

Arnold's Bequest Charity Board Meeting

Minutes of a video meeting on 27 October 2020

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green (Chair), Peter Knight, Paul Page, Andy Pearce and Alice Taylor

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Minutes

18. Welcome

The application of the Town Council's video meeting protocol and right to report were explained, and the meeting was welcomed.

19. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Graham Parker, John Pitts and David Youngman. Cllrs Bob Breakspear, Tara Carlton, Peter Collecott, Tracey Eastwood and Keith Patience had not provided apologies and were absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Knight; eight Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against. It was queried when Cllr Collecott had last made contact with the Town Council. The Clerk has written to him to give him due warning that he is approaching six months of absence in the context of being a Councillor and attending meetings. Cllr Coleby advised that he has encouraged Cllr Collecott to contact the office. At a Lowestoft Town Council Full Council meeting, professional advice was considered that failing to attend Zoom meetings because of technology issues alone was not a sufficient reason for the Council to accept apologies. Officers will try to assist Cllr Collecott with this if he does make contact.

20. Declarations of interests and any dispensations

There were none.

21. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of 28 July 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments and the draft minutes were noted.

22. Receipts and payments and the accounts to date

East Suffolk Norse has carried out a lot of maintenance work at Arnold's Bequest free of charge, but has advised this will be chargeable from next year and has suggested a budget of £1,000.

Cllr Page joined the meeting 19:06

This was noted and the Charity Board may wish to consider embarking on separate contractual arrangements. A meeting between the Town Council and Norse is being held shortly, where these arrangements could be discussed. Information about bank accounts was circulated to the Charity Board and it was agreed it would be easier and more transparent to separate Town Council and Charity Board affairs. As Arnold's Bequest is a small area requiring relatively little maintenance, the Charity Board could look at separate contractor arrangements. An item to consider banking and contractual arrangements will be included on the next agenda. A lot of work has already been completed at the site, and with biodiversity in mind. Norse have also offered the help of its Countryside Officer for half a day per month, to assist volunteers and help progress biodiversity actions. The Charity Board also has access to a qualified arborist through Norse. It is presumed the Charity Board would follow the Town Council's tender process, including thresholds, unless otherwise stated.

23. Noting expenditure from the £10,000 delegated budget to progress biodiversity actions, to purchase bulbs for Arnold's Bequest

It was noted that £132 has been spent on bulbs. Lots of work has been undertaken through the Countryside Officer and other Norse officers with no additional charge. Progressing a Friends Group will need to be discussed and this matter will be carried forward to the next meeting.

24. Declaring a Climate Emergency

The Town Council has declared a climate emergency but this Charity Board will need to make a decision about its own charity's position. Declaring a climate emergency will inform the actions taken by the Charity Board. It is already taking biodiversity and climate emergency actions to an extent but has not made an official declaration. The benefit of doing so would inform future decisions about the site, and all actions being undertaken currently are with a mind to improve habitat and biodiversity, and to make Arnold's Bequest an enjoyable outdoor space for all, which sends out a positive statement. Cllr Barnard proposed declaring a climate emergency; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

25. Biodiversity and site management actions, including an update on activities to date

Work is underway to clear litter and sort out the Heras fencing. Lots of litter has already been cleared, path edges are being trimmed and habitat paths created. Better lines of sight are carefully being creating, which the Charity Board has previously indicated it would like. Some rubble has been cleared and wood piles and being tidied and used to create habitats. Work has been happening to make good an uprooted tree. All of this work will make the area look more managed and a better environment to promote biodiversity. Sycamore trees are working well here as habitats, and plants are providing useful ground cover and habitats. Some areas can be cleared for more planting. There had previously been discussions about developing a pond at Arnold's Bequest. The Clerk will make enquiries about this with Norse. Volunteers would be welcome, and the Town Council will promote the site on its Facebook page and website, via its new Events and Communications Officer.

26. Any further actions, including litter management, to support biodiversity and site management

It was requested that signage be considered at the next meeting, as many people are unfamiliar with the name Arnold's Bequest and the land it refers to.

27. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 26 January 2021 19:00

28. Meeting close

The Mayor thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the meeting was closed.