



# Edenbridge Town Council



Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

Open Spaces | 20 Sep 2021 | Short Agenda (Excludes Confidential Items) | v:1

To Councillors: J Aldridge, A Baker (*Chair*), A Damodaran, V Jennings, A Layland, N Lloyd, S McGregor (*Vice-Chair*), B Todd.

An OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE meeting will be held at 8:00 pm (or shortly thereafter) on 20 September 2021 at Rickards Hall. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

15 September 2021

## Agenda

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1 **Apologies for Absence**

2 **Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**

Including any interests not already registered

3 **Public Questions**

Members of the public, and Members with prejudicial interests on items on the Agenda, may make representations, answer, ask questions and give evidence at this meeting in respect of items on the Agenda. (This is the only opportunity for the public to make a contribution during the meeting.) Both public and Members are limited to three minutes each to speak, and the total time allocated for public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

4 **To Receive and Sign Minutes of Open Spaces Committee 26 July 2021**

5 **To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 31 August 2021**

The comparisons report for the end of last month is attached.

6 **To Ratify Operational Decisions for Open Spaces Activity**

In line with the decision at July committee meeting, a cost of £143 plus VAT was accepted for a local company to carry out the “plumbing work” as last stage of addressing the water leak in the Cemetery. With £82 remaining of the original allocated expenditure, fortunately the difference of £61 was much less than the “up to £500 more if necessary” which July committee had allowed. Supply was restored at the start of August.

Following the earlier decision by members to install additional signage to address problems from long-term parking in Market Yard car park, the Clerk approved expenditure of £150 plus VAT for three new signs, which the groundstaff are installing.

Attempted break-in through the gate at Forge Croft allotments last month damaged the padlock sufficiently to require a replacement.

**Do members endorse the above decisions?**

7 **Correspondence**

7.1 **CPRE re: Countryside Voices - summer edition**

Members may wish to note there are several topics in this edition which are of relevance to rural communities such as Edenbridge: Affordable homes (p.3), solar farms (p.5), the importance of hedgerows management/maintenance (p.12), and rural housing development (p. 18/19). There is a hard copy of the magazine available in the office, or it is available on-line

## 7.2 Kent County Playing Fields Association re: subscription

The annual subscription has been paid (£20) in line with the decision to continue membership.

The letter containing the subscription request included the reminder that grants up to £1,000 are available to parish councils and voluntary organisations for projects such as children's play areas. Subject to availability of office resources, an application could be made for funding towards the Recreation Ground play area refurbishment.

## 7.3 Great Stone Bridge Trust re: additional Water Meadows maintenance

### 7.3.1 Additional Water Meadows Maintenance

Council has been contacted on behalf of the Great Stone Bridge Trust regarding possible additional maintenance work at the Water Meadows, going forward. The groundstaff already mow the "walks" around the Water Meadows usually four or five times a year for the Trust, though in this year of rapid grass growth it has already been five, and another cut is anticipated necessary.

The new request is for the kind of "pruning and clearing" maintenance with which the team has helped annually on a voluntary basis one day in October for several years. But in future it would more be frequently across the months during October-April. The proposed on-going maintenance will replace current volunteer work. The head groundsman is walking the site with a representative of the Trust to establish the nature of the work required. We will provide a costing based on the hours and frequency necessary.

**Do members agree to some groundstaff time being allocated to additional Water Meadows maintenance, subject to terms and costs agreed with the officers?**

### 7.3.2 Mont St Aignan sundial

Following a second incidence of damage to the brass pointer (the gnomon) on the sundial sited at the riverside garden near the stone bridge, the Trust has suggested the item could be re-located elsewhere. The heavy stone column itself has not been damaged. Another suggestion is to replace the gnomon in more robust material, such as steel or iron with a wider based design, to make it less vulnerable to interference or theft. Costs are being investigated, and hopefully it will be replaced soon.

The Trust agreed in 2018 to host the sundial on its land, with the proviso that the Town Council carried all of the cost and responsibility associated with the re-location and installation of the feature, and of its maintenance - and if required, any necessary repairs which might have to be undertaken at any time in the future. This the Council has done, and is doing.

If members wish to consider re-siting the sun-dial, they need to be mindful of the cost of a contractor removing, transporting, and re-installing this heavy single-piece unit. The re-location was assisted by the developers of the former Stangrove Lodge site, and the new occupants of that location did not want it on site.

**Do members wish the Council have the expense of re-location, and where would they suggest the sun-dial gifted to Edenbridge should be sited?**

#### 7.4 **EdenARA re: donation of seat(s)**

Following a meeting of EdenARA committee, its chairman and secretary met the Deputy Clerk in Stangrove Park to discuss possible locations for donation of seating. The group had been provided with costs for the Eastgate style of bench (£413 plus VAT) installed in the park, having cast iron frame and hard wood slats. It was also advised of the Council's existing policy to require an accompanying 10-year maintenance fee for each seat at £650. This is to cover the cost of future staff time and materials spent annually painting/staining the bench, and/or repairing in future if necessary. This is currently equivalent to £65 a year.

EdenARA chairman has written to advise that the group has sufficient funding to pay for purchase of one, or two, even three seats, but would not accept the additional £650 per seat (£1,950 for three) for 10 years of maintenance. It is suggested that "with handy, skilled, and active members" the group could look after and make any repairs. Accordingly, they ask councillors to look favourably on a request to waive the maintenance cost for the seating offered.

Members may wish to consider what would happen in years to come if the group no longer had members willing and able to undertake maintenance of the seating - or if the group itself ceased to exist. The 10-year fee guarantees the annual seating maintenance via Council staff, including prompt repair if necessary, where volunteers may not be so quickly available.

**How do members wish to respond to the EdenARA letter?**

#### 7.5 **Rotary Club re: offer of a tree for the Queen's Jubilee**

Edenbridge and Westerham Rotary Club wishes to plant a tree for the Jubilee. The amount of funding available will affect the possible size and species of tree, and therefore will influence the safest location to suggest for its future protection and welfare. The Club has been asked to clarify what funding they have in mind, and an answer is awaited.

**Do members wish to accept in principle the offer of an appropriate tree to fit in with the agreed tree planting programme?**

### 8 **Head Groundsman's Report**

#### 8.1 **Routine and seasonal work**

- Grass cutting all sites
- Watering plants
- Weed spraying
- Hedge cutting and pruning shrubs and flowers
- Maintaining planters through town and beds in Cemetery
- Disinfecting of play equipment continues
- Painting benches

## 8.2 **Groundstaff activity**

The in-house summer visual tree survey has been completed, as has the summer check of memorials in the Churchyard and Cemetery. Only a small number of issues were found in the Cemetery and action has been taken where necessary. Nothing major was found during the tree inspection. A few minor items have been carried out by the grounds team, with more routine maintenance scheduled for the coming winter months

The team has begun removing some of the summer plants from the planters throughout the town. We have also taken down some of the summer baskets from the courtyard at Doggetts Barn. We will be looking to remove the remainder of these in the coming days, and hope to have all the winter plants in within the next few weeks.

The summer pitch renovations were completed in a shorter off-season than normal. The football goals have been up for over a month, with most leagues having now started. All the rugby pitches were finished off last week, with rugby training now in full swing and the start of the season imminent.

The grounds team has now reinstated two notice boards that were removed from the Market Yard some time ago, as they were obscuring the view of the surveillance camera. One has been fixed to the wall of the public toilets, and the other placed on legs on the small patch of grass by the band hall.

We spent some time clearing the majority of the duck weed from the pond at Stangrove park. We then treated the pond with some eco-friendly duck weed treatment. Unfortunately, shortly after that we had one of very few warm spells this summer, and the weed seems to have multiplied again. Hopefully once the rest of the treatment is applied, and the weather begins to cool, the weed will start to disappear. However I feel this will continue to be an issue going forward and it may be worth trying to come up with a more long term solution to this problem.

A sturdy post has been sourced and has now been installed to hold the new defibrillator placed in Stangrove Park.

Head Groundsman 14/09/2021

## 9 **Open Spaces Business**

### 9.1 **To receive the Burial Report**

The burial report is as follows and updates the record of Cemetery activity:

July 2021:

One interment of ashes.

August 2021:

One burial

One interment of ashes

Two Grants of Right

9.2 **To receive update on works scheduled for 2020/21 in the 10 year maintenance plan**

The following works were outstanding from last year, for a variety of reasons:

**Cemetery walls mortar joints and coping stone repairs**

The contractor completed the work during August.

**Mowshurst car park resurfacing**

A date for scheduling the work was dependent on supply of the planings required, and these finally became available to proceed on 15th September.

**Tree survey follow up works**

Phase two of removal of a large horse chestnut tree deteriorating in Stangrove Park beside the path passing the pond is complete and the remaining tree trunk re-purposed.

The report on the condition of the oak in the south-west corner of Stangrove Park has advised the extent of the internal decay has moderately increased since the last inspection, but there is still significant sound wood present. Balancing tree benefits against risks, present and future pruning works will be required to mitigate the basal decay, and it is recommended as high priority (within three months from August) that the tree be reduced in height by 6m and lateral growth by 30%. This would equate to an additional 60% reduction in the wind sail effect following previous reduction works in 2015 - there has been 2-2.5m regrowth since then, which is quite good for the species.

Costed options (ex VAT) are as follows:

Crown reduction as recommended in the survey report £1,500

Dismantle the tree to leave standing monolith of 8m height add £1,000

Total £2,500

To dismantle further to ground level add £1,000

**How do members wish to proceed?**

9.3 **To receive update on works scheduled for 2021/22 in the 10 and 30 year Open Spaces maintenance plans**

The report from the periodic **external inspection of Council's trees** every two years is awaited.

The report from the annual **external inspection of playgrounds** has been received, with

most small-scale maintenance items within the capabilities of the groundstaff team. At the skate ramps Blossoms Park it was noted that some parts of vertical surface were in need of replacement, and these have been referred to the constructor for costing. This will be covered by the 10 year Maintenance Plan budget. The large square user advice sign on the side of the ramps required extra and different text, but the notice cover and frame has subsequently been damaged and the sign itself removed. It is proposed to replace the frame sign with a directly applied notice with aluminium surface layer (used for the new Market Yard signage), and a costing for this is awaited.

At Stangrove Park playground it was noted that the wrong style of access gate had been supplied. The contractor has ordered the correct replacement, at no cost to the Council, and this will be installed as soon as it has been delivered. Fault was noted with the “butterfly” see-saw unit, on which two bolts had worked loose and were missing from the central pivot point. It was not returning to level rest when not in use, which indicated worn bearings. Groundstand have fenced off the item and displayed notices to take the item out of use for the time being.

Playground repairers were able to quote for repair, but advised it could happen again as they had seen a few of these units fail over time. It is coming up to nine years old (December) and they advised strongly to think about a replacement unit. The playground does already have a small “springy” see-saw unit meanwhile, and the “butterfly” repair cost would be £735 plus VAT.

Initial investigations of possible replacements for the “butterfly” have revealed a wide range of designs and costs among manufacturers - some of which are attached.

**Do members wish to approve repair of the current unit, and consider budgeting for a replacement item next year?**

Work on the section of concrete slabs in Doggetts Courtyard due for cleaning, replacement and re-setting as necessary, and repointing has been completed.

The latest stage of the streetlights replacement rolling programme under the 30 year plan, with works approved for 14 columns this year, is now complete. The contractor was asked to recommend which columns should be included in the schedule next year 2022/23.

 Annex 1: Playground Equipment.pdf

#### 9.4 **To consider the street lighting replacement programme 2022/23**

The budget in the 30-year plan for the street lighting replacement programme is £14,800 for metal columns and £14,700 for concrete ones. Figures for the programme in 2022/23 have been obtained from our lighting contractor; these are subject to UKPN not implementing a price increase for the new year.

The quote for the metal columns from Streetlights is £1,175+ VAT and UKPN is £1,032 + VAT = £2,207.00 + VAT per column.

The quote for the concrete columns from Streetlights is also £1,175.00 + VAT and UKPN is £1,032.00 + VAT = £2,207.00 + VAT.

These figures would allow for six metal and five concrete columns to be replaced.

The following metal columns are proposed:

| Column numbers | Road         | Streetlights | UKPN     | Total net VAT |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| 81, 82, 83     | Hilders Lane | 3,525.00     | 3,096.00 | 6,621.00      |
| 235, 236, 240  | Swan Lane    | 3,525.00     | 3,096.00 | 6,621.00      |
| Column totals  |              | 7,050.00     | 6,192.00 | 13,242.00     |

And to replace the following concrete ones:

| Column numbers | Road        | Streetlights | UKPN     | Total net VAT |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| 16, 19,21      | Cedar Drive | 3,525.00     | 3,096.00 | 6,621.00      |
| 155,158        | Park Avenue | 2,350.00     | 2,064.00 | 4,414.00      |
| Column totals  |             | 5,875.00     | 5,160.00 | 11,035.00     |

**Do members agree to replace the above 11 columns as the project for the street light replacement programme in 2022/23?**

**Do members agree that if there are any surplus funds these would be used to paint and number some of the more recent metal replacement columns?**

## 9.5 To receive an update on projects awarded CIL funding

### 9.5.1 Recreation Ground playground refurbishment

Several site visits have been made with interested suppliers, the tender document having been published on the ContractFinder website. The closing date for submissions has been extended to 18th October, with a potential project start date (weather and ground conditions permitting) of spring next year.

### 9.5.2 Addition to skate ramps facility, Blossoms Park

The design has been taken to Blossoms Park to consult various users on the project, and the proposed addition has been welcomed by younger users, ages ranging from top-end primary (8-11) and lower secondary (11-13+) school years, and included two girls starting to learn skate boarding. The opportunity to practice skills on a unit at lower heights, and separate from the main run of ramps, was much appreciated by this up-coming generation of users. A couple of older young men, who were in the group which first campaigned for the facility as youngsters, said they were sure users would welcome anything that enhanced the range of skating activity possible at the site.

The suggestion has been made that insertion of a sloping “hip” to infill the 90-deg angle between the flat bank at the end of the new run, and the ramp leading down to approach the grind box, would increase the user options. It would also remove the issue of meeting a vertical surface if a rider fell while approaching this point. The constructor agrees with the comments, and that the “hip” element could enhance the design - but he warned that it was complicated to construct, and could add in the region of £3,000 to the overall cost, mainly because of labour time rather than materials. There was sufficient CIL funding allocated to this project to cover the “hip” feature: do members wish to add the “hip” to cover the angle between the flat bank and the ramp within the design?

**Other comments:**

On one occasion, two mothers present said the Council ought to think about providing a safe area with a smooth surface on which younger children could first learn to ride a bike or scooter. It was pointed out that the western end of the car park at the Recreation Ground (west side) was created without parking bay markings to provide a space for skating, and which could fit the requirement.

On another occasion a small group of boys using mini scooters asked if the landing platform at the cricket field end of the ramps could be extended, so there was a deeper space before encountering the back railings of the platform. The ramps constructor has been asked as a separate issue to see if this would be feasible, and if so - how much would this extension cost?

9.5.3 **Bus shelter, Swan Lane**

Investigation into the ownership of the field to the rear of the proposed bus shelter site is under way, through contacts with the local farming community. The Kent Highways officer contact has been asked to advise on the potential cost of constructing the paved crossing area including dropped kerb access slopes required under the Equalities Act 2010.

9.6 **To arrange the next Quarterly Monitoring visits and update the Action Plan**

For the proposed date at the end of July, four members replied, of which three were available. In consultation with the committee chairman, it was decided to postpone the monitoring visit. The proposed date for end of October is Thursday 28th October.

9.7 **To note resumption of Bulky Waste collections**

Funding was included in this year's budget for quarterly bulky waste collections which were trialled in Edenbridge prior to interruption by the pandemic outbreak in spring 2020.

Sevenoaks District Council has resumed offering this service for parishes to book, and Edenbridge has secured four dates through to next summer. The first of these is Saturday 30th October, and the collection vehicle will call at four locations, beginning with Church Street, then moving to Skeynes Road, followed by Park View Close, and finally Fircroft Way. The cost will be £304.33 per date, and the subsequent bookings next year are for 22nd January, 7th May, and 30th July.

Initial publicity has been given to this service, and more details regarding timings at locations will be publicised through posters, social media, and website, from the beginning of October.

9.8 **To consider response to anti-social behaviour at Lingfield Rd Recreation ground, and replacement of litter bins**

Council was advised last week that a number of complaints have been received regarding a variety of anti-social behaviour at the Recreation Ground across the summer, ranging from a horse and trap being driven on the field, to motorbikes, and model aircraft. All of these

activities are not permitted by the Byelaws. Residents are encouraged to report on 101, or 999 if life is in danger, but we have received feedback that the Police say there is nothing they can do. Unless these issues are recorded and responded to, the situation could get worse.

Police action could be taken under the Byelaws, and possibly the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 - summer evenings and weekends are not a time when other personnel are available. New police officers and PCSOs when appointed to cover Edenbridge over the years frequently were, and are, given a copy of the Byelaws. There must be many copies filed somewhere. **Do members wish to write to the police asking for regular visits to the Rec, where the unauthorised vehicles threaten the safety of other users of the grounds?**

Open Spaces committee is requested to review defences at the Recreation Ground, which requires balancing access for lawful users, and costs of any additional installations, against the seasonality of the problem.

The Rec by nature is an open site, with a number of access points, including a PROW footpath which runs along the eastern boundary from the south-east corner then turns west along the Flood Bund at the north of the site, before exiting into Coomb Field. There is also pedestrian/wheelchair/buggy access to the sports pavilion off the car park there. While pedestrian access remains open, it is possible for a motorbike to get through also - the same applies at the far corner of the west side car park, to access the playground. The answer might be an Accessible kissing-gate installation at these points - but possibly in metal, not a timber unit.

The knee-high rail around the field side of both car parks currently does not prevent a light-weight trap being lifted over onto the field. It could be replaced with higher fencing, a significant cost for approx. 180m.

It has been suggested that some kind of barrier could be put across the width of the Flood Bund at the Rec boundary on the east side, but again there are conflicting pedestrian needs, and the Environment Agency would need to approve any works installed into the bund. Also any unofficial access possible from the Water Meadows across the old Mill Leet dry bed would need to be stopped along the whole of that boundary. Consultation with the various agencies will be undertaken if members resolve as below:

**Do members want officers to investigate viable solutions, and once costs are known do they wish to submit an application for CIL funding?**

(The committee will be kept informed of viable solutions and progress.)

Members previously agreed to address increased litter capacity at the Rec by replacing the three dog waste bins with round black hooded bins for mixed waste. Unfortunately the litter bin unit used across Council's sites for years has been discontinued. Members will be familiar with these, but are invited to select a new unit to become the standard item going forward (see visuals attached).

The equivalent slightly larger round hooded bin from the same supplier is 90 ltr capacity at £474.56 plus VAT. Their similar square Invicta unit has 110 ltr capacity at £460.74 plus VAT. Both prices include delivery.


From a different supplier the double MLB rectangular steel bin with 224 ltr capacity has

two liners, at £532.99 plus delivery plus VAT. The single unit version has 112 ltr capacity at £362.99 plus delivery plus VAT. Two of the single WDB units with chute have been installed at Stangrove Park, and appear to be performing well.

Made of fibre glass reinforced with concrete with 112 ltr capacity these are £467.98 plus delivery.

Members may wish to install a larger unit by Coomb Field as it is closest to the sports pavilion, and two single units to replace the other two dog waste bins?

**Which unit(s) do members wish to choose?**

 Annex 2: Bins.pdf

## 10 **News Release**