

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
10:30 on 12 December 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce (Chair) and Bernadette Rappensberger

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Town Clerk), James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

109. Welcome

The Deputy Clerk temporarily left the meeting 10:33

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

The Deputy Clerk returned 10:34

110. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Paul Page and Graham Parker, with reasons provided. Cllr Begum proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

111. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

111.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Rappensberger declared she is aware of the Kirkley People’s Forum and attends some of their events, but is not a member.

111.2. Written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

112. The draft minutes and the appended confidential notes of the meetings on 14 November 2023

The draft minutes and confidential note were unavailable for this meeting and were deferred to the next meeting.

113. Public forum

Four public comments had been received with regard to item 116.4 and had been circulated to the Committee. It was agreed to take the comments into consideration at that agenda item.

114. Budget and Loan:

114.1. Monitoring the budget for 2023 – 2024, including delegated Committee and Sub-Committee budgets – It was noted that the budget was being monitored by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. The Deputy Clerk was shortly due to meet with a tenant and would report back to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee.

114.2. Bank reconciliations – It was noted that October’s bank reconciliation was underway.

115. Payments and Receipts:

115.1. The income and expenditure reports for November 2023 and December 2023 to date, including payments made under delegated authority (see schedules) – The income and expenditure reports had been circulated as follows. Cllr Begum requested clarification regarding the format of the receipts and payments document and agreed to speak with the Finance and Information Officer after the meeting.

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Table 1 November and December Payments

Date	Payment to	Description	Amount
1 November 2023	East Suffolk Council	Links Road car park NNDR	£196
1 November 2023	East Suffolk Council	SN Bowls Pavilion NNDR	£104
1 November 2023	East Suffolk Council	Hamilton House NNDR	£996
1 November 2023	Peter Colby Commercials Ltd	Unit 2 rent November	£2,050
2 November 2023	Essex and Suffolk Water	Normanston water Apr – Oct	£354.49
2 November 2023	Northumbrian Water Group Ltd	Legionella checks Sept – Oct	£1,539.58
2 November 2023	Munnings Supplies Ltd	Towels and gloves	£32.40
2 November 2023	Kompan Ltd	Normanston Park play area	£53,061.63
2 November 2023	Kompan Ltd	Play area repair parts	£333.91
2 November 2023	Kompan Ltd	Play inspections July	£2,062.54
2 November 2023	The Play Inspection Company Ltd	Cotman and Normanston inspections	£900
2 November 2023	Trade Gear Ltd	Line marking machine	£1,402.49
2 November 2023	AJ Builders	Thirlmere Walk matting	£2,550
2 November 2023	Marina Theatre Trust	Marina Theatre grant	£1,900
2 November 2023	Robert Mayes Charity	Bloodmoor Hill CC food grant	£1,500
2 November 2023	Wellers Law Group Ltd	Committee legal advice	£312
2 November 2023	Garden Discount Centre Ltd	Jacobsen repair	£132.94
2 November 2023	Munnings Supplies Ltd	Hand soap	£130.50
2 November 2023	Fatstickman Ltd	Winter PPE	£531.36
2 November 2023	North & Hawkins Ltd	Giardino condition survey	£720
2 November 2023	Wave Ltd	Water charges	£2,057.29
2 November 2023	AJ Builders	Marina cleaning	£2,563.20
2 November 2023	Garden Discount Centre Ltd	3x helmets	£103.68
2 November 2023	Suffolk Wildlife Trust	Kittiwake grant	£1,665
2 November 2023	AJ Builders	Triangle Market paving	£26,184
2 November 2023	AJ Builders	Mt water cylinder	£446.40
3 November 2023	Suffolk Pension Fund	Pensions October 2023	£11,859.02
6 November 2023	Fuel Card Services Ltd	Van fuel	£165.60 + £33.12 VAT = £198.72
6 November 2023	Sarah Foote	Parking and van repair reimbursement	£21.23 + £4.26 VAT = £25.49
6 November 2023	Taylor Williams	Parking reimbursement	£33.30 + £6.70 VAT = £40
6 November 2023	Lauren Elliott	Travel and parking reimbursement	£17.05 + £2.68 VAT = £19.73
6 November 2023	C&C Consulting Services Ltd	Health and safety support	£934.92
9 November 2023	Fleet 96 Rentals Ltd	Van hire October	£1,080
9 November 2023	Community Action Suffolk	NHD Plan room hire	£120
9 November 2023	Omnex Profilm Ltd	Marina Theatre sound processor	£3,672
9 November 2023	V.C. Cooke	Bin emptying October	£102
9 November 2023	V.C. Cooke	Bin emptying October	£354
9 November 2023	East Coast Waste	Waste disposal	£340.80
9 November 2023	Munnings Supplies Ltd	Gloves	£40.56
9 November 2023	The Society of Local	Committee Clerk CiLCA	£450

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	Council Clerks		
9 November 2023	Cloudy Group Ltd	IT service charge	£880.07
9 November 2023	DCM Surfaces	Cotman Close surfacing	£14,214.60
9 November 2023	Trees Direct	2x Silver Birch	£131.51 + £26.30 VAT = £157.81
9 November 2023	Thomson Environmental Consultants	Tree surveys	£4,095.88
9 November 2023	AJ Builders	St Margarets debris removal	£5,641.20
9 November 2023	Ben Burgess GroundsCare Equipment	John Deere lawn tractor	£22,194
9 November 2023	Gunton Primary Academy PSFA	Memorial play grant	£2,000
9 November 2023	Northumbrian Water Group Ltd	Legionella monitoring Sept 23	£769.79
9 November 2023	Claranet Ltd	Website hosting 23 – 24	£86.63
9 November 2023	J Parker's Dutch Bulbs Ltd	Bulbs	£2,141.10
9 November 2023	Wave Ltd	KG Water 1/6/22 – 16/9/23	£7,794.65
9 November 2023	HAGS-SMP Ltd	Cotman Close play area	£44,372.16
9 November 2023	Zurich Municipal	Normanston play insurance	£95.51
9 November 2023	Heathcliff Duncan	Plaque repair reimbursement	£11.65 + £2.33 VAT = £13.98
9 November 2023	East Point Business Services	HH rent and capital Q3	£8,659.38
9 November 2023	East Point Business Services	HH service charge Q3	£8,697.30
9 November 2023	Boggis Electrical Ltd	Marina Theatre emergency light	£469.37
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Waveney Norse legal advice	£53.04
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	General legal advice	£1,219.92
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Unit 2 legal advice	£1,577.84
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Arnolds Bequest legal advice	£1,458
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Marina Theatre legal advice	£5,544
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	TH legal advice	£116.64
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	TH and allotment legal advice	£114.12
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Property legal advice	£649.20
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Property legal advice	£1,651.92
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Allotments legal advice	£408.24
9 November 2023	Nicholsons Solicitors LLP	Denes Oval tennis legal advice	£1,224.72
9 November 2023	AJ Builders	Marina Theatre roof works	£303.60
13 November 2023	Fuel Card Services Ltd	Van fuel	£162.45 + £32.49 VAT = £194.94
16 November 2023	Credit Card Account	Credit card payments	£1,848.60
20 November 2023	Npower Ltd	Triangle Market electric	£499.30

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		October	
20 November 2023	Need2Store Ltd	Civic artefact storage	£240
20 November 2023	Fatstickman Ltd	Winter PPE	£362.18
20 November 2023	Garden Discount Centre Ltd	Edge trimmer	£139.86
20 November 2023	Tambai Promotions	BHM performance	£250
20 November 2023	Gearhire Sound and Light	Sound system Remembrance Day	£1,110
20 November 2023	Shine East Norfolk	Halloween Market entertainment	£25
20 November 2023	East Suffolk Council	Contested election May 23	£3,230.74
20 November 2023	East Suffolk One (Radio Network)	Triangle Market entertainment	£125
20 November 2023	MJ Training	First aid training	£248.40
20 November 2023	East Coast Sinfonietta	Remembrance performance	£250
20 November 2023	J Parkers Dutch Bulbs Ltd	Bulbs	£391.20
20 November 2023	P.J. Spillings (Builders) Ltd	T Hall degradation and asbestos	£76,496.40
20 November 2023	Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd	Hedge trimmer	£327.60
21 November 2023	Npower Ltd	Ken Gardens electric October	£88.18
21 November 2023	Npower Ltd	Ken Gardens electric October	£94.55
21 November 2023	Npower Ltd	Low Cem PC electric October	£107.79
21 November 2023	Npower Ltd	Normanston electric October	£407.62
21 November 2023	Npower Ltd	Denes Oval electric October	£731.98
21 November 2023	Npower Ltd	SN electric October	£474.19
21 November 2023	Npower Ltd	TH electric October	£879.71
22 November 2023	Anglian Water	Normanston water 1/4-2/10	£388.87
22 November 2023	Kingfisher Direct Ltd	P/ledger electronic payment	-£250.79

Table 2 November and December Receipts

Date	Received From	Description	Amount
2 November 2023	Resident	Return of Whitton Deposit	-£100
3 November 2023	Tenant	Rental income from tenant	£300
3 November 2023	Resident	Memorial Bench	£444.91
24 November 2023	Resident	Rental of Whitton Deposit	-£200

115.2. Any payments for approval (see schedule) - There were none.

116. Grants

116.1. Grant applications:

116.1a. Access Community Trust - £1,500 Cllr Brooks declared she knew of the applicant but had no financial interest in this organisation. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve this application; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

116.1b. Kirkley People's Forum - £4,209 – Cllr Brooks was concerned that the application seemed to be for funding to make payment to staff. Cllr Rappensberger clarified that they are volunteers and do not have paid staff, but as part of their room hire they were required to have reception cover for evening events. The Deputy Clerk considered the application to be acceptable on that basis. The Finance and Information Officer confirmed there was £11,460 remaining in the grants budget and £4,800 in the social and food relief budget.

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Cllr Pearce proposed conditional approval of this application, subject to staff verifying that the understanding that the grant is not for paying staff is correct. Cllr Pearce proposed using the £1,000 budget for providing administrative support to Friends and Stakeholder Groups, with the remainder to come from the grants budget. Cllr Rappensberger seconded the proposal; three Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. The Deputy Clerk noted the provision in the policy that applications should not usually exceed £2,000, however the Committee has discretion to consider applications exceeding this amount on a case-by-case basis.

- 116.1c. Project Apocalypse - £1,000 – Cllr Begum noted no breakdown of the finances had been provided, and no indication had been given as to the sustainability of the project. Cllr Brooks noted this was a private project and the Deputy Clerk agreed that the bank account details given were for an individual, which was contradictory to the Council's grant funding criteria. Cllr Pearce proposed no determination of this application at this stage, due to its ineligibility; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 116.1d. Norfolk and Suffolk Woodcarvers - £750 – Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the application. Cllr Begum queried whether the Town Council would have the opportunity to approve their advertisement before it is published. Cllr Pearce advised this would not be standard procedure and proposed to approve the application, but asked officers to advise the applicant that any reference to the Town Council in the advertising should be confined to its support for the project only; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 116.1e. The Lowestoft Players Ltd - £900 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this application, with funds to come from the defibrillator budget; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 116.2. Making a donation to the Britten as a Boy sculpture project – An approach had been made to the Town Council for financial support early on in the project, however it was understood there had been no response to a request from the Town Council for additional information. Cllr Begum noted the project had so far raised £58,000 of its £110,000 target. Cllr Brooks suggested the Town Council could purchase a maquette; the cost of a twenty inch maquette being £8,400. Cllr Begum noted the Town Council could be a named donor if it contributed more than £1,000. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation in principle to Full Council to pledge a donation of £5,000, to be paid in April 2024 from the grants budget, subject to officers checking that donations from local authorities are accepted. Cllr Brooks requested that consideration be given to purchase of a maquette also. Cllr Pearce proposed presenting the options to Full Council with no recommendation from this Committee, and asked officers to check in the meantime what would be acceptable to the project organisers; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.
- 116.3. A request from the Lowestoft Museum to draw down on the ring-fenced £10,000 match-funding – Cllr Pearce proposed for officers to make formal contact with the Lowestoft Museum, and, upon receipt of an invoice from the Museum, release the payment which has been set aside for this purpose; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour. Cllr Begum requested that grant applications be allocated to separate folders when uploaded to the website.
- 116.4. Making donations to assist those affected by conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza – Cllr Pearce noted that a donation had been made last year to assist those affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Feedback from members of the public at the time was mixed. Cllr Brooks advised she had requested this item with a humanitarian motive, and particularly with regard to children affected by the conflicts. Cllr Begum did not consider this an appropriate use of local authority funds and instead suggested that the Town Council

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should call from an immediate and permanent ceasefire. Cllr Pearce proposed to defer this item to Full Council with no recommendation from this Committee; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. The Deputy Clerk noted that advice would be required should Council be minded to call for a ceasefire.

117. Other financial and governance matters, including:

- 117.1. An update on the expenditure against budget for the changes to grounds maintenance operations from 2023/2024, including areas where the budget may be challenged (some aspects may be confidential) – It was noted this was mostly unchanged from the position presented to the last Full Council meeting.
- 117.2. Costs relating to the lease of a tipper vehicle – The Finance and Information Officer advised that quotations were pending, and lease/lease-purchase options were being explored. This would likely be for a period of three to five years at £10,000 per year. It may be possible to cover the year one costs from the funds already allocated to the workshop premises. Cllr Pearce proposed asking the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to make budget provision for £10,000 per year, and consider lease and lease-purchase options, which can be decided by this Committee or Full Council once more detail is received; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 117.3. The Community Infrastructure Levy fund for Lowestoft Town Council – It was noted that £1,565 had been received in the second instalment, and data was available on East Suffolk Council's website, though a more interactive system was being developed. Confirmation of the amount would not usually be provided in advance of the payment being received. Cllr Brooks considered the allocation of funding unfair and it was suggested this be added to a future Quarterly Liaison Meeting agenda. The Deputy Clerk advised that the East Suffolk Council CIL Officer had been due to speak with the Planning Committee and will make arrangements for this as well.
- 117.4. The Denes Oval:
 - 117.4a. The installation and funding of Wi-Fi at the Denes Oval – A request had been received from the Cricket Club to install Wi-Fi at the pavilion. It was considered that publicly accessible Wi-Fi for the wider site should be explored. Some provisional costs had been received. It was suggested the Wi-Fi should be installed at the pavilion first, before being rolled out to the wider site the following year. It was agreed to defer this item to January's meeting to see if the installation of the Wi-Fi could be completed before the start of the cricket season.
- 117.5. The interim internal audit report – The interim internal audit report was received and noted by the Committee and will also be received by Full Council. The Internal Auditor had made an observation about the general reserve balance being below the recommended range. Cllr Pearce advised that the Council has endeavoured to keep any precept increases to a minimum, whilst acknowledging its responsibilities for its assets and the need to maintain responsible contingencies in reserves. Cllr Brooks offered her thanks to all those involved with managing the Council's finances.
- 117.6. The Town Council's protocol for the handling of concerns raised by members of the public, including those which are not formal complaints or insurance claims, including those where contractors are acting under commission to the Town Council (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce requested clarity on the process should a member of the public claim a detriment involving a contractor commissioned by the Town Council and working on its land. Should the complaint be rejected by the contractor it was considered that the member of the public should be able to escalate it with the Town Council. It was clarified this did not relate to insurance claims or complaints which would be dealt with via the Complaints Procedure. The Deputy Clerk advised that a grievance against a contractor could always be taken up with the Town

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Council, and any contractor working on the Town Council's land would be held to account. A complaint could be submitted to the Town Council and would be handled in line with the procedure. The prominence of the Complaints Procedure on the Town Council's website will be considered as part of the review of the procedure. Cllr Begum advised she would not be able to stay if the meeting had to be extended. The Deputy Clerk advised that the Committee could receive updates without being quorate but would not be able to make any decisions.

117.7. Information to be supplied for Councillors to appropriately consider legal and commercial agenda items in confidential session, especially where they are required to make recommendations or decisions – It was agreed to defer this item to January's meeting.

118. Reviewing the following policies:

It was noted that the policies had been reviewed by the Working Group or the Personnel Committee. It had been discussed by the Personnel Committee that the Complaints, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures need to be updated to reflect the decision to standardise the resolution or update timescale to ten working days. Cllr Brooks had some comments regarding the Cycling Pledge which she would send to the Deputy Clerk. The Deputy Clerk would produce a summary sheet of the amendments for the Full Council meeting. Cllr Begum queried whether it would be possible to use inclusive language in the Conferring the Title of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen policies, and was advised the language used is in line with the legislation. Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the recommendations of the Working Group and the Personnel Committee and recommend adoption of the policies listed to Full Council, as amended; seconded by Cllr Begum; all in favour.

118.1. Community Engagement

118.2. Complaints Procedure

118.3. Conferring the Title of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen

118.4. Conferring the Title of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen – Post Award

118.5. Co-option

118.6. Cycling Pledge

118.7. Data Protection

118.8. Data Retention

118.9. Defibrillator

118.10. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

119. Lease and licence arrangements for the following (some aspects may be confidential):

The Deputy Clerk advised that updates for items 119.3 and 119.4 could be provided to Full Council. Cllr Brooks requested consideration of item 119.9 in confidential session. Regarding the remainder of the items under this heading, it had been agreed by Full Council that an Extraordinary Meeting should be convened if it were required to defer items for a second time. It would however be unlikely for this to take place before Christmas, so it was agreed that updates on these items should be received at January's meeting. The Deputy Clerk had provided a meeting paper to Full Council on these items, and would update this for the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting.

119.1. The Lowestoft War Memorial Museum Lease (confidential)

119.2. Licenses for the Lowestoft Town Tennis and Cricket Clubs (confidential)

119.3. The Heads of Terms and lease for Unit 2 (some aspects may be confidential)

119.4. Understanding the legal position and risk of a tenancy at will situation (some aspects may be confidential)

119.5. An update on progress of the Marina Theatre lease, following recent discussions with the legal and VAT advisors.

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- 119.6. London Road South land transfer (partial) to East Suffolk Council (confidential)
- 119.7. Northern coastal and sea wall transfers from East Suffolk Council (confidential)
- 119.8. Kirkley Community Sports and Social Club land from East Suffolk Council (confidential)
- 119.9. Legal and other aspects of the relationship with a tenant (confidential)

120. Date of the next meeting

9 January 2024 10:30

121. Items for the next agenda and close

Councillors were advised to send any requests to the office.

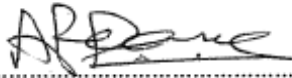
Cllr Begum proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

122. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

122.1. Any legal matters, including those above as required:

- 119.9. Legal and other aspects of the relationship with a tenant (confidential) – Cllr Brooks explained the issue she wished to raise. Cllr Pearce proposed asking officers to review the lease and approach the lawyer for advice; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Pearce suggested Cllr Brooks send details of any other concerns to the Deputy Clerk, with evidence, to discuss with the lawyer.

The meeting was closed 12:35.



Signed:

16 January 2024