

**Harrietsham Parish Council**  
**Environmental Committee**  
**Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 31st May 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), Brown, Lay, Luck, Stanley, Mrs S Amos and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)

1. **Apologies:** None **Members of the public:** None
2. **Minutes of the last meeting** (20th March 2023) were signed (without amendment) at the following Council meeting, another copy was signed for our records.
3. **Disclosures:** None.
4. **Amenity Contracts (Update):** MC noted that following the Annual Meeting, the committee had acquired two new members. He therefore went through each of the open spaces contracts, explaining for each the area being covered, and what was, broadly, involved. He noted that in all cases, the areas were being kept to a good standard. Additional points raised were:
- Burial Ground / Garden of Remembrance: Cllr Stanley queried whether the Ground had been mowed. MC responded that he thought it had been, although he too had noticed that it was looking quite long. The same contractor does the Glebe Field as well, and they had done a cut a week before the Coronation events – and within a couple of weeks, that had grown long as well. It looked like being just the time of year!
  - Glebe Field: The contract was going well. There was, though, an issue raised about the entrance to, and method of locking, the vehicle entrance to the field. Cllr T Sams had written to the committee asking that this be re-thought as the current method, using inaccessible padlocks at the base of two posts was becoming unsustainable. He also mentioned that the web matting that was down to protect the grass was becoming increasingly ineffective. Cllr Stanley, having been involved in unlocking the posts, was fully in agreement with these comments. After some discussion, it was agreed that we should look at an alternative method of access control, and that this would probably be a barrier, mounted on steel or concrete posts at waist height, and opening either vertically or swinging horizontally inwards. MC said he would look at options on his return from leave. Cllr Luck said that she had some information on heavy-duty matting that we could put down at the same time to help protect the grass, and that she would pass that on to MC.
  - Woodlands Walk: Cllr Dean reported that the council's aerator was still working at half power (or worse). Her own one had ceased working completely, and that she had it collected and taken away for maintenance. Once that was returned, she would get ours seen to as well. She also noted that although some of the young poplars had been removed by the contractors, as requested, some remained – she was seeing the contractors in the next few days, and would mention them. MC noted that although some of the required tree work had been carried out, work seemed to have paused – he had asked the contractor for an update and was waiting for a response.
  - War Memorial: Also looking good, but MC noted that some of the wreaths from last November are still there – they should have been removed in April or May. If they are still there after June's visit, he will contact the contractor and ask for them to be cleared.
  - Saxon Place Amenity Land: MC reported that he had walked round on several occasions over the last two or three months, and noted that the community orchard had looked very attractive with its blossom, and it was clear that all trees had survived the dry summer last year, although a couple looked a little sorry for themselves. They will, hopefully, revive as they grow older.
5. **Teers Meadow:** MC reported that he had walked the field as well, and it was looking good too. He also reported that the final paperwork for the Lottery Grant sign-off had been prepared by Mike Phillips, and sent off by MC. We had, as yet, received no response to say that the project, with its associated costs, was acceptable – although we had been asked for our bank details, presumably so that we could receive the final payment, so he hoped that all was well.

The group then turned its attention to the future management and use of the Meadow. MC stated that we should be looking at getting the cattle back on the ground, and perhaps we would need the area cut again. Mrs Amos reminded the committee of the Medway Valley Conservation Partnerships availability and expertise. Cllr Dean asked if we thought re-running some of the Anna Outdoors activities would be worthwhile, (generally felt that it would be). It was agreed that this should be a major topic for discussion at the next Environmental Committee meeting, in July.

6. **Glebe Field rubbish bin:** MC reminded that group that the council had agreed to provide another rubbish bin, to be located in the top north-east corner of the field (being the corner with the letter box). MBC had agreed to empty it (for a fee – thought to be £10 per empty), and we had identified the style of bin we wished to use. At that time, we were waiting for a quote from the contractor for installation. This has now been received, and was for £610 (plus VAT) to supply and install. The group unanimously agreed that we still wished to provide the bin, and agreed to **Recommend to Council** that we accept the quote as above. It was agreed to place it near the sign already in that corner.
7. **Glebe Field play area:** MC reported that the contract had been placed for the essential repairs approved at the last council meeting. The Clerk had reported that there was a 4-week lead time, so we still had another two or three weeks or so to wait. However, it was felt that none were so dangerous as to require action beforehand. Cllr Brown reported that on his weekly inspection, he had noted some missing screws in the tread of the steps up to the slide. He had advised the Clerk, so hopefully this had been added to the schedule of work.
8. **Churchyard / New Burial Ground:** MC updated the committee on progress to date, which was ... none. We are still waiting for the Environment Agency to provide their pre-planning advice. The Clerk had said that there was anecdotal evidence that this could be a prolonged wait, but that if we hadn't heard in the next couple of weeks, she would chase our consultants to see if they could generate any movement.
9. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 17th July 2023, in the Parish Office, at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 9:00 pm.