

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development
Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
17:30 on 13 March 2025

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Jen Jones, John Murray, Bernadette Rappensberger and Nick Webb (Deputy Chair)

In Attendance: Lauren Elliott (Senior Committee and Project Clerk), Jonny Hawes (Parks and Grounds Maintenance Manager) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

Public: One member of the public was in attendance via zoom

168. Welcome

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

169. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Christian Newsome, John Pitts and Elise Youngman with reasons provided.

Cllr Jones proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour. It was noted Cllr Andy Pearce had resigned from the Committee.

170. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

170.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – There were no declarations.

170.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

171. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 3 March 2025

The draft minutes were in progress.

172. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – The member of public spoke on item 173 as a representative of The Community Volunteers who had submitted the plans for development of the community garden. The member of public suggested the project be archived as they had understood that Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) had decided to not collaborate on this project. The member of public confirmed the project would have been externally funded and reassured members that the funding would not be lost as they have permission to use the funding for green spaces elsewhere in the town. The member of public thanked LTC for considering the project and commended the Town Council's work on biodiversity.

173. To review the plans for the development of a community garden in Gunton Community Park

Officers clarified there had been no decision by LTC to stop collaborating and the concerns raised by officers related to the possibility of the Grounds Maintenance Team (GMT) needing to take on maintenance of the garden, should a permanent volunteer group fail to be established, and the submitted plans may not be compatible with the site. To move forward, officers advised that a simplified plan may be preferable at this stage of the project.

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It was understood that the intention had been to set up a local group that would be managed by the Gunton Estate Community Hall to handle maintenance of the site. Officers had spoken with the Committee members of the Gunton Estate Community Hall, and whilst they were happy to be involved, from their understanding there were no volunteers from the local community to maintain the garden.

The Parks and Grounds Maintenance Manager confirmed the GMT's work schedule was set in advance and there was limited capacity to work on this project in terms of the timescale and the level of involvement required.

Cllr Coleby proposed a meeting be organised The Community Volunteers, members of the Gunton Estate Community Hall, Councillors of this Committee and officers to find a way to progress with the project; seconded by Cllr Murray.

It was suggested Ormiston Denes and the Army Cadets be contacted after the meeting with The Community Volunteers had taken place to query, and the project confirmed, to query if they were interested in participating as volunteers for the project.

Cllr Brooks declared she was a member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and suggested they be contacted for advice on what should be planted and how to care for the area.

Mark Webster felt this was a positive outcome and suggested the project be moved forward as part of the wider lottery bid project. Mark Webster noted three days had already booked in for the end of March to begin work on the project, and suggested the days instead be used to assist the Gunton Estate Community Hall with their garden.

Cllr Coleby clarified that the proposed meeting was to move forward with the project in Gunton Park, not a different site, and the only work that would be permissible at the Gunton Estate Community Hall would be primarily weeding work. It was requested by a member of the Committee that there be no work undertaken on LTC land at all until the meeting has taken place, as the group did not have permission to plant on LTC land.

Cllr Coleby proposed LTC work with The Community Volunteers and the Gunton Estate Community Hall Committee to deal with the needs of the Hall's garden within the three days The Community Volunteers has booked to be in Lowestoft, this would be done in conjunction with officers and Councillors who will meet them on the day to agree what work can be permitted over those three days.

A vote was called for the first proposal with six votes in favour and one vote against. Cllr Brooks requested it be recorded that she voted against the proposal.

Cllr Webb seconded the second proposal and a vote was held with six votes in favour and one vote against. Cllr Brooks requested it be recorded that she voted against the proposal.

174. Date of the next meeting

Monday 7 April 2025 – 19:00

175. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no items requested for the next agenda.

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176. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda:

176.1. To consider any legal issues, including those above as required – There were no resolutions.

The Chair closed the meeting at 18:13

Signed:
7 April 2025