

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 2nd MARCH 2006 AT 7.30 p.m. AT THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs Oxtoby
Cllr Mr A Tremain
Cllr Mrs M Solman (*arrived at 7.32 p.m.*)

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Mr D Thompson (Hartley De Sales FC)
2 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr J Gaywood, Cllr Mr C Ward, Mr V John (New Ash Green and Hartley CC) and Mr T Wade (Meopham CC).

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs M Solman arrived at the meeting at 7.32 p.m.

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 14 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 and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

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

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 19th January 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Football at Manor Field

Mr Thompson reported that Hartley De Sales FC was very pleased with the condition of the pitches at Manor Field, which they believed was due in part to the worming undertaken earlier in the season and the shortness of the grass. The Club confirmed the last senior fixture would be on 23rd April 2006, but the U16 and U13 teams were likely to finish before the end of March and agreed to keep the Council informed of the date of their last fixtures.

Mr Thompson reported that the bramble along the western boundary was causing some problems inasmuch as it was difficult to retrieve any footballs from the bramble and that the thorns were causing damage to the footballs. It was explained that the landowners had been contacted to ask whether they had any objections to the Council cutting back the bramble. If they had no objection, the Council would endeavour to keep the area clear by running a flail mower over the ground.

Mr Thompson reported that the football club was due to hold a committee meeting at the end of March, after which it would be in a position to confirm usage for the 2006/07 season.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

5. Cricket at Manor Field

(a) The Committee considered a quotation to roll the outfield after the close of the football season and in advance of the start of the cricket season.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation from Mr S Glover for the sum of £150 plus VAT to roll the field using a 4 tonne steel water ballast roller be accepted.

Mr Thompson left the meeting at 7.45 p.m.

(b) It was reported that, due to personal reasons, Mr B Tillet would no longer be available to undertake work at Manor Field and it was suggested that the groundsman at Hartley Country Club may be interested in undertaking some work. The Committee considered a quotation to repair the depression in the outfield, using the existing top soil stored in the corner of Manor Field. The Committee agreed that the surface would need to be finished with a better quality top soil before the seed could be sown. The Cricket Club had informed the Council that grass seed was available in the storage container.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the quotation from T D Munday for the sum of £50 to repair the depression in the outfield, labour only, be accepted, (2) the Clerk be authorised to make arrangements for the supply and delivery of 1 cubic yard of top soil and (3) the Cricket Club be asked to sow the grass seed upon completion of the repair to the depression.

6. Cricket at Longfield Hill

(a) It was reported that Meopham CC had thanked the Council for its support at Longfield Hill. Since the last meeting it was reported that the mole catcher had attended site and would be charging £200 to undertake the necessary work. The Committee considered a quotation for the control of worms on the outfield at Longfield Hill.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and (2) the quotation from Weed Management Ltd for the sum of £240 plus VAT for the control of worms on the outfield at Longfield Hill be accepted.

(b) It was reported that the quotation for the fence repairs at Longfield Hill was awaited. However, as a section of the fence between the farmer's field and the recreation ground was missing, the quotation had been invited on the basis of re-staking the existing fence posts where possible and installing new fencing where the existing fence was missing. The Committee noted that the existing fence was a spiral fence and that the contractor quoting for the work had been invited to submit quotations for two alternatives, i.e. install fencing with spiral fencing or chestnut paling fencing.

RESOLVED: That, further consideration of the matter be deferred.

(c) The Committee considered a quotation to adapt the field gate at Longfield Hill to prevent it being lifted off its hinges.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from ASAP Autos for the sum of £50 to adapt the hinge of the field gate at Longfield Hill recreation ground be accepted.

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 24th February 2006.

RESOLVED: That, the financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and the Pavilion as at 24th February 2006, attached as appendix 1 to these minutes, be received and noted.

8. Playgrounds

(a) The Committee considered the play area safety inspection report undertaken by RoSPA on 13th February 2006.

A report setting out a proposed course of action in respect the defects and faults identified by RoSPA was tabled for the Committee's consideration. The Committee noted one high risk item outside the recreation ground at Longfield Hill relating to an overgrown holly bush on the highway verge. The Highway Authority had been immediately informed of the problem and it was reported they had confirmed in an e mail dated 1st March 2006 that the holly bush had been cut back.

The Committee considered a letter dated 17th February 2006 from the Council's insurers stating that they were pleased to note that all the playground repairs were in hand and that they awaited a copy of the February 2006 inspection report, when available. It was confirmed that a copy of the February 2006 play area inspection report had been sent to the Council's insurers, as requested.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the play area safety inspection report undertaken by RoSPA on 13th February 2006 be noted,

(2) the report setting out the proposed course of action and the action taken to date in respect of the defects and faults identified by RoSPA in the play area safety inspection report be confirmed,

(3) the letter dated 17th February 2006 from the Council's insurers be noted.

(b) It was reported that in compliance with the Council's financial regulation 11.1 (b), an alternative quotation had been invited for the supply and laying of turf around the safety surface below the slide at Longfield Hill and for sealing the gaps between the existing safety tiles with mastic, and that the quotation was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the further consideration of the matter be deferred.

(c) The Committee considered a report on the cost of the supply and delivery of wet pour repair kits. It was reported that T D Munday had confirmed he would be willing to undertake minor repairs to the safety surfacing using the wet pour repair kit.

RESOLVED: That, an order be placed with Playtop for the supply and delivery of a black top wet pour repair kit, at a cost of £45.00 plus VAT and delivery.

9. Woodland Avenue

The Committee considered a request from a company known as Showtime Amusements to hire the Woodlands Avenue recreation ground for a family fun fair in the summer. The proprietor had provided a list of references, two of which, Rustington Parish Council and Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council had been contacted. Both Councils were very happy with the event and have booked the fair again for this summer.

RESOLVED: That, further information be obtained and brought back to the Committee for consideration.

10. Health and Safety

The Committee examined the time sheets in respect of the routine maintenance work for the months of December 2005 and January 2006.

RESOLVED: That, the time sheets in respect of the routine maintenance work for the months of December 2005 and January 2006 be received and noted.

11. Manor Field

(a) The Committee considered a letter dated 1st February 2006 from Messrs H F & J H Glover in respect of the Committee's proposal to install a chain barrier at the entrance to the field to prevent unauthorised vehicular access. Messrs H F & J H Glover had come forward with a number of suggestions regarding the siting of a barrier, which the Committee accepted.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the letter dated 1st February 2006 from Messrs H F & H Glover be noted and (2) costs for the installation of a chain barrier be obtained

(b) The Committee was reminded that at a meeting of the Special Projects Working Group held on 3rd February 2006, it was agreed that Messrs H F & J H Glover be asked whether they had any objection to the boundaries at Manor Field being cleared of bramble. It was reported a letter had been written to Messrs H F & J H Glover and that a response was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

12. Pavilion

(a) It was reported that in compliance with the Council's financial regulation 11.1 (b), an alternative quotation would be required if the Committee wished to pursue the proposal to install a PIR operated floodlight on the lighting column located in the Manor Field car park.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation/s be sought for the installation of a PIR unit on the roof of the Pavilion in the corner where it overlooks the approach to the building.

(b) It was reported that the cleaner of the Pavilion had confirmed he would be willing to undertake the testing and cleaning regime of the water services as recommended by Bayley Environmental Services Ltd. The cleaner would be asked to provide a quotation of the costs involved in implementing the regime, once the log book had been received from Bayley Environmental Services Ltd detailing the extent of the work required.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(c) The Committee considered seeking a quotation from the cleaner to wash down the walls in the hall and the corridor at the Pavilion.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation to wash down the walls in the hall and the corridor in the Pavilion be sought from the cleaner.

13. Rectory Meadow

(a) The Committee considered a letter from a member of the public congratulating the Council's success in designating Rectory Meadow as a Local Nature Reserve and asking whether the Council intended to use the area for the scattering or interment of ashes.

RECOMMENDED: That, (1) the letter be noted and, (2) the member of the public be informed that the Council already had facilities in the Parish for the interment of ashes and that it did not intend to extend such use to Rectory Meadow.

(b) The Committee welcomed the suggestion that a bench be installed at Rectory Meadow but felt that, whilst there were two salvaged benches in storage at Manor Field, the design of these benches was too urban and therefore would not be appropriate for use at Rectory Meadow. The Committee favoured the style of bench that had been installed on Northfield and suggested the bench could be sited in the centre of the Meadow, at the intersection of footpaths.

RESOLVED: That, costings be obtained for the supply and installation of a bench at Rectory Meadow, of a similar style to that installed on Northfield.

(c) The Committee considered a proposal that the designation of Rectory Meadow as a Local Nature Reserve should be celebrated and that representatives from English Nature, North West Kent Countryside Project, Rail Link Countryside Initiative, Sevenoaks District Council and the press be invited to an event at the Meadow in May or early June 2006.

RECOMMENDED: That, an event be organised to celebrate the designation of Rectory Meadow as a Local Nature Reserve

14. Hartley Wood

The Committee considered a letter dated 10th February 2006 from Kent County Council and a letter dated 2nd February 2006 from consultants, Hephher Dixon, acting on behalf of the London Borough of Southwark in respect of the Parish Council's application to designate land at Hartley Wood as a village green.

Consultants, Hephher Dixon, had reiterated their client's position regarding the Parish Council's application, inasmuch as they believed the land had not been generally accessible and that fencing and remnants of older fencing delineated a boundary around the property which specially identified the land as being in private ownership. However, the Committee was pleased to note that the consultants had accepted the Parish Council's offer to meet and welcomed this opportunity to discuss the matter further. The Committee suggested that it may be appropriate for representatives from Kent County Council to be present at the meeting.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) Kent County Council be advised that the Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to meet with the London Borough of Southwark and their consultants, Hephher Dixon, and that a meeting be arranged,

(2) any further action relating to the Parish Council's application for land at Hartley Wood to be designated as a Village Green be deferred until after the outcome of those discussions and,

(3) representatives from Kent County Council be invited to attend the meeting.

15. Lay by

(a) It was reported that the chestnut poles retaining the earth bank in the layby next to the Burial Ground were damaged, caused probably as a result of vehicles hitting them whilst parking in the lay by.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation be sought to re align the displaced chestnut poles and to re stake the front and back of the chestnut pole retaining wall.

(b) The Committee considered a quotation to fell a dangerous Lawson Cypress tree located in the lay by at the rear of the Garden of Remembrance. The Committee noted the quotation included the removal of a drooping branch from an Ash tree located in the closed church yard.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation from Austin Treework for the sum of £180.00 plus VAT to fell a Lawson Cypress tree located in the lay by be accepted.

16. Gorse Wood

The Committee noted that the Probation Services had confirmed they would be willing to attend site to undertake further rubbish clearance at Gorse Wood. The Probation Services would require the provision of a skip at a cost of £121.00 plus VAT, for an 8 yard skip and the provision of a portable toilet, at a daily rate of £60.00 plus VAT.

It was reported that further dumping had taken place since the Probation Services attended site at the end of last year and that a makeshift shed had been erected in the Woods.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) arrangements be made with the Probation Services to attend site on a further two days to undertake rubbish clearance at Gorse Wood,

(2) arrangements be made for an 8 yard skip and a portable toilet to be delivered to site on days whilst the Probation Services are in attendance and for the skip and toilet to be removed at the end of each day,

(3) West Kent Housing Association be informed of the Council's concerns regarding the fly tipping and rubbish dumping in Gorse Wood and the resultant cost to local tax payers to remove the offending rubbish,

(4) arrangements be made for the makeshift shed to be dismantled and removed from Gorse Wood.

17. Kent County Playing Fields Association

RESOLVED: That, the Playing Field be received and noted.

18. Dog Waste Bin

The Committee considered a complaint from a local resident about the amount of dog waste dumped at the end of Beechlands Close where it enters Hartley Wood. The Committee considered a request from the resident that it give consideration for the installation of a dog waste bin at this locality. The Committee was unclear as to whether this was a persistent problem or a "one off" problem.

The Committee felt that the provision of a dog waste bin at the junction of Manor Land and Church Road would be beneficial, as this was on a popular dog walking route.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) no further action be taken at this stage regarding the provision of a dog waste bin at the end of Beechlands Close, but the resident be asked to keep the Committee informed if the problem persisted and,

(2) a quotation be sought for the supply and installation of a dog waste bin at the junction of Manor Lane and Church Road.

19. Trees

The Committee felt the Council should consider taking a more proactive approach to the preservation and protection of notable trees within the Parish and that the Council should be looking towards identifying deserving trees so that some action may be taken to protect them before they become threatened.

RESOLVED: That, further guidance be sought from Sevenoaks District Council on what action the Parish Council could take to seek the protection of trees in the parish in a proactive manner.

20. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 4th April 2006 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.50 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	353.14	700.00	451.51	301.63
6 Open Spaces	2,790.00	6,936.60	25,550.00	20,550.85	9,145.75
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,200.00	1,314.50	6,125.00	4,118.13	2,121.37
NET TOTAL	4,290.00	8,604.24	32,375.00	25,120.49	11,568.75
Total for ALL Cost Centres		111,343.05		109,969.74	
V.A.T.		6,500.77		8,043.07	
GROSS TOTAL		117,843.82		118,012.45	

