

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 3 February 2025 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
30 January 2025

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 04 November 071/01-8**

 Open Spaces | 04 November 2024 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-071/1-8)

5 **To receive analysis of receipts and payments to 31 January 2025**

See the attached comparison report.

Income: This is on target, though 305 cemetery fees is expected to be down slightly; 310 rents benefitted from two additional children's fair bookings; and 326 Grass Pitch Grants has two grants from Kent FA including a new grant of £5332 for Mowshurst.

Expenditure:

- 3000 Staff costs under budget due to the open spaces vacancy; and the decision to hold off the replacement of a ground staff employee to April.
- 3100 Small projects shows no expenditure currently, the new cemetery signage and planting at Stangrove Park will be allocated here.
- 3140 & 3141 10-year and annual maintenance includes street furniture 4-yearly repaint (£6686); 2-year tree survey (£5090); plus some tree works (£2k); repairs to Doggetts courtyard; and and Churchyard wall repair (£465). Total expenditure between the two codes is £24,529 plus £1995 for the hedge cutting (February). Committee has also approved £2350 for the replacement doors to the stores at the allotments; this work has been done but not finished; invoice will be paid when work is completed.
- 3145 30-year maintenance plan had £45k streetlight replacement and £5k playground repairs (replacement seesaw).
- 3070 OS Vehicles includes insurance and fuel re tractor supply, and previously noted the unbudgeted new Kubota (£25k).
- 3130 Public Street Lighting is expected to be slightly over the £20k budgeted.

The attached open spaces budget comparisons shows an I&E forecast year-end, this includes an estimated FA grant movement to EMR of £6k, EOY net deficit -£15,814.65.

Do members have any questions on the budget comparison report?

 Annex 1: OS 2025 01 Financial Comparison 13.pdf

5.1 **End of year update on scheduled works**

The annual tasks are mostly completed and includes:

- 2-yearly tree inspection report and some other identified tree works, £2000 of tree works has been carried out (budget had allowed £4320).
- The pumps at the Mill Leat and Pavilion were serviced.
- 4-yearly street furniture repaint in the High Street completed (this was over budget £6686 budget £4958).
- Amenity weed spray to the open spaces was completed; and the other routine maintenance.

Included in the budget was Blossoms Park skate park chainlink fencing replacing (£5,600); Kent Brook stabilisation allowance to be allocated in the event of works needed under riparian ownership (£2160); and similarly for cemetery memorials and walls (£1300). These funds have not yet been needed and recommend to allocated to earmarked reserves (item 5.2).

Do members have any questions?

5.1.1 **To approve the budgeted expenditure of £1600 to replace two new waste bins at the Recreation Ground outside the Pavilion**

This year's one and 10-year projects had included £1600 to replace two waste bins outside the Pavilion. Both these bins are tired with damaged lids.

Do members confirm the budgeted expenditure of £1600 for two replacement bins?

5.2 **To confirm movement of funds to earmarked reserves for carry over projects**

Budgets: code 3140 1&10-year maintenance budget (£19,244) and code 3141 annual inspections (£14,835) total £34,079. The planned works are mostly completed (excluding hedges, stores doors at allotments and bin purchases). Forecast surplus £3604. Proposal to move to earmarked reserves:

Chainlink fencing for Blossoms Park (budget was £5600)	£1,600.00
Kent Brook Sabilisation (Riperian Ownership)	£ 1,000.00
Cemetery memorials & walls repairs	£ 1,000.00
TOTAL	£ 3,600.00

Do Members confirm to recommend to move £3600 into open spaces earmarked reserves to allow for the above?

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

Repairs to the Landrover following recent service; MOT, full service, shock absorbers, rear brake pads, front break pads, and labour. Totalling £760.04.

Members are asked to ratify the expenditure of £760.04.

7 **Correspondence**

7.1 **Residents correspondence re litter in town and lack of bins at north end of town**

The Town Council have received an email and a phone call from residents regarding the increasing amount of litter in town, especially the north end of town, along with the lack of bins. This issue was also raised by a resident at the PACT meeting on 20 January 2025.

The Community Warden is aware and targeted this area for one of the litter picks on 22 January.

The Communications Officer (CO) will be promoting the Great British Spring Clean campaign (run by the Keep Britain Tidy charity) via social media. The Great British Spring Clean is the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign and runs from 21 March - 6 April 2025.

8

Head Groundsman's Report

- Routine seasonal work
- Weed & moss treatment
- Maintaining planters throughout the town, including Doggetts Barn, and beds in cemetery
- Topping up sunken graves
- Winter pitch maintenance
- Pruning of shrubs and bushes
- Pitch marking
- Leaf clearance
- Tree work

The team attended a day's training course on the safe use of a wood chipper. I am pleased to report that it was a great success and everyone received an accreditation for their efforts. We also used the machine to clear large amounts of tree brush that we had stockpiled from storm damaged trees in Stangrove park and the Millenium Wood. The chip will be used across the councils sites for various tasks.

The winter pitch maintenance programme has continued with the aeration of the playing surfaces when weather has allowed. We have also applied a sand and soil top dressing mix to worn areas on the councils football pitches at the Rec and Nomads. The top dressing has been purchased as part of the FA Kent grant the council now receives. I am in the process of getting quotations for extra seasonal decompaction works to use our grant money on (item 9.1).

We have now built two new sleeper planters that we hope to have installed at Stangrove Park by the end of the week. These will then be planted with assistance from the community warden and some volunteers. We also assisted with the bulb planting along the railings.

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

We have begun putting new dogs on leads signage up around the cemetery and church yard.

The winter tree report has now been completed with any issues either address by the tree surgeon or team, or been reported to the Open Spaces Officer.

The team carried out some repair work to damage fencing caused by the storms at the back end of 2024, at the rear of Doggetts Barn.

The team has now fully serviced all of our smaller machinery, with the larger machinery being sent away to be serviced externally.

Fuel Store: The July Health and Safety (H&S) audit raised concerns with the fuel store advising this should be serviced annually. The store is at least 20 years old, but is fine and there are no visible issues. Having investigated this, the annual serving cost would be in the region of £700 upwards, or a new tank £1600. I am currently looking to get a second quote and to enquire if a servicing a new tank would be less cost and/or frequency. This will be reported to the next

committee.

8.1 **To receive an update on moving from white diesel to a more greener sustainable fuel, Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)**

Members resolved to switch from white diesel to HVO as a greener sustainable fuel at the September open spaces meeting, subject to checking that this would not affect the servicing, nor the warranty for the new Kubota.

It has been confirmed that servicing and warranties would not be effected. The switch will be made once the current supply of white diesel has been used up. We hope this will happen early spring.

Do Members have any comments?

8.2 **Memorial tree for 130 years of Edenbridge Town Council: to approve the expenditure of up to £450**

As part of proposals for to mark 130 years of Edenbridge Town Council, a commemorative tree was proposed at recent council meeting. Having spoken with a local expert, he has recommended 3 options. Two different varieties of Liquidambar which we have planted successfully in the past across the council's sites. Or a Redwood which would be in keeping with the variety of evergreen trees we have. Prices for the above range from £300-£450 as they vary in size. Yet to confirm suitable location.

Do Members approve the expenditure for up to £450 for a memorial tree? Do members have a preference of tree and location?

9 **FA Kent PitchPower Grant update**

Pitch de-compaction works were completed on 5 pitches at the Recreation Ground and two pitches at Mowshurst in late May 2024 at a cost of £2880.

1st year audit and expenditure of £3520 has been confirmed to FA Kent, as a result they have released the 2nd year funding.

9.1 **To confirm the expenditure of up to £2500 for additional pitch decompaction as recommended in the FA Kent report**

A further 2 pitches at The Recreation Ground and 2 at Mowshurst are planned for spring 2025, pricing to be confirmed. This will be funded through the PitchPower grant funding.

Do Members confirm the expenditure of up to £2500 for additional decompaction work?

10 **Open Spaces Business**

Allotment Renewals: Currently in the process of sending renewals for the Swan Lane Allotments, whilst the Forge Croft renewals are being handled by EAGA.

Byelaws: The MHCLG department responded in November to advise council should hear within the next few weeks. A follow up email has been sent.

Edenbridge Gardens In Bloom competition: 2025's competition will continue with the six categories ranging from best allotment, garden, youth/school groups, young gardener, window boxes & hanging baskets, and last year the strangest/unique space to create a colourful display was introduced. It is proposed to have a category to mark 130 years of the council as well as a 'peoples choice' category to engage with the public more. Further details will be presented to the April meeting. A presentation event is organised for the entrants to attend, this year's

awards will be presented on Wednesday 06 September 2025.

Market: January is always a quieter month with some traders taking this month off after the Christmas period, and of course challenges with weather. This said 30 January had 11 stalls, including three new stalls, which is a big positive. The balance sheet costs against income currently has approximately £1k deficit. With three months salaries and rents to be added, this is estimated to be £4k deficit. Market fees are now on the annual fees and charges review, with first increase applied in January. A policy for gazebos and adverse weather has been drafted and presented to governance committee.

Summer Play Scheme: Awaiting details from Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and will report at the April meeting.

Signage: Dogs on leads signs for the cemetery and pond signage for Stangrove Park and Millenium Wood (warning of the dangers of deep water) have been delivered and put up by the groundstaff.

Stangrove Park Bulb Planting: As reported in the November 2024 meeting, the Community Warden (CW) along with volunteers, have been busy bulb planting in Stangrove Park, along the line of the fencing that runs parallel to Station Road. This was funded by a grant from the Great Stone Bridge Trust (GSBT).

Stangrove Park: Unauthorised access: Following on from previous meetings, second letters to residents who still have gate access are yet to be sent.

Walkaround sites: The April agenda will propose a date to reintroduce the visits to the councils sites to inspect, consider issues and see what's new.

10.1

Cemetery signage: Update

Cemetery signage outlining the rules and regulations has been ordered and delivered (approved by members in September). A purpose designed frame and posts is being quoted for and ordered. In addition, new 'dogs and lead' and 'bag it and bin it' signage will be displayed on A5 and A4 signs.

Do Members have any questions?

10.2

To receive the Burial Report

November: 1 burial; 3 ashes interments.

December: 0 burials; 0 ashes interments.

January: 1 burial; 1 ashes interment.

10.3

Playground annual inspection reports

The annual inspection reports for the following sites were carried out in October 2024:

Site	Feedback	Risk factor
Blossoms Park - Skate Park	Some small issues identified such as bench repainting, damage to bin, secure chain link fencing and some wear to the riding surface of the ramp	Overall - very low risk with some low risk
Marsh Green	Signage needed, some small surface repairs, fencing	Overall - low risk with some very low risk

	repairs, slide issue but no remedial work needed	
Stangrove Park - Gym area & MUGA	Surface area eroded by gate in to the MUGA area; Basketball area - surface area around it to reinstate, Cross trainer showing some wear	Overall - Low risk with some very low risk
Stangrove Park - Playground	Some algae and moss on surfaces, improved signage, damaged paving slab by gate, safety gate on roundabout not working, damage to basket swing	Overall - Low risk with some very low risk and 1 moderate risk
Recreation Ground	Seat damage to zipwire, 3 Bay Swing - unsecure fixings, chain connecting links damaged and worn chain end links, worn bridge treads on multi play	Overall - Mostly very low risk, with some low risk, 1 moderate risk and 1 high risk

Mostly low and very low risk items highlighted which need to be monitored.

High Risk - Recreation Ground: Groundsaff have rectified this issue

Moderate Risk - Recreation Ground: Groundstaff have this in hand

Moderate Risk - Stangrove Park Playground: Groundstaff have this in hand


10.4

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

Following report to committee in November, and subsequent communications with SDC assets team expressing the council's disappointment with the reinstatement of the playground, works have now been carried out to rectify this. This included wetpour in the area by the children's apparatus (previously left with grass underneath it). In addition the entrance to the park from the west with wetpour. The relocation of one of the benches with wetpour; and one with a concrete plinth. In addition, SDC had suggested that the remaining strip of grass between the new wetpour and the fence be lined with bushes instead of grass. Committee and the Head Groundsman are asked to consider and provide feedback as to leave grassed or hedging?

The town clerk, head groundsman and chair of open spaces will visit the site before confirming handover back to the council.

Do members have any comments? Do members have a preference regarding the finishing by the fencing, grass or hedging?

 Annex 2: Spitals playground January 2025.pdf

10.5

Hanging Baskets: To approve the expenditure of £6029.10 plus VAT, for the 2025 hanging baskets for the High Street and Doggetts Barn

Amethyst has provided its annual quote to supply and maintain the summer High Street hanging baskets display for 58 baskets. Budget allowed for hanging baskets and plants is £7200, with £6000 allocated to hanging baskets.

Do Members confirm the expenditure of £6029.10 plus VAT and the overspend of £29.10 for hanging baskets?

10.6 **South and South East in Bloom 2025: How many categories would members like to enter this year**

Last year Council entered three categories in the South and South East in Bloom (SSEIB) competition, achieving the Silver Award for Small Conservation Area (Millennium Wood), Silver Gilt for Small Cemeteries, and Gold for the Parks category (Stangrove Park). These categories have been included in the budget for 2025-26.

Do members confirm to enter the three sites once again in to the SSEIB competition, with a total expenditure for all three of £230 (£95 for Small Cemetery, £60 for Small Conservation, and £75 for Park)?

Other categories to consider are Town Centre and Town of the year.

Town Centre (up to 1km radius from a self-determined point) - £165

Town of the year - £175

Do Members wish to consider other categories?

10.7 **Bulky Waste collection schedule 2025/26, to approve expenditure of £2546.20 for five collection dates**

SDC have confirmed five dates for Bulky Waste collections for 2025/26, increasing from the usual four. The total cost for five collection dates is £2546.20. There has been an increase per collection point of £5.85; the budget overspend for the five dates will be £46.20.

Dates: Saturdays 3 May 2025, 19 July 2025, 20 September 2025, 22 November 2025, and 14 March 2026

Locations: Church Street, Skeynes Road, Stangrove Estate, and Spitals Cross Estate.

Do members confirm the expenditure of £2546.20 and budget overspend of £46.20 for five Bulky Waste collections?

10.8 **Vandalism Report**

Trees at Millennium Wood cut down and used to start a fire and a memorial tree cut down in the Water meadows (GSBT land).

CO has done some publicity on these incidents on social media.

11 **Streetlights maintenance replacement programme**

11.1 **2024-25 programme: update**

Budget for 24-25 £45k. Programme update: Approved replacement total £42,528 plus MYCP 110 £3393, total £45,921. However, UK Power Networks have refunded some of the traffic management costs, new total costs £43,250. This leaves a surplus of £1750 which would allow for five LED replacements.

Streetlights 126, and pole boxes 85 and 87 are yet to be completed otherwise the other columns are all complete.

Column No.	Road	UKPN costs £	Streetlights £	Total £
25	Church Street	1509	1300	2809
111 (A&B)	MYCP inv 109&111	786	2050	2836
109	MYCP	2177	1300	3477

31	Croft Lane	2697	1300	3997
32	Croft Lane	1511	1300	2811
33	Croft Lane	1511	1300	2811
117	Marsh Green Road	1489	1300	2789
118	Marsh Green Road	2574	1300	3874
120	Marsh Green Road	3922	1300	5222
122	Marsh Green Road	1489	1300	2789
126	Marsh Green Road	3922	1300	5222
85 Pole box	Lingfield Road	0	610	610
87 Pole box	Lingfield Road	0	610	610
110 MYCP	MYCP re archway	2093	1300	3393
TOTALS		25,680	17,570	43,250

Do Members have any questions?

11.1.1 **Streetlights LED Replacements: To use the surplus of £1750 from the streetlight replacement budget for five LED replacements.**

Since the papers were prepared the cost for LED has increased from £350 to £365, total £1825.

Do members confirm to use the surplus from the 30-year streetlight maintenance replacement budget to fund five LED replacements; expenditure £1825?

11.2 **2025-26 programme: update**

Committee's November meeting confirmed 2025-26 budget of £25k and the next columns for column replacements (old steel ones 1975-80). Proposed replacements based on UKPN quotes (valid for 90 days so could change) and estimate from Streetlights £24,296. Works will be instructed from April 2025 with committee kept updated.

Do members have any questions?

12 **News Release**

13 **Date of next meeting - 14 April 2025**