

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
18:00 on 17 May 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Bob Breakspear (Chair), Colin Butler, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Andy Pearce and John Pitts

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

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

194. Welcome

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

195. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Neil Coleby. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

196. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 199.4. Cllr Hardie declared a local non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to Fen Park. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to Kensington Gardens.

197. Consideration of the draft minutes of the meeting on 12 April 2021 and the signing of previous minutes subsequent to 17 March 2020

Cllr Green proposed acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 12 April and approval to sign the minutes of previous meetings subsequent to 17 March 2020; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Breakspear was provided with all of the minutes to sign.

198. Public forum

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

199. Parks and open spaces:

199.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 27 April 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.

199.2. The following recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

199.2a. Proceeding with pledging land at Clarkes Lane, Fen Park and the North Denes to WildEast, with delegated authority to officers to progress the appropriate signage – There was some discussion regarding an appropriate budget. Officers will endeavour to seek the lowest possible quotations. Cllr Pearce proposed granting delegated authority to officers to proceed with pledging land at Clarkes Lane, Fen Park and the North Denes to WildEast, and progress appropriate signage, within a maximum budget of £1,000; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

199.2b. Transferring the £17,500 funds in the Fen Park pond budget to the ponds and waterways budget, in anticipation it will be spent this year – Since its inception, the Town Council has included budget provision for Fen Park waterways, believed to relate to the pond. Unspent funds may have been allocated to general reserves or a specific parks reserve. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers identify which reserve(s) unspent funds from this budget heading were allocated to and transfer the funds into the waterways budget, in anticipation it will be spent this year; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

199.3. The provision of benches, bins and bicycle racks in the Town Council's parks and open spaces – Full Council has already agreed to progress the provision of bins identified.

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From the suggestions that Cllr Coleby previously put forward it was commented that the Elwood style benches would complement the Sherwood style bins which have already been agreed. It was suggested that the Phoenix style bench should also be considered as it has arms. This item is also on the agenda for the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting tomorrow and will be discussed in more detail there.

- 199.4. Quotations for leaflets and signage for the Gainsborough Drive pond regarding duck feeding – The Gainsborough Drive Pond Group has requested forty information leaflets it can distribute to residents about duck feeding, complemented by signage at either end of the pond. This has already been approved by Full Council and officers have been liaising with other authorities regarding appropriate wording. Concrete bases may be required to affix the signs. Cllr Hardie has seen a good sign and will forward the details to officers. This Committee will be asked to determine the locations of the signs. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers to print one hundred leaflets for the Pond Group to distribute, and to progress two signs within a maximum budget of £750, including installation; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 199.5. How to develop areas in Fen Park and Kensington Gardens to produce mulch – Cllr Breakspear has identified a location in Kensington Gardens and Cllr Hardie has done the same for Fen Park. In Fen Park this is the area where the water pumping station is, which is a recessed area not commonly used by the public. There would need to be some bramble clearance and some fencing would be required to protect the area. The proposed location would provide vehicular access for East Suffolk Norse. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers to liaise with relevant stakeholders to agree the locations and progress the development of areas in Fen Park and Kensington Gardens to produce mulch; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. If there are any issues regarding the proposed locations, officers will report back to this Committee.
- 199.6. Site access to Sparrows Nest, including any quotations received to install a fence along the border of the grass between the play area and the Movie Makers Theatre – This is a potential alternative to the lockable bollards. A quotation has not yet been received and officers will follow this up.
- 199.7. Arrangements for replacement trees/planting, following incidents of environmental vandalism on Town Council land – There have been some discussions regarding an appropriate budget. Specialist advice will be sought about the type of planting needed. The Police are still involved and investigations are ongoing. It was previously recommended that the Council should endeavour to source the most mature trees it can. This is in progress but it will be quite a considerable project to ensure that the area is planted well and taken to a better stage. Once quotations have been obtained they will be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee. There will be liaison with the Police before any planting takes place, but it is understood they have already gathered all the evidence they can. It was suggested that mature hawthorns should be considered as they are relatively inexpensive and would suit the environment. It was also requested that oak trees be considered, particularly if they were there previously. It is understood that the Woodland Trust donates mature trees.
- 199.8. The security of Fen Park and the Britten Road play area, particularly regarding unauthorised vehicular access – There would be difficulties in securing the sites against unauthorised vehicular access. For Fen Park, staggered barriers were suggested at the three entrances which are not gated, which would still allow access for prams, bicycles and mobility vehicles. The Britten Road play area would be more difficult as it is an open space. Police Community Support Officers have been seen patrolling Kensington Gardens. The Council welcomes a visible Police presence and this Committee would like to extend this to more of the Council's assets if possible. The Committee asked officers to explore whether a by-law could be put in to preventing unauthorised vehicular access. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers seek quotations to install staggered barriers at

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three of the entrances to Fen Park, and make enquiries as to whether it would be possible to progress a by-law; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

- 199.9. A request to refurbish the Kensington Gardens bowls pavilion windows – Some repair work was carried out some time ago. Some capital grants funding is available from East Suffolk Council. Officers are trying to obtain quotations to see if the work could be covered by the funding available. The bowls club has done some work to improve the interior of the pavilion. Clubs can use the facilities free of charge, but a condition of this is that they demonstrate how they have reinvested the funds saved to either boost their membership or improve their facilities. The club could be asked to contribute but it is understood there is no formal lease in place and several different users access the pavilion. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers to progress the refurbishment of the Kensington Gardens bowls pavilion windows within the total amount of capital grants funding available from East Suffolk Council. If the quotations exceed the total sum available officers will bring quotations back to this Committee to consider. Officers will approach credible specialists for advice on what work is required and to which windows. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Hardie and all Councillors voted in favour. The Committee would like an assurance from the bowls club that it is not intending to vacate the pavilion. The Ammunitions Bunker could complement the facilities but the Council currently only has permission for certain usage and surveys are required to ensure it can safely be used. There were concerns previously that access could only be achieved by crossing land belonging to East Suffolk Council, but it has since been confirmed that there is public right of access.
- 199.10. A request from a school to hire the Kensington Gardens tennis courts for one morning per week – Officers are liaising with a representative of the school to determine what time they would like access and for how long. Public access would need to be precluded to accommodate this, and whilst the Committee would not wish for the courts to remain locked to accommodate the booking it could be difficult to ask users to vacate the courts once they have been opened for the day.
- 199.11. A request from Cllr Sonia Barker to join the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee – Cllr Knight proposed approval of the request from Cllr Barker; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

200. Normanston Park

- 200.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Normanston Park Tenancy Arrangements Sub-Committee meeting on 14 April 2021 – Further meetings of the Sub-Committee will be held to discuss plans. It appears the Town Council may have a different version of the lease to the tenant and would like to obtain the current version. Officers will contact the tenant.

201. Markets:

- 201.1. Receipt of the notes of the Triangle Market Working Group meeting on 5 May 2021 – The notes of the meeting were noted.
- 201.2. Any recommendations from the Triangle Market Working Group regarding the provision of markets – The Events and Communications Officer is communicating with local groups about restarting the market. There had been some discussion in the meeting about progressing a road closure and there had been some confusion about the section of road being referred to. The Events and Communications Officer undertook a site visit with Cllrs Parker and Pearce and it was agreed that a road closure would not be feasible, but signage is being considered instead. It was queried whether fees will be applied to stallholders this year. The Council will be reviewing all of its fees and charges at its Annual Meeting tomorrow. It had previously been agreed that stalls would be offered free of charge for now to encourage traders. It has been suggested that Fridays may be a good day to hold the market as the fresh fish stall attracts

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good trade. It was suggested that if the offer of free pitches still applies it should extend to the regular fresh fish and fruit and vegetable stalls on market days.

202. Providing access from the Links Road car park to the sea wall

The Committee was asked to consider in principle whether it would wish to provide a ramp from the Links Road car park to the sea wall, as a need has been identified. A site visit has been arranged with the Coastal Protection Authority to see if this would be possible. If he is available on the agreed date, it was agreed that Cllr Butler would attend the site visit. Cllr Hardie proposed an agreement in principle to progress providing access from the Links Road car park to the sea wall; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour. Once it is clear whether a provision of a ramp could be progressed this Committee will consider the details.

203. An issue reported regarding the surfacing of the Normanston Park car park

A complaint has been received that the surface is potentially problematic. Officers are looking into how this could be addressed. Although it is not a surfaced car park it can still develop defects which need to be looked into. Any urgent issues would have to be dealt with immediately under existing emergency delegated authority.

204. Progress with a plan for heritage plaques

It has previously been agreed that the Town Council would work in conjunction with the Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society on a plan for heritage plaques. The Society has completed its review of the plaques, identifying which plaques require repair, which need complete replacement and which new ones could be considered. Cllr Pearce has a spreadsheet which is not yet complete but provides an indication of the plans so far. The Society would like to know whether the Council could provide administrative support, such as contacting landowners for permission to install plaques. It was agreed that officers could support this. Cllr Pearce proposed approving the request from the Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society for officers to provide administrative support to progress the plans for heritage plaques; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

205. A proposal regarding procurement of additional items of the Lowestoft Collection

There had previously been discussions about who the Council may wish to consult and how, should it be interested in procuring additional items of the Collection. It was agreed this Committee would draw up a proposal about the principle of procuring additional items and the process for doing so. The Council has generally agreed it would only purchase an item if it enhanced the Collection. This does not just extend to the Lowestoft Porcelain. The Clerk is looking into the procedure, which will be brought to this Committee for consideration.

206. An update on the proposed bus shelter for Harris Avenue

Cllr Butler had been liaising with Suffolk County Council regarding the possibility of the Town Council purchasing one of its standard design bus shelters for Harris Avenue, which the County Council had agreed it would maintain. The County Council has advised that a concrete base would be required, which would be expensive to install. Cllr Butler proposed that he explore alternative designs which could be accommodated without a concrete base; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

207. Community Halls:

207.1. Management arrangements – Following the disbanding of the Whitton Residents' Hall management committee, the priority was for officers to get arrangements in place to ensure it could be used as a Polling Station for the recent elections. Since then, officers have been working through arrangements with various users, but had to change the external padlocks as people were entering the Hall without the Council's knowledge.

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Officers have been in contact with the community groups it is aware of which used to hire the Hall regularly, and has been putting in measures to make it safe and appropriate for them to return. Once this has been resolved the management of the Gunton Residents' Meeting Hall can be considered. There are two members left on the management committee for Gunton and a public meeting which was due to be held to increase the membership had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. This will be rearranged as and when it is appropriate to do so. If Whitton Residents' Hall is to be used as a meeting venue for the Town Council on a longer term basis it was requested that full capacity Wi-Fi provision is considered.

207.2. A request from the Lowestoft Boxing Academy to hire Whitton Residents' Hall – The Academy is looking for a permanent space and would like to install equipment which could cause difficulties for other users. It would be a policy decision for the Council but it is not thought there would be sufficient space to safely accommodate a boxing gym alongside the current use of other community groups. Cllr Breakspear proposed a recommendation to Full Council to decline the request from the Lowestoft Boxing Academy, on the basis that the Hall is intended for community use, and the permanent installation of boxing equipment would restrict the usage; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

208. Receipt of the notes of the Denes Oval Working Group meeting on 12 May 2021 and consider proposed improvements to the Denes Oval (some aspects may be confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

209. Lease arrangements for a tenant (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

210. Enhancing the arrangements for the Lowestoft Collection at the Lowestoft Museum (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

211. Date of the next meeting

7 June 2021 18:00 – At this stage it is anticipated that the meeting will be held at Whitton Residents' Hall.

212. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

Cllr Knight proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the live stream was closed as the meeting went into confidential session. It was confirmed the meeting would end following the confidential session.

213. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

A comfort break was taken 19:10 and the meeting resumed 19:17

213.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required:

208. Receipt of the notes of the Denes Oval Working Group meeting on 12 May 2021 and consider proposed improvements to the Denes Oval (some aspects may be confidential) – An update was given and officers have been looking into the feasibility of some of the proposals submitted by the Tennis Club. Site visits with the clubs and the Working Group will be arranged.

210. Enhancing the arrangements for the Lowestoft Collection at the Lowestoft Museum (confidential) – It was agreed to consider this item before item 209 as Cllr

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Breakspear would be required to leave the meeting for the consideration of that item. Cllr Pearce made a proposal regarding accessing advice from experts on procurement of additional items of the Collection; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

209. Lease arrangements for a tenant (confidential) –

Cllr Breakspear left the meeting 19:32

Cllr Knight proposed that Cllr Green preside over the remainder of the meeting; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour. The Clerk gave an update on the latest position and further updates will be reported back to this Committee.

The meeting was closed 19:37.

Signed: 

12 July 2021