

Harrietsham Parish Council
Finance and General Purposes Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 9th November 2017 at 1:30pm

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

Apologies: Cllr V Foster

Members of the public: None

2. **Disclosures:** None

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (11th July 2017) These were approved (unamended) at the subsequent Council meeting. Further copies were signed at this meeting for F&GP records.

4. **Clarification on the July Minutes.** Cllr Stanley informed the meeting that he had been requested by the Village Hall Trust to seek a retraction of the sentence “*There was a little surprise that the VHT hadn’t shown sufficient flexibility to just do this, but, as they hadn’t, the council felt it should*”. In response, he was reminded that minutes of meetings are a record of what was said, therefore the spoken word cannot be retracted. In respect of the sentence content, it was pointed out to Cllr Stanley that we believed that the arrangement for the Poppy morning to takeover the Friday morning Coffee spot on the Friday closest to the Remembrance Day had in previous years been arranged without the necessity of written dialogue or additional cost, and as such the request posted by the History Society was a surprise, no more than that.

5. **Review of 2017/18 Accounts to date:** The RFO went through the income and expenditure spreadsheets on the screen, commenting on each heading in turn. Essentially, all seemed to be progressing as expected. During the discussion, a number of minor matters were agreed. (a) the spreadsheets currently show income and expenditure budgets for the Playscheme. This is a hangover from previous years, and it was agreed that the columns should be set to zero, and the outstanding expenditure moved into Grants & Donations. (b) The CCTV camera requires more work than expected as part of its service. The RFO had already advised the Clerk that, as it is a specialist supply under £1000, for work already approved and underway, then we could just proceed with it – councillors were being informed in the interests of transparency, and all were in agreement. (c) prior to the meeting, Cllr Moore had asked that we indicate which noticeboard we would be happy to replace the existing one outside the Village Hall with. She had provided the RFO with the information produced by the clerk, and it was agreed that we would prefer the one from “furniture@work”, as it was the right size and seemed to be in keeping with the VHT’s one. At a cost of between £260 and £380, it is also approximately half the price of the one suggested by the VHT. It was agreed to **recommend to council** that we purchase this noticeboard, and ask that the VHT mount it on their wall, replacing the existing parish council board.

6. **Grant requests received:** The RFO had previously circulated a report, outlining the grants and donations given to date, or committed to for the year, and observed that even if the requests to be considered now were met in full, we would still be within budget. He went on to outline the three requests received for consideration in the current year:

Harrietsham Fish Scheme asked for £600, but it was felt that £500 – as per last year – was more appropriate. Proposed Cllr Dean, seconded Cllr Sams, all in favour.

Harrietsham Parish Church asked for £284 to pay for the floodlighting electricity (installation and maintenance falling to the church), and for half of the £815 cost of maintaining the churchyard (so £407). It was agreed that the church be offered a total grant of £691. Proposed Cllr Sams, seconded Cllr Stanley, all in favour.

Harrietsham Summer Fun Club asked for £500 in the current year, to start preparing for next year’s Club. The RFO reported that he had asked for certain clarifications on the paperwork submitted, and was waiting to hear. Councillors were also a little curious to know what preparation required a grant to be paid in the current year for something happening next Summer. It was agreed to defer the request to the next F&GP (in January), pending answers to the outstanding questions.

There was also a request from Harrietsham in Bloom for funding next year towards planting costs. The committee was happy to consider such a request for next year because HIB would start the process in April, and so would need any grant much earlier than we would normally provide it. It was noted that HIB perform valuable work around the village, greatly enhancing the environment to the benefit of all villagers.

They had asked for £500, which the committee agreed to offer. Proposed Cllr Dean, seconded Cllr Stanley, all in favour.

7. Preliminary consideration of 2018/19 budget. The RFO explained that at this point in previous years, he would normally have prepared a draft budget. This year, however, there are an unusual number of uncertainties on both income and expenditure. These range from being unsure as to whether the Local Council Tax Support grant would be forthcoming, what was happening with the Parish Services Scheme, and, most significantly, the number of houses to be included in the precept calculation following all the new building in the village over the past 12 months. He had therefore concluded that it would be better to wait until early January, and prepare a budget when most of these questions had been answered. This would also mean that we would have the results of the Open Spaces re-tender as well. Councillors supported this view, but expressed a view that a zero percent increase per Band D property would be desirable.

8. Date of next meeting: Thursday 18th January 2018, preferably at 1:30pm but subject to consultation with Cllr Foster.

Meeting closed at 3:00pm.

Recommendations to Council:

- **That the noticeboard offered by furniture@work be purchased, subject to VHT approval, at a cost of approximately £380.**
- **That the following grants be offered:**

Harrietsham Fish Scheme	£500
Harrietsham parish church	£691
Harrietsham in Bloom	£500 in 2018/19