

Harrietsham Parish Council

Environmental Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 20th September 2018 at 7:30pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman) and Stanley, M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Foster, Mrs S Amos and Mr D Oversby **Members of the public:** None
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (19th July 2018) were signed (without amendment) at the July Council meeting. A second set was signed for our records.
4. **Declarations:** Cllr Dean re Woodlands Walk, upon which she has dispensation to talk.
5. **Amenity Contracts (Update):** The Amenity Manager reported that all seemed to be well with the Open Spaces contracts, with no issues arising at the moment. He also noted that the new bench had been installed on the Glebe Field.
6. **Teers Meadow.** The Amenity Manager reported that there had been an informal meeting between Cllrs Dean, T Sams and J Sams, the Amenity Manager and Sally Evans to discuss the scope of expectations by the council for Teers Meadow. In a useful, wide-ranging discussion, the main features were that Sally recommended applying for Heritage Lottery funding, as being the most accessible source of potential funds. This would include fencing, noticeboards (possibly with boards on the other pieces of council land – the Amenity Manager having pointed out that the one up by Percy could do with refreshing), “consultancy” (intended to pay for professional guides on nature walks, expected to amount to about four a year), and possibly, a picnic area.

On the subject of land management, Sally recommended that we talk to a local land owner to see if they could provide suitable sheep for grazing – in which case, they might also be prevailed upon to trim some of the scrub and provide watering facilities for the livestock.

7. **Old CTRL site / New allotments:** The Amenity Manager reported that the last time he walked round the site, the land immediately behind the new houses was in a very poor state, but that it was our understanding from the developers that it would be re-instated before they left. The site of the new allotments had been staked out, cleared, flattened and rotavated. The fencing still needed doing, and it was our assumption that this would be done by the landscape contractors restoring the rest of the land. It was hoped that this would be done somewhere around the end of September.

The question of water for the new allotments was then raised. Three main options were being explored. The first was to tap into the water mains in Fairbourne Lane, and the clerk was currently in the process of obtaining a quote from the water company to do so, possibly with an option to then run a trench and pipe to the allotments themselves, terminating at a standpipe. The second was to drill a borehole. This would cost of the order of £5,000, but would require an electricity supply to pump the water. This, in turn, would require something like a generator, which was going to present its own problems. The third option was to simply supply each allotment with a tank, and then contract MBC Landscape to fill them from a bowser.

The rental charge proposed for the new allotments was also enquired about. Currently, the existing allotments are charged at £13. Cllr Dean observed that this ought to increase to at least £15 for the forthcoming year. As for the new allotments, the current thinking is that we should offer the first year free, as considerable initial work will be required for little return, and then charge the same as the current rate, plus watering costs.

8. **Woodlands Walk:** Cllr Dean reported that the supplier of the aerators (H2O Plants) was going to come and have a look at the under-performing units, but as there were three different owners involved, it was a matter of finding a mutually convenient time. She also noted that there had been no sign of any algae in most of the big lake this year, so we could presume that the combination of the chalk treatments in the last two years and the aerators were indeed having a beneficial effect. It was noted that when the chalk treatments were first discussed, it was recommended by the supplier that it should be done for three years initially. This was reiterated by H2O, who can provide the same service. Accordingly, Cllr Dean had asked for a price from H2O, who had quoted £1956+VAT to supply and deposit the chalk/bacteria mix. This is less than the expected cost from the original supplier, and it seemed wise to use the same firm as was maintaining the aerators, especially while we needed them to be looked at! It was therefore agreed to **recommend to Council** that H2O Plants be asked to provide a treatment of chalk to the lake, and at the same time, if possible, move the council's aerator to deeper water to avoid the filter clogging.
9. **Hanging Basket competition:** Cllr Dean summarised the history of the competition to date. It had now been running for 3 years, and in each year it had been a struggle to get entries, whilst at the same time we usually received some form of adverse comment. This raised the question as to whether or not we should continue to run it. It was noted that in year 1, we had 3 entries, year 2 – 7 and this year (year 3) – 11, so the figures were, at least, on an upward trajectory. It was therefore agreed to run it for another year – maybe two – before again reviewing the matter.
10. **Glebe Field noticeboards:** Cllr Stanley reported that he had successfully re-secured the surviving noticeboard in the play area. The clerk had been given what we thought were the details of the original producers of the board, and will see if it is possible to obtain copies.
11. **Items for Discussion:** None.
13. **Date of next meeting** – Thursday 15th November 2018 at 7:30pm in the Parish Office

Meeting closed at 9:10pm.