

Harberton Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes

Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00pm on Tuesday 12th April 2016, Harbertonford CE Primary School

In attendance: Cllrs, Broom, Camp, Hutchinson, J.Hockings, S.Hockings, Janes, McDonnell, Williams, Wynne.

Public: Bob Alford (Totnes Caring), Martin Fearn (Harberton Parish Hall), Frances Harvey (St. Peter's Church), Alicia Stolliday (St Andrew's Church), Gregory Ward (Harbertonford Allotment Society), Freda Wheat (St. Andrew's Church)

Minutes: Cat Radford (Parish Clerk)

Apologies: Cllrs Beamish Davidson, Waite, Barry Goldsmith (Harberton Cricket Club), Simon Harrington (Totnes and Rural Community Bus Association (TARCBA), Bob Monaghan (Harbertonford Village Hall), Les Wright (Harberton Parish Hall)

1. **Apologies** As above

2. **Annual Reports** from groups and organisations who have agreements with, or funding from Harberton Parish Council or the Harberton Parish Community Benefit Fund

2.1. **Harberton Playing Field Association (HPFA)** *Charlie Wynne*

It was reported that HPFA had seen another good year. Fundraising activities had been successful, the constitution had been reviewed and amended, the safety matting had been refurbished, repairs had been made to play equipment and the container used to store the mower had been repaired. A project to renew the goal posts is underway and plans to renew the access gate have been made. HPFA are drawing together an application for the Community Benefit Fund to install a trim trail in the playing field. A wedding booking has been taken for 2017. Mowing undertaken by South Hams District Council SHDC had gone well through the year and the Parish Council were thanked for funding these costs. The HPFA has recently lost a committee member, so anyone with an interest in joining the group would be most welcome.

2.2. **Harbertonford Playground Committee** *Jane Hutchinson*

Funds are gradually diminishing due to the annual spend on the asset insurance and maintenance and repairs to the playground equipment and safety surfacing identified by SHDC throughout the year, which costs around £300 on average. Funds currently stand at £1,023.98.

There have been some ongoing issues with the Earthwrights' equipment in terms of fungal growth and rotting in the oak but this wood has mostly been replaced now so hopefully we will be free of further issues. Volunteers have thankfully helped in the playground to maintain and weave in the willow.

2.3. **Harbertonford Allotment Society** *Gregory Ward*

2015 was the best year so far for the allotments, with members growing a wide range of produce on what is now a mature allotment. A few members downsized their allotments, bringing in extra revenue. The open day was well attended. Allotment owners entered the village flower show to win awards for 'best allotments' and other various produce categories. There is a strong balance sheet to allow reinvestment; working on a communal area and safer access. The bank balance stands at approx. £580. There are now only two people on the waiting list, since some members opted to hold half size allotments bringing the total number of allotments to approximately 26-28.

2.4. **St. Peter's Church** *Frances Harvey*

We are a small but committed congregation and hope to keep the church open during our time as custodians. We now have a new Vicar, Rev. David Sayle, who has come with new ideas so we look forward with high expectation. It costs £592 per month to keep the church open. £7109 per year. This is made up of the Parochial Church share to Exeter of £3167.00, Church upkeep of £1190, heat and lighting at 1591 and vicar expenses of £657. We aim to raise some of the money through regular coffee morning and bingo. We also have a summer fair in June. We greatly appreciate the grant from the Parish Council toward the grass cutting to keep the yard looking good for everyone – it is one of the first areas to be noticed on entering the village. It was noted that the bin outside the church has not been emptied and is overflowing with dog mess. The District Councillor agreed to take this up with SHDC.

2.5. **St. Andrew's Church** *Freda Wheat*

Thank you to the Parish Council for the annual contribution of £350 towards the upkeep of the Churchyard. This year it has costs £824 as professionals have had to be employed to do the strimming around the

grave-stones. Thanks were also given to the Community Benefit Fund for a grant of £500 for ongoing repairs. Further funds are raised via the Strawberry Fayre, Christmas Bazaar and monthly coffee mornings round the village. The Harvest Praise service following by lunch at the back of the church for 40/50 people is always enjoyable. In 2014 the porch was renovated at a cost of £13,750 of which the final balance of £1,790 was paid in January. Conservation work was carried out on the Palm Cross just outside the church in March by English Heritage who covered the cost of the £2,351 invoice. The repairs to the church are ongoing, an enormous repair to the chancel roof and ceiling is required. When a panel in the Sanctuary fell down it cost £2580 just to make it safe and do external work. The quinquennial report is expected at the end of April which will reveal the cost of full repair. We have set up *Friends of St. Andrew's* for the Church fabric, which is proving beneficial but we are still applying for grants.

Our normal congregation is small, consisting of 12 – 16 people per week. The visitors book continues to be an interesting guide to the number of visitors we have during the year and their comments are always very favourable (especially that the church is open all day) and particularly the beauty of the rood screen and stain-glass windows. Incidentally many come to visit the churchyard to trace their ancestors.

We thought we would have to dispense with the Parish Magazine, but at the eleventh hour Steve Pratt came forward as Editor so we can still print Parish Council minutes.

2.6. Harberton Parish Hall (HPH) *Martin Fearn*

HPH has had another successful year supporting activities for the Parish and wider communities. There has been a running programme of improvements in the last few years, including replacing the kitchen to a high standard. This year, attention has focussed on the Hall's lighting. In an effort to reduce electricity costs, it was decided to replace all the original lights with LED equivalents. Initially, floodlights were installed in the main hall but these proved to be unsatisfactory and complaints were received from user groups, especially the badminton players who said there was too much glare. Consequently, we have consulted lighting specialists who have devised a scheme of tailor made dimmable overhead LED fittings which will satisfy a range of user requirements. Similarly, replacement LED fittings around the main hall will be dimmable, but give a better ambience for social events such as concerts and parties. The remaining fittings in the meeting room, hallway and upstairs will also be fitted with energy-efficient equipment. We are confident that the project will be fully installed by the end of May.

Regular bookings are held for, amongst others, badminton, table tennis, art groups, Pilates and home education classes, which provide a good and reliable cash-flow. Additionally there are one-off bookings for wedding receptions and family parties, pantomime, Christmas Fair, elections and the like. The committee is conscious that the finances must be managed prudently, whilst maintaining the Hall as an attractive facility for users and fulfilling statutory health and safety obligations. The committee strives to provide a service to the local and wider community and our bookings sheets certainly reflect that goal. We are grateful to the Parish Council and its representative Ginny Davidson, for continuing support – not least with financial help with the lighting projects. The committee is confident that the Hall is on a firm operational and financial footing and that the coming year will be equally as successful as the last.

2.7. Harbertonford Village Hall *Written report from the committee*

Harbertonford Village Hall continues to provide a valuable resource to both local residents and people from the wider community. Facilities on offer include the large main hall and stage, side bar area with extra seating space and the large professional-standard kitchen. There is also a smaller room at the rear of the hall available to groups needing a venue for meetings not requiring the space of the main hall.

In the past year the hall has been managed and maintained by a committee of 12 members, meeting monthly. There has been some internal decoration carried out and planned projects include refurbishing the storage area and replacing the rotting fire doors.

Various groups still meet regularly: the Sunday skittles club, youth club, St Peter's Church coffee mornings and the martial arts class use the main hall weekly and is flourishing. However it would be very welcome if there was interest from other regular local groups. Harbertonford Sports and Social Group (HSSG) host regular events to enrich the village community and has introduced a varied selection of activities this year. The Embroiderers Guild continues to hold regular weekend workshops approximately four times a year.

Local events such as the Flower Show, Christmas craft fair, Open Studios weekend, the quarterly village Sunday brunches and 'Villages in Action' entertainment shows are all regular bookings and the hall has

occasional use as a polling station. The hall is popular as a venue for public forum meetings as well as being well used for private parties, wedding receptions and sadly on occasion for funeral wakes.

Many thanks to all the committee members and village residents who work extremely hard to keep the hall maintained as a wonderful resource for the village and neighbouring communities.

2.8. Totnes Caring *Bob Alford*

Totnes Caring would like to thank the Parish Council for its support as, although based in Totnes, cover 13 of the 16 Parishes around Totnes linked in to the two doctors services. The pressure on Totnes Caring, particularly with the cut back to health and social services is getting greater, so are looking to recruit more volunteers from village areas to support village residents in getting to hospital and to GP surgeries. With support from the Community Benefit Fund we printed leaflets and distributed them around the Harberton and Harbertonford to encourage interest in becoming a volunteer. We recruited 5 new volunteers in Harberton on the 14th November, volunteering to do driving, shopping, help out at lunch clubs, drive the wheelchair accessible vehicle which is a great help in the villages, befriending, reading, respite care for full time carers. We run a 'new directions' club for people who are going through something dramatic in their lives and someone who is a trained sculptor and potter has offered to come and do some training, and we are linked in with someone who volunteers for the Cinnamon Trust, which is very useful in supporting people who go into hospital and don't have anyone to look after their pets.

A different strategy was used in Harbertonford, where a stall was held at the Christmas Fayre at which two volunteer drivers were recruited. There are already six volunteers in Harbertonford, a befriender, trustee, two drivers, a member of staff, and volunteer to help out at the coffee morning. It is very difficult to get drivers to take family members in and out of hospital for visits as well as for operations. The grand plan is to create a mini network of Totnes Carers within a community and this pilot has been very successful. It has highlighted the fact that our villages do need a focus on a volunteer group, so the trustees have agreed a three year plan to continue with this as the result of the experiment we've been able to do with the contribution from the Community Benefit Fund. It has been a great success as far as we are concerned. It is hoped to meet more potential volunteers at the Strawberry Fayre on Saturday 4th June.

2.9. Harberton Feofees (United Parochial Charities) *John Hockings*

The Feofees made annual payments of £25 to 16 people in Harbertonford and 16 in Harberton this year. No other donations were made, which is unusual. All of the money paid out comes from interest investments. One of the tasks of the committee is to reinvest this money to keep the same income but this is becoming more and more difficult in the current economic climate. Two Parish Councillors are members of the committee and the new vicar will be invited to the next meeting.

2.10. Harberton Cricket Club *Written report from Chairman Barry Goldsmith*

After receiving the generous grant of £500 from the Parish Council, 2 of our members, Angus Ogilvy Stuart and Tom Heath, attended the Level 2 ECB Cricket Coaching course in the Autumn. They successfully completed the training part of the course and will complete the qualification once they have run coaching sessions for local players during the season monitored by a Harberton CC qualified mentor followed by a final assessment by a representative of the Devon Cricket Board. We also spent £50 on a junior catching/fielding net - very useful for coaching sessions.

During last Summer we ran weekly coaching sessions at our ground on Friday evenings for 3 months. This was well attended by local youngsters and their parents who were encouraged to take part. One of our coaches also ran weekly sessions for year 5 and 6 pupils at Harbertonford Primary School. At present we are in negotiations with KEVICC School to run coaching sessions for their lower school students both at the school and possibly at our ground. We hope to include local youngsters who do not attend KEVICC in this programme. How this will develop will become clearer when term starts after Easter. We hope that these developments will encourage youngsters (and their parents) to become involved in Harberton CC. At present 2 of our talented young players are regularly turning out for our senior team. while others who have passed through our youth development programme are playing league cricket for Dartington and Totnes.

Again many thanks to the Parish Council for your support and encouragement.

2.11. Totnes and Rural Community Bus Association (TARCBA) *Written report from Committee Chair, Simon Harrington*

The new routes adopted by the amalgamated Bob the Bus and Harbourne Shuttle services began end of April 2015. Between May to December 2015 there were 290 passenger journeys on the Thursday morning service. There were 197 passenger journeys for the newly introduced Tuesday morning service, as supported by the Community Benefit Fund. Both services are aimed at the current gap in commercial services between 08.30 and 10.30. A new 16 seater low floor accessible bus will go into service on the Tuesday morning service from April 2016. Private hire to organisations and individuals are up 33% on 2014/15.

Plans for the future include change of status from being an unincorporated to an incorporated organisation. The organisation is seeking for funding to find premises for storage of buses and for admin facilities and routes and timetables will be reviewed (linked to the result of the Totnes centre traffic flow decision). We are grateful to your Council for its support and we are always in need of volunteer drivers and supporters.

3. Harberton Parish Council Chair's report

It has been a relatively quiet year again with no great demonstrations as we had a few years back but there have been quite a lot of changes in personnel with the Parish Council following the election and changes to ward boundaries. We welcomed Cllr John Tucker as our District Council representative on the Parish Council. Councillor Robert Vint continued as the County Council representative. Ginny Davidson and Nuala McDonnell joined at election time and the remaining two unfilled vacancies were filled by Jane Hutchinson and George Waite. David Camp took over as vice chair when John Hockings decided to stand down.

There have also been changes in the District Council with the introduction of the Locality Officers as the main point of info, but John is very efficient at getting through to the District Council on our behalf. The proposed waste transfer station at Hazard raised a number of issues, which subsided after the arrest of the developer. A notable success was the appeal at Belsford Solar Farm which the inspector turned down, following the sterling effort by Shona Duncan and supporters. Also the Town and Parish (TAP) fund application success for making some improvements to the green lanes in the Parish.

Finally the Parish Council boldly acquired the phone box in Harbertonford, without its phone. There has also been a lot of hard work put in by the Neighbourhood Plan committee. Progress has been good and we expect some lively meetings in the short term.

Community Benefit Funds continue to operate. Amongst grants given we have provided grants for 3 gazebos to aid the dog show and they are now available for use for any community groups within the Parish. We also assisted Totnes Caring and the lighting in the Parish Hall in Harberton and there are a few applications to be decided later on at this meeting.

The reports we have had from the associations as part of this meeting seem to be a bit more optimistic than they were last year, last year there was a real struggle in terms of getting support from people and perhaps this has eased a little this year. There are however still money problems everywhere.

Thank you all for coming.

Meeting was closed at 7.30pm