

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:00 on 4 October 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Colin Butler, Alan Green, Paul Page, Andy Pearce and Elise Youngman

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 webinar

70. Welcome

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

71. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr John Pitts.

The Clerk arrived 18:04

Cllr Christian Newsome had not provided apologies and was absent. The Clerk had checked he was not waiting to be let in the building. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

72. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 76.4 and 76.7. Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 76.7. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 76.5 and 76.9.

73. The draft minutes of the meeting on 6 September 2021

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

74. Public forum

No advance comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance, either in person or via Zoom webinar.

75. Monitoring expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The Committee requested an up to date position on the community engagement budget. It is understood there has been one item of expenditure from it.

76. Parks and open spaces:

76.1. Receiving any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 21 September 2021 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

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

76.2a. An in-principle commitment to explore options for lights in the Town Council's parks and open spaces, taking account of practicalities and power supplies – Normanston Park, Fen Park and Kensington Gardens have been suggested so far. The Committee would like to investigate current provision of power supplies to the parks, and the feasibility of connecting a power supply to those that do not currently have it, particularly as the Council would like to increase its provision of defibrillators. There may be a large cost involved with connecting a new power supply and there is also a cost for an initial assessment of the site. The Committee would be prepared to consider alternative supplies, such as solar or wind energy. Cllr Pearce proposed an in-principle approval of the recommendation from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee for the Council's main parks (defined as Normanston Park, Belle Vue Park, Sparrows Nest,

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Kensington Gardens and Fen Park), including to explore alternative options, such as solar or wind energy. This should begin with an assessment of the current power supply, with delegated authority to officers to progress this assessment; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

76.2b. An in-principle commitment to create a public art policy – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this recommendation, with a request to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee to consider this initially; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

76.2c. An in-principle commitment to create provision for creative/artistic space in the Town Council's parks and open spaces, to be incorporated into the scheduled refurbishment of the parks – A similar idea is being considered as part of the Town Hall project and the Pocket Park funding for the land on Compass Street, adjacent to the Town Hall. It has been suggested that a chalkboard or similar could be incorporated into the designs for the Sparrows Nest play area refurbishment. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this recommendation, with the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to create specific proposals within the context of the five year plans. This could also form part of the public art policy as per the previous item. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Brooks and all Councillors voted in favour. Officers will approach providers to see what they can offer.

76.3. Specifications for benches, including to consider any suggestions from Councillors – There is a bench next to the Sparrows Nest play area which is facing the rear of the noticeboard. The Committee agreed that Norse should be asked to turn the bench around. If this cannot be incorporated within the cost of the refurbishment of the play area, this Committee will consider any additional expenditure. The Council previously agreed to progress the purchase of the benches at a cost not exceeding the underspend from the Parks Development budget in 2020 – 2021, and the installation cost to not exceed the Parks Development earmarked reserve total. Cllr Pearce proposed circulating the information on specifications and quantities of benches to Councillors, to request that any suggestions be sent to officers before the next Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting, for a final recommendation to be made to this Committee in November. If the costs are over budget this Committee will consider how to proceed. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

76.4. Refurbishment options for the St Margaret's Plain play area – The refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest play area will be approximately £60,000. The play areas budget is £70,000 and some expenditure has already been committed for Britten Road. It was agreed to defer this item to November's meeting to confirm exactly what is left in the budget. There has been some community engagement with regard to St Margaret's Plain. Users of the play area would like to see junior swings in addition to the toddler swings which are already there. The park would benefit from a larger bin, or additional bin provision. It was suggested that the bench and railings would benefit from some painting and the mound could be landscaped. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will consider this further. In the interim, Cllrs Brooks and Youngman offered to visit the site to carry out some community engagement, and officers will also seek public feedback via the Lowestoft Journal and the Town Council's Facebook page. Cllr Breakspear proceeding with community engagement to feed back to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

76.5. The cost of Holocaust Memorial items from the Kensington Gardens plan – The Committee Clerk undertook a site visit with Norse and the Friends of Kensington Gardens, to look at options for the Holocaust Memorial bed. Norse recommended building up the soil level and the bricks surrounding the garden to support the planting. The proposed lectern would be very large in the context of the garden, and it was suggested that a smaller information board may be more appropriate for the space. Cllr Pearce proposed that the cost of the work to the Holocaust Memorial bed and other Holocaust memorial items, such as a kindertransport bench is brought to the next meeting. A decision on the lectern will be made at the next meeting. The proposal was

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seconded by Cllr Brooks and all Councillors voted in favour.

- 76.6. An update on planting plans for 2021 – 2022 – The Friends of Kensington Gardens have confirmed which bulbs they would like. Cllr Breakspear is liaising with the Friends of Fen Park. It is understood that Norse had some ideas for Sparrows Nest and officers are liaising with them. Daffodil bulbs were planted at Normanston Park, the Stoven Close play area and Daffodil Walk last year. It was agreed that the same quantities could be purchased for those sites again this year. Cllr Breakspear has found a wholesaler who could provide the bulbs. Cllr Pearce proposed that in addition to the existing delegation to officers to progress the bulb order in conjunction with Cllr Breakspear, that the bulbs are purchased within a maximum budget of £3,500. Cllr Pearce further proposed that the same quantity of bulbs is purchased for Normanston Park, Stoven Close and Daffodil Walk as last year, and that a review is undertaken next year to establish quantities required in the next order; seconded by Cllr Brooks. The Council has previously struggled to find volunteers to assist with planting. It was suggested that the Town Council could include the agreed purchase of bulbs for Arnold's Bequest with its order, and arrange to invoice the Charity Board, as this may be more cost effective. Cllr Brooks has some information about planting previously carried out at Arnold's Bequest, which she will send to the Committee Clerk. Cllr Pearce has received contact from a group who may be interested in forming a Friends Group there. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour.
- 76.7. Quotations for the de-silting of the Fen Park and Gainsborough Drive ponds – The Council has already decided to progress dredging of the Gainsborough Drive pond, rather than application of the Schlix product. Depending on the depth of sediment, the cost could be between £6,500 - £13,000. A quotation has been received for Fen Park and officers were asked to clarify that it is the overall cost and not the cost per foot of sediment. Delegated authority has been given to officers to appoint a contractor for the Gainsborough Drive pond. It was agreed that options for Fen Park should be carried forward to the next meeting of this Committee. A meeting with Norse to discuss options is being progressed. It was requested that quotations are presented in a spreadsheet in future, for ease of reference.
- 76.8. Feedback and actions arising from site visits to the following:
- 76.8a. Britten Road play area – There is an area of overgrowth with a large amount of litter, which may include drug paraphernalia. The Council has been made aware of anti-social behaviour at the site. There have been some queries regarding land ownership. It was suggested that the overgrowth and litter should be cleared and the Council should seek quotations for a six foot high metal fence, to be installed on land which definitely belongs to the Council, along the boundary where anti-social behaviour incidents have occurred. It was suggested that if progressed, expenditure could come from the community engagement budget. The need for including regular litter picks in the grounds maintenance contract will need to be considered. The Council may wish to consider removing or relocating the play equipment which is in amongst the overgrowth, asking Norse to provide a quotation for removal of the overgrowth and undertaking additional planting there. Provisionally, the whole area should be explored from an environmental and safety perspective. The question of ownership relates to land behind the teen equipment and officers are liaising with a property owner who is due to be providing documentation as to their understanding of the land ownership. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers obtain an indicative quotation for a fence; seconded by Cllr Brooks; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Pearce proposed removal and disposal of the three pieces of teen equipment which are currently in the area of overgrowth, with replacement equipment for older children to be considered as part of wider plans when the park is refurbished, and a communication to be issued to local residents to explain the decision and offer reassurance that replacement equipment will be considered in due course; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

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- 76.8b. Bentley Drive play area, including whether to install a gate at the Howley Gardens entrance – Howley Gardens is a cul-de-sac and Councillors agreed that the risk of speeding vehicles which is being presented does not exist. Cllr Green proposed not to install a gate to the Bentley Drive play area from the Howley Gardens entrance seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour. Officers will respond to the resident who made the suggestion and will refer to the risk assessment undertaken on site. The play area itself is enclosed within a fenced area. Following on from the site visit, concerns were raised regarding the condition of the play equipment and matting. Officers will review the play inspection report and ask Norse to carry out any actions needed. Generally, the play areas are checked once a month and officers also carry out periodic inspections, particularly when an issue is reported. The Norse Contract Working Group will consider the extent of reporting it would like to receive from Norse. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers review the play inspection report and complete a risk assessment in time for November's meeting of this Committee; seconded by Cllr Elise Youngman; all in favour.
- 76.8c. Clarkes Lane – The play area contains only a small amount of equipment. It was suggested that there should be some engagement with the Warren School to see what type of equipment the children would like to see there. A wildflower meadow, community orchard/garden and pledging of land to WildEast are being progressed. The quotation for the wildflower meadow was in excess of £25,000 due to size of the area. The area is popular with dog walkers and longer grass makes it more difficult for owners to remove mess. The Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee is considering the plans for the community orchard/garden. This will need to begin with an assessment of the soil type and quality. Cllr Brooks proposed that Norse provide feedback to the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee on the most appropriate tree species for the site and area for it; seconded by Cllr Elise Youngman; all in favour.
- 76.9. An offer from a private individual of a water fountain to install in the Kensington Gardens fish pond – There has been some investigation into the electricity supply. There is no trace of cabling. The supply may have existed historically, but if so is not likely it would be in a condition to be reconnected. A solar powered device could be considered. Cllr Breakspear was advised to visit Carlton Marshes to see the device they have and report back to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee.
- 76.10. The following regarding The Ness
- 76.10a. Installation of a dog litter bag dispenser – The dispenser would be supplied and refilled at no cost to the Council. The Council would need to pay for the installation, which may require a post. Advice would be needed on where it could be installed. It was noted that the bins fill up quickly. If this were to be progressed it would need to be supported by an adequate provision of bins. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with Cllr Breakspear to seek advice and progress the installation of the dispenser at the most appropriate location; seconded by Cllr Brooks; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.
- 76.10b. A request to install a kittiwake nesting structure – Cllr Pearce recently attended the first meeting of the Lowestoft Kittiwake Management Partnership, at which several organisations were represented. It was agreed that kittiwakes need to be encouraged to nest at appropriate sites, particularly away from buildings in the town. Cllr Pearce proposed advising the company which has made the approach that the Council is amenable to this suggestion in principle, but would like further information and possibly a site visit before making a decision; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. The Council would need advice on what areas, if any, would be suitable for the structure.
- 76.10c. Options for a coast garden – This has been approved in principle, using Dungeness as inspiration. Cllr Brooks has been liaising with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and a representative will be meeting with some Councillors on site shortly. Cllr Elise Youngman has started researching appropriate species. Raised beds could be considered if planting directly in the ground is not feasible. Cllr Pearce referring this item to November's Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting; seconded by Cllr

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Breakspear; all in favour.

76.11. Options for the Normanston Park skate park (some aspects may be confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

A comfort break was taken 20:25 and the meeting resumed 20:32

77. Events and Communications:

77.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meetings on 13 and 17 September 2021 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

77.2. Requests from Cllrs Graham Parker and Elise Youngman to join the Events and Communications Sub-Committee – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the requests; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

78. Reviewing the Town Council’s Asset Register

Cllr Pearce proposed deferring this item to the next meeting. In the interim Councillors should review the Register and send any comments to officers to collate in advance of the meeting. Officers will also clarify what the colour coding refers to. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

79. Licensing arrangements for the Triangle Market area

At the Heritage Open Days market there were two stalls selling alcohol, which required a temporary events licence to do so. It would be possible to licence the site, but there must be an individual’s name on the licence, who would need to act as the designated premises supervisor and must be contactable. The cost would be £100 for the application, plus an annual renewal fee of £70. The named individual must also have a personal licence at a cost of £37, which does not expire. If this were progressed, the Council may wish to ask any traders selling alcohol to indemnify the Council against any inappropriate trading on their behalf. East Suffolk Council may be able to advise who the designated person should be. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to agree in principle to licence the Triangle Market, gathering information from other licensed markets in the meantime to enable Full Council to make an informed decision; seconded by Cllr Brooks; three Councillors voted in favour; three Councillors voted against; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Breakspear used his casting vote as Chair and voted against the proposal.

80. Inclusion and development related concerns regarding regeneration and cultural investment in Lowestoft (some aspects may be confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

81. Arrangements for the Sparrows Nest Movie Makers Theatre (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

82. Date of the next meeting

1 November 2021 18:00

83. Items for the next agenda and close

It was requested that an item is added to receive an update on whether the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences refurbishments will be project managed internally or externally.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

84. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

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76.11. Options for the Normanston Park skate park (some aspects may be confidential)
– There have been issues with anti-social behaviour but it would be difficult to secure the skate park completely at night. A meeting with stakeholders is being progressed to discuss town-wide issues. Regarding the issue of graffiti at the skate park, Cllr Pearce proposed exploring options of commissioning a professional street artist to do an art installation there; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllrs Brooks and Elise Youngman will do a site visit and speak with users of the skate park.

80. Inclusion and development related concerns regarding regeneration and cultural investment in Lowestoft (some aspects may be confidential) – Residents and businesses have expressed concerns, which Cllr Pearce is collating.
Cllr Green proposed suspending Standing Order 3y for fifteen minutes to allow the meeting to continue; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.
Cllr Pearce proposed that officers formally approach East Suffolk Council reporting the public discontent which has been reported to Lowestoft Town Council regarding both the Heritage Action Zone and the cultural investment fund, and requesting clarification over their decision making process; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

81. Arrangements for the Sparrows Nest Movie Makers Theatre (confidential) – Cllr Brooks proposed that officers try to progress formalising arrangements with the Movie Makers regarding their use of the Theatre; seconded by Cllr Elise Youngman; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting 21:10.

Signed: 

1 November 2021