

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 12 April 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Peter Lang, Paul Page (Chair) and Andy Pearce

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Public: There were two members of the public in attendance (in person)

185. Welcome

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

186. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sonia Barker, who had also provided a reason. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

187. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Brooks and Page declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 208. Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 207.

188. The draft minutes of the meeting on 8 March 2022

Cllr Pearce requested amendments at items 164, 167, 169, 174 and 176. Officers will review in time for the next meeting.

189. Public forum, including a talk from Re-Utilise Resource Centre

Regarding item 207, one of the members of the public in attendance suggested the public's perception of kittiwakes may be improved by increased street cleaning. Cllr Pearce advised this has been discussed but not all land is within the same ownership. The Town Council is considering extra street cleaning outside the Marina Theatre when kittiwakes are nesting there. Cllr Pearce hopes representatives from offshore renewables organisations involved with the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership will bring more funding in to support extra cleaning measures.

An invited guest from the Re-Utilise Resource Centre spoke of the work of the centre, which involves repurposing waste from businesses as arts and crafts materials. The centre can reuse or dispose of surplus paint in certain circumstances, but does not currently have the capacity to do this on a large scale.

190. How the Town Council may support the Re-Utilise Resource Centre

Where possible, the centre would like help approaching local businesses, particularly in manufacturing, to see whether any of their waste products could be repurposed. The centre is exploring the cost of purchasing three IBC tanks to enable it to take more donations of surplus paint, whether for reusing or disposal. The centre would also need to obtain a waste disposal licence and would like assistance with the process of doing so. Cllr Pearce proposed offering support with the process of applying for a waste disposal licence, including a letter of support if required. Cllr Pearce further proposed offering support in determining costs for IBC tanks to inform a grant application. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour. Cllr Brooks suggested the Council may wish to consider purchasing paint through Re-Utilise for its own decorating projects. Cllr Page would welcome their attendance at the Council's events to coincide with the Great Big Green Week in September.

The invited guest from the Re-Utilise Resource Centre left the meeting 16:09

The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 16:09 and returned 16:10

Lowestoft Town Council

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First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

15:30 on 12 April 2022

191. Monitoring expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority

Cllr Pearce noted some expenditure had been committed but not paid by the end of the financial year, and a total of £8,100 was remaining in the Climate Emergency budget at the end of the year. An additional £12,500 had been budgeted in 2022 – 2023.

192. An allocation of the budget to litter picking and cleaning

The Clerk showed the Committee a video of Community Warden Jonny Hawes using the e-cargo bike, which the Council currently has for a trial period. Whilst it is cumbersome, the bike has been used at different sites for different purposes and could be used to support litter picks. The Clerk reported that a litter pick of the Great Eastern Linear Park had taken place recently, in conjunction with the Water Lane Leisure Centre and the Lowestoft Rubbish Friends. Twenty two bags of litter were amassed and collected by Norse. The Clerk put forward a proposal for a budget allocation of £13,750 for litter and environment management, to deliver the Council's climate emergency concerns, in addition to existing contract work, across all of the Town Council's assets. The Clerk is seeking authority to appoint workers and purchase equipment to work with volunteers. Cllr Pearce had sent an email to officers regarding litter clearance of the stream bed, which may require professional support due to the nature of the area. Cllr Pearce proposed endorsing the proposal put forward by the Clerk, with budget allocation of £4,250 from the Climate Emergency budget, and delegated authority from this Committee to Clerk to proceed, and a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to approve the expenditure of £9,500 from the earmarked reserve for temporary and seasonal workers. Cllr Pearce further proposed undertaking health and safety assessments of litter picking areas with water. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposals and all Councillors voted in favour.

193. Use of the Climate Emergency budget for staff remuneration to facilitate meetings of the Environment and Waste Working Group at Hamilton House outside of office hours

Cllr Pearce explained that this had been agreed by another Committee but required this Committee's approval to make expenditure from its delegated budget. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this item; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

194. Any matters to raise with Cllr James Mallinder (East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment) and/or the Environment and Waste Working Group, and feedback on any matters previously raised, including the following:

194.1. The loss of the beach's Blue Flag status and any data regarding the level of contamination in the sea – Cllrs Brooks and Pearce expressed disappointment in Cllr Mallinder's response regarding the loss of Lowestoft's Blue Flag status.

The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 16:33 and returned 16:33

Cllr Green reported that dredging was being carried out when the Environment Agency was taking samples of the sea water, which may have affected the results. Cllr Pearce proposed taking up the matter with the Environment Agency and expressing disappointment in the response from Cllr Mallinder that East Suffolk Council does not have to incentive to take any action over and above its statutory minimum obligations; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

195. The results of the Clarkes Lane public survey

The Clerk left the meeting 16:40

Cllr Brooks noted that the majority of those who responded were in favour of improving the play area, and there was support for progressing a community orchard. Cllr Pearce would like the results from the schools to be received before decisions are made. The Project and Committee Clerk has made contact with Woodbridge Town Council regarding the

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development of their community garden. The Chair of the Lowestoft and District Allotment Association has indicated her interest in this concept in principle.

196. The first report of the carbon footprint assessment

Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with members of this Committee members, to consider the detail of the assessment via a Zoom meeting and bring back to this Committee with actions; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

197. What the initial investment in electric vehicles will include

The Project and Committee Clerk reported that staff have been considering this. The e-cargo bike trial is underway. There has been no update on the installation of a charging point at Hamilton House and it is unlikely the Council will be considering long term investment in Hamilton House. Cllr Pearce suggested that advice should be sought from Groundworks. Storage options will be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee. Cllr Brooks suggested that the Council could consider shared use with neighbouring Parish Councils.

198. Early consideration of priorities for 2023 – 2024, to inform recommendations to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee in preparation of budget considerations later in the year

Cllr Pearce asked for this item to remain on the agenda between now and September. Cllr Pearce proposed approving a maximum budget of £5,000 for a deep clean of the Marina Theatre at the end of the kittiwake nesting season. The Project and Committee Clerk advised that Norse had also quoted £35.75 plus VAT per week for street cleaning outside the Marina Theatre during nesting season, with the Council paying alternate weeks and the Theatre arranging cleaning for the weeks in between. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve that cost for this year from the climate emergency budget and to factor in an allowance for the 2023 – 2024 budget to allow the same to happen next year. Beyond this, the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership expects more of this type of work to be taken forward by renewable energy partners. Cllr Page seconded the proposals and all Councillors voted in favour.

199. Plans for the Town Council's Climate Action Day 2022 events

Cllr Pearce advised that two weekends of events are being considered and suggested that a Zoom meeting should be arranged with Committee members to discuss plans and draw up a proposal to be approved by the Committee. Cllr Brooks suggested a concert. Cllr Lang advised he had approached SSE Renewables, who would be happy to do a talk at the event.

200. A Climate Action Plan

This is underway and will be informed by the result of the carbon footprint assessment.

201. Any measures being taken by the Town Council's tenants to become more environmentally friendly

Cllr Pearce this should be taken into consideration as part of climate action planning.

202. Reviewing the Sustainability Policy

The member of the public left the meeting 17:06

The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee had requested this Committee's comments on the policy. Cllr Pearce had already submitted some comments to officers. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

203. Progress with tree mapping

It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda, as it is being progressed by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee.

204. An update on the disconnection of the gas supply to the Town Hall

Lowestoft Town Council

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15:30 on 12 April 2022

Cllr Brooks was concerned to see the Council is still making payments to Gazprom. The Project and Committee Clerk advised that officers are working through the disconnection process. Cllr Pearce suggested that the disconnection fee agreed at the last meeting should not be taken from the Climate Emergency budget and asked for the budget allocation to be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

205. An update on reviewing the Town Council's electricity supplier

The Project and Committee Clerk advised that one supplier had recommended not switching suppliers at this stage. The Town Hall meter needs to be replaced and it is understood the water ingress previously interfering with the electricity supply has been rectified.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the meeting 17:16

Cllr Pearce requested this item to remain on the agenda, and for the review of the supplier to take place as soon as it is appropriate to do so. During Woodbridge Town Council's Climate Action Event, Cllr Page attended a talk on energy suppliers and will share the details with officers.

206. An update on East Suffolk Council's Cycling Strategy

Cllr Brooks returned 17:17

The Project and Committee Clerk will seek an update.

207. The draft wording for the Town Council's contribution to the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership's Partnership Agreement

Cllr Pearce had suggested wording for the Town Council's insertion in the document. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this wording as the Town Council's submission to the draft document, recognising that the document as a whole will be considered for approval by the Town Council; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

208. The offer of a presentation from Sizewell C

Cllr Green advised he had initially approved the offer of a presentation but had not realised it was for the purposes of lobbying. Cllr Brooks proposed declining the offer; seconded by Cllr Page. Cllr Pearce considers that the Council made its decision in good faith, primarily on the basis of environmental destruction. Cllr Pearce proposed accepting the offer of the presentation, on the basis that it will be for the purposes of providing information only, and will not be with a view of persuading the Council to revisit its decision, and that a party with the opposing view is also invited to give a presentation at the same meeting; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

209. A report from Woodbridge Town Council's Climate Action Weekend (2 – 3 April)

Cllr Pearce proposed suspending Standing Order 3y to allow the meeting to continue for a further ten minutes maximum; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

Cllr Page temporarily left the meeting 17:37

Cllr Brooks attended the event on the Saturday and found it to be beneficial. Cllr Brooks approached some of the speakers regarding Lowestoft Town Council's Climate Action Day events.

Cllr Page returned 17:40

Cllr Page reported that Woodbridge Town Council has non-Councillor members on its Climate Emergency Committee and requested that this be considered at the next meeting. Cllr Page would like the Council to consider wildlife corridors and also approached speakers regarding Lowestoft Town Council's Climate Action Day events. Cllr Pearce requested that suggestions for speakers should be sent to officers to collate ahead of a Zoom meeting. An item has been added to the Finance and Governance Committee agenda to consider reimbursement to Cllrs Brooks and Page for their travel costs for attending the event. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to approve the reimbursements,

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with expenditure to come from the Climate Emergency budget. Cllr Pearce further proposed sending a message of thanks to Woodbridge Town Council. Cllr Lang seconded the proposals and all Councillors voted in favour.

210. Date of the next meeting

3 May 2022 15:30

211. Items for the next agenda and close

The Chair had concerns regarding the number of agenda items. Cllr Pearce advised that all Committees, Sub-Committees and Full Council to take the climate emergency into account as part of their decision making.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:53.

212. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

3 May 2022