

Sevenoaks Town Council

Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee meeting held on 12th February 2024 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/Ar44xNR--v4>

Meeting commenced: 19:00

Meeting Concluded: 20:41

Present:

Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet, Chair	Present	Cllr Lionel O'Hara	Absent
Cllr Victoria Granville, Vice-Chair	Present	Cllr Nick Varley	Present
Cllr Dr Peter Dixon	Present	Cllr Nigel Wightman- Deputy Leader	Present
Cllr Sally Layne	Apologies	Cllr Gareth Willis	Apologies
Cllr Lise Michaelides	Present	Cllr Claire Shea, Mayor (Ex- officio)	Apologies
Substitute		For	
Cllr Tony Clayton (Leader)		Cllr Sally Layne	
Cllr Catherine Daniell		Cllr Gareth Willis	

In attendance: Town Clerk (remote attendance), Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager, Senior Committee Clerk, Planning Committee Clerk, Open Spaces & Leisure Committee Clerk.

Members of Public present: 1

Representations received from Members of the Public: None

664. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted and received as noted above.

665. Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

666. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

667. Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee on 13th November 2023

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

668. Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager's Report

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

668.1 Staff & Training

Noted that a member of grounds staff had left the Council's employment in late December. Recruitment continued for Open Spaces vacancies. It was also noted that

Sevenoaks Town Council

The Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager and the Town Wardens had undertaken training in risks of using products involved in playground wet pour safety surfaces.

668.2 Knole Paddock and Rayley's Fields

The Committee considered the request from Sevenoaks Rugby Club for use of temporary flood lighting at Rayley's Field.

Given the various demands on Knole Paddock and Rayley's Field it was agreed that this request be referred to the next meeting of the Sports Strategy Group for consideration.

RESOLVED: That this request be considered at the next Sports Strategy meeting.

668.3 Greatness Cemetery

The Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager advised of a fault with the control unit of the newly installed screens at the cemetery chapel. It was advised that the unit would be returned for repairs.

It was noted that stability testing of Headstones and Memorials would need to be completed shortly as the last testing was completed five years ago. The cost of £2,299 would be met from the Rolling Capital Programme budget.

The 'resident' definition within cemetery charges was reviewed and it was suggested that the criteria be changed for a person to be considered a resident after living within the Sevenoaks Town areas for a shorter period of time.

RESOLVED: That wording be amended to the following:

“RESIDENT: A parishioner (or ex-parishioner) of Sevenoaks Town who for a period resided within the Town area and who at the time of his/her death had not been resident outside that area for more than 10 years.
NON-RESIDENT: Any non-parishioner.”

668.4 Greatness Recreation Ground

The Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager advised of concern raised by a resident over the parking of vehicles at weekends during football matches at the Greatness Recreation Ground or Church attendance. Consideration was given to the installation of bollards.

It was noted that plans for the entrance were included in the planning application for the new football pavilion and adaptations to the whole site and that a working party had been suggested to review the results of the Greatness Recreation Ground Survey (See Minute No. 673).

RESOLVED: That that this matter be referred to the Greatness Recreation Ground Working Party.

Sevenoaks Town Council

668.5 Lower St Johns Toilets Refurbishment

The Committee was informed that work had started and progress made on the refurbishment of the toilets at Lower St Johns.

668.6 Longspring Wood

The Committee noted the Longspring Wood Feasibility Study and that a current pledge sum of twenty thousand pounds had been received. Councillors requested that promotion continue.

668.7 Safety Upgrades at Middling Wood and Millpond Wood

The Committee noted the safety upgrades completed at Millpond Wood and Middling Wood; rope handrails have been installed at both locations and Middling Wood has had two steps repaired. Positive comments had been received from members of the public.

668.8 St Nicholas' Churchyard

The Committee noted damage to a wall between the churchyard and a resident's property. There is a health and safety risk posed by the fragility of the wall. The reason for damage is unknown however weather had been noted to be a possible factor. It was advised that a structural engineer had inspected the wall, and the wall had been temporarily secured.

Councillors asked that the legal advice regarding the boundary wall be reviewed in relation to the sharing of costs if possible.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Work be carried out to make the wall safe, to be funded from Capital Programme budget; and
- 2) Authority be delegated to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Town Clerk to review the legal advice and progress the works as appropriate.

668.9 Woodside Road Open Space

The Committee further considered proposals for the Woodside Road open space, in the light of the £10,000 quotation received for the cleansing of the area of potentially contaminated land. It was noted that the site was safe but there was a risk of phosphorus contamination should the site be dug deep.

Officers had recommended that the area be professionally cleared of potentially contaminated soil.

Councillors expressed concern about the cost of the proposed work, noting that the land was safe if left undisturbed. It was suggested that the site could be enhanced by other means, such as wildflower planting without disturbing the land.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council does not proceed with the cleansing of the area of potentially contaminated land at Woodside Road, which is safe if left undisturbed by deep digging, and does not carry out public consultation on the matter.

668.10 Woodland Management

It was noted that a 5-year woodland management plan review was required, together with an application to renew the Town Council's felling licence,

RESOLVED: To obtain a minimum of 3 quotes for a 5-year review of existing woodland sites and potentially new woodlands, to include submissions to obtain a new felling license and possible access to grants, at an estimated cost of £3,000.

668.11 Raley's Car Park

The Committee was informed that the applications for the Raley's Car Park Permits were now available.

669. Tree and Sculpture Projects

The Committee was advised of three new projects that the Town Council was progressing:

669.1 Sevenoaks Society Donation of Trees

The Committee noted the generous donation of £300 by the Sevenoaks Society for further tree planting, together with the recommended location at Greatness Recreation Ground, on the bank adjoining Mill Lane and the playground. The Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager confirmed that the trees planted would be native trees.

669.2 Infinity Project

The Committee was enthusiastic about the project for an outdoor art installation at Greatness Recreation Ground, utilising wooden poles engraved with poems. It was noted that poems used for the project were obtained from a community workshop and there was a possibility of different poems being used once there was a need for replacement due to deterioration.

669.3 Beuy's Project

It was noted that Sevenoaks Town had been chosen as one of nineteen locations in Britain for a national long-term tree growing project. The project consisted of planting trees in a circle. It was agreed that the Environmental Park would be the location for the project working in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council. The prestigious national project would recognise the commemoration of 50 years of Sevenoaks Town Council.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the locations for the tree and sculpture projects detailed above be approved; and
- 2) the next steps of installation be progressed.

670. Allotment Officer's Report

The Committee received and noted the Allotment Officer's report. The current number of available plots and waiting list of prospective tenants was noted as well as the possibility of improving the appearance of available plots to attract prospective

Sevenoaks Town Council

tenants. It was also noted that the Allotment Officer had attended and submitted a yearly report to The Sevenoaks Allotment Holder's Association Annual General Meeting. The reopening of the trading centre following the winter break was also noted.

671. OSL Committee Budget + 5 Year Capital Programme & Funding Recommendations (Rolled forward from November Meeting)

The Committee received and noted the 5 Year Capital Programme and funding recommendations. The Town Clerk advised that the plan was to proceed with projects for which funds had been already allocated this included:

Project	CIL	RCP	Vehicle Reserve	Capital Budget	Total
JCB Ecavator			£30,000		
Deck Mower (tractor)			£15,000		
Chapel restrain wood				£1,500	
Cemetery – garage roof repairs				£2,000	
KP workshop paint & restrain		£1,718			
Repair workshop barn doors	£2,000				
Vine crazy paving	£10,000				
Judds Piece resurfacing	£2,000			£500	
Woodside Road fence	£1,000			£1,000	
Pontoise Close Wall				£2,000	
St N Church paths		£1,200		£2,800	
Julian Meadow fence		£1,200			
Greatness Rec CCTV	£9,000				
	£24,000	£4,118	£45,000	£9,800	£82,918

It was noted that funds had not currently been allocated to the following projects

- Knole Paddock car park root damage £30,000
- Knole Paddock car park white lines £1,000
- Greatness Recreation play equipment £60,000
- Greatness Recreation play surface £8,000

672. Sports Strategy Survey

The Committee noted the publishing of the Sports Strategy Questionnaire which sought responses from schools and sporting organisations.

Councillors asked that they be provided with a copy of the distribution list for the questionnaire so that they could promote amongst their contacts without duplication.

673. Greatness Recreation Ground Survey Result

The Greatness Recreation Ground Survey Results were noted and a working group was suggested to review results. It was agreed that the group could be formed by members and non-members of the Town Council.

Sevenoaks Town Council

RESOLVED:

- 1) To establish a Working Group to review the results of the Greatness Recreation Ground Survey and feed back to this Committee at a future meeting; and
- 2) That membership of the Working Group be agreed via email with Councillors.

674. Pre-Application Advice – New Access to The Vine Pavilion

The Committee was disappointed by the Pre-application advice received regarding a new access to The Vine Pavilion; as it was felt that the proposal had significant public benefits, including improving accessibility and health and safety during events at the venue.

It was agreed that discussions be held with the Conservation Officer and the architect, and that the application process continue.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

- 1) Discuss the application further with the Conservation Officer and the architect; and
- 2) continues with the planning application of the new access due to its significant public benefit.

675. Tree Planting at Hillingdon Rise and Hillingdon Rise Play Area

Cllr Wightman advised that Kent County Council (KCC) had confirmed that trees could not be planted on KCC owned verges by other parties. However, KCC could plant trees on behalf of the Town Council at a fee and several trees could be planted free of charge. KCC had confirmed 14 locations at Hillingdon Avenue where trees could be planted.

Cllr Clayton reported that West Kent Housing Association (WKHA) was interested in tree planting at Hillingdon Avenue and that other WKHA locations could be discussed. Discussions had not yet taken place with Sevenoaks District Council.

676. Proposal to Collaborate with SDC, KCC and West Kent Housing to Share Grass Cutting Costs

Cllr Clayton observed that four different parties were responsible for the cutting of grass verges in Sevenoaks Town. It was suggested that collaborating with WKH, KCC and SDC in sharing grass cutting costs and instructing one grass cutting company could be more efficient and cost effective.

RESOLVED: To explore the proposal and to approach the different organisations for their opinions.

Sevenoaks Town Council

677. **Sevenoaks Lawn Tennis Club (SLTC) Proposal for Padel Courts on Town Council Land**

The Committee considered a proposal from Sevenoaks Lawn Tennis Club to create Padel Courts on Town Council land. The growing popularity and accessibility of the sport was noted.

It was noted that there would be a number of impacts, including the need to move the Town Council's compound; the effect on other users of Knole Paddock and Raley's Field; and the interests of other clubs in the piece of land. There were also other groups interested in developing Padel Courts. It was therefore considered that the proposal should be considered by the Sports Strategy Review Group.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the proposal for the creation of Padel Courts, and related implications for other sports be considered by the Sevenoaks Sports Strategy review group;
- 2) Sevenoaks Padel be invited to join the Sports Strategy Group; and
- 3) Subject to the above, Sevenoaks Town Council obtain pre-planning advice and consider the financial impact of the proposal.

678. **Current Matters**

The updates on the below current matters were noted:

1. Greatness Recreation Ground Management and Improvement Plan
2. Greatness Recreation Ground Survey
3. Sevenoaks Lawn Tennis Club-parking barrier in Raleys Car Park
4. Boundary Wall between the Closed Churchyard at St Nicholas Church and The Chantry house
5. Vine - Condition of Grass
6. Vine - Anti-social behaviour
7. Vine- Borehole
8. Sevenoaks Greensands Common Project
9. Sevenoaks Sports Strategy Review
10. Woodside Road Open Space
11. Mill Pond Wood – steps from Seal Road
12. Drinking Fountains
13. St John's Hill Public Toilets
14. Planting of Trees
15. Greatness Cemetery Chapel

679. **PRESS RELEASE**

It was agreed to issue Press Releases in relation to:

- 1) Beuy's Project
- 2) Longspring Wood Pledge Progress
- 3) Sports Strategy Questionnaire

Chair **Dated**