

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 15 August 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Wendy Brooks (Deputy Chair), Neil Coleby, Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernadette Rappensberger, Nick Webb, David Youngman and Elise Youngman

In Attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

62. Welcome

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

63. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Smith with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Webb; a vote was held with nine in favour and one against.

64. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

64.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Brooks declared she was Ward Councillor for Gunton with reference to item 76 and she was a volunteer member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Cllr Pearce declared he was Chair of the Gunton Residents Association. Cllr Breakspear declared he was Chair of the Friends of Kensington Gardens.

64.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No requests for dispensations had been received.

65. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 18 July 2023

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

66. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – No members of the public were in attendance and no advanced comments had been received.

67. To monitor expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget

Expenditure under the Horticulture budget was summarised with pending expenditure of £14,826.60 for tree mapping and survey works, and tree works totalling £3,050.00. Officers were asked to confirm if the funding for the North Denes contamination survey had been factored into the budget.

68. To consider increasing the planting of hedges and shrubs

Cllr Brooks requested hedges and shrubs be considered for general planting and suggested officers review and consider appropriate locations for planting, such as the Town Green or The Ness. Once potential sites had been identified, officers would add the hedge planting to the five-year plans as any planting, development or establishment of hedges would need to be reviewed the following year and factored into the Horticulture budget for ongoing maintenance.

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Cllr Brooks proposed a delegation to officers to review and consider the location of hedges; seconded by Cllr Pearce who requested an amendment that this be done in conjunction with this Sub-Committee who could provide ideas to officers. Cllr Coleby requested an additional amendment with information on the value of hedging and shrubs to be made available on the website and encourage members of the public to provide ideas on locations for hedging to the office. Cllr Brooks accepted these amendments and vote was held with all in favour.

69. To consider a recommendation to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee on the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Belle Vue Park and a maximum budget with delegations

It was agreed to discuss this item in confidential session.

70. To consider review and implementation of the five year plans in line with budgeting, noting Councillors' comments regarding the following:

- 70.1 Normanston Park
- 70.2 Rosedale Park
- 70.3 Kensington Gardens
- 70.4 Gunton Community Park
- 70.5 Great Eastern Linear Park
- 70.6 Sparrows Nest
- 70.7 Fen Park
- 70.8 Belle Vue Park
- 70.9 Denes Oval
- 70.10 Cotman Close
- 70.11 Britten Road Play Area
- 70.12 Clarkes Lane
- 70.13 Pakefield Green Play Area (Wellington Road)
- 70.14 The Ness
- 70.15 Ness Point
- 70.16 St Margaret's Plain Play Area
- 70.17 Bentley Drive Play Area
- 70.18 Gainsborough Drive Pond
- 70.19 North Denes
- 70.20 Links Road Car Park
- 70.21 Triangle Market
- 70.22 Town Green
- 70.23 Land at Upland's Road North (including pond)

The provision of gym equipment had been raised at the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee (AID) which needed to be factored into the five-year plans.

Cllr Brooks proposed a stand-alone zoom meeting be scheduled to decide the timetable of projects, with officers to send dates from the beginning of September.

The Project and Committee Clerk requested a zoom meeting be scheduled to discuss the planting plans and remaining budget of £3,900 for planting, with a delegation to officers, in conjunction with this Sub-Committee, to finalise plans in the zoom meeting and progress the bulb orders. Cllr Pearce proposed the requested delegation be approved, with the delegation to include spending up to the remaining £3,900 in the budget; seconded by Cllr Brooks who

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queried the budget allocation for hedges, which Cllr Pearce noted would be the Parks Development budget initially and then the Horticulture budget for future maintenance; all in favour.

71. To consider the scope and content of a public survey regarding shade and sports provision in Lowestoft

The scope for a sports survey was discussed and how would need to ascertain what sports and recreational equipment residents want provided and their ideal locations.

Suggestions were made to consider beginner lessons for skating being provided to the youth and an item was requested for the next agenda to discuss the provision of this at the Normanston skate park.

Cllr Pearce proposed to have separate surveys for shade and sports provision, with feedback from this meeting to be provided to the Communications Officer to compose the survey; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

The Friends Groups would also be consulted via the initial sports survey, to be followed by a scheduled meeting in the evening at the end of September for representatives of the groups to discuss the survey and any other issues with Councillors. Cllr Coleby suggested all stakeholders be involved in meetings discussing land they are tenants of as per the 2018 Stakeholder Policy, which officers were asked to investigate.

It was agreed to keep the meetings between Friends Groups and Stakeholders separate, with the Stakeholder meetings to be scheduled for individual sites.

Cllr Pearce proposed officers organise a meeting between with the Friends Group for the end of September 2023, and separately, in liaison with this Sub-Committee, contact individuals defined as stakeholders and communicate with individual sites to arrange stakeholder meetings; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr E Youngman advised she was not available on 26 September.

72. To receive feedback following a request for a pétanque (French boules) area at Kensington Gardens near the Boating Lake

The member of the public who first brought this request to the Sub-Committee requested a full-size court to be provided but noted that if there are issues with location then a smaller court would suffice. Officers would notify the member of the public that a sports provision survey was pending through which they can make their request known.

Cllr Coleby suggested the sports provision survey list several sports and include the pétanque to ascertain if there is public demand.

73. To receive and note the feedback of the public survey on The Drying Racks, with further investigations and planning to be undertaken by The Ness Working Group

The Committee noted the good response to the survey and there was a consensus on keeping the drying racks, with equal support for either replacing or restoring the existing racks and interest in wildflowers for the area.

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74. To consider the maintenance of bowling greens

Cllr Newsome reported issues raised by the Kensington Gardens Bowls Club on maintenance of the greens, specifically the watering schedule where an automatic watering system scheduled to water the greens overnight would be preferable to watering the green during the day at high sun. The Bowls Club had also expressed concerns over the First Light Festival marquees that had damaged the greens.

This feedback would be provided to officers for consideration and inclusion in the regular Clerk Grounds Maintenance report, with any recommendations to accommodate the suggestions from the club, however as automatic watering systems were raised as a legionella risk, alternative safer methods would need to be sought.

Any damage from the First Light Festival would need to be reported to the office as a condition of First Light's Events Application was for any damage to be financially covered by First Light. It was queried if a site inspection had been undertaken after the festival to ascertain if any damage was caused.

Cllr Pitts proposed officers ascertain if the greens were inspected after the First Light Festival and write to First Light about the damage to the greens; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour. Cllr Newsome would provide photos of the damage to the office.

75. To consider the development of a community garden, in collaboration with the Gunton Estate Residents Meeting Hall Management Committee, in Gunton Community Park

Cllr Pearce proposed a delegation to officers to inform the Gunton Hall Management Committee of the decision to allow the development of a community garden and continue to liaise with the Management Committee for ideas and concepts, with any initial funds to be dealt with via grants or direct budget allocation; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

76. To consider the maintenance of the Gainsborough Drive Pond

An update was requested on the situation of management and maintenance of the pond. Cllr Pearce declared he was Chair of the Gunton Resident Association and confirmed the Gainsborough Drive Pond Group helped maintain the pond, such as the clearance work last November, but had decided to not undertake further works this year. In his capacity as a Councillor, Cllr Pearce notified the group that any future works would require a new risk assessment.

77. To consider upgrades to the Fen Park play area prior refurbishment

A previous officer proposal requested a budget for Fen Park to accommodate upgrades prior to a full refurbishment due to the varying quality of existing equipment, therefore a £37,000 budget had been set to cover £10,000 for matting replacement, £10,000 to refurbish particular equipment and £17,000 to replace the tower with a slide. The Finance and Information Officer had confirmed that the recent re-laying of matting and reconditioned equipment had been allocated to this £37,000 budget.

An item was requested for the next agenda, for this Sub-Committee or AID, to review the condition of the tower with a slide and consider if replacement is required. The Project and Committee Clerk clarified that due to regular inspections officers were more aware of the condition of equipment. Recent quarterly operational reports had noted surface corrosion on

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the tower unit but no structural issues to warrant replacement. Primary concerns had been resolved and officers would provide recommendations of works to be done within the budget.

78. To consider making a recommendation on the purchase of land to Full Council (confidential)

This would be discussed in confidential session.

79. Date of the next meeting

19 September 2023 19:00

80. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Items would be sent to the office. Cllr Breakspear asked that Sub-Committee members send him a request if they wish to view the draft agenda.

81. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the Meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda

Cllr Newsome proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 20:35

69. To consider a recommendation to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee on the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Belle Vue Park and a maximum budget with delegations

The Committee Clerk provided an update to the Sub-Committee and a second option for the layout of the information panel was presented.

Cllr Coleby made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed the second layout be approved for the information panel; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour. Officers would explore the possibility of commissioning a new aerial photo of Belle Vue Park for 2024.

78. To consider making a recommendation on the purchase of land to Full Council (confidential)

Cllr E Youngman made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce.

At 21:02 Cllr Coleby proposed to suspend standing orders for fifteen minutes; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

Further discussions were held on the purchase of land.

Cllr E Youngman amended her proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; a vote was held with four in favour, five against and one abstention. The item would be referred to Full Council.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21:13

Signed:

19 September 2023