

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE HELD ON 8th JULY 2009 AT 10.45 a.m.
AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr C Alford
Cllr A Barnett
Cllr R Coates
Cllr Mrs P Cole
Cllr J Gaywood
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr B Ramsay (Chairman)
Cllr V Sewell (*left the meeting at 11.20 a.m.*)

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
PCSO R Rowbottom
6 members of the public

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs Cole declared a personal and prejudicial interest under minute item 4 in respect of the youth shelter, as her private residence was located opposite the youth shelter located at the Woodland Avenue recreation ground and, after making representations, withdrew from the meeting during further discussion and voting on the matter.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 1st June 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Youth Shelter

The meeting was adjourned at 10.50 a.m. to allow a resident of Gorsewood Road to address the Committee. The resident was speaking on behalf of a number of residents from Gorsewood Road who were experiencing problems associated with the anti-social behaviour of youths congregating around the youth shelter and in Gorse Wood.

She presented a log detailing the anti-social behaviour since 18th June 2009. The anti-social behaviour recorded showed incidents of motorbike activity, criminal damage, trespass, loud music and noise. The log referred to litter, cans, bottles and broken glass around the youth shelter. The resident referred to Sevenoaks District Council's Community Safety Strategy. She felt the Parish Council had a responsibility to manage its land to reflect the aims contained in the District Council's Community Safety Strategy. She considered the secluded location of the youth shelter contributed to the anti-social behaviour being experienced by residents of Gorsewood Road and requested the Council give consideration to its relocation.

Cllr Mrs Cole expressed her views on residents' requests to re-site the youth shelter. Cllr Mrs Cole withdrew from the meeting.

PCSO Rowbottom explained that the Police Tactical Team could be deployed to work, temporarily, in areas known to have particular problems.

The meeting resumed at 10.57 a.m.

The Committee considered a report detailing views expressed by the youth worker in response to the issues raised by residents in respect of the anti-social behaviour around

the youth shelter and in the woods. The Youth Worker felt that the youth shelter should not be removed as young people would have no meeting point. This was particularly important since the closure of the youth centre in Longfield a few years ago which had been well attended by Hartley young people. The Youth Worker was not convinced that re-siting the youth shelter would solve the problems of antisocial behaviour affecting residents of Gorsewood Road and their property. The Committee was reminded that the youth shelter had been sited on the edge of the recreation ground near the woods following guidance issued by the Police at that time.

The Committee was advised the estimated cost to re-locate the youth shelter, including the provisions of a new concrete base, would be in the region of £2,500. This did not include disposals costs of the old concrete base. The manufacturer of youth shelter had investigated whether any measures could be taken to deaden the noise created by young people banging on the metal roof, but no solutions had been found which would guarantee noise reduction and be vandal proof.

The Committee was informed that an Environmental Visual Audit had been carried out in Gorse Wood, including the area surrounding the youth shelter, on 7th July 2009. Those attending had included the Crime Reduction and Architectural Liaison Officer for West Kent Police, local Neighbourhood Beat Officer, Kent Fire & Rescue Services, Youth Workers, Sevenoaks District Council, local District Council members, Parish Councillors and the resident of Waverley, Gorsewood Road. It was reported that the issues highlighted during the audit would be compiled into an action plan by Sevenoaks District Council.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred pending receipt of the action plan being prepared by Sevenoaks District Council following the Environmental Visual Audit by strategic partners on 7th July 2009.

Cllr Sewell left the meeting at 11.20 a.m.

Cllr Mrs Cole returned to the meeting at 11.20 a.m.

5. Internal audit for the year ending 31st March 2009

The Committee examined the internal auditor's report and supporting documentation in respect of the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2009. The report contained no recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the internal auditor's report for the year ended 31st March 2009 be noted.

6. Accounts for the year ended 31st march 2009

The Committee was advised that an elector had written to the District Auditor in respect of a newsletter published by the Council in April 2008 relating to the Hartley Wood Village Green application and a public meeting.

RESOLVED: That, the correspondence by noted.

7. Receipts and payments

The Committee reviewed the receipts and payments for the period 1st April 2009 to 2nd July 2009.

RESOLVED: That, the summary of receipts and payments for the period 1st April 2009 to 2nd July 2009 be noted.

8. Investments

The Committee considered a report on the Council's investments. The Committee expressed its dissatisfaction with the rate of interest offered by Barclays Bank.

RESOLVED: That, investigations be undertaken on investment options available to the Council to secure a better rate of return on its investments.

9. Northfield – draft lease

The Committee examined a draft lease between New Ash Green Village Association, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council, Hartley Parish Council and EDF in respect of a sub-station site and easements on Northfield.

The Committee was informed that before disposal of an interest in land could be progressed, notice of the parish councils' intentions should be advertised in a newspaper over two consecutive weeks and any objections raised considered by the parish councils.

RECOMMENDED: That, the draft lease between New Ash Green Village Association, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council, Hartley Parish Council and EDF in respect of a sub-station site and easements on Northfield be approved, subject to:

- (1) corrections to the address of the Hartley Parish Council offices,
- (2) clarification within the lease that the access road to the sub-station would not be surfaced and;
- (3) consideration of any objections received following notice of the parish councils intentions being placed in a newspaper over two consecutive weeks.

10. Northfield – cutting the meadow for a hay crop

The Committee considered a report on the cutting of the meadow for a hay crop on Northfield undertaken on 27th and 28th June 2009. The cut had been carried out contrary to the terms of the contract which required the meadow to be cut from mid July and preferably before the start of the school summer holidays. At an extraordinary meeting of the Northfield Management Committee held on 3rd July 2009, the contractor had acknowledged the company had cut the meadow too early and apologised to the Northfield Management Committee. It was confirmed that one complaint from a member of the public had been received. It was reported that the Northfield Management Committee had resolved;

- to write to Natural England to report the early cropping of the hay;
- to reserve the Northfield Management Committee's position with regard to the continuation of the contract;
- to advise the contractor that the Northfield Management Committee holds them responsible for any consequences arising from their actions;
- to require the contractor return the access key of the Church Road entrance to the Clerk of Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council.
- to contact and advise the complainant of the action taken by the Northfield Management Committee.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

11. Hartley W.I. Hall

The Committee considered a report setting out progress to transfer the Hartley W I Hall to the Parish Council and execute a trust deed. The Committee acknowledged the Council had no alternative but to retain the services of Martin Tolhurst Solicitors to administer the fee account of the Hartley W.I. Solicitor.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the report be received and noted;

(2) the services of Martin Tolhurst Partnership be retained to administer the fee account of the Hartley WI solicitor; and

(3) the Clerk's action to seek clarification of the fee accounts presented by the Hartley W.I. to Martin Tolhurst Solicitors for payment be confirmed.

12. Kent Police

The Committee was advised that, as from 17th June 2009, PCSO Rachel Rowbottom had joined the police team covering the area of Ash, Hartley, Hodsoll Street and New Ash Green.

The Committee was informed that PCSO Charlie Maycock would be leaving her position at the beginning of August to take up an appointment as a police officer in the Metropolitan Police.

RESOLVED: That, the reports be noted.

13. Youth Worker

The Committee was informed of the resignation of HAWK Youth Worker, Glenn Walsh, who would be taking up new employment in youth work at Swanley. It was reported the position would be advertised in the local press. The closing date for applications would be 24th July 2009, with interviews being held on 28th July 2009.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

14. Power of well-being

(a) The Committee was informed that Cllrs Abraham and Granger had attended the power of well-being training event on 24th June 2009 at Sevenoaks Town Council offices and were now qualified in the use of the power of well-being.

RESOLVED: That, a report on Cllr Abraham and Granger's attendance at the wellbeing training event be deferred.

(b) The Committee was advised that the Clerk had passed Section 7, Power of Well-Being, Certificate in Local Council Administration 2008, which fulfilled the eligibility criteria for a qualified clerk as prescribed in the Parish Councils (Power to Promote Well-Being)(Prescribed Conditions) Order 2008.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

15. Kent LINK

The Committee considered an invitation to join the Kent Local Involvement Network, (LINK). The Committee was advised that LINK was an independent network of local people and community groups working to influence local health and social care services and that there was no charge to join the organisation.

RESOLVED: That, the invitation be accepted.

16. Kent Alcohol Strategy

The Committee considered the Kent Alcohol Strategy (draft v6). Members considered the report did not address the effect of relaxed licensing laws on the misuse of alcohol.

RESOLVED: That, the Kent Alcohol Strategy be welcomed.

17. Date of the next meeting

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee