



Coxheath Parish Council

Recreation and Open Spaces Working Group

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 2 June at 7pm
in the Parish Office, Coxheath Village Hall, Stockett Lane.

Present: Cllrs: H. Weaver (Chairman), D. Carpenter, I. Laponder and J. Sheppard

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith (Clerk), Guy Osborne, Land Director at Country House Homes

MINUTES

15/26 Administration

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. There were no intentions to record the meeting.

16/26 Apologies for Absence, Declarations and Dispensations

- a) Apologies for absence: **An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Parker and the reason for absence was accepted.**
- b) To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in the agenda.
Disclosable Interests: Under the Localism Act 2011:
Cllr. Carpenter declared an interest as a Trustee of the Village Hall
Other Significant Interests: **None received.**
Other Interests: **None received.**
- c) Requests for Dispensations: **None received.**
- d) Declarations of Lobbying: **None received.**

17/26 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 7 May 2026 as a true and accurate record.

18/26 Open Session

No members of the public present.

19/26 Beacon Park

Guy Osborne, Land Director at Country House Homes, introduced himself to Members and explained that he was attending the meeting to provide both an update on the Beacon Park development and to discuss the open spaces and Local Nature Reserve areas within the proposed development.

Nature Reserve: Guy Osborne explained that there will be a Local Nature Reserve which extends along the southern, eastern and northern boundaries of the site and includes landscaped paths through the site as well as a pocket park on the western boundary. This Local Nature Reserve will have dense levels of tree planting, ecology ponds, native hedgerow planting and other ecology habitat enhancements. This land will come under the umbrella of a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR) with a 30-year Landscape and Habitat Management Plan. The LNR status includes a £30,000 future Management Fund which is conveyed with the land to meet with future costs post establishment. In response to a concern about the level of maintenance required and the amount of funds available, i.e. just £1000.00 per annum for 30 years, Guy Osborne suggested that in the early years the overall expenditure would be quite low with the highest levels of expenditure being between years 15 and 25. Guy Osborne suggested that the Parish Council could be involved in the discussions on the specification of items such as the bridges across the drainage ditches and kissing gates. Cllr. Weaver suggested that the Clerk contacts Loose Parish Council for some advice as they maintain an established Nature Reserve Area. Guy Osborne suggested that the Parish Council also contacts Brian Clark, a Trustee of the Hayle Place Nature Reserve, for advice. Guy Osborne explained that he has also worked with Bearsted Parish Council on a similar project and suggested that they could also

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offer support and guidance. Guy Osborne advised that the PROW to the east of the site will be open to the nature area.

Open Space Guy Osborne advised that the proposed development will also provide an accessible open amenity space to include a children's play area and that Country House Homes would like to transfer this area to the Parish Council. Guy Osborne suggested that the Parish Council could be consulted on the type of play equipment that goes in the area. Within the Public Open Space there will also be a Beacon Landmark. The Beacon Landmark is a three-quarter sized bronze statue set within a ragstone seating plinth. This Beacon signifies Coxheath's history as a Beacon location in the 14th to 17th Century and will have pointers embedded in the ragstone plinth and surrounding paving to identify the original beacon locations. Members discussed the practicalities of a traditional burning beacon. It was agreed that the exact specification of the beacon in terms of lighting required further discussion. Guy Osborne advised that a further grant of £10,000.00 could be available to support the cost of the future maintenance of the open space.

Guy Osborne advised that Country House Homes and the Greenside Medical Hub have now entered into a licence agreement with Aspire to provide the land for the required footpaths for the Zebra crossing. The installation of the Zebra crossing is likely to take place during the school summer holidays. Guy Osborne advised that Country House Homes are still committed to upgrading the Zebra crossing to a Toucan crossing, (controlled by traffic lights), but that this will require a Section 278 agreement and will be conditional on a Level 2 Safety Audit.

Guy Osbourne advised that construction is forecasted to start between November 2026 and April 2027. The timing will be dependent on successfully finding an affordable home provider for the site. It was suggested that in the current climate it could take 3-4 years to build and sell the site, (expecting to build and sell 25-30 units per annum). Guy Osborne advised that £80,168.00 (index linked) CIL monies would be available to the Parish Council.

Cllr. Weaver asked about the provision of litter bins. Guy Osborne advised that currently there is no provision for bins and that the provision of bins in both the nature reserve and public open space would need to be agreed with MBC. Visual interpretation boards will be installed around the Nature Reserve and Guy Osborne would welcome suggestions for the design of these. It was noted that there will be 380 trees to maintain. Members expressed some concern about the ongoing cost to the Parish Council of maintaining the areas to be adopted. Guy Osborne asked to be involved and kept up to date on the Parish Council thoughts.

Guy Osborne confirmed that Country House Homes still have an option on the orchard/field to the east of the site and will be holding a consultation event in the Autumn on a proposal to build a total of 47 bungalows, a mixture of semi-detached and detached bungalows. Guy Osborne explained that it is believed that single storey buildings would be less harmful to the character of the area and would provide much needed single storey homes in the parish.

Guy Osborne left the meeting

20/26 Grounds Maintenance 2026

a) Benches update

It was noted that the Clerk is actively seeking quotes to repair five of the Parish Council owned benches. The five benches include the two benches in the village centre, one by the Church, one in the brick built bus stop and one at The Beacons. The Clerk is also trying to obtain quotes for any remedial works to the brick built bus stop. Cllr. Carpenter advised that the memorial bench for Brian Mortimer, founder of The Custard Pie Championship, a previous Parish Councillor and Ward Member, is to be installed next week at the entrance to the village hall car park and will be unveiled at The Custard Pie event due to be held on the 13 June 2026.

b) Grass cutting/Hanging Baskets update

The Clerk advised that there has been no reported issues and it was agreed that the hanging baskets are flowering well. The Clerk was asked to add the weeding of the play area and village hall car park to the next grounds maintenance schedule. It was agreed to review the grounds maintenance specification at the next meeting and to then ask Full Council to commence a tender process for a 3 year contract.

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21/26 Proposal to replace the containers on the recreation ground

It was noted that a decision from MBC regarding the planning proposal 26/501034/FULL is expected this month. Lawrence Containers have sourced a container and will make the required alterations. It was agreed to install any shelving when the container is on site. The Clerk is meeting the grounds contractor on site to see if he can assist with trimming the hedge behind the container on the Middle Field and tidying up the whole area. It was noted that Lawrence Containers are keen to deliver the container but have been advised that this cannot take place until planning permission has been received.

07/26 Recreation Ground

a) To consider quotes for improvements to the car park from Linden Road

Members discussed different types of specification suggested by two contractors for improving the car park from Linden Road. Both contractors had also quoted to improve the footpath across Middle Field. The Clerk advised that the cost of the preferred specification would be over the threshold of £30,000 (including VAT) meaning the Parish Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices. It was noted that the description for the use of the S106 funding that needs to be spent by the 21 May 2031 includes improving the access to the sports area from Linden Road and pathways. It was agreed to ask the Finance Committee to consider and approve the required invitation to tender and notice documents.

08/26 Playground/MUGA

a) To receive and discuss the monthly inspection report

The monthly inspection report for the play park, gym equipment, kick wall and MUGA which was carried out on the 29 May 2026 was noted.

b) To receive an update on the remedial works

It was noted that Capel Groundcare has completed the repairs to the anti-wrap swings hangers on the Junior swings.

c) To discuss a proposal to increase the CCTV cover on the MUGA

It was noted that Full Council accepted a quote from the local contractor Amiga to install two IP 8 Megapixel ColorVu Bullet Cameras and one Pan tilt zoom camera, all to be positioned on the existing tower. A separate network video recorder will be installed in the Parish Office and the Clerk will have access to images on a separate monitor and on the Parish Council mobile phone. As requested by Full Council the Clerk has obtained an example of the quality of the images which has since been approved by Cllr. Gardner. The Clerk has also negotiated a reduction of £5.00 per month for the maintenance charge reducing the cost from £35.00 to £30.00 per month. It was noted that a site survey will be taking place on Monday 8 June 2026 and that Darren Carpenter, in his role as a Trustee of the Village Hall, will attend to give access to the current equipment. The installation is then due to take place on Thursday 11 and Friday 12 June 2026. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council will need to write and adopt a CCTV policy. The Clerk will advise the MUGA Steward of the improvements to the CCTV.

d) To receive feedback from a site meeting to discuss the village hall playground

It was noted that the Clerk and Cllr. Weaver attended a site meeting to discuss replacing some of the playground equipment on the village hall playground. Cllr. Weaver suggested that the existing roundabout could be replaced with an accessible roundabout and that the toddler roundabout could be replaced with a suitable toddler multi-play unit. The Clerk advised that the S106 funding that needs to be spent by the 27 June 2027 would appear to have been allocated for improvements to the playground equipment and surface at Stockett Lane. The Clerk advised that there is a total of £101,789.63 S106 funding. The S106 team have already suggested that part of this fund could be used to purchase the replacement container. The Clerk will find out if the remaining funds could be used to replace all of the equipment at the Stockett Lane playground. In the meantime, the Clerk was asked to obtain further quotes to replace the two items of equipment and investigate installing sensory boards to the railings.

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24/26 Football Pitches

a) To receive any update

It was noted that Cllr. Batty has kindly agreed to engage with the football club. Given that the new football season starts in August, it was suggested and agreed to review the football agreement and annual fee at the next meeting. Cllr. Weaver will find out if Cllr. Batty would like to attend this meeting as a member of the public.

25/26 Huntingdon Road Village Green

a) To receive an update on a proposal to adopt the village green

It was noted that the Clerk has completed and submitted the land disposal application form provided by Golding Homes for a possible purchase of Huntingdon Village Green. Golding Homes has since advised the Clerk that they have completed an initial appraisal and there are no obvious reasons for them not to consider disposing of the land. The proposal will now be presented to the Executive Team at Golding Homes which is due to meet in June 2026. The Executive Team will decide whether the land can be disposed of.

b) To receive an update on proposal to improve the village green

It was noted that the Clerk is in the process of arranging site visits with two contractors that have expressed an interest in submitting a quote to improve the facilities on the village green.

26/26 Tree Surveys/Woodland Management Plan

a) To discuss the communication of the proposed urgent works to trees

It was noted that Full Council accepted the quote from Down to Earth for urgent remedial works to the trees on both the recreation ground and Huntingdon Village Green and that they hope to be on site the w/c 29 June 2026. Members considered and approved a flyer prepared by Cllr. Gardner which provides an explanation about why the works are required and when they will take place. The Clerk will hand deliver the flyers to properties bordering the village green and recreation ground and will also place the flyer on social media, the website and noticeboards.

b) To discuss further works outlined in the tree report

It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain a quote from Down to Earth for the works required to trees identified as a moderate risk.

c) To receive an update on the Woodland Management Plan

The Clerk reported that Down to Earth has apologised for not sending over a Woodland Management Plan in time for the meeting and that they hoped to complete the plan within the next couple of weeks.

27/26 Whitebeam and Fairhurst Play Areas

a) Proposal to adopt the play areas from MBC – to receive an update

It was noted that Deborah Turner from Corporate Property at MBC has sent over a draft 'Heads of Terms' for the transfer of both Fairhurst and Whitebeam play Areas. The Clerk has forwarded the details of the appointed solicitor for the Parish Council to Deborah Turner who has confirmed that the solicitor for MBC will now make contact with them.

b) To receive and discuss the inspection reports for both play areas

As agreed at the last meeting the Clerk had obtained and circulated a copy of the most recent RoSPA inspection report for both areas which was carried out for MBC in January 2026. The Clerk had also instructed Capel Groundcare to carry out an independent inspection of both playgrounds and copies of these reports have also been circulated. It was noted that most of the equipment and surfaces in both play areas need replacing. The Clerk advised Members that S106 funding could possibly be available to improve the surfacing and access to the Whitebeam Play area but that there is no S106 funding allocated to the Fairhurst play area. The Clerk was asked to find out from the S106 team if funding could

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be made available to replace any of the playground equipment at either site. It was noted that given the likely level of spend that this will require the publication of an invitation to tender and notices. It was agreed that when the S106 team have advised if S106 funding could be used that the Clerk draws up an invitation to tender.

28/26 Confidential Items

There were none.

29/26 Date of the next meeting

Thursday 9 July 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Office.

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.44pm

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