

**To Councillors: J Aldridge, A Baker (Chairwoman), S Compton, B Cummings, M Gemmell Smith (Vice-Chairman), C Jacques, A Layland, S McGregor, J Streets, S Sumner.**

Notice is hereby given of an Open Spaces Meeting to be held in Rickards Hall on 4 November 2024 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk  
30 October 2024

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

The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If an interest becomes apparent to a member during the course of a meeting that has not been disclosed under this item, the member must immediately disclose it.

## 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 16 September 063/1-7

 Open Spaces | 16 September 2024 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-063/1-7)

## 5 To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 31 October 2024

Attached is a copy of the income and expenditure to 31 October; seven months. Of note:

### **Income:**

310 Rents: On target plus additional £1996 generated from 2 x children's fair bookings.

313 Waste Services: this is a new code to show costs for additional waste bins provided for and paid by the Market fruit & veg stall.

326 Grass Pitch Grant: Received Kent FA £5332 new grant for Mowshurst; yet to received 2nd payment for Rec grant £3520.

### **Expenditure:**

3000 Staff costs: salaries under budget due to the open spaces vacancy; and the decision to hold off the replacement of a groundstaff employee to April.

3026 Sports Pitch Maintenance (grant): Budget had allowed for football pitch work at Recreation Ground, will now have additional expense for Mowshurst (covered by grant).

3140 Annual Maintenance - includes street furniture 4-yearly repaint (£6686); 2-year tree survey (£5090); plus some tree works; repairs to Doggetts courtyard; and Churchyard wall repair.

3070 OS Vehicles: previously noted - includes new Kubota (£25k); insurance and fuel re tractor supply (expenditure and budget overspend approved April Committee).

3130 Public Street Lighting: Previously acknowledged the hike in energy costs, budget 2024-25 increased from £11k to £18k as best estimate. Looking at current spend (without the winter months) it is likely this will be over budget. Current spent £11k or £1572pcm. (Members may at some point want/need to consider reducing the hours lit if energy costs continue to sore.)

Forecast for year-end will be presented to Finance Committee.

### **Do Members have any further comments?**

 Annex 1: Item 5 Public Comparison and Budget for Open Spaces.pdf

5.1 **To review annual subscriptions to Open Spaces organisations**  
Committee considered the below subscriptions November last year, and Council confirmed May this year, together with all its subscriptions. Invoices have been received for the current year and processed for 2024-25.

5.1.1 **Open Spaces Society Membership renewal £45**  
**Do Members confirm continued membership of the Open Spaces Society and the annual subscription fee of £45 for 2025-26?**  
<https://www.oss.org.uk/>

5.1.2 **Kent County Playing Fields Association £20**  
**Do Members confirm to continue membership of KCPFA, and approve the annual subscription of £20 for 2025-26 budget?**  
<https://www.kentpfa.org.uk/>

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

6.1 **SALTEX Exhibition: To ratify the expenditure for Head Groundsman, and Supervisor attending the exhibition up to £200**  
The Head Groundsman and Supervisor, attended the SLATEX Exhibition at the Birmingham NEC on Thursday 31 October (free to attend). As this was full day, overnight accommodation cost £102 including breakfast; plus evening meal allowances £25 pp evening meal allowance (HMRC approved subsistence). Travel was using the Council's van so just the actual fuel cost (est. £45) and parking (£15).

The Exhibition provided several workshops, an opportunity to meet suppliers and networking.

**Members are asked to ratify the expenditure.**

7 **Correspondence**  
Request for metal detecting on council sites; reply relayed decision previously made (June committee) when considering a similar request (email was circulated).

8 **Head Groundsman's Report**  
Routine seasonal work

- Grass cutting - all sites
- Weed & moss treatment
- Maintaining planters through town, including Doggetts Barn and beds in cemetery
- Topping up sunken graves
- Rose pruning
- Flail mowing water meadows and town field
- Pruning of shrubs and bushes
- Pitch marking
- Leaf clearance

The team have recently installed two new life rings at the pond in Stangrove park. We have also replaced the ring in the millennium wood that was lost to vandalism.

We have now started our winter pitch maintenance programme which includes slitting brushing and rolling, drag matting and also some top dressing and mowing.

I have recently met with a member of Edenbridge Cricket Club regarding the placement of a memorial tree at Blossoms park (previously supported by committee). We have agreed that the new tree will be placed in the vicinity of the pear tree that has recently been felled after a recommendation from our independent tree inspection.

The team have spent some time clearing out ditches across a number of the councils sites.

The winter plants have now been planted through the town and in the courtyard at Doggetts Barn.

A date has now been set (15 January) for the grounds team to attend a one day training course on the safe use of a chipper (approved September committee). Going forward this should allow us to make some use of the brush from our winter tree pruning. The chip produced will be used to suppress weeds across the council's flower beds and also to create paths etc. across various wet and worn areas on the council's open spaces.

We plan on spending some more time this winter replacing/ renovating some of the bench bases across the council's sites.

The team has recently aided the Bonfire Society with the installation and removal of some fencing for the firework display at the Recreation Ground.

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/new-life-buoys-installed-at-stangrove-park-to-enhance-safety/>

8.1 **Slitter maintenance: To consider and approve expenditure for remedial repairs - £412 plus vat to replace the brush; and £987 plus vat to replace the tines**

The slitter is in need of some remedial works requiring a replacement brush, cost of £412 plus vat.

**Do Members approved the expenditure for the a replacement brush, £412?**

Also the tines on the slitter will at some point need replacing at a cost of £987+ VAT. This is something that isn't urgent and could be scheduled for some time in 2025.

**How do members want to proceed, approve the expenditure for current budget or include in 2025-26 budget?**

8.2 **Trailer maintenance: To approve expenditure for remedial repairs of £750 plus vat**

The trailer used to tow with the Land Rover is in need of some remedial works. The quote for these works is estimated costing of £700-£750 plus vat. For information, the existing trailer is fine for the foreseeable future but to note, a replacement cost would be £3,700 so it would make sense to maintain existing trailer for now.

**Do Members approve the expenditure of up to £750 for the maintenance works to the trailer?**

9 **To receive and update on the 2-yearly tree inspection report work**

The grounds team have been working through recommendations from the 2-yearly report, with larger works contracted out to three trees (previously approved by committee).

10 **Open Spaces Business**

**Byelaws update:** The accompanying report summarising Council's reasons for the updates to the byelaws was submitted recently to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

**Recruitment for the Open Spaces Officer:** I am delighted to report that Daniel Strugnell will be joining the team from 3 December (council ratified October).

**Risk Assessments:** The Head Groundsman has been working through the RAs and updating. The annual health and safety audit in July was satisfied with the RAs and regular H&S checks. Action points from the audit, such as the lifebuoys, are being worked through.

**Stangrove Park new planting programme:** The Head Groundsman, Community Warden (CW) and Town Clerk, met recently to discuss the project. The CW was successful with a grant from the GSBT to help fund additional bulb planting and some funding towards planting for this project. It was agreed to plant bulbs along the line of the fencing that runs parallel to Station Road (from traffic lights towards Stangrove Road). The Groundstaff will create some raised planters to be sited either side of the main pedestrian entrance (opposite the traffic lights). Bulb planting likely to start mid-November.

**Seesaw replacement Stangrove Park:** installed September and posted on Facebook.

10.1 **To receive the Burial Report**

Burials and ashes for:  
October: 2 burial; 3 ashes  
November: 3 ashes; possibly 1 burial

The Planning and Admin Officer has been working through some anomalies on Epitaph researching and updating records.

10.2 **Cemetery matters - update**

There is one burial from May which has not paid. There was a funeral plan paid to the undertakers. The office is chasing this payment, in the meantime we have advised the client that until the invoice is settle we cannot proceed with the memorial headstone.

New signage for the cemetery (approved council February and September), is hoped to be installed before end of 2024.

Christmas wreaths and tributes will be removed from the graves mid-January. At which time there will be a full audit of the cemeteries and anything not within the permitted rules will be removed from the graves to ensure the standards of the cemeteries and consistency with the rule book and the memorials going forward. Where there are outstanding issues with a small number of graves which are not compliant, we will send further letters to those Grant of Right (GOR) holders, advising no exceptions. There remains two matters likely to require further solicitor's letters to GOR holders re non-compliant memorials.

**Do Members have any questions?**

10.3 **Allotment matters**

Nothing to report.

The replacement doors to the stores/garage at the Forge Croft allotments (approved Committee July 24) are ordered and still awaited fitting.

10.4 **To receive an update on the Annual Works Programme**

Routine annual works are being worked through including:

Pump annual serving for Mill Leat and the Pavilion took place in September (cost £400). Unfortunately, at the Pavilion, the engineer found the chamber at high level. Controls not

in automatic mode. Removed pump and inspected visually. Evidence of a foreign object having gone through the pump which has dislodged the impeller. Possible water inside pump. Electrical tests completed, running current satisfactory but pump has failed its insulation resistance test possibly due to water ingress into the pump caused by the dislodging of the impeller. Tested controls, all working well. Set parameters to correct values. Controls left in automatic mode. Faults Found Pump failed insulation resistance test Impeller dislodged. Controls not in automatic mode on arrival causing a high level. Urgent requirements to replace failed pump was advised, cost £4,797 plus vat. Council approved this (October meeting). The pump had been replaced previously September 2023.

Clock Service - Bracket Clock Edenbridge High Street, same as last year £265.00 plus vat booked. Booked October.

Playground Inspections: The annual playground inspections for council sites had to be delayed from August due to issues at Wicksteed. Their new inspector had advised he would be attending all sites 30-31 October. Awaiting reports.

Gully pots annual clean for Market Yard car park and East car park, Recreation Ground (committee September) is booked for 12 November.

Interceptor tank MYCP is expected for November; budget £898

Works on the annual schedule include Blossoms Park - skate park chainlink fencing replacing. Budget £5,600. It is unlikely this will be considered this current financial year with inspection of existing fencing to be done first. Proposal will be to move to EMR.

### **Do Members have any questions?**

#### 10.5 **Vandalism report**

Nothing to note. Some small graffiti on noticeboards, cleaned by Community Warden.

#### 10.6 **South & South East In Bloom results and note recommendations**

This year the Council submitted three entries, Cllrs Layland and McArthur attended the awards ceremony at Wisley last month, picking up Gold for Stangrove Park – Parks category; Silver-Gilt for the Cemeteries category; and Silver for the Millennium Wood – conservation category. Details on the website (link below).

Judging results are attached (confidential). To note:

**Cemeteries:** It is quite difficult for this area to be enhanced without spoiling the general feel of the churchyard, however the possibility of a few more areas set aside for pollinators and if possible a small meadow area left for wildlife. A few pockets of colourful plants/shrubs dotted around would definitely lift the area and increase the score line, however. more importantly keep up the good work.

**Millennium Wood:** Overall the area is well maintained, however there are signs of minimal vandalism and the paths ways were in need of some maintenance, as ruts and pot holes were evident. Maybe a more hard standing surface to make the area accessible all year round. The area could also benefit with some more directional signage and a few more information boards highlighting the local wildlife and flora that would enlighten the visitor experience.

**Stangrove Park:** Overall a well maintained park, however the following comments would enhance the score quite considerably: The addition of some seasonal bedding displays or borders within the park would encourage pollinating insects. Leaving more areas of grass unmowed to increase bio diversity. The pond area could benefit for some additional

maintenance ie de silting, cutting back some overhanging branches.

### **So Members have any questions?**

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/edenbridge-shines-at-south-south-east-in-bloom-2024-awards/>

Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents):

Confidential Annex 3 (omitted from public documents):

Confidential Annex 4 (omitted from public documents):

### 10.7 **Bulky Waste collections - Saturday 16 November**

The next collection is 21 September, with the next one 16 November. The same four locations: Church Street (9.15-9.45 am), Skeynes Road (10.00-10.30 am), Stangrove Park (10.45-11.15), and Spitals Cross (11.30-12 noon). The June collections SDC sent two freighters which helped to lessen the issues with fly tipping.

### **Do Members have any questions?**

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/bulky-waste-collection-saturday-16-november/>

### 10.8 **Spitals Playground relocation: To receive an update following the recent movement of the playground**

Attached (confidential) are some photographs of the newly relocated playground. The Town Clerk and Head Groundsman have met with the contractor and SDC to raise some questions and concerns. Following this Cllrs Baker and Gemmell Smith also met with the TC and HGM to discuss some of the concerns and issues. Also attached (confidential) is a copy of the playground from the planning application. A verbal report will be given at the meeting.

### **How do Members want to proceed?**

### 10.9 **Market activity update**

Usually reported within the Clerk's report to Council, but as within Open Spaces budget, here is an update on budget and activities.

Council has received a couple of emails recently asking what does the Council do for the market. To summarise briefly, Council took over from the market operator/licensee in 2021. In 2022 Council recruited a Market Officer to help grow and sustain the market, and it now regularly has around 10 traders with some weeks 15 (traders do come and go for various reasons).

Over the past two years the Council has also invested in:

- Dedicated website and Facebook and Instagram. All with weekly posts promoting the market and the individual stalls.
- Facebook specific advertising funded.
- Banners (currently on Great Stone Bridge Trust land by the river, Gabriels Farm Mill Hill, and we have been trying to negotiate a location at the north end of town).
- Advertising includes: several editions of the Edenbridge Magazine (delivered to every household in Edenbridge and surrounding area). Council's own newsletter also often features the market. This magazine is distributed six times a year.
- Other advertising has included the village parish magazines.
- Membership of National Association of British Market Authorities (NAMBA).
- We use NABMA 'Love your Market' campaign materials; we have had a feature in its magazine looking to attract new traders.
- The Council has invested in activities to attract people to the market for example last summer we had a magician and balloon modelling, music, cupcake decorating. At Christmas there was a 'letters to Santa' post box.
- Promotional rates for traders.

- 2024 Christmas includes front cover Edenbridge Magazine, hamper draw, letters to Santa, and Santa and his elves will be at the market on 19 November.

The Market Officer and Communications Officer produce a traders' newsletter two-to-three times a year to let the traders know what the Council is doing to help promote the market, and how the traders can also help. For example, advise of promotions or specials to include with social media posts or put on the chalk board to be placed at the High Street entrance.

Looking forward, the Council is currently investing time in a project that may result in a new market archway to help identify and promote the market, this project would be funded by a grant, but we have a few obstacles to overcome before this can hopefully be realised.

Finances (note 2024-25 income is six months whereas expenditure is seven months):

Market	2023-24 ACTUAL	Budget 2024-25	Actual todate	Forecast YE
Income	<b>8,485</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>4,926</b>	<b>9300</b>
Market Rates		898	523	898
	898			
Other		11,816	5,428	9648
Expenditure	8,795			
Total	<b>9,693</b>	<b>12,714</b>	<b>5,951</b>	<b>10,546</b>
Expenditure				
Budget Net total	<b>-1208</b>	<b>-3714</b>	<b>-1025</b>	<b>-1246</b>

All of the above does not include the time that the Communications Officer and the staff in the office put in to supporting the market.

Market fees are proposed to be considered with the annual fees and charges review as they have remained the same since 2021.

#### **Do members have any questions?**

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/win-a-christmas-market-hamper/>

<https://digital.magmanager.co.uk/Preview/Index/2730577#page/1>

10.10

#### **Winter Maintenance plan**

Kent Highways has confirmed its offer for one tonne bag of salt/sand mix (a small number of 25kg bags can be supplied if required), that parishes can use on the public highway. We have confirmed to Kent Highways and awaiting delivery.

10.11

#### **Kent FA Grass Pitch Maintenance Grant: To receive an update on works**

Kent FA pitch maintenance grants:

Recreation Ground: An audit of works is in the process of being confirmed, with the second release of the grant payment due December £3520.

Mowshurst pitches: The first grant payment was received October £5332.

The Head Groundsman and Town Clerk will look at the recommendations and plan the works for the coming year.

10.12

#### **Unauthorised gates on to Council owned open spaces**

As reported to Council:

**Recreation Ground:** There has been one potential new gate raised which is being investigated. A routine audit will be carried out by end of the year. Any unauthorised gates will receive letters. Currently, there are no matters outstanding on this with the solicitor so this will be referred back to Open Spaces Committee to monitor.

**Stangrove Park:** During the spring tree survey it was noticed that a resident had created an unauthorised gated access at the rear of their property and the boundary of Stangrove Park (Council registered land), gaining access directly on to Stangrove Park. This prompted an audit of gates, and found there were eight others. Letters have now been sent to all. Two have been blocked, one has confirmed that they will remove the gate but has asked for some time, two are with WKH. There has been two letters of objection received. Advice has been taken from the solicitor, and a response (from the Clerk) is currently being drafted.

**Do Members have any questions?**

11 **Update on Streetlights 2024-25 replacement programme**

The confirmed replacement programme 2024-25 (budget £45k) now has a total spend of £36,606, reported June meeting. UKPN are expecting to undertake its work to streetlights 25 Church Street, 31, 33 and 32 Croft Lane, 109 and 111 MYCP, 118 and 117 Marsh Green Road on 9, 10 and 11 September. 120 and 122 Marsh Green Road has a road closure so will need to be booked separately so are tbc. Streetworks work on these columns will be similar period. In addition to this, Council has approved to include street light 110 Market yard car park, cost £3,492. These works are yet to be booked in.

**Do Members have any questions?**

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/edenbridge-shines-at-south-south-east-in-bloom-2024-awards/>

12 **To confirm the proposed replacement columns for 2025-26 and to advise the budget for 2025-26**

Following the 2024-25 replacement streetlights, all concrete columns have now been replaced with the exception of Cedar Drive (8 columns) and Park Avenue (2 columns). Due to works on Stangrove estate these are on hold until the site has been cleared.

Next trench of works is to complete the old steel column replacements 1975-80. Of these are seven remaining plus three pole boxes. It is proposed to aim to complete these in the 2025-26 programme (see below). This will then leave 21 of the steel columns from 1985 for replacement. Conversion to LED remains about 100.

Budget for 2025-26 in the 30-year plan is £25k. Proposed columns for replacement are below with estimated costs. UKPN quotes last only 90 days.

Column No.	Road	UKPN costs £	Streetlights £	Total £
55	Four Elms Road	2574	1450	4024
229	Stangrove Road	3,922	1450	5,372
230	Stangrove Road	1600	1450	3050
231	Stangrove Road	1600	1450	3050
232	Station Approach	1800	1450	3250
233	Station Approach	2000	1450	3450
82	Hilders Lane		700	700
85	Lingfield Road		700	700
87	Lingfield Road		700	700
		<b>13496</b>	<b>10800</b>	<b>24296</b>

**Do Members confirm the proposed streetlight replacements for 2025-26 (subject to actual UKPN quotes) and the expenditure of up to £25k for 30-year maintenance project works?**

13

**10-and-30 Maintenance plans proposed projects for 2025-26**

Verbal report will be given at the meeting. In brief, the one-and-10 year plans have been reviewed with some update of prices for 2024-25 cost reflected. the 30-year plan had £63k budgeted but proposal is move some of those works along a year or two, thus this year £30k to allow for the streetlight replacement programme (had budgeted £30k proposing £25k) and £5k playground maintenance contingency.

To note, these plans will be reviewed with the Chairman and Vice-Chair during the budget preparations (draft budgets to Finance Committee 18 November).

**Do Members have any questions or proposals?**

14

**To consider and confirm budget recommendations for 2025-26**

Please see the attached (confidential) initial draft budget for 2025-25.

Considerations in the new budget:

1). April 2024, Committee agreed: *to purchase a new ride-on mower, at a price in the region of £25,000..... It was noted the the Open Spaces surplus of £3572 to be moved to vehicles/equipment EMR towards this cost, and for 2025-26 to consider budgeting towards recovering some of the unbudgeted expense.* The actual cost of the Kubota was £25,100 less £3572 from EMR, budget 204-25 had to cover was £21,528. Four-year plan = £5382py. Five-year plan = £4305.60py.

*Do Members support a four year spread in the budget to recoup the vehicle cost and make recommendation to Finance Committee to allow for £5,382 for the next four years to be included in the budget? Draft budget shows a new code for this (3075)*

**How do Members want to proceed with its recommendation to the Finance Committee for its draft budget preparations?**

2). New codes are proposed to show the actual costs of rates to the council and to also separate the costs for MYCP. Currently rates for the sites are included with the utilities for all the sites(Depot, Mowshurst, MYCP, allotments, cemeteries, Marlpit Hall, Blossoms Park). All of these expenditure items are budgeted under 3010 rates & utilities currently. (Draft budget has assumed the below.)

Propose:

(3010) Utilities council sites

(3014) Rates - MYCP rates & other exp

(3015) Rates - other (Depot, MHB)

The rates for the public toilets are included under 'public toilets' in central services. The Government's new budget has referenced 'rates' but we are yet to understand how this will affect the rates charges and budgets. We have sought advice from SDC and awaiting feedback.

**Do Members support the additional codes to help provide clarity and transparency with the budget costs?**

3). (3011) Market budget for advertising, training, PPE etc and rates was £4600. Propose 2025-26 (Advertising, banners, signs £1200; uniform & PPE £150, subscriptions £500, other costs & training £300; and rates £1,100); total Market expenditure £3250, plus salaries and

costs tbc.

**Do Members support the Market other expenses budget of £3250 and to make recommendation to the Finance Committee for its draft budget preparations?**

**Reserves movements**

At this stage it is difficult to confirm which projects may not be completed in 2024-25 budget year, and recommend movement at year-end into the earmarked reserves (EMR) to ensure future completion of works, or to release into General Reserves (GR). Any budget overspend/underspend to individual codes is also considered against the overall Net result for Open Spaces before release to GR. At the moment:

Interim tree works: budget £4320; committed so far £2000 (but do have potential further winter work).

Playground inspections: budget £350; actual expected £475


Skate park repairs: Budget £6393; spent £1856

Kent Brook: Budget £2160 - this is an in case and to build-up reserve if not used (propose EMR movement to

Chainlink fencing Blossoms Park: Budget £5600 (propose EMR movement to)

**Do Members have any questions?**

**Do Members confirm the draft budget recommendations to Finance Committee? Or, do Members have other recommendations for the budget?**

 Confidential Annex 5 (omitted from public documents):

15 **News Release**

16 **Date of next meeting - 03 February 2025**