

Harrietsham Parish Council

Environmental Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 30th November 2020 at 4:00pm by Zoom

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), Dayes, Foster, Luck, and Stanley,
Plus Cllrs Powell, Roots as guests M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager), A Broadhurst (Clerk)
2. **Apologies:** none **Members of the public:** Mrs S Amos
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (2nd October 2020) were signed (without amendment) as a true record.
(Proposed Cllr Dayes, seconded Cllr Luck)
4. **Disclosures:** None.
5. **Amenity Contracts (Update):** The Amenity Manager reported that the contracts seem to be progressing well. He noted that

The New Burial Ground and Garden of Remembrance seemed to be neat, tidy and well maintained.

The incumbant contractor had been approached about the Glebe Field / Harrison's Drive boundary hedge. They had indicated that they are happy to incorporate trimming the hedge into the contract at no extra charge. The question of any necessary tree work was left open, none being required at the moment.

The Medical Centre and Church Road verges seemed to be neat, tidy and well maintained.

The Amenity Manager confirmed that the sign had been replaced by the dam, using a fence post readily visible as one enters the Walk from the footpath. He also noted that he had asked MBC to ensure that the nearby lifebuoy was clear of vegetation. Cllr Dean confirmed that she too had noticed the sign, and also that she thought that the vegetation had been dealt with.

The benches were still looking pretty good, with no known repairs required. They are due another treatment in May/June next year.

The War Memorial seemed to be neat, tidy and well maintained.

The A20 verges and associated areas all seemed neat, tidy and well maintained.

On Teers Meadow, the Amenity Manager updated the committee on the spend to date on the Lottery Grant. We are waiting for Andrew French to do the one-off cut required as a result of not getting the cattle on the meadow. Once that has been done, we will have spent all but £640 of the 40% lottery grant received so far, and the £5,100 parish council contribution. The Amenity Manager has been in touch with the Lottery Fund, who have indicated that (a) we can ask for the next 40% whenever we want (the AM indicated that he would probably do so in the next financial year), (b) we can move budget from one heading to another, within reason and so long as we let them know what we've done and why, and (c) they are not yet allowing extensions to deadlines because they want to see how the pandemic restrictions play out, but they almost certainly will extend them in due course. * Cllr Dean indicated that Mrs Amos would like to re-join the Committee as a co-opted member, although this would have to wait until the next full council meeting (probably in January). However, in the meantime, Mrs Amos is keen to be involved with the embryonic Friends of Teers Meadow, and will contact Mike Phillips to open discussions.

The Saxon Place Amenity Land was looking neat, tidy and well maintained.

6. **Open Spaces:** The Amenity Manager confirmed that he had contacted all three contractors, and all had agreed to extend the existing open spaces contracts using the existing specifications, and allowing for a 2% uplift on their 2020/21 prices.

7. **Community Orchard:** The Amenity Manager outlined the main points of the Brogdale proposal, (ie 100 trees for £5865, supplied and planted), and then explained that additional costs were envisaged. These were basically the provision of watering facilities, including base(s), tank(s), and pipework. These costs have not yet been fully assessed, but are expected to be around £2000 plus a contingency for the pipework. The actual watering method is yet to be finalised, as Brogdale are experimenting with a pump powered by an electric drill – we await to hear whether it was successful. Cllr Roots enquired as to who would own the fruit once it starts to be produced (the answer being the parish council), and who would have it. The answer to the latter was that it would be freely available for people to collect, or we could have volunteers collect and distribute it. Cllr Stanley wondered whether we should have sought three quotes for the work, in view of the amount of money. The Amenity Manager/RFO responded that, ideally, we would have. However, he expressed the view that Brogdale were acknowledged experts in this, and that they were providing a complete service – supply and plant – whereas it seemed likely that most growers would supply, but not plant, so we would be left with blurred areas of responsibility. Finally, we needed a prompt decision because the trees needed to be reserved. It was therefore felt that, on this occasion, a single quote was warranted. It was therefore proposed to **Recommend to Council** that the council accept Brogdale’s quote for the supply of 100 trees, that we should provide water facilities as required, and seek to provide an easy way to deliver water to the trees. The expected cost for this being around £7900 for trees, labour and tank(s), plus the cost of pipework. Proposed Cllr Dean, seconded Cllr Foster, with 4 in favour, 1 abstention.
8. **Percy’s Information Board:** The Amenity Manager hadn’t yet tried to contact the original providers of the noticeboard, but it seemed that the most likely lines of enquiry lay with Steve Porchmouth (who sculpted Percy) and/or Sally Evans of the Mid Kent Downs Country Partnership. It was noted that the last time we heard about Sally, she had been quite ill, so it was agreed that we should ask Mike Phillips, who knows her, to contact her if it is appropriate. * Cllr Dean asked that we record our thanks to HIB for the work undertaken at Percy, and for the planting of numerous bulbs.
9. **Items for Discussion:** None.
10. **Date of next meeting** – To be agreed.

Meeting closed at 4:35pm.