

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 21 January 2025

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear, Christine Moore, John Murray, Andy Pearce, Deborah Ray and Elise Youngman (Chair)

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

110. Welcome

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

111. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, John Pitts and Bernadette Rappensberger with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

112. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

112.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – There were no declarations.

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

113. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 10 December 2024

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the draft minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

114. 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 advance comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance.

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

All budgets have been actively reviewed by the Budget and Loan Working Group as part of the 2025/2026 budget and precept recommendations. The following budgets would be recommended to be maintained in real terms, including an uplift for inflation: Parks Capital, Parks Repair and Maintenance, Horticulture and all other budgets relating to the maintenance of parks and open spaces.

116. To receive feedback from the stand-alone meeting concerning the Five-Year Plans

The purpose of the meeting was to prioritise the plans according to which projects were ready with specifications and needed to be prioritised financially and which projects required further information, quotes or external permissions to proceed.

A further meeting had been agreed to finish this initial review and then work to prioritise the projects that had all information and costs and determine what would be undertaken in Year One.

Officers would provide dates for the next meeting within the fortnight and circulate the notes of the meeting to all Sub-Committee members.

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117. To consider a proposal for an Active Track in Lowestoft

It was suggested both a pump track and active track be considered and costed in 2025/2026, so long as the tracks would not use the same footprints. Officers confirmed the tracks would use different footprints.

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the proposal for an active track and requested officers produce specifications for both an active track and pump track, with costs and further information to be sought on what grant funding may be available and what match funding requirements there would be, the feasibility of both projects could then be considered.

A concern was raised concerning the plans to install a pump track in Woods Meadow Estate and it may be appropriate to wait and clarify if that pump track would fulfil the demand for a pump track in the area.

Cllr Pearce clarified his proposal was not to commit to undertaking both projects, it was to explore and confirm the specifications and costs for both tracks. Part of the feasibility study would include consideration of a pump track being developed in the wider Lowestoft area, and if that may be a basis for not proceeding with a pump track in Normanston Park. Cllr Ray seconded the proposal and a vote was held with four votes in favour and two abstentions.

118. Sparrows Nest:

118.1. To consider a proposal to reinstate a pond at Sparrows Nest – The Grounds

Maintenance Team had submitted this proposal as there had previously been a pond sited in the area and comments had been received from the public on whether a pond could be reinstated. The pond could be located in its original location, in which case the existing clockface could be moved when out of seasons for the bulbs, or alternative locations could be considered. The pond would be complementary to the sensory garden.

If the Sub-Committee were favourable to the idea, then the Grounds Maintenance Team would consider feasibility further.

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve officers continuing the feasibility work and requested they speak with Pathways Care Farm about the project to ensure no concerns would be raised on the sensory garden, as there was a commitment to retain both; seconded by Cllr Ray; five votes in favour and one abstention.

118.2. To consider a maximum budget for planting the existing pond at Sparrows Nest, adjacent to Martello – Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the planting within a maximum budget of £500 to cover the purchase of plants, a basket and aquatic compost; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

118.3. To consider an invoice from Pathways Care Farm for £1,185 for work undertaken on the Sparrows Nest Sensory Garden – This was a retrospective request.

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the payment as Pathways Care Farm has acted in good faith and the Sub-Committee had committed to working with the organisation. It was requested the funds be allocated from the Horticulture budget 'bulbs and planting' line. It was agreed that in future, the invoice should provide a full breakdown of costs, such as the hours of labour. Cllr Youngman seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

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119. Date of the next meeting

18 February 2025 19:00

120. Items for the next Agenda and Close

No items were requested for the next agenda.

121. 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

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:43

Signed:

18 February 2025