

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD
ON WEDNESDAY 1st MARCH 2023 AT 10.00a.m.**

Present:

Cllr Larry Abraham
Cllr Lesley Driscoll
Cllr Laurence Glander – (*Chairman*)
Cllr David Graeme
Cllr Anne Oxtoby
Cllr Vince Sewell

In Attendance:

Mrs H Boden – (*Clerk*)
Cllr Perry Cole
Cllr Brian Ramsay
2 Members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Malham and New Ash Green Football 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 7th December 2022, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Pursuant to Standing Order 3 (e), the Chairman invited members of the public present to express an interest if they wished to make representations, answer questions or give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

2 members of the public expressed an interest under agenda item 7, (a)(iii), Trees.

Cllr Ramsay expressed an interest under agenda item 9, (c), Car Park Re-surfacing.

RESOLVED That,

pursuant to Standing Order 10 (a) (ix), the order of business be altered so that agenda item 9, (c), Manor Field, Car park Resurfacing, be brought forward.

4. Manor Field

Car Park Re-surfacing

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 7th December 2022, the Clerk reported that she was still awaiting contact from the person that had been requested to review the specifications for the car park and footpath and to meet with the 3 preferred contractors selected by the Committee at its meeting held on 17th August 2022, to ensure that the Contractor's interpretation of the specification meets the Council's requirements.

It was resolved that "*Cllr Sewell's offer to make enquiries with a suitably qualified professional to enable the Council to progress the matter, be accepted*" and that "*the Clerk be requested to pursue the individual that she had been liaising with*"

The Clerk reported that she had made enquiries with an additional suitably qualified professional regarding the above, but that no further assistance had been forthcoming from them or as a result of either of the other two lines of enquiry.

At the Chairman's invitation, Cllr Ramsay addressed the Committee regarding the proposal.

Cllr Ramsay asked whether information had been obtained as to the services that could possibly run under the existing car park.

The Chairman reported that no such information had been obtained.

Cllr Ramsay advised that this should be discussed with the potential contractors.

The Committee agreed that as all attempts to locate an external suitably qualified professional to meet with the contractors and oversee the works had failed, Cllr Ramsay's offer to carry out this role should be gratefully accepted.

RECOMMENDED: That,

- 1) Cllr Ramsay be authorised to review the quotations received from the 3 preferred contractors selected by the Committee at its meeting held on 17th August 2022;
- 2) provided that Cllr Ramsay is satisfied with the quotations, the Clerk be requested to contact the 3 contractors to request an updated quotation in view of the length of time that has elapsed since they were originally submitted;
- 3) the 3 contractors be requested to meet on site with Cllr Ramsay and Cllr Glander, to enable them to ensure that the Contractors' interpretation of the specification fully meets the Council's requirements;
- 4) following the meetings with the Contractors, the quotations be brought back to the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee for consideration and to appoint the successful contractor and,
- 5) Cllr Ramsay and Cllr Glander be authorised to oversee the works and to manage the project once the successful contractor has been appointed.

The Clerk reported that there had been no progress with regard to the Deed of Easement and reminded Members that work on the proposed footpath leading from

Hartley Burial Ground to the car park at Manor Field, could not commence until this had been obtained.

The Clerk reported that the Grant of Certificate of Lawful proposed use/development for the proposed car park and footpaths had now been received from Sevenoaks District Council.

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

Cllr Ramsay left the meeting at 10.11a.m.

RESOLVED That,
pursuant to Standing Order 10 (a) (ix), the order of business be altered so that agenda item 7,(a) (iii), Gorse Wood – Trees, be brought forward.

5. Gorse Wood

Trees

The Committee considered a request received from a resident of Gorsewood Road, for trees in Gorse Wood, adjacent to their property, to be reduced/removed.

At the Chairman's invitation, the 2 members of the public addressed the Committee regarding their request.

The residents expressed concern that the roots from a coppice of trees located adjacent to their boundary fence could be affecting their property.

The residents were also concerned about an additional tree located adjacent to their boundary fence, as it was close to their garage.

The Chairman reported that arrangements had been made for two Tree Surgeons to inspect the trees, but that differing opinions had been received in their reports.

The Clerk reported that she was in the process of making arrangements for a third Tree Surgeon to inspect the trees in order that a decision could be reached.

RESOLVED: That,
the matter be deferred until a report has been received from the additional Tree Surgeon.

The members of the public left the meeting at 10.37a.m.

6. Football at Manor Field

(a) There was no report from Hartley De Sales Football Club.

(b) The Clerk reported that an email had been received from the New Ash Green Football Club asking whether the pitch could be longer than the current markings next season.

The Committee agreed that further information as to the required size would be required before a decision could be made.

RESOLVED: That,

the above report be noted.

7. Meopham Cricket Club

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 7th December 2022, members considered a request received from a local cricket club for the use of the ground at Longfield Hill.

It was resolved that the Clerk be requested to contact Meopham Cricket Club to inform them of the request and to check the Lease to ascertain as to the use of the ground by another club would be permitted.

The Committee noted that the lease states that the Trustees of Meopham Cricket Club should *“not assign, underlet or part with or share possession of the Demised Premises or any part thereof except for the purpose of vesting the Term in the Trustees for the time being of the Club”*

In view of the above, the Committee agreed that it would not be possible to grant the request.

RESOLVED: That,

the request received from a local cricket club for the use of the ground at Longfield Hill be declined.

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 23rd February 2023.

RESOLVED: That,

the financial statement setting out detailed income and expenditure by budget heading in respect of the Allotments, Open Spaces and the Pavilion, as at 23rd February 2023, be received and noted.

9. Gorse Wood

(a) Trees

(i) The Committee considered the Tree Surgeons report following a meeting with a resident of Gorsewood Road, regarding the reduction of a tree adjacent to their property.

The Tree Surgeon inspected the Beech tree and advised that there were no obvious signs of decay and that the tree appeared to be in a healthy condition.

The Tree Surgeon advised that a reduction in height of the tree is possible, but recommended that no more than 20% is reduced.

The Committee agreed that in view of the fact that there appeared to be no health and safety issues with the tree, that the residents' request to reduce the height of the tree be granted, provided that the cost is met by the resident and that the Tree Surgeon that inspected the tree carries out the work.

RESOLVED: That,

the resident be advised that the Council has no objection to them making arrangements for the Beech tree to be reduced by up to 20%, provided that the cost is met in full by the resident and that the Tree Surgeon who inspected the tree and reported to the Council be engaged to carry out the work.

(ii) The Committee considered an email dated 14th January 2023, received from a resident of Hoselands View, regarding maintenance of the trees on Hoselands Green.

The resident is concerned that the trees are very high and that during strong winds, dead wood falls.

The resident is also concerned that the power cable is being affected by tree branches.

RESOLVED: That,

1) the Clerk be requested to seek a quotation for the removal of the dead wood on the trees on Hoselands Green;

2) the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee be authorised to accept the resultant quotation, should they consider it acceptable and,

3) the resident be advised to contact UK Power Networks with their concerns regarding the power cables, asking them to assess the issue and to arrange for any necessary works to be done.

(b) Litter

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 5th October 2022, it was resolved that arrangements be made for an inspection of the whole of Gorse Wood be carried out and an updated quotation sought from Sevenoaks District Council for the fly tipping to be removed.

The Clerk reported that in the meantime, the fly tipping problem had increased and was now becoming a health and safety issue.

In view of the recent increase in the amount of fly tipping, the Committee agreed that its clearance should be carried out as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDED: That,

1) due to the urgency of the issue, the requirement that waste can only be disposed of by a contractor holding a Waste Carriers Licence and the fact that the Parish Council has been fully satisfied with the standard of clearance work carried out by the District Council in the past, financial regulation 11.1 (k) be waived and the quotation received from Sevenoaks District Council for the sum of £783.00 + VAT, to remove and dispose of the fly tipping in Gorse Wood, be accepted;

2) the total cost of the above works be met from the Parish Council's General Reserves.

The Committee noted that one of the fence panels in the Council's metal fence on the boundary of Gorse Wood and Caxton Close car park had been stolen.

In addition, the wooden fence owned by West Kent Housing Association (WKHA) on the boundary of Gorse Wood and the alleyway which runs from no 66 – 72 Caxton Close had been vandalised. Both of which allow unrestricted access to the wood.

The Clerk reported that in July 2022, she had contacted the Community Safety Unit (CSU) at the District Council to ask whether they would consider re-instating the CCTV cameras in the car park.

The CSU advised that they had a camera that was in the process of being repaired and that they would consider installing it in Caxton Close car park.

The Clerk reported that she had heard nothing from them since.

RESOLVED: That,

1) the Clerk be requested to seek a quotation for a replacement panel for the metal fence at the entrance to Gorse Wood from Caxton Close car park;

2) the Clerk be requested to contact WKHA to ask whether, in view of the fact that their wooden boundary fence at the rear of 66-72 Caxton Close has been vandalised, allowing easy access to the woods, they would be prepared to contribute towards the cost of clearing the fly tipping;

3) the Clerk be requested to contact WKHA to ask them to make arrangements for the repair of their boundary fence at the rear of 66 – 72 Caxton Close and,

4) the Clerk be requested to contact the CSU at the District Council to ask whether they would consider re-instating the CCTV in the car park at Caxton Close.

10. Pavilion

The Committee considered a quotation for the existing alarm sensors in the loft to be decommissioned.

Members were reminded that due to the location of the sensors, the alarm engineer considered that the presence of spiders/cobwebs and possible rodents in the area were responsible for the recent false alarms.

The Clerk advised the Committee that there were insufficient funds remaining in the budget for the work to be carried out.

RECOMMENDED: That,

1) the quotation received from ADT, for the sum of £415.20 + VAT, to decommission the existing alarm sensors in the loft, be accepted and,

2) the total cost of the work be met from the Parish Council's General Reserves.

11. Manor Field

(a) Storage Container

Following a report received from the New Ash Green Cricket Club, that the doors on the storage container required some repair work, the Clerk had been requested to obtain quotations for the required work.

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 7th December 2022, the Clerk reported that she had been unable to locate a contractor willing to carry out repairs.

It was agreed that quotations should be sought for the removal of the existing container and its replacement with a new one.

The Chairman reported that he had recently inspected the storage container and that he had not experienced any difficulty with opening and closing it.

The Clerk reported that she had not received any recent complaints regarding the condition of the container.

In view of this, the Committee agreed that no further action was required at the present time.

RESOLVED: That,

- 1) the Chairman's and Clerk's reports be noted and,
- 2) no further action be taken with regard to the repair/replacement of the storage container.

(b) Weed & Moss Control

The Committee considered a programme of works to the ground at Manor Field for 2023.

In 2022, the following applications were carried out:

- March (Fertilizer and Sulphate of Iron)
- June (Fertilizer and Herbicide)
- September (Fertilizer and Sulphate of Iron)

The Committee agreed that the same ground works should be carried out during 2023.

The Committee considered 3 quotations for the works.

RESOLVED: That,

the quotation for the sum of £1,395.08 + VAT, received from Weed Management Ltd, to apply Fertilizer & moss control (March & September) and Fertilizer and weed control (June), to Manor Field, be accepted.

12. Quantified Tree Risk Assessment

(a) The Committee had been requested to consider any update received, regarding the Scout Leader's offer to locate and replace the ground markers in Hartley Wood, highlighted in the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment carried out in September 2021.

The Clerk reported that no update had been received, but that the Scout Leader had confirmed that the matter is in hand.

RESOLVED: That,

the matter be deferred until the next meeting.

(b) The Committee considered the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) on the trees located on land owned or management by the Parish Council, carried out by Duramen Consulting Limited.

Members noted some general issues arising during the survey such as encroachment issues at Longfield Hill and missing boundary markers in Foxborough and Hartley Woods.

The Committee noted that there were several trees where a formal risk assessment had been undertaken and trees were considered for works.

All other trees were considered to be either free of significant defects, remote from potential targets, or because the combination of assessed site use and risk of tree failure indicates that the risk posed is negligible using QTRA's methodology.

The Clerk reported that one of the trees identified had been located at the Burial Ground. The report recommended that a loose conifer branch hanging vertically downwards near the road, be removed.

Members noted that as this had been a health & safety issue, the Clerk had made arrangements for the necessary work to be carried out at a cost of £80.00 + VAT.

There were several other trees requiring minor works.

The Consultant has advised that a formal inspection of Hartley's trees is appropriate about every 18 months.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) carried out by Duramen Consulting Ltd, be noted;

(2) the Clerks actions in arranging for the loose conifer branch hanging vertically downwards near the road to be removed at a cost of £80.00 + VAT, be confirmed;

(3) quotations be sought for the works highlighted in the report, to be considered at the next meeting and,

(4) the next Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) be carried out in winter of 2023 or spring of 2024.

13. Playgrounds

(a) Woodland Avenue

(i) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 7th December 2022, it was resolved that “*the quotation received from RTC Services for the sum of £2,866 + VAT, to band repair the multi unit, roundabout, spinner and swing, be accepted and that the total cost be met from CIL monies (A & B) received.*”

The Clerk reported that the quotation had originally been received in October 2022 and that the cost had increased by £80, to £2946 + VAT.

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

(ii) The Committee considered an email dated 22nd January 2023, received from a resident regarding the recreation ground.

The resident expressed concern about a number of issues:

- the speed of traffic passing the recreation ground
- the amount of litter/fly tipping and drug paraphernalia around the youth shelter
- broken fence around the recreation ground
- broken entrance gate

The resident also commented on the fact that part of Hartley Wood was currently up for sale.

The Committee noted the resident’s concern with regard to the speeding traffic and that they had asked whether it would be possible to install speed bumps along Woodland Avenue.

Members agreed that unfortunately, due to the lack of street lighting, it would be unlikely that Kent Highway Services would consider the installation of speed bumps.

It was noted that the fly tipping issue had been dealt with under minute item 9 (b) and arrangements will be made for its removal.

The Clerk reported that the gate had recently been vandalised and removed and that although the gate had been found, a quotation had been sought for the required parts to enable it to be re-instated.

The Committee agreed that parts of the fencing surrounding the recreation ground were in a poor state of repair.

RESOLVED: That,

- 1) the resident be advised to contact that Kent Highway Services regarding the installation of speed bumps, but that in view of the lack of street lighting, it is unlikely that the suggestion will be implemented;
- 2) the resident be advised that the Council will be making arrangements for Sevenoaks District Council to remove the fly tipping and for the gate to be re-instated;
- 3) the Clerk be requested to contact the Parish Council’s routine maintenance contractor to ask whether he considers the fence to be repairable and if so, to provide a quotation;

4) the resident be advised that the Parish Council is in the process of submitting an application to Sevenoaks District Council, under the Community Right to Bid scheme, to nominate Hartley Wood as an Asset of Community Value and,

5) the Clerk be requested to contact the youth worker at WKHA, to highlight the issues in the area around the youth shelter.

(iii) The Committee had been requested to confirm the Clerk's actions of arranging for the damaged fence at Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground to be repaired.

The Clerk reported that the total cost of the work had amounted to £240.00.

RESOLVED: That,

the Clerk's actions of arranging for the damaged fence at Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground to be repaired at a cost of £240.00, be confirmed.

(b) Longfield Hill

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 7th December 2022, it was resolved that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to make arrangements for the supply and installation of a new baby swing, including new chains and fixings.

The Chairman reported that due to the age of the existing swing frame, it had proved both difficult and costly to obtain the necessary fixings and also that the regulations had changed since the original swing was installed and there would be insufficient distance between the proposed new swing seat and the other existing seat.

In view of this, the Committee agreed that the matter should not be pursued.

RESOLVED: That,

no further action be taken with regard to the replacement of the swing seat with a new baby swing seat.

(c) Operational Inspection

The Committee considered the Operational Inspection Report dated 7th December 2022, received from the Parish Council's Playground Inspector.

Members noted that Chantry Avenue and Longfield Hill recreation grounds had been assessed as "low risk" and that Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground had been assessed as "moderate risk".

The Clerk reported that the "moderate risk" item highlighted in the report relating to Woodland Avenue recreation ground was moderate damage to the safety surface around the roundabout.

Members noted that the areas in question had now been repaired.

RESOLVED: That,

1) the Operational Inspection Report dated 7th December 2022, received from the Parish Council's Playground Inspector, be noted and,

2) the routine maintenance contractor be requested to undertake the required minor works, as highlighted in the inspection report.

(d) Chantry Avenue

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's routine maintenance contractor had noted during his weekly playground inspection, that the safety surface at Chantry Avenue (near the swings) had been burnt, leaving a small hole.

Members agreed that the damage did not appear to have caused a health and safety issue and that the advice of the Playground Inspector, when they carry out the next playground inspection should be awaited.

RESOLVED: That,
the fire damage to the safety surfacing at Chantry Avenue be noted and the advice of the Playground Inspector be awaited as to whether any action is required;

14. Date of next meeting

To be arranged.

The meeting closed at 11.58 a.m.

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

Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

