

Harrietsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 24th June 2015 at 7.30pm in the Booth Hall.

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

Public Discussion

Community Warden Report: Martin Sherwood reported that he had completed house to house inquiries, following damage caused to the tennis court fencing. It was noted that children had been seen with shears earlier on in the day that were around the age of 10 or 11, however there were two differing descriptions. The Community Warden reported on Operation Civic, which had taken place in the Village Hall. This had given him the opportunity to visit homes with a Golding Homes Officer to discuss issues including ASB. Martin also informed all present of a new scheme, being organised by West Kent Housing, which assists unemployed people to gain the skills they need to attend interviews. The Association can also assist with supplying clothing for the interview. For further information, please visit www.westkent.org.

A resident commented that there had been a disappointing turnout for the Operation Civic event and Martin Sherwood responded that PCSO Burca-Ousby had visited homes to make residents aware of the event.

Police Report: The Clerk reported that there had been 4 crimes since the meeting in May. Three were criminal damage and the other was a theft from the Mace shop. There had been 29 incident calls relating to Harrietsham. A sample of these included, Police advice being given to lorries about their parking on the A20 and their lack of cones and high viz jackets, 3 reports of RTCs and an abandoned vehicle in Church Crescent. The Clerk reported that there has been a number of sheep killed by a dog at Runham Farm and the investigation is still ongoing, if anyone has any information they should call 101.

Cllr Allwood informed all present that he wished to read out a statement relating to the dispensations granted at the Extraordinary Meeting on the 2nd June 2015.

“For the avoidance of doubt or misinterpretation, the dispensations granted to Councillors in accordance with Section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011, on the 2nd June 2015 apply only to Neighbourhood Planning matters or planning applications for the development of sites with multiple dwellings. The dispensations granted cannot be used for individual planning applications for individual properties that would ordinarily be subject to the disclosure of pecuniary interest rules.

This statement will be included in the minutes of this evening’s meeting and a copy of the minute will be added to the approved dispensation record of each Councillor granted a dispensation by Council on 2nd June 2015.”

A resident comment on the withdrawal of the Neighbourhood Plan and queried whether the large amount of homes at Pilgrims Retreat were to be included in Harrietsham’s housing number, as the occupants are using the facilities but had contributed nothing to the finances of the village. Cllr Chinnery stated that this would be discussed in a meeting with MBC, as these dwellings are increasing the number of residents in Harrietsham. There was brief discussion with a resident explaining the layout of the site. It was noted that there are approximately 190 dwellings of which only 18 have a permanent licence. It was agreed that this should be discussed further by the Planning Committee.

Action: Planning Cttee

A resident reported that 38 plants had been stolen from the planters by the old school site. These have now been replaced, but Councillors were asked to keep an eye on them. The theft has been reported to the Police.

It was noted that there has been some fly tipping opposite Victorias, on the Ashford Road.

ACTION: Clerk

A resident highlighted that the stream is becoming very overgrown with irises, right down to the culvert. This will need attention as litter builds up and blocks the culvert eventually. It was agreed that this should be discussed by the Environmental Committee.

ACTION: Environmental Cttee

1 Present

Cllr T Allwood, Cllr J Sams, Cllr T Sams, Cllr A Chinnery, Cllr C Przystupa, Cllr M Williams, Cllr G Trussler, Cllr K Kay, Cllr G Dean, Cllr S Morris, Cllr P Milton, Lenham Representative L Porter, RFO Mr M Cuerden, Community Warden M Sherwood and the Clerk Mrs A Broadhurst.

23 Members of the Public

2 Apologies for absence

PCSOs Boyd & Burca-Ousby

3 Minutes of the last meeting

Parish Council Meeting 20th May 2015 - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Chinnery, seconded by Cllr Morris; with all in favour.

Extraordinary Meeting 2nd June 2015 - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Dean; with 8 in favour and 3 abstentions.

4 Disclosures and confidential items

Changes to the Register of Interests

No changes to the Register of Interests were declared.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

Cllr T Allwood - Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning - Removal of Tong's Meadow from Draft Plan) as he resides close to Tong's Meadow. He will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Cllr A Chinnery - Agenda Item 5.1 (Planning - Decisions Outstanding - MA/14/0208) as she lives close to the application site.

Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning - Removal of Tong's Meadow from Draft Plan) as she resides close to Tong's Meadow. She will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Cllr G Dean - Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning - Removal of Land South of Court Lodge) as she resides close to the site. She will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Cllr K Kay - Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning - Removal of Tong's Meadow from Draft Plan) as he resides close to Tong's Meadow. He will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Cllr S Morris - Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning) as one of the development sites is adjacent to his property. He will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Cllr C Przystupa - Agenda Item 5.1 (Planning - Decisions Outstanding - MA/14/0208) as he lives close to the application site.

Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning - Removal of Tong's Meadow from Draft Plan) as he resides close to Tong's Meadow. He will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Cllr J Sams - Agenda Item 8.2 (Playscheme) as she has been contracted as the Manager and her daughter is employed as a member of staff.

Cllr T Sams - Agenda Item 8.2 (Playscheme) as his wife has been contracted as the Manager and his daughter is employed as a member of staff.

Cllr G Trussler - Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning - Removal of Land South of Court Lodge) as he lives close to the site. He will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Cllr M Williams - Agenda Item 5.1 (Planning - Decisions Outstanding - MA/14/0208) as he lives almost opposite to the application site.

Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning - Neighbourhood Planning - Removal of Tong's Meadow from Draft Plan) as he lives almost opposite the site. He will be using the dispensation granted on the 2nd June 2015 to discuss and vote on this matter.

Requests for Dispensation

No requests were submitted.

5 Planning

5.1 The current planning applications were noted.

5.2 The planning decisions were noted.

5.3 Date of Future Planning Meetings: Cllr Chinnery proposed that the Planning meetings be moved from Friday to Wednesday mornings on the 1st and 3rd weeks of the month. This new day would come into effect following the meeting already scheduled for the 3rd July. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour. Cllr Chinnery added that the meeting time would remain unchanged (commencing at 9am).

Cllr Chinnery then asked whether Agenda Item 12 (Increase in Planning Committee Members) could be brought forward on the agenda to be dealt with under Planning. This was agreed by all present.

5.4 Increase to Planning Committee Members: Cllr Chinnery reminded all present that, at the elections, the Councillor number had increased from 9 to 11 members. With this in mind and the fact that the Planning Committee has delegated powers, Cllr Chinnery proposed that the number be increased from 5 to 6 members. This was seconded by Cllr Milton, with all in favour. After brief discussion it

was proposed by Cllr Chinnery that Cllr Dean join the Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Trussler, with all in favour.

- 5.5 Neighbourhood Planning: Cllr Allwood reported that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan has been withdrawn from MBC back to the Regulation 14 consultation stage. A meeting has been arranged with MBC on the 3rd July with the Spatial Policy Team and the Parish's Borough Councillors. Cllr Allwood stated that a working group needs to be established to move the Plan forward to amend and re submit to MBC to coincide with the Local Plan development. In the first instance it was felt that this working party should be the Members of the Planning Committee and Cllr Chinnery stated that she would like further input, even if only on a casual basis from other Councillors and residents. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Chinnery that a Neighbourhood Plan working group be formed, comprising of the Planning Committee members with additional help as offered. This was seconded by Cllr Kay, with all in favour.

- 5.6 Removal of Land South of Court Lodge & Tongs Meadow from the Draft Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Allwood stated that these two sites should be considered by the Parish Council for removal from the Neighbourhood Plan. Court Lodge has had two planning applications refused and Tongs Meadow currently has a live application awaiting a decision. However, both sites are not included in the MBC Local Plan and it has been confirmed that Tongs Meadow will not be revisited by MBC when they reconsider sites in Maidstone. Cllr J Sams asked whether removal of these two sites should be discussed first by the working party and residents before a vote at a Parish Council Meeting. Cllr Trussler stated that, at the elections, the residents had given the 8 HARD members a mandate to complete this. Cllr Chinnery informed all present that the Parish Council was not predetermining anything, they were simply getting a framework for the group to revise and update the Plan; removal of these sites would set constraints to work to. It was noted that at both the Reg. 14 and MBC Reg. 18 consultations, there had been a large volume of objections and MBC's own feedback showed that they would not support Court Lodge Road and have highlighted concerns with Tongs Meadow. It had been stated on the HARD election leaflet that the housing number needs to be limited. Since 2011 there have already been 370 homes approved and there will be further small infill sites before 2031, these figures are without taking into consideration Pilgrims Retreat. Cllr Chinnery added that the Parish Council should not be adding additional sites which the Borough Council has not asked for. Cllr Allwood proposed that Land South of Court Lodge be removed from the draft Neighbourhood Plan. This was seconded by Cllr Chinnery. Cllr T Sams then stated that all Councillors had just completed a Councillor training course where objectivity had been discussed. He added that people are passionate about children being able to get into the local Primary school and removal of Tongs Meadow would stop this. Cllr Chinnery stated that she has had a discussion with Golding Homes and KCC about the current school situation. Harrietsham Primary school currently has a one form entry system, with a capacity of 210 pupils. Currently the pupil number is 187, although the 23 available spaces are not distributed evenly throughout the school, therefore the school is nearing capacity. Tithes Mews will be completed by the end of August with the units being ready for occupation in September. These properties could house a total of 20-30 children and it was reasonable to think that 20 would need a school place. Kent County Council is aware that there needs to be an increase in provision and currently have a plan up until 2019. It was noted that this plan does not include expanding Harrietsham Primary School and KCC will have to review the plan as applications are coming forward sooner than had been expected. KCC have also stated that they need to complete a feasibility study into how they can expand the school, as only desktop studies have been completed; they need to engage consultants. KCC have stated they would only expand either Harrietsham or Lenham School and that the spare capacity at Platts Heath School would need to be filled before any expansion took place. Cllr Chinnery felt that Education should not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan, as this issue needs to be tackled by KCC. Cllr Chinnery confirmed that a meeting has been arranged with KCC on the 8th July.

Cllr T Sams again commented that there needs to be objectivity and that the group should discuss this after the meeting with KCC, any decision made this evening would be seen as prejudging the situation. Cllr Chinnery responded that she understood, however the Parish Council needs to give a clear message to developers and the Neighbourhood Plan should be aligned with the Local Plan as a starting point; sites can always be brought back later if necessary. Cllr Morris defended the originally Regulation 14 consultation stating that the Parish Council had been unaware of the sites that would move forward in the Local Plan. He added that the draft Neighbourhood Plan has now created an issue of overdevelopment and there are other issues that need to be addressed including detailed planning policies for the granted sites, A20 development, reinforcing the policies for green spaces and revisions to the S106/CIL list. He added that the new plan needs to be achievable and deliverable.

Cllr Allwood proposed that Land South of Court Lodge be removed from the Neighbourhood Plan, this was seconded by Cllr Chinnery; with 9 in favour and 2 against.

Cllr Przystupa proposed that Tongs Meadow be removed from the Neighbourhood Plan, this was seconded by Cllr Kay; with 8 in favour and 3 against.

6 Environmental

- 6.1 Recommendation from the Environmental Committee: Cllr Allwood reported that a provisional date of the 23rd July had been set for the next Environmental Meeting.
- 6.2 Other Environmental Issues: Cllr Dean informed all present that, during the Rotary Walk on Sunday, she had noticed the poor state of the Church graveyard, with grass almost waist high. She asked whether the Parish Council could do anything about this. The Clerk reported that this was the responsibility of the Church and the Parish Council could not arrange for it to be cut without authorization from them. Cllr Dean stated that volunteers would probably be prepared to assist with this. The Clerk stated that she would speak to Sarah Hill in the Church Office. **ACTION: Clerk**
Cllr Dean proposed that she would like to co-opt a resident on to the Environmental Committee, Sharon Amos. Cllr Chinnery added that Sharon has excellent knowledge on environmental matters. This was seconded by Cllr Kay with all in favour.

7 Finance

- 7.1 The Income/expenditure finance sheets were proposed as accurate by Cllr Trussler and seconded by Cllr Chinnery, with all in favour.
- 7.2 Cllr Trussler reported on the items which had been discussed at the recent emergency F&GP meeting:
- o Following a comment in the Internal Audit report, the Committee had agreed to lower the tender limits, as suggested, to £25,000.
 - o The Parish Council insurance had been reviewed and the RFO had managed to obtain 3 comparable quotes before the meeting and Councillors had agreed to accept the lowest quote for one year at a cost of £1,476. This had given a saving of approximately £700.
- Cllr Trussler raised concerns with regards to the leases which have been drawn up with the Village Hall Trust and the Doctor's Surgery. He stated that the leases, signed in 2011, were confusing and that further discussion needed to take place to resolve the outstanding financial issues, as some invoices are currently outstanding for the past 2 years. He added that, as there is a new Village Hall Trust Committee, it may be possible to discuss these issues further and after investigating the doctor's lease in more detail, the Parish Council may be able to move forward in resolving these problems.

Cllrs T & J Sams left the meeting.

8 Youth Provisions

- 8.1 Remix: It has been noted, before Cllrs T & J Sams had to leave, that Remix is running well and that a new volunteer has come forward to assist the group.
- 8.2 Playscheme: No report was provided.

9 Harrietsham Primary School

This item had been covered under Agenda Item 5.6 (Neighbourhood Planning)

10 Glebe Field

Cllr Przystupa reported on the work that had been completed to protect the Glebe Field. This had included arranging for a bund to be installed behind the damaged bollards and also having fabrication work completed on the bollards which can be unlocked to ensure that the padlocks were inaccessible. Cllr Przystupa added that Cllr T Sams and Cllr Williams had removed enough of the bund to allow access to the Rotary Club for the North Downs Walk the previous weekend and that members of the Parish Council had attended to provide assistance for the entire duration of the Walk. Cllr Allwood stated that he had received a call in the office from the Rotary Club thanking the Parish Council for providing the field and also for the support given during the event. Cllr Przystupa stated Cllr T Sams has had discussions with residents close to the Glebe Field with a view to changing the position of the entrance. He asked if Cllr T Sams could speak to the residents around the field as he had been in discussions with them previously. **ACTION: Cllr T Sams**
Cllr Przystupa thanked Cllr T Sams for all of his work during the illegal encampment and also with securing the field afterwards. Cllr Allwood thanked Cllrs Przystupa & Kay for arranging the fabrication work.

11 Amendment to Charity Committee Members

Cllr Allwood stated that, following setting up the various Committees at the last meeting, an amendment was required to the Charity Committee. Cllr Allwood proposed that Cllr Przystupa be replaced by Cllr Williams. This was seconded by Cllr Trussler, with all in favour.

12 Increase to Planning Committee Members

Cllr Allwood stated that this had already been discussed under Agenda Item 5.4 (Planning)

13 Lenham Parish Council

Cllr L Porter, from Lenham Parish Council, gave a report. He stated that only six Councillors had put their names forward for the Elections (they would usually have 13 Councillors). Since the elections a further three have been co-opted, one of which was an ex-councillor and the other two are from the Neighbourhood Planning working group. The Parish Council is actively looking for a further four Councillors. Councillors met recently at the Community Centre to discuss what the Parish Council wants to do in Lenham over the next year, as there are outstanding issues which have been overshadowed by the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Porter informed all present that three members of the Parish Council have arranged to meet with Fran Wilson, the new Leader of MBC, Jenny Whittle and Helen Whately MP to discuss various issues in the village. Cllr Porter reported that Lenham's Neighbourhood Plan was submitted on the 2nd April 2015 and Councillors have asked for a meeting with the Planning department as they have requested further background information. He is also hoping that the Spatial Policy team will be attending and is currently liaising with Rachel Elliott, however, no date has been given at present.

Cllr Porter spoke about how Lenham had set up their Neighbourhood Planning working party as Harrietsham is now intending to do the same. The group in Lenham comprises of three Councillors and five 'Save Lenham' members. They meet every Tuesday evening for 2 to 3 hours and a lot of work has gone into the plan over the past couple of years; ultimately the submission of the amended plan will rest with the Parish Council. Cllr Allwood reported that he was very impressed with the consultants employed by Lenham Parish Council and Cllr Porter added that they had looked at density and spread to indicate how the sites would look with a density of between 25 and 45 dwellings per hectare. Cllr Porter offered to share the drawings with the Planning Committee to give them a visual idea of the difference.

ACTION: Cllr Porter (LPC)

It was noted that MBC feel that 30 dwellings per hectare is acceptable, whereas Ashford Borough Council deems 14 per hectare as acceptable on the edge of a village,

14 Community Liaison Strategy/Communications Committee

Cllr Przystupa informed all present that, before the elections, they had made a commitment to look at communication. A Committee was formed at the last meeting which consists of Cllr Przystupa (Chair), Cllr Allwood and Cllr Dean. The Committee has reviewed the existing methods of communication looking at the areas which need to be improved and have circulated a proposed Communications Strategy to all Councillors. The strategy looks at the following points:

- The current issues with communicating with residents (poor website, lack of opportunity to speak with residents, relying on two noticeboards)
- Who does the Parish Council need to communicate with? (Residents, MBC/KCC, other Parishes, village clubs etc.)
- What does the Parish Council need to communicate? (Meetings, decisions, planning matters, village events, notifications of works and news of local significance)
- Communication principles (Transparent, honest, accurate, timely, lawful, meaningful and accessible)
- Communications going forwards (tackling points above)
- Recommendations:
 1. Set up a Facebook page
 2. Establish an effective website
 3. Establish an email distribution list for villagers
 4. Create a quarterly newsletter
 5. Review the use of Network magazine
 6. Provide opportunities for face to face discussion with Councillors (coffee mornings/drop in sessions)
 7. Provide the Communications Committee with delegated powers to implement the above strategy.

As no Councillors wished to raise any points, Cllr Przystupa proposed that the Communications strategy be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Morris, with all in favour. Cllr Przystupa then proposed that James Hailes be co-opted onto the Committee in an advisory role, to assist with the Facebook page which is currently being created. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour. Cllr Przystupa confirmed that James Hailes will be there as a moderator and, along with the Clerk and Communications Committee, will be able to post as required. If any inappropriate, unlawful or offensive comments are posted, these could be removed.

Cllr Przystupa stated that governance was extremely important and had circulated a draft Social Media Policy. It was proposed by Cllr Przystupa that this policy be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Kay, with all in favour. Cllr Przystupa proposed that delegated powers be given to the Communications Committee, as there is a considerable amount of work to be completed in a short time; this would be in line with the strategy and policy already approved. This was seconded by Cllr Kay, with all in favour.

15 Correspondence - Noted

16 Future Events

26th June - Friends of St John's AGM

11th July - Church Fete (with Pimms Tent and Hog Roast)

17 Items for Future Consideration

A20 Crossing at Holm Mill Lane - Cllr Przystupa

Booth and Baldwin Trust Representative Cllr Allwood

Booth & Baldwin Field Flytipping - Cllr Przystupa

“Away Day Meeting for Councillors” - Cllr Morris

Charity Committee Outstanding Work - Cllr Morris. After brief discussion it was agreed that this should be added to the next F&GP Committee Agenda as the work required is urgent (nominated signatories and change of address for correspondence). **ACTION: F&GP Cttee Agenda**

Harrietsham Primary School Capacity - Cllr Chinnery

18 Date of next meeting

Full Parish Council Meeting - **Wednesday 29th July 2014** from **7.30pm** in the Booth Hall

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9.32pm

Public Discussion:

A resident queried whether a meeting is to be held with MBC/KCC regarding the A20 improvements. Cllr Chinnery confirmed that the Parish Council is awaiting a date for this meeting.

The RFO informed all present that the grass in the churchyard is being kept longer on guidance from the Canterbury diocese which is aiming for ‘natural churchyards’. He suggested that the Parish Council might write to Dick Venn and Millie Hart asking if there is any particular reason why the grass is being left so long.

A resident asked why Cllr Dean’s dispensation request had not been discussed, as it had been deferred from the extraordinary meeting. Cllr Dean stated that she had withdrawn her request.

A resident queried why the public discussion at the extraordinary meeting had not been minuted. Cllr Allwood stated that this had been an error as he had not asked Cllr Kay to include this in the minutes.

Concerns were raised that dispensation had been granted giving the Planning Committee dispensation to deal with planning application around their homes; this was not seen as transparent. Cllr Morris clarified that without dispensation it would prohibit the greater Council from undertaking work and that the dispensation had been granted in line with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council. It was noted that the dispensation was specifically to deal with the Neighbourhood Plan and Councillors would not be able to take part in honest open discussion without the dispensation. Collectively the Parish Council had decided that all elected needed to be able to speak on the plan to represent all parishioners.