

Harrietsham Parish Council

Environmental Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 19th July 2018 at 7:30pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), Foster and Stanley,
Mr D Oversby and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** Mrs S Amos **Members of the public:** None
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (17th May 2018) were signed (without amendment) at the June Council meeting. A second set was signed for our records.
4. **Disclosures:** None
5. **Amenity Contracts (Update):** The Amenity Manager reported that, other than having to chase MB Landscape Services (MBLS) about the medical centre, all contracts had progressed smoothly – and MBLS had attended the Centre promptly following the email. There had been an earlier confusion over clearing the stream through the allotments, which was, we thought, now resolved, but Mr Oversby requested that we keep an eye on this, as it has historically proved a problematical part of the contracts. The Amenity Manager also noted that our aerator on the lake was now in need of some maintenance, and expressed concern that this had arisen after only a few months of use. (Apparently, the same issue has affected one of the privately-owned aerators as well). It was noted that we are still awaiting the re-anchoring of the duck-house, which was in the hands of MBLS who are currently doing a risk assessment for the work – although it might be done by the people looking at the aerator.

Mr Oversby raised the matter of two saplings in the village hall's hedge dying. These were in the corner where, a couple of years ago, the council had agreed to replace some plants following KCC dumping some salt in the wrong place. We had then subsequently got three replaced under warranty last year. The Amenity Manager pointed out that these weren't covered under the Open Spaces contracts, although there then followed a brief discussion by councillors that concluded that we couldn't be expected to guarantee plants after a prolonged period of time, and especially in the light of the recent hot weather.

Cllr Dean then observed that we are still awaiting a quote for completing the fencing work in Woodlands Walk. The Amenity Manager explained in response to a question that we had most of the fence round the dam replaced, but there was now some additional work required.

Two matters concerning West Street were then discussed. Firstly, it had been reported that one of the benches on the Green was in quite a bad state. This was at odds with a comment from the contractor treating all the benches, so the Amenity Manager undertook to talk to the clerk, and then have a look. Secondly, we need to have a look at the irises in the stream in West Street to ensure that they are not choking it. We already have a quote for reducing their numbers, and if necessary the Amenity Manager will ask the contractor to proceed.

6. **Amenity Contracts (Amendments)** With four months experience of the new contracts, some possible amendments for the future had been identified.
 - a. A20 verge cutting – should this be continued up to Victoria's, rather than stopping at the village sign? It was agreed that for 2019/20 and 2020/21 we would ask the contractor to cut to the parish boundary (just short of Victoria's). Prop Cllr Stanley, sec Cllr Dean, all in favour.
 - b. Station Road – patch of land needing cutting? This had been removed from the contracts as not being our responsibility – it had now been cut by someone else (possibly MBC?), so it agreed to leave it.
 - c. East Street Triangle – needs cutting? We had never done this, and it was cut after being reported to Highways as being a hazard.

- d. Stream through allotments – amend schedule? Currently, the contract calls for a cut in May, June, July and September. After some discussion, and consulting with Mr Oversby as an allotment holder, it was agreed to keep the same schedule, but to emphasise that the cuts should be at the beginning of May, June and July, and the end of September.
 - e. Glebe Field shrub bed. The contract called for it to be made into a flower bed and maintained. The contractor had advised that this was impractical given the shrubs already established. He has suggested a couple of alternatives, and it was agreed to ask him to cut back the shrubs to fence height, weed under and then spread bark to suppress further weeds. It would then be maintained as a mixed hedge. We would also ask his opinion on laying a membrane under the bark, and take his advice.
 - f. Medical Centre. The Amenity Manager pointed out a flaw in the current specification, in that it talks only about “paved areas”, whereas quite a bit of the surround is shingle, not paved. He had already talked to MBLS about this, who had agreed to amend the contract to “paved/shingle areas” at no additional cost.
7. **Teers Meadow.** The Amenity Manager reported that the wildlife survey had been conducted, and had identified a number of important species present. It was proposed to **Recommend to Council** that we should ask Sally Evans, who has been involved with the meadow for a number of years, to act as our consultant in assisting in preparing grant bids in order to get the meadow fenced and to work up a final management plan based on our newly acquired knowledge. An initial estimate had been for up to 4 days at £200 per day. Prop Cllr Dean, sec Cllr Foster, all in favour.
8. **Tommy.** The council had acquired the metal outline of a soldier as part of the “There but not there” commemorative project. Cllr Deans proposed siting him in the war memorial, probably over in one corner and with a view to leaving him there all year. Seconded by Cllr Foster, all in favour. Cllrs Dean & Foster to liase to get him installed.
9. **Items for Discussion:** Noticeboard on Glebe Field regarding liability; Glebe Field play area.
13. **Date of next meeting** – Thursday 20th September 2018 at 7:30pm in the Parish Office

Meeting closed at 8:50pm.