

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
16:45 on 20 May 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Paul Page and Andy Pearce (Chair)

In attendance: Shona Bendix (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. Cllrs Barker, Begum and Brooks were welcomed to the Council and this Committee.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Graham Parker, Keith Patience and Alice Taylor. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour. Cllr Green advised he would need to leave the meeting at 18:15.

3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 13.4, as a member of the Gunton Residents' Association and Pond Group. Cllrs Barker and Brooks both declared that they are members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. It was agreed to note those declarations as standing declarations.

4. The draft minutes of the meeting on 8 April 2021 and the signing of previous minutes subsequent to 17 March 2020

Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 8 April 2021 and all minutes subsequent to 17 March 2020. Hard copies of the minutes were passed to the Chair to sign.

5. Public forum

There were no advance comments and no members of the public in attendance via Zoom webinar.

6. Committee arrangements

6.1. Membership of the Finance and Governance Committee – Membership was confirmed as Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Paul Page, Graham Parker Keith Patience, Andy Pearce and Alice Taylor. Any subsequent requests to join the Committee will be considered by Full Council.

6.2. Appointing the Deputy Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee – Cllr Brooks nominated Cllr Begum as Deputy Chair; seconded by Cllr Green. There were no further nominations and all Councillors voted in favour to appoint Cllr Begum as the Deputy Chair.

7. Sub-Committee arrangements for the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee and the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee

7.1. Composition – The responsibilities of the Sub-Committees were explained. Cllrs Parker and Pearce had already advised they would like to join the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. Cllrs Hardie, Page, Pearce and Youngman had already advised they would like to join the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee, and Cllr Lang had indicated he may wish to join the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee. Cllrs Begum, Brooks and Green advised they would like to join the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. Cllr Barker advised she would like to join the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee. Cllr Green proposed approving membership of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee as Cllrs Begum, Brooks, Green, Parker

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and Pearce, and membership of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee as Cllrs Barker, Hardie, Lang (subject to his acceptance), Page, Pearce and Youngman; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

- 7.2. Terms of Reference – Cllr Pearce proposed to adopt the Terms of Reference of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee and Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

8. Budget:

- 8.1. Monitoring the budget for 2021 – 2022 – It was queried whether the decision to carry forward the underspend of over £30,000 from the 2020 – 2021 parks development budget to the 2021 – 2022 (rather than allocate to it to an earmarked reserve) had been implemented. It is understood it may have to be allocated to an earmarked reserve first for practical reasons, but officers will ensure the decision of the Council is implemented.
- 8.2. Any bank reconciliations – No bank reconciliations have been completed so far this year as the year end work and audit preparation has been prioritised first.

9. Payments:

- 9.1. The income and expenditure reports for April 2021 and May 2021 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – The income and expenditure reports were received and noted as follows:

April income

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
6 April 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£42.50
6 April 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£2,500
6 April 2021	Brome and Oakley Parish Council	Half of Deputy Clerk SLCC Membership Fees	£144.50
7 April 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£1,550
9 April 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£42.50
16 April 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£90.50
19 April 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16
20 April 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£1,562.50
20 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	CIL 2021-22 1 st Instalment	£7,358.53
20 April 2021	HMRC	VAT Return 2020-21 Q4	£29,298.14
23 April 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£90.50
29 April 2021	Food vendor	Trading from Links Road car park	£504
30 April 2021	Tenant	Rental income	£5,000

April expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 April 2021	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions March 2021	£4,450.7
1 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	Lowestoft Vision BID 2021-22	£1,185
1 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	Pakefield Street PC Business Rates April 2021	£124.55

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1 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	Kensington Gardens PC Business Rates April 2021	£205.80
1 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	Sparrows Nest Bowls Business Rates April 2021	£107.80
1 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	Links Road Car Park Business Rates April 2021	£188.25
1 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	Triangle Market Business Rates April 2021	£119.65
8 April 2021	East Suffolk Norse	Partnership Charge April 2021	£37450 +£7,490 VAT = £44,940
8 April 2021	Zurich Municipal	Insurance 2021-22	£16,675.69
9 April 2021	East Suffolk Norse	Links Road Car Park Resurfacing	£4,400 + £880 VAT = £5,280
9 April 2021	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Rent 2021-22 Q1	£3,675 + £735 VAT = £4,410
9 April 2021	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Capital Repayment 2021-22 Q1	£3,357.40 + £671.48 VAT = £4,028.88
9 April 2021	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Service Charge 2021-22 Q1	£7,397.50 + £1,479.50 VAT = £8,877
9 April 2021	East Point Business Services	IT Service Charge 2021- 22 Q1	£3,231 +£646.20 VAT = £3,877.2
9 April 2021	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Service Charge 18-19	£35,619.96 + £7,124.00 VAT = £42,743.96
9 April 2021	East Point Business Services	Hamilton House Service Charge 19-20	£13,875.25 + £2,775.05 VAT = £16,650.3
9 April 2021	Lowestoft Gym Ltd	Soft Play Equipment Grant	£1,500
13 April 2021	Corton Playing Field	Grant for 2x Fire Doors	£1,146
15 April 2021	East Suffolk Norse	Matta at Fen Park	£11,637.93 + £2,327.59 VAT = £13,965.52
15 April 2021	SLCC	Deputy Clerk Community Governance Degree 2021-22 1st instalment	£1,575
15 April 2021	East Suffolk Council	Hamilton House Business Rates 2020-21	£12,105.88
15 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£588.61
19 April 2021	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage April 2021	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
20 April 2021	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Charges	275.51
21 April 2021	HMRC	HMRC March 2021	£4,229.21
22 April 2021	NO BUTTS BIN CO	2x Wheelchair Access Picnic Table	£730 + £146 VAT = £876

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22 April 2021	Rialtas Business	Year End	£560 + £112 VAT = £672
22 April 2021	Michlmayr	Work to Town Hall Clock	£596 + £119.20 VAT = £715.20
22 April 2021	Karl Kirk	Works to the Marina Theatre	£1,787
22 April 2021	Hudson Architects	Works to the Town Hall	£1,000 + £200 VAT = £1,200
22 April 2021	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£342.72
22 April 2021	Nicholsons Solicitors	Legal Advice	£660.96
22 April 2021	Groundwork UK	Return of Neighbourhood Plan Grant	£1,204
22 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£170.84
22 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£738.77
22 April 2021	Clr Alan Green	Reimbursement for mileage	£51.25
23 April 2021	Great Yarmouth Heating	Whitton Hall Boiler Service	£66.5 + £13.30 VAT = £79.80
23 April 2021	Salaries	Salaries April 2021	£11,379.75
23 April 2021	Boggis Electrical Ltd	Marina Theatre Electrics Works	£770.23 + £154.05 VAT = £924.28
23 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£104.97
23 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£370.26
23 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£69.33
23 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£71.88
23 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£75.02
23 April 2021	NPower	Electric Charges	£483.35
27 April 2021	Anglian Water	Denes Oval water refund	-£159
29 April 2021	Gazprom Energy	Town Hall gas	£43.52 + £2.18 VAT = £45.70

May income

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
4 May 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£66.50
6 May 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£6,300
10 May 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£90.50
17 May 2021	Market Income	Weekly Market Income	£90.50
17 May 2021	Tenant	Rental Income from Tenant	£213.16

May expenditure

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Triangle Market PC May 2021	£117
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Links Road Car Park May 2021	£187

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4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Sparrows Nest PC May 2021	£110
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Kensington Gardens PC May 2021	£210
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Pakefield PC May 2021	£122
4 May 2021	East Suffolk Council	NNDR Hamilton House May 2021	£2,012.75
5 May 2021	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions April 2021	£4,403.67
6 May 2021	Parkinson Partners	VAT Advice	£200
7 May 2021	Omnex ProFilm Ltd	Marina Theatre Equipment	£5,970 + £1,194 VAT = £7,164
7 May 2021	McCormack Benson	Fire Risk Assessments at Hamilton House and Whitton Hall	£600 + £120 VAT = £720
7 May 2021	O A Chapman	Insurance Valuations	£500 + £100 VAT = £600
7 May 2021	MossKing Associates Ltd	Town Hall Business Plan Development Project	£9,210
7 May 2021	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit 2020-21	£450
7 May 2021	SLCC	Virtual Practitioners' Conference	£75 + £15 VAT = £90
12 May 2021	James Cox	Reimbursement for Mobile Wifi Device	£35
12 May 2021	Shona Bendix	Reimbursement for 4x Fire Safety Signs	£6.26
13 May 2021	Kompan Ltd	Stoven Close Play Equipment	£8,971.20 + £1,794.24 VAT = £10,765.44
14 May 2021	Eon	Whitton Hall Electricity	£14.10 + £0.71 VAT = £14.81
14 May 2021	Essex and Suffolk Water	Normanston Water October 2020 – April 2021	£341.80
14 May 2021	Ricoh UK Ltd	Printer Hire	£134.83 + £26.97 VAT = £161.80
14 May 2021	BSA Security	Whitton Meeting Hall Works following Fire Risk Assessment	£157.50 + £31.50 VAT = £189
14 May 2021	British Gas	Whitton Hall Gas	£63.69
14 May 2021	Hudson Architects	Town Hall Works	£4,160 + £832 VAT = £4,992
18 May 2021	Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Purchases	£225.29
18 May 2021	Need2Store Ltd	Civic Artefact Storage	£200 + £40 VAT = £240
18 May 2021	Shona Bendix	Reimbursement for Key Cutting and Stationery	£25.65
18 May 2021	Sword & Trowel Ltd	Payroll Services	£93.60

9.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule), including the following:

9.2a. £450 for Christmas lights licences (£150 per street for three streets) – There were no other payments awaiting approval. The Council has already approved the purchase of

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the lights themselves, and installation of infrastructure, and a new three year contract. It is understood this will be an annual cost. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the payment of £450 for Christmas lights licences, and including provision for this in the budget spreadsheet so that it is budgeted for on an annual basis; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour. It was confirmed that the scope of Christmas lights on the High Street will be the same as it was in previous years as the Council has already purchased these lights.

10. Audit

10.1. Progress with preparations for the External Audit – All necessary papers have been completed following the Annual Meeting, and duly signed by the Mayor. These will now be forwarded to the External Auditor. The period for the exercise of public rights was noted at the Annual Meeting and the notice will be duly published.

11. Budget and Loan Sub-Committee

11.1. The draft minutes from the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting of 12 April 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.

12. Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee

12.1. The draft minutes from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee meeting of 28 April 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.

12.2. Recommendations from the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee:

12.2a. Adopting the following Town Council policies: Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the policies and procedures as listed in items 12.2ai – 12.2aviii. There were some comments regarding the Toilet Strategy and Cycling Pledge which were considered first.

12.2ai Social Media Protocol

12.2aii Sponsorship and Advertising Policy

12.2aiii Toilet Strategy, including to note that a comprehensive review will follow – The Council has not indicated that it wishes to impose a charge for use of its public conveniences. Incidents of anti-social behaviour seem to be minimal so the facilities should remain open. The Strategy refers to a partnership with shops but most of those which had publicly accessible toilets have closed. The Toilet Strategy Working Group will be reviewing the Strategy and there is a commitment from the Council to capital refurbishment of at least two sites every year. Sparrows Nest and Fen Park have been identified as the priorities this year. It was suggested that the Council should move away from use of paper towels to cold air hand dryers instead. The comments and suggestions raised here will be fed back to the Working Group.

12.2aiv Training and Development Policy

12.2av Whistleblowing Policy, as amended

12.2avi Wildflower Meadows Policy

12.2avii Cycling Pledge – It was agreed the document should be progressed as a pledge rather than a strategy. A typographical error was identified at point three. There is reference to Cycle to Work Day and it was suggested this could be extended to include Cycle to School Week as well.

Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the policies and procedures as listed in items 12.2ai – 12.2aviii, subject to the suggested amendments being applied and comments being fed back; seconded by Cllr Begum. Regarding item 12.2aviii, the Tablet Policy was approved as a standalone document but the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee suggested incorporating it into the existing IT policy to have one overarching IT related policy. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour.

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12.2aviii Incorporating the Tablet Policy into the existing IT, Internet, Social Media,
Email and Secure Use of USB Memory Sticks Policy

13. Other financial matters, including:

- 13.1. The cost of providing smartphones to all Town Council officers – This has been discussed in principle but no decision has been reached yet. If progressed, the Council would like officers to have access to a smartphone with security features, particularly as staff are not just office based. Currently there are five members of staff but recruitment of a further three should be taking place this year. It was agreed it would be beneficial for budget provision at least to be in place in advance of this. The phones will likely be sourced through the Council's IT provider, who can also service them and look into any issues. Detail about the cost is still pending and it was agreed this should be obtained prior to a maximum budget being considered.
- 13.2. Recommendations for a payroll provider – The Clerk has been researching options from credible providers, and is compiling information for the provision of taking the administration of payroll services 'in house'. A meeting with a software provider will be held shortly. It was agreed to carry this item forward to a future meeting, once all the information is available.
- 13.3. Available s106 and CIL funding, and any approaching deadlines for expenditure – There is only a small amount of s106 coming in, which is being used for recent projects. It was queried whether Lowestoft is under funded by CIL in comparison to other areas locally. Officers will look into this, but the Council may be limited in what it can do. It could submit a formal response when there is a consultation about CIL charges but that may affect the amount of development the town gets. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee will be looking at the levels of earmarked reserves and any approaching deadlines for CIL expenditure. The relevant Committees and Sub-Committees will identify where it could be spent.
- 13.4. Quotations for leaflets and signage for the Gainsborough Drive pond regarding duck feeding – Duck feeding is contributing to maintaining an artificially high number of ducks at the pond and is affecting the water quality. The Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee made a recommendation to the Council to approve the printing of one hundred leaflets and two signs, within a maximum budget of £750, with delegated authority to officers to determine suitable wording. Cllr Brooks knows of a local sign maker and will pass the details to officers. Cllr Brooks proposed supporting the recommendation from the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 13.5. The cost of providing access to the sea wall from the Links Road car park – The Deputy Clerk and Cllr Butler are liaising with the Coastal Protection Team, as to whether this suggestion is feasible and lawful. Planning permission may be required if so. Indications are that the cost should be relatively low, but a sea defence board may be required. This will be carried forward to the next meeting, when further information should be available.
- 13.6. Any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee regarding an appropriate budget and delegated authority to officers to progress pledging land at Clarkes Lane, Fen Park and the North Denes to WildEast, including related signage – The AID Committee has made a recommendation to Full Council to progress pledging the land at Fen Park, Clarkes Lane and the North Denes to WildEast, within delegated authority to officers to progress, within max budget of £1,000. Cllr Pearce proposed endorsement of the recommendation from the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 13.7. Any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee regarding the transfer of funds of £17,500 from the Fen Park pond budget to the ponds and waterways budget – The exact figure is £17,527. It is anticipated that work will take place at the Fen Park pond this year, including possible dredging and desilting. Since the Council was formed it has budgeted specifically for the Fen Park pond, but the unspent funds were likely allocated to different reserves. If approved, officers will establish where the funds were allocated to and transfer the cumulative total to the ponds and waterways budget, ring fenced for Fen Park in anticipation it will be spent this year. The ponds and waterways budget is a relatively new budget heading but the funds accumulated so far could then be used for the Council's other

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ponds. Cllr Pearce proposed endorsement of this recommendation from the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

- 13.8. Any recommendations from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee regarding a maximum budget and any appropriate delegations to progress the installation of a fence in Sparrows Nest, along the border of the grass between the play area and the Movie Makers Theatre – The Chair explained the long standing issue with unauthorised vehicular access to the park and the hazard it presents to park users. Vehicular access would still be required for disabled visitors, employees and volunteers. The Council had been considering the provision of a lockable bollard but a tenant has designated parking by the Movie Makers Theatre, making it difficult to position a bollard safely. The play area is surrounded by a fence, but there is an area of open grass around it. The AID Committee has suggested seeking quotes for a fence to border the open grass area from Martello to the Movie Makers Theatre, of similar height to the play area, to create a barrier delineating the edge of the grass from the road. It was requested that officers also seek quotes for a fence to fit in with the Alice in Wonderland theme which has been suggested for Sparrows Nest. Officers will seek a range of quotes for different types of fencing for this Committee and the AID Committee to consider.
- 13.9. An update on the request to apply for District Council locality funding in respect of the memorial lecterns for Belle Vue Park and Kensington Gardens – The Council has previously given its approval for the lecterns, and District Councillors for the relevant wards had previously agreed to dedicate locality funding towards their purchase, but the application could not be submitted before the deadline. Officers will now contact the relevant District Councillors and will liaise with the relevant stakeholders to progress the lecterns. It was suggested that Suffolk County Councillors for the relevant wards could also be approached for funding.
- 13.10. The cost of proposed improvements to the Denes Oval (some aspects may be confidential) – The Working Group is reviewing the proposals. The Chair outlined the progress so far, with proposals for improvements having been received from the Cricket and Tennis Clubs. It had been agreed that the Working Group would initiate discussions with East Suffolk Council's Conservation Officer, particularly regarding improvements and repair work to the wall. East Suffolk Council has now proposed incorporating the Denes Oval into the conservation area. Lowestoft Town Council did not wish to see it included. The Town Council has always had a desire to protect and celebrate the town's heritage and so did not feel there was a need to include the Denes Oval in order to preserve its heritage. Its inclusion may limit the aspirations of the clubs. The priorities of the Tennis Club are to progress a lease and floodlights. Officers are looking into whether there any detrimental effects of floodlights on wildlife and ecology. The Tennis Club has pledged fund towards the cost of the floodlights and would also like to see improvements to the courts. The proposals from the Cricket Club are not quite as advanced. The Council has advised that it would like to retain a level of public access to the tennis courts. A lease could be mutually beneficial, allowing the club to access funding and confirming each party's responsibilities and rights. An indicative amount has been ring fenced in general reserves for improvement works at the Denes Oval, but the overall cost is not yet known. Any capital works expenditure from general reserves or capital works reserves should be replenished. Cllr Pitts had indicated he would like to become a member of the Denes Oval Working Group and the Committee was happy to approve this request. Any further requests to join the Working Group can be emailed to the Committee Clerk. Site visits will be arranged individually with the clubs. The Working Group would like a clear indication from both Clubs as to what their expectations are, and to what extent they expect the Town Council to fund the works.
- 13.11. The cost of roofing works at the Marina Theatre (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 13.12. The cost of enhancing the arrangements for the Lowestoft Collection at the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 13.13. The lease and financial arrangements for a tenant (confidential) – To be discussed during the

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confidential session.

14. Date of the next meeting

10 June 2021 16:45 – It was requested to move the meetings of this Committee to earlier in the day. The Committee members agreed that 13:00 would be a suitable time. There is an Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 10 June but it does not start until 15:00.

15. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda. Any requests can be emailed to officers.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the meeting 18:09

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

16. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

Cllr Green left the meeting 18:10

Cllr Brooks returned 18:10

- 13.11 The cost of roofing works at the Marina Theatre (confidential) – The latest position was explained. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 13.12 The cost of enhancing the arrangements for the Lowestoft Collection at the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – There was a discussion regarding security arrangements for the Collection. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 13.13 The lease and financial arrangements for a tenant (confidential) – This is still ongoing and an update was given.

The Chair closed the meeting 18:44.

Signed:

10 June 2021