

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 3 February 2020

MINUTES

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

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There was one member of the public in attendance

193. Welcome

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

The Deputy Clerk left the room 18:02 and returned 18:03

194. Apologies for absence

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

195. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard, Parker and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 201.3. Cllrs Breakspear and Taylor declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 205 and 214.

196. Accuracy of the Minutes

6 January 2020 – Following discussions at the previous meeting, further information about the Love Exploring/Sprytar app had been received and will be circulated to the Committee. The provision of adult gym equipment in Normanston Park has been included on the agenda for this meeting for further discussion. The provision of bicycle racks in the Town Council's parks and open spaces will be included on the agenda for the next Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting. The recommendation from the Toilet Strategy Working Group regarding the opening hours of the Town Council's public conveniences has been included on this agenda. Cllr Barnard proposed acceptance of the minutes of 6 January 2020; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

197. Public Forum

The member of the public spoke about item 207. It was queried whether outdoor gym equipment in Normanston Park is necessary and whether there is a demand for it. It was suggested instead that the Town Council could use the funds to promote and improve its existing sports facilities, such as the tennis courts. The Chair responded by saying there is a demand for the equipment. Oulton Parish Council have installed such equipment and have seen it well used. There are existing organisations in the town who already promote sports and sports facilities, so the Council would not want to duplicate the work they are already doing.

198. Progress with noticeboards, signs and plaques

All of the Town Council's noticeboards have been installed. The play area signage for Cotman Close, Stoven Close and Normanston Park has not been installed yet. Staff have already asked East Suffolk Norse to progress this and will continue to monitor. A bin was recently damaged at Cotman Close and has since been replaced but it is important that the public are aware of who to contact to report any issues. Cllr Pearce reported that the Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society is progressing the plaques. Cllr Coleby is due to attend their next meeting, where this

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will be discussed further.

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

199.1. Report from the Clerk regarding legal and policy issues affecting assets (some aspects may be confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

199.2. Report regarding asset management, compliance monitoring, maintenance and condition surveys – The Clerk sent an update email at the end of last week. The Deputy Clerk reported that some concerns have been raised about the condition of the Kensington Gardens Bowls Pavilion. A site visit is being arranged for Friday morning and Cllr Breakspear asked to be kept informed of the arrangements for this. The Belle Vue Park wall has sustained damage. East Suffolk Norse has cleared the debris and the contractor previously appointed to make repairs to the wall has been notified. The tenant of the Belle Vue Park cottage has notified the Council of some issues with the property. Cllr Taylor proposed asking East Suffolk Norse to have a look at the issues provide a quote for the cost of repairs; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour. On 1 February there was an incident of suspected arson in the public conveniences at the Lowestoft Cemetery. The ladies' toilets have been secured and East Suffolk Norse will be surveying the damage. Staff have reported the incident to the Police and obtained a crime number. The issue of an encampment in Sparrows Nest will be discussed during the confidential session. It was queried whether external inspections of the Community Halls are being progressed with East Suffolk Norse. It is understood that the Clerk is progressing this but this will be checked.

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

Cllr Taylor reported on discussions the Working Group has had with a couple of organisations about their ideas for managing the market. The Group will be discussing the idea of themed markets in the Town Council's parks with another organisation. Cllr Taylor has received contact from some interested parties about taking over management of monthly markets at the Triangle, and she has requested that they submit formal proposals. It was queried whether any approaches made to the Council previously about management of the market have been progressed. It was confirmed that nothing had yet been progressed and should the Council agree for an external organisation to manage the markets it would need to endeavour to obtain three quotations.

201. Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

201.1. Minutes of the meetings on 7 January 2020 and 28 January 2020 – These were circulated ahead of the meeting and were noted.

201.2. A recommendation for a maximum budget of £2,500 to purchase cherry trees, a maximum budget of £200 to purchase peace roses and a maximum budget of £800 to plant the cherry trees and peace roses – The Sub-Committee has made these recommendations as it was felt this would be an appropriate way to commemorate Victory in Europe Day and Victory Over Japan Day, and the trees and roses can continue to be enjoyed by residents and visitors to the town. A paper had been prepared of the proposed varieties and areas to plant the trees and roses and this was displayed at the meeting. The Chair explained the decisions of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee, which had been made with advice from East Suffolk Norse. There was a concern about the cost. It is hoped that Friends Groups or other local community groups will take responsibility for watering the trees and roses, and this would tie in with the Council's other policies on planting replacement trees for ones which need to be removed. East Suffolk Norse can put water bags on the trees to drip feed them, which would need to be topped up once a week. If approved, the Sub-Committee would like to arrange for one symbolic tree to be planted in August in Kensington Gardens, and

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for the others to be planted in the Autumn. If approved, the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will liaise with East Suffolk Norse about supply and storage. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the maximum budget of £2,500 for cherry trees, £200 for peace roses and £800 for planting, on the condition that no purchases are made until permission for planting has been obtained, the Town Council's Community Wardens have been appointed and any other maintenance arrangements have been agreed, such as water bags for the trees. This excludes the cherry tree to be planted in Kensington Gardens in August to commemorate Victory Over Japan Day. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Breakspear; seven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will liaise with East Suffolk Norse about appropriate areas for planting.

201.3. A recommendation for a maximum budget of £500 to purchase three rowan trees and a willow to plant at the Gainsborough Drive Pond – The local residents have met and agreed they will take responsibility for watering the trees. It was confirmed that these would be replacing trees previously removed, as per the Council's Open Spaces Strategy. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the recommendation for a maximum budget of £500 to purchase three rowan trees and a willow for the Gainsborough Drive pond; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

201.4. A recommendation for a maximum budget of £500 to purchase snowdrops for Sparrows Nest and to donate to Arnold's Bequest – Snowdrops need to be planted 'in the green' and it was thought it may now be too late for this to be progressed this year. Cllr Taylor proposed that this item is revisited in the Autumn; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

201.5. A recommendation to appoint Cllr Coleby as Lowestoft Town Council's representative to ParksEast – This was previously considered by Full Council, who voted not to appoint an individual representative at that stage. Cllr Knight proposed deferring this matter to the next meeting, for Cllr Coleby to confirm that he is still happy to be appointed as the Council's representative to ParksEast; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

202. Scope of additional Christmas lights

A group of Councillors completed a site visit to London Road South with a representative from Blachere, to look at extending the provision of Christmas lights to that area. Blachere should be providing a quotation and staff have been in contact with them.

203. Any measures the Town Council can take on its land to address social isolation

The 'Talking Benches' initiative was discussed at the last meeting, and it was suggested that benches should be grouped to encourage more social interaction, and this should be considered for any memorial bench requests the Council receives. There are organisations and community groups in the town who may be able to offer advice about other measures the Town Council can take. The Deputy Clerk recently attended a Community Partnership event and one of their priorities is tackling social isolation. Lots of different organisations are already working to address this but their work needs to be promoted more, as well as a central source of information progressed. The Community Partnership will be looking at how to achieve this.

Cllr Parker left the room 18:53

It was requested that this be carried forward to the next agenda for further discussion about the Town Council may work with other organisations and what action it can take on its land.

204. Site visits with East Suffolk Norse's Countryside Officer

Cllr Parker returned 18:55

The Arnold's Bequest Charity Board has already decided it would like to complete a site visit to that area with the Countryside Officer. It was suggested that a visit could be made to Fen Park, for advice with the pond, and to the Gainsborough Drive pond, as well as Arnold's Walk, for

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advice with the trees in that area which are becoming overgrown. Cllrs Barnard, Butler and Pearce expressed an interest in attending the site visits, subject to dates and times.

205. Friends of Kensington Gardens composting trial

Cllr Breakspear has sought advice from East Suffolk Norse at the last Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting. The Friends of Kensington Gardens would like to produce their own compost on site and Norse will assist with preparing an area for this. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee made a recommendation at their last meeting to purchase mulch, and this will be considered at the next meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee.

206. A recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to progress an intrusive geo-environmental survey of the North Denes land situated between the Tingdene Caravan Park and Links Road

More information is needed as to what is under the surface of the land in areas of the North Denes, before any development can be considered. Cllr Knight proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to progress seeking quotes for an intrusive geo-environmental survey of the North Denes land between the Tingdene Caravan Park and Links Road; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

207. The provision of adult gym equipment in Normanston Park

The Deputy Clerk advised that Woodbridge Town Council has installed about six pieces of equipment in one of its parks. Cllr Butler believes it is a similar number which has been installed at Oulton. Cllrs Carlton and Coleby previously made a site visit to Wenhaston to see equipment installed there. Quotes would need to be sought to progress this, but there has not yet been an indication from the Council as to type and quantity of equipment it would like to install. It was suggested that advice could be sought from East Suffolk Norse and Sentinel Leisure Trust. East Suffolk Council are looking to install similar equipment on the promenade so advice could also be sought from them. Normanston Park is already well used as a sports park so it was thought the equipment would be well used. Cllr Pearce proposed referring this matter to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to seek further advice and put together a proposal; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

208. A request from the Sparrows Nest Bowls Club to externally decorate the Sparrows Nest Bowls Pavilion

Images of the areas it is understood the Bowls Club would like to paint were displayed at the meeting. Cllr Knight proposed approval for the Sparrows Nest Bowls Club to externally decorate the Sparrows Nest Bowls Pavilion, with the paint to be supplied by the Town Council; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

209. The opening hours of the Town Council's public conveniences

A particular site of concern was inappropriate use of the disabled public convenience in Sparrows Nest, which prevented other users being able to access it. It was suggested that a secondary lock could be considered so that the toilet may be secured overnight when the other public conveniences are locked. The Toilet Strategy Working Group discussed the opening hours of the Town Council's public conveniences and this is likely to vary depending on the time of year and whether an event is being held at one of its sites. Signage would need to be considered to advise users when the facilities are available, and it was agreed that the information on the signs needs to be concise and clear. It was suggested that the signage could simply state that the public conveniences will be closed overnight. Cllr Knight proposed

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that the Town Council's public conveniences are closed overnight and appropriate signage be progressed to advertise this; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. A contract review meeting is being held shortly with East Suffolk Norse, where contractual arrangements for locking the public conveniences can be discussed.

210. A report on the condition of the Jubilee Bridge, following consultation with East Suffolk Council and Suffolk Highways

A Suffolk Highways Structures Engineer and East Suffolk Council Building Control have completed a visual inspection and did not identify any immediate danger, although further investigation is required and regular examinations should be completed. A condition survey undertaken in 2018 by Suffolk Highways and sent to the then Waveney District Council had been copied to the Deputy Clerk, who had enquired what action East Suffolk Council had taken as a result. It was agreed that the bridge seems to be deteriorating and action should be taken as a matter of some urgency to resolve ownership and address the issues identified. Cllr Taylor proposed starting discussions with East Suffolk Council with a view to them establishing full ownership of the bridge, on the basis that the Town Council does not have the funding or resources to own and maintain the bridge. It was further proposed that should East Suffolk Council establish full ownership of the bridge, via transfer back from Lowestoft Town Council, and that the Town Council should continue to monitor it to ensure that the issues are addressed; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

211. Submitting an application to the Sea-Changers Coastal Fountain Fund 2020, to receive funding towards the installation of water bottle refill stations, and to consider locations

If successful, this would provide up to £2,000 per site to purchase a water bottle refill station. Kensington Gardens and Sparrows Nest were suggested as potential locations, and potentially The Ness in future, once the extent of a water supply to that site is known. Cllr Barnard proposed proceeding with an application to the Sea-Changers Coastal Fountain Fund 2020, for Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

212. Consent to adopt the telephone kiosk on Gunton Drive, to confirm arrangements to sign contract of acceptance and to consider how to progress use and maintenance of the kiosk

It has been confirmed that the telephone kiosk can be adopted for £1, with an electricity supply. British Telecom will not accept responsibility for any electrical faults inside the kiosk. The Gunton Residents Association and Neighbourhood Watch group have offered to keep the kiosk clean inside and free of litter, and are keen to see it used to accommodate a defibrillator. Cllr Taylor proposed adopting the telephone kiosk on Gunton Drive with an electricity supply for £1; seconded by Cllr Knight; seven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Barnard proposed seeking three quotations for the cost of installing a defibrillator in the telephone kiosk; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

213. The Lowestoft Collection:

213.1. A recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee for a maximum budget of £100 for the purchase of new storage boxes for items of the Lowestoft Collection – Cllr Knight proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to approve a maximum budget of £100 for the purchase of new storage boxes for the Lowestoft Collection; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

213.2. Renewal of the loan agreement for the Lowestoft Collection to the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

214. Options for the Kensington Gardens Boating Lake (some aspects may be confidential)

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To be discussed during the confidential session.

215. Lease arrangements for the Community Halls (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

216. Date of the next meeting

2 March 2020 18:00

217. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for the inclusion of items on the next agenda.

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

The member of the public left the meeting 19:53

218. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

218.1. Any legal issues including those at 213.2, 214 and 215 –

199.1 Report from the Clerk regarding legal and policy issues affecting assets (some aspects may be confidential) – The Deputy Clerk explained the latest position regarding an encampment in Sparrows Nest. Cllr Taylor made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Barnard proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to explore the cost of secondary locks for the Town Council's disabled public conveniences, so that they may be secured when the other public conveniences are locked overnight; seconded by Cllr Taylor; all in favour.

213.2 Renewal of the loan agreement for the Lowestoft Collection to the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – The latest position with the loan agreement was explained. Cllr Taylor made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

214 Options for the Kensington Gardens Boating Lake (some aspects may be confidential) – The lake has been emptied now, for it to be cleaned and refilled. The Deputy Clerk will remind East Suffolk Norse to ensure they take the necessary measures to prevent algal bloom when the pond is refilled. There was a confidential discussion regarding options for the Boating Lake, and the matter is ongoing.

215 Lease arrangements for the Community Halls (confidential) – Legal advice is pending. At the previous meeting it was agreed that East Suffolk Norse would be asked to complete an external survey of the Halls, including the walls, guttering and downpipes. Contact will be made with Norse to progress this. There was a confidential discussion regarding lease arrangements and this will be progressed further following a meeting next week.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:29.

Signed:

2 March 2020