

To Councillors: J Aldridge, A Baker (*Chairwoman*), S Compton, M Gemmell Smith (*Vice-Chairman*), A Layland, N Martindale, S McGregor, A Read, J Streets, S Sumner.

Notice is hereby given of an **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** Meeting to be held in Rickards Hall on Monday 10 July 2023 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
5 July 2023

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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Meeting Papers & Report

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 12 June 2023, 2023-006/1-5**

 Open Spaces | 12 June 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-006/1-5)

5 **To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments**

Report to be presented at the meeting.

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

None to report.

7 **Correspondence**

7.1 **Landowner meeting re access path off Church Street to old Retention Dam Bridge and field**

Following the removal of the bridge at the Retention Dam, a barrier was sited on the north end side of the Dam where the bridge was. However, a resident has raised concern suggesting in their view it is not sufficient. As this is on the side of a private landowner who allows walkers access to the path and the field, a meeting has been organised with the landowner, Deputy Clerk and Head Groundsman to consider the potential of some additional barrier fencing. The estimate cost would be £160.

8 **Head Groundsman's Report**

Routine seasonal work:

- Tree and hedge pruning all sites
- Weed treatment
- Maintaining planters through town, including Doggetts barn. and beds in cemetery
- Watering
- Grass cutting all site

Other activities include:

- The selective weed spraying has now been carried out at the Rec, Blossoms park and Mowshurst
- I spent a morning delivering the ready steady grow kits to local schools and children's groups in preparation for this year's competition
- The team continues with our summer pitch maintenance programme with all goalmouths now well on there way to being ready for the start of the new season. One pitch has already been made available for pre season friendlies and training
- The team have installed a new bench by the play park at the recreation ground. We will also shortly be installing a new picnic bench at Stangrove
- We have been experiencing some issues with the Mill Leat. I have arranged for an electrician to come and take a look and hopefully rectifying said issue will be fairly straightforward. It is likely a metre to record council usage will be fitted and then the owner can invoice usage accordingly
- We will need to replace a bin in Stangrove park due to vandalism, and being deposited in the pond (which we rescued and cleared of litter debris). See below item for proposed suitable bins and budget costs
- The Frisbee tournament hosted at the Recreation Ground seems to have been a success; we marked the pitches and Finance have invoiced for these
- Ordered and replaced vandalised perspex to noticeboard at Stangrove Park
- As a council we have entered our cemeteries and Stangrove Park into the **south and south east In Bloom** competition. A member of the grounds team and the clerk showed the judge around and were given some very positive feedback. We are hopeful of a good grading
- I have now completed the application for our grass pitch maintenance grant. Some more information was requested but I am hopeful that by time of the meeting we won't be far away from being successful
- The plaque from FA Kent accreditation 'good pitches' at the Recreation Ground has been put up on the Pavilion, football pitch side
- The Rugby Club has requested a costing for painting some of the football goals before the start of the new season. I have been liaising with the clerk and we have now provided said costing which they have agreed, and are now also looking to do similar with the Rugby posts . This will be a small project for the team to undertake in the coming weeks
- Fly-tipping has returned at the Marsh Green side road
- I am in the process of carrying out the summer tree reports. This will be available at the next meeting

8.1 **To approve the expenditure £640 (including pins and delivery) for a new replacement bin for Stangrove Park near the pond**

See the attached paper for example bins and links.

 Annex 1: Example replacement bins for Stangrove Park.pdf

9 **Open Spaces Business**

9.1 **To receive the Burial Report**

July: Two Burials

9.2 **To receive a report on allotment activity**

The EAGA has advised of an issue between a couple of plot holders resulting in aggressive behaviour. The EAGA are investigating; subject to the outcome, I am proposing to write to both parties to advise rudeness and aggressive behaviour towards plot holders is not acceptable and could result in termination of the their allotment agreement.

9.3 **Ready Steady Grow gardening competition update**

The deadline for entries was extended to Friday 07 July. There are six categories. To date, we have received 20 entries. It is disappointing that there are no school entries despite seven starter packs having been issued, but we do have a great entry from the Beaver Scouts, again this year. (We will contact the schools.) The children's tallest sunflower has yet to receive any entries.

There have been some fabulous entries in the other categories making a difficult decision for the judging panel, when they meet later this month. (Cllrs were nominated at the last meeting.)

The awards presentation evening on Tuesday 5 September has Neil Miller, Head Gardener at Hever Castle and a renowned professional in the horticultural world, presenting the awards and giving a talk on his career and some gardening tips. A very personable man and will be an evening not to miss.

9.4 **To receive an update on the Annual/10-year maintenance programme Open Spaces work schedule**

The schedule of works has been received by committee previously, and works have been budgeted under code 3140 - 10-year Maintenance works, total annual budget £28,469. From this schedule, the following annual works have been commissioned recently or are in the process:

Cemeteries - slab repointing at the Wall of Remembrance area budgeted £648*

Doggetts Courtyard - repointing of some slabs in the Courtyard as part of the ongoing repairs budgeted £1,026*

Mowshurst pitch verti-drain and sandsit/decompaction - this work is usually carried out in the autumn; budgeted £1,501*.

Playground Inspections - 5 sites (15% discount applied) - cost £549.40. These have been booked in for week 21 August.

Seating - Recreation Ground, replacement of bench at Eastgate. Depending on style - recycled materials similar to the new style picnic benches £656; or with metal ends and slates from durable materials £631. Budgeted £801

Skate Ramps - up to 5 sheets need replacing. Per sheet £245. Total £1,225 (£6,393 allocated for skate park repairs in the 10-year maintenance plan).

**quotes have been requested. Unfortunately, due to the building sector demand it takes longer to receive and book the works in.*

Market Yard car park repainting bollards, budgeted £1,312. However, the Groundstaff can do this work saving on external contractor costs, only materials needed.

Do Members confirm the expenditure for the above annual maintenance work (under the 10-year maintenance programme), and the expenditure of up to £5,750.40 for the works listed above, plus the material costs for the Market Yard car park bollard painting?

9.5 **To note: the review of the Byelaws and public consultation**

The draft Byelaws, approved by Committee at its November meeting were sent to the Byelaws Team at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities at the beginning of December for comments/approval. In February, the DLUHC confirmed *Without prejudicing the eventual decision of the Secretary of State, I have informally reviewed the draft byelaws submitted and have not found any blocking issues which might lead to the Secretary of State declining your application. They're closely based on the Department's model set with minor alteration.*

The next step of the process is to consult on the proposed Byelaws. With the pre-election period this could not take place until after the elections and new council. The procedure is to *advertise a notice of intention to apply for confirmation of the byelaws in one or more newspaper; to be kept for at least one month after the date of publication.*

The cost for a public notice in the County Chronicle (only local newspaper publication) is £50; submission deadline 24 July for publication 3 August edition. Kent and Sussex newspapers group has been approached for a second publication. It would also be published on the Council's website.

Once the month has past, an application to the DLUHC for confirmation and approval can be made.

9.6 **Model Aircraft flying group - update on flying at the Recreation Ground**

Following several months of correspondence, discussion and consideration as to whether to permit a group of model aircraft enthusiasts to fly their model aircraft at the Recreation Ground, this has now been taken to the next level to agree terms by the Rugby Club who have the rights to manage the bookings of the facilities at the Recreation Ground under its Lease. The Rugby Club have been liaising over suitable flying times, risk assessment and mitigating the risks, and the hiring agreement terms and cost.

9.7 **Work on behalf of the Rugby Club - football and rugby goal posts repaint**

To note: The groundstaff will be priming and repainting three sets of football goal posts, which will be charged to the Club for materials and labour. We have also been asked to quote for the same for the rugby posts.

10 **News Release**

11 **Items for future agenda**

September agenda will receive an update on the Streetlight programme for 2023-24; and a first proposal for 2024-25 tranche of streetlight replacement programme.

Dogs on lead consultation.