

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 17 October 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Neil Coleby, Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernie Rappensberger, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman

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

103. Welcome

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

104. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Smith, Brooks and D Youngman with reasons provided. Cllr Coleby proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

105. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

105.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he was Chair of the Gunton Residents Association and a member of its subsidiary Gainsborough Drive Pond Group. Cllr Breakspear declared he was Chair of the Friends of Kensington Gardens.

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

106. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 19 September 2023

Cllr Pearce proposed approval the minutes and confidential note; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

107. 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.

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

The expenditure was summarised. There was expected to be some remaining funds from the delegated £3,900 from the Horticulture budget for bulb orders. Officers would check which budgets the tree works were allocated to as they were currently listed under the Horticulture Earmarked Reserves. The Planning Application for tree works was currently listed under the Parks and Open Spaces budget as pending expenditure and it was requested this be checked with the Finance and Information Officers as it was suggested it be allocated to the Capital budget.

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

109.1 Normanston Park – The Normanston Park play area refurbishment had been completed and issues identified in the inspection report were due to be resolved. An opening event would be planned for both Normanston Park and Cotman Close.

109.2 Rosedale Park

109.3 Kensington Gardens

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- 109.4 Gunton Community Park
- 109.5 Great Eastern Linear Park – A collaboration project had previously been considered with Ormiston Denes Academy for the Great Eastern Linear Park and the Project and Committee Clerk would contact them to determine if they were interested in continuing with the project. Cllr Coleby offered to contact the Waveney Youth Council to discuss their potential involvement. Community Payback would also be contacted to continue their partnership with the Town Council.
- 109.6 Sparrows Nest – The costings for the winter garden would need to consider a new path for disability access from the western side of the garden, per the previous draft plan. Cllr Breakspear proposed the treatment for the fence at the top entrance of Sparrows Nest be discussed at the next Assets, Inclusion and Development meeting; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 109.7 Fen Park – As the Friends of Fen Park had previously raised the issue of toilets being required on site, an update on the planned refurbishment of the toilet was requested and Councillors would be notified when a commencement date for the works has been confirmed. An item was requested for the next Assets, Inclusion and Development meeting consider locations for storage at Fen Park, to be used by the Friends of Fen Park for storing tools, with officers and Kirkley ward Councillors to review the site beforehand. The Allotments Sub-Committee would discuss an approach to the Fen Park allotments site representative to gauge their interest in collaborating with the Friends of Fen Park.
- 109.8 Belle Vue Park – A mosaic panel was suggested for the triangle bed in Belle Vue and it was agreed to consider the cost and potential completion prior to the 150th anniversary. As part of the grounds maintenance schedule of works, officers would assess the flower beds and review remedial works for the park prior to the anniversary in 2024.
- 109.9 Denes Oval
- 109.10 Cotman Close
- 109.11 Britten Road Play Area
- 109.12 Clarkes Lane
- 109.13 Pakefield Green Play Area (Wellington Road)
- 109.14 The Ness – An overall heritage plan for the site would be formulate by The Ness Working Group. A proposal had been received concerning a disused building linked to the Ness Park conservation area and officers would ascertain if site owner permission was required before the submission of the planning application. Cllr Coleby proposed this be discussed further at the next AID meeting as a confidential item; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 109.15 Ness Point
- 109.16 St Margaret’s Plain Play Area
- 109.17 Bentley Drive Play Area
- 109.18 Gainsborough Drive Pond
- 109.19 North Denes – Cllr Pearce proposed officers open dialogue with East Suffolk Council on complementary works between North Denes and Gunton Warren; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
- 109.20 Links Road Car Park
- 109.21 Triangle Market
- 109.22 Town Green
- 109.23 Land at Upland’s Road North (including pond)

A document with suggestions for projects in year one had been compiled from the standalone zoom meetings. Whilst the Sub-Committee had previously agreed to not decide on the project priorities

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until the public sports survey had been completed in November, officers noted that the results would likely not be available until December and therefore did not leave the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee enough time to accommodate the projects in the budget. There would also be some projects, such as bike racks and benches, that would not need the survey results to be set a priority.

It was agreed to proceed with the meeting on 19 October with members of Friends of Kensington Gardens and Friends of Fen Park. If a Friends Group wished to arrange a site visit with officers and Councillors, then this could be organised at a later date.

A capital works budget of £37,975 had been set for the five-year plans, and with £11,870 spent or committed for expenditure, there was over £26,000 remaining for this financial year. The 2024-2025 budget provisionally allowed for a £45,000 budget at the time of the meeting. Of the £25,000 Parks Repair and Maintenance budget for 2023-2024, only £4,000 had been spent and any underspend would be allocated to the Parks and Open Spaces Reserve and rolled over, which could provide a buffer for the expenditure in the next financial year. It was agreed to continue with the zoom meetings to discuss the five-year plans and the priorities and the Project and Committee Clerk would email members for available dates to schedule the next meeting.

With £90,000 budgeted for 2023-2024, the next two play areas to be refurbished would be Wellington Road and Britten Road. Cllr Pearce proposed to obtain indicative costs by the end of the calendar, in order to ensure £90,000 would cover the next two parks before agreeing the 2024-2025 budget. There was uncertainty as to whether £90,000 or £60,000 was budgeted for the play area refurbishments and officers would clarify this with the Finance and Information Officer. Officers were also asked to check when the second Community Infrastructure Levy was due to be received.

The Toilet Working Group had recommended the toilets at Normanston Park and Lowestoft Cemetery be refurbished in the next financial year. Cllr Pearce proposed the Normanston Park toilets and changing room and the Lowestoft Cemetery toilets be on the next AID agenda to review the 2024-2025 funds, with quotes to be obtained with the intention to procure the work this financial year and works to commence in 2024. Cllr Coleby requested an amendment for the Normanston toilets to consider reconfiguration of the changing rooms and the provision of the old pavilion for a standalone toilet, which was accepted by Cllr Pearce. Cllr Coleby seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

110. To consider December 2023 and January 2024 orders of Snowdrops, Winter Aconites and Bluebells for winter planting in February 2024

Cllr Pearce proposed the orders be progressed and delegated to officers, in conjunction with this Sub-Committee, to decide on the quantities and locations for the flowers. Cllr Coleby estimated the first-year costs to be £683.10. Cllr Pearce amended his proposal to include an initial maximum budget of £1,200 delegated to officers, noting that new planting is allocated to the capital budget. Cllr Webb seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

111. To consider the watering methods for the bowling greens

Concerns had been raised of the bowling greens being watered too late in the day when the water is burned off by the high sun. Officers suggested the Grounds Maintenance team water the greens earlier in the morning, which Cllr Newsome agreed would resolve the issue. Cllr Coleby suggested watering be instead completed in the evening.

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Cllr Newsome would forward his emails from suppliers of auto-sprinkler system for the Grounds Maintenance team to review and advise if this could be done within the existing schedule, or whether evening staffing or an automated sprinkler system is required, which would need to be factored into the 2024-2025 budget. Cllr Breakspear proposed this item be revisited at the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

112. Date of the next meeting

21 November 2023 19:00

113. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Any items should be sent to the office.

Due to the issues noted in previous meetings of damage to the Kensington Gardens bowling greens during the First Light Festival, an item was requested for this Sub-Committee to discuss and make a recommendation to Full Council on whether the bowling greens should be made available to the First Light Festival in 2024. The Project and Committee Clerk clarified that they had been notified of minor damage from the marquee at the time of the festival and the damage had been resolved.

An item was requested to make a recommendation for an approach to East Suffolk Council on their intention for the land they own at Cotman Close and the possibility of the Town Council acquiring that land.

114. 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

There were no resolutions.

The chair closed the meeting at 20:30

Signed:

16 January 2024