

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:30 on 15 December 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard (Chair), Neil Coleby, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang and Andy Pearce

Also in attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

99. 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.

100. Apologies for absence and changes to the membership of this Sub-Committee

Apologies were received from Cllrs Bob Breakspear, John Pitts and Alice Taylor. Cllrs Amanda Frost and Graham Parker had resigned from this Sub-Committee. Cllr Tara Carlton had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

101. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

102. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 17 November 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted.

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

There were none.

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

The review is taking place in January. This Sub-Committee did not wish to submit any comments and it was agreed to remove this item from the agenda now.

105. Progress with the development of wildflower areas at Clarkes Lane and Daffodil Walk

A quotation from Norse response is pending and this item will be carried forward. A Daffodil Walk resident has made contact to report a fallen tree and request a progress update. Daffodil bulbs were due to be planted by Norse and this will be checked.

106. A proposal from the Climate Emergency Committee to develop an area in Fen Park to produce mulch

Cllr Hardie has been liaising with the Fen Park Friends, who would like to see this progressed and are considering a suitable location. If possible, there would need to be some sort of fencing to prevent fly tipping of normal green waste, and signage may be required. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next agenda and Cllr Hardie will come back with some suggestions.

107. Review of the Town Council's Tree Policy

Cllr Pearce has emailed his comments to officers. There are statements in the policy which do not allow for the flexibility and discretion the Council is seeking. It is important that the policy is applied consistently on a case-by-case basis and it was suggested that caveat wording could be added where appropriate, so as not to undermine the whole policy. The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee will be reviewing the policy at its meeting tomorrow. It was agreed the policy should also be reviewed by the Assets, Inclusion and

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Development Committee at its meeting in January.

108. Information boards and/or required signage for the Town Council's parks

There are sites owned by the Town Council whose names are not recognisable, or which are known by different names locally. Some alternative names were considered by this Sub-Committee but a decision was made not to proceed as work had already begun on the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Many sites on the lists were open spaces rather than parks. It was suggested signage could be considered for the main parks first and built into the considerations at item 110. From the results of parks audit, it will need to be determined what existing provision there is and what is required, which will help to determine the priorities. Cllr Coleby had prepared a meeting paper which was displayed at the meeting. This Committee would like to see over entrance name signs progressed as a priority, where parks have an historical link, or information boards if not. A supplier the Town Council has used before for benches could provide coated and weatherproofed over entrance name signs. As discussed previously, it was suggested that QR codes could be used to provide more detailed information, which would be easier than signage to keep updated. The meeting paper will be circulated and this item will be carried forward to the next meeting. Once there is a clearer idea as to how signage will be progressed, it will be incorporated with the five year plans. Officers will seek quotations for the over entrance name signs ahead of the next meeting, but will need to ensure they are tall enough to allow vehicular access to parks where appropriate. Cllr Coleby proposed carrying this item forward to the next agenda as a standalone item, to then be incorporated with the five year plans once a way forward has been determined; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

109. Consideration of the following regarding play areas:

109.1 Which play area to prioritise for refurbishment in 2021 – 2022 – Subject to approval by Full Council, there will be a £70,000 budget provision for 2021 – 2022. Norse has been carrying out some repainting of play equipment under the Repairs and Maintenance budget as well. An extra piece of equipment is due to be installed at Stoven Close, Whitton Green is in progress, Nightingale Road and Normanston Park have been refurbished recently and there are no play areas in the St Margaret's West and Tom Crisp wards. It was suggested that Sparrows Nest could be looked at next, alongside a smaller site, such as St Margaret's Plain, which would benefit from an additional piece of equipment. Some of the matting at Fen Park still requires replacement, and some of the equipment needs painting. Cllr Hardie will take some photographs and send them to officers. The matting at the Britten Road play area is in a poor condition and was reported previously. The play equipment at Britten Road is worn and some of it is the undergrowth. It was suggested that the play area at Sparrows Nest could be enlarged, to cater for toddlers and juniors. The Ness is nearby, and is aimed primarily at older children, but seems to be well used by children of all ages. The play areas on Britten Road and London Road South are both in a poor condition, but the open space at the London Road South play area is well used and could benefit from football nets. Many of the play areas have issues, but any urgent health and safety concerns are being reported to Norse, and some of the smaller issues can be resolved under the Repairs and Maintenance budget. The recently refurbished Nightingale Road play area looks good but has no signage identifying it as belonging to the Town Council. There were concerns that smaller play areas could be overlooked and it was suggested that if the Council does decide to prioritise one of the play areas in the main parks, it should also consider one of the smaller play areas alongside it, if the budget allows. It was suggested that indicative quotes could be sought for some of the sites identified. Sparrows Nest was suggested as the Council has received comments from members of the public. There

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has been an issue with the funding for the additional piece of play equipment for Stoven Close, but the Council does have funds in reserves. It was agreed that a five year plan approach to play areas would be beneficial.

109.2 Further improvements to the St Margaret’s Plain play area – A quotation has been provided for matting, including for the mound where there used to be a slide. This is not because there is a particular health and safety issue, but more for aesthetic purposes. It was suggested to carry this item forward to the next agenda, to consider alongside any quotations for the other play areas. It was suggested this play area could carry a theme related to some of its historical links.

110. Five-year plans, priorities for 2021 – 2022, and any related funding for the following parks:

110.1 Normanston Park – Cllr Coleby has started work on a document based on ideas discussed previously. There was a suggestion to include The Ness in the five year plans, but the plans are more linked to development and upgrading of the parks, rather than maintenance. Maintenance is a separate matter affecting all of the parks. This Sub-Committee would like to understand the current provision in each of parks to determine what is needed. Indicative quotations for benches, bins and bicycle racks would help the Sub-Committee to understand priorities and when items can be progressed. The lack of lighting has been raised as a particular issue at Normanston Park, Fen Park and Kensington Gardens, and there are more environmentally friendly options which can be explored. The document lists the development opportunities for each site. Cllr Coleby will also incorporate the map of benches, bins and bicycles racks. Public conveniences and play equipment have separate budgets. The Sparrows Nest and Fen Park public conveniences have already been identified as priorities. The Sub-Committee would like to compile a check list to provide a clear picture of what provision there is in each park. Cllr Coleby’s document will be circulated and will be considered further at the next meeting.

110.2 Fen Park

110.3 Kensington Gardens

110.4 Sparrows Nest

110.5 Belle Vue Park

111. Date of the next meeting

19 January 2021 14:30

112. Items for the next Agenda and Close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda, in addition to those already being carried forward. It was requested that officers compile a checklist, as discussed at item 110.1. Cllr Coleby’s documents regarding signage and the five year plans will be circulated.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the livestream of the meeting. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting.

113. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

19 January 2021