

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 20th SEPTEMBER 2007 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs P Cole
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr Mr V Sewell

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr D Graeme, Cllr Mr J Gaywood, Cllr Mr S Granger and Cllr Mr M Harris.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute item 10 (a), 10 (b) and 10 (c) in respect of Hartley Wood, as her private residence bordered Hartley Wood. She considered her interest only to be personal as the discussions under minute item 10 (a) to (c) inclusive did not refer to any land immediately adjacent to her property.

Cllr Mrs P Cole declared a personal interest under minute item 13 in respect of the Playgrounds, as her private residence was located opposite the Woodland Avenue recreation ground.

Cllr Mr A Barnett declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 16 in respect of the allotments rents for 2007/08 as he was an allotment holder and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the matter.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 18th July 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Cricket at Manor Field

Mr John reported on the 2007 season at Manor Field. He explained the club only had one more away fixture to play before the end of the season and that unfortunately the first team had been relegated. He was pleased to report that the end of season repairs to the square had been completed by the Hartley Country Club's groundsman.

Mr John asked whether it would be possible to alter the position of the proposed practice net to slightly nearer the Pavilion. It was explained that the Council would be installing a gate to provide an access to the new Burial Ground and that the practice net would need to be sited to avoid obstructing the new entrance. It was suggested that agreement to the final siting of the practice net be deferred until after the new hedge had been planted, as this would define the position of the entrance gate to the new Burial Ground. Mr John agreed to obtain costings for the new practice net and to make enquiries with the local Planning Authority to confirm whether the practice net would require the benefit of planning permission.

The Committee considered where the sight cricket screens should be stored over the winter and agreed that they should be moved to the north east of the Pavilion, to an area where the rollers had been stored in the past.

RECOMMENDED: That, the report be noted.

5. Cricket at Longfield Hill

Mr Wade reported on the 2007 season at Longfield Hill, which had been the most successful season for many years. He was delighted to report that Meopham CC had secured club mark accreditation from Lords and that furthermore the club had been invited, as one of ten clubs in Kent, to become a focus club due to its commitment to develop youth cricket. If the club was successful in securing this achievement, it would assist with any future applications to secure additional funding.

Mr Wade explained that the ground at Longfield Hill was extensively used by the club for senior fixtures on a Saturday and Sunday, by the U13's and U15's on Sundays, by the U17's on a Friday evening and for training on a Wednesday evening.

Mr Wade reported that a Development Sub Committee had been established to develop the ground at Longfield Hill still further and that its "wish list" included such projects as the provision of a Pavilion, extending the boundary beyond the existing hedge and into the farmer's field beyond and digging up and relaying the cricket square.

Mr Wade confirmed that the club had undertaken work on the playing surface of the square and that the club would like to provide an electricity supply to the container. The Committee was reminded of the estimated costs of £1,340 of providing a new brick structure to house the meter and service head. The provision of a new electrical supply would cost £486. The Committee advised Mr Wade to contact the local County Councillor to enquire whether any funds would be available through the Community Members Scheme.

RESOLVED: That, a sum be included in the draft budget for 2008/09 as a contribution to Meopham CC towards the cost of providing an electricity supply to the container.

6. Football at Manor Field

(a) It was reported that Hartley De Sales FC had confirmed that four teams would be using two pitches at Manor Field for the 2007/08 season. The first football fixtures at Manor Field took place on 16th September 2007. A quotation for the sum of £170.00 from Landscape Services to set out and mark 1 no full size football pitch and 1 no junior football had been accepted and the pitches had been marked out on 12th September.

It was reported that an additional pitch had also been marked out at Manor Field to provide training facilities and that Hartley De Sales had confirmed it would be willing to meet this cost. However it was explained that the training pitch had been incorrectly marked out and that the contractor would be returning to site to re-set out the pitch once the lines had faded. However in the meantime Hartley De Sales had taken down the football posts on the training pitch and laid them in the undergrowth at the side of the field. The Committee was informed that the Council would incur additional costs as Mr Munday had been required to store the posts back in the container until such time as he was able to reinstate the football posts. It was reported that the football post had now been re-erected and that the football club had been requested not to remove the football posts in the future

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) The Committee considered the fees to be charged for the use of pitches at Manor Field for the 2007/08 season.

RECOMMENDED: That, the fees for the use of the pitches at Manor Field for the 2007/08 season be approved as set out below:

£310 per team for the use of the full size pitch

£265 per team for the use of the junior pitch (in front of the Pavilion)

(c) The Committee received a report on a proposal for Charlton Scheme Solutions Ltd to use the facilities at Manor Field and the Pavilion to host their representative team fixtures. It was explained that Charlton organised fixtures for regional representative teams in Kent. These regional teams later went onto to play representative teams from other clubs such as Arsenal and West Ham.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and a formal request for the use of the facilities at Manor Field be awaited from Charlton Scheme Solutions Ltd.

7. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 14th September 2007.

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

8. Budget 2008/09

The Committee considered a draft budget for 2008/09 for the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee.

RESOLVED: That, the draft budget for 2008/09 for the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, attached as appendix 2 to these minutes, be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration.

9. Pond

The Committee considered a letter dated 24th July 2007 from the Martin Tolhurst Partnership setting out advice in respect of the proposed application for possessory title of the pond. In view of the fact that the solicitor considered the Council's chance of success with an application as being no better than 50%, the Committee felt it could not support the expenditure of between £500 and £750 for legal costs in submitting an application. The Committee noted that the Friends of the Pond appeared to be continuing with their work to improve the pond, as further building materials had been stored on Manor Field behind the pond and considered that any future works to the pond should be left to the Friends of the Pond.

RECOMMENDED: That, in view of the solicitor's opinion that there was only a 50% chance of success, no further action be taken to pursue an application for possessory title of the pond.

10. Hartley Wood

(a) At the last meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, it was resolved that the landowners of the plots of land in Hartley Wood, where known, be informed of the Council's actions to undertake work to the trees on land under the ownership of the Parish Council and that they be advised that the Parish Council was not responsible for the maintenance of any trees which were not located on land owned by the Council. It was reported that letters had been sent to all known owners and that one of the landowners had responded, confirming that she had taken legal advice and would not be taking out any public liability insurance to cover her liabilities.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) At the last meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, it was resolved that the owners of land in Hartley Wood held under title number K888102 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. It was reported that the landowners had

confirmed they would not be willing to allow a motorbike inhibitor to be installed in Hartley Wood, but would support the Parish if it wished to install a barrier on the edge of the highway to prevent public access into the woods.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted and no further action be taken.

(c) The Committee considered quotations, as set out below, in respect of the quantified risk assessment of trees on land owned by the Council in Hartley Wood.

Specialist Tree Services for the sum of £275.00 plus VAT

Quaife Woodlands for the sum of £450 plus VAT

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £275.00 plus VAT from Specialist Tree Services, to carry out a walkover survey of the areas of Hartley Wood in the management of Hartley Parish Council to update the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment survey carried out in October 2006, be accepted.

11. Pavilion

(a) It was reported that a test sample of "Graffitishield" had been applied to the timber cladding and the brickwork at the rear of the Pavilion and that graffiti sprayed onto the protective coating had been successfully wiped away. To enable the timber cladding and external doors to be protected against graffiti immediately after the external repaint, it was considered prudent to purchase a 2 litre quantity of "Graffitishield" and 1 litre quantity of "Graffiti wipe away" from Si Laboratories Ltd at a cost of £109.86 plus VAT and delivery.

The contractor appointed to undertake the external redecoration of the Pavilion has confirmed he would be willing to apply the anti-graffiti paint to the wall cladding and external doors at an additional cost of £75.00.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's actions to purchase anti graffiti products at a cost of £109.86 plus VAT and delivery were confirmed and the expenditure of £75 to cover the additional work to apply the anti graffiti product to the timber cladding and the external doors during the external redecoration contract be approved.

(b) It was reported that there had been a lack of hot water and poor water pressure in the showers of the changing rooms during August. South Eastern Plumbers were asked to inspect the "Anderson" water heater, which provides hot water to the showers in the changing rooms. The plumber reported that the water heater urgently required cleaning and in its current condition was unsafe to use. As a result the system was temporarily shut down for a period of approximately 10 days until the cleaning works could be carried out. The clean, including the replacement of a thermocouple valve, was completed on 28th August 2007 at a cost of £93.00.

The plumber advised that the water heater had effectively reached the end of its life and considered the system to be inefficient and likely to cause continuing maintenance problems. He suggested the Council may wish to consider replacing the water heater with a hot water cylinder fed from the boiler located in the boiler room. This boiler currently feeds the radiators in the changing rooms and corridor. The plumber has been asked to investigate the feasibility and cost of installing a new hot water cylinder and to report his findings to the Council. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the installation of a new boiler that would eliminate the need to test for legionella.

It was reported that a safety valve in the boiler located in the kitchen had recently become blocked and that it had been necessary to call out the plumber, once again, to effect the necessary emergency repairs. An invoice for the work was still awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and the Clerk's actions to make arrangements for emergency repairs to the "Anderson" water heated and the boiler located in the kitchen be confirmed.

(c) It was reported that two complaints had been received by local residents about the noise from the wedding reception held at the Pavilion on 24th August 2007. Furthermore the two fence posts located between the car park and the path leading to the Pavilion had been temporarily removed to improve access. Whilst the hirer accepted responsibility for removing the posts, she explained that the posts had not been securely fitted into the ground in the first place. However, she had suggested that the £25 deposit be retained by the Council and used to effect the necessary repairs to the fence posts.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the deposit cheque for £25 be retained and, (2) the refundable deposit held on bookings at the Pavilion be reviewed by the Committee at its next meeting.

(d) It was reported that the referees' changing room was currently used for the storage of redundant office furniture and other rubbish. The Committee considered there was no re sale value in the furniture. It was also reported that there were other items of rubbish stored in the Council's archive cupboard and possibly the container. The Committee noted that the folding chairs currently stored in the container could be stored in the archive cupboard, once it had been cleared.

RESOLVED: That, a 4 yard skip at a cost of £94.00 be hired to dispose of the rubbish and Mr Munday be asked to assist at an hourly rate of £12.00 per hour.

(e) It was reported that a Parent and Toddler Group was hiring the Pavilion on a regular weekly basis. The Committee was reminded that other regular hirers of the Pavilion received a discounted hourly rate, reducing the hourly charge from £7.50 to £6.50.

RECOMMENDED: That, the Bumblebee Parent and Toddler Group be offered a reduced hourly hire rate for the Pavilion of £6.50 per hour.

12. Manor Field

(a) The Committee noted that the recent clearance work undertaken at the pond by Community Wardens had exposed the electricity meter unit, which was now rather vulnerable and the Committee considered that on the grounds of safety, consideration should be given to the construction of a more secure unit. It was noted that meter unit was positioned on the 20 foot wide strip of land owned by Mess H F & J H Glover and that their consent to the works would be required.

RESOLVED: That, a specification of works be prepared and costings obtained for the provision of brick housing for the electricity meter.

(b) The Committee considered a quotation to undertake clearance works in advance of planting a hedge at Manor Field for the new Burial Ground, including the area to the side of the Pavilion.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £195.00 from T D Munday to undertake clearance works in advance of planting a hedge at Manor Field for the new Burial Ground, including the area to the side of the Pavilion, be accepted.

(c) It was reported that Mr Munday had previously quoted for works to spray the bramble along the western boundary of Manor Field and to clear away the dead bramble, and that this quotation had been accepted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(d) The Committee considered a quotation to clear the area inside the entrance to the field and behind the beech hedge to expose the area below.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £45 from T D Munday to clear the area inside the entrance to the field and behind the beech hedge to expose the area below be accepted.

13. Playgrounds

The Committee examined the Play Area Annual Inspection Report undertaken by Ms M Cook of Craigdene Ltd on 10th July 2007. The Committee was pleased with the layout of the report and felt that it was clearer to understand than that of previous reports undertaken by RoSPA. The Committee particularly welcomed the use of photographs to illustrate the content of the report. The Committee noted that there was one medium risk item, glass under the roundabout, which had been removed by Mr Munday during his regular weekly inspections of the playground. All other items had been marked as either low risk or low/medium risk.

It was reported that during the week of 10th September 2007 the frog rocker unit at Chantry Avenue recreation ground had been vandalised. The platform had been salvaged and was currently being stored at the Parish Office. The protruding coil had been cut down to ground level and the end taped up to make it safe.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Play Area Inspection Report of 10th July 2007 be noted and a quotation be sought to undertake minor repairs, as highlighted in the report and,

(2) comparative quotations be obtained (a) to repair and reinstate the frog rocker unit or (b) to remove the damaged spring and make good.

14. Rectory Meadow

(a) The Committee considered a quotation to renovate the noticeboard board at Rectory Meadow.

RESOLVED: That the quotation for the sum of £185.00 from Mr Glidewell to renovate the noticeboard, as set out on an illustration dated 14th August 2007, be accepted.

(b) The Committee considered improvements to the area next to no 32 Banckside, which had been cleared last year by the North West Kent Countryside Project. The Committee was informed that the trees had not regenerated as hoped and that it would be necessary to provide some new plants to form an area of woodland behind the post and rail fencing. It was reported that the resident of 32 Banckside had complained about this area which was overgrown with stinging nettles that were encroaching onto the footpath. She had also complained about the condition of the footpath. Kent Highway Services had conducted a land search on the footpath to establish ownership and confirmed that it was not their responsibility.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) an application be submitted for the supply of 25 free trees under the “free tree scheme” and a further 25 trees (minimum) be ordered through the free tree scheme for planting to form an area of woodland on Rectory Meadow next to no 32 Banckside,

(2) North West Kent Countryside Project be asked to clear this area on their first volunteer day scheduled in the autumn and to plant the free and purchased trees to form a new hedge and,

(3) Mr Munday be requested to cut back any stinging nettles encroaching onto the path.

15. Longfield Hill

The Committee considered quotations, as set out below, to plant new hedging plants at Longfield Hill to infill the gap from the main vehicular entrance to the play area.

Baylis Landscape Contractors for the sum of £750 plus VAT

Independent Woodland Management for the sum of £890 plus VAT

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £750.00 plus VAT from Baylis Landscape Contractors to plant 40 linear metres of new double staggered hedgerow using Blackthorn and Guelder Rose including mulch with landscape grade bark and tree shelters be accepted.

16. Allotments

The Committee considered the rent for the allotment plots for the year 2007/08. The Committee noted that 12 months notice had been given to allotment holders that rents would be increased in line with inflation.

RECOMMENDED: That, the rent for the allotment plots for 2007/08 be increased by 3%.

17. Countryside Access Improvement Plan

The Committee considered a letter dated 27th July 2007 from Kent County Council seeking comments on the Countryside Access Improvement Plan. It was noted that anyone wishing to make a comment should do so by 1st October 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted.

18. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 6th November 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.35 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	294.47	-19.47
6 Open Spaces	1,783.00	389.19	26,575.00	14,045.18	11,136.01
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,000.00	1,371.00	7,825.00	3,545.07	4,650.93
NET TOTAL	3,083.00	1,760.19	34,975.00	17,884.72	15,767.47
Total for ALL Cost Centres		56,662.65		58,805.00	
V.A.T.		960.25		2,571.53	
GROSS TOTAL		57,622.90		61,376.53	

Expenditure	Budget 2007/08	Spent so far (upto Aug 07) (Column C)	Projected expenditure to 31st March 2008 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2008/09	Notes
Allotments						
Maintenance	225.00	120.00	125.00	245.00	225.00	
Rent	200.00	100.00	100.00	200.00	200.00	
Water	150.00	19.50	100.00	119.50	150.00	
SUB TOTAL	575.00	239.50	325.00	564.50	575.00	
Open Spaces						
Grass cutting	4,250.00	1,110.00	3,090.00	4,200.00	5,100.00	Hoselands Green
Gang mowing	2,100.00	720.00	1,390.00	2,110.00	2,250.00	
General maintenance Routine maintenance contract	3,000.00 5,650.00	1,587.90 2,478.00	2,250.00 3,150.00	3,837.90 5,628.00	4,000.00 6,000.00	08/09 additional tree surveys and treework
Playground maintenance	2,000.00	1,013.50	500.00	1,513.50	2,000.00	
Playground inspection	475.00	150.00	450.00	600.00	600.00	
Rubbish clearance	1,000.00	-	500.00	500.00	1,000.00	
Dog bins	1,300.00	364.00	637.00	1,001.00	1,300.00	Based on 7 no bins
Rectory Meadow	1,500.00	25.00	1,865.00	1,890.00	2,000.00	
Hartley Wood	4,000.00	3,303.87	750.00	4,053.87	1,500.00	

Pond	-	215.00	-	215.00	-	
Layby	-	-	-	-	-	
Miscellaneous expenses	500.00	8.74	100.00	108.74	500.00	
Cricket	500.00	160.00	-	160.00	1,150.00	£900 grant to Meopham CC for elect supply
Football	300.00	41.32	-	41.32	250.00	
SUB TOTAL	26,575.00	11,177.33	14,682.00	25,859.33	27,650.00	

Expenditure	Budget 2007/08	Spent so far (upto Aug 07) (Column C)	Projected expenditure to 31st March 2008 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2008/09	Notes
Manor Field Pavilion						
Cesspool	750.00	235.00	480.00	715.00	750.00	
Calor gas	925.00	279.54	450.00	729.54	900.00	
Electricity	525.00	161.25	250.00	411.25	500.00	
Water	175.00	20.40	100.00	120.40	150.00	
Rates	700.00	551.25	-	551.25	700.00	
Cleaning	1,000.00	400.00	560.00	960.00	1,000.00	
Cleaning materials	100.00	-	50.00	50.00	100.00	
Maintenance	3,000.00	1,008.75	1,500.00	2,508.75	3,000.00	
Testing	400.00	380.00	315.00	695.00	1,100.00	5 year elect test due 2009
Miscellaneous	250.00	78.00	75.00	153.00	250.00	
SUB TOTAL	7,825.00	3,114.19	3,780.00	6,894.19	8,450.00	

Income	Budget 2007/08	Received so far (upto Aug 07) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2008 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2008/09	Notes
Allotments						
Rent	300.00	-	300.00	300.00	300.00	
SUB TOTAL	300.00	-	300.00	300.00	300.00	

Income	Budget 2007/08	Received so far (upto Aug 07) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2008 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2008/09	Notes
Open Spaces						
Rectory Meadow	8.00	28.01	8.00	36.01	50.00	
Cricket	1,275.00	300.00	1,020.00	1,320.00	1,320.00	£900 NAG & Hartley, £420 Meopham
Football	500.00	60.00	1,000.00	1,060.00	500.00	
SUB TOTAL		388.01			1,870.00	

	1,783.00	2,028.00	2,416.01		
Income	Budget 2007/08	Received so far (upto Aug 07) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2008 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2008/09
Manor Field Pavilion					
Lettings	1,000.00	1,170.25	750.00	1,920.25	1,500.00
SUB TOTAL	1,000.00	1,170.25	750.00	1,920.25	1,500.00