

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 6th March 2017
In the Council Chamber commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Cllr S Arnold Cllr E Parson substituted for Cllr Arnold	Apologies		Cllr O Schneider	Apologies
Cllr N Busvine, OBE, Vice Chairman	Present		Cllr P E Towell	Present
Cllr J M Canet	Present		Cllr E Waite	Apologies
Cllr A Eyre (Mayor) Ex Oficio	Present		Cllr Mrs P C Walshe	Present
Cllr R J Parry, Chairman	Present		Cllr S G Raikes	Present

In Attendance: Chief Executive/Town Clerk, Committee Clerk, Open Spaces Manager, Ian Pearson, Darren Maddison, Christine Parvin representing Sevenoaks Hockey Club and one member of the public.

Prior to the meeting commencing a presentation was received from Andrew Willmore from the Kent Wildlife Trust regarding the Greensand Common Project (copy of presentation attached).

457. Apologies for Absence

Received from Cllr Arnold, Cllr Schneider & Cllr Waite.

458. Requests for Dispensations

There had been no requests for Dispensations.

459. Declaration of Interests

There were no Declaration of Interests.

460. Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 17th October 2016.

A copy of the minutes from the meeting held on the 17th October 2016 were received.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 17th October 2016 be received and signed as a true record.

It was requested by the Chairman and agreed by the Committee that Agenda Item 7 – Sevenoaks Hockey Club be discussed first. The meeting was suspended for a short time to enable Councillors to ask questions of the representations of the Sevenoaks Hockey Club.

461. Sevenoaks Hockey Club

A report was received requesting funding from the Sevenoaks Sports Strategy Fund towards a replacement artificial surface in the Hollybush Park. It was noted that the land in question is owned by Sevenoaks District Council and leased on a peppercorn

rent to Sevenoaks Hockey Club. Any refurbishment of the area was the responsibility of the Hockey Club.

It was agreed that the facility was a great community asset.

RECOMMENDATION: To the Community Infrastructure Committee to allocate £50,000 funding from the Sevenoaks Sports Strategy once capital funds had been received.

462. Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager's Report

Staff:

Last month Mr Ben Day and Mr Kevin Jenner were both successful in completing the training to drive the mini excavator and dumper truck at Greatness Cemetery. This cross department training will provide greater assistance in covering work when there are staff shortages.

Advertisements have recently been placed to fill the post of Town Warden and the new post of Assistant Town Warden. The Town Warden post has become vacant with the announcement that Mr Guy Yea who has been part of the team for ten years intends to retire in April. We all wish him well in the future and know that his significant contribution during this time will be missed.

It was suggested that the Open Spaces Manger communicate with local schools about future Apprenticeships for Open Spaces staff.

Vine Pavilion:

The replacement flat roof has now been completed to a high standard in EPDM rubber which has a life of around 40 years. In October further asbestos was identified in the end store boiler room. Its subsequent removal involved the further removal of plasterboard from two internal walls. Its replacement to ensure fire proofing around the boiler has been completed by our own staff and is representative of the many horticultural and non horticultural tasks undertaken in the last few months. Some are listed below:

Winter Works:

Vine Gardens – Remove redundant practice net bases, fill, level and seal then install reinforcing matting to allow light vehicles turning and parking. Aerate and overseed Vine Lawn.

Bethal Road – Plant young Amelanchier tree to replace dead Willow.

Mill Pond Wood – Complete the replacement of the boundary fence along Seal Road.

Greatness Cemetery – Reduce the front boundary hedge back to a manageable 5 foot height to allow quicker and more regular trimming in subsequent years. Install new soakaway alongside front drive to prevent excessive puddling after heavy rain.

Bradbourne Vale Road Allotments – Prune back encroaching vegetation alongside several plots and tidy walkways.

Pontoise Close Woodland – Prune back encroaching vegetation along footpaths.

Brittains Common – Install new bollards, removable posts and signs. Then plant selection of small trees close to Gas Regulator to disguise and enhance it.

It was noted that one of the Mayor's planted trees had been replaced twice in the past but was now growing well. It was noted that a new site would need to be identified for future Mayoral planting projects.

Sevenoaks Common – This Winter our own team have completed widening and enhancing the paths and glades in the Ashgrove Road triangle. This was started last Winter. We have also employed contractors to do similar work on the Windmill Cottage triangle which also includes the weedkilling of Rhododendron which has started to reappear in this area recently. All brush wood is chipped back onto paths to improve the condition. The contractor has also attended to several trees highlighted in the recent safety report. Although these are more phased for next years budget.

Littlewoods – Drainage – In November we attended to the problem of flooding at the front of the Woodland. We excavated and found a section of storm drain damaged by tree roots, this has been replaced and the tree most affecting the drain will be killed to prevent further damage.

Coppicing – Recently contractors undertook one of our biggest woodland projects in recent years. To Coppice around 40 trunks of Alder tree that grow in this wet woodland. They were becoming over mature with a risk of failure and falling onto neighbouring properties. Coppicing will allow them to regrow with multiple stems and perpetuate the trees for many more generations. With these gone there will be a huge increase in light reaching the woodland floor with a possible increase in wildflowers over the new few years. The trees will regrow quickly, 2-3 feet per year and it will be interesting to watch their development. We intend to kill the one stump already mentioned and do a small amount of planting with Hazel in some very open areas.

The committee requested that their gratitude be recorded to the Open Spaces team for the work on the Alder trees. It was agreed to see what wild flowers grow this year with a view to planting more in the coming years. Several Hazel trees would be planted in the area shortly.

Great British Spring Clean at the Environmental Park:

The committee requested that their gratitude be recorded to all involved in the clear up day. 16 bags of rubbish were collected over the 3 hours. Positive feedback had been received from members of the public on the day.

Bradbourne Vale Road Allotments:

Work on two plots at the far end of the allotments would happen in the Autumn ready for re-letting in September/October. It was requested that the soil be tested in the car parking area to ascertain if this area could be turned into useable plot space.

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Managers report be received and agreed.

463. Statement of Accounts to 31st December 2017

RESOLVED: That the Statement of Accounts were received and agreed as a true record.

464. In Bloom 2017

A copy of the minutes from the meeting held on 7th February were received and considered. It was noted that three quotes had been received for hanging baskets. A decision would be made regarding the contractors used for 2017 by the end of the week. Bedding plants would be red, white and blue and hanging baskets would be red, white and pink.

It was noted that the Post Office area was still cordoned off. The area is owned by the Post Office and an update would be received by them during the week regarding repair works with a timetable.

465. KCC Grass Cutting

KCC were offering parishes the opportunity to carry out the grass cutting contracts in their areas. Initially a payment would be made of 2 pence per square metre. It was hoped that neighbouring parishes might work together on the delivery of this.

RESOLVED: It had been agreed at the Finance and General Purposes meeting that Sevenoaks Town Council would not be taking on the contract.

466. 3G Pitch at Knole Paddock

A report was received and noted. The project had been submitted for planning permission. It was agreed that Sevenoaks Town Council would await the results of pre planning meeting before developing a business plan further.

467. Vine Strategy (Application for Green Flag status)

A report was received and noted and the Deputy Town Clerk congratulated on production of the document.

Two queries arose from the discussion regarding:

- I. Cricket Club ceremony regarding exchanging of a cricket ball
- II. It was noted that the number of members of the Brass Band has decreased over the last few years.

It was requested that if the document was used again that it describe more events and give more detail to each topic.

468. Current Matters

The report regarding Current Matters was received relating to:

3G Pitch at Knole Paddock	- To prepare and submit planning application - Town Council to allocate £250,00 from the Sports Strategy fund towards the project subject to Committee approval of Business Plan - Sevenoaks Fun initiative to start in 2017
Volunteer Litter Picks	Take place weekly at the Vine. The Great British Spring Clean at the Environmental Park will take place on Saturday 4 th March from 10am till 1pm
Greatness Recreation Ground	Install a 'Universal Keyed Lock' – awaiting finish of Mill Lane contractors use of car park.
Hanging Baskets	Quotes obtained. Contract given to Nicholas Cave to update.
Kippington Meadow Play Equipment	Progress with the installation of play equipment when funding becomes available – to be reviewed
Summer Play Provision 2017	Relocate the Julian's Meadow Play Day to Buckhurst Lane Play Area
Brittains Common	Install 35 posts along the kerbs with two drop down posts at the footpath – now completed

RESOLVED: That the Current Matter report be received and agreed as a true record.

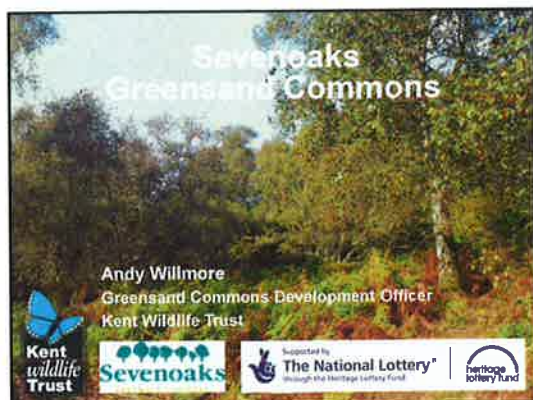
469. Press Release

RESOLVED: To issue a Press Release relating to the Great British Spring Clean and In Bloom Competition.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 p.m.

Chairman

Dated



Introduction

- Kent Wildlife Trust
- Greensand Commons
- Geology
- History
- Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Project
- Community Engagement
- Summary

Kent wildlife Trust

Heritage Lottery Fund

Tel 01622 862012 | info@kentwildlife.org.uk | kentwildlife.org.uk

Protecting Wildlife for the Future

What we do...

- Save species and wild places
- Inspire people and share wildlife knowledge
- Influence development to win for wildlife
- Empower people to make a difference

What we are...

- KWT is a Charity
- Set up by our membership in 1958
- Supported by and financially dependent on income from members
- Led by a governing body elected from our members
- A small trading arm
- Independent of government and other economic interests
- Part of a movement of wider independent Wildlife Trusts

Kent wildlife Trust

Kent Wildlife Trust statistics...

- 31,130 membership at the end of December
- 14,000 children in school visits to 5 visitor centres and in schools
- c90 Staff
- 3,200 ha under management
- 64 reserves
- c£4.5m turnover
- 1,000+ active volunteers
- A hardy grazing herd over 550 head

Kent wildlife Trust

Greensand Commons Project Sites

The Westerham cluster (159ha) includes:

- Hossey Common
- Farley Common
- Crockhamhill Common

The Sevenoaks cluster (115ha) includes:

- Bitchet Common
- Fawke Common
- Seal Chart and Redhill Wood

All managed by Sevenoaks Wildlife Trust and are now under a system of Management

- Sevenoaks Common (18ha)
Managed by Sevenoaks Town Council
- Sevenoaks Weald Common (4ha)
Managed by Sevenoaks Weald Parish Council

Sites are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest under Local Nature Reserves ancient woodland and remnant open heath

Located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Sevenoaks Greensand Commons - Project Sites

Legend

- Sevenoaks Common
- Sevenoaks Weald Common
- Bitchet Common
- Fawke Common
- Seal Chart and Redhill Wood
- Hossey Common
- Farley Common
- Crockhamhill Common

Kent wildlife Trust

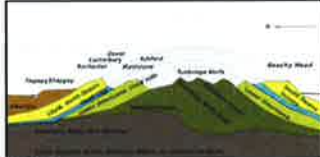
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Protecting Wildlife for the Future

Geology

- Formed in very shallow seas as land sinking
- Particles of sand washed from the land cemented together by lime in seawater
- Formed bands of hard rock, compared to soft sandstone and mud of Weald to the south, and chalk of the North Downs
- Areas remained on plateau, where left as very stony, slightly acidic, impoverished soils
- Easy to clear, very hard to farm



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Protecting Wildlife for the Future

History

- First colonists to Britain probably travelled along ridges; easiest to clear – free from swamp – vantage points – rock shelters
- Iron Age Hill forts; e.g. at Oldbury and by Crockham Hill Common
- Romans reputed to have made camps (One Tree Hill, Oldbury) – control Iron trade
- Jutes were first 'Anglo-Saxon' invaders
- Jutes settled to the north – Vale of Holmesdale
- Rise of great estates
- Development of 'Commons' on 'Manorial Wastes'

History

- Agistment:** Right to pasture cattle, horses, sheep
- Piscary:** Right to fish
- Turbary:** Right to take sods of turf for fuel
- Common of Marl:** Right to take chert, sand and gravel
- Pannage:** Right to turn out pigs for a period in autumn to eat mast (beech mast, acorns and other nuts)
- Estovers:** Right to take sufficient wood for the commoner's house or holding; usually limited to smaller trees, bushes (such as gorse) and fallen branches... 'By hook or by crook'

History

- "Wooded Heath" – a kind of Wood Pasture
- Very ancient origins
- Traditional management created rich, varied habitats
- Features grand 'pollards' created to allow grazing at the same time as wood production
- Lowland Heath now very threatened in the UK, 'Wooded Heath' even rarer



The vision;

For local people to have worked together to restore the natural heritage of the Commons and to have increased our communities' capacity to value, manage & protect this same heritage by building & sustaining skills, knowledge & resources, now & into the future.



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Protecting Wildlife for the Future

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Project

Development Stage

- Appoint Development Officer
- Set up steering group
- Ecological surveys and historical research
- Public consultation at each Common
- Develop outline management plans for each common
- Volunteers recruited and trained
- Fundraising strategy developed and implemented for match funding
- Develop activity plans for the delivery phase
- Develop evaluation and communications plans
- Submit 2nd stage HLF bid - March 2018



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Protecting Wildlife for the Future







Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Project

Delivery Stage

- 4 year project – approx. £700k
- Project Manager, Community Engagement Officer, both .8fte
- Rolling programme of restoration work on each Common (2 per year)
- Volunteers recruited (150) and trained (15-20/year)
- Apprentices recruited and trained (one per year)
- Friends Groups established
- Heritage education programme launched (Bug Hunters, Landscape and Literature, Common Tales etc.)
- Organisations engaged and supported to deliver activities from their local Common

Kent Wildlife Trust

wildlife TRUSTS

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Protecting Wildlife for the Future

Project Summary:

We have secured an HLF Grant for a 'Development Stage' during which time we will collate more ecological information, carry out further consultation and run some 'valley' events and activities leading to the submission in March 2018 of a funding application for a four year 'Delivery Stage' project.

Objective 1:
To have restored the natural heritage of the Commons and opened up public access through 20m of improved footpaths and bridleways & clear signage throughout.

Objective 2:
To have developed the capacity of local people to take a lead role in the on-going management of some 200ha of Commons, their conservation & protection of their heritage.

Objective 3:
To have created opportunities for people (particularly under-represented groups) to engage with and use the Commons in ways they would like.

Objective 4:
To have significantly increased the knowledge people (particularly children and young people) have about the natural heritage of the Commons.

Thank you!

Kent Wildlife Trust

Sevenoaks

The National Lottery

Sevensand Commons

www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/sevenoaks-sevensand-commons

