

## Draft Minutes of

### Harrietsham Parish Council 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 7:30pm

#### Public Discussion

The PCSO reported that there had been 5 crimes, with 27 other calls, reported in the last month. A full list is attached. The Community Warden had sent his apologies, and a brief report highlighting the need to take particular care as Christmas approaches. There was no other public discussion.

1. **Present:** Cllrs Allwood (Chair), Chinnery, Dean, Morris, Powell, Przystupa, J Sams, T Sams, Trussler and Williams. Cllr Henny Shotter (Lenham) and M Cuerden (RFO and Minutes Secretary for the evening).
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Kay (away on business), A Broadhurst (Clerk, off sick). Cllrs J and T Sams apologised that they had to leave at 9:30pm.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (28<sup>th</sup> October) were signed without amendment.

#### 4. **Declarations of Interest**

- **Changes to register**  
Cllrs J and T Sams, as they have purchased 2 Queded Way
- **Declarations**  
Cllr Dean item 7 - lives adjacent to Woodlands Walk  
Cllr Morris item 8.1 - involved in HIB, H VHT, the Big Lunch and the church.  
Cllrs J and T Sams item 8.1 - son attends indoor tennis club  
Cllr Williams item 7.1 - family member doing work in Woodlands Walk  
(All provided forms, which are held on file.)
- **Dispensations:** None requested.

#### 5. **Planning**

5.1 Noted

5.2 Noted

- 5.3 Cllr Chinnery reported that the Court Lodge appeal had now been heard, and we expect to learn the outcome in December. The design policy had been circulated round the village, being available from such places as the post office, and had also been on our website. Some feedback had been received, which had been collated and considered by the group. Amongst this, MBC had suggested some redrafting to make it easier to use by their planning officers.

Cllr Chinnery **proposed** to council that the design policy be adopted, seconded Cllr Dean, with all in favour.

Cllr Chinnery also reported that there is to be a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December regarding the S106 money, with Cllr Whittle (KCC) in the chair. A question was raised on the process for issuing invitations, and Cllr Chinnery undertook to ensure that all interested parties were aware of it.

#### 6 **Communications**

Cllr Przystupa reported that there had been a good response from the communications survey. Paul Hicks and Cllrs Chinnery and Williams had greatly assisted by knocking on doors to gather views, with a total of 350 residents responding.

The Social Media Policy was raised, with Cllr Powell commenting on the prompt and useful nature of the information on the website. There being no other discussions or questions, Cllr Przystupa **proposed** to council that the policy be adopted, seconded Cllr Dean, with all in favour.

#### 7. **Environmental**

- 7.1 Cllr Williams reported that there had been a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November at which it was decided to let the new Open Spaces contract as one, hoping that would attract larger companies, avoiding the potential for contractors not performing in the event of staff issues. He also stated that they would be seeking to appoint an Amenity Manager to oversee the contract, either from amongst the committee, by recruiting a volunteer, or by employing someone - which was still open to discussion. At this stage, any work on Teers Meadow still needed definition, (however - see item 11 below). It was hoped to circulate a draft contract shortly. On the question of the Glebe Field, it had been decided to leave the dressing of the earth mounds until the spring.

7.2 Other environmental issues: None.

#### 8. **Finance**

The usual income, expenditure and bank reconciliation spreadsheets had been previously circulated, and there being no questions for the RFO, Cllr Trussler **proposed** that they be approved, seconded Cllr Williams, all in favour. The Chairman duly signed them.

Similarly, the F&GP minutes had been circulated, and Cllr Trussler **proposed** that they be accepted, seconded Cllr Dean, with all those who had attended being in favour. Cllr Trussler then ran through the budget information, which had been made available for information only, noting that the final version - and agreement - would be done during January, when the precept needed setting. He set the background, talking about Band D properties etc. He then went on to observe that there was now the possibility that we might not have to contribute to the medical centre extension after all, but it depended on how the numbers actually worked out, and he was seeking confirmation from MBC that we were not committed to a one-third share of the cost. Cllr Trussler also talked about the distinction between Revenue and Capital expenditure, and his wish to create a separate, discretionary, Capital fund, in line with the discussions held at F&GP.

Cllr Allwood made a request that all councillors consider the budgets, and should contribute to the budget discussions if appropriate. This was reiterated by Cllr Trussler.

It was noted that although the Communications budget had been reduced for this year by £600 in the budget working paper, this wasn't reflected in the "live" expenditure spreadsheet. This budget should have been moved into Grants & Donations. The RFO undertook to check and amend the figures as required.

## 8.1 Recommendations from the F&GP Committee:

Cllr Allwood indicated that he would go through the grant requests individually, inviting comments as he did so.

*Harrietsham Lawn Tennis Club - F&GP recommended that the requested £150 be offered.*

Cllr Chinnery pointed out that they had not submitted accounts, as requested on the form. However, it was for a small amount, and they appeared to be matching the funding. Cllr Allwood **proposed** that the grant be paid, seconded Cllr Morris - all in favour.

*Harrietsham Fish Scheme - F&GP recommended that £600 of the requested £700 be offered.*

Cllr Przystupa expressed the view that Network shouldn't be given a grant because:

- The grant request was to assist with increasing printing costs which is an operating cost. A request of this nature is a subsidy not a grant.
- Although the cost is towards increased printing costs Networks advertising revenue had increased by the same amount and they continue to make a profit of £800.
- On assessing the impact of not giving them a grant it is clear that there would be no adverse impact on the future of Network.
- In September 2011 Cllr Taylor had stated that Network had a sizeable balance and didn't need a grant so shouldn't be awarded one. Despite this the PC are have continued to give Network a grant each year since and are now considering giving Network yet another grant some four years after Cllr Taylor's comments.

A view supported by Cllr Chinnery. Cllr Trussler offered the view that this was more about whether the council wished to support the Scheme in its work around the village.

Cllr Przystupa expressed the view that in awarding a grant to Network the council had suspended all governance.

Following a general debate, Cllr T Sams **proposed** that the grant be paid as recommended, seconded Cllr Morris, with 6 in favour and 4 against (**approved**).

*St John's Parish Church - F&GP recommended that the requested £315 be offered.*

Cllr Chinnery expressed the view that she wasn't convinced that this fitted with the intent of the grants scheme. She also stated that she understood historically there had been a "gentlemen's" agreement to pay the electricity bill for floodlighting the church. Following a general debate, Cllr T Sams **proposed** that the grant be paid, seconded Cllr J Sams, with all in favour.

*Harrietsham Village Hall Trust, for a music festival - F&GP recommended the £750 be offered once the festival had taken place.*

This item generated considerable general debate, with several councillors expressing grave reservations, ranging from a feeling that there was no need for a grant (Trust accounts not having been supplied) to the organisation and control of the event itself. Overall, it was felt that there was too little information available to reach a decision on a grant, so Cllr J Sams **proposed** that the decision be deferred until February's meeting, and that the RFO be asked to write, requesting further details, seconded Cllr Dean, with all in favour.

*Friday Coffee Morning - F&GP recommended that the council pay for hall hire during 2016/17.*

With little debate, Cllr Allwood **proposed** that the hall hire be covered by the council, seconded Cllr Morris, with all in favour.

*Big Lunch 2016 - F&GP recommended that the requested £130 be offered.*

Cllr J Sams **proposed** that the grant be paid, seconded Cllr Chinnery with all in favour.

*Harrietsham in Bloom - F&GP recommended that the two grant requests, totalling a possible £1900, be amalgamated into one, and that £1500 be offered for 2016/17.*

Cllr Chinnery stated that so far as the £900 for plants was concerned, she could see no need, based on their accounts, but that she could see why we might wish to continue the current arrangements for watering the planters. Cllr Trussler responded by outlining F&GP rationale in arriving at the offer suggested, which led to a short debate. Cllr T Sams **proposed** that the grant be offered as per F&GP's recommendation, seconded Cllr Dean, with 6 in favour and 2 abstentions.

Some items on the agenda were then taken out of order to allow the Cllrs Sams to contribute before having to leave at 9:30.

#### **11. Teers Meadow**

Cllr J Sams outlined the role of the field as a community meadow, acting as a wildlife and wild flower haven. She felt that there should be a working party to consider the field's future use and maintenance, observing that there already a 2-year old management plan in existence. There were several grants available, which should limit any costs to the council. The immediate priority was a "scrub-bash" to control weeds and young trees that were starting to encroach upon the field. This had been set for 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016, in conjunction with the North Downs Partnership. It was hoped that this would help generate community involvement. There then followed a general discussion about the field. Cllr T Sams then **proposed** that the council fully endorse the "scrub-bash" planned as a council activity, seconded Cllr Trussler, with all in favour. It was also noted that, until a maintenance plan had been settled upon, it would be inappropriate to include it in the tenders for the new open spaces contracts.

#### **14. Village Defibrillator**

Cllr J Sams reported that she had spoken to the school about a defibrillator, but there could be an issue over location (the school wanting it inside, but we want outside so that it is available to all). She had also spoken to a first aid professional who thought that they could supply one at a cheaper cost. The location for one was therefore the main thing still to be decided.

#### **9. Highways**

Cllr J Sams reported that the safety audit had been done, and we were now awaiting the results. The issue of Goddington Lane had been raised, but unfortunately, firstly, there is no budget for any work, and secondly, KCC feel that the work required is the landowners' responsibility. Cllr Sams also reported that there have been a number of complaints about the A20/ The Hollies boundary landscaping, and that a meeting with the builders is planned.

Cllr Williams reported that the local company which had placed about 40 advertising boards along the A20 through the village were to be served by KCC with a notice requiring their removal by 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

Cllr T Sams mentioned that he had been receiving comments about lorries parking overnight on the CTRL site entrance.

*At this point, Cllrs J & T Sams left the meeting.*

#### **10. Locking of Woodlands Walk Gate of an Evening**

Cllr Dean reported that she had spoken to a local resident in Woodlands Walk, who was happy to lock and unlock the Walk each morning and evening. All that is required now is a spare key.

#### **12. Lenham Parish Council**

Cllr Przystupa gave a short report on the last Lenham PC meeting. It started with only 6 councillors in place from an establishment of 13, although another 4 were co-opted that evening, reducing the vacancies to 3. They had held the third public consultation so far on planning. The solar farm in the parish wished to extend their licence from 25 years to 30 - a move that would generate about £10K for the council.

Cllr Shotter (Lenham) spoke briefly about their neighbourhood plan and some of the comments (and controversy) it had generated. This was what had caused the high councillor turn-over. She observed that the new council was now on a steep learning curve, and complimented Harrietsham PC on the way it conducts itself.

#### **13. Parish Council Meeting Venue**

Cllr Przystupa reported that the school was available for our meetings at no charge, but that we had to pay expenses, which had been quoted at £15 per hour. It was intended to hold January's meeting there. The RFO passed the rental agreement to the chairman for his perusal and subsequent signing.

#### **15. Correspondence** - There was no correspondence for inspection.

#### **16. Future Events**

HVHT Western Night (Saturday)

Christmas Tree Festival (church 5&6 Dec.)

School Christmas Fayre (5th Dec)

Christmas Carol Service (church, 20<sup>th</sup> Dec)

#### **17.Items for Future Consideration**

There were no items put forward for future consideration.

**18.Date of next meeting** will be on **27<sup>th</sup> January 2016** at the school, with the Mayor in attendance.

Parish Council meeting closed at 9:40pm

#### **Public discussion:**

A number of parishioners raised points or comments:

- \* the watering of the planters is required, whoever does it. Also, Teers Meadow is an important habitat that is worth maintaining.
- \* there is a website called Facebay which is used for person - to - person selling. It appears to be listing inappropriate items, such as bulk packages of tobacco.
- \* there was an expression of disappointment about the grants being made, and how the parishioner felt that due process hadn't been followed.
- \* Councillors were asked to speak up in future, as they were hard to hear for quite a lot of the time, especially when looking down at documents.
- \* will the Christmas lights on West Street green be switched on? (Cllr Dean said that she believed that we would be doing so.)
- \* who looks after the stream, and has it been done so recently? It is in need of attention, and apparently the contractors are supposed to have done work on it this month, but, as yet, there has been no sign of them and the stream was in a terrible state.
- \* there was an enquiry about the Clerk's health. (Cllr Allwood replied that it was thought that the Clerk was making good progress on the road to recovery, but, as always, these things take time - and usually longer than initially expected.)
- \* there was a question regarding our use of the school for meetings instead of the community centre, enquiring as to the saving we could expect. (Cllr Przystupa replied that there would be no significant financial difference between the two. However, that was not the main reason for the move. We needed more space than the current venue could offer, as it was cramped for the councillors since their number had increased from 9 to 11, and the members of the public were now often crowded in too.)

*Meeting closed at 9:55pm.*