

# Harrietsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7.30pm  
in the Booth Hall

Cllr Powell welcomed all present to the meeting.

## Public Discussion

The following items were raised during the public discussion:

- Security arrangements for the proposed Pharmabox.
- The poor condition of the doors at the surgery and it was clarified that these are being changed as part of the Pharmabox project.

County Cllr Emberson reported that the budget had been the key item so far this year.

Cllr T Sams stated that the pothole situation is very grim across the area and that there hasn't been the usual rush to repair them ahead of the new financial year, as seen with previous administrations. County Cllr Emberson responded that KCC Highways have repaired 28,000 potholes, but that it would be extremely difficult to bring them up to a satisfactory standard across Kent. It was noted that the prolonged poor weather had contributed to many of the issues seen. Now that a new contract has been signed with Ringway, it is hoped that there will be a better standard of repair, as there will be improved oversight. KCC are looking to impose a lorry levy tax, discussions are ongoing with the Treasury in the hope that some of the funds can be used on Kent's roads. They are also hoping to profit from the Dartford Crossing.

Cllr T Sams stated that the newly updated KCC reporting website is not fit for purpose and the Clerk added that it is very slow now to report multiple issues. It was also noted that you can't copy and paste when reporting now, which means repeat items such as potholes, take much longer to log. County Cllr Emberson will feedback on these points.

**ACTION: County Cllr Emberson**

Cllr Roots commented that he had reported 3 potholes for a resident and on checking the website, it stated that the customer had been given an update, which was not correct. The Clerk commented that this seems to be a standard comment when tracking reports, as she also constantly receives this message on anything reported, however no update has ever been provided.

Cllr Roots reported on the damaged verge outside the Scouts Hut in Station Road and the Clerk added that, she had been speaking with the Scout Master, and the concerns had been raised directly with County Cllr Emberson before the meeting. Cllr Roots added that a new dropped kerb will cost £480 and asked whether KCC Highways would fund this. County Cllr Emberson will investigate this further.

**ACTION: County Cllr Emberson**

The Clerk read out a report emailed by the Borough Cllrs which detailed that the call in, supported by the Ward Councillors, regarding the viability of the Heathlands SPD had been defeated. A recent litter pick along the A20 had collected approximately 1 tonne of litter. The first member steering group for the MBC Local Plan Review will be meeting later in the week and Cllr Povey will be attending. Further updates will be provided in due course.

## **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, Cllr R Welham, RFO/Amenity Manager Mr M Cuerden and Parish Clerk Mrs A Broadhurst  
4 Members of Public

### **1 Apologies for absence**

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

### **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

Parish Council Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026: The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr J Sams, seconded by Cllr Dean; with 8 in favour, 2 abstentions.

### **3 Disclosures and confidential items**

#### Changes to the Register of Interests

There were no changes to the register.

#### Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

Cllr C Roots: Agenda Item 7.2 - Finance (Grant Application from Knit, Crochet & Crafting Group) as his wife is the organizer for the group.

## Requests for Dispensation

No requests had been submitted.

A query was raised regarding when a dispensation is given to Councillors and the Clerk clarified the circumstances for when this would be required.

## 4 **Items to be taken in Closed Session**

It was agreed by all present that Agenda Item 19 (Staffing Matters) would be discussed in a Closed Session.

## 5 **Planning**

5.1 The outstanding planning applications were noted.

5.2 The approved application was noted.

### 5.3 **Other Planning Matters**

Cllr Powell reported that, now the SPD has been agreed, MBC are intending to submit an outline planning application for Heathlands. It was noted that there is no evidence to support the SPD and, hopefully, this will result in the application failing.

## 6 **Environmental**

6.1 To Approve the Minutes of the Environmental Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026: It was proposed by Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Luck; with 4 in favour (those present at the meeting).

### 6.2 **Other Environmental Matters**

- Transfer of 1/3 of Glebe Field: The Clerk reminded all present of the decision reached at the February meeting. It had come to light that the £3,500 approved did not include the Surveyor's fee of £1,000. This was highlighted to Councillors immediately and the Clerk was asked to proceed, to avoid the process being delayed. The Clerk had subsequently completed the required documentation, confirming Wellers Law Group as the Parish Council's solicitor and MBC are commencing work on the S123 notice. It was proposed by Cllr Powell to ratify the decision to increase the approved sum by £1,000 to £4,500 to progress with the transfer of 1/3 of Glebe Field to the Parish Council, seconded by Cllr J Sams; with all in favour.
- Transfer of West Street Green: The Clerk informed Councillors that the required evidence had been sent to Wellers Law Group shortly after the February meeting and she had worked with the solicitor to draw up the Statement of Truth, which has now been signed and returned. The solicitor had subsequently confirmed that she will submit all the required documentation to the Land Registry and their invoice had been received. The Clerk added that the Parish Council will now have to wait for the Land Registry to complete the work at their end, which is quite a slow process.
- Clarification of Timing for Lake Treatments: The Amenity Manager confirmed with Hawkhurst had stated that the treatments would be completed every other year. However, the aerators require servicing each year, as they become clogged up. Servicing of two units will be completed imminently; the third is privately owned and the resident will make their own arrangements.
- Outstanding Allotment Invoice: The Clerk reported that the RFO had written to the tenant as agreed at the last meeting. However, there had been no confirmation that the letter had ever been delivered. The Clerk had asked him to amend the dates and resend, however, having stated that full payment of £200 was required, a £50 payment had been received. The RFO had emailed the tenant to inform them that the matter would be referred to Full Council to decide whether Councillors will accept staged payments or require the remaining £150 immediately. It was noted that the tenant has not acknowledged any emails or letters sent to them to date. After brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr Dean that the RFO respond to the tenant stating that if no acknowledgement of the email is received from the tenant, full payment of £150 is required by the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026. If the tenant does respond, Councillors will accept three £50 payments to be received by 10<sup>th</sup> April, 10<sup>th</sup> May and 10<sup>th</sup> June. If the tenant defaults, the matter will be referred immediately to the small claims court. This proposal was seconded by Cllr J Sams, with all in favour.

**ACTION: RFO**

- Play Equipment Safety Inspections: The Clerk reported that both March play area inspections had been received before the meeting, which had flagged items which needed immediate attention:
  - Saxon Place: Four of the timber trail stepping stones have split and the quote for repair is £900 (+vat). As there is a 4-6 week wait for repairs, this needs to be addressed as soon as possible, being a 'Medium' risk item on the safety inspection. seconded by Cllr Dayes; with all in favor. **ACTION: Clerk**
  - Glebe Field 4 bay swing: The Clerk reported that the swing hangers are worn and, due to the age of the equipment, which was installed in 2009, the parts are no longer available. Safeplay had stated that the only option would be to replace the entire piece of equipment. They had provided a quotation of £5,297 (+vat) to remove the damaged equipment, recycle it, install a new galvanised swing system, replace 2 safety mats and arrange an independent post installation safety inspection. The Clerk reported that she would need to meet with other play companies to obtain additional quotes for Councillors to consider. In the meantime, she contacted MBC, as the Glebe Field play area is listed as a Strategically Important Play Area (SIPA) to enquire whether any funding would be available towards the cost of replacing the equipment. The Clerk then completed a grant application form and £5,000 of funding had now been confirmed towards the cost of the replacement equipment. MBC has clarified that the work needs to be completed in the 2026/7 financial year. The Clerk added that, in the coming weeks she will contact play equipment providers to arrange for further quotes. **ACTION: Clerk**  
The Clerk was thanked for her efforts in securing the grant so quickly to assist with the cost of the replacement play equipment.
- Community Litter Pick: Cllrs T & J Sams reported that they were unable to arrange the Spring litter pick this year, however they could organise one in the Autumn. This was agreed by all present and will be a future agenda item. **ACTION: Clerk**

## 7 Finances

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

### 7.2 Other Financial Matters

- Grant Application from the Knit, Crochet & Crafting Group: The Clerk reminded all present that a request was submitted after the February meeting for assistance with hall hire for the craft group. As the first booking was before the March meeting, the grant application was discussed over email, with Councillors agreeing to pay for the 4 requested sessions. Having responded to confirm that Councillors would ratify this decision at the March meeting, the RFO had emailed the group to clarify that the Parish Council would pay for one session in 2025/26 (the March booking) and four during 2026/27 (a total of 5 session). However, the group had requested funding for 4 sessions during 2026. Cllr Brown stated that he disagreed with the Parish Council paying the Village Hall directly and proposed that the group be given the remaining £108 directly; this was seconded by Cllr T Sams. The RFO then informed all present that the Grants policy does not allow grants to be paid into a personal account, which would be required in this case. After further discussion, Cllr T Sams suggested that the proposal be withdrawn and Cllr Brown agreed. It was then proposed by Cllr Dean to pay for 3 remaining sessions until December 2026 and, if further assistance is required in 2027, the group can submit a grant application as other organisations do in November. This was seconded by Cllr Dayes with 8 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. The RFO will email the group to confirm the grant arrangements. **ACTION: RFO**

## 8 Highways

There was no report to circulate for the meeting, as Councillors are preparing one for the Annual Parish Meeting booklet.

- A20 Traffic Surveys: Cllr Roots shared some data from recent speed watch sessions along the A20 which showed that the number of speeding vehicles had increased dramatically; he suggested that traffic surveys should be repeated to obtain further data. The Clerk had sought a quote from Streetwise, who had confirmed that these could be completed in the same points as the 2022 surveys, The Hollies, outside the Taste of Bengal, Chippendayle Drive and outside Northdown House. They had quoted a total of £1,090 (+vat) for a 7-day survey. Cllr Roots

suggested that the survey point at Northdown House be moved towards Downlands and the Clerk confirmed she would discuss this with the company. It was proposed by Cllr Roots to accept the quotation of £1,090 (+vat), seconded by Cllr J Sams; with all in favour. It was then noted that the surveys can be arranged within 3 days, however this would coincide with the school Easter break, Operation Brock being brought back in and roadworks along the A20 which will cause long tailbacks, affecting the results. Councillors suggested that the surveys should be undertaken in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June, and the Clerk will confirm this with Streetwise.

**ACTION: Clerk**

**9 Quotation for the Gutters to be Cleaned at the Medical Centre**

The Clerk reported that the gutters at the Medical Centre needed cleaning and the window cleaner for the Parish Office had supplied a quote. Cllr Dean suggested seeking a further quote for comparison and could supply some contact details. It was therefore agreed to defer this item.

**ACTION: Cllr Dean & Clerk**

**10 A20/West Street Green Christmas Lights**

The Clerk reported that, following the decision at the February meeting to enter a new 3-year contract with Gala Lights, a new design had been ordered, but the location of the two additional lights needed to be agreed. The Clerk circulated an image of the A20 through the center of the village and it was proposed by Cllr Dayes that the two new motifs should be added to the street column outside the Taste of Bengal restaurant and close to the pedestrian crossing (both on the Lenham bound side). This was seconded by Cllr Roots, with all in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk**

**11 CCTV for West Street Green**

Cllr Dean reported on an offer which had been made by a local security company, at no cost to the Parish Council. It was confirmed that the company would obtain the relevant permit from KCC. Cllr T Sams queried the GDPR procedures relating to accessing the data and the Clerk clarified that, if an incident needed to be reported to Kent Police, they would be informed that CCTV is available and provide the relevant contact details for the Police to obtain the footage. It was proposed by Cllr Dean to accept the offer, seconded by Cllr J Sams; all in favour.

**ACTION: Cllr Dean**

**12 Data Protection Training**

The Clerk reported that all but one Councillor and the RFO had now completed the KALC Data Protection training. Cllr Griffiths & the Parish Warden had completed the ICO GDPR training, as they were unable to attend the KALC sessions. The Clerk had completed GDPR as one of her CiLCA qualification learning outcomes and had also undertaken a Data Protection course with test at the end provided by SLCC. This confirms the Councils compliance with Assertion 10 of the AGAR in relation to Data Protection.

**13 Annual Parish Meeting**

The Clerk reminded all present that the normal Parish Council meeting will be shorter and at the earlier time of 7.15pm, with the Annual Parish Meeting commencing at 8.00pm. It was noted that the Highways and Finance reports are required for the booklet. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) will be the speaker for the evening, and Cllrs T&J Sams confirmed that they will arrange the refreshments.

**14 Big Lunch**

Cllr Dean reported that the judge for the Marvellous Mutts competition, prizes and electricity arrangements have been confirmed and Dogs Trust will be attending. Cllr Roots will speak to HIB to see whether the Parish Council can borrow their tombola and Cllr T Sams will speak to Harrietsham school regarding borrowing tables and chairs. A face painter is required and Cllr Dean is trying to confirm an ice cream van. Cllr J Sams will produce the flyers and posters for the Clerk to print. Prizes are required for the raffle; there will be a cake stall and Six Penny Piece will also be able to perform. Cllr Griffiths has offered to arrange a First Aid training course for members of the Parish Council as the hall cleaner has offered to be trained to provide cover at the event; Cllrs Luck & Donley and the Clerk confirmed that they would like to attend the training.

**15 Data Retention Policy**

It was proposed by Cllr Roots to approve the circulated Data Retention policy, seconded by Cllr T Sams; with all in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk**

There was general discussion on the length of time that some financial documents are held for and the Clerk suggested that members of the F&GP committee may wish to discuss this further at a future meeting. Any recommended changes could then be considered by Full Council. **ACTION: F&GP Cttee**

## 16 Future Events

27<sup>th</sup> March - Friends of St Johns AGM (Church 7.00pm)

28<sup>th</sup> March - Annual Parochial Church Meeting (Church 10am)

7<sup>th</sup> April - Games Club (Booth Hall)

11<sup>th</sup> April - HIB Annual Quiz (Village Hall 7.00pm for 7.30pm start)

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

7<sup>th</sup> June - Big Lunch

## 17 Items for Future Consideration

- Village Christmas Event - *Cllr Griffiths (June agenda)*
- Autumn Litter Pick - *Cllr T Sams (July agenda)*

## 18 Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7.15pm in the Booth Hall, followed by the Annual Parish Meeting commencing at 8.00pm

*The Meeting was then adjourned at 8.56pm.*

## 19 Staffing Matter

- Amenity Manager Vacancy: The Clerk gave an update regarding the vacancy currently being advertised.
- Council Administration: The recommendation from the Clerk to employ an Administration Assistant for an initial 2 hours a week on SCP 13, to commence training ahead of a staff member's planned retirement in 2027 was proposed by Cllr J Sams, seconded by Cllr Brown; with all in favour. **ACTION: Clerk**

*With no further matters to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.58pm.*