

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 22nd JUNE 2007 AT 9.30 a.m.
AT THE PARISH ROOM, ALL SAINTS CHURCH CENTRE, ASH ROAD**

Present : Cllr Mr C Alford
Cllr Mr A Barnett
Cllr Mr J Gaywood (Chairman)
Cllr Mr M Harris
Cllr Mr B Ramsay
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby (*arrived at the meeting at 9.34 a.m.*)

In attendance : Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
2 members of the public

Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mr L Abraham.

1. Election of Chairman of the Special Projects Committee

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr J Gaywood be elected Chairman of the Special Projects Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2008.

2. Election of Vice Chairman of the Special Projects Committee

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr M Harris be elected Vice Chairman of the Special Projects Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2008.

3. Declarations of Interest

After her arrival at the meeting, Cllr Mrs Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute item 7, Hartley Wood, in respect of matters relating to the Council's village green application on land owned by Southwark Council in Hartley Wood. During the ensuing debate, discussions extended to include land in Hartley Wood owned by the proprietor of Gorsewood Farm, at which point Cllr Mrs Oxtoby declared a personal and prejudicial interest, as the proprietor of Gorsewood Farm was her next door neighbour, and withdrew from meeting during discussion and voting on the matter.

Cllr Mr B Ramsay declared a personal interest under minute item 6, Hoselands Green, as he was the portfolio holder at Sevenoaks District Council responsible for Value for Money.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Special Projects Committee held on 3rd April 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby arrived at the meeting at 9.34 a.m.

5. Terms of Reference

The Committee examined the terms of reference and delegated powers approved by the Council at its Annual meeting held on 14th May 2007 and was satisfied that they required no further amendment.

RESOLVED: That, the terms of reference and delegated powers approved by the Council at its Annual meeting held on 14th May 2007 be noted.

6. Hoselands Green

The Committee considered a letter dated 16th May 2007 from the Professional Services Manager at Sevenoaks District Council setting out the terms and conditions attached to the transfer of land at Hoselands Green to the Parish Council.

The Committee noted that the land to be transferred from the District Council did not include areas of land on the corners of Hoselands Green at the junctions of Wellfield and Larksfield with Ash Road and presumed that these areas of greenland were owned by Kent County Council as part of the highway.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the terms and conditions, as set out in a letter dated 16th May 2007 from the Professional Services Manager in respect of the transfer of land at Hoselands Green from Sevenoaks District Council to Hartley Parish Council, be accepted,

(2) the Parish Council accept the District Council's offer to undertake the legal work necessary on behalf of the Parish Council at nil cost, subject to the District Council being reimbursed in respect of any disbursements incurred, such as the land search and the Land Registry fee and,

(3) clarification be sought from Kent County Council as to whether it owns the land located on the corners of Hoselands Green at the junctions of Wellfield and Larksfield with Ash Road and if so, confirmation be obtained as to whether Kent County Council would have any objection to land within its ownership being maintained by the Parish Council.

7. Hartley Wood

The Committee considered a report on the progress of the Parish Council's application seeking village green status on the area of land owned by Southwark Council in Hartley Wood and was pleased to note that Kent County Council was prepared to amend the detail of the Parish Council's application, omitting the area of land to the south of the landfill site.

The Committee noted that Southwark Council had been informed of the Parish Council's intention to resurrect the village green application, but that no response had been received.

The Committee considered a letter dated 8th May 2007 from Kent County Council requesting additional information on the application in relation to the extent and condition of fencing, and seeking clarification on why the Parish Council had not included land to the west of the public right of way, SD215, within its application. The Committee felt that the extent of land included within the village green application should not be extended to include other areas of land in Hartley Wood other than that part of the woodland owned by Southwark Council, as the land in question was in various ownerships and some of the owners could not be traced. Furthermore, the Committee noted that part of woodland was already owned by the Parish Council, some of which had been donated to the Council and other areas formed part of a possessory title claim lodged by the Parish Council with the Land Registry and therefore there was no threat to public access. However, the Committee considered that the Parish Council should give further consideration to this matter once the village green application for the land owned by Southwark Council in Hartley Wood had been resolved.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the report on the progress of the Parish Council's village green application be received and noted and,

(2) a response be sent to a letter dated 8th May 2007 from Kent County Council detailing the extent and condition of any fencing surrounding land owned by Southwark Council in Hartley Wood and that Kent County Council be informed that the Parish Council did not wish to extend the village green application to include land to the west of the public right of way, SD 215, for the reasons set out above, but that the matter would be reviewed once the current application had been resolved.

8. United Reformed Church

The Committee considered a report on a meeting with the members of the United Reformed Church held on 25th April 2007 and noted that no progress had been made since the last meeting with members of the United Reformed Church held on 6th July 2006, but the Trust Secretary would continue to keep the Parish Council informed of any developments.

RESOLVED: That, the report be received and noted.

9. Cherry Trees

The Committee noted that the Community Warden had visited the site to investigate the reports of vehicles parked on the pavement and noted that he had no powers to take any further action.

The Committee noted that the Highways Committee was investigating the possibility of the removal of the road traffic island located in front of the shops to improve parking and that a scheme was being prepared for comment by Kent Highways Services. The Committee noted that Kent Highway Services had commented it would not be able to fund the aforementioned works.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the report be noted and,

(2) further discussions and investigations on the matter be referred to the Highways Committee.

10. Gorse Wood

(a) The Committee noted that Keith Mandy had left the employment of West Kent Housing Association and that enquiries were being made to ascertain who had taken over responsibility for his project work.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) The Committee received a report on a meeting held with the developer of the site at Down Ampney off Gorsewood Road on 25th April 2007, at which the developer had been informed that the Parish Council had no desire to prevent vehicular access to the development site, but that it merely wished to secure pedestrian access for residents to access the facilities in Longfield, particularly those requiring access to Lanagfel Primary School. Kent County Council had been informed of the outcome of the meeting and asked to proceed with its investigations in respect of the claimed footpath from Caxton Close to Gorsewood Road.

Additionally, Kent County Council had informed the developer that under normal circumstances vehicles could not be driven on public footpaths, but in this situation private vehicular access would be permitted, although the surface would only be maintained by the County Council to a standard suitable for walkers and not vehicles.

Since the meeting with the developer at Down Ampney, the Council had received notification on 6th June 2007 that its application to designate the footpath through Gorse Wood from Caxton Close to Gorsewood Road as a public right of way had been accepted.

RESOLVED: That, the reports be noted.

11. Community Warden

The Committee considered a letter dated 10th May 2007 from the Head of Operations for Community Wardens at Kent County Council in response to the Parish Council's request that consideration be given to amending the job specification of the Community Wardens, so that liaison be maintained with parish councils on a regular and structured basis.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the letter be noted and,

(2) the Head of Operations be informed that the Parish Council was very satisfied with the work undertaken by Adam Osborn and that a request be made for his services to be retained within the parish of Hartley .

12. Exclusion of the press and public

RESOLVED: That, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of minute item 13, “New Burial Ground”, on the grounds that the likely disclosure of exempt information would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

13. New Burial Ground

The Committee was informed that a letter dated 4th April 2007 had been sent to the landowners of the two 20 foot wide strips of land bordering Manor Field, enquiring whether they would have any objection to the use of the land at Manor Field for the provision of a new Burial Ground and to the use of the entrance at Manor Field for access to the new Burial Ground. The landowner had responded on two occasion seeking additional information, which had been duly provided.

The landowners were informed that the Committee intended to consider the matter at the meeting of the Special Projects Committee to be held on 22nd June 2007 and were asked to respond to the Council’s original letter of the 4th April before that meeting. The Committee was informed that the landowner had not responded. The Committee expressed its disappointment over the lack of response.

RECOMMENDED: That, the Parish Council approve, in principle, the submission of an application to the Lands Tribunal to either discharge or modify the restrictive covenants on the land at Manor Field in order to allow the Parish Council to proceed with its plans for the provision of a new Burial Ground on land known as the “Orchard” at Manor Field.

14. Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 18th July 2007 at 9.30 a.m. at Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 10.45 a.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

