

Harrietsham Parish Council
Environmental Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean, Luck, Mrs S Amos, M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Brown, Dayes **Members of the public:** None

In the absence of Cllr Brown, it was agreed that Cllr Dean would Chair the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (10th March 2025) were signed (without amendment) at the following Council meeting, another copy was signed for our records.

4. **Disclosures:** None

MC, as Amenity Manager, reported that we were now in the second month of the new Open Spaces contracts, and they all seemed to be progressing well.

5. **New Burial Ground:** The NBG seemed to be in good order. Cllr Dean asked if the five Flowering Cherries were ok, and MC responded by saying that they were the last time he looked, which was a couple of weeks ago.
6. **Garden of Remembrance:** The new tree has now been planted. Other than that, there isn't anything further to report.
7. **Glebe Field:** No further comments required.
8. **Play Area:** No further comments required.
9. **Medical Centre & Church Road:** MC updated the meeting on the contract covering this area. The winning contractor had declined the contract on the grounds that having just one contract in the village wasn't economic. MC had therefore, in conjunction with the clerk, offered it to the second-placed contractor, who had accepted it. The area is now looked after by JB Landscapes. (JB had also won the contract to maintain the VHT's part of the car-park. MC indicated that, at the moment, he is considering asking for a single invoice so that he can claim the VAT back, and then either charge the VHT for their share, or allocate it against the budget we already hold for hall work/salaries.)

The front of the medical centre continues to look shabby, but the plans to revamp it have temporarily stalled because the S106 funding that we had thought could be used might not be suitable for this purpose. The Practice are trying to clarify the situation.

The unauthorised access at the back of the medical centre is being addressed. Both the Housing Association and the police are involved, and we are trying to get quotes for rectifying the damage.

10. **Woodlands Walk:** MC noted that we still need to get the dead tree identified in the tree survey removed. We will go ahead and instruct tree contractors, as previously agreed.

We have had a request to place a new bench "by the small pond off Church Road". We need to ensure that the applicant is talking about our lake, not the smaller one, closer to Church Road but privately owned by the residents. Assuming that she is, then we would have no objection, although we would need to approve location, bench and any plaque that they may wish to attach. The committee did wonder if the applicant appreciated how expensive benches, supplied and fitted, can be!

Cllr Dean then noted that we still need to get a replacement sign for the Woodlands Walk entrance on Church Road. MC said he'd talk to the clerk about it.

MC also reported that we need a new life ring as one had "gone missing" (presumably not used!). This is in hand.

11. **Benches:** The rotten bench on the Green has been removed, and we are in the process of getting a replacement. The bench and alcove by the stream still needs attention, but this might be tricky as we need to find a suitable contractor.

- 12. War Memorial:** MC noted that the memorial is looking neat and tidy, but commented on the “foreign” growth in the front hedge. He will talk to the contractor to see if we can do anything about it.
- 13. A20 Verges:** No further comments required about the contract.
- 14. Saxon Place Amenity Land:** Following a walk round a couple of weeks ago, MC reported that all seemed ok. He then noted that the warden, in his wonderings, had recently come across a new bench left by someone near the community orchard. The committee debated having it removed, but concluded that it wasn’t doing any harm, and so could remain. Whether there are then any long term maintenance issues remains to be seen.
- 15. Teers Meadow:** No further comments required on the upkeep of the meadow, with exception of getting the cows back. Mrs Amos checked the management plan, and it seems they should have been put back on for March and April – so we have missed that particular slot. The next one is September – November; Cllr Luck will contact the owner to see if she wishes to do so. We felt that missing the last grazing slot wouldn’t be too much of a problem as we had the bi-annual mow at the end of last year.
- 16. Future contracts – revised allocation:** Covered above.
- 17. Items for future work:** Aside from items above (and also from the previous minutes) there were just two major items to bear in mind. The village sign continues to require some work, which will probably be best done in conjunction with the bench by the stream, in that they will require some building-type work. Essentially, we need either a good odd-job man or a builder.

The other item relates to the entrance bollards on the Glebe Field. The situation seems a little unclear, in that there were significant problems reported when removing one of them for the Bluebell Walk, but Cllrs Dean and Luck reported no such problems for the VE Day celebration – nor did they note any signs of the damage previously reported. MC will continue to liaise with the Clerk to see what needs doing.

- 18. Date of the next meeting:** Monday 14th July 2025 in the Parish Office at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 8:30pm.