

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:00 on 6 January 2020

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sue Barnard (Chair), Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Peter Collecott, Peter Knight, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

174. Welcome

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

175. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Neil Coleby, Graham Parker and Keith Patience. Cllr Taylor proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

176. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

177. Accuracy of the Minutes

2 December 2019 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Knight; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

178. Public Forum

There were no members of the public in attendance.

179. Progress with noticeboards, signs and plaques

There were no updates to be reported.

180. Asset transfer and compliance issues, in particular the following matters:

180.1. Report from the Clerk regarding legal and policy issues affecting assets (some aspects may be confidential) – There were no matters for this Committee to consider.

180.2. Report regarding asset management, compliance monitoring, maintenance and condition surveys – The Clerk reported a potential maintenance issue at the Town Hall and will keep this Committee informed.

181. Feedback on the monthly market from the Markets Working Group

The Working Group will be meeting tomorrow. There were no matters for consideration at this meeting.

182. Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

182.1. Minutes of the meeting on 3 December 2019 – Cllr Breakspear proposed acceptance of these minutes; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

182.2. A recommendation to adopt the Wildflower Policy – This was previously considered by Full Council, but was not adopted as it was agreed that further consideration should be given to the cost implications first. The Chair explained that the policy is intended as a guide to how and where wildflower areas may be developed. Representatives from East Suffolk Norse were present at the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting at which the policy was recommended for adoption, but have not formally been consulted on the draft policy. The Clerk suggested that the introduction could be amended to

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state that Lowestoft Town Council will explore the development of wild flower areas, but recognises that the delivery of this may require some investment and will consider the relative merits of it. A further document, separate to the policy, has been prepared following the Full Council meeting and identifies some areas which could accommodate wild flower areas, should the Council adopt the policy. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Wildflower Policy as an 'in principle' commitment, with the amendment to the introduction as suggested by the Clerk; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. It was recognised by this Committee that any individual proposals with cost implications would need to be considered separately and this would be the understanding should the policy be adopted.

183. Advice received on options for increasing biodiversity at the Fen Park pond

Cllr Hardie has provided a report of a site visit she made to Essex to see an aeration device. The Committee were grateful for the report and would like some further information about the device, such as its size, the cost to run it, the area it covers and whether the environment is similar to that of Fen Park. The Committee would like more advice on the best use of the pond, how to increase biodiversity and make it naturally sustainable. Suffolk Wildlife Trust has analysed the area and identified some issues, but is not in a position to complete further work on this at the moment. It has instead suggested to seek further advice from Anglian Water. The Clerk will make contact with Anglian Water. East Suffolk Norse has appointed a Countryside Officer and enquiries will also be made with them.

184. Additional Christmas lights

The Council previously voted to extend the provision of Christmas lights to London Road South. A site visit is being arranged with an engineer to progress this.

185. Noting East Suffolk Council's plans to introduce a 'Talking Bench' in Lowestoft and consideration of whether to introduce any such benches on Lowestoft Town Council land

The aim of this is to combat social isolation. The Committee supported the idea in principle and discussed how Lowestoft Town Council may introduce such a scheme on its own land, along with other ways of combatting social isolation. It was commented that the arrangement of curved benches facing one another in the Belle Vue Park Poppy Garden naturally encourages social interaction and the Council may wish to consider this arrangement in more of its parks and open spaces. The Open Spaces Strategy covers public seating arrangements in the Town Council's parks and open spaces and it will initially be the responsibility of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to progress this strategy.

186. Any feedback this Committee would like to give on the Love Exploring (Sprytar) app, following its launch in Sparrows Nest in Summer 2019

Cllr Barnard, Coleby and the Committee Clerk met with a representative from Sentinel Leisure Trust when the app was being developed for Sparrows Nest. The Committee was disappointed that since then it has not seen much publicity about the app or received any feedback as to how it has been performing. Feedback has been requested from Sentinel Leisure Trust, but no data has been provided as to how many times the app has been downloaded or any public feedback. The Committee requested this data and would like to be kept informed of the plans to add Easter themed content in the Spring.

187. Suggestions from East Suffolk Norse on works to the Nightingale Road play area

The fencing is in a poor state of repair and East Suffolk Norse has suggested three options to

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address it. A concern was also raised that the site has become very muddy, which may have been due to the recent installation of the new play equipment. The Clerk emailed East Suffolk Norse for advice on whether grass seed or new turf could be laid. Upon consideration of the options for the fencing provided by East Suffolk Norse, Cllr Barnard proposed a recommendation to Full Council to upgrade to metal bow top fencing to match the seaward boundary, at a cost of £3,700 (+VAT); seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.

188. The provision of adult gym equipment in Normanston Park

The Council was previously exploring this and Cllr Carlton has requested that it be re-added to the agenda. Cllr Collecott explained that Oulton Parish Council installed such equipment for approximately £26,000 and they have found the equipment to be robust and well used. Further research will be completed ahead of the next meeting. Cllr Collecott will find the details of the supplier Oulton Parish Council used, and East Suffolk Norse's views will be sought.

189. Lease arrangements for the Community Halls (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

190. Date of the next meeting

3 February 2020 18:00 – It was noted that Lowestoft in Bloom also meets on the first Monday of every month, which Cllrs Breakspear, Coleby and Collecott attend.

191. Items for the next agenda and close

It was requested that the Town Council look to increase the provision of bicycle racks in its parks. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will initially consider the design, location and cost. A provision of bicycle racks is included in the plans for The Ness. It was requested that provision be made on the next agenda for discussions about the lease arrangements for the Community Halls to continue. It was requested that consideration is given at the next meeting to measures the Town Council can take to address social isolation.

Cllr Knight proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

192. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

192.1. Any legal issues including those at 180.1 and 189:

189. Lease arrangements for the Community Halls (confidential) – The latest position was discussed.

Cllr Breakspear reported that the Friends of Kensington Gardens submitted a grant application to East Suffolk Council for dog litter bags to refill the dispensers, and they have been awarded £500. The Friends of Kensington Gardens are also submitting a regular article to The Bugle magazine about their activities.

The Chair closed the meeting 19:29.

Signed:

3 February 2020