

**Harrietsham Parish Council**  
**Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
**Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 8th October 2020 at 1:30pm**

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), Foster, Roots, Stanley, and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)  
Also present: Cllrs Luck and Moore  
Apologies: Cllr T Sams  
Members of the public: None
  2. **Disclosures:** Cllr Roots – interest in 2 grant requests; HIB (Treasurer) and the PCC (Treasurer of the Friends of St John). Cllr Stanley – personal interest as a Trustee of the VHT.
  3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (16th January 2020) were approved at the subsequent Council meeting. A further copy was signed at this meeting for F&GP records.
  4. **Completion of 2019/20 audit:** The RFO reported that, because we had exceeded the income threshold of £200,000 by £2,000, we had to answer the supplementary questions caused by having an intermediate-level audit. Despite this, the council passed with no comments or concerns arising. The relevant papers are on the website and noticeboards.
  5. **Review of Accounts.** The RFO noted that due to Coronavirus restrictions, the usual process of individually authorising invoices had been suspended. However, he also observed that the volume of transactions was significantly reduced, and were now mostly repetitive, monthly, items. He then went through the figures year-to-date, discussing and answering questions as they arose. The chairman was invited to choose a number of transactions at random for individual examination. Six were chosen and checked against the relevant paperwork. All were found to be in order, so the complete transaction list – representing the first six months of the year – was retrospectively authorised and signed by the chairman; Proposed Cllr Dean, seconded Cllr Foster with all in favour.
- The chairman compared the September bank statements to the totals shown on the bank reconciliation, and agreed that all tallied.
- Cllr Dean observed that the clerk has been working from home since April, and wondered if she should be receiving an allowance to cover any additional costs incurred. The RFO noted that, as he is based at home, he receives a monthly allowance of £42 per month. It was proposed that the clerk should receive the same, back-dated to April; proposed Cllr Dean, seconded Cllr Foster, all in favour.
6. **Nationwide Investment account:** The RFO noted that the signatories for the account needed updating, as the only current authorised people were the RFO and Cllr Dean. It was agreed that all F&GP members present should sign the form, taking the total five. Cllrs Foster, Roots and Stanley all signed the form, which the RFO would send off with a covering letter to remove the relevant ex-councillors.
  7. **Recommendation from Staffing Committee:** As this contains confidential information regarding an employee's remuneration, this has been moved to a Confidential Part II set of minutes attached to these.
  8. **Recommendation from Environmental Committee:** It was proposed that (a) Teers Meadow has an additional cut due to the delay in putting cattle on – cost £790 (b) that the allotment rents be increased from £17 per annum to £18 and (c) that due to the current circumstances, the open spaces contracts should be extended by one year, with an increase in value of 2%, if the contractors were willing to do so. F&GP unanimously agreed that these should be supported.

Environmental had also discussed the proposed Community Orchard. Cllr Dean reported that in the intervening period, she had contacted Brogdale National Fruit Collection, and been told that they would be prepared to visit and make recommendations for a cost of £250 (£100 refundable if we then order trees from them). It proposed by Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr Stanley, with all in favour, that we should accept this quote and get on with it. Cllr Moore reported that she had asked at a local nursery about the cost of

fruit trees, and been told that they cost between £8 and £10 each – but these were for very small saplings; we would want bigger ones. Cllr Luck, meanwhile, was still looking for alternative prices too.

Cllr Dean also reported that she had been unable to get any prices from Royal Mail for a leaflet delivery, but she had one from Dor-2-Dor. They had quoted £120 per 1,000 for a single-leaflet drop, plus £20 to collect the leaflets from us. The general feeling was that we should get on with it, so it was proposed that we allocate up to £500 to deliver 4,000 leaflets to ME17 1xx and ME17 2xx; proposed Cllr Dean, seconded Cllr Foster, all in favour, and Cllr Dean to organise!

**9. Recommendation from Highways Committee:** Cllr Roots reported that a meeting had been held a couple of days ago, and we had a brief report from Cllr T Sams. In the event, there were no items for F&GP to consider, as their conclusion required council approval, and then a referral back to KCC for further information, consideration and costing. Nevertheless, there was a brief general discussion, during which it was noted that there will be financial implications arising from the proposal – not least the “up-front” cost of £10,000, but also additional costs from two street lights (likely to be expensive). We would also need to consider any on-going costs, (KCC to confirm that they will maintain the road markings), and also assurances that no subsequent safety audit will require the removal of the scheme, or excessively expensive modifications.

**10. Grant Requests:** The RFO reported that we had received five requests to date, and had previously circulated a report detailing four of them. The committee considered each in turn, and decided:

Harrietsham in Bloom - £100 for next year – agreed, prop Cllr Dean, sec Cllr Stanley, all in favour

Harrietsham Fish Scheme - £600 – agreed, prop Cllr Foster, sec Cllr Stanley, all in favour

Harrietsham PCC - £1,610 – agreed, prop Cllr Foster, sec Cllr Dean, all in favour

Royal British Legion – purchase of usual wreath, plus a larger than normal donation as they are unable to do door-to-door poppy sales this year - £150, prop Cllr Foster, sec Cllr Dean, all in favour

Harrietsham Village Hall - £5,000 for a new boiler (50%) – Deferred for a full council decision.

**11. Standing Orders & Financial Regulations:** The RFO noted that, other than the current, unusual, circumstances, there had been no changes requiring any amendments. It was therefore proposed to re-adopt both for the current year – proposed Cllr Roots, seconded Cllr Foster, all in favour.

**12. Risk Assessments, Investment Policy and Asset Register.** Similarly, these were still felt to be fit for “normal” purposes, and so were re-adopted for the current year – proposed Cllr Roots, seconded Cllr Stanley, all in favour.

**13. Date of next meeting** – To be arranged; probably January 2021.

Meeting closed at 3:25pm.

*The confidential minutes for Agenda Item 7 will be filed with the signed copy of the minutes*