

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:00 on 6 September 2021
MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Colin Butler, Paul Page, Andy Pearce (Chair) and Elise Youngman

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were two members of the public in attendance (in person)

56. Welcome

The Chair of the Committee had given apologies. Cllr Butler, as Deputy Chair, was in attendance but advised he would not be able to stay for the duration of the meeting. Cllr Pearce advised that he would be happy to preside over the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Brooks and all Councillors voted in favour. The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained, and the meeting was welcomed.

57. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Robert Breakspear and John Pitts. Cllr Colin Butler had advised he would not be able to stay for the entire meeting. Cllr Brooks proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

58. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 62.4 and 66 and declared that he had recently been appointed Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association. Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 62.4, 62.7 and 66, and declared that she had recently been appointed Vice-Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association.

59. The draft minutes of the meeting on 2 August 2021

Regarding item 46.4 of the previous minutes, it had been agreed that a site visit to Howley Gardens would be arranged. Cllr Begum had advised she would like to be involved. Cllr Brooks proposed acceptance of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

60. Public forum

It was agreed to bring forward item 62.20 as the members of the public in attendance wanted to address the Committee regarding this item specifically. A separate comment had been received in advance of the meeting regarding public conveniences, and it was agreed that the comment would be taken into consideration during the discussion of item 62.9. The members of the public in attendance expressed concern regarding the lack of traffic enforcement in the Triangle Market area. Installation of a bollard is being progressed, but it was initially understood that this would be a lockable bollard, whereas more recent updates have suggested a fixed bollard which it was felt would be more prohibitive to legitimate access, and could be more of hindrance than a benefit. The members of the public would like the Town Council to intervene and try to progress measures which address some of the issues in the area, without prohibiting legitimate access.

62.20. Issues regarding traffic management at the Triangle Market and Sails, including the proposed lockable bollard – The Town Council does not have enforcement powers, but this Committee would like to understand why the proposed design of the bollard has changed. Part of the conditions of the bollard being progressed was that the Town Council would agree to be the licensee. This was agreed in principle by the Council, but on the basis that it would be benefiting the community in that area. County Councillor James Reeder had offered to speak with local community groups in the area and may be able to act as an intermediary. Cllr Pearce proposed that the Town Council does not agree to be the licensee for the bollard until an appropriate design is progressed which the Town Council feels would meet the requirements of the local community; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

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Cllr Elise Youngman arrived 18:21

East Suffolk Council has established a multi-agency stakeholder group for The Scores and Triangle Market areas, with one of the aims being an improved traffic management system. The Committee was concerned that even though the Town Council had made an in-principle agreement to be the licensee for the bollard it was not informed of the change of design, and requested that this be fed back to Suffolk Highways to open a formal line of communication. Cllr Pearce proposed that a formal approach is made to Cllr Reeder to meet with local stakeholders, the Most Easterly Community Group, members of the community and the Town Council to discuss the issues in the area; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

The Deputy Clerk temporarily left the meeting 18:31

The members of the public left the meeting 18:31

61. Expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The budget monitoring documents had been circulated and were noted.

The Deputy Clerk returned 18:32

62. Parks and open spaces:

62.1. Receiving any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meetings on 20 July 2021 and 17 August 2021 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

62.2. The following recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

62.2a. Seeking a quotation to install ten additional bins at the Great Eastern Linear Park, and options for imprinting or engraving the bins as belonging to the Town Council – Accessibility to empty the bins may be an issue. There was a concern that the style of bin would be accessible to seagulls but this should not be an issue in this location. The net cost of the bins is within the expenditure limit of this Committee. Cllr Pearce proposed to proceed with the purchase and installation of ten additional bins along the Town Council owned stretch of the Great Eastern Linear Park, at entrance/exit and intersection points, with delegated authority to officers to liaise with Norse and other relevant bodies regarding the design and specification; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

62.2b. An in principle commitment to explore options for lights in the Town Council's parks and open spaces, and to consider suggestions from Councillors on areas to prioritise – The Friends of Fen Park would like to see lighting in Fen Park in the picnic bench area and the children's play area. Cllr Lang had previously suggested that Normanston Park would benefit from lighting. Cllr Breakspear had suggested uplighters for Kensington Gardens. Before any lighting can be progressed, the Council would need details of power supplies, practicalities and logistics of each site. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting, with officers to obtain information about the parks in the interim.

62.2c. To remove and not reinstate the damaged boardwalk at the Great Eastern Linear Park – There is currently no disabled access to the boardwalk, so removal of it would not take away any access. The boardwalk is rotting in places and has been subject to vandalism several times. Cllr Brooks proposed removing and not reinstating the boardwalk; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

62.3. How to progress planting plans in 2021 – 2022 – The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee has delegated authority over the planting budget. It was agreed that information about the Council's previously agreed planting plans should be gathered in time for the next meeting of the Sub-Committee. Some new beds have been proposed as part of the five-year plans.

62.4. Quotations for the de-silting of the Fen Park and Gainsborough Drive ponds – There has been some confusion about the bathymetric survey and silt levels which is complicating the process. The quotations are dependent on actual levels of sediment. The quotations received so far are based on approximations and so could increase. Consultation with

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residents around the Gainsborough Drive pond is likely to be required, particularly if sediment removed from the pond is deposited onsite. The solutions may differ for each pond and some preliminary work is required at Fen Park. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to approach Norse for a quotation and a suggested schedule of works, particularly if they would recommend a phased approach. Cllr Pearce further proposed a recommendation to Full Council to progress the de-silting of the Gainsborough Drive pond over the winter, regardless of by what method it is completed, in consultation with residents; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

- 62.5. Investigating the drains at Sparrows Nest – There is an ongoing issue of water running into car parks nearby, some of which are owned by the Town Council and some which are not. This also involves Arnold's Bequest land and the Charity Board will be asked to consider this issue. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to progress a survey of drains and progress appropriate action to address the issue, such as diversion routes and/or culvert repairs, within a maximum budget of £3,000; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour. Cllr Butler understands there is an issue with running water to the rear of the Sparrows Nest building complex, which could be causing an issue with damp. Cllr Butler will send photographs to officers.
- 62.6. Whether to remove fishing platforms from around the edge of the pond in Fen Park – The platforms are in good order, but would be more visible once the area is cut back. It is unlikely fish will be reintroduced into the pond but it could be possible to use the platforms for an alternative purpose. Cllr Brooks proposed leaving the platforms as they are, but keeping the situation under review in conjunction with whatever wider works are agreed regarding the maintenance of the pond; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Should the area become too overgrown there would be a risk of the platforms becoming trip hazards, so it was agreed that the area should be maintained.
- 62.7. Options and costs for the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest play area and improvements to the St Margaret's Plain and Britten Road play areas – Two quotations for the Sparrows Nest play area are still pending. There have been some issues with surfacing at other play areas and this may need to be taken into consideration. It was requested that the companies who are providing quotations be asked to incorporate a chalk board or similar into their designs. Options for Britten Road and St Margaret's Plain can be considered once a decision has been made regarding Sparrows Nest. Some expenditure has already been agreed for Britten Road to address certain issues and the Deputy Clerk will be meeting Norse on site shortly to look at areas of overgrowth.
- 62.8. Agreeing a five year schedule for the Council's commitment to refurbish at least one play area per year, including to consider any suggestions from Councillors – St Margaret's Plain and Cotman Close were suggested as priorities. It was suggested that the Council should aim to renovate one larger play area and one smaller play area per year. Thirlmere Walk, Bentley Drive and Fen Park play areas were also suggested as priorities. It was agreed that site visits should be arranged to all play areas for the Council to put together a list of priorities for budgeting purposes, with the aim of it being agreed at December's Full Council meeting.
- 62.9. Agreeing a five year schedule for the Council's commitment to refurbish at least two public conveniences per year, including to consider any suggestions from Councillors – Sparrows Nest and Fen Park have been agreed as the priorities for this year. It was agreed that a meeting of the Toilet Strategy Working Group should be convened to consider priorities going forward. It was commented that the Triangle Market public conveniences are not in a good condition but have not been identified for refurbishment this year as the wider area is included in an East Suffolk Council led feasibility study, although it has now been confirmed that this does not include the public conveniences. Cllr Pearce proposed that regardless of the priority order for the other public conveniences, the Triangle Market public conveniences are refurbished in 2022 – 2023, with all or the majority of funding coming from the earmarked reserved, and quotations to be sought in advance so that work can begin as early as possible in

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the new financial year; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. A public comment had been received asking the Town Council to consider installing public conveniences in the North Denes area. Public conveniences used to be available on Links Road but were closed. It is understood that the kiosk at Dip Farm will be reopening, which may include the public conveniences. Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Dip Farm. Cllr Pearce proposed that a meeting of the Toilet Strategy Working Group is convened, to put forward a recommendation on a five-year refurbishment and provision programme and suitable locations. This was seconded by Cllr Brooks but a vote was not required as this can be progressed administratively.

- 62.10. Replacement 'Matta' surfacing for the toddler swings in Fen Park, at a cost of £2,805 – The Clerk has emailed Norse to check whether this is still the preferred type of matting. Graffiti which was on the matting has been removed but the matting is split and has been cut out in places, and seems to have come away from the ground. Norse has previously advised that the matting beneath the roundabout is not urgent but it can be lifted in places. Some other issues are being taken forward immediately. It was agreed that Norse's advice on these issues should be sought.

Cllr Butler left the meeting 19:35

Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers to make a decision regarding the matting based on Norse's advice, within a maximum budget of £5,000, or to be referred to the Finance and Governance Committee or Full Council should the cost exceed this.

- 62.11. An application for a memorial bench in either Sparrows Nest or Belle Vue Park – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the application, with delegated authority to officers to liaise with the applicant and decide its location; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 62.12. Identifying a location within Kensington Gardens for a 'Talking Bench' – Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to staff, in conjunction with the Friends of Kensington Gardens, to agree a suitable location; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 62.13. An offer from a private individual of a water fountain to install in the Kensington Gardens fish pond – It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting when Cllr Breakspear is in attendance, as he has further information regarding this.
- 62.14. The installation of a dog litter bag dispenser at The Ness – It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting when Cllr Breakspear is in attendance, as he has further information regarding this.
- 62.15. Works on a retaining wall in Kensington Gardens – Cllr Brooks proposed proceeding in line with the professional advice received; seconded by Cllr Elise Youngman; all in favour.
- 62.16. Works at the Ammunition Bunker in Kensington Gardens – Cllr Brooks proposed proceeding in line with the professional advice received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 62.17. Vehicular access to Kensington Gardens – An issue had been reported that a taxi driver had been denied access into the park to drop off a visitor with limited mobility. The Council does not currently have a policy position on allowing vehicular access to Kensington Gardens to drop off visitors. The Committee agreed that there should be no restrictions in place which would prevent a visitor being dropped off within the park. Cllr Brooks proposed confirming that the Council has no policy position regarding vehicular access to Kensington Gardens to allow drop offs; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 62.18. A recommendation from the Outdoor Fitness Equipment Working Group on progressing the installation of equipment in Normanston Park and Fen Park – Three quotations have been received and evaluated by the Working Group, who have made a recommendation on how to proceed. There is £30,000 ring-fenced within the play areas reserve for this project, and a separate recommendation has been made from this Committee to the Finance and Governance Committee to ring-fence an additional £10,000 in the play areas reserve. The quotation favoured by the Working Group would require an additional £12,000 on top of this to complete the project at both sites. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to support the recommendation

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from the Working Group and ring fence an additional £12,000 in the play areas reserve, bringing the total budget to £52,000 to complete the project at both sites; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

62.19. Removal or replacement of the post and rail fence around the Normanston Park skate park – Norse have suggested that the fence seems to be redundant. Cllr Pearce proposed removing the post and rail fence around the Normanston Park skate park and asking Norse if there are any measures which could be taken to make the skate park more secure to limit anti-social behaviour, particularly overnight; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

62.20. Issues regarding traffic management at the Triangle Market and Sails, including the proposed lockable bollard – This item was considered earlier in the meeting. The Town Council has a meeting next week with an East Suffolk Council officer to discuss parking services, and it was suggested this issue could be raised there. This has previously been discussed at a quarterly liaison meeting with East Suffolk Council, who advised that the issues in this area would be for the Police to deal with. It has been difficult finding out which authority is responsible and it was suggested that the issue should be taken up strategically as part of the feasibility study for the area. Officers will find out when the next meeting of the Working Group will be to discuss the feasibility study.

62.21. Reviewing the condition survey for the Sparrows Nest building complex (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

63. Keyholder arrangements for the Town Council's noticeboards

A Noticeboard Protocol was adopted when the noticeboards were purchased, but arrangements for them have not been discussed in detail since. Previously keys were allocated to one Councillor per noticeboard and the Council had decided not to give keys to community groups. Cllr Pearce proposed that recognised community groups be permitted to have a key, subject to them formally agreeing to abide by the Town Council's Noticeboard Protocol and acknowledging that the key will remain in the ownership of the Town Council, who can request its return at any time. The Town Council is required to display certain information by law and community groups would be required to accept that notices displayed by the Town Council must take priority and must not be removed. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Brooks and all Councillors voted in favour. Cllr Brooks is the only Councillor for Gunton and does not have a key. There are six Harbour and Normanston Ward Councillors and it was suggested that more of them should have a key. Cllr Pearce proposed that in the short term he passes the key he has to Cllr Brooks. Additionally, all Councillors should be asked whether they would like and provision made for those who would like one to have one, subject to their agreement to abide by the Noticeboard Protocol. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Brooks and all Councillors voted in favour.

64. Priorities for improvements to the Town Council's Community Halls, to inform budgeting

It has been agreed that there will be a budget and earmarked reserve for the Town Council's Community Halls. There will be a public meeting to elect a Management Committee for the Gunton Residents' Community Meeting Hall. In the interim the tenants should be asked if they have any particular needs regarding the Hall. Whitton Residents' Hall is being managed by the Council. Cllr Pearce proposed that condition surveys should be arranged for the Halls if they have not been carried out within the last three years, including the Sparrows Nest Movie Makers Theatre (following a check to see if a tenancy agreement is in place). The results should be made available to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee, to make recommendations on the 2022 – 2023 Community Halls budget. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Page and all Councillors voted in favour.

65. The Town Council's contract for IT services (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

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66. Any needed works and conditions for use of the Gunton Drive telephone kiosk (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

67. Date of the next meeting

4 October 2021 18:00

68. 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 Brooks; all in favour.

69. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

62.21 Reviewing the condition survey for the Sparrows Nest building complex (confidential) – The survey has been organised into priority order and a programme of works over a five year period. The survey does include work required on the public conveniences, which the Council has already separately set funding aside for. Cllr Pearce proposed an in principle approval of the five year programme of works, using the costs as a quotation for five-year budgeting purposes, to be incorporated into the budget by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. Cllr Pearce further proposed that officers enquire as to whether there is anything within the report which would mitigate against the public conveniences being renovated within this financial year, therefore removing that element from the five year programme of works. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Page and all Councillors voted in favour.

It was agreed that an asbestos assessment should be carried out as a preliminary requirement, and if not already completed should be instructed immediately. It may be possible to allocate CIL funding to the project. The CIL position will be considered further at the Finance and Governance Committee meeting.

Cllr Pearce proposed that Sparrows Nest tenant rental income from 2021-2022 through to 2026-2027 inclusive is reinvested to part fund the programme of work, therefore reducing the amount to be included in the precept; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed that the cost of the Museum works is budgeted as arts, heritage and museum capital investment; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

65. The Town Council's contract for IT services (confidential) – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal regarding the IT services contract; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

66. Any needed works and conditions for use of the Gunton Drive telephone kiosk (confidential) – The current situation was explained. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Maintenance of the telephone kiosk itself was discussed. Cllr Pearce made a further confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Elise Youngman; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:47.

Signed:

4 October 2021