

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 19 April 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks (Chair), Graham Parker, John Pitts and Elise Youngman (Deputy Chair)

Present: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

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

202. Welcome

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

203. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Christian Newsome and Andy Pearce had given apologies, and had provided reasons. Cllr Brooks proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

204. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 209.3, 209.5, 209.7, 209.8 and 213. Cllr Youngman declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 209.4, 209.5, 209.7 and 216. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items relating to Kensington Gardens. Cllr Brooks declared she is Vice Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association, also that she resides in the Harbour and Normanston Ward and had advocated the refurbishment of the St Margaret's Plain play area.

205. The draft minutes of the meeting on 15 March 2022

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes and requested Cllr Youngman is identified as the Deputy Chair in the attendance list and on the website; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

206. 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.

207. Monitoring expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget

The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the year-end figures are pending. An up to date position and confirmation of the budget figures for the new financial year will be provided for the next meeting.

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

208.1 Progressing public engagement on the proposals to install up to three over entrance archways in Kensington Gardens in the 2023 – 2024 financial year – Cllr Breakspear suggested progressing just one archway for Kensington Gardens in the 2023 – 2024, to give an opportunity for them to be considered for other parks. The Sub-Committee discussed which entrance should be prioritised and what form public engagement should take. The Project and Committee Clerk suggested an online survey, as has been done recently with Clarkes Lane. Limited paper copies could be made available at public events taking place this year, such as the Kensington Gardens centenary and the Big Green weekends. Facebook, noticeboards and the Town Council's column in the Lowestoft Journal can also be used to promote the

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survey. Cllr Brooks proposed seeking the views of the public regarding an archway for the Kirkley Park Road/Kensington Road entrance of Kensington Gardens, with delegated authority to officers, in conjunction with members of this Sub-Committee, to progress the survey; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

208.2 An update on planting plans – Cllr Breakspear is due to meet with the Friends of Fen Park and has already liaised with the Norse grounds person regarding Sparrows Nest and Belle Vue Park. Cllr Breakspear will circulate the plans and will meet with the Project and Committee Clerk before the plans are presented at May's meeting for consideration.

208.3 A quotation for design and planning work to develop a sensory garden at Sparrows Nest – Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the quotation received, with delegated authority to officers to progress; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. The Chair offered thanks to Cllr Barker for arranging the liaison with Pathways Care Farm.

209. Play areas:

209.1 The scheduling of refurbishments for years four and five – Cllr Youngman proposed scheduling Thirlmere Walk, Gunton Community Park and Turnberry Close for year four, and Stoven Close and the Parklands for year five. Play equipment had previously been removed from the Parklands and there had been discussions about using the area as a community garden/orchard instead. Cllr Brooks seconded Cllr Youngman's proposal, with the removal of the Parklands, and requested that a site visit is arranged with Norse; all in favour.

209.2 Refurbishment options for the play areas to be progressed in year one (St Margaret's Plain, Bentley Drive and Rosedale Park) – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the recommendation from this Sub-Committee and the AID Committee to appoint a contractor for St Margaret's Plain will be considered by Full Council. The Project and Committee Clerk is liaising with providers regarding Bentley Drive and Rosedale Park, and site visits are being arranged.

209.3 Whether to retain the fencing surrounding the Rosedale Park play area – There was a discussion as to whether the fence is required, as it has been subject to vandalism. The park is popular with dog walkers and whilst the fence could keep dogs out of the play area, the Clerk advised that dogs may be taken into the play area and become trapped by the fence. The Sub-Committee had considered progressing a separate toddler play area, which would be fenced. The Project and Committee Clerk will request the cost of a replacement fence when seeking quotations for the play area refurbishment. In the interim, officers are addressing any health and safety concerns.

209.4 Alternative fencing options for the Stoven Close play area and Gunton Community Park – The Clerk reported that both sites have had issues with unauthorised vehicular access. Community Warden Paul Connew has suggested bunds. Officers will explore this further and report back to the Sub-Committee. The Clerk suggested Councillors may wish to visit the sites in the interim.

209.5 An update on agreed works at the Britten Road play area – The Project and Committee Clerk reported that the Council had accepted a quotation to re-establish the undergrowth. Cllr Breakspear proposed that photographs are circulated to Councillors when work such as this is undertaken; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. The Project and Committee Clerk has requested an update from Norse regarding the installation of a slide on the toddler unit.

209.6 An update on the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest play area – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that plans will be displayed at the park when an installation date is confirmed.

209.7 An update on the installation of outdoor fitness equipment at Whitton Green – The

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Project and Committee Clerk advised that installation should begin on 3 May and should be completed by 18 May.

209.8 Feedback from Cllr Green regarding a recent event at Whitton Green – Cllr Brooks was concerned that the event seemed to have happened without the Town Council's input. Cllr Barker was disappointed that the Town Council's Ward Councillors had not been invited. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and Events and Communications Sub-Committee would like to be kept informed of events on Town Council land. The signage for the outdoor fitness equipment is being progressed and Councillors would like to ensure the Town Council's logo has suitable prominence.

209.9 An update on reported vandalism at the Fen Park play area – The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the recent incident of arson which damaged some of the play matting has been reported to Norse.

209.10 An update on progressing 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. The Community Wardens have been asked to seek quotes elsewhere.

210. A request from the James Paget Hospital Charity to develop a rose garden in Belle Vue Park

Cllr Parker suggested that the sunken garden near to the thatched cottage could be used for this purpose, as it was a rose garden historically. Cllr Breakspear offered to take some photographs of the area for reference and can carry out a soil test. Cllr Breakspear proposed approval of the request in principle, with delegated authority to officers to liaise with the applicant and Norse to put plans together; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

211. Policies:

211.1 Implementation of the Pond Policy, including to note progress with a new draft policy – Cllr Pearce is working on a new draft which will be considered by the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee. Cllr Brooks made the following suggestions:

- The policy should recognise that the Town Council inherited its ponds in a neglected condition.
- The existing policy states that sunlight promotes algae, but ponds do need sunlight.
- The existing policy references planting reeds. This would need to be managed carefully.
- Silt level monitoring should take place more frequently than once every five years.
- Fish should not be brought in to the Town Council's ponds.
- Dredging and invasive work should only be carried out between November – February.
- Moving plants from one pond to another could risk spreading disease.
- The policy should recognise that ponds are an important way to promote wildlife and biodiversity, and the Council should consider creating more where possible.
- The policy should cover the Council's stance on wildlife feeding.

211.2 Reviewing the Tree Policy – Cllr Brooks would like the wording to be stronger. The policy infers that the Council will only listen to advice from experts and not members of the public. Cllr Brooks would like this wording to be reviewed. The policy states that pruning/pollarding will not be carried out to restore satellite/television reception and Cllr Brooks would like the Council to consider any requests of this nature more sympathetically. It was agreed that suggestions for amendments should

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be emailed to officers, to be fed back to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee.

211.3 Reviewing the Wildflower Meadows Policy – Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee to subsume this policy within the Open Spaces Strategy, and to refer this policy, the Tree Policy and the Pond Policy back to the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

212. Feedback on the concept of a sign regarding feeding wildlife in parks

The Project and Committee Clerk is seeking advice, following discussions at the last meeting.

213. An update on progress with appointing a Project Manager for pond works

The Project and Committee Clerk reported that, of the organisations approached, one party is potentially interested, and a meeting has been arranged for May. Details will be circulated to Councillors.

214. Whether to submit any recommendations regarding local open spaces for the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr Brooks would have liked this consultation to have happened earlier in the process. The Clerk advised that there have been opportunities to comment and the Working Group has put careful consideration into this, with the advice of consultants. The Plan will also go out to public consultation. It was agreed that any comments should be submitted to the Deputy Clerk.

215. Repairs and maintenance and any future usage of the pile driver at The Ness

The advice from the Community Wardens is that the pile driver could not be stood upright and would be too fragile to move. Cllr Brooks proposed adhering to the officers' advice; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour. The Project and Committee Clerk reported that officers are seeking advice from local historians regarding content for the information signs for the drying racks.

216. The results of the Clarkes Lane public survey

The results have also been considered by other Committees. The idea of a community garden is being considered for Clarkes Lane and the Parklands.

217. Progressing a composting/mulching area in Fen Park

Officers were asked to liaise with the Friends of Fen Park and seek quotations, based on the plans for Kensington Gardens compound.

218. An update on the installation of memorial lecterns in Belle Vue Park and Kensington Gardens

The Project and Committee Clerk advised the lecterns should be delivered within five weeks.

219. An update on approved memorial tree planting in Belle Vue Park

Officers will seek an update. It is understood the Deputy Clerk is liaising with the applicant.

220. An update on developing proposals for lighting in Fen Park, Normanston Park and Belle Vue Park

The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 20:39

The Project and Committee Clerk advised that this Sub-Committee has been given

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delegated authority to put together proposals which can be used to seek quotations, which should start with the Sub-Committee identifying where it would ideally like to see lighting installed within each park.

The Clerk returned 20:41

A Zoom meeting will be arranged to progress this.

221. An update on expanding Friends Groups and to explore the possibility of joint working with the Lowestoft and District Allotment Association

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

222. An update on measures to restrict parking in Sparrows Nest

The Project and Committee Clerk reported that there had been difficulties progressing a lockable bollard. A tenant had instead erected an 'A' board with a 'no parking' sign, and had reported it had been successful.

223. An update on preparations for the Platinum Jubilee

The Project and Committee Clerk reported that plans were progressing well.

224. An update on progressing a memorial to the late Cllr Sue Barnard

The Project and Committee Clerk that the bluebell bench for Sparrows Nest is part of the bulk order of benches which is being progressed. A bluebell walk has been proposed as part of the planting plans.

225. Whether to install murals on the sea wall and Ness Point

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

226. Date of the next meeting

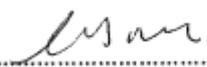
10 May 2022 19:00

227. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Cllr Barker requested an item to receive feedback from the Councillor 'safari' of the Somerleyton Hall estate.

There were no confidential items for consideration. The Chair closed the meeting at 20:46.

228. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed: 

10 May 2022