

Harrietsham Parish Council

Environmental Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 16th March 2017 at 7:30pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman) and Stanley, D Oversby, S Amos and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** None Members of the public: None
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (1st February 2017) were agreed as an accurate record, and signed by the Chair without amendment.
4. **Disclosures:** Cllr Dean, as she lives adjacent to Woodlands Walk (form on file).
5. **Amenity Contracts:** The Amenity Manager reported that since taking post on 1st February, he has walked round the areas covered by the contracts on two occasions. Each time, the areas seemed to be reasonably clean and tidy, bearing in mind that we are still in the “quiet season”. He had noted a few items worth keeping an eye on, the main ones being that (a) one of the benches in the Garden of Remembrance has a rotten leg, although, as a structure, it still seems to be sound – it will be interesting to see what the contractor has to say when it comes up for its Sandolin treatment. (b) There is some old barbed wire fencing on the Glebe Field; we should ask for that to be removed. (c) whilst most of the fencing is in good order, there are a couple of places where it isn't; one such is next to the gates to the Garden – we should consider whether we wish to repair such gaps (none are particularly serious yet).

The Amenity Manager also reported that he had received an email from C&A Landscapes, reporting a fallen tree within the hedge of the playing field, and also strongly advising that a significant part of the hedge ought to be repaired/replaced, giving costs for both works. A reply was sent, observing that the field and boundary hedge are the Booth & Baldwin Trust's responsibility, and he would pass the email on. Our cutting of the hedge is a historical anomaly originating from when we had a play area there, and may well be removed when the specifications are re-written later this year.

6. **Woodlands Walk:**

- (a) **Tree Survey:** There appeared to have been no movement on this yet, so the Amenity Manager agreed to pursue the matter, probably by initially contacting the company that did the last one to see if they would update it (at reasonable cost!).
- (b) The fence to the left of the W/Walk entrance is now leaning over, and the resident with whom it is the boundary has asked for a replacement. Cllr Dean has contacted the fencing contractor used recently for other works and asked for two prices, being to repair the broken post and a few boards, and to replace the entire stretch. The meeting's feeling was that as we are dealing with public money, then we should choose to repair, assuming a significant difference in cost. If the resident still wants a replacement, then we would be happy to consider contributing the repair cost if he wished to make up the difference. However, prices are now awaited.
- (c) Cllr Dean had been seeking advice on how to deal with algae in the lake, which, amongst other problems, causes a horrible smell during the summer months. After considerable effort, she had eventually ended up talking to the Hawkhurst Fish Farm, who attended for a site visit. They advised that the only guaranteed-to-work solution was to drain the lake, then dredge out and dispose of the sludge from the bottom. Apart from the practicalities involved, such a solution is likely to come to many thousands of pounds, and the meeting judged it to be economically impractical.

The alternative was to treat the lake. Hawkhurst Fish Farm had been using a product called Aquaplancton, stating that we would need 120 x 25Kg bags at £28/bag = £3,360. They have, however, just started using an equivalent substitute product with some success. This costs £16/bag, so costs £1,920. Either way, it needs to be properly applied, which would be at a cost of £470. It was not clear from the information available whether we are looking at just one treatment, or whether repeat treatments will be necessary – clarification on this is to be sought. However, the fact remains that we have to do something, and this is the only practical suggestion so far. It was therefore agreed to **Recommend to Council** that Hawkhurst Fish Farm be contracted to supply and spread one treatment of the substitute material, at a cost of approximately £1,920 + £470 = £2,390. Mr Cuerden, as RFO, advised that the cost would come out of the Woodlands Walk fund, (thereby not affecting our general budgets), and that as a specialist supply of proprietary goods sold at a standard price, and as we need to get the work done before the summer months, alternative quotes were not required.

Hawkhurst Fish Farm had also suggested that in order to control the algae in the future, we could put some Grass Carp in the lake. However, Cllr Dean had found conflicting advice on whether this was likely to be effective, and we would need about 30, at £70 each, with a £700 delivery charge. The meeting felt that spending £2,800 on encouraging illegal fishing was probably not an option we would wish to pursue.

7. **Dog Bins:** The council has already allocated up to £2,000 towards replacing some of the bins removed by MBC. After some discussion, it was agreed that we would seek to provide three initially, sited at the entrance to the Booth Field, one at or near the entrance to Forge Meadow, and one on the A20 near the Taste of Bengal. The questions of precise location, and the associated fixtures and fitting are yet to be resolved. It was noted that HPC have requested sufficient bin provision, including emptying, to have been made within the new developments south of the A20 by the management companies to be put in place by the developers.

Cllr Dean informed the meeting that she was intending to produce an A5 leaflet, in-house, so at low cost, for distribution within the village on the subject of dog-fouling. It was hoped that distribution could also be done at low (or no) cost by councillors each taking a section of the village for hand-delivery.

8. **Items for future discussion:** Cllr Dean: possibility of finding sponsorship from companies willing to support poo-bag dispensers attached to each dog bin. Mr Oversby: Yew hedge now encroaching on the Woodlands Walk entrance path, and the need to cut it back.

10. **Date of next meeting** – Thursday 18th May 2017, at 7:30pm in the Parish Office.

Meeting closed at 9:00pm.