

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD
ON WEDNESDAY 8th JULY 2026
AT 6.00p.m.**

Present:

Cllr Penny Cole
Cllr David Conroy
Cllr Laurence Glander
Cllr Anne Oxtoby – (*Chairman*)
Cllr Vincent Sewell

In Attendance:

Mrs H Boden – (*Clerk*)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Graeme and the representative from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED: That,
the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 20th May 2026, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers

At the meeting of the Parish Council held on 8th June 2026, it was resolved that the Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee be reviewed by the Committee at its next meeting.

RECOMMENDED: That,
the Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, as set out in **APPENDIX 1** attached to these minutes, be approved and adopted by the Council.

5. Football at Manor Field

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 20th May 2026, the Clerk was requested to contact Hartley De Sales FC, to ascertain as to whether a Saturday Soccer School is taking place at Manor Field.

The Clerk reported that confirmation had been received from the Football Club, that they are not running a Saturday Soccer School.

The Clerk reported that during a recent site visit, it had been noted that the nets on the portable goals being stored at Manor Field, had been left down.

The Clerk reported that she had contacted the football clubs to remind them that the nets need to be removed.

RESOLVED: That,
the Clerk's report be noted.

6. Cricket at Manor Field

(a) In the absence of the representative from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club, the Clerk reported that one of the football clubs had been in contact with the cricket club, to ask whether it would be possible for them to store the goals for the new 3v3 matches that they will be hosting, in the storage container.

The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club had no objection to this in principle, but in view of the fact that the container is the property of the Parish Council, had asked for the Council's view.

RESOLVED: That,
the football club be permitted to store the goals for the 3v3 matches in the storage container, provided that it does not impact the Cricket Club's storage space.

(b) The Committee considered an email dated 19th June 2026, received from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club, regarding the condition of the storage container.

Members noted that it was the Club's opinion that the front portion of the floor may need to be reinforced/replaced.

The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club had asked whether the Council would prefer to assess the issue and seek quotations for the repairs or whether it would like the Cricket Club to carry out the necessary work themselves.

RESOLVED: That,
(1) the email dated 19th June 2026, received from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club, regarding the condition of the storage container, be noted and,
(2) the Clerk be requested to confirm with the Cricket Club, that the Council is happy for them to undertake the necessary repairs.

7. Cricket at Longfield Hill

(a) The Clerk reported that she had contacted Meopham Cricket Club to enquire as to the Club's intentions for the cricket square which it would appear is currently not being maintained.

The Clerk reported that an email dated 8th July 2026, had been received from the Chairman of Meopham Cricket Club, advising that when the Lease expires in March 2028, the Club does not wish it to be renewed.

The matter has been discussed at length by the Club and it was considered that, in light of circumstances elsewhere, the use of Longfield Hill was no longer needed and members would rather see another sports club (or similar) use the facilities.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the email dated 8th July 2026, received from the Chairman of Meopham Cricket Club, advising that when the Lease expires in March 2028, the Club does not wish it to be renewed, be noted;

(2) the Clerk be requested to contact the Kent County Cricket Association to inform them that the ground will be available from March 2028 and to ask them to advertise the fact to their members and,

(3) the Parish Council's grass cutting contractor be asked to include the cricket square at Longfield Hill in their cutting regime and Meopham Cricket Club be advised accordingly.

(b) The Committee noted that the Lease between Hartley Parish Council and Meopham Cricket Club is due to expire in March 2028.

8. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial statement setting out detailed income and expenditure by budget heading in respect of the Allotments, Open Spaces and the Pavilion, as at 2nd July 2026.

The Clerk reported that the recent invoices relating to the water supply at the allotment site had been higher than during the same period in previous years. Members considered that this was due to the recent hot weather.

The Clerk reported that expenditure in respect of the emptying of the cesspit had increased from previous years, mainly due to the increased flushing regime required at the Pavilion.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Clerk's report be noted and,

(2) the financial statement setting out detailed income and expenditure by budget heading in respect of the Allotments, Open Spaces and the Pavilion, as at 2nd July 2026, be received and noted.

9. Billings Hill Shaw

(a) The Committee had been requested to consider an update on the proposed orchard project.

The Clerk reported that she had chased the representative from the North West Kent Countryside Project, but was still awaiting a response.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's Routine Maintenance Contractor had indicated that he would be prepared to water the trees (once planted), but would not been able to confirm the cost until the extent of the work was known. RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's report be noted.

(b) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 20th May 2026, the Committee considered a request from a resident, to purchase a piece of land located at Billings Hill Shaw, owned by the Parish Council.

The Committee noted that some years ago, the Parish Council had issued a Licence, permitting the residents to maintain the land at a peppercorn rent.

The Committee agreed that it had no objection in principle to the continuation of the Licence arrangement, but that legal advice would need to be sought.

The Clerk reported that she was awaiting a response from the Parish Council's Solicitor. RECOMMENDED: That, (1) the request received from a resident to purchase the land located at Billings Hill Shaw be declined and, (2) the matter of the Licence be deferred pending a response from the Parish Council's Solicitor.

10. Pavilion

(a) Water Hygiene

(i) The Committee had been requested to consider the results of the June monthly water temperature checks at the Pavilion, carried out by the cleaning contractor.

The Clerk reported that the results of the June temperature checks were not yet available and that she had chased the contractor for the results.

RESOLVED: That,
the Clerk's report be noted.

(ii) The Clerk reported that the water samples taken from the hot tap in the kitchen, the tap in the disabled toilet and the away team changing room showers had come back negative for Legionella. RESOLVED: That, the results of the recent water samples taken from the hot tap in the kitchen, the tap in the disabled toilet and the away team changing room showers, be noted, with no further action to be taken as the Committee is satisfied that Legionella had not been detected.

(iii) The Committee reviewed the "Pavilion – Water Flushing" Risk Assessment.

Members agreed that following advice received from the water hygiene contractor in an email received on 29th June 2026, the Risk Assessment should be amended slightly. RECOMMENDED: That, the "Pavilion – Water Flushing" Risk Assessment, as set out in **APPENDIX 2**, attached to these minutes, be approved and adopted by the Council.

(b) Cleaning

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 20th May 2026, the Committee considered an email dated 25th March 2026, received from the current cleaning contractor at the Pavilion, regarding a potential price increase.

It was resolved that the increase be accepted, subject to the disinfection of the water outlets being increased from once to twice a month.

The Committee considered an email dated 26th May 2026, received from the cleaning contractor.

Members noted that the cleaning contractor had advised that they would not be charging any extra for the additional disinfecting, but that they had asked whether it would be possible for them to store a small quantity of the disinfectant in the locked cupboard in the hall of the pavilion.

The Clerk reported that she had emailed the cleaning contractor on 27th May 2026, to advise that they would not be permitted to store any chemicals on site and that an alternative storage solution would need to be found.

Members agreed that the storage of cleaning chemicals at the Pavilion should not be permitted for health and safety reasons. RESOLVED: That, (1) the email dated 26th May 2026, received from the cleaning contractor at the Pavilion be noted; (2) the Clerk's report be noted and, (3) it be re-iterated to the cleaning contractor that cleaning chemicals are not permitted to be stored at the Pavilion.

(c) Chairs

The Clerk reported that the Combined Members' Grant funding had been received and that the new chairs could now be ordered.

The Committee considered various designs and agreed on the style and colour to be ordered.

Originally it had been agreed the 25 chairs would be ordered, but the Committee agreed that all of the chairs should be replaced, with the additional cost being met by the Parish Council.

The Committee discussed arrangements for the disposal of the existing chairs and it was agreed that local groups should be contacted as well as the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) to offer the chairs free of charge. RECOMMENDED: That, (1) an order be placed for the number of chairs required to replace all of the existing chairs at the Pavilion; (2) the total cost for the additional chairs be met from the Parish Council's general reserves and, (3) the Clerk be requested to contact local groups, KALC and SLCC to offer the chairs free of charge.

11. Manor Field

(a) Cesspit

Cllr Glander reported that the frequency of emptying the cesspit had recently increased and it was now becoming necessary for it to be emptied every couple of months.

Cllr Glander and the Clerk made arrangements for a plumber to inspect the cesspit as it was suspected that there could be a leak from the pipes in the pavilion going in to the cesspit.

The plumber confirmed that there was no leak, but there was a blockage, which he cleared.

The Clerk reported that the showers were being used more frequently than in previous years and that the flushing regime had been increased, in line with the Council's water hygiene contractor's recommendations and that this was most likely the cause of the cesspit becoming full on a more frequent basis.

The Clerk reported that due to this, it is likely that the budget for the cesspit will be exceeded for 2026/27. RESOLVED: That, the above reports be noted.

(b) CCTV

The Committee considered an email dated 25th June 2026, received from a local contractor, offering to arrange a no-obligation site visit with a view to installing CCTV at Manor Field. RESOLVED: That, the email dated 25th June 2026, received from a contractor, offering to arrange a no-obligation site visit with a view to installing CCTV at Manor Field, be noted and the offer declined

12. Playgrounds

(a) Prior to the meeting, Members conducted a site visit to Woodland Avenue recreation ground.

During the site visit, it was noted that a section of the artificial grass surfacing surrounding the MUGA had been vandalised.

In view of the overall poor state of the surfacing, Members agreed that it would be beneficial for it to be replaced with either artificial grass or wetpour surfacing.

The Committee agreed that the MUGA would also benefit from being replaced, with either a more up to date version, or possibly outdoor gym equipment. RESOLVED:

That, (1) the Clerk be requested to make some preliminary enquiries with playground equipment providers/manufacturers to obtain information on the equipment available and the likely costs involved, for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting and, (2) no action be taken at the current time with regard to replacing/repairing the damaged area of artificial grass surfacing, as the Committee does not consider it to be a safety issue.

(b) Goal Posts – Woodland Avenue

The Clerk reported that no quotations had been received for the re-siting of the goal posts at Woodland Avenue, as the contractor had asked for confirmation as to where the goal posts should be moved to.

During the site visit, Members considered where the new location should be and it was agreed that both goals should be moved forward slightly from their current location, away from the dipped goal area.

RECOMMENDED: That, (1) quotations be sought for the re-painting and re-location of the goal posts; (2) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities &

Open Spaces Committee, be delegated authority to accept the quotation considered most suitable and,

(3) the total cost be met from CIL funds.

(c) Vandalism – Woodland Avenue

(i) The Clerk reported that the flat seat swing had been removed by vandals and that in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, arrangements have been made for the swing seat to be replaced at a cost of £120 + VAT.

Members noted that routine maintenance contractor had wrapped the swing chains around the cross bar as a safety precaution. RESOLVED: That, (1) the Clerk's report be noted; (2) the Clerk's actions, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, of making arrangements for the swing seat to be replaced at a cost of £120 + VAT, be approved and, (3) the Committee is satisfied that the routine maintenance contractor's actions of wrapping the swing chains around the cross bar is sufficient to prevent any hazards and that no additional action is required, other than weekly monitoring until the swing seat is replaced.

(ii) The Committee noted that a section of the artificial grass surface surrounding the MUGA has been vandalised. RESOLVED: That, the vandalism be noted and that no further action is required as the Committee is satisfied that the vandalism does not present a health and safety issue at the present time.

13. Allotments

(a) Prior to the meeting, Members conducted a site visit to the allotment site.

During the visit, Members noted a plot that appeared to not be being cultivated.

The Committee discussed the possibility of the allotments being run by the allotment holders under an Allotment Association agreement.

Members agreed that a meeting with the allotment tenants should be arranged in the autumn. RESOLVED: That, (1) the tenant of the uncultivated plot be contacted to advise them that they are in contravention of the Allotment Tenancy agreement; (2) the Assistant Clerk be requested to make enquiries as to the possibility of setting up an Allotment Association at the site and, (3) the Assistant Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee be authorised to arrange a date for a meeting with the allotment tenants.

(b) The Committee considered a complaint received regarding a recently installed pond on one of the allotment plots.

Members noted that there was no reference to ponds in the current Allotment Tenancy Agreement.

The Committee noted that the plot did not appear to be being cultivated. RESOLVED: (1) the tenant be contacted to advise them that they are in contravention of the Allotment Tenancy agreement; (2) the tenant be advised that provided that the plot is being cultivated, the Council will tolerate the pond, but will re-assess the situation in 6 months' time and, (3) the tenant be advised that there should be no increase to the current size of the pond and that no further ponds may be installed on the plot.

14. Hartley Wood

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 20th May 2026, it was noted that motorbikes were still causing an issue in the woods.

The Clerk was requested to contact the local PC, who had been liaising with the Public Rights of Way Officer with a view to finding a solution to the issue.

The Clerk was also requested to obtain further information as to the ownership of land in Hartley Wood, to ascertain as to whether it would be possible for the Parish Council to install any additional fencing/gates, to try to alleviate the problem.

The Clerk reported that PC Weatherall had advised that the type of gate that he had originally suggested, would not be suitable and that he had not received any further updates from the Public Rights of Way Officer. **RESOLVED:** That, a site meeting be arranged with the Police, the Public Rights of Way Officer and members of the Council, to discuss the matter further.

15. Safeguarding Policy

The Committee reviewed the Parish Council's Safeguarding Policy and questioned whether the Council's Routine Maintenance Contractor would be required to be DBS checked. **RECOMMENDED:** That, (1) the Safeguarding Policy approved and adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 11th April 2022 and reviewed by the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee at its meeting held on 9th July 2025, be confirmed and approved and, (2) enquiries be made with the relevant authority to establish whether the Parish Council's Routine Maintenance Contractor is required to be DBS checked.

16. CCTV Policy

The Committee reviewed the Parish Council's CCTV Policy and agreed that the abbreviations contained within the Policy should be written in full. **RECOMMENDED:**

That, the CCTV Policy approved and adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 12th July 2021 and reviewed by the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee at its meeting held on 9th July 2025, including the above amendments, be approved and adopted.

17. Date of next meeting

To be arranged.

The meeting closed at 7.16 p.m.

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

Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

AMENITIES & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Delegation from the Council

These Terms of Reference were agreed by the Parish Council at its meeting held on ***** and recorded in the minute number *****

Membership

The Committee shall be elected, and may be re-elected, at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Procedures

- (1) The Committee shall operate in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- (2) At the first meeting of the Committee after the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, the Committee shall elect a Chairman and, if the Committee deems necessary, a Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year from amongst the Committee membership. The Chairman and Vice Chairman, if appointed, may be re-elected.
- (3) The Committee shall submit its minutes for adoption to the next meeting of the Parish Council, **if available**.
- (4) The Clerk or Assistant Clerk shall provide administrative support for the Committee.

Committee functions

- (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 the allotments at Woodland Avenue; and such land owned by the Council at the village pond and lay-by, 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 & 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.

Risk Assessment							
Pavilion - Water Flushing		Assessment date: 05/02/25		REVIEWED - 08/07/26			
Hazard and risk	People at risk	HPC controls	Risk Rating		HPC future controls	Target date	Person responsible
Lone working - Injury	Contractors	Water outlets flushed once per week by contractor working alone in the Pavilion. The water outlets in the Home and Away changing rooms and the WC at the front of the building flushed twice a week during the cricket season. Contractor advised of the following best working practices as set out below: (1) Field gate and external door of the Pavilion to be secured when working alone in the building. (2) Carry a mobile phone to call for assistance in the event of an emergency. (3) No working at high level when working alone.	Likelihood	Low	Continue with current arrangements. Contractor reminded to follow procedures as set out in HPC controls.	N/A	Clerk/ Council
			Severity	Medium			
			Risk Rating	Low 3			
Water outlet flushing - Risk of Legionella	Contractors/ Members of public	At the start of the Cricket season, once the chlorination of the tanks has been completed and whilst awaiting the results of the water sampling, the Contractor MUST use a disposable P3 mask and goggles for protection. (Advice sought from the Council's water hygiene contractor. Eye protection is not required, but the Council requests that it is worn). Contractor instructed to cover each showerhead with a large plastic bag with a hole at the bottom to enable the water to drain out of the bag preventing any spray/vapour from being created. 2) Once the water sampling results have been received and provided that Legionella is not detected, the use of the P3 mask and goggles is no longer required and the showers can be flushed without using the bag method. (Email received from the water hygiene contractor 29/06/26). Water hygiene testing is carried out as per the Legionella Risk Assessment dated 13/02/2024. Contractor instructed to ensure that members of the public do not enter the changing rooms whilst flushing is in progress.	Likelihood	Medium	Continue with current arrangements. No further action required.	N/A	Clerk/ Council
			Severity	Medium			
			Risk Rating	Medium 5			