



AGENDA

WESTERN AREA COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday, 2 March 2021
Time: 7.00 pm
Venue: Virtual Meeting Via Skype*

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock (Chairman), Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen and Corrie Woodford (Vice-Chairman).

Quorum = 3

Pages

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

*Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website after 4pm on Monday 1 March 2021.

Privacy Statement

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or

other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships. The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

(c) Where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Member might be predetermined or biased the Member should declare their predetermination or bias and then leave the meeting while that item is considered.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 1 December 2020 (Minute No. 289 - 297) subject to a an amendment at Minute No. 295 that the request for £4,655 was a contribution towards payment for the fencing around the recreation ground, not the adult play equipment.

4. Matters Arising

5 - 14

To consider matters arising from the last meeting held on 1 December 2020.

5. Public forum

The purpose of this item is to enable members of the public to direct questions to the Chairman or suggestion agenda items for future meetings.

6. Local issues

7. Nomination for Area Committee Review Working Group

Nominations for a representative to sit on the Area Committee Review Working Group.

8. Matters referred to the Committee by Cabinet

9. Matters referred to Cabinet by Committee

10. Funding

15 - 20

Issued on Monday, 22 February 2021

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Cabinet, please visit www.swale.gov.uk

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters arising – March 2021

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
Heritage issues	Cabinet Member for Planning	Cabinet adopted a Heritage Strategy and Action Plan on 18 March 2020. The Action Plan contains a programme of CA reviews. It has been suggested by the Cabinet Member that the Area Committee may want to fund CA reviews for areas which are outside of the planned programme of reviews in the Action Plan.	<p>The Conservation & Design Manager has advised that work is well advanced on the review of the three conservation areas. The consultant has visited all areas and met with local representatives from each. The consultant has done things slightly differently this time and has produced the proper digitised maps as she goes. This will allow the parish representatives that she met on the site visits to respond to the draft text. The initial draft appraisal documents should be available soon and then once finalised it is hoped to go out to public consultation after the May election.</p> <p>The Conservation & Design Manager will be carrying out an assessment to ascertain whether there is any scope for a conservation area at Iwade. The outcome of the assessment will be reported to the June meeting.</p>
Conservation issues, including ponds	Cabinet Member for Planning	SBC only has details of the ponds which it manages directly. There is a strategic and heritage, conservation and tourism need for information, including ownership, condition and management of the ponds in the area. Policy and	<p>The Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group have confirmed they are happy to work with SBC on this in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They can provide species data for all ponds in Swale, not just the ponds in public ownership. This will require

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
		<p>Performance Officer to explore with officers and other organisations what information currently exists on the areas ponds.</p>	<p>Swale to sign a data sharing agreement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. They would be happy to attend meetings and provide advice and guidance where possible. 3. They can provide a database of known ponds, however they will need to get agreement for a third party for this. <p>Kent Fire and Rescue have also indicated that they hold data on all known water sources they are able to use for firefighting operations, including ponds and are happy to share this data with SBC.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Environment has advised that this should be dealt with as a borough-wide issue and referred to the appropriate officer to deal with in due course.</p>
Walking and cycling routes around the villages	Committee member	<p>The Council is currently undertaking a review of its Local Plan. One of the documents that is being developed alongside this review is a Transport Strategy.</p> <p>The Cabinet would welcome any input from the Committee on walking and cycling to feed into the developing</p>	The Deputy Cabinet Member for Economy and Property is leading on this and will provide a verbal update at the meeting.

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
		<p>Transport Strategy which is being developed through the Local Plan Panel. It is important that there is no duplication of effort by the Committee's and Local Plan processes.</p>	
<p>Friends Groups - Maintenance and care of woodlands</p>	<p>Committee member</p>	<p>The Council has a grounds maintenance contract for its parks and open spaces. Maintenance of woodland owned or managed by the Council forms part of this contract, but priority is given to maintaining areas which have a heavy footfall, so inspection of woodland is therefore generally done on an ad hoc basis in response to information received.</p>	<p>Cllr Palmer will give a verbal update at the meeting. Please also see the attached paper on Friends Groups.</p>
<p>Addressing littering in parks and open spaces including litter picking and awareness campaigns</p>	<p>Committee member</p>	<p>The Council has a contract in place to maintain Swale's parks and open spaces. It also has details of all the litter picking and friends groups who help maintain our parks and open spaces.</p>	<p>The Chair suggests that Ward Members may wish to arrange litter picks in their areas. If they wish to do so they should contact the Environmental Projects Officer (Vikki Sedgwick) who co-ordinates any volunteer litter picks. She will arrange for any equipment you may want to borrow and agree a place to leave the waste once collected.</p> <p>Requests can be made directly to Vikki Sedgwick or to the Environmental Projects email address – EnvironmentalProjects@swale.gov.uk</p>

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
Research into how lower tier councils Area Committees tackle upper tier issues	Committee member	Road safety and youth provision were raised at the December meeting and it was noted that these were county-led matters. Members wondered how other councils Area Committees tackle upper tier matters.	<p>The Kent County Councillor advised that if the Area Committee has questions about specific issues relating to activity where KCC is the responsible authority and there isn't an existing route then Swale should write to the relevant officers at KCC. With regard to road safety or youth provision, routes already exist. He suggested the Joint Transportation Board for road safety, and the Swale Young People's Partnership Conversation, where youth provision could be raised.</p> <p>A mechanism for raising issues with a higher tier authority when there isn't an existing route is something that the Area Committee Review Working Group may wish to consider.</p>
Phoenix House	Committee Member	An update was provided and at the time of the December meeting all but two users of the building had managed to find alternative premises from which to operate.	The Cabinet Member for Community chaired a high level meeting with the Chairman of the Swale Community Centres on 27 January 2021. The meeting reviewed the background and context to current situation relating to Phoenix House in Sittingbourne including the Trust's own position and to take a view on possible options moving forward with regard to future provision

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			and how that might be provided. Current community hub models were noted and it was agreed that a project team be formed to consider the business case for future provision in the town. A further meeting, likely to be March, will be called when contact has been established with KCC.

Items to bring back to future Area Committee Meetings:

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
Brown tourism signs	Cabinet Member for Planning	<p>To commence an audit of existing local brown signs in concert with parish councils. Progress to be reported at next meeting on 1 December 2020.</p> <p>Cabinet adopted a Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan on 28 October 2020. This includes a medium term action to undertake a wayfinding audit of signage and identify any gaps. The delivery partners identified for this action are: SBC; town and parish councils; Visit Swale; Kent Highways; and local businesses.</p>	There have been no requests for brown tourism signs in the Western Area. The Chair proposes bringing this back in 6 months' time to see if any requests come forward.

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How friends' groups work

Aim

Friends groups are established as independent voluntary local user groups with the purpose of being the principal forum for discussing views about an area such as community woodlands, parks, playgrounds etc.

Friends Groups Working & the Council

Think of a friend's group as a PTA for a local school. It is there to help and support the school and raise funds where possible.

The Council will support friends' groups that are representative of the community as a whole, are actively inclusive of all user groups and represent the views of all members of their group. We work in partnership with all groups that meet these overarching criteria to improve parks and open spaces.

Financial support is not available to friends' groups as we hope to encourage self-sufficiency and independent governance. However, we will support, wherever possible, the group to raise revenue through grants and other approved income sources. There may, on occasion, be council grants that the group may apply for.

The Councils/councillors commitment to the friends' groups includes:

- attending a minimum of two meetings per year, and an extra two site walkabouts
- consulting the group on all matters that affect them
- technical advice or 'in-kind' resources, where feasible, to support activities beneficial to the area organised/supported by the park friends' group.

The formation of a friends' group

A democratic process is important for a group to be truly representative. We encourage friends' groups to be constituted and elect a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer annually at the AGM. It is not expected that ward councillors or officers are elected to these positions. Model constitutions are available from the Charity Commission for voluntary groups and the Council may be able to assist with this.

To make sure that groups are representative of the community and reflect the users of the park, we recommend the following key areas of interest:

- biodiversity and conservation
- events and activities
- disability, discrimination and accessibility for all - particularly socially excluded groups
- children, young people and the elderly
- sports and play
- fundraising and income generation
- areas of activity.

Clear aims and objectives. The group must:

- have a clear constitution
- have stated members and officers
- not replicate the role of any existing forum or group
- have a clear vision as to what they want to achieve, for example:
 - organise events
- have maintenance days
- work in a specific area of the park
- research into historic features and areas
- encourage young people into the park, or other audiences
- apply for a grant - for example from us, Awards for All or GreenSpace.

Develop membership

- use a website to promote activities
- link with council databases and publications
- attend events and fetes locally to promote your work
- link to council website
- get coverage in the local paper - invite the paper along to meetings or send them minutes.

Beyond consultation to partnership

Friends of groups do not always work – they can drift apart.

This is usually because they do not move beyond talking to getting things done. This causes problems not only in developing membership, but also in terms of how they are viewed by the community.

The successful friends' groups work in partnership with the local community and Council (Parish, Borough, & County) to set up events. It is also useful to partner other organisations such as schools, or a local charity.

Clear programme. Keep it simple (KISS).

- have a core annual event
- organise smaller events such as maintenance days with a parks development officer
- work with a local school to do bulb planting, then invite them back to see the flowers

AGM and elections

- you must have an AGM - Annual General Meeting
- all posts must be advertised at least a month in advance
- the advertisement must be wider than current membership.

Be aware of wider 'volunteers' and issues.

- join the [community network of Conservation Volunteers](#)

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Western Area Committee Funding Scheme

Summary of applications received for the March 2021 meeting

Area Committee's allocation for 2020-21 - £40,000.00

Allocations previously agreed by Area Committee:

Upchurch Parish Council	£4,655.00
Newington Parish Council	£4,000.00
Wyvern Heritage & Landscape	£6,270.00
Total	£14,925.00

Available to allocate at the March 2021 meeting - £25,075.00

(Applications arranged in the order they were received)

Reference:	WAC001
Organisation:	Hartlip Parish Council
Applicant Name:	Mr G F Addicott OBE - Chair
Status of organisation:	Parish Council
Details of project/activity:	<p>Proposed purchase of kissing gate for erection on The Parkland, Lower Hartlip Road, Hartlip</p> <p>In 1983 Hartlip Parish Council purchased approximately six acres of land on The Lower Hartlip Road for the enjoyment of residents. The land concerned is known as The Parkland.</p> <p>The Parkland is a tranquil area managed and financed by the Parish Council. It is a special place for residents to spend time, to simply wander and relax.</p> <p>Since it was purchased, various HPC organised community activities have been held on it for the benefit of Hartlip residents.</p> <p>Income has been generated for its upkeep by allowing its use for Scout camps and the Caravan Club have spent weekends there.</p> <p>Always there has been emphasis on ensuring that it is a quiet, green area over which residents can roam freely thus benefitting their physical and mental health.</p> <p>In recent years the Parkland has been let for horse grazing and the Grazing Agreement makes clear to graziers that Hartlip residents have the 'right to roam' over the whole of the land and that graziers must not do anything to restrict this.</p> <p>During the Covid-19 pandemic it has been an extremely popular area for people to take their children and grandchildren for</p>

	<p>walks, walk their dogs and generally wander and enjoy the rural environment they choose to live in</p> <p>As six horses now graze on the land, The Parkland has been divided into two so that not all the horses graze in the same area. A fence and gate divides the Parkland into two fields but the central gate is now locked to satisfy the wants of the graziers. As a result, resident access to the southern half of the field is not possible.</p> <p>Of course, this brings complaints from residents whose use and enjoyment of the land is restricted.</p> <p>A solution must be found to ensure that residents have free access to the whole of The Parkland and that they may avail themselves of this at any time and safely.</p> <p>The Parish Council have therefore decided to erect a kissing gate.</p> <p>It will also be important to emphasise to graziers the importance of this and to firmly reiterate the terms of their agreement which makes clear that they must not at any time or for any reason hinder or restrict the free movement of residents over the whole area.</p> <p>Research has been undertaken for a suitable gate and the recommendation is that the Parish Council should install a Matlock metal pedestrian kissing gate at a cost of £730.80 including VAT and delivery plus £300 for installation. (Total £1030.80)</p> <p>A Matlock kissing gate would provide inclusive and safe access for all residents, enabling people unsteady on their feet, disabled people, those walking with children and pushchairs to access the second field safely.</p> <p>Hartlip Parish Council requests that the Western Committee considers funding for this project so that it can go ahead very soon in readiness for springtime.</p>
Supporting papers attached?	None.
Total project expenditure:	Matlock Kissing Gate - £499.00 Delivery - £110.00 Installation - £300.00 VAT - £121.80 Total - £1,030.80
Total project income (addition sources of income including cash/in kind):	HPC is able to reclaim VAT
Funding request:	£1,030.80

Reference:	WAC002
Organisation:	Sittingbourne In Bloom
Applicant Name:	Lynda Marshall – Committee Member
Status of organisation:	Unincorporated Association (Community Group)
Details of project/activity:	<p>The Sittingbourne In Bloom Committee would like to apply for funding from the Swale Western Area Committee towards refurbishing the Sensory Garden at King George V Playing Fields.</p> <p>The Park has been entered into the South & South East In Bloom competition for the last 4 years and has progressed from a Silver to a Silver Gilt (High) during that time. We would very much like to achieve Gold this year to make it a hat trick with the Town and Milton Creek Country Park. We are also working towards entering it for a Green Flag. To achieve this, a start was made to setup a Friends Group and organise a number of events in the Park but this has been halted due to the pandemic. To maintain public engagement a Facebook page was setup last May which is regularly updated by Wes, who is the gate keeper and lives in the park house. The S&SE In Bloom judges have commented on this area every year and it has been considered that this would be a good project to involve the community and develop the Friends Group.</p> <p>Our plan is to encourage community involvement, increase pride in the environment and get people actively involved in a wide range of activities to increase enjoyment and wellbeing.</p> <p>It is intended to use this project to establish the Friends Group and restart the events program in the Park once Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted. The cost identified is to do all 4 beds but if the full funding is not available the project could be tackled in stages doing 1 or 2 beds at a time.</p> <p>This project will contribute towards the objectives of Swale Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2023: Priority 3: Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone: 3.5 Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural, leisure and development activities appropriate and accessible to each age group.</p> <p>Please see attached sheet for further details.</p>
Supporting papers attached?	Yes
Total project expenditure:	Materials & labour (and removal of rubbish) - £4,991.41 Additional top soil - £1,344.00 Plants - £750 Total project expenditure - £7,085.41

Total project income (<i>addition sources of income including cash/in kind</i>):	We are not VAT registered but normally make purchases via Swale BC and reimburse them.
Funding request:	£7,085.41

Compiled by Janet Dart, Interim Area Committees Coordinator
19 February 2021

17th February 2021

Dear members of the Western Area Committee

The Sittingbourne In Bloom Committee would like to apply for a grant from the Swale Area Committee towards refurbishing the Sensory Garden at King George V Playing Fields.

The Park is very well used by local residents as well as being a destination for those from other areas of Sittingbourne. There has been a program of improvements in the last few years including the planting of a variety of specimen trees, extensive bulb planting and the development of a wild flower meadow in the far corner. The children's play area has been refurbished and an outdoor gym and picnic tables added. The football pitches and tennis courts are well used and maintained.

The café is very popular and the café owner is very proactive. The In Bloom volunteers have planted 2 of the beds in front of the pavilion with bulbs and wild flower seed to provide a riot of colour over a long period in the summer. The over mature beds at the Park entrance were renovated in 2019.

The Park has been entered into the South & South East In Bloom competition for the last 4 years and has progressed from a Silver to a Silver Gilt (High) during that time. We would very much like to achieve Gold this year to make it a hat trick with the Town and Milton Creek Country Park. We are also working towards entering it for a Green Flag. To achieve this, a start was made to setup a Friends Group and organise a number of events in the Park. Unfortunately, after a very promising initial event when we ran a Land Art festival and carried out a survey of people interested in joining a Friends Group - all further events were cancelled due to the pandemic. To maintain public engagement a Facebook page was setup last May which is regularly updated by Wes, who is the gate keeper and lives in the park house.

The Sensory Garden was established by SBC some years ago and consists of four raised beds in what had been an old, abandoned paddling pool. These raised beds have now deteriorated and need replacing and replanting. We have had a quote from Blenwood to purchase new sleepers at a cost of £4,991.41 including brackets, labour and disposal of rubbish for-all 4 beds. Further quotes are being sought in the hope of reducing that cost but additional funds will be needed for top soil, mulch and extra plants once the sleepers have been replaced. The S&SE In Bloom judges have commented on this area every year and it has been considered that this would be a good project to involve the community and develop the Friends Group. Sittingbourne in Bloom would like to request a grant of £7085 towards this project which would enable it to be completed in 2021. If full funding is not available it is something that could be done in stages, perhaps tackling two beds at a time.

This project will contribute towards the objectives of Swale Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2023: Priority 3: Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone: 3.5 Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural, leisure and development activities appropriate and accessible to each age group. Our plan is to encourage community involvement, increase their pride in the environment and get actively involved in a wide range of activities to increase enjoyment and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely



Lynda Marshall
Sittingbourne In Bloom Committee Member

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