

Minutes of the Meeting of the OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE held in Doggetts Barn at 7.30pm on Monday 16th April 2018

Present: Cllrs T Bryant (Chairman), A Layland, M McArthur, S McGregor, and B Todd (vice chairman)

In attendance: Cllr C Pearman
Cllr G Middleton
Deputy Clerk

There were no members of the press or public present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received, noted, and accepted from Cllr J Barnett (away), and received and noted from the Head Groundsman. Cllrs R Bell and M Robson were absent

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, OR PREDETERMINATIONS

Cllr Layland: item 8.6 non-pecuniary, being a Trustee of the Eden Valley Museum
item 8.7 non-pecuniary, being a friend of the person requesting a bus shelter

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

4. TO RECEIVE AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE 22 January 2018

Resolved: that the minutes be signed by the committee chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. TO RECEIVE ANALYSIS OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE'S RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS TO 28 February 2018

Members noted the position one month from the end of the financial year.

The trailer was booked in for its service, and after inspection the quoted cost at £960.04 was referred to the committee chairman for approval, in order to progress the work to return the trailer to operation. It was

Resolved: to endorse this expenditure

In February the LCD display for the instrument cluster on the Bipper van failed, and the Town Clerk authorised swift repair on safety grounds. It was

Resolved: to endorse this urgent expenditures at a cost of £485

Members noted there was sufficient funding available in February for new gates and posts for Swan Lane allotments, in line with members' previous decision, so these were ordered and the groundstaff would install the items when ground conditions improve.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 SDC Arboricultural Officer re: roadside trees

Members noted Sevenoaks' Arboricultural Officer had circulated information about a court case and pending appeal hearing during 2018, concerning an accident in Surrey involving a falling tree and a passing bus. The outcome of this could significantly affect all landowners who have responsibility for substantial numbers of trees, particularly those next to highways or land where the public may have access (roads, railways, playing fields and parks, for example). It was

Resolved: to monitor the outcome of the case for report to committee

6.2 CLM re: field fencing

Members noted information received on behalf of the owner of land adjacent to the Recreation Ground, advising of a decision to boundary-fence the field, closing gaps next to the Rec boundary which were being used by a motorbike to access the farm fields. It was

Resolved: to monitor the situation on the Rec following closure of the boundary gaps.

6.3 GSBT re: old Mill Leat stream bed

Members noted the letter from GSBT agreeing to the committee's request to share the expense of removing occasional items of fly-tipping. Members were saddened to learn of the death of the Trust's long-serving clerk Mr Michael Ross, and

Resolved: to request Trustee Cllr Pearman to convey their condolences.

6.4 Allotment tenant re: deer fencing

Members considered a report from an allotment tenant of a sighting of deer on Swan Lane allotment site, and a request for improved perimeter fencing. As this was the only report, and allotment activity was increasing as the weather improved, it was

Resolved: to monitor the situation for any repeat sighting, before investigating costs of any increased height fencing.

6.5 Town Band re: open air free concert 11th July

Members considered the town band's annual request to hold its open air free concert in Stangrove Park this summer. It was

Resolved: to permit the use free of charge for a community event, subject to completion of an Open Spaces Hire Agreement, and meeting its Standard Conditions

6.6 Marsh Green Pre-school re: signage for the Green

Members considered a request Marsh Green pre-school to have a permanent sign on Marsh Green to help advertise its presence within the community. It was

Resolved: not to give permission, but suggest other means of raising the profile of the Pre-school.

6.7 Nomads FC re: fund-raising day 6th May

Members considered Nomads Football club's request to use Mowshurst for a club fund-raising day event, based around a six-a-side tournament. Subject to completion of an Open Spaces Hire Agreement, and meeting its Standard Conditions, it was

Resolved: to permit this community event at no additional charge.

7. HEAD GROUNDSMAN'S REPORT

Members noted that the new head groundsman left at the end of February, and Craig Open had been appointed in the post from this month. This was his first day in his new role, and an interim report had been prepared in his absence.

7.1 Routine and seasonal work

The team had carried out routine and seasonal work, with additional salt/gritting as necessary in the periods of very cold weather.

7.2 Groundstaff activity

The winter check of cemetery and churchyard memorials had been completed, with no items reported, and likewise the winter visual survey of trees. The first aid kits were checked, and the annual check of the team's driving licences carried out.

Members noted the lime tree in the Churchyard approved for reduction last meeting was subject to an application to the District Council, as it is within the Conservation Area. The outcome was awaited, and the work on hold until then.

The team had taken down the notice board at the front of Stangrove Park had been vandalised again, after it was refurbished it in February. The woodworker who made the new board for

Marsh Green had assessed it for repair and had quoted £260 quote for the work, to include new LH door, new thicker polycarbonate glazing for both doors, two new oak posts and complete repainting including header board. It was

Resolved: commission the work as quoted at £260, from the vandalism budget heading.

7.3 Items for the future

Members noted the purchase of the device to remotely operate the Cemetery Depot roller shutter door, with four coded key fobs, was still outstanding at the end of February, and the new head groundsman will progress this.

Having considered the results to date of investigations for a possible chipper to fit on the tractor, and potential costs ranging upwards from £10,092 plus VAT, it was

Resolved: to review this item in six months, seeking the opinion of the newly appointed head groundsman as to the necessity for the equipment.

Members noted the potential costs of repair to the spray marker machine, and the on-going trial of equivalent machine and paint from an alternative supplier arranged before the previous groundsman left. So far the grounds team were happy with the performance of the machine and paint, and the new head groundsman would negotiate with the supplier for a price for the machine at the end of the trial period.

8. OPEN SPACES BUSINESS FOR DECISION

8.1 To receive the Burial Report

Members noted the burial report updating the record of cemetery activity as follows:

January 2018	February 2018	March 2018
One burial	One burial	Four burials
		One ashes interment
	One Grant of Right	Two Grants of Right

8.2 To review Year 2 works within the 10 Year Maintenance Plan

Members noted the comparison with Year 2 budget.

The one outstanding item was repair to the Market Yard/Churchyard boundary wall. Following the decision to accept the surveyor's advice to rebuild the oldest (western) section of the wall with new foundations, and February council's acceptance of the contractor's amended quotation for works, it transpired that the nature of the works would now require a party wall agreement with the neighbouring property in the Churchyard, and also a Faculty from the Diocese as the Church believed it was the owner of the wall. Confirmation of this has been sought, but in the meantime the Archdeacon approved the repointing works for the remainder of the boundary.

From examination of property deeds, it was also difficult establish exact boundaries of the neighbouring property. Other than repointing to the Market Yard wall section on the east side of the car park, adjacent to Frantfield, works have been put on hold. After considerable discussion it was

Resolved: that the lease negotiation team (Cllrs Scholey, Pearman and Bryant) with Cllr Middleton would progress arrangement of a meeting to clarify the way forward, the view of the Conservation Officer should be sought, and funding for the works would be accrued into 2018/19 financial year.

8.3 To consider costings for Year 3 works within the 10 Year Maintenance Plan

Members noted comparative quotes were being sought for the Year 3 works which were mostly minor and fell broadly into four elements - hard landscape, soft landscape, fixtures, play equipment - with one major project at the Recreation Ground.

As the budget set in the Plan for the re-surfacing works at the Recreation Ground (eastern car park and western access drive/path off Lingfield Road to the Pavilion) was below the threshold for the Contract Finder website, four companies were invited to submit costings for the project. Two had responded to date, and the project had now been put on the Contract Finder website to seek other interest.

Members noted the path around the Sports Pavilion was originally not included in the Plan, but companies had been asked to quote additionally for this, as it may be sensible (depending on cost) to add this work while the contractors are on site. The costings would be presented to the next Open Spaces meeting on 4th June.

8.4 To arrange April Quarterly Monitoring visit and update the Action Plan

Members were reminded there had been no Open Spaces maintenance monitoring visits to sites by councillors since last summer. Two half-day visits need to be arranged this month, and it was

Resolved: the chairman would suggest dates, for circulation to members

8.5 To consider costings for annual weed control on sports pitches

Costings were sought from three companies for the annual treatment of sports pitches at Blossoms Park, the Recreation Ground, and now also Mowshurst football pitches under terms of the new lease. It was

Resolved: to commission Peter Duke to carry out the weed control treatment at £1,090 plus VAT

8.6 To consider War Memorial matters and WW1 commemoration

Members were reminded that from December Council meeting (item 8.6) councillors asked the Museum to confirm their research, to establish any restrictions in planning terms, and to ask the families whether they wish the honours to be added to the Memorial. It is understood that a meeting being arranged in the New Year, to address the above points, did not take place and there was no further news to date.

Members considered a proposal from the British Legion for installation of a support frame in front of the War Memorial, against which wreathes could lean, rather than being laid flat on the ground. The Legion would fund and arrange production of this, and sought Council's support for the proposal. It was

Resolved: to support the proposal in principle, subject to investigation whether particular permission would be necessary to add the support frame to the memorial.

Members considered a suggestion that the Town Council might like to provide a themed memorial seat as its contribution to the WW1 anniversary, to be installed at a suitable location. It was

Resolved: to purchase the WW1 seat design produced by David Ogilvy, at £695 plus delivery £105, plus VAT.

Cllr Layland left the meeting

8.7 To consider a request for additional bus shelter

Members considered information on passenger numbers, requested from the service provider of buses on the Swan Lane route outbound to Tunbridge Wells, in line with their decision at last meeting. Having previously considered costings, and location advice from Kent Highways, after considerable discussion it was

Resolved: not to install an additional bus shelter in Swan Lane opposite Swan Ridge, at this time.

Cllr Layland returned to the meeting

8.8 To consider additional planting in public places

Members noted the representative from a Dutch bulb company was not able to attend a meeting with councillors on 23rd February, but three councillors with the Deputy Clerk considered possible public locations to increase the amount of “planting colour” visible through the town. Six potential areas for swathe planting by contractor were identified. The Dutch company director visited Edenbridge just before Easter, for an initial meeting with the Deputy Clerk, and to view the suggested locations. He subsequently identified possible sites, and the range of costs (ex VAT) that the swathe planting could entail, from £3,000 for 200m², to £3,500 for 100m², depending on type of bulb mix chosen. It was

Resolved: not to pursue the swathe planting, but suggest the Community Warden adds the potential sites to the existing programme of planting in public areas, to create a longer term project into the future.

The councillors meeting on 23rd February also suggested six further small sites for the community planting initiative to consider for continuing, and those ideas had already been passed to the Community Warden.

8.9 To consider a request for use of Council premises for Bootcamps

Members at last meeting requested a presentation from MZ9 Fit and Fun, on the proposal for Bootcamps in Edenbridge. A representative was expected to attend the meeting to provide information, but did not. It was

Resolved: not to permit MZ9 use of Council open spaces for Bootcamps.

8.10 To consider a request for use of Council property for Christmas Lights events

Members considered requests for Council support from the new community group (Edenbridge Community Christmas Association) organising the town’s Christmas event on 1st December. It was

Resolved: to permit use of the Recreation Ground in May as a venue for a sponsored walk to raise funds for the Christmas event (subject to liaison with the Rugby Club), and on the event day use of Doggetts Courtyard - both subject to the completion of an Open Spaces hire agreement and meeting its Standard Conditions, and at no charge for a community event. Also to permit use of Rickards Hall as an organization base on 1st December, the hall hire charge waived to support this initial event of the new group.

9. TO NOTE THE GENERAL REPORT OF OPEN SPACES ACTIVITY

Works to prevent unauthorised access by vehicles at Stangrove Park had been completed, and the works for Marsh Green had begun the previous week, though ground conditions were still difficult.

Members noted Nomads FC had accepted the proposed terms for temporary storage of the club’s tractor in Mowshurst Barn, while a permanent location is sought for it.

The village sign at Marsh Green had been removed by the groundstaff as its post needed replacement, which the team would arrange, and then reinstall the sign.

10. PRESS RELEASE

No items were suggested for a Press Release

The meeting closed at 9.22pm