

# Lowestoft Town Council

## Extraordinary Full Council Meeting

Held via Video Meeting

19:00 on 30 March 2021

### MINUTES

**Video meeting participants:** Cllrs Robert Breakspear, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Mayor), Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Alice Taylor and David Youngman

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

**Also in attendance:** Sheila Moss King and Jess Johnston (MossKing Associates Limited)

#### 193. Welcome

Councillors and members of the public of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol. It was noted that items 198.1 and 198.2 would be merged and discussed in public as there was a presentation to be delivered as part of the public session of the meeting.

#### 194. Apologies for absence from any councillors not in attendance

Apologies were received from Cllrs Peter Lang, Paul Page and Keith Patience. Cllr Pitts had advised he was having technical difficulties trying to join the meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

#### 195. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

#### 196. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 23 March 2021 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted.

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

There were no comments.

#### 198. Progressing development of the Town Hall:

198.1. Feedback from the public survey – Items 198.1 and 198.2 were taken together and a presentation was delivered by MossKing Associates Ltd, who are developing the business case for the Town Hall. An update was given on the progress so far. Analysis of a public survey has been completed and the report circulated to Councillors. Potential uses for the Town Hall are now being explored, which will take account of feedback from the survey and will be based on feasibility, cost and the level of footfall which would be delivered. There has been engagement with local heritage and arts groups. Hudson Architects have been appointed to update the designs for the Town Hall. The capital cost is estimated at approximately £4million. Two key funders will be involved, the Government Towns Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). East Suffolk Council has secured £2million from the Towns Fund, subject to a business case. The NLHF will be a key match funder, but the heritage content of the project needs to be increased to secure a grant from this fund. The top recommendation from the survey was for part of the space to be used as a museum. From here, visitors could be directed to other museums in the town. The stages of preparing for and applying for funding were explained. The timeline for achieving the aim of a stage one submission to the NLHF was explained. The expression of interest will be submitted tomorrow, subject to the Council's approval today. It was queried whether the effects of the pandemic will influence the economic case for the Town Hall in the future. Certain elements will be affected to an extent, but opportunities have also been presented, such as the potential for a co-working hub space, given the rise of hybrid working arrangements. It is

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hoped there will be a café in the Town Hall to support this as well.

*Cllr Coleby temporarily left the meeting 19:27*

There was a concern that some of the deadlines were close and could be difficult to achieve.

*Cllr Coleby returned 19:30*

This is however not unusual and it was not known until recently when the NHLF would be accepting applications again. The figure of £4million is based on the original assessment by Colliers, with some additional contingency.

*Sheila Moss King and Jess Johnston left the meeting 19:33*

198.2. Advice from MossKing on their business plan and audience development work, and on the Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (confidential) – This had been covered with the discussion of item 198.1

198.3. The Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and any related delegations (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

### **199. Date of next meeting**

27 April 2021 19:30

### **200. Items for the next agenda and close**

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

Cllr Coleby proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour. The Mayor 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.

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

201.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required:

198.3 The Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and any related delegations (confidential) – There was a confidential discussion regarding the Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and related delegations. Cllr Taylor made a proposal, which was seconded by Cllr Pearce. Ten Councillors voted in favour and one Councillor voted against.

*Cllr Hardie left the meeting 19:59*

A statement was read by a Councillor, and requested it be appended to the minutes, regarding progressing the Town Hall project with partners. There were related discussions.

*Cllr Breakspear left the meeting 20:12*