

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee**  
**Via Video Meeting**  
**14:30 on 16 March 2021**

**MINUTES**

**Video meeting participants:** Cllrs Bob Breakspear, Neil Coleby (Chair), Jacqueline Hardie and Andy Pearce

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

**148. Welcome**

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

**149. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Peter Lang and John Pitts. Cllr Tara Carlton had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

**150. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

There were no declarations in addition to standing declarations relating to Lowestoft in Bloom and Friends Groups.

**151. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 16 February 2021 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting**

The draft minutes were noted.

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

There were none.

**153. Appointing the Deputy Chair of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee**

Cllr Pearce proposed Cllr Hardie for the position of Deputy Chair; seconded by Cllr Breakspear. There were no further nominations. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour.

**154. Five-year plans for the Town Council's parks and priorities for year one, including how to progress the decision to install bins at every entrance**

The process for purchasing and installing new bins on Town Council land was discussed. Once the expenditure has been approved there is usually liaison with Norse regarding the purchasing and installation. Some additional ongoing costs may also apply. It was suggested that the purchase of bins should be progressed at the sites where a need has been identified, including Fen Park. This has been covered as part of the five year plans but if the unit cost was known, and any discount for a bulk purchase, it will be possible to determine what can be achieved within the budget for year one. At the next meeting, the Sub-Committee would like confirmation of the remaining funds in the current year's parks development budget. Cllr Coleby had prepared a spreadsheet of the suggested number of benches, bins and bicycle racks required at some of the parks. Cllr Hardie proposed using this spreadsheet to obtain quotations to progress through the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) and Finance and Governance Committees to consider priorities; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It was noted that the Finance and Governance Committee will meet before the AID Committee. The quantities on the spreadsheet include the recently destroyed benches at Fen Park and Normanston Park. A fast food retailer has indicated that it would like to purchase a replacement bench for Fen Park. Cllr Hardie will forward the details to officers. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have arrangements in place, in the event of any future incidents of vandalism, to enable officers

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to seek external sources of funding for replacement items, to avoid public funds being used where possible. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee to delegate authority to the Clerk to seek alternative sources of funding to replace any equipment in the Town Council's parks which has been destroyed as a result of vandalism; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It was suggested this could apply to the bench which has been destroyed at Normanston Park. Cllr Ceresa's locality funding contribution towards the replacement matting in Fen Park has been confirmed. If approved, the delegation would give the Clerk discretion to consider any offers to sponsor a piece of equipment, such as the approach which has been received for Fen Park. The sponsorship of a fast food retailer could go against Council policy, but this Sub-Committee has indicated it would be happy to proceed.

The Friends of Kensington Gardens and the Friends of Fen Park have reviewed the draft five year plans and will submit their comments via email. Cllr Hardie has already submitted comments regarding the oxygenation of the pond. The pond may also require dredging and desilting. Suffolk Wildlife Trust has provided advice on the basis of the environmental pond assessments report and this was displayed. The Friends of Fen Park were approached by an organisation offering to complete some volunteering work at the pond and Cllr Hardie will forward the details to officers. East Suffolk Norse has previously advised removal of some of the weeds and cutting back foliage would be required but this is yet to be progressed. Dredging and silt removal should be progressed, even if it is completed over several years.

The dredging and deepening of the Gainsborough Drive pond have been discussed in the past. East Suffolk Norse's Countryside Officer has already indicated that some managed intervention would be required to maintain the site as a pond. It was requested that he be asked to review the assessment report and Suffolk Wildlife Trust's advice and provide some specific advice regarding re-profiling of the banks and desilting/deepening of the pond. Separately, it was requested that the AID Committee considers the issue of duck feeding. It is understood this is contributing to an abnormally high number of ducks at the pond, and discarded bread and duck faeces are having a negative effect on the pond. The Gainsborough Drive Pond Group would like the Council to consider producing an information leaflet they can distribute to residents and appropriate signage for the area. The Sub-Committee was in support of educational signage, such as that used at Nicholas Everitt Park. It was suggested that Suffolk Wildlife Trust could be approached to hold some educational events at some of the Town Council's parks and open spaces.

*Cllr Hardie temporarily left the meeting 15:00 and returned 15:00*

It was suggested this could cover such topics as feeding ducks and the benefits of rewilding areas.

*The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 15:02*

In previous years there has been specific budget provision for the Fen Park pond.

*The Clerk returned 15:03*

Cllr Pearce proposed seeking quotations for the management of the Town Council's ponds, including desilting, bank re-profiling, oxygenation and whatever other actions are required; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

The centenary of Kensington Gardens is taking place in 2022. It was suggested the reinstatement of the Peter Pan statue could be progressed as a priority for year one or year two alongside the Sparrows Nest sensory garden, which is intended to have an Alice in Wonderland theme. The Friends of Fen Park would like to progress a raised beds planting scheme and a rose garden. Prior to approval, the Council would need to see the designs,

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and ensure the materials used to create the raised beds are suitably robust.

**155. How to develop areas in Fen Park and Kensington Gardens to produce mulch**

The Friends of Fen Park and Friends of Kensington Gardens have identified potentially suitable areas at the two sites. An area of Fen Park has also been identified as potentially suitable for total re-wilding. Cllrs Breakspear and Hardie will mark the locations on a plan and forward to officers to seek advice from Norse. It was suggested that willow panels could provide an appropriate screen, but quotations will need to be sought.

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

A quotation for the smaller welcome signs has been obtained. Quotations for the over entrance archways cannot be given without an initial design. It was suggested Cllr Taylor may be able to produce a draft design so indicative quotations can be sought. A noticeboard would be welcome at Fen Park, as the Friends Group often has a lot of information about local activities to share. There is little signage in the town identifying where the nearest public conveniences are located and it was suggested this could be incorporated into any signage or information boards. It was agreed any information boards should reflect the Council's aims, in line with the five year plans.

**157. Planting:**

157.1 The purchase of bulbs and a replacement shrub for Sparrows Nest – A request has been submitted by grounds maintenance staff at Sparrows Nest. There is usually some provision for shrubs and replanting each year and a particular issue has been identified with a dead shrub in the island bed near Martello. Cllr Coleby offered to meet with the grounds maintenance staff and discuss ideas. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the AID and Finance and Governance Committees to progress the purchase of bulbs and replacement shrub for Sparrows Nest within a maximum budget of £100; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

157.2 Planting plans for Fen Park from the Friends of Fen Park – The Friends of Fen Park will need to submit a formal proposal in order for this to be progressed and Cllr Hardie will liaise with them.

*Cllr Hardie left the meeting 15:29*

**158. Proposals for memorial lecterns for the Belle Vue Park Peace Garden and Kensington Gardens Holocaust Memorial Garden**

Cllr Coleby had produced a paper with some further information, which had been circulated. It is understood some external funding should be available. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the AID and Finance and Governance Committees to proceed with the plans for memorial lecterns for the Belle Vue Park Peace Garden and Kensington Gardens Holocaust Memorial Garden; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

**159. An update regarding the provision of outdoor fitness equipment**

The Committee Clerk has obtained some quotations and additional information which should help to progress a proposal. A meeting of the Working Group will be arranged.

**160. Play areas:**

160.1 The provision of a path at the Stoven Close play area – A formal quotation has not yet been received. Officers will continue to chase or seek quotations from elsewhere.

160.2 The decision of Full Council to prioritise the Sparrows Nest play area for refurbishment in 2021 – 2022, alongside improvements to the St Margaret's Plain and Britten Road play areas, and to consider options and costs – Officers had started looking at options based on a certain theme. Some companies can tailor their

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existing products to fit with a theme. It was suggested that meetings could be arranged with some companies to see what they can offer for each of the three areas. With regards to St Margaret's Plain, the Sub-Committee will require some advice as to whether the mound should be removed or not. If necessary, site visits can also be arranged.

160.3 An update on the Whitton Green project – East Suffolk Council and East Suffolk Norse are supporting the project. The specification has been drawn up and funds are being contributed, including from the Town Council. It is hoped the project should progress fairly quickly now, although the ongoing effects of the pandemic may affect companies' ability to quote.

**161. Date of the next meeting**

20 April 2021 14:30

**162. Items for the next Agenda and Close**

It was requested that the next agenda includes a standalone item to continue discussions about required actions at the Town Council's ponds.

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 15:38.

**163. Resolution to close the meeting to the public**

Signed: .....

20 April 2021