

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Hall Project Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
10:00 on 8 August 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce and Bernadette Rappensberger. Non-Councillor members Helen Johnson and Benjamin Porter (East Suffolk Council Officers)

In Attendance: Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Also in Attendance: Sheila Moss King (Project Manager) and Jess Johnston (Heritage Manager)

35. Welcome

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

36. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Youngman with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
Cllr Coleby was absent with no apologies received.

Benjamin Porter entered the chamber at 10:02

37. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

37.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from members on items on the agenda – There were no declarations.

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

38. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 11 July 2024

Cllr Pearce proposed approval, subject to the words 'be deferred' being removed from item 28; seconded by Cllr Brooks; six votes in favour and one abstention.

39. 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 advanced comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance.

40. To receive an update report from the Project Manager, including the following:

40.1. The boundary agreement and legal and land registry processes – East Suffolk Council (ESC) confirmed this was being processed and would include the transfer of land for the substation. The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) required a charge be put on the title deeds already under the ownership of Lowestoft Town Council (LTC). This charge would be in the favour of the NLHF and would prevent LTC selling the Town Hall without their consent. The Acting Town Clerk was progressing this with the solicitors.

The Acting Town Clerk advised the Committee there had been no formal agreement to accept the transfer of the land. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to Full Council to accept the transfer of land from ESC; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

40.2. The risk register – The second risk of the capital project cost being higher than what was budgeted was currently scored at fifteen and in a few weeks the Project Team would be able to confirm if the risk has crystallised, though it was noted that inflation in the construction sector was confirmed at 2%, which had lowered since the financial

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planning for the project.

The fourth risk of receiving a limited number of tenders for the main contract posed less of an issue as there had been good interest in the tender package with several site visits and an extension granted to the tender deadline.

The Project Governance structure was working well and there had been no impact on the decision-making process of the project.

To date there has been no drawdowns from the Public Works Loan. It was requested the Committee be notified if there any repayments need to be budgeted for the next financial year.

- 40.3. Any planned actions to be authorised for progression – The Project Manager had previously discussed the expenditure on recruitment and extending the hours of the Heritage Manager to support the new Heritage Officer. It was confirmed the expenditure would need to be funded from the Contingency budget. Propose on Jess role and transfer from contingency budget.

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the extension of the Heritage Manager’s hours (at an average of four extra hours a week over the year) to support and supervise the new Heritage Officer and to fund this, and the Heritage Officer recruitment, by transferring the funds from the Contingency budget to the main project budget; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. The Project Manager confirmed the cost for recruitment and the Heritage Manager’s extended hours would be £12,980, leaving £646,659 in the Contingency budget. Cllr Pearce proposed to allow that cost to be transferred from the Contingency budget; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

The Heritage Manager provided an update on heritage activities, noting there had been 163 recorded interactions across the previous events held at Belle Vue Park, D Day, The Big Green Weekend and First Light. The Town Hall Heritage Manager was due to attend five sessions of Food In School Holidays to generate conversations and capture memories on the theme of traditions and superstitions. The team were also due to attend the Rock n Roll festival and the Heritage Open Days Heritage Skills Market.

The Project Manager was due to provide talks on the Town Hall. Cllr Brooks requested this be discussed further in confidential session with suggestions for locations.

- 40.4. To receive an update on the main build contract – The deadline for the tender bids was 19th August.

For the evaluation process would require input from members of the Design Team as well as any Councillors who may be interested in evaluating the quality questions on the extent to which the bidder uses the local supply chain, their public engagement, training and management of site visits during the development process. The Project Manager requested any interested Councillors notify her if they wish to be involved in the evaluation. This was compliant with equality legislation, as it would be the same scoring method and at the moderation meeting the Procurement Advisor would be moderating to ensure consistency and fairness. Benjamin Porter and Cllrs Pearce, Rappensberger and Barker put their names forward. Once evaluations were completed, Full Council would make the formal appointment.

41. Finance, budget monitoring and payments (see report):

- 41.1. To note and consider income and expenditure, including:
41.1a. To monitor the budget – There were no comments.

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41.1b. To consider any payments for approval – There were no payments for approval.

42. To receive an update on the Heads of Terms for the Registrars, including consideration of the rent appraisal (some aspects may be confidential)

This item would be discussed in confidential session.

43. To consider matters relating to employment and recruitment (confidential)

It was requested at the October meeting this Committee to discuss a timetable for the recruitment of the Town Hall team, including lottery-funded and full-funded posts, to identify any funding required for the 2025-2026 financial year. This item would be considered further in confidential session.

44. To consider any recommendations to Full Council

There were no further recommendations.

45. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 12th September 2024 – 10:00

46. Items for the next agenda and close

To consider the Volunteer Policy and Handbook and discuss its implementation.

47. 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 issues relating to the matters on this agenda:

47.1. To consider any legal issues, including those above as required – 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 10:51

40.3 Any planned actions to be authorised for progression – A confidential suggestion was made on the location for the Project Manager’s talks.

42. To receive an update on the Heads of Terms for the Registrars, including consideration of the rent appraisal (some aspects may be confidential)

An update on the Heads of Terms for the Registrars was provided.

43. To consider matters relating to employment and recruitment (confidential)

An update was provided on the recruitment for a filmmaker and the Heritage Manager thanked the Lowestoft Town Council officers for their work as there had been a large volume of emails for clarifications, expressions of interests and received tenders.

Recruitment for the Heritage Officer would close 19th August and the assessment date of application was set for Tuesday 3rd September.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:14

Signed:

12 September 2024