

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE HELD
ON 28th APRIL 2005 AT 7.30 p.m. AT THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr Mr V Sewell
Cllr Mr A Tremain

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Mr A Gray (Hartley De Sales FC)
Mr V John (NAG & Hartley CC)
Mr T Wade (Meopham CC)
2 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mr J Gaywood, Cllr Mrs Solman, Cllr Mr C Ward and Mr K Bushell.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mr A Tremain declared a personal interest under minute item 5 (a) in respect of cricket at Manor Field, as he is a member of Hextable CC.

Cllr Mr A Tremain declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 12 in respect of the cricket fees to be charged to NAG & Hartley CC and Hextable CC for the 2005 season, as he is a member of Hextable CC and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

Cllr Mr A Tremain declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 16 in respect of Gorse Wood, as his private residence is located adjacent to the wood and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 24 in respect of Hartley Wood, as her private residence is located adjacent to the wood and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

Cllr Mr A Barnett declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 23 in respect of the Allotments, as he is in an allotment holder and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 10th March 2005 be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the following correction, page 2, item 6, delete the word "Hextable" and insert the word "Meopham".

4. Football at Manor Field

Hartley De Sales FC reported that their fixtures for the season were completed on 27th April 2005. The club hopes to field 5 teams at Manor Field next season, in which case they would require the pitch immediately in front of the Pavilion to be reinstated. The fielding of a fifth team will be confirmed after the club's next committee meeting. If the pitch is

required, the club requests the Council purchase a new set of football posts, as the posts currently stored in the container are, in their opinion, not fit for use. The Committee considered means by which to dispose of the redundant football posts.

Hartley De Sales FC reported that sections of the grass were at times too long and requested consideration be given to additional cuts. It was reported that additional cuts had been undertaken in November and March with a rotary cutter and that due to the ground conditions, it would not normally be possible to bring the gang mower onto the field during the winter months as this could damage the ground. It was reported fertilizer had been applied to the field rather late in the season and this may have contributed to a healthy growth of grass during the winter. The Committee will ensure the ground is fertilized in early June, so as to avoid this problem in the future.

Hartley De Sales reported their fixtures usually start at the beginning of September. NAG and Hartley CC reported the cricket season does not usually finish until mid September. Hartley De Sales FC did not anticipate this would be a problem and if possible, the club would arrange their fixtures accordingly.

Hartley De Sales reported the football equipment had been moved to the back of the container and that the club was suffering from the attention of a nuisance dog on Manor Field.

NAG & Hartley CC asked whether it would be possible to accommodate an additional strip, which would require the football pitches to be moved. Hartley De Sales FC agreed to look into the matter, but were doubtful as to whether there would be sufficient space to relocate the pitches.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and (2) enquiries be made over the disposal of the redundant football posts stored in the container

5. Cricket at Manor Field

(a) Mr John introduced himself as the new Chairman of New Ash Green and Hartley CC. He reported that the club had moved its entire operation to Manor Field and that next season the club would be fielding 3 senior teams and one Colts team (U15). The first and second XI will use the ground on Saturdays, the Colts team on Sunday mornings from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and the third XI on Sundays when the ground is not being used by Hextable CC. It was confirmed the Colts would only require the Pavilion for changing and that teas are not usually provided at their fixtures.

Mr A Gray left the meeting at 8.05 p.m.

NAG & Hartley CC requested the grass be cut every week to accommodate league requirements. It was explained that the Council's grass cutting contractor is contracted to undertake 22 cuts from 1st April to 31st October and last year the contract was enhanced at the start of the contract to ensure weekly cuts. It was explained that this arrangement could possibly be continued, but that the cricket club would be responsible for all additional cuts over and above the contracted number of cuts. This was likely to be between 3 and 6 additional cuts, at a rate of £50 per cut. The Committee requested the contractor be paid for the additional cuts directly by the cricket club and that the payment be made promptly.

Hextable CC thanked NAG & Hartley CC for its support. Hextable CC reported this was the club's 25th anniversary and that a full list of fixtures had been arranged for the forthcoming season.

The Committee requested the cricket clubs move any cricket equipment out of the referee's changing room, as it is the Committee's intention to clear out the room at some time in the future.

RESOLVED: That, the Council's grass cutting contractor be asked to undertake additional cuts of the grass at Manor Field to ensure the grass is cut on a weekly basis throughout the cricket season and that the additional cuts over and above the contractual number of cuts, be funded by the NAG & Hartley CC and that

the club make arrangements to promptly settle the account for the additional cuts directly with the Council's grass cutting contractor.

(b) It was reported that the Clerk had made arrangements for the outfield to be rolled at a cost of £75.00, in readiness for the start of the cricket season.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's actions be confirmed.

6. Cricket at Longfield Hill

Meopham CC reported a full list of fixtures at Longfield Hill and that all the preparation work on the square undertaken by the club last year had been very successful. The club reported that the grass had been cut twice and that the resultant cuttings were proving to be problematic. Raking parties were being organised by the club to clear the cuttings before the first game of the season scheduled for 1st May.

Meopham CC requested the grass cutting contract be enhanced to allow the ground to be cut every week until the end of June and thereafter to revert to two weekly cuts. They also requested the grass cutting contract be started earlier.

Meopham CC reported that they had reclaimed large sections of the boundary and put up a fence between the ground and the adjoining field. They reported two gaps in the hedging adjacent to the highway had appeared and requested the Committee undertake repairs.

Meopham CC reported that a new water main had been laid, but they were experiencing some difficulty in getting a new meter and electricity supply installed to the container and requested some assistance from the Council.

Meopham CC informed the Committee that a new practice wicket had been laid at the ground.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the Council's grass cutting contractor be asked to undertake additional cuts of the grass at Longfield Hill to ensure the grass is cut on a weekly basis upto the end of June and thereafter revert to the contractual two weekly cuts, (2) at the end of the current grass cutting contract, the Committee review its grass cutting specification with a view to commencing the grass cutting contract earlier in the year, (3) quotations be sought for the installation of stock fencing and new hedging to seal the gaps in the existing hedgerow, and (4) arrangements be made to meet with the electricity board, with a view to making arrangements for the installation of a meter and new supply to the storage container.

Mr John and Mr Wade left the meeting at 8.25 p.m.

7. Playgrounds

(a) The Committee considered a report on action taken to rectify faults identified by RoSPA in their report of 2nd February 2005

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and, (2) quotations be sought for the installation of new wet pour safety surfacing at Longfield Hill play area and beneath the swing at Woodland Avenue.

(b) It was reported that a new condition had been imposed by the Council's insurers on its policy as set out below:

"Technical inspection of play equipment

It is a condition precedent to liability by this policy that an independent technical

examination is made annually of all play equipment for which the Insured is responsible.

The said inspection must be carried out by persons competent to do so and unless agreed otherwise by Allianz Cornhill any repairs or other work identified completed within 60 days of the date of inspection or the items must be removed."

The Committee noted that the Council makes arrangements for the technical inspections to be undertaken by RoSPA twice a year and questioned whether it would be prudent for the Council to reduce the number of inspections to once a year. The Committee noted that the reports written by RoSPA identify a number of issues, which it classifies as being low risk and therefore only requires monitoring. In addition, the report identifies a number of other issues of which RoSPA does not attach any risk. The Clerk is seeking clarification from its insurers on what it would define as a fault that requires action within 60 days of the date of inspection.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(c) The Committee considered a quotation to repair the sign fixed to the fence of the playground at Woodland Avenue.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from Mr Glidewell for the supply and fitting of a new sign, as original, ¾ “ exterior quality plywood with routed edge, green painted and sign written in gold, and moulded to protect and strengthen edge of signboard, for the total sum of £110.00 be accepted.

(d) The Committee considered a quotation from J Thomas (Southern) Ltd to repair the goal mouths at Woodland Avenue and Chantry Avenue by trimming out worn areas, supply and laying sandy loam soil to make up levels and laying roll turf to worn areas, total area 224 m² for a sum of £3,136.00. The Committee considered the quotation to be beyond the means of the Council and could not be justified. The Committee considered a number of alternative methods of repair.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the quotation from J Thomas (Southern) Ltd to undertake repair work to various goal mouths be declined and (2) a quotation be sought from a landscape gardener to repair the goals mouths by means of laying top soil, rolling, seeding, ensuring the work is protected by means of temporary fencing.

8. Health and Safety

The Committee considered the routine maintenance checklist for the month of February 2005.

RESOLVED: That, the routine maintenance checklist for February 2005 be received and noted.

9. Access audit for the Manor Field Pavilion

(a) At the last Committee meeting it was resolved that *“the Clerk be requested to produce an appropriate fire warning notice for display in the kitchen”*. The Clerk reported that that such signs should incorporate graphic symbols in compliance with BS5499, which are not readily available for downloading from the internet. Alternative quotations are being sought for the supply and delivery of an appropriate fire warning sign.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) The Clerk reported that a meeting with a representative from the charity RNID Sound Advantage to discuss the improvement of facilities in the Pavilion for the hard of hearing had been arranged and that a report would be forthcoming.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

10. Risk Assessment

(a) The Committee considered a report on a meeting with the Building Services Manager for Sencio Community Leisure to discuss the specific risks associated with the water services at the Pavilion. The Committee examined two quotations, as set out below:

“(1) Envirocure Ltd

To perform a risk assessment in accordance with the approved Code of Practice ACOP L8 (excluding schematics) at the Pavilion for the total cost of £200.00 plus VAT

(2) BAYLY Environmental Services Ltd

To attend site to carry out a basic water treatment risk assessment for the sum of £75 plus VAT.”

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from BAYLY Environment Services Ltd to undertake a basic water treatment risk assessment for the sum of £75 plus VAT be accepted.

11. Routine Maintenance Contract

The Committee noted that despite advertising on the Council’s notice board of the Council’s intention to award the routine maintenance contract for the period 1st June 2005 to 31st May 2006, only one quotation had been received. The quotation received in respect of the routine maintenance contact for the year 2005/06 was opened in the presence of the Committee.

It was noted that financial regulation 11.1 (j) makes provision within the quotation process for the situation whereby an insufficient number of quotations are received. Under such circumstance, the Council is permitted to make arrangements as it thinks fit for the procurement of goods, works or services.

The Committee examined the quotation dated 26th April 2005 from Mr Munday, as set out below and the current insurance certificate held by Mr Munday, which showed a limit of indemnity upto £2 million under the public and product liability section of the policy.

	05/06	04/05
A1 Manor Field	£1,589	£909
A2 Open Spaces	£2,080	£2,600
A3 Village Greens	£324	£324
A4 Pond*	£260	£260
A5 Gorse Wood	£520	£260
A6 Rectory Meadow	<u>£520</u>	-
TOTAL	£5,293	£4,353

* Quotation dated 26th April 2005 from Mr Munday included a sum of £112 for the strimming of the pond once a month, which is included within the grass cutting contract and therefore will be omitted from the routine maintenance contract.

The Committee noted the sums included in the quotation for the 05/06 contract were generally similar to the sums quoted and accepted by the Council for the 04/05 contract. The increase in overall costs were due to the marking out of the football pitches, inspection of the football posts at Manor Field and extension of the inspection and litter picking regime at Rectory Meadow and Gorse Wood. The Committee noted that the quality of the work undertaken by Mr Munday under the terms and conditions of the last year’s routine maintenance contract had been more than satisfactory.

RECOMMENDED: That, (1) the quotation dated 26th April 2005 from T D Munday for the total sum of £5,293, to undertake work as specified under the terms and conditions of the routine maintenance contract for the period 1st June 2005 to 31st May 2006 be accepted and, (2) if additional work is required under the terms and condition of the routine maintenance contract, an hourly rate of £10.00 for labour only be accepted.

12. Cricket Fees

The Committee considered the cricket fees to be charged to the New Ash Green and Hartley CC and Hextable CC for the 2005 season.

RECOMMENDED: That, the following charges be levied for the use of the facilities at Manor Field and the Pavilion:

New Ash Green and Hartley CC 1 st XI	£425
New Ash Green and Hartley CC 2 ^{ns} XI	£425
New Ash Green and Hartley CC 3 rd XI and Colts	<u>£425</u>
Total	£1,275

Hextable CC Total £425

13. Manor Field

The Committee considered a quotation for the installation of a new sign to be positioned at the entrance to the field, immediately adjacent to the beech hedge and the WI bin.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from Mr Glidewell for the installation of a new 3' x 3' signboard, fitted with moulding and pin board material, painted and sign written, and erected on site using new 3" x 3" treated posts concreted in for the total sum of £185.00 be accepted.

14. Car Park at Manor Field

The Committee considered two quotations, as set out below, for scraping off areas of mud from the surface of part of the car park and depositing resulting residue on the land in the Orchard, and for the supply and laying of road stone in various other locations in the car park to infill potholes.

“(1) J Thomas (Southern) Ltd

Allow to trim off contaminated material, supply, lay and roll MOT fill, approx 100 mm thick. Allow 600 m²@ £8.00 per m² for the sum of £4,800.00.

(2) Sevenoaks Direct Services

To scrape off area at the back of the car park. Scrape off and fill with road stone various other areas as discussed, for the sum of £605 plus VAT.”

RESOLVED: That, (1) the quotation from Sevenoaks Direct Services, to scrape off the surface of part of the car park and to fill with road stone in various other areas for the sum of £605 plus VAT be accepted and, (2) expenditure upto a sum of £50 be authorised for a temporary concrete repair to be undertaken to the pothole located next to the entrance gate.

15. Pavilion

(a) It was reported that EDF Energy had inspected and tested the electrics at the Pavilion in an endeavour to trace the intermittent fault, which causes the RCD (residual current device) located in the corridor to trip out resulting in a loss of power within the building.

RESOLVED: That, further consideration of the matter be deferred pending receipt of a report from EDF Energy.

(b) The Committee considered a quotation to fit a new closer on a door at the Pavilion.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from I S Carpentry and Building Services to supply and fit 1 no door closer to the external door of the Pavilion for the sum of . £102.00 be accepted.

- (c) The Committee considered the purchase of a steam cleaner at a cost of £83.06 to clean the tiled surfaces in the changing rooms at the Pavilion. It was reported that the cleaner had offered to pressure wash the surfaces in the changing rooms.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

16. Gorse Wood

- (a) The Committee considered two quotations, as set out below, to undertake work to trees located on land owned by the Council at Gorse Wood, allegedly causing a nuisance to the property known as Heathfield off Gorsewood Road.

“(1) Austin Treework

Fell and grind stump of one ash tree.

Fell and grind cherry saplings, identified by yellow paint

Cord wood to be left on site and brushwood to be chipped on site for use on footpaths as wood chip.

For the sum of £450.00 plus VAT

(2) Above the Canopy

Left hand side of woodland, as marked with yellow dots, nine immature wild cherries to be carefully section felled to a workable ground level. Stump to be cut flat in the same plane as the surrounding ground. Stump to be ground out to approximately 30 cm below ground level unless otherwise stated. Area to be raked level and excess arisings removed from site.

One semi mature ash to be carefully section felled to a workable ground level. Stump to be cut flat in the same plane as the surrounding ground. Stump to be treated with Root Out to prevent regeneration. Root Out does not guarantee success the first time and a further application may be required.

Any other encroaching branches. Reduce any branches that are encroaching the building to leave a clearance of approximately 2 metres. All brushwood to be chipped on site. All ash logs to be left in large sections.

For the sum of £372.77 plus VAT”

RESOLVED: That, the quotation dated 3rd March 2005 from Above the Canopy for the sum of £372.77 plus VAT to undertake various treework in Gorse Wood be accepted.

- (b) It was reported that the Council had received three complaints about the amount of dumped rubbish and fly tipping in Gorse Wood. The Council has received information of anti social behaviour by youths, who are currently congregating in the car park off Porchester Close. In addition, youths have been actively cutting down trees in the wood and have built a tree house in the wood. The Clerk is seeking the views of the Council's insurers in respect of the presence of a tree house on land owned by the Council.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and, (2) quotations be sought to remove the rubbish and fly tipping.

17. Rectory Meadow

- (a) The Committee considered a quotation to repair a damaged concrete spur supporting the notice board at the entrance to Rectory Meadow off Banckside.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from Mr Glidewell for replacing the damaged concrete spur to the notice board located at Rectory Meadow at the end of Banckside for the sum of £35.00 be accepted

- (b) The Committee considered two quotations for treework in Rectory Meadow, as set out below:

“(1) Austin Treework

The felling of dead and dangerous trees, removal of dead wood from identified trees, chipping up on site of brushwood lying on ground for the sum of £480.00 plus VAT

(2) Above the Canopy

All dead/dangerous trees as marked with yellow X to be carefully section felled to a workable ground level. The stumps are to be cut flat in the same plane as the surrounding ground, brushwood to be chipped on site and logs to be left on outer perimeter of woods.

Stump from previously felled wind blown tree (as marked with X). Stump to be ground out to approximately 30 cm below ground level unless otherwise stated. Area to be raked level and excess arisings removed from site. Brush from fallen trees is to be chipped. Previously fallen tree logs are to be stacked on perimeter of woods.

*Trees marked with yellow O - Remove large dead lower branches.
Cost to carry out the above works is £638.30 plus VAT”*

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from Austin Treework to undertake various tree work in Rectory Meadow for the sum of £480.00 plus VAT be accepted.

18. Woodland Avenue

(a) The Committee considered two quotations to undertake various fencing work at the Woodlands Avenue recreation ground, as set out below:

(1) To remove the kissing gate located opposite the property known as Woodlands:

T D Munday for the sum of £38.50

I Paternoster for the sum of £116.00

(2) To remove kissing gate as before and form new entrance opposite the recycling centre:

T D Munday for the sum of £113.30

I Paternoster for the sum of £242.00

RESOLVED: That, consideration of the matter be deferred.

(b) The Committee considered the provision of either a metal or timber kissing gate suitable for disabled access at the southern end of the Woodland Avenue recreation ground and in doing so, referred a brochure of gates manufactured by Centrewire Ltd

RESOLVED: That, installation and fitting costs be obtained for the installation of the “Woodstock” metal kissing gate and for the installation of the “Oxford” timber kissing gate, which are both suitable for large mobility vehicles.

19. Chantry Avenue

The Committee considered a report on a letter from the owner of “Bramley”, Ash Road in respect of repairs undertaken to the close boarded fence located on the boundary between his property and the recreation ground. The landowner is not willing to accept the terms laid down by the Council in respect of its offer to meet 50 % of the cost of repair to the fence on the basis that the Council would not accept any responsibility for its future maintenance.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 12th April 2005 from the property owner of “Bramleys” be noted and, (2) a land search be undertaken on the field located at the rear of Bramley to establish ownership.

20. Hartley Green

The Committee considered a progress report on the purchase of a bench from a company “Environmental Street Furniture”, which had proved to be problematic.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be authorised to purchase a bench upto the limit of £500, which was agreed by the Council at its meeting held on 13th September 2004

21. Correspondence

(a) RESOLVED: That, SERPA Newsletter issue 47, Spring 2005 be received and noted.

(b) It was reported that land at Northfield and Rectory Meadow may be eligible for funding under the new agricultural subsidy system and agri-environment schemes announced by DEFRA.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

22. Pond

It was reported that funding for improvement and conservation works to the pond from the Local Heritage Initiative was unlikely to be successful unless the application was submitted by a community group. The Committee suggested the local Archaeological Society may be interested at some time in the future.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

23. Allotments

The Committee considered a report on the rent arrears of two allotment holders. It was confirmed that allotment plots 29 and 38 had not been cultivated for over a year, whereas it was believed that allotment plots 1A, 1B, 3 and 5 were currently being cultivated.

RESOLVED: That, the allotment agreement with the allotment holder of plot numbers 29 and 38 be terminated and the plots be re let, where possible and, (2) further attempts be made to contact the allotment holder of plots 1A, 1B, 3 and 5 to recover the outstanding debt.

RECOMMENDED: That, the debt incurred by the non payment of rent due on plots 29 and 38 for 2004/05 totalling £17.00 be written off.

24. Hartley Wood

The Committee considered the implications for the Council in respect of its decision to seek possessory title of the plots of land in Hartley Wood where there were no known owners and formed the opinion that any existing owners who were known to the Council should be contacted and asked to mark the extent of their plots of land, so that clear boundaries could be identified on the ground. In addition, the Committee suggested that the owners should be reminded of their legal responsibilities to members of the public using their land and that they may be well advised to seek independent legal advice to safeguard their own interests against any future claims arising from any accidents on their land.

The Committee noted that it would be necessary to undertake a risk assessment of the one plot of land in the ownership of the Council and that it would also be necessary to include in the risk assessment the three plots of land being gifted to the Council. In addition the Committee recognised it would be necessary to extend the risk assessment to include the land to which the Council is seeking possessory title. The risk assessments should be undertaken by a competent individual or company and would be a cost to the Council, although at this stage the cost was not known. However, the Committee was satisfied that once a risk assessment had been undertaken and any identified remedial work carried out, there would be very little on going costs to the Council to maintain the woods.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted, (2) arrangements be made for the land owned by the Parish Council to be marked out to establish its boundaries and, (3) the Council's insurers be advised of the position with regard to the donation of

three plots of land in Hartley Wood to the Council and that the Council's public liability insurance cover be extended to include these plots of land

25. Date of next meeting

Thursday 2nd June 2005 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

