

AGENDA

GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP MEETING



Date: Friday 21 November 2014

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Gooch, Mrs Hinder, Parvin
(Chairman), Mrs Parvin, Vizzard (Vice-
Chairman) and P Watson

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of Lobbying

Continued Over/:

Issued on 13 November 2014

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Alison Broom

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ**

6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
7. Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 24 October 2014 1 - 4
8. Report of the Head of Finance and Resources - Harrietsham Parish Council Increase in Number of Councillors 5 - 15

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Councillor Parvin (Chairman), and
Councillors Black, English, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Parvin and
P Watson

Also Present:

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Hinder and Vizzard.

14. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members were noted:-

Councillor English for Councillor Vizzard

Councillor Black for Councillor Mrs Hinder

15. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

16. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

17. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that Councillor English had been lobbied on the Report of the Head of Finance and Resources Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

18. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

19. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

20. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 5 – Election of Vice-Chairman

The Chairman informed the Board that Councillor Vizzard had confirmed acceptance of his appointment as Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2014/15, the nomination for which had occurred in his absence.

21. APPOINTMENT OF POLITICAL GROUP SPOKESPERSON FOR THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

RESOLVED: That Councillor Vizzard be appointed Group Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

22. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD AND SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCILS INCREASE NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the report detailing the requests of the Broomfield and Kingswood and Sutton Valence Parish Councils for an increase in the number of Councillors from nine to eleven members. The Group heard that both Parish Councils had provided commentaries outlining the duties undertaken by Members, and stating that there had been a significant increase in work load over the past 3 years.

It was explained that the Local Government Boundaries Commission for England (LGBCE) provided a scale setting out a suggested number of Councillors commensurate with the size of the electorate of a Parish. Using this scale, the Group was advised that both Broomfield and Kingswood Parish, and Sutton Valence Parish, had a number of electorate between the figures of 701 – 1350, and as such both Parish Councils had the number of Councillors commensurate with the size of their electorate with 9 Members.

During discussion it was noted that, where a Parish Council had a temporary increase in workload or is undertaking a large project, it may benefit from co-opting members or seeking voluntary assistance. It was suggested that a meeting take place outside of the Group between the Head of Finance and Resources, the Chairman of Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), and the two Parishes in question, in order to advise further on the co-opting process and other options available.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the COUNCIL: That, in accordance with the adopted scale, the requests of Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council and Sutton Valence Parish Council for increases in the number of Parish Councillors from nine to eleven be refused.

23. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the report on the Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations, and advised the Group that every local authority with a responsibility for electoral administration must carry out a review of its polling districts and places at least once every five years. It was explained that a polling place was the building, and the polling station was the room in that building. A review commenced in 2013 which included physical inspections and assessment of each district to ensure polling stations remained fit for purpose. The review was conducted over four stages, and produced a series of proposals for alterations in some of the areas reviewed.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- The potential for confusion caused by the use of a single polling station to accommodate two wards, and the need to be mindful of sign posting and early notification of voters, alongside ensuring all staff are properly briefed to assist. It was suggested that the borough update could be used to inform voters, and that Ward Members and Parish Councillors may be able to assist with the placement of posters and signs.
- The benefits of encouraging postal voting as this minimises the pressure on polling stations and allows the electorate an easier method of voting.
- Parking on main roads such as Tonbridge Road causes problems for those who are travelling to polling places by car, especially when there is minimal parking space. A Member enquired as to whether the enforcement of double yellow lines could be lifted or suspended for the duration of the election day to allow greater ease of temporary parking, and was advised that this would be looked into outside of the Group.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:

That the following changes to Polling Places be approved:-

1. Bridge Ward - That the use of St Simon Stock R C Comprehensive School be discontinued. Electors in Polling District FA who currently vote at this polling station will vote at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This polling place to become a double station.
2. Heath Ward - That St Andrews Church Hall is re-instated as a polling station to accommodate electors outside of the former Oakwood hospital site. Electors in Polling District N will be split between Beechwood Community Hall and St Andrews Church Hall. All electors

to the East of Queens Road and to the South of St Andrews Road will vote at St Andrews Church Hall.

3. Marden and Yalding Ward, Collier Street Parish – That the polling place be moved from St Margaret’s Church to St Margaret’s School for electors in polling district RR.
4. Harrietsham and Lenham Ward, Lenham South Parish -_That St Edmunds Centre, Platts Heath becomes a polling station for use by electors in Polling District LC.
5. Headcorn Ward, Headcorn Parish –That the position of the station within the polling place will change from the games room to the small restaurant at the Hawkenbury Public House for electors in Polling District MB.
6. Sutton Valence and Langley Ward, Sutton Valence Parish – That the position of the station within the polling place will change from the games room to the small restaurant at the Hawkenbury Public House for electors in Polling District ZB.

24. DURATION OF MEETING

2.01 p.m. to 2.31 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP

NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF FINANCE & RESOURCES

Report prepared by Kathy Hildige

1. HARRIETSHAM PARISH COUNCIL INCREASE IN NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH Act 2007) S94 the Council has received a request to consider an increase in the number of Parish Councillors on Harrietsham Parish Council.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Finance & Resources

1.2.1 That the General Purposes Group recommend to Council that, in accordance with the adopted scale, the request of Harrietsham Parish Council for an increase from nine Councillors to eleven Councillors be accepted and the Council commence the necessary community governance review.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The LGPIH Act 2007 provides the Council with the power to take decisions in relation to the electoral arrangements of Parishes. Since February 2008 the Council has had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and considering the electoral arrangements of an existing or proposed Parish. Consideration of the electoral arrangements includes:

- a) The ordinary year of election;
- b) The number of Councillors to be elected; and
- c) The need to divide a Parish into wards.

1.3.2 Harrietsham Parish Council has requested that the Council consider increasing the number of Councillors on its Council from nine to eleven on the basis of the number of Electors in the Parish.

1.4 Considerations

1.4.1 The Local Government Boundaries Commission for England (LGBCE), the National Association of Local Councils and the Government all suggest that consideration should be given to the fact that the conduct of Parish Council business does not usually require a large body of Councillors and local Councils can find it difficult to attract appropriate numbers and appropriate quality candidates. They also suggest that consideration should be given to any unique local factors.

1.4.2 **Appendix A** to this report details the three most recent election results for the Parish Council and shows that a two out of the last three elections were uncontested. It also provides a map of the Parish boundaries evidencing the size and character of the areas covered by the Parish Council.

1.4.3 The fact that two of the last three elections were uncontested suggests that the Parish Council may have difficulty in finding additional candidates if the number of Councillors increases. This may cause a future problem for the Parish Council and may be raised by responses to the consultation however the electorate in the Parish Council area is of a size suitable for an increase, as set out below.

1.4.4 The LGBCE has suggested the number of Parish Councillors should be commensurate with electorate size. The Council has previously considered the issue of size of a Parish Council (the number of Parish Councillors to be elected) and has adopted a scale for determining the ratio between electors and the number of Parish Councillors. The scale is:

Up to 250 electors	5 Councillors
251-700 electors	7 Councillors
701-1350 electors	9 Councillors
1351-2200 electors	11 Councillors
2201-3250 electors	13 Councillors
3251-4500 electors	15 Councillors
Over 4500 electors	At the discretion of the Council

1.4.5 The range of sizes identified across the country by the LGBCE would suggest that the Council's scale is within suitable limits.

1.4.6 Harrietsham Parish Council has 1,608 electors. Using the adopted scale the Parish Council should have eleven Councillors and it currently has nine.

1.4.7 Should the General Purposes Group and Council approve the recommendation this would lead to the need for a community governance review and consultation under S82 of the LGPIH Act 2007. The terms of reference of such a review are set out in draft in

Appendix B. If the proposed changes are upheld by the review it would be necessary to incorporate the changes before the election in May 2015 and for that reason it would be essential that any such review commenced as soon as possible following the Council meeting in December 2014.

1.4.8 The officer recommendation to General Purposes Group is that it recommends to Council that the request be approved on the basis that the adopted scale suggests a need for an increase.

1.5 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.5.1 The group could chose to recommend to Council not to approve the increase however it is clear that the size of the Parish already suggests an increase in line with the adopted scale and current levels of development suggest this will increase in the near future.

1.6 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.6.1 The decision does not directly impact on corporate objectives.

1.7 Risk Management

1.7.1 The most effective method of managing the necessary increase is to complete the governance review before the 20th March 2015. Such a review includes a six week period of public consultation. The date of 20th March 2015 is the date of notice of election for the Parish Council election on 7th May 2015 and any changes to the Parish Council must be agreed prior to that date.

1.8 Other Implications

1. Financial	
2. Staffing	
3. Legal	
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6. Community Safety	
7. Human Rights Act	
8. Procurement	

9. Asset Management

1.9 Relevant Documents

1.9.1 Appendices

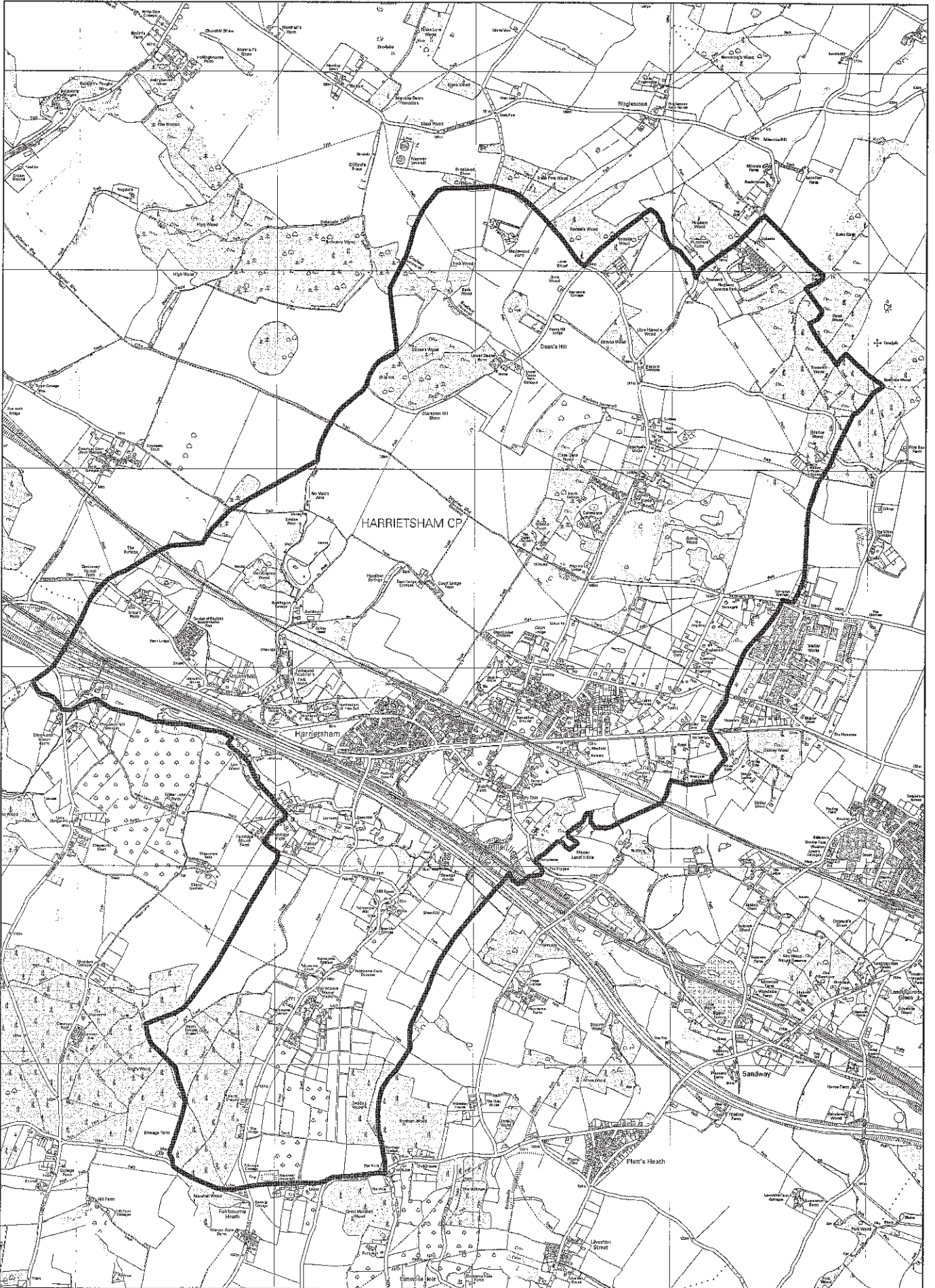
Appendix A – Last three years election history and Parish Boundary Map

Appendix B – Terms of Reference – Harrietsham Parish Council

1.9.2 Background Documents

None

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>		<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, this is a Key Decision because:			
.....			
Wards/Parishes affected:			
.....			



HARRIETSHAM PARISH



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**ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR
PARISH OF HARRIETSHAM
MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date of Election: THURSDAY 5 MAY 2011

RESULT OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION

I declare the following to be elected as PARISH COUNCILLOR without a contest -

NAME OF PERSON(S) ELECTED	HOME ADDRESS
Dennis Edward CLIFTON	Manor Barn, Fairbourne Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1LN
Alan Graham LAFFAN	11 Church Crescent, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1BB
Stephen Derrick MORRIS	Lower Danes, Ashford Road, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1BN
David OVERSBY	3 Court Lodge Cottages, Court Lodge Road, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1AT
JANETTA SAMS	Uplands, Hogbarn Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1NZ
TOM SAMS	Uplands, Hogbarn Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1NZ
Tony TAYLOR	3 Downlands, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1LE
Michael THOMPSON	6 Willow Close, Harrietsham, Kent, ME17 1EZ

Dated Friday 8 April 2011

Alison Broom
RETURNING OFFICER



ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR HARRIETSHAM PARISH

Date of Election: THURSDAY 3 MAY 2007

RESULT OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION

I declare the following to be elected as PARISH COUNCILLOR without a contest -

NAME OF PERSON(S) ELECTED	HOME ADDRESS
CLIFTON Dennis Edward	Manor Barn, Fairbourne Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1LN
FLEMING Paul Simon	1, Fairbourne Manor Cottage, Fairbourne Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1LN
MCDONALD John Barry	4 Lenmead, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1FA
MORRIS Stephen Derrick	Lower Danes, Ashford Road, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1BN
OVERSBY David Leonard	3 Court Lodge Cottages, Court Lodge Road, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1AT
SAMS JANETTA	Uplands, Hogbarn Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1NZ
SAMS TOM	Uplands, Hogbarn Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1NZ
WILLIS Cathie	17 Pilgrims Close, Hogbarn Village, Hogbarn Lane, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1NZ
WOOD Brian Patrick	5 Baldwin's Place, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1JT

Dated: Tuesday 10 April 2007

David Petford
RETURNING OFFICER

REVIEWS OF PARISHES AND RELATED MATTERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

TERMS OF REFERENCE HARRIETSHAM PARISH COUNCIL – INCREASE IN PARISH COUNCILLORS

INTRODUCTION

What is a Community Governance Review?

It is a review of the whole or part of the district / parish area to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The grouping of parishes under a common parish council.
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and

In undertaking any Review, the Council will be guided by the following legislation:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625);
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626)
- Relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972

The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (published in April 2008), together with the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission (CLCBE) for England in March 2010. The Terms of Reference of any Review will be published on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) and will also be available to view at our reception area at the Council's main offices in The Gateway, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JZ.

Parish governance in the Borough of Maidstone

The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level, and wants to ensure that parish governance in our Borough continues to be enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes (the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors) are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Ultimately, the recommendations made in any community governance review should aim to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in a more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Why is the Council undertaking this Review?

Reviews are normally undertaken because of one or more of the following reasons:

- Changes in population
- Shifts in “natural settlements” caused by new development
- In reaction to specific or local issues which have now been raised
- In receipt of a valid petition
- In advance of a full review of the district or parish electoral arrangements
- At a request from the parish council or other interested party

In this particular review, Maidstone Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of Harrietsham Parish Council with a view to increasing the number of parish councillors from 9 to 11 as a result of a formal request from the Parish Council.

Who undertakes the Review?

The organisation of the consultations and all subsequent correspondence is undertaken by the Electoral Services team at the Borough Council. The General Purposes Group of the Council is delegated to deal with all electoral matters and will make recommendation to full council for the final decision after the consultations have been concluded.

Consultation

The Council is now publishing this Terms of Reference document. It sets out the aims of the review, the legislation which guides it and some of the policies which the Council considers important in the review. The Council will need to take into consideration the views of the local people, together with the views of any other interested party. Local people and any other stake-holders should be aware of the outcome of decisions made and the reasons behind them. The district councils will also ask for the views of the County Council and any neighbouring parish councils.

Electoral statistics and arrangements

The parish council comprises one parish boundary and is coterminous with the borough ward boundaries and no change is requested to these.

The Council has used the Register of Electors as at 1 Sept 2014 to provide the electoral statistics. These are as follows;

Polling District	Area	Electorate as at 1 September 2014	Current no. of parish councillors
L	Harrietsham	1608	9

Timetable

The review must be completed within twelve months of the publication of this document.

Stage	What happens	Date/Timescales
Commencement of review	Publication of terms of reference	11 December 2014
Stage 1	Consultation period. Submissions are invited.	6 weeks
Stage 2	Consideration of submissions. Draft recommendations prepared and published.	2 weeks
Stage 3	Principal Council agrees and publishes final recommendations	20 February 2015
Stage 4	Council resolves to make an Order to increase the number of parish councillors	
Order effective	Number of parish councillors increases effective from next termly parish elections	7 May 2015