

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
Whitton Residents' Hall, Hawthorn Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9BB
14:30 on 18 May 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Robert Breakspear, Jacqueline Hardie, Andy Pearce and John Pitts

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

Public: There was one member of the public in attendance (via Zoom webinar)

186. Welcome

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

187. Any changes in composition and to receive and apologies for absence

It was noted that Cllr Sonia Barker had joined the Sub-Committee. Apologies were received from Cllrs Neil Coleby and Peter Lang. Cllr Tara Carlton had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

188. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 193. 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.

189. The draft minutes of the meeting on 27 April 2021

Cllr Breakspear proposed acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 27 April 2021; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

190. Public forum

No comments had been received in advance. Cllr Wendy Brooks was in attendance via the Zoom webinar as an observer only, and reported that the sound quality of the livestream of the meeting was poor. The Clerk advised that Cllr Brooks could submit any comments via the chat function on Zoom.

191. Five-year plans for the Town Council's parks and priorities for year one, including specifications for benches, bins and bicycle racks

The Sub-Committee has previously discussed the need to identify priorities for year one. The Friends of Kensington Gardens and the Friends of Fen Park have some comments about the plans which they will submit in writing. An order for bins has already been agreed. Specifications for bins, benches and bicycle racks were discussed by the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee at its meeting yesterday. It was suggested that the Elwood style bench would complement the rustic style Sherwood bins, and the Phoenix style bench should be considered as it has arms. The positioning of benches should be considered and it was suggested that the concrete base could be extended on one side to accommodate pushchairs and wheelchair users. Cllr Coleby had put together a spreadsheet of suggested numbers and styles of benches at each site. A total of sixty five benches has been suggested. There is an underspend from the parks development budget of about £35,000 last year, which is being carried forward to this year's budget. It is unlikely that all of the suggested benches could be purchased in the first year so priorities need to be identified. A bench was destroyed in Fen Park but a fast food retailer has offered to sponsor a replacement. Officers will check whether this will cover the total cost of the bench and its installation. In addition to this, a further picnic bench is required for

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Fen Park and at least one of them will be a wheelchair accessible picnic bench. Kensington Gardens has a good provision of benches already. Cllr Coleby's suggestion for Belle Vue Park is for seven picnic benches and seven unique benches. Cllr Pearce proposed seeking quotations for the requirements identified in Fen Park and Belle Vue Park, to be considered at the next meeting. Any additional sites identified as a priority can also be considered at the next meeting. Cllr Barker seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour. The bin order previously agreed has had to be reviewed. The total number may remain the same but some reallocation to different sites may be needed. The relevant Committees and Sub-Committees will be notified if there is a need to add additional bins to the order.

192. Information boards and/or required signage for the Town Council's parks, including proposed designs for over-entrance archway signs

Cllr Taylor has created a design for the over-entrance archway signs. The design could incorporate the Town Council's logo or there could be a unique design for each park. It was suggested that the Lowestoft coat of arms could also be incorporated. Cllr Barker proposed contacting East Coast College, East Norfolk College and the Sir John Leman High School to see if they would like to submit designs, using Cllr Taylor's design as a point of reference; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. At yesterday's AID Committee meetings there were discussions regarding required signage for the Gainsborough Drive duck pond and the land being pledged to WildEast, which are in progress.

193. The management of the Town Council's ponds, including oxygenation, de-silting and bank re-profiling

Officers have been seeking quotations and one provider has put forward a product which will help to reduce silt levels. A meeting will be arranged with the provider to discuss this in more detail. Members of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will be invited. Cllrs Hardie and Pearce would like to be involved. It was suggested that representatives from the Friends Groups should also be invited. At Gainsborough Drive, the Pond Group would like de-silting or dredging to be progressed but would like some advice regarding bank re-profiling.

194. Planting plans for Fen Park from the Friends of Fen Park

The Friends Group has submitted a formal proposal. The plans will be at no cost to the Council, but landowner permission is being sought. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee to give permission to the Friends of Fen Park to proceed with the planting plans, with delegated authority to the Clerk to ensure all the necessary pre-requisites are in place, particularly with regard to health and safety management; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

195. Play areas:

195.1 The provision of a path at the Stoven Close play area – One indicative quotation has been received so far. Officers are still seeking further quotations.

195.2 Options and costs for the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest play area and improvements to the St Margaret's Plain and Britten Road play areas – The Council has identified Sparrows Nest as its priority for total refurbishment in 2021 – 2022, with improvements to be made to St Margaret's Plain and Britten Road also. Cllr Coleby and the Committee Clerk have started researching ideas, including incorporating the suggestion of an Alice in Wonderland theme. It would be preferable to source all equipment from a single supplier. The general consensus of regular users of St Margaret's Plain is that it does not require significant capital investment, but painting of the fence would be welcomed. There had been discussion about whether or not to remove the mound, but it is popular with

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children as it is. Users of the park would like to see a junior swing installed in addition to the existing toddler swings, and would like the current pole-mounted bin to be replaced with a larger free-standing one. The painting could be progressed via the repairs and maintenance budget and officers will seek a quotation for a junior swing and replacement bin. There have been some incidents of anti-social behaviour at Britten Road. Any new equipment needs to be suitable for the environment and some of these issues have been addressed in the five year plans.

196. Alternative uses for the gate removed from The Ravine footpath

It is understood that Cllr Coleby may have some ideas regarding this. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next agenda.

197. The security of Fen Park and the Britten Road play area, particularly regarding unauthorised vehicular access

This issue was discussed at yesterday's AID Committee meeting. Quotations will be sought for staggered entrance gates at Fen Park. Any other known recurring issues can be considered at the next meeting.

198. The provision of a dog litter bag dispenser at The Ness

There had been issues with people removing bundles of bags at a time from the Kensington Gardens dispenser, but this may have now been resolved. The amount of dog litter has reduced in Kensington Gardens but the issue has not been resolved completely. A supplier has offered the Council a dispenser for The Ness and will refill it as well. Due to the size of the site and its popularity with dog walkers, it was suggested The Ness would need two dispensers, and Cllr Breakspear offered to liaise with the supplier to see if that would be possible, and obtain an indicative quotation for the dispenser and bags if the Council is required to pay for the second one.

199. Kensington Gardens:

199.1 Proposals to paint a wall – A supermarket has offered sunflower seeds to the Friends of Kensington Gardens. An area has been identified where the seeds could be planted, which is surrounded by a breeze block wall, which the Friends would like to paint with images of sunflowers. The Friends or the supermarket will supply the paint, and the Friends will do the painting. Cllr Breakspear proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee to proceed with painting the wall with the design as supplied, with delegated authority to the Clerk to agree any modifications to the design if necessary and to agree the type of paint to be used; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

199.2 Proposals for a paved area near the tennis courts (some aspects may be confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

199.3 Issues concerning a 'pathway' (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

199.4 Issues concerning the pond (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

200. Date of the next meeting

15 June 2021 14:30 – It was noted that some Sub-Committee members struggled to attend meetings at this time due to other commitments. The Sub-Committee would like to continue to meet on a Tuesday, but it was agreed to schedule meetings for a 17:30 start going forward. Meetings will be scheduled to avoid a clash with any other scheduled Sub-Committee and Committee meetings.

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201. Items for the next Agenda and Close

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

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; 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.

202. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

A comfort break was taken 15:34 and the meeting resumed 15:39

199.2 Proposals for a paved area near the tennis courts (some aspects may be confidential)

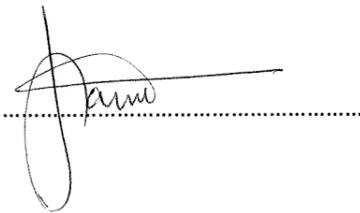
– Cllr Breakspear proposed progressing a professional survey of a wall to see if it would support a structure; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

199.3 Issues concerning a 'pathway' (confidential) – There is an area of land in Kensington Gardens with shrubs which children run through. It was suggested that the Friends could plant large shrubs which cannot be trampled and prevents children being able to pass through. There are existing shrubs elsewhere in the park which could be moved. In line with the Council's climate emergency declaration, the Clerk has asked the Chair of the Friends Group for any other suggestions to enhance the area.

Proposals from the Friends Group will be brought back to this Sub-Committee.

199.4 Issues concerning the pond (confidential) – Cllr Breakspear had an enquiry regarding the pond. The Clerk will enquire with Norse and it was advised that any enquiries of this nature can be raised with Norse via officers.

The meeting was closed 16:00.



Signed:

15 June 2021