

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 25th MARCH 2008 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

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr J Gaywood and Mr G Flint (Hartley De Sales FC).

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mrs P Cole declared a personal interest under minute item 10 (a) and (b) in respect of the playground at Woodland Avenue as she lived opposite the recreation ground.

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute item 12 (a), (b) and (c) in respect of Hartley Wood, as her private residence was located adjacent to the woodland.

Cllr Mr A Barnett declared a personal interest under minute item 16 in respect of the allotments as he was an allotment holder.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 5th February 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Football at Manor Field

The Committee considered a report received from Mr Flint, in which he thanked the Council for its support. He informed the Committee that the three pitches at Manor Field had been kept in excellent condition throughout the season and confirmed that Hartley De Sales FC wished to hire the same pitches next season.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

5. Cricket at Manor Field

Mr John reminded the Committee of the position of the practice net previously agreed by the Council. Mr John informed the Committee that the Cricket Club wished to alter the position of the sight screen, so as to avoid the water main which transected Manor Field and to avoid any conflict with the pedestrian access gate into the new Burial Ground. Mr John tabled a plan showing a revised position for the practice net.

Mr John asked a number of questions in relation to the maintenance of the field and the boiler in the Pavilion. He confirmed the date of the first fixture on 26th April and the new contact details for the fixture secretary and the treasurer.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) a meeting be held at Manor Field with Mr John to consider the siting of the practice net,
- (2) the Clerk be authorised upto a sum of £350 to make arrangements for works to be undertaken on the outfield and the cricket square for the control of wormcasts,
- (3) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, be authorised upto a sum of £150 to make arrangements for the outfield to be rolled after the close of the football season, if conditions allowed and if considered necessary.

Mr John left the meeting at 8.00 p.m.

6. Cricket at Longfield Hill

Mr Wade confirmed the teams playing at Longfield Hill for the forthcoming season, which included the U17's, U15's, U13's and U11's colt teams and the Senior 3rd team. Fixture cards would be available by mid April. Mr Wade explained the cricket square at Longfield Hill had a problem with worms and asked whether the Council intended to undertake any works to the square.

It was confirmed that the grass cutting contractor would commence the grass cutting contract as soon as conditions allowed, but at present the ground was too wet. Mr Wade asked whether the grass cutting contractor had the facility to collect the grass and explained that last year the Cricket Club had encountered considerable difficulties over the removal of the grass cuttings from the outfield. The Committee was unsure whether the grass cutting contractor had the necessary machinery to remove the cuttings.

Mr Wade confirmed that Meopham CC was still actively pursuing the provision of an electricity supply in the container. No further break-ins or other vandalism had occurred to the container.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) a quotation be sought for works to be undertaken to the cricket square and the outfield for the control of worms and,
- (2) enquiries be made with the Council's grassing cutting contractor to establish whether he had the facilities to remove the grass cuttings from the outfield.

Mr T Wade left the meeting at 8.20 p.m.

7. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 17th March 2008. Questions were raised about the cost of emptying the cesspool, which seemed inconsistent with the water rate charges.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the financial report, attached as appendix 1 to these minutes, be noted and,
- (2) a breakdown of the cesspool charges be obtained.

8. Pavilion

(a) Boiler

It was reported that no advice had been received on the replacement of the Anderson water heater.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) Storage

It was reported that investigations had taken place on the suitability of the use of the roof space in the Pavilion for storage. It was confirmed that there was a loft ladder allowing access into the roof space via the hatch located in the corridor and the roof was partially boarded to allow access to the services. There was no lighting in the roof space and limited height and space due to the position of the roof trusses. Due to the design of the roof, the Committee considered the roof space would only be suitable for the storage of lightweight items.

RESOLVED: That, no further action be taken.

(c) Electric light

It was reported that work was in hand to replace the damaged bulb in the PIR unit over the entrance door.

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

9. Manor Field

(a) Meter cupboard

The Committee received a report on investigations undertaken on the feasibility of moving the meter cupboard onto land owned by the Council.

The Committee considered a letter dated 13th March 2008 from Messrs H F & J H Glover. Messrs H F & J H Glover explained that the electricity cable had been laid without their prior consent in 1989 and that meter had been sited on their land. Notwithstanding, Messrs H F & J H Glover had agreed to allow this situation to continue, until such time as the Pavilion had been built and the electricity re-routed into the Pavilion. Messrs H F & J H Glover again stated they did not object to the meter being sited on their land, but would not wish a more permanent structure to be erected to house the meter.

RESOLVED: That, further investigations be carried to examine the feasibility and the cost involved in repositioning the meter onto land owned by the Council and providing a more secure enclosure.

(b) Car park

The Committee considered a report on the condition of the surface in the car park next to the concrete path leading to the Pavilion, which of late had been very muddy. The Committee noted that road stone had been laid in the past and had proved to be effective in coping with the muddy conditions.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be authorised upto to a sum of £50 to make arrangements for road stone to be supplied and distributed in the corner of the car park.

10. Playground

(a) Woodland Avenue – playground refurbishment

The Committee examined design schemes prepared by four playground suppliers and considered how the project could be progressed.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the criteria of various grants be examined to establish what would be required by the grant provider,

(2) the head teachers of the two local primary schools be contacted to establish what assistance could be offered by the schools in any consultation exercise undertaken by the Council and,

(3) investigation be undertaken to establish whether the design schemes submitted by various playground suppliers could be displayed on the Council's website.

(b) Playground operational report

The Committee examined the quarterly operational report undertaken by Maria Cook on 1st February 2008. It was reported that the redundant bolt at the Woodland Avenue playground, identified as a medium risk on page 8 of the said report, had been removed.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the quarterly operational report undertaken by Maria Cook on 1st February 2008 be received and noted and

(2) Mr Munday be asked to clean and treat the play surfaces affected by algae growth with a non toxic weed killer.

11. Rectory Meadow

The Committee considered a report on motorbike activity and the lighting of fires in woodland at Rectory Meadow. The Committee noted that the Police and Community Warden had been informed of the situation and that the Community Warden had investigated, reporting that there were currently no obvious signs of such activity.

The Committee was informed that the chain link fence between Rectory Meadow and the privately owned woodland beyond had been completely taken down and was lying on Rectory Meadow.

It was reported that the dead tree next to the boundary with no 29 Bancksides had been taken down and chippings had been delivered to site in readiness for distribution around the base of the newly planted trees.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Community Warden be asked to monitor the situation and to report any signs of motorcycle activity on Rectory Meadow to the Police and,

(2) the landowner of the privately owned woodland to the west of Rectory Meadow be informed of the damage to his chain link fence.

12. Hartley Wood

(a) Motorbikes

The Committee considered a report on motorbike activity in Hartley Wood. The Committee noted there were three main points of access into the woods: (1) Gorsewood Road next to the railway line, (2) at the end of Beechlands Close and (3) off Hartley Bottom Road over the landfill site. The Committee considered a number of measures which could be taken to prevent such incursions.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) Longfield and New Barn Parish Council be asked if it would be willing to provide a padlock on the kissing gate to the north of the subway, so as to prevent the gate being opened with a RADAR key,

(2) investigations be undertaken into the provision of a motorbike inhibitor next to the subway,

(3) a meeting be arranged with the Crime Reduction Officer to investigate measures to prevent motorbike incursion off the highway at the end of Beechlands Close and,

(4) Southwark Council be asked what measures it intends to take to prevent motorbike incursions off Hartley Bottom Road and over the land fill site.

(b) Foul water discharge

The Committee considered a report on a problem of foul water discharging into Hartley Wood, which had been ongoing since 2001.

RESOLVED: That, enquiries be made with Thames Water to establish the position and layout of the foul drains.

(c) Network Rail

The Committee considered a letter dated 18th March 2008 from Network Rail explaining that it had been necessary to undertake recent clearance works to the embankments between Longfield and Meopham Stations for the safe running of the railway. Network Rail confirmed that the tree stumps had not been poisoned, but had been treated with a herbicide to restrict their growth.

The Committee considered planting a hedge along the boundary with the railway line, which in time would eventually provide a screen.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the letter dated 18th March 2008 from Network Rail be noted,

(2) costings be sought for the planting of a new hedge along the boundary with Network Rail land and that Network Rail be asked to make a contribution to said planting works.

13. Gorse Wood

The Committee considered a report on motorbike activity and fly tipping in Gorse Wood. The Committee considered a number of options to fence off the entrances into Gorse Wood off Gorsewood Road and next to Down Ampney.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) further investigation be undertaken to establish the extent of the fly tipping in Gorse Wood and,

(2) quotations be sought on the provision of fencing and kissing gates at the two entrances to Gorse Wood off Gorsewood Road.

14. Foxborough Wood

It was reported that a further quotation had been invited to undertake a land survey in Foxborough Wood to define the Council's boundaries.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

15. Longfield Hill

(a) The Committee considered a request from the 1st Longfield Guides to use the recreation ground at Longfield Hill to practice fire lighting and cooking on fires.

RESOLVED: That, the 1st Longfield Guides be asked whether they had considered using the garden of the Scout Hut at Longfield Hill to practice their fire lighting and cooking on fires.

(b) The Committee received a report on the recent hedge planting at Longfield Hill. The Committee considered that the contractor could have used a better standard of tree shelter and stake, but the works had recently been inspected and the shelters and stakes were found to be still in-situ.

RESOLVED: That, the payment for the sum of £750 plus VAT to Baylis in respect of the new hedge planting at Longfield Hill be authorised.

16. Allotments

The Committee considered a quotation to prune the trees on the allotments behind the recycling centre.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £190 plus VAT from Austin Treework to prune the trees behind the recycling centre in the allotments be accepted.

17. Lay-by

The Committee received a report on recent damage sustained during high winds on 12th March 2008 to a Cypress tree located in the lay-by next to the Burial Ground.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's action to make arrangements for a branch to be removed from a Cypress tree located in the lay-by at a cost of £180 plus VAT be confirmed.

18. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 6th May 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in Hartley Library

The meeting closed 10.30 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	433.59	575.00	728.67	-20.08
6 Open Spaces	1,783.00	3,012.19	26,575.00	23,310.39	4,493.80
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,000.00	2,585.25	7,825.00	7,144.73	2,265.52
NET TOTAL	3,083.00	6,031.03	34,975.00	31,183.79	6,739.24
Total for ALL Cost Centres		114,972.89		108,087.33	
V.A.T.		4,784.75		4,310.23	
GROSS TOTAL		119,757.64		112,397.56	

