

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE HELD  
ON 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2005 AT 7.30 p.m. AT THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD**

**Present:** Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs Oxtoby  
Cllr Mr A Tremain  
Cllr Mr V Sewell  
Cllr Mr C Ward (*arrived at 7.35 p.m.*)

**In Attendance:** Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)  
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 M Solman and Mr V John (NAG and Hartley CC)

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute item 10 in respect of matters relating to the application to register land at Hartley Wood as a Village Green, as her private residence is located adjacent to Hartley Wood. The area of land in Hartley Wood which is the subject of the application is not immediately adjacent to land owned by Cllr Mrs Oxtoby and this being the case, she considered her interest to be personal and not prejudicial, but reserved the right to amend her interest if she thought appropriate during the ensuing discussions.

Cllr Mr A Tremain declared a personal interest under minute item 5 in respect of matters relating to cricket at Manor Field, as he is the Chairman of Hextable CC.

Cllr Mr A Barnett declared a personal interest under minute item 7 in respect of the receipts and payments for the allotments, as he is an allotment holder.

**3. Minutes of previous meetings**

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2005 be approved and signed as a correct record.

*Cllr Mr C Ward arrived at the meeting at 7.35 p.m.*

**4. Football at Manor Field**

It was reported that Hartley De Sales FC had requested the grass at Manor Field be cut in advance of this weekend's fixtures. The Club had informed the Council that the length of the grass made the pitches unplayable and if the grass was not cut before the weekend, the Club would have no alternative but to find an alternative venue which would incur a charge from the relevant Leagues. It was reported that arrangements had been made with the Council's grass cutting contractor to undertake an additional grass cut at a cost of £75.00. The Committee noted that the lines were not due to be marked out this week, but were likely to disappear after the grass had been cut and therefore it had been necessary to make arrangements for the lines to be marked at a cost of £30.

The Committee suggested that the specification for the grass cutting contract should be reviewed when it comes up for renewal in April 2006, with a view to extending the cutting schedule so that the first cut of season takes place mid March and cutting continues

through into November. It was pointed out that regardless of the number of contracted cuts, it was sometimes difficult to bring machinery onto the ground at Manor Field due to the wet nature of the ground. The Committee noted that the pitches at Manor Field had performed very well over the previous two seasons and that no fixtures had been lost due to the condition of the pitches, as it appeared that the healthy grass growth assisted drainage.

It was reported that the Clerk had enquired with the Club whether it would be possible for the U13 and the U16's to share the pitch in front of the Pavilion. The Club had informed the Clerk this would not possible due to the different leagues requirements in respect of the size of the pitch and the goalposts for the two different age groups.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted, and (2) the Clerk's actions to make arrangements for the grass to be cut and the lines to be marked out at a total cost of £105 be confirmed.

#### **5. Cricket at Manor Field**

It was reported that the end of season repairs to the cricket square had not been carried out due to the wet weather during October. The Cricket Club reported that the Kent Cricket League had recently inspected the ground and recommended that the repairs to the square should be delayed until mid to late March 2006. Landscape Services have agreed to delay the implementation of the works, but state they are of the opinion the works could have gone ahead at this time of the year provided the works were programmed after a period of two to three days of dry weather. Some concern was expressed over undertaking such remedial works to the square in March next year so close to the start of the cricket season in May. The Committee was informed of an advisory service provided by Kent County Cricket Club on such matters and it was suggested the Club may wish to make use of this service. Meopham CC advised the Committee that Addington CC has a trailer and suitable equipment to undertake repairs to cricket squares, which they are willing to make available to other Cricket Clubs.

The Committee noted that the sight screen at the far end of the field had been blown over in the wind and needed to be brought back to an upright position before it sustained any vandalism. The Cricket Club has been informed.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

#### **6. Cricket at Longfield Hill**

Meopham CC reported that the square had been treated and repaired at the end of the season and that the Club was so far pleased with the results. Meopham CC expressed some concern over the length of the grass on the outfield. It was reported that at the start of the 2005 season it had been necessary for the Club to organise a work party to cut and collect the grass on the outfield as, despite the fact that the grass had been cut by the Council's contractor, the length of the grass was still too long. The Club believed that the number of cuts undertaken by the Council's contractor in advance of the start of the cricket season was insufficient and requested consideration be given to cutting the grass once a week rather than once every two weeks and that this weekly cutting schedule should be continued through to the end of August, thereafter reverting to one cut every two weeks. The Club stated it would be willing to pay for any additional cuts over and above the Council's contracted number of 22 cuts. The Committee suggested it may be prudent to start the grass cutting contract in mid March rather than at the beginning of April.

Meopham CC asked whether the Council had any objection to the Club cutting back two low overhanging branches from a tree located on the boundary of the adjoining farmer's field. This would be undertaken by the Club at no cost to the Council and the Club would ensure all arisings were removed from site.

Meopham CC requested the Council's permission to lay a flexi pitch on the ground at Longfield Hill. This would help to preserve the condition of the square and would be particularly helpful for the Club's youth training sessions. Meopham CC informed the

Committee that whilst they did not wish to discourage youth participating in sport, they were concerned about informal use of the cricket square by others and use of the outfield by a local youth football club on Sunday mornings for training. Attempts by the Club to protect the cricket square with posts and rope had not been successful.

Meopham CC informed the Committee that the nettles on the spoil heap located on the west side of the ground next to the drainage trench had been cleared and requested the Council's permission to level off the spoil heap and so increase the size of the outfield. The Committee stated that the spoil heap had been created when the drainage trench had been formed and a drainage pipe laid across the ground to drain the surface water off the highway and that any works undertaken by the Club to level the spoil heap should not adversely affect drainage off the highway.

Meopham CC requested the Committee give consideration to including the ground at Longfield Hill within any contracts let for the control of weeds and worms at Manor Field.

Meopham CC reported that, at this stage, it would not be pursuing the provision of an electrical supply into the container located at the ground.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the report be noted,

(2) the grass cutting contracts be reviewed when they come up for renewal in April 2006, with a view to amending the specification so that,

(i) the grass cutting contracts commence in mid March and continuing through into November,

(ii) the grass at Longfield Hill recreation ground be cut once a week from mid March through to the end of August and thereafter revert to one cut every two weeks and that the offer from Meopham CC to pay for an additional cuts over and above the Council's contracted 22 cuts be accepted,

(3) no objection be raised to Meopham CC's request to cut back low overhanging branches from the tree located on the western boundary,

(4) no objection be raised to Meopham CC's request to lay a flexi pitch at the ground at Longfield Hill,

(5) a letter be written to the youth football team who use the recreation ground on Sunday mornings for training, requesting that they ensure their training sessions do no effect the cricket square and that a copy of the football club's public liability insurance certificate be obtained,

(6) no objection be raised to Meopham CC's request to level off the spoil heap along the western boundary, provided the drainage of surface water off the highway remains unaffected by the works.

*Mr T Wade left the meeting at 8.20 p.m.*

## **7. Financial Report**

The Committee examined a financial report setting out the net financial position of the allotments, open spaces and the Pavilion as at 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and suggested that if there was likely to be an underspend of the Committee's current budget, the works to redecorate the changing rooms, referee's changing room and toilet should be carried out, but this position would be reviewed closer to the end of the financial year. The Committee noted that the walls in the hall at the Pavilion had been badly marked and scuffed.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and the Pavilion as at 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005 attached as appendix 1 to these minutes be received and noted, and (2) a quotation be sought to wash down the walls in the hall at the Pavilion.

## 8. Playgrounds

The Committee examined a report on the action taken by the Council in respect of the medium risk items identified by RoSPA in their play area safety inspection report dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 2005. A number of queries were raised about the details of a wet pour repair kit.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted, (2) further advice be sought from Wychwood Play Services as to the minimum and maximum temperature that the wet pour may be laid and whether it can be applied if the surfaces are wet, and (3) Mr Munday be asked if he would be willing to undertake minor repairs to the wet pour safety surfaces using the repair kit.

## 9. Rectory Meadow

The Committee examined a report setting out the quotations returned in respect of treework to be undertaken at Rectory Meadow in support of a grant application to the Rail Link Countryside Initiative, to secure the boundary access points, enhance existing pedestrian access points with interpretation boards, provide information to visitors and produce a leaflet to distribute amongst local residents to raise the profile of the site.

Quotations for the treework had been sought based on two alternatives:

(1) To take down the trees located at the end of Banckside from the access gate up the hill to the kissing gate to ground level and remove arisings from site. All woodchip to be spread long the path from the kissing gate.

Above the Canopy for the sum of £1,600 incl VAT (£1,361.70 plus VAT)

Austin Treework for the sum of £1,580.00 plus VAT

(2) To reduce the trees located at the end of Banckside from the access gate up the hill to the kissing gate to a height of 6 feet above the ground and remove arisings from site. All woodchip to be spread long the path from the kissing gate.

Above the Canopy for the sum of £1,500 incl VAT (£ 1,276.60 plus VAT)

Austin Treework for the sum of £1,200 plus VAT

The Committee examined the budget submitted by the North West Kent Countryside Project to the Rail Link Countryside Initiative and noted that if the trees located at the end of Banckside were taken out down to ground level, there would be a shortfall of £761.70. It was reported that the North West Kent Countryside Project is seeking additional funding from the Rail Link Countryside Initiative to undertake this treework.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted, (2) the trees located at the end of Banckside from the access gate up the hill to the kissing gate be taken out down to ground level, and (3) the quotation for the sum of £1,600 incl VAT from Above the Canopy to undertake treework as set out in their quotation number HART05273\_rev1 be accepted.

## 10. Hartley Wood

The Committee considered a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005 from Kent County Council confirming that work has commenced on the Council's application to register land at Hartley Wood as a Village Green under section 13 of the Commons Registration Act 1965. The letter informed the Council that the initial consultation process had commenced and that notices had been placed on site and in the local newspaper. Residents have six weeks to come forward with any objections and the deadline for objections is Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

RESOLVED: That, the letter from Kent County Council be received and noted.

## 11. Manor Field

The Committee examined a report on the installation of posts and chains to prevent unauthorised vehicular access onto Manor Field. The Committee favoured the installation

of a chain barrier at the entrance to the field and a collapsible bollard along side the concrete path leading to the entrance door at the Pavilion.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and (2) quotations be sought to install a chain barrier and collapsible bollard to prevent unauthorised vehicular access onto Manor Field.

## **12. Chantry Avenue**

It was reported that the owner of the field adjoining the Chantry Avenue recreation ground has erected a new close boarded fence. Three photographs of the new fence were circulated. The owner informed the Council in an e mail dated 17<sup>th</sup> November 2005 that he has been advised by his solicitor that it was not necessary for him to secure a boundary, only to mark the boundary. The owner states that in future if the fence becomes damaged by the children from the Council's playground, then the Council should take responsibility for ensuring the children do not stray onto his land. Further to this, he stated that the trees located along the boundary shield the children from view and suggested that the trees should be cut back or removed. The owner of the field pointed out that a fence panel owned by the adjoining owner at Bramleys, Ash Road is still in a state of disrepair

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted, (2) a letter of thanks be written to the owner of the field behind the recreation ground, (3) the trees be inspected to establish whether they should be cut back or removed and, (4) a letter be written to the owner of Bramleys, Ash Road informing him that a new close boarded fence had been erected by the owner of the adjoining field and requesting once again that he undertake repairs to his dilapidated fence posts and panels.

## **13. Woodland Avenue**

The Committee considered a suggestion from a local resident to install a litter bin next to the kissing gate located opposite the recycling centre. The Committee noted that there was a litter bin located next to the recycling centre and therefore there was already adequate provision for the disposal of litter.

It was reported that a number of the youths who regularly congregate opposite the recycling centre come from Darenth and are the subject of Antisocial Behaviour Orders.

RESOLVED: That, no further action be taken with regard to the provision of a litter bin.

## **14. Hartley Green**

The Committee noted that the War Memorial Trust provides small grants of upto £250 to undertake certain works for the restoration or preservation of war memorials and considered whether it would be appropriate for the Council to submit an application for works to prevent vehicles gaining access to the Green in order to protect the war memorial. The Committee favoured the installation of an additional bollard at the south corner of the Green to prevent vehicles mounting the Green to cut off the corner and the installation of a chain to the existing bollards. In addition, the Committee felt the application should include repairs to the pointing of the paving slabs around the war memorial.

RECOMMENDED: That, an application for funding be submitted to the War Memorial Trust for works, as set out above to protect and preserve the war memorial.

## **15. Motor bikes**

The Committee considered measures to discourage the riding of motorbikes in Hartley Wood. It was reported that a scheme in Church Wood in Fawkham had been very effective in deterring the riding of motor bikes through the woods and had involved lying large tree trunks across the footpaths in the woods to create a chicane. The Committee considered submitting an application for funding through Kent County Council's Community Paths Scheme for the installation of a motor cycle barrier on either side of the subway

under the railway line. The barrier should be designed to allow access for pushchairs, prams and wheelchairs.

RECOMMENDED: That, an application for funding be submitted to Kent County Council through the Community Paths Scheme for the provision of motorcycle barriers to be positioned both sides of the subway.

#### 16. Pond

The Committee considered a report on advice received from a local pond warden in respect of the pond. It was suggested that the pond warden should be invited to a site meeting and that a programme of work be prepared.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted, (2) a meeting with the pond warden be arranged and (3) a programme of work be prepared.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.20 p.m.

Mr Glover raised questions in respect of responsibilities over public liability insurance. It was explained that the present owner of the woods were the London Borough of Southwark and that the application to seek Village Green status on part of Hartley Wood owned by the LB of Southwark was merely to regularise rights of access which have already been acquired by the public.

The meeting was resumed at 9.31 p.m.

#### 17. Date of next meeting

19<sup>th</sup> January 2006 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.32 p.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Hartley Parish Council**  
**Summary of Receipts and Payments**  
 Amenities and Open Spaces

Cost Centre	Receipts		Payments		Net Position Underspend (+) /Overspend (-)
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	
5 Allotments	300.00	292.44	700.00	126.49	565.95
6 Open Spaces	2,790.00	2,416.00	25,550.00	15,925.19	9,250.81
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,200.00	630.00	6,125.00	3,289.88	2,265.12
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>4,290.00</b>	<b>3,338.44</b>	<b>32,375.00</b>	<b>19,341.56</b>	<b>12,081.88</b>
Total for ALL Cost Centres		103,201.52		82,042.32	
V.A.T.		6,500.77		6,984.66	
<b>GROSS TOTAL</b>		<b>109,702.29</b>		<b>89,026.98</b>	

