

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

Via Video Meeting
18:00 on 7 December 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Bob Breakspear, Colin Butler, Neil Coleby (Chair), Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Knight, Paul Page, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Alice Taylor

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

97. Welcome

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

98. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Graham Parker. It was noted that Cllrs Amanda Frost and Keith Patience had resigned from this Committee. Cllr Alan Green had advised he would be in attendance but would be late. Cllr John Pitts advised he would need to leave the meeting at 20:00. Cllr Knight proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

99. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard, Breakspear Hardie, Pearce and Taylor declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 111.

Cllr Green joined the meeting 18:04

Regarding item 106, Cllrs Barnard and Pearce declared they are both members of the Gunton Residents' Association, although Cllr Pearce has not been involved with the telephone kiosk.

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

The draft minutes were noted.

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

There were no comments.

102. Parks and open spaces:

102.1. Receipt of any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 17 November 2020 – The draft minutes were noted.

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

102.2a. Reinstating the land of the former Parklands play area as unlocked public open space – The Parks and Open Spaces would like the land to be reinstated as unlocked public open space as a trial initially. The Council has always classed this land as public open space, and no other areas of open space owned by the Town Council are locked and only accessible by local residents.

Cllr Page joined the meeting 18:11

Cllr Pearce proposed reinstating the land of the former Parklands play area as unlocked public open space, on a trial basis initially, subject to an inspection of the land being completed for any health and safety concerns, and verification that the entrance is not wide enough to allow vehicular access; seconded by Cllr Knight; ten Councillors voted in favour; Cllr Page did not participate in the vote as he was not present for the entire discussion.

102.2b. Aspiring to install a bin at the entrance to every Town Council owned park and play area, and bicycle racks and benches where necessary – It was requested that the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee considers how this can be

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee

Via Video Meeting
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implemented, with timescales and a firm plan. Cllr Hardie proposed approval of the recommendation to aspire to install a bin at the entrance to every Town Council owned park and play area, and bicycle racks and benches where necessary; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

- 102.3. Progress with the purchase of the wheelchair accessible picnic bench for the Stoven Close play area – Quotations have been sought. The lowest price is £370 plus VAT for the bench alone, which is made from recycled materials. The Committee would also like the bench to be securely installed on a concrete pad. The Council could consider the requirement for wheelchair accessible picnic benches more widely across its other sites, but had received a specific request from a wheelchair user who regularly visits Stoven Close. A budget was previously agreed but may not be enough to cover the purchase of the bench and the installation. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to proceed with the purchase of the wheelchair accessible picnic bench for the Stoven Close play area, within a maximum budget of £1,000, and with delegated authority to the Clerk to progress, and for consideration to be given to wheelchair accessible picnic benches more widely across the Town Council's assets, as part of the five year plans; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. There was some discussion about the specific location of the bench with the play area. Norse may be able to offer some advice with this, but there is also an additional piece of play equipment to be installed.
- 102.4. Progress with memorial lecterns for the Belle Vue Park Peace Garden and Kensington Gardens Holocaust Memorial Garden – Cllr Coleby will be sending through additional information. The Heritage Plaques Policy states that a Working Group is supposed to meet annually to review the portfolio of plaques. Officers will look to arrange a meeting via Zoom. The Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society has details on the current provision of heritage plaques, and this information will be forwarded to officers. It was agreed to carry this item forward to January's meeting.
- 102.5. Arrangements for the lockable bollards at Sparrows Nest and Kensington Gardens and related signage – There are health and safety concerns at Sparrows Nest, but the bollard has been removed temporarily, as it can present a trip hazard when lowered. It was suggested the bollard should be relocated further into the park. Arrangements for the Triangle Market bollard will also need to be considered. There has been approval by Council to purchase two lockable bollards for Kensington Gardens, although it is understood that delivery drivers do not enter the park to make deliveries. Signage has not yet been progressed, until arrangements for the bollards are clearer. The main issue at Sparrows Nest has been members of the public driving into the park when they have no authority to do so. The bollard could be moved further into the park, but vehicular access up to the café would not be permitted. Consultation with stakeholders did take place, who expressed no objections to the bollards. Cllr Coleby proposed installing the bollard further into Sparrows Nest, just above the mini 'roundabout' structure, with appropriate accompanying signage permitting access to authorised vehicles only, and making enquiries with Norse as to the possibility of creating disabled parking bays outside the Movie Makers Theatre; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. It was agreed that the Kensington Gardens bollards should not be progressed until the issues with Sparrows Nest have been resolved, although the signage will likely be the same. The Committee was happy to progress the signage first and the wording will depend on whether disabled parking bays can be accommodated within the park.
- 102.6. Potential nursery plans – There is a piece of land at Arnold's Bequest which was historically used as allotments. The land has become overgrown, but it was suggested that if it were possible for the Town Council to lease the land from the Arnold's Bequest Charity Board, it could form nursery, a potential base for the Community Wardens, a composting area and storage of equipment. If not already, the boundaries would need to be determined to establish the extent of the Charity Board's ownership. Planning

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
Via Video Meeting
18:00 on 7 December 2020

permission may be required. If a lease were possible, it is assumed this would be at commercial rates, rather than any favourable rate. The Arnold's Bequest Charity Board will be asked to consider this as an in principle request, the legal ramifications will be explored and enquiries will be made with the Charity Commission to see if a lease is possible.

102.7. Any updates on improvement work to Whitton Green – The project is progressing as well as it can. East Suffolk Council should have a clearer idea about the cost and available funding by the end of the year. It is understood the Town Council has granted some delegations to progress the project, but if not the plans will go to Full Council to be considered. It was requested that information be added to the noticeboard to keep residents updated about the project. There will be a more detailed discussion about the funding in the confidential session.

103. Allotments:

103.1. How to enhance and expand the Town Council's provision of allotments – Further to the discussion at item 102.6, it was queried whether the land at Arnold's Bequest could be used for allotments, if it has been historically. This would be for the Charity Board to consider. The Allotments Association has indicated it can take on further sites, if appropriate land is identified. Cllr Pearce proposed referring this matter to the Allotments Sub-Committee for further consideration; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

103.2. Noting that a planning application is being submitted for vehicular access and parking at the Normanston allotments – This was noted. The Council had previously decided to cover the cost of the planning application.

104. The draft Mulch Policy

Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Mulch Policy; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour. Once adopted, the policy will be sent to Norse so they are aware of the Council's plans.

105. How to progress the installation of a bus shelter on Harris Avenue

There has been no progress since the last meeting. Cllr Butler is awaiting information from Suffolk County Council. It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda until such a time as Cllr Butler has an update to report.

106. Usage of the Gunton Drive former telephone kiosk, in addition to the defibrillator

A group of local residents would like to see the former telephone kiosk also used as a lending library, seed swap and sharing and a noticeboard, both for the community and the Town Council. There were no objections to this in principle, but the Committee would like to see a plan of how this will be accommodated, to ensure the defibrillator will not be obstructed. Delivery of the defibrillator is still pending.

107. The results of the environmental assessments of the Town Council's ponds, if received

The results should be received within two weeks. This item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

108. Which Town Council assets would benefit from enhanced security

It was suggested that measures should be considered for The Ness, and also the public conveniences on Rotterdam Road, where there have been incidents of anti-social behaviour. Those facilities are now being closed overnight. Anti-social behaviour has been reported at Sparrows Nest and the Denes Oval. There had been discussions previously about CCTV coverage at all of the Town Council's sites. The Council would need to consider whether this is

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee

Via Video Meeting
18:00 on 7 December 2020

monitored or recorded, but some sites currently have no power sources. It was suggested that the Town Council should engage with the Police, as a visible Police presence can be a deterrent. It is difficult for the Town Council to make an informed decision until it knows more about East Suffolk Council's plans for its CCTV service. The Council could consider employing its own Police Community Support Officer, which could be at a cost of approximately £30,000 per year. The Community Wardens should be appointed next year. It was agreed these plans should be considered further by the Community Safety Committee.

109. Noting that the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee is considering Committee and Sub-Committee structures and Terms of Reference, and consideration of whether to submit any comments

This Committee did not wish to submit any comments, and it was agreed to remove this item from the agenda now.

110. Requests to hire the Kensington Gardens Ammunition Bunker (some aspects may be confidential)

There was a general discussion about hire terms. Any lease agreement may require change of use consent. Currently there is no power or running water at the Bunker. It was suggested the Council could consider short-term hiring for the interim, to bring the building back into use and see if any changes are needed. The main issues are what use would be permitted and the access rights. The Council currently has permission for pop-up art exhibitions. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers make enquiries regarding the planning, legal and access issues, to determine what use would be permitted; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

111. Requests to grant Freedom of the Town, and Freeman status (some aspects may be confidential)

Cllr Hardie proposed considering the individual requests received against the policy; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. This Committee needs to ensure the applications now adhere to the policy, having been referred back to the applicants at the last meeting. This Committee recommended amendments to the policy to relax the requirement that the nominated person must be aware of the nomination.

112. A request for transfer/sale of land at Uplands (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

113. A request to trade at the Links Road car park in 2021 (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

114. Date of the next meeting

4 January 2021 18:00

115. Items for the next agenda and close

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

Cllr Green 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.

116. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
Via Video Meeting
18:00 on 7 December 2020

110. Requests to hire the Kensington Gardens Ammunition Bunker (some aspects may be confidential) – There was a confidential discussion about the individual requests received.

111. Requests to grant Freedom of the Town, and Freeman status (some aspects may be confidential) – There was a confidential discussion about the applications received.

Cllr Pitts left the meeting 20:00

Cllr Coleby made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour. Cllr Green made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Taylor made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Knight; all in favour.

112. A request for transfer/sale of land at Uplands (confidential)

Cllr Breakspear left the meeting 20:16

There was a confidential discussion regarding the request received. Cllr Coleby made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

113. A request to trade at the Links Road car park in 2021 (confidential) – There was a confidential discussion regarding the request received. Cllr Green made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

102.7 Any updates on improvement work to Whitton Green Whitton Green – There was a confidential discussion regarding funding for the project.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:52.

Signed:

4 January 2021