

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE **OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES** COMMITTEE HELD IN THE **COUNCIL CHAMBER** AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON **16TH JUNE 2025**

PRESENT: CLLRS A WATERS (CHAIR), J COX (VICE CHAIR) MR N NEWMAN, D ADDLINGTON, MRS L COX, MRS A THROSSELL, MRS K NASH, MRS M NEWMAN and A MULCUCK
MRS N GREENAWAY (CLERK OF THE COUNCIL)
MRS L FITCHETT (ADMIN ASSISTANT)

75. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.45pm.

76. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received

77. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

78. **FINANCE**

(a) Financial analysis – Month 1.

READ and NOTED

(b) Kubota repair costs

It was **NOTED** that the Ride on Tractor had undergone significant repair and a service recently and costs of ongoing repair versus replacing with a new one were considered.

It was suggested looking to ear mark reserve funds for a new small tractor in the future. **RESOLVED** to pay £1800 for further repair in the autumn, when the Kubota is not required for use.

79. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

(a) Safety warning signs in addition to Tarmac access permissions notice [Page 16 item 39 (a)]

RESOLVED to finalise the surface warning sign to the quarry to a one line notice 'Some of the paths are steep and uneven and slippery'

(b) Email requesting steps to be added to a slope within the LNR/Quarry site [Page 16 item 39 (b)]

Photos of the site were presented. It was **NOTED** that there is tarmac on the surface at the top of the slope. It was also **NOTED** that this was not an official path, more a path trodden over time as this passes through where there used to be gates to restrict

access in the past. Cllr Mrs Throssell asked if steps were not allowed could a rope bannister be added. Cllr Mulcuck stated that this work should be possible. The admin assistant explained that the grounds team had looked into this and have advised that the area is very inaccessible for equipment, this would require an external contractor.

RESOLVED to decline this request and continue with providing warning signs.

80. **TREES & PLANTING**

(a) Recent emergency tree works update

It was **NOTED** that there had been recent malicious chainsaw damage to a large tree in the quarry leaving it in a hazardous position for the passing public. Tree Monkeys were able to assist with removal of the affected branches by 7.30am next morning and remove the damage branches.

(b) Community Centre – Flower beds

(i) Twinning Anniversary bed update

This has been planted up courtesy of the twinning committee and a photo provided to Gallagher in thanks for providing the stone.

(ii) Adjacent beds

It was **NOTED** that the two other beds remain bare and to consider planting arrangements for these beds.

(iii) 4th bed idea for planting i.e. Wild Flowers

As above it was **NOTED** that a 4th bed could benefit from either re-turfing over to leave the Twinning bed as a centre piece or providing wild flowers.

RESOLVED to turf this 4th bed.

(c) Pitch reseeding and hanging baskets update

It was **NOTED** that the Pitch reseeding has been a success with the pitches ready for the tournament. The hanging baskets have all been displayed around the village.

81. **ALLOTMENTS**

(a) Update regarding recent inspection and reply received regarding utility usage

It was **NOTED** that an inspection was carried out on 9th June. A small number of plots were noted as needing to be kept an eye on.

RESOLVED to review again at next quarterly inspection.

The admin assistant read out the response received regarding utility charging protocols under allotment law. It was **NOTED** that on current water usage levels there is a likelihood that the water bills could become a substantial cost to the council going forward. The admin assistant advised that the team are investigating the readings at

present in order to discount any leaks and will be reviewing any costs and terms associated with this. The unit readings and options to reduce water intake were discussed as usage appears to have substantially increased, as has the price per unit.

RESOLVED to continue to monitor for the next few months and provide an interim update at next full council.

It was also **NOTED** that in the previous meeting it had been enquired if the allotment toilet was a compost toilet. The Admin Assistant confirmed that this was the case.

(b) Magazine for noting

Magazine from the Open Spaces Society was **CIRCULATED** and **NOTED**.

82. **QUARRY**

(a) Ideas regarding future of footpath fence and entrance hedging

Cllr Waters, discussed the need for fence repairs on the footpath heading behind Acorn Grove, between the field and the post at the beginning of the path into the quarry. Cllr Adlington also spoke about the path by the bowls club that has been created by being publicly warn but isn't an official entrance. It was **NOTED** that there had previously been a gate and discussion took place around different options.

RESOLVED for the grounds staff to look at what materials will be needed to repair the fence and to look at ideas regarding reinstating the 'zig zag' entrance.

Cllr Mrs Nash suggested a Hawthorne hedge and Cllr Mulcuck suggested gorse. It was **NOTED** that the council can now order further hedging from the Woodland trust but this would be 30 very small saplings. Cllr Waters also spoke about purchasing taller specimens as an option.

(b) Email received requesting steps to be added to a slope within the LNR/Quarry site

This was covered previously in item 79(b).

83. **CORRESPONDENCE**

A communication had been received from a resident whose property borders NRRG and their concerns about privacy/security because of a 'gap' between their new fence and the neighbour's boundary (an old DPC chain-link fence)

NOTED blackthorn and holly bushes had been planted and will grow to 'bridge the gap'

RESOLVED to respond advising that nothing further can be done at this time as the council would like time to wait for the previous planting to become established and provide better coverage.

84. **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

It was **NOTED** that an invite had been received from the Open Spaces Society to attend an AGM should anyone wish to attend on DPC behalf.

It was **NOTED** that Kent Men of Trees has been renamed to Kent Friends of Trees. In addition it was **NOTED** that 'KFOTT' were asking for participation in a competition for 'A tree with a story of interest' Cllr Waters spoke regarding the Victorian Ride on the border with Aylesford.

RESOLVED that Cllr Waters will draft an entry.

85. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.53pm.

Chairman
7th July 2025