

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:30 on 17 November 2020

MINUTES

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

Also participating: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk), Sian Maguire (Events and Communications Officer) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

81. 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.

82. Apologies for absence

Cllr Pearce temporarily left the meeting 14:32

Apologies were received from Cllrs Graham Parker and John Pitts. Cllr Amanda Frost had resigned from this Sub-Committee. Cllrs Tara Carlton and Jacqueline Hardie had not provided apologies and were absent. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of apologies received and thanked Cllr Frost for her contribution to this Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

83. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Kensington Gardens. Cllr Barnard declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Gainsborough Drive, and it was noted that Cllr Pearce would also have a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Gainsborough Drive pond.

84. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 20 October 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments and the draft minutes were noted.

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

A comment had been received regarding item 93, which was that the Council should look to improve the way it uses its current noticeboards before considering new information boards.

86. Noting that the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee are considering Committee and Sub-Committee structures and Terms of Reference, and consideration of whether to submit any comments

The Sub-Committee had no comments to submit at this stage.

87. Progress with the development of wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk

Cllr Coleby recently completed a site meeting with East Suffolk Norse, but no formal quotation has been received so far.

88. How to manage water usage in the Town Council's parks

Cllr Coleby has produced a draft Mulch Policy, which will be considered by the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee. An annual budget for the use of mulch has been approved. The Clerk is seeking advice regarding water management in parks.

89. Review of the Town Council's Tree Policy

Officers are reviewing the policy to ensure it accurately reflects the legal rights of members of the public. The policy will be reviewed by the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee and this Sub-Committee, following completion of the officer review.

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90. Progress with the public campaign to promote the local beneficial impact of trees

The Events and Communications Officer has been working on a page on the website to promote the local beneficial impact of trees. Cllr Coleby has some information to contribute to this and will forward it on to officers.

91. Access arrangements and disposal of waste at the former Parklands play area

The play equipment has been removed from this site. The gate is locked and it is understood that East Suffolk Norse has the key. A resident has cleared some of the scrub for a new fence, and has suggested a bonfire. The Sub-Committee agreed this was not the appropriate location for a bonfire and Norse will be asked to remove the waste instead. The land is due to become a community orchard and there was a discussion as to whether the lock should be removed from the gate so that the orchard can be enjoyed by all, rather than just the local residents. There have been incidents of anti-social behaviour at the site, which may have led to the lock being installed initially, but no other area of land owned by the Town Council has this arrangement, and it was agreed that areas of public open space should be available to be enjoyed by everyone. There were concerns regarding unauthorised vehicular access, but the steep banks should prevent this. The same concerns were expressed about Clarkes Lane, and it was suggested that a bund should be considered when the wildflower area is progressed. It was agreed that the Parklands should be reinstated as unlocked public open space, and a notice attached to the gate to explain this will be happening.

92. The results of the audit of the Town Council's parks, including consideration of the provision of benches, bins and bicycle racks

This will be considered as part of the five year plans for the Town Council's parks. It was agreed that it would also be beneficial to have a record of memorial benches.

Cllr Taylor temporarily left the meeting 14:45

Cllr Pearce returned 14:45

Councillors will be asked to assist with gathering this information.

Cllr Taylor returned 14:46

It was suggested that the Council could make a policy decision on benches, bins and bicycle racks, which could inform the five year plans. Cllr Taylor proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee that the Council aspires to install a bin at the entrance to every park, and benches and bicycle racks where necessary; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

93. Information boards and/or required signage for the Town Council's parks

Cllr Coleby has put together a meeting paper, which will be circulated to all Sub-Committee members. It was suggested that the Council should consider QR codes as opposed to larger information boards, as these are being used more widely and are easier to keep updated. Larger signs can still be used where appropriate, such as the memorial lecterns at Belle Vue Park and Kensington Gardens. It is unlikely that all necessary signage can be progressed in the same civic year, and can be incorporated into the five year plans. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next agenda, for all Sub-Committee members to receive and consider the meeting paper.

94. How to progress the following actions towards implementation of the Town Council's Health Emergency Declaration:

94.1 Planting an orchard tree for every other tree planted – It was agreed this could be incorporated into the tree promotion page on the website. This Sub-Committee would like to see a variety of orchard trees planted at appropriate locations. The Town Council has an aspiration to plant more orchard trees, but it was agreed there should be a balance, and the planting of orchard trees should not prevent the planting of other

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species. A variety of orchard trees are being purchased with a portion of the Tree Council funding.

- 94.2 Rapidly progressing the improvement of the Town Council's parks, open spaces and linked facilities for the enjoyment of all – Demonstrable progress is required, but due to costs and logistics this cannot be achieved all at once. The five year plans will assist the Council in achieving its targets. Any agreed plans will need to be fed into the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee for budgeting purposes. Friends Groups will be encouraged and it is hoped a Friends Group can be formed for Arnold's Bequest. Cllr Coleby offered to pull together all the ideas discussed regarding the five year plans so far, for this Sub-Committee to consider at the next meeting, and welcomed any further suggestions. There are four parks named on this agenda to consider five year plans for, but Belle Vue Park had also been discussed previously and Cllr Coleby will include it in the information he is putting together.
- 94.3 Progressing outdoor shopping and entertainment opportunities, including a cultural/event space in parks – Events have previously been held in Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens, and Normanston Park also could provide a space for this. In the current circumstances it is unlikely anything could be progressed until next year, but markets, hiring of the ammunition bunker and craft fayres could be considered. This is intended to support retail post-Covid so consideration would need to be given to appropriate locations, and ensuring that anything the Town Council organises does not compete with other businesses in the town.
- 94.4 Water fountains in Town Council parks to provide a free quality drink for those enjoying the outdoors – The Town Council successfully applied for funding towards water fountains in Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens, but this may have been delayed due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic. The Clerk was also seeking advice regarding Legionella management and connecting the fountains to the water supply. The Sub-Committee agreed the Council should aspire to install drinking water fountains in all its parks.

95. Five-year plans and any related funding for the following parks:

- 95.1 Normanston Park – This was discussed at item 94.2. Cllr Coleby is putting information together but would like ideas and suggestions. It was suggested that an electric vehicle charging point could be considered, as this is one of the only Town Council owned parks with parking facilities. Benches, bins, bicycle racks, information boards and signage will be progressed under these five year plans also. A public consultation regarding outdoor fitness equipment is running at the moment, and Normanston Park is one of the proposed locations. From previous discussions Cllr Coleby has also included a BMX pump track, low level LED lighting around the running track area, the division of tennis courts (as some are not as well used) to create a multi-use area incorporating other sports, the provision of public conveniences, and a designated area for dogs.
- 95.2 Fen Park – Cllr Hardie has previously raised a number of items including; picnic tables, lighting, the condition of the pond and the public conveniences. A butterfly wildlife area and reinstating boats on the pond have also been discussed previously.
- 95.3 Kensington Gardens – 2022 marks the one hundred year anniversary of the park. There was previously a Peter Pan statue in the park and it was queried whether this could be reinstated. It has also been reported that the pond is leaking and this will need to be investigated. There is also a waterfall which serves to top up the pond level only, and is then switched off as soon as the appropriate level has been reached. The Friends Group would like the Council to consider providing a supply of water in the park for watering the plants. As part of the five year plan there was a request to include how to make the boating lake more popular and attractive to visitors, the condition of the tennis courts, refurbishment of the bowls pavilion, the provision of CCTV and the most effective use

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of the kiosk near the boating lake, which is currently under lease. The provision of CCTV is being discussed as a separate issue more widely across all of the Town Council's assets, but it was noted that there is a desire to see additional security measures at Kensington Gardens.

95.4 Sparrows Nest – The winter garden has previously been discussed and there are overlapping themes with Kensington Gardens, which could be progressed along a similar timescale.

96. Date of the next meeting

15 December 2020 14:30

97. Items for the next Agenda and Close

It was requested that further consideration be given to the five year plans at the next meeting, particularly agreeing priorities for the 2021 – 2022 civic year, to feed into the budget considerations.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the livestream of the meeting. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting 15:47.

98. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

15 December 2020