

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

12th November 2025, 7.30pm

The Guildhall

Cllr C Martin	Present	Cllr Perkin	Present
Cllr Coniam	Present	Cllr Saunders	Present
Cllr Cook	Present	Cllr Eyre	Substitution
Cllr Gibson	Apology	Martin Collins	Present
Cllr Golding	Apology	Matthew Hatchwell	Absent

In attendance:

Louise Bareham (Town Clerk)

Stacey Woolf (Facilities Manager)

Public Questions:

Maria Newman queried why the Allotment membership list for St Nicholas Allotments had not been sent to her as Membership Secretary. The Facilities Manager replied that the list was sent to the Secretary for each site and this would be forwarded on to her by the Secretary. Cllr C Martin advised she would discuss the matter with Jenny Boxall.

Lesley Seager queried whether Cooksditch Stream was due to be treated with Siltex following the work at Stonebridge Pond. Cllr C Martin advised that the results at Stonebridge Pond would be considered first before progressing. Cllr C Martin advised she would make further enquiries.

208 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Perkin, Golding, and Gibson. Councillor Eyre attended as a substitute for Councillor Gibson.

209 Declarations of interest

None.

210 Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

The previous minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously. Cllr C Martin noted the delay in organising a meeting with Shepherd Neame regarding the land at Ospringe, due to time constraints and a commitment was made to attempt to arrange a meeting before Christmas.

Decision: It was proposed by Cllr Saunders, seconded by Cllr Cook, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Environment Committee dated 8th October 2025.**

Task: Arrange a meeting with Shepherd Neame regarding the land at Ospringe, before Christmas. @Cllr Claire Martin

211 Facilities Manager's Update

The Facilities Manager provided a comprehensive update on various sites and projects:

- Stonebridge: Work to reduce silt scheduled to start in November, with 72 people on the waiting list for allotments.
- Millfield: 48 people on the waiting list, a popular tree at the bottom of the allotment safely removed, and a new secretary elected.
- Perry Court: Functioning well with seven people on the waiting list, and solar lighting being installed along the hallways.
- North Preston: In good condition with ten people on the waiting list.
- Faversham in Bloom: The town achieved a gold award, with new planters ordered for Lower Rd., and pumpkin competition winners announced from Stonebridge and Millfield.
- Bench Report: Work to start in November, with a tree in front of the Creek needing removal due to its dead condition.
- Best Allotment Plot Competition: Presentations scheduled for 2nd December.

Questions were raised regarding the willow tree removal, leading to a discussion on whether the trunk was rotten and the stability of the area post-removal. It was agreed to cut the tree down to six feet.

The cost for removing the tree was quoted at £1,140.

Decision: It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Coniam, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to accept the quote of £1,140 for the removal of the willow tree.**

Task: Cut the willow tree down to six feet. @Facilities Manager

212 2026-2027 Budget

The draft budget for 2026-2027 was considered, with discussions including:

- Allotments and Land Management: Proposal to increase the budget to £4,000 to accommodate ongoing projects and potential land acquisitions.
- Planters: Additional funding might be required for planters in various areas, including Priory Ward and the town centre, with a suggested budget of £10,000.
- Kubota Tractor: Purchase of a Kubota tractor and attachments discussed, with a proposed budget of approximately £18,000.
- Environmental Projects: Various events planned, including Earth Day, Bat Walk Training, Great Big Green Week, Sunflower Growing competition, Eco Fair, Hedgehog Talk, and Tree Week, with a proposed budget of £1,000 (excluding trees).

- Public Spaces Projects: Green area at Regent and other areas on the estate, with a proposed budget of £5,000.
- Restoration of Cookstitch: £1,000 for possible Siltex treatment.

The committee agreed to present the draft budget to the full council for further consideration.

Decision: The committee agreed to present the draft budget to the full council for further consideration.

Task: Include provisions for carbon reporting activities in the budget. @Town Clerk

213 Oare Gunpowder Works

The committee reviewed quotations from three companies (A, B, and C) for works at Oare Gunpowder Works. The importance of utilising funds available from Swale until 31st March was highlighted. There was a discussion on the feasibility study for woodland maintenance costs and the overall project scope. The committee compared the capabilities and costs of companies A and B, noting that both had similar price points when additional services were included. The preference leaned towards Company A due to its larger size and proven track record, especially given the tight deadline for spending the funds. Ultimately, the committee voted in favour of Company A, recognising its resources and past performance.

Decision: It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Saunders, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the quote from Company A.***

214 Whiting Crescent Recreation Area

Councillor Saunders presented a proposal to install a football and basketball unit at Whiting Crescent Recreation Area, an area largely consisting of social housing and currently lacking recreational facilities. The unit, currently unused, could be relocated with a cost of £2,350 for renovation and installation. Swale BC would continue to own and maintain the equipment, ensuring no future liabilities for the Town Council. The committee agreed to fund the project from the current public projects reserve, with contributions from ward councillor grants. It was emphasised that the equipment should remain at the location and not be moved in the future.

Decision: It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Coniam, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to fund the installation of a football and basketball unit at Whiting Crescent Recreation Area from the current public projects reserve, with contributions from ward councillor grants.***

215 Bench Request Tettenhall Way

The Town Clerk referred to the possible installation of two bus stops at Tettenhall Way and S106 funds being available for this work. It was agreed to defer this item until further information on the location of the bus stops was received.

216 Carbon Reporting

The committee discussed the need for carbon reporting and noted that Sam Brookfield, who has completed the carbon literacy qualification and is a trainer, would handle the carbon report. The facilities team would need to compile relevant data such as diesel usage and electricity consumption for the report. The committee was pleased to learn that this service would be provided at no cost.

Task: Compile relevant data such as diesel usage and electricity consumption for the carbon report. @Facilities Team

217 Events

The committee discussed several upcoming events, including the Hedgehog Talk, National Tree Week, where volunteers plan to plant additional trees. Victoria Dickinson has secured a grant for five redwood trees and a liquid amber tree for Saint Mary's churchyard. The committee debated the appropriateness of planting a redwood tree at the recreation ground, considering its size and impact. Ultimately, they agreed to fund the tree, pending clarification on the choice of species and its suitability. Other events mentioned include the allotment award event and a Plastic Free Faversham litter pick. The committee aimed to promote these events through social media and ensure councillor participation.

Decision: It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Coniam, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED for the Town Clerk to make enquiries with Victoria Dickinson regarding the choice of a redwood tree and specifying a preference for native species, but the Committee were prepared to accept a redwood tree.**

218 Items for Report

None.

The meeting was closed at 9:04pm.