



Ramsgate Town Council

Minutes of Open Public Spaces Strategy Group

Venue: The Council Chamber, The Custom House, Harbour Parade, Ramsgate

Date: Friday 11th August 2023 at 9:30am

Present: Councillors: Crittenden (Chair), Huxley.

Also in attendance;

Mrs R Smith – Town Centre and Tourism Manager (Minutes)

Mrs M Morgan – Lead Technician

D Green – Community Representative

C Gibson – Community Representative

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Green, Albon and Wing.

ACTION: To approve the apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

REVIEW PREVIOUS MINUTES FOR ACTIONS

It was noted that due to the time delay since the last meeting and changes in staffing at both Thanet District Council and Ramsgate Town Council, some of the former actions were no longer applicable - two were of note:

- a. Mrs M Morgan and Mrs R Smith to meet with Mr G Mills to discuss strategy for undertaking the [agreed] work in lieu of permissions from Thanet District Council - this is to be carried forward (see below)
- b. Mrs R Smith had created a suggestion form for volunteers to give feedback on the [volunteers] event which was mostly very positive.
- c. Also, Mrs R Smith confirmed there is a £50 voucher available for volunteers to spend on plants and seeds.

AUDIT OF GREEN AND OPEN SPACES / PROGRESS UPDATE ON INITIAL PROJECTS SELECTED

Previously, Mr Chris Barton had compiled a comprehensive list of open spaces around Ramsgate, some of which had the potential to be included in spaces that could be looked after by Ramsgate Town Council and/or additional volunteer groups. These are (updated post meeting):

- Island at the bottom of Station Approach Road / junction with Shah Place (Kent County Council)
- Raised bed next to Viaduct Stores in Margate Road (Kent County Council)

- Raised beds/island St Lawrence seating area, south facing aspect of roundabout (Thanet District Council)
- Broad Street seating area (Thanet District Council)
- Prestedge Green where benches and bus stop are (Thanet District Council)
- Mowing from flagpole to King George VI Memorial Park (Thanet District Council)
- East Cliff promenade flower beds from lift to Winterstoke Gardens (Thanet District Council)
- Cutting raised beds in between greens along west cliff (Thanet District Council)
- Margate Road green front of billboards opposite Hare and Hounds (Kent County Council)
- Dog park Nethercourt (Thanet District Council)
- Nun's cemetery, Mark Ave. CT11 0JS (Thanet District Council)
- Corner of Grange Road behind Lewis Carpets shop (Thanet District Council)
- Elms Ave next to Trevor Shonk's garage (Kent County Council)

It was noted that five areas had been chosen to negotiate SLA's with Thanet District Council (Eastcliff beds, Dog Park, St Lawrence, Broad Street, plus gullies around Government Acre). Due to reduced staffing since the original agreement, it was **AGREED to reduce these to three: Eastcliff beds, St Lawrence, Broad Street.**

Due to staffing issues at both Thanet District Council and Ramsgate Town Council there has been no progress on negotiating Ramsgate Town Council taking over responsibility of the original five areas identified and so these three areas will be taken forward instead.

Updates from Mrs M Morgan & Discussion

- Nethercourt Dog Park, regularly mowed by Thanet District Council staff.
- Broad Street Seating Area, technicians keep this area maintained at least twice a year. Thanet District Council have trimmed the hedges recently.
- East Cliff Promenade,
 - Thanet District Council have weeded and laid bark down in some of the flower beds.
 - Winterstoke Gardening Group have recently carried out extra weeding along east cliff promenade.
 - The area around Edward Pugin's bust is very overgrown with weeds. Thanet District Council occasionally weed the area. Weeding this area is on the technicians' work list for next week.
- Thanet District Council has recently purchased a hand machine that will possibly clear the gullies around Government Acre.
- By the end of next week, the technicians will be down to three Full time Equivalents (FTE), but interviews are due to take place 23rd August and so this number should soon increase to four FTE.
- Eastcliff lift, weeding tiled entrance recently completed by Ramsgate Town Council and loose tiles now being stored at Radford House
- C Gibson asked if the areas suggested were to be taken on by volunteers or be managed by Ramsgate Town Council technicians. Councillor Crittenden confirmed that initially Ramsgate Town Council technicians would manage the space with the hope that volunteers might come forward to take over areas with the support of Ramsgate Town Council.
- In addition, Ramsgate Town Council technicians maintain three town centre beds, one longer bed outside Wilko in York Street, Cavendish Street car park planters, corner of Leopold Street bush trimming and lavender, entrance to Westcliff Arcade/multi storey lavender planting (all areas owned by Thanet District Council) and railing planters (x 15), railings owned by Kent County Council.
- ALBION GARDENS

- ***Note this does not fall within the remit of this group but was discussed as relates to commitments being undertaken by technicians.**
- Any transfer of gardens will have to include waterfall and surrounding pulhamite. Ramsgate Town Council cannot take on the waterfall.
- Discussion for Ramsgate Town Council to take on overall responsibility for the gardens to be discussed with Thanet District Council in conjunction with the Chair of Council, Councillor Albon.
- Volunteer group working in the gardens is now down to about only two volunteers and remain unconstituted. C Gibson offered for the group to use the Winterstoke constitution as a template. Winterstoke group is fully committed and would not be able to take on additional work in Albion Gardens.
- Mrs Morgan suggested Ramsgate Town Council would be able to mow and remove green waste.
- It was confirmed that there is a water leak somewhere in the system, which is why the waterfall pump has been turned off, pending further investigation. Invasive plants in the waterfall area also need to be dealt with and removed but this is not something that can be done by volunteers due to health and safety issues. Councillors are liaising with Thanet District Council, in particular Councillor Albon in his role as Cabinet Member.
- D Green advised that now is the ideal time to drain the pond at the bottom of the waterfall (Gardener's World, BBC 2, August 2023, episode 20 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tutu7tR8xl> 13 minutes 20 seconds into the episode)

ACTION:

- **Mrs M Morgan & Mr G Mills to consider a strategy for undertaking the three identified areas and report back to Town Clerk for consideration and discussion with Thanet District Council in liaison with the Chair of Council.**
- **Update Town Clerk on the reduced list of proposed areas for SLAs to be negotiated.**
- **Town Clerk, in conjunction with Chair of Council to resume contact with Thanet District Council to negotiate SLA's for three areas identified for Ramsgate Town Council to undertake gardening (reduced from previous give)**
- **Mrs M Morgan and Mrs R Smith to add the full list of possible areas for pocket parks. COMPLETED, as above**
- **Councillor Crittenden to contact Thanet District Council/Open Spaces with information on pond clearance and timings (see Gardener's World reference for advice) - COMPLETED**

ENGAGING VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Councillor Young has organised a volunteer thank you meeting where refreshments will be available on 8th September at Ramsgate Football Club between 11am and 1pm. Volunteer badges will be available for all volunteers that haven't yet received one. Mrs M Morgan also advised that some businesses would offer a discount to badge wearers.

The next volunteer gardener's lunch will be on 20th September at Radford House 12 midday to 2pm (ish). Speaker will be Irene Seijo (TBC). Linda Miller is also expected to attend to discuss starting a local Horticultural Society for people that would be interested in meeting up, swapping plans/seeds, taking trips to Kew Gardens etc. A suggestion was also made to ask if people would like to bring plants/seeds to swap with other gardening groups. Mrs R Smith reported that the first lunch, which was reviewed by the attendees, was scored very highly with 36 reviewers scoring the event 4.6/5. The negative comments were mainly around the venue size which was too small as 42 people attended.

C Gibson suggested that Thanet District Council should mow public spaces monthly. Mrs M Morgan advised that there is not enough staff at Thanet District Council to undertake the work. A discussion ensued about the danger of grass seeds and vets are reporting an increase of dogs being treated for grass seed inhalation.

Mrs R Smith and Mrs M Morgan reported that Brunswick Court has now set up a constituted gardening group which is growing in numbers every week and created a new sense of community. Mrs Morgan praised the new group that has made such a big difference to the area.

C Gibson suggested that we invite residents near different flower beds once they have been maintained, suggesting that they might like to keep it maintained (adopt a bed). C Gibson also asked her group about keeping the promenade maintained but the group felt that they could not undertake the weeding etc.

ACTION:

- **Mrs R Smith to add new gardening group to database and Mrs Linda Miller and send out invitations for the gardening volunteers' lunch on 20th September.**
- **Mrs R Smith to invite Irene Seijo to speak at the above lunch.**

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 20th October 2023 at 10am.