



MEETING PAPER

Subject: #LoveParks Week

Meeting: Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee

Date: 30th May 2023

Meeting Paper by Michael Winter (Communications Officer)

NON CONFIDENTIAL

On 9th February 2023, the Communications Officer represented Lowestoft Town Council at the Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards in Liverpool. Lowestoft Town Council had been shortlisted as a Finalist in the “Love Parks” category for its social media campaign during Love Parks Week 2022 (July/August 2022). The award was given to Southend-on-Sea City Council in what was a very close category.

For the 2023 campaign, I am looking at arranging a series of “pop-up” events within our parks to highlight the sort of things that could be done within our parks for free, promoting the facilities (such as play areas and sports facilities), the breadth of nature and wildlife that can be found locally and the importance of open spaces on mental health. At time of writing this paper, Keep Britain Tidy are yet to announce the theme for this year’s campaign (although this shouldn’t deter us from putting together our campaign as they have tended to be quite general themes on enjoying and caring for parks). I am currently in initial discussions with a range of potential partners about what they could offer and if they would be interested in being a part of the campaign.

The plan is to have each day of the week (starting on Monday 31st July until Friday 4th August) having a focus on a different park with free activities on offer. Initial ideas include:

- Ness Park – demonstration of free AR App, nature exploration (SWT)
- Normanston Park – sports activities partnering with local groups/coaches to offer free activities
- Fen Park – nature trails/mindfulness walks, craft/foraging activities, climate emergency and wellbeing sessions/talks (in partnership with MIND)
- Sparrows Nest – promotion of museums and the Andy the Clown Summer Activities (this would be the Thursday)
- Kensington Gardens – story trail on the theme of loving parks (in partnership with Get Suffolk Reading and the reading chair), also promotion of free bowls sessions from the bowls club (Wednesdays from 6:30pm)

The exact arrangements and dates for the parks is subject to the availability of the potential partners and their resources, and the dates of pre-existing activities. The current draft schedule is:

- Monday 31st July – TBA
- Tuesday 1st August – Normanston Park
- Wednesday 2nd August – Kensington Gardens (to fit in with Bowls Club event)
- Thursday 3rd August – Sparrows Nest (to fit in with Andy the Clown event)
- Friday 4th August – Fen Park (to fit in with the availability of MIND)
- Saturday 5th August – The Ness (during Pride)

I am hoping that the #LoveParks events will provide resources (such as the trails) for the summer holidays and beyond, with links to the trails on our website and leaflets within the parks (hopefully engaging with the onsite cafes etc.).

To coincide with this promotion, I am working on a summer campaign leaflet that gives ideas for families of free activities they could do in our parks over the summer (*Love Parks, Love Local, Love Summer*) – highlighting the range of play areas, facilities, and museums. This would also run with a “Help us look after YOUR open spaces” campaign around littering. These, alongside the #LoveParks week activities, will be put into a simple, attractive leaflet that could be sent to all schools in the area before the summer holidays begins. Alongside online promotion, I hope that this will present a wide range of interest in our parks and open spaces and the responsibility we all have to look after and care for them.

It is worth noting that, with the arranged Pride Event taking place on Saturday 5th August in Sparrows Nest/The Ness, it is hoped that many of the #LoveParks activities can run without much officer involvement as the Pride Event is predicted to use a large amount of time and resources (promotion wise, the two events (although having some cross over) will be targeting different audiences).

At the last Events & Communications Sub-Committee meeting, it was suggested that the Parks & Open Spaces Sub-Committee might be interested to have an input into the events and promotion around the parks. It may also be appropriate for the Parks & Open Spaces Sub-Committee to set a budget for #LoveParks Week activities, especially towards costs in setting up trails in some of our parks that could be used throughout the year.

I’m awaiting more details on costs from MIND as they are working out what funding they have available to them but I have received initial costs from Get Suffolk Reading. Their proposal for Kensington Gardens is:

“I Love My Park” StoryWalk:

This will include a generic StoryWalk which can be edited to fit each park in Lowestoft (if we decide to expand in the future). The story would encourage a love of parks, exploration and keeping our parks tidy. Get Suffolk Reading are already creating this story for parks and open spaces across Suffolk to use. Flyers could then be produced for the park, inline with the stories themes which include challenges for families to enjoy. These would be available online via the Get Suffolk Reading website and Lowestoft Town Council website but also in hard-copy form from the park cafes/tea rooms etc. With their support, the cafes could then offer a sticker or other prizes for the trail’s completion. Get Suffolk Reading would then have guided walks around Kensington Gardens on one of the days during #LoveParks week, led by one of their volunteers.

The cost for this would be:

- Writing and design of the StoryWalk - £750 (covered by Get Suffolk Reading but contributions from LTC would be welcomed)
- Design of Stickers (including LTC logo) - £50 (covered by Get Suffolk Reading)
- Printing of flyers - £37 per 1000 A5 doubled sided flyers (min of 1000 flyers)
- Printing of stickers - £123 for 2000 stickers

These trails could be a great way of engaging young people and families in our parks and how we can all care for them (a message that spreads further than #LoveParks week). With this in mind (and as a trial for the Summer) **I would recommend setting a suitable budget to cover the costs of these trail flyers** (especially as we could roll these out across our parks in the future) with a provision for future expenditure to restock if appropriate. The other events within the parks for #LoveParks week (as they would be one-offs) and the overall promotion could be funded via other budgets.

****As noted above, there are other events that will be taking place that will be taking up officer time so the idea is that these "pop-up" events will utilise and promote pre-existing facilities, activities and partnerships in a condensed week. If more events were to be organised across more locations, this would create more administration and cost to the events.****