

Harrietsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 26th January 2022 at 7.30pm in
St John the Baptist church

Cllr Dean welcomed all present to the meeting.

Martin Sherwood asked that he be made aware of any Platinum Jubilee events that are planned and mentioned that most of his work is currently related to referrals from other agencies.

A member of the public reported that The Friends of St Johns wish to arrange something for the Platinum Jubilee but want to make sure they don't clash with any other planned events.

1 Present

Cllr G Dean, Cllr F Stanley, Cllr C Roots, Cllr S Luck, Community Warden Martin Sherwood and the Clerk Mrs A Broadhurst
2 Members of the Public

2 Apologies for absence

Cllr E Powell, Cllr V Foster, Cllr T Griffiths, Cllr T Sams, Cllr J Sams, Cllr R Dayes County Cllr Prendergast, RFO/Amenity Manager Mr M Cuerden

3 Minutes of the last meeting

Parish Council Meeting 24th November 2021 - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Roots, seconded by Cllr Luck; with all in favour.

4 Disclosures and confidential items

Changes to the Register of Interests

There were no changes.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Dean declared an interest in Agenda item 6.3 (Other Environmental Matters - Remembrance Trees) as she has requested one of the trees.

Cllr Roots declared an interest in Agenda item 6.3 (Other Environmental Matters - Remembrance Trees) as he is the Treasurer of HIB, who have requested two of the trees on behalf of families.

Requests for Dispensation

No requests were submitted.

5 Planning

5.1 The outstanding planning applications were noted. The Clerk reminded members of the Planning Committee that there was a meeting scheduled for Friday 28th January to discuss 21/506821 - Land South of A20.

5.2 The approved applications were noted.

5.3 The refused applications were noted.

5.4 The withdrawn application was noted.

5.5 Other Planning Matters

Cllr Roots asked that the Clerk write to Kingswood Christmas Trees to remind them of their duty to remove any advertising signs they have posted in the area, as there is at least one still up in the village.

ACTION: Clerk

6. Environmental

6.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st January - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Luck, seconded by Cllr Stanley; with 3 in favour (those present at the meeting).

6.2 Recommendations from the Environmental Committee:

- **Awarding of the Amenity Contracts:** The recommendation was to award the contracts as follows:

Award A the Medical Centre & Church Road plus Woodlands Walk

Award B the A20 verges and the benches

Award D the New Burial Ground & Garden of Remembrance and the Glebe Field

Award E the War Memorial and Saxon Place

It was proposed by Cllr Luck and seconded by Cllr Roots; with all in favour to accept the recommendation.

The Clerk confirmed the Companies to be: A - Maidstone Borough Council, B - Isle Landscaping, D - JB Landscapes and E - Kent Valley.

- **Relocation of the bench on the Glebe Field:** Following a complaint received regarding the current location of the bench on the Glebe Field, the Amenity Manager has obtained a quote from the incumbent contractor (JB Landscapes) to move the bench across the field for £575. It was proposed by Cllr Roots to accept the quotation. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour.

- **Erection of Shed in Parish Office Garden:** The Amenity Manager had received a single quote for laying a base of slabs and then erecting the shed for £735. It was proposed by Cllr Stanley to accept the quotation. This was seconded by Cllr Roots, with all in favour.
Cllr Dean queried whether there is a security light in the garden and the Clerk confirmed that there is not. All Councillors agreed that one would be needed when the shed is installed. **ACTION: Clerk**
- **Renewal of Gate into the New Burial Ground:** The Amenity Manager had received two quotes to replace a rotting gate into the New Burial Ground. One was for £1,080 and the other £720. It was proposed by Cllr Roots to accept the lower quote. This was seconded by Cllr Stanley, with all in favour. The Clerk confirmed that the work had been awarded to Andrew French.
- **Brogdale Tree Pruning:** The Amenity Manager had received a quote from Brogdale for pruning the new fruit trees at a cost of £350. It was proposed by Cllr Roots to accept the quotation. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with all in favour.

6.3 Other Environmental Matters

- **Saxon Place Open Space:** The Clerk gave a comprehensive update on the situation with regards to the open space s106 money which is available from the Saxon Place development. It had been found in the documentation that the money (approx. £108k) was earmarked to be spent on the Glebe Field. As it is hoped to add various equipment to the newly acquired land, the Clerk is currently in discussions with Barratt Homes (BDW) to obtain a variation to the agreement. Whilst the Directors have confirmed that they are happy to consent to this, the original Landowner also needs to be in agreement. Barratts are currently in discussion with their solicitor and it is hoped that they can then speak with MBC to arrange the variation document. There is also further investigation needed with regards to whether there are restrictive covenants on the land; as the various documentation from the planning stage of the development, through to the registering of the Parish Council title deeds with the Land Registry are offering conflicting information. This week MBC has emailed to say that the money needs to be spent within the next 7 months and the Clerk has had a further discussion with the Planning Department to make them aware of the current situation. They agreed that the variation would be a good way to progress with the works and suggested we also ask for an extension to the time allowed for the spend. The Clerk is currently waiting for an update on the various points.
It was then noted that, following a meeting with Maria Cook (the play area specialist), it is likely that a MUGA would cost in the region of £60k, which would leave additional funds for play equipment or wooden assault course.
The Clerk was thanked for her efforts in trying to resolve the various matters.
- **Request for Remembrance Trees:** The Clerk reported that five new memorial trees have been planted in the New Burial Ground. Four have already been requested, leaving one tree available. The recommendation from the Environmental Committee is that a donation of £250 be requested for each tree, with any plaque being arranged by the person taking the tree on. It was proposed by Cllr Stanley to accept request the sum of £250 for each tree. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with 2 all in favour and 2 abstentions..
- **Anna Outdoors (Educational Events on Teers Meadow):** The Clerk reported that a meeting has recently been held on Teers Meadow, with Mike Phillips, to discuss plans for the forthcoming year. A company called Anna Outdoors has submitted a quote for activities on the meadow. At £3,500 initial thoughts were that it sounded expensive, however looking at the plans, they consist of a number of activities, each with a modest unit rate. It was proposed by Cllr Dean to accept the quotation. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with all in favour.
The Clerk informed Councillors that a further email had been received from Mike Phillips as he has been in discussions with the Mid Kent Country Partnership to arrange further educational events, in line with the funding specifications. They have submitted a quotation for both family and educational events at a cost of £2,500 and the Clerk detailed some of the various activities involved. It was proposed by Cllr Stanley to accept the quotation. This was seconded by Cllr Roots, with all in favour.

7. Finances

- 7.1 Income and Expenditure spreadsheets - The finance sheets were proposed as accurate by Cllr Roots, seconded by Cllr Stanley; with all in favour.
- 7.2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th November - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Roots, seconded by Cllr Stanley; with 3 in favour (those present at the meeting).
- 7.2 Recommendations from the F&GP Committee:
 - Budget & Precept for 2022/2023: The Clerk reminded all present that the proposed budget and Precept for 2022/2023 had already been circulated to all Councillors. The proposed recommendation is that the precept cost per band D property be held at £95.47 for the forthcoming financial year giving a precept of £132,197.02. This will result in there being no increase to residents but, due to the increase in Band D properties, the decision would result in the precept funding being increased by £5,937.90 for 2022/2023. It was proposed by Cllr Roots that **the precept for the forthcoming year be set at £132,197.02, with no increase per Band D household.** This was seconded by Cllr Stanley, with all in favour.

- To ratify Decision for Harrietsham Brownie's Grant Request: The Clerk reminded all present that, after the November meeting, a request had been received from the Brownies for £250 towards the census fee, badges and equipment. Seven had been in favour of approving the request, with no response from 3 Councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Dean to ratify this decision. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with all in favour.

8. Highways

A report had previously been circulated and Cllr Roots stated that there were two recommendations:

Church Road: It is proposed that the Parish Council ask KCC to consider introducing a 20mph speed limit along this road and also consider installing two Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), one for each direction. Or otherwise advise us and the community on how we may make the road safer for all users, especially pedestrians.

This recommendation was proposed by Cllr Stanley, seconded by Cllr Luck; with all in favour.

Ashford Road: It is proposed that the Parish Council ask KCC to consider introducing speed reduction measures along the Ashford Road in Harrietsham, and especially to consider the introduction of an Average Speed System for this, the main road through our village. This recommendation was proposed by Cllr Roots, seconded by Cllr Luck; with all in favour.

Cllr Roots reported on a post he had read on the Keep Lenham Safe Facebook page, which mentioned how dangerous the pedestrian refuge crossing points are along the A20 in the dark. This is compounded by the fact that the bollards are dirty and most are not lit. The Clerk reported that Cllr T Sams had stated that he intended to drive along the A20 from Lenham to Harrietsham to log with KHS all of the various issues relating to street lighting and the need for bollards to be cleaned. Cllr T Sams suggested that, once this is completed, the situation can then be reassessed. All Councillors were in agreement with this course of action. **ACTION: Cllr T Sams**

- Lorry Watch: Cllr T Sams is trying to arrange a meeting with the volunteers and is still waiting for additional information from KCC.
- Proposed 20mph Speed Limit for West Street & Surrounding Roads: The Clerk reported that there had been a poor response to the informal consultation recently completed. There had been 5 responses, 2 of which did not relate to the area included in the consultation. The responses will be passed to KHS, ahead of them completing the formal consultation. **ACTION: Clerk**

9. Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk reported that, whilst it is hoped that things are beginning to return to normal, she would ask that Councillors consider having a Scheme of Delegation in place, to enable the Parish Council to continue to operate effectively; should there be a new variant of Covid-19 suddenly discovered. Whilst the Omicron variant appears to have peaked, without any emergency powers in place, the Parish Council could have been in the position of not being able to make decisions (if the Council were unable to meet face to face). It was noted that emergency powers had worked very well over the past 22 months, with every decision being agreed by Councillors over email, before the Clerk/RFO had taken the necessary action. All decisions had then been ratified at the following meeting, resulting in there being a full paperwork trail to show how every decision had been reached outside of a meeting. With the Scheme of Delegation in place, this would be able to continue, if required. It is hoped that this will not be needed, but it would be wise to have it in place, and possibly review in April 2022; especially when considering how quickly the situation changed with regards to Omicron. Cllr Roots suggested that the review take place in May (at the Annual Meeting) and all Councillors were in agreement. It was proposed by Cllr Roots to have a Scheme of Delegation in place, with the situation being reviewed in May. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour.

10. Santa's Grotto

The Clerk reported that the Santa's Grotto held on the 19th December had gone very well, with additional activity tables being run by the Brownies and Scouts, which were enjoyed by the families attending. Cllr Griffiths had asked for thanks to be noted to Cllrs Stanley and Luck, who had overseen the refreshments on the day. Cllr Griffiths is hoping to arrange the Grotto again this year, on Sunday 18th December. Now that he knows it is a successful day, he plans to make it a bigger event this year and there will be the introduction of a Naughty Elf!

11. VHT Representative Vacancies

The Clerk reported that Cllrs Griffiths and Dayes had both recently stepped down from their roles as Parish Council representatives on the Village Hall Trust. The Clerk asked whether any other Councillors would be prepared to take over the role. There were no offers and the Clerk stated that she would inform the Chairman of the Village Hall. **ACTION: Clerk**

12. Staffing Group Vacancy

Following stepping down as a VHT Representative, Cllr Griffiths had asked to fill the vacancy on the Staffing Group. It was proposed by Cllr Dean that Cllr Griffiths join the Staffing group. This was seconded by Cllr Luck, with all in favour.

13. Climate Change Working Party

The Clerk suggested that, as Climate Change is becoming a more urgent issue, a working party should be formed to oversee any work required. As Cllrs T & J Sams and Cllr Foster had previously shown an interest, the recommendation was that they be the members on the Working Party in the first instance, to then be reviewed in May, with all of the various Committees. It was proposed by Cllr Roots to set up the Working Party as suggested. This was seconded by Cllr Stanley, with all in favour.

14. Climate Change

The Clerk reported that Cllr T Sams had suggested that the newly formed Climate Change working party meet and report back to a future meeting with any suggestions or ideas of areas that the Parish Council can tackle.

ACTION: Climate Change working party

15. Use of the Glebe Field for the North Downs Walk (Sunday 12th July 2022)

The Clerk reported that she had received the annual request from the Weald of Kent Rotary Club for use of the Glebe Field for parking for the North Downs Walk. This is to be held on Sunday 12th July and the use would have the usual caveats attached with regards to reinstatement if any damage was caused. It was proposed by Cllr Stanley and seconded by Cllr Roots to approve the use of the field.

ACTION: Clerk

16. Parish Cluster Meeting

The Clerk asked for this item to be deferred and all Councillors were in agreement.

17. LOLER Reports for the Parish Office Lift

The Clerk reminded all present that an email had been circulated to all Councillors regarding the possible need to have 'Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998' (LOLER) reports completed for the lift in the Parish Office. She has contacted Invalift, who supplied and installed the lift, to find out what the Parish Council's obligations are regarding the inspections (how often they should be carried out and by whom etc), but no response had been received prior to the meeting. A quote of £450 for each bi-annual inspection has been received from the current maintenance contractor, however the Clerk is looking into whether these need to be completed by an independent company. The Clerk has also asked the RFO to contact the Insurance Company to see if they can offer any advice.

Cllr Stanley asked that a notice be placed on the lift door to take the lift out of action, until the matter is resolved.

ACTION: Clerk

18. Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk asked Councillors how they wished to proceed with the Annual Parish Meeting this year, which is due to be held on the 27th April. After brief discussion, it was felt it was too early to know what would happen with regards to Covid. Encouraging large numbers of people to sit for a long period in the Church, listening to speakers, was not advisable and maybe a shorter meeting should be looked at in due course. Councillors asked that the usual booklet with village group reports be produced, so that this would be available, and the Clerk stated that she would start to contact groups in February.

ACTION: Clerk

19. CPRE Annual Subscription

The Clerk reported that the annual subscription to Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is now due for renewal at a cost of £36.00 (unchanged from last year). Cllr Stanley proposed that the subscription be renewed, this was seconded by Cllr Dean; with all in favour

20. Future Events

Soup Saturday - 12th February (St John the Baptist Church 12 - 2pm)

21. Items for Future Consideration

Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations (Beacon, Piper & Big Lunch) - [March Agenda](#)

22. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 7.30pm in St John the Baptist Church

With no further matters to discuss the main meeting was closed at 8.40pm.

Minutes of Confidential Agenda Item 23 (Medical Centre) will be filed with a signed copy of these minutes.