

Harrietsham Parish Council
Finance and General Purposes Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Monday 24th April 2017 at 1:30pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), T Sams, Stanley, and M Cuerden (RFO)

Apologies: None

Members of the public: None

2. **Disclosures:** None

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (9th November 2016) were been approved at the subsequent Council meetings. Further copies were signed at this meeting for F&GP records. The RFO then explained that the January meeting had to be cancelled due to bad weather, and due to precedural difficulties had to be held as a more informal working group. Notes of this meeting had been prepared, and the chairman signed a copy as an indication of their accuracy.

4. **Review of draft accounts 2016/17.** The RFO went through the draft summary accounts, explaining that the figures are all derived from – and reconcilable back to – the monthly spreadsheets provided at each council meeting. It was agreed that the figures appeared to be an accurate reflection of the council’s position, and that the accounts could go forward for audit at the end of this month. The **recommendation to council** was that the draft accounts be approved, subject to audit. It was noted that the bank reconciliation hadn’t been verified this time as the accounts are to shortly go, in their entirety, for full internal audit.

Some further points arose from the discussion on 2016/17:

* The RFO pointed out that we currently have a considerable sum in the Natwest bank accounts and indicated that he would like to move some or all of it to the Nationwide reserve account. This was proposed by Cllr Stanley, seconded Cllr Dean, all in favour.

* As part of the amenity contract re-letting process, the contract had required quarterly billing from the contractors. It was now understood that this was causing some problems with their administration, and it was also observed that this practice was out of line with how we treated other contractors. It was therefore agreed that all contractors should be allowed to move to monthly billing if they wished to do so. Proposed Cllr Sams, seconded Cllr Dean, all in favour.

* The RFO explained that although the sum of £2,000 for dog bins had been approved in 2016/17, that money wasn’t, theoretically, carried forward from one year to another. Cllr Sams then appraised the meeting of an offer from MBC on this subject, such that if we acquired 8 bins, MBC would supply 4 more, fitting all 12, and subsequently empty all 12 at no cost to this council, so long as they were all in accessible locations. The meeting agreed that this was a very good offer from MBC, which we would wish to accept. Cllr Sams is to pursue this, with a view to getting the details in writing.

* Similarly, the principle of a grant to the summer fun club had been approved last year, but the actual sum would come out of this year’s budgets. It was then noted that the council had received a full and reasoned response to its queries from the fun club leader, and in response it was felt that the grant should proceed. It was therefore agreed to **Recommend to council** that the summer fun club be offered a grant of £500, payable immediately, but on the proviso that the council receives full financial information (including invoices paid, number of children attending etc) on completion of this year’s project. Proposed Cllr Sams, seconded Cllr Dean, all in favour.

5. and 6. **Governance Declarations.** These were taken together as they cover similar ground. The RFO went through the declaration required by our internal auditors, Auditing Solutions, reading the question, and then outlining the proposed response to be offered by the chairman. It was agreed that all responses seemed to be entirely reasonable. It was therefore agreed to **Recommend to Council** that the chairman be authorised to approve the responses listed. Proposed Cllr Sams, seconded Cllr Stanley, all in favour.

7. **Annual Return** This was covered in the review of accounts above.

8. **Woodlands Walk** The RFO explained that whilst acting as clerk at the last council meeting, he had informed the meeting of the wrong total cost of treating the lake, only allowing for one ton plus application, when it should have been three tons. However, in the recording of meeting, he can be clearly heard outlining the

individual costs, and the final figure is clearly an immaterial error. He then went on to confirm that, in his role of Amenity Manager, he had walked around all the contracted areas on Friday, which included the Woodlands Walk. Whilst doing so, he had checked that both life-rings appeared to be all present and correct.

10. Date of next meeting – Thursday 13th July 2017, at 7:30pm in the Parish Office.

Councillors asked if it would be possible to hold future meetings during the day rather than in the evenings. The RFO undertook to consult with the clerk and to report back to the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 2:10pm.

Summary of Recommendations to Council:

That the draft accounts be forwarded on to the internal auditor for agreement

That the Summer Fun Club be offered a grant of £500.

That the chairman signs off the Governance Declaration(s)