



Edenbridge Town Council



Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

Open Spaces | 14 Feb 2022 | 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 7:30 pm on 14 February 2022 at Rickards Hall. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

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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 The Extra-Ordinary Open Spaces Committee 20 December 2021**

https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/mc-events/open-spaces-committee-extraordinary-meeting/?mc_id=692

Annex 1: Minutes Extra-ordinary Open Spaces committee 20 Dec 2021

5 **To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 31 January 2022**

The comparisons report for the end of last month is attached, giving the position with two months of the year remaining. Also shown is the Open Spaces committee budget for 2022/23 for members' reference.

Annex 2: Financial Budget Comparison

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

The company which provides and maintains the High Street hanging basket display confirmed the price for this summer at £4,960, which was within the budget for 2022. In consultation with the committee chairman it was accepted, and the colour scheme set for red/white/blue for the Royal Jubilee celebration. The number of baskets is reduced by four, due to lack of access to a building under development (groundstaff have retrieved the brackets for the time being).

January Council approved a request from Sevenoaks District Council for partnership working, to use part of Stangrove Park for free community post-natal exercise classes under the This Girl Can initiative, the instructor costs being covered by grant funding from Sports England. The aim is to run six-week courses from March until October. SDC is liaising with the Rugby Club about the possibility of operating similarly at the Rec, utilising Sports Pavilion facilities. Dates for one hour "taster" sessions for participants with their babes-in-buggies have been agreed for Tuesday 22nd and Thursday 25th February, 10-11am. An Open Spaces Hire Agreement (at no charge) has been completed, and relevant qualifications and insurance documentation provided, along with Risk Assessment.

Do members endorse the above decisions?

7 **Correspondence**

7.1 **Resident re: community garden inquiry**

The attached inquiry has been received regarding a proposal for a community garden project.

The description of the activity is similar to that which already exists among plot holders at the allotments (except that sale of produce is not permitted at the Council's sites), and the contact has been advised of this, along with the cost of annual rent. The Council does not have other public space which is suitable for this type of project, either by function or location, and unused. It may be that SDC has unused space associated with a residential area within the town which could be utilised, but if grass it would require some time for work on conditioning the soil to grow produce (unless raised beds were created).

How do members wish to respond?

 Annex 3: Community Garden Letter

7.2 **Resident re: Town Field wildflower meadow thanks**

The attached message has been received, appreciating the partnership project with SDC which is operating on Town Field, east of the Great Stone Bridge. The groundstaff mow a series of paths within the field, similarly to the work for the Great Stone Bridge Trust on the Watermeadows on the west side.

 Annex 4: Town Field thank-you letter

7.3 **Riverside fields Wildlife In Edenbridge report**

The Council has received the usual annual report from Mr D Eade, who has continued his detailed recording of flora and fauna sightings in the riverside fields south-west of the town centre. It is a fascinating insight into the response of the natural world to what he has described as "a very unusual year" in which the normal order of things was "completely disrupted by dreadful spring weather". He observes that it was the autumn before things returned to something like normal.

Changing farming practices and other human activity also had an effect on sightings, as well as the weather conditions.

The hard copy report is being scanned, and can be shared with Members on request.

8 **Head Groundsman's Report**

8.1 **Routine and seasonal work**

- Grass cutting all sites
- Leaf clearance
- Tree pruning and maintenance
- Maintaining planters through town and beds in cemetery
- Hedge cutting and pruning shrubs
- Painting benches
- Winter pitch maintenance
- Pitch over marking and maintenance

8.2 **Groundstaff activity**

The winter visual tree survey noted minor works across the Council's various sites, subsequently undertaken by the groundstaff, such as ivy clearance and low-level pruning, and sadly to report that none of the donated Italian alders planted at the back of the all-weather pitch in Stangrove Park now remain. They have been vandalised, broken at ground level.

The winter headstone check has been carried out in the Cemetery and Churchyard with nothing to report.

The Team has cleared out undergrowth and unwanted shrubs/self-seeded trees from the Peace Garden on the corner of Hever Road. It is proposed to plant some new shrubs in the spaces created in the coming weeks from funds remaining in that budget heading.

The team has continued with winter pitch maintenance programme at the Recreation Ground, Nomads and Blossoms Park. The playing surfaces have been good through the winter months with no need for cancellations of fixtures.

I have carried out the annual first aid kit checks, with any items that were out of date disposed of and replaced. The annual driving licence checks have also been made.

Equipment purchases approved at November committee meeting have been made - a new smaller tripod ladder, and a scarifier attachment for the Greentek slitter.

8.3 **Items for the future**

Under the Government's 2020 Budget, as part of UK commitment to reducing global warming, there are changes in permitted uses of lower duty red diesel tractor fuel coming into force from April 1st.

These will affect most sectors - agriculture being an exception, including forestry, horticulture, and fish farming. Landscaping and the maintenance of recreational facilities will not generally be considered an accepted activity, but maintenance of land by community amateur sports clubs, golf courses and driving ranges will be permitted - if machines are not used on public highway. This latter would appear to preclude movement between sites. Illegal use of red diesel will incur penalties, and end users must not stock up prior to deadline.

This potentially affects Town Council activity, requiring to swap onto white diesel fuel, but part of the groundstaff work involves pitch maintenance FOR community amateur sports clubs, though the Council is not itself a club. Being a member of the Grounds Management Association (formerly the Institute of Groundsmanship) clarification has been sought, but the GMA says it understands that there is a lack of clarity regarding red diesel legislation, and its use for grounds management going forward.

The Association is currently speaking to Government to get specific updates on its use for grounds management and turf care, and will be updating members as soon as more is known. "We understand that cost increases could have a detrimental impact on clubs and facilities, and we are relaying our sector's feedback to MPs" the GMA states on its website.

Advance orders have been placed for the five items approved for replacement on the Asset

Register, from the budget for next financial year beginning 01/04/2022.

Head Groundsman
08/2/2022

9 Open Spaces Business

9.1 To receive the Burial Report and review memorial benches policy

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

November 2021	December 2021	January 2022
Three burials	One Burial	Three burials
One interment of ashes		
One Grant of Right	Two Grants of Right	Two Grants of Right

Update of the short edition of the Cemetery Rules booklet provided for families has been completed with inclusion of an electronic version of the Cemetery layout plan, with the help of Cllr Aldridge.

Booklets for reference have been provided to all purchasers of new graves and ashes plots last year.

The updated layout plan has also been included in the full Rules booklet, which is provided to funeral directors and stone masons.

Members previously agreed to review their policy on memorial benches. At the November meeting it was decided to identify locations within the Cemetery where benches might be placed going forward, if more seating was accepted. These are shown on the attached plan, along with the existing 17 benches.

This would increase the number to 25, and could possibly accommodate a request to include a bench by the children's graves section. It does not add any to the last path in Cemetery Three section, where there are two requests from families only a couple of grave spaces apart, at the southern end of the path. There is also the issue of passing-access for buggies or wheelchairs to consider, on a path width of only 1.35m.

It was and is still possible to donate a bench for some other location in the town.

Do members wish to resume accepting any more benches at this time?

 Annex 5: Cemetery Plan - bench locations

9.2 To receive update on works scheduled for 2021/22 in the 10 and 30 year Open Spaces maintenance plans and note works scheduled for 2022/3

The report from the periodic **external inspection of Council's trees** every two years has been delayed and is expected in a couple of weeks. The agreed crown reduction work to a large oak in the south-west corner of Stangrove Park has been carried out, and specific inspection of two other trees in the park and one at Mowshurst has been requested. Council has been advised that the future prognosis for ash trees generally is not good.

The Cricket Club has requested reduction of a long branch extending over the cricket nets at Blossoms Park, due to the quantity of leaf and debris affecting the roof of the nets. A tree surgeon has costed this at £200plus VAT. **Do members wish this work to be carried out, subject to approval from SDC tree officer?**

The **decompaction** work to the sports pitches at the Rec and Mowshurst took place as scheduled, and the annual empty of the **interceptor tank** at Market Yard car park was carried out last month.

📎 Annex 6: Open Spaces 2022-23 maintenance 10 yr Plan

9.3 **To receive an update on projects awarded CIL funding**

9.3.1 **Recreation Ground playground refurbishment**

Following the extra meeting last month at which the proposal for awarding this contract was accepted, the chosen contractor was notified of the decision. In line with the meeting decision, a CIL Board application for funding for amendments to the equipment has been prepared as follows:

- alternative surfacing beneath the teens equipment
- provision of a play jeep instead of a small trampoline
- division of the swings unit into sections

An additional application for CIL funding for separate provision of an access path (approximately 60m) from the car park to the playground has been prepared, and members are asked to decide the sum requested against which type of surface they wish to install from a range of indicative costings:

1. 1,2m wide, timber edging, compacted Type 1 stone (road sub-base) £3,220
2. as 1) but adding compacted Breedon gravel as top surface finish £4,980
3. permeable pathway on Type 1 stone £16,500
4. asphalt £12,000

Which path surface option do members wish to select?

The potential project start date (weather and ground conditions permitting) is late spring.

9.3.2 **Addition to skate ramps facility, Blossoms Park**

Off-site construction of the project Members which approved for the skate ramps began last month, but owing to illness of the designer/manager, it is now expected to be completed by the end of February, with the team due to come to site to confirm ground fixings.

9.3.3 **Bus shelter, Swan Lane**

Information on the potential cost of constructing the pavement and crossing required under the Equalities Act 2010 arrived after the November committee meeting. The location Highways indicated for the crossing to avoid the Swan Ridge junction (between

the first two properties to the east) would involve excavating and laying approximately 25m of new pavement on the north side. Indications of the cost were £8,000-£10,000 (which would bring the total cost of the project up to £15,000) but “exact costs for installation will vary depending on several factors that would only come out during the detailed design phase”.

The Highways officer advised works would involve:

- A paved extension to the east of the bus stop, including a dropped kerb to facilitate disabled access. Further excavation of the existing hedge beyond any paved area would be required for sight lines to ensure the crossing area is safe. The opposite side of the road already has a dropped kerb so further works there can hopefully be avoided. We would have to go this way because the telegraph pole & drain on the west side prevent works in that direction.
- An extension behind the existing bus stop of the paved area as discussed previously.
This would ensure that any bus shelter installed here would be far enough away from the roadside that there is sufficient space to meet Equalities Act requirements. This is assuming we would install a narrow roof shelter so wouldn't need to go back as far as for a full length, which would need more space.
- The relocation of the 'bus stop boarder' kerbs to make room for the shelter to be installed.

A further item not yet in the equation is the position of the street light column no. 241 which is opposite the Swan Ridge junction. A cost for moving this if necessary would also have to be factored in, possibly up to £1,750 plus VAT.

The owner of the field to the rear of the proposed bus shelter site was willing to provide additional land to accommodate the shelter itself, but wanted a quid per quo in the form of installation and maintenance of a dog waste bin on Swan Lane farm access drive (which is part of the route of a Public Right of Way footpath). The owner understands that it is not policy to put a bin on private land, but feels that the council could waive the policy on this occasion. SDC has confirmed it would empty the bin, would supply and install the bin for £450, and the on-going cost would currently add £93.60 a year for weekly empty, £171.60 a year if twice weekly was required.

The question of land for further works to provide a pavement along to the bus shelter has not yet been raised with the land owner. **As the cost of the project is increasing beyond the CIL funding allocated, how do members wish to proceed?**

9.3.4 Street lighting, Westways

This project is now progressing - Highways' support has been confirmed, and the required forms have been provided for the application, for which there will be a fee of £127.50. The contractor has been asked to update his previous 2021 costing to install two extra columns, and has confirmed the installation price remains at £2,350 plus VAT, with UKPN tariff for connections increased by £372 to £2,436 (subject to actual positioning of the columns on the ground). Consultation with residents has been carried out with a deadline of the committee meeting date. Responses have been majority in favour, including from the two properties outside which it is proposed to install columns but with a request for discussion of exact column position. A verbal update will be

provided at the meeting.

9.4 **To note the next sites monitoring visit**

The next sites monitoring visits were set for 1st March, and 6th September. It is proposed to start at 9.30am, and members are requested to decide from which site to commence.

9.5 **To note the report on Bulky Waste collections and review site locations**

The second of the free Bulky Waste Collection dates took place on Saturday 22nd January, with the collection vehicle again calling at four locations, beginning with Church Street, then moving to Skeynes Road, followed by Park View Close, and finally Fircroft Way. It was publicised through posters, social media, and website, from early January. Again there have been no reports of any difficulties. The subsequent bookings this year are for 7th May, 30th July and 8th October.

A resident from the new development west of Enterprise Way has questioned the locations for the collections, and asked members to consider adding a fifth pick-up point to serve that area. An officer from SDC direct services has checked for a suitable location and has suggested within St John's Way, or in Enterprise Way itself. This could be added as the final collection of the morning, increasing the cost per date by £56.14 to £360.47. It would therefore add £224.50 beyond the budgeted sum this year - or members could decide to remove one of the existing four points from the schedule to pilot a new location.

How do members wish to proceed?

9.6 **To receive update on response to anti-social behaviour at Lingfield Rd Recreation ground**

Following Members' letter to the Police and also the Police and Crime commissioner, a meeting was arranged with ACI Stubberfield, and Sgt. Savill from the Community Safety Unit at Sevenoaks.

Council members and officers received confidential update on recent police activity and statistics, and in turn highlighted issues of community concern.

The importance of two-way information exchange was highlighted, and it was acknowledged that the absence of the regular PACT meetings during the past couple of years has not helped. These have been reinstated (in-person) and the first of them held last month. The new "e-Watch" link was also publicised, giving twice-weekly information to people who sign up to receive it through My Community Voice.

A site meeting with a Kent Highways officer has taken place to consider restricting the access for pony and trap down the slope to the GSBT watermeadows from Mont St Aignan Way. A chicane of short barrier sections across the path is a possibility being considered.

Do members wish any other action to be taken at this stage?

9.7 **To receive an update on projects for the Queen's Jubilee**

The proposed visit to a local nursery to look at tree stock for replacement trees on the Council's planting schedule, has yet to take place.

The Rotary Club has re-contacted the Council with their offer of a tree to be planted, and a figure which is available for the cost. Their wish is to plant this spring, with a species and at a location to be agreed with the Council, but have been advised that is not the ideal time of year for planting, and autumn is better. If the spring and summer are dry the survival of the

A local contractor has been asked to produce a costing for the proposed Rose Walk in Stangrove Park, and the response is awaited.

The Jubilee Working Group tasked by January Council will provide a verbal report and a recommendation at the meeting, for the Beacon to be at the Recreation Ground. The decision will inform any planning application that may be required.

How do members wish to proceed?

9.8 To consider allotment requests

Another two plot holders at Forge Croft allotments have requested permission, one to install a small wooden shed and the other a poly-tunnel on their plots. Members previously wished to create a policy to cover such requests, and for poly-tunnels - the following is proposed:

1. Small poly-tunnels will be allowed as temporary structures, for the purpose of extending the growing season and range of produce, provided that the following criteria are met for size and materials:

- within a maximum size of 2.46m (8ft) wide, by 6.15m (20ft) long (the width of the plot) and 2.3m (7ft 6ins) high
- of strong construction with either aluminium or plastic hoop frames, covered in clear or opaque PVC, and with anchor fixings to the ground (not guy ropes) to withstand wind.

The permission is conditional on the poly-tunnel being removed at the end of the tenancy.

2. Small wooden sheds will be allowed as temporary structures, provided that the following criteria are met for size and materials:

- within a maximum size of 1.8m (6ft), by 1.2m (4ft) and 2m (6ft 6ins) height, of robust construction in wood with either apex or sloping roof, from which tenants are encouraged to collect rainwater for use on their plot.

The permission is conditional on the shed being removed at the end of the tenancy.

The latest requests do meet the above criteria.

Do members wish to adopt this policy for permitting temporary structures on allotments?

9.9 To consider Edenbridge In Bloom Competition

It is uncertain whether SDC will organise an In Bloom competition this year, and given

previous popularity of a local Edenbridge In Bloom event, it is proposed the Town Council organises such a competition this year, with the assistance of the Community Warden. During “Lockdown” it was arranged so entries were photographic, and this could be the framework once again, but it would be more engaging to judge entries with visits now that restrictions have been lifted.

Six or seven categories would give sufficient variety for a wide range of residents to enter, and it is suggested that local businesses or organisations are approached to sponsor a £15 prize for one of the categories and/or maybe provide a judge?

Do members wish to stage an Edenbridge In Bloom competition, and if so are there a couple of councillors who would like to work with the Community Warden and Deputy Clerk on the organisation?

9.10 **To consider repairs to the Retention Dam on the River Eden.**

The condition of the Retention Dam bridge on the river, south of Church Street (see attached), was raised last meeting. A contractor who carries out footbridge work for Kent Public Rights of Way has subsequently made a site visit to view the structure. He has recommended that an appropriate structural surveyor assesses, but thought repair rather than replacement might be possible. An example of the type of structure the contractor produces for PROW is also attached. If a replacement bridge is required the cost may be in the region of £15,000, and an appropriate surveyor is being sought to provide a costing for an assessment.

The Retention Dam bridge does not carry a formal footpath - the route for footpath SR612 crosses the River Eden from Town Field onto Church Street further west along the field towards the High Street. The bridge element could be removed from the dam structure. The Town Council pursued installation of the dam with the footbridge across in the late 1980s, intended to keep up the water level through the town centre under the Stone Bridge in the summer months. It appears this was in response to concerns over the lack of water and the smell from the river at that time. It was formally opened in 1993, after much liaison with a range of authorities, and funding support from the Great Stone Bridge Trust.

The dam boards are inserted by Environment Agency staff in the spring, and removed in the autumn, based on their judgement of river flows. The Town Council paid £2,000 in 2012 to replace the metal frameworks that hold the boards.

How do members wish to proceed?

 Annex 7: Retention Dam - pictures 2022

10 **News Release**

Do members consider any items from this meeting should be the subject of a News Release?