

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD
ON WEDNESDAY 9th JULY 2025
AT 6.00p.m.**

Present:

Cllr David Conroy
Cllr Laurence Glander
Cllr Mally Malham
Cllr Anne Oxtoby – (*Chairman*)
Cllr Vincent Sewell

In Attendance:

Mrs H Boden – (*Clerk*)
A representative from the New Ash Green Football Club
A representative from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Graeme.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Malham declared an interest in minute item 16, Allotments, as he is an allotment tenant and took no part in voting on the matters.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED: That,
the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 28th May 2025, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Cricket at Manor Field

The representative from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club reported that the showers had been working well at the weekend.

Cllr Glander reported that all of the required works have now been completed and that hopefully there will be no more issues.

The representative from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club reported that the Club is still struggling for players.

They also reported that due to the recent period of dry weather, the Club is trying to find alternative ways to water the cricket square, such as inviting the fire brigade to

carry out training exercises at Manor Field so that the water can be used on the square.

The representative from the New Ash Green & Hartley Cricket Club left the meeting at 6.02p.m.

5. Cricket at Longfield Hill

There was no report from Meopham Cricket Club.

6. Football at Manor Field

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28th May 2025, the Committee noted that a number of complaints had been received from regular hirers of the pavilion, with regard to there frequently being no parking available near to the pavilion entrance during training times on Monday evenings.

The representative from Hartley De Sales FC was requested to ensure that spectators are asked to park away from the pavilion entrance to allow hirers easier access.

The Clerk reported that arrangements had been put in place by the club and that the new parking arrangements appeared to be working.

The Clerk reported that Hartley De Sales Football Club and the local Rainbows/Brownies/Scouts use the field on a Monday evening, creating issues with parents dropping off/collecting their children.

The Committee agreed that all groups should be contacted to suggest that car share schemes are put in place and that parents are asked to show consideration for other users.

RESOLVED: That,

the Clerk be requested to contact Hartley De Sales Football Club and the Rainbows/Brownies/Scouts leaders to ask that they contact all parents to suggest that car share schemes are put in place and that consideration is shown for other users, to allow the area to be used safely.

RESOLVED: That,

pursuant to Standing Order 10 (a) (ix), the order of business be altered so that agenda item 15. Chantry Avenue, be brought forward.

7. Chantry Avenue

The Committee considered an email dated 28th June 2025, received from a resident, regarding football sessions taking place in the recreation ground on Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings.

The resident expressed concern with regard to noise issues and also the associated car parking.

The representative from the New Ash Green Football Club confirmed that one of their teams uses the ground for training on a Tuesday evening and that on Saturday mornings, the area is used for a soccer school.

Cllr Glander asked whether the Club had considered Woodland Avenue as a possible venue and the representative from the Football Club advised that Chantry Avenue had been considered to be more suitable from a safeguarding perspective.

The Committee agreed that it was good to see the recreation ground being used, as historically it has been one of the least used of the council's open spaces.

The representative from the Club confirmed that all of the club members using the recreation ground were covered by the Club's insurance policy.

The representative from the Club reported that training would not take place in Hartley from October to March, as they train elsewhere during the winter months.

The Committee noted that the email received from the resident, also mentioned an issue with dogs barking in the area, in the early morning and late in to the night.

The Clerk reported that she had informed the resident that they should direct their concerns to the Environmental Health Department at the District Council.

The resident confirmed that they had already done this and asked whether it would be possible to include an article in the next edition of the Parish Council's newsletter, reminding residents to be considerate to their neighbours.

RECOMMENDED: That, (1) the email dated 28th June 2025, received from a resident, be noted; (2) permission be granted to the New Ash Green Football Club for the use of Chantry Avenue recreation ground for training on a Tuesday evening and a soccer school on a Saturday morning; (3) confirmation received from the Football Club's representative, that all of the club members training at the ground are covered by the Club's insurance policy, be noted;

(4) Permission for the use of the ground be granted, provided that spectators and parents dropping off/collecting their children are asked to be considerate to residents of the neighbouring properties with regard to parking and, (5) an article be included in the September edition of the Parish Council's newsletter, requesting that dog owners be considerate to their neighbours with regard to their dogs barking early in the morning and late in the evening.

The representative from the New Ash Green Football Club left the meeting at 6.17p.m.

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 3rd July 2025.

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 3rd July 2025, be received and noted.

9. Trees

(a) Billings Hill Shaw

(i) During the Routine Maintenance Contractor's weekly inspection, a Cherry tree located at Billings Hill Shaw was highlighted as potentially being unsafe.

Arrangements were made for the tree to be inspected by a Tree Surgeon who advised that it would be necessary for the tree to be removed.

Pursuant to Financial Regulation 5.18, the Assistant Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, accepted a quotation for the sum of £300 + VAT for the felling and removal of the tree.

The Committee had been requested to confirm the Assistant Clerk's actions.

RESOLVED: That,

the Assistant Clerk's actions, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, of the acceptance of a quotation for the sum of £300 + VAT for the felling and removal of a Cherry tree located at Billings Hill Shaw, be confirmed and approved.

(ii) During the Tree Surgeon's inspection of the Cherry tree, it was noted that 2 Ash trees located in the woodland to the left of the entrance to Billings Hill Shaw, were suffering from advanced Ash die back.

The Tree Surgeon advised that the trees would require removal as soon as possible.

Quotations for the work were sought and pursuant to Financial Regulation 5.18, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee and the Chairman of the Council, accepted a quotation for the sum of £1,400 + VAT for the felling of the trees.

The Committee had been requested to confirm the Clerk's actions.

The Clerk reported that as the trees were covered by a Tree Preservation Order, it had been necessary for an application to be submitted to Sevenoaks District Council for permission to remove the trees.

Members noted that the application had been submitted by the Tree Surgeon and that a decision was awaited. This can typically take up to 6 weeks.

The Clerk reported that in an emergency, this could be quicker, but that the Tree Surgeon had not considered that the removal of the trees was an immediate emergency.

RESOLVED: That,

the Clerk's actions, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, of the acceptance of quotation for the sum of £1,400 + VAT for the felling of the 2 Ash trees with advanced Ash die back, located at Billings Hill Shaw, be confirmed and approved, subject to the application for consent submitted to the District Council being granted.

(iii) The Committee considered a suggestion that the planting of fruit trees be undertaken at Billings Hill Shaw.

Cllr Oxtoby reported that she had recently been made aware of a grant available for the planting of orchards.

The Committee agreed that this initiative should be explored in more detail and that further advice should be sought from the grant provider.

RESOLVED: That,

the Clerk be requested to contact the New Ash Green Woodland Group to obtain further information and advice regarding the scheme, with a view to possible planting in the Autumn.

(b) Gorse Wood

(i) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28th May 2025, the Committee considered emails received from a resident of Caxton Close, regarding trees overhanging their rear garden and noted that upon inspection, the Tree Surgeon had advised that there were two fairly small Ash trees growing from the woodland, that were overhanging the fence by a reasonable amount, The trees were described as “not being fine specimens” and are growing at a bit of an angle.

It was resolved that the Clerk be requested to contact the Tree Surgeon to ask whether the two Ash trees posed a health and safety issue.

The Committee considered an email dated 2nd June 2025, received from the Tree Surgeon, advising that the trees are growing at an angle and are looking for light because of the trees behind them. They are only relatively small, so don't retain a lot of weight at the moment, but will grow large if they are healthy.

The Tree Surgeon was not prepared to confirm whether the trees pose a health and safety risk.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Clerk, Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee carry out a site visit to inspect the trees;

(2) further advice be sought from a qualified Tree Surgeon;

(3) delegated authority be given to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee to seek quotations for any work considered necessary and to accept the quotation considered most suitable and,

(4) should the Tree Surgeon advise that no works are required, the resident be advised that they are at liberty to cut back any overhanging branches to the boundary at their own expense.

(ii) The Committee considered an email dated 4th June 2025, received from a resident of Porchester Close, regarding a tree located adjacent to their property in Gorse Wood.

The Clerk reported that arrangements had been made for a Tree Surgeon to inspect the tree and that they had advised that the tree was very large and would benefit from a reduction of 25%.

RESOLVED: That,

delegated authority be given to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee to seek quotations for any work considered necessary and to accept the quotation considered most suitable.

Members noted that at the time of inspection, the Tree Surgeon had noted that there were 2 dead Ash trees in the vicinity, adjacent to another property.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Clerk, Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee carry out a site visit to inspect the Ash trees;

(2) further advice be sought from a qualified Tree Surgeon and,

(3) delegated authority be given to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee to seek quotations for any work considered necessary and to accept the quotation considered most suitable.

(c) Quantified Tree Risk Assessment

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 2nd October 2024, the Committee considered the “Boundary & Survey” issues highlighted in the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment report, carried out on the trees located on land owned or managed by the Parish Council.

The report advised that the inspector had examined the Land Registry plans online to clarify the Parish Council’s boundaries and thus tree ownership.

There appear to be a number of discrepancies and some unregistered land, adjacent to the land shown on the Land Registry title deeds for council land, potentially causing confusion as to who owns which trees near to the boundaries.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for Members to accompany the Tree Inspector when he next carried out an inspection (in approx. 12 months), to assess the situation.

The Inspector had previously indicated that he would be retiring in the near future and that therefore, he may not be available to undertake the next tree inspection.

The Committee agreed that as the Tree Inspector had been undertaking inspections on behalf of the Parish Council for a number of years and knows where the original (missing) ground markers were located, his assistance would be invaluable and it was resolved that “1) the Clerk be requested to contact the Tree Inspector to ask whether he would be in a position to undertake the next QTRA in Autumn/Winter 2025 and if so, whether Members of the Committee could accompany him to try and clarify the boundaries and, 2) if the Tree Inspector is not in a position to undertake the next QTRA in Autumn/Winter 2025, the Clerk be requested to ask whether he would be prepared to visit the sites with Members of the Committee on a date and time convenient with him.

Confirmation was subsequently received that the Tree Inspector would be available to undertake the next QTRA in Autumn/Winter 2025.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) arrangements be made with Duramen Consulting to carry out a Quantified Tree Risk Assessment on the trees located on land owned or managed by the Council, provided that the cost of the inspection and report does not exceed, by more than 10% , the fee charged for the inspection and report carried out in June 2024 and,

(2) arrangements be made for Members to accompany the Tree Inspector when he carries out the inspection to assess the situation with regard to the boundary discrepancies and unregistered land, adjacent to the land shown on the Land Registry title deeds for council land, potentially causing confusion as to who owns which trees near to the boundaries.

10. Pavilion

(a) Water Hygiene

(i) The Committee considered the results of the monthly water temperature check at the Pavilion, carried out by the cleaning contractor and the results of the monthly calorifier temperature check carried out by the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that due to the issue with the tap in the disabled toilet, the temperature taken from the pipework before the temperature mixing valve (TMV), was still slightly out of scope.

The Committee noted that arrangements were in the process of being made for the issue with the tap to be resolved and that in the meantime, the Council's water hygiene contractor had confirmed that the disabled toilet could remain open and in use (including the wash basin).

In addition, the temperature of the cold taps in the Home and Away changing rooms and the wc located adjacent to the entrance corridor at the Pavilion were slightly above what they should be.

The Clerk reported that she had sought advice from the Council's water hygiene contractor and that they had advised that this was to be expected during periods of warm weather and that as long as the weekly flushing regime is in place, this shouldn't be an issue.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the results of the monthly water temperature check at the Pavilion, for June 2025, carried out by the cleaning contractor be noted;

(2) the results of the monthly calorifier temperature check at the Pavilion, for June 2025, carried out by the Clerk, be noted, with no action required, as the Committee is satisfied that the results were within scope;

(3) the advice received in an email dated 26th June 2025, from the Council's water hygiene contractor in respect of the temperature of the cold taps in the Home and Away changing rooms and the wc located adjacent to the entrance corridor at the Pavilion, be noted and no further action be taken and,

(4) the action taken with regard to the replacement of the tap in the disabled toilet and the advice received from the Council's water hygiene contractor that the disabled toilet (including the wash basin) could remain open, be noted.

(ii) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces held on 28th May 2025, the Clerk reported that the temperatures of all outlets were within scope, with the exception of the tap in the disabled toilet.

The Clerk reported that the cause of the issue had now been found and that a quotation had been received for the sum of £190 + VAT for the installation of a new tap.

Members noted that there were no available funds remaining in the maintenance budget for the Pavilion.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the quotation received from Harris Building Contractors for the sum of £190 + VAT to install a new tap in the disabled toilet, be accepted and,

(2) the total cost of the work be met from the Parish Council's general reserves.

(iii) At the meeting of the Council held on 12th May 2025, Cllr Glander reported that during the recent water hygiene visit, the engineer had advised that although the kitchen sinks and wash basins in the wcs at the kitchen end of the building are mains fed, the toilets are not.

He advised that whilst the results of the Legionella test were awaited, the toilets should be converted to mains feed to allow them to remain in use.

The necessary pipe works were carried out, but the water hygiene contractor recommended that this was a temporary measure only.

Subsequently, advice was received from the water hygiene contractor that it would be necessary for a pressure reducing valve to be installed to the tank bypass, in order for the pipework reconfiguration to remain in place.

This work was carried out on 24th July 2025.

RESOLVED: That,
the above report be noted.

(b) Showers

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28th May 2025, it was resolved that the Clerk be requested to seek specialist advice for a review of the shower system at the Pavilion.

The Clerk reported that advice had been sought and it had been recommended that the current flexi hoses be replaced with solid copper pipework, and that the existing shower pump be fixed to the floor.

In view of the urgent nature of the works (to allow regular flushing of the outlets to prevent having to re-chlorinate the whole system at additional cost) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, accepted a quotation received from Harris Building Contractors for the sum of £490 + VAT, to carry out the required works. The quotation also included the work required to install a pressure reducing valve to the tank bypass, in order for the pipework reconfiguration to remain in place (see minute item 10. Pavilion, Water Hygiene (iii)).

The Committee agreed that as the showers are now working, a specialist review of the system is no longer required at present.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the above report be noted and,

(2) the Clerk's actions, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, of accepting a quotation received from Harris Building Contractors for the sum of £490 + VAT, to carry out the required works to the showers, including the work required to install a pressure reducing valve to the tank bypass, in order for the pipework reconfiguration to remain in place (see minute item 10. Pavilion, Water Hygiene (iii)), be confirmed and approved.

(3) no further action be taken with regard to a specialist review of the shower system at the Pavilion.

(c) Calor Gas

The Committee considered a letter dated 28th April 2025, received from Calor Gas, advising that from 26th May 2025 a paper Proof of Delivery will no longer be received.

A confirmation email will be received instead.

RESOLVED: That,

the letter dated 28th April 2025, received from Calor Gas, advising that from 26th May 2025 a paper Proof of Delivery will no longer be received, be noted.

11. Hartley Wood

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28th May 2025, Members considered an email dated 3rd April 2025, regarding the use of motorcycles, scooters and off-road bikes in Hartley Wood.

It was resolved that the Clerk be requested to contact Network Rail to seek permission to position CCTV cameras and erect the necessary signage on their land.

The Committee considered an email dated 17th June 2025 received from Network Rail.

RESOLVED: That,

no further action be taken with regard to the positioning of CCTV cameras on land owned by Network Rail.

12. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28th May 2025, Members considered a letter dated 12th May 2025, received from DEFRA, regarding Nitrate Vulnerable Zones.

At the meeting, the Clerk reported that she had contacted DEFRA to obtain clarification, but that a response was still awaited.

The Committee noted that the response from DEFRA had been rather vague and that the Clerk had emailed them several times in an attempt to clarify the requirements, particularly with regard to the Parish Council's allotment site and whether it was considered to be a relevant holding.

The Committee considered the email received from DEFRA dated 17th June and the accompanying advice and agreed that none of the land owned and managed by the Parish Council would be considered to be a "relevant holding" and that therefore no action would be required by the Council.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the above report be noted;

(2) the email received from DEFRA dated 17th June and the accompanying advice be noted and,

(3) no further action be taken as, following the advice received from DEFRA, the Parish Council does not consider that any of its land would be considered to be a "relevant holding".

13. Commercial Waste Collection Service

The Committee considered a letter dated 20th June 2025, received from Sevenoaks District Council regarding the cessation of its Commercial Waste Collection Service with effect from 30th September 2025.

The Clerk reported that new Government legislation introduced from 1st April 2025, dictates that all businesses in England with 10 or more full time staff, must comply with the new "Simpler Recycling" regulations. This requires separate bins and collections of food waste, paper and cardboard and dry recycling (such as glass, plastic and metal). Small businesses with fewer than 10 full time employees must comply by the end of March 2027.

Unfortunately the District Council does not have the facilities to deliver a full recycling service and is therefore unable to offer a full commercial collection service going forward.

The Committee agreed that should the Council have any surplus trade waste sacks as at 30th September 2025, which had been purchased and supplied by the District Council, a refund should be requested.

Members noted that although the Parish Council would not have to comply with the new regulations until 2027, it would need to find an alternative contractor to collect the waste from the Pavilion, Burial Ground and Village Hall.

Members considered quotations from two alternative contractors.

The Clerk reported that the collection frequency of the sacks could be specified by the Council.

Currently 2 sacks per week are collected by the District Council.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the quotation received from Countrystyle for the supply and delivery of 100 x 100l sacks at a cost of £295 + VAT (including collection and waste transfer costs), for the collection of waste from the Pavilion,

Burial Ground and Village Hall, be accepted and,

(2) should the Parish Council have any surplus trade waste sacks as at 30th September 2025, which have been purchased and supplied by the District Council, a refund should be requested.

14. Safeguarding Policy

The Committee reviewed the Parish Council's Safeguarding Policy approved and adopted by the Council on 11th April 2022.

Members noted that the Safeguarding Policy had last been reviewed at a meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28th August 2024.

RECOMMENDED: That,

the Safeguarding Policy approved and adopted by the Council on 11th April 2022 and reviewed by the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee on 28th August 2024, be confirmed and approved.

15. CCTV Policy

The Committee reviewed the Council's CCTV Policy, approved and adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 12th July 2021.

The Committee agreed that the current CCTV Policy fully met the Council's requirements.

Members noted that the CCTV Policy had last been reviewed at a meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28th August 2024.

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 on 28th August 2024 be confirmed and approved.

16. Allotments

Cllr Oxtoby reported that she and the Assistant Clerk had carried out a site visit at the allotments earlier in the day and that several issues had been highlighted:

- Plot 32 – plot unworked
- Plot 19 – plot returned and offered to the next person on the waiting list
- Plot 38 – fence behind plot in disrepair
- Plots 39 & 44 – overgrown vegetation behind plots

- Plot 10 – damaged water pipe
- Plot 30 – plot unworked

The Committee noted that a water pipe had been damaged by a tenant whilst digging a plot and they had subsequently repaired it.

Cllr Oxtoby reported that the pipe had originally been situated beneath the path and had become exposed, due to the fact that the allotment plot had been extended to include part of the path.

An invoice had been submitted by the tenant for the materials required for the repair.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) letters be sent to the tenants of plots 32 and 30, asking their intentions regarding the plots;

(2) quotations be sought for the overgrown vegetation behind plots 39 and 44 to be cut back and the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee be delegated authority to accept the quotation considered most suitable;

(3) quotations be sought for the repair of the fencing at the rear of plot 38 and the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee be delegated authority to accept the quotation considered most suitable;

(4) quotations be sought for the path to be reinstated and for shuttering to be installed to protect the pipe and the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee be delegated authority to accept the quotation considered most suitable and,

(5) arrangements be made for the tenant be reimbursed for the materials required to repair the damaged pipe.

17. Date of next meeting

To be arranged.

The meeting closed at 7.12p.m.

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

Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

