

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
18:00 on 1 November 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Colin Butler, Andy Pearce, John Pitts and Elise Youngman

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)

85. Welcome

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

86. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Christian Newsome and Paul Page. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

87. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Brooks declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 92.7, 92.8, 92.10 and 92.12. Cllr Pearce declared a local non-pecuniary interest in items 92.7, 92.12 and 96. Cllr Butler and Cllr Elise Youngman declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 98.

88. The draft minutes of the meeting on 4 October 2021

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

89. Public forum

Public comments regarding item 100 had been received and circulated. That item will be discussed during the confidential session.

90. Expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

The budget monitoring document was received and noted. Expenditure by the Events and Communications Sub-Committee from the events budget is under review and will be discussed further at the next Sub-Committee meeting on 25 November.

91. Thresholds for delegations to the Clerk for time urgent, emergency and general expenditure

For items which are not currently covered by an existing delegation, it was agreed that a delegation of £2,500 per item be set for time urgent, emergency and general expenditure to allow the Clerk to progress matters that are required between meetings, in liaison with Councillors if needed, without the need to call a meeting. This does not affect existing delegations to the Clerk. This was proposed by Cllr Pearce; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

92. Parks and open spaces:

92.1. Receiving any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meetings on 19 October 2021 – The draft minutes were received and noted.

92.2. The following recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee:

92.2a. Proceeding with the purchase of forty benches and review the requirement for any additional benches – The decision of Full Council was to progress the purchase of sixty five benches. The Committee Clerk has reviewed the five year plans and has recommended that benches linked to other projects later on in the five year plans are not purchased at this stage. Specific teen seating has also been omitted at this stage, given recent incidents of anti-social behaviour in certain areas. The proposed order does not include benches for the Cotman Close or St Margaret's Plain play areas, but a

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- separate order can be submitted at a later date. It was noted that the Thirlmere Walk play area has two existing benches. Cllr Brooks proposed proceeding with the purchase of the forty benches as identified in the Committee Clerk's report; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The final cost of the benches and installation (including concrete bases) will be given to the Committee once confirmed.
- 92.3. An application for a memorial bench in Normanston Park – Items 92.3 and 92.4 were considered together. Regarding item 92.4, the applicant had selected the £1,300 option (installation of a bench onto an existing base), but the total cost may be £1,800 if a new base is required. If approved, the Committee Clerk will liaise with the applicant regarding the requirements. Cllr Butler proposed approval of both applications; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 92.4. An application for a memorial bench in Kensington Gardens – This was included in the discussion of the previous item.
- 92.5. An update on the purchase of a Holocaust memorial lectern – It was clarified that there are two separate Holocaust Memorial beds. The larger bed could accommodate the lectern. Cllr Pearce proposed proceeding with the purchase of the Holocaust Memorial lectern in time for Holocaust Memorial Day; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour. Officers will seek quotation for a Kindertransport bench for this Committee to consider.
- 92.6. A bulb order for Sparrows Nest and Belle Vue Park – Cllr Pearce proposed quadrupling the quantities indicated on the spreadsheet for Arnold's Bequest. Cllr Pearce further proposed delegating authority to officers, in conjunction with the Chair of this Committee and Norse to agree final quantities of the bulbs for Sparrows Nest and Belle Vue Park; seconded by Cllr Elise Youngman; all in favour.
- 92.7. A request for bulbs from the Gunton Residents' Association – The Gunton Residents' Association has made a request for bulbs for planting on Town Council land in the Gunton ward, but has not specified quantities or species. Norse have gifted bulbs to Friends Groups previously. This is not guaranteed but officers can enquire with Norse. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of this request in principle, with delegated authority to officers, in conjunction with the Chair of this Committee, Norse and the Gunton Residents' Association, to progress an order within a maximum budget of £300 (if applicable); seconded by Cllr Brooks. When the dredging of the pond is progressed, silt may be lain on the grass surrounding the pond, which may affect any bulbs planted there. As part of the delegation, officers can liaise with the Gunton Residents' Association about appropriate areas and times for planting. The vote was taken and five Councillors voted in favour, and one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 92.8. A request from the Sparrows Nest Bowls Club to install a fence around the bowling green – The Club is concerned about use of the greens other than for the intended purpose. The Committee felt that a fence may be not effective in stopping this access and could become an ongoing expense for the Council. Any measures taken at Sparrows Nest would also need to be considered for Kensington Gardens. Cllr Butler proposed declining the request; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.
- 92.9. The cost of replacing the Sparrows Nest beacon – A quotation had not yet been received.
- 92.10. Refurbishment options for the St Margaret's Plain play area – Cllr Pearce proposed seeking three quotations for refurbishment options, following which the Council can decide whether to progress the project this year or next. The Council's maximum budget will not be shared with providers. For the Sparrows Nest project providers were asked to give a range of quotations. Historically, the site was known as Goose Green, some theming could therefore be applied. Previously, the Committee agreed to seek quotations for decorative sheet metal geese shapes to be applied to the fence surrounding the play area. The Committee Clerk will liaise with Cllr Elise Youngman regarding the design.
- 92.11. Options for the play equipment at The Ness, following recent vandalism – The basket swing has been vandalised. The supplier has advised it could be repaired with chains

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instead of rope to make it more robust. This could also be considered for the other basket swing but both would need to be returned to the supplier at the Council's cost. Cllr Pearce proposed delegating authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the contractor and supplier, to arrange delivery of the swings back to the supplier, to establish whether repair is possible, or if the whole item needs to be replaced. Cllr Pearce further proposed a maximum budget of £1,000 to meet delivery costs; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour. Officers will enquire whether chains instead of ropes will be prohibitive to the equipment's intended purpose.

92.12. An update on the de-silting of the Fen Park and Gainsborough Drive ponds – It has been agreed that the dredging of the Gainsborough Drive pond will take place over the winter. The Committee has requested a Zoom meeting with Norse regarding the Fen Park pond, and the Committee Clerk has been in contact with the contractor who last dredged the pond in 2009, who will also be involved with the meeting. The Committee Clerk will separately request a quotation for the Gainsborough Drive pond, acknowledging that the work would need to take place imminently. In addition to the cost of the dredging itself, the Committee would like to understand what the ongoing costs will be, for budgeting purposes, including whether a further full dredging will be required in ten years' time if the pond is adequately maintained.

92.13. A quotation to install fencing along a boundary of the Britten Road play area – Some fencing companies have been recommended to officers, who will arrange site visits to inform quotations. The Clerk has asked Norse for a quotation to clear the litter, and has chased.

92.14. Reviewing the play inspection report for the Bentley Drive play area – This year's reports are expected soon. The previous year's reports can be circulated in the interim for comparison. Norse's views on Bentley Drive and Pollard Piece is that both are reaching end of life and need to be looked at. This Committee has been asked to recommend a priority order for works for the Town Council's play areas and public conveniences. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee will receive the comments regarding Bentley Drive and Pollard Piece. Officers will enquire with Norse as to any interim risks. The Community Warden will have a positive impact on the Council's ability to assess its assets, but will still be reliant on others to complement this work. It was reported that although some improvement has been made to the Fen Park matting, there are still three sections with large tears. Officers will ask Norse whether this work is in progress.

92.15. Great Eastern Linear Park:

92.15a. Maintenance of 'off path' areas – The Council pays a relatively small grounds maintenance cost for this site. The breakdown of the cost has been received and does include some litter picking. As part of the contract review, the Council will need to determine what level of service it would like for this area.

92.15b. A risk assessment of the 'Nature Walk' – The Council has appointed a Health and Safety Consultant who could carry out an assessment, but as the decision has been taken to remove the boardwalk, and the area has become more overgrown since being fenced off, the Council would need to consider whether keeping the steps would encourage visitors down to the 'Nature Walk' area, and whether it would be responsible to do so. It had previously been suggested that the 'Nature Walk' signage should be removed. There is a lot of fly tipping in the area which needs to be managed. The Lowestoft Rubbish Friends have undertaken litter picks there. The Council may wish to incorporate a regular litter clearing service into the new grounds maintenance contract, but would need to pay for this service in the interim. Cllr Pearce proposed removing the 'Nature Walk' signs (subject to the Town Council having the authority to do so) and allowing the area to return to nature, with officers to carry out a risk assessment as to whether the steps should be removed, or how they should be restricted if left to stop visitors using them; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

92.16. A proposal regarding the Normanston Park skate park (some aspects may be

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confidential) – To be discussed during the confidential session.

93. Events and Communications:

- 93.1. Receiving any comments and noting the draft minutes of the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meetings on 7 and 27 October 2021 – The draft minutes were received and noted.
- 93.2. The decision of Full Council regarding the delegation of the Community Engagement budget to this Committee, and action any decision regarding the onward delegation to the Events and Communications Sub-Committee – The Terms of Reference for this Committee and the Events and Communications Sub-Committee will be updated to reflect the Council's decision to delegate the budget.

94. Reviewing the Town Council's Asset Register

This item is also on the Finance and Governance Committee's agenda. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting to give the Committee the opportunity to review the Asset Register fully and thoroughly ahead of the meeting. One section of the Register is problematic, and officers are working through it.

95. The Sails and Triangle Market:

- 95.1. Feedback from the Triangle Market Working Group meeting on 22 October 2021 – A market was held during Heritage Open Days, and a further one was held in October. Markets are planned for 5 November, 4 December and a Christmas market on 18 December. The Working Group will be approaching potential traders this week. The Working Group will need to review what markets will be planned for the first quarter of next year.
- 95.2. Improvements required to support the intended use of the Sails – The Clerk has been seeking quotations for removal of the green pillars. The Council has funds to support the improvement of that area and a separate Scores and Triangle Market Working Group has been set up as part of the Heritage Action Zone, which has ideas as to where funding could be accessed, subject to the Town Council's agreement to the proposals relating to its land. Regarding the capital works, the Council has until 31 March 2022 to spend the money. The Clerk is seeking advice from the National Association of British Markets Authority regarding anchor points, additional electricity points and other infrastructure to support the market. The Council would need to consider storage for gazebos and other plans. Agenda item 95.4 also refers. The Town Council has not delegated responsibility to its representatives on the Working Group to make decisions on behalf of the Council. Thus far it seems nothing in the proposals being discussed by the Working Group would conflict with the removal of the green pillars, and the public conveniences are also not included in the feasibility study. It has been agreed that quotations for refurbishment of the public conveniences should be sought, regardless of whether funds come from an earmarked reserves or other funding available for wider projects at the Triangle Market. The proposals for the Triangle Market being discussed by the Working Group new paving, new stalls, improved lighting, benches and planting, but the proposals are not yet ready for the consideration of the Town Council. It was suggested that the Town Council should seek the advice of a sailmaker to improve the Sails and make them a more effective shelter.
- 95.3. Licensing the area beneath the Sails for market trading – A Halloween market had been planned, but was cancelled due to the Continental Market, which was initially intended to extend to the Triangle Market. The licensing rules for the Sails and the Triangle Market differ, and the Sails area is not currently licensed for market trading, with any traders using the area required to obtain a street trading licence. The Committee agreed it would like the arrangement in place at the Triangle Market to extend to the Sails also. Cllr Pearce proposed that officers explore the option of licensing the area beneath the Sails for market trading; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

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- 95.4. An update on The Scores and Triangle Market Feasibility Study, particularly regarding proposals for the Triangle Market – This was covered with the discussion of item 95.2.
- 95.5. Triangle Market capital investment – Full Council had agreed that it would not set aside capital investment for any of the feasibility study projects, should they proceed, as it is likely they would be grant funded. Separately, the Council has however provisionally agreed a figure of £20,000 for capital investment in the Triangle Market in the next financial year. Officers will seek the advice of a sailmaker and will look into whether the Sails would benefit from another clean.

96. Repair work and any enhanced security measures required following vandalism to the Gunton Community Residents' Meeting Hall

There have been issues with anti-social behaviour and recently the front door has been damaged. Norse have temporarily secured it and will be providing a quotation for repairs. To prevent similar issues, it was suggested that the Council could consider the option of installing gates similar to those at Whitton Hall, or steel shutters. Officers will seek advice and quotations. A group of children is known to be causing issues in the area. It was agreed that the matter should be reported to the Police and a more visible Police presence requested. A meeting has been arranged for the Police and Crime Commissioner to meet with residents and business owners around the High Street to discuss issues in that area. This issue will be reported there as well. Anti-social behaviour issues have been reported at Whitton Green. The Community Safety Committee previously requested a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner. Officers will arrange this.

The Clerk temporarily left the meeting 19:35 and returned 19:36

97. The Friends Groups Policy

The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee asked this Committee to review the Policy. This is also on the Finance and Governance Committee's agenda and any comments can be considered there.

98. Whether to seek quotations to install a bus shelter on Harris Avenue

The Council has agreed to ring fence funds in its play areas budget, equivalent to the s106 expenditure used to purchase the new piece of play equipment at Stoven Close. The Council has not yet agreed to progress the purchase of the shelter. Norse previously provided a quotation for a steel structure, but it was suggested that aluminium would be preferable. Cllr Butler has suggested other companies who may be able to provide quotations. The Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee has been discussing a Climate Action Plan. Similar plans adopted by other Town Councils reference investment in bus shelters. Cllr Breakspear proposed seeking three quotations via the providers identified by Cllr Butler; seconded by Cllr Pearce. It was agreed this should be tied in with the climate emergency and the need for public transport. As such, officers will enquire as to the most environmentally friendly product and will take account of the true environmental cost, full life cycle thinking and end of life planning, sustainability of the product and the number of users. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour.

99. An application for regular trading at the Triangle Market (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

100. Business operation on Town Council land (confidential)

To be discussed during the confidential session.

101. Date of the next meeting

6 December 2021 18:00

102. Items for the next agenda and close

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It was requested that an item is added to finalise the recommendations to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee regarding the priority order for the refurbishment of play areas and public conveniences.

Cllr Pearce proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

103. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

103.1. Any legal issues, including those above as required

92.16. A proposal regarding the Normanston Park skate park (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllrs Pearce and Elise Youngman recently undertook a site visit to consult with users of the skate park. Cllr Pearce proposed asking the Events and Communications Sub-Committee to progress a proposal regarding the skate park at its meeting on 25 November; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

99. An application for regular trading at the Triangle Market (confidential) – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to Full Council to approve the application, with delegated authority to the Clerk to ensure that all necessary licensing arrangements, certification, health and safety, infrastructure and insurance requirements are in place before trading commences. The arrangements for traders were discussed and an overall review will follow in due course. Cllr Brooks seconded Cllr Pearce's proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

100. Business operation on Town Council land (confidential) – Cllr Pearce proposed that the Clerk contact the Town Council's solicitor for their view on a recent issue regarding business operation on Town Council land. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and all Councillors voted in favour.

An update was given regarding arrangements for the Kensington Gardens café.

The Chair closed the meeting 20:23.

Signed: 

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