

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD
ON WEDNESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2025
AT 10.00a.m.**

Present:

Cllr David Conroy
Cllr Laurence Glander
Cllr David Graham
Cllr Anne Oxtoby – (*Chairman*)
Cllr Brian Ramsay
Cllr Vincent Sewell

In Attendance:

Mrs H Boden – (*Clerk*)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Penny Cole, and Cllr Malham.

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 13th August 2025, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Football at Manor Field

(a) The Committee considered a quotation for the setting out of 3 no pitches.

One 11 v 11 pitch with respect lines, one 11 v 11 pitch without respect lines and one 9 v 9 pitch without respect lines.

The Committee was reminded that a quotation invitation exercise for the above works had been carried out in 2019 and that Landscape Services had been duly appointed.

Landscape Services have set out the pitches at Manor Field for many years and the Council has been more than satisfied with their work.

In view of this, the Committee considered that it would be in the best interests of the Council to continue using Landscape Services to set out the pitches at Manor Field.

RECOMMENDED: That,

due to the fact that a quotation invitation exercise was carried out in 2019 and that the Parish Council has been fully satisfied with their work, financial regulation 5.9 be waived and the quotation received from Landscape Services to set out 3 no football pitches (2 no 11v11 one with respect lines and 1 no 9v9 without respect lines), be accepted.

(b) The Committee considered the fees to be charged for the use of the football pitches at Manor Field for the 2025/26 season.

The Committee reviewed the cost of setting out the pitches, line marking paint and fortnightly line marking and noted that the fee received from the Clubs would most likely not cover the expenditure incurred by the Parish Council.

The Committee noted that last season, the hire charge for 3 pitches had been set at £2,300 and agreed that this fee should be increased by 5%.

RECOMMENDED: That, (1) the fees to be charged for the use of three pitches at Manor Field, for the 2025/26 season, be set at £2,415 and that the clubs be charged the sum of £805 per pitch and, (2) the New Ash Green FC be charged the sum of £10, each time they require the use of the toilets at the Pavilion, on the proviso that use of the Pavilion is supervised at all times and that the cost of any additional cleaning required will be met by the Football Club.

5. 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 28th August 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 28th August 2025, be received and noted.

6. Trees

(a) Porchester Close

The Committee considered an email dated 9th August 2025, received from a resident of Porchester Close, regarding 2 trees located in Gorse Wood.

The Clerk reported that she had made arrangements for the trees to be inspected by a Tree Surgeon, who had advised that although the trees are large, they do not pose a health and safety risk.

RESOLVED: That, the resident be advised that the trees have been inspected, but that due to the fact that they do not pose a health and safety risk, no further action will be taken by the Parish Council.

(b) Billings Hill Shaw

(i) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 13th August 2025, the Committee noted that a representative from the New Ash Green Woodland Group had suggested a site meeting to discuss the possible planting of fruit trees at Billings Hill Shaw.

At the meeting, the Clerk reported that she was waiting to hear from the representative with regard to a suitable date for the meeting.

The Chairman reported that a site meeting had recently taken place and that the representative from the New Ash Green Woodland Group had suggested that a Working Group be formed to build a vision for the land and to help take action on what grants to apply for.

The Committee considered that the planting of 12 trees initially would be sufficient in 2026, with further trees to be planted in the future.

Members noted that the project would require budgetary provision in addition to any grant funding that may be received.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) the Parish Council agrees in principle to the creation of an orchard at Billings Hill Shaw; (2) budgetary provision be made in the 2026/27 budget to part fund the project; (3) further investigation be made, in consultation with the New Ash Green Woodland Group, into available grants for the project and, (4) enquiries be made as to the purchase cost of 12 no fruit trees.

(ii) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 9th July 2025, it was agreed that a quotation be accepted for the felling of two Ash trees with advanced die back, located in the woodland at the entrance to Billings Hill Shaw.

It was noted that the trees were subject to a Tree Preservation Order and that an application would be required to be submitted to the District Council for their removal.

The Clerk reported that the application has now been approved by Sevenoaks District Council and that the works will be carried out on Tuesday 9th September 2025 and Friday 12th September 2025.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the Clerk's report be noted and, (2) a notice be erected on the fence adjacent to where the tree works will be carried out, to inform residents of the dates that the work will be undertaken and to advise that permission has been obtained from the District Council with regard to the Tree Preservation Order.

7. Pavilion

(a) Water Hygiene

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

RESOLVED: That, (1) the results of the monthly water temperature check at the Pavilion, for August 2025, carried out by the cleaning contractor be noted with no action required, as the Committee is satisfied that the results were within scope and, (2) the results of the monthly calorifier temperature check at the Pavilion, for August 2025, carried out by the Clerk, be noted, with no action required, as the Committee is satisfied that the result was within scope;

(ii) The Committee noted that the results of the recent water hygiene tests carried out by the Council's water hygiene contractor had indicated a high level of bacteria in the cold tap in the Away changing room.

The Clerk reported that the water hygiene contractor had confirmed in an email dated 20th August 2025, that as it isn't drinking water, it is not harmful to health and there would be no need to close the showers/changing rooms.

The Clerk reported that the water sample taken from the hot tap in the Away changing room had come back negative for Legionella.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the Clerk's report be noted and that no action be taken with regard to the high level of bacteria found in the cold tap in the Away changing room, as the Committee is satisfied with the advice received from the Council's water hygiene contractor in an email dated 20th August 2025 and, (2) the results of the recent water sample taken from the hot tap in the Away changing room be noted, with no further action to be taken as the Committee is satisfied that Legionella had not been detected.

(iii) The Committee considered a quotation received from the Parish Council's water hygiene contractor, for the system disinfection and Legionella sampling, following the closure of the changing rooms during the winter.

RESOLVED: That, the quotation received from the Parish Council's water hygiene contractor for the sum of £544.00 + VAT, for the system disinfection and Legionella sampling, following the closure of the changing rooms during the winter, be accepted.

8. Playgrounds

The Committee considered an email dated 21st August 2025, received from a resident regarding the playground at Chantry Avenue.

The resident had complained about the cleanliness of the playground, in particular the amount of bird droppings.

Cllr Oxtoby reported that she had inspected the area and that she had not noticed any cleanliness issues at the time.

The Clerk reported that she had replied to the resident, advising that all of the Council's playgrounds are inspected by an RPII registered Playground Inspector on a quarterly basis and on a weekly basis by the Parish Council's Routine Maintenance Contractor.

She had also advised that with regard to the presence of bird droppings, unfortunately, due to the close proximity to trees, this is something that we have no control over, however, the Routine Maintenance Contractor does try to clean the equipment as much as possible during his weekly checks.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the email dated 21st August 2025, received from a resident regarding the cleanliness of the playground at Chantry Avenue, be noted; (2) the Clerk's response to the resident be noted and approved and,

(3) the Council's Routine Maintenance Contractor be requested to monitor the situation and to report any issues to the Clerk.

9. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 15th October 2025 at 6.00p.m. at Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 10.35a.m.

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

Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

