

Harrietsham Parish Council

Environmental Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 23rd May 2022

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), Dayes, Luck, Stanley and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
2. **Apologies:** Mrs S Amos **Members of the public:** None
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (11th March 2022) were signed (without amendment) at the March Council meeting, another copy was signed for our records.
4. **Disclosures:** None.
5. **Amenity Contracts (Update):** The Amenity Manager reported that we are now in the second month of the new contracts, and apart from a few teething issues, things seemed to have settled down and were now going quite well.

New Burial Ground & Garden of Remembrance – was looking good; we have now received payment for four of the five new memorial trees.

Glebe Field – is similarly looking good. The Heart of Kent Hospice, following their last walk, had asked if we would consider widening the entrance gap off Marley Road onto the field. Councillors considered this, and decided that it would be undesirable to do so; it had been this width for many years, without difficulty, and the mounds were intended to prevent caravans or similar gaining access to the field – an objective that would be defeated if the gap were wider. The use of the field by the Bearsted Football club was also discussed, it being noted that, firstly, we didn't know if it was a commercial enterprise (ie, the participants were paying to do so) or not. If the latter, then we had no objection to a community exercise taking place on our land, but if the former, then they should be paying rent. Secondly, at no point had they even approached the council to see if they could use our field, which we felt just plain rude! It was agreed that we should write to the Club, asking if they are using it for commercial gain, or as a free community activity, and pointing out that they are using it at their risk as this activity has nothing to do with the council. We shall then see what the response is.

Medical Centre & Church Road – This had recently been done by the contractors.

Woodlands Walk – this is looking neat and tidy too. The question of the boundary fence along the Shaws footpath was discussed, and the quotes noted. (One other contractor had been approached for a price, but had declined to quote due to a lack of capacity to take on more work.) As the most dangerous bit had now been removed, it was decided to leave the rest in place and see if anyone complained. It was also noted that the contractor appeared to have dealt with the Hogweed, and had also removed the loose duck house, presumably for renovation.

Benches – the one that was broken on the West Street Green was repaired in a timely fashion.

War Memorial – is also looking neat and tidy. The Amenity Manager had noticed a self-seeded “foreign” growth in the hedge at the front, and would ask the contractor to deal with it.

A20 verges – After a few teething problems, this appeared to now be getting into shape. We are still awaiting a final May cut, after which we should be able to see if the new contractor has fully got to grips with the contract. Councillors discussed the unofficial path that had – again – appeared over the mound from the road to the Co-op. After considering the ownership of the land, and the possibility that a path might run into all sorts of compliance issues, it was agreed that this wasn't really one for the parish council, and we should leave it to the Saxon Place management company in conjunction with Kent Highways. We wait with

interest to see who cuts the road side of the mound, since we only go back as far as the “first significant obstacle” – in this case, the mound itself, and the management company feel they only own to the top of the mound on their side.

Saxon Place Amenity – Is looking generally pretty good, with the community orchard, in particular, coming on. The Amenity Manager noted that he had received a couple of favourable comments from parishioners about it. The possibility of a MUGA on the area was discussed again, with the consensus being that there was not enough space for one due to the close proximity of the railway and motorway. We should therefore confine our attentions to an enhanced play area.

6. **Teers Meadow:** This was looking good, having recently received a cut. It was noted that we hadn't heard anything further about the re-appearance of cows, but Cllr Stanley pointed out that the damaged fence by the footpath gate is yet to be repaired, so cows at the moment might not be a good idea. The Amenity Manager said he would check on this, and also contact Mike Phillips about the cows. It was noted that Mike has planned various activities on the Meadow, and we were in process of getting a leaflet drop arranged, which was due late May or early June – it is also, we believe advertised on Facebook / Harrietshamites, but not on our own website. A second drop, with the walking map, is planned for July(ish). There was a general consensus that a proper, face-to-face, meeting with Mike Phillips would be helpful in order to catch up with progress, plans and budgets. The Amenity Manager would contact him.
7. **Tree Survey:** The Amenity Manager explained the background to the memorial trees in the New Burial Ground and Garden of Remembrance, and his attempts to reconcile what is actually on the ground with the map. The contractors had undertaken the tree survey, recommended work to be done, and provided a price for doing so. It was agreed that we should **Recommend to Council** that we accept the quote for £650, and then ask them to formally reconcile ground to map and provide a quote for replacing where necessary. It was noted that any replacement trees would probably need to be just inside the hedge line, rather in the hedge as currently sited.
8. **Defibrillator:** The Amenity Manager reported that we now had all the bits for the defib, including the box. Bearing in mind that we already had defibs at the village hall, post office and – shortly – the station, the question was where did we want this one. After some discussion, it was agreed that it should be at the parish office, and we would attempt to get it on the wall by the front door, hoping that residents would be sensible enough to park in a manner leaving us with access to it. An alternative is to put it on a pole on our gravel by the path, but it was thought this might be unsightly, intrusive on the path and run the risk of being knocked over by parking vehicles.
9. **West Street Green:** The Amenity Manager reported that we had received a request from a resident to put a high fence or hedge round the Green in order to reduce noise and pollution when their children are playing on it. Aside from the initial costs involved, and the significant additional ongoing maintenance costs, it was generally felt that this significantly detract from the look and appeal of the green. It was therefore agreed to not progress with this idea.
10. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 18th July at 7:30pm in the parish office. It was noted that, generally, Monday is a better date than Thursday, and so it was agreed that we should hold future meetings on the third Monday of the months of May, July, September, November, January and March in the year.

Meeting closed at 8:40pm.