

Harrietsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 29th September 2021 at 7.30pm in
St John the Baptist church

Cllr Powell welcomed all present to the meeting.

1 Present

Cllr E Powell, Cllr G Dean, Cllr F Stanley, Cllr V Foster, Cllr T Griffiths, Cllr C Roots, Cllr S Luck, Community Warden Martin Sherwood, Amenity Manager/RFO Mr M Cuerden and the Clerk Mrs A Broadhurst.
1 Member of the Public

2 Apologies for absence

Cllrs T & J Sams, Cllr R Dayes, County Cllr Prendergast

3 Minutes of the last meeting

Parish Council Meeting 6th July 2021 - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Dean, seconded by Cllr Luck; with 5 in favour and 2 abstentions.

4 Disclosures and confidential items

Changes to the Register of Interests

There were no changes.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

Cllr G Dean - Agenda item 6.3 (Fishing Trial at Lake) as she lives close to the lake.

Cllr C Roots - Agenda item 7.3 (Recommendations from F&GP Committee - HIB Grant) as he is the Treasurer for Harrietsham in Bloom and submitted the grant application.

Cllr F Stanley - Agenda item 7.3 (Recommendations from F&GP Committee - VHT Grant) as he is a Trustee.

Requests for Dispensation

No requests were submitted.

5 Planning

5.1 The outstanding planning applications were noted.

5.2 The approved applications were noted.

5.3 The refused applications were noted.

5.4 The withdrawn applications were noted.

5.5 Other Planning Matters

Cllr Powell updated all present on a recent meeting organised by Lenham Parish Council, where the Heathlands Garden Settlement had been discussed. Save Our Heathland (SOHL) have appointed a Barrister to act on their behalf and are prepared to fight the development. It was noted that the MBC Regulation 19 meeting had been brought forward from November to next week and Cllr Powell felt that, as MBC have a 5-year land supply, there was no need to act so urgently. Cllr Foster offered to assist with researching any documents relating to environmental or climate change issues.

Cllr Powell reported that the Pilgrims Retreat application would be going before the MBC Planning Committee in the near future and that the 3-minute speech needed to be written and a decision made on who would attend. After brief discussion it was agreed that Cllr Roots would work on the 3 minutes using the previous one written by Cllr Dean, and presented by Cllr Powell, for information, Cllr Foster offered to either read the speech at the meeting or to attend, as it was felt that a larger number of Councillors should be present this time.

6 Environmental

6.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th September - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Stanley and seconded by Cllr Dean. (Councillors who were present at the meeting.)

6.2 Recommendations from the Environmental Committee:

- To increase the annual rental charge to £20 (currently £18): It was proposed by Cllr Foster and seconded by Cllr Dean to increase the annual rental to £20.00; with all in favour.
- To purchase combination locks for each allotment to allow Parish Council access at all times: It was proposed by Cllr Griffiths to purchase 16 locks (for the allotments and Teers Meadow) at a cost of up to £100. This was seconded by Cllr Luck; with all in favour
- Amenity Contracts Renewal 2022 - It was noted that the draft contracts had been circulated and it was proposed by Cllr Roots to begin the process of putting them out to tender, ready to commence in April 2022. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour.

6.3 Other Environmental Matters

- Fishing trial at Woodlands Walk: Cllr Powell reminded all present that the decision had previously been made to allow a 3-month trial of fishing on the lake in Woodlands Walk, dependent on the Parish Council receiving a copy of the club rules, risk assessments and proof of public liability insurance. Following the decision, the Parish Council received correspondence both for and against the decision. Since then, the person who intends to run the club has only supplied draft membership rules. Due to this, Councillors had asked that the decision be revisited. The issue of illegal fishing and the issue of Woodlands Walk being used as a footpath were both highlighted during the subsequent discussion. It was proposed by Cllr Roots that the fishing trial be stopped and that the situation of illegal fishing and antisocial behaviour be monitored, with a view of employing a gate keeper in the future (if deemed necessary). This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with 6 in favour and 1 abstention.

7 Finances

7.1 Income and Expenditure spreadsheets - The finance sheets were proposed as accurate by Cllr Powell, seconded by Cllr Foster; with all in favour.

7.2 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 21st September - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Roots, seconded by Cllr Dean; with 4 in favour. (Councillors who were present at the meeting).

7.3 Recommendations from the F&GP Committee:

- Transactions from April to September to be approved: It was proposed by Cllr Roots to approve the transactions to date. This was seconded by Cllr Foster, with all in favour.
- Village Hall Trust - grant of £1,500 for the purchase of a defibrillator: It was proposed by Cllr Foster to awarded a grant of £1,500 for the purchase of a defibrillator. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with 6 in favour and 1 abstention.
- Harrietsham in Bloom - grant of £100 towards watering costs: It was proposed by Cllr Powell to award a grant of £100 towards HIB's watering costs. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with 6 in favour and 1 abstention.
- Parish Council Documents: It was proposed by Cllr Powell to readopt the Parish Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessments, Investment Policy and Asset Register. This was seconded by Cllr Roots, with all in favour.
- The Clerk reported that the photocopier in the office, which had been loaned to the Parish Council approximately 5 years ago, has now broken. There needs to be research into whether it would be cheaper to purchase a new one outright or to have one under a contract. This is an urgent item and the Clerk will keep Councillors informed of the progress. All Councillors were in agreement that this should be progressed by the Clerk and RFO. The Clerk added that all quotes etc. would be circulated to all Councillors, if received in the next couple of weeks, otherwise it would be on the October agenda.

8. Highways

Cllr Powell reminded all present that a comprehensive report has been circulated.

- **Church Road Footpath** - The Clerk reported that a report commissioned by KCC regarding the proposed footpath had been circulated and, having discussed the matter at the recent F&GP committee, it was felt that there were still many questions left unanswered. KCC do not feel that the road is wide enough to incorporate any kind of path, even road markings, and so do not want to progress the matter further. It was noted that there hasn't been a highways related incident in the last 15 years and pedestrians know they need to be careful, when walking along the road. Cllr Dean added that the subject has been ongoing for approximately 20 years, it was going to cost a lot of money and a final decision needed to be made. After lengthy discussion it was proposed by Cllr Roots to complete a second traffic survey with a view of reducing the speed limit to 20 mph on Church Road, with additional signage warning of pedestrians, instead of having a footpath. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour. Cllr Foster then enquired whether additional street lighting could be discussed in the future and Councillors agreed that the situation could be monitored. The RFO spoke briefly about the costs involved with upgrading street lighting, when this had been investigated some years ago in St Welcomes Way.
- **Speedwatch** - The report had thanked the volunteers carrying out this task. It was noted that the data captured to date had been circulated to all Councillors. The village had Speed Indicator Signs (SIDs) for many years, partly funded by a grant from a previous County Councillor and replacements should now be obtained. Enquiries have been made with KCC and they have asked that a second traffic survey be undertaken after which they will advise us on whether we should have SIDs, Average Speed Indicators or some other traffic calming measures, with the costs involved. The Parish Council had previously discussed getting a second survey completed after the pandemic and it was proposed by Cllr Griffiths to arrange for this to be completed, with the data being passed to KCC (to compare with the previously supplied information the traffic survey completed in February). This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour.

ACTION: Clerk

- **Harrietsham's Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)** - The Highways Group would like the following items on the HIP for the village:
- **Hook Lane:** This lane is used by many and in particular during school times. There is a concern that the lack of footpath along much of it is dangerous to walkers, particularly parents and children of which there are now a significant number. KCC will not fund anything, as it does not meet its criteria of risk to need intervention. Cllrs T & J Sams have been monitoring the area and there is no signage and an issue with visibility. After brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr Dean that the group request a price for installing 3 or 4 warning signs (children in the road and no footway etc). This can then be reported back to the October meeting for approval. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with all in favour.
ACTION: Cllrs T & J Sams
- **20 mph Speed limit - West Street:** There have been ongoing discussions regarding the need to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph along West Street. Cllr T Sams has now been informed that the Parish Council could have the speed limit reduced, as requested, with two options being given.
 1. The whole of West Street, side roads and cul-de-sacs being reduced to 20 mph, at a cost of around £5,000 - £6,000.
 2. Just outside the school (for 400m from Hook Lane), at a cost of around £2,000.
 Either scheme would require a Traffic Regulation Order at a cost of around £2,500 - £3,000. Jennie Watson has confirmed that Kent Highways would pay for this. After brief discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Roots to progress with introducing a 20 mph for the whole of West Street and the surrounding side roads and cul-de-sacs, at a cost of between £5,000 and £6,000. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with all in favour. **ACTION: Clerk**
- **A20 small bus shelter, by Bailies Court:** This could be located on the north side of road, approximately 50m from the Church Lane junction. This is for residents travelling to Lenham/Ashford, who requested this before lockdown and the Highways group think that this could now be progressed. Jennie Watson is in contact with the Bus Stop Team to investigate land ownership and they will be reporting back on their findings. Councillors requested that this item be added to the HIP so that a price could be sought from KHS. **ACTION: Clerk**
- **A20 bus shelters near the Old School Site:** The Highways group would like to investigate whether bus shelters could be installed for the new bus stops near to the old school, which were created as part of the A20 improvement scheme. All Councillors were happy for the Highways group to progress to see whether this was feasible.
- **A20 - Speed, Noise & Pollution** - It was noted that the Highways report had covered this item and Cllr Roots had nothing further to add. He asked for this item to be removed from the agenda. **ACTION: Clerk**
- **Lorry Watch** - Cllrs T & J Sams have been contacted by residents, initially from Fairbourne Lane, enquiring as to whether the Parish would support a Lorrywatch Scheme, in the same way as with Speedwatch. Run and organised by KCC, it requires the participants to carry out risk assessments and for the volunteers to be insured by the Parish Council. The RFO reiterated that it must be made clear to the volunteers that this would be a Parish Council scheme. All Councillors agreed that Cllr T & J Sams can proceed with completing the relevant paperwork, in the first instance, and then report back at the October meeting. **ACTION: Cllrs T & J Sams**
- **Traffic caused by extra housing along the A20:** The report circulated also highlighted that the Parish Council should continue to be vigilant and aware of the increased housing numbers that will be generated from Maidstone Borough Council's Local Plan. Councillors must work with other Parish Councils to understand the cumulative effect on the A20 and also the link roads from other communities. With 1,000 homes within the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and 5,000 earmarked for Heathlands, not including other development, it will all have a significant impact on traffic passing through Harrietsham.

9. Parish Council Decisions (Approved Virtually since May 2021 Meeting)

It was agreed by all Councillors to ratify the following decisions, which had been made under emergency delegated powers since the May meeting.

- Grant of £36.60 for Speedwatch Scheme to purchase a new tuning fork (cost shared with Lenham Parish Council) Resident request to continue fence line along Parish Council land to improve privacy. (All works to be commissioned and paid for by resident) - **6 in favour, 1 abstention (interest)**
- To purchase a new noticeboard for the village green at a cost of £ £1,923.94 from Greenbarnes - **8 in favour**
- To allow use of the Glebe Field for parking for the Bluebell Walk (1st May 2022) - **7 in favour,**
- To allow a bride to arrive at her wedding on horseback, crossing the Glebe Field - **8 in favour**
- Grant of £2,000 towards the cost of re-securing the weathervane on the Church tower (total cost £8,000 +vat) - **8 in favour, 1 abstention (interest)**
- To move Parish Council meetings to the Church (hall no longer available on the last Wednesday of the month) - **7 in favour, 1 abstention (interest)**
- To allow a temporary A board on the green for Percival's Rest - **7 in favour**

- To have the War Memorial cleaned ahead of Remembrance Sunday (specialist job) at a cost of £1,100 +vat - *9 in favour*

10. Santa's Grotto

Cllr Griffiths reported that he would like to progress the Santa's grotto for this December. He had liaised with the VHT and they have offered the Hall, free of charge, on Sunday 19th December. Two pop up 3ft x 3ft gazebos would be required (which could then be used for other Parish Council events), an outfit for Santa and gifts for the children. It was agreed that a small selection box would be appropriate, as parents would not be charged for the visit. Cllr Griffiths intends to speak with members of the PTFA to see whether they can assist with suitable decoration of the gazebos for the day. It was proposed by Cllr Powell to set aside £800 to purchase 2 x 3ftx3ft pop up gazebos (with sides), outfit for Santa and selection boxes for the children attending. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with all in favour.

11. Additional Defibrillator for Village

Cllr Dean asked that Councillors consider purchasing a further defibrillator for the south side of the village. She thought that outside the Co-op store may be a suitable location, if the Manager was in agreement. It was proposed by Cllr Dean and seconded by Cllr Foster to set aside £1,600 for the purchase of a defibrillator. Cllr Griffiths added that he would look into the guidance supplied by the Ambulance Services of how close defibrillators should be located.

ACTION: Cllrs Dean & Griffiths

12. Future Events

Saturday Soup Kitchen (2nd Saturday of the month) starting 9th October in St John the Baptist Church

13. Items for Future Consideration

- **Climate Change** - *Cllr T Sams*

14. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 27th October 2021 at 7.30pm in St John the Baptist Church

With no further matters to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.12pm.

A resident raised the following items after the meeting:

- Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - HIB is starting to think about colour scheme for the planters.
- Allotments costs.
- Fishing.
- Thanks noted for the HIB grant.
- Lorrywatch - Investigate scheme in Leeds Village
- Bus Shelters - mustn't block the footpath.
- A20 flashing lorry height warning sign (Cllr Roots confirmed this has been reported to KHS).

(ACTION: Clerk)