

Sevenoaks Town Council

Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10th October 2022 at 7.00pm in Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:

<https://youtu.be/XyEBpAaH-6E>

Meeting commenced: 19:00

Meeting Concluded: 20:25

Present:

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

Substitute		For
Cllr Tony Clayton	Present	Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter
Cllr Claire Shea	Present	Cllr Sue Camp

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

Representations received from Members of the Public: None

335. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted and received as noted above.

336. Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

337. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

338. Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee on 4th July 2022

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 4th July 2022 be received and agreed as a true record.

339. Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager's Report

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

- Recruitment continued to be challenging for the replacement Grounds Supervisor post

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- Kent Wildlife Trust had included Greatness Cemetery in its list of Kent Local Wildlife Sites for its substantial Bryophyte and Fungus Flora on acid grassland
- There were currently 12 applications to Adopt a Tree and work had begun to identify suitable trees and sites
- Unfortunately 4 trees planted last year under the scheme had died but would be replaced
- Following the extension to 31st March 2023, it was suggested that, subject to discussion with “Wild in Sevenoaks”, the planned planting at Littlewood be dedicated to the Queen’s Canopy of Trees project

The report from Andrew Wilmore, Project Coordinator for Greensands Common, was noted. The Committee was impressed with the series of events held during Greensands Common Week in August and asked that thanks be sent to Andrew and his team. The Open Spaces Manager advised that the project would be wound up this year but it was hoped that it would continue in some form with voluntary groups.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) receive and note the report of the Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager; and
- 2) formally thank those involved with the Greensands Common Project

339.2 The Committee considered the quotes received in 2021 for repair works identified in St Nicholas’ Church Quinquennial report, which were the responsibility of the Town Council. It was noted that the stated proposal in the report to fund the works from Capital had been amended to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the companies that submitted quotes A and D, being the most competitive, be invited to requote with the plan to complete the works in 2023/24; and
- 2) the Finance & General Purposes Committee be asked to approve £4,000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for this purpose.

340. Statement of Accounts

The Committee sought clarification on a few matters of detail: the Responsible Finance Officer would be asked to follow up.

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

341. Allotments Reports

341.1 Allotment Manager’s report

The report of the Allotment Manager was received and the following noted:

- There were currently more plots available than people on the waiting list
- A number of the plots (less than 1%) were in a non-cultivable state and would be a challenge for new tenants

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- The Wayleave licence for the house in Wickenden Road onto Quaker's Hall Allotment site had been completed, the Council now had a general licence for future use
- The new clause regarding play equipment had been added to the Allotment Tenancy Agreement on 1st October 2022 and was accepted by tenants, the Committee congratulated the Allotment Manager on successfully addressing this issue
- The reurbishment of the Trading Centre at Quaker's Hall Allotments was almost complete and had been well received
- The installation of water tanks at Bradbourne Vale Allotments was ongoing, awaiting the manufacture of lids

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report of the Allotment Manager.

341.2 Draft Allotments Strategy 2021 - 2025

RESOLVED: that the Draft Allotments Strategy 2021-2025 be adopted.

341.3 Quaker's Hall Allotments - Management Plan 2022

RESOLVED: that the Quaker's Hall Allotments - Management Plan 2022 be adopted.

341.4 Bradbourne Vale Allotments - Management Plan 2022

RESOLVED: that the Bradbourne Vale Allotments - Management Plan 2022 be adopted.

341.5 Devolved Management of Allotments

The Committee considered the possibility of devolving management of allotments to Allotment Associations, via a service level agreement on a four-year cycle, reviewed following each Town Council election.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) allotment holders at Quaker's Hall and Bradbourne Vale be consulted regarding potential devolved management of the allotment sites, via a service level agreement on a four-year cycle, reviewed following each Town Council election; and
- 2) a report on the outcome of the consultation be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

342. Change to Order of Agenda

RESOLVED: That the order of the agenda be amended to facilitate an announcement by the Mayor on the outcome of the RHS National In Bloom Awards.

343. Sevenoaks In Bloom

343.1 RHS National In Bloom Awards 2022

The Mayor was delighted to announce that Sevenoaks Town Council had been awarded Silver Gilt in the RHS National In Bloom Awards. She advised that it was the first time Sevenoaks had entered the National Awards and thanked all the staff,

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volunteers and community groups that had contributed to this wonderful achievement.

RESOLVED: That the results of the RHS National In Bloom Awards be received and noted.

343.2 South & South East In Bloom 2022

The Chairman drew attention to the results of the South & South East In Bloom 2022, commenting that these were the best results to date, a reflection of the incredible amount of work put into the project. He reported that the following message had been received from Laura Trott MP:

“My congratulations to you, your team, all at Sevenoaks Town Council and all the volunteers for all your hard work in obtaining this result.”

RESOLVED: That the results of the South & South East In Bloom be received and noted.

344. Knole Paddock and Sports Pitches

Consideration was given to a report setting out recent drainage work undertaken at Knole Paddock, a Freedom of Information Request received, and discussions with Sevenoaks Rugby Football Club (SRFC) regarding the pitch condition and other matters raised by SRFC in connection with funding of works and management of the site.

The report also advised that regular end of season repair work to two cricket tables had begun.

The Committee acknowledged the difficulties experienced on site with the delay to the start of the drainage works due to Rugby fixtures and the impact of the long drought on the recovery of the ground and grass germination.

The Committee was pleased to hear that the new floodlighting had been installed the previous week and was well received by the Rugby Club.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the report be received and noted; and
- 2) Officers be thanked for all their hard work in dealing with this challenging matter

345. Proposed Works to Letter Box Lane

Consideration was given to a report detailing the legal advice which had now been received in respect of a request from householders for repair works to the track off Letterbox Lane which provided vehicular access Sevenoaks Common for Nos. 2, 4, and 6.

It was noted that conveyance documents granting rights to use the access road did not contain an obligation on Sevenoaks Town Council as land owner to maintain the

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access road, only for Nos 2 and 6 to contribute to any maintenance. Documents supplied showed that No.4 was granted the right to use the access road but there was no obligation to contribute.

The Town Council had obtained three quotes for the repair work.

RESOLVED: That the conveyancing documents granting rights to use the access road were clear that the obligation to pay for maintenance of the road was on properties Nos 2 and 6 Letter Box Lane, and therefore the Council would not contribute to the costs in the best interest of council tax payers.

346. 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> <p>Adopt a Tree – 12 applications received with trees to be planted in late Autumn.</p>
178 22.07.2019	Friends of Greatness Cemetery	<p>After delays in the launch due to Covid-19, an action plan for launch and running of scheme is being developed.</p> <p>Launch planned for November 2022.</p>
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	<p>Further to site visit by the supplier and confirmation of quote, the proposal is with Sevenoaks District Council for planning advice.</p> <p>Planning application approved and lights installed 5-7th October.</p>
152 (iv) 05.07.2021	St Nicholas Church – Quinquennial Report	<p>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.</p> <p>Two most competitive invited to requote with plan to complete works 2023/24.</p>
156 05.07.2021	Greatness Recreation Ground Management and Improvement Plan	<p>Meeting with stakeholders was held on 08.10.2021. It was agreed that a survey would be produced in 2022.</p> <p>The survey will be part of the professional consultant's work required by the Football Foundation to progress the proposed new pavilion.</p>

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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. Public consultation taking place. Planned planting date is mid-November.
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. Official openings held in time for summer holidays on 18th & 19th August 2022
297 27.09.2021	Sevenoaks In Bloom 2022	Noted the result of the South & South East In Bloom and that Sevenoaks Town Council was awarded Silver Gilt in the RHS National In Bloom Awards.
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. Oprington Ocelots informed and asked to provide update on self-funding and/or grant availability, ongoing maintenance funding, planned usage and other relevant information.
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. No further update.
194.2 04.07.2022	Letter Box Lane Track serving Nos. 2,4 and 6	Minute 345 above: RESOLVED: That the conveyancing documents granting rights to use the access road were clear that

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		the obligation to pay for maintenance of the road was on properties Nos 2 and 6 Letter Box Lane, and therefore the Council would not contribute to the costs in the best interest of council tax payers..
194.3 (i) 04.07.2022	Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC) <i>Additional ambulance access at pitch 1 access point</i>	<p>(i) <u>Additional ambulance access at pitch 1 access point</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Manager be asked to investigate these issues with the Rugby Club and report back to a future meeting</p> <p>Awaiting information from SRFC regarding Ambulance Service access requirements and funding options.</p> <p>Gate design to be partly dependent on Ambulance Service requirements.</p> <p>KCC advised vehicle crossover application would be required & SDC to be consulted regarding planning permission for dropped kerb.</p> <p>SRFC to investigate points and report back to us before planning permission applied for.</p>
194.3 (ii) 04.07.2022	Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC) <i>Club Signs at top of Plymouth Drive and by access point to the field by pitch 1</i>	<p>(ii) <u>Club Signs advertising home games at top of Plymouth Drive and by access point to the field by pitch 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Manager discuss the options with the Rugby Club and obtain detailed proposal for consideration at a future meeting</p> <p>SRFC would hope to attract more spectators by advertising upcoming matches on roadside signs</p> <p>KCC responsible for road signs - SRFC was advised to consult KCC about signage at top of Plymouth Drive</p> <p>Suggested to SRFC placement of sign on pavilion – SRFC preference is sign by hatched entrance</p> <p>Awaiting more information from SRFC detailing proposed signage</p>
<p>194.3 (iii) 04.07.2022</p>	<p>Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC)</p> <p><i>Pitch 1 Match Day Sponsorship Boards – request to keep up during season</i></p>	<p>(iii) <u>Pitch 1 Match Day Sponsorship Boards, request to keep up on pitch barriers during season (September to April)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>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.</p> <p>SDC advised that planning permission is required for any sponsorship boards - and retrospective planning application can be submitted for existing signage.</p>

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		<p>As Knole Paddock is within the green belt additional factors need to be considered when making planning application.</p> <p>SRFC explained difficulty in finding volunteers /members to place and remove sponsorship boards between match days</p>
194.3 (iv) 04.07.2022	<p>Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC)</p> <p><i>1st XV Match Entrance Charge</i></p>	<p>(iv) <u>1st XV Match Entrance Charge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>SRFC advised that it does not intend to impede public access to the open space and proposed setting up a table in the car park asking for a donation from spectators. They explained that supporters of teams at this level are accustomed to paying a small donation/entrance charge.</p> <p>The covenants are not clear either way. As a principle, charging is not made for entry to public open space.</p>
194.3 (v) 04.07.2022	<p>Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC)</p> <p><i>Additional Point of Sale: outdoor hot food facility</i></p>	<p>(v) <u>Additional Point of Sale – Outdoor Hot Food Facility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>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</p>

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		<p>and other scrutiny</p> <p>A meeting has been held with SRFC and discussion about information needed regarding costs associated with building and maintaining any structure, Health and Safety considerations, and Food Hygiene considerations for an outdoor Point of Sale, for STC to consider at a later date.</p>
197.1 04.07.2022	Wayleave from house in Wickenden Road onto Quaker's Hall Allotments -	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Completed.</p>
197.2 04.07.2022	Allotment Rents	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Agreed at F&GP (Minute 224 F&GP 18.07/22 Refers). Tenants notified.</p>
199 04.07.2022	Raleys Car Parking Permit Scheme - Charges	<p>Annual review of fee to be considered at next meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>Review of all fees and charges to be considered at November meeting of this Committee.</p>
202 04.07.2022	Dog Behaviour at Greatness Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs installed at Greatness Recreation Ground • Dog Education Event schedule for 16 August was postponed due to extreme heat • New Dog Education event to be held jointly

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		with SDC on 22 October at Greatness Recreation Ground.
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347. PRESS RELEASE

It was agreed that a press release be issued regarding the Silver Gilt achieved in the RHS National in Bloom Awards and the installation of new floodlighting at Knole Paddock.

Chairman **Dated**