

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16th JUNE 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
Cllr Mr V Sewell

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Mr V John (New Ash Green and Hartley Cricket Club)
Mr G Flint (Hartley De Sales FC)

Apologies for absence

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

1. Election of Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr A Barnett be elected Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2009.

2. Election of Vice Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby be elected Vice Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2009.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

Cllrs Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute item 15 in respect of Gorse Wood as her private residence was located opposite the woodland.

Cllr Mr V Sewell declared a personal interest under minute item 10 (a) in respect of the boiler at the Pavilion as he was an acquaintance of one of the contractors submitting a quotation to the Council.

Cllr Mrs P Cole declared a personal interest under minute item 12(a) in respect of the playground at Woodland Avenue as her private residence was located opposite the recreation ground.

4. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 6th May 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. Cricket at Manor Field

Mr John reported that there was still an ant infestation problem at Manor Field, although much improved from that reported the previous week. Mr John reported that the showers at the Pavilion had no hot water and that the double doors leading out onto the field could not be opened. Mr John reported that on arriving at the Pavilion the cricketers had

occasionally found the side door left unlocked and the burglar alarm not set. Mr John expressed some concern about the possible over use of the field if the team from New Ash Green was permitted to use the facilities next year.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

6. Cricket at Longfield Hill

There was no report from Meopham Cricket Club

7. Football at Manor Field

It was reported that Hartley De Sales FC had confirmed four teams would be using the facilities at Manor Field during the 2008/09 season.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

8. Terms of reference

The Committee reviewed its terms of reference as approved by the Council at the Annual meeting held on 12th May 2009.

RECOMMENDED: That, the terms of reference, as set in appendix 1 attached to these minutes, be amended.

9. Financial report

The Committee examined a financial report indicating the net position of the allotment, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 10th June 2008.

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

10. Pavilion

(a) Boiler

It was reported that the water heater serving the hot water to the showers in the changing rooms had failed. A local plumber had inspected the water heater and advised that the water heater was beyond repair. The gas supply to the water heater had been shut down on the grounds of health and safety.

The Committee examined a number of quotations in respect of works to replace the Andrews water heater. The Committee was advised that contractors had been invited to suggest the best means of providing hot water in the showers and the quotations reflected a number of different options. After some discussion the Committee agreed that the water heater should be replaced with an Andrews L63/71 storage heater with auto ignition controls, giving a capacity of 63 gallons which the Committee considered should be sufficient to meet the needs of the cricketers and that all contractors should be asked to re-quote on this basis. Quotations would be invited for consideration by the Council at its next meeting in July 2008.

RECOMMENDED: That, arrangements be made for the water heater in the Pavilion serving the changing rooms to be replaced with an Andrews L63/71 water heater and that the Council be requested to consider quotations received to undertake this work.

(b) Car park light

It was reported that the timer switch operating the car park lights had been adjusted to its lowest setting and should remain on for one hour.

The Committee considered a quotation to replace the lamp and control equipment of defective car park light. The Committee considered it would not be necessary to replace the bulb of the defective light as there was sufficient lighting in the car park from the remaining external light.

RESOLVED: That, no further action be taken.

(c) Water consumption

It was reported that quotations to replace the taps in the toilets and changing rooms with push operated taps were awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(d) Water treatment service contract 2008/09

The Committee considered two quotations from Bayly Environmental Services Ltd for the 2008/09 water treatment service contract at the Pavilion.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the quotation for the sum of £180 plus VAT from Bayly Environmental Services Ltd to attend site once per year to carry out a clean and chlorination of the cold water storage tank and associated hot and cold water services, including certification be accepted and,
- (2) the quotation for the total sum of £200 plus VAT to attend site twice per year (i.e. six monthly) to take 2 no water samples per visit (i.e. 4 per year) to be tested for specific legionella bacteria, including sampling and transportation to a UKAS accredited laboratory and certification be accepted.

(e) Conditions of hire of the Pavilion

The Committee reviewed the conditions of hire of the Pavilion and the emergency plan for the temporary responsible person.

RESOLVED: That, amendments to the conditions of hire and the emergency plan be drafted in line with the Committee's discussions and the drafts be referred to a future meeting for further discussion.

11. Manor Field

(a) Meter cupboard

The Committee was advised that EDF Energy charge £88.13 to attend site meetings or visits, which was generally non refundable but would be deducted off any charges if work proceeded. The Committee was informed that a letter had been written to EDF Energy requesting advice on the Council's proposal to relocate the meter to the corner of the Hartley Burial Ground.

RESOLVED: That, a response from EDF Energy be awaited.

(b) Fertilizer

The Committee considered a quotation from Mr Westwood to apply organic fertilizer on Manor Field. The Committee noted that Mr Westwood was not able to apply herbicide and questioned whether it would be more cost effective to employ the services of Sencio Community Leisure to apply fertilizer to the field in conjunction with the application of herbicide.

RESOLVED: That, the a quotation be invited from Sencio Leisure to apply fertilizer on Manor Field, including the cricket square and the Clerk be authorised to accept the lowest quotation in respect of the application of fertilizer to the field.

(c) Herbicide

The Committee considered a quotation to apply herbicide on Manor Field. The Committee considered advice about the eradication of ants which stated that whilst there was no chemical in the sports turf market available for the specific eradication of ants, it could be helpful to apply an insecticide for turf pests such as leatherjackets or crane fly grubs.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £260 plus VAT from Sencio Community Leisure to apply herbicide on Manor Field, including the cricket square, and the quotation for the sum of £35 from Sencio Community Leisure to spray for the eradication of turf pests, be accepted and that arrangements be made for the works be undertaken at the same time.

12. Playgrounds

(a) Woodland Avenue – playground refurbishment

The Committee considered a report on consultations undertaken with children at Hartley Primary School and Our Lady of Hartley RCP School. The Committee was shown an online consultation exercise being undertaken by Sevenoaks District Council on improvements to a play area at Holly Bush Recreation ground. The Committee felt this form of consultation could be undertaken in Hartley. The Committee was advised that an article seeking residents' views on proposals to refurbish the Woodland Avenue recreation ground would be included in the next edition of the Council's newsletter.

The Committee was informed of three community grant schemes for 2008/09 managed through Kent County Council's Sevenoaks Local Board: KCC Member Community Grant Scheme, KCC Small Community Capital Projects Fund and Local Schemes Grant.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the Communications Committee be asked to investigate the possibility of conducting an online consultation exercise on the proposed refurbishment of the playground at Woodland Avenue and, (2) enquiries be made at Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council on the availability of grants for the playground refurbishment at Woodland Avenue.

(b) Quarterly Operational Report

The Committee examined the quarterly operational inspection report undertaken by Maria Cook on 2nd May 2008.

The Clerk reported vandalism to the safety surface below the cradle swing at the playground in Chantry Avenue. The cradle swing had been temporarily removed and arrangements were being made for the safety surfacing to be repaired.

RESOLVED: That,(1) Mr Munday be asked to undertake minor repairs at the Council's three playgrounds as identified in the quarterly operational inspection report undertaken by Maria Cook on 2nd May 2008 and (2) the Clerk's actions to temporarily disable the cradle swing and to instigate the necessary repairs to the safety surfacing at Chantry Avenue be confirmed.

13. Rectory Meadow

(a) Byelaws

The Committee was advised that the byelaws on Rectory Meadow had been confirmed by the Secretary of State and came into operation on 1st May 2008. The confirmed byelaws would be printed in accordance with Section 238(8) of the 1972 Local Government Act and a copy sent to Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs for record purposes.

One copy of the confirmed byelaws would be deposited in the Parish Office for inspection at all reasonable times without payment.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) Control of bramble

The Committee was informed of bramble infestation on the meadow in the vicinity of the orchids. Mr Gallant of the North West Kent Countryside Partnership had confirmed he was not suitably qualified to undertake any spraying to eradicate the bramble. Furthermore he felt that any spraying could adversely affect the orchids and other wildflowers. The Committee considered other means by which to control and eradicate the bramble, but could not come to any satisfactory conclusion.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred pending further investigation into the control and eradication of bramble.

(c) Grass cutting

It was reported that the quotation for the sum of £260 plus VAT per cut from Gary Hawkins to cut the grass at Rectory Meadow had been accepted. The Committee was informed that due to the delay in undertaking the first cut Mr Hawkins would be asked not to cut the upper meadow and thus avoid the wildflowers which were proliferating in that area. The second and third cuts would be undertaken in late July and September respectively.

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

14. Hartley Wood

(a) Foul water discharge

The Committee was shown maps provided by Thames Water showing the layout of foul drains in the parish. The Committee was reminded of reports of foul water discharging in Hartley Wood, behind Arclei, Simmons Drive. Although this problem had been ongoing intermittently since 2001, the Committee was advised the drains were not discharging at the moment.

RESOLVED: That, enquiries be made with Thames Water to establish what measures would be taken to ensure permanent repairs to the defective foul water drain running through Hartley Wood at the rear of Arclei, Simmons Drive.

(b) Quantified tree risk assessment

The Committee examined quotations received in respect of a quantified tree risk assessment on the land owned by Hartley Parish Council in Hartley Wood, as set out below:

- Quaife Woodlands for the sum of £495 plus VAT
- Lushland Ltd for the sum of £990 plus VAT
- Treeventures Ltd for the sum of £960 plus VAT

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £495 plus VAT from Quaife Woodland to undertake a quantified risk assessment of the trees on land owned by Hartley Parish Council in Hartley Wood be accepted.

(c) Hedge

The Committee was reminded that at a meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 25th March 2008 it had been resolved to investigate the cost of planting a new hedge along the boundary of Network Rail land to provide screening from the railway line following works undertaken by Network Rail to clear the embankments and to

ask Network Rail to make a contribution to the planting works. The Committee felt that it would be better to plant a shelter of trees rather than a hedge and discussed the possibility of enlisting the assistance of neighbours with the planting.

RESOLVED: That, a draft specification be prepared to plant a shelter of trees on land owned by the Parish Council either side of the subway to the south of the railway line and the matter be considered further at a future meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee.

(d) Motorbikes

The Committee was informed of progress since the last meeting to prevent motorbikes gaining access to Hartley Wood.

Longfield and New Barn Parish Council was seeking advice from the Public Rights of Way Office in respect of the request to padlock the kissing gate to the north of the subway to prevent it being opened with a RADAR key.

The Committee considered a report on a meeting held with the Police on 6th June 2008 to discuss measures that could be implemented to prevent access by motorbikes in Hartley Wood. The Crime Reduction and Architectural Liaison officer from Kent Police favoured the use of motorbike inhibitors placed at strategic points of access. The Committee was reminded of the three main points of access for motorbikes; end of Gorsewood Road, end of Beechlands Close and over the landfill site off Hartley Bottom Road.

The Committee was informed that the Public Rights of Way Officer had inspected the subway and was not keen to support the provision of motorbike inhibitor on the public footpath until such time as other measures had been implemented to secure the boundaries of Hartley Wood. She was concerned that motorbike inhibitors could obstruct bicycles.

RESOLVED: That, (1) investigations be undertaken with Kent Highway Services to seek their views on proposals to install an motorbike inhibitor and fencing on highway land at the end of Beechlands Close along the boundary of the woodland and (2) subject to the outcome of investigations in (1) above, costings be obtained to provide a motorbike inhibitor and fencing at the end of Beechlands Close.

15. Gorse Wood

It was reported that only one quotation had been received for the provision of fencing and kissing gates at the entrances to Gorse Wood off Gorsewood Road.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

16. Gorsewood Road

The Committee was advised that the Highways Committee had requested the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee consider a matter raised by a resident at a recent Members Surgery about the condition of the subway under the railway line. The resident had complained about the mud on the path, graffiti on the walls, defective light and lack of handrails next to the steps.

The Committee was advised that Kent County Council was investigating repairs to the defective light. The Committee was informed that Sevenoaks District Council swept the footpath from time to time, but agreed that due to its location next to an area of woodland any attempts to keep the footpath clear of mud would be futile. The Committee was unsure which authority owned or was responsible for the maintenance of the subway.

RECOMMENDATION: That, enquiries be made with Kent Industrial Training Services to establish whether it would be willing to paint the walls of the subway to

remove the graffiti and apply a coat of anti graffiti paint, and that said paint to be supplied by the Parish Council, in accordance with powers under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act

17. Date of next meeting

Monday 4th August 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 10.20 p.m.

Signed:..... Date:.....
Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Amenities and Open Spaces Committee Terms of Reference

1. To manage the operation of the Manor Field, Pavilion and all open spaces, playing fields, recreation grounds, play grounds, ~~village pond~~ and lay-by and such land at Hartley Wood that the Council has taken care and control of, with the exception of the open space known as Northfield. Such operation shall include making recommendations to the Council on scales of hiring charges for the use of facilities together with conditions of hire.
2. To arrange for the maintenance of the Pavilion.
3. To review and monitor the grass cutting contracts together with the maintenance of all open spaces and to ensure that they are in safe condition for their use by the public.
4. To undertake and monitor health and safety inspections of all playground equipment.
5. To prepare an annual budget for review by the Council's Finance Committee in November of each year and to monitor expenditure against the annual budget approved by the Council.
6. To keep under review opportunities to secure funding support from external sources.
7. To be responsible for dealing with all matters relating to public rights of way to ensure the general upkeep of footpaths within the Parish, making recommendation to Council where necessary.

Delegated Powers

1. To authorise expenditure on those matters which fall within the responsibility of the Committee up to the sums contained in the annual budget approved by the Council, provided that any new schemes shall be subject to prior approval in principle by the Council.
2. To respond, on behalf of the Council, to orders for the diversion, stopping-up, extinguishment or creation of a public path.

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	112.00	163.00
6 Open Spaces	1,870.00	0.00	25,700.00	4,189.10	19,640.90
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,500.00	281.75	7,850.00	1,195.26	5,436.49
NET TOTAL	3,670.00	281.75	34,125.00	5,496.36	25,240.39
Total for ALL Cost Centres		53,046.83		22,097.37	
V.A.T.		485.73		1,339.39	
GROSS TOTAL		53,532.56		23,436.76	

