

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 12 December 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, Bernadette Rappensberger, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman

In attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

132. Welcome

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

133. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs John Pitts, Jack Smith and David Youngman, with reasons provided. Cllr Brooks requested separate votes to approve the apologies for each Councillor who had provided them. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve the apologies provided by Cllr Pitts; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the apologies provided by Cllr Smith; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the apologies provided by Cllr D. Youngman; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; five Councillors voted in favour; two Councillors voted against.

134. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

134.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr Pearce declared he is Chair of the Gunton Residents' Association. Cllr Breakspear declared he is Chair of the Friends of Kensington Gardens.

134.2. Written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

135. The draft minutes of the meeting on 21 November 2023

At the last meeting, Cllr Pearce had specifically requested that Cllr Newsome be invited to the Zoom meeting to discuss watering methods for the bowls greens, and requested an amendment to the minutes to reflect this. It was noted that October's minutes also still required formal approval. Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes of 21 November, with the amendment as requested; seconded by Cllr Pearce; six Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

136. Public Forum

No members of the public were in attendance and no advance comments had been received.

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

It was noted that the budget and expenditure was being monitored and reviewed by the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee and the Finance and Governance Committee, and there was nothing to specifically report at this meeting.

138. Review and implementation of the five-year plans in line with budgeting, noting Councillor's comments regarding the following:

Cllr Brooks queried whether it had been decided to progress the idea of refurbishing the Normanston Park changing rooms, and whether there had been any progress with the development of a wildflower meadow at the Great Eastern Linear Park. Cllr Brooks considered the duck feeding signs at the Gainsborough Drive pond to be in the wrong place to be

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sufficiently visible. Cllr Newsome enquired whether there had been any update following the vandalism to the 'Euroscope' at Ness Point.

Cllr Pearce noted that a document of suggestions for year one projects, provided by the Project and Committee Clerk, was available on the members' area, and read through the document:

138.1. Normanston Park – Refurbishment of the public conveniences and changing rooms had been recommended as a year one priority and provision had been included in the draft budget.

138.2. Rosedale Park

138.3. Kensington Gardens

138.4. Gunton Community Park – It had been suggested that a community garden could be progressed in partnership with the Gunton Community Residents' Hall's Management Committee.

138.5. Great Eastern Linear Park

138.6. Sparrows Nest

138.7. Fen Park - A specific budget was in place for improvement works to the play area, some of which had been used for resurfacing works and the refurbishment of the roundabout. The Project and Committee Clerk considered that much of the refurbishment works required could be done 'in house'. Cllr Brooks noted that outdoor fitness equipment had been suggested. The Project and Committee Clerk had contacted the Environment Agency about water testing the pond due to its discolouration. Cllr Pearce noted the sluice gates were not owned by the Town Council and had been operated by the previous grounds maintenance contractor. The Project and Committee Clerk advised that the Parks and Community Officer had put together a document advising of the flow of water at the site, which demonstrated that the stream did not run into the pond. The owner of the sluice gates was however known to the Town Council should they need to be operated. It was requested that a similar document for the flow of the natural springs in Sparrows Nest would be beneficial, and officers were asked to check that the repair work carried out to the rear of the War Memorial Museum had held.

138.8. Belle Vue Park - The pink and white beds and ten-year snowdrop plans had been approved and could start in year one. The Project and Committee Clerk had requested further detail from Cllr Coleby to put costs together. Cllr Brooks had previously requested consideration of refurbishment of the elephant statue. It was noted that a site visit had suggested by officers at item 140.

138.9. Denes Oval - Full Council had requested exploration of the possibility of a Public Works Loan for the perimeter wall, gates and turrets, over a term of no longer than ten years, in order to make the cost of the works more manageable and predictable for budgeting. A condition survey of the pavilion had been instructed, and it had been agreed for a surveyor to go to site and provide a programme of works following this. Improvements to the planting of the rockery wall at the front of the Pavilion had been requested.

138.10. Cotman Close

138.11. Britten Road Play Area - The installation of bicycle racks had been suggested to complement scheduled improvement works to the play area.

138.12. Clarkes Lane - A new play area had been put forward as a recommendation to Full Council as a 2024 – 2025 project, together with the refurbishment of the Thirlmere Walk play area. Additional orchard trees, a wildflower area and a community garden had also been suggested and it had previously been agreed for a site visit to be arranged.

138.13. Pakefield Green Play Area (Wellington Road) - The installation of bicycle racks had been suggested to complement scheduled improvement works to the play area.

138.14. The Ness – The Project and Committee Clerk was approaching Landscape Designers

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for quotations and it was anticipated that the Coastal Garden itself would be developed in stages. The Ness Working Group was considering the sea wall mural. It had been suggested by officers not to prioritise this as a year one project as the plans were not advanced. It had been suggested that a 'Herring Lassies' sculpture could be incorporated into the plans for the Coastal Garden. Consideration was also being given to commemorating other groups who worked on the site, including the 'Beetsters' and 'Ransackers'.

138.15. Ness Point – Cllr Brooks had suggested a tourist telescope for Ness Point. It was noted the damage to the 'Euroscope' could cost several thousand pounds to repair.

138.16. St Margaret's Plain Play Area

138.17. Bentley Drive Play Area

138.18. Gainsborough Drive Pond

138.19. North Denes

138.20. Links Road Car Park

138.21. Triangle Market – Seating and planters for the area adjacent to the Triangle Market were being considered at item 144. Belle Vue Park was now being considered as the location for the memorial to the Lowestoft Witches, as considered by the Events and Communications Sub-Committee.

138.22. Town Green – It was noted there had been discussion of planting at the site as a welcome to the town.

138.23. Land at Upland's Road North (including pond)

139. Installation of fencing around the Cotman Close play area

Cllr E. Youngman considered this would be difficult, given the proximity of surrounding vegetation, which the Town Council does not own. Cllr Pearce advised the request had come from a resident, who understood the site to be fenced historically, and reported that dog walkers do allow their dogs off the lead there. No complaints about dogs had been received by the office so far. Regarding the split ownership of land at Cotman Close, an East Suffolk Council officer had indicated that East Suffolk Council would be amenable to transferring land to the Town Council on a cost-neutral basis, on the understanding the land would be used for a community benefit. There were however other outstanding land transfer issues to resolve first. Cllr Pearce suggested revisiting this item at a time when the land is in single ownership, and would advise the resident to contact the office.

140. A budget for further grounds work required at Belle Vue Park before the 150th anniversary

The Project and Committee Clerk had suggested a site visit, to highlight areas for improvement and any new or improved planting needed. The site visit could also incorporate the next two items on the agenda. Cllr Pearce proposed to progress the site visit to Belle Vue Park and Sparrows Nest. Cllr Brooks requested to include Arnold's Bequest also. Given that Arnold's Bequest is managed by the Charity Board, Cllr Pearce suggested this should be arranged as a separate site visit, however for practicality purposes, could be scheduled to follow the Belle Vue Park and Sparrows Nest visits. Cllr Pearce proposed for officers to arrange the site visits, with the Parks and Community Officer and Facilities Maintenance Officer in attendance, to be scheduled around the relevant meetings in January; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

141. Improvement works required to the entrances to Belle Vue Park and Sparrows Nest on Yarmouth Road

This was included with the consideration of the previous item.

142. Improvement works required to the entrances and perimeter of Sparrows Nest on Whapload Road, including replacement fence panels

This was included with the consideration of the previous item.

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143. The Town Council Tree Policy in relation to the pledge to replace felled trees

Cllr Breakspear read out the Project and Committee Clerk's notes. Cllr Pearce noted that the new Tree Working Group would be reviewing the results of the tree survey and the Tree Policy in light of the survey. The Town Council's pledge in relation to felled trees could extend to sponsoring the planting of trees on land it does not own. In the interim, Cllr Pearce proposed that arrangements for the replacement of any tree felled should be considered on a case-by-case basis; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

144. Putting together a specification for seating and planters for the site adjacent to the Triangle Market, including to consider a planting plan and a budget

Cllr Breakspear declared he had recently joined the Men's Shed. Cllr Breakspear read out the Project and Committee Clerk's notes. Cllr Brooks considered that other local organisations should also be approached. The Project and Committee Clerk advised that quotations would be sought from multiple sources, and suggested organising a Zoom meeting with Triangle Market Working Group, Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee and Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee members to put together a specification. Cllr E. Youngman proposed to proceed as suggested by the Project and Committee Clerk, with the meeting to be scheduled for the first half of January; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

145. The installation of planters at the Denes Oval

Cllr Breakspear read out the Project and Committee Clerk's notes. A member of the grounds maintenance team primarily based at the Denes Oval had requested two of the planters currently stored at the Town Hall be installed at the Denes Oval, where he would plant and tend to them. Cllr Brooks proposed to approve this request, and offer all of the planters at the Town Hall for installation at the Denes Oval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

146. Date of the next meeting

16 January 2024 19:00

147. Items for the next agenda and close

Councillors were advised to email any requests to the office.

There were no confidential items for consideration and the meeting was closed at 20:15.

148. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:



16 January 2024