



Lowestoft Town Council

Ponds and Waterways Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Ponds and waterways are an important biodiversity resource to their environment, but need management to maintain their health. This is the same whether they are a natural pond such as at Uplands Road North, or a designed artificial pond such as those in Kensington Gardens, Sparrows Nest, Gainsborough Drive and Fen Park. As the custodian of our ponds and waterways the Council will aim to deliver a balanced environment in and around all our ponds and waterways that nurtures wildlife, sustains itself, and provides pleasure and educational opportunities for the community. Our goal is to conserve, enhance and develop our natural ponds, waterways and artificial water features.

1.2 Pond ecology can be described as the interaction of the life in the pond with the environment that exists there. A shallow, nutrient rich pond, exposed to sunlight with little water flowing through it will be teeming with algae and aquatic plants. It may have very little animal life present because of low oxygen levels. In contrast a newly created, deep, spring fed pond may have little life of any kind in it because of low temperatures and lack of food supply.

1.3 All ponds age. A pond begins with mostly water, few nutrients, and little aquatic life. Over time the pond accumulates nutrients. This enrichment process is called eutrophication. The addition of nutrients stimulates the growth of aquatic life. These organisms live and grow and die. Their remains decay in the pond and the nutrients it took to grow them are released back into the water of the pond to keep the cycle going. Eventually, though, there will be an accumulation of material that resists decay and the pond will fill up.

2.0 Pond Maintenance

2.1 As a pond and waterway owner the Council should manage the eutrophication process and manage the health of the water as a habitat. Some of the measures necessary to maintain a healthy pond are described below:

- Expertise will be accessed where needed.
- Regular visual checks will be undertaken to check on the health of the pond and monitor levels of rubbish and detritus.
- Water monitoring tests and management interventions will be carried out on ponds when deemed necessary, but especially to prevent and address algal blooms.
- Animal access to ponds or streams that feed ponds will be evaluated to check for adverse effects on the pond because of the inputs of nitrogen and phosphorus from their waste. Measures might include marginal and bank planting to reduce access. Reed bed planting and marginal planting in natural ponds will be considered where appropriate as this needs little regular maintenance other than litter removal and assists with reducing animal access to pond.
- Where wildfowl are present on the pond, regular checks will be carried out between April and mid-October to remove dead wildfowl and so prevent outbreaks of avian botulism.
- A planned de-silting programme will be considered as keeping sediment out of the pond prevents the pond from being made shallow. Silt levels will be monitored every 5 years and actioned as necessary to maintain pond health, depth and life.



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- Smaller ponds should have carefully managed margins to allow for this movement of wind over their surfaces. Oxygenation of ponds happens in two major ways. Plants and algae do photosynthesis during the day and wind adds oxygen at night. Thus, plants and an open aspect allowing for the movement of the wind over the pond's water surface is necessary for a healthy pond.
- Oxygenating plants will be introduced in ponds where appropriate, especially those without marginal planting and an obvious water flow/source, but this will be monitored to make sure their growth does not affect the ecological balance of the pond.
- Care will be taken that only appropriate species of fish or wildlife are introduced into ponds and that any transportation of fish or wildlife will be conducted with the appropriate licenses and that minimal stress is caused to the fish or wildlife.
- Where the health of the pond is not in a positive state then consideration will be given to the introduction of floating wind powered water circulating equipment and the installation of sonic algal control devices.
- Tree and foliage maintenance will be managed as necessary to allow for wind movement across the surface of a pond and to maintain light levels on the ponds and hence maintain a healthy pond.
- In the event of a severe period of frost and snow, ponds will be monitored to check that oxygenation of the water is not at a stressed level.
- Where it is considered that a rare or endangered species has taken residence in a pond then the appropriate organisation will be contacted for advice and all necessary action taken to ensure the safety of that species.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1 In order to ensure that the Council's ponds and waterways are properly maintained, officers will work with Council contractors and staff to ensure that a maintenance schedule is in place and will carry out spot checks to ensure that the maintenance is ongoing and take into account the measures listed above.

3.2 If any issue arises that officers cannot deal with within existing policy or funding then the issue will be raised with the Town Clerk to bring to councillors' attention via the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee. Should additional funds be required the AID Committee will make recommendation to the Finance & Governance Committee.

Revisions	
Date	Amendment
February 2021	Removed outdated references to Implementation Committee and officer position which no longer exists.
March 2021	Wording strengthened throughout to make the Council's aims and intentions clearer.
March 2021	Added that expertise will be accessed where needed.
March 2021	Fen Park had been referred to as a natural pond when it is effectively man-made, so this has



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	been removed. Also removed reference to Normanston Park, which does not have a pond, and instead referred to Gainsborough Drive and Uplands Road North as natural ponds.
January 2022	Gainsborough Drive confirmed as a man-made pond.
November 2022	Policy Title changed to Ponds and Waterways. References to man-made changed to artificial