

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE

12:30 PM on Tuesday 1 November 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks (Deputy Chair), Alan Green (Chair), Graham Parker and Andy Pearce

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

Public: There were no members of the public present

80. Welcome.

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

81. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Youngman. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour

82. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

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

Cllr Brooks declared membership of the Environmental Waste Group.

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

None received.

83. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 3 October 2022, 10 October 2022, 17 October 2022 and 24 October 2022.

The Finance and Information Officer confirmed the minutes from the 3rd, 10th and 17th October were circulated before the meeting and the 24th October minutes are still being produced. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

84. Public forum.

There were no members of the public in attendance and no comments had been received in advance of the meeting.

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

The budget position for 2022-2023 was circulated before the meeting. The Finance and Information Officer will examine it further this week.

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

86.1. The Marina Theatre

The flying rig was discussed and it was confirmed that this is included in the budget. It was confirmed that there was provision in the budget for the lights. A spreadsheet with the Marina's priorities of capital works that need completing over the next 12 months was to be considered at next week's meeting and it was requested that the Finance and Information Officer re-circulate the list for councillors to review ahead of the meeting next week.

86.2. Staffing

It was noted that following decisions of Full Council around recruitment the councillors had asked for a total figure for the 2023-24 staffing budget. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be provided to the next meeting.

86.3. Bulky Waste

It was noted bulky waste disposal is to be considered by the next Climate Emergency Committee prior to November's Full Council meeting.

It was noted that in going through the budget spreadsheet, anything listed as grounds maintenance will not be covered as that is for a separate discussion on works being outsourced or in-house.

Budget Line	Agreement
Individual Parks/Waterways and Ponds	<p>On waterways and ponds, the Finance and Information Officer confirmed there is approximately £17,500 in the Fen Park Pond reserve. It was agreed that can come off the total £32,000 budget leaving £14,473 budget for waterways and ponds.</p> <p>It was noted that an agreement has been previously made on works to be conducted with the maximum budget of £50,000 and a delegation to staff has been worked into the budget.</p> <p>This item only needs to come back to Full Council if the quotes come in over the maximum budget.</p>
Play Areas	<p>Capital Investment for play areas is not for new play equipment, it is in relation to items such as railings, new gates and fencing.</p> <p>The refurbishment budget for 2023-24 is £88,000 based on the 2022-23 budget plus inflation.</p> <p>The Capital Investment budget for 2023-24 is £16,500 based on the 2022-23 budget plus inflation.</p> <p>There is a potential underspend from this year's play area budget which could be rolled forward.</p> <p>It was noted repair costs should come down but at this time there is no dedicated play area repair budget as it comes from the overall repair and maintenance budget and is therefore not individually itemised.</p>
Play Areas Reserve	<p>Council's policy is that when taking any unbudgeted expenditure from reserves, it must be replaced so the reserves are not exhausted.</p> <p>Whitton Green was to be the designated play area for 2020-21 when the budget was £50,000 but it increased to £80,000 due to combining it with</p>

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	<p>the landscaping works and outdoor fitness equipment. As this was not precepted it had to come out of the reserves. The first half of the overspend was precepted for 2022-23, with the second half still to be precepted. Cllr Pearce proposed to move the overspend of £48,500 provisionally into 2024-25 to keep the percentage increase in precept down; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.</p> <p>The Finance and Information Officer to provide the projected underspend of play areas at year end to be reviewed at the next meeting.</p>
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	<p>It was noted that due to the short time the new equipment has been in it is difficult to know the usage and demand of the equipment and this figure should be left at £0 until an assessment on usage can be done in a future year.</p>
Toilets	<p>Toilets have a refurbishment budget and capital investment of £152,000 for the current year (figure includes reserves) before the precept next year.</p> <p>A question was raised whether or not to precept £100,000 for 2023-24 as the Council is unable to refurbish and replace all toilets in the next two years. Cllr Pearce proposed taking out £20,000 capital investment for 2023-24 and leaving the budget amount of £88,000 for refurbishment as a working figure that is subject to revisit in light of the effect on the precept; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.</p>
Utilities	<p>It was requested that the Finance and Information Officer increase the utilities budgets for 2023-24 by an annual inflation amount.</p>
Triangle Market	<p>Cllr Pearce suggested leaving the Capital Investment budget in plus RPI due to ongoing discussion on toilets and large projects to ensure the reserve does not get depleted. There are currently no steady sources of income for the Triangle Market so this will be set to £0.</p>
Allotments, Community Gardens and Community Orchards	<p>There is a Capital investment budget of £10,000 for 2022/23.</p> <p>The Council pays the Allotment Association £1,000 annually, under a 14 year old agreement, to manage the assets. Cllr Pearce suggested working out what the £1,000 equates to for 2022-23 after inflation is applied and using this to inform next year's budget.</p> <p>Cllr Pearce proposed the 2023-24 Capital Investment budget be left as an increase in RPI and the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee can revisit if needed; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.</p> <p>Cllr Pearce stated if the admin fee is increased by 15 years RPI then they will need to increase the rental income but this will require a discussion with the Chair of the Lowestoft and District Allotment Association. It was suggested to leave the 2023-24 Rent as it is pending review of the lease. It was queried if we can make our sites more accessible and it was confirmed that it could be part of the capital upgrades.</p> <p>Cllr Pearce proposed provisionally leaving the maintenance figure in the budget as a working figure, pending a meeting of the Allotments Working Group and a meeting with the Lowestoft and District Allotment Association; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.</p>

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Normanston Park	It was previously decided to contra all income so all income can be re-invested in the park.
Great Eastern Linear Park	Cllr Pearce proposed a budget of £10,000 on capital investment in order to cover the three stage works recommended in the report completed on waterways; ponds and stream. Seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. It was queried if there should be inclusion for management of trees and it was clarified that this will be discussed as part of ground maintenance.
Links Road Car Park	Cllr Pearce suggested to not precept for capital investment as it was agreed that the rent money paid for using the site was going to go into the Links Road reserve. This figure was initially based on 44 weeks and it was confirmed the Council will be paid additional rent for time over this. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee that any additional rent also goes into Links Road reserve; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
Denes Oval	The total budget for the project was £122,000, of which £80,000 is already in place. Cllr Pearce proposed budgeting £33,500 for Capital Investment for 2023-24 which is the £122,000 minus the £80,000 minus the club's contribution of £8,500; Seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. It was mentioned the Denes Oval utilities bill is lower than that of other parks and the Finance and Information Officer will look into utilities.
Belle Vue Park	Cllrs requested to have the spreadsheet adjusted to only be Belle Vue Park and remove Jubilee Bridge as it was established we have no liability. A Councillor queried if capital investment is to be allocated and that a survey may be required to know what needs to be done. It was decided to leave capital investment blank for now.
Thatch Cottage	£40,000 has already been precepted for rethatching the cottage –Cllr Pearce suggested leaving it at £0 for 2023-24 and in a year's time Council can review the available budget when they are within six months of the works being carried out.

87. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 8th November 12:30

88. Items for the next Agenda and Close.

89. 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.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour

The chair closed the meeting at 14:08

Signed: 

22 November 2022