

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 7 February 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Colin Butler, Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, John Pitts 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

145. Welcome

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

146. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Page. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour. It was noted that Cllr Butler was required to leave his phone on during the meeting.

147. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to the Gunton Ward and any matters relating to Fen Park. Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to the Gunton Ward and St Margaret's Plain. Cllr Youngman declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 151.11 and 151.15. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Kensington Gardens.

148. The draft minutes of the meeting on 10 January 2022

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

149. Public forum

There were no members of the public in attendance, either in person or via Zoom webinar. A member of the public had submitted a comment regarding item 166, asking the Council to keep the steps clear of soil and stones.

150. Expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee had received an update on expenditure for planting. The events budget is being regularly monitored by the Events and Communications Sub-Committee. It was requested that going forward, each Committee and Sub-Committee only receives details of the relevant budgets, rather than everything.

151. Parks and open spaces:

151.1.Receiving any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 18 January 2022 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

151.2.Play area signage, including problems with dogs in enclosed play areas – The Community Warden has revised the draft design following feedback from this Committee. The new draft was displayed. Generally, the Committee liked the design. The signs will be solid so any amendments required to the telephone number in future cannot be easily made, but stickers can be used if needed. It was agreed that the reference to 'the Rangers' and the cartoon image of the two children should be removed. A second sign was displayed. The Committee would prefer not to see a large block of text and the generic reference to a minimum age, which is not the case with all of the Town Council's play areas. It is recommended that the minimum age is specified, and the Council has been advised to do so when installing outdoor fitness equipment. A

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maximum age is also relevant for certain equipment. It was agreed that a separate second sign would not be needed. The sign would need to be impactful, and may be needed on more than one side of each play area. It was suggested that the sentence regarding the danger of climbing the fencing should be added to the bottom of the first sign, and the age range of the equipment should be added in where the cartoon image of the children is being removed. Cllr Pearce proposed progressing one sign, based on the first one displayed, with removal of the reference to 'the Rangers', moving the telephone number up a line, and replacing the symbol for the ranger with the symbol for the telephone. Cllr Pearce further proposed replacing the cartoon image of the children with text to indicate the age range of the equipment, and adding the sentence regarding the danger of climbing the fence to the blank space at the bottom of the sign. Cllr Breakspear seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

- 151.3. The designs and cost of items relating to the Kensington Gardens centenary – The Friends of Kensington Gardens have been discussing a Peter Pan themed statue for the duck pond. A local contractor they have been liaising with has been asked to supply information regarding the dimensions, cost and a sample of the proposed material. The Friends of Kensington Gardens can supply most of the funding towards this, but would welcome a contribution from the Town Council. A maximum budget of £2,000, including installation, has been indicated. Three proposed designs were displayed. The statue may also include a small water feature powered by a solar pump. Cllr Pearce proposed approval in principle to progress the statue, with a maximum budget for the contribution from the Town Council of £3,000, and with delegated authority to officers to approve the design in conjunction with members of this Committee and the Friends of Kensington Gardens. This is subject to the contractor verifying that the images used in the draft designs are not copyrighted. The Friends of Kensington Gardens can contribute up to £1,500 towards the project. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour. Cllr Breakspear has received some information regarding the history of Kensington Gardens, which he will share with the Committee.
- 151.4. Additional metal fencing or gabions at Kensington Gardens – Officers have explored the cost of gabions but these could be difficult to fit into the space. It has instead been suggested that a wall is constructed and the space filled. It is understood it would be filled with rubble topped with soil and possibly grass but officers can look into this. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this suggestion, with delegated authority to staff to implement, within a maximum budget of £2,000; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 151.5. Quotations for work to remove access to the Great Eastern Linear Park 'Nature Walk', and to consider re-wilding of that area – A quotation is pending.
- 151.6. Installation of a Town Council noticeboard in Fen Park, and any other assets which may require a noticeboard – It was suggested that an additional noticeboard for the Gunton Ward could be installed on land where a memorial bench to the late Cllr Sue Barnard has recently been installed. This would require landowner permission and possible planning permission. Gunton Cliff was suggested as an alternative. There is an agreement in budgetary terms for additional noticeboards. The Friends of Fen Park are having a noticeboard installed in Fen Park, which was purchased via locality funding. Its primary purpose will be to display community notices and it was therefore suggested previously that it would be beneficial for the Town Council to install its own as well. A bulk order of noticeboards would be more cost effective. Village Rise was previously suggested as a potential location. The Town Council owns land at Stoven Close but this area may not receive the footfall to support a noticeboard. The Communications Officer will oversee the noticeboards in general and will liaise with Councillor and stakeholder key holders regarding content to be displayed.
- 151.7. An update on the repair/replacement of damaged matting at Fen Park – The sections of damaged Matta surfacing have now been replaced. The condition of the red and black matting has been raised with Norse. It was also reported that the green matting

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- appears to be in a poor condition. Officers will raise this with Norse.
- 151.8. An update on the installation of gates in the gaps in the fencing surrounding the Fen Park play area – A quotation is pending. A maximum budget was previously agreed. Separately, it was reported that there is a gap in the hedging near the play area, opposite the toilet block.
- 151.9. Refurbishment of the seesaw and pedal merry-go-round in the Fen Park play area – It is understood that both items of equipment are still in a good condition, but require painting. This can be picked up when this play area is considered for refurbishment.
- 151.10. The need to replace the wooden footbridge in Fen Park, and seeking quotations – The Community Warden has obtained sample materials, which were shown to the Committee. The Community Warden has recommended the material which is fully recycled and appears to have a surface which would provide better grip. Cllr Pearce proposed support of the Community Warden's recommendation for the material, with a preference for the darker colour, and proposed seeking quotations for total replacement of the bridge; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour. The Friends of Fen Park will be kept informed of the plans.
- 151.11. An update on the Whitton Green play area refurbishment – The quotation for the outdoor fitness equipment has been accepted. Officers will ensure the preliminary work takes place to ensure everything is in place prior to installation. The contractor's current lead time is eight to ten weeks.
- 151.12. Vandalism to trees recently planted at the Stoven Close play area and Gunton Community Park – Cllr Butler felt there had been insufficient liaison with Ward Councillors regarding the trees planted at Stoven Close. This Committee deals with matters covering all wards and decisions do not necessarily involve the specific Ward Councillors, but it was agreed that Councillors should be kept informed of matters affecting their ward. The Council has a replacement policy for trees which are removed. It was noted that the Council is receiving ten English Oak trees as part of the 'Treebilee' project. The Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee would like to see five planted in Rosedale Park and five planted in Gunton Community Park, and has agreed a maximum budget of £100 per tree for protection. Officers will liaise with Norse's Arborist regarding appropriate locations within the parks for planting.
- 151.13. Drain and gully clearance in the Town Council's parks – In terms of planned preventative maintenance there needs to be an agreement for officers to progress planned works, such as drain and gutter clearance. The costs will be presented to the Finance and Governance Committee and Full Council to consider an appropriate delegation. There is an issue with soakaways in Kensington Gardens. It was agreed that the use of soakaways generally would require expert advice. Cllr Pearce proposed an in principle agreement for an appropriate delegation to officers to progress items of planned preventative maintenance, subject to quotes being received and approval from other relevant Committees and Full Council. There has not been a specific budget allocated to this in 2022- 2023 so expenditure would come from the parks repairs and maintenance budget. Quotations received can inform the 2023 -2024 budget. Cllr Butler seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.
- 151.14. An update on the commencement of year one agreed capital works on the Sparrows Nest building complex – The toilet block is being looked at specifically with a contractor. The remaining work can be categorised and progressed through specific contractors. The priority one works have been completed. £91,000 has been set aside for the priority two plus works, which mostly includes window works. It is understood there will be funds remaining in the repairs and maintenance budget for this year to put towards the works. There are also some quite clear allocations for specific works. Specific issues relating to the windows have been highlighted by the condition survey, however the complex should be dealt with as a whole. If all windows were replaced, the Council would have the longevity of better windows, possibly double glazing, and

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improved frames. Quotations are being sought for the whole complex. As the building is in a conservation area, planning permission would be needed for anything other than wooden frames. At least one quotation has been received for the windows. The Committee were asked to consider the principle of setting a budget for replacing the windows throughout the building. This will require the consideration of the Finance and Governance Committee due to the cost. The five year plan was taken into account when the 2022 – 2023 budget was set, ensuring the costs for year one and an element of contingency were included. There is a ring fenced reserve for Sparrows Nest within the parks budget. Any remaining funds from the repairs and maintenance budget could be used to go over and above the works identified in the condition survey to support the longevity of the building. Cllr Pearce proposed an in principle agreement to replace the windows throughout the complex, and if the cost is higher than anticipated due to the scope of the works, the additional funding is put forward from the appropriate budget or reserve; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed proceeding with the planning application to progress this work; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

- 151.15. Commencement of approved works at the Britten Road play area (some aspects may be confidential) – Officers have been looking at ways to try and increase the undergrowth. A quotation and some advice has been received. It has been queried whether the undergrowth would establish well but the area was dense with undergrowth previously. The Committee was asked in principle whether efforts should be made to re-establish the undergrowth, and sixty metres of chain link fencing installed to protect it, rather than security fencing across a wider area. Cllr Pearce proposed approval to proceed in this way, within a maximum budget of £8,000; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. This Committee has a per item expenditure limit of £5,000, so this proposal will be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

A comfort break was taken at 19:30 and the meeting resumed at 19:34

152. Events and Communications:

- 152.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 22 December 2021 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

153. Reviewing the Town Council's Asset Register

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting. It was clarified that Chaukers Crescent is Clarkes Lane. There are areas of land which have been amalgamated under the grounds maintenance contract, which it was suggested should be reflected on the Asset Register. This will be considered at the next meeting.

154. Receipt of the notes from the Toilet Strategy Working Group meeting on 28 January 2022

The notes were not available for this meeting.

155. The Sails and Triangle Market:

- 155.1. Receipt of the notes from the Triangle Market Working Group meetings on 7 and 28 January 2022 – The notes were received and noted.
- 155.2. A recommendation from the Triangle Market Working Group to proceed with the removal of the green struts beneath the Sails, within a maximum budget of £1,700 plus VAT – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this recommendation, and for officers to explore whether the metal would have salvage value; seconded by Cllr Pearce; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor voted against.
- 155.3. Improvements required to support the intended use of the Sails – Some capital works funding is available from East Suffolk Council, which could be used towards the Triangle

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Market development plan, once agreed. There is an issue with some of the paving. Certain trees are causing problems and should be replaced with trees with less problematic root systems. This work is health and safety linked and a quotation has been received. The removal of the struts would be capital work in its own right. East Suffolk Council has been asked in principle what expenditure could be reimbursed. The funds need to be spent by the end of this financial year. Quotations are pending for improvement works to the toilets. If some of the concrete is to be lifted, it was queried whether more planting could be carried out there. Before budgets are approved, the Council needs to determine what is to happen at the site. There have been discussions about having stalls in the Sails area, but if the Sails are to remain the Council may not wish to purchase covered stalls, and the licensing of the area needs to be considered, as per the next agenda item. Before expenditure is made to clean and re-hang the Sails, the Council will also need to consider whether it would wish to retain them. There may not be enough regular traders to extend the market to the Sails, and it was suggested this could become a seating and planted area instead. The Triangle Market Working Group can consider this further. The placement of covered stalls on the Triangle Market could also help to remedy the issue of illegal parking there. The Town Council's plans for the Triangle Market will need to be communicated to East Suffolk Council, to update their plans under projects which include this area.

- 155.4. Licensing the area beneath the Sails for market trading – East Suffolk Council has advised it still owns the market franchise, but the Town Council owns the land, therefore if the area is extended it would have to be a joint venture. This requires further research. The cleaning of the Sails could not be funded via the capital works funding, and should be completed in the spring. Officers are trying to determine what can be funded, and a meeting of the Working Group will be scheduled once further information is available. It seems the Market Charter and franchise are separate, but this would require clarification by the Town Council's solicitor. The Town Council has been given plans of the land the District Council intended to transfer, and is working on that basis until the legal process decrees otherwise. The land transferred under the Reorganisation Order but has not been formally registered to the Town Council. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to consider whether to progress six covered stalls on the Triangle Market, which it may be possible to purchase via the funding from East Suffolk Council, and if so to consider a maximum budget; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 155.5. Triangle Market capital investment – This was covered with the discussion of the previous items.
- 155.6. Terms and conditions for market trading – The Deputy Clerk is working on draft terms and conditions. The Working Group would like to recognise the loyalty of existing traders, but legal advice may be required as the Town Council could not subsidise one trader and not another. The intended outcome is to rationalise arrangements into one document for all traders. Cllr Pearce proposed support for the Deputy Clerk's work to produce standard terms and conditions for market trading; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

Cllr Pearce proposed suspending Standing Order 3y to allow the meeting to continue for a further twenty minutes; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

156. Ponds:

- 156.1. Progress with the Fen Park and Gainsborough Drive pond dredging – Officers are ensuring all necessary health and safety measures are in place with the appointed contractor, prior to commencement of the work. A Zoom meeting is also to be arranged with this contractor regarding Fen Park.
- 156.2. An offer from a private individual to install a water fountain in the Kensington Gardens fish pond – There was no update to report.

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157. Allotments:

157.1. A request from the Lowestoft and District Allotments Association to install a boundary fence at the allotment site bordering the Nightingale Road play area – The play area has its own boundary fence. The Allotments Association has cleared some of the allotments land to accommodate additional plots and are seeking permission to erect a fence to demarcate the boundary. The new fence would be purchased and maintained by the Allotments Association. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers to make the decision, in conjunction with members of this Committee; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour. It was queried how the land between the boundary fence of the play area and the boundary fence of the allotment site will be maintained. A site visit for Councillors can be arranged if required.

157.2. Requests from Cllrs Elise Youngman and Keith Patience to join the Allotments Sub-Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the requests for Cllrs Youngman and Patience to join the Allotments Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour. It was reported that hedging overhanging the highway from the St Margaret's Road allotments has now been trimmed back.

158. Capital works expenditure at Kensington Gardens bowls pavilion, not exceeding £2,700

This was originally allocated partly from the capital expenditure grant funding from East Suffolk Council and offset against income. The grant funding has now been allocated to pavilion costs instead. Subject to planning permission, the Committee was asked to confirm it was happy for the expenditure not exceeding £2,700 to be taken from the Town Council's capital works budget instead. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the expenditure at the Kensington Gardens bowls pavilion not exceeding £2,700, to be taken from the capital works budget, subject to planning permission being secured; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

159. The need for full replacement of the Belle Vue Park lodge cottage thatched roof, and to consider seeking quotations

It was suggested a condition survey of the whole cottage should be progressed if one has not already been carried out. Seeking quotations for the replacement of the thatched roof is in hand. Cllr Brooks proposed that the replacement of the thatched roof should proceed; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The Town Council has drawn on some of the capital grants funding available from East Suffolk Council for Sparrows Nest and Belle Vue Park. Norse have carried out some repairs to footpaths. Officers continue to chase for quotations for tarmac works. Officers are liaising with the Maritime Museum regarding works required to some of the windows. The Town Council has budgeted specifically for the Belle Vue Park lodge cottage.

160. The need for resurfacing and/or repair work to the surface in front of the Sparrows Nest bandstand

The Committee agreed the surfacing appears to be in a poor condition. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers should seek quotations for repair or replacement; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour. Additional works, such as work required to the entrance from Yarmouth Road, will be considered at the next meeting.

161. The requirement for chestnut fencing in addition to agreed planting at the Town Green, within a maximum budget of £150 plus VAT, additional to the maximum budget previously agreed

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of this expenditure; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

162. Whether to reinstate the bookcase in the Gunton Drive former telephone kiosk

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The new defibrillator may be affixed externally to the kiosk. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers carry out a risk assessment, in consultation with the Town Council's health and safety consultant, and make the final decision as to whether or not to reinstate the bookcase; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

163. The ownership of the sea wall near The Ness, and to consider any additional provision of street furniture which may be required along it

It was noted that additional bins may be required. Cllr Pearce proposed deferring this item to the next meeting for further consideration; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

164. A request from East Suffolk Council to remove the frame of a former wayfinder sign from Ness Point

Cllr Butler proposed approval of this requested; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

165. The delegation from Full Council to consider a suitable recipient of the Councillor tablets which will be surplus to requirements

Cllr Pearce proposed deferring this item to the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

166. A request from a member of the public to improve the steps leading from the cycle track on the former railway line beside the Cemetery to Normanston Drive

A member of the public had raised this concern. Officers are checking ownership with Railway Paths Partnership but it is assumed that the steps are owned by the Town Council. Cllr Pearce proposed asking Norse to clear the steps, and for the Norse Contract Working Group to consider incorporating work such as this into the new grounds maintenance contract; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

167. The decision of Full Council to display adverse weather signage and to further consider gritting (some aspects may be confidential)

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

168. Capital works expenditure (some aspects may be confidential)

This will be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

169. A progress update on approved capital projects which are awaiting implementation (confidential)

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

170. Future governance of Gunton Residents' Meeting Hall (confidential)

An organisation has expressed an interest in taking over the management of the Hall. This Committee had previously agreed that it would like a public meeting to review the governance arrangements and to elect a Management Committee to work with the Town Council. Cllr Pearce proposed declining the proposal from the organisation to take over management of Gunton Residents' Meeting Hall, and progressing the proposal to organise a public meeting to elect a Management Committee, who should be individuals and not corporate entities; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

171. Date of the next meeting

7 March 2022 18:00

172. Items for the next agenda and close

A discussion regarding the condition of the entrance porch to Sparrows Nest from Yarmouth

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Road was requested. An update on the agreed purchase of additional bins for the Great Eastern Linear Park was requested.

There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 20:25.

173. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

173.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required

Signed: 

7 March 2022