

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16th JUNE 2009 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr Mr J Gaywood
Cllr Mr D Graeme (*arrived at the meeting at 7.34 p.m.*)
Cllr Mr S Granger
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr Mr V Sewell

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
PC A Blackmore (Crime Reduction and Architectural Liaison Officer,
West Kent Police)
Mrs J Fallace (Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Gorsewood Road)
Dr G Cramp (Chairman of the Hartley Parish Plan Steering Committee)
2 members of the public

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mrs P Cole, Mr M Quantrill (New Ash Green & Hartley CC) and Mr T Wade (Meopham CC).

1. Election of Chairman

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 2010.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

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 2010.

3. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mr A Barnett declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 24 (a) and (b) in respect of the allotments, as he was an allotment holder and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the matters.

4. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 21st April 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Cllr Mr D Graeme arrived at the meeting at 7.34 p.m.

5. Gorsewood Road

The Committee considered a report on a site meeting held on 9th June 2009 with the Crime Reduction and Architectural Officer for West Kent Police, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for part of Gorsewood Road, a number of residents of Gorsewood Road, namely residents of Hestia, Clairvaux, Strawberry Lodge and Waverley, and two Parish Councillors. The meeting had been convened at the request of the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to discuss issues relating to anti social behaviour and damage to property. At that meeting residents had raised concerns about the antisocial behaviour of youths congregating at the youth shelter located in the recreation ground at Woodland Avenue and requested the Parish Council give consideration to re-siting the youth shelter to a more suitable location on the recreation ground.

Page 34	Ditto	No alterations
Page 35	Ditto	No alterations
Page 36	Maintenance of Open Spaces	No alterations
Page 37 (part)	Allotments	No alterations

RECOMMENDED: That, the suggested alterations made by the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, as set out above, be considered by the Council at its meeting to be held on Monday 13th July 2009.

Dr G Cramp left the meeting at 8.30 p.m.

7. Cricket at Manor Field

(a) The Committee considered a report from the Chairman of the New Ash Green and Hartley CC, in which he explained membership difficulties being experienced by the cricket club. He informed the Committee of progress to provide a practice net at Manor Field. Initial investigations would indicate the cost of providing a practice net should be in the region of £3,000 and the club was actively pursuing funding for the project, including the possibility of funding from the Parish Council. The cricket club had been informed of funding opportunities through the local Kent County Council members' fund. It was suggested that Meopham CC could be in a position to advise on other possible sources of funding.

RESOLVED: That, consideration of funding from Hartley Parish Council for the provision of a practice net be deferred at this stage.

(b) The Committee considered a report of recent difficulties encountered with the programmer on the two boilers caused by interruptions to the power supply in the Pavilion. It was reported that the incidence of power cuts throughout Hartley had increased of late and that interruptions to the power supply un-set the programmers controlling the boilers. This had caused inconvenience to the cricketers as it effected the hot water supply to the showers.

RESOLVED: That, advice be sought from the plumber responsible for installing the new boiler serving the showers in the Pavilion.

8. Cricket at Longfield Hill

(a) Meopham CC had nothing to report. Fixtures cards had been delivered to the Parish Office.

(b) The Committee was informed that several clumps of Japanese Knotweed were present along the southern boundary of the recreation ground next to Manor Farm, which amounted to 3 m² on Council owned land and 10 m² on land owned by the neighbouring farmer. The farmer has indicated verbally she would be willing to share the cost of its removal.

The Committee was advised of a course of action to eradicate the weed, which involved the cutting down and controlled removal of the weed from site, injecting the remaining stumps with a suitable herbicide on three occasions throughout the summer, followed by three annual visits during 2010, 2011 and 2012 to ensure its effective eradication.

One quotation had been received from a suitably qualified contractor. A further quotation was awaited.

The Committee was advised that eradication of this invasive weed required urgent attention.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to make arrangements for the eradication of the infestation of Japanese Knotweed at Longfield Hill in line with best value principles.

9. Football at Manor Field

There was no report from Hartley De Sales FC.

10. Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the terms of reference as approved by the Council at its Annual meeting in May 2009.

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

11. Financial Report

The Committee examined a financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 10th June 2009.

RESOLVED: That, the financial report, attached as appendix 2 to these minutes, be noted.

12. Pavilion

(a) Hall floor

The Clerk considered advice from the cleaner of the Pavilion on the treatment of the wood block floor in the hall. He had advised that the wood block floor should be stripped of old polish and cleaned before an application of three coats of Woodblock floor polish. After drying the floor should be buffed with a buffing floor machine. The total cost to undertaken this work would be £150.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the total sum of £150 from Mr D Cunningham to treat the wood block floor of the hall in the Pavilion, in line with his advice, be accepted.

(b) Sustainable Energy Fund

The Committee was advised of funding opportunities available from the E.ON Sustainable Energy Fund. Community groups, charities and not for profit organisations that benefit young people, elderly people of people in fuel poverty could apply for grants of upto £20,000 (90% of costs) to implement sustainable energy projects in community buildings. Joint proposals with local authorities could be considered, although community organisations should lead the application.

RESOLVED: That, the funding opportunities available from the E.ON Sustainable Energy Fund be received and noted.

(c) Emergency repairs

The Committee was advised of emergency action undertaken to repair a leaking stopcock in the kitchen at a cost of £90.

The Committee was further advised of repairs required to replace 3 no defective emergency lights in the changing rooms and referee's changing room and a defective fluorescent tube in the kitchen.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's action to undertake emergency repairs to a leaking stopcock and defective lighting in the Pavilion be confirmed.

13. Manor Field

(a) Meter Cupboard

The Committee was advised of notification from Sevenoaks District Council that the proposed works to relocate the electricity meter and enclosure onto land owned by the Council in Hartley

Burial Ground had been granted a lawful development certificate, (SE/09/00595/LDCPR). The proposed works fell within the provisions of 1995 General Permitted Order and therefore constituted permitted development.

The Committee was reminded of previous advice provided by NALC which stated that, provided the Parish Council had a right to relocate and replace the meter and create an easement, the Parish Council should instruct the District Valuer to obtain a valuation of the proposed legal easement and instruct a firm of solicitors, who specialised in conveyancing, to obtain an estimate of legal fees.

At a meeting of the Council held on 9th March 2009 it had been resolved that,

“(1) the Council’s solicitor be instructed to negotiate with solicitors acting on behalf of Messrs H F & J H Glover to draft an agreement and agree a nominal fee in respect of the creation of the easement and,

(2) subject to (1) above, the Council will consider meeting the reasonable legal costs incurred by Messrs H F & J H Glover.”

The Martin Tolhurst Partnership has confirmed it would be able to undertake the legal work in respect of the creation of an easement and provided the negotiations did not become protracted, estimate their fees to be £500 plus VAT and minor disbursements, plus Land Registry fees of approximately £80.

Solicitors acting on behalf of Messrs H F & J H Glover have advised their fees would be between £500 to £750 plus VAT and any disbursements, and that they would require their fees to be met whether or not the matter completed. They were willing to cap their fees at £750 plus VAT, at this stage.

The Committee expressed some concern that the solicitors acting on behalf of Messrs H F & J H Glover required the Council’s undertaking to pay their fees whether or not the matter completed. The Committee could not foresee any reason why the terms of a deed could not be agreed to the satisfaction of both parties.

The Committee was unsure whether Messrs H F & J H Glover required a fee in respect of the creation of an easement. If so, the advice of the District Valuer would be required to determine the value of the easement.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.55 p.m. to allow Mr Glover to address the Committee.

Mr Glover confirmed he would need to clarify matters with the family, but believed that no or very little consideration would be required for the creation of an easement.

The meeting resumed at 9.00 p.m.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be asked to establish whether any consideration would be required to create an easement permitting the electricity supply serving the Pavilion to pass under the 20 foot wide strip of land owned by Messrs H F & J H Glover at Manor Field.

(b) Athletics training/trim trail

The Committee considered a draft plan showing the position and types of trim trail equipment that could be provided at Manor Field to form an extended training area for use by local sports clubs or for use by visitors to the field for informal training or recreation.

Members generally felt that before the matter could be pursued support for the project should be demonstrated from the community.

RESOLVED: That, consideration of the provision of trim trail equipment at Manor Field be deferred at this stage.

(c) New beech hedge

The Chairman reported on works required to the area of land on the field side of the new beech hedge in order to integrate this area into the rest of the field. The area had been harrowed, but would require additional work involving approximately four grass cuts using a suitable mower. Mr Westwood would be able to undertake this work at a cost of £150, which would include the cost of harrowing.

Furthermore the Committee was reminded that a quotation for the sum of £55 from T D Munday to rake the area next to the beech hedge to form a level surface and seed had recently been accepted, but on further inspection it had become apparent that the area would require additional work. The Committee was advised that the area required levelling by using top soil from the existing spoil heap located behind the Pavilion. T D Munday had estimated the additional costs would be in the region of £25.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) Mr Westwood be asked to cut the grass next to the beech hedge from Foxborough Wood to the Pavilion using an appropriate mower, as required, in order that the ground located adjacent to the new beech hedge could be integrated into the rest of the field at a cost of £150 plus VAT; and

(2) the order placed with T D Munday to rake and seed the ground next the beech hedge be extended to include levelling the surface of the ground by using the top soil from the spoil heap located at the rear of the Pavilion and applying a selective weedkiller to the area, when appropriate.

(d) Fertilizer

The Committee felt the field would benefit from an application of fertilizer and that this work should be carried out as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be authorised upto a sum not exceeding £200 to make arrangements for Manor Field to be fertilised.

(e) Fence repairs

The Committee considered a quotation to undertake fence repairs to the boundary fence in the north east corner of Manor Field.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £80 from T D Munday to repair the existing spile fence in the north-east corner of Manor Field next to the kissing gate be accepted.

14. Hartley Wood

(a) Motorbikes – Beechlands Close

It was reported that the Council's request for consideration to be given to the installation of fencing and a motorbike inhibitor on highway land at the end of Beechlands Close had been referred to the County Council's Partnership Officer.

The Committee was advised of an e mail dated 11th June 2009 from the County Council's Partnership Officer. The Committee noted that the content of the e mail was not entirely accurate. The Clerk reported the matter had been taken up with the County Council's Partnership Officer. The Clerk had offered to meet the County Council's Partnership Officer on site.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred.

(b) Foul drains

The Committee was advised of an e mail dated 18th May 2009 from Thames Water informing of work undertaken to clear the foul drains in Springcroft and Beechlands Close. Thames Water had attended site on 15th February 2009 to clear a build up of fat and grease from the public sewer in Beechlands Close. Investigations were on-going into the problems associated with the foul drain from Springcroft. A TV survey had established the foul drain was blocked due to a build up of debris. Thames Water intended to cut the tree roots protruding into the drain during week commencing 18th May 2009.

RESOLVED: That, the reported be noted.

(c) Arboricultural survey

It was reported that three quotations had been invited to undertake safety works to trees on land owned by the Parish Council in Hartley Wood, as recommended by consultants, Quaife Woodlands, in a report dated April 2009.

Royal Mail had returned one set of documents relating to the invitation to provide a quotation for the safety treework. The Committee examined two quotations received in respect of the works, as set out below.

Contractor	Quotation sum	Insurance (public & products liability)
Down to Earth Trees Ltd	£960.00 plus VAT	£ 5m
Above the Canopy	£1,086.96 plus VAT	£ 5m

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £960.00 plus VAT from Down to Earth Trees Ltd to undertake safety works to 4 no trees on land owned by the Council in Hartley Wood, as identified by consultants, Quaife Woodlands in a report dated April 2009, be accepted.

15. Billings Hill Shaw

New entrance

The Committee was advised that quotations to supply and install a “Rambler” style gate in the south-west corner of Billings Hill Shaw had been invited from five contractors. It was reported that only one contractor had returned a quotation.

The Committee was reminded of Financial Regulation 11.1 (j) which allows the Council to make such arrangements as it thinks fit for the procurement of goods, works or services, if following the quotation process insufficient number of quotations are received.

RECOMMENDED: That, the quotation for the sum of £379.00 plus VAT from Ian Paternoster to supply and fit a “Rambler” self closing pedestrian gate in the south-west corner of Billings Hill Shaw be accepted.

16. Chantry Avenue

It was reported that concerns had been raised by a resident of Chantry Avenue about the safety of three horse chestnut trees in the recreation ground at Chantry Avenue. A local tree surgeon was asked to inspect the trees in the recreation ground. The tree surgeon reported that one of the horse chestnut trees had split approximately 1½ metres from the ground and additionally was splitting and shedding bark from the ground level to crown break. Furthermore bleeding was observed 1½ metres from ground level, indicating bleeding canker which is terminal in a tree of this species. The tree surgeon recommended the tree be removed and the stump ground out. The other two horse chestnut trees were found to be in sound condition.

Three quotations were invited, as set out below:

Austin Treework for the sum of £180 plus VAT

Down to Earth Trees Ltd for the sum of £297 plus VAT

Above the Canopy for the sum of £319.15 plus VAT

Due to the urgency of the work and pursuant to Financial Regulation 3.3 the quotation from Austin Treework for the total sum of £180 plus VAT was accepted

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

17. Playgrounds

(a) Training day

The Committee was informed of a training day for operatives responsible for the inspection of play equipment. The training day was being offered by Swanley Town Council sometime between July and September at a cost of £60 to £100. The Committee was reminded that the Council's three playgrounds were visually inspected on a weekly basis by Mr Munday as part of the routine maintenance contract and his attendance on a training day would be impracticable as it would require him to lose a day's work.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) Quarterly Operational Inspection

The Committee considered a report of a quarterly operational inspection undertaken by Ms Maria Cook of Craighene Ltd on 28th May 2009 on the Council's three playgrounds. The Committee noted that the report did not contain any medium or high risk matters requiring attention. Mr Munday had been requested to attend to or monitor a number of minor and low risk matters

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

18. Woodland Avenue

It was reported that vegetation behind the play area at Woodland Avenue was protruding through the fence into the play area causing a hazard. The Clerk had made arrangements for the vegetation to be cut back and made safe.

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

19. Woodland Avenue playground refurbishment

(a) The Committee considered a report on a meeting held on 6th May 2009 with the funding officer from Kent County Council.

RESOLVED: That, the report be received and noted.

(b) The Committee was advised of an e mail dated 28th May 2009 from Sevenoaks District Council informing of government funding through the "Playbuilder" fund managed by Kent County Council. The District Council had asked for an expression of interests from town and parish councils wishing to improve or build a play area in their parish during the year April 2010 – March 2011. The funding was subject to a number of criteria, set out in the e mail. It was reported that due to the deadline for responses, the Clerk had registered an expression of interest in respect of the Woodland Avenue playground refurbishment.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the Clerk's actions be confirmed and (2) Cllr Sewell be appointed to the sub committee established to investigate the feasibility of refurbishing the Woodland Avenue playground.

20. Gorse Wood

It was reported that Austin Treework had notified the Council of tree work to be undertaken to trees overhanging the rear boundary of the property known as The Malt House, Gorsewood Road from Gorse Wood and that in line with good arboricultural procedure the overhanging

branches had been cut back to a suitable point on the trees. The householder would be paying for the work. The work had been authorised by the Clerk and completed on 14th May 2009.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk's actions be confirmed.

21. Rectory Meadow

(a) It was reported that the Clerk had made arrangements for the area around the entrance to Rectory Meadow off Bancks side to be strimmed and cleared of nettle.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk's actions be confirmed.

(b) The Committee was reminded that the North West Kent Countryside Partnership had, last year, carefully dug out bramble located in the meadow, but the bramble was showing signs of returning. The Committee was advised that the only effective method of eradication would be to carefully paint selective weedkiller on the bramble, taking care to avoid the wildflowers.

RESOLVED: That, the services of the North West Kent Countryside Partnership (NWKCP) be employed to undertake one additional day's work to eradicate the bramble in the meadow by carefully applying selective weedkiller on the bramble in the meadow.

22. Foxborough Wood

(a) It was reported that the owners of Hartley Court had not responded to a number of letters or attempts to contact them by telephone in respect of the alleged encroachment onto land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood. The Committee expressed a view that it wished to see the matter resolved by the autumn.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be pursued.

(b) The Committee was informed that five contractors had been invited to submit quotations in respect of the provision of a new chestnut paling fence between The Court Cottage and land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood. It was reported that to date only one quotation had been received.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred pending the receipt of further quotations.

23. Dog bin

The Committee considered a request from a member of the public for the installation of a dog bin at the entrance of Hartley Wood at the end of Gorsewood Road. The Committee felt it would not be necessary at this location.

RESOLVED: That, the request be declined.

Cllr Barnett withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on minute item 24 (a) and 24 (b).

24. Allotments

(a) Rules and regulations

The Committee reviewed the rules and regulations relating to the allotments at Woodland Avenue. The Committee considered rules should be introduced to deal with responsibilities for the maintenance of borders and pathways and the keeping of livestock

RESOLVED: That, a draft showing proposed amendments to the rules and regulations be brought back for consideration at the next meeting.

(b) Taps

The Committee was advised of a leaking tap at the allotments and arrangements made by the Clerk for its repair at a cost of £8.60.

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

Cllr Barnett returned to the meeting.

25. Date of next meeting

Monday 27th July 2009 at 7.30 p.m. in Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 10.00 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, ***woodland**, playing fields, recreation grounds, play grounds ***owned by the Council**, and such land owned by the Council at the 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 and General Purposes Committee 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.

Approved by Council on 11th May 2009

****proposed insertions shown in bold italics***

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	450.00	-	725.00	129.22	145.78
6 Open Spaces	2,590.00	677.00	26,050.00	5,049.86	19,087.14
7 Manor Field Pavilion	2,000.00	462.00	8,900.00	2,393.86	4,968.14
NET TOTAL	5,040.00	1,139.00	35,675.00	7,572.94	24,201.06
Total for ALL Cost Centres		56,230.16		31,697.74	
V.A.T.		-		1,076.83	
GROSS TOTAL		56230.16		32,774.57	