

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee

Via Video Meeting
18:00 on 4 January 2021

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard (Chair), Colin Butler, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie and Andy Pearce

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

117. Welcome

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

118. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Neil Coleby and Alice Taylor. Cllr Graham Parker had resigned from the Committee. Cllrs Bob Breakspear, Peter Knight, Paul Page and John Pitts had not provided apologies and were absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

119. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 127. With regard to item 134, Cllr Barnard declared that she is a member of the Committee of the Local Archaeology and History Society but is not associated with the Lowestoft Museum, but was contacted by someone from the Museum in November with regard to item 134. Cllr Hardie declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 123.2.

120. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 7 December 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted but will not be formally considered and signed until face to face meetings resume.

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

A public comment had been received and welcomed efforts from the Lowestoft Town Tennis Club and the Lowestoft Cricket Club to raise their profiles. The member of the public would like to see more provision for social tennis from the club and would like to see repairs made to the wall and gate.

122. Parks and open spaces:

122.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 15 December 2020 – The draft minutes were noted.

122.2. Locations for the wheelchair accessible picnic benches in the Stoven Close play area and Gunton Community Park – It was queried whether a path should be provided at the Stoven Close play area. A wheelchair user does access the play area currently. No budget has been agreed for a path yet, and this could have large cost implications, but will be taken forward as appropriate. Cllr Butler had provided a report which was displayed at the meeting. There is one picnic bench at Stoven Close currently, with a bin nearby. A new piece of play equipment is also due to be installed at Stoven Close, and will be discussed later on the agenda. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to install the wheelchair accessible picnic bench at the Stoven Close play area at a reasonable distance to the existing picnic bench and bin, and for the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to consider the provision of a path; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. At the Gunton Community Park there is an existing bench along the pathway. Cllr Butler proposed a recommendation to Full Council to install the wheelchair

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- accessible picnic bench at the Gunton Community Park at a reasonable distance to the existing bench, towards the play area; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 122.3. Funding of an additional piece of equipment at the Stoven Close play area – There had been some funds earmarked but there have been issues with the application for funding. There is £15,454 linked to applications DC/13/0649 and 0650 which could be used instead and is not yet time limited. An image of the equipment was shown, which has already been approved by Full Council. Cllr Hardie proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the purchase of the additional piece of equipment for the Stoven Close play area, using the funding available to the Council now, which could be used for an alternative purpose if the issues with the original application are resolved; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. There is a Royal Naval Patrol Service cemetery within Belle Vue Park. A memorial bench was removed from the cemetery some time ago. East Suffolk Councillor Janet Craig has offered locality funding for a replacement. Where appropriate, the Town Council's policy for memorial benches will be consistent with East Suffolk Council's, however there will be some aspects where the Town Council would be justified in taking a different approach. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve the offer of a memorial bench for the Belle Vue Park cemetery, subject to there being no issues with a bench being sited in this location; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 122.4. Progress with memorial lecterns for the Belle Vue Park Peace Garden and Kensington Gardens Holocaust Memorial Garden – There were no updates to report at this meeting and it was agreed to carry this item forward to the next agenda.
- 122.5. Site access to Sparrows Nest – The issue has been more difficult to resolve than first anticipated. Officers have been exploring appropriate signage and have sought advice on whether disabled parking bays could be marked by the Movie Makers Theatre, but this would be difficult given the current layout. It was suggested that the mini roundabout could be removed, but this would be unlikely to make much of a difference. The Council does not wish to restrict disabled access but it is not always possible to create it. The priority remains to ensure the safety of park users. It was suggested that methods used at other parks could be explored or a speed limit could be imposed, but this would not always be respected and would be difficult to enforce. It was suggested that an area could be marked as a drop off only point for visitors and deliveries. Stakeholders have been approached about key holding responsibilities and there have been some issues, but a decision is still required either way. Cllr Pearce proposed that the bollard be reinstalled further into the park, access beyond which will be by pre-arrangement only, with appropriate signage at the entrance to the park, and to explore the possibility of marking a drop off and delivery point; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 122.6. Participation in East Suffolk Council's Open Space Study Consultation – The consultation is underway and a meeting is likely to be arranged shortly requiring the Town Council's representation. Cllr Green put himself forward as the Town Council's representative and nominated Cllr Coleby as the substitute representative, subject to his agreement; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

123. Public conveniences:

- 123.1. Receipt of the notes of the Toilet Strategy Working Group meeting on 17 December 2020 – The Council has decided to prioritise the refurbishment of the Fen Park and Sparrows Nest public conveniences and a provisional budget has been set, subject to the approval of Full Council. A Norse officer with relevant experience has inspected the sites and the reports indicate the refurbishments could be completed within the budget set. Cllr Butler has provided notes on the Sparrows Nest public conveniences and understands that some work may be required to the building itself. Some relevant new

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information regarding the budget and precept means some provisional capital works funding has been allocated to address those repairs to wider building.

- 123.2. How to progress the Council's decision to refurbish the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences – The discussion of the previous item also relates to this one. The Working Group has suggested that the size of the Fen Park public conveniences building would lend itself more to gender neutral public conveniences, rather than being segregated. It would need to be verified that the building is an appropriate size to accommodate disability access. Cllr Pearce proposed that three quotations be obtained for the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.
- 123.3. The response from East Suffolk Council regarding the Pakefield Street public conveniences (confidential) – The Town Council has sought pre-application advice from East Suffolk Council on a potential change of use. East Suffolk Council has advised that the footprint of the site would be considered too small for the intended purpose. Any further thoughts about alternative uses would need to be discussed confidentially, or referred back to the Toilet Strategy Working Group for further consideration.

124. The Triangle Market

- 124.1. Receipt of the notes of the Market Working Group meeting on 16 December 2020 – It is understood that Highways funding for the bollard has been secured. It is hoped that food stalls can be attracted when market opens again.
- 124.2. Noting that plans are being made for a Spring Garden Market in March 2021 – A provisional date has been set, but will be dependent on the situation with the pandemic. A date after Easter may be more appropriate. Officers are trying to progress arrangements in line with the decision to hold the market on a Friday. The market will not be advertised until there is a clearer indication whether it can definitely go ahead.

125. Review of the Tree Policy

Amendments previously requested have been made but the amended document has not yet been circulated. The policy was displayed at the meeting. Some minor amendments may still be required but the amendments so far do allow the Council to apply the discretion and flexibility it wants. This item will be carried forward to enable the Committee to review the amendments, and the policy will also be reviewed by the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee. The policy maintains the Council's commitment to plant two trees for every one it has to remove, plus two additional orchard trees, as per the Health Emergency Declaration.

126. Review of the Friends Groups Policy and appendices

There are inconsistencies within Appendix Two, with Special General Meetings referred to at some points but not others. Officers will check for consistency and amend where necessary. An amendment has been made to clarify that it is a requirement for Friends Groups to have their own insurance. The policy and appendices do say that the Council will offer support to groups setting up, who can also apply for a grant towards their costs. A video meeting for the Friends Groups has been discussed and an invitation to the meeting will also be extended to East Suffolk Norse. The policy gives provision for representatives from the groups to be invited to meetings of this Committee periodically where relevant, but an amendment will be made to the policy to extend that provision to its Sub-Committees also. Representatives from the Friends Groups have previously been invited to Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meetings. It was suggested that an email group could be established, to allow Friends Groups to communicate with one another, the Council and Norse. This would be subject to adherence with the Government Data Protection Regulations. The voting rights of Friends Groups members is covered in the policy. If the individual groups' constitutions are clear about

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membership and voting rights the policy can be amended to this effect. Cllr Pearce proposed carrying this item forward to the next meeting, a review of the policy and appendices by the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee and consultation with the Friends Groups on the policy and appendices ahead of a meeting with them; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

127. Plans for the usage of the Gunton Drive former telephone kiosk, in addition to the defibrillator

The defibrillator has been installed. Confirmation of registration with the ambulance service is pending before it can become operational. It is understood that an external sign was included with the defibrillator, which can be installed once it is ready to use. Local residents who will be checking the defibrillator and maintaining the kiosk would also like a noticeboard and bookcase installed within. Images of the kiosk were shown and it was agreed that the electricity points should be boxed in. Officers will speak with Norse to action this. There were concerns that there is not a lot of room in the kiosk and a bookcase may cause an obstruction. It may be possible to accommodate the shelf but the Committee would first like to see what space is available once the electrics have been boxed in. The resident who will be checking the defibrillator weekly will also keep the kiosk clean, and it was requested they check that the overhead light remains operational. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting for further consideration of the requested additional uses of the kiosk.

128. The results of the environmental assessments of the Town Council's ponds, if received

The reports have been delayed by the Christmas break, but officers will continue to request updates.

129. Review of the Conferring of the Title of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen policy, particularly with regard to conferring the title upon an organisation or object, and related arrangements

The existing policy has been amended to include provision for considering applications to confer the title upon organisations and objects. The amended policy was displayed at the meeting, which the Committee was happy to accept. Cllr Hardie proposed referring the amended policy to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee for review; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

130. The Denes Oval:

130.1. Proposals from the Lowestoft Town Tennis Club and the Lowestoft Cricket Club regarding improvements to the Denes Oval, including to consider alcohol licensing, sponsorship banners and club signs – Quotes have been received for tennis court resurfacing and fence repairs, which will be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee. The Tennis and Cricket Clubs' plans can be considered by this Committee in principle but would need a fuller discussion by the Finance and Governance Committee in terms of the budget. The Tennis Club's priority is a lease and it is understood they would be prepared to input some funding as well. The proposals from the Cricket Club have not yet reached the same stage and it is understood they would like some commitment from the Town Council for improvements to the site before agreeing to a lease. Officers have looked into question of sponsorship advertising and understand it would be permitted as long as it was within a certain size, but further checks are needed. Officers have also looked into alcohol licensing, but the Town Council may be required to be the license holder. Options can be discussed with the club. Regarding the comment made by the member of the public, the Tennis Club will be contacted to see if there are any opportunities to play social matches.

130.2. The cost of improvement work to the Tennis Courts – This was covered with the discussion of the previous item. The quotes will be considered by the Finance and

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Governance Committee. This does not include floodlights, but options could be explored, and the Tennis Club has offered funding towards them. The Council may not be able to deliver the club's priorities within the expected timeframes, and it is understood the club would also like the tennis courts for their use exclusively. It was suggested that at least one court should still remain for public use.

A comfort break was taken 19:45 and the meeting resumed 19:50

131. The repair or removal of the pedestrian gate at the bottom of the footpath alongside The Ravine

The gate has been removed, along with a section of railing further up, due to their condition. If this Committee recommended reinstatement the cost or repair would need to be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee. There used to be another gate at the top of the footpath which was removed some time ago, and the Council is not aware of any requirement for these gates. Cllr Butler proposed a recommendation to Full Council not to reinstate the pedestrian gate removed from the footpath alongside The Ravine; seconded by Cllr Hardie; four Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

132. Arrangements for the hire of the Kensington Gardens Ammunition Bunker, and to note the withdrawal of one of the applications (some aspects may be confidential)

This Committee has discussed the idea of exploring alternative uses. Currently there is consent for gallery-type installations. A sports organisation has withdrawn its interest. A retailer has expressed interest but this usage is not currently permitted. It was suggested that appropriate surveys of the site should take place before any hire is considered. Cllr Hardie proposed progressing appropriate surveys of the Kensington Gardens Ammunition Bunker; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

133. A request for transfer/sale of land at Uplands (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

134. The loan agreement for the Lowestoft Collection (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

135. Date of the next meeting

1 February 2021 18:00

136. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

Cllr Pearce 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.

137. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

137.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required:

123.3. The response from East Suffolk Council regarding the Pakefield Street public conveniences (confidential) – This matter will be referred back to Full Council for further consideration. Cllr Butler proposed that, in addition to Full Council considering this matter, it also be referred to the Toilet Strategy Working Group for further consideration; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

133. A request for transfer/sale of land at Uplands (confidential) – An update was given and officers are seeking further information.

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134. The loan agreement for the Lowestoft Collection (confidential) – There was a confidential discussion regarding the loan agreement. Cllr Hardie proposed a confidential recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Barnard; three Councillors voted in favour; two Councillors voted against. This matter will also be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:35.

Signed:
1 February 2021