

Harrietsham Parish Council
Finance and General Purposes Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 6th November 2025 at 7:30pm

1. Present: Cllrs T Sams (Chair), Brown, Dean, Luck, Roots and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
Apologies: None
Members of the public: None

2. Disclosures: Cllrs Brown and Roots both registered an interest in Item 7 as they are both involved in various grant requests. (Forms for both are on record, and neither will vote on the relevant applications.)

3. Minutes of the last meeting: (10th July 2025) were approved at a following Council meeting. Another set was signed for our records.

4. Review of 2025/26 accounts to date. The RFO went through each income and expenditure heading in turn, answering questions as they arose. October is the end of month 7 in the financial year, and the figures were almost all as we would expect at this time. Items attracting particular comment were (a) bank interest is likely to be significantly reduced – perhaps by £4,000 – from the budget due to the much reduced interest rates. (b) There is an outstanding commitment to increase the Woodlands Walk dowry fund to £100,000 in increments of £5,000 per year. Last year's transfer didn't take place as the money was spent on the aerators instead. This year, the transfer can occur as planned. (c) The church received a contribution to the north churchyard wall, an action which we viewed as an investment to avoid future possible higher costs. In this context, as it really relates to an open spaces matter, the RFO indicated that he intends to place the expenditure in that column. (d) He noted that, in line with previously delegated powers, he had made a £10,000 grant to the village hall, which had the effect of making them marginally in profit at the end of October, with two months left of their year. That, plus gifting the fire-doors to the hall, had used most of their budgeted amount. (e) The Medical Centre rent was exactly as budgeted, however, whilst the costs show a small underspend can be expected, the Council had offered the Practice a £4,000 contribution to their project for the front of the building. This will cause an over-spend, unless it falls into next year.

The bank balances were checked and confirmed by the Chair.

5. 2026/27 initial budget considerations: In a brief discussion, Cllr Sams suggested that we should keep the current legal budget “as is” for next year, due to the uncertainty arising from possible implementation of the Heathlands housing project and the need to contest planning applications that may arise. Cllr Roots asked that we keep the possibility of supplying power to the West Green in mind, with a potential budget cost of around £6,000. He also enquired as to the situation about the Christmas lights – when did they reach the end of the current lease, and what costs would be incurred by renewing it?

6. Medical Centre frontage: Essentially, this had been addressed in item 4 above. We believe that the work required to the front of the Centre, were we to just fulfill our obligations, would be around £3K- £4k. It was therefore agreed that the Council should offer the Practice a £4K contribution to their PharmaBox project, so long as the front gets renovated to an acceptable standard in the process. This contribution would be made available when work commences. If the Practice are unable to install their boxes, then we shall renovate the frontage, as previously planned.

7. Grant / Donation Requests: The RFO started by explaining that since he wrote and distributed the summary report of all requests, we had received two more, one from the Tennis Club and one from the new Games Club. The Committee then considered the requests in turn, starting with the ones on the report:

Harrietsham Gardening Society: Requested £350 (donation last year £150). After some discussion, in which it was noted that although there had only been a vague purpose of the grant expressed, in that it had lacked detail, we had two councillors proposing and seconding £150 and two proposing and seconding £175. With Cllr Brown abstaining due to an interest, it was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a grant of £175 be offered, proposed Cllr Sams, seconded Cllr Roots with Chair's casting vote.

Harrietsham Fish Scheme: Requested £882 (donation last year £750). It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a grant be offered of £882, proposed Cllr Sams, seconded Cllr Dean, all in favour (Cllr Brown abstaining due to an interest.)

Harrietsham PCC: Requested £433 floodlighting, £410 churchyard maintenance, £750 New cremation area, totalling £1,593 (donation last year £984). It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a grant be offered of £1,593, proposed Cllr Roots, seconded Cllr Brown, 4 in favour, 1 abstention (Cllr Dean).

Harrietsham In Bloom: Requested £250 (donation last year £100). It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a grant of be offered of £250, proposed Cllr Dean, seconded Cllr Luck, all in favour (Cllr Roots abstaining due to an interest.) *It was noted that this request relates to funding in early 2026, and will therefore be paid in April of that year.*

Friday Coffee Morning: The committee had received the usual request for the continuing funding of the hall hire on each Friday that the group meets. It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that we should continue to underwrite the hall hire costs for 2026/27, (an estimated cost of around £1,400). *It was noted that this request relates to funding in 2026/27.*

Harrietsham Lawn Tennis Club: Requested £750 (donation last year £500). It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a grant be offered of £750, proposed Cllr Brown, seconded Cllr Dean, all in favour. *It was noted that this request relates to funding in early 2026, and will therefore be paid in April of that year.*

St John's Games Club: This is a new club which seems to be taking root, out-growing it's current venue of teh Church Room in the village hall. It may well need to expand into the Booth Hall from early next year. It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that we should underwrite the hall hire costs for 2026/27 in the same we do for the Coffee Morning, (an estimated cost of around £325), proposed Cllr Sams, seconded Cllr Dean with all in favour. *It was noted that this request relates to funding in 2026/27.*

10. Date of next meeting – Thursday 8th January 2026 at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 8:55pm.