

# Lowestoft Town Council

## Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Via Video Meeting  
15:30 on 11 June 2020

### MINUTES

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

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

#### 17. Welcome

The right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol were explained and noted, and the meeting was welcomed.

#### 18. Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received. Cllrs Page and Pitts were not present at the meeting. Cllr Pitts had reported ahead of the meeting that he had been having technical issues. Cllr Pearce proposed accepting assumed apologies from Cllrs Page and Pitts; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

#### 19. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard, Parker, Patience and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 28.7c.

#### 20. Noting that the minutes of the meeting of 14 May 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

Cllr Pearce requested some amendments to the minutes. At item 12.2 it states that the appraisal should be an agreed process between both parties, and that any dispute would be handled via the Complaints Procedure. It was agreed that this would be via the Grievance Procedure and not the Complaints Procedure, and staff will check that this is what was said at the meeting. At item 14 it states that it was agreed the start time of the meetings should be brought forward as some Committee members have other commitments later in the evening. This did form part of the consideration, but the matter was raised initially as it was felt that starting the meetings at 17:00 is inconvenient for members of the public wishing to observe the meeting, due to meal times, etc. This may not now be so much of an issue, however, now that recordings of the meetings are available on YouTube for a civic year. At item 15 it states that a meeting of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee will be arranged, once its Terms of Reference have been approved. However, the Terms of Reference were approved during the meeting and the item was not carried forward.

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

There were none.

#### 22. Review and adoption of Sub-Committee arrangements

22.1. Composition of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee and the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee – It was previously agreed that membership would be open to all Councillors, however it was queried whether a Councillor could join a Sub-Committee if they are not a member of the Committee it reports to. This would be for the Committee to decide. Cllrs Coleby, Green and Parker expressed an interest in joining the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. Cllr Barnard expressed an interest in joining the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee. Membership of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee was confirmed as Cllrs Coleby, Green, Parker and Pearce. Membership of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee was confirmed as Cllrs Barnard, Coleby, Frost, Hardie, Page, Patience, Pearce and Taylor. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the membership of the Sub-Committees as stated; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

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- 22.2. Adoption of the Terms of Reference for the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee – There were no comments or queries. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the Terms of Reference for the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 22.3. Any delegations to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee – There are currently no delegations drawn into the Terms of Reference. Part of the Sub-Committee’s remit is to consider its own Terms of Reference, and it can therefore make proposals to this Committee if it would like any to be considered.

### 23. Review and adoption of Working Group arrangements for the Norse Contract Working Group, including composition

Cllrs Coleby, Green and Pearce expressed an interest in joining this Working Group. It was agreed that the Deputy Mayor and the Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee should be invited to the meeting, as the discussions may cover environmental, climate emergency and biodiversity matters. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the membership of the Norse Contract Working Group as Cllrs Coleby, Green and Pearce, and that the Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee be invited to join the meeting; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

### 24. Any updates on banking

The removal of a previous bank signatory who no longer wishes to continue in the role has been completed. The addition of the new bank signatories agreed by Full Council is being progressed.

### 25. Budget:

- 25.1. Monitoring the budget for 2020 – 2021 – The budget monitoring documents were circulated ahead of the meeting and there were no issues raised. It was requested that the Drying Racks cost centre be moved nearer to The Ness cost centre if possible. A typo had been found in the document of ‘Belle View Park’, rather than ‘Belle Vue Park’.
- 25.2. Any bank reconciliations – The Clerk has received April and May’s bank reconciliations and will check and send these to one of the bank reconciliation signatories.

### 26. Payments:

- 26.1. Payments for authorisation, including the following:  
26.1a. See schedule – There were none.
- 26.2. Income and expenditure reports for May 2020 and June 2020 to date – These were circulated ahead of the meeting and were noted as follows:

#### May income

Date	Payment from	Description	Amount
13 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	S106 for Pakefield	£6,108.81
18 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	Rental income from tenant	£213.16

#### May expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market PC NNDR May 20	£117
1 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park NNDR May 20	£187
1 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls NNDR May 20	£110
1 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC NNDR May	£210

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1 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC NDR May 20	£122
1 May 2020	NPower	Town Hall electric March 2020	£282.38 + £14.12 VAT = £296.50
1 May 2020	NPower	Kensington Gardens electric Jan-Mar 20	£272.02 + £13.60 VAT = £285.62
1 May 2020	NPower	CCTV electric March 2020	£173 + £34.60 VAT = £207.60
1 May 2020	NPower	Triangle Market electric Mar 2020	£103.64 + £5.18 VAT = £108.82
1 May 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas March 20	£42.83 + £2.14 VAT = £44.97
1 May 2020	East Suffolk Council	Food voucher grant	£1,200
1 May 2020	Society Local Council Clerks	Town Clerk SLCC membership	£525
1 May 2020	Social Local Council Clerks	The Clerks' Manual 2019	£47.50
1 May 2020	Railway Paths Ltd	Annual Rent for GELP access	£24.78
1 May 2020	NPower	Pakefield St electric Jan-Mar	£354.83 + £17.74 VAT = £372.57
1 May 2020	Essex and Suffolk Water	Normanston Park water Dec 19 – Mar 20	£516.87
1 May 2020	NPower	Normanston Park electric Jan – Mar 20	£3,779.83 + £755.97 VAT = £4,535.80
1 May 2020	NPower	Lowestoft Cemetery PC elec Jan-Mar 20	£228.62 + £11.43 VAT = £240.05
1 May 2020	NPower	Denes Oval electric Jan – Mar 20	£1,084.78 + £216.96 VAT = £1,301.74
1 May 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest electric Jan – Mar 20	£305.69 + £15.28 VAT = £320.97
1 May 2020	Suffolk County Council	2x recruitment adverts	£150
4 May 2020	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge May 2020	£36,525 + £7,305 VAT = £43,830
4 May 2020	Nicholsons Solicitors	Professional charges (legal)	£712.80 + £142.56 VAT = £855.36
4 May 2020	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit Year End 19-20	£450
6 May 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions April 2020	£3,860.90
6 May 2020	Society Local Council Clerks	Community Governance qualification	£1,376
18 May 2020	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas April 2020	£42.11 + £2.11 VAT = £44.22
18 May 2020	Ricoh UK Ltd	Printer hire	£286.47 + £57.30 VAT = £343.77
18 May 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest electric Feb-Apr	£263.32 + £13.17 VAT = £276.49
18 May 2020	NPower	Triangle Market electric Apr20	£74.87 + £3.74 VAT = £78.61

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18 May 2020	NPower	Triangle Market elec Apr20 DD	£74.87 + £3.74 VAT = £78.61
18 May 2020	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership charge June 2020	£36,525 + £7,305 VAT = £43,830
20 May 2020	Guy McGregor	Payslips 19-20 Q4	£46.50 + £9.30 VAT = £55.80
20 May 2020	Gilbert Builders Ltd	Belle Vue Park wall works	£2,674 + £534.80 VAT = £3,208.80
20 May 2020	Groundwork UK	Return of grant underspend	£535
20 May 2020	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage May 20	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
20 May 2020	HMRC	HMRC April 2020	£3,750.19
22 May 2020	ICO	ICO membership 20- 21	£35
22 May 2020	Salaries	Salaries May 2020	£8,725.47
22 May 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest electric Jan-Apr	£108.16 + £5.41 VAT = £113.57
22 May 2020	NPower	Town Hall electric April 2020	£102.89 + £5.14 VAT = £108.03
22 May 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest electric Feb-Apr	£680.70 + £34.04 VAT = £714.74
28 May 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest elec Jan-Apr DD	£108.16 + £5.41 VAT = £113.57
28 May 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest elec Feb-Apr DD	£680.70 + £34.04 VAT = £714.74
28 May 2020	NPower	Sparrows Nest elec Feb-Apr DD	£91.44 + £4.57 VAT = £96.01
28 May 2020	NPower	Town Hall electric April DD	£102.89 + £5.14 VAT = £108.03

**June income**

There has been no income for June to date.

**June expenditure**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Payment to</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market Public Conveniences NDR June 2020	£117
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park NDR June 2020	£187
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowling Pavilion NDR June 2020	£110
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens Public Conveniences NDR June 2020	£210
1 June 2020	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street Public Conveniences NDR June 2020	£122
4 June 2020	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions May 2020	£3860.90
5 June 2020	MS Oakes	Town Hall Repairs	£700.23 + £140.05 VAT = £840.28

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- 26.3. Payments made under delegated authority (see schedule) – All expenditure was made under delegated authority to the Clerk, except for the £1,200 food voucher grant paid to East Suffolk Council.
- 26.4. Receipt of any applications made under the COVID-19 Grant Awarding Policy and any payments made – Cllrs Green, Pearce and the Clerk had a meeting this morning to review the first four applications received, from the Excelsior Trust, Lowestoft in Bloom, the Seagull Theatre and the YMCA Trinity Group. A summary of the discussions which took place about each application was displayed on screen. Cllr Coleby advised he is a member of Lowestoft in Bloom, but there was to be no discussion or decision about the grant applications at this meeting. The Excelsior Trust has received funding from East Suffolk Council, which is funding that other businesses can apply for, but this has not entirely covered the funding they require. As per the policy, certain other documents are required in support of each application, such as the organisation's constitution, equality policy and safeguarding policy (if applicable). Without these, applications can still be considered in principle, but payment cannot be made until they are received. The policy has been updated to say that applications from the heritage and culture sector will be considered in a positive way, but these will be given no preferential treatment. Each application will be considered on its own merit.

### **27. Audit**

- 27.1. Consideration of the Internal Audit report and recommendations from the Responsible Financial Officer, including the following:
- 27.1a. Review and adoption of the Reserves Policy and consideration of allocating £300,000 from the general reserves to the Council's earmarked reserves for asset management and improvement (£200,000 to the capital reserve and £100,000 to the repairs and maintenance reserve) – It was agreed at the last meeting that the Internal Audit Report, recommendations from the Responsible Financial Officer and a review of the Reserves Policy would be considered in conjunction with each other. Further information about the reserves position was provided but there was a concern that it still did not match information that had been provided to Council in 2019. It was agreed to revisit this item later in the meeting to see if any further information could be found during the course of the meeting.
- 27.2. Noting that the period for the exercise of public rights has been amended to take account of the Bank Holiday – It was confirmed that this has been actioned.
- 27.3. Noting that the External Audit submission has been made – This was noted.

### **28. Other financial matters, including:**

- 28.1. Reviewing signatory delegations – This was circulated ahead of the meeting and there were no queries or comments. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to accept the current signatory delegation position; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.
- 28.2. How the Town Council may appropriately formally offer its thanks to local keyworkers – Cllr Green had made a proposal which was circulated to the Committee ahead of the meeting. The Clerk had sought advice from the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO), who recommended exercising caution in taking action before the full extent of the effect of the pandemic is known. This was noted, but there was a concern that so many have already lost their lives without receiving thanks, and the full impact of the pandemic may never be known. NACO has offered advice on the appropriate ways of expressing thanks, and it was suggested that the Council could use local newspapers, and its own website and Facebook page to broadcast a public message from the Mayor, as distributing gifts could result in people being missed out. Using local media and the Town Council's Facebook page and website will however still not reach everyone. Cllr Pearce proposed proceeding with the letters of thanks, as referred to in Cllr Green's written proposal, so long as it does not contravene advice received, and deferring a decision on distributing gifts until the situation regarding the pandemic is clearer; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

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- 28.3. The renewal of the Town Council's corporate registration as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Officer, as of 24 May 2020 – This was noted.
- 28.4. An additional member for the East Suffolk Council Capital Grants Programme group – The Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee would like to put forward Cllrs Butler and Hardie to join this group. Cllr Hardie's membership to the AID Committee is being ratified at the next Full Council meeting. It was agreed to still accept Cllrs Butler and Hardie's immediate membership to this group.
- 28.5. The Reopening High Streets Safely Fund – This was circulated to Councillors, to relevant organisations and to the public via social media. A limited amount of comments were received in response and some were contradictory. The Town Council's tenants have provided some feedback, and this will be considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and the AID Committee. Any suggestions with financial implications will be considered by this Committee. A response will be provided to East Suffolk Council tomorrow, and matters for the consideration of the Town Council will go to the relevant meetings.
- 28.6. A draft Infrastructure Investment Plan for CIL and s106 – A draft plan was circulated ahead of the meeting. A motion from Cllr Coleby, related to the draft plan, was displayed at the meeting, which proposed CIL funding be used for a piece of artwork in Kensington Gardens to commemorate the NHS and carers. With the advice received and discussed at item 28.2, Cllr Coleby suggested that his motion be deferred and considered at a later date. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will look at this more generally across the Town Council's assets. The draft plan has identified some of the Town Council's investment priorities, but does not list them in order of priority. Public consultation will be key in identifying priorities but overall this decision will be made by the Council. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Infrastructure Investment Plan as a working document; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 28.7. The following recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee:
- 28.7a. Installing lockable bollards at the Maritime Museum and gated entrances to Sparrows Nest – It was clarified that the gated entrance is the vehicular entrance further along Whapload Road. There were concerns that lockable bollards could make access difficult for Museum volunteers and deliveries being made to the café and restaurant. The AID Committee has considered these concerns, but has made this recommendation as there has been an issue at Sparrows Nest with unauthorised vehicles accessing the park. Those previously given permission to park in Sparrows Nest could be given a key for the bollards, but will need to manage within their own organisations who can access the key and how. Officers have consulted with stakeholders, who identified pros and cons for lockable bollards being installed, but were broadly in favour so long as they could still access the park, as has been previously agreed by the former Waveney District Council. It was suggested that a compromise could be made on the positioning of the bollards, by putting one to stop vehicles passing the Maritime Museum and the other to stop vehicles driving up to the café. In terms of cost, quotations received so far indicate that a maximum budget of £200 would be sufficient. Cllr Coleby proposed approving a maximum budget of £200 for the installation of lockable bollards at Sparrows Nest in principle, subject to the AID Committee making the final arrangements to ensure the requests of the Town Council's tenants have been met; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 28.7b. A maximum budget of £500 to purchase mulch for Belle Vue Park, Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens – It may now be too late in the season to use mulch, but it was agreed that it would be beneficial to have the budget in place for any measures which can be taken to retain moisture in the ground. Cllr Coleby proposed approval for a maximum budget of £500 to purchase mulch for Belle Vue Park, Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens, with delegated authority to the Clerk to purchase this if and when required, in liaison with the relevant Committees and Sub-Committees; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 28.7c. A maximum budget of £500 to purchase three rowan trees and a willow to plant at the

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Gainsborough Drive pond – These are two replace two trees which died and had to be removed. The decision was previously deferred pending a site visit East Suffolk Norse's Countryside Officer, which has now taken place, and concerns raised have been satisfactorily addressed. There was a concern about the location of the new trees, as there has been issues with flooding in this area. This has been taken into consideration, and the trees away from the problem area. Cllr Coleby proposed approval for the maximum budget of £500 to purchase three rowan trees and a willow for the Gainsborough Drive pond area; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

28.7d. Requesting that the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee explore the cost of installing and maintaining defibrillators, to enable budget provision to be made to provide at least two Town Council defibrillators per year, and match fund at least five defibrillators per year for a minimum of the next five years – Cllr Taylor proposed that this matter be added to the agenda for the first meeting of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

28.7e. Progressing an application to the Tree Council for trees and whether to progress other measures identified to increase biodiversity at the Town Council's parks and open spaces – A budget had previously been agreed for the planting of cherry trees, subject to relevant planting permissions and maintenance arrangements being made, to be progressed once the Community Wardens were in post, with the exception of one tree to be planted in Kensington Gardens in August to commemorate Victory Over Japan Day. This was discussed as a standalone item and not part of wider discussions around improving biodiversity or as part of the application to the Tree Council. It was agreed that the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee could consider the planting of cherry trees as part of the Tree Council application, as long as the two did not become inextricably linked, and the purchase of the cherry trees did not become dependent on the outcome of the Tree Council application. The Tree Council application must be submitted by 30 June, and the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will consider this further. Cllr Pearce proposed approval for an application to the Tree Council to be progressed, on the condition that the previously agreed expenditure for cherry trees does not become dependent on the outcome of the application; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

28.8. Debtor and creditor management (confidential), including consideration of moving a creditor amount of £10 into general reserves – To be discussed during the confidential session.

### 29. Date of the next meeting

9 July 2020 15:30 – It was previously agreed to bring the start time of the meetings forward to prevent a clash with meal times for members of the public who may wish to observe the meetings. However, the Council has now agreed that video meeting recordings will remain available for the public to view for a civic year. One member of the Committee, who was not present at the last meeting, has advised they would not be able to participate with meetings if the start time remains at 15:30. It was instead suggested future meetings should commence at 16:30. There were no objections to this, but Cllr Patience advised this would present an issue once face-to-face meetings resume. Cllr Barnard proposed 16:30 as the start time for meetings of this Committee for the time being; seconded by Cllr Parker; seven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.

### 30. Items for the next agenda and close

It was agreed that the item to review the Internal Audit Report, the recommendations from the Responsible Financial Officer and the Reserves Policy should be carried forward to the next meeting. Cllr Coleby has information on the reserves position from 2019 and will forward this to the Clerk.

*Cllr Patience left the meeting 17:21*

It was requested that provision be included on the next agenda for a discussion about the

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budget previously delegated to the Events and Communications Sub-Committee. This Sub-Committee previously reported to the AID Committee, but it was agreed it would report to the Finance and Governance Committee instead as it had a delegated budget. It was requested that clarification regarding the current position on the delegated budget be provided at the next meetings of both the Sub-Committee and this Committee. The Internal Audit report raised specific concerns regarding the payroll service. This is being taken forward and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Thanks were offered to the public for viewing the live stream of the meeting. Those viewing the meeting were advised that it was being closed to the public to move into confidential session, following which meeting would end. Cllr Coleby proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

### **31. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:**

- 31.1. Any legal matters, including those at 28.8 above as required  
28.8 Debtor and creditor management (confidential), including consideration of moving a creditor amount of £10 into general reserves – Cllr Taylor proposed moving the creditor amount of £10 into general reserves immediately; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. An issue regarding debtor management was considered. Cllr Green made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It was agreed this decision was made as an exception due to the current circumstances, and did not set a precedent for any similar issues in future.

The Chair closed the meeting 17:32.

Signed: .....  
9 July 2020