

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
16:00 on 28 April 2021

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Paul Page and Andy Pearce (Chair)

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

75. Welcome

Cllr Hardie proposed that Cllr Pearce preside over the meeting; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

Councillors and members of the public were reminded of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed. The Chair of the Sub-Committee had given apologies and at this point in the meeting the Deputy Chair was not present. Cllr Hardie proposed that Cllr Pearce preside over the meeting; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

76. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Neil Coleby and Peter Lang. Cllr David Youngman had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

77. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

78. The draft minutes of the meeting on 17 March 2021 and the signing of previous minutes subsequent to 17 March 2020

The Sub-Committee accepted the minutes of the meeting on 17 March 2021 and was happy for the minutes of the previous meetings subsequent to 17 March 2020 to be signed also. Cllr Pearce was presiding over the meeting but did not have the hard copies of the minutes to be signed, so it was agreed that they could be signed at the next meeting.

79. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

There were none.

80. Reviewing the following Town Council policies:

80.1 Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings), including to consider any feedback from the webinar-style meeting trials and any amendments which may be required regarding the arrangements for holding meetings from 6 May 2021 – The Council has received favourable comments from the public to holding its video meetings in webinar format, and live streaming its meetings to enable members of the public to view meetings remotely or watch them at a later date. The Council intends to continue to live stream its meetings, regardless of whether they are held in person or not. The budget the Council has set aside for amplification equipment includes provision for the equipment the Council would need to do this. There is uncertainty on the legal position regarding video meetings, but the decision of a judicial review is expected by the end of the week. In light of this, Cllr Pearce proposed deferring consideration of the Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings) to the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

80.2 Social Media Protocol – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Social Media Protocol; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

80.3 Sponsorship and Advertising Policy – Regarding point 4.1n of the policy (the Council does not promote smoking or vaping), it was queried how this would apply if the Mayor were invited to open a vape shop. This would be more of a moral than a legal question

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for the Council. Given the Council's climate and health emergency declarations, the Council and the Mayor may wish to consider what it is appropriate for them to attend and endorse. The Council has recently given landowner permission for fast food traders to trade on its land, as it did not wish to remove people's choice and wanted to support local businesses. In the context of this policy specifically, the Mayor opening a vape store would not constitute sponsoring or advertising. Point 4.1n should be read in the context of the overall policy. The Community Safety Committee has the responsibility of implementing and overseeing the health emergency declaration, and could be asked to consider how it is applied to wider issues.

Cllr Page joined the meeting 16:17

Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Sponsorship and Advertising Policy; seconded by Cllr Hardie; three Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

80.4 Tablet Policy – The Council is considering replacing the tablets with laptops. If this does progress, the overall content and intention of the policy will not change significantly. There have been discussions as to whether it would be possible for Councillors to use their own personal devices, and access any confidential or sensitive documents via a secure medium. If that is agreed the policy would need to be updated to reflect how this would be managed. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to incorporate the Tablet Policy into the existing IT, Internet, Social Media, Email and Secure Use of USB Memory Sticks Policy; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour. It was agreed that Cllr Pearce would continue to preside for the rest of the meeting.

80.5 Toilet Strategy – The Strategy is under ongoing consideration with the Toilet Strategy Working Group. Specifications are being considered, but the Strategy also requires a review overall. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Toilet Strategy, with an acknowledgement that there will be a comprehensive review to follow; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

80.6 Training and Development Policy – The policy may need to be amended in future as new staff are appointed. For now, the Sub-Committee was happy with the policy in its current form and Cllr Hardie proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Training and Development Policy; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

80.7 Whistleblowing Policy – Point 10.2 of the policy states that the Clerk will be responsible for the register and records, however point 10.3 gives provision for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to report and ensure an appropriate person maintains records where any matters relate to the Clerk. Point 10.3 also refers to 'the Board' and it was agreed that any references to 'the Board' throughout the policy will be amended to 'the Council'. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to adopt the Whistleblowing Policy with this amendment; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

80.8 Wildflower Meadows Policy – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Wildflower Meadows Policy; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

80.9 Cycling Pledge – Cllr Green proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Cycling Pledge; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

81. Reviewing the Town Council's Standing Orders, and noting the Finance and Governance Committee's recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Standing Orders at the Annual Meeting in their current form, with a comprehensive review to follow

Full Council approved the recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee. A review of the Standing Orders will be on the agenda for the first meeting of this Sub-

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Committee in the new civic year. Currently, the next meeting of this Sub-Committee is scheduled for 19 May, but that may be subject to change depending on when the Annual Meeting takes place. Cllr Pearce proposed to note Full Council's ratification of the recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee, regarding the adoption of the Standing Orders, which will be reviewed by this Sub-Committee at its first meeting of the new civic year; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

82. The development of work practice procedures

The Clerk has put together two documents, to offer guidance to staff and contractors regarding the implementation of climate emergency friendly practices. This Sub-Committee was happy to note the procedures. Cllr Pearce proposed that once the procedures have been considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and Climate Emergency Committee that they are referred to Full Council for adoption, rather than coming back to this Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

83. Date of the next meeting

19 May 2021 16:00 – Given the uncertainty regarding the scheduling of the Annual Meeting, Cllr Pearce proposed cancelling the meeting of this Sub-Committee currently scheduled for 19 May, and that the next meeting should instead be held on 16 June at 16:00; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

84. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the livestream of the meeting. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting 16:39.

85. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed: 

16 June 2021