

Leisure and Environment cttee meeting - Minutes of meeting held on 16th September 2021 at 5.30pm

REP L&E 5/2021

Meeting agenda

1) **Present;** Cllr Rowan-Robinson Chair, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Jordan, Cllr Sutton.

Also, present Town Clerk and one member of public plus one member of public via Zoom facility

- 2) a) **Apologies for absence** - Apologies were received from Cllr Beavan.
b) Declarations of interest – nil.
c) Declaration of pecuniary interest – nil.

3) **Minutes of previous meeting** – as presented to Town Council

4) Public section

The member of public advised that the flash had been very good for birds this year due to the covering of water on it. Questions to cttee; As it sits on an independent marsh, members were asked if this could this be done every year - and then let the water off before the time for the grazing cattle to come back on. As the farmer had not complained this year would this be something that could be experimented with next year. Mr Westlake might assist once the cattle are off. Could Council carry out a feasibility study to see what works could be carried out to increase wildlife even further?

Tree planting – the trees that were planted by the sewage works have taken well apart from the Oak. There are lots of areas that would benefit from further planting.

Discussion about these suggestions - Cllr Rowan- Robinson asked whether boards would work in the area of the Flash – member of public advised that they did not know how well this might work.

Mention was made that the marsh is tenanted to a farmer and any suggestions such as those above would need to be discussed with the tenant.

5) Environmental matters

a) Appearance of town

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the Council were aware of comments being made regarding the appearance of the town.

There would seem to be 3 matters of concern – weeds on edges of pavements/paths, litter, footpaths. Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that he had provided a robust response to a letter from SRS regarding the footpaths – and felt that the town is not ‘scruffy’ especially considering the footfall that it receives.

Discussion about each matter in turn.

- i) *Weeds – edges of roads/ pavements* – these are the responsibility of SCC – the weeds are sprayed once a year by SCC and left in situ – unlikely to be any possible action locally unless by volunteers.

Weeds – by individual premises – these are the responsibility of the premises owners – liaison has taken place with holiday agencies regarding the properties they look after. It was suggested to ask the Town Manager to liaise with businesses regarding their frontages.

It was also suggested that people with concerns should advise of the specific property/premise so that the owner/occupier could be contacted. Local gardeners are unlikely to wish to take on weeding outside individual premises. It was suggested that a volunteer event could be held in spring to do such weeding throughout the parish.

- ii) *Litter* – again evidence of individual concerns was requested. The Town Clerk advised that Norse had been very good with litter collections and litter picking and there had been no complaints from anyone about bins overflowing, bags of rubbish lying on the pavements/prom etc. which had been the case in 2020.

Norse do litter pick in Southwold daily during the summer – but with the daily footfall that the town experiences there will also be a low level of litter at some stage during each day.

Example of French businesses sweeping outside premise each morning - It was suggested that the Town Manager contact all businesses asking them to sweep outside their premises at least once a day.

Discussion about trade waste bins for Susie's Café – Norse have been checking to ensure that the business on the prom have the appropriate trade waste agreements – hence the trade waste bins.

The Town Clerk was asked to contact the other businesses along the prom to ensure that they clear their areas regularly.

An example was shown of a litter hoover machine used in Bury St Edmunds – details have been provided to the appropriate ESC cabinet member who advises that they will look into cost/benefits etc.

New recyclable bins have been placed in the High Street by Norse who advise that they are conscious of appearance and will be cleaning/updating all their bins in the High Street over the next few months.

Washing of pavements – ESC/SCC carry this out during the year on an irregular basis. The Town Council has previously undertaken additional pavement cleaning, but the pavements only retain their cleanliness for a very short period of time due to daily footfall levels. In view of the costs, it is not sustainable for the Town Council/ ESC/SCC to carry this out as often as might be preferred.

iii) *Footpaths* - The Chairman advised that:

Volunteers have been carrying out works in Waters Copse and this has improved the footpaths there.

The footpath trail is being implemented and this will make improvements.

SCC are quick to respond to issues reported on their system regarding footpaths.

Town Council/Common Trust have regularly cut their footpaths.

Other footpaths – Reydon area- parish clerk to look into these issues. Volunteer group could be set up to improve these and cut back brambles etc.

iv) *Other matters*

Dog mess on pavements – this again is about messaging and individual responsibility.

Discussion about the word 'scruffy' and what else this might include. It was suggested that flower beds planted with seasonal bedding would help the town look prettier. These would take maintenance, constant watering and volunteers would be needed to make this happen.

It was agreed that discussion would take place with Norse about the possibility of seasonal planting on the North Parade/East Cliff green area. Cost of planting and regular maintenance to be established for 2022.

b) *Town Council grounds maintenance/footpath cutting* – this is presently undertaken by Mr Seaman who carries out the grounds work on the Common, but who is wishing to reduce work in due course. Common Trust has received quotes from Vertas, and Norse for footpath cutting and it has been suggested that Vertas undertake the footpaths work for the Common Trust and incorporates the Town Council footpath work at the same time. Agreed by all.

Vertas are willing to undertake other grounds works as required – Council to get costs for specific works as/when required.

c) *Hemlock* - quotes had been received for its spray, cut and removal on several areas in Southwold– this will need to be carried out for at least the next 3 years to eradicate it completely.

Discussion about the cost and the alternatives. It was suggested that it might be too late to spray this year and that cutting, raking and removing in the spring would be appropriate as a first stage (members were advised that could use hedge cutter, and store under a tarpaulin and then it could be burnt). Mention was made that the green keeper at the Golf Club may have the necessary equipment and be prepared to do this in the spring – contact to be made with the green keeper and comparative quote requested from him for the Town Council. Common Trust mgt team also to contact about the areas of Hemlock on the Common.

d) *Ferry Road Garden* – Cllr Goldsmith reported that the area has been cut and will be left for a week to dry before spraying in 2 applications. Timescale for planting and completion is to be established.

e) *Tree planting* – see discussion in public session. The Town Clerk advised that there is a national initiative promoting tree planting - called the 'Queens Green Canopy'. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would liaise with Mr Hancock about possible areas to put forward for the scheme.

f) *Horse Chestnut saplings* – Cllr Beavan to update.

g) *Dogs on lead sign/boards for Buss Creek footpath* – see updates on funding below.

h) *Climate initiatives* – the Town Clerk advised that the Town Mayor will be promoting climate initiatives during his term of office.

i) *Science workshops* - The meeting was advised that EDF will be undertaking some science workshops with the school children.

6) Leisure projects

- i) *Skatepark improvements* – a member of the public is leading the community efforts for a new skatepark on the Klondyke. Mention was made of the insuring and maintenance responsibilities and Town Clerk will respond. As landowners STC will need to be part of the community group.
- ii) *Festival of Suffolk 2022* – being led by the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk Lady Euston. Zoom call being held with all parishes later in the month with more information.
- iii) *Queens Platinum Jubilee – 2/3/4/5 June 2022*. Beacon lighting, and the lone piper are part of the national initiatives. Town Council will need the help of community members to establish events over the 4 days – community meeting to be held via zoom with those willing to help organise appropriate events. Date to be set.

7) Other matters not dealt with in meeting.

Great British Beach Clean – 17 – 26th Sept – to be promoted.

800 years of Southwold Market – Love your market fortnight 16 – 30 Oct – to be celebrated/ highlighted.

Fingerposts – within footpath trail

Denes water quality – to be discussed at next meeting

Dam Boards – to be discussed at next meeting

Remembrance Sunday – to be organised

8) Funding/ grants.

Update by JM Environmental of the 4 individual, but co-joined projects, that are being undertaken by Town Council/Common Trust for which some have received funding.

Project 1 – footpath across marshes/drainage works - James Mellish will arrange another site visit to progress.

Project 2 – AONB grant £3,650 – project costs £7050 Waters Copse. Phase 1 has been completed. Phase 2 needs to be completed by Feb 2022.

Project 3 – RDPE grant - £42,230 Town footpath trail – grant expires 10th July 2022. Working group to assist with the text to go on the boards – working group volunteers are Cllrs Jordan, Bradbury and Rowan-Robinson.

Project 4 – Boating Lake – application for Heritage Lottery funding - James Mellish will carry out another consultation on this project at the Town Hall before submitting an application at end of year.

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