



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Open Public Spaces Strategy Group

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

Date: Friday 13th October 2023 at 10am

Present: Councillor: Huxley (Chair for the meeting)

Also in attendance;

Ms L Fidler – Town Clerk and RFO

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

Mr G Mills – Technician Manager (HR and Health and Safety)

D Green – Community Representative

C Gibson – Community Representative

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Albon and Crittenden and Mrs M Morgan (Technician Manager (Projects Manager)).

ACTION: To approve the apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

REVIEW PREVIOUS MINUTES FOR ACTIONS

- C Gibson asked for a correction in the minutes dated 11th August 2023 where it stated 'C Gibson also asked her group about keeping the promenade maintained but the group felt that they **could** undertake the weeding etc.' It was noted that this should have read 'C Gibson also asked her group about keeping the promenade maintained but the group felt that they **could not** undertake the weeding etc. This is because it is too large a job for them to undertake along with everything they already do.
- Ms L Fidler attended the first part of the meeting and reported that whilst there had been little progress, Thanet District Council has offered a lease for the bandstand and the green areas surrounding it but it was only for 6 months. Ms L Fidler has subsequently requested that this would need to be at least 15 years to enable Ramsgate Town Council to apply for funding. Awaiting response from Estates (Andreea Plant) which will then be taken to Council for consideration.
- Albion Gardens: Thanet District Council is receptive to Ramsgate Town Council looking after the green areas (excluding pulhamite and waterfall area). Awaiting a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to that effect.
- Pocket parks; Andreea Plant has advised that we 'just do it'. Ms L Fidler has emailed Tony Marmo and Andreea Plant to confirm that this is still acceptable. The merit in this is that Ramsgate Town Council can take on the spaces that can technically be undertaken so, for example, the technicians wouldn't need to take on ongoing

maintenance of trees and can focus on projects that they have the skillset and time to undertake.

- Mrs R Smith reported that since all three areas had been agreed as a starting point: Eastcliff beds, St Lawrence, Broad Street and that work could commence on the basis that Thanet District Council has suggested 'just get on with it'.

ACTIONS:

- **Councillor Huxley to contact Tony Marmo about re-surfacing the Eastcliff promenade.**
- **Councillor Huxley to find out who the tree officer is and report back via email.**
- **Correction for Minutes 11th August 2023 noted and recorded.**

PROGRESS UPDATE

- C Gibson asked if there is funding from Thanet District Council towards planting etc. Mrs R Smith suggested there wouldn't be available funds.
- Following a meeting with newly appointed Head of Coastal and Public realm (Thanet District Council), Tony Marmo, Ms L Fidler and Mr G Mills, Thanet District Council will tidy up the top level of the Royal Parade arches, (removal of bird mess, graffiti) and Ramsgate Town Council have agreed to do the weeding and litterpick the area.
- D Green suggested that a couple of days work (weeding and pruning) along the Madeira Walk would make a big difference.
- Ms L Fidler has asked Tony Marmo to come and meet with ward Councillors, technician managers and Mrs R Smith for a town walkabout with the hope we can identify other areas that need maintaining.
- C Gibson asked if Tony Marmo could come and visit the Winterstoke Gardens. C Gibson mentioned the National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) were in discussions with Thanet District Council about having their observation point at Winterstoke. Ms L Fidler also suggested contacting Lisa Collingwood as the coastline officer at Thanet District Council.
- D Green requested if the hedge at Nelson Gardens could be trimmed once deemed nest-free. C Gibson requested if the east cliff promenade could be weeded. The beds have only been weeded once in the past 15 months and the weeds are prolific, seeding and spreading all the way along the promenade. D Green also advised that the tarmac is breaking up and needs re-doing. C Gibson advised that Winterstoke area is also becoming a liability with uneven surfaces.
- C Gibson suggested we keep an audit or monitor/record the progress on pocket parks that Ramsgate Town Council take on and how this benefits the community/visitors.
- D Green advised on the 13 Edwardian Shelters and the amazing work that has been done by the volunteers and Ramsgate Town Council technicians who worked on the shelters for many weeks. Councillor Huxley praised the incredible work that Ramsgate Society has undertaken over the past few months and over the past decade, maintaining the shelters following an extensive restoration project that they oversaw and raised funds for. Councillor Huxley asked Mrs R Smith and Mr G Mills to follow up how Ramsgate Town Council could support the ongoing maintenance now all the shelters are restored with fresh paint and new glass. D Green praised Ramsgate Glass who have done an incredible job in replacing glass for free over many years. This has saved Ramsgate Society thousands of pounds.
- Mr G Mills reported that the Ramsgate Town Council technician team will be at full complement and may well be able to take on more maintenance work (to possibly include cleaning and sweeping of the shelters).
- C Gibson asked about pollarding and pruning trees at Winterstoke and Mrs R Smith advised this should be left to specialists/tree surgeon. Councillor Huxley would find out who the tree officer is at Thanet District Council.

- D Green asked about the fencing around/under the viaduct and the vast amount of litter. that has accumulated. Advised to contact Enforcement Officers at Thanet District Council and that this was brought up in a Litter Forum meeting on 10th October which was attended by Thanet District Council Enforcement Officers. D Green asked about Heras fencing and why it is left for years, specifically around Maritime Museum and Westcliff Hall. A suggestion was made to contact Kent County Council (KCC) and ask for an update/report on how long it will remain at Westcliff Hall.

ACTION:

- **Mr G Mills to assess the Nelson hedging for nests with a view to trim back for the winter.**
- **Mr G Mills to review workload and report back on areas that could be undertaken by technicians including the three identified areas plus shelters and Eastcliff promenade weeding.**
- **Mrs R Smith to send an e-introduction to C Gibson and NCI contact.**
- **Councillor Huxley to report on name of Tree Officer at Thanet District Council.**
- **Ms L Fidler to chase 'walkabout' meeting with Tony Marmo.**

ENGAGING VOLUNTEER GROUPS

- Mrs R Smith reported on the success of the Thank You event on 29th September with 130 people attending. Ramsgate Football Club was an excellent venue and the event was received very positively by those that attended. A suggestion was made to give an opportunity for various groups to stand up and say a bit about what they do.
- All gardening groups had been invited to the Gardener's Lunch on Friday 20th October which will be held at Radford House with Guest Speaker, Irene Seijo. Mrs Linda Miller had also asked to come along to ask gardeners if they would be interested in a Ramsgate Horticultural Society. Mrs R Smith will also create correx signs about the public gardens for groups to use in their respective areas to promote the work they do.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Members agreed the dates for forthcoming meetings, these are as follows:

Friday 8th December 2023 at 10am

Friday 9th February 2024 at 10am

Friday 12th April 2024 at 10am

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:15am.