

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Via Video Meeting
15:30 on 10 December 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Neil Coleby, Alan Green, Andy Pearce (Chair) and Alice Taylor

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

102. Welcome

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

Cllr Green joined the meeting 15:36

103. Apologies for absence, and any changes to membership of the Committee or its Sub-Committees

Apologies were received from Cllrs Paul Page, Graham Parker and David Youngman. Cllr John Pitts had not provided apologies and was absent. It was noted that Cllr Keith Patience had resigned from this Committee and Cllr Graham Parker had resigned from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee. Cllrs Peter Lang and David Youngman have requested to join the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee. Cllr Taylor proposed acceptance of the apologies received, and approval of the requests from Cllrs Lang and Youngman to join the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Barnard; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

104. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Regarding item 111.2, staff will not be present for discussions relating to terms and conditions and contracts.

105. Noting that the draft minutes of the meeting of 12 November 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted.

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

There were no comments.

107. Budget:

107.1. Monitoring the budget for 2020 – 2021 – The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee has been monitoring the budget and there were no items for particular discussion.

107.2. Any bank reconciliations – The bank reconciliations are up to date to October 2020.

107.3. A maximum budget for wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk – A quotation from Norse is still pending. This item will be carried forward to the next agenda.

107.4. Receipt of the draft minutes from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meetings on 16 November 2020, 23 November 2020, 30 November 2020 and 7 December 2020 – The draft minutes were noted.

107.5. Considering and determining recommendations on the draft 2021 – 2022 budget and precept, taking account of the following recommendations from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee:

107.5a. Waiving charges for the use of the Town Council's sports and leisure fees in 2021 – 2022 for clubs and members of the public, with the requirement that sports clubs benefitting from the fee waiver produce an annual report to the Council on how the funds saved have been reinvested – As a way of ensuring the requirement of providing an annual report is met, it was suggested that the fee waiver for the following year could be conditional on the report being provided. Cllr Taylor

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proposed waiving charges for the use of the Town Council's sports and leisure fees in 2021 – 2022 for clubs and members of the public, with the requirement that sports clubs benefitting from the fee waiver produce an annual report to the Council on how the funds saved have been reinvested, with the condition to apply from now on, and not retrospectively; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

107.5b. A budget provision of £25,000 for climate emergency related adjustments, with any underspend being allocated to a climate emergency reserve – This would include work related to the resolution to achieve net zero status by 2030. The Council does not currently have a climate emergency reserve. Cllr Taylor proposed approval for the budget provision of £25,000 for climate emergency related adjustments, with any underspend being allocated to a climate emergency reserve; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee has not discussed setting an upper limit on the reserve, but will likely make an overall proposal regarding reserves and targets for the Council. It was queried whether the repair work required to the Jubilee Bridge will affect this. There have been detailed discussions, and this can be discussed again during the confidential session. This will also be considered by Full Council.

108. Payments:

108.1. The income and expenditure reports for November 2020 and December 2020 to date – The reports were noted as follows:

November income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
2 November 2020	Market Income	Weekly market income 2 November 2020	£42.50
2 November 2020	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16
3 November 2020	Market Income	Weekly market income March 2020	£85
5 November 2020	Market Income	Weekly market income 9 November 2020	£42.50
12 November 2020	HMRC	VAT return Q2 2020-21	£30,040.92
13 November 2020	Screen Suffolk	Drone filming at The Ness and Normanston Park	£125 + £25 VAT = £150
16 November 2020	Market Income	Weekly market income 16 November 2020	£42.50
20 November 2020	Market Income	Weekly market income 23 November 2020	£42.50
30 November 2020	Market Income	Weekly market income 30 November 2020	£42.50
30 November 2020	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£213.16

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November expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
2 November 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC business rates	£122
2 November 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC business rates	£210
2 November 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest bowls pavilion business rates	£110
2 November 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park business rates	£187
2 November 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC business rates	£117
4 November 2020	East Point Business Services		£8,877
4 November 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
5 November 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions October 2020	£3,977.69
9 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£225.94
9 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£369.60
9 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£757.83
9 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£210.80
9 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£158.80
9 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£202.09
9 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£121.14
16 November 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas	£45.70
16 November 2020	Lloyds Bank	Credit card charges	£20.39
16 November 2020	Joshua Freemantle Creative	Remembrance Day 2020 video	£225
16 November 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal advice	£285.12
16 November 2020	Royal British Legion	Poppy wreaths	£50
16 November 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal advice	£763.20
16 November 2020	Guy McGregor	Payslips	£77.40
16 November 2020	SLCC	ILCA Fees Events and Communications Officer	£99 + £19.80 £118.80
18 November 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage	£200 + £40VAT = £240
19 November 2020	NPower	Electric charges	£114.20
19 November 2020	HMRC	HMRC October 2020	£3,925.19
23 November 2020	NPower	Electric charges	£661.43
23 November 2020	Salaries	Salaries November 2020	£10,247.81
23 November 2020	British Hamper Co	Covid 19 thank you hampers	£1,466.92 + £82.15 VAT = £1,549.07
24 November 2020	MS Oakes	Town Hall repairs	£850 + £170 VAT = £1,020
26 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£100.23 + £5.01 VAT = £105.24
26 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£344.26 + £17.21 VAT = £361.47
26 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£118.15 + £5.91 VAT = £124.06
26 November 2020	NPower	Electricity charges	£119.24 + £5.96 VAT = £125.20

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27 November 2020	Lord Kitchener MHC	Covid-19 grant	£1,500
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December income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
1 December 2020	Lamarti	Use of Links Road Car Park	£360 + £72 VAT = £432
7 December 2020	Market Income	Weekly market income 7 December 2020	£42.50

December expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 December 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC business rates	£122
1 December 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC business rates	£210
1 December 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest bowls pavilion business rates	£110
1 December 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park business rates	£187
1 December 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC business rates	£117
1 December 2020	Zurich Municipal	Insurance for the Ness	£527.96
4 December 2020	SCC Pension Fund	Pensions November 2020	£4,438.65
7 December 2020	Blachere Illuminations	Christmas Light uninstillation	£2,349 + £469.84 VAT = £2,819.04
7 December 2020	Liquid DJ	VJ Day event Sound	£400
7 December 2020	Michlmayr	Annual service to Town Hall clock	£314 + £62.80 VAT = £376.80
7 December 2020	Henry Baker	Lest we Forget Video	£175
7 December 2020	BSA Security	Gunton Hall Alarm	£80.40
8 December 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£214.11
8 December 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£124.79
8 December 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£74.70
8 December 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£71.42
8 December 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£93.37
8 December 2020	NPower	Electricity Charges	£63.18
10 December 2020	NALC	Leaders Talk Planning for the Future Webinar	£43.09 + £8.62 VAT = £51.71

- 108.2. Payments made under delegated authority (see schedule) – All payments were made under delegated authority.
- 108.3. Any payments for approval (see schedule) – There were none.
- 108.4. Receipt of any applications made under the COVID-19 Grant Awarding Policy and any payments made under delegated authority – All approved applications, for which the Council has been invoiced, have now been paid. Officers are looking to rationalise this section of the agenda for future meetings, whilst maintaining transparency.

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109. Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee

- 109.1. Receipt of the draft minutes from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting on 18 November 2020 – The draft minutes were noted and have not yet been reviewed by the Sub-Committee.
- 109.2. Recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee:
- 109.2a. Adoption of the Community Engagement Policy, as amended – It was agreed to vote on items 109.2a – 109.2d together, with the exception of item 109.2b, which will be considered for further amendment regarding bestowing freedom of the town upon an organisation or object, once Full Council has considered specific applications for individuals. It was suggested that this Committee could still recommend adoption at item 109.2b, with an acknowledgement that the policy requires further review. Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the policies as specified in items 109.2a, 109.2c and 109.2d; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.
- 109.2b. Adoption of the Conferring of the Title of Honorary Freeman and Freewomen Policy, as amended – Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the policy as amended, with a recommendation to support the recommendation from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to further amend the policy, with regard to conferring the title to an organisation or object; seconded by Cllr Taylor; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 109.2c. Adoption of the Equality and Diversity Policy
- 109.2d. Adoption of the Financial Regulations
- 109.3. 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 – Any recommendations made by the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee will be considered by this Committee anyway. It was agreed to now remove this item from the agenda.

110. Events and Communications Sub-Committee

- 110.1. Receipt of the draft minutes from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 26 November 2020 – The draft minutes were noted and have not yet been reviewed by the Sub-Committee.

111. Other financial matters, including:

- 111.1. A lease renewal for a tenant (confidential) – There were no updates to consider at this stage. A Sub-Committee has been set up and will review the lease. A site visit has taken place and a follow-up meeting will be arranged.
- 111.2. Staff terms and conditions (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 111.3. The contract renewal for the office printer (confidential) – It was agreed this could be discussed in public session without naming the company involved. Officers have managed to re-negotiate the existing contract to obtain a preferential rate. The contract term would be extended, but would give a significant saving. The current annual cost is £976.80, whereas the new sum would be £134.40 per quarter. A new printer would be provided, but the existing one would be fully recycled, and the company has excellent environmental credentials. Thanks were offered to officers for negotiating the preferential rate. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the contract renewal for the office printer, over a five year term; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

112. Date of the next meeting

14 January 2021 15:30 – Some Committee members are having difficulties attending the meetings under the current schedule. Cllr Pearce proposed that, with effect from the meeting on 14 January 2021, meetings of this Committee commence at 16:45; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

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113. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda, in addition to those being carried forward.

Cllr Coleby proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Green; 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.

114. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

114.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required

111.1 A lease renewal for a tenant (confidential) – There was a confidential discussion regarding the lease renewal. A Sub-Committee has been formed of Cllrs Coleby, Patience and Pearce, who will work with the Clerk. Cllr Hardie has experience of commercial leasing, and although all Councillors were invited to join the Sub-Committee she may not have been present at the meeting. Officers will check whether Cllr Hardie is interested in becoming a member and will arrange a Zoom meeting with the Sub-Committee.

A confidential update on the status of the Jubilee Bridge was given. Full Council will be considering this matter further.

111.2 Staff terms and conditions (confidential) – This relates to matters discussed at the recent meeting of the Personnel Committee.

At 16:31 Committee members went into a breakout room for a confidential discussion without staff present

Cllr Coleby proposed a confidential recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed a confidential recommendation to Full Council regarding staff terms and conditions; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

Councillors returned from the breakout room 16:38

The Chair closed the meeting 16:39.

Signed:

14 January 2021