



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Open Public Spaces Strategy Group

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

Date: Friday 27th January 2023 at 9am.

Present: Councillors: Crittenden (Chair), Huxley.

Also in attendance;

Mrs R Smith – Town Promoter and Visitor Information Centre Manager.
(Minutes)

Mrs M Morgan – Lead Technician

C Gibson – Eastcliff Gardening Volunteer Representative.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Green and Wing (Personal Commitments), Mr C Barton and Miss L Fidler (Illness) and D Green (Holiday)

ACTION: To approve the apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Open Public Spaces Strategy Group held on Thursday 9th December 2022 were received and considered.

ACTION: The Minutes were noted as accurate.

AUDIT OF GREEN AND OPEN SPACES

Councillor Crittenden welcomed Mrs M Morgan to the group who has kindly agreed to attend on behalf of Mr C Barton.

Councillor Crittenden reminded the group that Mr C Barton had already undertaken work on the audit, expanding on an original audit request to show where any potential pocket park spaces are located around Ramsgate. Mrs R Smith handed the paperwork of green spaces (including satellite images) identified by Mr C Barton over to Mrs M Morgan.

Due to key staff currently being off sick, no further progress has been made regarding audits or permissions from Thanet District Council (TDC) since the last meeting.

Mrs M Morgan put forward Spencer Square (lawn mowing and hedge trimming) for consideration. C Gibson suggested more tree planting on East Cliff and reported that her Winterstoke Gardening Group felt that there had been significant recent tree planting undertaken on West Cliff but none on the east side. Mrs M Morgan advised that this was carried out by Ramsgate Society, agreed by TDC for planting areas and the planting was carried out by a private company. Mrs M Morgan also confirmed that there were trees planted in Arklow Square and this was part of the Platinum Jubilee planting.

Councillor Crittenden queried whether the viaduct had been included as a possible space for consideration. Mrs M Morgan advised the group that she had recently contacted Mr P Valek (Kent County Council) about the viaduct as it has been over sixteen months since it was last cut and the technician team were offering to spend some time clearing the site. Mr P Valek advised that this was included in their works schedule in February. Both Councillor Crittenden and Mrs M Morgan stated they had removed a significant number of bags of debris/weeds from the area in the past few weeks and months.

PROGRESS UPDATE ON INITIAL PROJECTS SELECTED

Councillor Crittenden reminded the group and for the benefit of Mrs M Morgan that five areas had been identified as 'quick wins' that would yield maximum impact across several wards in Ramsgate.

Five spaces included;

- East Cliff promenade beds,
- Broad Street seating area,
- Nethercourt dog park,
- Government Acre gulleys (weeding)
- St Lawrence Seating area

Mrs M Morgan thought that Councillor Wing and another volunteer had already gone along and removed the weeds at Government Acre. Mrs R Smith confirmed that this hadn't been undertaken by volunteers yet.

Mrs M Morgan informed the group that TDC had recently cut back the St Lawrence seating area and it is looking much better.

Councillor Crittenden reported that permissions from TDC to undertake the maintenance have still not been granted. Councillor Crittenden advised that she will contact Councillor Albon, who has recently met with the Open Spaces and Estates Managers, and find out whether permissions and Service Level Agreements for the proposed areas were discussed and report back to the group. Councillor Huxley advised the group that Mrs R Smith had agreed to contact Mark Greening (Open Spaces and RTC's new main contact) and Mark Peace (Estates Manager at TDC).

Councillor Crittenden advised that it was important that the identified areas were manageable for the technicians and did not want them to become overwhelmed with the amount of work allocated, hence the project running over three years. She went on to add that the hope was that once these areas had been brought up to a high level, volunteers might come forward to help with ongoing maintenance.

Councillor Crittenden also reminded the group that another part of this initiative was to support the gardening volunteer groups, where possible, with heavier or more complex jobs in their area. Mrs M Morgan gave examples such as cutting back hedges in Albion Gardens or Spencer Gardens. Councillor Crittenden confirmed that this type of request would be considered under the other arm of this three-year strategy; to support volunteer gardeners with areas they find difficult to tackle. Mrs M Morgan added that this would also need permission from TDC for the technicians to undertake.

ACTION:

- **Councillor Crittenden to contact Councillor Albon for an update of his recent meeting with Open Spaces and Estates manager and liaise with Mrs R Smith.**

- **Mrs R Smith to follow up on Miss L Fidler's email request to Open Spaces and Estates Managers, copying in Councillors Crittenden, Huxley and Albon and report back to the group.**
- **Mrs R Smith to contact Councillor Wing for update on Government Acre and report back to the group.**
- **Mrs M Morgan and Mrs R Smith to meet with Lead Technician, Mr G Mills to discuss a strategy for undertaking the work in lieu of permissions from TDC being granted.**

ENGAGING VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Mrs R Smith confirmed that the first lunch has been booked for the Chamber Room on 3rd February 2023 from 12:30pm until 2pm and Jackie Young from Youngs Nursery had kindly agreed to come and speak to the gardening volunteers at the event.

Lunch will be booked using a local bakery and the technicians will collect and deliver to The Custom House.

Mrs R Smith reported that an email invitation to all identified gardening groups had been sent out with approximately 30 already accepting the invitation with a good turnout especially from Western Undercliff and Winterstoke Gardening Group.

Councillor Crittenden requested that photos of the event are taken for social media and Councillor Huxley suggested they could also go in Community Ad Magazine.

Councillor Crittenden mentioned using the event to find out from the volunteers how we can help. A suggestion box at the event was agreed so that we can identify what the volunteers would like Ramsgate Town Council to support them with.

C Gibson suggested a future guest speaker who talks about encouraging rewilding areas.

C Gibson also suggested residents could be encouraged to look after their areas more by possibly offering a competition. Mrs M Morgan suggested that this had been successful in her street a few years ago. Mrs R Smith mentioned Ramsgate in Bloom and engaging businesses which had lost interest after year one with 25+ entries for the first year and only two or three entries by year three.

Mrs R Smith asked C Gibson and Mrs M Morgan (as gardening group organisers) when the best time would be to run the next gardener's lunch later in the year. C Gibson suggested late autumn which Councillor Crittenden confirmed that 'Preparing for Spring' and 'Preparing for Winter' were the original headings for the bi-annual meet ups.

C Gibson asked about possible trade deals on gardening equipment from local companies which are unavailable to groups but might be available to RTC. Councillor Crittenden confirmed that this would be something to apply for under Ramsgate Fund or through their ward Councillors.

ACTION

- **Mrs R Smith to create a Suggestion Form for volunteers to give feedback on the event and how RTC can support them going forward.**
- **Mrs R Smith to ask Jackie Young about bringing delphiniums for planting (subject to cost and availability).**
- **Mrs R Smith to supply Social Media content with images for RTC to use online and for a Community Ad article.**

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 1pm.