

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee

Via Video Meeting
18:00 on 1 June 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby (Chair), Alan Green, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce and Alice Taylor

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

1. Welcome

The right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol were explained and noted, and the meeting was welcomed.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr John Pitts. Cllrs Bob Breakspear and Peter Collecott were not in attendance. It was agreed to accept assumed apologies from Cllrs Breakspear and Collecott, under the current circumstances due to COVID-19. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of apologies for absence for Cllrs Breakspear, Collecott and Pitts; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Coleby declared a standing local non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to Lowestoft in Bloom. Cllr Hardie declared a standing local non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to Fen Park.

4. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 2 March 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments and the draft minutes were noted.

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

There were none.

6. Review and adoption of Committee arrangements

6.1. Membership of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee – Membership was confirmed as Cllrs Sue Barnard, Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby, Peter Collecott, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor.

6.2. Appointment of the Deputy Chair of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee – Cllr Patience proposed Cllr Barnard as Deputy Chair of the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Parker. Cllr Taylor proposed Cllr Hardie as Deputy Chair of the AID Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Knight. As the proposal for Cllr Barnard had been made first, this vote was taken first. Eight Councillors voted in favour of Cllr Barnard being appointed Deputy Chair of the AID Committee. Two Councillors voted in favour of Cllr Hardie being appointed Deputy Chair of the AID Committee. Cllr Barnard had received an absolute majority of the votes as was duly appointed Deputy Chair of the AID Committee.

6.3. Review and adoption of the Terms of Reference of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee – It was requested that provision be made on the next agenda to include a discussion about item 6.d of the Terms of Reference – namely to review the Council's policies and develop and recommend new policies, such as youth engagement and communities engagement, and consider how these can be taken forward. Cllr Pearce proposed adoption of the Terms of Reference of the AID Committee; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

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7. Review and adoption of Sub-Committee arrangements for the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee

- 7.1. Confirming the composition – Cllrs Breakspear, Carlton, Coleby and Parker had previously expressed an interest in joining this Sub-Committee. Cllrs Barnard, Hardie, Pearce and Taylor expressed an interest during the meeting. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee membership as Cllrs Barnard, Breakspear, Carlton, Coleby, Hardie, Parker, Pearce and Taylor; seconded by Cllr Barnard; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 7.2. Review and adoption of the Terms of Reference, including consideration of extending the remit to include recommendations on how to balance COVID-19 recovery against climate and biodiversity considerations – At item three of the Terms of Reference, it was suggested that a minimum frequency should be included. Last year the Sub-Committee had regular monthly meetings to make recommendations to this Committee. Cllr Knight proposed that the Terms of Reference of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee be amended to specify that the Sub-Committee should meet at least quarterly; seconded by Cllr Pearce; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Green advised he was abstaining as did not want to influence the voting.
- 7.3. Any delegations – There are no delegations to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee, as it makes recommendations to this Committee.

8. Review and adoption of Working Group arrangements for the Toilet Strategy Working Group, the Triangle Market Working Group and the Normanston Allotments Working Group

- 8.1. Confirming the composition – Cllr Pearce advised he would like to be considered for membership of all three of these Working Groups. With regard to the Normanston Allotments Working Group, it was suggested that this more generally becomes the Allotments Working Group, as there are matters to be considered at other sites and some of them relate to all the allotment sites. It was further suggested that this becomes the Allotments Sub-Committee, as it may not need to meet regularly but will enable an ongoing working partnership and will allow ongoing consideration of the allotments sites. Should this be progressed, it was requested that the Normanston Allotments Working Group remain active as a separate group, until the matter of establishing vehicular access to the Normanston Allotments is resolved, as some Councillors would like to see this matter reach its conclusion separately to the ongoing commitment of the Sub-Committee. Cllr Hardie advised she would like to remain a member of the Working Group but did not wish to join the Sub-Committee. Cllr Coleby proposed that the Normanston Allotments Working Group continues until that particular matter has been resolved, and that an Allotments Sub-Committee be set up separately; seconded by Cllr Knight; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Lang had previously been a member of the Normanston Allotments Working Group but is not a member of this Committee. An invitation was however extended to all Councillors for expressions of interest for the Sub-Committee and Working Groups which sit under this Committee. Cllrs Coleby, Hardie, Patience, Pearce and Pitts had expressed an interest in joining the Normanston Allotments Working Group. It was agreed that any other interested Councillors could observe the first meeting and their membership confirmed at the subsequent meeting of this Committee. Cllr Coleby proposed membership of the Normanston Allotments Working Group as Cllrs Coleby, Hardie, Patience, Pearce and Pitts; seconded by Cllr Hardie; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. Cllr Barnard expressed an interest in joining the Allotments Sub-Committee, which will be considered further at the next meeting of this Committee, along with the Terms of Reference.

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Cllrs Coleby and Parker had previously expressed an interest in joining the Toilet Strategy Working Group. Cllrs Butler, Pearce and Taylor also expressed an interest. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the membership of the Toilet Strategy Working Group as Cllrs Butler, Coleby, Parker, Pearce and Taylor; seconded by Cllr Knight; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

Cllrs Coleby and Parker had previously expressed an interest in joining the Triangle Market Working Group. Cllrs Barnard, Pearce and Taylor also expressed an interest. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the membership of the Triangle Market Working Group as Cllrs Barnard, Coleby, Parker, Pearce and Taylor; seconded by Cllr Barnard; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

9. **Reviewing the register of land and assets, including building and office equipment**

This was reviewed at the close of the financial year ending 31 March 2020. It has since been amended to reflect that the Town Council no longer has the CCTV service. The provision of benches, bins and noticeboards in the Town Council's parks and open spaces is not currently well documented and the Clerk has so far asked Cllr Breakspear and the Friends of Kensington Gardens to mark the current provision there on a map of the park. This will be beneficial to ensuring the asset register is up to date. It was requested that if Councillors were able to safely assist with plotting current provisions of bins, benches and noticeboards on maps, volunteers would be welcome. Cllr Coleby proposed approval of the register of land and assets, including building and office equipment; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

10. **Working with Cllrs Coleby, Green and Taylor to look at the capital grants programme and the Council's priorities, with a view to making recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee**

It was clarified that this relates to East Suffolk Council's capital grants programme. Expenditure must be committed first, then can be reclaimed. This group was set up by the Finance and Governance Committee. It was requested that further information be supplied to Councillors about the amount of funding available and any caveats related to it. The Clerk will include this in an update to Councillors. It was queried whether the programme has an expiry date. It is understood the programme is running over a three year period. Cllrs Butler and Hardie advised they would like to be involved with this group as well. Cllr Pearce proposed approval for Cllrs Butler, Coleby, Green, Hardie and Taylor to look at the capital grants programme and the Council's priorities, with a view to making recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee; seconded by Cllr Barnard; nine Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote. A meeting of this group will be set up following the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee.

11. **A policy for the installation of defibrillators on land owned by the Town Council**

Draft policies had been produced by both staff and Councillors. It was requested that there be some co-ordination with the District Council, so as not to have both authorities installing defibrillators in close proximity and leaving other areas with none. The provision of defibrillators at the allotments had previously been discussed and it was suggested that this be added to the agenda for the first meeting of the Allotments Sub-Committee for further consideration. A District Councillor had arranged for a defibrillator to be installed on the Gunton Estate Residents Meeting Hall, using locality funding, but one has now been installed at the Baptist Church in the interim. An alternative location is being sought for the defibrillator originally intended for the Meeting Hall. A group of District Councillors are putting together an

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inventory of all the defibrillators in the town. The national database currently does not have a record of any in Lowestoft. A motion from Cllr Coleby had been circulated ahead of the meeting, as follows:

This committee recommends the Defibrillator Policy to Full Council for adoption. It further recommends that the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee should include a budget for Defibrillator Grants and a budget for Town Council Defibrillators at a level to be able to at least provide two town council defibrillators and match fund at least five defibrillators per year for a minimum of the next five years into the 2021/22 budget. The budget for Town Council Defibrillators should include any costs involved with maintenance and re-stocking of defibrillators and any costs involved with registering them. Additionally, funding should be added to the training budget to allow defibrillator training at a minimum of four yearly periods.

Should any urgent need for a defibrillator be determined prior to budgets being set up in line with this motion, the matter will be referred to the AID committee to consider and make a recommendation to Full Council regarding the matter.

The cost of including budget provision for defibrillators as set out above will need to be considered. The average cost of a defibrillator is £1,200, plus £500 - £600 for the cabinet. The cost of an electricity supply may also need to be considered, as this may not be readily available at all sites. Cllr Coleby proposed requesting that the Finance and Governance Committee consider asking the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to explore the cost of the provision of defibrillators, as per Cllr Coleby's motion, to inform budget considerations; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Defibrillator Policy, as drafted by officers; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

12. Public conveniences:

12.1. How to progress the Full Council decision to prioritise the Fen Park and Sparrows Nest public conveniences – It is understood that CIL and s106 funding was to be explored for this initially. The Toilet Strategy Working Group recommended that repairs to the roof of the Fen Park public conveniences be progressed as a priority to prevent further deterioration. The Fen Park Friends may be able to access external funding. Cllr Hardie attends their meetings and they may shortly be making a formal proposal to the Council. A meeting of the Toilet Strategy Working Group can be arranged when this is ready for consideration. Full Council will need to consider the terms and arrangements for future management of the public conveniences, if applicable. The Working Group will also need to consider a specification for the Sparrows Nest public conveniences and make recommendations back to this Committee once it has met.

12.2. Whether to progress a Changing Places toilet, and if so to consider an appropriate location – It is understood that funding and relevant permissions may have been secured for a Changing Places toilet in North Lowestoft, and plans are possibly being made for provision in South Lowestoft as well. The Clerk will enquire with East Suffolk Council whether they have any plans to this effect, then the Toilet Strategy Working Group can consider the options if required.

13. Adding Siltex to the Fen Park lake to enable the lake to regenerate and oxygenate for and to encourage the return and preservation of wildlife

Suffolk Wildlife Trust has given advice that Siltex could have a detrimental effect if acid peat is present in the pond. It is hoped they can complete a comprehensive survey of the site, or at least visit the site to make recommendations. East Suffolk Norse and the Environment Agency have also been approached for advice. The Environment Agency was previously looking into

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the oxygenation issues with the pond. Advice is required on how best to improve the biodiversity of the pond and whether maintaining a stock of fish there is the best way forward.

14. A request for a memorial bench in Kensington Gardens

An inventory has been started of the current provision of benches and bins in the Town Council's parks and open spaces. Some areas already have a high concentration of benches, whereas other areas are more sparse. It was suggested that the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee should review this in more detail. The Friends Groups may also be able to assist. Cllr Hardie has received a request from a member of the public for a memorial bench in Fen Park. Each request will need to be considered individually and take account of what is best overall for the town. The Open Spaces Strategy includes a memorial bench policy. Any permissions granted would need to be subject to adherence with this policy. It was agreed to refer this item to the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee for further consideration.

15. Date of the next meeting

6 July 2020 18:00

16. Items for the next agenda and close

It was requested that provision be included on the next agenda for a discussion about coaches using the Normanston Park car park as pick up and drop off point, for which the Town Council has previously granted permission. As per earlier discussions in the meeting, it was requested that provision be included on the next agenda for a discussion about youth and community engagement policies.

The Clerk is compiling a list of measures identified by the Council which can improve the biodiversity of the Town Council's parks and open spaces. This was displayed at the meeting and any further suggestions were welcomed. This will be considered further at the next meeting. Cllr Barnard identified potential funding available through the Tree Council and staff will look into this. The Council has previously approved the purchase of cherry trees, which this funding could be used towards. It was suggested that the Climate Emergency Committee and Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee could be asked to consider any additional measures as well. It was agreed that the Finance and Governance Committee should be asked to consider the submission of an application for funding from the Tree Council, and the cost of any other measures which have already received support from the Council. It has been suggested that social distancing circles could be painted in the Town Council's parks. This has been introduced successfully in other areas but there were concerns about maintenance and whether it would be appropriate to use paint on grass. It was suggested that it could be useful to have some sort of visual indicator at the parks as to what a two metre distance should look like, but there would be a cost implication and advice is being updated frequently, and most people should already be aware of the distance they should be keeping. Recovery measures will be discussed at June's Full Council meeting. As restrictions are lifted, the Council will need to give consideration to how it will handle more people returning to its parks, car parks and buildings, particularly where there are narrower entrances. The Clerk is putting together risk assessments for Friends Groups to resume their activities on Town Council land. They will need to put together their own risk assessments also, and liaise with their insurers. Working with Friends Groups towards the recovery of the Town Council's assets will be considered at the next meeting. East Suffolk Council is seeking views on the reopening of the Town Centre, and measures may include social distancing markers and one way systems.

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17. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

There were no confidential items for consideration. Thanks were offered to those who had observed the livestream of the meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting 19:22.

Signed:

6 July 2020