

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee

Via Video Meeting
18:00 on 12 April 2021

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Colin Butler, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Andy Pearce and John Pitts

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

173. Welcome

A minute's silence to mark the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, was observed.

Councillors and members were reminded of the public of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed.

174. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Neil Coleby. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

175. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce declared local non-pecuniary interests in items 178.2c, 178.9, 188 and 190. Cllr Butler declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 190.

176. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 1 March 2021 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

Cllr Butler had not been included on the list of attendees at the previous meeting and this will be amended.

177. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

There were none.

178. Parks and open spaces:

178.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 16 March 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.

178.2. Recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

178.2a. Progressing the purchase of bins, benches and bicycle racks, as part of the Council's five-year plans – Cllr Coleby has put together a spreadsheet indicating how many of each item the Council may require at each site. The Committee Clerk has started to seek quotations based on this information. It was suggested that this should be considered in more detail at next Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee discussed carrying any unspent funds from the parks development budget from 2020 – 2021 forward to the 2021 – 2022 budget. This Sub-Committee would like benches, bins and bicycle racks prioritised as part of the five year plans, which could result in some large items of expenditure in the first couple of years. There have been some concerns regarding the provision of bins, in Fen Park particularly. This Committee would prefer not to have one site progressed individually, as it may be more cost effective to purchase items in bulk, it would however like to see the Council's provision of bins increased on its land. Cllr Pearce proposed that an item be added to April's Full Council agenda to consider any recommendations arising from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee regarding the provision of bins in the Town Council's parks, with regard to its five year plans; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

178.2b. Delegating authority to the Clerk to seek alternative sources of funding to

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replace any equipment in the Town Council's parks which has been destroyed as a result of vandalism – This would enable the Clerk to seek sponsorship, grant funding, or other sources of external funding which may be available. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to seek alternative sources of funding to replace any equipment in the Town Council's parks which has been destroyed as a result of vandalism; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

178.2c. Quotations for the management of the Town Council's ponds, including de-silting, bank re-profiling and oxygenation – Options have been discussed, including oxygenation and de-silting where required. The Council has not yet made a decision regarding bank re-profiling at Gainsborough Drive, but it was requested that enquiries be made with Norse to see if they can make any recommendations regarding this. Officers are also asking external organisations to provide quotations for measures required at each of the ponds, in line with the results of the environmental pond assessments. Cllr Pearce proposed referring this item to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee for consideration initially, and adding an item to the Full Council agenda to consider any quotations received, if applicable; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

178.2d. Progressing the purchase of bulbs and replacement shrub for Sparrows Nest, within a maximum budget of £100 – Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this recommendation; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

178.3. The possibility of a path at the Stoven Close play area, from Weston Road to the picnic benches – One quotation has been received so far, but ongoing repair and replacement costs would need to be considered also. Cllr Pearce proposed referring this item to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to consider, with an in-principle approval from this Committee to proceed. Following this, the Finance and Governance Committee will give the matter its consideration. Cllr Butler seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

178.4. Installing a noticeboard on private land on Shelton Road – Cllr Pitts has made contact with the manager of the fish and chip shop, who has welcomed this request. The Council already has a standard noticeboard design but a wall mounted model may be more suited to this site if possible. It is not clear if the person Cllr Pitts has been liaising with is the landowner or a tenant. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the installation of a noticeboard on private land at Shelton Road, subject to written consent being received from the landowner; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.

178.5. Site access to Sparrows Nest – It has been established that a tenant has designated parking near the Movie Makers Theatre. There is a fence around the play area, but the greater risk could be caused by children playing on the grass area surrounding it. There was a discussion about signage at the entrance to the park warning drivers to slow down, but it was queried how effective this would be. Given the new information the Committee now has regarding the designated parking area for a tenant, should this Committee now wish to consider a different solution it would need the agreement of Full Council and consultation with stakeholders again. The Council will shortly begin the recruitment process for its Community Wardens, but it is intended that the Wardens will be a positive presence in the town and they will not be available to police this area at all times. A fence running along the border of the grassed area between the play area and the Movie Makers Theatre should offer a practical safety measure. Cllr Pearce proposed seeking quotations for a fence of the same style to that surrounding the play area, running along the border of the grassed area from the play area to the Movie Makers Theatre; seconded by Cllr Green; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

178.6. Maintenance required at Ness Point – Cllr Butler had reported that some concrete at Ness Point had been broken up during recent storms. Loose rubble has since been

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removed and affected areas have been fenced off.

- 178.7. Arrangements for replacement trees/planting, in line with the Town Council's Tree Policy, following the unauthorised removal of trees from Town Council land – Regardless of what legal action may be taken, the Council has a policy on tree replacement, which it should adhere to. The Police are investigating and the Council will be writing to all residents in the area. Advice is being taken from Norse regarding replacement planting. It was suggested that the Council should look to purchase the largest, most robust replacements it can. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to seek advice from Norse and other external bodies regarding the species and maturity of replacement trees, in line with the Council's Tree Policy; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.
- 178.8. Alternative uses for the gate removed from The Ravine footpath – It had been suggested that it may be possible to repurpose the gate elsewhere. It was agreed to refer this item to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee initially to consider potential alternative uses.
- 178.9. Measures to inform the public on bird feeding in the Town Council's parks and open spaces – The Gunton Residents' Association has raised a specific concern at the Gainsborough Drive pond. Duck feeding is contributing to maintaining an artificially high number of ducks there. Ducks are creating a hazard to drivers and leftover food is adding to the detritus in the pond. The Residents' Association has asked the Council to consider producing some information leaflets which the Association can hand deliver to residents in the area. There is faded sign at the pond asking visitors not to feed the ducks, and it was requested that two replacement signs (at either end of the pond) are purchased, either asking visitors not to feed ducks, or advising on the correct food to use. Such signage could be adapted and used at other sites. There have been issues with visitors feeding pigeons at Belle Vue Park, which has also attracted rats. Similar issues have also been reported at Fen Park. The Friends of Kensington Gardens will be making an approach to the Council about putting in similar signage there. Cllr Breakspear has seen some good signage at Nicholas Everitt Park and he will send details to the Clerk. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to consider an appropriate design for signs at the Gainsborough Drive pond, and the cost of producing forty leaflets to be distributed to local residents; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.
- 178.10. Progressing the decision of Full Council to pledge land at the North Denes, Fen Park and Clarkes Lane to WildEast, and to consider appropriate signage – WildEast has offered to assist the Council with designing appropriate signage. The cost of this will be brought back to this Committee and the relevant Committees to consider.
- 178.11. An update on the provision of drinking water fountains at Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens – This has also been discussed at the Finance and Governance Committee meeting. It has been difficult to progress this during the pandemic. The funding needs to be spent by a certain date, but the Council may be able to reapply at a later date if this is not possible. There are concerns about how this can be implemented safely, particularly given the public health concerns if the fountains are not regularly used. Options are being explored and progress will be reported back.

179. Normanston Park:

- 179.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Normanston Park Tenancy Arrangements Sub-Committee meetings on 22 March and 6 April 2021 – The draft minutes were noted.
- 179.2. A recommendation from the Normanston Park Tenancy Arrangements Sub-Committee to adopt its Terms of Reference – Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the Normanston Park Tenancy Arrangements Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr

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Green; all in favour.

179.3. Any recommendations regarding the lease, insurance and building improvements relating to a tenancy at Normanston Park (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

180. Public conveniences:

180.1. Receipt of the notes from the Toilet Strategy Working Group meeting on 12 March 2021 – The notes from the meeting were noted.

180.2. Progress with the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences, including the specifications and any feedback from the Climate Emergency Committee – The Climate Emergency Committee did not have any specific concerns, but when quotations are sought it would like companies to come forward with recommendations for more environmentally friendly options, if they believe that better options are available. Some specifications still need to be considered. No decision has been made by the Council as to whether the Fen Park public conveniences should be divided or should be one gender neutral toilet. There was a concern that the specifications may be too prescriptive, and that it may be more cost effective to approach companies who can complete the entire renovation, rather than approaching different companies for each different aspect. Companies who specialise in the renovation of public conveniences may be able to make their own recommendations to the Council. Cllr Pearce proposed approaching companies to provide options and quotations for the entire refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences, including comparative quotations for having a single toilet at Fen Park and for having two; seconded by Cllr Butler; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

181. Christmas lights:

181.1. Receipt of the notes from the Christmas Lights Working Group meeting on 26 March 2021 – The notes from the meeting were noted.

181.2. A recommendation from the Christmas Lights Working Group to purchase braided LED lights for London Road South and to agree a joint contract for the North and South sides of the town (some aspects may be confidential) – Any discussions regarding individual quotations would need to be in the confidential session. The Finance and Governance Committee has supported the recommendation from the Christmas Lights Working Group. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve the recommendation from the Christmas Lights Working Group, subject to the cost being within the budget previously set by the Council; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

182. Guardianship of historic features at the Lowestoft Hospital

The Council is being asked to consider the principle of whether it could take on guardianship of historic artefacts, further to additional processes. The Council may wish to consider whether it has detailed enough processes to determine what it should take on. The Council has a general policy but it does not specify how these decisions should be made. It is understood that part of the wall has historic value, but can only be accessed via partial demolition. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Clerk to liaise with representatives of the site owner to indicate that the Council would in principle be interested in taking on guardianship of the historic artefacts at the Lowestoft Hospital, including preservation of the historic part of the wall if any demolition is to take place, and to liaise with appropriate external bodies to discuss how to assess the heritage value of the artefacts; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

183. Working with the museums on Town Council land to encourage visitors post-lockdown

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The Council would like to do what it can to encourage visitors back to its sites, including the museums. The Events and Communications Officer could liaise with relevant people to consider the options and can ensure the museums are promoted via the Council's social media accounts. The vision of the Town Hall project is to support local heritage and it was suggested that complementary sites could also be included, such as the Heritage Centre and the Lowestoft Museum. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the relevant officers to progress working with the museums on Town Council land to encourage visitors post-lockdown, including a complementary arrangement with the Heritage Centre and the Lowestoft Museum; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

184. A proposal regarding procurement of additional items of the Lowestoft Collection

The Council does not have a formal procurement policy. In principle it is in favour of purchasing items which would enhance the collection. Should advice be needed to assess the merits of an item, the Council would need to draw on external expert advice. The Lowestoft Collection is not just limited to the Lowestoft Porcelain. It was suggested that a central part of the procurement process should be that where an item adds quality and value to the collection the Council should look to purchase. Previously when individual items have come up for sale the Council has considered them on a case-by-case basis. That may need to continue to be the case going forward, but there have been concerns that the Council needs more independent advice from a wider panel of experts. If the Council knew where to source this advice it could be built into a policy. The Council does have an asset record relating to the Collection. This can be reviewed and amended and details added in as to the type of advice the Council would like to try to access should an item come up for sale that it is potentially interested in. The Council may also need to look at how it is notified when a piece comes up for sale, particularly items outside of the porcelain collection. The Council has a small allocation of budget for this so would need to consider its position on why it would like to collect items. There is a good network of people in the heritage sector who should be able to notify and advise when a significant piece comes up for sale. The Council is currently liaising with East Suffolk Council regarding items in storage and this is likely to also be a big undertaking for this Committee and the Finance and Governance Committee in deciding what items require restoration and where items will be housed. Cllr Pearce proposed that the Clerk draft a proposal regarding procurement of additional items of the Lowestoft Collection, including items outside of the porcelain collection; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

185. Proposed improvements to the Denes Oval (some aspects may be confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

186. Lease arrangements for a tenant (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

187. Requests for transfer/sale of land at Uplands (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

188. A request for transfer/sale of land at Gunton (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

189. A request to trade at the Triangle Market (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

190. An application to grant Freedom of the Town (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

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191. Date of the next meeting

10 May 2021 18:00 – It was noted that the meeting will be held on 17 May at 18:00 so that it is not within the period after the legislation enabling Councils to meet via video meeting ends but the lockdown restrictions do not allow face-to-face meetings to take place.

192. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour. The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the live stream was closed as the meeting went into confidential session. It was confirmed the meeting would end following the confidential session.

193. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

193.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required:

A comfort break was taken 19:48 and the meeting resumed 19:54

179.3 Any recommendations regarding the lease, insurance and building improvements relating to a tenancy at Normanston Park (confidential) Normanston Park – Discussions are ongoing. The Sub-Committee is meeting next week with the tenant. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

181.2 A recommendation from the Christmas Lights Working Group to purchase braided LED lights for London Road South and to agree a joint contract for the North and South sides of the town (some aspects may be confidential) – There is an in-principle agreement from the Council to proceed but a provider has not yet been selected and further quotations are pending. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the purchase of Christmas lights and the necessary supporting infrastructure for London Road South, and a joint contract for the North and South sides of the town; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour. To give sufficient time for the order to be placed and the infrastructure put in place a final decision is required at April's Full Council meeting. The Town Council's Financial Regulations state that three quotations shall be obtained but there have been difficulties obtaining quotations during the pandemic and this will be discussed at the Full Council meeting if three quotations have not been obtained.

185. Proposed improvements to the Denes Oval (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Pearce proposed referring this item to Full Council for a policy steer as to whether it would wish to see discussions continue regarding proposals to make improvements to the Denes Oval; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

186. Lease arrangements for a tenant (confidential) – It was agreed to move this item to the last item on the agenda.

187. Requests for transfer/sale of land at Uplands (confidential) – Two individual requests have been received. One is still ongoing and separate meetings will be arranged to continue the discussions. Regarding the other, Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to decline the request for the transfer/sale of land at Uplands; seconded by Cllr Butler; all in favour.

188. A request for transfer/sale of land at Gunton (confidential) – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to decline the request for the transfer/sale of land at Gunton; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

189. A request to trade at the Triangle Market (confidential) – Cllr Page advised he would need to leave the meeting at 21:00. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation

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to Full Council to approve the request to trade at the Triangle Market, with delegated authority to the Clerk to ensure the applicant has all the necessary prerequisites in place beforehand, including the relevant licences, food hygiene certification and insurance; seconded by Cllr Green; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

Cllr Pitts left the meeting 21:03

190. An application to grant Freedom of the Town (confidential) – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to approve the application to award Freedom of the Town; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

186. Lease arrangements for a tenant (confidential) –

Cllr Breakspear left the meeting 21:05

Cllr Page left the 21:06

Cllr Knight proposed appointing Cllr Green to preside over the remainder of the meeting; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

There was a discussion regarding management of the project to renovate the Whitton Green play area. This Committee was happy in principle with the discussion and the Clerk will liaise with the Councillors previously granted delegated authority to progress the plans.

The Chair closed the meeting 21:14.

Signed:

17 May 2021