

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:30 on 27 April 2021

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Robert Breakspear, Neil Coleby, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Andy Pearce and John Pitts

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

164. 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.

165. Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received. Cllrs Tara Carlton and Peter Lang had not provided apologies and were absent.

166. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There are standing declarations. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Kensington Gardens. Cllr Hardie declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Fen Park. Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Gainsborough Drive pond.

167. The draft minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2021 and the signing of previous minutes subsequent to 17 March 2020

Whilst legislation allows Councils to meet via video meeting, minutes can be formally approved and signed. The Sub-Committee was happy to approve the minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2021. The Chair had a hard copy available and signed them during the meeting. The Sub-Committee was happy for all previous minutes subsequent to 17 March 2020 to be signed and officers will arrange to make hard copies available to the Chair.

168. Advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

A public comment had been received with regard to item 179.2. Options for improvements to the St Margaret's Plain play area are being considered and amongst them is the option to remove the mound. Children do however use it for imaginative play and simple improvements to it could be a more cost effective and simpler option. The comment will be taken into consideration at the relevant agenda item.

169. Five-year plans for the Town Council's parks and priorities for year one, including specifications for benches, bins and bicycle racks and noting that any recommendations regarding bins will go directly to Full Council

Bins were discussed at the last meeting as a priority. It was queried whether purchase and install costs have been obtained, and how remaining funds in parks development budget will be allocated. A fast food retailer had previously offered to sponsor the picnic bench in Fen Park destroyed by fire and would like to know the cost. Cllr Hardie will forward contact details to officers to provide information about the cost of a replacement bench. The Council wanted to ensure it had a strategic approach rather than progressing the purchase of individual items of furniture. Cllr Coleby has put together information on the requirements for each park and he and the Committee Clerk have been seeking quotations. The Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee has agreed that any recommendations arising from this meeting regarding the purchase of bins specifically can go straight to the Full Council meeting later today for consideration. The Budget and Loan Sub-Committee has recommended that the anticipated underspend of £39,317 from the

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parcs development budget in 2020 – 2021 should be carried forward to the 2021 – 2022 parks development budget, rather than being allocated to an earmarked reserve, as there is likely to be significant expenditure from this budget to achieve the year one and two priorities for the five-year plans. The document Cllr Coleby had prepared regarding the provision of bins, benches and bicycle racks was displayed. The cost of installation onto a concrete pad would need to be checked but should not exceed £450 plus VAT. Cllr Hardie proposed a recommendation to Full Council to purchase nineteen Glasdon Jubilee 110 litter bins and six Glasdon Sherwood litter bins; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour. Benches and bicycle racks still need to be discussed. Cllr Coleby's document has identified several different options. It was agreed that an item should be added to the agenda for the AID Committee to give this consideration at their meeting on 17 May, and in the interim the document should be circulated for Councillors to give their views.

170. Available CIL and s.106 funding and how this may be used within the Town Council's parks and open spaces

The raising of s106 for public funds ceased in 2013 so only a small amount is still available. About £15,000 is available, arising from the development of land off of Foxborough Road. There is no deadline for expenditure at this stage as further payments are due. CIL funding is available but will be a reduced sum. The Council has budgeted wisely for its parks anyway. Any approaching deadlines for the expenditure of CIL funding will be discussed at the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting. As work evolves on the five-year plans it was agreed that there should be cross referencing against CIL and s106 availability and identification of where funds can be used as we go along, as it will likely apply to different wards.

171. Development of procedures including the Selection of Materials for Site Development Procedure

The Friends of Fen Park have achieved funding towards the development of raised beds, using recycled plastic material as was advised to them by the Council. Permission is required from the Council for all of the plans the Friends would like to progress, and they will need to submit a formal proposal to be considered.

The Selection of Materials for Site Development Procedure had been circulated. Point L of the procedure states that waste for recycling must be segregated from landfill waste and there was a concern this could commit the Council to providing segregated bins. This type of bin has been installed at The Ness but is not always used correctly and is very difficult to enforce. At point B, it was requested that this be extended to say unless the order is future proofed and the items ordered can be used at a future date. At point C, it was requested that this be extended to include sustainable and renewable materials, as well as recyclable materials. At point F it was requested that an amendment be made that vehicles/equipment should only be left running where there is an environmental benefit to doing so, as sometimes the start-up and shut down process is more energy consuming. At point I it was suggested that the wording could be amended as follows: all soils and mulches must be responsibly sourced and utmost care taken not to introduce any diseases and invasive species and where it is practicable and beneficial it will be produced onsite. At point L it was suggested that the wording could be amended to state that waste will be segregated in line with local recycling opportunities, where practicable. The Climate Emergency Committee will consider the proposed changes.

172. How to develop areas in Fen Park and Kensington Gardens to produce mulch

Cllr Breakspear has identified a potentially suitable location in Kensington Gardens and has

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circulated the details. This will require the formal approval of the Friends Group as well as the Council. The Friends of Fen Park have identified a location they believe would be suitable and Cllr Hardie will send the details through. The areas in both parks would require some sort of screening to prevent public access. Once details are received from both groups this can be considered by the AID Committee. It had been agreed that the Council would organise stakeholders' forums and meetings of the Friends Groups. A meeting of the Friends Groups was organised fairly recently, and from that a WhatsApp group was set up to maintain a line of contact between the groups. The Friends Groups have also been made aware that they are welcome to attend meetings of this Sub-Committee. It was suggested that meeting of the Friends Groups could be arranged for the spring and the autumn.

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

This is part of the five year plans. A cohesive design needs to be agreed. It had previously been suggested that Cllr Taylor may be able to produce a design for the wrought iron over-entrance archways. The Committee Clerk has started seeking quotations but a design is required for an accurate quotation. It was suggested that the Council could ask if any local schools would be interested in being involved with this project. However, it is unlikely this could be added to the curriculum any earlier than September, if at all, which may delay the process too much. The Council already has an agreed logo and font so now needs to decide which parks to prioritise. The Sub-Committee members will consider the information previously provided and this item will be carried forward to the next meeting. Officers will also speak with Cllr Taylor regarding the design of the over-entrance archways.

174. The boundaries and signage for land pledged to WildEast

WildEast do not have any standard signage but have offered to help the Council design its own. Before the land at the North Denes, Fen Park and Clarkes Lane is pledged, the boundaries need to be identified. The Sub-Committee was in agreement to pledge the land at the North Denes as a whole, as designated walkways could still be identified and maintained. The areas discussed at Fen Park were the areas next to sewage works and at the back towards Tom Crisp Way. At Clarkes Lane it is the area leading down towards the pit, bordered by the two pathways. Cllr Coleby proposed proceeding with pledging the land identified to WildEast, with delegated authority to officers to progress appropriate signage; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

Cllr Coleby temporarily left the meeting 15:33 and Cllr Breakspear presided over the meeting

175. The management of the Town Council's ponds, including oxygenation, de-silting and bank re-profiling

Cllr Coleby returned 15:34

Advice is needed regarding the management of the Gainsborough Drive pond. Local residents would like to see the pond deepened but would like advice on bank re-profiling and whether the bank should be raised at one end, lowered at the other, or left as is. The Council has a ponds and waterways budget, but has a separate budget of £17,500 for the Fen Park pond, due to the significance of the work required, which may be held in separate reserves. Officers are seeking advice and quotations for the management of all of the ponds. Cllr Pearce proposed moving the £17,500 funds in the Fen Park pond budget reserve into the ponds and waterways budget, in anticipation it will be spent this year; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

176. Planting plans for Fen Park from the Friends of Fen Park

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The Sub-Committee praised the work of the Friends Group and would like to support them as much as it can. The Friends Group will need to submit a formal proposal for its planting plans, for the Council to consider.

177. Planting plans for the Holocaust Memorial Garden in Kensington Gardens

The Council has already agreed to progress the purchase of memorial lecterns for Belle Vue Park and Kensington Gardens. There is an associated planting plan for Kensington Gardens, which it is understood has already been approved. The bulbs would need to be ordered ready for planting in the autumn. Cllr Coleby will send the details to officers, who will seek quotations.

178. Arrangements for replacement trees/planting, following incidents of environmental vandalism on Town Council land

There are concerns regarding the widespread destruction of trees at the Gunton Cliff area. Officers are writing to all residents in the area. The Council is also looking into claimed covenants of rights to a sea view at the cost of the environment. Elsewhere, there has been damage to bulbs and daffodils intended for the enjoyment of all. Some thought needs to be given to what replacement planting should take place, particularly at Gunton, and would require some specialist advice. The AID Committee has delegated authority to officers to seek the most mature and robust replacement trees possible. A proposal will be brought back to this Sub-Committee once advice has been sought. The Friends of Kensington Gardens have had issues with school children in the gardens and have reported the issues to the school concerned. In future, formal approaches should be made through the Town Council. The Council will use its columns in the Lowestoft Journal to try to educate on the importance of protecting and enjoying the environment. It was suggested that the Council could sponsor an environmental prize and could work with schools to get young people involved with protecting and supporting the environment. The Events and Communications Officer will start looking into this.

The meeting needed to close at 16:00 for another meeting which was due to take place. At 15:50 it was agreed the remaining agenda items should be carried forward to the next meeting, apart from item 182.2, which Cllr Breakspear wished to discuss as part of the confidential session.

179. Play areas:

179.1 The provision of a path at the Stoven Close play area

179.2 Options and costs for the refurbishment of the Sparrows Nest play area and improvements to the St Margaret's Plain and Britten Road play areas

180. Alternative uses for the gate removed from The Ravine footpath

181. The security of Fen Park and the Britten Road play area, particularly regarding unauthorised vehicular access

182. Kensington Gardens:

182.1 Proposals for a paved area near the tennis courts (some aspects may be confidential)

182.2 Issues concerning a 'pathway' (confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

183. Date of the next meeting

18 May 2021 14:30

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184. Items for the next Agenda and Close

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

Cllr Hardie proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; 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.

185. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

182.2 Issues concerning a 'pathway' (confidential) – Cllr Breakspear raised some concerns regarding the grounds maintenance at Kensington Gardens.

The Chair closed the meeting 15:59.

Signed:

18 May 2021