

Harrietsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 28th January 2026 at 7.30pm
in the Booth Hall

Cllr Powell welcomed all present to the meeting.

Public Discussion

It was reported that a litter pick is required along the A20, on both sides of the road. Borough Cllr Povey offered to report this.

ACTION: B. Cllr Povey

It was noted that a tree branch blocking the footpath had been cleared promptly by KCC Highways, once it had been reported as an emergency.

B.Cllr Povey reported on the Heathlands SPD consultation, which had now closed, with over 350 responses received. Having attended a steering group meeting, it was evident that the document is being pushed through, rather than ensuring that all the necessary detail is included. The Gypsy and Traveller consultation was noted.

The Clerk read out a report provided by County Cllr Emberson which gave an update on the KCC draft budget, which limits the council tax rise to 3.99% for the forthcoming financial year; further details are available on their website.

Present

Cllr E Powell (Chair), Cllr T Sams, Cllr J Sams, Cllr C Roots, Cllr S Brown, Cllr R Dayes, Cllr G Dean, Cllr S Donley, Cllr S Luck, RFO/Amenity Manager Mr M Cuerden and Parish Clerk Mrs A Broadhurst

Borough Cllr S Povey

5 Members of Public

1 Apologies for absence

Cllr T Griffiths, County Cllr S Emberson, Borough Cllrs C Houlihan and M Nedelcheva

2 Minutes of the last meeting

Parish Council Meeting 26th November 2025: The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Dean, seconded by Cllr Luck; with 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

3 Disclosures and confidential items

Changes to the Register of Interests

There were no changes to the register.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

Cllr G Dean: Agenda Item 6.2 - Environmental (Recommendation - Water Treatment in Lake) as she lives adjacent to the lake in Woodlands Walk.

Cllrs T & J Sams stated that they had a personal interest in Agenda Item 20 (Co-option of Parish Councillor) and they would not be taking part in the co-option process.

Requests for Dispensation

No requests were submitted.

4 Items to be taken in Closed Session

It was agreed by all present that the following items would be discussed in a Closed Session:

Agenda Item 19 - Staffing Matter

Agenda Item 20 - Co-option of Councillor

5 Planning

5.1 The outstanding planning applications were noted.

5.2 The approved applications were noted.

5.3 The refused application was noted.

5.4 Other Planning Matters

Cllr Powell reported that he had attended a Full Council meeting to ask two questions related to the Heathlands SPD, the first was submitted ahead of the meeting and MBC had refused to give a written response. The supplementary question, asking whether MBC intended to revisit the Highways Model for the A20, received no answer, Cllr Powell was referred back to the SPD document. Cllr Powell reported that he will attend the next meeting to ask again. B.Cllr Povey

added that, to date, MBC had spent £8m on a project which is not viable. For the development to be “self-sufficient and self-contained” the development would require a railway station, which does not look likely. This will also be impacted by Panattoni’s plans to create a further 2,000 jobs at the old Tarkett site.

6 Environmental

6.1 To Approve the Minutes of the Environmental Meeting held on 12th January 2026: It was proposed by Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Dean; with 5 in favour (those present at the meeting).

6.2 Recommendations from the Environmental Committee:

- Water Treatment in Woodlands Walk Lake: Whilst this had been discussed in the Environmental meeting, Cllr Brown queried whether a treatment was required in the lake, now that all of the aerators are functioning. The Amenity Manager clarified that the previous advice was that it should be completed every other year with the aerators installed but added that the Parish Council had chosen to treat the lake every year apart from early 2021. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr S Brown to treat the lake every other year, with the next treatment being 2027, seconded by Cllr J Sams, 5 in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions (one being Cllr Dean who had declared an interest). The Amenity Manager was asked to seek further clarification from Hawkhurst Fish Farm regarding the correct lake treatment frequency.

ACTION: Amenity Manager

Cllr Dean reported that one of the aerators is at an angle and needs investigating. The Amenity Manager was asked to contact the supplier and to also find out whether any servicing should routinely take place.

ACTION: Amenity Manager

6.3 Other Environmental Matters

- Transfer of West Street Green: The Clerk updated all present on the unsatisfactory service offered by Hallett & Co, reading out the latest email response received. The Clerk asked Councillors to confirm that she could liaise with Wellers Law Group to progress the matter on the Parish Council’s behalf. It was proposed by Cllr T Sams for the Clerk to contact Wellers Law Group to see if they can assist, seconded by Cllr Dean; with all in favour. Cllr Dean asked for a copy of the email to discuss further with Ms. Thorneloe. **ACTION: Clerk** Whilst discussing the land transfer, the Clerk also reported that, following the Parish Conference, she had written to the Director of Finance at MBC to, once again, request the transfer of a portion of the Glebe Field to the Parish Council. Mr Green had responded to apologise for the delay, stating a further update would be available soon. Having asked for likely timescales, no further response has been received. The Clerk added that she has made the Borough Councillors aware of the communications, so that they can monitor the situation, to try to move the matter forward. Borough Cllr Povey reported that, having chased Mr Green, it is likely that the Parish Council will receive a response in the next 10 days. The Clerk spoke regarding the comment made at the Parish Conference regarding Parishes having to cover all the legal costs. As MBC has their own solicitors the Clerk highlighted that this should keep costs to a minimum for Parishes, requesting that the Borough Cllrs actively support Parishes with this. The Clerk added that the Land Registry fee is £130 for land transfers and there shouldn’t be excessive legal costs, as it is a simple transfer. It was also noted that this needs to be progressed promptly, as the request was first submitted in May 2025 and MBC is hoping to form the new Town Council by October 2026, ahead of the Unitary authority being formed in 2027, which does not leave long for both parties to sign off the necessary documentation, before the land is at risk of being transferred to the new authority.

7 Finances

7.1 Income and Expenditure spreadsheets: The finance sheets were proposed as accurate by Cllr T Sams, seconded by Cllr J Sams; with all in favour.

7.2 Clerk to confirm receipt of Councillor’s Completed Precept Declaration Forms: The Clerk confirmed that all members were eligible to discuss and approve the precept for 2026/27.

7.3 Minutes of the F&GP Meeting held 8th January 2026: It was proposed by Cllr Roots, seconded by Cllr Luck; with 4 in favour (those present at the meeting).

7.4 Recommendations from the F&GP Committee:

- To Approve the Proposed Budget for 2026/2027: To set an expenditure budget of £226,712, requiring a precept of £186,615 - giving a Band D Charge of £137.39 per property for 2026-27. Resulting in an increase of £10.40, or 8.19% (20p a week). It was proposed by Cllr Roots to approve the proposed budget, setting a precept for the forthcoming year of £186,615,

which was an annual increase of £10.40 per Band D property. This was seconded by Cllr Brown, with all in favour.

ACTION: RFO

- Further Grant Application for 2025-2026

- Harrietsham Primary School (£750): A donation of £750 was proposed by Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Dean; with all in favour.

7.5 Other Financial Matters

Cllr Roots offered thanks to the RFO for his work producing the budget figures.

8 Highways

There was no report to note.

Cllr T Sams informed all present that he intends to drive around the village in February to report any issues. Cllr Roots added that the worst potholes along the A20 had been filled. Cllr T Sams commented that he had been contacted by a solicitor who is acting on behalf of someone with life changing injuries, following hitting a pothole, which had been reported at least 5 times. This showed the importance of making sure that the potholes are reported. Cllr Dean commented that KCC Highways had been out clearing the drains under the railway bridge in Church Road. The Clerk added that the drains around the Harrison Drive area have been reported again and County Cllr Emberson made aware of this, as the area has a known flooding issue.

Cllr Roots reported that 3 of the 6 planned Speedwatch sessions had had to be cancelled due to poor weather. The sessions held showed that most drivers are keeping to the speed limit, with only one found to be driving at 40mph. The Clerk was then asked to contact County Cllr Emberson to see whether there was an update on the average speed cameras being reintroduced.

ACTION: Clerk

9 Santa's Grotto & Sleigh

Cllr Griffiths had circulated a brief report before the meeting. The Clerk stated that this will be an agenda item again at the February meeting, as Cllr Griffiths would like to discuss altering the event.

10 Post Office Closure

The Clerk reported that there is an ongoing discussion with the Postmaster and Post Office regarding where the mobile van can be stored. It was noted that, if residents do not use the service once it is up and running, it will be removed, as Harrietsham will be an outreach service. Cllr Roots reported that there has been some interested in the sale of the Post Office in Lenham.

11 Recent Loss of Water in the Village

Cllr Roots spoke regarding the recent water loss issues in the village and the resulting inconvenience of the bottled water station being situated in Headcorn. The Clerk commented that she had contacted South East Water on the first weekend to offer the Village Hall's car park, as this had been used historically; however, the water company had not progressed with additional locations. Cllr Roots explained that Helen Whately MP had pushed for this during the second weekend of outage and eventually a total of 12 pallets of bottled water were delivered to the Village Hall. Cllr Roots thanked Cllrs Griffiths and Donley for their efforts overseeing distribution of supplies to residents from Harrietsham, Kingswood, Leeds and Hollingbourne, which he had also assisted with.

12 Civility & Respect Councillor's Statement of Assurance

The Clerk reminded all present that the Parish Council had adopted the Civility & Respect Pledge in November 2022. A Councillor Statement of Assurance has now been produced by NALC and SLCC for Councillors to sign to confirm that they support the ethos of the Pledge. All Councillors submitted signed Assurance documents to the Clerk to be retained on file.

13 Defibrillator Faulty Display

The Clerk reported that the display on the defibrillator located at the Post Office is faulty, resulting in the charge of the battery not being properly displayed. Having discussed the issue with the supplier they have stated that the cost of the repair would cost a minimum of £300, as the unit is out of warranty. They had offered a replacement unit at a reduced cost of £695 (+ vat) with free delivery. The Clerk added that the full cost of the defibrillator is in the region of £950 - £1,100 (+vat). It was proposed by Cllr Dean to purchase a replacement defibrillator at the reduced cost of £695, seconded by Cllr T Sams; with all in favour.

ACTION: Clerk

14 Amended IT Policy

The Clerk reminded all present that Councillors had approved a new IT policy earlier in the financial year, when Assertion 10 was first announced. A further version had been released by NALC, which is far more in-depth and subsequently a further draft had been circulated to all Councillors before the meeting for adoption. It was proposed by Cllr T Sams to adopt the new IT policy, seconded by Cllr J Sams; all in favour. The Clerk will add this to the website.

ACTION: Clerk

15 Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk reported that the Annual Parish Meeting is to be held on Wednesday 30th April and CPRE has offered to be the speaker for the evening. After brief discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should produce the usual booklet for the meeting.

ACTION: Clerk

16 Future Events

11th April - HIB Annual Quiz

23rd May - Friends of St John's Bingo Afternoon (Village Hall 2.00-5.00pm)

17 Items for Future Consideration

Nothing to be added to a future agenda.

18 Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 7.30pm in the Booth Hall

The Meeting was then adjourned at 8.41pm.

19 Staffing Matter

The Clerk reported on a forthcoming staffing change, and it was proposed by Cllr Dean to advertise for an Amenity Manager, to commence employment before the end of March 2026, allowing for a handover, seconded by Cllr J Sams; all in favour.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllrs T & J Sams left the meeting.

20 Co-option of Parish Councillor

After brief discussion with both applicants individually, Cllr Brown proposed that Mr Welham be co-opted onto the Parish Council. This was seconded by Cllr Dayes; with all in favour. Mr Welham was duly co-opted as a Councillor and signed the Acceptance of Office.

The Clerk confirmed that she would discuss the various Committees with Cllr Welham.

With no further matters to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.28pm.