

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 24th SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mrs P Cole
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby (Presiding Chairman)
Cllr V Sewell

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Mr G Flint (Hartley De Sales FC)
4 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr A Barnett, Cllr J Gaywood, Cllr D Graeme, Cllr S Granger and Mr M Quantrill (New Ash Green & Hartley CC).

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute items 13 and 21 in respect of Hartley Wood, as she owned land and property close to Hartley Wood.

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute 12 in respect of the allotments, as one of the allotment holders was an acquaintance.

Cllr Mrs P Cole declared a personal interest under minute item 15 in respect of treework at Billings Hill Shaw, as she knew the tenant of Hartley Grange Cottage.

Cllr Mrs P Cole declared a personal interest under minute item 16 in respect of the Woodland Avenue playground refurbishment, as her private residence was located opposite the playing field.

Cllr V Sewell declared a personal interest under minute item 10 (a) in respect of the painting of the storage container, as he worked for a company which supplied Sika Icosit 6630 paint.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 27th July 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Cricket at Manor Field

The Committee considered an e mail dated 22nd September 2009 from the Chairman of the New Ash Green & Hartley CC reporting on the performance of the teams throughout the season. The end of season work to the cricket square would take place on 2nd October. A planning application for the practice net base had been submitted and the Cricket Club was actively fundraising for the base which, all being well, should be installed for the beginning of the 2010 season.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

5. Cricket at Longfield Hill

There was no report from Meopham CC.

6. Football at Manor Field

(a) Mr Flint reported that the football pitches at Manor Field were in excellent condition.

The Committee was advised that Longfield Tigers had approached the Council regarding the provision of a football pitch at Longfield Hill recreation ground to temporarily replace the pitch that had been lost due to the current construction works at Longfield Academy. The

Committee felt the recreation ground at Longfield Hill was too small to accommodate a junior football pitch. It was suggested that the training pitch at Manor Field could be suitable, although it was unclear whether the width of the training pitch would meet the requirements of the league. Mr Flint felt that Hartley De Sales FC would be happy with this arrangement, provided the two football clubs could liaise over fixtures to avoid any clashes, but confirmed he would raise the matter at Hartley De Sales' committee meeting.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) Longfield Tigers be advised that the ground at Longfield Hill would be too small to accommodate a junior football pitch;

(2) Longfield Tigers be offered the use of the training pitch at Manor Field for the 2009/10 season on a temporary basis and on similar terms to that offered to Hartley De Sales; and

(3) subject to acceptance of the terms and conditions in (2) above, Longfield Tigers be asked to liaise with Hartley De Sales FC to avoid any clashes with the fixtures.

(b) The Committee considered the football fees for the 2009/10 season.

RECOMMENDED: That, the following charges for the use of the football pitches at Manor Field for the 2009/10 season be approved:

(a) £350 per team for the use of the senior pitch

(b) £300 per team for the use of the junior pitch (in front of the Pavilion)

Mr Flint left the meeting at 7.45 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 18th September 2009.

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

8. Budget 2010/11

The Committee considered the draft budget in respect of the allotments, open spaces and Pavilion for the financial year 2010/11.

RESOLVED: That the draft budget for 2010/11, attached as appendix 2 to these minutes, be submitted to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for consideration.

9. Pavilion

Programmer on the boiler serving the showers

The Committee was informed of difficulties recently experienced with the hot water services to the showers. The plumber had advised that the programmer operating the boiler serving the hot water to the showers had an integral battery which, due to its age, no longer functioned and therefore could not provide a backup when there was an interruption to the power supply at the Pavilion.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be authorised upto a sum of £300 to make arrangements for the supply and fitting of a new programmer to the boiler serving the hot water services to the showers.

10. Manor Field

(a) Storage container

The Committee was advised that the contractor employed to re-paint the storage container had withdrawn his offer. The contractor had been misinformed by the supplier of the paint about its cost when preparing his quotation.

RESOLVED: That, further quotations be sought to re-paint the external surfaces of the storage container.

(b) Meter Cupboard

The Committee considered a report on progress to create an easement in connection with the re-siting of the meter cupboard from land owned by Messrs H F & J H Glover onto land owned by the Council in Hartley Burial Ground.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(c) Hawthorn hedge

The Committee considered a quotation to cut the Hawthorn hedge along the northern boundary of Manor Field. Two other contractors had been invited to submit quotations but none had been received. The Committee noted that the contractor who had submitted a quotation had cut the hedge previously and that the Council had been satisfied with the quality of his work.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £250 plus VAT to dress the hedge top and Manor Field side of the Hawthorn hedge on the northern boundary of Manor Field, reducing the hedge to the height of the cricket screen, be accepted.

(d) Oak trees

The Committee considered the following quotations to lift the canopy of the Oak trees in Manor Field:

Austin Treework for the sum of £80 plus VAT to lift the canopy of 2 no Oak trees, remove and dispose of all arisings.

Austin Treework for the sum of £190.00 plus VAT to lift the canopy of 7 no Oak trees, remove and dispose of all arisings.

Above the Canopy for the sum of £250 including VAT to lift the lower canopy of 2 no Oak trees to approx 1.5 metres. The contractor advised the work should be undertaken in stages as the trees could suffer from ring barking due to the overall scale of the wounds created by the removal of large branches.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £80 plus VAT from Austin Treework to lift the canopy of 2 no Oak trees, remove and dispose of all arisings be accepted.

11. Order of business

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to Standing Order 26 (d) the order of business be altered so that the agenda item relating to the allotments be taken as the next item of business.

12. Allotments

(a) The Committee considered a report on re-structuring the allotment rents. At a meeting of the Council held on 16th October 2008 it had been agreed to increase the allotment rents for the period 2009/10 by the rate of inflation plus a surcharge in the region of £3 to £5 per allotment plot, charged on a pro rata basis. The surcharge of £3 to £5 equated approximately to a 33% increase in rental charges. At that time the Council had expressed the view that it

wished the income from the allotments to meet more fairly the outgoings attributed to the running of the allotments and that in order to achieve this allotment rents would need to be increased above the rate of inflation.

On further investigation it became evident that the size of the plots had altered over the years. It had therefore been necessary to measure each allotment plot and it was assessed that the basic rental charge for the period 2009/10 should be 0.12 p per sq m. Any subsequent increases could then be applied as a percentage of the actual size of the plot, which would be a more equitable rental structure.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the report setting out the re-structuring of the allotment rents to enable rents to be set based on the actual area of each allotment plot be approved and adopted;

(2) the basic rental charge for the allotments for the period 2009/10 be set at 0.12p per sq m and that an inflationary rate of 2% be applied to each allotment, plus a 33% surcharge; and

(3) the allotment rents for the period 2010/11 be increased by the rate of inflation.

(b) The Committee considered a report on the condition of a four allotment plots. Allotment plot numbers 1 and 32 were not being cultivated, whilst allotment plot numbers 2 and 44 were untidy.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.15 p.m. to allow two allotment holders to address the committee.

The allotment holders reported a leaking tap at the water point off Woodland Avenue and complained about bonfires in the allotments which were causing a nuisance to other allotment holders and residents. They requested allotments holders be asked to dispose of their rubbish responsibly and not to dump rubbish on other allotment plots. It was suggested a meeting of the allotment holders could be beneficial.

The meeting resumed at 8.25 p.m.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) arrangements be made to repair the leaking tap;

(2) allotment holders be asked to dispose of their rubbish responsibly and to abide by the rules and regulations relating to the allotments in respect of the lighting of bonfires; and

(3) a meeting of the allotment holders be arranged.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the Council commence proceedings to terminate the allotment agreements of plot numbers 1 and 32; and

(2) allotment holders of plots numbers 2 and 44 be contacted about the condition of their allotment plots.

13. Hartley Wood

Motorbikes – Beechlands Close

The Committee was advised of an e mail dated 12th August 2009 from the County Council's Partnership Officer expressing concerns about the proposal to install a motorbike inhibitor and fencing which in his opinion could give rise to a possible legal challenge from the landowners of the plot of woodland in Hartley Wood beyond the turning area in Beechlands Close.

RECOMMENDED: That, the e mail dated 12th August 2009 from the County Council's Partnership Officer be noted and no further action be taken.

14. Gorse Wood

The Committee considered a letter dated 4th August 2009 from residents at The Spindles, Gorsewood Road requesting pruning and pollarding of trees located in Gorse Wood.

The Committee was reminded of treework undertaken in 2004 to reduce the crown by 50% of two groups of Hornbeams. A firm of surveyors had been engaged by the owners of The Spindles to investigate and report on movement to the external and internal walls. The surveyors, in their report of 12th March 2004, concluded that the majority of the movement was likely to be the result of general thermal expansion of the structure exaggerated by a general lack of expansion joints. The surveyor had expressed concern about a number of large mature trees in close proximity of the external walls and recommended that they be regularly pruned and pollarded to ensure no significant effect on the foundations.

The Committee was reminded of previous requests from other residents whose rear gardens backed onto Gorse Wood to prune and reduce trees located on Council land in Gorse Wood which had been refused.

The Committee was advised that further quantified tree risk assessments would be required in Gorse Wood

RESOLVED: That,

(1) further expert opinion be sought on the trees located on Council land in Gorse Wood and in close proximity to property at The Spindles, Gorsewood Road and that this be undertaken in conjunction with the quantified tree risk assessment to be undertaken in Gorse Wood: and

(2) the residents at The Spindles be informed that the Council would have no objection to any branches of trees in Gorse Wood and overhanging their property at The Spindles from being cut back to the boundary line.

15. Billings Hill Shaw

The Committee was advised of issues relating to two trees at Billings Hill Shaw, both of which were protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The Committee was informed of advice from two tree surgeons:

(1) A mature Ash tree to the west of the entrance to Billings Hill Shaw had two stems which could result in the front stem splitting from the trunk.

(2) A semi uprooted Ash tree to the east of the entrance to Billings Hill Shaw was wedged between trees. The tree surgeons did not believe the tree would move easily, but advised other trees in that locality required pruning back from an overhead telephone cable. Any treework would require the dismantling and reinstatement of the overhead telephone cable.

RESOLVED: That, a meeting with the Arboricultural Officer at Sevenoaks District Council be arranged to discuss the most appropriate treatment to the two trees.

16. Woodland Avenue playground refurbishment

The Committee examined a report on the outcome of consultations undertaken with parents and young people during the summer scheme events at Woodland Avenue on 28th July 2009 –

In the Zone, organised by Sevenoaks District Council, and on 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th August – Playdays, organised by West Kent Xtra.

The Committee felt that the opinion of the Council's Playground Inspector, Ms Maria Cook should be sought on any forthcoming refurbishment scheme.

The Committee considered that parents who had expressed an interest in getting more involved with the refurbishment project at the summer scheme play day events could be contacted.

RESOLVED: That, the sub committee established to investigate the Woodland Avenue playground refurbishment be asked to come forward with a suitable scheme based on the outcome of consultations undertaken with residents through the Council's newsletter and website, with school children at the two local Primary Schools and at the summer scheme play days events and that those parents who had expressed an interest in getting involved with the project be invited to a discussion of the plan.

17. Playground

Annual Inspection report

The Committee examined the Annual Inspection report of the Council's three playgrounds undertaken on 1st September 2009. The report had highlighted one medium risk at Longfield Hill recreation ground relating to algae growth on the safety surface under the slide. Mr Munday had been asked to clean the surface in line with the Playground Inspector's recommendation.

Accident

The Clerk reported on an accident that had occurred on the slide at Woodland Avenue on Sunday 20th September 2009. Packing tape had been stuck to the shute of the slide and as result had effected the sliding action down the slide. The incident was reported to the Parish Council on Monday 21st September 2009 and shute cleaned on Tuesday 22nd September 2009. The Committee was shown photographs of the slide after the remedial work had been completed. The Committee was advised that the Council's insurers had been informed of the incident.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Annual Inspection report of the Council's three playgrounds undertaken on 1st September 2009 be received and noted and the action taken in relation to the medium risk defect at Longfield Hill recreation ground be confirmed; and

(2) the report of the accident at Woodland Avenue play area on 20th September 2009 be noted and the Clerk's actions be confirmed.

18. Hoselands Green

The Committee considered three quotations in respect of treework at Hoselands Green:

Contractor	Work	Quotation sum
Down to Earth	Prune back crowns of 11 no trees to approx 1 metre from kerb edge of road Remove dead branches Lift crown of Lime tree by 2 metres	£840 plus VAT
Austin Treework	Cut back various trees to 1 metre from the footpath kerb, remove dead wood and lift the canopy of 1 no	£750 plus VAT

	Lime tree to 2 metre from ground level	
Above the Canopy	Reduce canopies back be approximately within the kerb line towards the centre of the road. Remove all dead wood above 6 cm in dia. Lift lower canopy to approx 2 metres over grassed area	£1,500 incl VAT

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £750 plus VAT from Austin Treework to cut back various trees to 1 metre from the footpath kerb, remove dead wood and lift the canopy of 1 no Lime tree to 2 metre from ground level at Hoselands Green be accepted.

19. Foxborough Wood

It was reported that no progress had been made to contact the owners of Hartley Court in respect of the alleged encroachment onto land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood.

In view of the proposed programme of works to extend quantified tree risk assessments to all land owned by the Parish Council, it was felt that the issues relating to marking the boundaries of land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood should be progressed.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Clerk continue to contact the owners of Hartley Court in respect of the alleged encroachment onto land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood; and

(2) quotations be sought to mark the boundaries of land owned by the Council in Foxborough Wood by means of ground anchors in advance of undertaking a quantified tree risk assessment.

20. Tree management

The Committee considered extending the programme of quantified tree risk assessments to other areas of woodland owned or managed by the Council, including Foxborough Wood, Rectory Meadow, Billings Hill Shaw, Chantry Avenue, Woodland Avenue, Manor Field, Hoselands Green, Longfield Hill, Hartley Green, Hartley Court Green, Burial Ground and Closed Churchyard.

The Committee felt that a phased programme should be introduced, in which case the areas of woodland requiring quantified tree risk assessments could be grouped together according to their priority and ease of assessment.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred to the next meeting pending further investigations.

21. Hartley Wood

The Committee considered whether there would be any benefits to the placing of byelaws on land owned by Hartley Parish Council in Hartley Wood. The Committee noted that the Parish Council's land in Hartley Wood was located amongst a wider area of woodland and felt that due to the open and unrestricted nature of the woodland it would be impossible to enforce any byelaws.

RECOMMENDED: That, no further action be taken to place byelaws on land owned by Hartley Parish Council in Hartley Wood.

22. Date of next meeting

Thursday 26th November 2009 at 7.30 p.m. in Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 9.35 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	450.00	-	725.00	129.22	145.78
6 Open Spaces	2,590.00	977.00	26,050.00	12,182.41	12,254.59
7 Manor Field Pavilion	2,000.00	1531	8,900.00	3,535.89	4,895.11
NET TOTAL	5,040.00	2,508.00	35,675.00	15847.52	17,295.48
Total for ALL Cost Centres		60,309.35		64,302.59	
V.A.T.		1,154.12		2,633.13	
GROSS TOTAL		61,463.47		66,935.72	

Expenditure	Budget 2009/10	Spent so far (upto Sept 09) (Column C)	Projected expenditure to 31st March 2010 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2010/11	Notes
Allotments						
Maintenance	225.00	8.60	150.00	158.60	225.00	
Rent	200.00	100.00	100.00	200.00	200.00	
Water	300.00	20.62	280.00	300.62	300.00	
SUB TOTAL	725.00	129.22	530.00	659.22	725.00	
Open Spaces						
Grass cutting	4,750.00	3,055.00	1,000.00	4,055.00	4,500.00	Contract re-let 2010
Gang mowing	2,500.00	1,800.00	360.00	2,160.00	2,250.00	Contract re-let 2010
General maintenance	4,400.00	991.00	3,500.00	4,491.00	4,500.00	Extend tree risk assessment programme
Routine maintenance contract	6,500.00	3,057.00	3,057.00	6,114.00	6,500.00	
Playground maintenance	2,000.00	115.00	500.00	615.00	2,000.00	
Playground inspection	650.00	300.00	300.00	600.00	650.00	
Rubbish clearance	500.00	-	500.00	500.00	500.00	Gorse Wood
Dog bins	1,400.00	673.40	673.40	1,346.80	1,500.00	Based on 7 no bins
Rectory Meadow	2,000.00	570.00	1,175.00	1,745.00	2,250.00	NWKCP £175/day Grass cutting £270/cut
Hartley Wood Pond	750.00	475.00	960.00	1,435.00	750.00	Survey £475 Treework £960
	-	-	-	-	-	

Layby	-	-	-	-	-	
Miscellaneous expenses	200.00	858.16	-	858.16	200.00	Seat BHS £394.16 Rambler gate £379
Cricket	250.00	170.00	-	170.00	250.00	Rolling
Football	150.00	117.85	75.00	192.85	150.00	Pitchmarker
SUB TOTAL	26,050.00	12,182.41	12,100.40	24,282.81	26,000.00	

Expenditure	Budget	Spent so far	Projected	Estimate for	Budget	Notes
	2009/10	(upto Sept 09) (Column C)	expenditure to 31st March 2010 (Column D)	year (Column C + Column D)	2010/11	
Manor Field Pavilion						
Cesspool	850.00	422.00	435.00	857.00	950.00	09/10 6 no empties per year @ £145 per empty
Calor gas	1,100.00	36.66	1,050.00	1,086.66	1,200.00	
Electricity	700.00	317.60	325.00	642.60	700.00	
Water	150.00	29.12	75.00	104.12	150.00	
Rates	600.00	601.25	-	601.25	625.00	
Cleaning	1,350.00	830.00	540.00	1,370.00	1,450.00	
Cleaning materials	100.00	42.98	50.00	92.98	100.00	
Maintenance	2,500.00	675.00	1,750.00	2,425.00	2,500.00	Paint storage container/programmer
Testing	1,300.00	581.28	250.00	831.28	900.00	5 year fixed wiring test undertaken in 2009/10
Miscellaneous	250.00	-	250.00	250.00	250.00	
SUB TOTAL	8,900.00	3,535.89	4,725.00	8,260.89	8,825.00	

Income	Budget 2009/10	Received so far (upto Sept 09) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2010 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2010/11	Notes
Allotments						
Rent	450.00	-	600.00	600.00	600.00	09/10 inflationary increase in rent plus surcharge £3/£5
SUB TOTAL	450.00	-	600.00	600.00	600.00	

Income	Budget 2009/10	Received so far (upto Sept 09) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2010 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2010/11	Notes
Open Spaces						
Rectory Meadow	60.00	-	-	-	-	* £900 NAG & Hartley CC (2009 and 2010 seasons)
Cricket *	1,380.00	300.00	1,080.00	1,380.00	1,380.00	* £480 Meopham CC (rent fixed to 2012)
Football **	1,150.00	677.00	1,200.00	1,877.00	1,200.00	** 2008/09 fees - £325/team full size pitch &
SUB TOTAL	2,590.00	977.00	2,280.00	3,257.00	2,580.00	** £275/team junior pitch

Income	Budget 2009/10	Received so far (upto Sept 08) (Column C)	Projected income to 31st March 2009 (Column D)	Estimate for year (Column C + Column D)	Budget 2010/11	Notes
Manor Field Pavilion						
Lettings	2,000.00	994.00	1,000.00	1,994.00	2,000.00	
Yoga	-	365.00	200.00	565.00	500.00	
Art Group	-	96.00	-	96.00	-	
SUB TOTAL	2,000.00	1,455.00	1,200.00	2,655.00	2,500.00	

* Testing

Water temp	240.00
Chlorination	180.00
Legionella	200.00
PAT	50.00
Fire extinguishers	75.00
Fixed wiring	<u>500.00</u>
	<u>1,245.00</u>