

Lowestoft Town Council
Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1DE
Monday 06 October 2025 at 19:00

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, John Murray, Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger (Chair), Deborah Ray and Nick Webb

In attendance: Mark Smith (Facilities and Contracts Manager) and Lauren Elliott (Senior Committee and Project Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

54 Welcome

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

55 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Elise Youngman, with reasons provided. Cllr Jones proposed approval of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

56 Declarations of interests and dispensations:

56.1 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests from Councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Brooks declared she is a member of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, and attended meetings of the Waveney Disability Forum as the substitute representative.

56.2 Written requests for dispensations for interests and noting dispensations granted – There were none.

57 The draft minutes of the meeting on 1 September 2025

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 1 September 2025; seconded by Cllr Jones; seven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Brooks had abstained from the vote as she understood she had not been in attendance at the meeting, however, the minutes recorded her as being in attendance, and it was established that it was the recent Extraordinary Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting which Cllr Brooks had not been in attendance for.

58 Public forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance.

59 Monitoring expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The budget-monitoring spreadsheet had been provided. There were no comments.

60 Parks and open spaces:

60.1 The draft minutes of the Extraordinary Parks and Open Spaces meeting on 30 September 2025 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

60.2 Any recommendations from the parks and open spaces sub-committee on the following items:

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1 Scheduling of the Clarkes Lane play area project – A meeting paper had been provided, which had also been received by the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee. Officers had proposed for the car park to be done as the first stage of the project, however, if this were potentially up to a year in the advance of the play area being developed, there were concerns that it would either have to be fenced off, or visitors may become accustomed to using it for purposes other than visiting the play area. It was considered that it would be feasible for the car park to be developed at the same time as the play area. In the meantime, officers were asked to discuss any options for parking enforcement with East Suffolk Council, and this would be crucial, as the Town Council would likely not be seeking to develop a car park at this location otherwise. Should the Town Council be directly funding the project, it was anticipated this would be done over two to three years. Some potential external funding sources had been identified. Officers were asked to speak with external funders to understand the requirements, and what degree of match funding may be possible. The Town Council had secured CIL funding from East Suffolk Council for play area projects previously, but only at the stage where the projects were ready to be progressed.

2 Options for development of the Normanston Park changing rooms – Three options had previously been presented for consideration and none had been ruled out. A meeting paper was provided to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee with a fourth option. The Sub-Committee considered the new option offered more flexibility, should the need arise, including the option to spread the cost over a number of years. Having spoken with the football teams currently using the facilities, the Sports Development Officer had established there was not a demand for showers or additional toilet facilities at the moment. Options for installing additional facilities in the future would be limited, due to the location of the existing services. There were concerns regarding the aesthetic of the containers in that environment, but cladding, screening or trellis would be possible. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to endorse the recommendation from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to proceed with Option D, as presented on the meeting paper (£50,000 for five modular containers). It was clarified that the referee's changing area was not designated male or female, but separate facilities for both could be accommodated in one container. As part of the proposal, it was requested that officers provide the additional cost of cladding or screening options to Full Council. Cllr Webb seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

60.3 The feasibility of a refreshment kiosk for Fen Park – A meeting paper had been provided. It was considered a refreshment kiosk would attract more footfall to the park, and thus become a deterrent to certain behaviours. The meeting paper had identified that a small kiosk would be feasible. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the installation of a refreshment kiosk in Fen Park in 2026 – 2027, ideally with completion ahead of the summer season. In preparation for this, officers were asked to put together a full specification and cost, for inclusion in the budget. It was intended for the kiosk to be owned by the Town Council and run by a tenant. Cllr Jones seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

60.4 Options and a maximum budget for adult gym equipment in Fen Park – A meeting paper had been provided. The Sports Development Officer had suggested a range of equipment options. Cllr Brooks proposed a recommendation to Full Council to initially install two pieces of outdoor fitness equipment in Fen Park in 2026 – 2027, with the Sports Development Officer to provide a recommendation on two appropriate pieces of equipment. Cllr Pearce seconded the proposal; seven Councillors voted in favour; one

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Councillor abstained from the vote. It was understood there was £9,000 remaining in a reserve for outdoor fitness equipment, and this would be checked ahead of the Full Council meeting.

61 Events and communications:

61.1 A recommendation from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee for a budget to hold a Santa Dash event in December – A budget of up to £5,000 was discussed by the Events and Communications and Budget and Loan Sub-Committees. An entry fee would be charged, and all sums raised donated to a local charity.

Cllr Jones temporarily left the meeting 19:53

Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the request of the two Sub-Committees; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

62 Toilets:

62.1 A report on the feasibility of reinstating the Belle Vue Park toilets and consideration of options (some aspects may be confidential) – A meeting paper had been provided.

Cllr Jones returned 19:57

Following a site visit by officers, it had been established that it would be feasible to reinstate the facilities. The external appearance of the building would not change, and replacement doors and windows would be in an appropriate heritage style. Budget projections had allowed for this. The timescale of other large-scale projects was considered, however projects such as the Denes Oval perimeter wall and pavilion refurbishment were unlikely to be direct funded and would not therefore be competing for the same funds. Another proposed project for the park would likely increase the footfall, and it was suggested the opening hours of the toilets could align with this, which may lessen the risk of anti-social behaviour. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the reinstatement of the Belle Vue Park toilets in 2026 – 2027, with a provisional suggestion to precept half of the funds and take the other half from reserves, to be replenished in the following year; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

62.2 A report on the Kirkley Cliff Road toilets and consideration of options (some aspects may be confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

63 Recommendations for the 2026-2027 budget

It was clarified this would be a standing item on most agendas for the remainder of the year, for any recommendations to be made to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee. A further standalone meeting to discuss the five-year plans would be arranged. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to ensure the parks capital budget for 2026 – 2027 is no less than 2025 – 2026 budget plus RPI, and to be increased further if possible. Cllr Murray seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

64 Feedback on the various summer sport events hosted in Town Council parks

A meeting paper and spreadsheet had been provided. Thanks were offered to the Sports Development Officer for the range of work he has undertaken and the number of people he has engaged in the various activities. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee had expressed its support for the Sports Development Officer's work and building on this in future, including addressing gender inequalities. The Sports Development Officer welcomed ideas and suggestions.

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65 A recommendation to Full Council on whether to install a sculpture in Ness Park

This item had been considered by this Committee at its meeting in April and deferred for six months. Cllr Brooks had informally approached two Suffolk-based sculptors to gauge their interest. Both had said it would be too time consuming to provide a full specification to Council for consideration unless the work was guaranteed. The Town Council had not yet formally decided to proceed with the project. A map of The Ness existed, which identified the areas covered by the impermeable seal, which would limit the locations available for installation of the sculpture. The benefit of more public art and a sculpture dedicated to women, versus the cost and other demands on the budget was discussed. Cllr Pearce proposed for Cllr Brooks to pass the contact details of the two sculptors to the office, for exploratory discussions to take place, and enquiries made about external funding options and any match-funding requirements. It was proposed for this information to be brought the November's Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal; seven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

66 Date of next meeting

Monday 3 November 2025 at 19:00.

67 Items for the next agenda and close

Councillors were advised to send any requests to the office.

Cllr Jones proposed to move the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the meeting 20:26

Admissions to Meeting

62.2 A report on the Kirkley Cliff Road toilets and consideration of options (some aspects may be confidential) – Meeting notes had been provided. A verbal report was provided to the Committee on the issues being experienced.

Cllr Brooks returned 20:28

Officers had made a recommendation and Cllr Jones proposed a recommendation to Full Council to support this. Cllr Murray seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

64 Feedback on the various summer sport events hosted in Town Council parks – The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee had discussed the gender balance in attendance at the various sports sessions held during the summer. Suggestions had been put forward, which the Sports Development Officer had been supportive of.

The meeting was closed at 20:46.



Signed:

12 November 2025