

Harrietsham Parish Council

Environmental Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2017 at 7:30pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman) and Stanley, D Oversby and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Allergyce, Mrs S Amos **Members of the public:** One (Mr T Bell)
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (16th March 2017) were signed (without amendment) at the March Council meeting. A second set was signed for our records.
4. **Disclosures: None.**
5. **Amenity Contracts:** The Amenity Manager reported that he has seen the Glebe Field being cut that day, and that he had had a quick look at the war memorial area. All looked very neat and tidy. He also commented that he had walked the entire set of areas under contract a couple of weeks ago, and found no problems. All-in-all, it appeared that the various contracts were running well, with the contractors all fulfilling their contracts. Cllr Stanley confirmed that following his walks round the areas, he too felt that all was well.

The Amenity Manager went on to observe that we should start thinking about the revision of the contract specifications, as they fall due at the end of next March. There are several items that should be looked at, including the maintenance of areas not specifically our responsibility. Mr Oversby commented that he didn't feel it was necessary to cut the verges all the way up to Victoria's – just to the village sign would probably suffice.

6. **Grass verge, west end of Hook Lane Triangle:** This relates to the patch of ground next to the A20 where Harrietsham in Bloom (HIB) maintained a raised piece of land with an "H" planted. It has now fallen into a state of disrepair as HIB haven't had the resources to maintain it. It is actually KCC's land, but they clearly have no immediate plans to do anything with it. Cllr Dean suggested that we take on clearing the area so that HIB can put a planter on the site. She therefore proposed that the council seeks a price from the contractor who deals with that area for levelling the area and either re-seeding or re-turfing. Seconded Cllr Stanley, Amenity Manager to talk to JB and report back, probably to full council in due course.
7. **Hanging Basket Competition:** Mr Oversby asked for an update on progress to date. Cllr Dean stated that there should have been an advert in this month's Network, but for some reason it had been omitted. However, it was expected that there would be one in June's edition. The competition itself will be judged at the end of July and it was agreed that we would run off 200 application forms for the competition.
8. **Advertising Hoardings:** Mr Oversby observed that there seemed to be a large number of boards, banners and the like round the village. In particular, he felt that the one for foster parents on West Street Green was looking quite tatty now – which was generally agreed upon. Cllr Dean agreed to talk to KCC about it, and also to check out the rules about when planning permission (or other permissions) are required for an advertisement.
9. **State of Glebe Field:** Cllr Stanley made the point that there are several parts of the Glebe Field which now have very poor quality grass, with dandelions and other weeds. This led to a general discussion on grounds maintenance and especially the possible need to occasionally apply some broad-leaf weedkiller. This culminated with the Amenity Manager being asked to talk to the contractor (JB) to seek advice and to give a price for a treatment of weedkiller.

10. **Policy for use of the Glebe Field:** Cllr Dean stated that with the increasing requests for outside bodies to use the Glebe Field (and, potentially, other grounds such as the New Burial Ground), she wondered if we should more closely define a policy to specify our expectations of users. This led to a brief discussion on the question of By-Laws, which have, in the past been found to be too difficult to establish, never mind implement. It was suggested that we should, instead, generate a standard set of “terms and conditions” for users of our land – or, if the clerk already has one, then review it. The Amenity Manager observed that, instead of relying on By-Laws, we could consider charging a nominal £1 hire fee, which would then establish a contract between us and the users, to which these T&Cs would then apply. We might wish to check if this is indeed the case.
11. **Maintenance of Tears Meadow:** It was generally agreed that the meadow is in a very unsightly condition, with numerous large ant-hills and large clumps of thorns abounding. It was noted that some time ago, Cllr Sams was looking at getting some advice on maintenance and possibly obtaining grants. It was agreed that we ask if there had been any progress, (Cllr Stanley believing that a grant had been applied for and refused), and if not then we, as a committee should seek to develop our own plan – perhaps Cllr Sams could provide some contacts. Mr Oversby commented that he thought that there might be some people in the village with the knowledge and experience to help.
12. **Items for Discussion:** (1) The replacement of rotting guard rails in Woodlands Walk (2) An update on the condition of the lakes in Woodlands Walk following treatment.
13. **Date of next meeting** – This was expected to be Thursday 20th July 2017, at 7:30pm in the Parish Office, but as the Amenity Manager might be on holiday then, and as there is a possible clash with the date for the next F&GP, this is unlikely to be practical, so the next meeting has yet to be arranged.

Meeting closed at 8:45pm.