

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 16 January 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks (Chair), Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernadette Rappensberger and Elise Youngman

In attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

149. Welcome

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

150. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Robert Breakspear and Nick Webb, with reasons provided. Cllrs Neil Coleby, Christian Newsome and Jack Smith were absent with no apologies given. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

151. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

151.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he is Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association.

151.2. Written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

152. The draft minutes of the meetings on 17 October 2023, 21 November 2023 and 12 December 2023

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of all the minutes listed, and noted that November's had previously been approved; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

153. Public Forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance.

154. Monitoring expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget

Following the previous day's Budget and Loan Sub-Committee meeting, Cllr Pearce reported that, of the £37,975 capital development budget, there had been expenditure of £10,970. There had been £11,269.50 expenditure from the £25,000 repairs and maintenance budget. It was noted that expenditure may be pending following the site visits earlier that day (agenda item 156), particularly preparations for the Belle Vue Park 150th anniversary, and the previously approved ten-year snowdrop plan. A quotation for block paving works in Belle Vue Park had been received, and it was noted that £24,000 was available in the budget for any works required prior to April 2024. Provision had been made in the 2024 – 2025 budget for all block paving works known of at this time. For any time sensitive works, it should be possible for funding to be taken from general reserves and replenished from the tarmacking budget in April.

155. Review and implementation of the five-year plans in line with budgeting, noting Councillor's comments regarding the following:

155.1. Normanston Park

155.2. Rosedale Park

155.3. Kensington Gardens – In response to a query from Cllr Rappensberger, the Project and

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Committee Clerk advised that a quotation had been received to refurbish the footbridge, including the supporting steel structure beneath, and replacement of the surface using the same material as that for the Fen Park footbridge. Cllr Pearce noted that provision had been made in the 2024 – 2025 ponds and waterways budget for this work.

155.4. Gunton Community Park

155.5. Great Eastern Linear Park

155.6. Sparrows Nest

155.7. Fen Park

155.8. Belle Vue Park

155.9. Denes Oval

155.10. Cotman Close – Cllr Brooks noted the entrance to the site from Cotman Close becomes very muddy, and enquired whether it would be possible for the Town Council to seek permission from East Suffolk Council to carry out improvement works on its land. Cllr Youngman noted that the Bentley Drive play area has a similar issue. The Project and Committee Clerk advised this would likely be an issue at most open spaces with grass and high footfall. Cllr Pearce proposed to approach East Suffolk Council to consider transfer of ownership of the wider site on a cost-neutral basis, but in the meantime, and not contingent on this, seek permission from East Suffolk Council to make improvements to the Cotman Close entrance to the site; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Brooks proposed asking officers to provide a quote or indicative cost for access improvements to the Bentley Drive play area, such as installation of a path; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

155.11. Britten Road Play Area

155.12. Clarkes Lane

155.13. Pakefield Green Play Area (Wellington Road)

155.14. The Ness

155.15. Ness Point

155.16. St Margaret's Plain Play Area

155.17. Bentley Drive Play Area

155.18. Gainsborough Drive Pond – Cllr Pearce noted that the volunteer Pond Group had previously undertaken annual pond weed clearance work. Since the pond has been dredged, the group has been made aware that it cannot resume activities at the site without refreshed permissions and a risk assessment. It was noted the Town Council had recently approved purchase of a Rigid Inflatable Boat for qualified officers to use for works in the water. The Project and Committee Clerk advised she would welcome an approach from the group to discuss what work could and could not be undertaken by volunteers. Cllr Pearce would contact the group and ask them to liaise directly with the office.

155.19. North Denes

155.20. Links Road Car Park – Cllr Brooks noted planting was due to take place at this location and raised a concern with standing water at the site. Cllr Youngman noted the surface seemed to be subsiding in places. Cllr Pearce asked officers to check whether the specification of the Anglian Water works at the site had been provided, and whether the issues may be caused by subsidence. In response to Cllr Brooks' query, the Project and Committee Clerk advised that Anglian Water had undertaken planting at the site, to replace that which was lost during the works.

155.21. Triangle Market

155.22. Town Green – A planting plan for this area had been discussed, though not yet formally scheduled and costed. It had been suggested that the planting could incorporate the Coat of Arms. Cllr Brooks proposed, subject to officer availability, to aim to complete enhancement of this site in time for the 150th anniversary of Belle

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Vue Park, with a delegation to officers to determine the design, plants and colour scheme and provide an indicative cost to the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee at its meeting in February; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

155.23. Land at Upland's Road North (including pond)

In response to a query from Cllr Rappensberger, the Project and Committee Clerk advised that the sports consultation was being prepared and should be available shortly.

156. Feedback from a recent site visit to Belle Vue Park and Sparrows Nest and consideration of the following:

The Project and Committee Clerk had prepared a report following the site visits. Cllr Pearce requested facilities staff provide quotations or estimates to enable the recommendations contained within to be progressed, if possible to be agreed at February's AID Committee meeting. Cllr Pearce noted the proposed use of block paving at Belle Vue Park also addressed climate and environmental concerns regarding the use of tarmac. Cllr Pearce proposed to welcome the site visits and feedback, and in principle endorse all the suggestions and recommendations within the report, with quotations or indicative costs to inform a project budget for the AID Committee to consider, alongside appropriate delegations; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

156.1. A budget for further grounds work required at Belle Vue Park before the 150th anniversary

156.2. Improvement works required to the entrances to Belle Vue Park and Sparrows Nest on Yarmouth Road

156.3. Improvement works required to the entrances and perimeter of Sparrows Nest on Whapload Road, including replacement fence panels

157. Putting together a specification for seating and planters for the site adjacent to the Triangle Market, including to consider a planting plan and a budget

The Project and Committee Clerk had prepared notes for the meeting and explained that a Zoom meeting between members of this Sub-Committee, the AID Committee and the Triangle Market Working Group had previously been agreed. Officers will produce new draft proposals for comment at the meeting. Cllr Pearce noted there was essentially £20,000 available in the Triangle Market budget, before other budgets would need to be considered. A quotation for providing an electricity supply to the market kiosks was pending. Cllr Brooks had been made aware there may have been a plaque on the Triangle Market toilets from when they were first opened, and asked that this be retained if it is found during the refurbishment. When considering seating at the site, Cllr Pearce requested it be kept at a safe distance from the road.

158. The installation of bee cafes in the Town Council's parks

The Project and Committee Clerk explained the initiative which has started in another area of the county, to install planters full of pollinator plants, creating a wildlife corridor of locations for bees to feed. An initial conversation has been had with the person who designed the planters, who would be happy to support the Town Council should it decide to progress the project. The Sub-Committee was supportive of the idea and would welcome the progression of discussions. Cllr Pearce asked if it would be possible to obtain data on what native bee species inhabit the area, and what measures can be taken to protect them. In terms of connectivity of the sites, Cllr Pearce suggested the Great Eastern Linear Park. Cllr Pearce proposed to progress discussions of bee cafés, with recommendations from staff, including budget and locations; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed to ask

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staff to investigate what native bee species inhabit this area, and any measures the Town Council can take to protect/conservate them; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

159. Date of the next meeting

20 February 2024 19:00

160. Items for the next Agenda and Close

A site visit to the Great Eastern Linear Park with Suffolk Wildlife Trust had taken place in 2022. Cllr Pearce advised that initial work following this had focussed on litter picking the stream bed, but there had also been proposals received relating to the base of the railway viaduct. Cllr Pearce requested this be picked up for review and discussion. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the meeting was closed at 20:05.

161. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

20 February 2024