

# Edenbridge Town Council

Town Clerk: Christine Lane Cert HE Local Policy



To: S. McGregor and R. Davison (ex officio), J. Barnett, T. Bryant (Vice-chairman), A. Layland (Chairman), V. Maynard, M. Robson J. Scholey, B Todd and J. Wooltorton.

**An OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE meeting will be held 16 November 2015 at Rickards Hall at 8pm**

## AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS, OR PREDETERMINATIONS  
Including any interests not already registered
3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS  
Members of the committee will receive questions and statements from the public (this is the only opportunity for members of the public to make a contribution during the meeting) and from members with Interests in items on the Agenda. Members and public are limited to 3 minutes per person to speak.
4. TO RECEIVE AND SIGN MINUTES OF OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE 28 September 2015
5. TO RECEIVE ANALYSIS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS TO 30 September 2015
6. CORRESPONDENCE
  - 6.1 SDC re: outdoor projects National Citizen Service
7. HEAD GROUNDSMAN'S REPORT
  - 7.1 Routine and seasonal work
  - 7.2 Groundstaff activity
8. OPEN SPACES BUSINESS FOR DECISION
  - 8.1 To receive the Burial Report,
  - 8.2 To receive the report on the annual review of Activities Risk Assessments
  - 8.3 To receive the report on Quarterly Monitoring and review the action plan
  - 8.4 To consider the Annual Review of Groundstaff Activities
  - 8.5 To consider committee budget recommendations for 2016/17
  - 8.6 To consider refurbishment of Spitals Cross playground
  - 8.7 To consider costings for additional tree work and Millennium Wood future maintenance
  - 8.8 To receive the report on the biennial review of street lights
  - 8.9 To consider future action to prevent unauthorised access to open spaces
9. TO NOTE THE GENERAL REPORT OF OPEN SPACES ACTIVITY
10. PRESS RELEASE

| <b>Income for Open Spaces</b> |  | <b>Budget</b>     | <b>Actual</b>    | <b>Balance</b>    | <b>Expenditure for Open Spaces</b> |  | <b>Budget</b>     | <b>Actual</b>    | <b>Balance</b>    |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Allocation from Precept       |  | 153,571.00        | 76,786.00        | 76,785.00         | Staff Costs                        |  | 105,065.00        | 40,717.39        | 64,347.61         |
| Cemetery Fees                 |  | 14,000.00         | 4,144.35         | 9,855.65          | Utilities                          |  | 8,370.00          | 3,907.50         | 4,462.50          |
| Rents                         |  | 14,214.00         | 7,421.18         | 6,792.82          | Playground Repairs                 |  | 5,000.00          | 1,653.00         | 3,347.00          |
| Maintenance Services          |  | 4,800.00          | 1,782.31         | 3,017.69          | Services                           |  | 16,020.00         | 6,609.80         | 9,410.20          |
| Hire Charges                  |  | 0.00              | 0.00             | 0.00              | Equipment/Tools                    |  | 6,000.00          | 244.92           | 5,755.08          |
| Solar Panels                  |  | 800.00            | 539.11           | 260.89            | Materials                          |  | 18,480.00         | 6,520.02         | 11,959.98         |
| AM Sundry Receipts            |  | 9,800.00          | 4,168.19         | 5,631.81          | Buildings                          |  | 3,000.00          | 729.04           | 2,270.96          |
|                               |  |                   |                  |                   | Vehicles                           |  | 11,150.00         | 3,540.63         | 7,609.37          |
|                               |  |                   |                  |                   | Contingencies                      |  | 6,000.00          | 1,106.00         | 4,894.00          |
|                               |  |                   |                  |                   | Others                             |  | 1,400.00          | 272.50           | 1,127.50          |
|                               |  |                   |                  |                   | Small Projects                     |  | 3,000.00          | 906.00           | 2,094.00          |
|                               |  |                   |                  |                   | Vandalism                          |  | 3,500.00          | 0.00             | 3,500.00          |
|                               |  |                   |                  |                   | Footpaths Equipment                |  | 200.00            | 0.00             | 200.00            |
|                               |  |                   |                  |                   | Public Street Lighting             |  | 10,000.00         | 2,629.85         | 7,370.15          |
|                               |  | <b>197,185.00</b> | <b>94,841.14</b> | <b>102,343.86</b> |                                    |  | <b>197,185.00</b> | <b>68,836.65</b> | <b>128,348.35</b> |

**5. TO RECEIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COMMITTEE'S RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS TO 30th September 2015**

The comparisons report from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 as presented to October Finance committee is attached for members' information.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

**6.1 SDC re: outdoor projects National Citizen Service**

The Health and Communities Manager Hayley Brooks has been approached by Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) who deliver the National Citizen Service programme locally for young people. They are looking for outdoor social action projects to work on in **summer 2016**, in partnership with North West Kent Countryside Partnership. She has asked for suggestions of outdoor/conservation projects, including clearing shrubbery, planting, digging ponds, in gardens, parks, or open spaces, on which twelve 15-17 year olds could help as part of their National Citizen Service. **Do members have any suggestions which Hayley could forward to CACT?**

**7. HEAD GROUNDSMAN'S REPORT**

**7.1 Routine and seasonal work**

**OCTOBER/NOVEMBER**

Grass cutting all sites

Leaf clearance on all sites

Cleaned out Mill Leat

Cleared out ditches at Mowshurst and Marsh Green

Marking out all sports pitches

Top dressed and fertilised goal mouths and centre circles on football pitches

Planted winter plants at Doggetts Courtyard; planters through town and Cemetery.

Started cleaning along all kerb sides on all sites

Cut over hanging brambles from all sites

Tree works and tidying on all sites has started, and will be ongoing all winter

Usual weekly maintenance

**7.2 Groundstaff activity**

The health and safety monitoring quarterly output has been completed

The quarterly monitoring sites visit has taken place over two afternoons on 21 and 22 October with all going well with some useful pointers (see item 8.3)

The winter machinery servicing is under way and will be on going over the next few months

The bonfire night has taken place same as always; rain made a bit of mess which we will be sorting out. The committee Chairman with the Clerk and head groundsman have had a site-meeting with representatives of Rugby Club and Bonfire Society, to consider arrangements for future years.

Training provision for the team, agreed in principle at last meeting, is being progressed, first with a bespoke course of two half-days, covering an update on noise and vibration awareness and also basic equipment maintenance, at a good value cost of £375. Ellis Whittam has been approached to provide Basic Health & Safety refresher, including Manual Handling and Personal Safety, free for office and groundstaff as part of the package Council has with them.

LANCE THOMPSETT 10/11/15

**8. OPEN SPACES BUSINESS FOR DECISION**

**8.1 To receive the Burial Report**

The burial report is as follows and updates the record of cemetery activity:

**September 2015**

One ashes interment

Three Grants of Right

**October 2015**

Two burials

One Grant of Right

**8.2 To receive the report on the annual review of Activities Risk Assessments**

The Head Groundsman has carried out the annual review of the activities risk assessments, and an assessment for clearance of drains has been added.

**8.3 To receive the report on Quarterly Monitoring and review the action plan**

The report from the October two half-day sites visits is attached. The next quarterly monitoring is due in January, and members are invited to arrange two half-days for this.

#### **8.4 To consider the Annual review of Groundstaff Activities**

Currently the grounds team has four staff in the summer (including an eight-month contract post), and three in the winter. With the deputy head groundsman on long-term sick leave, the short contract has been extended by a year to maintain staffing levels at three. Meanwhile it is recommended to maintain the activity *status quo*. **Do members support this proposal?**

#### **8.5 To consider committee budget for 2016/17**

Following the last meeting, at which the 10-year Open Spaces Maintenance Plan was adopted, the small group of councillors have met to review the budget for Year One of the Plan. Cllrs Layland, Bryant and Scholey met with the deputy clerk in attendance. Cllr Davison was unavailable but was content for the meeting to proceed without him.

As discussed previously at Forward Planning committee in September, the total cost of the works in the 10-year plan spread across the period results in an average of £42,000 per year. This does not mean the amount spent in any one year will be £42K – some years will require more than that, other years less. Adoption of the Plan is considered to be good governance as a method of managing the estate maintenance.

The intention is to create a capital budget for Open Spaces maintenance, into which £42K would be transferred each year, requiring additional funds if insufficient for the year, and to roll forward any unspent year-to-year. The spend-profile of the 10-Year Plan is as follows:

|      |                            |      |                             |
|------|----------------------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Yr 1 | over the average by £8,600 | Yr 2 | over the average by £28,200 |
| Yr 3 | under by £3,200            | Yr 4 | under by £12,800            |
| Yr 5 | over by £8,600             | Yr 6 | under by £26,700            |
| Yr 7 | under by £27,500           | Yr 8 | under by £13,750            |
| Yr 9 | under by 24,600            | Yr10 | over by £63,000             |

The maintenance works programmed for Year One are budgeted at £51,594 at 2015 prices, with £42,450 coming from £18,150 savings in the Revenue Budget currently allocated for maintenance, £17,300 from Depreciation Fund, £7,000 from Property Fund. All but £1,000 (provided in perpetuity for grave maintenance) of the Cemetery Capital Fund will also be transferred to the new Open Spaces maintenance budget heading, thus a further £33,846. Details of the mechanisms for managing these funds need to be agreed with the Clerk and RFO.

Other than the High Street hanging baskets display, no additional items/projects were identified for Budget considerations at last meeting, but members may wish to consider item 8.10 below. **Are there any further suggestions for Budget consideration?**

#### **8.6 To consider refurbishment of Spitals Cross Playground**

The committee chairman and the deputy clerk have met West Kent Extra's funding co-ordinator. The organisation is prepared to be a funding partner for this project and is investigating the possibility of making an application for Landfill Trust funds through waste handling companies. The outcome of this is awaited, and West Kent is also considering a request to contribute some funding of its own to the project. Local charities and organisations are also being approached.

Invitation to Tender documents have been prepared, and there are several playground providers already expressing interest even before the Invitation is released. The outline specification does not currently state that the new playground equipment should be metal, as is the current provision – **do members wish to include this as a requirement, and subject to the response from West Kent, do members wish to issue the Invitation to Tender at the end of this month?**

#### **8.7 To consider tree works costings and Millennium Wood future maintenance**

The Edenbridge Club has confirmed that it will share the £550 cost of works to the Copper Beech in the Churchyard to reduce over-shadowing, and therefore this, and the felling of the nearby dead Birch at £100, has been submitted to the SDC arboricultural officer for approval, as they are within the Conservation Area. **Do members wish to proceed with the works if SDC permits?**

The Kent Men of the Trees representative who toured the sites with Cllr Richard Davison in August, believed the report had already been sent to us. A copy is now attached. Before KMT could consider any advice on a future maintenance programme for the Millennium Wood, it has been suggested that members should consider a number of questions about their vision for the future of the wood:

What do you want the wood to be in like in 50 years? Do you want to establish some trees as “heritage trees” for the future? Do you want the wood area to be “zoned”, and have some more dense areas included, and other parts thinner? Do you want “clearings” for the picnic areas? Is there a possibility of community working parties? Is there potential to link up with a Countryside Partnership? **How do members wish to respond to these questions?**

**8.8 To receive the report from the biennial review of street lighting**

The biennial review of street light provision has been carried out by members, as agreed last meeting, though three reports are still awaited. Only two of ETC columns were found out of light, both already listed for work by council’s contractors. No columns were reported in poor condition.

**8.9 To consider future action to prevent unauthorised access to open spaces**

Following suggestion that this committee should consider ways to reduce the possibility of unauthorised vehicles accessing open spaces, a meeting was arranged with the Rugby Club regarding a low rail barrier around the front of the car park on the eastern side of the Rec, matching the one in place on the western side, and also a speed hump at the entrance from Coomb Field. Cllr Barnett attended and reports that he met the club chairman and secretary, and it was clear the club would like to discourage any non-essential vehicles from accessing the ground. They welcomed the suggestion of a rail, but felt there was no requirement for a “sleeping policeman”.

Members are advised that a vehicle appeared to have gone onto Rugby 1 pitch after hours on Tuesday evening, turning back and leaving tyre marks, not ruts, and no damage sufficient to prevent play. As noted last meeting, the cost of a barrier would need to be balanced against the frequency of incursions, plus the need to move the mobile training lights onto the Rugby pitch, and the need to leave the end of the flood bund accessible, which would remain vulnerable points. The Environment Agency and KCC have vehicles which need to access the Rec at intervals, and currently are able to do so without the need to make prior arrangements or unlock the Ambulance gate. **Do members wish to investigate the options for this project?**

**9. TO NOTE THE GENERAL REPORT OF OPEN SPACES ACTIVITY**

There was a **vandalism** incident involving a large amount of graffiti covering the surfaces and sides of the skate ramp equipment at Blossoms Park overnight 31<sup>st</sup> October, which was reported to the police, and required much work by the groundstaff and community warden to remove. Re-treatment of some parts of the riding surface with preservative may be required. Also last month both bus shelters either side of Main Road on Marlpit Hill each had a pane of glass broken which required replacement at £175 each plus VAT. During the weekend of 7/8 November, the wall beside the footpath SR610 to the north of the Churchyard/Cemetery One was in one place splattered with white paint. Someone subsequently walked in the pool of paint on the footpath and left a trail of footprints along the asphalt.

The volunteer controlling rabbits at **Mowshurst** reports that there has been a noticeable reduction in activity, this possibly helped by one of the neighbouring properties now being occupied, the drain lines being more consolidated now, and the time of year.

The preparation work for re-surfacing a section of the paths in **Stangrove Park** has been carried out, but ground conditions since have not facilitated vehicle access to lay the asphalt.

A report on the **Edenbridge in Bloom** competition has been received, and it appears the awards presentation went ahead without notification to the Council. Local entrants again went on to do well at the District level competition. A full list of the winners will be included in the Council’s autumn newsletter shortly, and the Chairman has decided to invite them to his Reception next month.

We are advised that next year back gardens will be added as a category, also some school categories with seed supplied, and the awards announced at an evening event at the end of July.

**10. PRESS RELEASE**

Do members consider any items from this meeting should be the subject of a Press Release?

## **Kent Men of the Trees**

### **Trees in the Village Competition 2015**

#### **Edenbridge report**

Firstly I would like to record my gratitude to Councillor Richard Davison for meeting me, providing transport, showing me around Edenbridge, and pointing out the diverse trees of Edenbridge, and their history. Edenbridge sits in the quintessential Low Weald, renowned for its woodland, and in particular for its suitability for growing large oaks! The town and surrounds are very well treed.

#### **Mowshurst**

The Mowshurst site, developed on ex-agricultural land, hosts a number of playing fields and is the home of the Nomads Football Team. As it is so intensively used, the heavy clay soil has had significant drainage works over the years, and the surrounding hedges and large trees are growing well. The hedges (3<sup>rd</sup> August) had already been tightly and formally trimmed. There are excellent boundary trees, including some impressive Oak, Ash and Sycamore. The trees are regularly inspected for safety from the ground and remedial work has been carried out on some of the older trees, with at least one monolith left in place for biodiversity purposes. The regular inspections allow the older trees to adjust and settle down in their maturity whilst ensuring public safety. Some of these may well become the veteran trees of Edenbridge during the second half of this century, and heritage features well into the twenty-second century or longer. One large tree that has been removed has Ganoderma bracket fungi on the remaining stump. Ivy has been well controlled on some of the other larger trees, and this management should be continued in these public areas. On the other hand, the woodland connecting the railway embankment trees with the Millennium Wood has extremely high biodiversity value, due to its standing and fallen deadwood.

#### **The Millennium Wood**

This planting has developed extremely well over the years. However in places it is very overgrown and the longer term management aims may now need to be reviewed. The paths are maintained for public access, and subject to occasional vandalism. The woods could be selectively thinned in different compartments to increase structural diversity. The resulting opening up of areas could increase biodiversity, and potentially access to the wider wood area, if desired. Further advice is available from the KMOTT chairman, Dr. Alun Griffiths.

#### **Stangrove Park and the Leisure Centre**

This is a very well-treed and intensively used public central area, appropriately and diversely planted, with trees ranging widely in age and species – a very dynamic landscape. There is good planting less than 10 years old, with young trees imaginatively chosen, but it has not always been possible to maintain mulching around the tree-base, strimmer damage has unfortunately occurred and also tree-ties have not been removed and have become over-tight. These trees could still be rescued and protected from further damage.

Some of the older trees are stag-headed and some may be diseased, e.g. the Horse-chestnuts should be checked for bleeding canker. Soil compaction may be a contributory factor in some cases. Some trees have obviously had to be removed over recent years, as they will have posed an unacceptable risk. In other cases deadwood should continue to be removed where it is shown to be a significant

risk to the public, and very good practice is again evident here. The Hawthorn tree by the Leisure Centre entrance could perhaps be coppiced to regenerate it, or completely replaced, for example perhaps with a Flowering Cherry. The iconic Wellingtonia has sadly suffered fire-damage from apparent vandalism. Stangrove Pond, surrounded by trees, provides excellent amenity interest and biodiversity.

### **Town centre, roadside and privately owned land**

There are a number of excellent trees throughout the town, including many Pines, Limes, Hornbeams, Beeches, Maples and, as just one example, the noteworthy Oak on private land in front of the "Pinnacle" office. I am sure that many of these are protected by TPOs organised through Sevenoaks DC with the support of the Town Council. The landscaping and trees planted along Mont St Aignan Road are of very high overall quality, and a credit to the Town Council's efforts. An opportunity to look at the trees in a private garden was offered - a good range of trees including a tree with an old partly horizontal trunk retained as an attractive feature were noted.

### **The Churchyard and Cemetery**

Here there is an excellent mix of evergreen and deciduous trees. The avenue of closely planted Limes has been tightly and regularly pollarded. Again there are young trees evident, including several different species of Acer with beautiful bark in the churchyard, which could do with renewed mulching to protect against strimmer damage, and reduce weed and grass competition, ensuring that they grow away well and robustly.

### **Blossoms Park**

This Park has great character in its boundary trees, particularly the Oaks bordering the farmland, and the Pines on the roadside. There is one Oak with its trunk particularly interestingly marked with burrs. Many of the trees carry index numbers indicating that they are being tracked on the database. The two Pear Trees are also a great feature. Again there is evidence of young trees, such as the Cherries, again with effective angled stakes. The investment in such valuable young trees can be greatly enhanced and safeguarded by careful mulching and protection.

### **Marsh Green**

The Poplars mentioned in a previous report are on neighbouring land, and any issues possibly arising from them in the future, would have to be discussed with the landowner concerned. There is a good diversity of trees here, including an excellent Pin Oak, and a very pleasant mix of trees in and also around the grassed areas is developing here.

### **Recreation Ground**





There are some excellent oaks around the sports fields, although one Oak near the road entrance close to the houses was stag-headed and should be kept under observation in future years. The neighbouring commercial plantation of Poplars in the middle distance is a valuable landscape and biodiversity feature. The marshy area beyond the bund provides excellent diversity and some areas are developing into valuable scrub, with young Oak and Sallow for example. It is very difficult to block these natural processes and entirely prevent scrub development, and if a wet meadow is still to be encouraged, as mentioned in the 2012 report, this might best be achieved on only a small and realistic area of the land concerned.

Judge - David Carey.

| Site                   | Item                           | Action required  | Responsible               | Target date        | Signed off         |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Blossoms Park          | Wooden notice board            | Replace Perspex  | Groundstaff               | November 2015      |                    |
|                        | Skate ramps                    | Plant additional Russian Vine screen, west side of fence | Groundstaff               | Oct 2015           |                    |
|                        | Logs r/o parking spaces        | re-fix   | Groundstaff               | Autumn 2015        |                    |
|                        | Front hedge thin, in patches   | Plant additional hedging to improve                      | Groundstaff               | Autumn 2015        |                    |
| Recreation Ground      | Garden waste fly-tip           | Negotiate with other bank owner re: future removals      | Deputy clerk              | September 2015     |                    |
|                        | West side waste bin overgrowth | Clear back around bin location                           | Groundstaff               | November 2015      | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Marsh Green            |                                |  |                           |                    |                    |
| Peace Garden, Hever Rd |                                |  |                           |                    |                    |
| Doggetts Courtyard     | Seating                        | Existing seats removed, replace with new                 | Councillors/ Deputy Clerk | ?timescale         |                    |
|                        | Slat missing, litter bin       | Re-fix   | Groundstaff               | November           |                    |
| Market Yard            | North walls                    | Needs repointing ?ownership                              | Contractor                | ?timescale         |                    |
|                        | Memorial stability             | Contact owners and stone masons                          | D Clerk                   | Sept 2014 -ongoing |                    |
| Cemetery               | Pedestrian gate Cem 2/3        | Repair catch   | Groundstaff/bespoke part? | November 2015      |                    |
|                        | Paint flaking, gates Cem       | Repaint  | Groundstaff               | May 2016           |                    |



|                        |  |   |                        |                        |               |
|------------------------|--|---|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1 and Cem 2            | Damage to skip-bay wall                  | Quotations for repair                       | D clerk/contractor     | September 2015         |               |
|                        | Cem 2/3 sign leaning nr main gates       | Needs new posts and Re-setting              | Groundstaff            | December 2015          |               |
| Churchyard             | Garden waste behind                      | temp signage                                | Groundstaff/D Clerk    | October 2015           | <i>Leanne</i> |
|                        | Church St wall                           | Birch by Cottage has died – fell? Refer SDC | Deputy clerk           | October 2015           | <i>Kesh</i>   |
|                        | Trees                                    | Beech adjacent Men's Club - reduction       | Councillors/contractor | Winter 2015/6          |               |
| Forge Croft Allotments |  |   |                        |                        |               |
| Pound Green            |  |   |                        |                        |               |
| Stangrove Park         | Seat lost from west side nr Norman Court | Location for memorial seat?                 | D Clerk                | On-going               |               |
|                        | Self-sets trees on south perimeter       | Thin  | Groundstaff            | On-going seasonal task |               |
|                        | Path surface approach to playground      | Contractor to resurface                     | D Clerk/contractor     | October 2015           |               |
|                        | Small dead Hawthorn nr Leisure Centre    | Remove                                      | Groundstaff            | December 2015          |               |
|                        | Low-level growth on other Hawthorns      | Remove                                      | Groundstaff            | December 2015          |               |

|                             | Pond low water level          | Opportunity to edge-trim and remove old litter                           | Groundstaff             | December 2015 |   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------|---|
| Spitals Cross playground    | "Bitty" grass areas           | Make more continuous grass areas in re-design                            | Deputy Clerk            | 2016 project  |   |
|                             | Fencing and play equipment    | Plan to replace as single Project in 2016. Repair fence as <i>ad hoc</i> | Deputy Clerk            | 2016          |   |
|                             | Leaf fall                     | Clear up regularly   | Groundstaff             | Autumn 2015   |  |
|                             | Surface under flat swing      | Patch repair   | Deputy Clerk/contractor | November 2015 |   |
|                             | Paint on memorial seat plaque | Remove   | Groundstaff             | November 2015 |  |
|                             | Mowshurst                     | Old football goals   | Remove                  | Nomads        | August 2015   |
| Hedge north of Pitch 1      |                               | Trim sides only  | Groundstaff             | December 2015 |  |
| Trees east side of car park |                               | Lift overhanging branches  | Groundstaff             | December 2015 |  |
| Overgrowth in hollow        |                               | Thin and remove rubbish  | Groundstaff             | January 2016  |   |
| Swan Lane Allotments        |                               | Vegetation   | Trim back hedges        | Groundstaff   | Autumn 2015   |
|                             | "Copse" sign by manure heap   | Move to other side of entrance inside barrier                            | Groundstaff             | Autumn 2015   |   |