

Harrietsham Parish Council

Environmental Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 17th May 2018 at 7:30pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (Chairman) and Foster, Messrs D Oversby and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Stanley and Mrs Amos. **Members of the public:** None
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (15th March 2018) were signed (without amendment) at the March Council meeting. A second set was signed for our records.
4. **Disclosures:** None

5. **Amenity Manager update:** The Amenity Manager provided a general summary, saying that, having walked round the relevant open spaces, the contracts appeared to be running well. He hadn't yet contacted the contractors about installing a bench on the Glebe Field because it was still hoped that a parishioner would volunteer to do it. He had, though, asked Kent Valley to look at the irises along West Street whilst they were doing the Green, but he had yet to hear. In the meantime, we are still trying to ascertain ownership of the stream.

6. **Hanging Basket Competition:** This was progressing. Mr Oversby had lined up a judge, for the princely fee of £40. Both the Gardening Society and Parish Council websites had been updated with the details, and plans were afoot to distribute some leaflets.

7. **Glebe Field hedge:** At the last meeting, Cllr Stanley had asked if the hedge could be looked at, as he feared that there might be some holes, possibly due to vandalism. Both Cllr Dean and the Amenity Manager had – independently – been round the edges of the field, and felt that the hedges were ok. The Amenity Manager commented that there were some gaps, but these looked more likely to be the product of individual hedge plants dying – but he thought the gaps left would be filled by the remainder bushing out.

8. **Allotments:** The council is to take possession of a substantial piece of amenity land behind the new developments where our office is, and in there some land has been set aside for new allotments. The developers have offered to strip off the vegetation where these allotments are to be, level the (rather lumpy) ground, spray the complete area (some 1743m²), cultivate the area and then fence it with a 900mm high rabbit-proof fence with gate. For this, the council has been asked for a contribution of £2,500. The committee wondered if it would be possible to have a higher fence (say 1.2m?) to make it not just rabbit-proof, but also a little more human-proof too! This might increase the contribution sought, but we can but ask.

Discussion then turned to the question of water supply for the allotments. This, it was agreed, might be a problem. There is a significant slope up from the stream to the ground allocated, so manually carried buckets will probably not be practical. The options therefore seem to be (a) an extraction licence from the Environment Agency and a pump, which will need to be either petrol or manual, and kept securely somewhere, somehow, (b) locate a nearby water main, get the water company's permission to tap into it and run a pipe with a standpipe or two on it, (c) the new land will require a maintenance contract, so we include a term that requires the contractor to have a water bowser which they use to fill pre-positioned tanks on the allotments. Unfortunately, all of these sound possibly complicated and certainly expensive. The Amenity Manager agreed to think about this further. Meanwhile, it was agreed that there was little point discussing possible rent levels until the potential costs of the preparatory works and the watering had been quantified.

9. **Items for future discussion:** None

10. **Date of next meeting** – Thursday 17th July 2018 at 7:30pm in the Parish Office

Meeting closed at 8:15pm.