

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 18th JULY 2007 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mr S Granger (*arrived at 7.42 p.m.*)
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr Mr V Sewell

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mrs P Cole, Cllr Mr J Gaywood, Cllr Mr M Harris, Mr T Wade (Meopham CC) and Mr V John (New Ash Green and Hartley CC).

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal under minute item 8 Hartley Wood, as her private residence was located in Gorsewood Road which bordered Hartley Wood. She considered her interest only to be personal as the discussions under minute item 8 (a) to (d) inclusive did not refer to any land immediately adjoining her property.

After his arrival at the meeting, Cllr Mr S Granger declared a personal interest under minute item 4, Cricket at Manor Field as he had attended net practice.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 5th June 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Cllr Mr S Granger arrived at the meeting at 7.42 p.m.

4. Cricket at Manor Field

It was reported that a site meeting had taken place with Cllrs Barnett, Granger and Sewell and representatives from New Ash Green and Hartley CC on 21st June 2007 to discuss the siting of a practice net. It was reported that the most appropriate site for the location of a practice net would be on the edge of the outfield, in line with the cricket square and next to the proposed new Burial Ground. The Committee felt that the Cricket Club should seek advice from the Planning Authority to confirm whether the new structure would require the benefit of planning permission. Furthermore the Committee considered the Cricket Club should make an application to the County Councillor as soon as possible in order to seek funding for the supply and installation of the practice net through the County Member Community Scheme.

RECOMMENDED: That, the siting of the proposed practice net at Manor Field be approved, as set out above, subject to any necessary consents.

5. Cricket at Longfield Hill

The Committee examined a breakdown of the estimated cost to provide a new electrical supply to the container at Longfield Hill. The Committee noted that the cost of the new housing for the new electrical head, including ducting, would be in the region of £1,340 and the cost of providing the new electrical supply would be £486.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

6. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 12th July 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the financial report, attached as appendix 1 to these minutes, be noted.

7. Pond

The Committee considered a letter dated 12th July 2007 from a local resident in response to the Council's letters of 9th July 2007 and 12th June 2007. The resident had been informed of the Council's decision to accept, in principle, the offer made by the "Friends of the Pond" to refurbish the pond, but before committing any further support for the project the Council had requested further information including a detailed breakdown of the costs involved to facilitate the project, a programme of works and a detailed plan indicating the position of the paths, fences, plants and the extent of the wetland.

In his letter of 12th July the resident informed the Council that as the project was being funded by local residents, he felt there was no requirement to formulate a budget. Furthermore he considered that future funding needs were nebulous and explained that funds were fairly readily available to formalised community groups working on the environment.

The Committee noted a letter dated 18th June 2007 from the Land Registry advising that adverse possession covered a complex area of law and that in view of the technical nature of the claim, it recommended advice be sought from an independent legal advisor to discuss the legal aspects of the case. The Committee was informed that as a result of this advice, further guidance was being sought from the Martin Tolhurst Partnership, including the likely cost to the Council if it continued to pursue the claim.

The Committee noted that refurbishment works to the pond had continued, without any further liaison with the Parish Council.

The Committee wished it formally recorded that it was disappointed with the Council's decision to amend its recommendation contained in the minutes of the previous Committee meeting held on 5th June 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 12th July 2007 be noted and the findings of the investigations into the Council's possessory title claim be awaited.

8. Hartley Wood

(a) The Committee noted that the treework on land owned by Hartley Parish Council in Hartley Wood, which had been identified as requiring attention in a recent quantified risk assessment, had been completed on 15th June 2007. Three dead cherry trees located immediately adjacent to Pippins, Gorsewood Road had been brought to the Clerk's attention and in view of the condition of the trees and their close proximity to property, the Clerk, pursuant to Financial Regulation 3.3, had instructed the contractor to fell the tree dead trees to the ground at an additional cost of £ 425.53.

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

(b) It was reported that following the treework undertaken on land owned by Hartley Parish Council in Hartley Wood, the Council's insurers had confirmed in an e mail dated 5th July 2007 that the work undertaken was acceptable and that the wood was covered by the Public Liability section of the policy. All cover was subject to the standard Policy terms, conditions, exclusions and the Limit of Indemnity of £5,000,000.

The Committee noted that the Council's insurers had suggested the Parish Council erect a sign stating that it was only responsible for the maintenance of the woodland under its ownership.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the e mail dated 5th July 2007 from the Council's insurers confirming public liability cover extended to the area of woodland owned by the Council in Hartley Wood be noted,

(2) arrangements be made for the supply and installation of a notice to be erected at the entrance to Hartley Wood off Gorsewood Road, stating that the Council was only responsible for the maintenance of the woodland under its ownership and,

(3) the owners of other plots of land located in Hartley Wood, where known, be informed of the Council's action to undertake work to the trees under its ownership and advised that the Council was not responsible for the maintenance of any trees which were not located on land owned by the Council

(c) The Committee was reminded that at a meeting held on 11th June 2007 the Council had approved a recommendation relating to the provision of a motorbike inhibitor at the entrance to the Hartley Wood off Beechlands Close. Enquiries over the ownership of the land upon which the inhibitor was to be sited had confirmed that the owner was not the proprietor of Gorsewood Farm, but was owned by four individuals none of whom live locally.

RESOLVED: That, the owners of the land be contacted to enquire whether they would have any objection to the installation of a motorbike inhibitor at the entrance to Hartley Wood off Beechlands Close.

(d) The Committee noted that the quantified risk assessment on the land owned by the Parish Council in Hartley Wood had been undertaken in October 2006 and was only valid for one year.

RESOLVED: That, quotations be invited for a quantified risk assessment on the land owned by the Parish Council in Hartley Wood.

9. Gorse Wood

(a) It was reported that Kent County Council had confirmed in a letter dated 6th June 2007 that the footpath from Caxton Close to Gorsewood Road had been designated as a public right of way.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 6th June 2007 from Kent County Council confirming the footpath from Caxton Close to Gorsewood Road had been designated as a public right of way be noted.

(b) The Committee examined the arboricultural risk assessment at Gorse Wood undertaken by Quaife Woodland during June 2007.

RESOLVED: That, quotations be invited in respect of the work required to the trees in Gorse Wood, as recommended in the arboricultural risk assessment undertaken by Quaife Woodland in June 2007.

10. Pavilion

(a) The Committee considered three quotations received in respect of the external redecoration of the Pavilion, as set out below:

Kevin Abraham for the sum of £750 plus an additional sum of £200 for works to the cladding located at the rear of Pavilion which required stripping back to bare wood and re-staining. Total sum £950 (not registered for VAT)

Richard W Burns for the total sum of £1,200 (not registered for VAT). Mr Burns advised in a covering letter dated 11th July 2007 of his relationship to Cllr Mrs Burns.

Ashden Property Maintenance for the total sum of £2,300 (not registered for VAT).

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the total sum of £950 from Kevin Abraham to undertake the external redecoration of the Pavilion be accepted.

(b) The Committee considered a quotation to undertake works to the incoming gas supply, as recommended by Calor Force following a recent inspection of the pipework.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £220 from South Eastern Plumbers to remove the steel boxing around the gas emergency control valve and to supply and install control valve housing with lockable door, including correct labelling for valve and cross bonding to pipe be accepted.

11. Manor Field

The Committee considered quotations, as set out below, received in respect of the cutting of the hedge located along the northern boundary of Manor Field:

B Ballard for the sum of £350 plus VAT to cut top and one side of the hedge

J C Brooker for the sum of £430 plus VAT to cut top and side of hedge, including self sown trees and bushes. Hedge to be cut with tapered side on Manor Field face of hedge.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the satisfactory treatment of the arisings, the quotation from B Ballard for the sum of £350 plus VAT to cut the top and one side of the hedge located along the northern boundary of Manor Field be accepted.

12. Rectory Meadow

(a) It was reported that a quotation for the renovation of the noticeboard located on the entrance to Rectory Meadow next to Bramblefield Close was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) Pursuant to Financial Regulation 3.3. it was reported that the Clerk had made arrangements for damaged and hanging tree branches to be removed at a cost of £ 190.00. Furthermore it was reported that a local tree surgeon had advised of a dead beech tree located on the boundary of no 29 Bancksides and in view of the condition of the tree and the close proximity to private property, the Committee considered the arrangements should be made for the tree to be felled.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk's actions be confirmed for the removal of damaged and hanging tree branches and arrangements be made for felling the dead tree located on the boundary of no 29 Bancksides.

(c) The Committee considered the appointment of consultant to undertake a botanical study of Rectory Meadow and noted that it was a recommendation of the Stewardship Management Plan that a botanical study be undertaken five years after the implementation of the plan.

RESOLVED: That, investigations be undertaken to obtain the services of suitably qualified person/s to prepare a botanical study of Rectory Meadow.

(d) The Committee considered the purchase of a power scythe, which would enable Rectory Meadow to be cut in areas which were currently inaccessible with an ordinary grass cutter. The North West Kent Countryside Project had advised that the Council would be eligible to apply for a grant in the region of £4,000 from Awards for All, which would secure the purchase of a power scythe. The North West Kent Countryside Project had offered to store the power scythe and suggested that, in return, the Project could be allowed to use the scythe on other sites and also could charge the Parish Council a discounted rate for their time when cutting Rectory Meadow.

RESOLVED: That, further discussion be undertaken with the North West Kent Countryside Project to establish responsibilities for the maintenance, insurance and running costs involved if the Council was to pursue the purchase of a power scythe.

13. Longfield Hill

To consider quotations in respect of the supply and planting of new hedging at Longfield Hill. Quotations will be made available at the meeting.

14. Lay-by

The Committee considered a number of options to secure the earth bank at the rear of the layby.

RESOLVED: That, various options to secure the earth bank be investigated, including costings.

15. Date of next meeting

Thursday 20th September 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.15 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	0.00	575.00	239.50	35.50
6 Open Spaces	1,783.00	28.01	26,575.00	10,227.33	14,592.68
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,000.00	696.50	7,825.00	3,034.19	4,487.31
NET TOTAL	3,083.00	724.51	34,975.00	13,501.02	19,115.49
Total for ALL Cost Centres		53,522.41		41,307.35	
V.A.T.		960.25		2,018.42	
GROSS TOTAL		54,482.66		43,325.77	

