

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
14:00 on 23 May 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green and Andy Pearce (Chair)

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

1. Welcome

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

2. Approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Parker with reasons provided.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

Cllr Page was absent with no apologies received.

3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

3.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda

Cllr Brooked declared she was the Town Council representative on the Lowestoft and Plaisir Twinning Association. Cllr Green declared he was a Director of the Lowestoft Town Football Club. Cllr Pearce declared he was the Town Council representative on the South Pier Management Committee. Cllrs Brooks and Pearce declared they were Town Council representatives on the Marina Theatre Quarterly Management meetings.

3.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted

No written requests for dispensations had been received.

4. To consider the draft minutes and appended confidential notes of the meeting on 26 April 2023

Cllr Green proposed approval of the draft minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

5. 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. An anonymous comment had been received from a member of the public and would be read and considered with the application at item 10.1b.

6. To review and adopt Committee arrangements

6.1. To note the membership of the Finance and Governance Committee

Membership of the Finance and Governance Committee (F&G) consisted of all present Councillors, Cllrs Parker and Page who were not present at the meeting.

6.2. To appoint the Deputy Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee

Cllr Green proposed Cllr Page be nominated as Deputy Chair; seconded by Cllr Begum; a vote was held with three in favour and one abstention. Officers would contact Cllr Page to confirm his acceptance of the post.

7. Budget and Loan:

7.1. To review and adopt Budget and Loan Sub-Committee arrangements, including the following:

7.1a. To consider composition – At the time of the meeting Cllrs Barker, Brooks, Green and Pearce had requested to join the Sub-Committee. Cllr Begum registered her interest, subject to confirmation of the meeting schedule. The composition of the Sub-Committee would be approved by F&G in June. Cllr Brooks proposed a form be

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sent to all Councillors listing the Committees and Sub-Committees for Councillors to indicate which Committees they wish to join; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

- 7.1b. To review and consider adoption of the Terms of Reference - Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 7.1c. To agree the meeting schedule - Cllr Pearce proposed to defer agreement of the meeting schedule to the August meeting, with the Finance and Information Officer to contact the Sub-Committee if a meeting is required; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 7.2. To monitor the budget for 2023 – 2024, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets
Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the budget as it stands; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 7.3. To note any bank reconciliations
April 2023 was ongoing at the time of the meeting.

8. Standing Orders and Policies

- 8.1. To review and adopt Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee arrangements, including the following:
 - 8.1a. To consider composition - Of those in attendance, Cllrs Pearce, Green and Brooks registered their interest in joining. The invitation to join will be extended to all Councillors, with membership to be approved by F&G in June.
 - 8.1b. To review and consider adoption of the Terms of Reference – Cllr Pearce proposed to adopt the Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
 - 8.1c. To agree the meeting schedule – Cllr Pearce proposed to delay the decision until the Sub-Committee meeting scheduled for 21 June.
- 8.2. To consider compliance with the Investment Policy and consider any matters raised by the auditor to be included in this policy
It was agreed to defer this item to the next Standing Orders and Policies meeting.

9. Payments and Receipts:

- 9.1. To note the income and expenditure reports for April 2023 and May 2023 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules)
Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the report; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 9.2. To consider any payments for approval (see schedule)
There were no payments for approval.

10. Grants

- 10.1. To note the receipt of the following grant applications and consider whether they require urgent consideration:
 - 10.1a. Kirkley Pocket Parks Group - £646.09 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
 - 10.1b. Lowestoft Community Church - £3,402.00 – The public comment raised concerns regarding the omission of protected identities (specifically LGBTQ) and was reviewed alongside the applicant's equality policy. Cllr Pearce proposed to defer the decision until June and request clarification from the applicant, firstly in relation to their equal opportunities policies and if the role required an applicant be a practicing Christian. Secondly to request a written statement in support of the Equality Act 2010 stating that there would be no discrimination of LGBTQ candidates in the recruitment and treatment of the post holder, and that Lowestoft Community Church support the Equality Act 2010 and do not tolerate discrimination on any protected characteristics set out in that policy. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.
 - 10.1c. Suffolk County Football Association - £2,000.00 – Cllr Brooks proposed approval.

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As the applicant had submitted grant requests to other sources, which were pending at the time of the application, the funds required from the Town Council may have reduced. Cllr Begum proposed officers liaise with the applicant regarding the outcomes of their other funding applications to determine what funding is required from the Town Council. Cllr Pearce requested an amendment to approve in principle a grant of up to £2,000, which was accepted. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all Councillors in favour.

- 10.1d. Suffolk County Football Association CIL - £10,000 – The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) budget currently has £20,000 uncommitted.

The Deputy Town Clerk entered the chamber at 15:04

The Deputy Clerk advised that a grant can be permitted from the CIL budget, so long as it is funding infrastructure, and that this application had been submitted to several councils across the county.

The Deputy Town Clerk left the chamber at 15:11

Cllr Pearce proposed to defer the decision, noting that funds were not required until August 2023, and return to the item in June after the committed CIL expenditure had been reviewed; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

- 10.1e. Lowestoft Town Football Club Ltd (amount to be considered) – As the meeting would not be quorate, this item was deferred to the June meeting.
- 10.2. To give early consideration to a possible sponsorship arrangement for the South Pier
As the meeting would not be quorate, this item was deferred to the June meeting.

11. Other financial and governance matters, including:

- 11.1. To consider the following budget allocations:

11.1a. For the purchase of bicycle racks, within a maximum budget of £5,000 – Cllr Pearce proposed the budget be allocated from the 2023-2024 Parks and Open Spaces budget, subject to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee approving the expenditure; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

11.1b. For additional street cleaning outside the Marina Theatre during the kittiwake nesting season for this year – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the expenditure and allocate a maximum of £1,000 from the unallocated £35,000 of the General Climate and Ecological Emergency budget for 2023-2024, with this item to be brought back to the Committee if expenditure approaches the maximum figure; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

11.1c. An additional budget of £5,000 for the Pride Event – Cllr Pearce proposed to use the anticipated £2,000 underspend from the Coronation event, with the balance drawn from the Events Earmarked Reserve; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

11.1d. The additional funds to cover the 5% price increase in the cost of hiring the sound system for Full Council meetings – Cllr Pearce proposed that the 5% increase of £280 be allocated from the Amplification Earmarked Reserve; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

- 11.2. To note receipt of locality funding to cover the cost of the defibrillator to be installed in Fen Park, with any residual funds to contribute to the purchase of the Fen Park noticeboard – The Committee thanked Cllr Ceresa for making the defibrillator available through locality funding.

12. To consider lease and licence arrangements for the following (some aspects may be confidential):

- 12.1. Royal Naval Patrol Service Association Museum
12.2. Martello and Giardino

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12.3. Maritime Museum

12.4. To receive an update on VAT advice and any implications for the Marina Theatre lease and Towns Fund project (confidential)

12.5. To receive an update on the status of the lease for the Lowestoft War Memorial Museum (confidential)

It was agreed to defer these items and arrange a stand-alone zoom meeting to discuss the leases ahead of the Full Council meeting in June, with any issues or proposals to be discussed by F&G in June; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

13. Date of the next meeting

12 June 2023 15:00

Cllr Pearce proposed to proceed with the scheduled 12 June meeting and recommend to Full Council that F&G meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 11:00 for the 2023-2024 civic year; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

Cllr Brooks advised that she may not be able to attend the meeting on the 12 June due to a conflict in schedules.

14. Items for the next agenda and close

The installation of new bins at Bentley Drive would be queried with the Parks and Community Officer and updated to the Councillors via email.

15. 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 employment matters and legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda, including the following:

15.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required

There were no resolutions.

The Chair closed the meeting at 15:36

Signed:

12 June 2023