

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 13 December 2022

MINUTES

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

In Attendance: Lauren Elliot (Project and Committee Clerk - PCC) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Public: Three members of the public were in attendance (in person)

128. Welcome

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

129. Approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Page and Pitts with reasons provided.
Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.
Cllr Craig was absent and had not provided apologies.

130. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

130.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda.

Cllr Pearce declared non-registerable interest in item 134 as he is Chair of the Gunton Residents Associations (GRA). Cllr Breakspear declared non-registerable interest in items relating to Kensington Gardens as he is a member of the Friends of Kensington Garden Group.

130.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted
None were received.

131. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 15 November 2022

Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

132. 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.

The members of the public were invited to make a public comment and item 134 was brought forward.

134. To receive comments from members of the public on the Gainsborough Drive boat planter

The member of public declared he was a resident of Gainsborough Drive and a member of both the GRA and the Gainsborough Drive Pond Group. It was explained the reasons for objecting to the boat planter were the pond having no connection to boating, as a natural environment it should be kept as a nature reserve and the residents were not consulted with on the placement of the boat. It was requested the Town Council re-consider the permission given to the GRA for placement of the boat near the pond. The member of the public suggested any planting should in the ground instead.

It was confirmed the Town Council could reconsider the decision as permission was

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granted at the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee (AID) meeting in June, however the reconsideration would need to go back to the AID.

It was established that the land owner permission was granted by the Lowestoft Town Council and the boat is owned by the GRA, it was also confirmed consultation is generally not carried out before land permission is granted.

It was remarked that the dimensions of the boat weren't clarified when the land was granted and the member of the public, who reviewed the minutes for the Gainsborough Drive Pond Group meeting, confirmed sourcing a suitable planter was mentioned but the size of the planter was not specified.

Cllr Pearce clarified the request for the planter was from the Treasurer of the GRA who approached AID for permission to use the land. It was queried if the boat could be disguised or sited elsewhere and Cllr Pearce noted GRA attempted to address the concerns by moving the boat and planned to have the boat painted green and surrounded by undergrowth.

The member of the public confirmed most residents near the pond were not aware of the original planter idea and that, rather than replacing the boat with a smaller vessel, it would be preferred to have no boat in the area.

Cllr Barker proposed representatives of the residents near the pond, the GRA, the Gainsborough Drive Pond Group and the Lowestoft Town Council meet and resolve the issues with a record of the meeting, with all parties notified of the meeting beforehand and for the record of the meeting to be communicated to all parties after the meeting. Seconded by Cllr Brooks. Cllr Pearce mentioned the GRA wanted to resolve the issue internally. The proposal was modified for the GRA to proceed with an internal meeting with residents to seek a solution and if no resolution is found then the Town Council will proceed with Cllr Barker's original proposal. Cllr Brooks seconded the modified proposal; all in favour.

Cllr Breakspear escorted the members of public from the meeting at 19:38

Cllr Breakspear returned to the chamber at 19:40

133. To monitor expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget

It was confirmed £6,557 of the £14,008 Horticulture budget has been spent to date and underspend is being carried forward.

134. To receive comments from members of the public on the Gainsborough Drive boat planter

This item was brought forward to the start of the meeting.

135. To consider review and implementation of the five year plans, including planting plans, in line with budgeting, noting Councillors' comments regarding the following:

- 135.1 Normanston Park
- 135.2 Rosedale Park
- 135.3 Kensington Gardens
- 135.4 Gunton Community Park
- 135.5 Great Eastern Linear Park
- 135.6 Sparrows Nest
- 135.7 Fen Park

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- 135.8 Belle Vue Park
- 135.9 Denes Oval
- 135.10 Cotman Close
- 135.11 Britten Road Play Area
- 135.12 Clarkes Lane
- 135.13 Pakefield Green Play Area
- 135.14 The Ness
- 135.15 Ness Point
- 135.16 St Margaret's Plain Play Area
- 135.17 Bentley Drive Play Area
- 135.18 Gainsborough Drive Pond
- 135.19 North Denes (and to consider the management of the open space)
- 135.20 Links Road Car Park
- 135.21 Triangle Market

It was confirmed Cotman Close and Normanston Park play areas were awaiting decisions from Full Council for budgeting and it was suggested the remaining sites be discussed in a stand-alone zoom meeting.

It was confirmed the Communications Officer is reviewing options for maps as per previous discussions.

Cllr Barker suggested drone footage of assets be used to complement the work towards the five year plans. It was requested staff investigate the feasibility of using a drone and the Sub-Committee will re-visit the five year plans and drone in January, and for the Project and Committee Clerk (PCC) to arrange a stand-alone zoom meeting in the interim.

136. To consider the following regarding Sparrows Nest:

- 136.1 Development of a Winter Garden – It was noted a previous Councillor had made plans for a garden with winter plants and a sensory element. It was suggested the development of the garden be progressed through the five year plan and it was confirmed the plan for Sparrows Nest was under Cllr Brooks' jurisdiction. Cllr Pearce proposed the winter garden be taken forward, with Cllr Brooks developing the plan using the previous Councillor's plans, and incorporating it into the five year plan for Sparrows Nest, and for the PCC to contact both Pathways Care Farm to ask them to build this winter garden into the concept and also to contact the Council's Grounds Maintenance contractor. Seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.
- 136.2 To receive an update on the sensory garden - The PCC confirmed Pathways Care Farm were meeting internally to discuss plans. It was noted as Sparrows Nest is in a conservation area, scale plans are required to determine what may need planning consent and Pathways Care Farm suggested the Town Council engage a landscape artist to produce those plans, for which staff will seek quotes. Cllr Brooks commented she knows someone who may be a landscape architect and will have them contact the office directly. It was requested this item be brought back with an update.

137. To consider designs and quotations for park welcome signage:

It was confirmed the quote of £17,000 was for four bespoke signs, one each across four sites: Normanston Park, Kensington Gardens, Fen Park and Sparrows Nest. Ness Park and Great Eastern Linear Park were also identified that could benefit from a map and signage.

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It was noted Suffolk Wildlife Trust used the same company for their signage and it was suggested Cllr Barker speak to Suffolk Wildlife Trust for any positive or negative feedback they have about the signage.

Cllr Barker suggested having leaflets copied from the signage that visitors can take with them. It was requested Cllr Barker bring examples of the leaflets used by Suffolk Wildlife Trust to the next meeting.

It was noted signage needed to be coordinated with the five year plan otherwise aspects of the signage could become outdated. To avoid this it was suggested to not have specific content on the sign and only display the park name, the history and a map showing permanent aspects of the parks. Further information on the wildlife, details the parks and its facilities and any updates could be on the QR code which would be linked to the Council's website and drone footage.

Cllr Pearce suggested to set aside extra funding rather than withdrawing from the existing parks or signage budget and possibly make a recommendation to Budget and Loan to review for the 2023-2024 budget. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee to set £20,000 as a contingency for the 2023-2024 budget; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. It was suggested further discussions on the signage can be held at AID in January.

138. To consider the following regarding The Ness:

138.1 Planting, including a coastal garden – It was noted the Field Society sent a list of all plants growing on The Ness. Cllr Pearce proposed the Sub-Committee receive advice on where there is no residual contamination on the site and the boundary of the membrane from the previously contaminated soil to ensure any planting wouldn't puncture the membrane; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour. After advice is received then the site for the coast garden can be chosen.

138.2 Advice from an Arborist regarding the trees, and to consider next steps – The feedback from the Arborist was provided to the company who managed the Ness project and their opinion was that the trees can be nurtured back to health. This was sent to the Arborist but no response has been received yet. It was commented that the trees may not recover as the roots are at risk to salt water exposure due to flooding. The Sub-Committee will wait for the Arborist to respond and then consider not replacing or planting new trees on that site.

138.3 Making a recommendation on whether to submit an application for Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty grant funding for The Ness, and the detail of any application – It was noted applications are not open until 2023 and the coastal garden could be submitted for funding.

139. To consider how to progress the provision of water bottle refill stations in the Town Council's parks

It was remarked the Sub-Committee needed to consider the priority of sites to have these refill stations. Cllr Pearce proposed to progress as per health and safety advice provided and pilot the stations at Kensington Gardens, Normanston Park and the Great Eastern Linear Park as they are regularly used by runners and cyclists; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

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140. To consider options for compiling a Tree Inventory

It was suggested staff contact the tree expert from Suffolk Coastal for advice. The PCC confirmed staff were seeking quotations and checking if any records currently exist for the land. It was confirmed the quotation received at the previous meeting for establishing software options was put on hold whilst the value of the service is considered. It was noted over the next year there could be enough staff to schedule the mapping work and produce an inventory of each site with photographs of the trees sent for identification. It was suggested this be factored into the Grounds Maintenance transition. Cllr Pearce proposed to, in principal, produce the Tree Inventory during 2023-2024 and requested the PCC provide a potential approach and timetable; seconded Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

141. To receive an update on trees vandalised at the North Denes

It was confirmed there was no program of replacing the trees at the North Denes. A site visit was suggested for Councillors to determine if the vandalised trees should be replaced. Cllr Pearce proposed the PCC arrange a site visit for the North Denes in 2023 and for clarification be provided on the Rights to a View in the area and what legacy rights exist for houses in the area where Lowestoft Town Council land is between them and the sea; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

Cllr Youngman temporarily left the chamber at 20:47

142. To consider any impact of water depth on the biodiversity of the Gainsborough Drive Pond

Cllr Youngman returned to chamber at 20:48

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) were approached and confirmed a body of water with steep sides installed with a ramp or sloping edges would benefit ducklings, hedgehogs and other wildlife. It was confirmed specifications were requested from the RSPB. Cllr Pearce proposed staff progress and implement this per the advice received, with the Facilities Maintenance Officer (FMO) and Parks and Community Officer (PCO), or a contractor, installing a ramp. A delegated budget of £500 maximum was allocated, if exceeded then it was requested an item be on the January AID agenda. Seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

143. To consider the following regarding Kensington Gardens

143.1 The future of the boating lake – Cllr Breakspear requested this item be deferred to January whilst ideas are compiled and the lake is completely emptied. It was noted this work needed to be considered with regards to the grounds maintenance contract and if part of future annual maintenance then it needs to be decided whether the work is outsourced or complete in-house.

143.2 Screening for the bins – Cllr Pearce proposed the FMO and PCO review the site and make a recommendation to AID in January with a budget request; seconded Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

143.3 Funding for water lilies for the duck pond – It was requested this item be deferred to the AID meeting in January whilst awaiting advice. It was suggested if possible for the Council to consider funding this from the Horticulture budget.

144. To consider submitting an application to East Suffolk Council for Field to Fork grant funding

It was noted the grant fits with a prior idea for community kitchen gardens at Clarkes Lane and The Parklands where fruit trees were being planted. It was requested the FMO and

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PCO visit Fen Park and confirm if there is space in the area bordering the existing allotment land for a community garden.

It was requested the PCC continue to monitor for when the applications re-open. Cllr Youngman proposed the community garden on Gunton Community Park be developed first; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour. It was noted once the Management Committee for Gunton Community Hall is developed, the Council can do collaborative work with them to develop the community garden.

145. Date of the next meeting

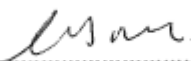
17 January 2023 19:00

146. Items for the next Agenda and Close

It was requested any items for the agenda be emailed to staff.

147. 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

The Chair closed the meeting at 21:03

Signed: 
17 January 2023