

# Harrietsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 7.30pm in the Booth Hall.

The Chairman welcomed all present and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

Cllr Powell welcomed the Worshipful Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Derek Butler and also the Lenham Parish Council representative Cllr R Greenwood. Cllr Powell then informed all present of the resignation of Stephen Morris from the Parish Council.

## Public Discussion

Community Warden: The Community Warden reported on the rising number of thefts relating to gun dogs, lurchers and particularly spaniels. He asked that all residents be vigilant as they are being stolen from gardens. Cllr Allardyce asked whether the dogs are being stolen for a ransom and Martin Sherwood stated that this was not the case and they are probably being stolen for breeding. Martin also reported on the complaints he is receiving relating to dog fouling around the village. This is becoming a huge problem in both Harrietsham and Lenham and may be due to the darker evenings. Along with an MBC Officer, he has been stencilling the pavements in hotspot areas and asked that any issues be reported to him. If the Community Warden witnesses a dog fouling, he can challenge the owner and record everything in his notebook. He can then attend court as a witness, if a prosecution is progressed. Cllr Allardyce queried whether a resident can challenge a dog owner and it was noted that, if the owner is aggressive, the resident should just walk away. A description of the owner and breed of dog can be reported to Martin for him to monitor the situation.

Police Report: The Clerk reported that, since the 21<sup>st</sup> December, there had been five crimes. Two were criminal damage, one was theft of tools, one was theft of a motor cycle and the other was an attempted burglary. The Clerk stated that she would ask the PCSO was any crimes reported from the 30<sup>th</sup> of November to the 21<sup>st</sup> December.

**ACTION: CLERK**

The Clerk also reported that PCSO Dave Rowley is now back as the PCSO for Harrietsham and Lenham and he has stated that he is looking forward to working with everyone who supported him in the past. It was also noted that there had not been any reported ASB issues in the village recently.

A resident reported that she regularly gives dog owners dog waste bags, however it never makes them change their behaviour.

A resident raised concerns with the building work being completed off Church Lane. The Clerk stated that an application for 9 homes had been withdrawn due to issues with the site layout. She has spoken with the Planning Officer and the application will be resubmitted but there are no concerns that the bungalows will be replaced by two storey homes. The residents raised concerns that the bungalows to be demolished are being emptied and a large pile of rubbish is accumulating, this in turn is causing a rat issue in the area. It was also noted that there is a sheep being grazed on the land, however there is no grass on the site. The resident is concerned that the animal has no food. Cllr J Sams stated that she would speak to Environmental Health about the rat issue and the sheep.

**ACTION: Cllr J Sams**

A resident raised concerns about the mess being created on the main road from the Crest Nicholson development as no wheel washing is being completed on the lorries as they leave the site. Cllr Powell stated that this issue had been discussed at a recent MBC meeting and Crest Nicholson had actually been named as one of the worst culprits for this. This is a real issue as, in cold weather, the mud on the road surface freezes and becomes very slippery. Cllr Powell added that the Site Foreman should be approached and also the matter can be reported to MBC Enforcement officers to investigate further. The Community Warden stated that he would also report the matter to Kent Highways.

## 1 Present

Cllr E Powell, Cllr G Dean, Cllr J Sams, Cllr M Allardyce, Cllr F Stanley, RFO Mr M Cuerden, Community Warden M Sherwood, the Worshipful Mayor of Maidstone Cllr D Butler, Lenham Parish Council Representative Cllr R Greenwood and the Clerk Mrs A Broadhurst.  
9 Members of the Public

## 2 Apologies for absence

Cllr T Sams, PCSO D Rowley

## 3 Guest Speaker - The Worshipful Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Derek Butler

Cllr Butler gave a humorous speech detailing some of the events he has attended as the Mayor. These included an engagement at Buckingham Palace, which was his first official one as Mayor, he had the privilege of hosting an event at Leeds Castle in honour of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and he opened the 49<sup>th</sup> World Custard Pie Competition in Coxheath!

#### **4 Minutes of the last meeting**

Parish Council Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 - The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Dean, seconded by Cllr Allardyce; with all in favour.

#### **5 Disclosures and confidential items**

##### Changes to the Register of Interests

No changes were submitted.

##### Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

##### Requests for Dispensation

No requests were submitted.

#### **6 Planning**

6.1 The current planning applications were noted.

6.2 The approved planning applications were noted.

6.3 The withdrawn planning application was noted.

##### 6.4 Other Planning Matters:

Cllr Powell reported that the planning appeal for Court Lodge Road had been dismissed and mentioned that the appeal had been a long drawn out process. At the first appeal the Inspector had stated that there was no chance of a development being approved on the site, however this had not stopped the developer from submitting the second application. This latest appeal has had even stronger reasons given for dismissal and so it is hoped that this will stop any further applications being submitted. Cllr Powell informed all present that there are currently three other appeals with the Planning Inspectorate (Land South of Bell Farm, Land East of Goddington Lane and Land North of West Street). Cllr Dean stated that the Bell Farm South appeal's closing date is the 8<sup>th</sup> February and she has added a post to Facebook asking for residents to respond, even if they do not live close to the site. Cllr Allardyce raised concerns about pollution of water sources around the various appeal sites and the Clerk stated that issues are already being looked into around the Trout Farm by the MP and Environment Agency as there have been issues in the surrounding areas which could directly impact their livestock. Concerns were also raised regarding a pipe which has been installed by Crest Nicholson on their development site into the Land South of East Street and it is thought that this is a soak away.

#### **7 Communications**

##### 7.1 Recommendations from the Communications Committee:

There were no recommendations.

Cllr Dean reported that the Parish Council website is in the process of being transferred to a new Wordpress site, as the current one is no longer supported. The content should have been migrated across however this has gone wrong. The Clerk added that she had attended a training course along with Cllrs Dean and Allardyce where the trainer had admitted that the site was a mess. The Clerk has subsequently spent approximately 40 hours trying to rectify the issues on the site, which has still not been able to go live. It was noted that both Councillors have since attended a Media Conference where Hugo Fox were promoting their website which is free to community groups. They are prepared to come into the office to set up a new website free of charge and Cllr Allardyce stated that it seemed a very good website. Consequently, the Clerk will not be spending any more time trying to amend the Wordpress site. The Clerk added that the Parish Council had purchased a domain name some years ago and enquiries are being made to see whether we can gain access to it. If not, the Parish Council may need a new domain name and this will cost between £5 and £20. All Councillors were in agreement that this was an acceptable price to pay if it means that a new site can be set up.

#### **8 Environmental**

8.1 Recommendations from the Environmental Committee: Cllr Dean reported that there are no recommendations, but a meeting has been arranged for the 1<sup>st</sup> February.

##### 8.2 Other Environmental Issues:

Cllr Dean reported that, since the last monthly meeting, the new wooden burial ground gates have been installed and the hinges on the large iron gates at the Marley Road entrance have been adjusted satisfactorily. Additionally, the broken concrete fence post in Woodlands Walk has been replaced.

The Parish council has received complaints about the dog bins that have been removed by MBC in one of their cost cutting exercises. The village was promised only one mixed bin to replace these. The Parish Council is in contact with MBC to provide more mixed bins but in the meantime, it must be impressed upon all dog owners that it is their responsibility to pick up after their dogs and place it in their own rubbish bins rather than just leaving the plastic bags on the Glebe and Booth fields or anywhere else for that matter. Cllr Dean added that leaving mess on the floor is disrespectful to their surroundings as well as their fellow residents. The Clerk added that, when MBC removed the

dog bins, the content had been tipped onto the floor and left - the MBC staff had not brought a suitable bin with them to empty the content into. This was appalling behavior as it amounted to littering and MBC routinely fine people in the Town Centre for doing the same thing. Cllr J Sams stated that she would take this matter up with MBC.

**ACTION: Cllr J Sams**

Cllr Powell stated that there is uproar across the Borough at the removal of the dog bins and it was noted that Parishes are looking to replace the bins. Cllr Greenwood confirmed that Lenham Parish Council are replacing 6 of the bins and have agreed to fund emptying them at an annual cost of £1,300. Cllr Stanley stated that Harrietsham is seeing lots of development on the South side of the village, however there are no bins to deal with any type of litter. There is also a concern with the amount of additional dog mess being seen around the new burial ground and Garden of Remembrance. Cllr J Sams suggested that a map of the village be used to decide where additional bins are needed so that the Environmental Committee can look further into this matter.

**ACTION: Environmental Cttee**

Cllr Allardyce stated that there had been a report on Radio Kent relating to flytipping and stated that, if a resident is arranging a private company to remove bulky items, it is down to them to ensure that they have a waste carrier's license and are not dumping the items somewhere.

## **9 Finance**

- 9.1 The Income/expenditure finance sheets were proposed as accurate by Cllr Stanley and seconded by Cllr J Sams, with all in favour.
- 9.2 Budget & Precept for 2017/2018: Cllr Powell reminded all present that the proposed budget and Precept for 2017/18 had already been circulated to all Councillors. He added that there are financial cuts across the country and Borough Councils are not able to give as much funding as seen in previous years. The Parish Service scheme money is being reduced and the Local Council Tax Support funding has been withdrawn. This has left Parishes in a position where they need to increase their precepts. The recommendation circulated by the RFO highlights that the precept for last year was £56,111 spread across 1020.2 properties. Any precept agreed this year will be spread across 1077.9 Band D properties. The RFO has recommended that the precept requirements for 2017/18 is £93,945 resulting in a precept of £87.16 per Band D property, which equates to £1.68 per week. It was proposed by Cllr Allardyce that the precept for the forthcoming year be set at £93,945, an annual increase of £32.16 per Band D household. This was seconded by Cllr Dean, with all in favour.
- 9.3 Review of Standing Orders, Risk Assessments & Financial Regulations: It was noted that the Standing Orders have been reviewed and remain unchanged whilst the Risk Assessments and Financial Regulations have been amended to incorporate the move to on-line banking. It was proposed by Cllr Dean that all three reviewed documents be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Stanley, with all in favour.  
Cllr Allardyce stated that the RFO was doing a fine job and all Councillors thanked him for his work.

## **10 Highways**

Cllr J Sams reported that Goddington Lane and Holm Mill Lane have both been swept but added that further work is required. Complaints have been received about the potholes on Birchalls Wood Road and these have been reported to Kent Highways. It was noted that Cllr T Sams is checking the streetlights in the village and reporting any faults found on the Kent Highways website. It was noted that this website is very good for reporting new faults as well as tracking previously reported issues. It allows residents to see whether Kent Highways have already been informed of the issue that they want to report, this saves duplicate reports being submitted.

## **11 Traffic and Parking Issues in West Street**

Cllr Allardyce state that he has been monitoring the situation and the congestion is not being caused by the CTRL workers, who leave the site approximately 30 minutes before dusk. At 8pm on Monday evening a Tesco van had been delivering to a property in West Street, at the junction of Station Road and it had been chaos. Cllr Allardyce had counted 53 vehicles parked between Forge Meadow and the shop, with the pinch point being by the pub, where vehicles were parked fully on the pavement. Cllr Powell added that the issue needs to be monitored as there is going to be expansion at the school and an appeal has been lodge for housing in West Street.

- Update on white line issue by Harrietsham Primary School – Cllr J Sams stated that she would chase this with Kent Highways, as there hadn't been any progress since the last meeting.

## **12 Lenham Parish Council**

Cllr J Sams and Cllr Powell had been unable to attend the Lenham Parish Council meetings. Cllr Greenwood stated that, at the last meeting, the following items had been discussed:

- The Lenham Neighbourhood Plan as this is starting again, he added that a meeting has been arranged with the Planning Department and Rob Jarman. It was noted that Lenham has 1,400 new homes

allocated in the Local Plan and the s106 requests need to be linked to try to resolve the traffic issues through the centre of the village

- Concerns are being looked into relating to parking, especially since the Co-op has opened. A full report is being undertaken to investigate expanding parking facilities.
- Dog bin issues (previously reported on during the meeting).
- A tourism website is being developed.

There was brief discussion relating to the development proposed for Lenham and it was acknowledged that both Parishes are trying to keep the villages separate.

### **13 Playscheme 2017**

Cllr J Sams proposed that the Parish Council gives the budget of £500, set aside for Playscheme, to the group that ran the Fun Club last year with the required condition that they can provide appropriate documentation showing DBS of staff, insurance, discussion with Ofsted and child policies around safeguarding. This was seconded by Cllr Stanley, with all in favour.

### **14 Use of the Glebe Field for the North Downs Walk (11<sup>th</sup> June 2017)**

The Clerk reported that The Weald of Kent Rotary Club have submitted their annual request for use of the Glebe Field for the North Downs Walk. It was proposed by Cllr J Sams and seconded by Cllr Dean to allow use of the field, with the usual caveats attached regarding reinstating any damage to the field.

### **15 Use of the Glebe Field for Teddies in Loving Care Event (10<sup>th</sup> June 2017)**

The Clerk reported that Susie Jack is coordinating an event called Teddies in Loving Care on the 10<sup>th</sup> June and has asked whether the field could be used for parking as the village hall parking may be insufficient. It was proposed by Cllr J Sams and seconded by Cllr Stanley to allow use of the field, with the usual caveats attached regarding reinstating any damage to the field. Councillors then noted that this event is the day before the annual North Downs Walk and stated that, if the weather is bad in the run up to that particular weekend, this approval may need to be reconsidered to ensure that the North Downs Walk will not be impacted by parking issues.

### **16 Battles Over - A Nations Tribute & WW1 Beacons of Light**

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council has the opportunity to be included in the beacons being lit to commemorate the end of WW1 and the many millions who were killed or came home wounded. One thousand beacons are to be lit on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018 but Parishes need to register as soon as possible to be included in the guide which is to be produced. It was proposed by Cllr Dean that the Parish Council be involved in this tribute. This was seconded by Cllr Allardyce, with all in favour. The Clerk then informed all present that the Organisers will need contact details for the beacon coordinator and, as Stephen Morris has now resigned from the Council, she would need to ask him whether he would be prepared to take on this role. Cllr Allardyce offered to assist if Mr Morris declined.

### **17 Renewal of Annual Membership to CPRE**

The Clerk reported that the annual subscription to Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is now due for renewal at a cost of £36.00 (unchanged from last year). Cllr J Sams proposed that the subscription be renewed, this was seconded by Cllr Dean; with all in favour.

### **18 Future Events**

Every Saturday Morning 9am on the Glebe Field - 'Get Active' event (depending on the weather).

### **19 Items for Future Consideration**

No further items to be added to the agenda.

### **20 Date of next meeting**

Full Parish Council Meeting - **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017** from **7.30pm** in the Booth Hall

Cllr Powell thanked Jose Perafan for all of his assistance with recording and uploading the meetings to YouTube, as this was the last meeting he would be attending before moving back to Columbia. Jose received a round of applause from all present.

*With no further matters to discuss the meeting was closed at 8.50pm*