HILDENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Pavilion and Recreation Ground – Riding Lane – Hildenborough – TN11 9HY
Telephone: 07818 329029 email: clerk@hildenboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk
website: www.hildenboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk

OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MINUTES
on Wednesday 23rd September 2026

In Attendance
Cllr Wynne, Cllr Sklavenitis, Cllr Gabriel, Cllr Wills & Cllr Haugh
Louise Jenner Parish Clerk

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

   Cllr Connor & Cllr McNeil

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –** None

3. **APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – Held on 29th July 2026**

   The minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2026 were approved unanimously and signed**.**

4. **CLERK'S REPORT**

   a) **Footpath** – Councillors discussed the completed footpath at the Recreation Ground on Riding Lane and noted how many residents are already using it.
   b) **Pedestrian priority signage** – Pedestrian priority signage is required on the footpath. The laminated stickers previously bought have not proved effective. The Clerk will investigate alternatives and report back to a future meeting.
   c) **Ash dieback** – Ash dieback works are ongoing. Landscape Services are due back on site in October. The annual tree survey report is still awaited.
   d) **Picnic tables** – The location of the previously approved picnic tables will be agreed by the Clerk in consultation with Cllr Wynne. It was agreed that the tables will be placed on the grass. Strimming around benches and picnic tables will be considered when the maintenance budget for 2027/28 is set.
   e) **Bus shelter** – The bus shelter needs a new roof. Three quotations are awaited and will be reported to a future meeting.
   f) **West Wood** - It's been brought to the attention of Councillors that children have be digging within the woods to create their own bike jumps. Parish Clerk to investigate safety signage.

5. **OPEN SPACES WORKING GROUPS` - verbal report, The Recreation Ground and Village Green 'walkabout'**

   Cllr Wynne gave a verbal report on the walkabout of the Recreation Ground and Village Green. The following points were noted.
   Recreation Ground
   a) **Litter bin** – A new, larger bin is needed at the start of the footpath leading down to the tennis courts. The Clerk will arrange for one to be provided.
   b) **Fitness sign** – The sign shows an out-of-date contact number. The Clerk will look into replacing it with a small metal sticker showing the correct details.
   c) **Play Park sign** – The sign has been redrafted, and the new version has been agreed by Cllr Sklavenitis and Cllr Wynne. The replacement sign will be installed shortly.
   d) **Footpaths** – Two pathways need attention: the path leading to the playpark and the path within the playpark. A first outline quotation has been received. The Clerk will obtain two further quotations and report back to Full Council.
   Village Green

e) **Water fountain** – It was suggested that the posts and chains around the water fountain be repainted.

Other matters

f) **Village sign, Fox Bush** – A resident has asked for the village sign at Fox Bush to be repainted.

g) **Maintenance team** – The Open Spaces Committee thanked the maintenance team for their hard work and for the improvements made since they started, noting that all areas were looking neat and tidy.

6. TREE PLANTING REQUEST – To consider Hildenborough Primary school's request for suitable Parish Council locations for the school's planting of sapling trees project.

Councillors discussed possible locations for the trees to be provided by Hildenborough Primary School. Some locations could cause conflict with sports clubs or neighbouring properties once the trees mature, ruled out the Recreation Ground and the Village Green at this time.

It was **RESOLVED** that West Wood, in the areas where the ash trees have been removed, be offered to the school as a suitable location for the planting.

Councillors also asked that the school be advised the Parish Council's plans for a community orchard, and that fruit or nut trees be recommended for any future planting. The Clerk will write to the school accordingly

7. WAR MEMROIAL – To consider the Girl Guides request for funds for plants around the war memorial.

It was **RESOLVED** to provide funding of up to £150 towards plants for the area around the War Memorial, to be met from the open spaces budget.

Councillors noted that there is no water supply near the War Memorial. The plants chosen should therefore be suitable for dry conditions and able to cope without regular watering.

8. APPLICATION – To review a request for the hire of the Pavilion and cricket pitches, Saturdays, 2027 cricket season. To consider key stake holder's response.

The applicant withdrew their application today at 5.13pm.

9. POND ENHANCEMENTS RECREATION GROUND –

9a - To review the report and the history of previous decisions and to consider the recommendation to the Full Council for approval of the bramble clearance, viewing platform and chestnut palling fencing.

MVCP has confirmed availability in 2027 and would carry out the bramble clearance in January 2027, ahead of the bird-nesting season, returning in April 2027 to complete the viewing platform and chestnut palling fencing works.

Recommendation.

That the Open Spaces Committee recommends to the Full Parish Council that it approves proceeding with the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership 2027 quotation, at a total scheme cost of £3,730.00 + VAT, this being above the Committee's delegated approval limit.

9b – To review the original brief and consider other enhancements.

It was agreed that quotations would be sought for new pond signage. The Clerk and Cllr Gabriel will work together on the content and design and bring a proposal back to a future meeting for approval.

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The Clerk will contact the local Scout group to ask whether the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts would be willing to make bird boxes, bat boxes, insect hotels and hedgehog homes for the site.

10. POND ENHANCEMENTS WEST WOOD –

10.a- To review the report and the history of previous decisions and to consider the recommendation to the Full Council for approval for the viewing platform.

That the Open Spaces Committee RECOMMENDS to Full Council that:

(a) Medway Valley Countryside Partnership is appointed to supply and install the viewing platform, accessible ramp, front fencing and gate at West Wood Pond in spring/summer 2027 at a cost of £4,823.80 plus VAT

(b) Medway Valley Countryside Partnership is appointed to fell two trees and create log piles at a cost of £361.00 plus VAT, subject to Tree Preservation Order consent being granted by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and the works being timed outside the bird nesting season;

(c) the expenditure is met from Open Spaces West Wood Pond Project 2026 –and the balance is to be carried forward to 2027/2028 budget.

The Clerk is authorised to submit the Tree Preservation Order application to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council on behalf of the Parish Council as landowner;

10.b To review and consider the quotations for chestnut palling fencing around West Wood Pond.

That the Open Spaces Committee RECOMMENDS to Full Council that:

Chase Fencing Supplies is appointed to supply and install approximately 100m of 1.2m chestnut pail fencing around the pond at a cost of £3,300.00 plus VAT. The Open Spaces Committee recommends this is carried out within this financial year before the viewing platform installation once approved by the full council.

The expenditure is met from Open Spaces Pond Project.

11. PLAY PARK INSPECTION REPORTS - to review the reports and works required for budgeting.

Councillors considered the following replacement items for the play areas:

Location	Item	Supplier	Estimated cost	Notes
Recreation Ground	New nest swing	Online Playgrounds	£787.05	Online price
West Wood Park	New cradle seats (x2)	Online Playgrounds	£243.80	Two seats required
West Wood Park	New anti-wrap swing chains (x3 sets)	Online Playgrounds	£189.00	Three chain sets required
West Wood Park	Trapeze – 8 new handles/lugs	HAGS	£1,312.64	Quotation attached as Appendix
			£2,532.49	

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It was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of the above items at a total estimated cost of £2,532.49 [plus VAT and delivery]. The cost will be met from the playground maintenance budget.

Within item 5. Councillors reviewed the footpaths and the current quotation provided by the footpath contractor Arnold Tarmac. The Clerk will obtain two further quotations and report back to Full Council.

Councillors expressed thanks to Richard and the Parish Clerk for the work carried out since they have joined the Parish Council. The Play Park Inspection reports reflect the significate improvements and replacements that have been made.

12. PARISH INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN – To review the amendments to the Parish Infrastructure Statement.

Councillors noted the amendments put forward at the last open spaces meeting including the updated priority listing of items, the document was approved.

13. FUTURE PROJECTS FOR BUDGETING

13a. West Wood - Community Orchard - To consider the initial quotations for a survey of the area and review initial outlined costs for budgeting.

- Councillors considered the 4 quotations received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP) to carry out a survey of the proposed area at a cost of £570 plus VAT, to be met from Open Spaces West Wood projects budget. It was noted that MVCP will visit the site twice across 2 seasons before providing a full report.
- Councillors discussed options for providing water while the trees establish. These included a standpipe, sealed water butts, or a borehole with a pump house and a built-in drinking water fountain. It was noted that a borehole could also strengthen Hildenborough's resilience planning by providing residents access to drinking water during supply outages.

13b. West Wood – Community Shed – To consider the possibility of the installation of a community shed.

Councillors discussed the idea of a community shed put forward by residents, what type of shed, should it remain open or lockable, water harvesting from the roof of the structure. Could it encourage anti-social behaviour. Sharing of fruit and other items, cost for upkeep and maintenance. It was agreed at this time that the trees would take several years to establish and that this item could be reconsidered in the future.

13c. West Wood – Development of unused land to car parking spaces

Councillors reviewed an outline cost for the proposal. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Kent County Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to ask what would be required of the Parish Council should the proposal progress. Key stakeholders, including the doctors' surgery and nearby residents, would also need to be consulted at a later stage.

- Additional note regarding the fallen trees within the Doctors Surgery woodland. Parish Clerk to contact the Practise Manager.

13d. Recreation Ground – Car Park Extension

Councillors reviewed an outline cost for the proposal. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to ask what would be required of the Parish Council should the proposal progress. Councillors noted they believe it was investigated some years ago with outlined survey costs obtained. The Parish Clerk to review the archive and contact the Tree Preservation Officer at TMBC. Councillors discussed the possibility of Disabled bays and electric charging points.

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14. MEETING CLOSED – 20.53

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Cllr Wynne, Cllr Sklavenitis, Cllr Gabriel, Cllr Connor, Cllr Wills, Cllr McNeil, Cllr Haugh

Next Open Spaces Meeting – Wednesday 28th October 2026

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