

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

Notice is hereby given of an Open Spaces Meeting to be held in Rickards Hall on 26 January 2026 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
21 January 2026

To assist in the speedy and efficient dispatch of business members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting.

Council Meetings may be recorded. Any person intending to make recordings is advised to notify the Clerk in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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Meeting Papers & Report

1 **Apologies for Absence**


2 **Declarations of Interests, or Predeterminations**

Including any interests not already registered.

3 **Public Questions**

Members of the public, and Members with prejudicial interests on items on the Agenda, may make representations, answer, ask questions and give evidence at this meeting in respect of items on the Agenda. (This is the only opportunity for the public to make a contribution during the meeting.) Both public and Members are limited to three minutes each to speak, and the total time allocated for public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

4 **To receive, approve and sign the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 10 November 2025 (pages 2023-113/1-10).**

 Open Spaces | 10 November 2025 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-113/1-10)

5 **To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 21 January 2026**

Attached is a copy of the income and expenditure from 1 April to 21 January 2026. To note:

Income:

305 Cemetery fees expected to be down slightly.

315 Maintenance services down due to no longer maintaining the Leathermarket.

311 Market Rents expected to be down slightly.

325 Sundry receipts up due to two fair bookings and Ultimate Frisbee tournament.

320 Solar panels up as budgeted £0.00. Income from the Depot. We still haven't received confirmation of the Pavilion's postcode from Royal Mail, which is required for the Scottish Power claim.

Expenditure:

3080 Contingencies and unexpected maintenance over budget due to wetpour repairs in Stangrove Park.

3100 Small Projects over budget due to the self defence workshop.

3110 Vandalism over budget slightly.

3145 30 year maintenance plan under budget due to playground contingency fund.

Do members have any questions?

 Annex 1: OS Financial Comparison Jan 26.pdf

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

Kent Brook: Budget £2,160 - this part of contingency in the event of significant repairs.

Skate Park sheet repairs: Budget £4,000 - Spent £1,950. Any surplus to be moved to EMR as contingency or for future upgrade to skatepark.

Equipment surplus of £3,187.92 move to EMR if not used.

Repointing section of courtyard concrete slabs: Budget £1,026 (propose to move to EMR). There is some works to be considered to the side of Doggetts Barn.

Churchyard, path and roads to repair: Budget £2,052 (propose to move to EMR). Continue contingencies fund.

Do Members support the proposed reserve movements?

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

At the November meeting Members were advised that on 31 October the picnic bench next to the playground in Stangrove Park was set on fire. Four table top slats and two seat slats required replacement. The total cost for replacing the damaged slats was £208.73.

A car has been abandoned (no tax or MOT) in the Market Yard Car Park. Removal was required in order to gain access for the cleansing of the interceptor. Cost to remove the vehicle was £100.00.

Do Members ratify the above expenditure?

8 **Correspondence**

9 **Head Groundsman's Report**

Routine seasonal works have continued across all Council sites. This has included weed treatment, maintenance of the town planters (including Doggetts Barn) and cemetery beds, topping up sunken graves, pruning shrubs and bushes, pitch marking, planned tree works, and ongoing leaf clearance.

I have recently completed the latest Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund inspections at both the Recreation Ground and Nomads, and an updated report has now been received. The FA is satisfied with the current condition of the pitches at both sites and has provided recommendations to further improve playing surfaces and overall playability. Many of these recommendations support the work already being undertaken, however there may be opportunities to make more effective use of the grant funding in other areas. Please see associated items for ratification.

Prior to Christmas, the team repaired a section of the black railings at the front of Stangrove Park. This expenditure was approved at the previous meeting, and I would like to thank the Committee for its support.

Tree works have been completed over the past two months across several Council sites. This included the removal of a large oak tree in Stangrove Park which had been in decline for a number of years, the removal of deadwood from trees overhanging Mill Hill at Blossoms Park, and a 30% crown reduction to the silver maple on the recently acquired land at the former police station site.

We have taken delivery of one of the two pedestrian mowers approved at the previous meeting, with the second unit expected shortly.

All Council small machinery has now been serviced in preparation for the upcoming growing season. The Kubota has been sent away for a full service, and the tractor is scheduled to be serviced in the coming weeks.

Autumn pitch aeration was carried out in November using an earthquaking machine, which breaks up the soil profile using rotating and vibrating discs to a depth of approximately 250mm. This work was funded through the FA Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund. Arrangements are now being made to schedule the spring aeration programme, which will be completed using a verti drain machine.

The team has undertaken pruning of Council shrubs and hedges, and an approved contractor has been booked to carry out larger hedge cutting across various sites. This work will be completed prior to the start of the nesting season. In addition, the lime trees within the churchyard have now been pollarded.

The Grounds Team has also commenced repairs to the boundary fence at Forge Croft Allotments.

Finally, we have begun the woodland management programme in Millennium Wood. This will include the removal of any dead or dangerous trees, thinning areas of blackthorn and various undergrowth, encouraging fresh shoots to grow and to improve habitat quality and biodiversity within the site.

9.1 **To consider the hire or purchase of a pedestrian self propelled top dresser. Hire costs twice yearly total £1,300.00**

As part of the FA PitchPower report, it was recommended that we increase the volume of top dressing applied during the playing season and as part of the annual summer pitch renovation programme. While sufficient funding is currently available within the grant to purchase additional top dressing material, it is increasingly difficult and inefficient for the team to apply larger quantities by hand, particularly across wider areas.

To support this recommendation, I have obtained indicative costs for the hire or purchase of a pedestrian, self-propelled top dresser. The cost to purchase a new machine is approximately £11,500 + VAT, while weekly hire is approximately £650 + VAT.

As the PitchPower grant funding can be used to cover hire costs but does not extend to the purchase of new machinery, hiring the equipment may represent the most practical and cost-effective option at this stage, as current usage would likely be twice a year.

Initially costs would be funded by the PitchPower grant, but as this decreases with the Council's commitment increasing (as per the agreement) this would form part of future budgets.

Do Members approve the hire of a pedestrian, self-propelled top dresser at a cost of up to £650.00 + VAT per week (hire costs twice yearly total £1,300.00), to be funded through the FA PitchPower grant?

Alternatively, do Members wish officers to investigate the purchase of a pedestrian, self-propelled top dresser and report back to the Committee with costs and options?

9.2 **To consider the removal of water troughs at the Forge Croft Allotments and replace with mains fed taps at a cost of £250.00 per unit**

Following a 2025 legionella report it was suggested that the four water troughs at the Forge Croft Allotments should be removed and replaced with mains fed taps to avoid old and stagnant water, which could be a health hazard.

The cost to remove the old trough and replace with a mains fed tap is £250.00 per unit.

Do Members confirm to proceed with the removal of the water troughs at the Forge Croft Allotments and replace with mains fed taps, at a cost of £250.00 per unit? If so, do Members want to replace all four in one go or stagger the work? For example, two this year and two the following year.

9.3 **To consider the purchase of two new waste bins at Stangrove Park and the newly acquired land at the old Police Station site at a total cost of £1,149.98 plus VAT**

Several litter bins across various Council sites are approaching the end of their service life and will require replacement in due course. The most urgent replacement is a bin at Stangrove Park, which is now no longer fit for purpose, together with the provision of a new bin for the Council's recently acquired land at the former Police Station site. The total cost for both bins is £1,149.98 + VAT (cost based on previous bin order).

Do Members approve the expenditure of £1,149.98 plus VAT for the purchase of two new waste bins?

10 **Open Spaces Business**

Land outside Old Police Station: Quotations to carry out works to improve the site are currently being obtained. Works would include remedial brickwork for safety and aesthetical purposes as well as some land sculpting. This will then allow the grounds team to undertake some replanting and making good in the spring to make this area a real community asset. A further update will be provided at the April meeting.

Market Archway: This was due to be installed on 29 December but due to unforeseen circumstances had to be postponed. A new installation date will be confirmed in due course.

Allotment Renewals: Renewals will be sent out to plot holders in February for the Swan Lane Allotments, whilst the Forge Croft renewals are being handled by EAGA.

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

10.1 **Cemetery Matters**

10.1.1 **To receive the Burial Report**

November: 1 burial, 0 ashes interments

December: 1 burial, 0 ashes interments

January to date: 0 burials, 1 ashes interment

10.1.2 **To note the retirement of Edenbridge Cemetery grave digger and confirm the appointment of his replacement**

In December, the Council was informed that after nearly 55 years of service, the local grave digger, Philip Edwards, would be retiring. During this period, Philip has undertaken his duties to a consistently high standard and has provided a long standing and valued service to the community.

Philip has recommended Stephen Lawrenz as a preferred grave digger. Stephen has assisted Philip at Edenbridge Cemetery for the past few years and has expressed an interest in continuing the role. He is currently carrying out these works as needed.

Stephen has a good working knowledge of Edenbridge Cemetery, and his public liability insurance has been received and checked.

Do Members confirm to appoint Stephen Lawrenz as the preferred grave digger for Edenbridge Cemetery?

10.2 **Vandalism Report**

On the 13th or 14th of December 2025 the community plot polytunnel had been slashed, and a new cover is probably required. A polytunnel on an adjacent plot has also been damaged by trespassers at the Forge Croft Allotments. The costs will fall to the plot holder, but is an incident for noting.

Further damage to the community plot polytunnel occurred on the 17th or 18th of January 2026.

The Community Warden (CW) has reported this to the police.

10.3 **Allotment matters**

10.3.1 **To consider replacement of Forge Croft Allotment Gates at a cost of up to £2,498.12**

The Edenbridge Allotment Garden Association (EAGA) Plot Officer has raised ongoing concerns regarding trespassing and vandalism at the Forge Croft Allotments.

Some anti social behaviour has been reported in the past, though more recently in December, two polytunnels had been severely damaged (as reported under item 9.2) and again in January.

Trespassers are gaining access either by climbing over the main entrance gates or by scaling the fence along the eastern boundary of the allotments. the grounds team are currently carrying out repairs and improvements to the fencing.

The EAGA Plot Officer has therefore requested that the existing entrance gates be replaced with a taller, more robust alternative. He believes this would help deter unauthorised access (although it will not fully prevent it) and also discourage plot holders from climbing over the gates.

Costs for a 1.8m high x 1.2m wide twin mesh single leaf pedestrian gate and a 1.8m high x 3.5m wide twin mesh single leaf vehicle gate are £1,398.12, excluding installation. Should installation be required, this is estimated to cost around £1,100.00.

Members are asked to consider:

1. If they support replacing the access gates at the Forge Croft Allotments and approve the unbudgeted expenditure of up to £2,498.12.

2. If supported, as the work is not budgeted for, do Members want to make an ETC CIL application to fund this?

10.3.2 **To consider continued support for the community plots at Forge Croft Allotments**

Committee and EAGA agreed to waive fees for the past two years for two community plots at the Forge Croft Allotments.

The community plots appear to be well used and the plan is to continue the initiative for another year.

**Do Members want to continue to waive the fees for two plots or start to charge?
Current plot fees are £37.73 per plot.**

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

The annual tasks are mostly completed and includes:

- The pumps at the Mill Leat and Pavilion were serviced.
- Amenity weed spray to the open spaces was completed.
- Annual playground inspections
- Annual gulley clearance.

The interceptor cleansing for the Market Yard Car Park was booked for early December, but due to an abandoned car blocking access this had to be postponed. Arrangements have been made for the removal of the vehicle, once this has taken place the interceptor cleansing can be rebooked.

Do members have any questions?

10.5 **To discuss Gardens in Bloom plans for 2026 and agree categories**

At the September 2025 meeting, Members noted that there was a low number of entries for the 2025 competition and as a result, an awards evening would not be held. Members resolved that despite the low number of entries, the competition should continue for 2026 but with some updated categories.

The categories for 2025 were:

- Front or Back Garden
- Herb/Vegetable Garden
- Window Box or Hanging Basket
- Tallest Sunflower
- Unique display celebrating 130 years of Edenbridge Town Council
- Youth Category: Eggshell cress heads
- People's Choice

The following categories for 2026 are proposed, with some slight changes to the above and the removal of low or no entry categories:

- Front or Back Garden
- Allotment or Herb/Vegetable Garden
- Small display (Window Box or Hanging Basket)
- Young Gardener (Any entry from under 16's)
- Peoples choice

Do Members have any comments?

Do Members support the amendments to the categories for the 2026 competition?

Do Members want to reintroduce the awards evening for 2026 or say vouchers are issued to winners of each category and will be published on the website and Facebook.

10.6 **Playground annual inspection: To receive reports**

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

Stangrove Park playground: Some algae and moss on surfaces, some paint flaking off metalwork on roundabout and train, loose fixings on springers, damage to basket

swing/worn chains. **Risk Factor** - Low risk with some very low risk and 1 moderate risk.

Stangrove Park gym and multi use games area (MUGA): Missing instruction labels for gym equipment, loose fence posts. **Risk Factor** - Very low risk with some low risk.

Marsh Green playground: Some rot present on fence posts, signage delaminated, gate closes too quickly, swing shackles and chains worn, slide fall height exceeds 1.5m, dents in slide surface, surfacing and paintwork on all equipment requires attention. **Risk Factor** - Low risk with some very low risk. The playground is due for replacement in 2026.

Blossoms Park skate park: Bench paintwork worn, bin door not secured, some damage to chain link fence, some parts of timber on skate ramp rough or splintered, some unsecured fixings. **Risk Factor** - Low risk with some very low risk.

Recreation Ground playground: Bin door not secured, grass mats underneath spinner and rope swing are silted up, spinner seat damaged, rope swing has some damage, 3 bay swing has some wear on chains and the chains have been twisted along with excessive wear on chain links, slight damage to side of slide. **Risk Factor** - Low risk, with some very low risk and 1 moderate risk.

All very low and low risk issues identified will be monitored by the Head Groundsman and addressed if necessary along with the two moderate risks.

No inspection carried out on Spitals Cross playground as this was undertaken earlier in the year.

Do Members have any questions?

10.7

Hanging Baskets: To confirm the number of hanging baskets, the budget of up to £6,206.00 and contractor.


Amethyst has provided its annual quote to supply and maintain the summer High Street hanging baskets display for 58 baskets. The quote totals £6,206.00, which is an increase of £176.90 from 2025.

The Open Spaces Officer has been in contact with an alternative provider who has provided a quote (attached, confidential) totalling £5,292.50 for 58 baskets. A positive reference has been received from Lingfield Parish Council and their website shows a wide range of prestigious customers.

Budget allowed for hanging baskets and plants is £7,200.00.

Which contractor would Members like to proceed with?

Do Members approve the budgeted expenditure for the 2026 hanging baskets for the High Street and Doggetts Barn?

 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents):

10.8

Market: To consider an external appraisal of the market providing a summary report of key issues and recommendations, carried out by a NABMA market specialist, and the expenditure of £300.00 plus travel and VAT.

The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) has offered a support package to market authorities which includes:

- An on site visit to the market by an experienced adviser to gain a detailed understanding of current issues and opportunities.
- In-depth discussions with officers (and the wider team if required) on how to

- improve the market
- Written report summarising key findings and recommendations.

The cost for this service is £300 plus travel and VAT. This support may be helpful in addressing operational challenges, strategic considerations, as well as providing an independent view and fresh insights.

Do Members confirm to approve the expenditure of £300.00 plus travel and VAT for a site visit from an external market sector specialist?

11 **Capital projects update**

11.1 **Bandstand at Stangrove Park**

At the November meeting, Members resolved to approve the proposed bandstand for Stangrove Park, including its style, size and location.

Officers are now preparing the tender documentation for both the construction of the bandstand and the associated groundworks. Once submissions are received, they will be assessed to confirm they meet the required specification and deliver best value. A summary of the tenders and the recommended next steps will be presented to Committee in April for consideration.

Do Members have any questions?

11.2 **Marsh Green Playground**

At the November Open Spaces meeting, Members were advised that the Open Spaces Officer had met with two playground equipment suppliers to obtain an indicative budget for the replacement of the playground at Marsh Green. Based on these initial discussions, the estimated cost of the project is approximately £70,000, with the full amount to be funded through Edenbridge Town Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation.

The next stage is to progress the project to tender. Tender documentation will be prepared and issued over the next couple of months, with submissions assessed against the agreed requirements, quality standards and value for money. A further update will be brought back to Members at the April meeting.

Do Members have any questions?

12 **Edenbridge Cricket Club: To consider a request to extend car park at Blossoms Park**

Edenbridge Cricket Club (ECC) has requested permission to resurface and extend the cricket pavilion car park at Blossoms Park.

The existing car park surface does not provide a stable, year-round all-weather solution. The proposed scheme would replace the current surface with a more robust specification and extend the parking area. It would also improve disabled access to the pavilion.

The proposals are being designed to meet the requirements of the conservation area and this will be demonstrated through a planning application, which is currently being prepared.

Subject to available funding and overall costs, the extension may be delivered in phases. If approved, ECC hopes funding will be supported through the Town Council CIL funds alongside other external funding and grant opportunities.

The existing and proposed car park layouts are attached (confidential).

Do Members approve the request from ECC to extend and resurface the car park at Blossoms Park, subject to planning permission?

Do Members confirm that ETC submits the planning application as the work would be on Council land?

- 🔒 Confidential Annex 3 (omitted from public documents):
- 🔒 Confidential Annex 4 (omitted from public documents):
- 🔒 Confidential Annex 5 (omitted from public documents):
- 🔒 Confidential Annex 6 (omitted from public documents):

13

Streetlights maintenance replacement programme

13.1

Streetlights maintenance replacement programme: 2025-26 Update.

Column numbers 232 and 233 were due to be completed on 4 December 2025, these are now programmed for 20 February 2026.

Column number	Street	Streetlights Cost	UKPN Cost	Completed
55	Four Elms Road	1,515.00	3,178.00	30/11/25
229	Stangrove Road	1,515.00	2,394.00	09/12/25
230	Stangrove Road	1,515.00	2,528.00	09/12/25
231	Stangrove Road	1,515.00	2,394.00	09/12/25
232	Station Approach	1,515.00	2,129.00	20/02/26
233	Station Approach	1,515.00	2,129.00	20/02/26
82	Hilders Lane	600.00	Pole Box 2024	30/11/25
85	Lingfield Road	600.00	Pole Box 2024	30/11/25
87	Lingfield Road	600.00	Pole Box 2024	30/11/25
Totals		10,890.00	14,752.00	25,642.00

Two Columns were repaired in Mill Hill 137 from the 23/24 programme and 139 which was damaged in a road traffic accident (covered by insurance). Repairs were carried out on 9th December 2025.

Column 50 in Four Elms Road was removed on 2nd December 2025.

Do Members have any questions?

13.2

Streetlights maintenance replacement programme: 2026-27 Update

At the November meeting, Members ratified an ETC CIL application for £40,000 to fund the vast majority of streetlight replacements on Cedar Drive and Park Avenue, the CIL application was approved. The CIL application for an additional streetlight in Church street was also approved, when this work has been booked a further update will be provided.

14 **News Release**

15 **Date of Next Meeting - 13 April 2026**