

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:30 on 16 February 2021

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Bob Breakspear, Neil Coleby (Chair), Alan Green, Peter Lang, Andy Pearce and John Pitts

Also participating: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

130. Welcome and one minute's silence to be observed in respect of the passing of Councillor Sue Barnard

A minute's silence was observed to mark the passing of Councillor Sue Barnard. Councillors and members of the public were reminded of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed.

131. Appointing the Chair of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee

Cllr Lang proposed appointing Cllr Coleby as the Chair of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee until the Annual Meeting in May. A motion has been put forward that a Councillor who is Chair of a Committee should not be permitted to also Chair any of its Sub-Committees. Cllr Pearce seconded Cllr Lang's proposal and all Councillors voted in favour. A new Deputy Chair will be appointed at next month's meeting.

132. Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received. Cllr Alice Taylor had resigned from this Committee. Cllr Tara Carlton had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Bob Breakspear had advised he would be late. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received from those who would be late; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour. Thanks were extended to Cllr Taylor for her work on this Sub-Committee.

133. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Lang declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 138. There are standing declarations regarding the Friends Groups and Lowestoft in Bloom.

134. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 19 January 2021 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted.

135. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

A member of the public had submitted a comment to the Climate Emergency Committee regarding electric bicycle lock-ups, which is relevant to this meeting also (item 141). The comment spoke against pursuing lock-ups as they can be expensive, unsightly and not always effective. It was suggested that item could be extended to consider lock-ups for all types of cycles, rather than exclusively for electric bicycles.

136. Five-year plans for the Town Council's parks and priorities for year one, including how to progress the decision to install bins at every entrance

Cllr Breakspear joined the meeting 14:39

The draft plans had been circulated and thanks were offered to Cllr Coleby for his work in producing them. It was agreed that the documents would provide a good basis for the Town Council's plans, and could be adopted as discussion/working documents without committing the Council to anything. Quotations will need to be obtained and certain items, such as bins, have already been identified as priorities. In principle, benches, bins, bicycle storage and signage will be considered strategically across all of the Town Council's parks and should not be delayed by other larger items of expenditure. Cllr Coleby offered to look

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into quantities and specifications for further consideration at the next meeting. It was agreed that the plans should be circulated to the Friends Groups, East Suffolk Norse, stakeholders and particular community groups for their views, before being shared with the wider public. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee to adopt the draft plans as discussion/working documents; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

137. Priorities for any locality funding which may become available

A County Councillor has offered funding to use in Fen Park. Officers have approached all the District and County Councillors for the area and another County Councillor has offered funding towards the purchase of the wheelchair accessible picnic benches for the Stoven Close play area and Gunton Community Park. In Fen Park, funding could be used towards purchasing more bins, a noticeboard or some replacement picnic benches for those which have been damaged. The Committee Clerk will be completing a site visit to Fen Park this week and will create a list of the options. Cllrs Coleby and Hardie also offered their assistance. The Friends of Fen Park would like to see a table or bench specifically for children in the park. Cllr Pearce proposed provisional acceptance of the funding offers; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

138. Progress with the development of wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk and consider ongoing maintenance and mobilising volunteers

A formal quotation from Norse is still pending. Officers are seeking quotations from commercial gardeners, but are yet to receive a response. Cllr Hardie knows of somebody who may be able to assist and will make enquiries. It was suggested that it may be better to postpone this until the autumn, as that is a better time to progress such a project, and would give more time to seek quotations and volunteer assistance. The Daffodil Walk residents were informed some time ago that this would be progressed and will be kept duly updated. Cllr Coleby proposed postponing the development of wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk until the autumn, but for quotations to be sought and plans to be put in place in the interim; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.

139. How to develop areas in Fen Park and Kensington Gardens to produce mulch

The Friends of Fen Park have identified potential locations and these will be looked at as part of this week's site visit. It has been suggested that willow or other natural fencing could be used to surround it. Cllr Breakspear has identified a potential location in Kensington Gardens and Norse has identified a former storage area in Sparrows Nest which may be suitable. The Council would need to consider whether it would transport mulch from these sites to its other parks, particularly the cost and environmental impact of doing so. Cllr Pearce proposed that formal proposals and costs be brought to the next meeting for consideration, following site visits; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

140. Information boards and/or required signage for the Town Council's parks

This will be tied in with the five year plans. Some sites may be considered for renaming upon completion of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It has been agreed that replacement play area signage will be progressed where required. The Friends of Fen Park would like a noticeboard in the park which they could use to display their own notices. It was suggested that QR codes should be used where possible, as this would provide an easier way of keeping information updated. There had been a request to see if it would be possible to install a noticeboard on private land on Shelton Road. There were some concerns regarding installing and maintaining a Town Council asset on private land but this

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will be added to the next AID agenda for consideration. To further progress signage, this Sub-Committee would need to know the requirement at each of its sites for each type of sign. It can then identify priorities and what is feasible within the first year. QR codes can be used but not everyone accesses information online, and historical information will not require regular updating. Cllr Coleby is adding more detail to the draft five year plans for the next meeting and will include signage requirements also. Measurements can be taken during site visits for the ornate over-entrance arch signs, but suppliers have indicated they will need more detail about specific designs before they can provide a formal quotation.

141. The provision of electric bicycle lock-ups within the Town Council's parks

It was suggested this information could be included with the draft plans which will be circulated, as discussed at item 136.

Cllr Pitts left the meeting 15:30

Bicycle racks may be sufficient in some of the parks, but the Friends Groups, stakeholders and the public may be able to provide a steer. Bicycle lock-ups may be expensive and some of the parks may not be large enough to accommodate them. In Fen Park it was suggested that a bicycle rack near to the play area would be required. The provision of bicycle storage will be included in the consideration of the five year plans. It was suggested that local businesses may wish to sponsor bicycle storage facilities. The cost is understood to be between £300 – £600 for bicycle lock-ups, depending on the specification.

142. Play areas:

142.1 The provision of a path at the Stoven Close play area and the location of the additional piece of equipment – A formal quotation for the provision of a path is still pending.

142.2 Noting the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee's recommendation to Full Council to prioritise the Sparrows Nest play area for refurbishment in 2021 – 2022, alongside improvements to the St Margaret's Plain and Britten Road play areas, including to consider options and costs – This recommendation from the AID Committee will be considered by Full Council at its meeting next week. The Committee Clerk has started to explore options for the Sparrows Nest play area based on the Alice in Wonderland theme which has been discussed previously, and these were displayed at the meeting. Once the decision of Full Council is known, this Sub-Committee will explore the options and costs. Norse has confirmed it will be cutting back the vegetation which has engulfed one of the pieces of equipment at the Britten Road play area.

143. Repair work required to the Sparrows Nest brick pier and balustrade

The cost of repair work to the brick pier and a replacement balustrade has been approved by the Finance and Governance Committee. Officers are checking that hardwood is being used for the balustrade.

144. The Town Council's involvement in the WildEast project

The project would like landowners to 'pledge' areas of their land to give over to nature for total re-wilding. This does not include managed wildflower areas. It was suggested that the North Denes could be a suitable area. Kirkley Ham is a mostly wild space but is not owned by the Town Council. It is understood this area and another section of land between Fen Park and the Pakefield Riding School may be owned by Suffolk County Council and the Town Council may wish to pursue a transfer of land ownership. Leathes Ham was also identified as a potential area for re-wilding but this land has not transferred to the Town Council's ownership. Clarkes Lane is large area and the Council has decided that part of it

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will be a managed wildflower area, but there are sections of it which could be given over to nature. Cllr Pearce declared that he is a member of the Friends of Dip Farm, and requested that the details of the WildEast project be passed to them, in case they wished to liaise with the relevant Council to request inclusion of any land at that site in the project. Cllr Lang proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee to agree in principle to the Town Council's involvement in the WildEast project, with potentially suitable areas of land at Fen Park, Clarkes Lane and the North Denes; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour. Certain areas of Fen Park need clarity regarding ownership, particularly around the pump station. An area to the south of this had been identified by Cllr Coleby as a potential butterfly area, or could be used as the mulching area. It was agreed that suggestions on any other potentially suitable areas of Town Council land be sought from the rest of the Council.

145. Date of the next meeting

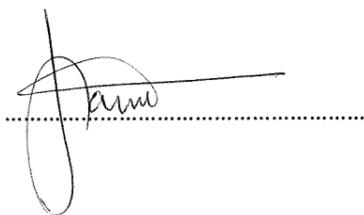
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146. Items for the next Agenda and Close

An update regarding the refurbishment of the Fen Park public conveniences was requested. A budget is in place and the Toilet Strategy Working Group is meeting next week to discuss this. An officer from East Suffolk Norse with this area of expertise has looked at both the Fen Park and Sparrows Nest public conveniences and it is understood that both can be refurbished within the budget the Town Council has agreed for public conveniences refurbishment. The Town Council has previously specifically included a budget for the refurbishment of the Fen Park public conveniences so these funds should be held in reserve. Sparrows Nest and Fen Park have already been identified as the priorities. It has been confirmed that there is no asbestos present in the public conveniences building at Fen Park, so this should now be able to progress. A condition survey is required at Sparrows Nest before refurbishment work can begin there.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the livestream of the meeting. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting 16:04.

147. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Pearce', is written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Signed:

Date: 18 May 2021