

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**15:30 on 3 October 2022**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green, Graham Parker, Andy Pearce and Elise Youngman

**In attendance:** Sarah Foote (Deputy Town Clerk) and James Cox (Finance and Information Officer)

**Public:** There were no members of the public in attendance

40. **Welcome.**

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

41. **To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence.**

No apologies were received. Cllr Patience was absent.

42. **Declarations of Interests and dispensations.**

Cllr Pearce, Barker and Green declared they were members of the Town Hall Project Board. Cllr Parker and Pearce declared they were members of Gunton Residents' Association.

43. **To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 5 September 2022.**

Cllr Brooks proposed acceptance of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Parker; and agreed (one abstention from Cllr Pearce)

44. **Public forum.**

No advanced comments had been received. The live streaming of this meeting was not possible.

Cllr Pearce declared that he had received correspondence about charging for leisure fees.

45. **To review the 2022 – 2023 Lowestoft Town Council Budget and reserves (some aspects may be confidential).**

Cllr Pearce stated that for working purposes 10% had been allowed for inflation but was not the final figure and the rate of inflation may fall or rise before the final recommendation on precept and budget was made. Cllr Parker expressed concern that members of the public thought a 10% increase in precept had been agreed. Inflation for the 2022/23 had outstripped predicted and the sub-committee would need to look at threatened budgets and whether levels of reserves are appropriate.

46. **To review the 2023-24 Lowestoft Town Council Budget and reserves including the following (some aspects may be confidential).**

The Finance and Information Officer confirmed that a new template was being prepared. Cllr Pearce summarised the current situation as £2.4m budget with a precept of £1.8m. Going forward precept would need to be increased or budget cut. The Sub-committee would need to consider the budget line by line.

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Budget Line	Agreement
Community Halls R&M	<p>Finance Officer to give consideration to R&amp;M figures for Community Halls and what items could be in asset compliance. It was proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Brooks; and agreed (Cllr Parker abstained) that pending the information requested above, lift budget to £5,000 instead of £3,300.</p> <p>A cleaning budget of £1,600 for Whitton Hall be added. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.</p> <p>Cleaning of Gunton Community Hall to be considered by AID Committee in November</p>
Community Halls Reserve	<p>Finance Officer to check if sewage charge at Uplands is quarterly or annual. Cllr Pearce proposed, seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour that £25,000 be added to reserve to build funds for repairs and improvements at Community Halls.</p>
Parks and Open Spaces	<p>To be discussed when grounds maintenance contract has been explored further</p>
Community Safety	<p>EMR at target. Defib budget to stay at £10,000 and to be precepted. Cllr Pearce proposed that reserves were sufficient and no precept required. If potential works at Britten Road were taken from reserves, precept would be required to recover.</p>
Capital Works	<p>Some items in recovery (Belle Vue Bridge) needed to be removed. Officers were currently reviewing condition surveys to give a better picture of what may be required.</p>
Elections	<p>ESC to be asked to provide projected figures for 2023 local elections. Review once this data is received.</p>
Marina Theatre - capital	<p>A number of pieces of equipment were reaching end of life but the flying rig was due to be retired in summer 2023. It had been agreed last year to put £100k as a down payment. The total cost of the flying rig was expected to be £212,000 based on quotations received and in addition there was the previously unbudgeted expenses of the lighting desk. Cllr Pearce proposed moving reclaimed Town Hall funding, at end of phase one of the project, to Marina Theatre capital budget which would decrease the amount needed to be found to finance the flying rig. Seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.</p>

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Specific items on the agenda for discussion were:

46.1. Festive Lights

Budget is for current contract and renewal at end of year three of contract. New lights will not need to be purchased. Current contract is £6295. Agreed to budget £8373 for contract renewal to ease spread of new contract over the three years. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Parker asked if the council was committed to £6295, what would the cost be to withdraw from the contract.

46.2. Climate Emergency and Ecological

Fuel reimbursement will come from this budget heading and not personnel. £10k to be spent on Kittiwake partnership. Cllr Pearce proposed £13,750 is precepted and that the Climate Committee are asked to give consideration to a budget request.

46.3. Town Hall Loan Repayment

Deferred to a future meeting.

47. **Date of the next meeting.**

10 October at 11.00 am and 17 October at 1.00 pm.

48. **Items for the next Agenda and Close.**

49. **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.**

The chair closed the meeting at 17.30

Signed: 

24 October 2022