

PARKS REPORT
RLA – 18 September 2024**Broomfield:**

Cracks in the footpath have been repaired and signs advising of uneven surfaces have been installed.

Work measuring and marking the pitches has been undertaken.

The hedge rows around the council offices have been trimmed.

Shrubs at Pacific Close have been cut back.

Cricket has finished for the season.

Heritage Park:

Public Right of Way DS6 has been cutback.

The vandalized "Uneven Surface" sign and dog bin at the steps have been re-instated.

The entrance to the New Burial Ground allotments has also been cut back.

Veteranisation work to the trees, as part of the wider ecological improvements to the park, has been undertaken. This work was carried out as part of external funding.

Knockhall:

The mini football pitch has been top dressed and seeded.

The access bar to the changing rooms has been re-welded.

The adult size pitch has been measured and marked out.

Swanscombe Park:

The standpipe leak has been repaired.

As previously agreed, the fox fence deterrent has been purchased and installed.

Following the theft of one of the vans the damaged gate has been repaired.

The hedges around the perimeter have been cut back.

Valley View:

A wildflower area is being installed to the right as you enter the play area.

Equipment / Staffing:

Members were previously advised (minute 110/24-25) that one of the parks' vans was stolen. The insurance company settled the claim, and a second-hand electric van is in the process of being sourced/purchased to replace the stolen diesel van.

The contents of the van are subject to a separate insurance claim.

A tow bar has been fitted to one of the vans.

Miscellaneous:

The DSTC Community Day on 12 July 2024 was very successful and the bird boxes produced by the students will be placed throughout the Town Councils sites in both Greenhithe and Swanscombe.

The works highlighted from the periodic survey have now been undertaken/completed.

The fence line at Keary Road allotments has been cut back.

Recommended:

To note.

AGENDA ITEM

RLA 18/9/24 7.1

CRICKET – PITCH ALLOCATION 2025 SEASON

Background

The Town Council has had a cricket square located within Broomfield Park since its creation. Until the closure of the Pavilion the hire of the square included the use of changing facilities within the building.

From May 2023 the provision of cricket has been limited to the hire of the pitch and the use of the portalo located to the rear of the Grove Hall.

The Town Council have capacity to allow two teams to use the pitch per season.

Request Received

The Town Council have been approached by three teams who would like to hire the pitch for the 2025 season. All three teams play fixtures on a Saturday, meaning we are limited to only allowing two of them to hire for the upcoming season. As the Kent League needs to be made aware of ground availability by the end of September members are being asked to consider the requests.

Team:	Background / Summary:
Swanscombe & Greenhithe 1880 Cricket Club.	<p>This team have been playing cricket from within the Town for 144 years and have been a continuous user of this ground for a number of years.</p> <p>The club have begun expanding their community initiatives and undertook the cricket coaching for this year's Summer of Sport</p>
Oakfield Warriors Cricket Club	<p>This club previously hired the Town Councils pitch prior to 2023 but chose to move their fixtures elsewhere when the facility for changing rooms were no longer available.</p> <p>They are a large club with multiple teams and play out of a variety of locations including Maidstone and Sevenoaks.</p>
Ebbsfleet Cricket Club	<p>This team is in its third season and have been playing in the Essex League whilst searching for a local ground to be available to play its home matches, so they are able to join the Kent League.</p> <p>The players are all from the Ebbsfleet, Swanscombe, Greenhithe and Northfleet area.</p> <p>Ebbsfleet Cricket Club are in the process of forming a partnership with Swanscombe & Greenhithe 1880</p>

	Cricket Club to find ways to attract the next generation of local cricketers.
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All clubs have been made aware of the likely facility limitations for the 2025 season and all have agreed to them, with the exception of Oakfield Warriors who would have to decide which of their teams would be able to play at the site should changing rooms not be available.

Recommended: To decide which teams be allocated a space on the pitch for the 2025 cricket season.

ROUGH SLEEPERS – KNOCKHALL PARK & HERITAGE PARK

Background

On the 23 July 2024 the Town Council were made aware that a gentleman with a dog had pitched a tent in a corner of Knockhall Park. Staff contacted the gentleman who confirmed he was homeless. He was made aware that the Town Council had an open-air cinema event at the site the following evening. The gentleman subsequently relocated his tent and belongings to an area within the Heritage Park. He was later joined at the site by a lady and a second tent was pitched.

On the 12 August 2024 officers discovered a second couple had pitched a tent at the Northeast corner of Knockhall Park, again claiming to be homeless.

The Town Council began receiving complaints from residents of the Knockhall Road area regarding the behaviour witnessed. Unfortunately, it was hard to ascertain whether this behaviour has been from the individuals camped at the site or the couple coming across from the Heritage Park with their dog.

Actions Taken

In the case of each couple at both the Heritage Park and Knockhall Park the following external organisations were contacted and advice obtained:

Organisation:	Advice Received:
Kent Police	<p>Kent Police do not have the power to move on a person from private land claiming homelessness.</p> <p>They can only act on any actual offence the person or persons undertake.</p> <p>Advised the Town Council regarding seeking advice on Civil Eviction proceedings.</p> <p>Advised that occurrences of anti-social behaviour could be used to ask Dartford Borough Council to consider issuing a Community Protection Warning.</p> <p>Attended the site on multiple occasions to ensure safety is being considered and remind the people sleeping rough of the expected conduct/behaviour.</p>
Dartford Borough Council Housing	Contacted the individuals to register as homeless and to investigate the possibility of finding accommodation.
Gravesham Borough Council Housing	Contacted the individuals to register as homeless and to investigate the possibility of finding accommodation.

Porchlight (Homeless Charity)	Support the homeless individuals in liaising with the relevant authorities for housing support and investigate the available of spaces within temporary accommodation.
Kent Community Warden	Attended site to check on conditions and assist with signposting to support.
The Swanscombe Centre and Junior Park Run	They were both made aware of the situation at the Heritage Park.
The Town Councils Solicitor	<p>On contacting the Solicitor, it was confirmed that we could seek a Civil Eviction for each site. This would likely take time and require a court appearance, followed by a bailiff eviction notice to be served.</p> <p>The expected cost of the legal action for eviction would be approximately £2,000 per case.</p> <p>The eviction though would only apply to the individuals present for the site they are being evicted from.</p>

Town Council staff have been regularly inspecting sites and, where possible, providing litter bags to ensure that the rough sleepers keep the areas tidy.

Town Council officers have been regularly updating each of these stakeholders with information regarding any concerns raised, issues identified, or copies of complaints received.

Update

On the 11 September 2024 staff discovered the tent at Knockhall Park collapsed, empty and that the belongings of the couple had been taken. The area has been cleared, the tent removed, and signs placed on site advising the owners of the tent that this has been stored and to make contact should they wish to have it returned.

Staff have also been informed by the couple residing at the Heritage Park that they have been engaging with Porchlight and they hope to have accommodation resolved within the next 2 weeks.

Recommended:

1. To note, and endorse, the actions taken to date by the Town Clerk in managing the encampments from rough sleepers.
2. To agree for the Town Clerk to continue to engage with the relevant stakeholders to ensure that the matter is managed to minimise the potential impact to the Town Council, its parks and neighbouring residents.

Month	2021			2022			2023			2024		
	Sessions	Energy (KWH)		Sessions	Energy (KWH)		Sessions	Energy (KWH)		Sessions	Energy (KWH)	
Jan			19	154	137	3859	128	3458				
Feb			10	102	111	2437	108	1745				
Mar			33	578	122	3824	152	3763				
Apr			38	434	130	4280	124	3374				
May			76	993	138	3705	131	3629				
Jun			69	1079	141	3588	150	3854				
Jul			67	1149	114	2749						
Aug	6	1	62	924	119	2829						
Sep	2	1	54	1380	129	3451						
Oct	6	82	99	2309	111	3211						
Nov	21	133	114	2733	139	4005						
Dec	14	192	109	2621	123	3167						
TOTAL	49	409	750	14456	1514	41105	793	19823				
AVE	8.17	68.17	62.50	1204.67	126.17	3425.42	132.17	3303.83				

Month	2021			2022			2023			2024		
	Sessions	Energy (KWH)		Sessions	Energy (KWH)		Sessions	Energy (KWH)		Sessions	Energy (KWH)	
Jan			10	17	60	950	75	1841				
Feb			5	32	52	1004	65	1575				
Mar			12	91	69	1421	103	2714				
Apr			7	46	59	775	78	1716				
May			9	47	94	1555	80	1877				
Jun			27	317	137	1778	80	2164				
Jul			22	246	113	2048						
Aug			25	293	56	1073						
Sep			25	313	71	1536						
Oct			30	371	64	1417						
Nov			42	542	67	1278						
Dec	12	14	42	627	55	1261						
TOTAL	12	14	256	2942	897	16096	481	11887				
AVE	12.00	14.00	21.33	245.17	74.75	1341.33	80.17	1981.17				

AGENDA ITEM 7.3
RM 18/9/24

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