Minutes of a Lowestoft Charter Trustee Meeting held at the Town Hall, Lowestoft on Monday 10 February 2014 at 6.30 pm.

Members present:
J Ford (Mayor), S Ardley, M Barnard, S Barker, A Barron, R Bellham, M Cherry, Y Cherry, J Craig, G Douce, I Graham, C Law, F Mortimer, K Patience, M Pitchers, M Rudd, T Sullivan, J Swainson, N Webb, S Webb and Wheatley

Officers present:
A Charvonia, (Assistant Chief Executive), D Lee (Democratic Services Manager) and J Sturman (Senior Accountant)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Byatt, P Coghill, P Collecott, D Coulam and L Jacklin.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

4. LOWESTOFT CHARTER TRUSTEES BUDGET FOR 2014/15

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees (LCT) considered a report which sought approval to set a budget and precept for 2014/15 and to consider a budget estimate for 2015/16 and risk assessment of LCT activities.

Details were outlined in the report regarding the current budgetary position for 2013/14, proposed budget for 2014/15 and estimated budgets for 2015/16. In addition, the Risk Register for LCT activities was attached as Appendix A to the report. As at 31 March 2013 the LCT reserves stood at £9,711.07.

The proposed precept of £9,000 for 2014/15 would result in the annual amount paid by a Band D household being maintained at 60p. The budget was comprised of the following:

- £2,000 - Mayor of Lowestoft
- £2,000 – Waveney District Council Recharge for support services
- £5,000 – Grants and other expenditure to further the civic and ceremonial role of the LCT

Support Costs for the Mayor of Lowestoft and Lowestoft Charter Trustees

It was reported at the meeting that £2,000 had been ear-marked as a recharge for Waveney District Council as recompense for the cost of support services to the LCT, including audit fees and the annual Small Bodies Return. However, a more realistic assessment had been made as to the actual costs incurred for supporting the LCT in 2013/14 and this was estimated to be in the region of £21,000. As a result, there was a clear mismatch between the level of financial support charged for and the level of support services received. A breakdown detailing the estimated costings for 2013/14 had been circulated to all LCT Members prior to the meeting.
Concern was expressed as to the level and amount that Waveney District Council were subsiding the Lowestoft Charter Trustees. Clarification was given that the Lowestoft Charter Trustees were formed in 1974 as Lowestoft was not a parished area. The LCT was not a registered charity and did not have the powers that could be exercised by a Parish or Town Council. Its activities were limited to those of a civic and ceremonial nature. The only income received was by way of a precept each year.

It was considered that fundamentally the largest proportion of costs was connected with supporting the Mayor of Lowestoft. The following issues were put forward during the discussion on this item:

- Consideration needed to be given as to whether a Mayor of Lowestoft should be retained in the future, or not.
- Administrative support could be sought from outside Waveney District Council as the only requirement on the Council was to provide the LCT with a meeting room.
- The funding of apprenticeships was not in accordance with the LCT’s principles for promoting initiatives of a civic and ceremonial nature.

In summary, the Lowestoft Charter Trustees agreed that the provision of a detailed breakdown of estimated costs was helpful in stimulating discussion and enabling a more open conversation but the LCT was not in a position to make a formal decision regarding future support at this meeting. It was therefore suggested that a decision on whether to retain a Mayor of Lowestoft and if so how this should be funded should be referred to the next Annual LCT meeting in June 2014. The members of the LCT were requested to give this matter some thought and come to the Annual Meeting with costed suggestions for future support.

**LCT Grants Committee**

At the LCT Annual Meeting held on 10 June 2013 delegated authority was given to a LCT Grants Committee to administer the allocation of funds from the approved budget set aside for grant assistance to local organisations. Due to capacity issues, the LCT Grants Committee had not met to-date.

It was reported that £5,000 had been set aside in a grants pot for 2013/14. However, £500 had already been allocated from this to support the Mayor’s Community Award as part of the annual Chamber of Commerce Awards Scheme. Therefore £4,500 remained available for distribution.

Clarification was given that it was not intended to set up a time intensive grants process with associated application forms given the relatively small amount in the grants pot and the limited capacity available to administer such a scheme. Instead, the Grants Committee should determine which activities / initiatives they would like to support that were of a civic or ceremonial nature in Lowestoft. It was agreed that the LCT should not in the main organise any new events themselves but would support other initiatives / activities where the LCT could give added value.

It was noted that previously grants had been awarded to Lowestoft in Bloom, Lowestoft Christmas Lights and Lowestoft & Plaisir Twinning Association. The Twinning Association had expressed interest in receiving funding from the 2013/14 grants budget. Reference was made to the Commonwealth Baton coming to Lowestoft on 9 June 2014 and discussions that needed to be held as to how the LCT could contribute towards the enhancement of this event in terms of added value (similar to that provided for the 2013 Olympic Games).

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Lowestoft Charter Trustees budget for 2014/15 as outlined in the report be approved.
2. That the indicative budget for 2015/16 be noted.

3. That the risk assessment of January 2014 presented in Appendix A be approved.

4. That the Lowestoft Charter Trustees note the estimated figures provided by Waveney District Council and invite Lowestoft Charter Trustee Members to make organisational suggestions with costs for presentation prior to or at the Lowestoft Charter Trustees’ Annual Meeting.

5. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees (LCTs) considered a report seeking nominations for outside body representation on the Lowestoft Charity Board and Oulton Community Association.

Lowestoft Charity Board

The Lowestoft Charity Board was responsible for handling the administration associated with the management of Church Green Almshouses, management of the education foundation and Relief in Need Charity. (The Lowestoft Charity Board is a separate external charity with no direct links to the LCT).

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees currently have nomination rights to the Lowestoft Charity Board. Councillor Patience was appointed as a LCT representative on 11 June 2012 for a 4 year term of office. At the annual LCT meeting held on 10 June 2013, Councillor N Webb was appointed for a 4 year term of office expiring in June 2016, whilst Councillor Sullivan was appointed for a 4 year term of office expiring in June 2017. However, due to a change in circumstance both these Councillors were having to step down and so two nominations were sought to sit on the Lowestoft Charity Board.

Oulton Community Association

On 9 June, former Councillor Ives-Keeler was appointed as a LCT representative on Oulton Community Association for a 4 year term of office expiring in June 2015. However since that time Councillor Ives-Keeler had sadly passed away and in order to ensure continued LCT representation on this body and following consultation with the Conservative and Labour Group Leaders and Councillor Collecott (as an Oulton Ward Councillor), it was agreed that Councillor L Jacklin (as the newly Elected Councillor for the Oulton Ward) should attend Oulton Community Association meetings and that this appointment would be ratified at the February 2014 meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the following Lowestoft Charter Trustees representatives be appointed to serve on the Lowestoft Charity Board:
   - Councillor J Wheatley (in place of Councillor N Webb) for the remainder of a 4 year term of office expiring in June 2016.
   - Councillor M Cherry (in place of Councillor T Sullivan) for the remainder of a 4 year term of office expiring in June 2017.

2. That Councillor L Jacklin be appointed as the Lowestoft Charter Trustees representative on Oulton Community Association for the remainder of a 4 year term of office expiring in June 2015.

The meeting was concluded at 7.50 pm.

Mayor of Lowestoft