

# HILDENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Pavilion and Recreation Ground – Riding Lane – Hildenborough – TN11 9HY  
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## OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MINUTES on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026

### In Attendance

Cllr Wynne, Cllr Sklavenitis, Cllr Gabriel, Cllr Haugh, Cllr Wills, Cllr McNeil,  
Cllr Connor.

Louise Jenner RFO & Parish Clerk

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

### 2. DECLARATIONS ON INTEREST

None were declared

### 3. APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October were approved unanimously and signed.

### 4. CLERKS REPORT – Noted

### 5. To consider the annual quotations for the ground works contracts:

#### Agree a recommendation for the next Parish Council Meeting.

The Open Spaces Committee reviewed the annual quotations for the ground works contracts and makes the following recommendations:

#### 1. Recreation Ground & B245 Hedge Works

That the Parish Council proceeds with Landscape Service for the Recreation Ground contractual ground maintenance; plus, hedge cutting along the B245 parallel to West Wood for 2026.

#### 2. West Wood & Village Green

That the Parish Council proceeds with 3 Counties Maintenance for the West Wood and Village Green ground maintenance works for 2026

#### 3. Recreation Ground Herbicide Treatment

That the Parish Council suspend the Recreation Ground herbicide treatment for 2026. For the impact of omitting the treatment to be monitor and consider if required in future years.

### 6. To consider the quotations for further Ash Die Back works to West Wood:

#### Agree a recommendation for the next Parish Council Meeting.

The Open Spaces Committee reviewed the current position on quotations received for the next phase of Ash Dieback works at West Wood, considered that a recommendation could not be made until the three outstanding quotations were received. The Parish Clerk advised that for one contractor further clarification is required whether the quote included the chipped wood being spread on the pathways.

Councillors further suggested exploring whether the local Scouts or Cubs might be interested in assisting spreading the chipped wood. Subject to appropriate supervision, risk assessments, and safeguarding considerations.

Recommendation:

For the Parish Council to defer a decision on the Ash Dieback works until outstanding quotations and required clarifications are received.

### 7. To review resident's suggestion for access gates for the Recreation Ground.

The Open Spaces Committee reviewed two suggestions received from residents regarding the installation of access gates on the Recreation Ground pathway leading onto Riding Lane. The Councillors consider whether gates were required and if so at which entrances, agreed to recommend providing one gate for the middle entrance that open directly on to Riding Lane. Councillors reviewed a selection of indicative gate styles and prices, proposing a self-closing metal gate, opening into the Recreation Ground, to ensure safety and prevent obstruction of the public highway.

The Parish Clerk to obtain a full quotation, including supply, installation, and associated ground works, for consideration and approval by the Parish Council.

**8. To consider providing a bike storage rack for the Recreation Ground.**

Councillors reviewed the prices for bike storage facilities and possible locations at the Recreation Ground.

The Parish Clerk will obtain a full quotation including installations cost for further consideration.

**9. To consider the purchase of new seating for a 'picnic area' on the far side of the Recreation Ground.**

Councillors reviewed the selection of picnic tables, chose a company known for their quality.

Councillors approved the purchase of two picnic tables from Earth Anchors, specifically:

- Octagonal Wheelchair Access Table
- Surrey 2m Picnic Table

The total cost for the two tables is £1,365.60 + delivery + VAT.

The Parish Clerk to confirm installation costs with the contractors and report back to the Committee or Parish Council once information is received.

**10. To consider the purchase of wildflower seeds for the area of silt by the West Wood pond.**

Councillors considered the proposal and agreed that up to £100 for the purchase of seeds, after consulting with the Hildenborough Conservation Group.

**11. CURRENT PROJECTS**

**11.1 To consider 'the Brief' for the enhancement of the pond at the Recreation Ground.**

Councillors agreed the brief to be used to allow the parish clerk to seek additional funding. Councillors suggested further information be added following the recent meeting with the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.

**11.2 To consider the information provided by Medway Valley Partnership for the following areas:**

**Pond at the Recreation Ground**

Councillors discussed the proposed position of the viewing platform between two oaks trees with the right hand side remaining as a hedgerow and a chestnut post and rail fencing to the left hand side only.

The Parish Clerk will seek further prices on the reduced length of fencing and further costs on the installation of a shaded area.

### **Wetland areas the Recreation Ground**

Councillors reviewed the information provided regarding the potential creation of a wetland area and the associated proposal for Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to undertake preliminary site survey work.

Councillors agreed that before proceeding, the Parish Council should consult the key stakeholder, the Tennis Club, due to the proximity of the proposed wetland area to their facilities. Their views and any concerns should be sought prior to commissioning the survey work.

Subject to the Tennis Club raising no objection, the Open Spaces Committee supports the expenditure of £960.00 for Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to undertake three site visits to complete a plant survey and assess the suitability of the location for development as a wetland area.

### **West Wood Pond**

Councillors discussed the proposed works to West Wood Pond and reviewed the availability of the relevant budget. The discussion raised several matters requiring clarification before any recommendation to proceed can be made.

The Parish Clerk will seek confirmation of the mesh size proposed as part of the fencing around the pond, ensuring it will allow wildlife—particularly frogs and newts—to pass through freely and safely.

Councillors also requested the Parish Clerk obtain a cost for the removal of two small trees as recommend by MVCP to increase light to the pond.

Councillors agree with the proposed platform size of 4m x 3m.

Before any final decision is taken, Councillors agreed that the Parish Council should consult with the Hildenborough Conservation Group to gather their views and ensure the works support local conservation aims.

## **12. NEW PROJECTS FOR 2026-28**

### **Renewal of Boundary Posts – Village Green**

Councillors discussed the condition of the boundary posts around the Village Green.

The Parish Clerk will:

- Seek additional information and updated prices for replacement posts.
- Investigate alternative options for taller boundary posts, which may improve visibility for drivers parking in the area.

### **Horse Chestnut Trees – Disease Assessment**

Councillors raised concerns regarding the health of the two Horse Chestnut trees located on the Village Green.

It was agreed to await the results of the forthcoming tree survey before determining whether any action is required.

### **Hedgerow Planting – Woodland Trust Options**

Councillors considered the potential purchase of hedgerow plants from the Woodland Trust to:

- Support and attract wildlife,
- Enhance biodiversity habitat
- Improve water absorption on the Village Green.

The Parish Clerk will seek:

- Costings for the plants,
- Costs for planting labour, and
- Costs for any additional soil required.

A further update will be provided once pricing is available.

#### **West Wood Rough Ground Area above Doctors' Surgery entrance**

Councillors considered whether work to enhance the area of rough ground above the Doctors' Surgery entrance should be included in the Parish Infrastructure Plan.

- A proposed funding of £20,000 could be added to the plan
- Councillors discussed potential improvements and future uses for the space.
- It was agreed to invite suggestions from residents; to be publicised in the Key Magazine.

#### **Verti-Drainage – West Wood and Future Planning**

Councillors considered the use of Verti drainage for the goal mouth area at West Wood, to improve ground conditions and reduce surface compaction.

- The Parish Clerk will seek prices for the works.
- Verti drainage for the Village Green will be reconsidered in 2027, as part of the future maintenance plan.

### **13. CORRESPONDENCE**

**Resident letter regarding the standing water at the village green.**

### **14. MEETING CLOSED – 21.19**

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Cllr Wynne, Cllr Sklavenitis, Cllr Gabriel, Cllr Connor, Cllr Wills,  
Cllr McNeil, Cllr Haugh**

**Next Open Spaces Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026**