



Lowestoft Town Council

Pond Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Ponds are an important biodiversity resource to their environment, but need management to maintain their health. This is the same whether they are a natural pond such as at Normanston and Fen parks or a designed man-made pond such as those in Kensington Gardens and Sparrows' Nest park. As the custodian of our ponds the Council will aim to deliver a balanced environment in and around all our ponds that nurtures wildlife, sustains itself, and provides pleasure and educational opportunities for the community. Our goal is to conserve, enhance and develop our natural ponds and man-made water features.
- 1.2 Pond ecology can be described as the interaction of the life in the pond with the environment that exists there. A shallow, nutrient rich pond, exposed to sunlight with little water flowing through it will be teeming with algae and aquatic plants. It may have very little animal life present because of low oxygen levels. In contrast a newly created, deep, spring fed pond may have little life of any kind in it because of low temperatures and lack of food supply.
- 1.3 All ponds age. A pond begins with mostly water, few nutrients, and little aquatic life. Over time the pond accumulates nutrients. This enrichment process is called eutrophication. The addition of nutrients stimulates the growth of aquatic life. These organisms live and grow and die. Their remains decay in the pond and the nutrients it took to grow them are released back into the water of the pond to keep the cycle going. Eventually, though, there will be an accumulation of material that resists decay and the pond will fill up.

2.0 Pond Maintenance

- 2.1 As a pond owner the Council should slow this process down as much as possible. Some of the measures necessary to maintain a healthy pond are described below:
- Regular visual checks are important to check on the health of the pond and also to check for rubbish and other detritus that may be in the pond.
 - Water monitoring tests should be carried out on ponds when deemed necessary, but especially when monitoring for algal blooms during hot weather periods.
 - Animal access to ponds or streams that feed ponds can have a negative effect on the pond because of the inputs of nitrogen and phosphorus from their waste, marginal and bank planting will be effective in reducing access, see point 4.
 - Reed bed planting and marginal planting in natural ponds, needs little regular maintenance other than litter removal and assists with reducing animal access to pond.
 - Where wildfowl are present on the pond then regular checks should be carried out between April and mid-October to remove dead wildfowl and so prevent outbreaks of avian botulism.
 - Keeping sediment out of the pond prevents the pond from being made shallow so it is important to consider a planned de-silting programme, monitoring silt levels every 5 years and actioning as necessary to maintain pond health, depth and life.
 - Oxygenation of ponds happens in two major ways. Plants and algae do photosynthesis during the day and wind adds oxygen at night. Thus, plants and an open aspect allowing for the movement of the wind over the pond's water surface is necessary for a healthy pond. This means that smaller ponds should have carefully managed margins to allow for this movement of wind over their surfaces.



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- Oxygenating plants should be introduced in ponds, especially those without marginal planting and an obvious water flow/source, but this needs monitoring to make sure their growth does not affect the ecological balance of the pond.
- Care should be taken that only appropriate species of fish or wildlife should be introduced into ponds and that any transportation of fish or wildlife should be done with the appropriate licenses and that minimal stress is caused to the fish or wildlife.
- Where the health of the pond is not in a positive state then consideration should be given to the introduction of floating wind powered water circulating equipment and the installation of sonic algal control devices.
- Tree and foliage maintenance is necessary to allow for wind movement across the surface of a pond and to maintain light levels on the ponds and hence maintain a healthy pond.
- In the event of a severe period of frost and snow, ponds should be monitored to check that oxygenation of the water is not at a stressed level.
- Where it is considered that a rare or endangered species has taken residence in a pond then the appropriate organisation will be contacted for advice and all necessary action taken to ensure the safety of that species.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1 In order to ensure that the Council's ponds are properly maintained, the Facilities Manager will work with council contractors and staff to ensure that a maintenance schedule is in place and will carry out spot checks to ensure that the maintenance is ongoing and take into account the measures listed above.

3.2 If any issue arises that the Facilities Manager cannot deal with within existing policy or funding then the issue will be raised with the Town Clerk to bring to councillors' attention via the Implementation Committee. Should additional funds be required the Implementation Committee will make recommendation to the Finance & Governance Committee.