

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Budget and Loan Council Meeting
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
12:30 on 2 October 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Bernie Rappensberger and Elise Youngman (Deputy Chair)

In Attendance: James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

31. Welcome

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

32. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence from any Councillors not in attendance.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Begum, Green, Parker and Pearce with reasons provided. Cllr Barker proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; three in favour and one abstention. Cllr Brooks had requested that Cllr Begum's apology be voted on separately but as the vote in favour had already been taken this would instead be implemented at future meetings.

33. Declarations and dispensations

33.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr E Youngman declared she worked for the company who cleaned Lowestoft Town Council toilets.

33.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

34. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – No members of the public were present and no advanced comments had been received.

35. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 4 September 2023, 11 September 2023, and 18 September 2023.

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the draft minutes; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

36. To review the 2023 – 2024 Lowestoft Town Council Budget and reserves (some aspects may be confidential).

To be discussed in confidential session.

37. To review the 2024 – 2025 Lowestoft Town Council Budget and reserves (some aspects may be confidential).

To be discussed in confidential session.

38. Date of next meeting

9 October 2023 at 12:30.

39. Items for the next agenda and close

Any items for the next agenda should be emailed to the office.

40. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public

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interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal and employment issues relating to the matters on this agenda.

Cllr Rappensberger proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 12:36

It was agreed to have a separate meeting on the Town Hall and Marina Theatre budgets once more information has been received on both projects.

Offices - IT service costs were generally fixed but there had been an increase due to the new staff. It was agreed to reduce the £3,090 Parking budget line to £1,500.

Costs for the Meetings budget line should decrease once staff have acquired the new sound system.

Officers were exploring the future purchase of an electric van, at an approximate cost of £60,000.

For the Workshop Premises budget line, the rent was expected to increase on an annual basis, though the amount was uncertain as the lease had yet to be finalised.

£155,000 would not be required for next year's Grounds Maintenance budget line as it covered the purchase of new equipment. It was agreed to provisionally budget £50,000 for next year and review this at a later meeting. A cricket scrape was required for Denes Oval and Normanston Park site, at £15,000 per site, which would be a one-off cost. Quotes were being sought for the maintenance of the bowls greens, which would be annual costs. £25,000 was entered as a working figure on the Grounds Maintenance Sports Facilities budget line.

£5,000 was agreed for the Office Supplies budget line to build up a reserve. It was agreed to delete the Refurbishment budget line.

Events - The Coronation budget line would be replaced by a reserve build up for a royal funeral. The Finance and Information Officer was asked to verify if this reserve had historically been part of the Events budget. The Finance and Information Officer suggested the target figure and timeline for this reserve be discussed by the Events & Communications Sub-Committee. The reserve would start at £0 value and then increase to £2,500 for the next two years as the budget was already stretched.

A D-Day 80th Anniversary budget line of £15,000 was provisionally added. The Armed Forces budget line was renamed to National Armed Forces, which was noted to have an uncertain element due to the pending the bid for 2025.

It was agreed to lower the Remembrance Day budget line to £2,500.

£10,000 was provisionally entered for the Pride Event.

Grants – It was agreed to keep the budget at £51,000 and roll over any underspend. Only a small number of applications had been drawn from the Social and Food Relief budget line, therefore it was agreed to reduce the budget to £10,000 for 2024-2025. Officers were asked to make inquiries on the £900 granted to The Grit for a printer and tables as the organisation were

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relocating.

Community Engagement - The Sponsorship budget line was increased to £5,500. The Communications Officer was exploring costs for the website which would be entered as a new budget line once further information has been received. Cllr Brooks requested an item on the November agenda for the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to discuss the current model of Friends Groups and the need to view community engagement through a larger scope.

Festive lights - These were fixed costs and would not be altered.

Civic - As there had been an increase in the number of engagements, the Mayor Travel budget line might require an increase. The one-off purchase of a Mayor Consort badge could be allocated from the Lowestoft Collection Reserve.

Arts and Heritage – All items in the storage facility needed to be removed, packaged, revalued and logged, which would be a one-off cost. £10,000 was entered as a provisional figure until costs for upcoming sculpture projects such as The Fishermen Memorial and the Herring Lassies were ascertained, then the budget could be revisited.

CIL and External Funding - This could not be budgeted for as they were one-off payments.

The current estimated Council increase per household was noted. The Finance and Information Officer confirmed the reserves should not be used to decrease the precept, and whilst external funding would be explored for projects, they should not be considered as part of the budgeting unless already agreed.

The Chair closed the meeting at 13:51

Signed:
30 October 2023