

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Budget and Loan Council Meeting**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**12:30 on 20 November 2023**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger and Elise Youngman (Deputy Chair)

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

**91. Welcome**

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

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Begum and Green with reasons provided.

No apologies were received from Cllr Coleby.

GP; AP; 5 in favour; 1 abstention who had wanted to take them separately.

**93. Declarations and dispensations**

93.1. 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.

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

**94. 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.

**95. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 30 October 2023, 6 November 2023 and 13 November 2023.**

The minutes were in progress.

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

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

Anticipated year-end balances would be reviewed against committed and actual expenditure, and officers would notify the Sub-Committee if any budgets indicated a cause for concern.

**98. Date of next meeting**

27 November 2023 at 12:30

**99. Items for the next agenda and close**

Items should be sent to the office.

**100. 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.**

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Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session due to the confidential legal and commercial information that would be displayed during the meeting, noting that no decisions would be made in confidential session and the draft budget would be shared when recommended to the Finance and Governance Committee (F&G) and Full Council.

Cllr Brooks queried the need for a confidential session this early in the meeting, particularly as contracts and leases had not been covered in depth previously.

Cllr Barker seconded the proposal and a vote was held with five in favour and one against.

*The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved to confidential session at 12:38*

**The Ness** - £7,410.91 was highlighted for potential movement to the general Play Area Earmarked Reserve (EMR) and any transferrals between reserves would be considered before the proposals are due to be brought to F&G and Full Council.

**Sea Wall** - The £2,000 budget was highlighted for potential transfer as it covered bin emptying and could be allocated under grounds maintenance. Whilst LTC owned the sea wall between Ness Point and Links Road Car Park, there should be no contribution required towards sea wall defences.

**Kensington Gardens** - As a recent annual water bill had totalled £7,115 it was agreed to increase the Utilities budget line from £5,000 to £10,000.

**Fen Park** - Officers confirmed the requested £10,000 for matting, £10,000 for refurbishment and £17,000 for the replacement of the tower unit was not required.

£23,190 was the anticipated year-end figure and would be kept in the reserve on the basis that the play area was not due for refurbishment for two years, however it was highlighted for consideration of transferral.

£5,000 was entered as a working figure under the Utilities budget line.

**Community Halls** - As quotes were due to be received from the Gunton Community Hall, it was noted that there may be committed expenditure against the budget. As the total amount of outgoings for next year (£13,111) had been met from the anticipated year-end reserve no charges would be precepted for next year.

**Marina Theatre** - This budget needed to be reviewed in a single item meeting. It was suggested to use £25,000 from the anticipated year-end balance of the Marina Theatre EMR against the 2024-2025 budget and to use the entire £632.11 from the Marina Theatre Capital EMR.

**Town Hall** - This budget needed to be reviewed in a single item meeting. The Finance and Information Officer would check the anticipated year-end balance in the project fund. The figures from the Project Manager's report needed to be checked against this budget, therefore it was suggested the Project Manager be invited to the meeting when this budget is discussed in full and the provisional figures are reviewed.

**Staff** - The contingency budget was set as £70,000 due to unknown elements such as the cost-of-living increase. The Finance and Information Officer would calculate the pensions and national insurance per the £713,179 under the Salaries Gross budget line.

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*Cllr Rappensberger left the meeting at 13:50*

Of the £713,179 only £30,000 was coming from the EMR offset and the remainder would be precepted.

The Finance and Information Officer noted the new pay scales for 2023-2024 had been received and would calculate the £588,000 figure to determine what would remain in the reserves at year-end and clarify if the RPI allowance made for 2023-2024 covered the agreed National Joint Council increase.

*The Chair closed the meeting at 13:58*

Signed: .....

8 January 2024