

Harrietsham Parish Council
Environmental Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8th September 2025

1. **Present:** Cllrs Brown (Chair), Dean, Donley Luck, M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Dayes, Mrs S Amos **Members of the public:** None
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (14th July 2025) were signed (without amendment) at the following Council meeting, another copy was signed for our records.
4. **Disclosures:** None
5. **New Burial Ground:** MC reported that the church's repairs to the north churchyard wall (our joint boundary with the church) are now underway, and appear to be progressing satisfactorily.
6. **Garden of Remembrance:** All looking neat and tidy.
7. **Glebe Field:** Nothing further has been done about the entry bollards, with Cllrs Dean and Luck reporting that they have used them without difficulty.

MC reported that we had arranged another inspection of the trees along the boundary with the rectory, and received the same verbal feedback that they were fine, and likely to remain so for the next 20 years, concurring with the previous inspection. We were then offered an estimate – again verbally – of about £10K to reduce the height of the row by about 1/3rd to assist in budgetting when the time came. All this was to be confirmed in writing, but instead we received an email saying that the company had decided to cease trading instead!

We had also looked at the tree near the garage of the house in Harrisons Drive, which the owner had asked us to cut back. Although we couldn't see that it was doing any harm, the contractor was going to give us a price to trim it – so now we need to find another tree-man.

MC had received reports from Cllr Dean and the Parish Warden that there were tree cuttings apparently dumped along the south fence of the field. He had asked the contractors to clear any debris from the entire run of the fence as he thought that there might be some other loose vegetation along there too.

8. **Medical Centre & Church Road:** MC reported that the unauthorised gate in the fence/hedge at the back of the medical centre had been reverted to a fence, and that the Housing Association were happy for us to bill them for the wire fence repair and hedge replanting – we are now awaiting the invoice address and, if needed, a Purchase Order number. In the meantime, our contractor has confirmed that the price originally given still stands.

He also noted that there has been no progress by the Practice in the matter of the Amazon-style lockers for prescription-collection being installed to the front of the building. It seemed that they are now being told that S106 money can't be used for this purpose, so the Practice will have to fund it themselves. They have asked if the Council would be willing to contribute. MC, as RFO, and the Clerk were suggesting that we estimate how much the repairs to the doors, windows etc would be if we – as a good landlord – undertook that work, and offer it, instead, as a contribution to the Practice to help with a wholesale revamp of the frontage – including the lockers.

The raised beds round the centre and village hall seemed to have quite a bit of unwanted growth in them – things like brambles and sycamore saplings. MC has asked the contractor to have a look and remove what they can.

9. **Woodlands Walk:** MC reported that both new life-rings had been acquired and are now installed. The sole remaining old ring is in storage at the parish office, (although he also noted that, having seen the new ones, he wasn't sure he'd want to trust his life to the old one!).

He also reported that the tree identified as needing removal in the last tree survey had so been – by the contractor who has now ceased trading, and, as yet, we have not been invoiced for the work.

The new sign for the Walk's entrance is in hand, and should appear soon.

- 10. Benches:** The new bench on West Street Green had been seen being delivered that afternoon, and so was, presumably, now installed. All other benches look ok, although the alcove by the stream still needs attention.
- 11. War Memorial:** All looked neat and tidy. The "foreign" growth in the hedge had yet to re-appear.
- 12. A20 Verges:** Cllr Brown again noted that the stream by the West Street Green was looking overgrown on one side. MC said he'd have a look, saying that (so far as he could remember), the contract calls for regular removal of debris from the stream within 3 metres of the culvert, together with a litter pick back to the West Street bridge. The banks are to be cut back each May and November.
- 13. Saxon Place Amenity Land:** The Amenity Land itself is all looking ok. Cllr Dean suggested that rather than letting the fruit in the community orchard go to waste, we could ask the school, scouts or guide if they would like to organise trips to the orchard to collect whatever they wanted. They could then keep or distribute it as they wished. Councillors agreed that this was a good idea, and nominated Cllr Dean to approach the scouts and guides in the first instance, (with the thought that the school children might be too small and too numerous).

MC reported that the clerk is currently dealing with issues on several allotments which are becoming unkempt. It is quite possible that we shall shortly have several vacant plots, possibly more than we have people on the waiting list. He has sought the contractor's view on the best way to manage this, and the answer seems to be to weed-kill any vacant plot every two or three months – strimming is not recommended as it spreads the weeds. He also noted that there have been several comments relating to the Mares' Tail weed that is becoming endemic on the allotments. Unfortunately, it seems that this is a highly successful, pre-historic weed for which there is no easy answer. All the allotment holders can do is keep pulling it up!

There had been some comment over the access path to the west of the allotments being overgrown, and that the stream through the allotments needed further clearing. Both have now been addressed by the contractor, as has cutting back the no-man's land between the car park and the allotments.

- 14. Teers Meadow:** Cllr Luck reported that the cattle were back on the Meadow, although we aren't sure how long they will be there for.
- 15. Additional Tree Surveys:** MC confirmed that they had all been done, and we had found no further work required – all look ok.
- 16. Items for future work:** At this point, the situation is unchanged. The village sign continues to require some work, which will probably be best done in conjunction with the bench by the stream, in that they will require some building-type work. Essentially, we need either a good odd-job man or a builder. MC was provided with a couple of possible contacts to see if they were interested.
- 17. Date of the next meeting:** Monday 10th November 2025 in the Parish Office at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 8:15pm.