

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 10 May 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Robert Breakspear, Wendy Brooks (Chair), Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Elise Youngman

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

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

229. Welcome

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

230. Approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Parker, who had provided a reason. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour. The Chair paid tribute to former Waveney Member of Parliament Bob Blizzard, who had sadly passed away.

231. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Barker declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 238 and 247. Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Fen Park, and declared he is the Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association. Cllr Youngman declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 238.1 and 242. Cllr Breakspear declared a local non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Kensington Gardens. Cllr Brooks declared she is the Vice Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association.

232. The draft minutes of the meeting on 19 April 2022

Cllr Pearce advised there had been a typographical error on the agenda and item 235 should state £8,000 not £800. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

233. Public forum

No advance comments had been received. There were no members of the public in attendance, either in person or remotely via Zoom webinar.

234. Monitoring expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget

Cllr Pearce queried the sum of £14,008 as the opening balance of the 2022 – 2023 horticulture budget. Officers will check if this is correct.

235. Noting £8,000 payment from the parks reserve towards the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event in Sparrows Nest

Cllr Pearce clarified the amount should be £8,000 and not £800 as initially published on the agenda. At an Extraordinary Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee a £10,000 budget was approved, using £2,000 from the community engagement budget and £8,000 from the parks reserve, so as not to exhaust the events budget. Cllr Pearce reported the parks reserve would still have sufficient funds to cover other contingency items, such as progressing temporary repairs to the Sparrows Nest pond in time for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event. The Reserves Policy states that any funds taken from reserves will be replenished in the next financial year and therefore a record should be maintained when funds are taken from reserves. In future, Cllr Pearce suggested that events linked to

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something happening nationally should be pre-planned and treated as a major event for budgeting purposes.

236. Whether to install murals on the sea wall and Ness Point

Cllr Brooks advised that Sheringham had undertaken a similar project, documenting the history of the town. Cllr Barker requested that if the project refers to the town's fishing industry, the contribution of women is recognised as well. Cllr Pearce proposed asking officers to liaise with relevant authorities to determine what permission the Town Council would have or need to progress this project, and to liaise with local historians regarding content. Cllr Pearce further proposed undertaking a site visit to look at feasibility. Cllr Pitts seconded the proposals and all Councillors voted in favour.

237. Five-year plans for the Town Council's parks, including the following:

237.1 An update on planting plans – Cllr Breakspear and the Project and Committee Clerk are meeting this week to discuss the plans. Cllr Breakspear reported that he is meeting with Norse to discuss plans for Arnold's Bequest and will extend an invitation to other Councillors, ahead of plans being considered by the Charity Board. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers liaise with nurseries to see if direct links can be established for placing future orders; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour. Cllr Breakspear suggested the Council should consider growing its own plants as a long term plan. Cllr Barker had enquired as to the installation of bird boxes as part of the Gull Wing project, and had been advised that the habitat to the north side of the bridge may support this in time. Cllr Brooks proposed adding an item to the next agenda to consider how the Town Council may move to becoming more self-sufficient; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

238. Play areas:

238.1 Refurbishment options for the Bentley Drive and Rosedale Park play areas – Site meetings due to take place this week are being arranged due to the availability of the provider. The Project and Committee Clerk is also liaising with other suppliers to arrange site visits.

238.2 The cost of alternative fencing options for the Stoven Close play area and Gunton Community Park – The Clerk advised that quotations are pending.

239. Feedback from a site visit to Belle Vue Park with the James Paget Hospital Charity, to explore options for a rose garden

Cllr Pearce advised that the sunken garden in Belle Vue Park is being considered as the location. The Town Council is not being asked to fund the installation, but to grant landowner permission. The Town Council may however have liability for ongoing maintenance. A plaque with a QR code would link to a virtual garden to view roses dedicated to loved ones. Cllr Brooks advised there may be a cost to the Council for improvements to the soil and surrounding tarmac. If approved, Cllr Pearce suggested ring-fencing an element of the horticultural budget this year and adding budget provision in future years. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the request from the James Paget Hospital Charity to develop a rose garden at the location identified, with assistance from the Town Council and Norse as required; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.

240. Feedback on the concept of a sign regarding feeding wildlife in parks

The Project and Committee Clerk reported that officers had been exploring ideas, and an information board was suggested, which would identify the wildlife you may see at that particular site, with advice on feeding. Cllr Pearce welcomed the idea of information

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boards but did not think these should include information about feeding and suggested there should be specific signs where there are known issues. Cllr Brooks would like the Council to consider a 'no feeding' policy across all the Town Council's parks and open spaces and this will be considered at the next meeting. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting, pending clarification of the Council's policy position regarding wildlife feeding.

241. Progressing a composting/mulching area in Fen Park

The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the supplier whose quotation has been accepted for Kensington Garden can provide a similar model at Fen Park for a similar cost. Cllr Pearce asked officers to find out if aquatic weed is suitable for mulch, particularly in the volume it is currently being removed from the pond by volunteers. If not, an arrangement for removal will need to be agreed with Norse. Cllr Pearce proposed an in principle approval of the composting/mulching area in Fen Park, using the same model as that approved for Kensington Gardens, and at the location already identified by the Friends of Fen Park. Cllr Pearce further proposed establishing whether aquatic weed can be mulched and making an arrangement with the Friends of Fen Park to dispose of any matter which cannot be mulched. Cllr Breakspear seconded the proposals and all Councillors voted in favour. Cllr Breakspear advised that the Friends Groups Policy has provision for periodic meetings with all Friends Groups. A meeting had been held but the Sub-Committee would like to see these meetings take place on a regular schedule.

242. Using land at the Parklands as a community garden

Further to discussions at the last meeting, the Project and Committee Clerk is arranging a site visit with Norse.

243. An update on approved memorial tree planting in Belle Vue Park

The Deputy Clerk has been liaising with the applicant and all arrangements are in place. The Deputy Clerk is now checking what time of year to plant the selected species of tree.

244. Progress with tree mapping

The Office Administrator has arranged a meeting with the supplier who has provided mapping solutions for Suffolk County Council.

245. Feedback from a Zoom meeting regarding developing proposals for lighting in Fen Park, Normanston Park and Belle Vue Park

Cllr Brooks reported that Fen Park had been identified as the priority for lighting in the Zoom meeting. The Friends of Fen Park had suggested a plan for lighting. Attendees at the meeting felt lighting may not be required to the extent suggested by the Friends Group, but should be installed at points to identify a route through the park. It was agreed at the meeting that a similar approach should be taken for Normanston Park. Attendees at the meeting considered that lighting would not be required in Belle Vue Park. Cllr Barker suggested liaison with the school neighbouring Fen Park. Cllr Breakspear suggested contacting Suffolk Highways regarding improvements to the street lighting surrounding Fen Park. Community Warden Jonny Hawes has taken forward both of these points as discussed in the meeting.

246. An update on expanding Friends Groups and to explore the possibility of joint working with the Lowestoft and District Allotment Association

Cllr Youngman has been liaising with the Chair of the Lowestoft and District Allotment Association and has been appointed as the Town Council's representative to the Association. The Chair of the Association was supportive of the idea of a community garden

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at Clarkes Lane but had concerns regarding the parking provision. Cllr Pearce proposed that, in line with the Friends Groups Policy, meetings with the Friends Groups are scheduled every six months, from the start of the new civic year. Further to discussions regarding the development of a community garden, the Council could consider a vegetable garden as part of this and encourage people to grow their own food. The Council previously gave funding to the YMCA to support a similar project and could engage with them again for advice on progressing this project. Cllr Barker seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

247. Feedback from the ‘safari’ visit to the Somerleyton Hall estate

Cllr Barker has provided a report to the Communications Officer for circulation and offered thanks to those at the Somerleyton estate involved with the visit. The primary purpose of the trip was to look at the areas of re-wilding, following the Council’s agreement to pledge land to WildEast. Officers will check on the progress of signage for this land. It is understood there is no overlap between areas identified at Clarkes Lane for rewilding and other projects proposed for the site.

248. Date of the next meeting

21 June 2022 19:00

249. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Cllr Breakspear requested an item to consider storage of equipment for Friends Groups in parks. Cllr Breakspear also requested an item to consider an offer from an organisation of a ‘Talking Chair’ to the Friends of Kensington Gardens. Cllr Breakspear will circulate further information ahead of the next meeting.

There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 20:51.

250. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:

21 June 2022