

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 5th AUGUST 2010 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr A Barnett (Chairman)
Cllr D Graeme
Cllr S Granger
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
1 member of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mrs P Cole, Cllr J Gaywood and Cllr V Sewell.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby declared a personal interest under minute item 7, Quantified Tree Risk Assessment, as her private residence was located close to Hartley Wood.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 24th June 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Cricket at Manor Field

The Committee was informed of concerns expressed by the Chairman of the New Ash Green and Hartley CC about recent anti-social behaviour of youths and vandalism at the Pavilion and surrounding area.

The Committee expressed some concern about the condition of the grass in the practice net, which was bare in places and that this was impacting on the edge of the football pitch. It was noted that the practice net had recently been moved, presumably to allow the grass to recover.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

5. Cricket at Longfield Hill

There was no report.

6. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 30th July 2010 and was satisfied that the income and expenditure of the Committee was in line with budgeted estimates.

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

7. Quantified Tree Risk Assessments

The Committee considered a report containing a Quantified Tree Risk Assessment of trees located on the Council's land throughout the parish undertaken by consultants, Duramen Consulting Ltd. The consultant had visited each of the sites identified by the Council and inspected the trees present thereon, taking into consideration the use of each site and adjoining features such as roads, paths, buildings, gardens, etc., to assess the risk of damage or injury to person or property.

The consultant's report contained a number of recommendations setting out works required to the trees. The recommendations differentiated between those works which required action on the grounds of safety and those works which required action on the grounds of general maintenance where the risk could be accepted on the grounds of infrequency of use.

The Committee was reminded of a request received in July 2009 from the owner of the Spindles, Gorsewood Road, to prune and pollard trees overhanging his property in Gorse Wood. These trees had previously been referred to in a report prepared by surveyors in February 2004 advising the owner on cracks in his property at the Spindles. The Committee was advised that the Council had undertaken works to those trees in June 2004 to reduce the crown of two groups of Hornbeams by 50%.

The Committee felt that the trees located in Billings Hill Shaw presented a greater risk than that identified in the consultant's report due to the proximity of roads and property, and the accident in November 2009 when, following a storm, a tree had fallen onto a vehicle parked on the highway.

The Committee questioned whether the trees were marked or tagged on site to ease identification.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment dated 30th July 2010 undertaken by consultants, Duramen Consulting Ltd, be received and noted;
- (2) a meeting be arranged with consultants, Duramen Consulting Ltd, to discuss in further detail the content and findings of the report;
- (3) quotations be invited from tree surgeons to undertake the tree work as recommended in the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment of 30th July 2010 as being necessary on the grounds of safety, and to include within that quotation the recommended works to the tree located in Gorse Wood next to the Spindles, identified as tree no. 3/4 in the report;
- (4) clarification be sought on the condition of the trees and associated risks of those trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order at Billings Hill Shaw;
- (5) the owners of Hartley Court be advised of the findings of the report in respect of the large Maple tree located on their land and overhanging Hartley Burial Ground, identified as tree no. 10/1 in the report.

8. Pavilion

(a) The Committee considered quotations received in respect of the redecoration of the hall and the corridor in the Pavilion, and other minor works, as set out below:

Contractor	Quotation sum	Optional extras
AMH Decorating Services	£2,188.00	Glazing - £320.00 Decorate home changing room - £234.00
Richard W Burns	£1,550.00	Glazing - £120 (labour only), plus cost of glass £185 for Georgian wired and £130 for 6.4 mm laminated glass. Decorate home changing room - £60.00 (one wall only).
Kevin Abraham	No quotation returned	

Pursuant to Standing Order 59, Richard Burns had, in a letter accompanying his quotation, declared he was the husband of Cllr Mrs J Burns and had in the past undertaken work for Cllr Ramsay.

RESOLVED: That, subject to clarification being obtained on the contractors' VAT position, the Clerk be authorised to accept the lowest quotation in respect of the redecoration of the hall and corridor in the Pavilion and including the optional extra works to replace the perspex sheets in the high level windows at the Pavilion with laminated glass and to decorate the one wall effected by mould in the home changing room.

(b) The Committee considered a suggestion from the cleaner at the Pavilion that the wooden floor in the hall would benefit from a regular coat of polish once a year, for which a charge of £75 would be made.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £75 from the cleaner at the Pavilion to clean and apply 2 no coats of non slip polish to the wooden block floor in the hall at the Pavilion be accepted and that the work be included in the regularly cleaning schedule at the Pavilion to be undertaken once a year.

(c) The Committee considered quotations in respect of the water treatment at the Pavilion for 2010-11, as set out below .

Contractor	Quotation sum
Bayley Environmental Services Ltd	£400.00 plus VAT
Envirocure Ltd	£995.00 plus VAT

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £400.00 plus VAT from Bayley Environmental Services Ltd to, (1) attend site once per year to

clean and chlorinate the cold water tank and associated hot and cold water services and provide certificate, and (2) attend twice per year to take 2 no water samples per visit to be tested for specific legionella bacteria and provide certificate, be accepted.

(d) The Committee considered a request to hire the Pavilion for a 17th birthday party on Saturday 11th September 2010.

RESOLVED: That the request to hire the Pavilion on 11th September 2010 for a 17th birthday party be declined.

(e) The Committee considered a report on problems following the year 6 leavers party at the Pavilion on 23rd July 2010, which resulted in six large refuse bags of rubbish being left by the litter bins on the field after the party. Attempts to contact the hirer were unsuccessful and arrangements were made with Mr Munday to clear up the rubbish and dispose of the waste. The Committee was reminded of condition 4 of the hire agreement which requires all hirers to take their rubbish away.

RESOLVED: That, the cost incurred by the Council to make arrangements for the rubbish to be cleared up and disposed of properly be deducted from the deposit cheque held by the Council for the hire of the hall for the year 6 leavers party on 23rd July 2010.

(f) The Committee considered a report on vandalism to the Pavilion resulting in two panes of glass being smashed in the external doors from the hall on 29th July 2010. It was reported that the cost of replacing the two panes of glass would be in the region of £180.

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

9. Manor Field

(a) Meter cupboard

The Committee considered a letter dated 13th July 2010 from solicitors acting on behalf of the landowner of the 20 foot wide strips of land at Manor Field in respect of the creation of an easement for the electricity cable passing through the land to serve the Pavilion. The solicitor advised that a draft Deed had been forwarded to his clients for comment and approval, and that a copy would be forwarded to the Council in due course. The solicitor also advised that the land in question was mortgaged to the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation plc and their consent would be required.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 13th July 2010 from solicitors acting on behalf of the landowner of the 20 foot wide strips of land at Manor Field be noted.

(b) Rabbit infestation

The Committee considered quotations received in respect of the supply and installation of a rabbit proof fence adjacent to the boundary between Manor Field and Foxborough Wood, and adjacent to the boundary of the 20 foot wide strip of land owned by Messrs H F & J H Glover next to Hartley Court. The Committee expressed some concern about siting the rabbit fence inside Manor Field, as by doing so a gap

of approximately 2 metres would be created between the new rabbit proof fence and the existing stile fence which would be difficult to maintain. The Committee also felt that a new rabbit proof fence installed on the inside of Manor Field would be prominent and look unsightly.

The Committee considered that the provision of a close boarded fence to form a new boundary fence between the new Burial Ground and Foxborough Wood would enhance the visual amenity of the Burial Ground and help to prevent the encroachment of bramble. The Committee considered that a rabbit proof fence could then be fixed directly to the outside face of the new close boarded fence. The Committee felt that, for similar reasons, a new close boarded fence could be installed from the Manor Field car park and run behind the storage container and the Pavilion and along the boundary of the 20 foot wide strip owned by Messrs H F & J H Glover to Foxborough Wood.

The Committee considered that if this proposal was accepted by the Burial Ground and Gardens of Remembrance Committee, the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee could take responsibility for the installation of the rabbit proof fence along the boundary of Manor Field and Foxborough Wood from the new Burial Ground to and including the kissing gate in the north east corner of Manor Field.

RESOLVED: That, the matter of the provision of a close boarded to form a boundary in the new Burial Ground be referred to the Burial Ground and Gardens of Remembrance Committee for consideration.

10. Longfield Hill

The Committee considered quotations in respect of the control of moles at Longfield Hill, as set out below.

Contractor	Quotation sum	Works
Monitor Pest Control Ltd	£295.00 plus VAT	Dig into mole tunnels and lay humane traps
Monitor Pest Control Ltd	£345.00 plus VAT	Open tunnels, place Phostoxin pellets and back fill
Able Group	£495.00 plus VAT	To attend site and gas site for moles

The Committee noted that the Able Group recommended the closure of the ground to the public for a period of 24 hours. The Committee considered it would be impossible to close the ground and noted that this requirement had not been stipulated by Monitor Pest Control Ltd. The Committee was reminded that the grass cutting contractor had brought this matter to the Council's attention as he was concerned that the mole hills could cause damage to his grass cutting machinery.

RESOLVED: That, enquiries be made with the grass cutting contractor to establish whether the presence of moles at Longfield Hill continued to be a problem and subject to his response, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to accept the quotation for the sum of £345.00 plus from

Monitor Pest Control Ltd to open moles tunnels, place Phostoxin pellets and back fill, provided the contractor recommended that there was no need to close the recreation ground during the works. If the contractor recommended the closure of the ground during the gassing works the quotation for the sum of £295.00 plus VAT from Monitor Pest Control to dig into mole tunnels and lay human traps be accepted and the works be scheduled to take place after the close of the cricket season.

11. Woodland Avenue

The Committee considered a report on recent vandalism at Woodland Avenue.

It was reported that further damaged had occurred to the gate into the play area resulting in the weld on the bottom hinge being damaged.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the report be received and noted; and

(2) expenditure upto £100 be authorised for repairs to be made to the weld on kissing enclosure of the gate.

12. Gorse Wood

The Committee considered a request from the resident of 37 Porchester Close to prune the trees at the rear of her property. The Committee noted that a Whitebeam tree, (tree number 3/10), had been identified by Duramen Consulting Ltd in the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment leaning towards her property and that the consultant had recommended the Whitebeam tree should be monitored.

RESOLVED: That, arrangements be made for the tree numbered 3/10, as identified by Duramen Consulting Ltd in the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment, to be inspected by a tree surgeon and based on the advice received thereon, a quotation be obtained on the remedial works.

13. Rectory Meadow

The Committee was advised that an additional visit from the North West Countryside Partnership had taken place on 4th August 2010 at Rectory Meadow to provide training on survey work for the volunteers.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and the actions to make arrangements for an additional visit from the North West Kent Countryside Partnership be confirmed.

14. Playgrounds

The Committee considered the quarterly operational report in respect of the Council's three playgrounds undertaken by Maria Cook on 23rd June 2010. It was reported that the repair to the damaged self closing cover of the gate at Woodland Avenue, which had been identified in the report as a medium risk, had been completed on 21st July 2010 at a cost of £158.80 plus VAT. The other minor items of repair had been referred to Mr Munday.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the quarterly operational report in respect of the Council's three playgrounds undertaken by Maria Cook on 23rd June 2010 be received and noted; and

(2) arrangements for repairs to the self closing gate cover and other minor repairs to be undertaken as identified in the quarterly operational report on 23rd June 2010 be confirmed.

15. Allotments

(a) Allotment lettings policy

The Committee considered a report on a lettings policy for the allotments.

RESOLVED: That, the waiting list for the allotment plots at Woodland Avenue be maintained so that prospective allotments holders shall not be placed at the bottom of the waiting list if, for whatever reason, they choose to refuse a vacant allotment plot and their position on the waiting list shall be maintained. Under such circumstances the vacant allotment shall be offered to the next person/s on the waiting list and so on until such time as the allotment plot has been let.

(b) Allotment charges 2011/12

The Committee considered charges for the rent of the allotments for the period 1st October 2011 to 30th September 2012. The Committee was advised that invoices issued in October for the allotment rents gives notice to the allotment holders of increases to be implemented the following year.

The Committee was reminded of the one-off 33% surcharge levied on allotment holders, plus an inflationary increase of 2%, for the period 2009/10 and that allotment holders had been given notice that the allotment rents for the period 2010/11 would increase by the rate of inflation. .

RECOMMENDED: That, the allotment rents for the period 2011/12 be increased by 3%.

(c) Meeting with allotment holders

The Committee was reminded of the meeting held with allotment holders on 17th November 2009. This meeting had been welcomed by the allotment holders who had asked for a similar meeting to be arranged in 2010. The Committee considered that the meeting could be arranged for sometime towards the end of October and that the invitations could be issued at the same time as the issue of the invoices in early October.

RESOLVED: That, allotment holders be invited to an informal meeting with Members of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee.

16. Parish Plan

RESOLVED: That, the consideration of the action plans contained in the Hartley Parish Plan relating to the countryside be deferred.

17. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 16th September 2010 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

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	600.00	0.00	725.00	126.77	-1.77
6 Open Spaces	2,580.00	99.00	26,000.00	7,635.82	15,883.18
7 Manor Field Pavilion	2,500.00	632.00	8,825.00	3,452.24	3,504.76
NET TOTAL	5,680.00	731.00	35,550.00	11,214.83	19,386.17
Total for ALL Cost Centres		6,416.75		44,233.10	
V.A.T.		820.40		2,034.20	
GROSS TOTAL		7,237.15		46,267.30	