2020	The Hygiene Bank	Covid-19 Grant	£500
21 September 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage September 2020	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
21 September 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage August 2020	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
23 September 2020	Salaries	September salaries	£10,194.44
23 September 2020	East Coast Insulations	Asbestos removal allotments	£19,650 + £3,930 VAT = £23,580
24 September 2020	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charges October 20	£8,255 + £1,651 VAT = £9,906
29 September 2020	Marina Theatre Trust	Covid-19 grant	£1,874.68 + £374.94 VAT = £2,249.62
30 September 2020	Unity Trust Bank	Service charge	£38.25

October income

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
1 October 2020	Market Income	Weekly Market Income 1 st October	£42.50
5 October 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£6,300
5 October 2020	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16

October expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 October 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC Business Rates	£122
1 October 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC Business Rates	£210
1 October 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls Pavilion Business Rates	£110
1 October 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park Business Rates	£187
1 October 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC Business Rates	£117
1 October 2020	Autopa Ltd	2x Lockable Posts Sparrows Nest	£144.18 + £28.83 VAT = £173.01
5 October 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions September 2020	£4,664.31
6 October 2020	Land Registry	Land Registry searches	£12
7 October 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£106.75 + £5.34 VAT = £112.09
7 October 2020	SLCC	Virtual National Conference Admin and Finance Assistant	£25 + £5 VAT = £30
7 October 2020	Blachere Illuminations	Festive Light Installation 2020	£2,587.50 + £517.50 VAT = £3,105
7 October 2020	GYH Plumbing	Denes Oval Pavilion	£83.33 + £16.67 VAT

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		Service	= £100
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- 79.2. Payments made under delegated authority (see schedule) – All payments in the schedules were made under delegated authority.
- 79.3. Any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were none.
- 79.4. Receipt of any applications made under the COVID-19 Grant Awarding Policy and any payments made – There had been no new applications since the last meeting of this Committee. The last Covid-19 grant payment made was to the Marina Theatre, and an invoice had been received today from The Voice cCloud for their grant payment.

80. Events and Communications Sub-Committee

- 80.1. The draft minutes from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 24 September 2020 – The draft minutes were noted, but have not yet been seen by the Sub-Committee.
- 80.2. The following recommendation from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee on:
- 80.2a. The status of Lowestoft's Remembrance commemoration 2020 – It was agreed to discuss this item as part of the confidential session, as information has been received today which is not yet in the public domain. As soon as the Council has received all the information it needs and agreed a plan, a public statement will be released.

81. Budget and Loan Sub-Committee

- 81.1. The draft minutes from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting on 1 October 2020 – The draft minutes were noted, but have not yet been seen by the Sub-Committee.
- 81.2. The following recommendations from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee:
- 81.2a. Ringfencing a maximum budget of £4,000 within the existing Covid-19 grant fund to cover the cost of hampers to offer thanks to staff at Lowestoft care homes and staff at the James Paget Hospital's Intensive Care Unit – The figure has been suggested based on a budget for approximately forty hampers at £100 each. It was agreed these would be most appropriately funded through the grant fund. It was suggested that however much is spent on the hampers it would not be sufficient for all the staff involved to benefit and it was queried whether this should be progressed at all, given the budget constraints the Council is facing. It was clarified that Full Council has already resolved to provide the hampers and tasked this Committee with its implementation. The decision was previously deferred whilst professional advice was being sought, but there is nothing to suggest that the Council cannot offer a gesture of thanks in this way. Cllr Green proposed approving the recommendation from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to ringfence a maximum budget of £4,000 within the existing Covid-19 grant fund to cover the cost of hampers to offer thanks to staff at Lowestoft care homes and staff in the James Paget Hospital's Intensive Care Unit; seconded by Cllr Barnard; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Consideration has not yet been given to delivery of the hampers and the content of the hampers.
- 81.2b. An in principle agreement to set a maximum budget of £16,000 for amplification improvements to Hamilton House – This budget would also include the broadcasting and recording of meetings. Full Council previously resolved that at the time when face-to-face meetings can resume, they will be recorded and the recordings will remain available on the same basis that video meetings are currently (for the civic year). Three quotations have been obtained. Two were for a similar amount (approximately £15,000) and listed a lot of component equipment. The other quotation was for a lesser amount (approximately £10,000) and did not include as much equipment. Full Council did not feel able to make a decision until the differences between the quotations had been considered against the Council's requirements. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the recommendation from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee of an in principle

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agreement to set a maximum budget of £16,000 for amplification improvements to Hamilton House; seconded by Cllr Barnard; five Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. This matter is to be revisited by Full Council early in the new year, once further information has been obtained.

82. Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee

- 82.1. The draft minutes from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting on 16 September 2020 – The draft minutes were noted, but have not yet been seen by the Sub-Committee. A typographical error at item 17.2c will be amended.
- 82.2. The following recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee:
- 82.2a. Adoption of the Acquisitions and Disposal Policy, as amended – The amendment is at point 3.11 and changes the wording ‘Suffolk Records Office’ to ‘a repository agreed by the Council’. It was queried whether the Town Council’s records need to be stored in the Suffolk Records Office by law and it was confirmed that this is not the case. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Acquisitions and Disposal Policy as amended; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 82.2b. Approval from the Finance and Governance Committee to carry out a review of the Committee structure (including Sub-Committees and Working Groups), Standing Orders and Terms of Reference – It was clarified that this will not prevent Committees and Sub-Committees making recommendations on their own Terms of Reference. This has been recommended as an increasing number of items require consideration from the different perspectives of several Committees and Sub-Committees, which can lead to potentially conflicting recommendations and decisions being made. The Sub-Committee is seeking this Committee’s to review the structure and make any recommendations. If approved, the Sub-Committee would like this review to take place at its meeting in January, to allow the other Committees and Sub-Committee to submit any comments. Any approved changes would take effect from May 2021. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the request from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee to carry out a review of the Committee structure (including Sub-Committees and Working Groups), Standing Orders and Terms of Reference in January, with the comments of the other Committees and Sub-Committees to be sought in the meantime; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

83. Other financial matters, including:

- 83.1. Noting that the required re-declaration of compliance has been made to the Pension Regulator on 29 September 2020 – The Town Council has received written confirmation from the Pension Regulator to confirm the re-declaration has been received and accepted.
- 83.2. Progressing autumn bulb planting, within a maximum budget of £1,700 – A schedule has been put together and circulated to the Committee. It was queried whether the bulbs for Arnold’s Bequest are being funded via the Arnold’s Bequest Charity Board. The Charity Board has approved a budget for biodiversity improvements to Arnold’s Bequest. Previously, the Council has gifted bulbs to Arnold’s Bequest. The Charity Board does however have its own funds and has not yet spent any of them, so it was suggested that the Council should invoice the Charity Board for the bulbs for Arnold’s Bequest. The Charity Board gave delegated authority to the Clerk to progress the biodiversity actions, so arrangements for making the payment for the bulbs could be sorted out internally. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the maximum budget of £1,700 to progress autumn bulb planting, with the Clerk to use her delegated authority from the Arnold’s Bequest Charity Board to decide how the payment should be made; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.
- 83.3. Purchasing two lockable bollards for Kensington Gardens, within a maximum budget of £200 – As agreed previously by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee, the bollards will be located at the entrance near CEFAS and the entrance near the school, to prevent unauthorised vehicular access. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the maximum budget of £200

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to purchase two lockable bollards for Kensington Gardens; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

- 83.4 The costs associated with implementation of the Tree Council funding, within a maximum budget of £10,508.88 – The funding was conditional on the involvement of young people with the tree planting. The Tree Council has advised it will review these requirements in light of the current restrictions. The Tree Council funding covers the cost of purchasing the trees, this budget would be for the watering. It was initially intended for the trees to be planted in October or November, but it was agreed that the trees should not be ordered until the Tree Council has provided further advice. In the interim, it was suggested that further quotations should be sought for the watering costs. Volunteers have come forward for some of the sites and the Council could seek volunteers for the other areas, but there is an issue with water provision to some of the sites. Some schools have already indicated they would like to be involved with the planting, and this was detailed in the application. The maximum budget for watering costs exceeds the financial delegation to this Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed referring this matter to Full Council, and that in the interim officers attempt to obtain further quotations and advice from the Tree Council; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 83.5 Progressing the purchase of a cherry tree for the Gainsborough Drive pond, within a maximum budget of £50 – It had previously been decided to defer the purchase of cherry trees (excluding Kensington Gardens) until the Community Wardens had been appointed. A volunteer has now offered to water the cherry tree at Gainsborough Drive if it is approved. Cllr Green advised he would be happy to collect the tree if needed. Cllr Pearce proposed approval for the purchase of a cherry tree for the Gainsborough Drive pond, within a maximum budget of £50; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.
- 83.6 The recipients, costs and nature of the luxury hampers being offered as thanks for frontline work during the pandemic, and to consider where within the budget the funding will come from – This item is a duplication of item 81.2a, which arose as a recommendation from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee.
- 83.7 Works at Normanston Park and the related cost (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

84 Date of the next meeting

12 November 2020 16:30

85 Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items in addition to those identified during the meeting.

Cllr Green proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the live stream was closed as the meeting went into confidential session. It was confirmed the meeting would end following the confidential session.

86 Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

86.2 Any legal matters, including those above as required:

- 78.5 The East Suffolk Norse analysis of the monthly Partnership Fee and the proposed charges for 2021 – 2022 (confidential) – This was circulated to the Committee ahead of the meeting and discussed. Cllr Green proposed referring this matter to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee, following the Norse Contract Working Group meeting on 21 October; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. This will also need to be considered by Full Council and a meeting with representatives from Norse will need to be arranged.

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80.2a The status of Lowestoft's Remembrance commemoration 2020 – There was a confidential discussion regarding this.

Cllr Green left the meeting 17:57

Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. Cllr Taylor made a further confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

83.6 Works at Normanston Park and the related cost (confidential) – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting 18:21.

Signed:

12 November 2020