

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee meeting held on
Monday 4th July 2022 at 7:00pm in Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Available to view on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/e5NCKMilB1I>

Meeting commenced: 19:00

Meeting Concluded: 21.58

Present:

Cllr Nick Busvine, Chairman	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides	Apologies
Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter, Vice-Chairman	Present	Cllr Tom Morris Brown	Apologies
Cllr Keith Bonin	Present	Cllr Richard Parry	Present
Cllr Sue Camp	Apologies	Cllr Mrs Rachel Parry, Mayor (ex-officio)	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Present	Cllr Simon Raikes	Present
Cllr Roderick Hogarth (until 21.15)	Present		

Substitute		For
Cllr Tony Clayton	Present	Cllr Sue Camp
Cllr Libby Ancrum	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides
Cllr Claire Shea	Present	Cllr Tom Morris Brown

In attendance: Cllr Andrew Eyre, Town Clerk, Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager, Allotments Manager, Committee Clerk (Remote attendance) and Senior Committee Clerk (Remote attendance)

Representations received from Members of the Public:

Jack Clipsham, representing residents of 2, 4 & 6 Letter Box Lane, in respect of the repair required to the access track serving those properties, as set out at Agenda Item 5. [See Minute 194.2 below]

Adam Bowman, Director of Rugby, Sevenoaks Rugby Football Club, in respect of the five requests submitted and set out at Agenda Item 5. [See Minute 194.3 below]

Brigitte Perry, Chair of Sevenoaks Allotment Holders Association and plot holder, and Joanne Etherington, Quaker's Hall Allotments plot holder, in respect of the review of the Town Council's previous decision regarding the installation of play equipment on allotments, set out at Agenda Item 8. [See Minutes 196 below]

190. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted and received as noted above.

191. Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

192. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet, Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter and Ruth King, Allotment Manager, all declared an interest in Agenda Item 8 (Quaker's Hall Allotments – Play Equipment) insofar as they were members of Sevenoaks Allotment Holders Association.

193. Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee on 14th February 2022

It was agreed that the word "had" be deleted from the fourth line of Minute 521 (ii).

RESOLVED: that subject to the amendment above, the Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 14th February 2022 be received and agreed as a true record.

194. Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager's Report

194.1 The report of the Open Spaces and Cemetery Manager was received and the following noted:

- Open Spaces Chargehand Ben Day was leaving and recruitment for his replacement had begun
- Additional drainage works at pitch 1, Knole Paddock, had been completed
- Vine Waste entry track had been improved with the installation of a grid mesh stabiliser. Grass seed would be sown around the perimeter when the weather was more favourable.
- Improvements to the play areas at Julian's Meadow and Hillingdon Rise, grant aided by Enover, had been completed. An official opening by the Mayor would be arranged
- Greensands Common Project Update was noted

194.2 Letter Box Lane Track serving Nos. 2,4 and 6

The Committee noted the report regarding repairs required to the track which leads off Letter Box Lane, providing vehicular access across Sevenoaks Common for Nos. 2,4 and 6. Title deed investigations had confirmed that the track was within the Town Council's boundary but did not include restrictions or responsibilities. The title deeds for the individual properties varied in relation to the responsibility and contribution towards maintenance. It was agreed that further legal clarification was required.

The Committee noted the representations submitted by the householders at the beginning of the meeting, including a video showing drainage issues.

RESOLVED: That a sub-committee be formed comprising the Chair of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee, the Town Clerk, the Open Spaces Manager and a local ward member and, following receipt of legal advice, to begin negotiations with the three householders to reach an agreement regarding reasonable contribution to the required works.

194.3 Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC)

Following promotion this season, the Rugby Club had submitted a number of requests for consideration to help their Club develop. The Committee noted the representations submitted at the beginning of the meeting, discussed the items and raised matters as shown below:

(i) Additional ambulance access at pitch 1 access point

- Ambulance service to be consulted regarding the need for the access, and whether this proposal was of significant benefit
- Robust gate design would be required to address risk of unauthorised access to the site
- Application to drop kerb would need to be submitted to Sevenoaks District Council
- Discussions required with Rugby Club regarding funding of the works
- Consideration to be given to impact on car parking

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Manager be asked to investigate these issues with the Rugby Club and report back to a future meeting

(ii) Club Signs advertising home games at top of Plymouth Drive and by access point to the field by pitch 1

- More detailed proposal required of what is intended, what is the purpose, has the placement on the side of existing building been considered
- Advice from Sevenoaks District Council required on whether planning permission needed
- Consideration to be given to the range of uses of the land, implications of clearly branding it as Rugby Club, and to putting something up explaining the variety of uses at Raleys Field
- Current Public Realm Wayfinding project looking at signage throughout the Town, including sports clubs, to be taken into account
- Noted, that Vine Cricket Club do have a provision and that they lease the land.

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Manager discuss the options with the Rugby Club and obtain detailed proposal for consideration at a future meeting

(iii) Pitch 1 Match Day Sponsorship Boards, request to keep up on pitch barriers during season (September to April)

- Planning permission implications to be considered regarding advertising
- Concern that it would visually appear to be a barrier and impede passage across public open space

RESOLVED: that, in principle, the installation of sponsorship boards be permitted on match days and at other times the Rugby Club is using the pitches, subject to clarification of any planning permission required. At all other times the sponsorship boards to be removed.

(iv) 1st XV Match Entrance Charge

- Covenant on the land to be checked to see whether this permissible
- Details required of how it can practically be achieved without impeding public access to the open space

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the covenant on the land be checked to clarify whether this is permissible
- 2) the Rugby Club be asked to provide details of how a charging scheme could be introduced whilst also ensuring that the general public still had free access to the public open space

(v) Additional Point of Sale – Outdoor Hot Food Facility

- Town Council to consider whether it wants a concession on that site
- Green belt land, planning permission would be required
- Utilities would need to be installed
- Costs of building and managing project to be considered

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Manager look in more detail at the proposal to consider whether it is a practical proposal that would stand up to planning and other scrutiny

195. Change to Order of Agenda

RESOLVED: That the order of the agenda be amended to facilitate consideration of the following item for the benefit of the members of public in attendance:

Agenda Item 8 – Request to Review Council Decision in respect of the Installation of Play Equipment on Allotment Sites

196. Request to Review Council Decision in respect of the installation of Play Equipment on Allotment Sites

In accordance with Standing Order 7 (Sevenoaks Town Council Standing Orders, adopted 09.05.2022) Cllrs Busvine, Granville-Baxter, Raikes, and Bonin submitted a request in writing to the Town Clerk for the reconsideration of the previous decision of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee [*Minute 343(iii) 08.11.2021 refers*] to not allow and to remove all play equipment on safety grounds.

The Committee noted the representations submitted at the beginning of the meeting.

It was also noted that the national standard of practice for the management of allotment sites was to not allow play equipment, although reference was also made to Norwich City Council which permitted smaller items of play equipment as long as it was kept in good repair.

The Town Clerk brought to the attention of the Committee that the Town Council's insurer would not provide insurance cover for play equipment installed by others on

the allotments. Bearing this in mind and standard national practice the Town Clerk, in communications to Councillors before and at the meeting, clearly recommended against permitting play equipment on allotments. It was noted that allotment holders could as elsewhere in the country entertain their children whilst gardening using different methods including toys that could be portable and of a size that could fit into a car boot.

Following detailed discussion, Councillors agreed that smaller items of play equipment would be allowed but that due to the insurance risk to the Town Council larger or permanent structures would not be permitted and should be removed. It was agreed that the Town Clerk and Open Spaces Manager would decide whether items were acceptable.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Sevenoaks Town Council in principle adopt the Norwich Rules *“Some children’s play equipment, including small swings and trampolines, will be allowed as long as they are kept in good repair. Paddling pools and bulky play equipment, including large trampolines and swings, are not allowed on site”* without trampolines.
- 2) In the light of professional advice received regarding insurance liability, permanent or large structures that do not meet the criteria above should be removed as soon as possible.

197. Allotment Manager’s report

The Committee received and noted the Allotments Manager’s report.

197.1 Wayleave from house in Wickenden Road onto Quaker’s Hall Allotments

It was noted that a gated access from a plot holder’s property in Wickenden Road to their allotment plot had been created in the fence without the prior permission of the Town Council.

It was agreed that the access should be subject to a formal wayleave agreement with the tenant of the property. The agreement would be specific to the tenant not the property: when the tenant leaves the property the wayleave ends and the access gate must be removed.

It was also agreed that the Town Council would pay for a generic wayleave document to be prepared.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the tenant be allowed continued access to the plot via the back gate until they either give up the plot or move house, by means of a formal wayleave agreement to be drawn up between the Town Council and the tenant. The plot tenancy does not go with the house but the person. When they leave the house, the tenant should be reminded that the wayleave agreement will end and the back gate must be removed

- 2) The Town Council pay for a generic wayleave document to be prepared for use in this and future cases and to where possible reclaim costs.

197.2 Allotment Rents

RESOLVED:

- 1) To recommend to the Finance & General Purposes Committee that the allotment rents be increased by no more than 10%, ie. to 21.8p per square metre, slightly more than the rate of inflation
- 2) That any increase be communicated to the tenants in September along with their renewal letter and invoice, with the increase effective from 1st October 2023.

198. Statement of Accounts

RESOLVED: that the accounts to 31 May 2022 be received and noted.

199. Raleys Car Parking Permit Scheme

The Committee reviewed the criteria for the Raleys Car Park Scheme which allocated 35 annual permits to low paid retail workers in the Town.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the criteria be amended to state:
 - applicant's salary criteria be in line with minimum wage
 - that people with greater difficulty accessing the town centre to be given priority
- 2) The review of the annual fee to be considered as part of the general review of fees and charges by the Town Council in the Autumn

200. Secure Parking for Electric Bikes

The Committee received and noted the research undertaken into options for secure parking for electric bikes. It was noted that further research was underway.

201. Sevenoaks in Bloom

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2022 were received and noted. The Town Clerk reminded councillors of the requests for help in the run up to the judging days.

202. Dog Behaviour at Greatness Recreation Ground

It was noted that following a complaint from a local resident with concerns about a dog's behaviour and a request to restrict dogs from Greatness Recreation Ground, or put in place restrictions to keep on a lead, a meeting had been held in March between the Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council officers to consider options. Unfortunately due to understandable resource issues the District Council had been unable to progress this matter.

The Committee noted the position and requested that officers continue to liaise with the District Council on this matter.

203. Cycle Friendly Accreditations

Councillors congratulated the Bat & Ball Station Café and the Café on the Vine on receiving Cycle Friendly Places Accreditation.

204. Current Matters

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

176/5 (vii) 22.07.2019	Tree Planting	<p>Open Spaces Manager to liaise with Tarmac in relation to offer of trees. So far, there has not been a reply from the new management team at Tarmac. Total number of trees planted in 2021 by STC is 21 standard trees and 390 whips/saplings.</p> <p>As part of The Queen's Green Canopy Project, the Mayor planted an Avalon Plum tree at the Bat & Ball Centre in March. Two Sakura cherries have also been planted, one in memory of Cllr Waite.</p>
178 22.07.2019	Friends of Greatness Cemetery	After delays in the launch due to Covid-19, an action plan for launch and running of scheme is being developed.
96 07.07.2020	St John's Toilets	Refurbishment to be progressed subject to landowners (SDC) permission. SDC granted permission "in principle". Two quotations have been obtained with additional quotations being sought.
435 15.02.2021	Cemetery Gates	New gates between cemetery and Greatness Recreation Ground to be installed. Completed.
438.3 15.02.21	Knole Paddock and Raleys Field – First pitch drainage	Drainage work completed.
152 (iii) 05.07.2021	Raleys Field Floodlight improvement on Pitch 3	Further to site visit by the supplier and confirmation of quote, the proposal is with Sevenoaks District Council for planning advice. Planning application with SDC.
152 (iv) 05.07.2021	St Nicholas Church – Quinquennial Report	Quotes from qualified stone masons for works mentioned in the Quinquennial report of 12.03.2021 have been obtained and will be reviewed by Officers. To be reported to next meeting.
156 05.07.2021	Greatness Recreation Ground Management and Improvement Plan	Meeting with stakeholders was held on 08.10.2021. It was agreed that a survey would be produced in 2022.
289 (iii) 27.09.2021	Wild in Sevenoaks tree planting	Consider further a place for the planting of trees. It was agreed to plant up an area of 'Littlewood', planned for November 2022. Woodland Trust has approved application from Wild in Sevenoaks group – trees to be delivered in the Autumn.

293 27.09.2021	Play Areas Tender Review	Contracts awarded and work expected to commence early to mid-May 2022. Both Hillingdon Rise and Julian's Meadow play areas completed. See Open Spaces Manager's report, Agenda Item 5. Openings to be organised before start of school summer holiday.
297 27.09.2021	Sevenoaks In Bloom 2022	Noted that Sevenoaks is a finalist in the Britain in Bloom 2022 competition. See Agenda Item 11.
353 08.11.2021	Kent Association of Local Councils – Fire Hydrant Initiative	Awaiting information from KALC/KFRS with guidance on progressing scheme.
519 (i) 14.02.2022	Knole Paddock and Raleys Field – cricket practice nets	Planning permission granted.
522 14.02.2022	Sevenoaks Lawn Tennis Club-parking barrier in Raleys Car Park	Club advised of resolution: RESOLVED: to support the SLTC proposal subject to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLTC to proceed only if the tennis club meet the full cost, including planning permission; • Should the items become damaged or unused, they be removed from the site completely, including removal of the key pad and kerbed area and the reinstatement of the area to its former condition at SLTC's expense; • That there be no loss of parking spaces to the Town Council; and • That officers seek reassurance that emergency access provision be taken into account during the planning process.

205. PRESS RELEASE

It was agreed that a press release be issued regarding the completion of the Julian's Meadow and Hillingdon Rise Play Areas, and the Cyle Friendly Places Accreditation awarded to the Bat & Ball Café and Café on the Vine.

Chairman Dated