

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:30 on 18 August 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard (Chair), Bob Breakspear, Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green, Peter Lang, Andy Pearce and Alice Taylor

Also participating: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

31. Welcome

Councillors and members of the public were reminded of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed.

32. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Amanda Frost, Jacqueline Hardie, Graham Parker and John Pitts. Cllr Tara Carlton had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour

33. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to the Gunton Residents Association and Gainsborough Drive pond. Cllr Coleby declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Lowestoft in Bloom. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Kensington Gardens.

34. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 14 July 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were received and noted, and there were no comments.

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

No comments had been received.

36. Increasing the Town Council's provision of noticeboards, bicycle racks, benches and bins, including costs and progress with a public survey

Officers are putting together the content for the public survey, which will also include the consultation for the Neighbourhood Development Plan, which the Town Council is legally required to complete. Possible further external funding options to support the development of the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be explored. There are still some sites listed on the Members' Area of the website which need to be surveyed. It was noted that St Margaret's Plain has a bench and a fifty-litre bin, and it was requested that this is included with the schedule of sites to ensure it is not forgotten. Regarding noticeboards, Cllr Pitts had previously made a couple of suggestions for locations in Pakefield, and is making enquiries regarding land ownership. The proposed wheelchair accessible picnic bench for the Stoven Close play area has been suggested to East Suffolk Council as a possibility for the Talking Bench, and a response is pending. It was noted that St Margaret's Plain has a bench and a fifty litre bin, and it was requested that this is included with the schedule of sites to ensure it is not forgotten. Enquiries are being made regarding costs of noticeboards, benches, bins and bicycle racks. The company who provided the benches for the Belle Vue Park Peace Garden may be able to provide bespoke designs for other sites. Cllr Coleby will forward the details he has to officers.

37. How best to increase the local beneficial impact of trees, including the following:

37.1 Approval of the Tree Council funding application and plans for implementation – The Finance and Governance Committee has allocated funds from the parks development budget for planting and watering costs. Enquiries have been made with schools and

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youth groups to assist with planting, as per the conditions of the funding. Cllr Coleby is contacting the fire service to enquire about sponsorship of one of the sites. Cllr Coleby is also looking into the rest of the cherry trees from the original proposal.

- 37.2 Progressing a public campaign to promote trees – It was suggested that a joint Working Group with the Climate Emergency Committee could be formed to consider this. Originally a public event was being considered, but this would be difficult to progress now unless it were an open air event in one of the parks, which could be linked to the tree planting. In the meantime, it was suggested that information on local trees could be added to the Town Council’s website. The Ness Steering Group will be meeting at the start of September. Trees have been planted at the site, and it was suggested that the opening event could include the planting of the Charter Scots Pine. The October half term is being considered for the launch event.

Cllr Breakspear temporarily left the meeting 14:48

Should the Health Emergency Declaration document be adopted by Full Council as a working document, one of the actions is to plant an orchard tree for every other tree planted by the Town Council. The Events and Communications Officer should be appointed shortly, who can also work with the Events and Communications Sub-Committee to progress the ideas of this Sub-Committee and the Climate Emergency Committee. Cllr Coleby proposed that a Working Group is formed to draw up proposals to be progressed by the Events and Communications Sub-Committee, working with relevant officers; seconded by Cllr Pearce. An email will be circulated to all Councillors inviting expressions of interest to join the Working Group.

- 37.3 Suffolk County Council’s plans for a memorial woodland –

Cllr Breakspear returned 14:54

It appears this is a national initiative, but no more information is available at this stage.

38. How to progress wildflower areas at Gunton Community Park, Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk, and to consider any other appropriate areas of Town Council land

Cllr Breakspear temporarily left the meeting 14:55

A site visit to Daffodil Walk has been completed. East Suffolk Norse will be dealing with the fallen trees there. It was suggested that wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk should be progressed this year and the other sites next autumn.

Cllr Breakspear returned 14:58

Bulb and seed mixes are available, for which Norse should be able to provide a cost. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the residents of Daffodil Walk to explain what the Council is doing in this area and why. Officers will draft a letter send to Cllr Lang to distribute. Rosedale Park, Fen Park, the North Denes, the Bentley Drive play area and Arnold’s Bequest were suggested as other sites which could accommodate wildflower areas. Each of the Town Council’s parks and open spaces will need to be considered to see if they have suitable areas. All Councillors voted in favour to seek costs and progress wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk this year.

39. Five year plans for the following parks:

- 39.1 Normanston Park – Usually site visits are arranged to complement the consideration of these plans. It was agreed that these items should be deferred to the next agenda and site visits arranged in the interim. Officers are exploring options for adult gym equipment and will be organising site visits with the interested companies. It is understood East Suffolk Council is planning to install equipment along the promenade and enquiries will be made with them to ensure provision is not being duplicated. Low level solar lighting has previously been considered for Normanston Park and recently

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lighting to some of the poles in Fen Park has been suggested. This Sub-Committee was also considering a proposal for a BMX pump track in Normanston Park before the pandemic. It was agreed that site visits to the four sites identified as part of this item should be progressed, across two half days (one half day for the Northern side of the town and one half day for the South).

39.2 Fen Park – This was covered in the discussion of item 39.1.

39.3 Kensington Gardens - This was covered in the discussion of item 39.1.

39.4 Sparrows Nest, including a suggested Alice in Wonderland theme - This was covered in the discussion of item 39.1.

40. Autumn planting:

40.1 The assistance of seasonal workers – Previously there were discussions about seasonal workers being involved with the Town Council’s biodiversity projects and autumn planting. This would be an extension to what has already been agreed and the seasonal workers have already been appointed. It was requested that enquiries be made with Norse, including whether the pandemic has affected the employment of any full time members of staff. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee to request the assistance of seasonal workers for an extended period, to help progress the Town Council’s biodiversity projects and autumn planting; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

40.2 Planned planting, including the Holocaust island bed and lawn, and the Belle Vue Park pink and white beds – The Holocaust Memorial bed and pink and white beds were due to be progressed earlier this year. The budgets have previously been approved, but the plants need to be sourced. Cllr Coleby has been seeking quotations and will liaise with officers to progress this.

40.3 Ordering bulbs – Cllr Coleby is putting together a paper, including bulbs for the pink and white beds, a bluebell walk in Sparrows Nest, and bulbs for Gainsborough Drive, around the trees at the Stoven Close play area, Fen Park and Arnold’s Bequest, plus Kensington Gardens if the Friends Group would like some. In the parks development budget there is an allowances for bulbs, shrubs, trees and perennials but no delegation. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee, to purchase bulbs within the maximum budget previously set by the Finance and Governance Committee; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour. Cllr Breakspear will check with the Friends Group regarding Kensington Gardens.

40.4 A plan for the 2021 planting of the Sparrows Nest Winter Garden and Sensory Garden – This would provide winter blooming plants for the park, and has previously been approved. A budget had been agreed to work with a designer, but it was agreed this cost could be saved if Councillors first draw up plans for the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to consider. It was suggested that the former oriental garden could be transformed into a Sensory Garden, which the College may be able to help implement. It was agreed that Cllrs Barnard, Coleby, Lang and Pearce would meet to begin looking at this.

41. How to make improvements to the St Margaret’s Plain play area

This was added to the agenda following requests from members of the public for improvements to the site. A group of Councillors completed a site visit. The slide has been removed and the only equipment there now is a set of toddler swings and a small climbing frame, along with a bench and a bin. The bin was full and may need to be replaced with a bigger one. The Councillors spoke with families using the park, who would like to see more swings and a climbing pole, and suggested that the equipment and metal railings could be painted to provide more colour. Officers will enquire with Norse whether painting the

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equipment could be progressed under the repairs and maintenance budget. Plans for the Whitton Green play area are being progressed this year and it was queried where the St Margaret's Plain play area is on the Town Council's priority list for play areas. The Sentinel Leisure Trust report identified St Margaret's Plain as the Town Council's lowest rated play area. There is a small piece of land attached to the play area, and another small area of land on Thurston Road, which are both owned by East Suffolk Council. It was suggested that if the Town Council were to acquire these parcels of land they could be used to extend the existing play area and create another small play area to cater for this area, which could be themed to reflect the history of the area and therefore provide an educational space too. If the expenditure were primarily repairs and maintenance at this stage it could be progressed alongside the plans for Whitton Green. East Suffolk Council officers have indicated to Councillors at the site visit that they may be open to considering the transfer of the land, but it was clarified that Councillors had not been negotiating with East Suffolk Council on the Town Council's behalf.

Cllr Hardie joined the meeting 15:49

It was suggested that the Town Council should first consider its priorities. Any additional play equipment may have to be considered at a later date, but it was suggested that painting of the existing equipment could be progressed if this can be done via the repairs and maintenance budget.

Cllr Frost joined the meeting 15:52

It was suggested that the AID Committee could look at Sentinel Leisure Trust's report and the Council's policy on additional land transfers.

Cllr Breakspear left the meeting 15:56

Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee to consider further land transfers and how these may benefit the improvements identified in Sentinel Leisure Trust's report. Cllr Coleby further proposed that enquiries be made with Norse to see whether the painting of the equipment at the St Margaret's Plain play area could be progressed via the repairs and maintenance budget; seconded by Cllr Pearce; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against; one Councillor abstained from the vote. There were concerns that the land identified on Thurston Road may not be suitable as a play area.

42. Whether to progress an art project at the Belle Vue Park North entrance, and which organisations to approach for plans

The College previously installed boards decorated with poppies. The idea of an art project has been discussed with the College and the Ormiston Denes Academy, and other local art groups may potentially be interested. It was confirmed that asbestos has now been removed from the entrance. It was suggested that a typographical map of the park could form part of the artwork, with the rest linking to the Scores and the Heritage Action Zone. Cllr Coleby proposed that a map of the Scores and Heritage Action Zone be installed at the Belle Vue Park North entrance as a temporary measure, whilst discussions are held with interested parties about a future art project there; seconded by Cllr Frost; all in favour.

43. Signage encouraging the appropriate disposal of dog litter at the Town Council's parks and open spaces

It was clarified that dog litter bins are not being considered, just positive signage to encourage visitors to look after the Town Council's parks and open spaces.

Cllr Hardie left the meeting 16:17

Signage has been considered previously and it was agreed that too many signs will clutter the parks and will not have the intended impact. It was suggested the message could be included in general information boards at the entrances to the parks, as has been suggested

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previously. It was commented that eco-friendly signs with a similar message have been erected at Pakefield beach.

44. Date of the next meeting

22 September 2020 14:30

45. Items for the next Agenda and Close

It was requested that this Sub-Committee's consideration of changing the names of certain parks and open spaces continues. The Neighbourhood Development Plan will define the names of assets so this needs to be considered promptly. This will need to include checking how the names are listed in the Land Registry, and for legal purposes any name changes decided by the Town Council will need to be changed with the Land Registry also. It was also requested that consideration is given to information boards and signage at the next meeting.

46. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 16:23.