

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
17:30 on 17 August 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks (Chair), 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)

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

Cllr Pearce nominated Cllr Brooks and this was seconded by Cllr Breakspear. There were no further nominations and all Councillors voted in favour. As Cllr Brooks was the Deputy Chair of this Sub-Committee there will be an item on the next agenda to appoint a new Deputy Chair.

40. Welcome

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

41. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies and all Sub-Committee members were in attendance.

42. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 48. Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 49. Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 48 and 49.2 (specifically the St Margaret's Plain play area).

43. The draft minutes of the meeting on 20 July 2021

Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 20 July 2021; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

44. Public forum

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

45. Expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget

It was noted that there had been no expenditure by this Sub-Committee under delegated authority.

46. Five-year plans for the Town Council's parks, including the following:

46.1 The final cost of bins and any other priorities for year one regarding bins and benches, within the remaining budget, including considering additional bins at the Great Eastern Linear Park – A group of Councillors undertook a site visit today and compiled a list of locations for bins at the Great Eastern Linear Park – a total of seven locations between Yarmouth Road and the boardwalk. It was suggested this should provisionally be rounded up to ten. The Lowestoft Rubbish Friends have started litter picking there and have requested a provision of bins at intersection points. The cost of the twenty three bins already purchased for other sites was confirmed as £12,443.49 (including VAT), with eighteen to be installed on a new concrete pad, at a cost of £142.33 plus VAT each, and five to be installed on an existing concrete path at a cost of £59.77 plus VAT each. These bins do not have any Lowestoft Town Council branding on them. Cllr Barker proposed that officers explore options for engraving or imprinting

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these bins and any additional bins purchased with the Town Council name or logo; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. It was requested that officers confirm the cost of ten additional bins for the Great Eastern Linear Park in time for the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee meeting on 6 September.

- 46.2 The cost of over-entrance archway signs – Cllr Taylor had previously provided a draft design. It was requested that she be asked to amend the design to incorporate the Lowestoft Borough logo as well. The designs could be further modified to make them unique to each park as well. The cost will depend on the design. Sub-Committee members were asked to send details of any companies they knew which may be able to provide a quote to the Committee Clerk. This item will be carried forward to the next agenda.
- 46.3 A recommendation from the Community Safety Committee to explore options for the provision of drinking water facilities – In its Health Emergency Declaration, the Council has committed to providing drinking water facilities. If this is not possible it will need to be removed. The Council previously secured funding for two drinking water fountains but it has not been possible to safely progress them due to the Legionella risks. The use of any such facilities is unpredictable and in their environment would be subject to fluctuations in temperature. There is also the additional risks associated with the pandemic currently. Legionella risk assessments are currently being carried out on the Town Council's behalf, which should result in a new regime for the management of Legionella. Following this, the Council should be able to determine what, if anything, could safely be progressed. The Council will be assisted by health and safety advisers and there will be lots of further work on risk management. The wording of the Health Emergency Declaration can be reconsidered in the interim.
- 46.4 A recommendation from the Community Safety Committee to explore options for lighting, including to determine at what stage this should take place during the five year plans and consultation with local groups – Cllr Lang would like to see some form of lighting progressed in Normanston Park. The Friends of Fen Park would like to see some lighting in that park for safety reasons. The Sub-Committee is aware of the potential impact on the environment from light pollution, but would like to consider options for areas popular with visitors, particularly where a lack of light may present a safety hazard. In terms of the five year plans, it is likely that lighting would not be progressed until year two at the earliest. The Council could still make a decision and start to obtain quotes this year in preparation. No further projects can be progressed in year one until the final cost of benches and bins is known. If lighting is progressed, the Town Council would need to be considerate of its neighbours, and may also wish to tie in its plans for lighting with any plans to progress CCTV. An update is expected from East Suffolk Council at the end of this month regarding its CCTV service. The Lowestoft Town Tennis Club would like to progress floodlights at the Denes Oval. The design it is considering should not spread light outwards. Cllr Pearce proposed support in principle to exploring options for lighting in the Town Council's parks and open spaces, and asking Councillors to give suggestions to the AID Committee of where they would like to see lights installed in parks and open spaces within their wards; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

47. Appropriate action to take in relation to the damaged boardwalk at the Great Eastern Linear Park

A site visit took place today. From one direction there is no signage about the nature walk. At the other end there is triple sign, but the sign for the nature walk points to the other bank, not along the footpath with the boardwalk. There are steps down the bank to the stream. There is currently no disability access, so removal of the boardwalk would not take

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away any existing access. The boardwalk has been subject to repeated vandalism and is now mostly rotten. The Council could instead consider installing something small across the stream in its place. The general maintenance of that area is a separate discussion which needs to take place, including what to do with the steps, fly-tipping and environmental maintenance. This can be discussed at the next meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee to remove and not reinstate the boardwalk; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. There will be an item added to the next agenda to consider the additional issues arising from the site visit. It was queried whether the signage for the nature trail should be amended or removed, as the nature trail is mostly overgrown and access is limited. If the nature walk is cleared, a programme of ongoing maintenance will need to be considered. The Sub-Committee would like to understand how much maintenance work Norse currently carry out at the Great Eastern Linear Park.

48. Fen Park and Gainsborough Drive ponds:

48.1 Quotations for the treatment of the ponds with Schlix – It was agreed to consider items 48.1 and 48.2 together. Regarding 48.1, quotations have been received for both ponds. A sediment treatment is recommended for Gainsborough Drive, whereas more extensive preparatory work is required at Fen Park before treatment starts. The Friends of Fen Park are concerned that overgrowth is contributing to the lack of movement in the water. This is not covered by the Norse contract and the Friends cannot safely reach it. Weed removal is included in the quote. The exact depth of the pond at all points is not known, and it is not clear whether the quote is based on actual measurements or best estimates, and how the quote will be affected if the pond is deeper than expected. Officers will make enquiries. A recommendation cannot be made at this stage as there are no quotes yet for other forms of de-silting or dredging to compare it to. It was requested that additional quotes be sought in time for the AID Committee meeting on 6 September. If the funds available in the ponds budget and reserve are insufficient, it was suggested that any shortfall could be covered from the parks budget or reserve. Suffolk Wildlife Trust has suggested that mechanical dredging at Fen Park may be too expensive and impractical for Fen Park, and the Council may wish to consider pump dredging instead.

48.2 Quotations for de-silting by dredging and by non-mechanical means – This was covered with the consideration of the previous item.

49. Play areas:

49.1 A report of spend against budget on play areas – Expenditure has been committed for Whitton Green and the Britten Road play area but it is understood that there has been no actual expenditure from this budget yet.

49.2 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 – Site visits have taken place with providers for the Sparrows Nest play area. Quotations have been requested in time for September's Full Council meeting. Typically it is understood there will be a ten week lead-in time and a four to six week construction time so a decision would be required in September for the project to be completed this year. It was agreed to carry this item forward to October's meeting, when a decision about Sparrows Nest should have been made by Full Council and thus what funds remain in the budget for the other sites. The AID Committee has made a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with some works at Britten Road, within a maximum budget of £18,000.

50. Date of the next meeting

21 September 2021 17:30 – The Planning Committee is considering revising its schedule so

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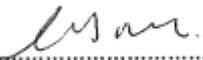
that it meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month, to avoid meeting ahead of Full Council. If agreed, there would be a clash with the meetings of this Sub-Committee. It would be difficult for some members to attend meetings if they were brought forward. Cllr Pearce proposed holding September's meeting of this Sub-Committee at 18:30, then to make a decision regarding future meeting times; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

51. Items for the next Agenda and Close

A discussion regarding the Cotman Close play area was requested.

There were no confidential items for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 18:39.

52. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed: 

21 September 2021