

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

Notice is hereby given of an Open Spaces Meeting to be held in Rickards Hall on 13 June 2022 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
8 June 2022

To assist in the speedy and efficient dispatch of business members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting.

Council Meetings may be recorded. Any person intending to make recordings is advised to notify the Clerk in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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1 **Apologies for Absence**

2 **Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**
Including any interests not already registered

3 **Election of Committee Chairman**


4 **Election of Committee Vice Chairman**

5 **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.

6 **To Receive and Sign Minutes of The Open Spaces Committee 11 April 2022**

 Open Spaces | 11 Apr 2022 v.1 | Minutes (Pages 9709 to 9713)

7 **To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 31 May 2022**

The comparisons report for the end of May is attached, giving the position two months into the new financial year.

 Annex 1: Open Spaces Financial Budget Comparisons June 2022

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

The Town Band requested to hold free open air concerts in Stangrove Park (as they have in past years) on the afternoon of 15 May, evening 22 June, and afternoon 18 September. Their Open Spaces Hire Agreement was received last month, along with required documents, and permission was given for the first date including use of the TN8 Licence.

Do members endorse the decision, and extend the permission to the other two dates, at no charge for a community event?

Damage was caused to a section of the low wall surrounding the Peace Garden on the corner of Hever Road on 10th May. It was cracked and un-seated down to pavement level, and leaning into the garden. A local building company quoted £420 plus VAT to take down the four courses plus soldier course, and rebuild in best-match bricks. In consultation with the committee chairman, the costing was accepted and repair authorised, in order to progress the works.

Do members endorse the above decision?

9 **Correspondence**

9.1 Residents Re: Council's Provision of Benches

Letters have been received regarding the benches outside Stangrove Park, which were installed as part of the Relief Road project. They are not on Town Council land and have not been maintained by ETC. Sevenoaks advised last year that they are not on SDC assets list either for maintenance.

Street furniture also is not a Highways responsibility. Committee members asked previously for a cost per bench of routine maintenance by the groundstaff team. This is currently around £65 for the annual painting/staining, but this does not cover any repair costs if any wooden slats need replacing.

There are six benches in total outside the Park, nine slats in each bench, the cost of the wood being £35 per seat - so £210 ex VAT for slat repairs currently.

Do members wish to add these benches to the maintenance schedule, which already covers more than 60 seats on Town Council land?

The suggestion of designating "chatting" benches has also been made, in a central but peaceful location away from traffic, Stangrove Park being suggested - the idea being that people who are lonely can sit on these to indicate they would like others to sit and talk to them. The concept has been welcomed by some; the reverse view is that for others who do not want to talk it would rule out certain seats for their use. Also, any bench can be used to strike up conversations without need to designate.

How do members wish to respond?

10 Head Groundsman's Report

10.1 Routine and seasonal work

- Grass cutting all sites
- Weed killing
- Weeding and flower bed maintenance
- Maintaining planters through town and beds in cemetery
- Hedge cutting and pruning shrubs
- Pitch over marking and maintenance

10.2 Groundstaff activity

The team has now planted all the summer plants throughout the town and in the courtyard at Doggetts Barn. Any excess plants have been planted in the Cemetery.

We spent a day putting up bunting through the town in preparation for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. By the time of the meeting we will have begun taking everything down again.

The team has continued with the summer pitch maintenance programme, and we now have all the goal mouths and other bare patches well on the way to being ready for the start of the new season.

We have now begun the summer bench painting/maintenance programme. This will

continue through the coming weeks/months and will incorporate all the Council's furniture and bollards etc.

Unfortunately there was another break in up at Mowshurst barn and our largest tri-pod ladder went missing. (See item 11.5 below) We also lost a section of our extendable ladders earlier in the year due to unforeseen circumstances. Ideally we would like to replace both at some point, but these purchases could be spread over the coming months. **Will members agree this in principle?**

*(Going forward we will no longer be storing anything of value in the barn at Mowshurst.)

Since the last meeting we have taken delivery of a new mower which was approved by members in a previous meeting. This will be a great help with the ever increasing manual mowing load in the Cemetery. Unfortunately we are still awaiting delivery of our long reach hedge cutter and pole pruner.

The team has continued to carry out work on behalf of the Great Stone Bridge Trust. Since the last meeting we have cut all the pathways, and cut back some of the trees and overgrown bushes to allow better access for the tractor. We also spent some time strimming the bund that runs alongside the Mill Leat.

10.3 **Items for the future**

We have recently had one of the old pedestrian push mowers reach the end of its life. I will hopefully have a costing for replacing this by the time of the meeting. Is this purchase something the councillors endorse?

Due to changes in the use of certain chemicals we are now in possession of a small amount that we cannot legally use. I am in the process of sourcing quotes for the proper disposal of said chemicals. I currently have one price, and am waiting to hear back for a comparison. I hope to have this for the next meeting.

Head Groundsman 08/06/2022

11 **Open Spaces Business**

11.1 **To receive the Burial Report**

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

April 2022	May 2022
One interment of ashes	One burial Two interments of ashes Three Grants of Right

With increased numbers of ashes interments at the Wall of Remembrance, there is a need for additional provision of communal flower vases for families' use. A source of these products was located, available on offer at £8.99 plus VAT each, and in consultation with the committee chairman seven were purchased, delivery free.

11.2 **To consider works for 2022/23 in the 10 and 30 year Open Spaces maintenance plans**
Costings have been sought for the annual **playground external inspections** due in July. There will be one location fewer this year, with the Recreation Ground refurbishment having taken place and receiving post-installation inspection. The four sites are Marsh Green, Blossoms Park, Stangrove Park, and Spitals Cross. Three prices have been received:

Company A £110 per site (report includes photographs): £440

Company B £78 per site up to two facilities (£78 extra for third) (report includes photographs): £390

Company C £70 per site up to five items, £3.50 per item extra (report does not include photographs): £336

Which company do members wish to appoint to carry out the inspection?

One further quotation was received for the annual **weed-control application** on the sports pitches at Blossoms Park, the Recreation Ground, and Mowshurst. A third company declined to provide a quote. In line with the decision at last meeting, the costings were considered by the committee chairman and vice-chairman, and the existing company Peter Duke Contracting was selected at a cost of £1,386 plus VAT.

The periodic **external tree inspection** report was received last month, with only seven of the 550 - plus trees surveyed recommended for work, four with Priority 2 (within one year) and three Priority 3 (within two years). Two of the four Pr2 are diseased on Marsh Green and advice is to fell. One of the three Pr3 is a yew in the Churchyard in major decline also advised to fell. This latter will need reference to the Church and to Sevenoaks District Council tree officer. The adjacent yew is also in decline, and the Church has requested cut down to healthy low-level growth.

Further inspection this summer is recommended for three other trees, an ash at Mowshurst, an oak and an ash in Stangrove Park. There was high priority recommendation to safeguard the row of young limes along the path at the front of the Park from mower damage at the base, by installing some form of barrier. Options and pricings are being sought.

The short schedule of works has been provided to contractors for costings - there is just over £6,000 in the budget for works resulting from the Tree Survey.

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

11.3.1 **Recreation Ground playground refurbishment**

The project started on 9th May with good weather and ground conditions, and planning permission for the cable run was granted at the end of the month, which is when work installing the safety surfacing also began. Updating pictures were released at stages via social media, and received many positive comments.

The opening celebration event is scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday 16th June, with fancy dress, fun and games and goody bags.

11.3.2 **Bus shelter, Swan Lane**

Response is awaited from Highways regarding their suggestion for alternative location for the proposed shelter.

11.3.3 **Street lighting, Westways**

The cable supply drawing supplied by UK Power Networks revealed that for one of the new columns the shortest route to access power had to be to trench 7m across the street, adding £1,478 to the UKPN basic tariff. The committee chairman and vice-chairman were advised, and agreed to proceed with the works, the extra funding to be taken from Contingency or Small Projects, or an additional small application for CIL. UKPN payment has been made, and we await notification of when the works will be scheduled. When this date is known, the forms for Kent Highways will be submitted.

11.4 **To receive the report on Bulky Waste collections**

There was a problem with fly-tipping in advance of the latest collection date, at the Skeynes Road collection point. This had happened during the pilot scheme pre-Lockdown in 2020, and the location was withdrawn from the scheme at that point. Having resumed in October last year, and January, without a problem, it was disappointing that this changed for the collection last month.

The next free Bulky Waste Collection date is on Saturday 30 July, with the collection vehicle calling at four locations, beginning with Church Street, then moving to Skeynes Road, followed by Park View Close, and finally Fircroft Way. It is again being publicised through posters, social media, and website. Subsequent bookings are for 8th October and another one in January.

11.5 **To consider security at Mowshurst Barn**

Mowshurst Barn was broken into over the weekend 21-22 May - the lock having been removed, the larger tripod ladder stored there was stolen. It was property-marked, and no other items appeared to be missing. There is usually little of value in the barn, with the likes of sandbags and barriers for Emergency Planning kept there.

A local locksmith was asked to inspect the doors, and recommend a more secure lock arrangement compatible with the size of the large doors. A costing is still awaited.

11.6 **To receive update on anti-social behaviour at Lingfield Road Recreation ground**

Members will be aware that along with lighter evenings and better weather there was an increase in anti-social behaviour at the western car park after Easter and into early May. Neighbouring residents reported dangerous speeding cars (with racing, hand-brake turns, and in reverse) loud music and sounding horns, and incidents of fighting. The residents complained that Police response was inadequate, despite being offered visual evidence and number plates recorded.

The Council office forwarded all information to the Community Safety Unit, and requested that patrols were made in the relevant time-frame. Residents also provided further video evidence of the behaviour continuing, sending direct to the Community Safety Unit. A range of actions was set in motion which included a meeting with the police arranged for 26th May, which two police officers attended. They reported two vehicles had been issued with Section 59 notices, which warned that any further anti-social use of the vehicles could lead to loss of the vehicle and driving licence, prosecution and heavy fine. It was agreed this could be reinforced with relevant S59 signage from the police displayed, and additional Council signage about nuisance behaviour in the car park.

Residents have again requested that the western car park is closed in the evenings, possibly by installing automatic control equipment on timer, along with signage highlighting closing time. Any potential option needs to be sustainable, and able to accommodate all the multiple variables of timing of authorised activity at the Recreation Ground.

A restriction of access onto the flood bund from the adjacent Cobbetts Way housing estate is also being pursued with Moat Housing.

Do members wish further costings for automatic control equipment to be investigated?

11.7 To consider survey of the Retention Dam

Three appropriate bridge survey companies have been located, which have confirmed they could report on the Retention Dam over the River Eden. Each of them were sent pictures from the original bridge opening day in 1993, and from February in its current condition. Copies of the costings have been circulated to members.

Company A (based near Arundel) £1,294.13

Company B (based at Hawkhurst, towards Cranbrook) £1,675

Company C (offices across the south-east include Tonbridge, and Tunbridge Wells) £1,450

Each will do an inspection of the bridge and report on its structural condition, with recommendations for any remedial work considered necessary. All could do the inspection within a couple of weeks of being instructed.

When OS budgets were set last autumn, spending on the Retention Dam was not anticipated but there is a small contingency included in the 10 Yr Maintenance Plan budget which would cover the cost of the survey if commissioned.

Which company do members wish to appoint?

Members may wish to note that, depending on the outcome of the survey and the nature of any works recommended, there may be need to gain consent from the Environment Agency which would have associated cost.

 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents): Retention Dam Survey Quotations June 2022

11.8 To review Forge Croft allotment site rules

The attached site-specific rules were agreed by the Council with Edenbridge Allotment Gardens Association some years ago, and are given to tenants alongside the Tenancy Agreement. An update has been requested to cover some recent issues, which members are

asked to consider (see blue text):

- dogs - to specify they be kept on a lead
- vacated/abandoned plots - do members wish to charge for clearance and disposal of materials not removed, with exception for serious ill-health or death of plot-holder?
- no bonfires - except arisings from EAGA committee's seasonal voluntary perimeter maintenance in the autumn/winter
- children's play equipment - not to be brought onto the site (allotments are not a playground)

Do members wish to adopt these additional site rules?

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

Planning permission for the Queen's Jubilee Beacon was granted w/c 16th May, by which time plans for the beacon-lighting event were well in hand. The Beacon installation was completed w/e 27th May. The event on the evening of 2nd June was well attended by local residents, and the ceremonial lighting accompanied by the Town Band went according to timetable. Verbal reports will be made at the meeting.

The nursery owner who recommended a summer walk round the various Council sites identified for Jubilee Queens Canopy tree planting, to confirm which varieties would suit the locations, has been asked to confirm a date - Wednesday 22nd June: starting 2pm at Marsh Green. The Cricket Club has confirmed it would like to plant a tree in Blossoms Park to mark the Jubilee, and the Rotary Club has also identified this location for its Jubilee tree.

A local contractor was asked to produce a costing for the proposed Rose Walk in Stangrove Park, and this has been estimated at £8,600 for the ground works. Costs for possibly six double hoop metal rose arches are £1,650, and for the rose bushes, rosemary, and suitable planting medium it is estimated the cost would be around £1,000-£2,000 depending on rose variety and size chosen, and therefore plant spacing. The project would introduce some floral colour to the Park location, the arches making it visible above the front hedge.

Do members wish to pursue this autumn project, and identify funding up to £12,500?

11.10 **To receive an update on Ready-Steady-Grow gardening competition**

Ready-Steady-Grow was officially launched just before Easter, offering local people seven categories to enter:

- Front/back garden
- Allotment or Edible garden
- Container (basket, window box, tub or any other)
- Young Gardener (age 16 and under)
- Community Group garden
- Nature-friendly garden
- Local Schools

The entry form is available on the Council's website, or from the office, and other collection points around the town. First entries were received w/c 23rd May. Initially photographs will

be judged ahead of visits made to short-listed entries. Due to the recent unseasonal weather, the closing date is extended to 7th July, and judging will take place during July. Local companies have been approached to donate prizes for a category, and a guest speaker talk has been booked for 10th August. All category winners with guest are invited. A limited number of tickets will then be available to other gardening enthusiasts.

Publicity banners have been produced to encourage entries, posts made on social media, posters and leaflets placed around the town, details circulated to allotment tenants, and local organisations have been asked to inform their members. The Presentation Evening is planned for mid September with a further special guest from the horticultural world.

12 **News Release**

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