

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 4 November 2019

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sue Barnard (Chair), Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Andy Pearce, Alice Taylor and Nick Webb

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

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

138. Welcome

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

139. Receipt and consideration of acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Coleby, Collecott and Parker. Cllr Webb proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

140. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

141. Accuracy of the Minutes

30 September 2019 – Accepted as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Taylor; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

142. Public Forum

There were no members of the public in attendance.

143. Progress with noticeboards, signs and plaques

The Rosedale Park noticeboard has now been installed. The Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society is looking at plaques with Cllr Coleby and an update will be requested at the next meeting. East Suffolk Norse has completed improvement work to one of the Belle Vue Park entrances.

144. Asset transfer and compliance issues, particularly the following matters:

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

144.2. Report regarding asset management, compliance monitoring, maintenance and condition surveys –

Cllr Pearce arrived 18:04

Urgent works on the Town Hall have begun. Work on the Whitton Residents Meeting Hall's central heating system is scheduled for this week. The Clerk advised that any facilities or contract issues could be reported to her.

145. Feedback on the monthly market from the Markets Working Group, and any recommendations

Some stalls have been booked for November's market and there are two further markets scheduled for December. The stallholders who have repeat booked are happy to monitor the market themselves and it was suggested that one could be appointed as a market warden. This will be considered further when the market reopens in March. In the interim, Councillors will continue to assist.

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146. Feedback from the Lowestoft Town Council asset tour, including the following:

146.1. To consider options for the St Margarets Play Area – Cllrs Butler and Coleby produced reports on the asset tour and these have been circulated. There were no Lowestoft Town Council officers present at this year's tour and the Clerk explained this was due to staff workloads, and it had been checked that it was acceptable for staff not to attend. East Suffolk Norse and some Councillors were unaware of the non-attendance of a Lowestoft Town Council officer and had expected that an officer would be present. The asset tour identified a lack of signage, seating and cycle racks in the Town Council's parks. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will take this forward.

147. A recommendation from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to approve the use of mulch on the Town Council's flowerbeds and herbaceous borders

In line with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, mulch is effective at holding moisture and means less watering is required. It has been used successfully on the Poppy Garden. Some trees are being felled at The Ness and it was queried whether these could be used for mulch. It is understood that trees often need to be left for up to a year before the wood bark can be used for mulch. A discussion will need to be held with East Suffolk Norse as to how the use of mulch would be managed, particularly at sites which do not have a Friends Group. Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the recommendation from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to use mulch on the Town Council's flowerbeds and herbaceous borders; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

148. Options for the Fen Park pond

It was agreed to defer this item to next meeting for further information to be received. Cllr Barnard advised she had received a document she could not open, which may contain further information. The Clerk will look into this.

149. Security of Lowestoft Town Council's parks, including the following:

149.1. Arrangements at park entrances to prevent unauthorised access – Lockable bollards had previously been considered for Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens. It has since been queried whether the gates could just be closed at Sparrows Nest instead. A meeting will be arranged in January, with stakeholders from the museums and restaurants at the sites, to seek their opinions. In the interim, it was agreed to contact them via email to seek their views.

149.2. An update following a request for a police patrol of the parks – Cllr Breakspear has been making enquiries about a once or twice daily patrol of Kensington Gardens. It was suggested that the café could be approached about a potential voucher scheme for the police.

150. Consideration of the following relating to litter bins:

150.1. A request for 2 new litter bins in Rosedale Park – During the asset tour, East Suffolk Norse identified that this is a large space, currently only served by one bin. Cllr Webb proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to approve two new litter bins in Rosedale Park; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

150.2. A request for a dog litter bin on Long Road, between Westwood Avenue and Homefield Avenue, to replace one previously removed from the grass verge – It is understood that East Suffolk Norse no longer installs specific dog litter bins. The land in question does not belong to the Town Council. Cllr Taylor proposed declining the request for a dog litter bin on Long Road; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour. The Clerk suggested that the Council may wish to review its litter strategy in due course, to prevent littering from occurring. The Climate Emergency Committee will consider this in line with the Town Council's existing policies.

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151. Progress with the feasibility study for the Town Hall

The final draft was received by the Town Council this morning. A meeting is being held with Historic England and East Suffolk Council, then the document will be circulated to Councillors.

152. Lease arrangements for the Community Halls (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

153. Date of the next meeting

2 December 2019 18:00

154. Items for the next agenda and close

No matters were raised for inclusion on the next agenda.

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

155. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

155.1. Any legal issues including those at 144.1 and 152.

144.1 Report from the Clerk regarding legal and policy issues affecting assets (some aspects may be confidential) – Reports of an encampment at Belle Vue Park have been received, but the Clerk has checked and this is not there now. The Clerk has recently visited the Town Hall to inspect the repairs completed so far, and they are progressing well. Upon internal inspection of the Town Hall, the Clerk identified issues and has been liaising with the contractors and the Town Council’s insurers.

152. Lease arrangements for the Community Halls (confidential) – The current arrangements for the Gunton Residents Community Meeting Hall in particular were discussed and Cllrs Barnard, Butler and Coleby are liaising with the current tenant. A new draft lease has been prepared for all of the Community Halls, but robust governance arrangements are required also.

There was a confidential discussion about the potential purchase of a business property by the Town Council, and the latest update was given.

The Chair closed the meeting 19:02.

Signed:
2 December 2019