

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on
Tuesday, 2nd September, 2025 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town
Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillors S Collop (Chair)
A Bullen, R Colwell, P Devulapalli, D Heneghan, A Kemp, P Kunes
(Vice-Chair) and B Long

Portfolio Holders

Councillor P Bland - Parking and Open Spaces
Councillor S Ring - Business and Deputy Leader
Councillor M de Whalley – Climate Change and Biodiversity

Officers:

Richard Allan, Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture
Martin Chisholm, Assistant Director for Operations and Commercial
Chris Black, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager
Mark Parkinson, Chief Operating Officer

External Attendees:

Representatives from CDS Group
Andrew Thornalley, Thornalley Funeral Services

UNDER STANDING ORDER 34:

Councillor T Barclay on Zoom.

EC23: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Ware.

EC24: MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

EC25: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P Bland declared he was Vice-Chair of South Wootton Parish Council.

Councillor S Ring declared he was a Ward Member for South Wootton in relation to the Cabinet Report on Cemeteries.

Councillor B Long declared he was a Trustee of Marshland St James Village Hall Charity.

Councillor P Devulapalli declared she was a Trustee of King George V Playing Field in Shouldham.

EC26: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC27: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor T Barclays was present under Standing Order 34 on Zoom.

EC28: **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was none.

EC29: **CABINET REPORT - PLAYING PITCH AND SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY ADOPTION**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture presented the report.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Councillor Long referred to the Pre-Screen EIA and suggested, health inequalities should be a positive rather than neutral. He also referred to discrepancies in the report as mentioned locations had been sold and no in longer public use. He urged that all members should consider the report and facilities within their areas.

The Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture explained the information included in the report was originally from 2023 and although it had been updated in 2025, welcomed Members input so that the information could be reviewed.

Councillor Long proposed an email be sent to all members to review the report and feedback to the Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture with correct information in their wards.

Councillor Kemp commented on the St James Swimming Pool facilities being relocated and the concerns of residents accessing a new location out of the town centre. She commented further on policies to promote the footfall in the town centre.

The Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture explained St James Swimming Pool was at 100% occupancy and locations were identified by consultants, however Lynnsport fulfilled the demographic of Sports England and Swim England. He added further, a traffic management plan would be considered to ensure accessibility for residents. He highlighted this was supported following the public consultation results.

In response to a further question from Councillor Kemp, the Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture explained the public consultation included Alive members, Active Norfolk, Ward Members, National Governing bodies, Sports England, Social media and groups affected.

Councillor Colwell referred to page 94 and commented his appreciation of the details on 5G pitches in the report. He commented on previous issues with 5G pitches and the impact on the surrounding local area and encouraged Officers to consult with local high schools. He highlighted on page 264, an issue in Fairstead Centre Point was limited capacity due to the lighting.

Councillor Heneghan supported Councillor Longs comments and asked if the report could be simplified before sending to members.

The Assistant Director for Operations and Commercial commented on Fairstead Centre Point and explained the flood lights were on timers and could be used by a button. He added, he would follow up to ensure there were no maintenance issues.

Councillor Bullen commented he had visited all Alive sites and recognised the commitment and professionalism of the Alive Leisure staff. He highlighted the award Lynnsport had been nominated for and the importance of engaging and supporting local sports clubs.

The Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture explained Lynnsport had applied for centre of the year award for the region and were shortlisted for the final five or six centres out of forty. He added the award ceremony was on 30th October.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture confirmed the current 3G pitches were owned by Alive Leisure and confirmed an alternative location had been identified which was to be announced in due course.

Councillor Devulapalli asked if there were any plans for additional indoor tennis courts or padel courts. In addition, she asked if there were any future plans for Downham Market facilities and it was explained there was currently no indoor tennis courts but there was an upcoming project next year. He added a report on Padel was on the Forward Decision List for November and this included Lynnsport and Hunstanton but there was no demand identified in Downham Market.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ring commented on the importance in developing the strategies and focussing on ensuring all sports were catered for. He recognised the success of the public consultations with currently over 800 responses so far. In addition, he welcomed the knowledge of members and facilities within their ward. Councillor Ring acknowledged Downham Market was to become a sports and leisure hub for rural areas.

Councillor Long questioned if fouling of playing fields within the protection order included cricket pitches/fields and was advised the public protection order was on the dog control webpage but did not currently include recreational spaces including cricket grounds. He advised further the order was last reviewed 1st December 2024 and valid for three years. He explained the difficulties with enforcement and including sports clubs in the order would be considered at the next renewal.

Councillor Devulapalli commented on foot and cycle paths and walking was the primary exercise for residents but there was lack of routes for example there was no way of crossing the A10. The Assistant Director for Operations and Commercial provided assurance Officers were working with Norfolk County Council on Walking and Cycling.

Councillor Colwell agreed there was no safe way of crossing the A149. He commented active travel should be encouraged and suggested a potential route for the new development at Knights Hill.

Councillor Devulapalli asked for the report to include capacity for cycling and walking.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ring explained the report was based on demand for sports such as padel etc. He recognised the importance of walking and cycling but advised the report reflected the demand from residents. He reiterated this was a Norfolk County Council issue.

Councillor Kemp additionally commented on the transport strategy and the importance of active travel.

Councillor Long commented the points raised were a transport issue. He referred to the additional proposed recommendation that an email was sent to all members to be made aware of the report and use their local knowledge to identify leisure facilities within their wards.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the following recommendations to Cabinet and provided the additional recommendation:

All Members to be made aware of the report and notify of any corrections in the report on current leisure facilities within their wards to the Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture and Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet Resolves:

To recommend to Full Council the adoption of the playing pitch and sports facilities strategies.

Recommendations to Full Council:

That Council agree to adopt the playing pitch and sports facilities strategies.

EC30: **CABINET REPORT - CEMETERIES**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Assistant Director for Operations and Commercial and Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager presented the report

Representatives from CDS Group gave a presentation to the Panel.

The Chair invited Andrew Thornalley, Local Funeral Director to speak on this item.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Panel.

The Chair, Councillor Collop sought clarification on how many plots were taken at the cemetery last year. and was advised there was an average of 30 new burials each year.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Kunes sought clarification on the groundwater level on Gaywood Allotment site and the CDS Representative confirmed at the beginning of the investigation it was 1.6 metres, and new burials were between 1.3 to 1.8 metres depending on single or double depth burials and 1 metre above groundwater level. He confirmed groundwater was needed to be a minimum of 2.4 metres.

Councillor Long commented the Environmental Agency needed to provide flexibility. He highlighted the significance of finding an interim solution due to the timescales of a new cemetery and although it was not a mandatory service the Council provided but was recognised by the public. He questioned if under draining the land was a solution.

The Chair, Councillor Collop asked if water could be drained has been carried out at Florence Fields.

The Assistant Director for Operations and Commercial explained the relationship with the Environment Agency was exemplar. He added the Environment Agency were the regulators and had to issue the permit for an extension or a new site. He explained they were flexible with considering each individual ground space. He provided assurance all plots and burials would be honoured as previously agreed.

The Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager highlighted the relationship with the Environment Agency was key to delivering the bereavement services and continuing to operate the site by delivering the committed burials.

Representatives of the CDS Group confirmed the Environment Agency had been consulted and had confirmed use of the existing site was not feasible. He explained dewatering required a discharge consent to the sewage system as surface water would be contaminated.

Councillor Long appreciated and understood the complexity of drainage and sewage. He commented it was Environmental Agency national policy he was referring to not local Officers.

Councillor Heneghan questioned the gap with the Gayton Road Cemetery being closed and a new cemetery not opening until May 2028. She sought clarification and assurance on where burials were to be made, she highlighted the report included Hunstanton and questioned the delay in this being resolved. She hoped local funeral directors were listened to and invited to future meetings as appropriate.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ring commented on the long journey of the cemetery and highlighted South Wootton were allowing plots to be bought and there was space in Hunstanton which could be used. He highlighted to the Panel it would not be the current Borough Council that would be delivering the Cemetery due to LGR. He reminded the Panel this was not a statutory obligation, and he could not see another option than to close Gayton Road Cemetery. He asked for CDS Group to explain the changes in regulations of the Environmental Agency.

The representative from CDS Group explained there were updates to the Environment Agency regulations in 2022 and 2024, which meant the regulations for groundwater and buffer zones were more stringent. He reiterated that this was outside the geographical extent of the existing cemetery and therefore treated under the new regulations in which the Environmental Agency was to act as a consultee and perimeter. He commented there was no resolution for the site.

Councillor Kemp commented she understood a bespoke environmental permit was needed for dewatering. She sought clarification, on what criteria, other than flood risk, were all the sites were discounted. She asked if there was any disused or industrial land which could be used, and sites be revisited.

The representative from CDS Group explained the predominant reason a site had not been identified within the boundary was due to being urbanized and any open space were parks. He added further accessibility was considered for sites which were two or more miles out of the boundary.

In response to Councillor Kemp the representative from CDS Group explained usually cemetery sites accommodated around 800 burials per acre therefore sites over 3 acres were recommended.

Councillor Long was concerned with the second recommendation and proposed the following recommendation – to urgently review all potential sites within a suitable distance of King's Lynn and explore opportunities for developing a burial cemetery within a quicker timescale as possible.

Councillor Kunes seconded the proposed recommendation. The Panel agreed the additional recommendation.

Councillor Colwell asked in terms of research, how many test pits were dug in the Gaywood allotment site.

and it was explained that tier two was trial pits and tier three included groundwater monitoring. He concluded all areas of the site were non-compliant. He added that the Defra map was considered around vulnerability and would circulate to the Panel.

The Chair, Councillor Collop questioned if the deadline for closure of the cemetery needed to be April 2026.

The Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager explained the right of burials included up to 2 burials which consequently meant 30 burials could become 60. He commented this was unlikely; however, capacity was dwindling. He added, it also allowed for capacity for commitments in other parts of the cemetery for non-compliant graves.

The Assistant Director for Operations and Commercial explained the 1st April 2026 provided clarity of expectation to members, funeral directors and others. He explained Hunstanton was a cemetery was operational and included in the report as an alternative. He understood the frustration in terms of timescales and acknowledged it was a difficult decision with no easy solution.

Andrew Thornalley, local funeral director summarised his comments to the Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel did not support the following recommendation to Cabinet:

Cabinet Resolves:

- 1) Close Gayton Road Cemetery to new full body burials from 1st April 2026 unless operational circumstances require this date to be brought forward.

The Panel made amendments to the second recommendation;

- 2) To urgently review all potential sites within a suitable distance of King's Lynn and explore opportunities for developing a burial cemetery within a quicker timescale as possible.

EC31: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC32: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on **7th October 2025 at 4:30pm** in the **Council Chamber**.

The meeting closed at 6.43 pm