

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 18 March 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Paul Page (Chair), Graham Parker, 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)

Also in attendance: A representative of Suffolk Wildlife Trust (in person) and a representative of Zero Hour (via zoom)

141. Welcome

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

142. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Barker and Rachel Bunn with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllr Craig was absent with no apologies received.

143. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

143.1. 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 Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) representative on the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership. Cllr Parker declared he was an East Suffolk Councillor. Cllr Brooks declared she knew the person who made the request per item 150.7b. Mr Sillett declared he was a member of the East Suffolk Travel Association. Cllrs Brooks, Page and Ray declared they were members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT).

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

144. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 19 February 2024

Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

145. 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 other than those due to provide presentations.

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

The updated budget position would be provided at Full Council. There was an expected year-end surplus of £23,500 to carry forward, in addition to next year's budget.

147. To receive a presentation from a member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust in connection with community engagement activities

The representative from SWT was a community outreach officer looking to engage local groups to discuss and understand their goals for local green spaces and form a working group to deliver on those aspirations.

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The Committee suggested SWT contact the Friends of Fen Park, the Gunton Estate Community Hall Management Committee and the Most Easterly Community Group who had previously expressed an interest in a community garden project. Arnold's Bequest was also recommended as a site for engagement opportunities.

SWT intended to re-establish wildlife corridors between the various nature sites and bring back biodiversity. Gardens were a key focus for this and the wildlife pathways between gardens could be an opportunity for engagement work.

148. To receive a presentation from Zero Hour regarding the Climate and Ecology Bill

Cllrs Page, Pearce and Ray declared they had been lobbied to support this item.

The Climate and Ecology bill was a private members bill that planned to address the climate crisis in a science-led, cross-party approach and Zero Hour was the campaigning body. The bill was due to be reintroduced to Parliament and was supported by 134 MPs, 350 Councils (of various levels), 520 organisations and 4 peers.

Zero Hour had engaged with East Suffolk Council (ESC) and the presenter would check if a mandate had been sought to ensure the entire district council was in support of the bill and provide an update to the Committee.

Zero Hour informed the Committee that the bill did not have the methodology to address the climate and ecological emergency, instead it sought to have governments create their own strategies to work towards the aspirations in the bill.

The representative offered to send over reports and other supporting material.

Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to Full Council to support this bill; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

Both presenters left the meeting at 16:36

149. 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, including the following:

149.1. To receive feedback from Cllrs Page and Ray on the meeting with East Suffolk Council discussing collaboration on environmental matters – Cllrs Page and Ray agreed it was a positive meeting and it had been agreed to continue these meetings to identify key opportunities for collaboration.

The issues associated with planning and the adverse effects on the climate had been discussed and officers were asked to query when the standalone meeting with ESC would be convened to discuss planning and the associated issues, per the discussions at a previous Quarterly Liaison.

It was noted that ESC had only adopted a 10% biodiversity net gain and officers were asked to clarify with ESC how that decision was made.

149.2. To receive feedback from a meeting with East Suffolk Council regarding waste and

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recycling – Cllr Pearce requested a comment made in the meeting for East Suffolk Council to direct those within the Lowestoft parish unable to afford their services to the Lowestoft bulky waste service be included in the notes of the meeting. It had been agreed that ESC would share data fly-tipping data and LTC would share collection data on the bulky waste scheme.

149.3. To receive an update on the acoustic panel for McDonalds in Gunton ward – Cllr Brooks requested officers ask if the acoustic panel had been installed.

150. To consider the following items:

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

150.1a. Receive an update on the formation of a Lowestoft Pupils Climate Committee – This item would be deferred until Ms Bunn was in attendance to provide the update.

150.1b. Plans for the 'Big Green Weekend' for 2024 – An update was provided on the plans for the Sunday event at Kensington Garden, which would be focussed on upcycling.

As the tearooms were involved, it was queried if they could be asked about providing a plant-based menu for the weekend.

Cllr Parker proposed for next year's event LTC approach the surrounding parishes for a joint green weekend; seconded by Cllr Pearce who requested regular meetings be scheduled with the other parishes with one meeting to focus on this proposal; five votes in favour and one abstention.

Cllr Pearce proposed the commercial tenants in Sparrows Nest and Kensington Garden be asked whether they could provide a plant-based menu, which LTC would promote and consider supporting as an event cost; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

150.2. To consider Lowestoft Town Council's draft Climate Action Plan and relevant actions:

150.2a. Review the Climate Emergency Action Plan and consider a recommendation to Full Council, with consideration of feedback from the standalone meeting – There was no recommendation and the standalone meetings would continue to work through the remainder of the document.

150.2b. Receive feedback on the scheme of delegations relating to planning considerations and discuss the capacity of members to join the Planning Committee – Members were asked to consider joining the Planning Committee ahead of the Annual General Meeting. It was noted that as agendas are shared with all Councillors, members could review the applications and send public comments to the Planning Committee or attend as a member of the public.

150.2c. How the Environmental Policy is monitored

150.2d. A recommendation to Full Council on whether the Environmental Policy, Items Sustainability Strategy and Climate Declaration should remain as standalone documents or be merged into one

Items 150.2c and 150.2d were given joint consideration. It was suggested to have the policies reviewed in batches with common themes rather than in alphabetical order to effectively cross-reference and identify where policies need to be combined or adapted to reduce duplication.

Cllr Pearce proposed these policies be reviewed as soon as possible and take a considered view on whether the policies concerning the climate and environment should remain separate or be merged; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

150.3. To consider the following in relation to the Earth Protector Town Status of Lowestoft Town Council and relevant actions:

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150.3a. Setting up a steering group to audit, plan and monitor the activities and projects undertaken to protect and enhance the environment in and around the town – This item was deferred to the next meeting and more information was requested on its requirement as part of the Earth Protector Town declaration.

150.4. To consider the natural environment with regards to Lowestoft's parks and open spaces, and other ecology related matters, and relevant actions:

150.4a. Receive an update on the progress of the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce informed the Committee that ESC had agreed to be the accountable body of the partnership and take over ownership of the finances from offshore wind developers. A further update would be provided in confidential session.

150.4b. A quotation for kittiwake nesting mitigation measures on the western elevation of the Marina Theatre – This item was requested by February Full Council to query if the quote could be allocated to the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget.

At 17:31 Cllr Brooks proposed to suspend standing orders for ten mins; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed the quote be allocated from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget or reserve; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed to reallocate the £8,500 kittiwake-related expenditure from the Marina Theatre budget to the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

150.4c. Receive an update on the works to support bees in the Town Council parks and open spaces – Cllr Brooks informed the Committee that SWT advised patches of wildflowers in open spaces were preferable to pollinators and planters.

Cllr Ray suggested the site 'buglife' be reviewed as they have mapped out the bee lines in the country.

This was still in progress and Cllr Pearce proposed the Project and Committee Clerk continue to develop the initiative further; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Cllr Page proposed the remaining items be deferred to the next agenda and a standalone meeting convened for item 150.6a; seconded by Cllr Parker; five votes in favour and one abstention.

150.5. To consider issues relating to the energy and water supply of the built environment of Lowestoft and relevant actions:

150.5a. Receive an update on the installation of water refill stations

150.6. To consider public transport and alternative methods of travel and relevant actions:

150.6a. Receive the notes from the Public Transport Working Group meeting

150.7. To consider issues relating to waste and pollution:

150.7a. To consider a policy for dog waste bins

150.7b. A request for dog waste bins in alley ways between Edinburgh Road and Park Road, Edinburgh Road and St Margaret's Road and Edinburgh Road and Cambridge Road

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

It was agreed that the perspective of nature had been considered in all decisions.

152. Date of the next meeting

Monday 15 April 2024 15:30

153. Items for the next agenda and close

Any items should be sent to the office.

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- 154. 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**

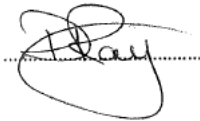
Mr Sillett left the meeting at 17:40

Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 17:40

- 150.4a. Receive an update on the progress of the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce provided a confidential update.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:43

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Day', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Signed:
15 April 2024