

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 13th MARCH 2007 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs Oxtoby
Cllr Mrs M Solman
Cllr Mr A Tremain

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 Cllrs Mr J Gaywood, Mr M Harris, Mr V Sewell and Mr C Ward. The Committee was advised that Mr V John hoped to attend the meeting, but due to work commitments was likely to be late.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mr A Tremain declared a personal interest under minute item 10, Gorse Wood, in respect of the quotations received for the quantified risk assessment, as his private residence was located adjacent to the woods.

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 14 (a) and 14 (b), Hartley Wood, as her private residence was located adjacent to the woods and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the items.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 6th February 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record and,

(2) the minutes of the special meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 28th February 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Football at Manor Field

There was no report from Hartley De Sales FC.

The Committee felt that the ground may require an additional grass cut before the start of the grass cutting contract.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, to make arrangements for the grass at Manor Field to be cut before the start of the grass cutting contract, if deemed necessary.

5. Cricket at Manor Field

RESOLVED: That, consideration of a report from the New Ash Green and Hartley Cricket Club be deferred pending the arrival of Mr V John. (Refer to minute item 9).

The Committee considered the means by which to dispose of the damaged panels from the cricket sight screens and the redundant junior football posts currently stored in the storage container. The Committee felt that the sight screens and football posts could be dismantled and removed by a scrap metal merchant.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be asked to make enquiries about the disposal of the sight screen panels and football posts.

6. Financial Report

The Committee examined a financial report setting out the net financial position of the allotments, open spaces and the Pavilion as at 6th March 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and the Pavilion as at 6th March 2007, attached as appendix 1 to these minutes, be received and noted.

7. Playground inspections

(a) Chantry Avenue roundabout repairs

The quarterly operational report dated 9th January 2007 stated that there was slow movement to the roundabout and recommended the following works: lubricate or adjust the mechanism. It was reported that Mr Munday was unable to undertake the works. The Committee considered two quotations, as set out below:

(1) Safeplay for the sum of £360.00 plus VAT to remove the top fixings and bearing with housing, remove unit platform and store securely, clean lower bearing, friction restrictor and under platform area, assemble all and lubricate as required, replace platform and test.

(2) RSS Playmakers for the sum of £813.34 plus VAT to strip down, supply and fit new speed damper bearing kit, re-assemble item on completion.

The Committee noted that Safeplay had offered to reduce the cost of the works to repair the gate at Longfield Hill by £90.00, if the works to the roundabout were undertaken in conjunction with the repairs to the gate (refer to minute item 7 (c)). In view of the discount being offered by Safeplay, it was considered expedient to accept the quotation from Safeplay for repairs to the roundabout and for these works to be undertaken in conjunction with repairs to the gate at Longfield Hill.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £360.00 plus VAT to remove the top fixings and bearing with housing, remove unit platform and store securely, clean lower bearing, friction restrictor and under platform area, assemble all and lubricate as required, replace platform and test be accepted.

(b) Ball Wall @ Woodland Avenue recreation ground – safety surface

It was reported that one quotation had been received and that one further quotation was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(c) Gate repairs @ Longfield Hill recreation ground

The Committee considered a quotation from Safeplay for the sum of £276.00 plus VAT to remove spring covers and pillar spring, replace spring as required, re-tap spring fixing as necessary, refit and test. It had been reported under minute item 7(a) that Safeplay would be able to undertake the aforementioned repairs to the gate for the sum of £186.00 plus VAT if undertaken in conjunction with the repairs to the roundabout at Chantry Avenue.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £186.00 plus VAT from Safeplay to remove spring covers and pillar spring, replace spring as required, re-tap spring fixing as necessary, refit and test be accepted.

(d) Gate repairs @ Chantry Avenue

The quarterly operational report dated 9th January 2007 stated that the weld mesh had become detached from the gate frame at the bottom. The Committee considered a quotation for the sum of £80.00 plus VAT from ASAP to spot weld the mesh to the frame, but the contractor had advised this would not provide a permanent repair and recommended a new mesh panel with new kick plate be fitted to the gate at a cost of £190.00 plus VAT.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £190.00 plus VAT from ASAP to supply and fit a new mesh panel with kick plate be accepted.

(e) Training

It was reported that the Clerk had attended a one day training course at a cost of £85.00 plus VAT provided by Craigdene Ltd on the management of playgrounds and the procurement of new playground equipment.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's attendance on 12th March 2007 on a playground management training course provided by Craigdene Ltd be authorised.

8. **Woodland Avenue**

The Committee considered a report from the Youth and Community Worker West Kent Xtra that Charlton AFC would like to use the recreation ground at Woodland Avenue from May and August to deliver a football skills course to young people. Charlton AFC would require the use of the ground one evening per week for approximately 1½ hours and would be free to the young people attending the course. The Committee considered how the course could be advertised locally and suggested an item be included in the Council's next newsletter and a press release distributed to the local press.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the recreation ground be made available for Charlton AFC to deliver a football skills course to young people and, (2) the Youth Worker be informed of the course.

9. **Cricket at Manor Field continued**

Mr V John arrived at the meeting at 8.02 .p.m.

Mr Vaughan reported that the damaged cricket sight screen panels had been removed and temporarily stored behind the Pavilion. Mr Vaughan informed the Committee that the Cricket Club may wish to relocate two sight screens currently accommodated on the sports field in New Ash Green and asked whether the Committee had any objection to these screens being transported to Manor Field. Mr Vaughan agreed that, in future, arrangements would be made for the sight screens to be chained together and stored behind the Pavilion during the closed season.

Mr Vaughan reported that a dip in the ground had appeared in the goal mouth area of the football pitch located next to the Pavilion and asked whether repairs could be carried out.

Mr Vaughan enquired whether the Committee had reached any decision on the level of fees to be charged to the Cricket Club for the 2007. Mr Vaughan had no objection to the suggestion that the fees could be held for two years.

Mr Vaughan reported that the Cricket Club was investigating the possibility of providing a portable practice net, which could be stored behind the Pavilion during the cricket season when not in use, and dismantled and stored in the container throughout the winter.

Mr Vaughan enquired whether the outfield would be rolled before the start of the cricket season.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Clerk be authorised to make arrangements for the outfield to be rolled between the end of the football season and the start of the cricket season, provided the work could be undertaken in line with last year's costs plus 10%,

(2) arrangements be made with Mr Munday to level off the dip in the outfield using topsoil from the spoil heap located behind the Pavilion and seeded,

(3) no objection be raised to the relocation of two cricket sight screens from New Ash Green to Manor Field

(4) no objection be raised to the provision of a portable practice net on the cricket square, provided the Cricket Club ensured the practice net could be securely stored behind the Pavilion when not in use during the playing season and stored in the container during the winter,

(5) consideration of fees for the 2007 season be included on the next agenda.

Mr Vaughan left the meeting at 8.20 p.m.

10. Gorse Wood

The Committee examined two quotations to undertake a quantified tree risk assessment on land owned by the Council in Gorse Wood, as set out below:

(1) Quaife Woodlands for the fixed fee quotation of £650 plus VAT

(2) Specialist Tree Services for the fixed fee quotation of £1,200 plus VAT

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the fixed fee of £650 plus VAT from Quaife Woodlands to undertake and provide a report on a quantified tree risk assessment on land owned by the Parish Council in Gorse Wood be accepted.

11. Rectory Meadow

(a) It was reported that one quotation had been received in respect of cutting the grass on Rectory Meadow and that one quotation was still awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) It was reported that motorbikes had been active in the woodland on Rectory Meadow and it was suspected that they had gained entry through the kissing gate on the public right of way behind 32 Bancks side.

12. Pavilion

It was reported that the Council had received a number of enquiries about hiring the Pavilion on a regular basis from Manor Artists and two local yoga instructors, as detailed below. The Committee noted that, in the past, regular hirers of the Pavilion had been offered a discount on the hourly hire rate and considered whether this arrangement should be extended to the new regular hirers.

The Manor Artists, every two weeks, commencing on Tuesday 13th March 2007, initially for 6 sessions. The Manor Artists intend to hire the Pavilion on a regular basis, once every two weeks after the Group has returned from a trip.

Yoga instructor, once a week, commencing Wednesday 2nd May 2007

Yoga instructor, once a week, commencing Thursday 26th April 2007.

RECOMMENDED: That, the Manor Artists and the two yoga instructors be offered a £1 discount on the hourly rate for the hire of the Pavilion, reducing the hourly rate from the standard charge of £7.50 per hour to £6.50 per hour.

13. Pond

The Committee noted that the recommendation contained in the minutes of the special meeting of the Amenities and Open Space Committee held on 28th February 2007, (page

2, minute item 3) had been amended by Council resolution at a meeting held on 12th March 2007, requiring the Council to contact Kent Highway Services to confirm whether drainage could be provided to the highway if the proposals to create a marshland were implemented.

The Committee considered that phase 1 of the project, which included clearing out the pond of deadwood and rubbish, clearing the surrounding banks of bramble and cutting back any overhanging branches could be carried without any effect on the surface water drainage from the highway, but considered phase 2 of the project, which included works to create the marshland and introduce new planting, could not be implemented until the views on the Council's proposals had been obtained from Kent Highway Services. The Committee felt that phase 1 of the project could be undertaken at no cost to the Council, as the Community Warden had confirmed that the Response Team would be providing its own tools and any green waste could be transferred to the spoil heap in the Burial Ground for future burning.

The Committee agreed that any material or deadwood removed from the pond should be temporarily stacked at the edge of the pond for a few days to allow any wildlife present to return to the pond and thereafter transferred to spoil heap in the Burial Ground.

It was reported that a male and a female duck had recently appeared on the pond and in view of their presence, the Community Wardens would be requested to take care when undertaking the clearance work to ensure no disturbance took place to any nest that could be present.

RESOLVED: That, the Community Warden be invited to attend the next meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee.

14. Hartley Wood

(a) Motorbikes

The Committee considered a letter dated 18th February 2007 from a resident in respect of motorbike activity in Hartley Wood and the Clerk's response in a letter dated 19th February 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the correspondence be noted and, when known, the resident be updated on the progress on the installation of the kissing gate to the north of the subway.

(b) Possessory title application

The Committee considered a letter dated 12th February 2007 from the Martin Tolhurst Partnership enclosing a letter dated 7th February 2007 from the Land Registry.

RESOLVED: That, the views of the Open Spaces Society be sought on the Land Registry's decision to reject the Council's possessory title application on land in Hartley Wood where there was no known owner.

15. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 24th April 2007 at 7.30 p.m. in Hartley Library

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed:..... Date:.....
Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

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	389.97	575.00	450.46	214.51
6 Open Spaces	2,375.00	9,420.60	24,825.00	28,806.14	3,064.46
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,000.00	1,211.25	6,375.00	5,572.49	1,013.76
NET TOTAL	3,675.00	11,021.82	31,775.00	34,829.09	4,292.73

