

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Full Council Meeting
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:00 on 14 May 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker (Mayor), Connor Blowers, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Christine Moore, John Murray, Christian Newsome, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernadette Rappensberger and Nick Webb

In attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Public: No members of the public were in attendance

287. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained, and the meeting was welcomed. Cllr Barker also welcomed Cllr Blowers to the Town Council, and thanked those who had attended the recent Annual Assembly.

Cllr Webb arrived 18:02

288. Apologies for absence from any Councillors not in attendance

Apologies were received from Cllrs Nasima Begum, Robert Breakspear, Neil Coleby, Janet Craig, Paul Page and Deborah Ray, with reasons provided. Cllr Christine Moore had advised she would be in attendance but would be late. Cllr Parker proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

289. The signing of Cllr Connor Blowers' Declaration of Acceptance of Office

It was confirmed that Cllr Blowers had signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and this had been duly witnessed.

290. Declarations and dispensations

290.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – There were none.

290.2. Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

291. The draft minutes and confidential notes of the Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 9 April 2024 and the Full Council meeting on 23 April 2024

The confidential note of the meeting on 9 April had been circulated. Cllr Pearce had comments on the discussion regarding the allotments lease. It was not clear whether the confidential note from 23 April had been circulated. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve both sets of public minutes and defer both sets of confidential notes to the next Full Council meeting; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

292. Public forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance.

293. Any delegations to the Personnel Committee regarding management of staff absence (some aspects may be confidential), noting the Personnel Committee will make recommendations to Full Council for formal decision

Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the delegation to the Personnel Committee to manage staff absence, in line with the legal advice received. Cllr Pearce seconded the proposal and noted that draft updated Terms of Reference had been provided to reflect this delegation. Cllr Brooks amended her proposal to include approval of the amended Terms of Reference also; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

294. Current membership of the Personnel Committee is ten members. Appointing substitute

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members to the Personnel Committee to ensure going forward full membership is in attendance to consider business (some aspects may be confidential)

Cllr Pitts arrived 18:08

It was understood the principal authorities used substitutes. Where the Personnel Committee is required to consider legal items or matters relating to staff terms and conditions, and it may therefore only be able to share limited information, it would be beneficial democratically to have as many of the members in attendance as possible. The Committee currently has ten members but the quorum is four members. Cllr Brooks noted that half of the Council's members were already appointed to the Committee and questioned the need for substitutes. This type of arrangement could also mean that a substitute member may attend a meeting and be expected to vote when they had not participated in previous discussions.

Cllr Moore arrived 18:11

Cllr Barker explained this had been put forward as a practical measure. Cllr Pearce clarified that if all ten members were to attend a meeting there would be no requirement to call on the substitutes. The quorum for Full Council was seven and it was therefore expected this should be the minimum number of members present at the Personnel Committee meetings. Where there is a matter where the Town Council is acting in its capacity as corporate employer and is expected to approve a recommendation from a Committee where it may not have seen the supporting information, and which may have been put forward by a voting majority from four Councillors, the legitimacy of any such decision may be called into question. It was clarified that individual members of the Personnel Committee would not be appointing their own substitutes and officers would be responsible for calling on substitutes as required. Cllr Patience considered anyone who had joined the Committee should ensure their own attendance, which would negate the need for substitutes. Cllr Brooks accepted the explanation provided by Cllr Pearce. Cllr Barker advised that votes for any members who put themselves forward as substitutes would be taken separately, to identify the order in which staff should call upon the substitutes if required. It was noted that not all Councillors were present, however, the Personnel Committee was due to meet imminently so a decision was required. Cllr Pearce proposed approval to appoint substitute members to the Personnel Committee, in line with the agenda item and on the basis set out, and simultaneously approve the updates to the Terms of Reference, as had been provided in draft; seconded by Cllr Barker; eleven Councillors voted in favour; two Councillors voted against. Cllr Webb put his name forward to become a substitute member. Cllr Pearce proposed to appoint Cllr Webb as a substitute member to the Personnel Committee; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

295. Advanced payment of professional fees relating to Marina Theatre project pending signing of the funding agreement document at which point payment will be reimbursed

Cllr Blowers declared he is a paid employee of the Marina Theatre.

Cllr Blowers temporarily left the meeting 18:24 for the consideration of this item

The funding agreement had not yet been signed and it was unlikely this would take place before the end of the week, when the invoice was due for payment. The suggestion of the Project Committee was for the Town Council to pay the invoice, which would be reimbursed from the project funds, once the funding agreement has been signed. Cllr Pearce noted paragraph 6.4.3 of the draft funding agreement stated: 'the grant recipient (Lowestoft Town Council) shall not use the grant to pay for any expenditure commitments of the grant recipient entered into before the date of agreement, unless approved in writing by the Council'. Cllr Pearce proposed conditional approval to pay the invoice, subject to officers obtaining the requisite prior written permission from the relevant officer at East Suffolk Council. Without this written approval, payment should not be made; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

296. Date of next meeting

Annual Meeting of Lowestoft Town Council - 21 May 2024 at 18:30

Full Council Meeting – 30 May 2024 at 18:30 – It was noted the date had been changed from 28

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May.

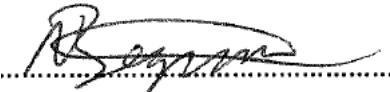
297. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda. There were no confidential matters for consideration at the meeting was closed at 18:27.

298. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

298.1. Any matters, including those above as required

Signed:


30 May 2024