

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
18:00 on 1 August 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Colin Butler (Chair), Christian Newsome, John Pitts and Elise Youngman

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Public: There were five members of the public in attendance (in person)

41. Welcome

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

42. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Robert Breakspear, Paul Page and Andy Pearce, who had provided reasons. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.

43. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 48.12. Cllrs Butler and Youngman declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 47.

44. The draft minutes of the meeting on 4 July 2022

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.

45. Public forum

The Clerk confirmed that a letter from a member of the public and follow-up comments from another member of the public had been circulated. A member of the public spoke regarding item 47 and was unhappy with how the Committee had handled residents' concerns, and considered that his query as to whether Councillors would be happy to have a bus shelter located where they live had not been answered. The member of the public asked the Committee to take previous incidents of anti-social behaviour into consideration. The member of the public queried why planning permission was not required.

A member of the public advised that the bus shelter being installed at the proposed location would prevent her erecting a garage on her property and having a dropped curb outside her home.

A member of the public reported that a recently installed exchange box had already been vandalised and the incident had been reported to the Police.

A member of the public enquired whether a budget had been set aside for repairs and funding a Police presence in the area.

Cllr Brooks asked officers whether there had been any engagement with the Police. The Project and Committee Clerk advised officers had been trying to arrange a public meeting which it was hoped the Police would attend, but had not been able to book the Gunton Residents' Community Meeting Hall. Cllr Brooks considered it would be a waste of time to install a bus shelter where she lives as it is a narrow road with narrow paths and is not included on a bus service route.

Cllr Pitts understood the residents' concerns and advised the time between now and the Full Council meeting would allow for liaison with the Police.

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46. Monitoring expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The Committee noted receipt of the report circulated in advance.

47. Making a recommendation to Full Council regarding its decision on 21 December 2021 to install a bus shelter on Harris Avenue

Cllr Brooks requested liaison with the Police regarding the concerns raised about anti-social behaviour, but advised that the risk of anti-social behaviour had not stopped the Town Council's events to improve its facilities. Cllr Youngman advised she had been liaising with the Police regarding existing anti-social behaviour and the Police would be monitoring the area. Cllr Butler advised he had lived in the area a long time and had not noticed an issue with anti-social behaviour, but is aware that the Town Council tries to ensure any equipment it installs is resilient. Cllr Butler advised another Councillor had been driving buses in the area for six years and had not noticed any issues, but advised this was one of the busiest stops on the route. Cllr Butler advised that planning permission was not required but approval had been granted by Suffolk County Council.

Cllr Newsome arrived 18:23 but left the meeting temporarily for the consideration of this item

Cllr Butler advised the Town Council promotes the use of public transport, having declared a Climate Emergency. A member of the public considered that this particular bus route is not busy and believes the concerns raised will be ignored, and may contact the press regarding this.

A member of the public left the meeting 18:27

The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 18:27

Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve the installation of the bus shelter and to speak with the Police in the interim regarding anti-social behaviour; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

The remaining members of the public left the meeting 18:28

48. Parks and Open Spaces:

48.1. The draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 19 July 2022 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

48.2. The following recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

48.2a. Proceeding with replacement fencing and gate and associated ground works at Pakefield Green Play Park at a cost of £4,956.22 + VAT –

Cllr Newsome returned 18:30

There was some confusion regarding the area in question, with Cllr Butler noting that the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan refers to it as London Road play area and Cllr Pitts noting that it is known locally as 'Hilly Green'. Cllr Pitts proposed approval of this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

48.3. Purchasing a replacement gate for the Thirlmere Walk play area, within a maximum budget of £1,450 – Cllr Brooks advised the need for the replacement gate had been identified by the Facilities Maintenance Officer and Community Warden. Cllr Butler proposed approval of this; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

48.4. Submitting comments to the Lowestoft Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Spaces consultation – Cllr Brooks would like to see the Bentley Drive and St Margaret's Plain play areas and the Great Eastern Linear Park included. Cllr Pitts suggested 'Hilly Green' and the area known as Pakefield Green (not the same area as referenced at agenda item 48.2a). Cllr Butler explained that work with consultants has taken place and any areas not meeting the necessary criteria were removed from the list. Cllr Pitts proposed that Councillors should individually submit their comments to the Deputy Town Clerk ahead of the close of the public consultation on Friday; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Butler advised he would circulate the criteria.

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- 48.5. Further information regarding the offer of a 'Reading Chair' for Kensington Gardens, and the provision of 'Reading Chairs' in other parks – The Project and Committee Clerk advised Cllr Breakspear was going to be seeking further information, which the Committee would consider before deciding whether to extend the initiative to other parks. Cllr Brooks reported that a reading area in the Bentley Drive play area had been discussed on a recent Zoom meeting with a play equipment provider. In response to a query from the Committee, the Project and Committee Clerk advised the Lowestoft Lions would be sponsoring one of the new benches to be installed in the refurbished Sparrows Nest play area. Cllr Brooks requested inclusion of an item on the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee agenda to consider working with tenants to provide children's books to read during their visit.
- 48.6. A revised quotation for the purchase of bulbs (£105.89 more than previously approved) – The Project and Committee Clerk understood the cost increase was as a result of certain bulbs in the initial order being out of stock and substituted, and a change in quantities of others. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of a maximum budget of £3,000 to purchase the bulbs, with delegated authority to the Clerk to progress the order; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.
- 48.7. Recommendations regarding the management and ongoing maintenance of the Town Council's ponds and waterways – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the Community Warden had reviewed the report and noted that it included a quotation for removal of the Great Eastern Linear Park boardwalk, which had already been instructed with another contractor. Since the report had been received, the grounds maintenance team at Kensington Gardens had identified a potential leak in the boating lake. The Project and Committee Clerk advised further detail may be required from the body which completed the report prior to Full Council formally approving the recommendations. Cllr Butler proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve the recommendations within the report, with delegated authority to officers to obtain any further detail required prior to the Full Council meeting; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.
- 48.8. A biomass collection device for the Town Council's ponds and waterways, including feedback from a recent Zoom meeting – Cllr Youngman and the Project and Committee Clerk attended a Zoom meeting with the supplier. Cllr Brooks had approached Suffolk Wildlife Trust, who had raised some questions. These were put to the supplier, who advised it would not be harmful to wildlife and could be fully cleaned to prevent cross-contamination between sites. The Project and Committee Clerk gave some more information about its usage. Cllr Brooks advised that the device is to be trialled in Plymouth. Cllr Pitts proposed awaiting the outcome of the trial in Plymouth before considering this item again; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

The Clerk returned 19:03

- 48.9. Fencing for the Stoven Close play area to prevent vehicular access – Cllr Butler advised a site visit had been undertaken and the matter was considered by officers to be a health and safety concern. Cllr Brooks supported the Facilities Maintenance Officer's suggestion of metal loop fencing. Cllr Pitts suggested this may prevent vehicles passing the play area gates but may not prevent unauthorised vehicular access altogether. Cllr Brooks queried whether the Council could enforce against unauthorised vehicular access under the General Power of Competence and asked officers to confirm the Council's legal position. Cllr Brooks proposed asking officers to obtain quotations for the fencing and bring back to this Committee for consideration; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.
- 48.10. Quotations to install a wheelchair accessible pathway to the Stoven Close play area – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the Facilities Maintenance Officer is seeking quotations, which will be brought back to this Committee for consideration.
- 48.11. Health and safety matters at the Gunton Community Park and future of the fenced area

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- Cllr Butler advised officers had some health and safety concerns. Cllr Brooks suggested the fenced area could be put forward as a potential 'Food Hub' location, with reference to item 56. Cllr Butler read out the information the Council had received regarding the 'Food Hub' project. Cllr Youngman also suggested Clarkes Lane as discussions had already taken place regarding a community garden there. Following a site visit to Gunton Community Park, Cllr Youngman understood the fenced area was to be tidied and a low railing installed to replace the fence, as a continuation of the existing line of railing, as recommended by the Facilities Maintenance Officer. Cllr Youngman proposed approval of this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.
- 48.12. Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Conservation Report of the Great Eastern Linear Park, and progressing any required works – Cllr Brooks was supportive of the report, which had suggested some of the scrub should be managed, and identified areas where mowing could take place less frequently. Clearance of the stream had been included in the report received at item 48.7. Cllr Butler proposed asking officers to seek quotations for the recommended works and bring back to this Committee for consideration; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 48.13. An assessment report of the Great Eastern Linear Park, and progressing any required works – The report was specifically to advise on the stability of an area of the bank where issues had been reported. An investigation would need to take place again in the autumn when the undergrowth had died back. Cllr Butler proposed deferring this item until the follow-up report had been received; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 48.14. An annual budget for each park for tarmac works – The Clerk advised that work has been undertaken at some sites, but officers could put a recommendation together for each site. Officers will review the requirements for each site and feed back to this Committee and the Finance and Governance Committee. The Clerk advised that routine health and safety checks are undertaken by officers and the Council's health and safety consultant, but this item is with a view to an annual budget being agreed for tarmac works.
- 48.15. The purchase of a replacement bin for the St Margaret's Plain play area – The Committee liked the design but had a discussion regarding the colour. Cllr Brooks proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with members of this Committee, to select the colour and progress purchase and installation of the bin, within a maximum budget of £400; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.
- 48.16. The purchase of additional insect hotels – The Community Warden had suggested this and the purchase of hedgehog houses for the allotment sites particularly, following a recent site visit. Cllr Butler proposed asking officers to liaise with the Allotments Association to see if they would be supportive; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.
- 48.17. The purchase of fish for the Sparrows Nest pond – Cllr Brooks advised fish may not always be beneficial to the health of a pond, but queried whether fish could be transferred from the Kensington Gardens pond. The Project and Committee Clerk advised a member of the public had donated fish to Kensington Gardens on the basis they would remain there. The Project and Committee Clerk advised fish had been added to the Uplands Road North pond without the permission of the Town Council. Cllr Pitts proposed asking officers to seek advice on whether fish could be transferred to the Sparrows Nest pond from another Town Council pond; seconded by Cllr Newsome; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 48.18. An update on commencement of the Sparrows Nest preventative repairs programme, and budgeting implications – The Clerk explained that an assessment of the retaining wall to the rear of the building was required (as per the next agenda item) prior to the windows being addressed.
- 48.19. An assessment report of Sparrows Nest, and progressing any required works – Cllr Butler read out the report. Cllr Brooks proposed asking officers to seek quotations and

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seeking Cllr Le Grice's opinion of the report, due to his experience of the of construction industry; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.

48.20. Locations for five planters, provided under the New Burden Project – Cllr Brooks advised that the Council would be liable for the cost of planting and watering. Cllr Youngman suggested they could be incorporated into the areas under consideration as community gardens. Cllr Pitts suggested installing them in parks with active Friends Groups. Cllr Brooks suggested checking if Jesters Diner would like to be involved. Cllr Pitts proposed approaching the Friends Groups and Jesters, and feeding back to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

48.21. An approach from the Most Easterly Community Gardening Group to improve public open spaces in North Lowestoft, particularly the Compass Street 'pocket park' (pending formal transfer to Lowestoft Town Council) – Cllr Brooks would like to see the neighbouring properties given the opportunity to be involved with the Compass Street 'pocket park', but the land is not yet within the Town Council's ownership. Cllr Brooks proposed deferring consideration of this item until the land has passed into the Town Council's ownership; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

48.22. Feedback from the Whitton Green outdoor fitness area launch event – Cllr Youngman had attended and praised the event, and noted that the equipment seems to be well used.

49. Allotments

49.1. A request for Cllr Patience to join the Allotments Sub-Committee – Cllr Youngman proposed approval of this request; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

At 20:02, Cllr Brooks proposed suspending Standing Order 3y for thirty five minutes to enable the meeting to continue; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

A comfort break was taken 20:02 and the meeting resumed 20:09

50. Tree planting:

50.1. A delegation to Officers to make decisions on replacement tree planting as per the Tree Policy – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this delegation; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

50.2. An application for a replacement memorial tree in Kensington Gardens – Cllr Butler proposed approval of this application; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

51. Signage:

51.1. A maximum budget of £5,000 for play area signage – Cllr Pitts proposed approval of this item, and if possible for this budget to also include the purchase of bin stickers as previously discussed; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

51.2. The purchase of signage for the Denes Oval – The Project and Committee Clerk explained that the Community Warden has recommended replacing the faded sign at the entrance of the Denes Oval and also putting additional signage at the top and bottom of The Ravine to advertise the Denes Oval to passers-by. The Committee was happy with this recommendation in principle. Cllr Brooks requested inclusion of a list of facilities available at the Denes Oval on the signage.

51.3. Signage for the Sparrows Nest bowling greens, asking people to keep off the grass – Cllr Butler queried whether this should also apply to Kensington Gardens. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this item, but with wording such as 'please respect the bowling green', to be purchased within the budget approved at item 51.1; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

52. Any outcomes from the Marina Theatre Quarterly Management Meeting on 15 July 2022

Cllr Brooks attended and had queried whether the replacement ventilation system could be purchased via Towns Fund funding, but does recall this question being answered. Cllr Butler

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proposed deferring this item until minutes of the meeting have been circulated; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

53. Approval and funding for capital improvement works to the Sussex Road allotments site, including the communal area near the entrance, a compostable toilet and fencing repairs to the boundary with the Great Eastern Linear Park

The Project and Committee Clerk explained that the Facilities Maintenance Officer and some Councillors had undertaken a site visit to look at how to improve access to the Sussex Road allotments to support plans for a communal tool sharing area. The Allotment Association's request for compostable toilets will be considered further by the Toilet Strategy Working Group. It has been confirmed that they do not use chemicals but Cllr Youngman suggested further research may be required to see if compostable toilets would be suitable for requirements. Cllr Butler proposed awaiting further advice from the Facilities Maintenance Officer; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

54. Possible future uses of the Kensington Gardens Ammo Bunker

Cllr Brooks reported on the recent site visit and understands investigations beneath the surface of the bunker may need to take place. There is no electricity or water supply to the bunker and it can only be accessed via land belonging to East Suffolk Council. Cllr Pitts understands connecting power and water supplies would be expensive, and proposed approaching the Friends of Kensington Gardens for use of the space as storage, at least in the interim; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. The Project and Committee Clerk relayed advice from the Planning Authority which stated that if the space had not been used as a gallery and had previously been used as storage, it could be used as storage again without the need for change of use permission.

55. A proposal from the Environment and Waste Working Group regarding bulky waste collection to target fly tipping

Cllr Brooks proposed deferring this item to the next meeting, pending the outcome of meetings which will be taking place shortly; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

56. The 'Food Hub' project and any suitable locations

Following discussions at item 48.11, Cllr Brooks proposed delegating authority to officers to seek additional information and make enquiries as to the suitability of land at Gunton Community Park, Clarkes Lane and Britten Road; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

57. Lowestoft Town Council's involvement with the 'Discovering Suffolk' project

Details had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Brooks proposed responding to advise that the Town Council is supportive of initiatives to promote walking and cycling and would welcome being kept informed of this project; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

58. Making recommendations to Full Council regarding the leaseback provisions in the Waveney District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2017 (confidential)

The Clerk advised this is a complex issue, which requires more time and written advice to Councillors about the background and any legal advice received.

59. Date of the next meeting

5 September 2022 18:00

60. Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Youngman requested an item to consider maintenance requirements for the town sign on High Green. Cllr Brooks requested this also includes a discussion regarding the Marina Theatre advertising signage there.

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There were no confidential items for consideration and the meeting was closed at 20:33.

61. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

61.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required

Signed:
5 September 2022