

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 7 August 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, Christian Newsome (Deputy Chair), Andy Pearce, John Pitts, Bernadette Rappensberger, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman (Chair)

In Attendance: Shona Bendix (Town Clerk), Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

67. Welcome

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

68. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Breakspear with reasons provided. Cllr Coleby provided apologies with reasons via Cllr Pearce. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

Cllr Smith was absent with no apologies provided.

69. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

69.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Brooks, Pearce and Youngman declared they were on the Town Hall Project Board. Cllr Pearce declared he had met with members of the Gunton Estate Community Hall Management Committee and passed their queries to the office per item 81.

69.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted - No written requests for dispensations had been received.

70. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 3 July 2023

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of the draft minutes and confidential note; seconded by Cllr Jones; all in favour.

71. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – No advanced comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance.

72. Public Toilets

72.1. To consider quotations for the following public toilets (as per the delegation from Full Council):

72.1a. Fen Park

72.1b. Repairs to Pakefield Street

72.1c. Additional information from the contractor regarding Triangle Market

72.1d. Sparrows Nest

It was agreed for items under 72.1 to be discussed in confidential session.

72.2. To receive an update on the planting of prickly plants at the Pakefield Street toilets – The budget had been agreed and planting was scheduled for autumn. Officers suggested the Committee consider installation of palisade fencing to deter vandalism and prevent access to neighbouring sites. Cllr Pearce proposed an item for the next agenda to consider palisade fencing, with a site visit conducted and quotes obtained before the next meeting; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

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73. To monitor expenditure by this Committee and its Sub-Committees from their delegated budgets

There were no comments.

74. Parks and Open Spaces:

74.1. To approve a request from Cllr David Youngman to join the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee – Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Webb; a vote was held with seven in favour and one against.

74.2. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee meeting on 18 July 2023 – To be signed off at the next meeting.

74.3. To consider any recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee on the following:

74.3a. To approve the Friends of Kensington Gardens funding and installing signs to identify flower beds managed by the group – There were no comments.

74.4. To receive an update on the screens for bins – There was no update and this item was deferred to the next meeting.

74.5. To receive a report on the grounds maintenance, including the following:

74.5a. The frequency of bin emptying in Lowestoft's parks and open spaces – Approximately sixty-five bins are located outside of staffed sites and are emptied by the roving grounds maintenance officers. All bins are emptied on a Monday, with a seconded round of emptying on a Thursday or Friday for bins that fill up faster, which the Clerk noted was often due to residents disposing of their household waste in these bins. Cllr Brooks raised an issue of fly tipping at Links Road for the Clerk to check with the grounds maintenance officers. The Clerk requested further discussion on this item be held in confidential.

74.5b. The frequency of tree watering, particularly where planting did not involve water bags – Due to recent weather, watering had not been necessary. The grounds maintenance officers would continue to monitor the situation and equipment was ready for when watering is needed.

74.6. To consider the following regarding Fen Park:

74.6a. A budget for upgrades to the play area prior to refurbishment – With officer recommendations, a budget of £37,000 had been set for 2023-2024 to cover upgrades for matting and the repair or replacement of end-of-life equipment. It was agreed to progress initial discussions at the Parks and Open Spaces meetings, with an item on the next agenda of the Sub-Committee to receive a briefing paper with proposals from officers on what upgrades are required. An item was requested for the Parks and Open Spaces agenda to receive an update on the replacement swings at Fen Park.

The next two play areas to be refurbished were Britten Road and Pakefield Green.

74.6b. Provision of adult fitness equipment – Cllr Brooks proposed officers conduct a survey via social media on the usage of existing fitness equipment and query what residents would like to see installed in Fen Park, with the Friends of Fen Park and Kirkley People's Forum to also be engaged for a consultee opinion; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

It was agreed to have a similar survey for Rosedale Park after the Fen Park survey has been completed.

If the feedback from the survey indicates the fitness equipment from Fen Park would be better suited at Rosedale Park, it was suggested to consider relocation of the fitness equipment between the two sites.

74.6c. Quotations for a pond aeration device – Of the two quotes received the Project and Committee Clerk advised the cheaper quote may be sufficient and would query the effectiveness of the system with other clients. A third quote had been

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sought but not obtained at the time of the meeting.

Cllr Pearce proposed to defer a decision with or without a recommendation to August Full Council, with the Project and Committee Clerk to complete investigations on the providers and the Finance and Information Officer to advise on available funds; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

- 74.7. To consider the intrusive ground survey report for Britten Road (some aspects may be confidential) – This item would be discussed in confidential session.
- 74.8. To consider the installation of teenage gym equipment for Rosedale Park – Cllr Pearce proposed a social media survey be conducted after the Fen Park survey, with notices of the survey to be put on the Whitton Hall board, and to inquire with the supplier the feasibility of relocating gym equipment from Fen Park to Rosedale Park; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.
- 74.9. To consider a request from the Kensington Bowls Club to renew their application to site a notice board on the Bowls Pavilion – Cllr Pearce proposed to give the Bowls Club site owner permission to place a noticeboard on the Bowls Pavilion; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

75. Events and Communications:

- 75.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Events and Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 26 July 2023 – To be signed off at the next meeting.
- 75.2. To consider any recommendations from the Events and Communications Sub-Committee on the following:
- 75.2a. To consider the development of the Lowestoft Town Council website – Cllr Pearce proposed to endorse the officer recommendation based on the indicative costs provided in the paper, with Finance and Governance to decide the budget allocation in September; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.
- 75.2b. To consider progressing the transferral of the Lowestoft Borough coat of arms to Lowestoft Town Council – Cllr Pearce proposed approval and for the transfer to be progressed this year, with funding to be allocated from the Heritage, Civic & Arts reserve; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

76. Allotments:

- 76.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Allotments Sub-Committee meeting on 4 August 2023 – To be signed off at the next meeting.

77. Community Safety:

- 77.1. To receive and note the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting on 26 July 2023 – To be signed off at the next meeting.
- 77.2. To consider the following recommendations from the Community Safety Sub-Committee:
- 77.2a. Replacement basket swing at Gunton Community Park (£6,651.19 quote received) – Cllr Pearce proposed if the basket swing was removed due to health and safety then the budget be allocated from the Community Safety Reserve's ring-fenced £45,000 for play area repair and maintenance on safety grounds; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- The vandalised zipline was due to be assessed prior to replacement.
- The contractor had indicated that the costs for the basket swing would be less than £6,651.19 and officers would endeavour to complete the replacement at a lower cost.

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78. To consider the purchase of the remaining John Reay painting and the creation of an Acquisition budget

Another Angle Studio wished to gift the Town Council paintings from the John Reay collection at a value of £500 and Cllr Brooks proposed a person be nominated to select a painting for the Lowestoft Collection and a budget be considered to purchase one of the remaining paintings.

Cllr Pearce made a counterproposal that a nominated officer attend the studio with members of this Committee to select the painting to be gifted to the Town Council, with the officer to have the final decision if Committee members are unable to agree on the selection; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour. The Clerk provisionally requested Councillors meet at the studio Wednesday 9 August at 12:15 PM.

The budget to purchase a painting would be funded from the Arts and Heritage Earmarked Reserve (currently at £40,000 with £15,000 provisionally offset against evaluations and advice). Cllr Brooks proposed the Town Council purchase a John Reay painting, with a maximum budget set to £3,000, to be selected at the same visit on Wednesday 9 August with the Clerk to have the final choice in the event of a disagreement; seconded by Cllr Pitts; all in favour.

79. To receive an update on liaison between LTC officers and The Grit to consider insurance and security arrangements for the loan of paintings from the Lowestoft Collection for a maritime-themed exhibition

Three smaller watercolour paintings with glass fronts were chosen for the exhibit. All risk assessments have been completed and the paintings were covered under the Town Council's insurance.

80. To consider an approach to East Suffolk Council for an exhibit to be held at the old Post Office building

As the progress of the building refurbishment was unknown, Cllr Pearce proposed officers query with East Suffolk Council (ESC) when the art element of the project was due to open and once confirmed the Town Council would then approach ESC on co-curating with partners, including the Town Council, on occasional exhibits; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

81. To consider the following regarding the Gunton Estate Residents Hall, in cooperation with the Management Committee:

81.1. An update from the Gunton Estate Residents Hall Management Committee on garden plans – This referred to the enclosed courtyard.

Cllr Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 20:07

Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 20:09

81.2. Extension of the existing hygienic cladding in the kitchen – The Management Committee intended to extend the cladding for ease of cleaning and control of mould and mildew build up. Cllr Pearce proposed officers liaise with the Management Committee and obtain quotes for the next meeting. It was suggested that this be the action for items 81.2-81.9.

81.3. The replacement of existing concrete steps with a moveable ramp – This would be sited in the enclosed courtyard and needed to be movable to allow access to the shed or side gate into the garden, which a fixed ramp would obstruct.

81.4. The replacement of the community noticeboard – This would replacement the current community noticeboard next to the Town Council noticeboard.

81.5. Refurbishment of the gentleman's toilets – The Management Committee intend to

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reconfigure the gentleman's toilets as a unisex toilet with baby changing facilities.

- 81.6. General repair works in the ladies' toilets – This would be a simple repair on the taps.
- 81.7. Replacement of metal grilles with window shutters – The Management Committee intend to replace the grilles with shutters to improve the ventilation and improve the aesthetic.
- 81.8. Review of the cleaning regime – This was raised as the first clean by the new cleaning company's had been assessed as insufficient by the Management Committee. Cllr E Youngman declared that she worked for that company. The Management Committee had paid for someone else to undertake an extra clean.
- 81.9. Varnishing of the timber flooring – Discussions would be required with Officers on the preservation of the timber flooring and whether it required a varnish due to the potential slip hazards.
- 81.10. Car parking provision – At the time of the meeting this was concept only with no actions required.
- 81.11. Provision of foldaway snooker and table tennis tables – This would be discussed by the Finance and Governance Committee as it pertained to a grant application.
- 81.12. Replacement of the existing cooker and fridge – At this time the Management Committee were considering District Councillor Locality Funding and the item would not be discussed by this Committee.

Cllr Pearce proposed for items 81.1 and 81.10 that officers liaise with the Gunton Estate Residents Hall Management Committee whilst they work on the concept and provide advice on health and safety, with the finalised designs to be brought to this Committee for review and approval; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

Cllr Pitts proposed a delegation to officers to liaise with the Management Committee on these items and source specifications and quotes for the Committee for approval of budgets; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

82. To consider proposals for improvements to the site adjacent to the Triangle Market

Cllr Brooks suggested that seating be considered in the design as a social space. Cllr Pearce proposed a stand-alone zoom meeting be scheduled with members of this Committee and the Triangle Market Working Group to formulate a plan for improvements and reach a consensus on the location of benches and green spaces; seconded by Cllr E Youngman; all in favour.

83. To note the requirement to pay the bid levy for the Town Hall

Cllr Brooks suggested this be challenged as the Town Council was currently paying the bid levy for Hamilton house and the Town Hall, with the latter being unoccupied. The Clerk was asked to query the process for having the site removed from the non-domestic ratings list, with an update to be provided at the next meeting.

84. Date of the next meeting

Monday 4 September 2023 – 19:00

85. Items for the next agenda and close

Cllr Pearce requested an update on the replacement basket swing at The Ness. Cllr Brooks requested an update on the Denes Oval wall condition survey.

86. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda:

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- 86.1. To consider any legal issues, including those above as required
Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved to confidential session; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 20:36

A five-minute comfort break was taken at 20:37

The meeting was resumed at 20:41

72. Public Toilets

- 72.1. To consider quotations for the following public toilets (as per the delegation from Full Council):
- 72.1a. Fen Park – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.
- 72.1b. Repairs to Pakefield Street – The quote was for repairs ahead of refurbishment works. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 72.1c. Additional information from the contractor regarding Triangle Market – Discussions were held on the requirement of an anti-climb barrier and, depending on costs, whether to install the barrier as part of the development or consider it in a separate proposal. Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.
- 72.1d. Sparrows Nest – This site was part of a five-year preventative repair programme, therefore the money available for toilet works in year one would be allocated from the Sparrows Nest budget. One quote had been received which would deplete the Capital budget and restrict other year one capital repairs for the building, though provisional approval of the quote could be granted whilst officers check the other capital priorities for the building.
There was a discussion on whether the toilets for Sparrows Nest would be refurbished as unisex as it was acknowledged that re-configuration of the toilet layout would be required for which a new quote would be needed.

At 21:00 Cllr Pearce proposed to suspend standing orders for ten minutes; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.

It was suggested to defer a decision and consult with Sparrows Nest Park users (including customers of Giardino and Martello) on their preference for single sex or unisex toilets.

Cllr Pearce proposed this item be considered by the Toilet Strategy Working Group to discuss a policy on this matter and make a recommendation to Full Council; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

The £200,000 budgeted for Fen Park and Triangle Market, plus the £15,000 contingency ring fenced against the CIL budget, would be used for the refurbishment of Fen Park and Triangle Market toilets and the repairs for Pakefield Street toilets.

The Committee requested clarification from the Finance and Information Officer on the committed expenditure in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) budget of £11,200 for 'Triangle Market PC doors' as there was uncertainty on the need of expenditure for repairs when the toilets are due to be refurbished. Another ring-fenced £4,000 in the CIL budget was queried for 'Sparrows Nest PC Works' with clarification requested on what the expenditure was for if the toilets are to be refurbished.

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74.7 To consider the intrusive ground survey report for Britten Road (some aspects may be confidential) – It was agreed to defer this item as a stand-alone zoom was scheduled for Thursday 10 August to discuss the report.

74.5 To receive a report on the grounds maintenance, including the following:

74.5a. The frequency of bin emptying in Lowestoft's parks and open spaces – The Clerk provided a confidential update to the Committee on the waste collection for bins.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21:14

Signed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M. Jones', written over a dotted line.

4 September 2023