



Lowestoft Town Council

Open Spaces Strategy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The aim of this strategy is not to be prescriptive but to help to develop a long-term sustainable strategy for Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) owned parks and open spaces. Alongside this, LTC is developing five year plans for each of its sites, which will set out a schedule of planned projects and improvement works.

1.2 LTC is committed to the management and maintenance of its parks and open spaces, with the aim of ensuring those who live in, work in and visit Lowestoft have access to good quality, vibrant and well-maintained green spaces. This will include ensuring that parks and open spaces are:

- welcoming [and accessible](#)
- safe and secure
- clean and well maintained
- environmentally friendly
- [visually sensorily and aesthetically](#) pleasing
- involving the local community
- managed by an appropriate workforce and/or volunteers
- promoting healthy lifestyles
- promoting conservation and heritage
- promoted appropriately

2.0 Bins and Waste Management

2.1 LTC only has responsibility for bins on its own property. LTC shall arrange provision of appropriate bins on its premises at a level justified by the use, and shall arrange for them to be maintained and emptied on a regular basis.

2.2 Unless recycling bins are provided, bins can be used for all waste, unless the legal position concerning this changes. LTC will not provide specific bins for dog waste, which can be disposed of with general waste.

2.3 LTC has appointed officers to undertake litter picking and general maintenance of its parks and open spaces, ensuring they remain attractive and well-maintained places for visitors to enjoy.

3.0 Volunteers and Friends Groups

3.1 LTC is pleased to work with its existing Friends Groups [and other community stakeholders](#) and ~~would~~ welcome approaches from those who would be interested in forming Friends Groups [or working with the Town Council in other ways.](#) ~~The Town Council, and~~ has adopted a [Friends Groups Policy](#) to support this process.

3.2 ~~LTC also supports volunteer work on its land, and~~ [To support the above,](#) officers can provide support with relevant permissions and completion of documents such as an appropriate risk assessment [and financial assistance for administration and insurance.](#)

4.0 Use of Pesticide and Herbicide

4.1 LTC is committed to maintaining its parks and open spaces by ensuring its contractors use methods which have little or no negative impact on the natural environment. This means LTC will:

- Aim to reduce pesticide use by supporting manual and horticultural methods, so that pesticides are only used if absolutely necessary.
- Encourage the increased use of green recycled waste, such as mulch, reducing the need for use of

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herbicide on shrub beds and hedge lines.

4.2 There should be no blanket application of pesticides or herbicides. If they are to be used, then individual weeds should be sprayed with a contact herbicide where possible.

4.3 Pesticide may be used as part of routine maintenance on LTC's [sports facilities](#) ~~bowling greens~~. In these locations, treatments will be kept to a minimum and contractors will be expected to carry out treatments in a safe and responsible way.

4.4 Rats and other pests are monitored and any outbreaks controlled only as and when necessary.

5.0 Planting Policy

5.1 Although detailed planting will be site-specific and may vary upon location, there are some overarching planting guidelines:

- Planting should be diverse but appropriate to the location.
- Plants which require lots of watering ~~and maintenance~~ should be avoided.
- Planting should provide year-round interest where possible.
- Planting should be wildlife-friendly; providing habitat, pollen and wildlife corridors where possible.
- Planting should primarily consist of perennials and shrubs, with annuals used only where necessary.
- LTC should explore planting methods which are as environmentally-friendly as possible, including 'no dig'.

5.2 LTC will consider the development of wildflower areas at appropriate locations ([please see Wildflower Policy](#)) ~~DECIDE IF IN THIS DOCUMENT OR NOT.~~

6.0 Play Spaces Policy

6.1 LTC is committed to the ongoing improvement of its play spaces, and has a dedicated annual budget for routine maintenance, plus a separate budget for the refurbishment/replacement of at least ~~one~~ [two](#) of its play areas annually, where this is required. A regular cycle of inspections will ensure any issues are picked up and actioned in a timely manner.

6.2 As part of its process for selecting a design and contractor to refurbish a play area, LTC will consider the following:

- Play value – ensuring the site offers a range of different types of equipment and [age appropriate](#) play.
- ~~Inclusive Play~~ [ion and accessibility](#), including sensory equipment.
- Ensuring the site is visually appealing and appropriate for its surroundings, particularly where it is neighboured by residential properties.
- Environmental credentials of the contractor, including their approach to the works and materials used.

6.3 LTC has declared a Health Emergency. As part of its promotion of a healthy lifestyle, LTC has installed outdoor fitness equipment at three of its sites (Whitton Green, Normanston Park and Fen Park) and will consider extending this to other sites.

6.4 Dogs are not permitted in LTC's play areas. Where a play area is located within a park or wider area of open space, LTC requests that dog owners are responsible and respectful of other park and play area users, ensuring dogs are kept under control and dog foul is bagged and binned.

7.0 Sports Facilities

7.1 In line with its Health Emergency declaration, LTC is proud to offer a range of sports facilities across

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several of its parks.

7.2 LTC works with its resident sports clubs and stakeholders to ensure facilities are maintained to a high standard, and will engage specialist contractors for this purpose where required.

7.3 ~~The current policy of LTC is that all sports and recreation facilities are free to access to the public. LTC will review this policy will be reviewed on an annually whether or not to apply a charge to clubs and members of the public for use of its sports facilities.~~ annual basis.

7.4 The use of sports and recreation facilities by a third party for chargeable activities such as tennis or football coaching, and the use of the floodlights at Denes Oval, will be subject to a fee.

8.0 Promotion of Open Spaces

8.1 LTC Website – the new LTC website is currently in development. To maximise information and participation, LTC's public spaces should be clearly defined on its website, and information provided on each of the parks and play areas, including location and facilities available. ~~There should be a link to any Friends Groups and the Friends Groups Policy.~~ The website should also provide details of LTC's allotments which are managed under lease by the Lowestoft and District Allotments Association, including how to apply for a plot.

8.2 Signs – LTC's parks and play areas should have signs displaying LTC's logo and a telephone number to report any issues. The location of the park/play area should be identified using 'What3Words' or similar. Key parks could also have information boards, showing a map of the park, points of interest and a QR code to link to further information on LTC's website.

8.3 Noticeboards – Sites for noticeboards will be determined based on the amount of footfall, ease of access and the appropriateness of the location. The primary function of the noticeboards will be to display LTC's notices, though community groups may be permitted to display public notices in line with LTC's Noticeboard Protocol.

8.4 Local Media and Social Media – LTC will use its social media accounts and any opportunities provided by the local press to promote its parks and open spaces.

9.0 Public Seating

9.1 Seating is important in parks, open spaces and play areas, enabling visitors to rest and enjoy the environment, facilitating parks becoming places of destination and helping to reduce social isolation.

9.2 Seating should be comfortable, durable and constructed from recycled/recyclable materials where possible.

9.3 Wherever picnic benches are installed, consideration should also be given to wheelchair-accessible picnic benches.

9.4 The amount of seating should be appropriate for the amount of footfall at that location.

10.0 Vehicular access

10.1 Vehicular access to parks and open spaces may be necessary at times (e.g. for maintenance or deliveries), however general access should be restricted unless the site has specific vehicular access and parking facilities, or parking permits have been issued in exceptional circumstances.

10.2 Motorised mobility vehicles are welcome in LTC's but users should restrict their speed to walking pace.

10.3 Cyclists are asked to dismount-exercise due consideration when using pedestrian pathways in LTC's parks.

10.4 LTC is seeking to increase the provision of bicycle racks in its parks, to encourage visitors to consider whether it is necessary to drive to them, and to encourage cyclists to safely and responsibly store their



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bicycles.

11.0 Security

11.1 Vandalism and anti-social behaviour unfortunately remain an ongoing issue in LTC’s parks and open spaces, but has not prevented LTC’s continued efforts to enhance its green spaces and make them safe and welcoming spaces for those who do wish to enjoy them.

11.2 LTC continues to explore and implement methods to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour on its land, including options for lighting and CCTV.

11.3 LTC has planted a variety of prickly plants across several sites, which serves as a more ecological deterrent to anti-social behaviour, whilst also providing a wildlife habitat.

Revisions	
Date	Amendment

DRAFT