

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency Committee
Via Video Meeting
15:30 on 4 August 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Alan Green, Paul Page, Andy Pearce and David Youngman (Chair)

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

22. Welcome

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

23. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Peter Lang and Graham Parker, and non-Councillor member Emma Bateman. Cllr Jacqueline Hardie had not provided apologies. Non-Councillor member Ashley Ford-McAllister could not join the meeting due to technical difficulties.

24. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllrs Barnard and Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 29.

25. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 7 July 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments.

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

A comment from a member of the public had been received regarding item 33.3 and was circulated to the Committee and displayed at the meeting. The member of the public had commented that Lowestoft's cycling network was disjointed, and encouraged the Town Council to run a public survey asking for routes and suggestions on how to make cycling in the town safer and more popular, accompanied by a public promotion of cycling. The member of the public also expressed disappointment that none of the funding to improve Suffolk's cycling infrastructure will be spent in Lowestoft.

27. The current provision and costs of bottle banks for glass recycling in Lowestoft and whether this should be increased to appropriate Lowestoft Town Council sites

It was clarified that East Suffolk Norse do not determine the location of bottle banks. Conflicting information has been received from different sources previously. Cllr Pearce proposed that enquiries be made with the appropriate organisations for the next meeting, regarding cost and permissions for increasing the provision of bottle banks in Lowestoft; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

28. Consideration of the following regarding Fen Park:

28.1. An additional provision of bins – This Committee specifically has been asked to consider this item as it relates to a wider policy position for the Council on whether more bins should be provided at public expense on Town Council land, and raise the public expectation that they will be able to dispose of their litter in public places, or whether visitors should be encouraged to take their litter with them. There is a provision of bins in other parks owned by the Town Council and it was suggested that this should be considered more widely across all the Town Council's parks, rather than provide bins at some locations but not others. It was suggested that fifty-litre capacity bins could be appropriate for this park, and may discourage fly-tipping, as not everyone will be willing to take their litter home with them. A public survey is being put together regarding the

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provision of facilities within parks, including bins, benches and bicycle racks. Cllr Barnard proposed a recommendation to Full Council to purchase fifty-litre capacity bins for Fen Park; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

- 28.2. Exploring the possibility of providing lighting to at least two poles in the park – Public safety does need to be considered alongside climate emergency and environmental concerns. Should the Town Council wish to proceed this would be subject to the relevant permissions being sought and a survey of the poles. It was previously discussed that this would be considered for Normanston Park also. It was suggested that this be included with the public survey and considered strategically then.

29. The Friends of Gainsborough Drive Pond group’s maintenance of the site and plans for the removal and disposal of Water Speedwell from the pond

The advice from East Suffolk Norse’s Countryside Officer is that the pond weed should be partially removed, leaving approximately a third in place to provide protection to wildlife. The Gainsborough Drive Pond Group is looking to develop an area at the site to compost the waste.

30. A request from the Friends of Kensington Gardens to install water butts in Kensington Gardens

This requested has also been considered by the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee. It has been brought to this Committee as well to consider the value of water butts versus the impact on the environment to create them. There are also public health and safety concerns regarding the Legionella risks of potentially stagnant water, and whether the water butts could be toppled. Advice has been sought from East Suffolk Norse, who would need to be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of any water butts installed. It was agreed that advice should be sought from East Suffolk Norse regarding the Legionella risks, and whether any other authorities locally have installed water butts, and how they mitigate and manage the risks.

31. Approval of the Tree Council funding application and consider plans for implementation

The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and the AID Committee will be considering the implementation. The successful application is a positive step, and will increase the Town Council’s tree portfolio. Two cherry trees are being planted for VJ Day, which East Suffolk Norse will water. Maintaining trees at other sites where there are no contractors on site regularly and no standpipe will be more difficult. Volunteer groups are being considered and Cllr Coleby will approach the fire service to see if they would like to be involved. A condition of the funding is that young people must be involved with the tree planting, and enquiries are being made with local schools and youth organisations.

32. The Woodland Trust official record of ancient trees in Lowestoft and how best to increase the local beneficial impact of trees

The Committee would like to see the ancient trees publicly promoted by the Town Council, with images, and an area on the website to positively promote trees, including data on the Town Council’s tree stock. Cllrs Barnard and Green volunteered to photograph the ancient trees.

33. How to implement the Sustainability Strategy, following its adoption by Full Council, including through:

- 33.1. Encouraging reduction in single use and unnecessary plastic and other packaging – There was a national initiative in July encouraging households against the use of single-use plastics. It was suggested that rather than limit this initiative to one month, the

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Council should explore ways to extend it. The Council has secured funding for drinking water fountains for two of its parks. Cllrs Page and Youngman will consider this further and provide feedback at the next meeting.

- 33.2. Declaring a health emergency – One aspect of implementing the Sustainability Strategy is looking at health and wellbeing. The pandemic has highlighted these issues and the Government is also looking at measures to improve health and wellbeing. The health and wellbeing strategy was displayed at the meeting, which forms part of the Sustainability Strategy. Although the Town Council is not a statutory health authority, it could exercise the General Power of Competence to fund defibrillators and explore other measures. The document also complements the climate emergency declaration, as food sources may be affected by pollution and climate change. Should the Council decide to declare a health emergency it could progress that and the Sustainability Strategy through specific measures in this document, which the Clerk explained to the Committee. Although not a health authority, the Town Council is still concerned for the wellbeing of its electorate, and recent studies have shown that a disproportionately high number of residents in the town rely on food banks and food fridges. Cllr Green advised he could arrange a visit to the food bank for Councillors to see the demand. It was suggested that local organisations supporting mental wellbeing be contacted as well for their views, and how the Town Council may support them. Any such organisations would be welcome to submit a grant application also. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to declare a health emergency and adopt the health emergency declaration as a working document; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 33.3. Supporting the growth in cycling, walking and other forms of transport/exercise – Further to the comment submitted by a member of the public, it was agreed that the Town Council could release a statement to express its concern regarding the lack of investment in the town, and to promote cycle routes and ask residents for ideas as to where they would like to see cycle routes. The Town Council cannot raise expectations, but this could inform its lobbying position. It was suggested that cycling routes from North Lowestoft to Gorleston and Great Yarmouth should be advocated. A cycling network in Waveney has previously been referenced by East Suffolk Council and some information is available online through Sustrans. It was suggested that local organisations such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust may also be able to give advice regarding eco-tourism and cycle routes in other areas. Bicycle racks are being looked at as part of the public consultation and a wider strategy in the town. In the meantime, the Town Council will promote cycling in the town in its weekly entry in the local press.

34. Developing a policy which takes account of climate emergency considerations for utility procurement and contracts

A procurement specification needs to be set. The Clerk will start working on how to put together a specification, including exploring how brokers assess energy providers' environmental credentials.

35. The Suffolk County Council Rolling Five Year Plan for Cycling in Suffolk and recent Government announcements on funding for cycling schemes and £50 payments to residents for servicing bicycles

Cllr Green, as Mayor, expressed his disappointment with Suffolk County Council's decision. It was agreed that the Town Council will publicly express its disappointment via the local press and will combine this with promotion of the public survey and cycling in Lowestoft. The £50 payment to residents scheme has now ended, but other schemes may be run in the future.

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- 36. The lack of inclusion of Lowestoft in Suffolk Waste Partnership’s scheme to access discounted home composting bins**
It appears that Lowestoft is now included, but official confirmation is pending.
- 37. Date of the next meeting**
1 September 2020 15:30
- 38. Items for the next agenda and close**
Some items had been identified during the meeting and will be carried forward. There were no additional requests for items to be included on the next agenda.
- 39. Resolution to close the meeting to the public**
There were no confidential items for consideration. The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the livestream and closed the meeting at 16:47.

Signed:
1 September 2020