

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**18:30 on 16 November 2021**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Sonia Barker, Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks (Chair), Andy Pearce and Elise Youngman

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

**Public:** There were no members of the public in attendance (either in person or via Zoom webinar)

**92. Welcome**

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed.

**93. Apologies for absence**

No apologies had been received. Cllrs Christian Newsome and John Pitts had not provided apologies and were absent.

**94. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 106.5, 106.6, 110.1, 110.2, 111.2 and any items relating to Gunton. Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 106.4, 106.8, 106.9, 106.11 and 108. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any items relating to Kensington Gardens. Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any items relating to Gunton and St Margaret's Plain.

**95. The draft minutes of the meeting on 19 October 2021**

It was queried that at item 88.2b a proposal had been made but seemingly not voted on. It was confirmed that a vote had not taken place, but it had still been agreed to progress the action, which did not require a vote. Regarding item 88.2c, the Elmtree ward Councillors met on 18 October 2021 and some informal notes of the meeting were recorded. An item will be added to the next agenda to consider how to proceed.

**96. Public forum**

No advance comments had been received. There were no members of the public in attendance, either in person or via Zoom webinar.

**97. Expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget**

A bulb order is in progress.

**98. Five-year plans for the Town Council's parks, including the following:**

98.1 Planting plans for the proposed new beds in Belle Vue Park – It was agreed to consider items 98.1, 98.2 and 100 together. At its meeting in December, the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee will be asked to establish its year two priorities under the five year plans. It was suggested that a Zoom meeting with Norse would be beneficial. Officers will send Norse the initial designs for the planned new planting in Belle Vue Park and Sparrows Nest, for their opinion and an indicative cost if possible. There is no draft design for the Sparrows Nest children's maze yet, but it would need to be small and aimed at younger children, in line with the play area. Cllr Barker assisted with the development of a sensory garden at the Pathways Care Farm and will liaise with them about the possibility of a site visit for Sub-Committee members. Cllr Pearce proposed progressing a Zoom meeting with Norse to discuss the planting plans, timescales and logistics regarding items 98.1, 98.2 and 100, plus any other actions in the interim which would be beneficial, including a site visit to the

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Pathways Care Farm; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

98.2 Planting plans for the proposed Sparrows Nest Winter, Sensory Gardens and children's maze – This was covered with the discussion of the previous item.

98.3 The cost of over-entrance archway signs – The Community Warden will be taking measurements to inform quotations.

98.4 The cost of items relating to the Kensington Gardens centenary – The Friends Group has started discussing an event, but no firm plans have been made. Peter Pan sculptures had been suggested in the five year plans. The Friends Group will consider what sort of design they would like to see and will liaise with officers. Ideally, an approximate cost would need to be known before December's Full Council meeting.

**99. Approved bulb orders**

Some of the bulbs have already been delivered and planted. Another batch is due to be delivered shortly. The Committee Clerk will liaise with Councillors regarding the planting for Arnold's Bequest. It was agreed that bulb planting should be added to the events calendar. Although it will not be progressed through the Events and Communications Sub-Committee, bulb planting needs to be planned earlier in the year.

**100. Development of a coast garden at The Ness**

This was covered with the discussion of item 98.1.

**101. Small-scale planting at the Links Road car park**

Works are due to start in this area in January 2022 and the car park will be used as compound. Under the current schedule, work is due to be completed by the end of October 2022, but this may be followed by works to put in access from the car park to the seawall. It was suggested that ideas to make the area more picturesque should be discussed in May 2022, to be implemented upon completion of the works.

**102. Whether to explore the option of installing swift bird boxes in the Town Council's parks**

Cllr Brooks received an approach from an organisation who installs swift bird boxes. If progressed, the boxes should be installed on buildings, at first floor window height. Cllr Brooks proposed asking the organisation to assess whether the Town Council would have any appropriate sites, and advise on the positive and negative aspects of swifts nesting on its land; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour. Cllr Brooks will progress this and feed back to the Sub-Committee.

**103. The Town Green:**

103.1 How to promote and support its use for community events – Cllr Pearce received an enquiry about the possibility of hiring the space for small group meetings. As with any event application, the potential hirer would have to complete a risk assessment and application form. In principle, the Sub-Committee would support its use, but would consider each application on its individual merits.

103.2 An update regarding fencing repairs - It was previously agreed that a site visit would take place. Norse suggested a natural fence with complementary semi-mature planting. Councillors agreed to visit the site individually and provide feedback to the AID Committee.

**104. The decision of Full Council to install reflective strips and/or spotlights at the bicycle racks in Normanston Park, within a maximum budget of £6,000 (under delegated authority to this Sub-Committee)**

The maximum budget was agreed in case the reflective strips are not feasible and would

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require spotlights instead. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers, within the same maximum budget, to carry out a risk assessment and progress a solution if it is deemed to be an urgent health and safety issue, or bring back to this Sub-Committee to consider if not; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

**105. Installing spotlights at the Normanston Park Skate Park**

It was agreed that this item would be discussed in confidential session regarding the reasons behind this item.

**106. Play areas:**

- 106.1 A stock-take of play areas and site visits – The AID Committee has been asked by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to identify a priority order for play area refurbishments, in line with the five year budgeting plan. The annual play inspection report has now been received and will inform discussions. It was agreed that the priority order should be balanced between the north and south sides of the town. Councillors will consider the play areas within their wards and submit comments to the AID Committee.
- 106.2 An update on refurbishment options for the St Margaret’s Plain play area – The Committee Clerk is liaising with providers. Cllr Elise Youngman is sourcing designs for decorative geese to be attached to the fencing.
- 106.3 Repair and maintenance of the Cotman Close play area – East Suffolk Council owns the separate swing. There is a sign at the site but its position may need to be reviewed.
- 106.4 A review of the play inspection reports for the Bentley Drive and Pollard Piece play areas – As discussed at item 106.1, the play inspection report will be circulated ahead of the AID Committee meeting. The equipment is reaching end of life but is not dangerous.
- 106.5 Repair and maintenance of the damaged matting at Fen Park – It was previously reported that some of the matting had lifted and other sections had been cut. The lifted matting has now been secured but the cut sections still need to be replaced. Officers will ask Norse for an update and will feed back to this Sub-Committee.
- 106.6 An update on the installation of gates for the gaps in the fencing around the Fen Park play area – Officers will check how this is progressing and will feed back to this Sub-Committee.
- 106.7 The provision of creative/art spaces within the Town Council’s parks – Cllr Elise Youngman will research ideas. The Council may wish to agree a pilot site. The bandstand area in Sparrows Nest is not frequently used at the moment. Play equipment providers may be able to supply chalkboards or similar for smaller play areas. Any agreement to progress this would be incorporated into the Council’s Art Policy, which is under development.
- 106.8 An update on commencement of approved works at the Britten Road play area – The first quotation for the fencing has been received, and can be discussed in more detail as part of the confidential session. The replacement matting for the Britten Road play area should be ordered now, as the Whitton Green works are drawing to a close.
- 106.9 The installation of a music-themed piece of art or play equipment at the Britten Road play area – As the play area is in a residential setting, the Council should be mindful of how much musical equipment it purchases. Suppliers may however be able to supply equipment which is musical themed but does not necessarily make a noise. Cllr Brooks has given the Committee Clerk details of an organisation who may be able to provide a piece art/equipment as a tribute to Benjamin Britten.
- 106.10 An update on instructing the contractor to proceed with the refurbishment of the

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Sparrows Nest play area – The Town Council’s appointed health and safety consultant has reviewed the quotation. The contractor has agreed to secure the site with metal Heras fencing, rather than plastic mesh fencing. Once an installation date is agreed, it was suggested that temporary signage should be put up, and added to the website and Facebook page, to show the plans for the site.

106.11 An update on completion of the Whitton Green play area refurbishment (including outdoor fitness equipment) – It is understood that a Zoom meeting took place in the last couple of weeks and the Clerk has circulated an update since.

106.12 Signage for play areas – Officers are putting together an inventory of which signs have been updated and which are still to do. Where possible, the signs will be ordered in bulk.

**107. An update on Compass Street pocket park project/stakeholder meetings, legacy planning for ongoing maintenance and an update on the transfer of the land to Lowestoft Town Council**

An update will be sought but it is understood this transfer may not be able to be progressed until other land transfer matters have been resolved.

**108. The situation regarding the former Parklands play area**

The Community Warden undertook a site visit with Norse today. Norse have the key to the site. The site has steep banks. Any future use of the site would need to be risk managed.

**109. An update on instructing the contractor to proceed with the installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Fen Park and Normanston Park**

The Committee Clerk is undertaking site visits on 25 November with the contractor and Norse, to determine the exact location for installation of the equipment in each park.

**110. Ponds:**

110.1 Progress with the Fen Park and Gainsborough Drive pond dredging – The Committee Clerk is liaising with the contractor who dredged the Fen Park pond in 2009. A Zoom meeting is being arranged and a separate site visit to Gainsborough Drive.

110.2 An update regarding the issue of duck feeding at the Gainsborough Drive pond – The Clerk is seeking legal advice. Cllr Brooks has not yet received advice from the RSPB.

110.3 An offer from a private individual to install a water fountain in the Kensington Gardens fish pond – An individual has offered funding, but this requires further consideration, including feasibility and the availability of a power supply. The necessary infrastructure could be expensive. Cllr Breakspear is liaising with the Friends Group.

**111. Public conveniences:**

111.1 A stock-take of public conveniences and site visits – The Toilet Strategy Working Group will be meeting on 18 November, following recent site visits, to make a recommendation to the AID Committee on a priority order for refurbishments.

111.2 An update on the appointment of a project manager for the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences, and prospective refurbishment of the Triangle Market public conveniences – It was agreed that an update would be discussed during the confidential session.

**112. Progressing Holocaust memorial items for Kensington Gardens**

The unit cost of the lectern has increased to £521 plus VAT and it is not guaranteed that delivery could be secured before Holocaust Memorial Day, due to a supply issues and a

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shortage of materials. It would be more cost effective to purchase the lectern for Kensington Gardens and the lectern for Belle Vue Park together. The overall cost is still within the budget previously agreed. Cllr Pearce proposed that in line with the previous decision, the lecterns are still ordered as soon as possible, even if it is not possible to secure delivery before Holocaust Memorial Day; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

**113. Date of the next meeting**

14 December 2021 18:30

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

An update on the survey for Clarkes Lane was requested. Any additional items can be emailed to officers.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

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

105. Installing spotlights at the Normanston Park Skate Park – Feedback was given from a recent site visit by Cllrs Pearce and Elise Youngman. There will be further discussion at the next AID Committee meeting.

111.2. An update on the appointment of a project manager for the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences, and prospective refurbishment of the Triangle Market public conveniences – There was a discussion about the projects which may be managed internally and what may require external project management. An update can be given at the next AID Committee meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:22.

Signed: .....

14 December 2021