

# Harrietsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.30pm in the Booth Hall

Cllr Powell welcomed all present to the meeting and reported that Cathy Lay had resigned from the Parish Council.

## Public discussion

A resident reported that the HIB AGM will be held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October and asked that a Parish Council representative attend. Cllr Powell confirmed he would be available. **ACTION: Cllr Powell**

A resident reported that Harrietsham in Bloom (HIB) had entered the two main flower beds on the green (planted for the King's Coronation) into Maidstone Borough Council's competition and had earned second place, receiving a voucher for Cooling Nursery.

A resident reported that the Friends of St Johns concert had not been as well supported as they had hoped, but this may have been because Lenham had held a barn dance on the same evening. The Secretary for the group has stood down and a replacement is needed.

A resident commented that the Parish Council Facebook page is not being updated and Cllr Griffiths responded that this is due to a lack of time being available.

A resident asked that the Parish Council arrange a 'Best Kept Allotment' award next year.

**ACTION: Environmental Cttee**

A resident raised concerns regarding the rewilding of the new burial ground around the remembrance trees. It was confirmed that this was not being progressed.

## **1 Present**

Cllr E Powell, Cllr T Griffiths, Cllr F Stanley, Cllr C Roots, Cllr S Luck, Cllr S Brown, RFO/Amenity Manager Mr M Cuerden and the Clerk Mrs A Broadhurst  
2 Members of Public

## **2 Apologies for absence**

Cllr T Sams, Cllr J Sams, Community Warden Martin Sherwood

## **3 Minutes of the last meeting**

Parish Council Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Roots, seconded by Cllr Brown; with 4 in favour and 2 abstentions.

Cllr Brown commented that Rev. Huggins had asked for thanks to be passed on to Councillors for their help with facilitating the parking for a wedding earlier in the month (July Agenda item 11)

## **4 Disclosures and confidential items**

### Changes to the Register of Interests

There were no changes to the register.

### Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

Cllr C Roots: Agenda Item 11 (Poppy Display 2023) as his wife organizes the Poppy Display through Harrietsham Knit, Natter and Craft.

Cllr T Griffiths: Agenda Item 6.2 (Other Environmental Matters - Annual Charge for Allotments 2023-2024) as his wife is currently a tenant.

### Requests for Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation.

## **5 Planning**

**5.1** The outstanding planning applications were noted.

**5.2** The approved applications were noted.

**5.3** The refused application was noted.

### **5.4 Other Planning Matters**

- MBC Local Plan Update: Cllr Powell spoke regarding an email received from the Chairman of Lenham Parish Council, which the Clerk had circulated along with a further email from Harrietsham's barrister. The Lenham Garden Settlement is now being referred to as Lenham Heathlands and, if approved, building will commence in 2031, as Lenham Parish

Council's Neighbourhood Plan period ends. Cllr Powell stated that there are no major modifications relating to highways, although the Inspector has suggested that the Leeds/Langley bypass is revisited. MBC is to discuss the main modifications to the Local Plan at a meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> September and the Clerk reminded all present that the link to these has been circulated to all present; adding that there will then be a public consultation running until the 13<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr Powell added that it is likely that the Inspector's comments would be available in the early New Year. The Parish Council will need to submit a response to the forthcoming consultation and Cllr Powell proposed that £5,000 be set aside for the Barrister to write this. The RFO confirmed that £10,000 had already been set aside for further legal advice, so there was no requirement for a vote. It was agreed by all present that Cllr Powell confirm that the Parish Council would be prepared to spend a maximum of £5,000 on the response required.

**ACTION: Cllr Powell**

Cllr Brown asked whether other Parishes are assisting with the costs and Cllr Powell responded that each Parish needs to submit their own response, as each village's concerns would be different.

The RFO then raised concerns relating to the level of expenditure that the Parish Council has recently undertaken and the possibility of the huge costs involved with a Judicial Review, should this be a future consideration. Due to the recent reports of Councils being declared bankrupt, the RFO stated that he intends to circulate a report on the expenditure to date, incorporating the Parish Council's future planned spending to ensure that all Councillors are fully understanding the financial situation. Any thoughts can then be discussed with the F&GP Committee.

**ACTION: RFO**

## 6 Environmental

**6.1** Minutes of the Environmental Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July: The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Stanley; with 3 in favour (those present at the meeting).

### **6.2 Other Environmental Matters**

- Annual Charge for Allotments to be agreed for 2023-2024: The Clerk reported that the agreements are due to be renewed in October and the current annual charge is £22. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Luck that the annual fee should rise to £25.00, this was seconded by Cllr Brown; with 5 in favour and 1 abstention.
- Rubbish Bin near to Fairbourne Lane end of Saxon Place Land: The Clerk reported that Cllr T Sams had received a request from a resident for a bin to be installed. This would need to be outside the gate on Fairbourne Lane and the cost would be similar to that agreed for the bin on Marley Road (approx. £630). The bin would then need to be emptied by MBC at £10 a time. The Amenity Manager raised concerns regarding the location of the proposed bin as either it would need to be on the KCC verge (permission would be needed) or inside the gate (and MBC may not then agree to empty it). After brief discussion Councillors asked that the item be deferred so that further information could be sought.

**ACTION: Cllr T Sams**

- Unauthorised Encampment Policy: The Clerk asked that this item be deferred.
- New Burial Ground: The Clerk reported on a recent meeting that had been held with The CDS Group, following the Environment Agency confirming the use of the field as a burial ground. The next step is to gain pre-application advice from MBC and the Clerk has instructed CDS to progress with this, as a matter of urgency. This being because, with the current projected timeframe, the burial ground cannot start being used until mid-2025. The cost of the pre application advice will be in the region of £6,400, as additional documents will need to be submitted due to the field being in the AONB. Absolute worst-case scenario, the full planning application could cost in the region of £85,000, although it is hoped that the cost will be closer to £25,000-£30,000. The cost will depend on the advice given by MBC through the pre-application submission.
- Woodlands Walk Gate: Cllr Griffiths raised concerns that the gate operative has approached and removed youths on several occasions, stating that he is the Bailiff for the lake, but has not made members of the Parish Council aware of this, even though he has been asked several times to alert the Council to any issues that arise. There are concerns that there are no processes in place to protect the operative from any issues and there does not appear to be any risk assessment in place. Cllr Stanley commented that the other end of the lake is fully accessible so questioned the need to lock the gate in Church Road. After

discussion it was proposed by Cllr Roots that the gate be left unlocked until the Environmental Committee have had the opportunity to fully discuss the process. This was seconded by Cllr Griffiths, with all in favour. Cllr Roots offered to inform Mr Chandler.

**ACTION: Cllr Roots/Environmental Cttee**

## 7 Finances

7.1 Income and Expenditure spreadsheets: The Clerk reported that, as the RFO has only just returned from leave, these will be circulated in the next week and approved at the next meeting.

7.2 Minutes of the F&GP Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July: The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Roots and seconded by Cllr Luck; with 2 in favour (those present at the meeting)

## 8 Highways

The Clerk reported on a recent meeting with KCC Highways regarding the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). KHS have now confirmed that they can progress with signage in Hook Lane, Fairbourne Lane, Marley Road and Greenway Forstal/Holm Mill Lane. Whilst a barrier cannot be installed near to the railway bridge on Ashford Road, they would install tactile paving and can progress with double yellow lines on the West Street/Station Road junction (which require a public consultation and Traffic Regulation Order). When pricing up the various jobs, to form an estimate price to bring to the meeting, the Clerk had found the cost to be over £12,000 with the various design fees. Following further discussion with KCC Highways, they have agreed to pay for the yellow lines and charge one design fee for the other work. This brings the estimated total down to just over £5,000. This price could alter if any issues are found with installing any of the items that are included. KCC Highways would need a decision quite swiftly, as the yellow lines need to be factored into the budget by November and an informal public consultation needs to be held first. The Clerk has asked the Team to progress with the consultation in order to meet the deadline for budget considerations. It was noted that KCC would not progress with a one way system on West Street (between Hook Lane, the school and Ashford Road) as this would not be popular with residents and had stated that the school needs to progress with the outstanding Travel Plan. It was then proposed by Cllr Brown to progress with the items discussed and this was seconded by Cllr Powell; with all in favour.

The Clerk reported that Cllr T Sams has chased KCC for an update regarding the ditch/drainage issues in Church Road and Stede Hill, he will update Councillors when he receives any further information.

It was noted that the average speed cameras have now been installed along the A20.

It was noted that the Marley Road traffic survey has been completed and the Clerk will circulate the data, once received.

It was noted that the 20mph speed limit has been introduced in West Street and Church Road.

Cllr Brown stated that a 30mph roundel had not been removed on Church Road, close to Court Lodge Road.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## 9 Santa's Grotto

Cllr T Griffiths reminded all present that the event will be on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December and will be advertised in the Network magazine and on Facebook. Cllrs Stanley and Luck offered to oversee the refreshments and Mrs Dean has also offered to help. A group will be needed on the Saturday evening to erect the grotto and again on the Sunday evening to take everything down.

The Clerk was asked to purchase 175 selection boxes, which will be wrapped by Councillors.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## 10 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day

The Clerk had circulated a pack relating to the D-Day anniversary and asked Councillors to consider how they want to mark the occasion. It was agreed that the working party will meet before the October meeting to bring a proposal forward for discussion at the next Parish Council meeting.

**ACTION: Cllrs T & J Sams, Griffiths, Roots & Brown**

The date for the event was discussed and Councillors agreed that Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June would be the closest date to the Anniversary date.

## 11 Poppy Display 2023

The Clerk reported that a request had been received regarding this year's poppy display and asked that the Parish Council formally adopt it again, for the duration of the Remembrance period, so that it is covered by insurance. It was confirmed that the fencing and lighting will be installed again to help avoid any trip hazard. It was proposed by Cllr Griffiths, seconded by Cllr Stanley; with 5 in favour and 1 abstention.

## 12 Policy for Parking on the Glebe Field

Following a recent request for use of the field for parking for a wedding, the Clerk requested that Councillors review an Open Spaces policy, which was written some years ago. There are areas of the policy which need revisiting and the Clerk suggested that the Environmental Committee review this at their next meeting, to then be approved by Full Council. This was agreed by all present.

**ACTION: Environmental Cttee**

Cllr Roots asked that the Committee considers allowing use of the field free of charge for charities, but that all other requests are charged for the use.

## 13 HugoFox Website

The Clerk reported that, from October, HugoFox will be charging for their websites. There will be 3 packages and the Clerk recommended that Councillors approve the Silver package, at a cost of £19.99 (+vat) a month in order to still keep access to the Planning Tracker. If the Parish Council does not sign up to one of the packages, the website will be deleted. The Clerk reported that HugoFox had offered a 15% discount if the Parish Council agrees to pay the first year by invoice and then set up the direct debit from year 2. It was proposed by Cllr Roots to sign up to the Silver package, paying by invoice for the first year to receive a 15% discount. This was seconded by Cllr Powell, with all in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## 14 Community Warden Consultation

It was noted that the Parish Council's response, which had previously been circulated, had now been hand delivered to KCC to ensure that it was received before the deadline.

## 15 Parish Charter

The Councillor's individual views had been amalgamated into a response to the MBC survey and this has now been submitted by the Clerk to meet the 30<sup>th</sup> September deadline.

## 16 New Street Name (Old School Site)

It was proposed by Cllr Griffiths to name the new road for the development on the old school site 'Hilton Court'. This was seconded by Cllr Powell. Cllr Roots then proposed 'Hilton Close', which was seconded by Cllr Brown. As both proposals received 3 votes each, Cllr Powell used his Chairman's vote and Hilton Court was agreed as the new street name.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## 17 Use of the New Burial Ground by RBLI for The Great Tommy Sleep Out

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from Royal British Legion Industries to host a 'Great Tommy Sleep Out' to raise funds for veterans and their families in the new burial ground in March 2024. Tickets will be £10 per adult and families can arrive from between 4-5pm to set up their tents. They hope to have a fish and chip van deliver and there will not be any alcohol allowed. They are hoping to obtain local sponsorship to help cover the cost of the bins and toilets that will be required.

Cllr Brown raised a number of concerns relating to risk assessments, insurance, access and loud music being played during the evening. As the RBL have organised these events before, Cllr Roots felt that these issues will all have been addressed, but the Clerk confirmed that she would discuss them with the organiser. After brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr Griffiths to allow use of the burial ground for one evening. This was seconded by Cllr Roots, with all in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## 18 Future Events

13<sup>th</sup> October - HIB AGM (Booth Hall - 7.30pm)

14<sup>th</sup> October - Ploughman's in the Church (Midday to 2pm)

17<sup>th</sup> December - Santa's Grotto

Coffee Morning - Every Friday in the Booth Hall (10am - midday)

## 19 Administration Matter

The Clerk reported that, following the comments made by the RFO under agenda item 5.4, she had produced a form to be completed when Councillors wish to add an item to the agenda. It is hoped that this will result in Councillors considering the item fully (including the potential cost to the Council) before progressing with projects. It was noted that this is to be used ahead of the October Parish Council meeting and each Councillors was supplied with copies of the form.

**ACTION: Councillors**

**20 Items for Future Consideration**  
No further items to be considered.

**21 Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7.30pm** in the Booth Hall

*With no further matters to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.26pm.*