

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
14:30 on 3 December 2019

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Bob Breakspear, Neil Coleby (Chair), Graham Parker and John Pitts

In attendance: Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Also in attendance: Mark Ross (Assistant Manager Grounds – East Suffolk Norse) and Peter Wilson-Sutter (Assistant Manager Parks – East Suffolk Norse)

Public: There was one member of the public in attendance

23. Welcome

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

24. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Lang. Cllr Parker proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

25. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Coleby declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Lowestoft in Bloom. Cllrs Barnard and Parker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Gainsborough Drive Pond. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Kensington Gardens.

Cllr Pitts arrived 14:37

26. Public Forum

The member of the public spoke of the benefit of fallen leaves in certain areas; providing a good habitat for insects, and spoke of the detrimental effect leaf blowers can have. It was requested that the Council give consideration to stopping collection of fallen leaves in certain areas, particularly where the trees are surrounded by soil rather than concrete. East Suffolk Norse advised that they mainly only collect leaves in parks, for health and safety reasons and to keep them looking tidy. The majority of the leaves collected are composted and used for mulch. It was suggested that a nursery area could be considered at Arnold's Bequest. It was suggested that in the future, alternatives to tarmac can be considered for pathways within parks, which are permeable but robust. There was a discussion about water harvesting options and Cllrs Barnard and Breakspear will explore suitable options.

27. Accuracy of the minutes

5 November 2019 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Parker; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

28. Planting for civic events in 2020:

28.1 A planting plan for cherry trees for Victory over Japan Day – This was circulated ahead of the meeting and displayed at the meeting. Normanston Park has not been included at this stage as replacement trees for those previously removed will be considered at a later date. The plan contains a total of forty four trees, at an approximate cost of £50, giving an overall total of approximately £2,500, not including the cost of planting. The plan includes a potential community orchard at Clarkes Lane. Cllr Parker will enquire about including the planting of a tree at Whitton Green as part of the Pocket Parks funding project. Cllr Barnard proposed that further research be completed into the cost of the cherry trees planting plan, and a timescale for planting;

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seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour. Cllr Coleby will look into this and liaise with East Suffolk Norse about costs.

28.2 Planting of peace roses for Victory in Europe Day – A paper was circulated ahead of the meeting and displayed at the meeting. Maintenance costs need to be considered. East Suffolk Norse recommended against planting roses on the Town Green but there were no objections to any of the other proposed locations. Cllr Coleby will complete further research into the costs and will liaise with East Suffolk Norse about planting.

28.3 An update on the preparation and planting of the Holocaust Memorial Garden – The ground has been prepared. The hire cost of a turf cutter was discussed, but East Suffolk Norse advised that a bulb planter could be used instead. A group of volunteers including Councillors and the Friends of Kensington Gardens will plant the bulbs later this week.

29. Long term plans for the following parks, including naming, identity, planting, lighting and furniture:

29.1 Clarkes Lane – Cllr Coleby presented an aspirational long term plan to the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee would like to visit these sites ahead of the next meeting to look at the feasibility of the plans.

29.2 Belle Vue Park – Plans for the pink beds were circulated ahead of the meeting and displayed at the meeting. Full Council voted against the idea of preferred suppliers, but was in favour of using local suppliers where possible. Future planting aspirations will be considered more at the next meeting, including snowdrops and ‘in the green’ planting.

29.3 Normanston Park – It was agreed this would be discussed following the site visits.

29.4 Kensington Gardens – It was agreed this would be discussed following the site visits.

30. Consideration of ecological enhancement of parks including through:

30.1 Progressing the Wild Flower Policy – Cllr Coleby presented a paper providing more details on potential locations and how the policy may be implemented. Progression of this policy would be an ecological step, rather than a cost saving one, and East Suffolk Norse has indicated that there may actually be an increased cost to successfully create wild flower meadows. East Suffolk Norse recommend that any wild flower meadows the Council decides to progress are over a large area, rather than a small space. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the wild flower policy additional paper; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

30.2 Site visits with the East Suffolk Norse Countryside Officer – The Countryside Officer is due to start early in the new year and may be able to offer advice with the Wildflower Policy. With regard to the site visits, East Suffolk Norse will be informed of the arrangements so they can decide the most appropriate officers to send.

31. The Woodland Trust’s initiative to plant one million trees and a suggestion from the Climate Emergency Committee to consider residential areas, should the Town Council wish to be involved

The Sub-Committee agreed it would like the public to be more engaged with tree planting. The Climate Emergency Committee suggested more tree planting in residential areas, to encourage families to adopt and look after them. It was suggested that a representative from Lowestoft in Bloom and other local organisations could be invited to a future meeting and it was suggested that a representative from each of the Friends Groups could be invited periodically. This will be added to the next agenda for further consideration. It was suggested that the Council could consider a public event about tree planting, through liaison with the other Committees and Sub-Committees, East Suffolk Norse, local organisation and local schools. This will be considered further at the next meeting.

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32. A recommendation from the Climate Emergency Committee to explore collection points for mulch

The Climate Emergency Committee suggested consideration of locations in the town for people to dispose of their green waste. East Suffolk Norse advised there could be difficulties with managing these and ensuring that they are used for the correct type of waste disposal. Further research will be completed to see if any other Councils run such schemes.

33. A recommendation from the Climate Emergency Committee to develop a Litter Strategy

A waste management policy is included in the Open Spaces Strategy, but there is no policy on how litter bins are allocated within the Town Council's parks and open spaces, e.g. based on the size of the area. East Suffolk Norse advised that this has mostly been done reactively over the years, with bins being installed as and when required. When the site visits take place a record will be kept of the location of existing bins, how well used they are and where any issues with littering exist. Each site will be reviewed and recommendations made as to the type and number of bins required for each location. There has been a request for the provision of bottle bank glass recycling in the town to be considered at the next Climate Emergency Committee meeting.

34. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 7 January 2020 at 14:30

35. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Dates for the site visits will be circulated. It is anticipated this will be the first week of January, although if there is an expectation that a Lowestoft Town Council officer will be present this could be difficult with office cover. The diary will be checked and dates circulated. It was requested that a Lowestoft Town Council representative to ParksEast be considered at the next meeting. Full Council approved the expenditure of £100 per year to secure the Council's membership, but it is not clear why representatives were not appointed at the last meeting.

36. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

There were no confidential matters for discussion.

The Chair closed the meeting 16:25.

Signed:
7 January 2020