1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Barnard, A Barron, I Graham, F Mortimer and T Sullivan.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

3 COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE RETIRING MAYOR

The retiring Mayor of Lowestoft, Councillor J Ford, addressed Members stating how much she had enjoyed the role of Mayor over the past 12 months and what a pleasure it had been to serve the people of Lowestoft.

Councillor Ford commented that she had been greatly enlightened by new and established businesses in the area and has engaged with a diverse rant of organisations during her year of office. In addition, Councillor Ford admired those local people who had proved themselves very resilient in coping with the December 2013 floods. Councillor Ford wished the incoming Mayor of Lowestoft every success during his civic year of office.

4. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR OF LOWESTOFT

Two nominations for the office of Town Mayor of Lowestoft for 2014/15 had been received in accordance with the Lowestoft Charter Trustees Constitution. These were Councillors R Bellham and M Rudd.

A vote was taken between the two candidates and it was

RESOLVED

That Councillor R Bellham be elected to the office of Mayor of Lowestoft for the 2014/15 civic year.

Having been duly appointed, Councillor Bellham was invested with the Gowns and Chain of Office and then read out and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed and signed by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services.

As the incoming Mayor, Councillor Bellham presided over the rest of the meeting.
5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR OF LOWESTOFT**

Two nominations for the office of Deputy Town Mayor of Lowestoft for 2014/15 had been received in accordance with the Lowestoft Charter Trustees Constitution. These were Councillors M Cherry and D Coulam.

A vote was taken between the two candidates and it was

RESOLVED

That Councillor M Cherry be elected to the office of Deputy Mayor of Lowestoft for the 2014/15 civic year.

Having been duly appointed, Councillor M Cherry was invested with the Chain of Office and read out and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed and signed by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services

NOTE: Following the first part of the vote on this item those Conservative Councillors present (Councillors S Ardley, D Coulam, C Law and M Rudd) left the meeting and took no further part in the discussion or voting on any other items on the Agenda.

6. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

7. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE NEW MAYOR OF LOWESTOFT**

Councillor R Bellham, as the newly elected Mayor, thanked all the Lowestoft Charter Trustees for voting for him, stating that he was absolutely delighted to be elected as Mayor for 2014/15, seeing the role as a real privilege.

The Mayor reported that he had not yet decided on which charities he aimed to support during his year of office but that he would make an announcement in due course.

The Mayor was also looking forward to working closely with the Deputy Mayor as a team effort for recognising and supporting the good work undertaken within Lowestoft’s local communities.

8. **MAYOR OF LOWESTOFT’S EXPENSES AND FUNDRAISING FOR 2012/13**

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees (LCTs) considered a report detailing Mayoral and civic expenditure for 2013/14 and received an update on the fund-raising activities undertaken by Councillor J Ford, the retiring Mayor of Lowestoft. In addition, Members received an update on funds awarded by the Lowestoft Charter Trustees Grants Committee.

**Mayors Expenses for 2013/14**

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees’ budget for 2013/14, as approved on 10 February 2013, 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.

As at 31 March 2014 the LCT Reserves stood at £11,227.74.
It was reported that expenditure from the Mayor’s budget allocation of £2,000 for 2013/14 totalled £883.13, a full breakdown for which was outlined in the report. In addition, it was proposed that £500 be allocated to the Lowestoft & Plaisir Twinning Association from the Mayor’s budget for 2013/14 for the hosting of a twinning reception in July 2014.

Mayor of Lowestoft Fund-Raising for 2013/14

At the start of her civic year of office in 2013/14, Councillor Ford, as the incoming Mayor of Lowestoft, announced she would be raising funds in aid of the East of England Air Ambulance Service. Councillor Ford also reported that she would be supporting, highlighting and promoting issues relating to older people and people with disabilities.

As well as attending over 120 community engagements throughout the year, Councillor Ford also held a number of fund-raising events for her chosen charity, details of which were outlined in the report. Councillor Ford had presented a cheque for £1,504.84 to the East of England Air Ambulance Service and allocated the remaining funds to a number of community / charitable organisations as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access Community Trust</td>
<td>£250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspergers East Anglia – Kirkley Project</td>
<td>£250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowestoft Shopmobility</td>
<td>£250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowestoft &amp; Waveney DIAL</td>
<td>£250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Disablement Information &amp; Advice Line)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Cole Cancer Fund</td>
<td>£250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lowestoft Charter Trustees Grants Committee

It was reported that the Lowestoft Charter Trustees Grants Committee had met on 10 February and 27 February 2014 to consider the allocation of funds from the £5,000 LCT Grants Budget for 2013/14. A total of £4,600 had been awarded. The remaining £400 would be returned to the LCT Reserves.

RESOLVED

1. That Mayoral and civic expenses for 2013/14 be noted.

2. That the monies raised through fund-raising by the Mayor of Lowestoft in aid of the East of England Air Ambulance Service and other local charities during 2013/14 as outlined in the report be noted.

3. That an allocation of £500 from the Mayor’s budget for 2013/14 be made to the Lowestoft & Plaisir Twinning Association for costs towards a Twinning Reception to be held in July 2014.

9. LOWESTOFT CHARTER TRUSTEES – ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees (LCT) was formed in 1974 by virtue of Section 246 of the Local Government Act 1972 as a result of the re-organisation of local government as Lowestoft was not a parished area. The LCT is not a registered charity and does not have the powers that could be exercised by Parish / Town Council. Its activities are limited to those of a civic and ceremonial nature.

At the LCT meeting held on 10 February 2014, the LCT set a precept of £9,000 for 2014/15. This equated to a charge of 60p per year for a Band D household and maintained the precept approved for previous year.
The LCT budget for 2013/14 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

At the LCT meeting held on 10 February 2014 approval was given for £2,000 to be ear-marked in the LCT budget as recompense to Waveney District Council (WDC) for the cost of support services to the LCT. The services provided included democratic support for LCT meetings as part of its governance arrangements, finance and budgetary services, audit services and completion of the annual Small Bodies Return.

Prior to the LCT meeting on 10 February 2014 an assessment was made of the actual costs incurred for supporting the LCT in 2013/14. It was estimated at that time that the actual costs for supporting the LCT was £21,000 per year. This represented a difference of £19,000 a year when compared to the recharge amount of £2,000. A copy of the detailed breakdown for administrative costs provided to the LCT (as considered by the LCT on 10 February 2014) was attached as Appendix A to the report.

Waveney District Council was facing increasing budgetary pressures and as a result the authority was no longer able to subsidise the Lowestoft Charter Trustees. The LCT therefore needed to consider how to deliver its administrative arrangements in the future from approved LCT budgets.

The largest proportion of costs was connected with support for the Mayor of Lowestoft and in particular the hosting of the Mayor’s Ball each year.

A number of options were outlined within the report for the future support of the LCT as follows:

Option 1 - WDC provides administrative support for two LCT meetings (Annual General Meeting and the Budget Setting meeting), financial and audit support (including preparation of the annual Small Bodies Return). This option would not include any administrative support for the Mayor of Lowestoft for the 2014/15 civic year. The total estimated cost of this option was £2,000.

Option 2 - Alternative provision could be explored from the private sector for undertaking all LCT administrative activities including support for meetings and accountancy services. Both these activities would require professional support. Diary management could be provided at a cheaper rate than currently provided, possible through a Lowestoft based organisation.

The following issues were raised during the discussion on this item:

- The importance of maintaining a Mayor as a civic figurehead for Lowestoft was stressed. Comparison was made to the Town Councils within Waveney which had a Mayor for their local areas and it was considered that Lowestoft, as one of the largest towns in the district, should have mayoral representation. It was also thought that having a Mayor encouraged civic pride in the local area.

- Confirmation was given that sponsorship opportunities had been explored as part of the organisation of the last Mayor’s Ball but no offers of financial support had been received.
• The Mayor of Lowestoft could organise their own ball without drawing on resources from the Democratic Services Team relying on family members or Councillor colleagues to assist with the arrangements.

• Any fund-raising should be sustainable in terms of covering costs associated with hosting an event before any profits were made.

• Clarification was given that the ‘Civic Office of the Year for 2012’ was awarded to Waveney District Council to recognise the close working relationship between the Chairman of the Council and the Mayor of Lowestoft which benefitted local communities.

• An administrative centre point was needed to receive and co-ordinate civic engagements for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

• It was reported that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor were not allocated a personal budget but could claim mileage expenses to reimburse them for travel incurred in undertaking their civic duties. The £2,000 allocated to the Mayor in the LCT budget paid for necessary civic expenditure, purchase of the wreath for the Remembrance Parade Service, half-cost for hosting the Joint Chairman and Mayor Carol Service etc.

Following a full debate supporting the principle for retaining a Mayor of Lowestoft, it was moved and seconded:

“That the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Lowestoft be charged with exploring alternative costed options for the provision of support services for the Mayor of Lowestoft and report back to a future LCT meeting”.

The following Amendment was then proposed:

“That a working group be established comprised of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Lowestoft, Councillor Barker plus 3 other LCT Members to explore alternative costed options for the provision of support services for the Mayor of Lowestoft and to report back to a future LCT meeting”.

The mover of the original motion (Councillor Coghill) and the seconder (Councillor Patience) agreed to incorporate the revised wording into their original motion.

Consideration was then given to the appointment of the 3 additional Members to the Working Group.

Other Financial Matters

The Trustees’ attention was drawn to additional items of expenditure that would need to be funded from LCT budgets. These included:

• A replacement honour board to record the names of past Mayors of Lowestoft. The estimated cost of a new board was £1,000.

• The Mayor’s Chain of Office required some remedial works

• The civic gowns for both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor needed professional cleaning.
RESOLVED

1. That a working group be established comprised of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Lowestoft, Councillor Barker and Councillors Byatt, Collecott and S Webb to explore alternative costed options for the provision of support services for the Mayor of Lowestoft and to report back to a future LCT meeting.

2. That the financial and budgetary position with regard to support services for the Lowestoft Charter Trustees and the Mayor of Lowestoft for 2014/15 be noted.

3. That the civic gowns for both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Lowestoft be professionally cleaned, if necessary following inspection, to be funded from the Mayor of Lowestoft’s budget for 2014/15.

4. That the purchase of an additional honours board for recording the future Mayors of Lowestoft be referred to the above newly established Working Group.

5. That the Mayor of Lowestoft for 2014/15 obtains a professional opinion regarding remedial works required for the Mayor of Lowestoft’s chain of office and reports back to a future Lowestoft Charter Trustees meeting.

6. ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2014

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees (LCTs) considered a report which sought approval for the Audit Commission Small Bodies in England Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2014 and to receive the Annual Return for the period ending 31 March 2013.

The Annual Return contained conformation of the year-end accounts, statement of assurances on internal controls, internal audit review and the external auditor’s accreditation. The financial information included in the Annual Return was limited to in year transactions in respect of the LCT precept, plus the General Fund balance. The Audit Commission had appointed BDO LLP as External Auditor from 2012/13 to 2016/17 in accordance with Section 3 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

A copy of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2014 was attached as Appendix A to the report.

A copy of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2013 was attached as Appendix B. The single issue arising from the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2013 was an administrative error in that the signature of the Chair of the LCT was not within the aligned boxes. All other information within the Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices and met legislative and regulatory requirements. A copy of the BDO Audit report was attached as Appendix C.

The total precept for 2013/14 was £9,000 with £7,383.13 of expenditure resulting in a transfer of £1,516.87 to the LCT Reserves. The total reserve balance as at 31 March 2014 was £11,227.94.

During the discussion on this item it was confirmed that it was expedient to retain £2,000 - £3,000 of reserves given the role and current financial position of the LCT.

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2014 be approved.

2. That the audit opinion for the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2013 be received.
NOTE: Following the conclusion of the above item the new Mayor of Lowestoft signed the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2014 on behalf of the Lowestoft Charter Trustees.

10. LOWESTOFT CHARTER TRUSTEE REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND APPOINTMENTS TO A LOWESTOFT CHARTER TRUSTEE GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Lowestoft Charter Trustees (LCT) considered a report which sought the appointment of LCT representatives onto a number of Outside Bodies, details of which were outlined in the report. In addition, nominations were sought for representation on the Lowestoft Charter Trustees Grants Committee.

Lowestoft & Plaisir Twinning Association

The Lowestoft & Plaisir Twinning Association promoted international friendship and understanding by strengthening using all possible means, the twinning links between the towns of Lowestoft & Plaisir. Two nominations were sought to represent the LCT for the 2014/15 municipal year.

Three nominations were received, namely Councillors A Barron, M Cherry and J Ford. Following a formal vote where each LCT Member present was allocated 2 votes as there were 2 positions available, Councillors J Ford and M Cherry were appointed as the LCT representatives on the Lowestoft & Plaisir Twinning Association for the 2014/15 municipal year.

Lowestoft in Bloom

Lowestoft in Bloom developed community partnerships for providing floral displays, landscaping of roundabouts, gardens and hanging baskets.

Two representatives were sought to represent the LCT on Lowestoft in Bloom for 2014/15.

Two nominations were received, namely Councillors P Collecott and J Craig. Following a formal vote both Councillors were duly appointed as the LCT representatives on Lowestoft in Bloom for 2014/15.

Oulton Poor’s Land Charity

Oulton Poor’s Land Charity distributed income from the Marshes (which is land owned by the charity) to people in need in the village of Oulton.

It was reported at the meeting that Mr G Hawes had previously represented the LCT on Oulton Poor’s Land Charity but having recently clarified membership with the Secretary, it was apparent that Mr Hawes sat on this body by virtue of his membership of Oulton Parish Council.

Lowestoft Charter Trustees Grants Committee

The LCT Grants Committee was established on 13 February 2013 and is comprised of the Mayor of Lowestoft for each respective year and six other nominated representatives.

Consideration was given to the make-up of the Grants Committee. After a debate on this issue it was considered that whilst the Grants Committee was not subject to the political proportionality rules that apply to District Council Committees, the LCT Grants Committee should be representative of the various political parties on the LCT.
RESOLVED
1. That Councillors M Cherry and J Ford be appointed as the LCT representatives on the Lowestoft & Plaisir Twinning Association for the 2014/15 municipal year.
2. That Councillors P Collecott and J Craig be appointed as the LCT representatives on Lowestoft in Bloom for the 2014/15 municipal year.
3. That Mr G Hawes be appointed as the LCT representative on the Oulton Poor’s Land Charity for the 2014/15 municipal year.
4. That the following Members be appointed to a Lowestoft Charter Trustee Grants Committee with delegated authority to administer the allocation of funds within the approved budget set aside for grant assistance to local organisations:

   Councillor R Bellham (Mayor of Lowestoft) and Councillors S Ardley, D Coulam, I Graham, F Mortimer, T Sullivan and S Webb.

11. FUTURE LOWESTOFT CHARTER TRUSTEES MEETING DATES

   Members considered future meeting dates for the next Lowestoft Charter Trustees (LCT) Annual Meeting and also for a meeting to set the LCT budget and precept for 2015/16.

   RESOLVED
   1. That the date for the next Lowestoft Charter Trustees Annual Meeting be held on Monday 8 June 2015 at 6.30pm in the Waveney District Council Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lowestoft.

   2. That the date of the Lowestoft Charter Trustees meeting for setting the budget and precept for 2015/16 be held on Monday 26 January 2015 at 6.30pm in the Waveney District Council Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lowestoft.

The meeting was concluded at 8.30 pm.

Mayor of Lowestoft