

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:30 on 22 September 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard (Chair), Bob Breakspear, Neil Coleby and Andy Pearce

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

47. 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.

48. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Amanda Frost, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang, Graham Parker, John Pitts and Alice Taylor. Cllrs Tara Carlton had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

49. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Kensington Gardens, including the Friends Group. Cllr Barnard declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Gunton Residents' Association and Gainsborough Drive Pond. Cllr Coleby declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Lowestoft in Bloom. These had previously been declared as standing local non-pecuniary interests and it was noted that Cllr Taylor had also previously declared a standing local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Kensington Gardens, including the Friends Group, and Cllrs Parker and Pearce had also previously declared a standing local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Gunton Residents' Association and the Gainsborough Drive Pond.

50. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 18 August 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

Play areas had been discussed at the previous meeting, and it was requested that an item be included on the next agenda for any updates to be considered, including the Stoven Close wheelchair-accessible picnic bench and the survey of benches, bicycle racks and bins. Cllr Barnard has provided contact details to staff of someone who may be able to produce a map of The Scores for the Belle Vue Park entrance, as agreed at the last meeting.

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

A comment had been received from a member of the public enquiring whether any information had been obtained about what remedial and maintenance work can be progressed at the St Margaret's Plain play area. Play areas will be discussed at the next meeting, so any updates will be considered then.

52. Trees

52.1 Progress with a public campaign to promote the beneficial impact of trees - It was previously agreed that a Working Group would be set up from members of this Sub-Committee and the Climate Emergency Committee. All Councillors were emailed but no responses were received. Staff can still progress the public campaign and it was agreed that a page should be added to the website promoting the beneficial impact of trees and highlighting local noteworthy trees.

52.2 Progression of procurement and planting of the Tree Council funded trees, including arrangements and costs for watering – Cllr Barnard knows a group of residents who have offered to assist with watering the trees and cutting the grass at the former Parklands play area, but have found the paperwork to form a Friends Group too

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complex. If the activities are limited to regular watering and periodic grass cutting, it may be this can be managed without comprehensive paperwork. Enquiries are being made with Community Action Suffolk to see if they have a suitable framework. As a condition of the Tree Council funding, young people need to be involved with the planting. Schools have been approached and some have expressed an interest, depending on restrictions imposed due to the pandemic. Cllr Coleby will be contacting the fire service regarding Rosedale Park.

Cllr Pearce joined the meeting 14:44

The Finance and Governance Committee will consider the ongoing maintenance costs of the trees. Where volunteer groups are not forthcoming, maintenance of the trees will be organised via contractors. The plan for cherry tree planting, which had been deferred, are mostly at sites which are already regularly tended by grounds maintenance staff. Staff will put together a spreadsheet to show which sites have volunteer groups, the ongoing maintenance costs of the sites which do not, and which schools are interested in the project.

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

Enquiries are being made with Norse as to the cost to progress these. Some of the Daffodil Walk residents have expressed concerns that the Council is using this as a cost-cutting exercise and the area may become untidy as a result. A resident with an allergy to bee stings is also concerned about the potential increase in the number of bees to the site. The Council has declared a climate emergency and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to see what actions the Council has taken since then towards this. Cllr Lang has suggested two smaller areas of land at Daffodil Walk as alternative sites for re-wilding, although it is not known whether these areas are within the Town Council's ownership. Cllrs Barnard and Coleby are putting together more information for the Daffodil Walk residents on what would be involved in the re-wilding process. Staff can also send this to Norse as additional information to inform the quotation. This item will be carried forward to the next agenda for further consideration.

54. A planting scheme for plant and bulb orders

Cllr Coleby has put this together, and will progress this with staff. There is a need to progress this quickly, as seasonal worker assistance has been extended to assist with autumn planting. The Friends of Kensington Gardens would like some bulbs and Cllr Breakspear will confirm the quantities. A bulb order for Arnold's Bequest will need to be considered at the next Charity Board meeting. Plans for the Sparrows Nest Winter Garden will be progressed within next year's budget. It was queried whether three quotations need to be obtained, as it can be difficult to find three different suppliers to source certain plants from. The Council has a duty to obtain best value for money, and if reassurances can be given that this is the case, the order can proceed.

55. Five year plans for the following parks:

It was agreed that this cannot be considered fully until the audit of the Council's parks has taken place. The deadline is the end of September to receive the information back. The information will be presented to this Sub-Committee to consider, and it was requested that the information be circulated in advance of the meeting so it can be analysed beforehand.

55.1 Normanston Park

55.2 Fen Park

55.3 Kensington Gardens

55.4 Sparrows Nest, including a suggested Alice in Wonderland theme

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56. Areas of Town Council land to be considered for re-naming, and to suggesting alternative names

Many names currently used by the Town Council are not recognised locally, and some areas are known by several different names locally. It was suggested that the land at Uplands Road North could be renamed to Uplands Green and Uplands Hollow, but it was then clarified that the hollow is the former Parklands play area and not Uplands Road North. Clarkes Lane could become Clarkes Meadow, as a wildflower area is being progressed here. It was suggested that Daffodil Walk should remain as it is, and it would not be worth renaming the small area on Notley Road. Stoven Close could become Stoven Green. Delius Close could become Delius Piece and Britten Road could become Britten Piece, as both are named after composers. The land at the top of the High Street is commonly referred to as the Town Green. The Great Eastern Linear Park is known locally as The Trams and Rosedale Park is known locally as Broadwaters Park. It was suggested that Gunton Community Park should remain as it is. The land at London Road Pakefield could be named Pakefield Green and Turnberry Close, could become Turnberry Green. The land at Bentley Drive could be renamed Bracken Rise in recognition of one of the only rugby players who did not have a road named after him on that estate. It was requested that enquiries be made with East Suffolk Council to progress the transfer of the rest of the land at that site which the Town Council does not currently own, along with the two pieces of land at Daffodil Walk suggested by Cllr Lang, which is was confirmed are not owned by the Town Council. Should the Assets, Inclusion and Development (AID) Committee agree to the proposed name changes, community engagement and appropriate signage will need to be considered. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the AID Committee to progress the proposed name changes as discussed; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

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

It was agreed that welcome signage identifying the park name should be considered at least for the larger parks, such as Sparrows Nest, Belle Vue Park, Fen Park, Normanston Park and Kensington Gardens. This could be an arch across the entranceways but will likely vary from site to site, depending on the environment, character and history of each site. Information boards have also previously been discussed. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next agenda for consideration. The discussions may also tie in with the five year plans for the parks.

58. Date of the next meeting

20 October 2020 14:30

59. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Certain local groups have made comments on social media that they have found the Town Council difficult to deal with. It was agreed that communication between the Town Council and its Friends Groups needs to be improved, and it was suggested that a guide could be produced to clarify what activities the Friends Groups can do and what would need to be referred to the Town Council under health and safety or legal requirements. It was suggested that Friends Groups could be invited to meetings of this Sub-Committee to discuss any specific concerns they may have.

It was requested that an item be added to the appropriate agenda for either this Sub-Committee, or the AID Committee, to investigate whether it would be possible to install an outdoor tap on the old toilet block in Belle Vue Park, as there are difficulties in watering the plants in this area. This will be taken forward and enquiries are being made to establish what is inside the toilet block and whether any work is required on health and safety grounds.

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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 15:24.

60. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:
20 October 2020