Harrietsham Parish Council Environmental Committee Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 17th January 2019 at 7:30pm

- 1. **Present**: Cllrs Dean (chairman) and Stanley, Mr D Oversby, M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
- 2. **Apologies**: Cllr Foster, Mrs S Amos **Members of the public**: None
- 3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (15th November 2018) were signed (without amendment) at the November Council meeting. A second set was signed for our records.
- 4. **Declarations: N**one.
- 5. **Amenity Contracts (Update):** The Amenity Manager reported that he had previously walked round all the lands covered by the contracts, and all seemed to be in good order. It was generally agreed that the contractors had all done a good job, and the parish appeared to be in a well-cared for, presentable condition. He then also noted that the end of the first year of the the 3-year contract period was now approaching, and it was pleasing to note that contracts themselves had required only minor amendment and clarification to the original specification. These were:
 - We now wished that the A20 verges be cut up to Victoria's, to be done in April, June, August and October
 - The allotment stream should be continue to cleared as specified, but the contractors would be asked to ensure that it is done at the beginning of May, June and July and the end of September.
 - There was a flaw in the original specification for the Medical Centre, as it talked about weeding and clearing the paved areas but most is shingle! The contractor has already agreed to consider the spec to be amended to encompass this.

In addition, the Amenity Manager also repeated the concerns raised at the last meeting about the state of the A20 verges through the village, following the work by Kent Highways. This related to the debris left behind which might make it impossible for the contractor to either mow or strim the verges without risk to either equipment or passers-by. It has been left that the contractor will assess the situation when the next cutting season commences in April.

The Amenity Manager also said that he would check that the bark chippings had been laid on the Glebe Field shrub bed.

- 6. **Teers Meadow.** The Amenity Manager reported that the grant bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund had now been submitted, and we are waiting to hear the result. This, it was thought, might be some time in March.
- 7. **Old CTRL site / New allotments:** The Amenity Manager reported that we had, within the last few days, completed on the land acquisition, so the public space, including the new allotments, was now the council's property. We would need to start thinking about we are to manage the space. Councillors also repeated the point raised at the last meeting about surveying the site to identify possible access points for any unwanted visitors, which may then entail the installation of bollards similar to those surrounding the Glebe Field.

Discussion turned to the new allotments, and it was noted that we are still having trouble finding the necessary number of people who wished to have one. It was noted that (a) the old allotments have – or will shortly have – three vacancies, and (b) that the Clerk had now tried to contact the people currently on the waiting list for an allotment, only to find that most were either un-contactable or no longer wished to be on the list. We currently only have one person who definitely wants one of the new allotments. The committee understands that the Clerk will shortly be placing an advertisement in Network and on our web site, asking if anyone wants to be on the list. Depending on the result of that, we might need to either "moth-ball" the allotments entirely, or maybe release plots in ones and twos, keeping the rest of the plot under control with weedkillers and strimming.

- 8. **Current allotments** "The Pit": Mr Oversby had previously notified the Clerk that he was giving up his allotment after 21 years of successful cultivation and, by the way, did we know about the pit dug and then filled with scrap by the previous occupant? He went on to inform the meeting that he thought the surface area was about the size of the table in the office, but was of unknown depth. He had, many years ago, pulled out a couple of car-jacks, but that the "pit" was covered by 18" 24" of top-soil, which had proved more than adequate for many years of successfully growing all sorts of produce on it. He didn't feel that it was a problem, only mentioning it in case the new occupant needed to know.
- 9. **Items for Discussion:** None.
- 10. **Date of next meeting** Thursday 14th March 2019 at 7:30pm in the Parish Office Meeting closed at 8:20pm.