

SOUTHBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL



Tel: (01892) 529176

Southborough Civic Centre
Council Offices
137 London Road
Southborough
Kent TN4 0NA

OPEN SPACES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

28TH March 2024

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the Open Spaces & Environment Committee will be held in the Southborough Civic Centre, 137 London Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, KENT TN4 0NA on **Wednesday 3rd April 2024 at 7.00 p.m.** at which your attendance is required.

All meetings and agendas are open to the public, except where confidential information is being discussed. The agenda of the meeting will identify whether any meeting or part of the meeting is not open to the public and explain why.

Seating for the public will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, and cannot be guaranteed. If you want to attend the meeting in person, please advise the Finance@southboroughcouncil.co.uk or call 01892 529176.

Members of the public may speak under the Public Open Session, as long as 24 hours' notice of their wish to do so has been given to the Town Clerk, and that subject is relevant to this Committee. No speech may be longer than five minutes, except by resolution of the Committee or Council.

AGENDA

TO: MEMBERS OF THE OPEN SPACES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: Cllrs Lewis (Chair), Kinghorn (Deputy Chair), Figgitt, Elliott, Hill, Opara, Spickett, Stewart and Wharton.

1. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

2. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS

Members who have a disclosable pecuniary or other significant interest within the meaning set out in the Kent Code of Conduct 2021 in any matter appearing on the agenda, are invited to declare that interest at this stage and sign the register accordingly.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Standing Order 3(d): Members of the public may speak under this item as long as 24 hours' notice of their wish to do so has been given to the Deputy Town Clerk, and that the subject is relevant to this Committee. No speech may be for longer than five minutes, except by resolution of the Committee or Council.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 6TH February 2024 were approved at the Full Council held on 29 February 2024.

5. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Council Members to note the income and expenditure reports relating to Open Spaces for February 2024.

6. SOUTHBOROUGH COMMON - Southborough Society

The council in conjunction with the High Weald team carry out various surveys of our common areas. The Southborough Society have asked the council for permission to carry out a botany survey of the common and cemetery for their own use.

7. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

It is proposed that during the consideration of the following items the public and press shall be temporarily excluded (Standing Order 3 (c)): -

“Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public’s exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public’s exclusion.”

These items are considered confidential for the following reason(s)
Information relating to the financial and personnel affairs of the Council.

- a) **Christmas Tree – Civic Centre** - Members to see the previously supplied email outlining the costs to set in place a Christmas tree ground sunk tree support. This will prevent the tree from falling as has happened previously.

Paul Gosling
Finance Officer
Southborough Town Council.

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/23.

paid between 01/02/24 and 29/02/24, for the Open Spaces & Environment Committee

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Details	Heading
TRD FEB 24	01/02/24	844		£60.47	£10.08	£50.39	Trade UK	Tools 249/4
D&G FEB 24	01/02/24	851		£19.99	£3.33	£16.66	D&G Appliance Plan	White goods Pennington 253/1
BG1 FEB 24	01/02/24	852		£33.78	£5.63	£28.15	British Gas	Home cover - 7112 253/1
BG5 FEB 24	07/02/24	853		£36.38	£6.06	£30.32	British Gas	Home cover - 7356 257/2
EDF8 FEB 24	09/02/24	849		£127.00	£6.05	£120.95	Edf Energy	Elec Pavilion 161 253/4
EDF6 FEB 24	09/02/24	850		£16.00	£0.76	£15.24	Edf Energy	Elec ST peter's Church - 420 258/3
3540	14/02/24	825		£2,736.00	£456.00	£2,280.00	Treework	Tree work 249/1
W167281	14/02/24	829		£109.41	£18.23	£91.18	Kidman's Ltd	Strimmer Repairs 249/4
W167267	14/02/24	830		£17.99	£3.00	£14.99	Kidman's Ltd	Rake 249/4
439982	14/02/24	834		£684.00	£114.00	£570.00	Pallet Handling Penshurst	Allotment Fence 250/1
3551	14/02/24	836		£456.00	£76.00	£380.00	Treework	Tree work 249/1
26988	14/02/24	839		£137.40	£22.90	£114.50	Wasteway	Clean up of dead animal 255/1
26802	14/02/24	840		£274.50	£45.75	£228.75	Wasteway	Clean up of dead animal 255/1
LBBC FEB 24	15/02/24	858		£428.82	£71.47	£357.35	Pet wipes UK Ltd	20,000 Poo Bags 255/1
CW1 FEB 24	16/02/24	873		£14.98	£0.00	£14.98	Castle Water SE	Water Pennington 253/5
CW2 Feb 24	16/02/24	874		£53.86	£0.00	£53.86	Castle Water SE	Watter Allotments 250/2
CW3 Feb 24	16/02/24	875		£24.23	£0.00	£24.23	Castle Water SE	Watter Allotments 250/2
SEFE3 FEB 24	26/02/24	867		£20.23	£0.96	£19.27	SEFE	Cemetery 257/7
SEFE2 FEB 24	26/02/24	868		£263.84	£12.56	£251.28	SEFE	Cemetery 257/7
	29/02/24	885		£897.60	£149.60	£748.00	Pallet Handling Penshurst	New Fence Bungalow 253/6
859	29/02/24	888		£312.05	£52.01	£260.04	The Sticky Monkey	CCTV Signs Pennington 253/1
1979	29/02/24	893		£300.00	£50.00	£250.00	Foster Landscapes Ltd	Inspections 249/3
440297	29/02/24	895		£1,713.60	£285.60	£1,428.00	Pallet Handling Penshurst	Cemetery fence 257/2
V1 FEB 24	29/02/24	896		£3,031.64	£505.27	£2,526.37	Veolia UK Ltd	Waste removal 249/6
Total				£11,769.77	£1,895.26	£9,874.51		

Received Income Transactions

Start of year 01/04/23

received between 01/02/24 and 29/02/24, for the Open Spaces & Environment Committee

Paying	Received	Tn no	Invoice	Gross	Vat	Net	Heading	Details
STR FEB 24	01/02/24	624		£40.10	£0.00	£40.10	200/3	Stripe Tennis courts
FPI050224MB	05/02/24	623	STCCB460	£727.48	£0.00	£727.48	201/2	Interment
CHQ000231	22/02/24	644	STCCB476	£363.74	£0.00	£363.74	201/2	Interment
Cash 2102241	22/02/24	647	STCA478	£10.00	£0.00	£10.00	203	Plot 10a Ridgeway Over Paid 7.23
rent FEB 24	26/02/24	655		£598.00	£0.00	£598.00	201/1	Rent
FPI OS FEB	26/02/24	656		£683.00	£0.00	£683.00	200/1	Rent
FPI290224PJ	29/02/24	659	STCCB485	£3,208.72	£0.00	£3,208.72	201/2	Burial Fees
FPI290224JP	29/02/24	663	STCA488	£5.54	£0.00	£5.54	203	Plot 94 Yew Tree
Total				£5,636.58	£0.00	£5,636.58		

Hi Carolyn,

Many thanks for your response. Diana has asked me to reply on the society's behalf.

It's great to hear that other residents have taken an interest in the natural history of the cemetery and that KHWP are going to undertake a floral survey. Would you be able to share the details of who at KHWP is leading this survey as we would be keen get in touch to partner with them?

We completely agree that it is crucial to maintain the peace and tranquillity of the site and not to damage the memorials. I have led several natural history events before in cemeteries on behalf of the London Natural History Society and London Wildlife Trust, such as at Nunhead Cemetery, Tower Hamlets Cemetery, and Tottenham Cemetery among others, and am familiar with the issues that attend these types of sites and the behaviours required. I am also a friend of Woodbury Park Cemetery and have undertaken a floral survey of that site in the past.

The events we had in mind were possibly one heritage walk in the late summer and one fungi walk in the late autumn. Both would involve relatively small numbers, maybe c.10-15 adults, and we would keep to the paths. We would be happy to consider any other reasonable measures you thought appropriate.

The suggested surveys would involve c.2-3 people and would be no more than walking around the site for an hour or two. The suggested insect and moth surveys would involve leaving traps out overnight on c.5-6 nights between May and September. The reason for asking for out of hours access is so that these could be placed at dusk and retrieved at dawn. Fungi surveys involve no special equipment in the field and is simply about walking, observing, taking photos, and taking a few specimens to study under the microscope. Bat surveys involve walking around with bat detectors and heat cameras, again at dusk or early evening in the summer months.

As part of any publicity and articles we would be happy to include all the points you raise about respecting the special status of the site.

I would be happy to provide more details on our proposal if that would be useful to you. I would be equally happy to meet and talk though these points in person if that is easier.

Best Regards,
David

About the Southborough Society

The Southborough Society ('the society') is the civic and heritage society of Southborough and High Brooms ('the town'). The society exists to stimulate interest in and care for the environment and character of the town, its history and its surrounding countryside. The society is a registered charity with approximately 400 members and is open to everyone.

Southborough Cemetery

As well as providing a place for burials and remembrance, Southborough Cemetery ('the cemetery') is an important heritage asset of the town, an open space rich in history, architecture, and wildlife.

Local natural history experts have long recognised the cemetery's potential for nature and over the years several intriguing records of potential conservation importance have been made, such as the presence of rare orchids and waxcap mushrooms.

These finds are likely to be indicators of semi-natural, unimproved grasslands, a habitat seriously threatened throughout the UK and Europe according to Natural England.

Proposal

The society asks permission from the town to undertake a programme of activities focussed on the heritage and natural history of the cemetery in 2024 and 2025.

The purpose of the programme is:

1. to stimulate interest in the cemetery amongst the residents of the town, and
2. to improve understanding of the ecology of the cemetery and surrounding landscape.

Such activities may include:

- volunteer-led surveys of the cemetery: wildflowers, mushrooms, bats, birds, moths, and other pollinating insects;
- public walks and talks;
- public displays;
- articles and papers in local and nature journals; and
- press releases and social media articles.

As a secondary purpose, the outcomes of the survey work could be of assistance to the Southborough Town Council when considering the cemetery's management plan, as we believe that changes to the environmental management of the older, inactive parts of the cemetery could be beneficial to promoting wildlife, such as not mowing the grass during spring and early summer.

The programme would not incur any monetary costs for the Town Council, nor involve any activities that would present any obvious health and safety risks.

The survey work is likely to require access to the cemetery on a few occasions when it is normally closed to public access. We would look to liaise with STC on the details of any such arrangements, including avoiding any clashes with burial and site management activity.

The survey work may include the removal of a small number of specimens for detailed examination so that they can be identified to species level. This will not have any impact on the site's ecology.

The results of any surveys would be recorded with the relevant biological recording organisations covering West Kent for public record and would be shared with the Town Council. We would be happy to provide a formal report at the end of the programme to the Town if that would be useful.