

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
15:30 on 14 June 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Peter Lang, Paul Page, Andy Pearce and David Youngman (Chair)

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance (either in person or via Zoom webinar)

1. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed.

2. Apologies for absence

There were none and all Committee members were present.

3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

4. The draft minutes of the meeting on 6 April 2021 and the signing of previous minutes subsequent to 17 March 2020

Cllr Page proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting on 6 April 2021 and the minutes of all meetings of this Committee subsequent to 17 March 2020; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

5. Public forum

Cllr Butler had highlighted an article in the local press regarding the provision of electric vehicle charging points in Great Yarmouth. It was agreed to carry this comment forward to the next meeting and include an item on the agenda to discuss electric vehicle charging points.

6. Committee arrangements

- 6.1. Membership of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee – The membership of the Committee was confirmed as those Councillors present at the meeting.
- 6.2. Appointing the Deputy Chair of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee – Cllr Brooks nominated Cllr Page for the position of Deputy Chair; seconded by Cllr Pearce. There were no further nominations. The vote was taken and five Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

7. The draft Cycling Pledge, including noting proposed amendments and a recommendation to adopt from the Finance and Governance Committee

Minor amendments had been made to correct typographical errors and identify some of the national initiatives the Council may wish to support. The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee has reviewed the Pledge and the Finance and Governance Committee has recommended its adoption to Full Council. There were concerns regarding the condition of some of the cycling facilities in the town, which can potentially be hazardous for users. It was agreed these should be discussed under a specific agenda item at the next meeting. East Suffolk Council is leading a project, working with Suffolk County Council, to develop a cycle network. East Suffolk Council has advised the Deputy Clerk that it will work with the Town Council to implement the results of its recent public survey. A Highways Technician periodically meets with the Planning Committee and any specific concerns can be raised there, or via the relevant County Councillor for the particular ward. Suffolk Highways has previously advised that it tends to prioritise repairs and maintenance based on the hazard to motorists rather than cyclists. It is understood that Suffolk Wildlife Trust has been in contact with the

Lowestoft Town Council

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Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB

15:30 on 14 June 2021

County Council about creating a crossing and trying to improve cycle provision to Carlton Marshes.

8. 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

Cllr Pearce advised he would be happy to pick up those previously allocated to the late Cllr Barnard. It was suggested that new members to this Committee could be allocated those previously assigned to Cllr Hardie, who is no longer a member of this Committee. The purpose of this exercise was explained and the Committee Clerk will re-circulate the Terms of Reference document and remind Committee members which ones they have been allocated.

9. Proposed amendments to the Selection of Materials for Site Development Procedure from Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee

The Committee was happy with the amendments suggested by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee. This procedure is essentially a guidance document and more of a statement of approach than the Council's other policies and procedures. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Selection of Material for Site Development Procedure, as amended; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

10. A policy commitment, insurance and budget for volunteer litter picking

There are a number of active litter picking groups in Lowestoft. Some smaller groups may be interested but may not want to go through the process of setting up a formal Friends Group. It was queried whether these groups could instead be covered by the Town Council's insurance policy, or a separate umbrella policy taken out by the Council specifically for this purpose. The Council would also need to ensure any such activities on its land were properly risk managed and safeguarded, and the proper equipment supplied. Existing groups would like some more practical assistance, such as help with purchasing equipment. This item has arisen as the Council has been approached by interested groups, but currently has no policy position on how this can be taken forward. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers look into the feasibility of the Town Council covering litter picking groups under its own insurance policy, when working on Town Council assets, or taking out a separate policy for this purpose, and drawing up a set of guidelines for litter picking groups to follow; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. The Council has a community engagement budget of approximately £8,000, where it was suggested any related expenditure could come from.

11. Concerns regarding the loss of kittiwake nesting sites and any measures the Town Council could take to mitigate this

This has been identified as a town-wide issue. When the Marina Theatre sought the Council's permission to install anti-nesting measures, the Council was clear that they should be non-lethal, and should not include nets, clear Perspex or sharp materials. Once the nesting birds had left the Theatre, a gel was applied to prevent them being able to nest again at that location. It is understood that some seabirds return to the same location each year. The measures implemented at the Theatre have only been partially successful. It is understood that the proposed roofing works will not interfere with the anti-nesting measures. If this is not the case, it was suggested the Council could liaise with the Stella Maris Hall, who have put measures in which do not stop kittiwakes nesting, but helps prevent the spread of mess. It was suggested that the Town Council could seek advice from East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment, Cllr James Mallinder, about a town-wide initiative. The proposed windfarms locally could cause harm to kittiwakes and it was suggested the discussions with Cllr Mallinder could include whether it would be possible to request the incorporation of mitigation measures into the design, or asking the project teams to fund the cost of nesting platforms on shore. With the Gull Wing and flood defence projects currently

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee

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15:30 on 14 June 2021

ongoing in the town, it may be possible to ask the project teams to consider the installation of artificial cliffs with ledges at an appropriate location within the town. Cllr Brooks proposed seeking advice from relevant bodies, such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and progressing a meeting with Cllr Mallinder to discuss the town-wide issue of kittiwake nesting sites; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It was suggested that Carlton Marshes may have appropriate land, and the involvement of Suffolk Wildlife Trust may open funding opportunities the Council would not otherwise have been able to access. The Committee had concerns regarding the ongoing issue of pollution at Gunton Warren, which will also be raised at the meeting with Cllr Mallinder. Committee members were advised to email the Committee Clerk with any other suggestions of matters to be raised at that meeting.

12. Using a section of land at Clarkes Lane as a community garden

The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee had been discussing the idea of a community orchard at Clarkes Lane, as part of the Council's five-year plans. In areas of Great Yarmouth there are community gardens with raised beds to provide accessibility. The Council has a commitment to planting more orchard trees and supporting allotments and community gardens, as part of its health emergency declaration. The Marina Theatre has similar planters in its outdoor café area. Cllr Lang proposed that officers explore the cost of progressing a community garden at Clarkes Lane and bring back to this Committee to consider; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Related expenditure could be met from the community engagement budget. If progressed, the Committee would wish to engage with the local community, including nearby schools.

13. Any measures the Town Council could take regarding the appropriate disposal of food waste

Not all households in Lowestoft have space for compost bins. The former Waveney District Council used to run weekly food waste and glass collections, but those schemes have now ended. It was suggested this could be raised at the meeting with Cllr Mallinder. The Committee would like the relevant authorities to rethink their recycling facilities, and particularly how they can help residents who do not drive. There also does not seem to be a balance with the services and facilities available in the North and South sides of the town either. Officers can add advice to the website about the appropriate disposal of food waste, and can promote any relevant initiatives. Recycling arrangements seem to differ in different areas, and in time the Council may wish to liaise with the relevant authorities regarding co-operative arrangements for more efficient and cost effective waste disposal with other areas nearby. It was suggested that East Suffolk Council should consider providing an option for green bins to be paid for via monthly direct debit. This can be raised at the meeting with Cllr Mallinder.

14. Extending the provision of bottle banks and other recycling banks

This was partly covered with the discussion of the previous item. It was suggested that the Council looks into installing a bottle bank in Normanston Park. A parcel of land on the corner of Thurston Road had also previously been identified as a potential location, but this is not currently in the Town Council's ownership. East Suffolk Council has indicated it would be willing to consider transferring land on a cost neutral basis if there is a demonstrable community benefit, but all existing land transfer matters must be resolved first. The Committee requested an update on existing land transfers and this will be communicated. At an appropriate time, an agenda item will be added to identify areas of land the Town Council would potentially like to request transfer of. Options at other locations belonging to the Town Council may be limited due to the criteria the land would have to meet. Cllr Lang proposed that officers make enquiries into whether it would be feasible to site a bottle bank in Normanston Park; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour. It was requested that officers see what providers are available, and whether any measures can be taken to make the bottle banks

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee

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15:30 on 14 June 2021

themselves look more attractive. First and foremost they must however serve their purpose and be accessible. If feasible, the Council may also wish to consider putting in clothes recycling banks.

15. Date of the next meeting

6 July 2021 15:30

16. Items for the next agenda and close

As per discussion in the public forum, an item will be added regarding the provision of electric vehicle charging points. Regarding item 12, there had been discussions about the pocket park on Compass Street transferring to the Town Council, with a local community group managing the land as a community garden and creative space. East Suffolk Council has since secured funding for it, and a meeting had taken place with stakeholders. The Deputy Clerk has received an update since the meeting, which will be communicated. There had previously been an item on the agenda about supporting the reduction in pollution. Officers were seeking data on pollution levels in the Tom Crisp Way area during and after the construction of Gull Wing, and an update was requested at the next meeting. Cllrs Barker and Lang have been made aware of an 'Eco-Church' initiative to encourage parishioners and Churches to have ecological initiatives within the Church. Some Churches in Lowestoft are taking part. It was agreed that Cllrs Barker and Lang would make enquiries with the relevant Churches to see what initiatives they would like to run and how the Town Council may be involved. This will be fed back to the next meeting. A discussion on demolition and housing in terms of planning was requested, as building and demolition contributes significantly to carbon emissions. It was instead suggested this could be incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee, as part of item 8.

There were no confidential items for consideration, and the meeting was closed at 17:20.

17. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

6 July 2021