

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 April 2022

MINUTES

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

In attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

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

199. Welcome

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

200. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Christian Newsome, who had provided a reason. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

201. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Denes Oval and Triangle Market. Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Denes Oval and anything else in the Gunton Ward, Fen Park and kittiwakes. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Kensington Gardens. Cllr Youngman declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 205.14.

202. The draft minutes and appended confidential notes of the meeting on 7 March 2022

Regarding item 180.6, Cllr Butler understood that the suggestion to install a noticeboard at Stoven Close had been rejected altogether. Village Rise is being considered as a potential location even though this land is not owned by the Town Council. Cllr Butler did not wish for the minutes to be amended. Cllr Breakspear proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

203. Public forum

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

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

The budget monitoring document had been circulated today and reflects the position at the start of the new financial year. Cllr Pearce reported that any underspend from 2021 – 2022 budgets will be allocated to the corresponding earmarked reserves, which the Finance and Information Officer is working on. Cllr Pearce requested an item on the Full Council agenda to consider delegating the other budgets relating to assets to this Committee, where they have not been delegated already, with the same per item expenditure limit.

205. Parks and Open Spaces:

205.1. The draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 15 March 2022 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

205.2. Recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

205.2a. Approving the quotation to re-establish undergrowth in an area of the Britten Road play area – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the quotation of £3,300 plus VAT; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

205.2b. Approving three bins for Kensington Gardens, with an emptying cost of £12.38

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per week (to be applied as an amendment to the existing grounds maintenance schedule) – The Project and Committee Clerk will check whether this charge would be per bin per week. At the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting, Cllr Pearce proposed adding this charge to the existing grounds maintenance schedule, and asking Norse for an indicative cost for the whole year, with an adjusted cost to be provided at year end when the actual expenditure is known; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

Regarding the Kensington Gardens composting compound, a supplier had provided costs for three different approaches. Community Warden Paul Connew had recommended gravelboards and concrete posts, within a maximum budget of £6,820 plus VAT. The Committee would like to see what the gravelboards would look like and Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with members of this Committee, to decide how to proceed; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

205.2c. Appointing a contractor for the refurbishment of the St Margaret's Plain play area (some aspects may be confidential) – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the supplier recommended by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee had agreed to hold their price until the end of April. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to endorse the recommendation of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee, on the basis that the price is being held; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

205.3. Feedback from a tenant regarding the installation of swift boxes onto a building in Normanston Park – Cllr Brooks and the Project and Committee Clerk attended a Zoom meeting with a representative of the Save Our Suffolk Swifts Group. Jesters Diner, Gunton Residents' Community Meeting Hall and Whitton Residents' Hall were identified as potential locations. The two Community Halls have since been discounted following site visits undertaken by the Save Our Suffolk Swifts Group. The Jesters Diner tenant has some reservations with installing nesting boxes on a food premises. Cllr Brooks reported that nesting boxes outside of the restaurant at Snape Maltings. Works are due to take place on the Jesters building which would prevent the nesting boxes being installed immediately, even if agreed. Locations in Sparrows Nest had also been explored as part of the Zoom call, but no appropriate locations were found there. Officers used the Town Council's social media channels and local press to encourage members of the public to consider installing swift nesting boxes on their homes. The Project and Committee Clerk will liaise again with the tenant and the Save Our Suffolk Swifts Group and will enquire about the installation of the nesting boxes at Snape Maltings.

205.4. Progress with items relating to the Kensington Gardens centenary – Cllr Breakspear reported that the Friends of Kensington Gardens have so far booked a Punch and Judy show and croquet for the centenary event on 11 June. The Peter Pan sculpture is being progressed. The Friends of Kensington Gardens are also working with Lowestoft in Bloom to celebrate its twenty five year anniversary, which could not be celebrated last year due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic. The purchase of a Kindertransport memorial bench has been approved and an art installation at another location is under consideration. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with this Committee and the Events and Communications Sub-Committee to meet with the other body involved with progressing the art installation, and the artist, to progress the proposals discussed at a recent site meeting, and the project timeframe and cost, to bring back to this Committee or Full Council to approve; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Breakspear advised that the Friends of Kensington Gardens have not yet considered the over-entrance archways, but are due to meet again shortly.

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- 205.5. First Light Festival occupancy of Kensington Gardens – Cllr Breakspear reported that the Friends of Kensington Gardens are meeting with representatives from the First Light Festival on 20 April. Cllr Breakspear has concerns as to how the event will be managed in the Gardens, particularly use of the bowling greens. The Project and Committee Clerk advised that Norse reported only minor issues with bowling greens the last time the Gardens were used for the Festival, but wet weather conditions leading up to the event and after aided the speedy recovery of the greens.
- 205.6. Whether to progress an order for additional noticeboards and to identify locations – Cllr Butler had circulated some images of the proposed locations and queried why officers had suggested Gunton Community Park when a location within the Gunton Ward was being sought and Gunton Cliff had been put forward as a suggestion by Councillors. A noticeboard has already been installed at the Gunton Residents' Community Meeting Hall, which is in close proximity to Gunton Community Park. It has already been reported that the noticeboard at the Hall needs to be moved closer to the path. Stoven Close had been suggested in response to former Councillor David Youngman's suggestion to install one at Village Rise, which is not owned by the Town Council. The landowner had however responded positively to Councillor enquiries about installing a noticeboard there. Cllr Pearce proposed asking officers to approach the Village Rise landowner again, with a delegation to officers to determine the design of the noticeboard; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Cllr Pitts and the Project and Committee Clerk had been trying to seek landowner permission to install a noticeboard on Shelton Road, but have so far not received this formally. Cllr Pitts proposed pursuing the possibility of installing a noticeboard on Shelton Road; seconded by Cllr Breakspear all in favour. Cllr Elise Youngman reported that Normanston Park already has a noticeboard. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to officers to progress the recommendation to install a noticeboard on Gunton Cliff; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.
- 205.7. An update on the repair/replacement of damaged matting at Fen Park – An incident of vandalism had occurred over the weekend, which officers have reported to Norse. The previous damage had been rectified. A formal quotation to replace the red and black wetpour matting is pending.
- 205.8. An update on the installation of gates in the gaps in the fencing surrounding the Fen Park play area – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that a quotation from Norse is still pending. Officers will be seeking quotations from other contractors. A delegated budget has already been agreed.
- 205.9. Making improvements to Sparrows Nest entrance from Yarmouth Road – Community Warden Paul Connew is seeking quotations for general tidying, repointing work and replacement roof tiles. Cllr Breakspear advised that the party who has been assisting with work at the Denes Oval is interested in taking on projects at other sites and Cllr Breakspear will liaise with the Community Wardens regarding this. Cllr Brooks considered the advertising signage to be unattractive, but Cllr Pearce suggested lease provisions may enable this type of advertising by tenants. In response to a query from Cllr Butler, the Project and Committee Clerk advised that some repair work had been carried out on the fence, but she will ask Mr Connew to check whether any further work is required. Cllr Youngman requested that recently installed health and safety signage is applied more neatly.
- 205.10. A revised plan and any costs implications regarding the Sparrows Nest play area – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the Finance and Governance Committee had approved the additional costs and revised plans, and an installation date is pending.
- 205.11. An update on the purchase of additional litter bins for the Great Eastern Linear Park – Cllr Pearce advised that the Lowestoft Rubbish Friends had requested the installation

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of bins at intersection points along the Great Eastern Linear Park. A site visit had been undertaken previously and installation points identified. The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the purchase and installation of the bins would total £6,644.70 plus VAT. This would exceed the budget previously agreed as it was initially thought the bins could be installed directly onto the concrete path. Community Warden Paul Connew has since undertaken a site visit with Norse and has advised they would become an obstruction on the path and has instead recommended installing them to the side of the path, on concrete bases. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to approve the increased cost and proceed as planned; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

205.12. The need for litter picking along the Great Eastern Linear Park – The Office Assistant has organised a litter pick with the Lowestoft Rubbish Friends. Cllr Pearce advised that the grounds maintenance contract is being reviewed and the current schedule for the Great Eastern Linear Park is minimal, covering some grass cutting, bin emptying and litter picking. There is an issue with fly tipping along the stream bed. Cllr Pearce would like the Norse Contract Working Group to review the Council's requirements for a grounds maintenance schedule at the Great Eastern Linear Park, including a programme of bin emptying and litter picking. In response to a query from Cllr Youngman, the Project and Committee Clerk advised that local schools had wanted to undertake a litter pick of certain areas prior to the pandemic, but officers had not received a response to enquiries to rearrange this. At the request of the Lowestoft Rubbish Friends, Cllr Pearce has asked District Cllr James Mallinder whether East Suffolk Council would consider increasing the provision of bins along the stretch of the park it owns.

205.13. Lighting in parks and any necessary tree works – Cllr Pearce undertook a site visit to Fen Park with the Friends Group and Community Warden Paul Connew. Cllr Pearce advised that Cllr Lang considers Fen Park to be the more immediate priority. The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee has delegated authority to put together a specification for lighting to be used to seek quotations. Any tree works would need to be considered as part of this and in line with the Council's climate emergency declaration.

205.14. The use of land at Clarkes Lane as allotments – Cllr Brooks recently attended a Climate Action event in Woodbridge and met a community group who have developed a community garden. The results of the recent Clarkes Lane public survey suggest that volunteers would not be forthcoming to form a community group. Cllr Pearce suggested an approach could be made to the Lowestoft and District Allotments Association to see if anyone on their waiting list would be willing to form a community group to help develop a community garden at Clarkes Lane. Cllr Youngman suggested the open space at The Parklands could also be considered for a community garden.

205.15. The maintenance of gated areas of The Ness – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that Concertus had recommended small gates to discourage the use of large mowers in the fenced off areas. Norse have advised that strimming is more expensive and would be charged at £500 per time. Cllr Pearce would like the Norse Contract Working Group to consider the maintenance requirements at The Ness, and what would be needed in terms of a schedule.

Cllr Brooks left the meeting 19:32

205.16. Reviewing QR codes and augmented reality licences at The Ness – Cllr Pearce had queried who owns the information accessed through the QR codes and how it can be amended or updated. If the information now belongs to the Town Council, it will need to be given details of the provider.

206. Reviewing the Town Council's Asset Register

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This will also be reviewed by the Finance and Governance Committee. Cllr Pearce asked officers to ensure it is updated with recent acquisitions, including equipment the Town Council owns at the Marina Theatre and storage containers at Normanston Park and the Denes Oval. With regard to the civic artefacts, Cllr Pearce asked that those items which are not within the Town Council's physical custody, due to the previous owner being unable to locate them, are annotated as 'whereabouts unknown'. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Annual Meeting to approve the Asset Register in principle, subject to his comments being implemented; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

207. An update from the Toilet Strategy Working Group meeting on 23 March 2022

Cllr Pearce reported that the Working Group had recently met with the Project Manager. The pandemic and inflation have caused the cost of materials and labour to rise. The Project Manager considers that a modular unit is not commercially viable for Fen Park and is now exploring the rebuild and renovation of the existing structure. The Project Manager had circulated draft wording for a tender. Cllr Pearce had submitted comments but had not received a response. Councillors were concerned that the current footprint of the Fen Park toilets would not be able to accommodate all that is required, including an accessible toilet. Cllr Butler is aware of a company which may be able to provide a quotation for a modular unit.

208. The Sails and Triangle Market:

208.1. An approach to the cookery van for a presence at the market – Cllr Nasima Begum had made the suggestion to explore this. Cllr Pearce advised that, if agreed, the van would not have a regular presence at the market as it is expensive to hire. Cllr Pearce suggested this should be explored in principle, and asked officers to liaise with Cllr Begum to seek further advice and bring back to this Committee with more information.

208.2. Improvements required to support the intended use of the Sails – Cllr Pearce advised there are complications regarding the licensing, market franchise and Charter Market. The removal of the green struts has been approved. Quotations are required for cleaning the Sails, but Cllr Pearce advised that Council has not yet decided on their future.

208.3. Licensing the area beneath the Sails for market trading – There was no update to report.

208.4. Triangle Market capital investment, including the public conveniences – Cllr Pearce advised that the public conveniences had been identified as a priority, which would be from a different funding source to the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences. The Council has authorised the purchase of huts for the market, subject to planning permission. Budget provision for £20,000 of capital investment had been included in the 2022 – 2023 budget, in addition to the reserve. Quotations are being sought to repair damaged paving beneath the Sails.

208.5. Terms and conditions for market trading – The Deputy Clerk is working on this.

209. An offer of funding from the Lawn Tennis Association for improvements to tennis courts

A Zoom meeting regarding this is being held this week. Cllr Pearce proposed an in principle approval to accept the offer of funding, including for the electronic gates access at the Denes Oval, given that assurances have been provided that this would still support public access. As part of this, the Town Council would like the assistance of the Lowestoft Town Tennis Club or a contractor to administer the associated booking system. Cllr Pearce further proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with Councillors attending the upcoming Zoom meeting, to progress the proposals with the Lawn Tennis Association and Lowestoft Town Tennis Club; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

210. Recommendations arising from a site visit and Zoom meeting regarding kittiwake nesting at

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the Marina Theatre

Cllr Butler suggested there should be some liaison with neighbouring retail outlets regarding the proposal to install nesting ledges on the Theatre. Cllr Pearce proposed that, after this nesting season has finished, the Council instructs the requested deep clean of the nesting area on the Theatre building, as per the quotation provided. Cllr Pearce further proposed looking in principle at nesting ledges on the other side of the building, including liaison with neighbouring businesses, with delegated authority to officers, in conjunction with the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership and members of this Committee to determine what materials to use for the ledges, and to explore the recommendation from the RSPB officer for strips which have a mild electric current running through them, which are not harmful to kittiwakes, but deter them from nesting in inappropriate areas. Cllr Pearce further proposed liaison with appropriate authorities during this nesting season to arrange increased street cleaning outside the Theatre, with an agreement for the Council to pay alternate weeks. Cllr Youngman seconded the proposals and all Councillors voted in favour.

At 20:03, Cllr Pearce proposed suspending Standing Order 3y to enable the meeting to continue for an additional twenty minutes; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

211. Progressing the Full Council decision to appoint a Project Manager for pond dredging

The Project and Committee Clerk reported that she will be meeting with one potentially interested party in May, and will circulate an invitation to members of this Committee.

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

Cllr Pearce considered that installing street furniture may be an acknowledgement of ownership of that section of the sea wall. Ownership of sea defences is being resisted by the Town Council and Cllr Pearce suggested this item should not be considered until the matter of ownership has been resolved.

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

The Project and Committee Clerk advised that five have been returned to the office so far.

214. Guardianship of an artefact from the former Lowestoft Hospital

Community Warden Paul Connew had undertaken a site visit with the new owner. The artefact was identified as a memorial board. From an email exchange officers have since had with the new owner it does not appear they are looking for the Town Council to take guardianship of the artefact.

215. Progressing a licence for the Lowestoft Town Tennis Club (some aspects may be confidential)

There was no update to report. Cllr Pearce asked if a licence could also be considered for the Cricket Club.

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

Cllr Pearce suggested any measures should include Sparrows Nest, particularly the steps, the Great Eastern Linear Park, The Ness and footpaths within parks. Cllr Pearce requested that the Community Wardens undertake a survey to identify any potential hazards. Cllr Pearce queried whether any safety inspections are undertaken along the steps between Belle Vue Park and Sparrows Nest. Cllr Youngman requested that they are assessed.

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

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Most had been discussed individually over the course of the meeting. Cllr Pearce requested an update at the next meeting or the Finance and Governance Committee meeting regarding capital works to a building in Normanston Park.

218. Date of the next meeting

9 May 2022 18:00

219. Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Butler requested an item on the public conveniences. Cllr Breakspear will report back regarding the First Light Festival and Kensington Gardens centenary.

There were no confidential items for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 20:16.

220. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

220.1. To consider any legal issues, including those above as required

Signed: 
9 May 2022