

Sevenoaks Town Council
Notes of Open Spaces & Leisure Committee working party*
Held via Zoom on 5th July 2021

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk_aKgsiWUO

Meeting commenced: 19:00

Meeting Concluded: 20:31

Present:

Cllr Nick Busvine, Chairman	Present	Cllr Roderick Hogarth	Apologies
Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter, Vice-Chairman	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides	Apologies
Cllr Keith Bonin	Present	Cllr Tom Morris Brown	Present
Cllr Sue Camp	Absent	Cllr Richard Parry	Present
Cllr Dr Merilyn Canet	Apologies	Cllr Simon Raikes	Present

Substitute		For
Cllr Tony Clayton	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides

In attendance: Cllr Andrew Eyre, Cllr Robert Piper, Town Clerk, Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager and Open Spaces & Leisure Committee Clerk

Representations received from Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

148. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted and received as noted above.

149. Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

150. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

151. Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee on 15th February 2021

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 15th February 2021 be received and agreed as a true record.

152. OPEN SPACES & CEMETERY MANAGER'S REPORT

The report of the Open Spaces and Cemetery Manager was received and discussed, and the following matters noted.

*Delegation of authority under S101 of the Local Government Act 1972 (*Minute 60, Annual Council Meeting 04.05.2021 refers*)

i) Knole Paddock and Raley's Field – Drainage of Pitch 1

Two quotes for the work had been returned but the process of obtaining quotes had been lengthy. So as not to lose play time this Autumn, it had been agreed with Sevenoaks Rugby Football Club (SRFC) that work would be programmed for May 2022. A third competitive quote would be sought if possible.

ii) Knole Paddock and Raley's Field – Floodlight Improvement on Pitch 3

Three companies in the area had been approached but to date no one had returned a quote nor carried out a site visit. It was agreed to approach companies from further afield.

iii) Knole Paddock and Raley's Field – Condition of the Pitches

Less use and the Spring's near perfect conditions for preparing and sowing grass seed had resulted in a good covering of grass. The pitches were heavily used due to the large size of the SRFC membership and maintaining a high standard of grass covering was challenging. The Town Council would continue to maintain a balance to ensure a high-quality area for cricket in addition to rugby and football pitches.

iv) St Nicholas Church – Quinquennial report

The Town Council has a duty to maintain the Churchyard in good order. The recent Quinquennial Report (12.03.2021) had identified a number of small repairs that were needed, mainly to the boundary walls.

RESOLVED: that quotes be sought from qualified stone masons for all the works mentioned in the Quinquennial report.

v) Dog Waste Bins

It was noted that four new bins had been purchased. The new larger bins should prevent overflowing and untidy bins.

vi) Sevenoaks Common Greensand Commons Project

Despite the challenges of lockdown and dwindling income, Kent Wildlife Trust had now resumed this successful scheme. The appointment of a new Project Officer and a new Engagement Officer would help to involve public of all ages to visit the commons and participate in events.

A meeting had taken place with the new Project Officer to review works done and identify simple clearance and path maintenance projects which could be undertaken by volunteers. It was acknowledged that it would take time for the project to resume in earnest.

The Committee welcomed a resumption of this initiative.

153. Statement of Accounts 1st to 31st January 2021

RESOLVED: To accept the Management Accounts 1st to 31st May 2021.

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154. Allotments Manager's Report

The report of the Allotments Manager was received and discussed, and the following matters noted.

i) Quaker's Hall Allotments (QHA)

There were two vacant plots (10 rods) and 42 people on the waiting list. Formal inspections had not taken place since the start of the pandemic, but cultivation levels had been monitored and some tenancies had been ended because of non-cultivation.

ii) Bradbourne Vale Allotments (BVA)

There were no vacant plots, and one person is on the waiting list. Cultivation levels had been very high and there had been a quick turnover of several plots resulting in new tenancies.

iii) Water use across both sites

The Committee had discussed water usage on the two allotments sites and had considered the possible causes in the discrepancy of water usage between the two sites. A proposal had been discussed to install a trough-based solution.

RESOLVED: that, subject to grant opportunities, one quote be obtained for a trough-based solution (plastic or metal) and a trial-run be conducted at Bradbourne Vale Allotments.

155. Sevenoaks In Bloom

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15th June 2021 were received.

It was noted that this year would be more challenging than previous years as we had been unable to hold volunteer days but that every effort would be made to achieve the very best.

It was noted that Sevenoaks District Council had been working with the Town Council especially by tidying and clearing weeds.

The Committee wished to thank everyone involved on their behalf.

156. Greatness Recreation Ground Management and Improvement Plan

The aims of the Management and Improvement Plan were to assist those responsible for conserving, managing, and improving Greatness Recreation Ground and to do so in a consistent, sustainable and – where possible – an environmentally sensitive way, with the intention of encouraging more people to enjoy this facility and to respond to changing needs.

Sevenoaks Town Council encouraged existing and potential new partner agencies to work with it to incorporate targets into this Plan.

The Committee considered the revised Plan, which had also been circulated for comments to various stakeholders including the Sevenoaks Football Club, the Greatness Residents' Association, and One Step Walking Group. No comments had been received.

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The Committee thanked the Town Clerk for the comprehensive and well thought out plan.

RESOLVED: that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk and the Open Spaces Manager to finalise the wording of the Greatness Recreation Ground Management and Improvement Plan and carry out actions within.

157. Play Areas Capital Programme

The Town Council owns and maintains several play areas within the town and pays for repairs, general maintenance, and H&S checks from its annual revenue budget. The Play Areas Capital Programme sets out planned improvements, and invaluable in maintaining an open dialogue with residents.

It was noted that the provision of challenging, safe, and high-quality play equipment for children was as important as the provision of quality gym equipment for teenagers and adults.

RESOLVED: That the following programme of capital investment be agreed in principle, subject to availability of funds.

Play Area	Last Capital Investment	Expenditure	Target Date	Proposed Budget
Hillingdon Rise Rec. Ground	2008	£35,000	2021	£50,000
Julian's Meadow	2008	£35,000	2022	£50,000
Greatness Rec. Ground	2008 2018	£50,000 £10,000	2023	£50,000
Buckhurst Play Area	2016	£100,000	2024	£50,000
Vine Play Area	2016	£10,000	2021	£10,000
Kippington Meadow	2018	£3,000	2025	£5,000
Pontoise	2019	£10,000	2026	£30,000
Mount Close	2020	£20,000	2027	£30,000
		£273,000		£275,000

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158. Adopt a Tree Scheme

In response to the nationally declared climate emergency, the Town Council had pledged to encourage a more sustainable approach to both land use and lifestyle changes. The Adopt a Tree Scheme aligns with that pledge and would benefit the local environment by helping to improve air quality and providing homes for wildlife while adding to the beauty of the Town.

It was noted that the Chairman and Vice Chairman had offered to sponsor planting of new apple trees at the Bat and Ball Centre.

The Committee welcomed this initiative.

159. Bee Hotel at The Pound

As part of the Town Council's commitment to biodiversity and the awareness of the threat to bees and other pollinators, the former animal pound in Pound Lane had been made into a wildlife friendly area, with a focal point of a Bee Hotel. It was intended that the area would serve as an educational venue and an information sign would be erected.

It was noted that The Bee Hotel would be officially opened by the Mayor on 12th July at 2.00pm along with children from a local school.

160. Employee Volunteering in conjunction with Woodland Trust

It was noted that the Town Council had been contacted by EmployeeVolunteering.co.uk, an organisation which matches companies and their employees to volunteer opportunities and projects. They were working with the Woodland Trust who it was understood would be supplying trees to support their projects.

It was proposed to plant approximately 150 saplings of Hazel and Hornbeam trees in an area in Sevenoaks Common that is bare and prone to weed re-growth. Once planted, the trees would provide dense cover for small birds and mammals.

It was noted that this project was provisionally agreed and that a fuller commitment from Employee Volunteering was awaited.

161. Trees in Sevenoaks – Sevenoaks Residents with Woodland Trust

A small group of residents from Sevenoaks had come together to help the environment and to help reduce some of the most serious challenges of climate change. The group was applying to the Woodland Trust for trees that could be planted in Sevenoaks and had asked for partnership opportunities with the Town Council.

It was suggested that there could be a possible partnership with a Residents Association project.

It was noted that this scheme could run in parallel with the Adopt a Tree initiative under the delegated management of the Town Clerk and the Open Spaces Manager.

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162. Management of Sevenoaks Town Council Open Spaces & Allocation of Councillors

The allocation of councillors to open spaces was reviewed. It was noted that councillors were not expected to provide formal reports but were asked to review their assigned open space and to feedback any comments. Councillor Clayton requested that Hillingdon Play Area be added to the list.

It was noted that Cllr Busvine would temporarily work alongside Cllr Waite on the St Nicholas Church site.

RESOLVED: That the following allocation of Councillors to open spaces had been agreed:

SITE	COUNCILLOR
Cemetery	Cllrs Eyre & Camp
Vine (Inc. Fencing)	Cllr Granville Baxter
Upper High St. Gardens	Cllr Michaelides
St. Nicholas Church	Cllr Waite and Cllr Busvine
Kippington Meadow	Cllr Richard Parry
Sevenoaks Common	Cllr Richard Parry
Knole Paddock	Cllr Raikes
Greatness Rec. Grounds	Cllr Dr Canet
Allotments	Cllr Morris Brown
Pointoise/Mount Close	Cllr Shea
Millpond Wood	Cllr Camp
Hillingdon Rise Play Area	Cllr Clayton

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163. Current Matters

The updates on current matters were noted as set out below.

366(vi) 27.11.2017	Vine & Cycle racks	All ten Cycle Planters that were purchased have been installed and filled with plants. Currently at the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat and Ball Centre • London Road, by the Post Office • High Street, by W.H. Smiths • Parklet in Buckhurst 1 car park temporarily (move to Business Hub/STC Offices)
176/5 (vi) 22.07.2019	Hillingdon Rise Green	Leaflet drop to be arranged regarding parking on grass. <i>Cllr's to canvas public about parking on the grass.</i>
176/5 (vii) 22.07.2019	Tree Planting	Open Spaces Manager to liaise with tarmac in relation to offer of trees. New 'Adopt a Tree' brochure produced and distributed.
178	Friends of Greatness Cemetery	The launch has been delayed due to Covid-19. The leaflet is completed and ready to go to print and we hope to launch later this year.
503 17.02.2020	Greatness Football Pavilion Proposal	Presentation to councillors took place 6.7.2020 <i>Football Club submitted planning application.</i>
96 07.07.2020	St John's Toilets	Refurbishment to be progressed subject to landowners (SDC) permission. SDC granted permission "in principle".
217 (iv) 28.09.2020	Trees	John London and Mayor's oak to be replanted
435 15.02.2021	Cemetery Gates	New gates between cemetery and Greatness Recreation Ground to be installed
438.1 15.02.2021	Vine Cricket Ground	Additional signage to be installed, recognising Deed of Gift of land for cricket, and requesting that Vine be respected - <i>COMPLETED</i>
438.3 15.02.21	Knole Paddock and Raleys Field	Open Spaces Manager to review options and proposals regarding improvements to infrastructure of sports pitches
439 15.02.2021	Sevenoaks Town Football Club (STFC) New Pavilion Proposal	Authority delegated to Town Clerk and Chairman of Open Spaces & Leisure Committee to work with STFC to progress proposal for new pavilion

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164. PRESS RELEASE

No press releases were requested.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Chairman **Dated**

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