

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 4 March 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Christian Newsome (Deputy Chair), Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernadette Rappensberger, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman (Chair)

In Attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

212. Welcome

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

213. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Coleby with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

214. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

214.1.To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he was Chair of the Gunton Residents Association. Cllr Rappensberger declared she was a Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) representative for Friends of Fen Park. Cllr Breakspear declared he was Chair of Friends of Kensington Gardens.

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

215. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 5 February and the draft minutes of the meeting on 19 February 2024

Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; eight votes in favour and one abstention.

216. 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 – No advanced comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance.

217. To monitor expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The updated budget position had been provided prior to the meeting and the Project and Committee Clerk noted the expenditure approved at the previous meeting.

218. Parks and Open Spaces:

218.1.To receive and note the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 20 February 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

218.2.To consider proposals from the Lowestoft Town Cricket Club relating to the Denes Oval Pavilion – Cllr Pearce proposed this item be deferred until the condition survey has been received and the findings used to commission the survey of works for the building, which would inform the timescale of works; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. It was suggested a meeting be arranged with the club to discuss their proposals once the condition survey has been received.

218.3.To consider the cost of refurbishment works to the Belle Vue Park porch entrance and a delegation to progress – Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce with the agreed amendment that the budget be provisionally allocated to the Parks

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Development budget and the Finance and Governance Committee confirm the allocation after the updated budget document has been received; all in favour.

218.4. To receive an update on the status of condition surveys and chartered reports for the Normanston Park toilets and changing rooms and the Lowestoft Cemetery toilets – The condition surveys should be received by the end of March and it was agreed to defer the item to the next meeting.

218.5. To consider any measures for dog control in the Town Council's parks and open spaces – A member of the public had requested consideration of the installation of fencing at Cotman Close play area.

The transfer of land at Cotman Close was due to be considered at the next East Suffolk Council Quarterly Liaison meeting, and if in agreement on the transfer then Lowestoft Town Council could fence off the area, otherwise Lowestoft Town Council could approach East Suffolk Council for permission to install a fence on their land.

The play area at Cotman Close used to be fenced and officers were asked to check if the fence had been removed within the year Lowestoft Town Council was formed.

Cllr Pearce proposed to await the outcome from the Quarterly Liaison meeting and in the interim officers would check the record of a fence on that land, with this item to be re-considered at the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

It was suggested officers check East Suffolk Council's by-laws on keeping dogs under control near children's play areas and consider installation of a sign instructing people to keep dogs under control near all play areas. Officers confirmed the new signs installed at fenced-off play areas stated no dogs were permitted and would check the signs for play areas that are not fenced.

219. Events and Communications

219.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 28 February 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

220. Allotments

220.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Allotments Sub-Committee meeting on 1 March 2024 – The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

221. To consider a delegation to the Community Safety Sub-Committee to consider the matter of vandalism of public conveniences and make a recommendation directly to Full Council in March

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the delegation to the Community Safety Sub-Committee to make a recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

222. To consider application to the District CIL funding programme commencing 1 April 2024 for projects ready for implementation

The Planning Committee had met with an East Suffolk Council officer and were notified that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding applications were open until May 2024 for any projects ready to commence. The East Suffolk Council officer would also be available for an informal discussion on the viability of these projects before the applications are submitted.

The refurbishment of toilets and play areas would have full specifications and procurements ready for the application, and whilst the specification or procurement has not been finished for the Normanston Park changing rooms, the chartered surveyor report might be ready in

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time for the submission deadline.

Cllr Brooks proposed the Committee pursue CIL applications for the projects discussed, with a delegation to officers to submit the applications once all information has been received; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

223. To consider budget priorities from the Marina Theatre, including a quotation for replacement stage floor

Cllr Brooks proposed the replacement stage floor be funded if it is affordable; seconded by Cllr Pearce and it would be funded, if there was enough residue, from the 2023-2024 repair and maintenance budget allocated to the Marina Theatre, with the shortfall to come from the £70,000 capital budget for the Marina Theatre; eight votes in favour and one abstention.

The current stage was installed four years ago and officers were asked to check how often it was expected that the stage would need to be re-laid.

224. Friends Groups:

224.1. To consider a storage unit for the Friends of Fen Park – A new Committee had been established for the Friends of Fen Park and they needed a storage unit for their tools. This unit would be painted and have planting to camouflage with the surroundings. Cllr Rappensberger proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce with the agreed caveat that this will be the asset of Lowestoft Town Council, who will be responsible for its maintenance, and be made available to the Friends Group for storage; all in favour.

224.2. To review the Friends Groups Policy – Cllr Brooks shared suggestions on improving the policy so that the Friends Groups were elevated and given more status. These included membership being open to all, the requirement of a constitution, regular meetings with the minutes shared with LTC to maintain dialogue with the Town Council, adherence to the Town Council's key policies such as Equality and Environmental and working with the Town Council's grounds maintenance teams.

Other members agreed on elevating the Friends Groups positions but expressed reluctance in requiring the groups to share their minutes with LTC as they would seek permission from the office for any works they want to undertake, instead they should speak with LTC once a year to provide an update on their work. Furthermore, it was felt the Town Council should not force the groups to compromise their independence by requiring them to have open membership or support LTC's legislation, when legislation such as the Equality Act already covered this.

Cllr Youngman proposed a standalone zoom call be scheduled to discuss the policy in further detail; seconded by Cllr Pearce with the accepted amendment that the zoom call be given delegation to make a recommendation on the policy directly to Full Council; seven votes in favour and two abstentions.

225. To consider proposals from the Lowestoft Town Tennis Club regarding 'Free Tennis For All'

It was noted that the proposals compromised LTC's pledge of free access of the courts to the public as the proposal necessitated reserved courts for the club.

Cllr Pearce proposed a standalone zoom call be scheduled to discuss this further with the Acting Town Clerk and legal advice be sought if necessary; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

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226. To consider the purchase of a painting and appropriate locations (some aspects may be confidential)

The historical importance of the painting, particularly with 2025 being the 360th anniversary of the Battle of Lowestoft, was noted.

There may be issues with the dimensions and a risk that the painting may end up in storage for some time as the heritage layout for the Town Hall had been decided per the interpretation work undertaken. It was thought that the interpretation plan only covered the heritage space and not the gallery space, and as LTC would have operational control on the displays then this painting could be prioritised for display.

Cllr Brooks proposed LTC consider purchase of the painting; seconded by Cllr Pearce; six votes in favour and three abstentions.

227. To consider a contract for pest control

The office had been contacted by company undertaking pest control per a legacy contract under Waveney District Council that included some of the LTC assets prior to its formation. They undertake rat management at Bentley Drive play area with baited rat traps.

The Committee were asked to consider if regular baited rat traps were required at any LTC sites or if would be preferable to engage with a contractor as needed. Officers confirmed there were no known persistent issues with rats on LTC land and highlighted concerns of baited traps in public areas with children, dogs and the damage to wildlife.

Cllr Brooks proposed to engage these service as needed and not opt for consistent use of pest control services; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.

228. To receive an update on the approach from a member of the public concerning acquirement of a Punch and Judy booth and the Laughing Sailor

There was no update and it was agreed to defer the item to April.

229. To consider partnership working with East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust including feedback from a recent meeting (confidential)

It was agreed to discuss this item after the site visit with the trust.

230. Date of the next meeting

Monday 8 April 2024 – 19:00

231. Items for the next agenda and close

232. 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:

232.1. To consider any legal issues, including those above as required

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:12

Signed:

8 April 2024