



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Open Public Spaces Strategy Group

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

Date: Friday 9th December 2022 at 10:30am.

Present: Councillors: Crittenden (Chair), Huxley.

Also in attendance;

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

Mr C Barton – Supervisor Technician.

D Green – Westcliff Gardener Volunteer Representative

C Gibson – Eastcliff Gardening Volunteer Representative

Miss L Fidler – Town Clerk (attended for Item 5 only)

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Wing and Green (Personal Commitment).

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 meeting held on Thursday 10th November 2022 were received and considered.

ACTION: The Minutes were noted as accurate.

NEW MEMBERS TO GROUP (COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION)

Councillor Crittenden welcomed new members of the group, C Gibson and D Green and gave a brief overview on the reason for setting up this group and what the initial strategies would entail.

Councillor Crittenden also gave an overview of the 'pocket parks' and green and open spaces audit for the benefit of new members. C Gibson discussed how Winterstoke has improved each year that they have worked at the site and how people like to return and see the improvements when they visit and this example underlines how if spaces including street cleaning and open spaces were looked after, people would come and she questioned the amount of money Thanet District Council (TDC) had paid out in severance fees etc which could have been spent on vital services that made a difference to the town's general appearance.

Councillor Crittenden reiterated how budget cuts have had a detrimental effect on non-statutory services. Councillor Huxley reminded the group that TDC has lost 60% of central government budget since 2010 and this has impacted on staff and capacity to undertake gardening.

AUDIT OF GREEN AND OPEN SPACES

Mr C Barton put forward another area that needs urgent attention and requested that a small seating and planted up area in St Lawrence could be included in the initial list of areas to tackle. There is a fly tipping problem on the land behind the area which Mr C Barton felt that it may be a longer-term project but would be worth including for the benefit of the residents that use this space on a regular basis. The group agreed for this area to be included along with the four other identified areas discussed in the previous meeting on 10th November.

Mr C Barton reported that he was about 60% through the audit of ownership for identified areas. Mrs D Green advised that Nelson Crescent, where she volunteers as a gardener, is considered unadopted land and she is in possession of the certificate to evidence this.

A general discussion took place about other initiatives to consider. C Gibson mentioned Worthing Seafront where the town ran an annual competition where flower beds were tended by people and were judged in a competition. C Gibson also asked whether there was an opportunity for sponsorship for equipment, possible quid pro quo where local services provide a service and get free advertising space on RTC website or in the community magazine.

D Green mentioned the irregularity of lawn mowing and that some consistency would be appreciated. D Green also asked about composting and whether this could be supplied by Ramsgate Town Council or Thanet District Council.

ACTION:

Mrs R Smith and Mr C Barton to consider the ideas discussed above and come back to the next meeting with ideas how these could be achieved.

PROGRESS UPDATE ON INITIAL PROJECTS SELECTED

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and permissions to undertake gardening and maintenance on the four identified areas were discussed and Councillor Crittenden invited Miss L Fidler to join the meeting and update the group. Miss L Fidler informed the group that a request had been sent to TDC regarding permissions to work on all the pocket parks identified in the audit so far and updated on the specific areas including:

- Nethercourt Dog Park, grass cutting and overhaul of plant beds,
- Broad St Seating Area, weeding and planting
- East Cliff Promenade, clearing, tidying and replanting of untended beds. Mowing of promenade areas
- St Lawrence Seating area has also been listed in the email to TDC and a Service Level Agreement has been requested for each area.

Miss L Fidler confirmed that weeding edges above the gulley along west cliff still needs to be requested for permission. Miss L Fidler also mentioned the added difficulties if we identify areas for maintenance that have trees on site as this could increase costs etc. Miss L Fidler excused herself from the meeting and left.

ENGAGING VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Mrs R Smith identified 10 gardening groups and sent an introductory email to a representative of each group on 7th December 2022. Mrs R Smith thanked D Green and C Gibson for accepting the invitation to be community representatives on this group. The introductory email outlined the purpose of this group and the initial strategies including the bi-annual networking lunches.

Councillor Crittenden suggested how the bi-annual networking lunch could look – either with a guest speaker or a variety of tables with experts in a variety of fields. Mrs R Smith to advise on location and date once arranged and it was agreed that the first networking lunch would be in late January/Early February.

ACTION:

Mrs R Smith to confirm a suitable time and location for the networking lunch and advise the group.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Councillor Crittenden suggested that we delay the 5th January meeting until later on in the month to allow time for a response from TDC regarding permissions and SLAs and for Mrs R Smith to make the arrangements for the first networking lunch in late January/early February.

ACTION:

Mrs R Smith to confirm and will advise Councillor Crittenden of the proposed new date for next meeting by 23rd December.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:10am.