

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 20th APRIL 2004 AT 7.30 p.m. AT THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD**

**Present:** Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)  
Cllr Mr V Sewell (*arrived 7.45 p.m.*)  
Cllr Mr A Tremain  
Cllr Mr C Ward  
Mr K Bushell (New Ash Green CC)  
Mrs L Osborne (New Ash Green CC)  
Mr A Gray (Hartley De Sales FC)  
Mr T Wade (Meopham CC)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby, Cllr Mrs M Solman, Cllr Mr J Gaywood and Mr M Ward (Hextable CC)

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Mr A Tremain declared a personal interest under minute item 4, cricket at Manor Field in respect of the report from Hextable CC.

Cllr Mr A Tremain declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 11 (a) and (b), Gorse Wood and left the meeting during discussion and voting on this item.

Cllr Mr A Barnett declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 12 (a) and (b), Allotments and left the meeting during discussion and voting on this item.

**4. Cricket at Manor Field**

New Ash Green Cricket Club (NAGCC) reported that the ground at Manor Field had been approved by the Kent League as being suitable for league cricket and as a result, the Club's 1st and 2nd teams will be playing at the ground every Saturday throughout the forthcoming season. The Kent League had identified a number of minor faults with the ground, which included the condition of the square as the result of worm casts, a slight depression in the outfield, lack of sight screens and covers. The Cricket Club will be attending to these matters before the start of the season.

The Kent League requires the outfield to be cut every week. NAGCC agreed to fund any additional grass cuts required, over and above that provided by the Parish Council. Currently the Parish Council undertakes 22 cuts at Manor Field from to 1st April to 31st October.

The NAGCC requested permission to cut back the overgrown area adjacent to the Orchard in front of the Pavilion and to erect a short section of chestnut paling fencing in that area to stop any cricket balls entering the Orchard.

NAGCC tabled a fixture list for the forthcoming season. It was noted fixtures commence on 8th May and conclude on 28th August.

*Cllr Sewell arrived at 7.45 p.m.*

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Council's grass cutting contractor be asked to undertake additional grass cuts at Manor Field to ensure the grass is cut on a weekly basis throughout the cricket season and that the additional cuts are to be funded by the New Ash Green CC, provided that should the Cricket Club be able to make its own arrangements for the ground to be cut, the arrangements with the Council's grass cutting contractor for the additional grass cuts may be terminated with immediate effect and,

(2) subject to the Council's grass cutting contractor being in agreement with (1) above, all additional grass cuts, over and above that already provided for in the Council's contract, shall be invoiced directly to the New Ash Green CC and,

(3) New Ash Green CC be authorised to cut back the overgrown area adjacent to the Orchard, in front of the Pavilion and to erect of a short section of chestnut paling fencing between the Orchard and the ground in that vicinity and,

(4) the Council's grass cutting contractor be requested to run his gang mower into the area reclaimed by New Ash Green CC as set out in (3) above and,

(5) New Ash Green CC be authorised to undertake work to the outfield to remove the depression identified by the Kent League and,

(6) New Ash Green CC be authorised to store the sight screens behind the Pavilion between fixtures and,

(7) arrangements be made for the materials required to mark out the boundary to be stored in the storage container at the rear of the Pavilion, provided the New Ash Green CC ensure the relevant COSHH certificates are safely stored in the container and,

(8) New Ash Green CC be responsible for putting out the plastic covers to protect the square as required before each fixture and for the said covers to be stored in the storage container between fixtures.

Hextable Cricket Club thanked the New Ash Green CC for its work in preparing the cricket square. Hextable CC reported a full season of cricket fixtures had been arranged. New Ash Green CC and Hextable CC agreed to meet separately to resolve any outstanding matters.

## **5. Meopham Cricket Club**

Meopham CC reported on the work undertaken by the Club to the ground in readiness for the start of the cricket season. Due to other commitments, Mr Tillet has not been able to help the Club with the preparation of the square. However despite this, work has continued throughout the closed season on the preparation of the cricket square, in conjunction with clearance works to the boundaries, which has resulted in the boundary being extended by between 4 to 12 feet. This clearance work has resulted in the exposure of gaps in the hedging on the west and the south boundaries and Meopham CC requested the Council's assistance with the provision of new fencing in these areas. Meopham CC will measure up the boundary to ascertain what lengths of fencing are required. The chestnut paling fence located adjacent to Manor Road has fallen down. The outfield has been affected by the presence of moles.

The Club intend to run a new water pipe from the man hole to the new storage container. The new pipe will be laid to a depth of 2'6" and it is hoped the work will be undertaken during week commencing 26th April. The Electricity Board has refused to connect an electricity supply to the container and as a result, it will be necessary to construct a brick container before a connection can be made. Drawings of the Club's proposals will be provided to the Council.

Vandalism at the ground has so far been minimal. Residents at Longfield Hill have been informed of Meopham CC plans to use the ground for youth cricket. Fixture cards will be available shortly and the first fixture of the season will take place on 2nd May.

Meopham CC expressed concern over the length of the grass.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the report be noted and,

(2) the Council's grass cutting contractor be requested to cut the grass shorter and to extend his cut into the areas reclaimed at the boundaries by the Cricket Club.

## 6. Football At Manor Field

Hartley De Sales FC reported the relocation of the senior pitch had been very successful and that the number of cancelled fixtures, due to the condition of the ground, had been kept to a minimum. The quality of the line marking continues to be a serious problem and if the situation cannot be improved next season the football club may be forced to find an alternative venue. The Club, in terms of numbers of players, is going from strength to strength. During the summer the Club intends to run a soccer skill session on a Saturday morning at Manor Field between 10.00 to 12 noon. The Club agreed to ensure the soccer skill sessions are held away from the cricket outfield. The Club also agreed to store its equipment at the far end of the container to assist the Cricket Clubs.

Hartley De Sales FC confirmed it will require two pitches next season: one senior and one junior pitch, accommodating 3 or 4 teams.

RESOVLED: That, the report be noted.

*Representatives from the Sports Clubs left the meeting at 8.25 p.m.*

## 7. Routine Maintenance Contract

### (a) Time Sheet for March 2004

RESOLVED: That, the time sheet for March 2004, completed under the terms and conditions of the Routine Maintenance Contract, be noted.

### (b) Routine Maintenance Contract 2004/5

Despite advertising the letting of the contract on the Council's notice boards, only one quotation had been received. The quotation received in respect of the Routine Maintenance Contract for 2004/05 was opened in the presence of the Committee. The Committee noted financial regulation 13 (j) which makes provision for the situation whereby, following the quotation process an insufficient number of quotations are received then the Council is permitted to make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring goods, works or services. The Committee considered the quotation dated 29th March 2004 from T D Munday as set out below: The Committee noted that T D Munday currently holds public and product liability insurance cover upto £2 million and that his work undertaken during the previous year in respect of the routine maintenance contract had been more than satisfactory.

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| A1 Manor Field    | £909.00   |
| A2 Open Spaces    | £2,600.00 |
| A3 Village Greens | £324.00   |
| A4 Pond           | £260.00   |
| A5 Gorse Wood     | £260.00   |
| Total             | £4,353.00 |

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the quotation dated 29th March 2004 from T D Munday for the total sum of £4,353.00 to undertake work as specified under the terms and conditions of the Routine Maintenance Contract from 1st June 2004 to 31st May 2005 be accepted and,

(2) if additional work is required under the terms and conditions of the Routine Maintenance Contract, an hourly rate of £10.00 for labour only be accepted.

## 8. Manor Field and Pavilion

### (a) Entrance

The Committee considered a letter from the owners of the strip of land at the entrance to Manor Field confirming they have no objection to the Council's proposal to provide a new kissing gate at the entrance to the field and to widen the existing field gate. The owner requested confirmation that the cost of the works will be borne by the Council. There was some discussion as to whether the provision of the new entrance arrangements should be held on abeyance until the sale of the land to the Council had been concluded.

RESOLVED: That, quotations be obtained for the provision of a new kissing gate suitable for disable access and a new 12 foot wide field gate at the entrance to Manor Field.

### (b) Vertical blinds

The Committee considered the provision of vertical blinds to the full height windows and doors in the Pavilion. Some concern was expressed over the practicalities of providing blinds over such a wide opening and whether they would obstruct the fire exit.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation be obtained for vertical blinds to be supplied and fitted to the full height doors and windows in the Pavilion overlooking the field.

### (c) Line marking equipment

The Chairman reported on a recent demonstration of line marking equipment at Manor Field. The quality of the marking appeared to be superior to that currently provided by the Council's contractors. Details of the line marking machine and its operating costs were circulated to the Committee for consideration. The Committee compared the set up and operating costs of the new equipment with the costs currently incurred by the Council as a result of employing the services of a contractor to undertake the line marking:

Cost per marking (labour and materials) using machinery purchased by the Council - £28.27 per marking

Estimated cost per marking using the services of the Council's contractors - £25.00 per marking

In view of the dissatisfaction expressed by Hartley De Sales FC with the current line marking arrangements, the Committee considered that although the operating costs were slightly more than that of the existing arrangements, the improvement in the quality of the line marking would represent best value to the Council.

RECOMMENDED: That, the Kombi Spray Line Marking Machine supplied by Fleet (Line Markers) Ltd be purchased for the sum of £394.00 plus VAT through Kent County Supplies.

### (d) Vandalism

The Committee considered a report on the recent vandalism at Manor Field on 17th and 24th March 2004, which had resulted in damage to the cricket sight screen, goal post and W.I. bench. It was reported that the bench had been repaired and arrangements were in hand to reinstate the bench.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the action undertaken by the Clerk to remove and make safe the vandalised sight screen, football goal post and W I bench be confirmed and,

(2) expenditure be authorised for the materials required to repair the bench and,

(3) T D Munday be asked to reinstate the bench in accordance with the terms and conditions of the routine maintenance contract.

(e) Kissing gate between Foxborough Wood and Manor Field

The Committee was informed that the land owner of Foxborough Wood intends to either lock the gate one day per year or display suitable notices to ensure the footpath does not become an established footpath.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(f) Meter Cupboard

The Committee was informed that a quotation for the repairs to the meter cupboard is still awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

## 9. Rectory Meadow

(a) The Committee considered a letter from the Rural Payments Agency advising the Council that in order to make the payment of claims as efficient as possible, the Agency intends to use the BACS payment method as its preferred choice.

RESOLVED: That, all future payments from the Rural Payments Agency to the Council under the terms and conditions of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme be made by the BACS payment method.

(b) The Committee was informed that a letter sent to the last known address of the owner of the Old Rectory had been returned unopened to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk be asked to undertake a search to establish the address of the landowner of the Old Rectory shown on the land title documents held at the Land Registry.

(c) The Committee considered a letter from the North West Kent Countryside Project outlining proposals and costings for new fencing on the boundary with Ash Road and on the boundary with the woodland adjacent to land at the Old Rectory, funded by means of a grant through the Rail Link Countryside Initiative (RLCI). The Committee was unsure as to whether the grant from the RLCI would fund the whole of the proposed new fencing works or whether the Council would be required to make a contribution to the cost of the works. There was some discussion as to the whether the site should be fenced off.

RESOLVED: That, the North West Kent Countryside Project be asked to apply for funding from the Rail Link Countryside Initiative for fencing the boundary of the woodland and the perimeter of Ash Road.

## 10. Billings Hill Shaw

The Committee was reminded of an offer received to purchase of an area of woodland owned by the Council at Billings Hill Shaw, in front of Hartley Grange Cottage.

The Committee considered advice from Sevenoaks District Council in respect of the development potential of the said land. The Planning Officer has confirmed the site is located within the Green Belt and is covered by a tree preservation order. As the site is not part of a residential curtilage and does not form part of the residential curtilage of neighbouring properties, the site would be considered woodland/amenity land. A change of use application would be required to use the area as residential curtilage and for any other residential purpose and as such would be determined in accordance with local plan policies. The Planning Officer has advised that the change of use to residential is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and any forthcoming planning application of this nature would likely get an unfavourable outcome. If any new owner used the land as it currently is and no change of uses occurred, then no application would be required. The Committee noted that the comments given by the Planning Officer were an Officer's opinion only and did not constitute a formal decision by the Local Planning Authority.

RECOMMENDED: That, the offer to purchase an area of land owned by the Council at Billings Hill Shaw, in front of Hartley Grange Cottage, be rejected.

#### 11. Gorse Wood

(a) The Committee considered a letter from a resident whose property is located adjacent to woodland owned by the Council. The resident informs the Council that he has recently noticed cracks in the brick and plaster to his property and as a result, instructed a firm of Chartered Surveyors to inspect and report on the cracks. The report expresses concern about the trees located adjacent to the property on land owned by the Council and the owner has requested the trees are pruned and pollarded as recommended in the surveyor's report.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation be obtained to prune and pollard the trees allegedly affecting the property.

(b) The Committee considered a complaint received from a resident of Porchester Close about the amount of dumped rubbish in the wood particularly where properties at Porchester Close border Gorse Wood. The Committee was informed that a visual inspection of the wood had been undertaken and it had been found to be in acceptable condition. The Community Facilities Working Group is attempting to extend the free heavy refuse collection so that a pick up point is provided in Caxton Close and it is hoped that this will alleviate some the problems associated with dumped rubbish in Gorse Wood.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

#### 12. Pond

The Committee considered a letter from the builder in respect of the recent diesel spillage in the pond and a copy of letter from the Environment Agency to the builder.

The letter from the Environment Agency confirms attendance on site following the diesel spillage on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004 and in response to a complaint from the Parish Council. The Agency established that a lorry delivering goods to an address in Church Road ran over a wooden stake and pierced its fuel tank. The Agency reported it was evident that efforts had been made to clean up the diesel that had run out into the road.

The Agency confirmed that the pond is classified as "uncontrolled" by the Water Resources Act 1990, but it considered the presence of diesel represented a risk to other "controlled" waters, such as groundwater and negotiated a clean up of the pond, which was duly carried out by the builder. The Agency now believes the risk of further pollution has been reduced and therefore will not be pursuing further enforcement action.

In light of the above, the builder has informed the Council that he is satisfied with the clean up process, but has stated he would be pleased to meet with the Council.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the builder be advised that the Council is not entirely satisfied with the outcome of the clear up operation and intends to seek further advice on the matter and,

(2) advice be sought from the English Wetlands Trust.

#### 13. Allotments

(a) The Committee considered a letter of thanks from the owner of the property located on Woodlands Avenue and bordering the allotments, in respect of the recent fence repairs undertaken by the Council.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted.

(b) The Committee considered an increase in the rental for the allotments for 2004/05 due on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004. In accordance with the rental agreement, 12 months notice is required of any increase in the rent due to the Council. Notice was given on 1<sup>st</sup> October

2003 that the rents would be increased on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004 in line with the rate of inflation.

RECOMMENDED: That, the proposed increase in the rent of the allotments for the year 2004/05 by the rate of inflation, be confirmed.

#### **14. Public Right of Way**

The Committee considered a number of letters from landowners and interested parties expressing concerns over the Council's proposals to seek funding from Kent County Council for the installation of a field gate and kissing gate at the end of the access drive located between Windy Ridge and Greystones, off Church Road to prevent the illegal trespass of motorbikes over Court Field and onto Northfield.

RESOLVED: That, consideration of the proposals be deferred pending further discussions with the landowners and interested parties.

#### **15. Playgrounds**

(a) The Committee was informed that the safety surface renewal had been completed below the roundabout at the Woodland Avenue play area.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) The Committee considered further safety surface renewal works to the Council's playgrounds.

RESOLVED: That, quotations be sought for the renewal of the safety surface below the slide at the Woodland Avenue recreation ground.

#### **16. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 15th June 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 10.03 p.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

