



MEETING PAPER

Subject: 150th Anniversary of Belle Vue Park

Meeting: Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee

Date: 18th July 2023

Meeting Paper by Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

History of the Park

Opened 28 May 1874, Belle Vue Park (originally called Arboretum Hill) was the first public park to be opened in Lowestoft and was proposed by the Lowestoft Improvement Committee as a symbol of the town's civic pride in 1872. This was followed by a tender of £256 in August 1873 to establish a keeper's lodge in the grounds before the park was opened in 1874.

The park has gone through many developments and acquired several assets in its long history with the Jubilee Bridge erected in 1887 to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the replacement of the original bandstand with the Naval War Memorial in 1952 and the rebuilding of the thatched lodge in 1991 after it was destroyed in a fire the previous year.

To this day it remains a well-loved and popular park. The 150th anniversary is a notable milestone and as it was the first public park in Lowestoft, it would be an opportune time to celebrate the importance and rich history of the park.

Historical Information Panel

With 150 years since its opening there is certainly much to discuss about the park and an information panel would allow for an engaging and detailed display the park's history.

The proposed panel would summarise the inception of the park, its original design, with specific aspects such as the thatched lodge highlighted, and information on modern additions to the park that demonstrates its ever-evolving future. An accompanying map would display the park's layout and the locations of all its features.

The A1 sized panel would be free standing and located at the Yarmouth Road entrance to the park, positioned on the grassy area to the right of the entrance as you enter the park.

Officers are working on securing the permissions for use of the three postcards, a photo of the opening of the park and the aerial photos of the park.

Belle Vue Park

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of Lowestoft's First Public Park



Establishment of the Park

Insert Photo from Opening

Before the 1840s there were no public parks in Britain, as many towns were in close proximity to the rural hinterland, until the development of urban populations which caused civilians to become increasingly separated from the natural world. Campaigners and politicians, such as Edwin Chadwick and Robert Peel, championed the creation of green spaces for the urban populations.

Lowestoft had no free public park until 1872, when the Chairman of the Lowestoft Improvement Committee, James Peto, and two other members, William Youngman and William Rix Seago, proposed a piece of common land be converted into a free public park as a symbol of Lowestoft's civic pride. Originally called 'Arboretum Hill', it was renamed to Belle Vue Park and opened to the public in 1874.

Park Design

The layout of the park followed the contemporary pleasure garden design, an outdoor ticket-for-entry entertainment space popular in London during the 18th century as the growth of an urban middle class and rising incomes led to several innovations in paid-for entertainment. The pleasure gardens were designed as formal gardens, with shrubberies and miniature waterways, and buildings for performances and dining.

Belle Vue continues to develop with new additions since the formation of the new Lowestoft Town Council in 2017. The Peace Garden, designed in the shape and colours of the Flanders' Poppy, commemorates the 100th anniversary of the end of the 'Great War' and those who sacrificed their lives for peace. The Rose Garden is a virtual memorial garden for local people to remember their loved ones and support the James Paget Hospital Charity. It is planted with red roses, to mark the Hospital's 40th Birthday in 2022, and has a QR code to view online memorials.

Notable Aspects



Ground Keeper Thatched Cottage

In August 1873 a tender of £256 from G Simpson was accepted to erect a thatched keeper's cottage, with a grounds keeper established in 1874 to oversee visitors to the park. In 1990 a fire destroyed the lodge, it was later rebuilt to the original design in 1991.



Bandstand/Naval Memorial

The bandstand was erected in 1873 on the eastern boundary of the park and provided beautiful sea views. It was demolished in 1952 and replaced with the naval memorial, built by Imperial War Graves Commission in memory of 2,385 officers of the Royal Naval Patrol Service, which is still standing today. The memorial was later accompanied by three restored cannons in 1972.



Jubilee Bridge

In 1887, Council member Mr Arthur Stebbing proposed a bridge be erected over the ravine on the northern boundary of the park to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

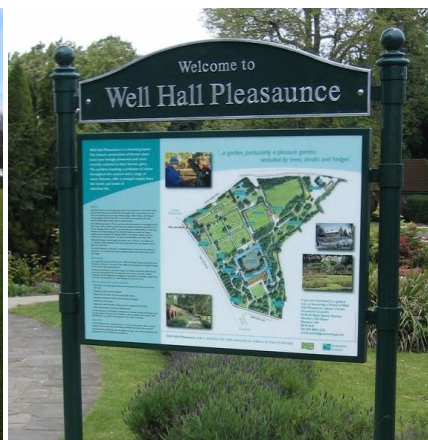
The 'Vue' from Above



This panel was erected by Lowestoft Town Council in 2024.
Copyright for photos: (cottage, Ravine Bridge, Bandstand A. Taylor collection.)

Historical Information Panel Design & Costs

Fitzpatrick Woolmer – This company provides freestanding display boards and their design team would work with the officers in developing the content, with full colour proofs provided for comment and approval prior to printing. The ideal frames would either be 'Cavalier Interpretation display' or 'Fusilier interpretation display' and quotes were requested for both. This company provides options for a site survey and installation of the unit. Their estimated lead time is four to six weeks.



Shelley Signs – This company provides freestanding display boards and can assist with the design, either creating the full designs themselves or adapting from our existing artwork, with a choice of frame. We are awaiting a response to initial enquiries.



Nature Sign Design – This company offers upright aluminium signs of a durable design with anti-vandal security fittings, powder coated in a colour of our choice. The estimated lead time is one week for artwork and four weeks for production.



Plaque

Belle Vue Park is on the list of planned heritage plaques for Lowestoft. The plaque could be placed on the Yarmouth entrance to the park. As it would be supported by the information panel in the entrance of the park, the plaque does not require as much detail regarding Belle Vue and its history.

Per the Heritage Policy of the Council, the shape and colour would be a 300mm round disc in a grey/green tone. According to the policy, one of three icons would be used for plaques: a cross for anything with a religious connotation, a nineteenth century herring lugger for anything connected to fishing or maritime activity and the adapted image from the Lowestoft coat of arms for plaques of miscellaneous subjects. Therefore, the image for this plaque would be:

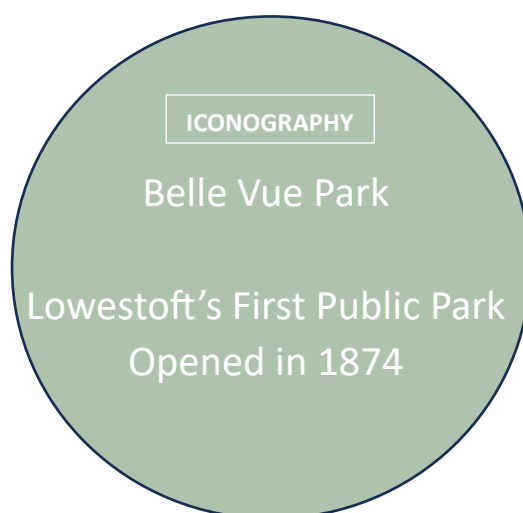


However, the Council could consider a fourth category of iconography: flowers for parks and open spaces. The flowers could be different for each plaque depending on the open space it is commemorating, or if a single image was preferred then it could be the oxlip, the flower of Suffolk County.

For this Belle Vue Park plaque, bluebells were suggested in reference to the wild bluebells that grow in the ravine and due to the similarities in name 'Belle Vue Park' and 'bluebells'.



The font would be white and read as follows:



Plaque Cost

The decision on a plaque supplier would be part of a wider conversation with the Events and Communications Sub-Committee in August on who the permanent plaque supplier for the Town Council should be.

Planting Plans

There are two small areas at the Yarmouth Road porch entrance to the park which could be planted up to look more welcoming to visitors. A quotation has also been requested for removal of an old tree stump from one of the beds. The following planting plan is suggested:



English Bluebell

- Hardy bulb
- Flowers Apr – May
- Attracts [bees](#)
- 60 bulbs - £19.99



Campanula Medium 'Blue'

- Hardy biennial
- Flowers Jun – Aug
- Bell shaped flowers
- 1 x 1 litre potted plant - £14.99



Aubrieta 'Cascade Blue'

- Hardy perennial
- Flowers Mar – May
- Attracts pollinating [insects](#)
- 1 x 1 litre potted plant - £14.99



Nerine Bowdenii 'Pink'

- Hardy bulb
- Flowers Sep – Nov
- Funnel shaped [flowers](#)
- 10 bulbs - £9.99



Penstemon 'Miniature Bells'

- Hardy perennial
- Flowers Jun – Sep
- Miniature [bell shaped](#) flowers
- 50 seeds – £0.99



English Lavender

- Hardy shrub
- Flowers Jul – Aug
- Attracts [bees](#)
- 2 x 9cm potted plants - £13.99

planting. The following planting plan is suggested:



Pentstemon 'Heavenly Blue'

- Hardy perennial
- Flowers Jun – Oct
- Attracts pollinating [insects](#)
- 2 x 9cm potted plant - £19.98



Echinacea 'Nectar Pink'

- Hardy perennial
- Flowers Jul – Sep
- Attracts pollinating [insects](#)
- 2 x 9cm potted plant - £19.98



Aubrieta 'Cascade Purple'

- Hardy perennial
- Attracts pollinating [insects](#)
- Flowers Mar – May
- 1 x 9cm potted plant - £11.99



Erigeron 'Pink Jewel'

- Hardy perennial
- Attracts pollinating [insects](#)
- Flowers May – Jul
- 1 x 1 litre potted plant - £14.99

Porch entrance



To complement the proposed planting plan for the porch entrance, the building would also benefit from some painting and decorating.

The image above shows two display boards which had previously been decorated with images of poppies which have since faded. With the information collected about the history of Belle Vue Park, it is suggested that the boards could display a timeline of interesting facts and historical images of the park and we could work with a school to progress this as a project for their students.

In the interim, it is proposed that the entrance porch generally is repainted to look more presentable for visitors.