

**MINUTES of the ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE meeting held at Town Hall,
Felixstowe on Wednesday 5 July 2023 at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr D Rowe (Chairman)
Cllr M James (Vice Chairman) Cllr S Harkin
Cllr D Aitchison Cllr M Morris
Cllr J Candy Cllr M Sharman

OFFICERS: Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mrs J Smith (Assets & Services Officer)
Mr T Minns (Grounds & Maintenance Manager)

IN ATTENDANCE: None

92. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from **Cllr N Barber** and **Cllr D Underwood**.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr J Candy	All	Other registerable interest (as Members of East Suffolk Council)

Members were advised that, should any matters arise in the meeting that directly relate to any of their interests, they should make appropriate declarations at that time.

95. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Assets & Services Committee Meeting held on 26 April 2023 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

96. ASSETS & SERVICES BUDGET REPORT

The Committee considered the summary and detailed report showing income and expenditure against budget to 28 June 2023. It was questioned as to why there was no cost centre for bus shelters which it was believed Felixstowe Town Council own five, the Deputy Town Clerk explained that there are currently no bus shelters on Felixstowe Town Councils assets.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Budget Report to 28 June 2023 be received and noted; and,**

- ii. **Deputy Town Clerk to review the ownership information on Bus Shelters in Felixstowe.**

97. TOWN HALL UPDATE REPORT

Committee received the update report on the Town Hall. Members were asked to give thought to an alternative use of the Surveyor's office now that East Suffolk Council had vacated the room.

Committee considered the damp that was apparent in the Committee room, also in the Clerk's Office and small amount in the Council Chamber and agreed it would be good to obtain an updated Structural Engineer report as it was coming up to 5 years since the work was carried out in October 2018.

Committee were pleased to note the comments of the East Suffolk Council Conservation Officer on the work carried out to the windows.

Members considered the damage to the accessible entrance porch roof and agreed that the work should be carried out at a cost of £180 to supply and fit plain clay tiles to match the existing.

Members questioned if the work to be done to the Town Hall Gardens toilets by East Suffolk Council, had gone out to tender, and if there was a set date for the works yet. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that work was due to be started at the end of 2023/2024 but as yet it had not gone out to tender. Plans will be forwarded to Members in due course.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. **the Town Hall Update Report be noted;**
- ii. **the Structural Engineer who carried out the previous inspection be approached for a quote for new update report on the front elevation, if the cost is more than £500 then three quotes to be obtained and referred back to committee;**
- iii. **the porch roof to be repaired by same company who carried out previous work to Town Hall rear roof, funded from the Town Hall Repairs and Maintenance budget; and,**
- iv. **Deputy Town Clerk to investigate with East Suffolk Council as to whether the plans for the works to be done to the Town Hall Gardens toilets had been finalised, and ask how long the toilets would be out of action and whether portaloos would be there in the interim.**

98. WALTON COMMUNITY HALL UPDATE

Committee received the update report on Walton Community Hall. Members discussed the current costs and usage of Walton Hall, and the benefits of more

energy efficient heating and lighting. One member offered to forward details regarding the government's Move to Net Zero levelling up scheme.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the air conditioning had been turned off since the high rise of electricity costs, and it was agreed that it be serviced as usual.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Walton Community Hall update report be noted;**
- ii. the air conditioning be serviced; and,**
- iii. the Deputy Town Clerk approach Groundwork East for an updated detailed report and/or seek other engineer reports if possible to assess the heating and lighting at Walton Community Hall and cost for the best options for environmental impact.**

99. CEMETERY UPDATE REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Manager presented the Cemetery Update Report. Members noted the work carried out to install a crate soak away system and agreed that quotes be obtained for the drainage field system and brought back to committee in September. If the same contractor is competitive it would be recommended to use them, as the work to date was very good.

Members discussed the options available for replacement hedging in the Cemetery and agreed that *Berberis darwinii* 'Compacta' be sourced as it is good for bees and low maintenance at an approximate cost of £2.79 per plant.

The need for shoring equipment as a Health and Safety matter due to coffins becoming longer and wider was discussed and agreed to be taken from the Cemetery Earmarked Reserve. It was noted that there was only one company who supplied universal equipment that would be compatible with the equipment already owned.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Cemetery Update Report be noted; and**
- ii. three quotes be obtained for the drainage field system; and,**
- iii. up to £1,500 be funded from the Cemetery Earmarked Reserves to replace hedges affected by Box Blight; and,**
- iv. Grave shoring equipment and 4 ground protection boards at a cost of £2,395 +VAT to be funded by the Cemetery earmarked Reserve.**

100. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE REPORT

The Assets & Services Officer presented the Allotments update report. Members discussed the benefits of keeping a hedged boundary at Cowpasture, and other boundary treatment options. Members were concerned that if a fence was to be erected it would probably mean that the hedge would have to be removed in order to erect the fence. Currently a mixture of dead hedge and hawthorn was being used. A trip has been arranged for Council's Planning & Environment Committee to visit the site at the end of July and boundaries can be discussed then, however, so far Persimmon have not been able to help with this matter.

It was agreed that some simple signage may prevent residents walking through Cowpasture and should be considered at key entry points where the site may be used as a walk through.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Allotment update report be noted; and,**
- ii. investigations be made into the potential cost of boundary fencing, and Persimmons be approached again regarding a contribution to the boundary.**

101. ALLENBY PARK AND GOSFORD WAY PARK

Committee received the updates on Allenby Park and Gosford Way Park. Members discussed potential points for a Park Management Plan, currently being drafted, and ways of increasing the profile of Allenby Park within the general community. The Park Management Plan can be incorporated in Council's forthcoming Business Plan which will span the years 2024-28.

Signposting from the Town Centre to Allenby Park and promoting its heritage would mean that visitors to the town would be made aware of its location.

Members questioned whether the cost of £4,445 to bring water to the park would bring value for money. Members also considered whether a licence could be given to a food or drink kiosk, even if it was a mobile one during the Summer holidays only. It is too short notice for this summer but something to consider in the future.

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Committee that there was currently no Earmarked Reserves for the Parks but Members could consider recommending to Council that an Earmarked Reserve be created with a name such as 'Public Spaces' which would give a broader definition than just for parks. The money could be transferred in from General Reserves.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that East Suffolk Council had agreed to fund 50% of the work required for the footpath in Gosford Way, however, they would

require Felixstowe Town Council to procure the works as it is now in ownership of Felixstowe Town Council. Members agreed that 3 quotes should be obtained and the funds to come from the newly created Earmarked Reserve should Council approve.

Members were pleased to hear about the work being carried out to allow disabled access to Allenby Park with the Play Matta costing £44. Promotion will be carried out both on social media and the magazine.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Park Update Report be noted;**
- ii. it be recommended to Council to create an Earmarked Reserve named 'Public Spaces' with £20,000 transferred from Council's General Reserves.**
- iii. Three quotes be obtained for the Gosford Way Park footpath repair, once agreed with East Suffolk, recommend to Council that the cost is funded by the new 'Public Spaces' Earmarked Reserve if approved.**

102. TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Members approved the draft Tree Management Plan. Committee discussed training of staff and what work could not be carried out in house. Members suggested that in the future it may be worth investigating further training for staff to allow more in-depth tree work.

Members discussed a tree at Allenby park, following concerns of a near neighbour. However, Committee felt that cutting down a healthy tree due to people climbing on it was not a reasonable course of action. Other efforts were being made to deter this behaviour such as growing grass around the base of the tree. The Grounds team would also speak with the neighbour and ask them to keep a record and report any anti-social behaviour to the police.

An ongoing issue with three trees along the entrance to the Ferry Road Allotments was discussed. Members considered various options available to resolve the issue. Pruning would become a regular cost to the Town Council, and Members were concerned that felling the tree could cause issues with the house adjacent due to roots shrinking. It was agreed to ask Flagship to attend the site to see the issue for themselves and ask if they would be prepared to make a contribution towards the work, as they went into an agreement for the house knowing that the trees were adjacent. Either way it was agreed that Flagship should be sent a disclaimer once the quote has been received for the works. Members agreed that it would be in the best interest to fell the tree overhanging the garden with Flagships agreement to a disclaimer and prune the other two. The expected cost to be up to £5,000.

East Suffolk Council gave planning permission but Members queried whether the planning permission has been complied with. If the house in question is closer to the trees than the plans suggest, it would be worth speaking with Planning Enforcement at East Suffolk Council. While they may not take any action, there could be a possibility of going to the developer and owner and seek some compensation/money towards the cost of pruning/felling the trees.

Cllr Harkin agreed to update the resident and advise that work was expected to take place by the end of the year. Felixstowe Town Council will also send a letter to the resident to confirm when the work will be done.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Tree Management plan be brought back to committee when further work has been carried out;**
- ii. the Allenby Park resident be advised of Committee's reluctance to fell a healthy tree, and advice be offered on reporting any issues to the police; and,**
- iii. three quotes be obtained for the tree work to be carried out at Ferry Road allotments, fell F3 and hard prune F1 and F2, and bring figures to committee in September with an update of meeting Flagship housing to see if they will contribute half; checking plans against where the building is, and if necessary contact Planning Enforcement at East Suffolk Council.**

103. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.19pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 20 September 2023 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____