Minutes of the Meeting of Open Spaces held in Rickards Hall on 21 September 2026 at 7:30 pm

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Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge, Angela Baker *(Chairwoman)*, Carey Jacques, Alan Layland
In attendance: Open Spaces Officer. There were three members of the public and no press.
The meeting started at 19:30

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received, noted and accepted from Cllr's Gemmell Smith, Stockdale, Compton, Streets and McGregor.

2 Declarations of Interests, or Predeterminations

Cllr Jacques declared an interest in The Edenbridge Bonfire Society

3 Public Questions

Chair closed the meeting 19:32

A member of the public spoke on item 16 on the agenda. He explained why the Edenbridge Allotment Garden Association (EAGA) had requested to allow non-Edenbridge residents to become plot holders.

Chair opened the meeting 19:33

The Chairman proposed to bring forward agenda item 16 for discussion following the procedural items, as there were representatives from the public present. Members agreed unanimously and,

***Resolved:** to bring forward items 16 to be discussed before proceeding with other items on the agenda. Details are minuted sequentially to follow the agenda order.*

4 To receive, approve and sign the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 15 June 2026 (pages 2023-142/1-8).

Resolved: that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee 15 June 2026 be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting (pages 2023-142/1-8).

5 To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 15 September 2026

Members noted the income and expenditure from 1 April 2025 to 15 September 2026.

Members had no comments.

6 To Ratify Operational Decisions for Open Spaces Activity

None.

7 Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

A resident had raised concerns regarding the amount of litter and waste left at the Recreation Ground following the Edenbridge FC Football Festival on 25 July 2026. Issues included overflowing rubbish bags, general litter and potential hazards to dogs. The resident had also reported an increase in dog fouling and enquired whether action could be taken.

The Town Clerk had responded to the resident and made Edenbridge Rugby Club aware of the concerns. The resident had also been informed that free dog waste dispensers had been introduced at several locations, including the Recreation Ground.

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8 Facilities Manager's Report

Members noted that the grounds team had continued routine seasonal maintenance across the town, including weed treatment, planter maintenance, grave topping, pruning, pitch marking, grass cutting and watering.

Autumn pitch renovations had been scheduled for the end of September, including scarification and approximately 100 tonnes of top dressing at the Recreation Ground and Nomads, funded by an FA grant.

The annual review of the Grounds Team's risk assessments had been completed, and a new notice board had been installed at Stangrove Park. Painting and maintenance of street furniture had also been undertaken, alongside repairs to the paved area at the Wall of Remembrance.

New fencing had been planned for the allotments following police advice regarding anti-social behaviour. An extension to the Mowshurst path had also been planned using woodchip as a more cost-effective alternative to the quoted £1,600 aggregate option.

8.1 Market Yard – Proposed Bin Storage Area

Following a spate of vandalism and inappropriate behaviour involving the bins in the Market Yard and the storage cupboard door, it was proposed that a secure bin storage area be created between the toilet block and the band hut. This would have involved installing a gate across the alleyway between the two buildings, securing the bins while also providing an additional layer of security for the storage cupboard.

The cost of installing the gate was £320. Members,

Resolved: to approve the proposed expenditure of £320 for the installation of a gate across the alleyway.

8.2 Old Police Station Site – Landscaping Works

Following discussions with the Open Spaces Officer, plans had been developed to complete the landscaping of the former police station site on the High Street. The next phase of works would include turfing, the creation and planting of herbaceous borders, and the installation of fencing.

The Community Warden may have been able to secure funding towards the cost of some of the plants, which would reduce the overall cost to the Council. The estimated cost of completing the works was £1,000 which would be funded from the Open Spaces earmarked reserves. Members discussed planting options and requested that in light of the warm and dry summer, and the likelihood of this becoming the norm moving forward, that drought resistant plants and shrubs, such as lavender, be planted. Members,

Resolved: to approve expenditure of up to £1,000 to complete the landscaping works.

8.3 Stangrove Park – Replacement Commemorative Tree

Following the vandalism of the commemorative liquidambar tree in Stangrove Park earlier this year, prices had been obtained for a suitable replacement.

The estimated cost of supplying and planting the replacement tree was approximately £400. Members,

Resolved: approve expenditure of up to £400 for the replacement commemorative tree.

9 Open Spaces Business

Members noted the Open Spaces business including:

Playground inspections: The annual playground inspections had been carried and we were waiting on the report, with the exception of Marsh Green Playground as this site was being upgraded at the time. An update would be provided at the November meeting.

Tree survey: We were still waiting on the annual tree survey report, it was hoped that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

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Gully clearing: The annual gulley clearing at the Market Yard Car Park was carried out on 4 September.

Pump maintenance: The pump servicing for the foul water pumping station at the Recreation Ground and the water feature pump at Mill Leat were carried out on 14 September.

Summer fun days: The annual summer fun days took place over four Thursdays in late July/August. The days were well attended. On one day the bouncy castle was unavailable due to the hot weather.

9.1 Cemetery matters

9.1.1 To receive the Burial Report

Members noted the following burial report:

June: 1 burial; 0 ashes interments.

July: 0 burial; 0 ashes interment.

August: 0 burial; 0 ashes interments.

September (to date): 0 burials, 1 ashes interment.

9.1.2 New Cemetery Booklets

Members noted that the new cemetery booklets were complete and were available for anyone who would like a copy.

The updated booklets provided useful information about the cemetery and are intended to offer a clear and accessible source of information for residents, visitors and anyone wishing to find out more.

In addition to the printed copies, the new cemetery booklets were also available to view electronically on the website. This would make the information more easily accessible and allow people to refer to the booklet online at their convenience.

10 Capital projects

10.1 Bandstand Project – progress update

Members were reminded that contractors had been appointed in April 2026 for the Stangrove Park Bandstand Project, at costs of up to £41,478.70 for design and construction and £20,740 for groundworks, funded through CIL allocations. Additional costs had been anticipated for associated finishes, landscaping and planning requirements.

Preparatory planning work had commenced, with Turner & Hoskin appointed to prepare the application documents. The bandstand location, landscaping, drainage and access arrangements had been agreed, and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal had been completed.

Both contractors had been advised of delays due to the planning process, with works provisionally scheduled to commence in March/April 2027, subject to planning approval and suitable ground conditions.

Members had no questions but did request that the work was completed as soon as possible, dependant on planning permission and weather conditions.

10.2 Marsh Green Playground project

Members were reminded that Kompan had been appointed in June 2026 to deliver the Marsh Green Playground Project. A pre-start meeting had taken place in August to agree the programme and site arrangements.

Construction works had commenced on 11 September 2026, with completion anticipated during the

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week commencing 28 September, subject to weather and site conditions. The Open Spaces Officer was to continue monitoring progress, with safety checks required before the playground could reopen to the public.

11 To confirm the expenditure under the annual works programme for the hedge cutting at Council sites £2,195.00

Prices had been sought for the routine seasonal hedge cutting. The contractor used previously had come back with a quote and if approved this work would be scheduled for the coming months. Members,

Resolved: to approve the expenditure of £2,300.00 plus VAT for annual hedge cutting.

12 To review and approve draft Volunteer/Community group policy for the hire of Open Spaces

At the June meeting, Members requested that a policy be developed to provide a clear and consistent approach to the hire of Stangrove Park by volunteer and community groups.

A draft Volunteer/Community Group Policy for the Hire of Open Spaces had subsequently been prepared for Members' consideration. The policy was intended to establish the arrangements and criteria that would apply when volunteer and community groups requested to hire Stangrove Park. Members reviewed the draft policy and,

Resolved: to approve the draft policy with no amendments.

13 To review and approve draft policy relating to the hire of Stangrove Park for exercise classes

At the June meeting, Members requested that a policy be developed to provide a clear and consistent approach to the hire of Stangrove Park for organised exercise and fitness classes.

A draft Policy for the Hire of Stangrove Park for Exercise Classes had subsequently been prepared for Members' consideration. The policy was intended to establish the arrangements and criteria that will apply to individuals, instructors and organisations wishing to use Stangrove Park to deliver organised exercise or fitness classes. Members reviewed the policy and,

Resolved: to approve the draft policy, without any amendments.

14 To consider and approve plans submitted by the Rugby Club for the creation of an additional rugby pitch within the Recreation Ground

At the June meeting, Members considered a request from the Rugby Club for the creation of an additional rugby pitch within an area of the Recreation Ground that was not included within the Club's lease.

The proposed pitch was intended to provide a smaller training/children's pitch, primarily for junior rugby activities and coaching sessions.

The Committee approved the proposal in principle, subject to the Rugby Club submitting plans that were acceptable to the Council.

The Rugby Club had subsequently submitted plans showing the proposed location and dimensions of the additional pitch. These plans were attached for Members' consideration. Members reviewed the plans and,

Resolved: to approve the creation of an additional rugby pitch at the Recreation Ground.

15 Bench requests

15.1 To consider request for a memorial bench at Marsh Green

The Council had received a request for permission to install a memorial bench at Marsh Green.

The applicant had been advised of the costs associated with the provision and installation of the bench. The fees quoted were in line with the Council's existing charges for memorial benches within the cemetery, together with the applicable maintenance fee.

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Members were asked to consider whether they were satisfied for a memorial bench to be installed at Marsh Green and for the cemetery memorial bench charges and maintenance arrangements to be applied to this request.

The precise location of the bench would be agreed with the applicant and Council officers to ensure that it was appropriately positioned and did not adversely affect the use or maintenance of Marsh Green. Members considered the request and,

Resolved: to approve the request for a memorial bench at Marsh Green.

15.2 To consider a request for a memorial bench at The Recreation Ground

The Council had received a request to install a memorial bench at the Recreation Ground. The applicant had been advised of the associated costs, based on the Council's existing cemetery memorial bench charges.

The family had requested that the resident rate be applied and the additional non-resident maintenance fee waived, citing longstanding family and community connections with Edenbridge, including relatives living and buried in the town and involvement in local organisations.

Members were asked to consider whether the resident rate and fee waiver were appropriate and whether permission should be granted for the bench, with its location to be agreed between the applicant and Council officers. Members considered the request and,

Resolved: to approve the request for a memorial bench at the Recreation Ground and for it to be charged at the resident rate.

16 To consider Edenbridge Allotment Garden Association (EAGA) request to allow non-Edenbridge residents to become plot holders

EAGA had advised that several allotment plots remained vacant at Forge Croft, while Swan Lane was fully occupied. EAGA had requested greater flexibility in allowing non-Edenbridge residents to take on vacant plots, suggesting a sponsorship arrangement through existing plot holders.

It was proposed that Edenbridge residents would retain priority, with plots offered to non-residents only where there was no local demand, helping to ensure plots remained cultivated.

Members were asked to consider whether a sponsorship scheme was necessary or whether the existing provision for occupation by prior agreement could be used. Any agreed changes would require clarification within the Tenancy Agreement, including arrangements should demand from Edenbridge residents increase. Members considered the request and,

Resolved: to approve the allocation of available allotment plots to non-Edenbridge residents, subject to Edenbridge residents continuing to receive priority; and

Resolved: to confirm that non-Edenbridge applicants should be required to obtain and complete a sponsorship form from an existing plot holder.

17 To approve of the use of the Council TN8 License by the Edenbridge Bonfire Society and ECCA (Edenbridge Community Christmas Association)

Members were asked to consider approving the use of the Council's TN8 Licence by Edenbridge Bonfire Society and Edenbridge Community Christmas Association (ECCA) for their forthcoming events, should it be required.

Neither organisation had requested use of the licence, but advance approval was sought to avoid the need for further Committee approval at short notice. Any use would remain subject to the relevant licence conditions and Council requirements. Members,

Resolved: to approve the use of the Council's TN8 Licence by Edenbridge Bonfire Society and Edenbridge Community Christmas Association (ECCA) for their respective events, should its use be requested; and,

Resolved: to delegate authority to the Clerk to agree the necessary arrangements, subject to compliance with the conditions of the licence and any other relevant requirements.

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18 Solar Farm (Land North West Of Little Browns Railway Bridge Hilders Lane) - Community Benefit Fund

Members were reminded that Full Council had agreed in March to accept a £40,000 Community Benefit Fund contribution from Kybo Solar Farm Limited towards additional EV charging infrastructure, subject to confirmation that the funding was not linked to a Section 106 Agreement.

Sevenoaks District Council had subsequently confirmed that the contribution was independent of the planning process and could be accepted.

Initial investigations into suitable Town Council-owned sites had identified the Recreation Ground car park, adjacent to the Pavilion, and Mowshurst car park as the only potentially viable locations for further consideration.

Members were asked to consider the locations and whether they would like officers to conduct further investigations for other locations. After discussion, Members,

Resolved: to confirm that the Recreation Ground Car Park was the most suitable location and is the preferred site for the installation of EV chargers.

19 To consider and approve an ETC CIL bid for Old Police Station Site Improvements

Members were advised that the existing handrails at the Old Police Station site were damaged and outdated, and replacement with durable cast iron handrails had been proposed to improve safety and appearance.

New planters or hanging baskets had also been proposed to enhance the area. Quotations were being sought, with total costs estimated at no more than £5,000, potentially funded through available CIL monies, subject to eligibility and approval. Members,

Resolved: to approve an ETC CIL bid for the replacement of the existing metal handrails at the Old Police Station site and the purchase of new planters/hanging baskets for the area.

20 Streetlights maintenance replacement programme

20.1 Streetlights maintenance replacement programme: 2026-27 Update

Members noted the following:

Funding had been approved for the 2026–27 streetlight replacement programme, including ageing steel columns and ten concrete columns on the Stangrove Estate. A £40,000 CIL contribution had been awarded towards replacing columns on Cedar Drive and Park Avenue, allowing the 30-Year Maintenance Plan budget to be reduced from £25,000 to £15,000.

UKPN had confirmed that column replacements were scheduled to take place between 2 and 6 November 2026, subject to approved budgets.

Members had no questions.

20.2 To consider and approve the replacement of 70W High Intensity Discharge (HID) streetlights

The Council's streetlighting contractor had advised that 70W (and above) HID lamps were due to become obsolete from February 2027 under Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) regulations, affecting eight Council streetlights.

Seven lights could be replaced at £375 each (£2,625 + VAT), while the Windsor-style wall-mounted fitting at The Old School House, Lingfield Road, required replacement at £1,395 + VAT.

The total estimated cost was £4,020 + VAT. Replacement ahead of February 2027 was recommended to avoid reliance on obsolete lamps and potential difficulties sourcing replacements. Members noted that the lamps are due to become obsolete from next year and,

Resolved: to approve the replacemnt of eight affected Council owned streetlights; and,

Resolved: to approve the expenditure of £4,020 plus VAT for the replacement works.

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21 **News Release**

Members requested that the new Marsh Green Playground was advertised.

22 **Date of next meeting - 9 November 2026**

Noted.

The meeting ended at 20.15

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