

Harrietsham Parish Council
Finance and General Purposes Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 9th November 2016 at 7:30pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), T Sams, Stanley, and M Cuerden (RFO)

Apologies: None

Members of the public: None

2. **Disclosures:** Cllr Sams declared that as his son plays tennis, he would take no part in the discussion on their grant request.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (14th July and 8th September 2016) were been approved at the subsequent Council meetings. Further copies were signed at this meeting for F&GP records.

4. **Review of Accounts.** The RFO went through the figures year-to-date, discussing and answering questions on each column in turn. The conclusion was that income and expenditure is broadly in line with what we would expect at this point in the year. The chairman compared the bank statements to the totals shown on the bank reconciliation, and agreed that all tallied.

5. **Adoption of on-line banking.** The committee considered the RFO's report on this subject, which had previously been circulated to all councillors. The RFO commented that the only thing to add was that the report had also been copied to the Internal Auditor, who had said that he was content with the proposal. After some discussion, it was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that the report be adopted, with the RFO permitted to set up and use on-line banking as outlined. Prop: Cllr Dean, Sec: Cllr Sams, all in favour. Cllr Dean went on to suggest that the RFO get the necessary forms ready prior to November's council meeting, in anticipation of the recommendation being accepted.

6. **War Memorial, and proposal from the History Society.** It was noted that October's council had given permission to the Society to start fund raising for their proposals. This committee felt that before commissioning the work on the memorial, there would need to be a high level of certainty that external grant money (ie, from the Society) would be available to cover most or all of the cost. It was also felt that we would like more information on the detail of the proposals, (including the layout, number, type and content of the proposed bricks, etc), and that the council should invite the Society to give us a presentation on the proposal when such details are available to ensure that we are happy with the proposals.

7. **Grants and Donations.** The RFO had previously circulated to all councillors an initial report on the applications received at that point, but had subsequently significantly revised it to reflect further requests and clarifications received. He therefore started by confirming that all present had Version 2, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Each application was then discussed in turn.

Harrietsham Amateur Musical Society – Cllr Sams noted that the council already owns a significant amount of stage lighting (and other equipment) from Remix, and that at least one member of HAMS would be familiar with its use and operation. It was therefore proposed to **Recommend to Council** that rather than offering a financial grant to acquire more, we should instead offer the free loan of our equipment for their use at their own risk. Prop Cllr Sams, sec Cllr Dean, all in favour.

Harrietsham History Society – It was acknowledged that the Society must have accumulated a significant volume of material on the village, and that a way of managing this would be of benefit to the village. It was therefore agreed to **Recommend to Council** that the Society be offered a grant of £500, as requested. Prop Cllr Dean, sec Cllr Stanley, all in favour. Councillors then expressed the hope that the archive held within this software would be readily available to all villagers.

Harrietsham Fish Scheme – The committee felt that the Fish Scheme is an important part of the fabric of the village, and we wished to support it. However, it was noted that they hold significant reserves, whilst our own budgets are under pressure. It was therefore agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a grant of £500 be offered. Prop Cllr Sams, sec Cllr Dean, all in favour.

St John The Baptist Parish Church – The committee felt that the lighting and churchyard maintenance represented features and facilities for the village that it wished to maintain. However, as with the Fish Scheme, it was noted that the church had its own reserves, whilst ours are under pressure. It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that the council offer a grant of £450.

Harrietsham Tennis Club – It was agreed that the club represented a valuable village amenity which we would wish to support. In this context, the request was reasonable, and it was agreed by Cllrs Dean and Stanley to **Recommend to Council** that a grant of £200 be offered, as requested.

Messy Church – Whilst it was felt that this was a worthwhile social initiative, it was noted that it actually covers four parishes, and with no real indication as to where most of its support is drawn from. It was therefore agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a grant of £100 be offered (instead of the £400 requested), together with the suggestion that they could approach the other parishes for a contribution.

The RFO explained that certain clubs and societies benefit from advance warning as to whether we will support them in the forthcoming year, mainly because they need to plan and budget as well. This year, we have two such applications:

Friday Coffee Morning – All present agreed that this is a valuable village asset, providing a well-attended opportunity for the elderly of the village to socialise. Additionally, it also provides a revenue stream for the village hall, helping to support that enterprise as well. Accordingly, it was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that the Council confirm that it will pay for the hall hire, as in previous years, for the period April 2017 – March 2018.

Harrietsham in Bloom – The committee felt that HIB makes a considerable difference, improving the village environment to the benefit of all, and that we would wish to continue supporting both it as a group and the volunteers individually. It was noted that they had amended their initial application, and were now asking for a grant of £500. It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that HIB be offered a grant of £500, as requested, to be paid in April 2017. Prop Cllr Sams, sec Cllr Dean, all in favour.

8. Play Equipment – The council has received two quotes for new equipment, one being £3717 and the other for considerably more. The work needs doing urgently, having been delayed for some time now, but it was thought that it could be paid for using some of the S106 money held by MBC. Accordingly, it was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that approval be sought to use S106 money, and the work commissioned – if approval is refused, then the work should go ahead anyway, and we would have to cover the cost. Prop Cllr Stanly, sec Cllr Sams, all in favour.

9. Draft Budget for 2017/18 – The RFO had previously circulated an initial draft budget for next year, and went through both income and expenditure, explaining the assumptions made. Whilst the budget showed a significant increase in the precept required, he emphasised that certain key pieces of information are, as yet, unavailable. Specifically, these included the values for LCTS, PSS and the notional Band D property number, all awaited from MBC. It was hoped that some (or all) of these would be available from MBC after November 23rd, in which case a more accurate draft might be available to council at the end of November. Whatever we have will be circulated with the usual meeting papers, and councillors will be asked for their views and any useful comments. The draft will then be reviewed at January's F&GP, with a final budget offered to January council, allowing a precept requirement to be sent to MBC before the end of that month.

10. Date of next meeting – Thursday 12th January 2017, at 7:30pm in the Parish Office.

Meeting closed at 9:35pm.

Summary of Recommendations to Council:

5. Adoption of on-line banking.

That the report be adopted, with the RFO permitted to set up and use on-line banking as outlined.

7. Grants and Donations.

Harrietsham Amateur Musical Society –that rather than offering a financial grant to acquire more, we should instead offer the free loan of our equipment for their use at their own risk.

Harrietsham History Society (S137) – that the Society be offered a grant of £500, as requested.

Harrietsham Fish Scheme (S137) – that a grant of £500 be offered.

St John The Baptist Parish Church (S137) – that the council offer a grant of £450.

Harrietsham Tennis Club (Sport) – that a grant of £200 be offered, as requested.

Messy Church (S137) – that a grant of £100 be offered (instead of the £400 requested), together with the suggestion that they could approach the other parishes for a contribution.

Friday Coffee Morning(S137) – All that the Council confirm that it will pay for the hall hire, as in previous years, for the period April 2017 – March 2018.

Harrietsham in Bloom (S137) – be offered a grant of £500 in 2017/18.

8. Play Equipment.

That approval be sought to use S106 money, and the work commissioned – if approval is refused, then the work should go ahead anyway, and we would have to cover the cost.