

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Asset Working Group
Held on 17th July 2024 at the Town Council Offices

Meeting Commenced: 14:00

Meeting Concluded: 14:55

Present:

Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet (Chair)	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides	Present
Cllr Dr Peter Dixon (Vice-Chair)	Apologies	Cllr Nigel Wightman	Present
Cllr Libby Ancrum (Mayor, ex-officio)	Apologies	Cllr Gareth Willis	Apologies

In attendance: The Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer & Deputy Town Clerk, Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager, Open Spaces & Leisure Committee Clerk, Mr Tim Burrows.

The quorum of 3 elected members was met.

82. Chair and Vice-Chair

Noted that at the Annual Town Council meeting held on 13th May 2024, the following appointments were made:

Chair: Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet
Vice-Chair: Cllr Dr Peter Dixon

83. Revised Committee and Working Group System

83.1 Noted that at the Annual Town Council meeting held on 13th May 2024, the Town Council approved a revised Committee and Working Group system.

83.2 The Terms of Reference for the Community Asset Working Group were received and noted.

84. Apologies for Absence: Received and accepted as noted above.

85. Requests for Dispensations: There were no requests for dispensations.

86. Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

87. Minutes of Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 12th February 2024

It was agreed to receive and accept the minutes as a true record.

88. Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager's Report

Nicholas Cave, the Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager, presented his report.

It was advised that the experienced gardener volunteer Adrian Cheeseman as well as Tom Percy had been recruited as part time gardeners. Tom Percy had started work on a 6-month temporary contract to assist in maintaining Greatness Cemetery, whereas Adrian Cheeseman would be focusing on the horticultural aspect at the town centre.

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In Bloom judging had taken place in late June, the Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager thanked staff and volunteers for their hard work in preparation for the judging date. It was advised that results would be presented in September.

SDC Planning and Building Control had approved works for repairing the boundary wall at St Nicholas's Church. Discussions were being held with the contractor to finalize working dates.

The Council received an update on the reseeded of the Knole Paddock and Raleys Field, it was also noted that Verti draining Pitch 1 was being planned for early Autumn.

It was noted that once the full process for refurbishing of the rugby pitches would look good and may be tempted to be played on, roots need to establish before this happens.

Memorial Stability testing had taken place at Greatness Cemetery in May. It was noted that 109 memorials had failed the testing and right's holders were being contacted to request that headstones be made safe. The Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager advised that headstones which were not secured by instruction of relatives would need to be made safe by The Council.

RESOLVED: To investigate and seek quotations for the securing of headstones which have failed their stability testing after all methods of contacting family members have been exhausted.

89. Statement of Accounts – Open Spaces & Leisure

The Statement of Accounts for Open Spaces & Leisure for April and May 2024 were received and noted.

90. Cemetery Income Report

The Cemetery Income Report for 2024/2025 was received and noted.

91. Allotment Officer's Report

The Working Group noted the Allotment Manager's report.

91.1 Allotment Rents

RESOLVED:

- (1) To recommend to the Finance & Delivery Committee that 2025/2026 allotment rents for Quakers Hall Allotments be increased by no more than 5% i.e. to 24p per square metre for the Quakers Hall site
- (2) To recommend to the Finance & Delivery Committee that 2025/2026 allotment rents for Bradbourne Vale Allotments be increased by no more than 5% to 23p per square metre.

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- (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 2025.

91.2 Community Payback

The Allotments Officer had informed the Working Group that a signed agreement has been sent to the Community Payback coordinators to arrange for clearing work on vacant plots. The Town Council was awaiting confirmation of a commencement date for the work days.

92. Sevenoaks Day Nursery: Request to Extend Facilities

The Working Group received and considered the request made by the Sevenoaks Day Nursery to extend its facilities.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Sevenoaks Town Council provides permission for Sevenoaks Day Nursery to extend its current building into land leased to them within the current peppercorn rent agreement.
- 2) Sevenoaks Town Council formalises legal paperwork and records to address 1 above.
- 3) Sevenoaks Day Nursery be asked to research a provision where materials have a similar external appearance to the original building.

93. Sevenoaks Greensand Commons Project

The report on the Sevenoaks Greensand Commons Project was received and considered. The continued involvement of Sevenoaks Town Council in the Greensands Commons Legacy Project and the recruitment of a part-time Greensands Common Ranger, via an annual contribution of £4,000 were considered.

Although very supportive of the legacy project, the Working Group decided not to continue with the Town Council's participation as it was considered that the Council's limited funds available for woodland management would be more beneficially used in-house to conserve and enhance Sevenoaks Common in conjunction with the recently acquired 14 acres of Longspring Wood, which is adjacent to Sevenoaks Common, to increase public access and manage the biodiversity of the ancient woodland.

RESOLVED: To withdraw from the funding agreement for Greensands Common Project and divert budget to Sevenoaks Common / Longspring Woods.

94. Current Matters

The updates on the below current matters were noted:

1. Greatness Recreation Ground Survey

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2. Boundary Wall between the Closed Churchyard at St Nicholas Church and The Chantry House.
3. Vine Anti-Social Behaviour
4. Greatness Cemetery – Headstone & Memorial Testing
5. Tree and Sculpture Projects
6. Pre-application Advice – New Access to The Vine Pavilion

95. Press Release

It was agreed that a press release be issued for the achievement of the renewal of the Green Flag Award.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Chair

Dated