

Lowestoft Town Council
Budget and Loan Council Meeting
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
12:30 on 6 November 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce and Elise Youngman

In Attendance: Shona Bendix (Town Clerk), James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

71. Welcome

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

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Begum, Green and Rappensberger with reasons provided. It was requested to approve the apologies separately.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of Cllr Begum's apology; seconded by Cllr Barker; three votes in favour and one vote against.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of Cllr Green's apology; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of Cllr Rappensberger's apology; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

Cllr Parker was absent with no apologies received.

73. Declarations and dispensations

73.1. 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 (LTC) owned toilets.

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

74. 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 in attendance and no advanced comments had been received.

75. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 19 October 2023 and 30 October 2023.

The minutes were in progress and would be signed off next week.

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

Officers would continue to monitor and notify Councillors if any budgets seemed challenged and could potentially go over-budget before the end of the financial year.

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

Items 76 and 77 would be discussed in confidential session.

78. Date of next meeting

13 November 2023 at 12:30

79. Items for the next agenda and close

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

- 80. 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 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 Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session, with the assurance that this Sub-Committee had no delegations, and any recommendations would be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; three votes in favour and one vote against.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 12:37

The draft Council Tax Base figure for 2024-2025 is 13,032.78 which provided an estimated increase of 0.8%.

The Kindertransport statue had been provisionally ring-fenced, and it was recommended that the figure be removed, pending discussions and agreements on timescales, and not be considered committed expenditure.

Parks and Open Spaces - It was suggested to have an offset of £37,000 in the Earmarked Reserve (EMR) based on the year-end expenditure of £66,000, assuming the capital budget would have been spent by year-end.

Public Conveniences - £70,000 was recommended as the provisional figure for the proposed refurbishment of Lowestoft Cemetery toilets, with the funding for the Normanston toilets to be allocated from the Normanston Park budget.

The Finance and Information Officer advised the recommended figure of £6,000 for the Utilities budget line may be too low, however it was agreed to maintain this as a provisional figure.

Cllr E Youngman temporarily left the chamber for consideration of the toilet cleaning budget at 13:04

The provisional figure for the Cleaning budget line was £31,282.50 which excluded maintenance and consumables. Invoices would be checked to ensure there were no payments to clean the Triangle Market toilets whilst they were shut for refurbishment.

The Finance and Information Officer would review the Cleaning – Consumables budget line as the costs may increase in 2024-2025 compared to the current year as toilets had been closed for refurbishment.

Cllr E Youngman returned to the chamber at 13:15

Horticulture - The Tree Planting budget line had been removed as there were no plans for tree planting next year. Tree Routine Works and Inspections budget lines had been increased to £7,500, whilst Tree Reactive Works had been increased to £37,500 per officer advice. The Deputy Clerk noted the initial assessment estimated no less than £40,000 required for the works, therefore it was agreed to provisionally increase the Reactive Works budget line to £45,000.

A tree planting budget may be required as several trees were identified for removal in the

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recent survey. It was agreed for the tree policy to be brought up in the review order and for Parks and Open Spaces to provide comments.

Waterways and Ponds - A Sparrows Nest budget line of £34,000 had been entered as the first year to build up the reserve for replacement of the pond. Any works for other ponds such as Gainsborough Drive and Uplands, or the stream at Great Eastern Linear Park needed to be agreed and have a budget set.

The cost for salt for the Kensington Gardens boating lake would remain in the Kensington Gardens budget this year and next year it could be considered for relocation to the Waterways and Ponds budget.

Play Areas - Indicative quotes for Britten Road and Wellington Road refurbishments were due to be obtained by officers so the Sub-Committee could understand budgeting requirements.

The Tennis Club EMR Contribution budget line covered the capital funding per the contractual arrangement with the Lowestoft Tennis Association.

It was agreed to remove the Stock budget line.

The Chair closed the meeting at 14:00

Signed:

8 January 2024