

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 20 November 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Paul Page (Chair), Andy Pearce and Deborah Ray (Deputy Chair). Non-Councillor member John Sillett

In Attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Public: Three members in attendance (in person)

89. Welcome

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

90. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Barker with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllr Craig and Ms Bunn were absent with no apologies received.

91. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

91.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he was the Town Council representative on the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership (LKP). Mr Sillett declared he was a member of the East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA).

91.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

92. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 16 October 2023

Cllr Pearce proposed approval and requested officers confirm that allocation of the LKP grant was allocated to the Climate and Ecological budget as decided by Full Council; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

93. 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 – Those in attendance made no comments.

94. To receive a report from an invited speaker regarding the Local Plan and the Town Council's Climate Action Plan

Dr Hugh Ellis worked for the Town and Country Planning Association and supported the We Are Here Project by Rights Community Action. Speaking on the Local Plan he raised the concerns for vulnerable coastal communities and the need to consider the future challenges these communities face with climate change and the rising sea levels. Flood risks impacted economic confidence and investment in the town could suffer if companies were not willing to invest in the area due to the rising sea level.

The Project and Committee Clerk temporarily left the chamber at 15:53

The Project and Committee Clerk returned to the chamber at 15:54

Cllr Ray declared she was a member of the We Are Here Lowestoft Group and confirmed they were working to submit a document to the Local Plan for climate resilience to be considered in

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the plan.

Dr Ellis was thanked for speaking to the Committee and it was suggested he attend a Full Council meeting (in person) in the future. Officers would liaise with Dr Ellis to arrange him speaking to the Planning Committee and raise the lack of climate resilience in the Local Plan.

95. To receive a report from an invited speaker regarding the accumulative impact of proposed energy projects on East Suffolk

Fiona Gilmore from Suffolk Energy Actions Solutions (SEAS) discussed the economic and job opportunities for Lowestoft and challenging the national grid on the current plans for the energy programme in Suffolk with offshore wind solutions and the establishment of an energy island. On the North Sea Corridor Lowestoft was a key area for its significant geographical location as the most eastern town and this presented an opportunity for Lowestoft to become a centre of excellence for renewable energy.

One proposal from SEAS was to set up a task force to work on the development of a centre of excellence to grow and build on the actions currently undertaken and contact innovators in Cambridge to discuss these opportunities.

Ms Gilmore confirmed East Suffolk Council (ESC) had been involved in this project and she was due to provide a presentation to them this week.

Ms Gilmore suggested SEAS be invited to an open debate with Peter Aldous MP for an opportunity to discuss and raise awareness on the job opportunities in Lowestoft. Cllr Pearce proposed this Committee support the request and discuss the possibility of this debate with East Suffolk Council at the next quarterly liaison meeting; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Ms Gilmore was thanked for speaking to the Committee and she would keep members notified of the meeting and feedback with ESC.

96. To monitor expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority

The Committee Clerk summarised recent expenditure, noting that the LKP grant had been allocated to the Climate and Ecological budget.

97. To consider any matters to raise with Cllr Rachel Smith-Lyte (Cabinet Member for the Environment) or Cllr Caroline Topping (East Suffolk Council Leader with responsibility for Parish Liaison) and to receive feedback on any matter previously raised

Cllr Brooks proposed the overlooked acoustic panel, which was intended to reduce noise for residents and wildlife at the Gunton McDonald's, be raised with ESC as residents had reported a loud and constant hum in the area; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed the presentation by SEAS, due to be delivered to ESC, be raised with Caroline Topping and formally requested to be discussed at the next quarterly liaison meeting; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

98. To consider the following items on the agenda:

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98.1. To consider avenues of community engagement and relevant actions:

98.1a. Receive an update on the formation of a Lowestoft Pupils Climate Committee –

The Events and Administration Officer joined the meeting at 16:45

Concerns were raised on the duplication of forums, noting the recent decision by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to set up a youth forum. It was noted that this would be a different forum but complementary to the main Youth Forum. As Ms Bunn was not in attendance this item was deferred to the next meeting to receive a report.

98.1b. Plans for the ‘Big Green Weekend’ for 2024 – Cllr Pearce proposed, if there were no delegations to this Committee, to delegate to officers in conjunction with interested Councillors to progress plans for the event.

As the creation of a network of community and stakeholder groups was required as part of the declared climate emergency, it was suggested that this event be more ambitious and grow by joining with other community groups who could be involved in the organisation of the event. Cllr Pearce confirmed that the proposed delegation included contact and engagement with other community organisations. Cllr Page seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

98.1c. Receive a presentation from Cllr Ray on Plant Based Councils – Cllr Ray provided a presentation on how the current food system affects climate and biodiversity.

Queries were raised on how this parish being plant-based would affect the global issues and whilst the reduction of meat consumption was important, it was equally important to support farmers in an agricultural county.

The Events and Administration Officer queried if the Town Council moving to fully plant-based would apply to all events, such as the Triangle Market days and the Pride Event, as the requirement for plant-based food would disadvantage local businesses. It was noted that dietary requirements were always considered to ensure options were available for events.

The Committee confirmed the fully plant-based menu would only be provided at events where the Town Council has full responsibility for hospitality and not the annual events where food and trading are provided by third parties. It was noted that the café for the Town Hall would need to be considered as that may constitute as direct hospitality by the Town Council.

Cllr Ray suggested a compromise with plant-based options to be made available rather than a 100% plant-based menu.

Cllr Pearce proposed for a trial period of six to nine months, events where the Town Council provides hospitality and food plant-based options be provided. During this period the conversation and debate around the options would be evaluated.

At 17:29 Cllr Pearce proposed to suspend standing orders for twenty minutes; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

It was noted that this could proceed without permission from Full Council as it was a trial period and events run by this Committee and the Events and Communications Sub-

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Committee already had delegated authority. It was confirmed there would be no restrictions to trading by third parties on Town Council land. Cllr Ray seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

Mr Sillett left the meeting at 17:35

- 98.2. To consider the following in relation to the Earth Protector Town Status of Lowestoft Town Council and relevant actions:
- 98.2a. Recommend Lowestoft Town Council signs the pledge for Plastic Free Communities as the Community Lead – Cllr Page proposed a recommendation to Full Council be made to sign the pledge; seconded by Cllr Pearce who requested officers advise Full Council on the Town Council's current plastic usage; all in favour.
- 98.2b. Setting up a Steering Group for Plastic Free Communities and appointment of a Town Council representative – This item was deferred to the next meeting.
- 98.3. To consider Lowestoft Town Council's draft Climate Action Plan and relevant actions:
- 98.3a. Support for Zero Hour and their Climate and Ecology Bill – This item was deferred to the next meeting as Full Council approval would be required.
- 98.4. To consider issues relating to waste and pollution:
- 98.4a. Receive an update on the Bulky Waste Scheme – An update was requested on how the scheme has been promoted via the website and community partners, with feedback to be received from the contractor. It was noted that the Deputy Clerk was scheduling a meeting between this Committee and the contractor which would address the requested updates.
- Officers confirmed the successful uptake with November collections being fully booked at the time of the meeting.
- There had been confusion with the surrounding parishes as to whether they had access to the service. Cllr Pearce proposed an item go to Full Council to consider arranging two annual meetings with the surrounding three parishes to discuss waste management. This could include how the bulky waste scheme could be extended to the wider Lowestoft if the other parishes were interested in buying into the scheme; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.
- 98.4b. Submitting a response to the East Suffolk Council's Refuse & Dog Waste Bin Policy Consultation – This item was deferred to the next meeting.
- 98.5. To consider the natural environment with regards to Lowestoft's parks and open spaces and relevant actions:
- 98.5a. The Town Council Tree Policy in relation to the pledge to replace felled trees – This item was deferred to the next meeting.
- 98.6. To consider issues relating to the energy and water supply of the built environment of Lowestoft and relevant actions:
- 98.6a. Receive an update on a new energy supplier – Quotes had been received and were cheaper than the current provider though it would be worthwhile obtaining quotes from more suppliers so a full comparison document could be compiled. This item was deferred to the next meeting.
- 98.6b. Receive an update on the water refill scheme – Officers had not yet received a response to the Expression of Interest form.
- 98.7. To consider public transport and alternative methods of travel and relevant actions:
Receive the notes of the Public Transport Working Group and consider any relevant actions – The Working Group had agreed to recommend that a public meeting be scheduled in 2024 with groups such as ESTA and the East Coast College in attendance.

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At 17:52 Cllr Page proposed to suspend standing orders for five minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

98.7a. Support for a local cycling group – This item was deferred to the next meeting.

99. To review the decisions on this agenda from the perspective of nature

The Committee agreed nature had been considered in the decisions of this meeting.

100. Date of the next meeting

Monday 18 December 2023 - 15:30

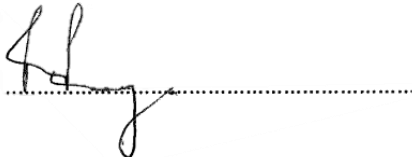
101. Items for the next agenda and close

Any items should be sent to the office. An item to cover feedback from the ESC quarterly liaison meeting was requested for the next agenda and Full Council.

102. 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

There were no resolutions.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:56

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Page', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Signed:

18 December 2023