

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 15th MAY 2006 AT 7.30 p.m. AT THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mr M Harris
Cllr Mrs Oxtoby
Cllr Mr V Sewell (*arrived at 7.32 p.m.*)
Cllr Mrs M Solman
Cllr Mr C Ward

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Mr V John (New Ash Green and Hartley CC)
2 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr J Gaywood and Cllr Mr A Tremain.

2. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr A Barnett be elected Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2007.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr A Tremain be elected Vice Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2007.

4. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests

5. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the special meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 26th April 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Cllr Mr V Sewell arrived at the meeting at 7.32 p.m.

6. Terms of Reference

The Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference and was satisfied that it could operate satisfactorily under the Terms of Reference as approved by the Council at its Annual Meeting held on 8th May 2006.

RESOLVED: That, the Terms of Reference, as set out in appendix 1 attached to these minutes, be noted.

7. Cricket at Manor Field

Mr Vaughan thanked the Committee for making arrangements for the square to be wormed and for infilling the depression in the outfield. It was reported that an inspection of the ground by representative/s from the Kent Cricket League would take place on 17th May 2006 and that the Cricket Club had recently spent £1,000 on repairs and maintenance to its machinery. Mr Vaughan explained that he was trying to contact the Council's grass cutting contractor to discuss the possibility of cutting the grass on the outfield shorter.

Mr Vaughan explained that the Cricket Club had secured sponsorship from BUPA Care Homes and asked whether the Council would have any objection to the siting of a notice, approximately 4' x 3' in size, at the entrance to Manor Field with the words, "Manor Field home of New Ash Green and Hartley Cricket Club". The new sign, if acceptable to the Council, would include the BUPA Care Home logo. He suggested the sign could either be permanent or temporary, whichever the Council preferred. There was some question as to whether the provision of a new sign would require the benefit of planning permission.

Mr Vaughan reported that the Cricket Club would like to develop an area at Manor Field for the provision of a cricket net. This would require the installation of a concrete base, but the nets and posts would be removable as the Cricket Club could be held liable if an accident occurred in its net if they were not present to supervise its use and to avoid any risk of damage to the nets from vandalism.

Mr Vaughan asked whether the Committee knew of anyone who would be interested in preparing the Cricket Club's cricket teas. It was suggested an item could be placed in the Council newsletter.

Mr Vaughan reported that the Cricket Club had managed to find someone who was willing to prepare and maintain the cricket square throughout the season. He confirmed that the Cricket Club would be undertaking the end of the season repairs to the cricket square and therefore it would not require the services of an outside contractor to undertake this work. Mr Vaughan confirmed that the hedge located along the north boundary of Manor Field was not causing any difficulties for its players.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted, (2) costings for a new concrete base for the cricket net be obtained and (3) the Cricket Club be asked to provide further details on the design of the sign to be provided by BUPA Care Homes.

8. Cricket at Longfield Hill

There was no report from Meopham Cricket Club.

9. Financial Report

The Committee examined a financial report setting out the net financial position of the allotments, open spaces and the Pavilion as at 9th May 2006.

RESOLVED: That, the financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and the Pavilion as at 9th May 2006, attached as appendix 2 to these minutes, be received and noted.

10. Playgrounds

(a) The Committee considered a report on action taken by the Council in respect of the playground safety inspection undertaken by RoSPA on 13th February 2006.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) The Committee considered a number of matters relating to the faults identified by RoSPA in their playground safety inspection report of 13th February 2006 as set out below:

(i) It was reported that three quotations had been invited in respect of the repairs to the hard standing surrounding the base of the kissing gate located at the north end of the recreation ground at Woodland Avenue and noted that RoSPA in its report of the 13th February 2006 had identified this fault as being a medium risk. Two of the three contractors requested to submit a quotation had declined the Council's invitation.

The Committee was concerned that due to the level of risk identified by RoSPA the Council was under some obligation from its insurers to take appropriate action and noted that the Council's financial regulation 11.1 (j) permitted the Council to make whatever provision it deemed necessary for the procurement of goods, works or

service if following the quotation process an insufficient number of quotations were received. The Committee examined the quotation for the sum of £650 from Direct Services and noted that Direct Services was unable to give any assurances that the concrete would not be damaged or defaced after its operatives had left site.

RECOMMENDED: That, the quotation dated 7th April 2006 for the sum of £650 plus VAT from Direct Service to form a new ramp below the kissing gate located at the north end of Woodland Avenue recreation ground be accepted.

(ii) It was reported that the Public Rights of Way Officer had inspected the site and advised that there would not be sufficient space to install a road side barrier in front of the pedestrian gate on SD 216, as recommended by RoSPA in its report dated 13th February 2006. The Public Rights of Way Officer had suggested the gate could be fitted with a latch and self closing mechanism to prevent children running through the gate and directly onto the highway, and that a “keep closed” sign could be fitted to the gate.

RESOLVED: That, the advice of the Public Rights of Way Officer be accepted and a quotation based on the advice received from the Public Rights of Way Officer be sought.

(iii) The Committee considered a quotation for the supply and delivery of a warning sign.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation dated 31st March 2006 for the sum of £46.60, plus £6.95 carriage, plus VAT from Stock Signs for the supply and delivery of a sign, “Do not climb on the equipment or hang on the ring” be accepted.

(c) The Committee considered a report on the future arrangements for the inspection of the Council’s playgrounds and noted that the proposed new inspector, Ms Maria Cook, from Craigdene Ltd was a RP II registered inspector and a Member of the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Council’s insurers be informed of the qualifications held by the proposed new playground inspector and asked whether it would be acceptable for the Council to accept the services of Ms M Cook of Craigdene Ltd in respect of the safety inspection of the Council’s three playgrounds and,

(2) subject to the insurers’ acceptance of (1) above, an order be placed with Ms M Cook of Craigdene Ltd to undertake an inspection of the Council’s three playgrounds in February 2007.

11. Manor Field

(a) It was reported that the quotation in respect of the fixing two benches currently stored in the Calor Gas compound was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) It was reported that the quotation to extend the stock fencing around the beech hedge at Manor Field to prevent unauthorised access of vehicles onto the field was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(c) The Committee considered a letter dated 8th March 2006 from Messrs H F & J H Glover confirming they had no objections to the Council making arrangements for the bramble to be cleared along the western boundary of Manor Field.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation to clear the bramble along the western boundary of Manor Field be sought.

(d) It was reported that the Clerk had renewed the two annual maintenance agreements with Kent County Council in respect of (i) the inspection and testing of portable electrical appliances in the Pavilion and the Parish Office for the sum of £1.65 per test excluding VAT (£40.00 minimum charge) and (ii) the fire extinguisher maintenance contract for the Pavilion at a cost of £4.50 per portable fire extinguisher.

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

(e) The Committee considered a letter dated 28th April 2006 from Messrs H F & J H Glover in respect of the Arthritis Research Campaign's application for a temporary events notice at Manor Field on 18th June 2006 for their charity jazz afternoon and the Clerk's response in a letter dated 4th May 2006. It was reported that a response from Messrs H F & J H Glover as to whether they had any objections to the provision of a Pimms and Chardonnay stall was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the correspondence be noted.

(f) The Committee considered a suggestion that the hedge located on the northern boundary of Manor Field would benefit from being cut and that all hedges around Manor Field would benefit from a phased programme of hedge pruning.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation be sought to cut the hedge along the north boundary of Manor Field.

12. Pavilion

(a) The Committee considered a quotation for the sum of £50 to wash down the walls in the main hall and the corridor.

RESOLVED: That, a quotation for the sum of £50 from Mr D Cunningham to wash down the walls in the main hall and the corridor be accepted.

(b) The Committee considered a quotation for the sum of £194 to supply and fit new water assembler on the combination boiler. The joint in the pipe was repaired recently, but was leaking again and the plumber advised that the fault can only be rectified by replacing the water assembler.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £194 from SE Plumbers to supply and install a new water heater assembler to the combination boiler in the kitchen be accepted.

(c) The Committee expressed its concern over the increase in the amount of graffiti on the Pavilion and the storage container located behind the Pavilion and considered what measures could be taken to reduce the incidence of graffiti and its removal. The Committee noted that the Police and the Community Warden had been informed of the problem.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the Police and the Community Warden be asked what action had been taken since the problem had been reported to them and, (2) the graffiti team from Sevenoaks District Council be asked to attend site again to remove the graffiti.

13. Rectory Meadow

(a) The Committee considered an e mail dated 12th April 2006 from English Nature advising of funding opportunities for Local Nature Reserves.

RESOLVED: That, the e mail be noted and further enquiries be made to establish what funding opportunities are available for the Local Nature Reserve at Rectory Meadow.

(b) The Committee considered a number of matters relating to the application for payments on Rectory Meadow through the Rural Payments Agency

(i) The Committee noted that the Clerk had completed the application form in respect of the payment for the 2006 single payment scheme through the Rural

Payments Agency and that the aforementioned application was returned before the deadline of 15th May 2006.

RECOMMENDED: That, the Clerk's actions be confirmed

(ii) The Committee considered a letter dated 21st April 2006 from the Acting Chief Executive of the Rural Payments Agency advising of the Agency's intention to make substantial partial payments under the 2005 Single Payment Scheme its highest priority and that the Agency hoped to ensure all eligible applicants received a full or partial payment by the end of June.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted.

(iii) It was reported that the Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee planned to visit English Nature at Wye College on 24th May 2006 to discuss the possible submission of an application for funding on Northfield through the Higher Level Stewardship scheme. The Chairman explained that he hoped to make some enquires about whether Rectory Meadow would be eligible under the scheme and would report back his findings to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(c) The Committee considered a letter dated 21st April 2006 from the Kent Wildlife Trust explaining that Rectory Meadow had been identified as a Local Wildlife Site.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted. (Annexed)

(d) The Committee examined a proof of the interpretative sign and the information leaflet and considered a number of comments on both the sign and the leaflet put forward by the North West Kent Countryside Project. The Committee agreed with many of the comments put forward by the Project and suggested a number of improvements to the design of sign and leaflet.

RESOLVED: That, a meeting be arranged with the North West Kent Countryside Project to explain the points raised by the Committee to improve the interpretative sign and the information leaflet and that Cllrs Barnett, Mrs Oxtoby and Mrs Solman be invited to attend the meeting.

(e) The Committee considered arrangements for the opening of Rectory Meadow Local Nature Reserve on 16th June 2006 at 11.00 a.m. and noted that Mr S Hanna from English Nature and Ms G Winters from North West Kent Countryside Project had confirmed they would be able to attend. A response was still awaited from the Rail Link Countryside Initiative and an invitation had been extended to the press. The Committee also favoured extending the invitations to include residents, and more specifically to the volunteers who had previously worked on the meadow and others who had in the past assisted with the restoration of the meadow, such as Mr C Tristram and Ms V Tofte (both ex employees from the North West Kent Countryside Project) and ex councillor Mr Gronow. The Committee suggested that a glass of wine or a soft drink could be offered to all attending the opening.

RECOMMENDED: That, invitations to the opening of the Rectory Meadow Local Nature Reserve be extended to residents and to others who had worked closely in the past on the restoration of the Meadow and that in accordance with powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 light refreshments be provided at the opening.

(f) The Committee noted that the contractor employed by the Council to cut the grass on Rectory Meadow last year was not available to undertake the work this year. It was reported that the grass cutting regime employed required the grass to be removed from the Meadow and that as a result it was proving extremely difficult to find contractors with the appropriate machinery to undertake this work. Nevertheless two quotations had been invited in respect of the grass cutting for 2006 from Mr N Simms and Mr G Hawkins. Mr Simms had declined the Council's invitation to submit a quotation as he did not have the necessary machinery to remove the grass from the Meadow. The Committee considered a verbal quotation from Mr Hawkins.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £300 per cut from Mr G Hawkins to cut the grass at Rectory Meadow be accepted and that arrangements be made for the grass to be cut at the end of May, July and September 2006.

14. Allotments

The Committee considered a letter dated 12th April 2006 from Mid Kent Water confirming the ban on the use of hosepipes did not currently extend to allotments.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted.

15. Pond

The Committee considered a letter dated 18th April 2006 and subsequent e mail dated 24th April 2006 from a company known as Blackwood Bayne which offered consultancy services in nature conservation, countryside management, access to the countryside, landscape, community work and grant making. The Committee was particularly interested in the advice that may be available in respect of the management of ponds.

RESOLVED: That the correspondence be noted and a meeting be arranged with Ms S Bayne of Blackwood Bayne.

16. Foxborough Wood

The Committee considered a letter dated 23rd April 2006 from a local resident expressing concern about the safety of tree he believes to be located on land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood. It was reported that the tree was protected by a TPO and advice had been sought from the Tree Officer at Sevenoaks District Council.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted and the advice from the Tree Officer at Sevenoaks District Council be awaited.

17. Public Rights of Way

The Committee considered information from the Open Spaces Society informing that on 1st January 2026 the definitive map of public rights of way would be closed to claims for footpaths and bridleways which existed before 1949, but had not been recorded.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the information provided by the Open Spaces Society be noted and (2) advice be sought from the Council's footpath representative.

18. Date of next meeting

Monday 24th July 2006 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Amenities and Open Spaces Committee
Terms of Reference**

1. To manage the operation of the Manor Field, Pavilion and all open spaces, playing fields, recreation grounds, play grounds, village pond and lay-by and such land at Hartley Wood that the Council has taken care and control of, with the exception of the open space known as Northfield. Such operation shall include making recommendations to the Council on scales of hiring charges for the use of facilities together with conditions of hire.
2. To arrange for the maintenance of the Pavilion.
3. To review and monitor the grass cutting contracts together with the maintenance of all open spaces and to ensure that they are in safe condition for their use by the public.
4. To undertake and monitor health and safety inspections of all playground equipment.
5. To prepare an annual budget for review by the Council's Finance Committee in November of each year and to monitor expenditure against the annual budget approved by the Council.
6. To keep under review opportunities to secure funding support from external sources.
7. To be responsible for dealing with all matters relating to public rights of way to ensure the general upkeep of footpaths within the Parish, making recommendation to Council where necessary.

Delegated Powers

1. To authorise expenditure on those matters which fall within the responsibility of the Committee up to the sums contained in the annual budget approved by the Council, provided that any new schemes shall be subject to prior approval in principle by the Council.
2. To respond, on behalf of the Council, to orders for the diversion, stopping-up, extinguishment or creation of a public path.

Approved by the Council on 8th May 2006

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		575.00	200.69	74.31
6 Open Spaces	2,375.00		24,825.00	8,079.20	14,370.80
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,000.00	210.00	6,375.00	916.71	4,668.29
NET TOTAL	3,675.00	210.00	31,775.00	9,196.60	19,113.40
Total for ALL Cost Centres		210.00		9,196.60	
V.A.T.		0.00		1,342.20	
GROSS TOTAL		210.00		10,538.80	

