

Minutes of the Meeting of Open Spaces held in Rickards Hall on 12 February 2024 at 7:30 pm

Present: Cllrs. Angela Baker (*Chairwoman*), Sarah Compton, Michael Gemmell Smith (*Vice-Chairman*), Alan Layland, Stuart McGregor, Angela Read
In attendance: Cllr Bob Todd, Town Clerk, Open Spaces Officer, Minutes Clerk, 25 members of the public, no members of the press.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and read a statement advising of Committee meeting procedures and recordings; and advising that by remaining at the meeting in effect this gives permission to be recorded - an opportunity was given for members of the public to leave (no one left). This meeting was recorded. (*Recordings are deleted*).

1 Apologies for Absence

Prior to the first item, the Chairman welcomed those present and advised that the meeting was being recorded, offering anyone who did not want to be recorded the opportunity to leave if they wished. Information on the procedure for the meeting and the conduct for public participation was read out.

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted, from Cllrs Aldridge, Streets, and Sumner.

2 Declarations of Interests, or Predeterminations

None.

3 Public Questions

19:33 The Chairman closed the meeting and invited any members of the public who wished to speak to raise their hand.

Members of the public raised issues related to the recent action taken by Council, whereby some individual grave memorials had had items removed and the recent notice that artificial flowers were not permitted in the cemeteries.

First resident to speak, was aggrieved as the items removed from the memorial area they tended to, had not all be kept and only the kerb edgings were remaining for collection despite the rule book saying these would be kept for one-month. He also said that the rule book had not been issued prior to recent communications. He had further questions which the Town Clerk said she would respond to direct upon receipt of his list.

A second resident spoke about how they tend to their memorial area and keep it nice. They objected to being asked to move the kerb edgings and artificial flowers and felt that it was offensive to do this, and not right. They also expressed disappointment that following a meeting with the Town Clerk and Chair of the Committee, that the agreement to partially remove the kerb stones, had been withdrawn. Another person spoke saying they were vey upset by the whole situation.

Another resident said she had tended her family memorial for 21 years and could not understand why the sudden need to remove the edging and plants. Yet, a neighbouring memorial was overgrown with brambles.

One resident said they understood why there were rules in placed, but asked if the rule book could be looked at. Recent Facebook activity supported that people were not happy and that the Council should take this into account with its rules. She asked if there could be a meeting between residents and the Council to debate and discuss to try to resolve. She mentioned that she knew someone had already written to request this and had not received a response. She also said the the rule book was not something she was familiar with, and asked why now. The Town Clerk responded, saying she had written and offered three dates to meet the individual, but had had no reply.

Other comments from residents included, fresh flowers need to be regularly replaced whereas artificial flowers are bright and colourful; removal of long-term planting; non-receipt of the rules booklet; lack of communication in some cases; the process by which Cemetery rules were created;

how they could be changed; and a request for a meeting to resolve issues.

Officer and Chair, clarified that there was national guidance for setting burial ground rules, but details were decided by the local burial authority according to the situation in each location - also residents did not own a grave space, but bought a Right of Exclusive Burial for a period of time - currently 75 years (some older ones had been for 100 years). Grant of Right holders had been contacted by officers (where there where the up-to-date details) giving notice that the memorial areas would need to be brought back inline with the rule book, and an opportunity for residents to do this themselves. This was not a new thing. Also, when the Grant of Right is issued, they also sign to say they have received a copy of the rule book. It was also said that the Council recognises this is a sensitive matter, and that it would not discuss individual cases in an open forum.

The Chair thanked the public for their attendance and their comments, inviting each person to come to the office to address their concerns regarding specific individual graves, since not all issues were the same - as other residents had already done in recent weeks. She apologised to anyone who not received a letter. Previous Committee meetings had considered some individual cases, and it had been agreed to uphold the regulations. A further review of the Cemetery rules was not an item on the agenda for this meeting so would not be discussed, and no decisions taken that evening.

19:57 In closing the Public Questions the Chair advised that members of the public were welcome to stay, or could leave at this point if they wished. All but one chose to leave, and the meeting was paused to accommodate the departure.

4 To receive and sign minutes of The Open Spaces Committee meetings of 18 September 2023-18/1-5; and 06 November 2023-026/1-5

Resolved: that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meetings of 18 September 2023 (18/1-5) and 6 November 2023 (026/1-5), be signed by the Chair as true and accurate records of the meetings.

5 To receive analysis of income and expenditure to 31 January 2024

Members received the comparisons for 2023-24 budget income and expenditure to 31 January (with two months remaining), and a projected year-end forecast which indicated an overspend on budget of -£9,701. Members noted also:

- £2,832 from 2022-23 streetlight replacement programme (reduced deficit to £6869)
- Vandalism (3110) - there had been quite a bit of vandalism: £316 to streetlight repairs; £730 replacement litter bin by pond; £1,479 repairs to playgrounds; £340 Pavilion broken window
- 30-year maintenance plan (3145) - streetlighting replacement programme (budgeted allowed £25k) and costs were reported to the November Committee, including an additional £7,050 from 2022-23 programme which had not been paid in the previous year. Committee had also approved at its September meeting to proceed with 30 LED replacement lighting units, cost £10,500. An overspend had been noted and agreed. It was also noted that the income received a refund from UKPN £5,661. Total Streetlighting expenditure will be £37,375.
- 30-year plan had also budgeted for £5k to move to reserves to replenish the playground reserves.
- Small Projects (3100) - included the removal of the rotten wooden bridge over the river Eden, cost £5,950 not budgeted for; an additional picnic bench near Stangrove Park; tree work in Blossoms and Stangrove Park
- The projected year-end had allowed for potential year-end movement into reserves where projects in the 10-year plan may not be complete/or commissioned.

The budget had not allowed for additional expenditure requested in these papers.

The reduction in Market income was queried, and members were advised that data on recent cash payments by stall holders was yet to be entered into the Council's finance system, but had been processed through the office till. This would improve that income figure, but Market activity had been quieter in January, which was not unusual. There were no further questions.

6 To ratify operational decisions for Open Spaces activity

None.

7 Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from a resident countering residents' disagreement with existing Cemetery rules and action by Council. The email had been circulated previously. The writer had sent apologies for not being able to attend the meeting. Having seen via social media a growing and rather negative narrative on how the Council manages the towns municipal cemeteries, they wrote as wanted to point out, as with most social media, the numbers involved with the dialogue were not representative to the overall population of the town; and stressed the importance of maintaining the rules, to facilitate the overall task of keeping the facility as a peaceful and visually harmonious location. They said that they have family members in the cemeteries and urged everyone to be grateful that they had such a lovely area for their loved ones to be laid to rest in, and be thankful for the not overbearing regulations, with which families agree to comply at the outset when arranging interments.

20:01 Group of people outside the meeting room were asked to be quiet.

8 Head Groundsman's Report

Members noted the report, including:

- **Routine seasonal work:** Tree and hedge Pruning all sites
- Weed treatment
- Maintaining planters through town, including Doggetts Barn courtyard, and beds in the Cemetery
- Topping up sunken graves
- Rose pruning

Other activities included: a new concrete slab in the Cemetery on which to keep bulk deliveries; the roadway in front of the skip was slightly extended; the winter tree maintenance programme and tree inspections; the new pump at the Mill Leat had been installed; pitch decompaction. Sand and soil top dressing mix had been delivered for use on the more worn areas of the Council's pitches through the remainder of the season. The winter headstone check was carried out late last year, with any memorials of concern reported, and where possible families notified.

8.1 To consider the replacement of two damaged/vandalised waste bins and the expenditure of up to £1,600

20:05 Cllr Layland left the meeting.

It was reported one of the metal bins in Stangrove Park by the outdoor gym area had recently been vandalised. Also, one of the same kind of bins in the Market Yard car park had also been damaged for some time now. The cost for replacing these two bins with the new model to match those recently installed in the park was approximately £1,600. After considering whether to delay the replacements until the new financial year, given the existing overspend on Vandalism in the current year, it was

Resolved: to sanction the immediate purchase at £1,600 approximately of two new style bins to replace those damaged, given the likely small underspend in the overall Open Spaces budget by the current year end.

20:07 Cllr Layland re-joined the meeting, with two Members of the public.

8.2 To consider additional turfing for cemetery maintenance improvements and the expenditure of £450

Members were advised that while digging out the footing for the new concrete base, the groundstaff used the majority of the spoil to top up sunken graves in the Cemetery. The team wished to turf over those graves, and also make good around the newly installed base. To make

good approximately 50 graves the price for the turf and topsoil required was £450.

Resolved: to approve the turfing works at a cost of £450

One Member raised a divot near the pond in Stangrove Park and asked if this could be filled.

9 Open Spaces Business

Members noted updates on matters from previous agendas, and upcoming activities including:

Byelaws: the revised and updated byelaws for the Council's open spaces and car parks had been submitted to the DLUHC for confirmation and approval. Once this was received, signage across the Council's sites would need updating.

Dogs on leads: Following the November meeting which received feedback from the consultation on dogs on Council site, the results had been published on the website and Facebook.

Gardening Competition: Following the success of the previous two years, preparations to start promoting this year's event were in progress. Categories, closing dates for entries and the awards presentation details were yet to be finalised.

Family summer fun days: We are waiting information on the proposals and costs from SDC for this year's summer play days.

Kent FA Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund: the first year (of 6) payment of £3,520 had been received.

Level 1 Football Grounds Maintenance qualification: Head Groundsman and Assistant, had both

Rugby Club Minis Rugby Festival: This year's event hosted by the Club was Sunday 3 March.

Seesaw replacement, Stangrove Playground: September Committee meeting, £2,500 was approved for a replacement seesaw. An order was placed, but it transpired that the old base would need to be removed and replaced, and some surface repairs done. The revised quote was £3,595.65. This would be presented to April Committee.

9.1 To receive the Burial Report

Members noted November to January there were no burials or ashes interments. For February there was one burial, and two ashes booked.

However, the Council office had been busy with several enquiries regarding Grants of Right, researching individual burials and interments, liaising with stonemasons on new Memorials and inscriptions, and updating records. Another project which officers were looking to start was to scan the historic paper records onto the Epitaph system. The ongoing memorial safety inspections had led to some letters to Grant of Right holders, asking them to contact one of the approved stone masons to address any potential safety issues, for example leaning stones.

9.1.1 To receive a further update on memorials in cemeteries which are not compliant with the Cemetery Regulations

20:15 Cllr Compton left the meeting.

Following decisions at the September and November Committee meetings to uphold the rules for Memorials in the cemeteries, Members noted officers had contacted 22 Grant of Right holders who had exceeded the permitted memorial area on grave plots in the Lawn Cemeteries (three and four). In some cases there were no current contact details, and a couple remained outstanding. The majority of people contacted re-instated their memorial areas to comply with the Cemetery rules.

However, despite being given notice, a small number had not, so in mid January these were made good by staff (as permitted by the regulations). Officers also noted that there had been a significant increase in the number of artificial flowers, which were also not permitted. Notices were displayed in the cemeteries advising that artificial flowers (and other memorabilia exceeding the permitted memorial area) would be removed in due course. The notices had been removed by someone, but were in the process of being replaced. This work would not take place until early spring, giving people fair notice and will coincide with spring flowers.

Members noted the sensitivity with memorials and tributes, and said that it is always a difficult decision to balance consistency with individual requests.

20:17 Cllr Compton re-joined the meeting.

9.1.2 To consider additional signage in the Cemetery with map and some dos and don'ts, and the expenditure up to £1,500

Following recent concerns raised by some residents, that visitors to the Cemetery were not aware of the rule of no artificial flowers, or the differentiation between the older sections and the Lawn Cemeteries, officers had investigated potential signage options. Having researched other cemeteries, the Council's regulations were consistent with others including no artificial flowers; some did provide signage advising of some of the rules. The proposal was to install a purpose sign highlighting some of the rules (and advising the full regulations are available from Council office and its website). Example wording and signage was presented. Members considered the numerous options ranging from attaching Dibond signage to the existing signage (four would be needed) to installing new purpose-made signs. The costs ranged from £100 each to £1,500 respectively. Another option would be to use the existing posts but add new purpose-made designs, or a mixture of all of these. A slightly higher budget would allow for a new notice, plus replacement of the existing signage with the same branding (using the existing posts).

Members considered and what budget level to set, favouring a design on aluminium that included a Cemetery layout map, and unanimously,

Resolved: to set the upper end of the budget at £1,500, and leave the style of board for the Officers to define and then liaise with the Chair before progressing to order.

9.2 Allotment matters

Members noted the Town Clerk and Open Spaces Officer had met recently with the voluntary Plot Officer, Edenbridge Allotment Gardens Association (EAGA). Several points were discussed, including:

- The Allotment Tenancy Agreement, for which there had been some suggested amendments to make it clearer concerning plot maintenance, not to use the areas that border the site, and clearance at the end of the Tenancy.
- Permission for temporary structures on plots, policy adopted in June 2022 (see item 9.2.2 below)
- Draft Agreement between the EAGA and the Council, discussed by the Committee in 2018-19, but the content had not been finalised. EAGA had a draft copy to consider and provide some feedback (item 9.2.3).
- A request from a community group wanting to take on a couple of plots, issues to consider in how to manage groups on the site, responsibility for the potential vulnerable members of the group, and requirements Council would want from the group i.e. safeguarding policy, and insurance as the EAGA's insurer would not provide cover so the group would be responsible to obtain its own (item 9.2.4).
- Timing of Council's annual fees and charges reviews and operative date

It was noted the site itself was extremely well managed by the EAGA, with the help of the groundstaff. The Council was responsible for the kitchen/mess room building including the rear storage. The latter had a damaged door which was beyond further repairs. The Buildings Manager would look at options for replacement, to present to Committee at a future meeting.

The Chair, proposed to bring forward agenda items 9.2.4, before 9.2.1 as the outcome might affect the Tenancy Agreement wording.

Resolved: to bring forward agenda item 9.2.4 and this change in order of discussion.

The minutes would record in agenda (numerical) order.

9.2.1 To receive and approve the updated Tenancy Agreements for the Forge Croft Allotments and Swan Lane Allotments

The proposed updated Tenancy Agreements reflected provision for clearer information on what allotment tenants can and can't do. Both the EAGA and Council officers had had to liaise with tenants regarding unauthorised storage of items (usually non-gardening items, for example car engine and parts, building materials, furniture, and general rubbish) at Forge Croft. Tenants who resign are expected to leave the plot cleared of all items that they used, and to cut back and remove old planting, but a number of plots had been left in an unmanageable condition, leaving either EAGA volunteers or the groundstaff to clear. The amendments proposed aim to make this clearer.

Resolved: to support and confirm the updated amended Tenancy Agreement for Forge Croft Allotments, and the Tenancy Agreement for Swan Lane allotments.

9.2.2 To review the Temporary Structures Policy for poly tunnels and small sheds on allotment plots

Members reviewed the Temporary Structures policy adopted by the Committee in February 2022, and

Resolved: to confirm and continue with the Temporary Structures Policy, remaining under annual review.

9.2.3 To receive and consider the draft Agreement between the Town Council and the Edenbridge Allotment Gardens Association (EAGA) and

20:32 Member of the public left the meeting.

Members noted that there was no formal documentation between the Town Council and the EAGA covering management of Forge Croft Allotments site, despite a good long standing arrangement between both parties.

The volunteers of the EAGA do an excellent job overseeing the plot holders' activities, managing the renewals and insurance, as well as organising some events. However, they were volunteers, and this is an onerous and sometimes time consuming role. Most people wanted to tend to their plot and not have to manage the issues that arise with individual plot holders. The EAGA committee currently had just three officers, and there are 130 allotment plots. The proposed Agreement was not supposed to be designed as a rigid document, but to provide clarity for EAGA on its role, and the support that the Council provided. For example, where some tenants had become unmanageable, Council officers had help liaise with these individuals. It also provides a guide for future EAGA volunteers.

Solicitors' advice was taken previously, and a draft Agreement was prepared. However, for a number of reasons this had not progressed further. When the Town Clerk and Open Spaces Officer met with the Plot Officer recently, this was raised and a draft copy had since been sent to the EAGA for comment; on which we await their feedback. Members considered the first draft, mindful that the EAGA effectively manages the day-to-day running on behalf of the Council, and noting some of the obligations were already reflected in the Site Rules. Whilst noting the EAGA were yet to comment on the draft, Members were satisfied, and unanimously,

Resolved: to approve the initial draft Agreement and for the the Town Clerk to oversee any final amendments in liaison with the EAGA.

20:33 Member of the public re-joined the meeting.

9.2.4 To consider permitting a community group use of two allotment plots at Forge Croft Allotments

Members considered a request made to the Town Council and the EAGA, for use of two plots to support a Community Garden at the Forge Croft Allotments. The proposal was to support an activity for a group of residents (the leaders were from Hever and Four Elms parish, but referenced the project was for Edenbridge residents). The project aims were to help towards improving participants' overall health, both physical and mentally, promote social connections and community engagement as well as fostering sustainable practices and encouraging healthy food habits. The garden would be a space for volunteers to come together, grow their own food, learn about gardening, and promote environmental stewardship. It should be available for all members of the community from children to adult.

Members noted, the function of allotments already achieves the above, fostering sustainable practices, growing food, socialising, improving wellbeing, and are available to all members of the community of all ages. The proposal suggested the need for a small shed for socialising and seating area. This was already provided at Forge Croft Allotments, it would not be appropriate to provide separately on the plots for a Group, and it was uncertain how other plot holders would feel sharing this area. Other details of the proposal would need to be considered further, and whether it was suitable for this site.

The Plot Officer had had several conversations with the lead person of the Group: Issues raised include, management of numbers on the site, responsibility for vulnerable people of the Group, and safeguarding issues (and a policy would need to be provided), and insurance. The Group had already looked into their own insurance. The site rules and plot holders' responsibilities had also been discussed.

In principle, the EAGA was prepared to pilot this initiative, subject to the Tenancy Agreement and site rules being accepted, and the Group providing clear details on how it was proposed to manage its members, providing a list of members, and restricting numbers attending at one time, insurance and safeguarding policy. Councillors also needed to consider if they would permit an exception for non-residents and to allow a Group, as plots had previously been individual lets and Edenbridge parish residents only. After some discussion, it was

Resolved: to support providing two plots for a Community Garden site for a one year pilot, with plot fees waived, subject to agreement from the EAGA and a Tenancy Agreement, and to meet all conditions, including risk assessment, provision of insurance, safeguarding policy, and details of management of project membership. It was noted that the Allotments are provided for residents within the Edenbridge parish, and the group does say it is for Edenbridge residents, although organised by two residents outside the parish (Hever and Four Elms parish).

9.3 To receive an update on the Annual Works Programme and other approved works

Members noted the annual commissioned works update, of note:

Remaining for the current year 2023-24 Mowshurst car park resurfacing (budget £2,160); Market Yard car park repainting bollards which the groundstaff had agreed to carry out this work rather than pay contractor.

Outstanding - to be moved to reserves for works 2024:

- Doggets Courtyard - Repointing courtyard slabs £890 (10 year maintenance plan);
- Stangrove Playground - Replacement seesaw, noted above (item 9). Budget has £240 surface repairs (10-year) could be used towards the seesaw additional costs
- Line marking Rec East & West car parks - budget £1,652 - works yet to be assessed and commissioned
- Replace hanging baskets, Doggetts Barn - £777
- Tree works - to move unspent budget to allow for future unexpected tree work. Est. £2,160
- Kent Brook stabilisation (Riparian ownership) - 10year 2023-24 had allowed £2,160, move for future maintenance works
- Flood Bund hedging to re-lay - this will need doing, but is on hold, move budget £1,644
- Marsh Green - replacement of posts - budget £4,276. These were currently being replaced as needed - propose move half of budget to reserves
- Repaint bomb shelter - £324
- Cemetery memorials and path repairs, budget £2,700.
- Closed Churchyard - memorials repairs budget £648
- Bench replacements (replace Eastgate) - £801

Advance note - unplanned works 2024: The perimeter Churchyard wall (south side) along Church Street was going to need 'repointing and repairs'. This would need quoting and scheduling for ideally late spring/summer. Last year £8,530 was moved into reserves for the three stone churchyard walls. Quotes would hopefully be provided to the April meeting. It was suggested that an application for CIL funding might be possible for this infrastructure work.

Resolved: that the unspent funding for outstanding budgeted projects be moved to reserves for future

delivery.

9.4 Vandalism report

Members noted the spate of vandalism over the past few months: perspex in notice boards damaged, twice replaced (£165); damage to waste bins; two play items damaged at the Recreation Ground, both replaced, but vandalised again since; Stangrove Park had a bench damaged which the groundstaff were able to fix; some graffiti which the Community Warden had cleaned.

Members were asked to consider repeat expenditure for replacement items. (Expenditure for the waste bins had been requested under the Head Groundsman's report.) They noted the Vandalism budget 2023/24 was £3,000. Expenditure to date, £3,426.18. Yet to be added, £82 for replacement perspex, streetlighting vandalism to four smashed lights cost £1,750. This raised the Vandalism expenditure to £5,184.38.

20:39: The Chair proposed to bring forward agenda items 12 in view of members of the public attendance for this item. Members,

Resolved: *to bring forward agenda items 12 and to discuss before proceeding with other items on the agenda.*

9.4.1 To approve the expenditure for a replacement button seat for the zipwire, and expenditure of £250 plus vat

The zip wire seat at the Recreation Ground was vandalised during the late summer and replaced, cost for seat, chain and fixings of £367.25 plus carriage costs £25. The replacement for the seat this time will be £250.00 plus vat and carriage cost. Having suggested investigating a seat in tougher material, Members unanimously,

Resolved: to replace the button seat again, with expenditure of £250 plus VAT plus carriage costs.

9.4.2 To consider replacing the damaged children's sensory rain wheel/spinner and the expenditure of £367.00

It was reported the metal central strip of the sensory rain wheel/spinner in the toddlers' section of the Recreation Ground playground was badly dented in the summer, and replaced at the cost of £327.00 plus £40 carriage costs. Recently this was attacked and dented again. HAGS had suggested Members may want to consider an alternative item, to fit the same post, but unfortunately having investigated they do not have a suitable alternative. To replace the damaged section would be the same cost as before. This was a popular item with the young children developing sensory and motor skills through touch and sound. Members considered the options to replace or remove this item and unanimously

Resolved: not to replace the damaged part of the sensory wheel currently. To make safe the existing with removal. It was agreed to keep under review.

20:39 The Chair proposed, in view of the two members of the public attending, for Item 12 on the agenda, to be discussed at this point, ahead of Item 9.5.

Resolved: *to move Item 12 forward on the Agenda, to be discussed ahead of Item 9.5.*

The minutes would record in agenda (numerical) order.

9.5 Hanging Baskets - To approve the budgeted expenditure of £5,797 plus vat, for the 2024 hanging baskets for the High Street and Doggetts Barn

Members were advised Amethyst had provided its annual quote to supply and maintain the summer High Street hanging baskets display, for 58 baskets. It was within the budget (£6k); 2024-25 expenditure.

Resolved: to approve the expenditure of £5,797 plus vat, for the 2024 hanging baskets

9.6 South and South East in Bloom 2024 - how many categories would Members like to enter this year

Members were reminded of the Town Council's success entering the South and South East In

Bloom competition for the first time in 2023, in two categories - Parks and Cemeteries. They were delighted it received two Silver Gilt Awards (just a few points off Gold) for the Council's Cemeteries and Stangrove Park. It was proposed to re-enter the Small Cemeteries and the Park categories, also to enter the Millennium Wood in the Small Conservation Area section.

Resolved: to enter the Council's three sites as proposed into South and South East in Bloom, with total expenditure for three entries of £215.

9.7 **Site visits: to confirm dates for the 2024 visits**

Members of the Committee visit Council's sites at least three times yearly. It was proposed that from this year to focus on two or three sites per visit, selected by the Open Spaces Officer and Head Groundsman. **Members confirmed**, but noted these could be changed if need:

April: Monday 8th, 11.30 am

July: Tuesday 2nd - 11.30 am

September: Thursday 5th - 11.30 am

10 **Streetlights maintenance plan and works update**

10.1 **Update 2023-24 works programme**

Members noted the budget for current year 2023-24 was £25k. An update was provided at the November meeting including the additional 30 lights being replaced for 30 LED funded partially by a reserves movement and a UK Power Networks refund. Members had already approved a budget overspend to facilitate the LED upgrades.

2023-24 programme: Columns: 241 (Swan Lane), 244 (Victoria Road); and the two pole boxes 81 and 82 (Hilders Lane) had been replaced. Columns 137, 138 and 139 Mill Hill were expected to be completed by end of February. Total for the 2023-24 planned replacement programme £20,189.

10.2 **Update on proposals for 2024-25 replacement programme**

At the November meeting an update on the Council's 245 streetlights was given, noting there were 53 remaining for replacement.

Committee agreed to the proposal for 10 replacement columns, three pole boxes, and the twin set in MYCP in 2024-25. The 30-year Plan allowed £45k budget. At the time of the meeting, not all costs from UKPN had been received to confirm total expenditure, but prices were held until July.

11 **10-and 30-year maintenance plans - approval of programmed expenditure**

11.1 **Tree Survey: To approve the expenditure for the two-yearly tree survey of trees on Council sites, £5,090 plus vat**

Members were advised Quaife Woodlands had provided the cost for the two-yearly arboricultural tree survey for sites controlled by the Town Council. This produced a detailed inventory of all significant trees at the sites, and to include adjacent neighbouring trees only where they present a significant risk or major inconvenience to Council property. They had the necessary plans of the sites: Blossoms Park, Marsh Green, Edenbridge Cemetery, Forge Green, Forge Croft Allotments, Stangrove Park, Swan Lane Allotments, Mowshurst and the Millennium Wood, Pound Green, and Lingfield Road Recreation Ground, and a couple of trees in Market Yard car park. The parameters of the survey and report were confirmed, with a fixed fee quotation of £5,090 plus VAT (an increase of 5% from previous survey). The work would take place April/May 2024.

Resolved: Quaife Woodlands to continue to provide the biennial tree survey and the expenditure of £5,090 plus VAT be taken from the 2024-25 budget allocation.

12 **To consider hiring Stangrove Park to allow for a children's Fun Fair for two weeks from 24 May to 2 June**

The Council had been approached by a Fun Fair company looking to hire Stangrove park for a small

children's fun fair for the spring bank holiday period, ideally for two weeks 24 May to 2 June. The fair would last ten days and would be trading from 12 noon until 8.00 pm, and would require a couple of days before the event for set up, and also a day after to dismantle the equipment and dispose of any rubbish. They would provide around 20 attractions and a couple of food units, attractions would be aimed at families and children up to 12 years of age and require only the use of small vehicles (4x4's & vans) to set up thus, reducing the risk of damage to ground. They had already provided copies of insurance certificates and would provide other paperwork including risk assessments, test certificates and first aid certification. They had visited the site, and said that their vehicles would fit through the gates with no need to remove. They are aware that wet weather can be an issue and had sufficient boarding to put down. One reference had been obtained and a second reference was awaited.

Members were advised that Council's fees and charges for circus and fairs had not been reviewed since 2019, when it was £763.45 (£636.21 net, £127.24 vat). There was also no confirmed deposit fee, though in the past Members had said "suitably significant amount" was required. After some discussion it was

Resolved: to approve the hire of Stangrove Park for a small children's Fun Fair 24 May to 2 June, the hire fee to be set in line with Council's uplifts of other fees since 2019, with a deposit sufficient to repair any damage (est. £1,000).

20:44 Two members of the public left the meeting after this item had been discussed.

13 News Release

None.

14 Date of next meeting - 15 April 2024

Noted.

The meeting closed at 20:48.