



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

Notice is hereby given of an Open Spaces Meeting to be held in Rickards Hall on 5 September 2022 at 8:00 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
31 August 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

Agenda

1 - Apologies for Absence	3
2 - Declarations of Interests, or Predeterminations	3
3 - Public Questions	3
4 - To Receive and Sign Minutes of The Open Spaces Committee 25 July 2022	3
5 - To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 31 July 2022	3
6 - To Ratify Operational Decisions for Open Spaces Activity	3
7 - Correspondence	3
7.1 - Resident re: Stangrove Pond water level	3
7.2 - Resident re: Mill Leat water supply	4
8 - Head Groundsman's Report	4
8.1 - Routine and seasonal work	4
8.2 - Groundstaff activity	4
8.3 - Items for the future	5
9 - Open Spaces Business	5
9.1 - To receive the Burial Report	5
9.2 - To consider works for 2022/23 in the 10 and 30 year Open Spaces maintenance plans	5
9.3 - To receive an update on projects awarded CIL funding	6
9.3.1 - Recreation Ground playground refurbishment	6
9.3.2 - treet lighting, Westways: Amended resolution for total cost of project, currently £6,568 (CIL approved £5,000) - to receive update and consider potential additional expenditure	6
9.3.3 - Bus shelter, Swan Lane	6
9.4 - To receive a report on Bulky Waste collections	6
9.5 - To consider damage to playground gates	7
9.6 - To consider security at Mowshurst Bam	7
9.7 - To receive update on anti-social behaviour at Lingfield Road Recreation ground	7
9.8 - To consider works to the Retention Dam	7
9.9 - To receive an update on projects for the Queen's Jubilee	8

9.10 - To receive an update on Ready-Steady-Grow gardening competition	8
10 - News Release	8
Annex 1 5 Financial Comparisons.pdf	9

1 **Apologies for Absence**


2 **Declarations of Interests, or Predeterminations**

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 Open Spaces Committee 25 July 2022**

 Open Spaces | 25 Jul 2022 v.1 | Minutes (Pages 9758 to 9762)

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

The comparisons report for the end of July is attached, giving the position one third through the current financial year.

 Annex 1: 5 Financial Comparisons.pdf

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

The office was alerted to a part broken branch in a tree within the clump adjacent to the path passing the playground in Stangrove Park, mid afternoon one day early last month. The area was cordoned off overnight, and a tree surgeon was able to attend first thing next morning to climb and remove the branch, at a cost of £200 plus VAT.

A large pane of glass was reported smashed in the bus shelter on Main Road opposite the Swan, mid month. The Clerk approved a replacement pane of clear toughened glass at a cost of £215 plus VAT.

A visitor to the Cemetery reported failure of one of the older water taps to turn off towards the end of an afternoon last week. A local plumber was quickly arranged to attend, and kindly fitted a replacement tap he had in stock, at no charge.

Members are asked to ratify the above decisions.

7 **Correspondence**

7.1 **Resident re: Stangrove Pond water level**

A resident contacted the office last month with concerns regarding the low water-level in Stangrove Pond. They were reassured that this was not unusual in drought years, as the pond was fed by groundwater and run-off from the Park. Past experience showed that as

the weather returned to rain into the autumn and winter the water level and wildlife usually recovered, but the situation was being monitored.

7.2 **Resident re: Mill Leat water supply**

The new owner of the property previously known as Tanyard House (now called Tanyard Cottage) has contacted the office regarding payment for the water used to top-up the adjacent Mill Leat feature as necessary. This is linked to a sub-meter which records the usage, and under past ownership the Council paid for the quantity of water used, with the property bill as evidence of the charges made by the water supply company. For a number of years after 2014 while the property was under renovation, this system was not available to the groundstaff, who reverted to using the bowser to supply water.

With renovations nearing completion a new “tap” was subsequently fitted in the summer of 2020, approved by the committee members, but there is no record of any reading being taken from the sub meter at that time, nor of any contact with the property owner prior to last month. He has sent a picture of a meter reading, and requested that the Council resumes paying for water used in the Mill Leat. The reading does not appear to correlate with the one taken when the business occupant of the premises moved out in 2014.

he Clerk has requested a site meeting to confirm whether this is a new sub-meter, and also a copy of the water bill showing supply charges, so that the Council can pay correctly what is owed.

Members will be updated on the outcome, for inclusion in budget considerations. From past experience, the quantity of water added to the Mill Leat varies with the seasons and the weather, as the amount of rainfall contribution varied from month to month.

8 **Head Groundsman’s Report**

8.1 **Routine and seasonal work**

- Grass cutting all sites
- Weed killing
- Weeding and flower bed maintenance
- Maintaining planters through town, including Doggetts Bam courtyard baskets and tubs, and beds in the Cemetery
- Hedge cutting and pruning shrubs
- Pitch over marking and maintenance

8.2 **Groundstaff activity**

From the summer headstone check, there were no current contact details registered for owners, so contact request cards are being placed at graves concerned. The summer visual tree survey is now complete, and there is a list of minor works to be undertaken by the grounds team. Any items beyond our capabilities have been reported to the deputy clerk.

All the Councils’ benches have been repainted, including those for which we have recently taken over maintenance at the front of Stangrove Park.

The team spent some time preparing and marking ten Ultimate Frisbee pitches at the Recreation Ground as requested by the rugby club for the event last month. All the Council's sports pitches have now been marked for the coming season and all goal posts have been reinstated.

The two ladders approved by councillors at the last meeting have been ordered, and should be with us shortly and will be a great help going forward.

I am still waiting for the large scale weed spraying to be completed. I am in regular contact with the contractor and he hopes to have all approved sites done as soon as possible, weather permitting.

The team has started cutting back various summer shrubs and removing summer plants from the councils' beds and planters. We will continue to do so in the coming weeks with a view of planting the winter plants sometime in October.

8.3 **Items for the future**

I have recently decided to change paint suppliers for line-marking the councils' sports pitches at the Recreation Ground. This is due to a number of factors, but we may need to consider replacing our spray line-marker in the coming weeks/months. I am awaiting a representative to come for a site visit and to give us a demo of what they can offer us. After said visit I will be able to provide the committee with costings.

Head Groundsman
31/08/2022

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 2022 August 2022

9.2 **To consider works for 2022/23 in the 10 and 30 year Open Spaces maintenance plans**

The small schedule of works recommended from the periodic external tree inspection report has been commissioned in line with the decision at last meeting, with exception of one of the Churchyard yews in major decline, which had been advised for felling. The Church has confirmed that it wishes its tree to be half-felled in company with the one adjacent, to give scope for regeneration. The Churchwarden has advised in writing that the PCC will cover future cost of removal if necessary, if the tree ultimately fails.

The contractor who usually carries out the autumn hedge-cutting work at Blossoms Park, the Recreation Ground, Mowshurst, and Forge Croft allotments, has advised that the cost this year would be £1,895 plus VAT - the budget allowed for this work was £1,512. The difference reflects increased operation costs, and the fact that the hedgeline behind the new playground at the Recreation Ground will have to be cut manually as the machine

previously used no longer fits behind the new playground fence.

Are members content to accept the costing for the work, taking the additional money from contingency?

The annual external playground inspection has taken place on 22nd August, and reports received for Marsh Green, Blossoms Park skate ramps, Stangrove Park including the outdoor gym and ball games area as well as the playground, and Spitals Cross playground. All items were assessed either low or very low risk, and minor maintenance points will be addressed by the grounds team. The new facility at the Recreation Ground had recently received its post-installation inspection, so was not included this summer.

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

9.3.1 **Recreation Ground playground refurbishment**

Two new litter bins, supplied through Sevenoaks District Council post-Covid funding, have been installed, and the unit temporarily in place is being transferred to the car park. The outstanding play equipment works are scheduled for the day of the committee meeting, and a verbal update will be given.

9.3.2 **treet lighting, Westways: Amended resolution for total cost of project, currently £6,568 (CIL approved £5,000) - to receive update and consider potential additional expenditure**

Further to the report at the previous meeting, the two new lighting columns installed on 1st July were due to be connected on 18th August. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

9.3.3 **Bus shelter, Swan Lane**

The County Councillor undertook to follow up the request for response from Highways regarding their suggestion for alternative location for the proposed shelter.

9.4 **To receive a report on Bulky Waste collections**

The next free Bulky Waste Collection date is on Saturday 8th October, 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. SDC reported that there were no problems from fly tipping of items in advance at the end of July. Publicity through posters, social media, and website, emphasised that service users must stay with their items to load into the freighter. There is one further booking in this financial year in January to be confirmed.

Do members wish to continue with this quarterly collection service next financial year, and include budget funding accordingly?

9.5 **To consider damage to playground gates**

Members at last meeting approved repair to the damaged access gate at the Ball Games area in Stangrove Park, at a cost of £295 plus VAT (which has been carried out). The same design of safety gate was installed at the Recreation Ground playground, and one of these has been similarly damaged. An alternative more robust design of safety gate is being researched for installation, rather than incur on-going expense for repeat damage to the existing style of gate.

9.6 **To consider security at Mowshurst Bam**

In line with the decision at last meeting, the Head Groundsman has fitted a covered hasp style of lock to Mowshurst Bam, following the break-in over a weekend in May. The locksmith who was asked to inspect the doors, and recommend a more robust lock arrangement compatible with the size of the large doors, has suggested fitting two heavy duty hasp and staple locks, to the top and the bottom of the door, linked by a heavy duty padbar, and fitted with two heavy duty padlocks. The cost quoted would be £637.56 plus VAT, including £120 for labour.


A diagram of the proposed installation has been requested. Do members wish to pursue this option at this stage?

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

During the summer holiday period there have been a couple of reports of evening/night behaviour involving vehicles at the Recreation Ground, which were referred to the Community Safety Unit at Sevenoaks.

Following last meeting, Cllrs Baker and Aldridge with the Deputy Clerk had a site meeting with representatives of the company which deals with CCTV for Sevenoaks District. They have subsequently contacted BT to obtain costings for transmission services, which has been circulated to members. There are two options for positioning the service, and the prices shown do not include the cost of the camera equipment itself. Whilst ETC would be responsible for transmission and camera equipment costs, maintenance and upkeep, members are already aware that SDC charges approximately £1,000 per year per camera which it monitors for other organisations, to cover controlling and managing the data, and liaising with the police and the customers.

Do members wish to identify one of the position options, for which a camera quotation can then be produced?


 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents): CCTV Data Quotation

9.8 **To consider works to the Retention Dam**

Members have received a copy of the comments and costings for works to the dam bridge from the company which originally provided a bail-park figure for a new bridge earlier in the year. It will be noted that they are not able to undertake any repairs to the abutments on the river bank. This would be an additional cost.

The survey company were unable to suggest any contractor in the area which could undertake the repairs work highlighted in the survey report.

How do members wish to proceed?

 Confidential Annex 3 (omitted from public documents): Bridge Quotation

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

The remaining project is replacement tree-planting this autumn/winter and, as Members requested, a brief tour of potential planting sites has been arranged with the District Council's countryside manager. This is on Thursday 8th September starting at 10am at Marsh Green.

9.10 To receive an update on Ready-Steady-Grow gardening competition

The guest-talk evening on August 10th was very well received by a capacity audience in Rickards Hall. The competition presentation evening is booked for 6.30pm on 14th September, and all competition entrants have been invited. The special guest from the horticultural world is Jim Buttress, whose life in gardening has ranged over 75 years, from maintaining the Royal Parks to becoming a renowned Royal Horticultural Society judge, particularly for Britain In Bloom, and allotments expert. He will talk about his wide experience after handing out the prizes and certificates for Ready-Steady-Grow.

A limited number of additional free seats are being advertised to the wider community, on a first- come-first-served basis, to extend the audience for the evening.

10 News Release

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

Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/22 and 31/07/22 inclusive. Includes due and unpaid transactions.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/22

		Previous Year's Net	2022/23	Actual Net	Balance	2023/24
INCOME						
Open Spaces						
300	OS Allocation from Precept	£298,890.90	£333,626.00	£166,813.00	-£166,813.00	£0.00
305	OS Cemetery Fees	£16,187.75	£15,000.00	£9,564.90	-£5,435.10	£0.00
310	OS Rents	£11,916.83	£10,810.00	£3,217.12	-£7,592.88	£0.00
311	OS Market Rents	£7,722.45	£6,000.00	£2,524.00	-£3,476.00	£0.00
315	OS Maintenance Services	£4,675.08	£5,224.00	£1,833.04	-£3,390.96	£0.00
320	OS Solar Panels	£1,908.37	£1,000.00	£0.00	-£1,000.00	£0.00
325	OS Sundry Receipts	£2,197.43	£70.00	£351.68	£281.68	£0.00
Total Open Spaces		£343,498.81	£371,730.00	£184,303.74	-£187,426.26	£0.00

	Previous Year's Net	2022/23	Actual Net	Balance	2023/24	
EXPENDITURE						
Open Spaces						
3000	OS Staff Costs	£176,868.18	£179,775.14	£62,408.80	£117,366.34	£0.00
3010	OS Utilities and Rates	£11,395.46	£12,375.00	£4,396.39	£7,978.61	£0.00
3011	OS Market 1	£2,392.85	£3,600.00	£1,240.15	£2,359.85	£0.00
3012	OS Market 2	£0.00	£0.00	£692.54	-£692.54	£0.00
3016	OS Other Staff Expenses	£3,196.50	£3,000.00	£308.98	£2,691.02	£0.00
3020	OS IT Equipment and Licences	£725.66	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
3029	OS Bulky Waste Collection	£608.66	£1,200.00	£0.00	£1,200.00	£0.00
3030	OS External Services Costs	£4,044.43	£6,000.00	£2,016.00	£3,984.00	£0.00
3040	OS Replacement Equipment and Tools	£7,751.50	£6,630.00	£4,404.78	£2,225.22	£0.00
3050	OS Materials	£4,870.88	£6,500.00	£2,560.82	£3,939.18	£0.00
3055	OS Hanging Baskets & Plants	£5,632.38	£6,600.00	£4,970.60	£1,629.40	£0.00
3060	OS Buildings Insurance	£2,139.00	£2,500.00	£722.28	£1,777.72	£0.00
3065	OS Cemetery Expenditure	£110.00	£0.00	£62.93	-£62.93	£0.00
3070	OS Vehicles/Costs/Fuel	£8,181.27	£9,000.00	£4,965.22	£4,034.78	£0.00
3080	OS Contingencies	£3,982.14	£3,000.00	£1,693.25	£1,306.75	£0.00
3090	OS Subs/Misc	£571.65	£1,000.00	£236.82	£763.18	£0.00
3100	OS Small Projects	£2,695.94	£4,250.00	£127.50	£4,122.50	£0.00
3110	OS Vandalism	£3,122.37	£5,100.00	£971.00	£4,129.00	£0.00
3115	OS Misc Maintenance Charges	£860.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
3120	OS Footpaths Equipment	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
3130	OS Public Street Lighting Electricity	£9,095.96	£11,000.00	£1,445.10	£9,554.90	£0.00
3135	OS Public Street Light Contract Maintenance	£6,765.64	£7,000.00	£3,382.82	£3,617.18	£0.00
3136	OS Public Lighting Repairs	£2,154.75	£2,500.00	£1,538.50	£961.50	£0.00
3140	OS 10 Yr Maintenance Plan	£33,188.62	£24,500.00	£7,051.00	£17,449.00	£0.00
3145	OS 30 Yr Maintenance Plan	£32,320.00	£55,000.00	£0.00	£55,000.00	£0.00
	Total Open Spaces	£322,673.84	£350,530.14	£105,195.48	£245,334.66	£0.00