

# Lowestoft Town Council

## Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee

Via Video Meeting  
18:00 on 6 July 2020

### MINUTES

**Video meeting participants:** Cllrs Sue Barnard, Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby (Chair), Amanda Frost, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor

**Also participating:** Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

**18. Welcome**

The right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol were explained and noted, and the meeting was welcomed.

**19. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Knight. Cllr Peter Collecott had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Barnard proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

**20. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

Cllrs Barnard, Parker and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 26.3a and 26.3b. Cllrs Breakspear and Taylor declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 26.3b and 26.5.

**21. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 1 June 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting**

Regarding item 23 of this meeting's agenda, a Councillor participated in the last meeting who was not a member of the Committee at the time. There were no amendments required to the minutes of the previous meeting however, as they recorded what happened at that meeting. It was noted that a Councillor had participated and voted in the last meeting without being a member at the time. Their membership has since been accepted by Full Council.

**22. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda**

A member of the public had provided comments about item 26.4b, requesting that the Town Council consider spending some of its budget for play areas on the St Margarets Plain play area to make improvements to this site.

**23. Noting Full Council's confirmation of the composition of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee, and to note a Councillor's participation at the meeting on 1 June who was not a member of the Committee**

Composition of the Committee was read out as follows: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby, Peter Collecott, Amanda Frost, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee's composition; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

**24. Review and adoption of Sub-Committee arrangements for the Allotments Sub-Committee**

24.1. Composition – This was read out as follows: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Neil Coleby, Peter Lang, Keith Patience and Andy Pearce. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the composition of the Allotments Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

24.2. Terms of Reference – Removal of asbestos from the allotment sites is being instructed and arrangements made for the necessary access to do this. Cllr Pearce proposed

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acceptance of the Allotments Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

24.3. Any delegations – There are no delegations to this Sub-Committee currently.

**25. How to implement the Infrastructure Investment Plan, following its adoption by Full Council as a working document, including the following:**

25.1. Receipt and consideration of the up to date CIL and s106 position and any deadlines for expenditure – It was noted that some of the s106 funding allocation related to a development that had not yet completed. Some of the s106 funding has a time limit of 12 October 2020 and is to be spent in the vicinity of the St Margarets East ward. It was clarified that expenditure needs to be committed by the deadline date and plans for expenditure submitted by the Town Council will be considered by the District Council based on their parameters. It was suggested that the St Margarets East ward Councillors should be approached for suggestions and this will be carried forward to the next agenda. The Clerk will seek advice from East Suffolk Norse, particularly with regard to the play areas in the ward.

**26. Consideration of the following regarding parks and open spaces:**

26.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the meeting on 16 June 2020, and consideration of the following recommendations: - The draft minutes were noted.

26.1a. A request for the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to review the Friends, Stakeholders and Assets Policy – It was noted that the management structure in the first section requires updating. In practice insurance is always required and what happens in practice will be better reflected in the policy. It was queried whether the policy should be updated to include reference to the Community Wardens. The policy can be reviewed again once the Wardens are appointed. It was suggested that more support be given to groups in their early stages. Some wards have Community Enablers who can offer advice, but this support is not available everywhere. Officers do provide support and groups can submit applications under the Town Council's regular grant awarding policy. Cllr Coleby proposed adoption of the Friends, Stakeholders and Assets Policy, subject to the necessary amendments to the management structure and the Clerk reviewing insurance provisions; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

26.1b. Tenant COVID-19 recovery actions and noting that provisional permission has been granted (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

26.2. Requests from Cllrs Frost and Pitts to join the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee – Cllr Lang also requested to join the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee. Cllr Coleby proposed approval for Cllrs Frost, Lang and Pitts to join the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. Cllr Lang had also requested to join the Normanston Allotments Working Group. Cllr Pearce proposed approval for Cllr Lang to join the Normanston Allotments Working Group; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

26.3. Consideration of the following relating to ponds:

26.3a. Advice from East Suffolk Norse's Countryside Officer on the presence of Water Speedwell in the Gainsborough Drive Pond, and to consider how this should be managed – The weed has been prolific in the pond and has previously been cleared by the Friends Group, who has requested advice about how to manage it in future. The Countryside Officer has recommended some form of clearance, the extent of which is to be determined by the Town Council. The Friends Group would like to leave some coverage in the Southern end of the pond to provide shelter for wildlife. Disposal of any weed removed from the pond was discussed. Cllr Barnard offered to speak with a local organisation who may be able to

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compost it. Previously the wet weed was left by the pond for a time so any invertebrates could escape back into the pond, then it was removed in consultation with Norse. The Friends Group has previously requested a green bin, but special provision would need to be sought as this type of waste cannot usually be disposed of in a domestic green bin. With regard to the Town Council's climate emergency declaration, it was suggested that the option of composting the weed onsite before it is removed be explored if there is not an alternative option. It was requested that the advice and recommendations of the Countryside Officer be communicated to the Friends Group, as they may have their own suggestions. Cllr Coleby proposed that the decision regarding removal of the Water Speedwell from the Gainsborough Drive pond be referred to the Friends Group, and that liaison regarding the disposal of the weed be reported back to this Committee; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 26.3b. Making a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee on whether to progress environmental surveys of the Fen Park, Kensington Gardens and Gainsborough Drive ponds – Advice has previously been sought from Suffolk Wildlife Trust but no date or cost for an environmental survey has yet been provided. A quotation from another organisation of £355 has been received, for surveys of the Fen Park, Kensington Gardens and Gainsborough Drive ponds, and does not include the Cotmer Road pond. Cllr Hardie proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to progress environmental surveys for the Fen Park, Gainsborough Drive, Kensington Gardens and Cotmer Road ponds, within a maximum budget of £500; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It is understood that the quotation is an overall cost and not the cost per site but this will be verified ahead of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting.
- 26.4. The Town Council's provision of play equipment, particularly regarding the following sites:
- 26.4a. Sparrows Nest – Councillors have received comments from members of the public that the play area is looking tired and needs more to entertain children. The Ness will have a play area, but this is aimed at older children, whereas Sparrows Nest is aimed at younger children. It was queried how this fits with the Town Council's plan to focus on one play area per year, as there are other sites in need of attention too. The play area report will assist in identifying priorities, but these two sites have been added to the agenda due to approaches made by members of the public. During previous site visits which have taken place it was requested that quotations be sought for the repair or replacement of the hardstanding at the Britten Road play area as well. The rubber matting of the Fen Park play area also needs to be replaced. Advice has been sought from East Suffolk Norse on what improvements can be made to the Sparrows Nest play area, and graffiti in the bandstand has also been reported to them. The issue with the matting at Fen Park has also been raised with Norse, and any matters relating to health and safety will be prioritised. Progress with the issues reported at Britten Road will be checked.
- 26.4b. St Margaret's Plain – Advice previously sought suggests that it is not a large enough site to accommodate any more equipment. The equipment which is there would benefit from some renovation. There is a small concrete area next to the land which is owned by East Suffolk Council and it was queried whether the Town Council could make enquiries into transfer of this land to enhance the play area. In the interim, it was suggested that planting could be considered, or a game painted onto the grass. Advice and suggestions will be sought from relevant organisations. Cllrs Barnard, Coleby, Hardie and Pearce volunteered to start a Working Group to explore options for the Town Council's play areas. Officers will

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circulate the latest play inspection report, and details of any improvement work to any of the sites which has taken place recently.

- 26.5. A request from the Friends of Kensington Gardens to create a rose garden in Kensington Gardens, to commemorate the efforts of keyworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic – In principle, the Committee thought this was a good idea to create a lasting commemoration, but would like to see more detail, including the location. Proposals submitted by Councillors relating to the pandemic have temporarily been suspended based on advice to wait until the full effect of the pandemic is known, it was therefore queried whether this request should be considered at this stage. It was agreed that a full proposal should be requested from the Friends of Kensington Gardens, for the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to consider initially.
- 26.6. How to work with Friends Groups towards the recovery of the Town Council's parks and open spaces – The Committee would like to see more promotion of Friends Groups on the Town Council's website, Facebook page and noticeboards. There have been enquiries from members of the public about establishing a Friends of Sparrows Nest group. It is understood that promotion of Friends Groups has been included in the Town Council's weekly Lowestoft Journal entry, or will be shortly. There are currently no noticeboards in Fen Park. All Councillors were previously asked where they would like to see a noticeboard located within their ward, and it was intended that one noticeboard would be allocated to each ward. It was suggested that any requirement for additional noticeboards should be explored. Although there is no specific budget provision for this, it could be funded through the parks improvement budget. Officers will email all Councillors to enquire whether they would like an additional noticeboard in their ward, and if so at which location. This will be considered by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee. A local community group had previously enquired about an additional noticeboard in the High Street area. Officers will contact them for more information. Cllrs Coleby and Taylor advised they would be happy to support any new Friends Groups.
- 26.7. Consideration of the following regarding Normanston Park:
- 26.7a. A request from a member of the public for a memorial bench near the Skate Park – It was agreed that there is a requirement for additional seating in Normanston Park, but the Finance and Governance Committee will need to consider the ongoing maintenance costs. It is understood that a company which previously provided custom-made benches for the Town Council may be able to produce a skateboard-themed bench, which could be suggested to the member of the public who has requested the bench. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to approve the request from a member of the public for a memorial bench near the skate park in Normanston Park; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 26.7b. Security arrangements to prevent unauthorised vehicular access – There are two barriers near to the café which can be lifted or lowered. It was suggested that one of the barriers should remain lowered to prevent the unauthorised access of larger vehicles. Norse have suggested the narrowed route for visitors entering and exiting the park and for delivery vehicles may cause issues. It was suggested that should this go ahead, warning signage should be considered, which should also advise how authorised vehicles can gain access if they require the barrier to be raised . The Clerk has sought advice from the Town Council's insurers and additional risk management precautions will need to be considered. Cllr Patience proposed that one barrier should be lowered for the interim, until the necessary advice has been sought and precautionary measures put into place; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Signage will be considered further at the next meeting.

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- 26.7c. The use of the car park as a drop off and collection point for coaches – This item is linked to item 26.7b. Should permission be given for coaches to use the car park as a pick up and drop off point in future, arrangements will need to be made to ensure they can gain access. Officers will check whether this will be required for this year.
- 26.7d. Changes to tenant and contractor areas (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 26.8. How to progress the decision of the Finance and Governance Committee to approve a maximum budget of £200 for the purchase of two lockable bollards at Sparrows Nest, including to consider the positioning of them and ensuring that the requests of stakeholders have been considered – The Finance and Governance Committee raised some queries regarding the proposed locations of the bollards within Sparrows Nest. Previous engagement with stakeholders within the park indicated that they would not object to the bollards so long as they had a key for them. Cllr Butler declared a local non-pecuniary interest in this item due to the discussions relating to particular stakeholders. With regard to the locations, it was queried why these should be changed if the stakeholders had no issues. Cllr Coleby proposed progressing two lockable bollards at Sparrows Nest in the locations originally proposed – at the Maritime Museum entrance and the vehicular entrance further along Whapload Road; seconded by Cllr Pearce; twelve Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 26.9. Potential locations for two ballot cigarette butt bins, which can be provided and delivered at no cost to the Council
- A five minute comfort break was taken at 19:36 and the meeting resumed at 19:41*
- It was clarified that East Suffolk Council has asked the company providing the bins to seek locations for them, based on the Town Council's local knowledge. The bins can be installed on Town Council land but the ongoing maintenance of them would need to be considered, and it may be that there are other more appropriate areas where there is a particular issue with cigarette butt littering. It was agreed that the bins would be more appropriately located in the town centre, and it was suggested that the company providing the bins seek advice from the town's hospitality sector.
- 26.10. The design and construction features for completion of The Ness (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 26.11. The framework for seasonal work in parks (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.
- 27. Noting receipt of the 'Notice to Complete' for the telephone kiosk on Gunton Drive and to consider potential uses for the kiosk**
- The local Neighbourhood Watch scheme has offered to look after the kiosk and has suggested it could be used to display advertisements and as a book exchange. The kiosk is covered by insurance and Councillors were invited to submit any suggestions for its use to officers. Cllr Barnard will contact the local Neighbourhood Watch and Residents' Association. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting.
- 28. The development of Youth Engagement and Communities Engagement policies, as per this Committee's Terms of Reference**
- The Committee felt it is important to progress the development of these to improve its community engagement, the involvement of young people in decisions which affect the town, and obtaining feedback from key groups. It was agreed that officers will draft the policies, to be considered by the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee.

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**29. A request to reposition the Town Council's noticeboard at the Triangle Market**

A local community group has previously suggested repositioning the noticeboard so that it is more visible. No suggestions have been received so far of alternative locations. It is understood that when the noticeboard was first installed the location was dictated by land ownership and it could be expensive to move it, if it is possible to do so. The Clerk has emailed Councillors to ask if a further noticeboard is required in their ward and has requested that potential locations are suggested if so.

**30. Trading arrangements in Links Road Car Park (confidential)**

To be discussed during the confidential session.

**31. Date of the next meeting**

3 August 2020 18:00

**32. Items for the next agenda and close**

It was requested that provision be included on the next agenda to discuss security of the Town Council's parks. It was queried whether the Town Council could consider appointing a Park Keeper. This will be included within the Community Wardens' role to an extent. The priorities of activities under the Norse contract can be reviewed if this is the Council's desire. The appointment of Park Keepers may be a long-term ambition.

Cllr Coleby proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the live stream was closed as the meeting went into confidential session. It was confirmed the meeting would end following the confidential session.

**33. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:**

33.1. Any legal issues, including those at items 26.1b, 26.7d, 26.10, 26.11 and 30 above as required

26.1b – Tenant COVID-19 recovery actions and noting that provisional permission has been granted (confidential) – The Clerk provided updates on Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens. The Clerk has made a site visit to Normanston Park and issues identified by a tenant were discussed.

*Cllr Hardie left the meeting 20:19*

Cllr Taylor made a confidential proposal, which was seconded by Cllr Coleby and all Councillors voted in favour.

26.7d Changes to tenant and contractor areas (confidential) – This was covered during the discussion of item 26.1b.

*Cllr Frost left the meeting 20:29*

26.10 The design and construction features for completion of The Ness (confidential)  
The application for exploration into the feasibility of supplying water to The Ness has been submitted.

*Cllr Patience left the meeting 20:33*

As the meeting had exceeded two and a half hours, Cllr Pearce proposed extending the meeting by fifteen minutes to allow consideration of the remaining agenda items. This was seconded by Cllr Green and all Councillors voted in favour.

*Cllr Breakspear left the meeting 20:34*

It was suggested that an Extraordinary Meeting should be called to ensure the

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outstanding issues regarding The Ness receive the time and attention they require, particularly as the project is nearing its conclusion. Cllr Green as Mayor was supportive of this idea and officers will make the arrangements for this.

26.11 The framework for seasonal work in parks (confidential) – This item is also on the Climate Emergency and Finance and Governance Committees’ agendas for consideration. The Clerk provided an update on the latest position.

30. Trading arrangements in Links Road car park (confidential) – There was a confidential discussion regarding this, and this will be considered further by Full Council.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:47.

Signed: .....  
3 August 2020