

**Minutes of the Meeting of Open Spaces held in Rickards Hall on 18 September 2023 at 7:30 pm**

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Present: Cllrs. Michael Gemmell Smith (*Vice-Chairman*), Alan Layland, Nicola Martindale  
In attendance: Town Clerk. No members of the public, no Press.  
19:34 Meeting opened.

Cllr Gemmell Smith (Vice-Chairman) chaired the meeting.

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Compton, McGregor, Read, Sumner.

*Members noted the Committee was at minimum numbers to be quorate (three); and agreed should Members raise questions with any decision from this meeting, they could request the item to be brought back to Committee.*

**2 Declarations of Interests, or Predeterminations**

None.

**3 Public Questions**

19:35 meeting closed for Public Questions.

None.

19:35 meeting reopened.

**4 To Receive and Sign Minutes of The Open Spaces Committee 10 July 2023-010/1-3**

Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Monday 10 July 2023-010/1-3 be duly signed by the Committee Chairman as a true and accurate record.

**5 To Receive the Financial Budget Comparison for Open Spaces (codes 300s/3000s) up to 31 August 2023**

Members received the financial comparisons for the first five months of financial year; staff costs (3000) were to 31 July. Under code 3145 (30-year maintenance plans) a Streetlights invoice £7,050 for the replacement columns in 2022-23 had not been received until July 2023. UK Power Networks invoice for £15,574 paid. The late invoice had not been pick-up as outstanding at year-end therefore sufficient funds had not moved into the earmarked reserves. This means code 3015 would have an overspend against budget in 2023-24. Agenda item 11.1 streetlights current replacement programme and costs.

**6 To receive a report and ratify recent Operational Decisions for Open Spaces Activity**

The following operational decisions, which had been approved in consultation with the Committee Chairman, Town Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk were noted, and

**Ratified:** each of the below:

**1. Tree works** – total £1,350, prices ex-VAT (see below) - Several items were noted from the Head Groundsman's summer visual tree inspection for further examination, and the contractor RWE reported and recommended:

Stangrove Park

A horse chestnut, canker on stem, die back now in crown (it's beside a junction of two paths) Recommended fell to ground level - £300; The Oak at top of Park near the flats, fungal brackets around trunk, no leaves, (appears dead); Recommended fell to ground level - £750; a willow stem dropped into the pond in August which the groundstaff are not equipped to deal with this awkward

removal and tidy. Work was quoted and commissioned £320.

#### Mowshurst

Ash, beside hedge which divides pitch 2 from Millennium Wood, fungal brackets around trunk and sparse crown (?Ash die-back) Recommended fell to ground level – £300;

The approved 10-year plan budget for interim tree works not the result of the biennial tree-survey has £4,300. These works were approved, in order to progress them into the contractor's autumn schedule.

#### **2. Doggets Courtyard** - Repointing courtyard slabs £890 (10 year maintenance plan)

Repair work on 5sqm of the paving in the vicinity of the flower cart well within the budget allowed in the 10 year Plan, approved in order to be programmed for early autumn.

**3. Stangrove Park playground** - Replacement swing seat £166.97. A flat swing seat was damaged beyond repair, and temporarily removed from the playground. Replacement and fixings has been ordered to return to operation as soon as possible.

#### **4. Recreation Ground playground** - total cost £759.25 (see below breakdown)

Swing set – missing safety chain. The zipwire cable seat and chain damaged (though usable the seat section has been damaged). Fixings damage to seesaw and twin swings. Replacement/repair costs £392.25

In August the metal to the children's sensory spinner wheel was vandalised (posted to vandalism budget). Replacement rain spinner wheel unit £367.00.

**5. Pavilion** – broken window (awaiting invoice) estimated £350.00. Vandalised window smashed end of July (vandalism budget).

#### **6. Pumps at Pavilion and Mill Leat** – total replacement/repair costs £5,550.83 (see below)

At the beginning September, AES attended for the annual servicing of the pumps at both sites. Mill Leat report: found pump bearings have failed pump tripping pump breaker in tattoo shop, did not reinstall pump as it has failed, new pump required. Cost £753.83. Pavilion report: Carried out routine service, low reading to earth on pump, this has dropped considerably since last visit. Pump replacement required as pump likely to fail in near future. Tested electrically and mechanically, left working. Cost of replacement £4,797. As this is the sewage pump, approval has been given to replace.

NB: the maintenance budgets had allowed £2,441 for repairs to both pumps, so this would be an overspend on budet.

#### **7. Grounds** – Trolley Jack - replacement due to wear and tear £162.81

**8. Annual hedgecutting** at Blossoms Park, Recreation Ground, Mowshurst - £1,995. This is routine works included in the budget; the cost is £100 more than last year's invoice.

**9. Moswhurst** car park surface maintenance and repairs - £2,750. This is budgeted maintenance work, budgeted had allowed £2,160.

### **7 To receive the Head Groundsman's Report**

Members received and noted the Head Groundsman report in the meeting papers. There were no questions.

### **8 Open Spaces Business**

#### **8.1 Cemeteries matters**

##### **8.1.1 To receive the Burial Report**

Members noted September 2 burials; 2 ashes.

**8.1.2 To receive a request to permit an additional memorial at a grave plot, and thus reconsider the the policy and rules on Memorials**

It recently came to the attention of officers that an additional unauthorised memorial had been added at a grave plot. Having written to the Grant of Right holder to advise that this was against policy, notice was given to remove. Council had since received a request from the resident asking Members to reconsider its policy on memorials for the cemeteries so as to permit this additional one. A copy of the letter was received, (confidential paper).

Members said that they recognised the sensitive nature, and whilst the additional memorial itself was not offensive, Council had in the past received similar requests and also for photographs on memorials which it had declined, and it would be unfair to permit this request. The rule book was clear, and the Committee had ensured consistency with Memorials over the years. Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** that the additional memorial and photograph cannot be permitted, and would need to be removed.

Members were also asked by the resident to consider changing its policy, Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** not to amend its policy to allow additional memorials at grave plots or to allow photographs.

**8.2 Allotment matters**

Members noted the meeting report: Forge Croft Allotments had a couple of ex-plot holder tenants who had left their plots in poor condition. Letters had been sent to the request they rectify or would be charged for the this work.

**8.3 Ready Steady Grow Competition: To receive feedback from the Awards Ceremony and the winners; and to consider continuing with the event for 2024**

Members noted the meeting report: Tuesday 6 September, an Awards Ceremony took place at Rickards Hall, with certificates and prizes presented to each of the category winners and runner-ups; there was also some highly commended certificates. Members considered continuing with the event in 2024 and unanimously,

**Resolved:** to support running the Ready Steady Grow Competition in 2024.

**8.4 To receive feedback following meeting with landowner re access path off Church Street to old Retention Dam Bridge and field. The Landowner has confirmed they are satisfied with current measures in place**

Members noted the Landowner of the path at the access path off Church Street had confirmed they were satisfied with current measures in place following the removal of the foot bridge.

**8.5 To receive an update on the Annual Works programme and approve the autumn tranche of works**

Members received an update on the annual works programme as reported in the meeting papers. There were no questions.

**8.6 Matter arising re Lease Holders**

**8.6.1 Nomads Football Club**

Members noted Nomads Football Club had recently advised that due to limited numbers of players and members, they have taken the decision this season (2023-24) not to play in a league, but were continuing with player membership and training sessions. The pitches were also still in use with junior football.

**8.7 Kent FA Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund - To receive an update on funding application**

Members noted: the Service Level Agreement for the football pitches at the Recreation Ground had been signed by the Town Council (Town Clerk) and the Rugby Club (Chairman) and submitted in

September, for funding over a six-year period. The pitch assessments for Mowshurst were yet to be submitted.

**8.8 Annual Playground inspections - to receive a summary report and confirm any future actions**

The annual playground inspections had been carried out and full reports received. Members noted there was nothing significant and the highlighted issues were in the process of being addressed.

**8.9 To approve the expenditure of a replacement seesaw for Stangrove Park; quotes range between £1,529 to £3,612 plus installation**

Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to approve the expenditure of a replacement seesaw for Stangrove Park; and selected the Wicksteed model, expenditure up to £2,500.

**8.10 To approve the expenditure £700 (including pins and delivery) for a new replacement bin at Stangrove Park near the path to Stangrove Estate**

Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to approve the expenditure £700 (including pins and delivery) for a new replacement bin at Stangrove Park near the path to Stangrove Estate.

**9 Byelaws: To note the Public Notice of intention to make updated and amended byelaws to Council's nine sites was published 21 August closes 20 September**

Members noted: the Notice for intention to make updates and amendments to the Council's Open Spaces byelaws across its nine sites had been published in the Edenbridge Magazine, The Chronicle, and the Council's website. These Byelaws follow the DLUHC model byelaws for Pleasure Grounds, Public Walks and Open Spaces. The Consultation closed 20 September 2023, 23:59. Following this, and subject to the consultation response, an application to the DLUHC for confirmation and approval would be made.

**10 Dogs on leads consultation - to confirm the consultation questions and media platform**

Members considered the draft questions for consultation on dogs at its open spaces. The proposal: to run the consultation for a two-week period, using Facebook, the Websites and notices around the Council's sites and noticeboards. Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** the questions for Dogs on Leads consultation and to proceed as soon as possible.

**11 Streetlights replacement programme**

**11.1 To receive an update on 2023-24 programme**

Members received an update on the 2022-23 streetlight programme: Total budget from 30-maintenance plan £25,000. Total works for the above streetlight replacements £17,005 (plus UKPN additional costs). Streetlights invoice for works 2022-23 programme was received in July 2023 and paid, £7,050. Total cost in budget code 3145 (30-year plan) £24,005 (surplus £995). As reference under item 5, this unpaid invoice had not been picked up and the budget underspend would have been moved back to General Reserves.

February 2023 meeting, Members had expected the surplus for 2023-24 to have been £7,700 and approved 22 lights to be upgraded to LED (£350 each) to be included in this current year. In addition to this, 2022-23 budget moved a surplus of £2,832 to earmarked reserves to allow for 8 further LED upgrades. The money is in earmarked reserves for 8 LED upgrades. The surplus on budget for 2023-24 was now £995. Three LED updates would be £1,050. Members were asked to confirm the number of LED upgrades, and unanimously,

**Resolved:** to continue with 30 LED upgrades and the expenditure of £10,500 (noting the cost quoted was January 2023 and there may be a slight increase).

**11.2 To confirm the proposed replacement columns for 2024-25 and to advise the budget for 2024-25**

Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to support the proposed columns 25, 31, 111 and two pole boxes 85 and 86, for replacement in the 2024-25 budget £25k.

**11.3 To receive an update on the proposed street lighting for Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre, and to note four Edenbridge Town Council maintained lights will be decommissioned and replaced with KCC approved and maintained lighting columns**

Members noted, following recent correspondence presented to Open Spaces Committee June 2023, the contractor for the Edenbridge Medical Centre had confirmed KCC would take over the management of new streetlighting: Kent County Council (KCC) had recently accepted responsibility for the maintenance of the lighting in the area and therefore, the Town Council would be losing four streetlights from its stock: 47,48,49 and 50.

**12 Maintenance Plans**

**12.1 To receive an update on the 10-year Maintenance Plan**

Members received update on the 10-year maintenance plan and noted, any projects not completed this budget year, would be carried over in the earmarked reserves for future completion.

Open Spaces 10-year plan for 2023-23 had included (refer to the the annual programme attachment item 8.5):

Stangrove Park - cradle swings 2 seats replacement £260; Flat swing replacement £583

Cemeteries - footpath repairs budget £2,052

Recreation Ground Car park - repainting lines £734; West car park £918;

Marsh Green - replace posts beside ditch ££4,276

Doggets - replace hanging baskets £777

Mowshurst - carpark planings for repair £2,160

Kent Brook - bank stabilisation £2,160

**12.2 To receive an update on the 30-year Maintenance Plan**

Members noted the 2024-25 tranche of works allowed a budget of £45k. The details of costs and proposed lights was yet to be received.

**13 News Release**

None.

20:25 Meeting closed.