

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 6 November 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker (ex-officio), Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Jen Jones, Christian Newsome (Deputy Chair), Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernie Rappensberger and Elise Youngman (Chair)

In Attendance: Shona Bendix (Town Clerk), Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

123. Welcome

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

124. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Smith and Webb with reasons provided.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Coleby. Cllr Brooks requested the apologies be taken separately which the Committee agreed to.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of Cllr Smith's apologies; seconded by Cllr Coleby; seven votes in favour, two votes against and one abstention.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of Cllr Webb's apologies; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

125. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

125.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he was a nominating Councillor regarding the application of item 137, and he was Chair of the Gunton Residents Association. Cllr Breakspear declared he was a member of the Friends of Kensington Garden Group.

125.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

126. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 2 October 2023

Cllr Jones proposed approval of the draft minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; seven votes in favour and three abstentions from members who were not in attendance at the previous meeting.

127. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – No advanced comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance.

128. To monitor expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The latest position had been provided at a previous meeting and there were no comments.

129. To consider the formation of a Lowestoft Town Council Youth Forum

Cllr Barker proposed Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) consider setting up a youth forum to represent the young people of the parish. This forum could meet on a bi-monthly or quarterly schedule and report to the Finance and Governance Committee. Cllr Pearce seconded but requested an amendment for the forum to report to Full Council, which was accepted by Cllr

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Barker. This forum would have a wider brief than the Pupils Forum being set up by the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee, with a clear purpose, and it was intended to create a space for young people to have an open meeting to discuss their ideas. Whilst there was a Waveney Youth Council, this forum would not be a duplication as it would be based in and focussed on Lowestoft rather than a District-wide forum. A vote was held with all in favour.

130. Parks and Open Spaces:

- 130.1.To receive and note the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 17 October 2023 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.
- 130.2.To receive a report on the grounds maintenance – The latest update had been provided at Full Council.
- 130.3.To consider the following regarding The Ness:
 - 130.3a. Approval of a £150 + VAT landscape design consultation fee for the coastal garden

Cllr Barker left the chamber at 19:25

Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce with the request that the fee be allocated from the Consultancy budget; all in favour.

- 130.3b. To receive the notes of The Ness Working Group – The competition had yet to be approved by LTC and officers were asked to inquire methods of transfer for the mural with artists as this would inform the terms and conditions of the competition on what materials would be required. Once this has been confirmed this item would be discussed further by the Events and Communications Sub-Committee.
- 130.3c. To consider a wider heritage plan for The Ness that includes a sculpture for the Herring Lassies, ‘Beetsters’ and ‘Ransackers’ – The Ness Working Group had agreed to commemorate the Herring Lassies, per the initial request from the member of public, and extend this to the local people who supported the fishing industry. These sculptures would be part of the overall heritage plan of the site and would be discussed further at the next working group meeting. Cllr Brooks requested the next meeting not be scheduled on a Monday or Friday morning.
- 130.4. To receive the notes of the Triangle Market Working Group and consider any actions, including:
 - 130.4a. To ring-fence a maximum budget of £15,000 for refurbishment and compliance works for two existing stalls at the Triangle Market – Items 130.4a and 130.4c were taken together. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the recommendation to ring-fence a sum of £15,000 as a maximum budget for capital works, and for an initial sum of £5,000 to be made available as an annual budget; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
 - 130.4b. A quotation for electrical supply to all units at the Triangle Market – This would be discussed at the next meeting as no quotes had been received.
 - 130.4c. To establish an annual budget of up to £5,000 for the annual maintenance of all kiosks – This item was agreed under 130.4a.
- 130.5. To consider the need for timber treatment at the Sparrows Nest Yarmouth Road entrance – It was noted that one entrance had been closed and a sign was required to explain the reason for closure.

All fencing panels on the Whapload Road and Yarmouth Road required treatment and indicative costs were requested for the Committee to consider, noting that if the

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grounds maintenance officers could undertake application of the treatment then the costs would be reduced.

Whilst the timber could not be treated at this time of year, the works could be scheduled with a maximum budget and delegation approved.

It was suggested to fully restore all entrances, with the ravine entrance prioritised, rather than only repainting works.

Cllr Coleby proposed officers obtain indicative costs to be provided to this Committee or Parks and Open Spaces; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

- 130.6. To consider the budget allocation and specification for play area refurbishments in 2023-2024 – There was a budget of £90,000 available for the refurbishment of Britten Road and Wellington Road. Cllr Brooks proposed that disability requirements and inclusivity be considered more in the procurement process and that groups such as Waveney Disability Forum be engaged for input on the park design; seconded by Cllr Pearce with the amendment that disability access and the climate emergency declaration, with regards to the materials used, should be considered in the procurement phase. Furthermore, once the designs have been received, they be consulted with Waveney Disability Forum without releasing the financial information or names of the contractors. Cllr Brooks agreed to the amendment and a vote was held with all in favour.

As Britten Road was named after Benjamin Britten, it was agreed to query if the companies could incorporate that into the design of the park.

- 130.7. To consider works required for Fen Park Pond – Officers had approached the Environmental Agency for advice and would investigate the relevance of the sluice gate to the overall health of the pond, as well as verifying the historical leak from a water company into the pond. This item would be rolled over to the next meeting.

- 130.8. To consider the offer of a pond oxygen meter – Kirkley People's Forum had been provided with the device by the Environment Agency, therefore officers needed to ascertain if the Environment Agency agreed for it to be passed on to LTC. This item would be rolled over to the next meeting.

- 130.9. To consider the purchase of replacement equipment for Kensington Gardens bowls – Officers confirmed this equipment was for public use and advised a maximum budget of £500 with a delegation to purchase the equipment would be sufficient to progress the purchase. Cllr Brooks proposed approval per the officer's advice; seconded by Cllr Pearce who requested that once purchased the equipment be entered on the asset register; all in favour. It was suggested for officers to consider implementing a daily maintenance and condition check of all bowls equipment used.

- 130.10. To consider a request from the Friends of Kensington Gardens to install wooden sleepers in the reading corner to create raised beds – Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 130.11. To consider alternative options to memorial benches and trees – The alternative options would vary, according to the location they would be installed in, and residents needed to be notified when different areas are nearing capacity for memorials. Cllr Brooks proposed to gauge the public interest on these alternative options; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 130.12. To consider an application for a memorial tree in Kensington Gardens – This applicant had not specified their preferred tree species or location.

Cllr Coleby proposed officers determine the applicant's preference on tree species and

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location and make the applicant aware of there being no guarantee that the tree would survive; seconded by Cllr E Youngman. Cllr Pitts requested an amendment that if no appropriate location is identified then the applicant be asked to consider an alternative memorial. Cllr Coleby accepted the amendment, and a vote was held with all in favour. In the interim, officers would confirm whether this park was nearing capacity on memorial trees.

- 130.13. To receive an update on preparations for the 150th anniversary commemoration of Belle Vue Park and to consider any further actions that may be required – The allocation for the miscellaneous budget would be referred to the Finance and Governance Committee. The cost for the two plaques, one for Belle Vue and a replacement one for the Beacon Stones, needed to be ascertained so a budget could be approved.

The stone steps leading from Belle Vue to Sparrows Nest and the fence around the war graves were raised as areas requiring work to enhance the area before the anniversary.

Cllr Pearce proposed the stone steps be assessed to determine if any works were required; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

The responsibility for the maintenance of the war graves fencing needed to be confirmed.

The Committee Clerk noted that a decision was required on whether the park name or the Borough coat of arms should be displayed on the information panel due to be ordered. Cllr Pearce proposed the header board for the information panel have the name of the park rather than the Borough coat of arms; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

- 130.14. To consider fencing works on the footpath at Walmer Road at a cost of £725 + VAT – If the fencing works were on LTC land and presented a health and safety issue, then this would be completed under the delegated repair and maintenance to officers.

- 130.15. To receive an update on the commissioning of a preventative repair report for the Denes Oval Clubhouse and public toilets – The report was due to be commissioned following a condition survey that had been requested for the site, which had no commencement date at the time of this meeting, therefore this would be rolled over to the next agenda.

At 21:00 Cllr Brooks proposed to suspend standing orders for twenty-five minutes after a five-minute comfort break; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

A five-minute comfort break was taken at 21:00

The meeting resumed at 21:05

Cllrs Jones and Rappensberger returned to the chamber at 21:06

- 130.16. To consider a consultation fee of £750 + VAT with regards to the development of a pump track – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the fee and to include the pump track in the sports survey to receive suggestions for locations; seconded by Cllr Brooks. It was agreed to remove Links Road Car Park from the list of potential sites. A vote was held with all in favour.

131. Events and Communications:

- 131.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 25 October 2023 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

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132. Allotments:

- 132.1.To receive and note the draft minutes of the Allotments Sub-Committee meeting on 3 November 2023 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.
- 132.2.To consider approval of a change to their Terms of Reference to include the Chair of Lowestoft District Allotments Ltd as a non-Councillor member – Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

133. Community Safety:

- 133.1.To receive and note the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting on 27 September 2023 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

134. To consider the following in relation to the Friends Groups:

- 134.1.To receive the notes of the meeting with the Friends Groups on Thursday 19 October – Cllr Breakspear, in his capacity as Chair of Friends of Kensington Gardens, felt the meeting and subsequent site visit was successful and suggested drop-in sessions be considered to gauge interest for friends groups in other locations.
- 134.2.To consider a location for a storage unit, or the reuse of the concrete pad, for the Friends of Fen Park to store their tools – The secretary of Friends of Fen Park had suggested the concrete pad or area near the compost, though the former may not be an ideal location.

It was suggested that the Committee consider if officers could use the container in case the Friends of Fen Park do not maintain use of it.

Cllr Rappensberger proposed the item be deferred to the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 134.3.To consider the current model for Friends Groups and the Town Council's relationship with them – Cllr Brooks suggested the Committee consider how to work with groups such as YMCA, the Allotments Association and sports clubs. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting and for it to be at the beginning of the agenda.

135. To consider planning for scheduled Lawn Tennis Association works on the Normanston Park and Kensington Gardens tennis courts

Works were due to commence February 2024. Officers would verify if since LTC were funding the removal of the all-weather surface layer of the Normanston courts, and then relaying the surface after the grant funded works, were Lawn Tennis Association contractors undertaking the work or did LTC need to procure for the works. This item was rolled over to the next meeting to receive confirmation.

136. To consider the following in relation to public conveniences:

- 136.1.The procurement of contractors for the Normanston Park toilets, changing rooms and separate toilet block, and Lowestoft Cemetery toilets – Cllr Pearce proposed officers begin the procurement process and obtain indicative costs to inform the budget; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
- 136.2.To consider the procurement of the Sparrows Nest toilets, including the configuration the Town Council will put out to tender – This item would be referred to Full Council.

137. To consider an application for Freedom of the Town (confidential)

It was agreed that this item did not need to be discussed in confidential session. Cllr Pearce proposed the application for Freedom of the Town by the Royal Naval Patrol Service Association (RNPSA) be recommended for approval to Full Council to mark the connection

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between Lowestoft and the RNPSA in a significant anniversary year for the naval memorial; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. Officers were asked to inform the RNPSA of Full Council's decision in time for Remembrance Sunday and arrange a formal presentation on a mutually agreeable date in the future.

At 21:30 Cllr E Youngman proposed to suspend standing orders for ten mins; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

138. To consider land owner permission ahead of a planning application for a proposal involving Town Council land (confidential)

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

139. To consider an approach to East Suffolk Council regarding possible transfer of a piece of land (confidential)

Following the recent play area refurbishment, the Committee requested an approach be made to East Suffolk Council (ESC) to consider transferral of the wider park on the basis that it would be managed as community land. The Clerk noted that transfer arrangements for that land were recently agreed by LTC and have been acted upon by ESC, but officers would ascertain the feasibility of this. An alternative suggestion to obtain permission from ESC to install equipment on their land would also be explored.

140. Date of the next meeting

Monday 4 December 2023 – 19:00

141. Items for the next agenda and close

Items should be sent to the office.

142. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda:

142.1. To consider any legal issues, including those above as required – There were none.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:17

Signed:
8 January 2024