

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16th OCTOBER 2008 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs P Cole (*arrived at 7.40 p.m.*)
Cllr Mr D Graeme
Cllr Mr S Granger
Cllr Mr M Harris
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Mr Guy Flint (Hartley De Sales FC)
Mr T Wade (Meopham CC)
3 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr J Gaywood, Cllr Mr V Sewell and Mr V John.

2. Declaration of Interests

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

Cllr 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 A Barnett declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 9 (a), 9 (b) and 9 (c) in respect of the allotments and following representations made to the Committee pursuant to Standing Order 57, withdrew from the meeting during further discussion and voting on the matters.

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

Cllr Mr D Graeme declared a personal interest under minute item 5 (b) in respect of the quotation received from Ray-Weld as personnel within the company were known to him.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 4th August 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Cricket at Manor Field

The Committee was informed of Mr John's intention to stand down as Chairman of the New Ash Green and Hartley CC at the AGM in December.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

5. Cricket at Longfield Hill

(a) Mr Wade thanked the Parish Council for its co-operation and help throughout the season. He explained that the Cricket Club was continuing its work to extend the outfield and improve the cricket square. He reported on the end of season results of the three senior teams and various youth teams. He confirmed the Cricket Club intended to pursue the provision of electricity in the containers and would, if necessary, consider the purchase of a generator. It

was suggested the Council could place an article in the next edition of the newsletter to encourage any aspiring young cricketers to contact Meopham CC who have excellent facilities and first class coaches. Mr Wade agreed his telephone number could be included as a contact.

Cllr Mrs P Cole arrived at the meeting 7.40 p.m.

(b) At the previous meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee a verbal quotation to undertake repairs and improvements to the metal vehicular gate at Longfield Hill from Remlap for the sum of £275 was accepted. Following a further discussion with the contractor a written quotation of £360 plus VAT was provided to the Council.

In view of the difference in the quotation sums, an additional written quotation was invited from Ray-Weld which was duly returned for the sum of £290 plus VAT and included re-concreting the gate retaining post, welding a new padlock to the post and welding stops on the post to prevent the gate from being lifted of its hinges.

It was reported that as a comparison quotations had been invited to replace the gate and posts with a new heavy duty triangular vehicle barrier. The Committee was advised that the cost of the materials would be £395 plus VAT and delivery, in addition to the labour costs required to install the gate and posts. The Committee felt it could not justify the cost of providing a new gate and posts and considered it would be better to proceed with repairs to the existing gate.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £290 plus VAT from Ray-Weld to re-concrete the gate retaining post, weld new padlock to post and weld stops on the post to prevent the gate from being lifted of its hinges be accepted.

6. Football at Manor Field

(a) Mr Flint reported that the football pitches were in perfect condition and confirmed he now understood the cutting arrangements. He explained that a redundant football socket had become exposed in the junior pitch in front of the Pavilion. It was confirmed that arrangements had been made for the socket to be removed in advance of the Sunday fixtures. Mr Flint undertook to ensure no training would take place on this pitch on Saturday to allow additional time for the socket to be removed.

The Committee considered a request from Kick Kent to hire the facilities at Manor Field for football parties. Hartley De Sales confirmed they used the ground on Saturday mornings for training and all day Sunday for fixtures. Some concern was expressed about the possible wear to the pitches from additional use, but it was generally agreed that the ground could possibly be made available on Saturday afternoon on the area beyond the cricket square between the senior and training pitch. The facilities would not be available from the end of April to the beginning of September as the ground and the Pavilion was fully committed on both Saturdays and Sundays throughout the cricket season.

RESOLVED: That, a meeting be arranged with Kick Kent at Manor Field to progress discussions about the possible use of the grounds and the Pavilion for football parties.

(b) The Committee considered fees to be charged to Hartley De Sales FC for the 2008/09 season. It was confirmed that the training pitch would be marked out once every four weeks and Hartley De Sales FC would be charged accordingly.

RECOMMENDED: That, the following charges for the use of the football pitches at Manor Field for the 2008/09 season be approved:

£325 per team for the use of the senior pitch

£275 per team for the use of the junior pitch (in front of the Pavilion)

7. Financial report

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

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

8. Budget 2009/10

The Committee considered the draft budget in respect of the allotments, open spaces and Pavilion for the financial year 2009/10. The Committee considered a request for the provision of a dog bin at Hoselands Green, but felt the request should not be progressed.

RESOLVED: That, the draft budget for 2009/10, attached as appendix 2 to these minutes, be submitted to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration.

9. Allotments

(a) The Committee considered the allotments rents for 2008/09. The Committee was reminded that when allotments holders were issued with invoices for last year's rental, (2007/08), they were given advance notice that the 2008/09 rents would increase in line with the current rate of inflation.

RECOMMENDED: That, the allotment rents for the period 2008/09 be increased by 5%.

(b) The Committee considered the allotment rents for 2009/10. The Committee was mindful that the Council had recently expressed concern about the income received from allotments rents. The Council considered that allotment rents should be reviewed with a view to increasing receipts to a level more comparable with the cost of providing the allotments. The Committee noted that the primary outgoings included annual payments to Sevenoaks District Council for a licence to use the land for the purposes of providing allotments and water charges.

RECOMMENDED: That, the allotment rents for the period 2009/10 be increased by the rate of inflation, plus a surcharge in the region of £3 to £5 per allotment plot, to be charged on a pro rata basis.

(c) The Committee considered a letter dated 30th July 2008 from an allotment holder regarding a number of matters affecting the allotment, in particular the removal of trees on the boundary of no 44 Larksfield and bramble encroachment onto plot no 23.

RESOLVED: That, a meeting be arranged with the allotment holder to discuss matters further.

10. Pavilion

The Committee noted the current hourly charge of £7.50 for the hire of the Pavilion, reduced to £6.50 for regular bookings. The Committee considered increases to the hourly rate and in doing so compared the list of charges applicable to All Saints Church Centre.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

11. Manor Field

The Committee noted that two letters had been written to EDF Energy enquiring about the cost of relocating the meter onto land owned by the Parish Council in Hartley Burial Ground. It was reported that the Clerk had contacted EDF Energy on 18th August 2008 and was informed that in order for them to confirm whether the proposal would be feasible, and to estimate the likely cost of the work, an engineer would be required to visit the site at a cost of £88.13 inc VAT.

This amount would ordinarily be non refundable, but would be deducted from any charges if the work went ahead.

RESOLVED: That, arrangements be made with EDF Energy for a site meeting to be held at Manor Field to discuss the relocation of the meter cupboard onto land owned by the Parish Council in Hartley Burial Ground at a cost of £88.13 incl VAT.

12. Playgrounds

(a) Woodland Avenue – playground refurbishment

The Committee was reminded that at a meeting of the Communications Committee held on 27th August 2008 it was recommended that, *'the Parish Council conducts an online consultation on the proposed refurbishment at Woodland Avenue, using the basic subscription from 'Survey Monkey', once the questionnaire has been designed.'* The recommendation had been approved and adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 8th September 2008. A hard copy of the online consultation was circulated to Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That, a hard copy of the online consultation be circulated to Members of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee for comment.

(b) Chantry Avenue

At the previous meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee it was reported that a quotation for the sum of £750.00 + VAT had been accepted from Wicksteed Leisure to repair the vandalised safety surfacing below the cradle swing at Chantry Avenue. Further vandalism had taken place since the quotation had been provided and the area of safety surfacing requiring replacement had increased, in which case it would be likely that the final cost of the works could exceed the quotation sum.

It was reported that the safety surfacing had been repaired for the sum originally quoted and the cradle swing re-instated.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

13. Rectory Meadow

The Committee examined the Botanical Survey undertaken by the Kent Wildlife Trust. The Committee noted that the report referred to scrub encroachment since the 2000 Botanical Survey, particularly in the area to the west of the main footpath running through the upper meadow. The Committee was advised that the North West Kent Countryside Partnership undertook scrub clearance as part of the works carried out by volunteers during their regular visits to the meadow, but as this work was undertaken by hand the Committee felt it was not an efficient use of these resources leaving the volunteers to concentrate on the areas of larger scrub. The Committee was informed that Mr Westwood could clear the scrub by means of a flail mower for the sum of £100 and that once under control it should be possible to use a rotary mower to undertake the scrub clearance works.

The Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee reported on work undertaken by the North West Kent Countryside Partnership during the volunteer work days on 17th September 2008 and 15th October 2008, which had included the pulling of bramble by hand and scrub clearance in the lower meadow.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Botanical survey be received and noted,

(2) a quotation for the sum of £100 from Mr Westwood to undertake scrub clearance at Rectory Meadow be accepted and,

(3) the control of scrub by means of cutting with a flail mower or other mechanical means be included in the annual maintenance regime.

14. Hartley Wood

(a) Tree planting

The Committee noted that at the previous meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee it had been resolved that, *'(1) expenditure up to a sum of £250 be authorised to purchase trees and other necessary materials to provide a screen on land owned by the Parish Council on both sides of the southern entrance to the subway at the end of Gorsewood Road, (2) residents at the end of Gorsewood Road who had given an undertaking to the Parish Council to assist with any re-planting be contacted to seek their assistance and (3) Network Rail be asked to make a contribution to the cost of the supply of the works'*.

It was reported that the householder at Pippins, Gorsewood Road had agreed to assist with the planting and that a response was awaited from Network Rail to a request for financial assistance with the replanting works.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and replanting works be progressed.

(b) Motorbikes

It was reported a site meeting had been held with Kent Highway Services on 11th August 2008 to seek their views on proposals to install a motorbike inhibitor and fencing on highway land at the end of Beechlands Close. Kent Highways Services agreed to undertake a land search to establish ownership of an area of overgrown land at the end of Beechlands Close.

The Committee examined a copy of the agreement between the developer of Beechlands Close and the Highway Authority in relation to the adoption of the road and footpaths in 1962 as highway land. The Committee felt that further investigative work would be required to establish the boundary of highway land at the end of Beechlands Close.

RESOLVED: That, further work be undertaken to establish the boundary of highway land at the end of Beechlands Close in advance of the preparation of a scheme for the installation of a motorbike inhibitor and fencing for submission to Kent Highway Services for comment.

15. Gorse Wood

(a) It was reported that six companies had been invited to submit quotations for fencing works at the two entrances to Gorse Wood off Gorsewood Road, but to date only two quotations had been received. Two further quotations were being sought which should be available for consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) It was reported that Clean Kent had visited Gorse Wood on 1st, 2nd and 3rd September 2008 to clear litter and dumped rubbish.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

16. Foxborough Wood

(a) At the last meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee it was noted that the surveyor, (J. C White Geomatics), had completed stage 1 of the land survey to establish the position of the boundaries of land owned by the Parish Council in Foxborough Wood. The Committee had examined a letter dated 17th June 2008 and accompanying plan from J C White Geomatics, detailing a number of anomalies over the position of the boundaries with adjoining landowners. Furthermore the Committee noted that title could only be rectified following an application for rectification to the Land Registry.

The Committee was informed of advice from J C White Geomatics that further survey work would be required to produce a plan acceptable for submission to the Land Registry in respect of an application to rectify the title and that this additional survey would cost £500 plus VAT.

RESOLVED: That the matter be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration.

(b) The Committee considered a letter dated 4th September 2008 from the owner of The Court Cottage explaining that he would be willing to meet Hartley Parish Council to agree the line of the boundary between his land at The Court Cottage and land owned by the Parish Council in Foxborough Wood.

RESOLVED: That, a meeting be arranged with the owner The Court Cottage to discuss the matter further.

17. Gorsewood Road

At the last meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee the Committee was advised of information received from a resident, explaining that Network Rail was not responsible for the condition of the subway, which was the responsibility of Kent County Council.

It was reported that the matter had been taken up with the local County Council member who advised that Kent Highway Services would attend to the reports of mud on the footpath and investigate the ownership of the light in subway which would be rectified if found to be the responsibility of Kent Highway Services. The reports of graffiti on the walls of the subway should be referred to Sevenoaks District Council

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the matter in relation to the mud on the footpath leading to the subway and the defective lighting be pursued with the County Councillor and Kent Highway Services and,

(2) Sevenoaks District Council be asked to remove the graffiti from the walls of the subway.

18. Information Leaflet

The Committee examined an information leaflet entitled, "Amenities and Open Spaces" drafted by the Communications Committee.

RESOLVED: That, the Communications Committee be informed that the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee was satisfied with the information contained in the leaflet.

19. Date of next meeting

Thursday 4th December 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in Hartley Library.

20. Playgrounds

(a) Annual Inspection Report

The Committee examined the Annual Inspection Report prepared by Maria Cook on 12th August 2008. It was reported that the only medium risk item contained in the report, (page 17 - refix sharp wire to panel adjacent to gate at Chantry Avenue), had been repaired by Mr Munday on 14th August 2008. The other remaining items requiring minor repair had been referred to Mr Munday for attention. It was confirmed that Sevenoaks District Council had removed graffiti from the slide and the bench at Woodland Avenue and from safety surfacing at Longfield Hill.

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

(b) Longfield Hill Recreation Ground

The Committee noted the Annual Inspection Report had identified two areas of vandalised safety surfacing requiring repair. The Committee considered two quotations as set out below:

- Wickstead for the sum of £431.00 plus VAT to replace a safety tile below the slide and repair the safety surfacing using wet pour below the swing
- Safeplay for the sum of £515.00 plus VAT to repair upto 2 m² using black rubber crumb mix wet pour

RESOLVED: That the quotation for the sum of £431.00 plus VAT from Wickstead to replace a safety tile below the slide and repair the safety surfacing using wet pour below the swing be accepted.

21. Kent Free Tree Scheme

The Committee was informed of the Kent Free Tree Scheme administered by the North West Kent Countryside Partnership.

RESOLVED: That, an order be placed with the North West Kent Countryside Partnership for 25 free trees to be planted on land owned by the Council in Hartley Wood adjacent to the railway line next to the subway.

The meeting closed at 10.00 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	323.46	-48.46
6 Open Spaces	1,870.00	699.00	25,700.00	10,858.04	13,670.96
7 Manor Field Pavilion	1,500.00	1,376.75	7,850.00	5,821.31	1,905.44
NET TOTAL	3,670.00	2,075.75	34,125.00	17,002.81	15,527.94
 Total for ALL Cost Centres		60,723.52		71,207.87	
V.A.T.		2,849.41		4,210.11	
GROSS TOTAL		63,572.93		75,417.98	

<u>Expenditure</u>	Budget 2008/09	Spent so far (upto Sept 08) (Column C)	Projected expenditure to 31st March 2009 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2009/10	Notes
Allotments						
Maintenance	225.00	202.00	-	202.00	225.00	
Rent	200.00	100.00	100.00	200.00	200.00	
Water	150.00	21.46	275.00	296.46	300.00	
SUB TOTAL	575.00	323.46	375.00	698.46	725.00	
Open Spaces						
Grass cutting	5,100.00	1,095.00	3,385.00	4,480.00	4,750.00	
Gang mowing	2,250.00	720.00	1,650.00	2,370.00	2,500.00	
General maintenance	4,000.00	3,347.66	2,300.00	5,647.66	4,400.00	08/09 fence repairs @ Gorse Wood
Routine maintenance contract	6,000.00	3,029.00	3,171.00	6,200.00	6,500.00	
Playground maintenance	2,000.00	750.00	1,250.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	Implement phased programme of safety surface renewal @ Chantry Av
Playground inspection	600.00	315.00	300.00	615.00	650.00	
Rubbish clearance	500.00	-	-	-	500.00	
Dog bins	1,300.00	654.70	673.40	1,328.10	1,400.00	Based on 7 no bins
Rectory Meadow	2,000.00	772.00	1,220.00	1,992.00	2,000.00	

Hartley Wood	1,000.00	6.00	1,000.00	1,006.00	750.00
Pond	-	-	-	-	-
Lay-by	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous expenses	200.00	93.58	100.00	193.58	200.00
Cricket	500.00	-	-	-	250.00
Football	250.00	75.10	75.00	150.10	150.00
SUB TOTAL	25,700.00	10,858.04	15,124.40	25,982.44	26,050.00

Expenditure	Budget 2008/09	Spent so far (upto Sept 08) (Column C)	Projected expenditure to 31st March 2009 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2009/10	Notes
<u>Manor Field Pavilion</u>						
Cesspool	750.00	372.00	396.00	768.00	850.00	08/09 6 no empties per year @ £132 per empty
Calor gas	900.00	472.12	475.00	947.12	1,100.00	
Electricity	500.00	311.26	325.00	636.26	700.00	
Water	150.00	229.16	75.00	304.16	150.00	
Rates	600.00	572.50	-	572.50	600.00	
Cleaning	1,000.00	840.00	480.00	1,320.00	1,350.00	
Cleaning materials	100.00	13.45	50.00	63.45	100.00	

Maintenance	2,500.00	2,730.82	750.00	3,480.82	2,500.00	08/09 water heater & taps replaced. 09/10 redec hall & corridor
Testing	1,100.00	280.00	475.00	755.00	1,300.00	* 5 year elect test due 2009
Miscellaneous	250.00	-	100.00	100.00	250.00	
SUB TOTAL	7,850.00	5,821.31	3,126.00	8,947.31	8,900.00	

Income	Budget 2008/09	Received so far (upto Sept 08) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2009 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2009/10	Notes
Allotments						
Rent	300.00	-	428.00	428.00	450.00	09/10 inflationary increase in rent
SUB TOTAL	300.00	-	428.00	428.00	450.00	

Income	Budget 2008/09	Received so far (upto Sept 08) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2009 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2009/10	
Open Spaces						
Rectory Meadow	50.00	-	900.00	900.00	60.00	* £900 NAG & Hartley CC (2009 rent review due)
Cricket *	1,320.00	665.00	715.00	1,380.00	1,380.00	* £480 Meopham CC (rent fixed to 2012)
Football **	500.00	99.00	1,150.00	1,249.00	1,150.00	** 2007/08 fees - £310 per team full size pitch &
SUB TOTAL	1,870.00	764.00	2,765.00	3,529.00	2,590.00	** £265 per team junior pitch

Income	Budget 2008/09	Received so far (upto Sept 08) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2009 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2009/10	
Manor Field Pavilion						
Lettings	1,500.00	1,226.00	1,000.00	2,226.00	2,000.00	
SUB TOTAL	1,500.00	1,226.00	1,000.00	2,226.00	2,000.00	