

Minutes of Harberton Parish Council

meeting held on Tuesday 12 January 2010 at Harberton Parish Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Fearn, Johnson, Hockings, Williams, Steer & Hoddinott.

Apologies: Cllrs Knight, Janes, Hill, Beamish, Jeffreys & Hookway. Parish Clerk Diana Crann and District Cllr Robert Steer.

Minutes of the last meeting were considered and agreed after one amendment. Proposed by Cllr Hoddinott, seconded by Cllr Hockings. All in favour.

Reports: No reports received from District Cllr Steer, County Cllr Black or the Police.

Matters Arising:

1) Cllr Williams said that he had the lead necessary to complete the repairs to the fence on the path up to Harberton Playground. He will liaise with Cllrs Hockings and Hoddinott.

2) Community Planning. Ongoing.

3) Interactive road signs at Harbertonford. The Clerk has received not further information and will enquire again.

4) Parish Boundstone. A letter has been received from Mr Oldfield of Harberton, who liaised with Highways to relocate the new stone. He explained that the stone could not be put back in its original location without the serious possibility of it being damaged beyond repair again. As a compromise, it has been put on the other side of the A381 at Peak Cross, but does still respect the directions. "T" is on the left of the stone and Totnes Parish is on the left-hand side of the road at that point. "H" is on the right-hand side and Harberton Parish is on that side. The new location is only a few yards from the old site and is in a safe and visible position.

5) P3 Footpath Scheme. Ongoing.

6) Buses to/from Kingsbridge School. See Correspondence.

7) South Hams Standards Committee. South Hams Monitoring Officer, Delyth Jenkins Evans's attendance has been postponed until the Parish Council's April meeting. Ms Jenkins Evans will issue invitations to other Parish

Councils to attend so that her time in explaining the rules is maximised. This PC is agreeable to the arrangement.

8) Damaged SW Water marker in Bow Road, Harbertonford. Ongoing.

Planning: Parish Council Recommendations. Decision at the meeting –

23/2286/09/F Extension to Leigh Bridge Cottage. Harberton. No objections, provided building materials are in keeping and the privacy of the neighbours is respected. Proposed by Cllr Steer, seconded by Cllr Johnson. All in favour.

Correspondence:

1) Allotments. Correspondence has been received from Frances Padfield re the establishment of allotments in Harbertonford. All councillors were circulated with the letters and emails from Mrs Padfield in advance of the meeting. Councillors discussed the matter at length and established that currently there are no blocks of land in Harbertonford on offer by landowners. The Chairman had spoken to DAPC at County Hall and confirmed that the PC has a responsibility to consider an application from six or more residents. This element has been satisfied. The PC fully supports the Allotment Society's efforts and will seek land either in the Parish, or surrounding parishes if the Society wishes it. Within the Parish, councillors thought the best approach would be for the PC to lease land from a landowner and then let blocks to interested parties. The Chairman said that DAPC confirmed this as the most common arrangement. The PC would be responsible for the initial fencing and for providing water and access for the disabled. The Chairman said he was conscious of the possibility of the PC being left with ongoing expenses if allotment holders gave up their blocks and there were no further takers. This concern was echoed by other councillors. The Chairman has investigated that there are useful support organisations, such as the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens and the Allotment Regeneration Initiative, and will liaise with them as appropriate. The Allotment Society will be asked to direct all enquiries

about land they hear of through the PC. The Chairman understood that Mrs Padfield had hoped to attend the meeting but, in her absence, the Chairman said he would email her to let her know what was discussed.

2) DCC Public Consultation on Admission and Transport Arrangements for Schools and Colleges in the 2010/2011 Academic Year. Councillors agreed to write expressing concern that the bus services to/from Harbertonford and Kingsbridge do not make connections suitable for students using the bus to get to school.

3) Letter received from the Audit Commission. In accordance with their policy of rotating District Auditors every five years, the Commission proposes to appoint Wayne Rickard in place of Alun Williams with effect from January 2010 to cover the financial years 2009/2010 to 2013/2014. Councillors have no objections. No formal response is required of the PC.

4) SHDC Precept 2010/2011. Councillors discussed the matter in great detail. It was confirmed from the accounts supplied by the Clerk that our buffer against unforeseen expenditure was being eroded. For the last two financial years the precept was set at £6,500 as councillors were aware of the tightening economic conditions. However, as the current precept does not cover the expected costs from that sum, an increase is necessary to bring the Parish Council closer to our expenditure. This will be reviewed for the 2011/2012 financial year. Relative to other parishes of similar size, Harberton's precept has always been modest and realistic – only in exceptional circumstances have larger sums been required for specific purposes, such as the flood relief precautions in both villages. Councillors have been approached for support in establishing allotments in Harbertonford, so in addition to the usual expenditure, it was agreed to include some provision in the precept in case there is a need during the next financial year. It was also thought prudent to put a little more in reserve as a contingency measure. It is difficult to predict exactly what the economy will do during 2010/2011, but indications are for some modest improvement. Therefore, councillors agreed a precept of

£7,250. Proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Isabelle Steer. All in favour.

5) South Hams Local Development Framework – Development Policies Development Plan Document. There will be an examination of this document – probably during February. Anyone wishing to comment may get details from www.southhams.gov.uk following links Residents/Forward Planning/Local Development Framework/Development Policies, or contact SHDC for a hard copy.

6) SHDC wrote advising that the Local Government Review will recommend that all of Devon will become a Unitary Authority, with the exception of Plymouth and Torbay which already have that status. It is estimated that transition costs to the new body are likely to be in the order of £75 million. SHDC do not support this view and will make final representations to the review committee to try a last effort to influence the Secretary of State's decision.

7) Devon Playing Fields Association will be holding a meeting at Ipplepen Village Hall on 28/04/10 to discuss safety standards in playgrounds. Details forwarded to Cllr Jeffreys for Harbertonford and Jan Culf for Harberton.

Matters at the discretion of the Chairman:

1) Cllr Steer expressed concern that funding for schools to have broadband connection has been removed with only two months notice. Harbertonford Primary School will have to find some £7,000 to cover this shortfall – an enormous sum for a small school. It may result in cutbacks elsewhere in the school.

2) Cllr Johnson said that the grit bins had not been refilled in the Square in Harberton and at the Bus Stop. She said that a new bin is needed at Shop Hill and that the Clerk be asked to make enquiries. The Chairman added that Cllr Knight had reported the same situation in Harbertonford, especially at Marl Park. There, it seems that neither Tor Homes nor Highways are willing to take responsibility. The Clerk will be asked to investigate.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm. The next will be held at Harbertonford Primary School at 7.30pm on Tuesday 09 February 2010.