

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 6th NOVEMBER 2007 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs P Cole
Cllr Mr D Graeme
Cllr Mr S Granger
Cllr Mr M Harris
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr Mr V Sewell

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

1. Apologies for absence

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

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mr M Harris declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 8 (b) in respect of a request from Longfield and Hartley Scout Group to use Manor Field for their monthly paper collection, as he was closely associated with the Scout Group and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the matter.

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

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

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute item 14 in respect of Hartley Wood as her private residence was located adjacent to the woodland.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 20th September 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Football at Manor Field

There were no problems to report at Manor Field.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

5. Cricket at Manor Field

Mr John apologised for the late delivery of fees for the 2007 season.

Mr John reported that the New Ash Green & Hartley CC estimated the cost of installing a base for the provision of a practice net would be in the region of £1,300 - £1,400 plus VAT and that the County Councillor had been approached to support the project through the Members Community Fund. The County Councillor had suggested the Club submit an application for funding of £1,000. Mr John confirmed he had written to Sevenoaks District Council to enquire whether the provision of a practice net would require the benefit of planning permission. Mr John explained that the Cricket Club would like to site the practice net closer to the Pavilion,

which the Committee considered would be acceptable, provided it did not obstruct the field access to the New Burial Ground.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

6. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 30th October 2007.

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

7. Pavilion

It was reported that the cleaner was currently employed to clean the Pavilion once a week and that his duties only extended to provide a very basic clean of the facilities. The Committee felt this was insufficient, particularly as the number of bookings in the Pavilion was continuing to grow. The Committee considered a new draft cleaning schedule which would, if implemented, provide a higher standard of cleanliness, but would inevitably incur the Council with additional costs.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the cleaner be asked to comment on the additional work required to implement the new draft cleaning schedule and to provide an estimate of the likely additional costs if the new cleaning schedule was adopted and,

(2) the cleaner be asked to provide a quotation to carry out an additional one-off clean of the hall, kitchen and toilets, over and above the regular weekly clean.

8. Manor Field

(a) It was reported that two quotations had been received in respect of constructing a new brick structure around the existing timber meter housing unit at Manor Field, but that there was some disparity between the two quotation sums.

RESOLVED: That, further quotations be sought.

(b) The Committee considered a letter dated 3rd October 2007 from the Longfield and Hartley Scout Group informing the Council that they were under notice to find an alternative venue for their monthly waste paper collection and requesting the Council give permission to use the overspill car park at Manor Field. Whilst the Committee had no objection, in principle, to using the car park at Manor Field, it did express some concerns about opening and shutting the gate for the delivery and collection of the container and enquired whether the Scout Group had fully investigated alternative venues in the area. The Committee felt that if permission was given to the Scouts, use of the Manor Park car park should be offered for a trial period of six months.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) enquires be made with the Longfield & Hartley Scout Group to establish if they had fully investigated alternative venues in the area for their monthly waste paper collection and,

(2) the views of residents at [Cobweb Corner](#) and [Plum Castle](#) be sought.

(c) The Committee considered whether quotations should be sought for clearance work to be undertaken on Manor Field to the area in front of the bungalows, which had become overgrown with weed and bramble. The Committee noted that the majority of this area fell within the land

owned by Messrs H F & J H Glover. The Committee was informed of an organisation who could be in a position to provide free labour to clear the site.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) investigation be undertaken into the possibility of utilising free labour to clear the area and the findings be brought back to the Committee for further consideration and,

(2) consent be sought from Messrs H F & J H Glover to clear the land in front of the bungalows, Plum Castle and Cobweb Corner.

9. Playground

(a) The Committee considered a progress report on repairs to the playgrounds required as a result of the Play Area Annual Inspection Report undertaken by Ms M Cook of Craigdene Ltd on 10th July 2007. It was noted that the report had been superseded by the Quarterly operational report of 23rd October 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) The Committee considered the Quarterly Operational Report undertaken by Ms M Cook on 23rd October 2007. It was noted there were only three reported medium risk items; spring base at Chantry Avenue (refer to minute item 9(c)), and glass under the roundabouts Chantry Avenue and Woodland Avenue. It was reported that Mr Munday had been asked to inspect the roundabouts and remove any glass, and to ensure that the underside of both roundabouts were inspected and any glass removed during the regular weekly playground inspections. The Committee noted that access under the roundabout was restricted and therefore made clearance difficult. The Committee noted that there was one low/medium risk item, a protruding bolt, which Mr Munday had been asked to make safe. All other items contained in the report had either been designated as a low risk or were merely to be monitored.

It was reported that the wear to the bearings of the roundabout at Woodland Avenue had been reported to the Clerk as a result of the weekly playground inspections, but at this stage the quarterly operational report only required the situation to be monitored.

The Committee commented on the presentation of the report, which it considered was superior to reports previously undertaken by RoSPA. The Committee particularly liked the inclusion of photographs, which made the report clearer and simpler to read.

It was reported that the works to renew the weld mesh on the gate at the Chantry Avenue play area, which had been authorised by the Committee at its meeting held on 13th March 2007, was still outstanding despite a number of reminders sent to the contractor. The Committee felt that the delay in progressing the works was now unacceptable and that repairs should be undertaken as soon as possible, through an alternative contractor.

The Committee expressed concern about the unauthorised erection of nets on the football posts located at Woodland Avenue. It was suggested that enquiries should be made to establish who was responsible for erecting them, so that the danger of unattended nets could be explained to them and that they be asked to remove the nets after use.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Quarterly Inspection Report undertaken by Ms M Cook of Craigdene on 23rd October 2007 be received and noted and any action taken by the Clerk in respect of the aforementioned report be confirmed,

(2) the Youth Worker be contacted to enquire if he knows of the person/s who was responsible for erecting the unauthorised nets at Woodland Avenue and,

(3) enquiries be made to find an alternative welder to undertake the repairs to the weld mesh on the gate at Chantry Avenue and Mr Munday be instructed to undertake temporary repairs to the aforementioned gate.

(c) The Committee considered comparative quotations, as set out below, for repairs to the vandalised frog rocker in the Chantry Avenue playground.

(1) Remove base and repair surfacing for the sum of £180 plus VAT from Safeplay.

(2) Reinstate frog rocker for the sum of £260 plus VAT from Safeplay.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £260 plus VAT from Safeplay to reinstate the frog rocker be accepted.

10. Boiler at the Pavilion

At the previous Committee meeting faults with the “Anderson” water heater had been reported and the plumber had advised that the Council should give consideration to replacing the unit. The plumber had agreed to provide the Council with guidance on what system could be installed. It was reported that this advice was still awaited.

RESOLVED: That, alternative advice be sought from suitably qualified heating engineers on what system could be employed to replace the “Anderson” water heater located in the boiler cupboard at the Pavilion.

11. Rectory Meadow

(a) It was reported that quotations were being sought in respect of treework to the dying beech tree located on the boundary with no 29 Banckside and that these quotations would be available for consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) The Committee considered a quotation for the sum of £475 from the Kent Wildlife Trust to undertake a botanical survey of Rectory Meadow. It was explained that a similar report had been undertaken by a consultant in 2000 and that it had been recommended in the Countryside Stewardship Management Plan that a follow up survey should be undertaken. The Committee questioned the value of a follow up survey and felt that the study could be completed by students from local universities such as Greenwich, Kent or Hadlow College.

RESOLVED: That, enquiries be made with educational establishments to establish whether a botanical survey could be completed by a student/s as part of their studies.

12. Gorse Wood

It was reported that as the result of a number of discrepancies identified in the arboricultural risk assessment undertaken by Quaife Woodlands in Gorse Wood during June 2007, a site meeting had taken place with the surveyor. It had been agreed the surveyor would re-assess the area of woodland and provide the Council with an updated report. A copy of the updated report was tabled at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That, the updated arboricultural risk assessment be noted and quotations be sought to undertake the recommended treework, as contained in the aforementioned risk assessment.

13. Woodland Avenue

At a meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 5th June 2007 it had been resolved that, *“the refurbishment of the playground be investigated including the possibility of obtaining grants to fund any scheme and that the findings be reported back to the Committee for further discussions.”* The Committee continued those discussions.

Examples of various items of playground equipment were tabled at the meeting. The Committee was advised of a playground refurbishment project which had recently been completed by Westerham Parish Council through funds provided by Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council. The Committee was informed of possibly funding opportunity which had been advertised in Parish News issue 327; Children's Play: Playful Ideas.

RESOLVED: That, investigations be undertaken with playground suppliers to further discussion on a refurbishment scheme for the playground at Woodland Avenue and details of the grant Children's Play: Playful Ideas be obtained for consideration by the Committee.

14. Hartley Wood

It was reported that the landowner of a plot of land in Hartley Wood, title number K873988, had informed the Council that she was having difficulty in obtaining public liability insurance to cover her plot of land and enquired whether the Council would be willing to ask its insurers to extend the Council's insurance cover to include her plot and she would pay any increase in the premium.

RESOLVED: That, [enquires](#) be made with the Council's insurers to establish whether the Council's policy could be extended to cover the legal liabilities of the landowner under title number K873988 and that the findings be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

15. Foxborough Wood

The Committee considered undertaking a land survey of the area of land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood in advance of undertaking an arboricultural risk assessment. This work would continue and extend the Council's policy of tree management on all its land.

RESOLVED: That, quotations be sought to undertake a land survey to establish the boundaries of the land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood.

16. Allotments

It was reported that complaints had been received about a rat infestation at the allotments in Woodland Avenue and that the Clerk had employed the services of AKS Pest Control to eradicate the problem at a cost of £116.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's action to employ AKS Pest Control to eradicate the rat infestation at the Woodland Avenue allotments at a cost of £116 be confirmed.

17. Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study

The Committee considered a report on a study commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council on local open spaces, sport and recreation in the District. The study included an audit of all open spaces in the District, provided priorities for future open space, recreation and sport provision, and made recommendations to the allocation of future resources.

The Committee was appalled by the number of inaccuracies contained in the study and was disappointed that no consultation had taken place with Parish Councils across the District.

RESOLVED: That, the study commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council on local open spaces, sport and recreation in the District be noted.

18. Energy efficiency in community buildings

The Committee considered a publication entitled "Energy efficiency in community buildings" published by a national charity, NEA, which was committed to promoting the benefits of energy efficiency to community buildings.

RESOLVED: That the publication “Energy efficiency in community buildings” be noted.

19. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 11th December 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.50 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	305.48	575.00	339.50	240.98
6 Open Spaces	1,783.00	389.19	26,575.00	15,217.18	9,964.01
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,000.00	1,806.50	7,825.00	4,957.54	3,673.96
NET TOTAL	3,083.00	2,501.17	34,975.00	20,514.22	13,878.95
Total for ALL Cost Centres		58,641.90		71,776.32	
V.A.T.		1,930.23		2,960.53	
GROSS TOTAL		60,572.13		74,736.85	

