

Sevenoaks Town Council

Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10th July 2023 at 7.00pm in Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

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

<https://youtube.com/live/CUJ4McSREj8?feature=share>

Meeting commenced: 19:00

Meeting Concluded: 20:52

Present:

Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet, Chair	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides	Present
Cllr Victoria Granville, Vice-Chair	Apologies	Cllr Nick Varley	Present
Cllr Peter Dixon	Present	Cllr Nigel Wightman	Apologies
Cllr Sally Layne	Apologies	Cllr Gareth Willis	Present

Substitute		For	
Cllr Claire Shea	Present	Cllr Victoria Granville, Vice-Chair	
Cllr David Skinner	Present	Cllr Nigel Wightman	

In attendance: Town Clerk, Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager (remote attendance), outgoing Allotment Manager, newly appointed Allotment Manager, and Committee Clerk

Representations received from Members of the Public:

Michael Wakefield and Patrick Michaels, in respect of the requests made regarding Woodside Road Open Space, as set out at Agenda Item 13. [See Minute 213 below]

200. Chair and Vice-Chair

It was noted that at the Annual Council meeting held on 15th May 2023, the following appointments were made:

- 1) Chair of Open Spaces and Leisure Committee – Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet
- 2) Vice-Chair of Open Spaces and Leisure Committee – Cllr Victoria Granville

201. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted and received as noted above.

203. Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

204. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Skinner stated a Declaration of Interest in matters relating to Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees.

Sevenoaks Town Council

205. Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee on 13th February 2023

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee meeting held on 13th February 2023 be received and agreed as a true record.

206. Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager's Report

The report of the Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager was received and the following matters were discussed:

206.1 Staff

Open Spaces gardener Lewis Sutton was leaving and he had been thanked for his four years' service. This leaves three vacancies to fill including the post of Open Spaces Supervisor.

206.2 Sevenoaks Greensands Common Project

The project which had run for four years and benefitted Sevenoaks Common was coming to an end and a request had been received to continue funding for an additional four years.

A review of the works carried out to date had shown several other sites had received a greater amount of conservation work and it was hoped that regular reviews would take place to ensure that Sevenoaks Common received an equal amount of time and resources in future.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Finance & General Purposes Committee to consider in future budgets to contribute £5,000 p.a. for four years to continue funding the project.

206.3 Green Flag – The Vine

Following the successful Mystery Shop in October 2022, a full evaluation had been carried out in May 2023 and The Vine had retained its Green Flag standard.

206.4 Greatness Cemetery

It was noted that due to several factors the Open Spaces team had fallen behind on grass cutting and that outside firms would be contracted to assist if necessary.

206.5 Skateboard Park at Greatness Recreation Ground

It was noted that the skatepark has regular maintenance but needs fundamental repairs. Three options had been given to the Youth Services Committee for review. Following consideration, the option of a complete renovation had been selected. It was noted that the estimated cost of £40,000 would be reviewed at the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.

206.6 Councillor Tour of STC Open Spaces

It was noted that the Councillor tour of Open Spaces would take place on 15th July and that an additional tour would be scheduled in September.

Sevenoaks Town Council

207. Statement of Accounts

RESOLVED: that the accounts to 31st May 2023 be received and noted.

208. Allotment Manager's Report

The Committee noted the Allotment Manager's report.

208.1 Allotment Rents

RESOLVED:

- (1) To recommend to the Finance & General Purposes Committee that 2024/2025 allotment rents for Quakers Hall Allotments be increased by no more than 10% ie to 23p per square metre, slightly more than the rate of inflation.
- (2) To recommend to the Finance & General Purposes Committee that 2024/2025 allotment rents for Bradbourne Vale Allotments be increased by 0.2p to round up to 22p per square metre.
- (3) That any increase be communicated to the tenants in September along with their renewal letter and invoice, with the increase effective from 1st October 2024.

208.2 Water Tank Installation at BVA

The Allotment Manager thanked the Open Spaces team for assisting during the installation of the tanks.

208.3 Allotment Manager

The Committee thanked the outgoing Allotment Manager, Ruth King, for her excellent work.

The newly appointed Allotment Manager, Anna Rosinska, was welcomed.

208.4 Provision of Allotment to Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees

RESOLVED: to provide one allotment Free of Charge to Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees, to be reviewed on an annual basis.

209. Sevenoaks In Bloom

The Mayor, Cllr Shea, expressed thanks to all who presented on judging day with special thanks to the Town Clerk, the Open Spaces Manager, and the Town Team Officer.

The Committee thanked Sevenoaks Town Council staff, particularly the Open Spaces Team, as well as the Soroptimists and other volunteers who had worked hard to prepare the Town.

The result will be announced in September.

Sevenoaks Town Council

210. **Sevenoaks Sports Strategy Review**

Further to the successful implementation of the first Sevenoaks Town Council Sports Strategy which resulted in more than £1.2 million being invested into sports provisions within Sevenoaks Town, it was noted that representatives of local sports' organisations and schools were being invited to participate in the design and preparation of the second local Sports Strategy.

The timeline for production of the second Sports Strategy would be dependent on items raised during the consultation.

The first meeting is scheduled to take place 4th October 2023.

211. **SRFC Liaison Group & Raleys/Knoles Paddock User Group**

RESOLVED: to expand the role of Councillors nominated as "Representatives to Outside Bodies" to include Sports Clubs who are Tenants of Sevenoaks Town Council.

212. **Sevenoaks Rugby Football Club – Liaison Meeting**

The Committee noted the notes from the Liaison Meeting.

213. **Woodside Road Open Space**

It was proposed by a local resident to enable the area to become a wildlife habitat and to remove dead trees. The open space is re-wilding itself naturally, but it was agreed that the proposed suggestions would be beneficial to wildlife and enhance the appearance of the space. Due to previous contamination, an Environmental Health report should be commissioned prior to any plan of action being implemented. Ash Trees showing signs of Ash Back would be added to a list of tree works planned this summer.

RESOLVED:

- (1) Officers to prepare a consultation leaflet to be circulated by Ward Councillors.
- (2) To commission an updated Environmental Health report on the land to ensure there is no contamination.
- (3) To develop a plan of action to be implemented in the Autumn, subject to local support and result of Environmental Health report.

The Committee thanked Sevenoaks resident Michael Wakefield for the handmade bird boxes donated for the open space.

214. **Mill Pond Wood – steps from Seal Road**

The Woods attract many users and the Committee had considered improvements which could be made to the steps to permit easier access without detracting from the wood's natural state and character.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To continue to monitor the use and erosion of the steps.
- (2) To obtain quotes to install handrails to the existing steps.

Sevenoaks Town Council

215. Raleys Car Park Permit Scheme

RESOLVED: to expand the criteria to open applications to independent businesses alongside independent retailers.

216. Wednesday Market at Buckhurst Lane

It was noted that issues related to the proposed move of the Wednesday Market were complex and had many planning and trading issues which needed to be considered.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To recommend that the Town Council review the current policy for persuading Sevenoaks District Council to move the Wednesday Market from Buckhurst Lane to the High Street (same location as Saturday market) at its meeting scheduled for 24th July 2023.
- (2) Officers to assist where possible to provide any additional information requested by Councillors for the review at the Town Council.

217. Current Matters

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

NB: updates in green

176/5 (vii) 22.07.2019	Tree Planting	<p>Open Spaces Manager to liaise with Enover in relation to offer of trees. So far, there has not been a reply from the new management team at Enover.</p> <p>Total number of trees planted in 2022/23 by STC is 34 standard trees and 70 whips/saplings. 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 2022/23 – 13 trees planted.</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 have been invited to requote with plan to complete works 2023/24.</p> <p>Work scheduled to commence September 2023.</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>

Sevenoaks Town Council

		<p>The survey will be part of the professional consultant's work required by the Football Foundation to progress the proposed new pavilion.</p> <p>STFC and STC jointly appointed consultant for public consultation in January 2023.</p> <p>Pending update.</p>
353 08.11.2021	Kent Association of Local Councils – Fire Hydrant Initiative	<p>Awaiting information from KALC/KFRS with guidance on progressing scheme. Pending information from KFRS.</p> <p>STC liaising with representative from Sevenoaks Fire Station.</p>
522 14.02.2022	Sevenoaks Lawn Tennis Club-parking barrier in Raleys Car Park	<p>Club advised of resolution:</p> <p>RESOLVED: to support the SLTC proposal subject to the following:</p> <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. <p>STC is aware that SLTC is ready to submit planning application.</p>
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

Sevenoaks Town Council

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 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> <p>No further update.</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 • 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

Sevenoaks Town Council

		<p>provision and that they lease the land.</p> <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>No further update.</p>
194.3 (iii) 04.07.2022	<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> <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</p>

Sevenoaks Town Council

		<p>/members to place and remove sponsorship boards between match days.</p> <p>No further update.</p>
194.3 (iv) 04.07.2022	<p>Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC) <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> <p>It is recommended that sale of programme is used to generate funds from spectators. No further update.</p>
194.3 (v) 04.07.2022	<p>Knole Paddock, Sevenoaks Rugby Club (SRFC) <i>Additional Point of Sale: outdoor hot food facility</i></p>	<p><u>(v) 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

Sevenoaks Town Council

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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> <p>No further update.</p>
414.2 07.11.2022	Boundary Wall between the Closed Churchyard at St Nicholas Church and The Chantry house	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Officers carry out additional preparatory work required; and 2) obtain legal opinion regarding ownership of the boundary wall <p>Legal opinion has been received and a shared ownership agreement has been sent to the owner.</p> <p>Shared ownership agreement being finalised.</p>
582.4 13.02.2023	Vine - Condition of Grass	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To rule out the placement of a path down the middle of the grass; 2) To seed and temporarily fence off an area of the grass to allow it time to recover; and 3) To consider what can be installed in the garden to celebrate the Coronation. <p>King Charles Coronation Roses to be planted in Vine Garden.</p>
582.5 13.02.2023	Vine - Anti-social behaviour	<p>RESOLVED that Officers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review additional security arrangements to be taken; 2) Continue and intensify communication with the Police; and 3) Report back at the next Committee meeting.

Sevenoaks Town Council

		<p>Item was reported to Youth Service Committee.</p> <p>Enhanced CCTV was installed and existing/damaged toilet doors were replaced with more robust/steel doors.</p> <p>SDC consulting on PSPO, may be complicated due to Premises Licences.</p>
582.7 13.02.2023	Vine- Borehole	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Officers to explore and consult fully about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) SVCC plans to fund a borehole installation; b) Location of related infrastructure; and c) The opinion of local and relevant authorities and agencies. 2) Officers to report back at the next Committee meeting. <p>Pending reply from Environmental Agencies.</p>
213 10.07.2023	Woodside Road Open Space	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Officers to prepare a consultation leaflet to be circulated to local residents by Ward Councillors. 2) To commission an updated Environmental Health report on the land to ensure there is no contamination. 3) To begin implementing a plan of action in the Autumn subject to local support and result of Environmental Health report.
214 10.07.2023	Mill Pond Wood – steps from Seal Road	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To continue to monitor the use and erosion of the steps. 2) To obtain quotes to install handrails to the existing steps.
216 10.07.2023	Wednesday Market at Buckhurst Lane	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To recommend that the Town Council review the current policy for persuading Sevenoaks District Council to move the Wednesday Market from Buckhurst Lane to the High Street (same location as Saturday market) at its meeting scheduled for 24th July 2023.

Sevenoaks Town Council

		2) Officers to assist where possible to provide any additional information requested by Councillors for the review at the Town Council.
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218. PRESS RELEASE

No press releases were requested.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting.

Chair **Dated**