

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2011 AT 8.00 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH
ROAD**

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

In Attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
3 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr A Barnett, Cllr J Gaywood, Cllr S Granger and Mr D Rennison (Hartley De Sales FC).

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs Cole declared a personal interest under minute item 7 (a) to (e) in respect of the Playgrounds at Woodland Avenue as her private residence is located opposite the recreation ground.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 6th December 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Football at Manor Field

Mr Rennison had forwarded a report which was read to the Committee. Mr Rennison informed the Committee that, due to the bad weather throughout December and early January, a number of fixtures had been postponed and Hartley De Sales FC required the use of the football pitches upto the end of April. It was reported that the cricket season was due to start over the weekend of 30th April/1st May and that the football club could use the facilities upto and including the weekend of 23rd/24th April. It was suggested that the football matches, daylight permitting, could be arranged during the evening.

It was reported that water bottles were being left on the ground at Manor Field after the football matches.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the report be noted; and

(2) Hartley De Sales FC be asked to ensure all water bottles used by their footballers and visiting teams be disposed of properly.

5. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report indicating the net position of the allotments, open spaces and Manor Field Pavilion as at 27th January 2011.

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

6. Trees at Billings Hill Shaw

At the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 6th December 2010 it was reported that, following concerns from a resident of Grange Way about trees overhanging the public right of way and his property, the Public Rights of Way Officer had inspected the site and confirmed that the trees at the end of Billings Hill Shaw were not the responsibility of Kent County Council. It was resolved that further investigations be undertaken to establish which trees were overhanging property in Grange Way.

The Committee was advised that the branches touching property at Grange Way were not the responsibility of Hartley Parish Council. There were, however, one or two branches overhanging the rear garden of the property in Grange Way and that these trees were the responsibility of Hartley Parish Council, but the Committee considered these branches did not, at this stage, constitute a nuisance.

RESOLVED: That, the trees, for which Hartley Parish Council is responsible on Billings Hill Shaw, be monitored.

7. Playgrounds

(a) At the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 6th December 2011 it was resolved that the quotation from Safeplay to undertake works to the swings at Chantry Avenue and Woodland Avenue and the roundabout at Chantry Avenue be accepted.

The works to the swings at Chantry Avenue and Woodland Avenue were completed on 15th December 2010. The Contractor could not complete the works to the roundabout at Chantry Avenue as none of the bearings brought to site were suitable and an order for the new bearings had to be placed with the roundabout supplier. The Contractor returned to site on 24th January 2011 to fit the new bearings to the roundabout.

Whilst on site on 15th December 2011 the Contractor advised that the bearings on the roundabout at Woodland Avenue required replacing. The Council's playground inspector, Maria Cook, was asked for an opinion on the condition of the bearings when she next visited the playgrounds. The Inspector, in the Operational Report dated 13th January 2011, reported that, "*the roundabout is making a grinding noise and there is a wobble to the bearing. It is recommended that the bearing is planned for replacement.*"

The Committee examined two quotations as set out below. Wickstead declined to quote.

Contractor	Works	Quotation sum
Safeplay	To remove the roundabout from its column, replace the bearings, lubricate and re-fit. This is based on the assumption that the column is undamaged.	£378.40 plus VAT
Park Leisure	Supply a new roundabout bearing @ a cost of £150, delivery @ a cost of £25 and install @ a cost of	£925.00 plus VAT

£750.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation for the sum of £378.40 plus VAT from Safeplay to remove the roundabout at Woodland Avenue from its column, replace the bearings, lubricate and re-fit be accepted.

(b) The Committee examined a quarterly Operational Report on the Council's three playgrounds undertaken by Maria Cook on 13th January 2011. The report indicated two medium risk items, one relating to a long nail adjacent to the gate at Woodland Avenue and the other item relating to algae growth on the surface at Longfield Hill.

It was reported that Mr Munday had removed the offending nail adjacent to the gate at Woodland Avenue on 20th January 2011 and applied "Simply Gone" to the safety surface below play equipment at Longfield Hill to remove the algae growth on 20th January 2011.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Operational Report on the Council's three playgrounds undertaken by Maria Cook on 13th January 2011 be received and noted and the Clerk's action regarding the work undertaken in respect of the two medium risk items identified in the Operational Report be confirmed; and

(2) investigations be undertaken to establish whether the damaged fence panel identified on page 9 of the Operational Report still required attention and if so, the owner be contacted and asked to put the necessary repairs in hand as soon as reasonably possible.

(c) The Committee was advised of damage to the metal field gate and metal kissing gate at Woodland Avenue recreation ground which had occurred at the beginning of December. It had not been possible to ascertain with any certainty, the date or cause of the damage to the gates and posts, as it had been reported to the Council during the period of heavy snow at the beginning of December. The matter had been reported to the Police.

It was reported that emergency action had been taken to make the kissing gate safe by removing the gate from site, which had resulted in the recreation ground being open and accessible to use by illegal and nuisance motorbikes. The Committee was advised that arrangements had been made for a new field gate and post, and new post for the kissing gate to be fitted, for the salvaged kissing gate to be re-hung on the new posts and repairs to be undertaken to the metal enclosure of the kissing gate.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the report be noted; and

(2) the Clerk's actions to make arrangements for repairs and replacement of the gates and posts at Woodland Avenue be confirmed.

(d) The Committee was advised that a dangerous branch from an Oak tree had been reported to the Council by a local tree surgeon on 21st January 2011 whilst undertaking other works for the Council at Woodland Avenue. The tree surgeon was of the opinion that the branch required urgent attention as it was hanging dangerously over the recreation ground. The Clerk authorised the tree surgeon to

cut down the offending branch and to leave the branch in the woodland area below at a cost of £50.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the report be noted; and

(2) the Clerk's actions to make safe a branch from an Oak tree located in Woodland Avenue be confirmed.

(e) The Committee considered an e mail dated 5th December 2010 from a local young resident regarding the possibility of the provision of a skateboard park for local young people.

The Committee was reminded that the Council had investigated a few years ago the provision of a skateboard park at Woodland Avenue, but due to the proximity of residential property had decided that the recreation at Woodland Avenue was not suitable. The Council had not been able to identify any other suitable sites within the parish where a skateboard park could be safely sited for users and where it would not cause a nuisance to residents. The Committee was advised of other skateboard facilities in the locality.

RESOLVED: That, the young person be thanked for his e mail and advised that Hartley Parish Council had investigated the provision of a skateboard park in the parish, but that no suitable sites could be found.

8. Manor Field

(a) Grant of electricity easement

The Committee was advised that the Martin Tolhurst Solicitors had been instructed to advise on and execute the Deed of Easement in respect of the electricity cable at Manor Field. The Council's solicitor had made a few minor comments on the draft Deed prepared by solicitors acting on behalf of Messrs R and E Glover and had suggested that advice be taken from the Council's insurers in respect of the indemnity referred to in the draft Deed. This matter had been taken up with the Council's insurers and a response was awaited.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) Moss treatment

The Committee was advised that the moss had returned to Manor Field and considered other forms of treatment which could help to prevent this problem recurring in the future.

The Committee considered a quotation for the sum of £265 plus VAT from Weed Management to supply and apply sulphate of iron on the three football pitches and 1 cricket square, total coverage 2.2 hectares (5.5 acres).

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the quotation for the sum of £265 plus VAT from Weed Management to supply and apply sulphate of iron on the three football pitches and 1

cricket square, total coverage 2.2 hectares (5.5 acres) be accepted;
and

(2) further advice be sought on the control of moss on recreation fields.

9. Longfield Hill

(a) Proposed new sub-station and underground cables

The Committee was advised that the Freedom Group had been informed of the Council's legal and professional costs in respect of the proposed works to install a new sub-station and underground cables at Longfield Hill and that a response was awaited confirming these costs were acceptable.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) Moss treatment

The Committee was advised of a quotation for the sum of £220 plus VAT from Weed Management to supply and apply sulphate of iron at Longfield Hill, including the cricket square, total coverage 1.5 hectares. The Committee was unsure whether the recreation ground required treatment.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk, in consultation with the Vice Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to accept the quotation for the sum of £220 plus VAT from Weed Management to supply and apply sulphate of iron at Longfield Hill including the cricket square, total coverage 1.5 hectares, if following an inspection of the ground, it was determined that the ground would benefit from a treatment to eradicate moss.

10. Rectory Meadow

At the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 16th September 2010 the Committee considered a letter dated 31st August 2010 from the Rural Payments Agency advising of the results of a Single Payments Scheme inspection carried out on 11th January 2010. The letter advised that, following their inspection no evidence of any agricultural activity had been found on the land and therefore, the land was not eligible for the scheme.

It was resolved that representations be made to the Rural Payments Agency, setting out the reasons why the Council considered it satisfied the eligibility criteria for making claims under the Single Payments Scheme.

The Committee considered a letter dated 30th November 2010 from the Rural Payments Agency in which it was confirmed that, having considered the evidence presented by the Council, the Rural Payments Agency was satisfied that Hartley Parish Council was eligible for the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) at Rectory Meadow. Furthermore the 2009 claim for SPS would be reinstated and that no further action would be taken to recover payments paid from 2005 to 2009.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

11. Allotments

The Committee considered a report on the allotment rent in respect of the tenant on allotment plot no 31.

The Committee was advised that allotment rent invoices were issued to tenants annually in October and that the rent due from the tenant of allotment plot no 31 for the period 1st October 2010 – 30th September 2011 was currently outstanding, despite the issue of two reminders and a letter requesting the tenant inform the Council of his intentions regarding the plot. No response had been received to either the rent reminders or the subsequent letter. The Committee was informed that the allotment plot had been inspected and that whilst no rent had been forthcoming, there was sufficient evidence to suggest the plot had been cultivated during the previous season.

RECOMMENDED: That, notice to quit proceedings be instigated in respect of allotment plot no 31 on the grounds of non payment of rent.

12. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 2nd March 2011 at 7.30 p.m. in Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.

Signed:..... Date:.....

Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Hartley Parish Council
Summary of Receipts and Payments
Amenities and Open Spaces (as at 27th January 2011)

Cost Centre	Receipts		Payments		Net Position Underspend (+) /Overspend (-)
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	
5 Allotments	600.00	619.16	725.00	616.47	127.69
6 Open Spaces	2,580.00	3,109.00	26,000.00	20,379.40	6,149.60
7 Manor Field Pavilion	2,500.00	2,113.25	8,825.00	6,248.37	2,189.88
NET TOTAL	5,680.00	5,841.41	35,550.00	27,244.24	8,467.17
Total for ALL Cost Centres		70,554.31		94,661.77	
V.A.T.		2,247.44		4,101.64	
GROSS TOTAL		72,801.75		98,763.41	