

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council Meeting

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

19:30 on 25 May 2021

MINUTES

Participants: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Colin Butler, Alan Green (Mayor), Peter Knight, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor

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)

19. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed. There had been requests from members of the public asking attendees to try to speak louder and more clearly, and for the meeting Chairs to read out who is present at the start of each meeting. The Mayor read out a letter he had received from Buckingham Palace offering thanks for the condolences sent following the death of thanking Mayor for expressing condolences following the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

20. Apologies for absence from any Councillors not in attendance

Apologies were received from Cllrs Robert Breakspear, Tracey Eastwood, Amanda Frost, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Paul Page, Keith Patience and David Youngman. Cllr Tara Carlton had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Knight proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

21. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Brooks, Parker and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 26.2c.

22. The draft minutes of the Annual Meeting on 18 May 2021

The draft minutes were unavailable and it was agreed to defer the consideration of them to June's Full Council meeting.

23. Public forum

There were no advance comments and no members of the public in attendance via Zoom webinar. Several Councillors had seen or received comments via Facebook regarding item 26.7. There will be further discussion regarding the concerns raised at that point on the agenda.

24. Finance

24.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 20 May 2021 and noting that any recommendations arising from that meeting will be considered at the next regular Full Council meeting – The draft minutes were noted.

24.2. Receipt and consideration of the following:

24.2a. 2021 – 2022 budget position – There had been no updates since the Annual Meeting last week.

24.2b. Any bank reconciliations – There had been no updates since the Annual Meeting last week.

24.2c. Payments, including those made under delegated authority, any payments for approval, and income and expenditure reports for the month ending 30 April 2021 and May 2021 to date – There had been no updates since the Annual Meeting last week.

24.2d. A quotation for a replacement fire alarm system at the Marina Theatre – It is understood that the cost is not likely to exceed £26,500 plus VAT. The Theatre has £23,000 of funding it can put towards the cost but has requested a contribution from the Town Council. The overall contribution requested from the Town Council needs to be clarified as VAT also needs to be taken into consideration. The maximum cost should

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not exceed £29,800 plus VAT. Cllr Pearce proposed approving the Marina Theatre's request for a financial contribution towards its replacement fire alarm system; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour. At its meeting on 10 June, the Finance and Governance Committee will determine which budget heading the funds will be taken from, and in the interim officers will ask the Theatre to confirm the exact amount requested from the Town Council, including any VAT.

25. Governance

- 25.1. Actions by the Town Council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic – There was a query regarding meeting arrangements for Working Groups and it was confirmed that they can meet via Zoom as they are not required to meet in public. Alternative venues to Whitton Residents' Hall have been explored for in person meetings but there have been issues with availability and accessibility. Officers can look again. Committees and Sub-Committees with smaller membership may be able to meet at Hamilton House. It is hoped that lockdown restrictions may be further lifted on 21 June, which is before the next Full Council meeting. It was agreed for current arrangements to remain in place pending an announcement from the Government about 21 June.
- 25.2. Progress with preparations for the External Audit – Preparations are going well. The notice regarding the period for the exercise of public rights will be published shortly. At the Annual Meeting, Full Council gave all the approvals needed and the forms will be submitted at the first opportunity. Notices are also required to be published upon completion of the audit. All information will be publicly available online, as will the audit report itself.

26. Assets, Inclusion and Development

- 26.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting on 17 May 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.
- 26.2. Recommendations from the AID Committee:
- 26.2a. Delegating authority to officers to proceed with pledging land at the North Denes, Fen Park and Clarkes Lane to WildEast, and progress appropriate signage, within a maximum budget of £1,000 – Cllr Green proposed approval of the recommendation; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 26.2b. Transferring a total of £17,500 previously allocated to the Fen Park pond to the ponds and waterways budget, in anticipation that it will be spent this year (officers to identify which reserves the funds were previously allocated to) – The cumulative total is £17,527. The Finance and Governance Committee has supported this recommendation. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the recommendation; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 26.2c. Delegating authority to officers to progress leaflets and signage for the Gainsborough Drive pond regarding duck feeding, within a maximum budget of £750 – Leaflets will be printed in the office. Cllr Green proposed approval of the recommendation, including to allow officers to agree the final wording of the signs and leaflets; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.
- 26.2d. Delegating authority to officers to liaise with stakeholders and agree locations to produce mulch in Fen Park and Kensington Gardens – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the recommendation; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.
- 26.2e. Delegating authority to officers to proceed with the refurbishment of the Kensington Gardens bowls pavilion windows within the maximum amount of capital grants funding available from East Suffolk Council (to be referred back to the AID Committee if the quotations exceed this) – It was queried whether a condition survey has been carried out on the building and whether additional funding could be accessed to support any other required improvement works. The capital funding available from East Suffolk Council is specifically for the windows (£3,750 allocated originally - then £3,000 in a subsequent year - for a missing swan neck to one area, decaying windows and repairing

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- timber pillar bases), and there is a time limit on the expenditure. Cllr Pearce proposed approving the recommendation and separately requesting that officers find out when the last condition survey was completed and feeding back the results to the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee to consider any additional work required; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 26.2f. An in principle agreement to provide access to the seawall from the Links Road car park, subject to liaison with the Coastal Protection Authority – Cllr Butler and the Deputy Clerk have had a meeting with the Coastal Protection Authority and think this may be possible in principle. The AID Committee will consider this further and a vote of thanks was offered to Cllr Butler for the work he has done towards this so far.
- 26.2g. Providing administrative support to the Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society to progress plans for heritage plaques – Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in this item. The Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society has identified which existing plaques require repair or replacement and has put together a plan for new plaques. Cllr Pearce has the plan and this will be considered by the AID Committee. The Society may require administrative support in certain areas, such as seeking landowner permissions. The AID Committee will consider how best to progress the plans.
- 26.2h. Exploring designs and seeking quotations for the proposed bus shelter on Harris Avenue – Suffolk County Council has quoted costs exceeding the ring fenced budget the Town Council has set aside. Cllr Butler is now exploring alternative options. Local residents have opposed the proposal through concerns about anti-social behaviour. The AID Committee will consider how to proceed once more information is available. It was suggested that District and County Councillors for the ward may be able to contribute locality funding.
- 26.2i. Declining a request from the Lowestoft Boxing Academy to hire Whitton Residents' Hall – It is understood that the club would like to install permanent equipment, so the main concern is that it could limit other functions of the hall and the building may not have the correct facilities to support this. If possible, the Academy may need to compromise to enable this request to be accommodated. Rather than reject the request outright it was suggested that the Council could relay its concerns regarding space and the potential restrictions it could impose on other user groups to see if a compromise could be reached. Cllr Parker proposed referring this request back to the AID Committee to liaise with the Lowestoft Boxing Academy and see if a suitable compromise could be reached; seconded by Cllr Pearce; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 26.2j. Approaching experts for support regarding procurement of additional items of the Lowestoft Collection (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 26.3. A request from a member of the public for tree works at the Great Eastern Linear Park and any feedback from a recent survey of the site – The results of the survey had just been received and required a discussion in confidential session.
- 26.4. Amendments to the allocation of bins previously approved for purchase for the Town Council's parks – The allocation of bins is still being mapped out. The final number required should be known by the next AID Committee meeting and any additional cost should be minor and could be covered within the AID Committee's financial delegation.
- 26.5. Any works needed to the Marina Theatre including the roof (some aspects may be confidential) – The Finance and Governance Committee was seeking a delegation from Full Council to receive a professional assessment of the roof and decide how to proceed. The cost could exceed £40,000 and it is not clear whether the work is required immediately, although there would be a cost saving if the Town Council instructed the works now, rather than as a separate project at a later date. Cllr Taylor proposed delegating authority to the Finance and Governance Committee to receive the professional assessment of the roof and decide how to proceed, and in the interim requested that the Clerk seek clarity as to what the overall cost to

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the Council would be if it were to instruct the works now; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 26.6. Progressing a promotional video of Lowestoft (some aspects may be confidential) – The Council had requested further information from those who had already submitted a quotation, such as a storyboard, etc. The Events and Communications Officer is progressing this.
- 26.7. The costs of repair and legal advice and potential for the removal of the Jubilee Bridge (some aspects may be confidential) – There have been concerns raised by residents about the potential removal of the bridge. It was clarified that this was a suggestion made by East Suffolk Council at a Liaison Meeting and has not been formally discussed by Lowestoft Town Council yet. It was previously thought that removal would not be possible anyway as the bridge is a listed structure. The Council would like to support heritage but would like to understand all the options available. Cllr Taylor proposed support to keep the bridge as an important part of the town's heritage; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 26.8. Progress with the Town Hall development and funding bid (some aspects may be confidential) – The deadline to submit the stage one bid is the end of this week. The costs are commercially confidential. A Project Board will be set up, with the same representatives from each body as there is currently. The Board would like a delegation from the Council to administer what has already been agreed to in the bid itself, as there will be tight deadlines to meet. The stage two bid and beyond will come back to Full Council to approve. Cllr Brooks proposed granting delegated authority to the Project Board to implement the work necessary to complete the stage one work, including any payments required associated with the bid. The Town Council's representatives will be the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairs of the AID and Finance and Governance Committees, the HAZ representatives and the Place Board representatives; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

27. Planning

- 27.1. Receipt of the draft minutes of the meetings on 27 April 2021 and 4 May 2021 – The minutes have now been formally approved by the Committee. The last meeting was only just quorate. Any Councillors interested in joining the Planning Committee or Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group were encouraged to come forward.

28. Climate Emergency and Ecological

- 28.1. Receipt the draft minutes of the meeting on 24 May 2021 and to note that any recommendations arising from that meeting will be considered at the next regular Full Council meeting – The meeting was cancelled as it was inquorate.

29. Legal

- 29.1. Noting the consultation on the further draft recommendations for Suffolk County Council division boundaries – This item was noted.

30. Date of next meeting

22 June 2021 19:30

31. Items for the next agenda and close

There were none.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Knight; 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.

32. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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32.1. Any matters, including those above as required

It was confirmed that a request to review the start time of Full Council meetings would be considered at the next meeting.

A comfort break was taken 20:41 and the meeting resumed 20:46

26.2j Approaching experts for support regarding procurement of additional items of the Lowestoft Collection (confidential – Officers are looking to compile a list of experts from whom it could seek advice. The Clerk gave an update regarding the civic artefacts transferred from East Suffolk Council.

26.3 A request from a member of the public for tree works at the Great Eastern Linear Park and any feedback from a recent survey of the site – Cllr Taylor proposed approving the request for works subject to a full review of the report by the AID Committee, with delegated authority to the Clerk to allow the works on the advice of the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

26.5 Any works needed to the Marina Theatre including the roof (some aspects may be confidential) – Full Council has granted delegated authority to the Finance and Governance Committee to make a decision, subject to receipt of a condition survey. The Clerk has requested clarity regarding the total cost.

26.7 The costs of repair and legal advice and potential for the removal of the Jubilee Bridge (some aspects may be confidential) Bridge – The latest position was discussed. Cllr Taylor made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

26.8 Progress with the Town Hall development and funding bid (some aspects may be confidential) – A delegation was agreed during the public session. There was a confidential discussion regarding costs. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour. A vote of thanks was recorded for Cllrs Pearce and Taylor for their work on the Town Hall project.

The meeting was closed 21:26.

Signed:

22 June 2021