

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD
ON WEDNESDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2026
AT 10.19a.m.**

Present:

Cllr Penny Cole – *(Arrived at 10.26a.m.)*
Cllr David Conroy
Cllr Laurence Glander
Cllr David Graeme
Cllr Anne Oxtoby – *(Chairman)*
Cllr Brian Ramsay
Cllr Vincent Sewell

In Attendance:

Mrs H Boden – *(Clerk)*
Cllr Perry Cole – *(Hartley Parish Councillor)*
Representative from the New Ash Green Football Club

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from the representative from Hartley De Sales 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 17th December 2025, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Football at Manor Field

(a) The Clerk reported that an email dated 16th February 2026, had been received from the Hartley De Sales Football Club, asking for the date of the last weekend that they can use the pitch.

The Clerk reported that the cricket was due to commence on Saturday 25th April.

The email also asked for a list of regular hirers so that they can minimise disruption when the club resumes training at Manor Field.

The Clerk reported that she had provided a list of hirers to the Club.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the email dated 16th February 2026, received from the Hartley De Sales Football Club, be received and noted and, (2) the Clerk's report be noted.

(b) The representative from the New Ash Green Football Club apologised to the Committee on behalf of the Club, for the poor state of the pitches caused over the weekend of 24th/25th January.

The pitches had been deemed fit to play by 2 committee members and both referees, but became significantly churned up during the matches.

As a result, the Club took the decision to postpone games for the following 2 weeks and the Parish Council took the decision to rest the pitches for a further week after this.

The representative assured the Committee that the pitches would be inspected later in the week and that matches would be postponed should the condition of the pitches be considered not acceptable to play on. RESOLVED: That, the report received from the representative of the New Ash Green Football Club, be noted.

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 12th February 2026.

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 12th February 2026, be received and noted.

6. Billings Hill Shaw

(a) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 15th October 2025, it was agreed that the Clerk be requested to contact the representative from the New Ash Green Woodlands Group, with a view to arranging a meeting to discuss the proposed orchard project further.

The Clerk reported that she had heard nothing further from the New Ash Green Woodlands Group, but that at a recent site meeting, the representative from the North West Kent Countryside Project (NWKCP) had offered to contact the New Ash Green Woodlands Group on behalf of the Parish Council.

To date, there has been no response. RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's report be noted.

(b) At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 15th October 2025, it was agreed that the Clerk be requested to contact the representative from the NWKCP, to ask whether they would be able to assist with the proposed orchard project.

Members noted that a site meeting had been held on 4th February 2026 with a representative from the NWKCP, the Clerk and members of the Committee.

At the meeting, the representative from the NWKCP agreed to prepare a plan, in order that the project can be costed.

The Clerk reported that this had not yet been received. RESOLVED:

That, the above report be noted.

(c) Members considered information received with regard to the potential hire of a stand pipe to enable the proposed orchard to be watered.

It was agreed that if watering of the orchard could not be arranged then the plan would need to be aborted. RESOLVED: That, once a plan has been prepared by the NWKCP, full costings be obtained, including costings relating to watering, for consideration by the Committee.

(d) The Committee considered an email dated 18th December 2025, received from a resident, regarding a piece of land owned by the Parish Council in Billings Hill Shaw. RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be requested to obtain further information, to be considered at the next meeting.

7. Pavilion

(a) Water Hygiene

(i) The Committee considered the results of the monthly water temperature checks at the Pavilion, carried out by the cleaners. RESOLVED: That, the results of the monthly water temperature check at the Pavilion, for January 2026, carried out by the cleaning contractor, be noted with no action required, as the Committee is satisfied that the results were within scope.

(ii) The Committee had been requested to consider the results of the recent water hygiene tests carried out by the Council's water hygiene contractor.

The Clerk reported that the results were still awaited. RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's report be noted.

(iii) The Committee considered 2 quotations for the water hygiene contract at the Pavilion for 2026/27. RESOLVED: That, the quotation received from BrodexTrident for the sum of £1,583.00 + VAT, to carry out annual water hygiene services including chlorination of the hot and cold water services and testing for legionella be accepted.

(iv) The Committee considered arrangements for the opening of the changing rooms and wc, including arrangements to ensure the safe use of the showers.

Members were reminded that at the end of the cricket season, arrangements had been made for the calorifier 1 (located in the boiler room) and the cold water tank (located in the loft space above the entrance corridor) to be left full and the water supply to the sink toilets and showers turned off, using the isolation valves.

The changing room showers/hand wash basins and toilets had been taken out of use for the winter and the water temperature monitoring and flushing in these areas was discontinued.

In view of the above and as recommended by the Council's water hygiene contractor, arrangements have been made for the disinfection of the water tank, calorifier 1 and associated pipework and for two Legionella samples to be taken 48

– 72 hours afterwards, approximately 3-4 weeks before the start of the cricket season, at a cost of £544 + VAT.

The Clerk reported that once the water samples had been taken, there would be a two week wait for the results to come back. During this time, the water hygiene contractor had confirmed that the weekly flushing of the outlets (including showers) would need to be carried out.

Members noted that the Clerk had sought advice from the water hygiene contractor as to how this could be carried out safely by the routine maintenance contractor during this time, as it would not be known whether Legionella was present in the system.

The Committee noted the advice received from the water hygiene contractor that in order to flush the showers safely, the spray nozzle of each showerhead should be taken out and then the water should be run. If the nozzles can't be removed, the contractor would need to cover each showerhead with a large plastic bag with a hole at the bottom to allow the water to drain out of the bag preventing any spray/vapour from being created.

The Clerk reported that the Council currently provides a protective face covering and goggles for the contractor and that the contractor had received training on the process from the water hygiene contractor on 3rd April 2025. RECOMMENDED:

That, (1) the Clerk's report be noted; (2) following the disinfection of the water tank and associated pipework, recommended by the water hygiene contractor, the parish council's routine maintenance contractor be requested to recommence the weekly water flushing of all outlets in the changing rooms and wc, with strict adherence to the advice provided by the water hygiene contractor regarding the procedure to be used relating to the showers; (3) the Clerk be requested to remind the routine maintenance contractor that the mask and goggles provided by the Parish Council must be worn at all times whilst carrying out the flushing (as stated in the Council's Water Flushing Risk Assessment).

(b) Roof

(i) The Committee considered quotations for the raking out and re-pointing of the tiles on the valley of the roof at the Pavilion. RECOMMENDED: That, (1) the quotation received from Evo Kent Roofing, for the sum of £3,270 + VAT, for the necessary repairs to the Pavilion, as set out in a quotation dated 17th December 2025, be accepted, subject to confirmation as to potential additional costs with regard to scaffolding or damaged tile/ridge/hip costs; (2) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee be delegated authority to accept any additional costs relating to the repairs, if considered satisfactory and, (3) the total cost of the above works be met from CIL funds.

(c) Fire Risk Assessment

The Committee considered the Fire Risk Assessment Report and noted that the assessment was carried out on 27th January 2026.

The Clerk reported that four significant findings had been highlighted in the report.

1) the LPG storage compound was found to contain vegetation and combustible stored items.

Members noted that the Clerk has asked the grounds maintenance contractor to remove these hazards.

2) *The final exit door to the rear, does not open effectively due to interference with the frame.*

The Clerk reported that she had made arrangements for the door to be inspected and the contractor had advised that the door requires planing.

The Clerk reported that she had requested a quotation for the work.

3) *The hazard warning signage on the LPG compound is worn and not readily visible.*

The Clerk reported that new signage had been requested from Calor Gas and that the signs have been erected by the Council's routine maintenance contractor.

4) *The boiler room and the referee's changing room have holes and unstopped service penetrations in the ceiling.*

As the building is a single storey structure, there is no requirement for the ceiling to be fire resisting. Based on the simple layout and scope of the premises, the current condition of the relevant ceilings does not pose a significant risk to the means of escape, however, where feasible, the ceilings should be maintained in effective imperforate condition to prevent the early and unseen spread of fire and smoke into the roof void.

The Clerk reported that the advice received from the Fire Inspector was that the ceilings should be upgraded as part of any refurbishment of the relevant areas.

Members agreed that advice should be sought from the Fire Inspector as to whether it would be acceptable to fill the holes with fire retardant expanding foam. RECOMMENDED: That, (1) the Fire Risk Assessment report dated 27th January 2026, be noted; (2) the remedial action taken with regard to items 1 and 3, as highlighted in the report, be noted and approved; (3) the Clerk be delegated authority to accept the quotation once received, in respect of item 2, for the planing of the rear fire exit door and, (4) advice be sought from the Fire Inspector with regard to item 5, as to whether it would be acceptable to fill the holes in the ceilings of the referee's changing room and the boiler room with fire retardant expanding foam.

(d) PIR Light

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 17th December 2025, it was resolved that a quotation received for the sum of £160 + VAT, to install a new emergency bulkhead, outside the main entrance door to the Pavilion, be accepted.

The Clerk reported that it was also necessary for an additional floodlight to be installed at a cost of £85 + VAT. RESOLVED: That, the installation of an additional floodlight at a cost of £85 + VAT, be noted and approved.

8. Manor Field

(a) Bollard

The Clerk reported that the replacement bollard at the entrance to Manor Field was due to be installed on Friday 20th February.

The bollard will be keyed alike to the existing one.

(b) Water Meter

The Committee considered an email dated 6th February 2026, received from Castle Water, regarding the water meter at the Pavilion, Manor Field.

The Clerk reported that for some time, it has been difficult to read the meter due to its location and the fact that the display panel is unreadable due to condensation.

The Clerk reported that she had contacted Castle Water to ask them to make arrangements for the meter to be read, but that they had advised that if the display panel was unreadable, estimated readings would be applied.

Castle Water have advised that if they submit a request to the Wholesaler (South East Water), to replace the screen, in line with the Scheme of Charges, a £99 + VAT admin fee may be charged.

If however, the screen was found to be damaged by no fault of the Council's there would be no fee.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the situation be monitored and the display screen inspected in the Spring to see if the condensation issue improves and, (2) no further action be taken at the present time with regard to replacing the display panel on the water meter.

(c) Cesspit

Cllr Glander reported that the cesspit appears to be filling up more quickly, despite the fact that the showers aren't in use.

Cllr Glander reported that he had checked the cesspit just after it had been emptied and that there did not appear to be a leak. He advised that he would continue to monitor the situation. RESOLVED: That, (1) Cllr Glander's report be noted and, (2) the situation continue to be monitored.

(d) Car Park

The Committee considered an email dated 6th February 2026, received from the Parish Council's Solicitor, regarding the previously proposed footpath leading from Hartley Burial Ground to the car park at Manor Field.

The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Council's Solicitor with a query relating to the email and was awaiting a response. RESOLVED: That, (1) the email dated 6th February 2026, received from the Parish Council's Solicitor, regarding the previously proposed footpath leading from Hartley Burial Ground to the car park at Manor Field, be noted; (2) the Clerk's report be noted and, (3) the matter be deferred, pending a response from the Parish Council's Solicitor.

9. Quantified Tree Risk Assessment

The Committee had been requested to consider the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment report, if available.

The Clerk reported that the report had not yet been received, but that she had chased this up with the Tree Inspector.

- RESOLVED: That,
- (1) the Clerk's report be noted and,
 - (2) the matter be deferred until the next meeting.

10. Playgrounds

(a) Playground Inspections

The Committee considered the Operational Inspection Report dated 29th January 2026, received from the Parish Council's Playground Inspector.

Members noted that Chantry Avenue recreation ground and Longfield Hill recreation ground had been classified as low risk 10 and that Woodland Avenue recreation ground had been classified as a medium risk 12.

The Committee considered the list of items highlighted as requiring attention, noting that all items had been classified as either "low" or "medium" risk.

The report advised that low risk items may continue in use. Action may be required, but that monitoring should be undertaken. The necessary action will be indicated on the report where appropriate.

The Committee agreed that as the next inspection would take place within 3 months' time, this would be sufficient monitoring.

The Clerk reminded members that the Council's Routine Maintenance Contractor inspected the Council's playgrounds on a weekly basis.

Medium risk items may continue in use. Action required as indicated on the report, will be necessary within 3-6 months, as finance allows.

The Committee agreed that no action should be taken at the current time with regard to the low risk items detailed in the Inspection Report dated 29th January 2026.

Members considered the following medium risk item detailed in the Inspection Report:

Woodland Avenue

- Picnic table (recycled plastic) – the item is loose in the ground – re-secure item in the ground

Members noted that this issue had been highlighted in previous inspection reports and that the item had been secured in June 2025, by Safeplay.

The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Playground Inspector to ask whether this item had been included in the report in error and they had confirmed that the item had become loose. RESOLVED: That, (1) the operational inspection reports dated 29th January 2026, be noted; (2) no action be taken at the current time regarding the low risk items detailed in the three inspection reports; (3) the Clerk be requested to contact the Parish Council's routine maintenance contractor to ask him to inspect the picnic table at Woodland Avenue, which has been highlighted as a medium risk and to re-secure it if necessary, to ensure that it is safe.

(b) Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground

(i) The Clerk reported that there have recently been reports of motorbike activity at Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground.

Members noted that the fencing surrounding the car park at Porchester Close was recently vandalised, allowing entry in to the woods for bikes.

The Clerk reported that the Council's routine maintenance contractor has repaired the fencing and placed some large logs and vegetation behind the fence, to make access for bikes more difficult.

Members agreed that it was important for residents to continue to report nuisance motorbikes to the Police. RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's report be noted.

(ii) The Committee had been requested to consider whether any remedial works are necessary to the ground around the goal post areas.

Members agreed that it would be impossible to carry out any works as the goals are constantly in use and that the only option would be for the goals to be moved. RESOLVED: That, a quotation be sought for the re-siting of the goal posts, to be considered at the next meeting.

11. Rectory Meadow

The Committee considered a quotation received from the North West Kent Countryside Project, to cut the grass in 2026/27 in accordance with the Management Plan.

Members noted that the cost had increased significantly from that of previous years and that this was due to the recent re-structuring of the organisation.

Members noted that the cost had remained the same for a number of years.

The Clerk reported that the increase would mean that the 2026/27 budget provision for Rectory Meadow would be exceeded.

The Clerk reported that the NWKCP had been carrying out the work for a number of years, as previous attempts to obtain alternative quotations had proved fruitless, due to the specialised nature of the work involved. RECOMMENDED:

That, (1) the quotation received from the North West Kent Countryside Project, for the sum of £2,184 + VAT, to cut the grass in 2026/27 in accordance with the Management Plan, be accepted and, (2) due to the fact that there is insufficient budgetary provision in the 2026/27 budget, the additional cost be met by the Parish Council's general reserves.

12. Grass Cutting Contracts

The Committee considered the quotations received for grass cutting contracts at the Council's open spaces, recreation grounds and amenity land for the period 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027.

The Clerk reported that five quotations had been requested but only three had been received.

RECOMMENDED: That,

- (1) the quotation received from Landscape Services for the sum of £12,230.95 + VAT, to cut the grass at the Council's open spaces and amenity land, as specified in Contract 2 for the period 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027 be accepted and,
- (2) the quotation received from Landscape Services for the sum of £3,491.68, to cut the grass at the Council's recreation grounds at Manor Field and Longfield Hill, as specified in Contract 3 for the period 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027 be accepted.

13. Routine Maintenance Contract 2026/27

The Committee considered a report on the appointment of a contractor to undertake duties set out in the Routine Maintenance Contract for the period 1st July 2026 to 30th June 2027, including regular patrols of the Council's open spaces and execution of minor repair/maintenance works.

The Clerk reported that each year, notice of the Council's intention to award the contract is placed on the Council's noticeboards, inviting interested parties to contact the Council. No expressions of interest are usually received.

The Council's current contractor is invited each year to submit a quotation.

The Committee considered the schedule of works and agreed on a number of amendments. RESOLVED: That,

- (1) a notice be included in the next edition of the Parish Council's newsletter, inviting anyone interested in providing a quotation for the contract, to contact the Council;
- (2) a notice be placed on the Council's noticeboards and website, inviting interested parties to contact the Council and,
- (3) quotations be sought for the Routine Maintenance Contract for the period 1st July 2026 to 30th June 2027, to be considered by the Committee at its next meeting.

14. Allotments

(a) Plot Clearance

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 17th December 2025, it was noted that a new tenant had asked for assistance from the Parish Council to clear the plot, as there was a large amount of carpet on it.

At the meeting it was agreed that the Council's routine maintenance contractor be requested to inspect the plot to ascertain as to whether he would be able to remove the carpet and that the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee and the Assistant Clerk conduct a site visit to inspect the plot.

The Clerk reported that the Council's routine maintenance contractor had inspected the plot and had advised that the removal of the carpet was not something that he would be able to assist with.

Cllr Glander reported that he and the Assistant Clerk had inspected the plot earlier in the week and that due to the fact that the carpet was embedded into the ground, it would require the use of a digger to remove it. RESOLVED: That, (1) a

quotation be sought for the removal of the carpet; (2) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to accept the quotation if considered acceptable and, (3) the Clerk be authorised to arrange for the delivery of a skip to enable the carpet to be disposed of and following this, for the use of all of the allotment tenants.

(b) Fencing

The Clerk reported that a complaint had been received regarding the state of the fencing along the western boundary of the allotment site, which backs on to the sheltered housing accommodation.

Cllr Glander reported that he and the Assistant Clerk had inspected the fence earlier in the week and that the Council's boundary fence was still in situ, but that the close boarded fence behind this, erected by West Kent Housing Association had rotted and fallen into the garden of the sheltered housing accommodation. RESOLVED:

That, the Clerk be requested to report the issue to West Kent Housing Association.

(c) National Allotment Society Membership

The Committee had been requested to consider whether it wishes to renew its subscription to the National Allotment Society, at a cost of £70 per annum.

The Clerk reported that the Council's membership had lapsed several years ago. RECOMMENDED: That, the Council renews its membership to the National Allotment Society, at a cost of £70 per annum.

15. Porchester Close – Fencing

The Clerk reported that there have been several incidences of vandalism to the fencing at Porchester Close car park, leading in to Gorse Wood.

The Clerk reported that the Council's routine maintenance contractor has repaired the fencing and placed some large logs and vegetation behind the fence, to make access for bikes more difficult. RESOLVED: That, the Clerk's report be noted.

16. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 11.56a.m.

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

Chairman of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

