

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 12 July 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Peter Lang, Paul Page and Andy Pearce

In attendance: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance (either in person or via Zoom webinar)

18. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained and the meeting was welcomed.

19. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wendy Brooks and David Youngman. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

20. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 27 as a member of the Gull Wing Stakeholder Group, but has not yet attended a meeting of the group.

21. The draft minutes of the meeting on 14 June 2021

Cllr Lang proposed acceptance of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

22. Public forum

Cllr Butler had submitted a comment in advance regarding item 26. Cllr Brooks had also submitted some comments regarding certain items on the agenda, which it was agreed would be incorporated into the discussion of those items.

23. Monitoring expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority

This Committee has not yet made expenditure from the climate emergency budget under its delegated authority. The carbon footprint survey is being progressed. It was requested that the Finance and Governance Committee decides where this expenditure should come from within the budget. Given the availability of funds, it may be more appropriate to use the climate emergency budget than the consultancy budget.

24. The reporting of specific hazards for cyclists in Lowestoft

It was queried whether the Town Council could have its own reporting tool on its website, which cyclists could use to report issues, which could then be collated and reported to Suffolk Highways and the results fed back to the Planning Committee, when it receives updates from the Highways representative. Issues such as broken glass present a hazard to cyclists and it was suggested that Councillors could carry out periodic inspections of their wards and report any issues they find. It was commented that the town would benefit from additional sheltered and secure cycle storage facilities. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee has been considering the cycle storage provision in the Town Council's parks. East Suffolk Council carried out a map based consultation regarding cycling provision, including cycle storage. The results of the survey are pending.

25. A request from Suffolk County Council to identify locations in Lowestoft which would benefit from secure, sheltered cycle storage

It was agreed that an email will be circulated to all Councillors requesting suggestions. It was commented that the seafront area would benefit from additional storage, particularly the South Pier and Claremont Pier areas, and the area at Waterloo Road where there used to be public conveniences.

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26. The provision of electric vehicle charging points on Lowestoft Town Council land

This would be an ongoing consideration for the Council. There has been some debate regarding the positives and negatives of electric vehicles and the installation of charging points and it was suggested that the Council would benefit from some professional advice regarding the climate, environmental and ethical considerations with regard to the wider transition to electric. Some fast charging points have been installed in Lowestoft already. East Suffolk Council own the majority of the public car parks in the town and it is not yet known if any will be installed in those. Consideration would also need to be given to a provision for residents who do not have private driveways. Options would be quite limited on land owned by the Town Council. It is understood some petrol stations in the town will be increasing their provision of charging points. Officers have been liaising with East Suffolk Council as to what expertise they have accessed to make assessments when considering their own provision. The next quarterly liaison meeting will be held shortly, where this can be discussed further. In trying to attract more visitors to the cultural and heritage quarters of the town, consideration should be given to providing charging points at the Town Hall and Marina Theatre. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers ask an appropriate person to speak with the Council about the climate, environmental and ethical considerations regarding the wider transition to electric; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour. Cllr Brooks had commented that she has concerns with electric vehicles being prioritised, and would prefer to see a focus on public transport and cycle lanes.

27. Data on the effect of Gull Wing on pollution levels in Lowestoft

Officers have requested this information and a response is pending. Cllr Barker has been appointed as the Council's representative to the Stakeholder Group but has not yet had a meeting to attend.

28. Making amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Town Council's Committees and Sub-Committees to more appropriately reflect how the Town Council's climate emergency declaration is being taken forward

Committee members will take this forward where they can. If not, officers can put some suggestions together and bring back to this Committee.

29. Implementation of the Sustainability Strategy

Any matters which cannot be readily picked up by this Committee can be allocated to the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee. The Council is already taking action to progress measures generally, but has not yet reviewed how the Strategy is being implemented. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting.

30. Increased support for volunteer litter picking

Volunteer litter picking has been taking place over the last few weeks, including around the Great Eastern Linear Park. Where volunteers come forward, it was agreed this should be encouraged and facilitated by the Town Council, and not just through formal Friends Groups. Prior to the pandemic, a school was going to carry out a litter pick of the boardwalk area of the Great Eastern Linear Park. That area is not currently accessible but it was requested that officers contact the school to see if they would still like to do this when appropriate, or another area of the Great Eastern Linear Park. It was confirmed that the Council has insurance cover for volunteer litter picking groups, as long as they comply with the Council's conditions. When litter picking on Town Council land permission should be sought in advance, which is a straightforward process and officers can support and advise. One of the issues is the provision of equipment, which the Finance and Governance Committee will need to consider. It was suggested that any expenditure regarding this could come from the Climate Emergency budget. The process should be made as straightforward as possible for volunteers. The Council could make equipment available to hire, to be managed by the group organiser. Equipment could be distributed to Friends Groups to manage, so long as the equipment is checked regularly to ensure it is still fit for purpose, and a list of volunteers is maintained, and records

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kept of when litter picks are happening. East Suffolk Norse has given the Council some sets of equipment which have been used to support litter picks.

31. Agreeing the boundaries for the WildEast areas at Clarkes Lane, Fen Park and the North Denes and to consider the inclusion of parts of the Great Eastern Linear Park, part of Gunton Community Park and land behind 4 The High Street

A document with suggested boundaries at each site had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Brooks had commented to query the residents of Gunton Cliff's rights to a view. This is a legal issue. The Friends of Fen Park would like a smaller area pledged to WildEast than that identified by officers. It has been queried with the Friends Group whether there is a particular reason behind this and it has been made clear that any land pledged to WildEast would still be maintained to enable access where required. It would be important to make the public aware, particularly nearby residents, that the re-wilding is being done deliberately, and the reasons behind it. Signage is being progressed to support this. Regarding the Great Eastern Linear Park, there are certain areas which may require active and regular tree management. There are also some land transfer matters ongoing. This should not affect the Council's ability to progress the pledging of land to WildEast. The Town Council does not own all of the Great Eastern Linear Park. Cllr Lang proposed agreeing the boundaries for the WildEast areas as set out in the meeting paper; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. With regard to Fen Park, the Committee was happy to agree the boundary as the larger area as identified in the meeting paper, unless a fundamental issue is raised by the Friends of Fen Park. Cllr Pearce proposed giving staff the discretion to make a decision regarding Fen Park, based on information provided by the Friends Group; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

32. Using a section of land at Clarkes Lane as a community garden

This ties in with the Council's health emergency declaration. Consideration needs to be given to the practicalities and how this could be progressed. Cllr Pearce proposed seeking approval from the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee for the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee to progress plans for a community garden/orchard at Clarkes Lane; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour. If approved, this Committee will liaise with East Suffolk Norse's Countryside Officer to put together a proposal which can be used for public consultation.

33. Progressing the installation of a bottle bank in Normanston Park

Officers have been liaising with the provider and a response is pending.

34. Date of the next meeting

3 August 2021 15:30

35. Items for the next agenda and close

There had been discussion at the last meeting about the Eco-Church initiative. Cllr Barker now has some more information, which she will send to officers. An item will be added to the next agenda for further discussion. An internal meeting with East Suffolk Councillor James Mallinder will take place ahead of the next Committee meeting. The issues regarding kittiwakes have been raised and will be discussed with Cllr Mallinder. It is understood that Suffolk Wildlife Trust had suggested the idea of an artificial cliff, but not necessarily located at Carlton Marshes.

There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 16:42.

36. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed: 3 August 2021