

Devon Air Ambulance Trust
A Community Landing Site for Harberton?
Public Meeting convened by Harberton Parish Council

Wednesday 11th April 2018 7pm

Councillors present: Cllrs Broom, Davidson, J.Hockings, S.Hockings, Williams
 Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT): Toby Russell,
 Public: 35
 Notes: Cat Radford, Parish Clerk

A presentation was given by Toby Russell of Devon Air Ambulance Trust. These notes below are a record of the questions asked by members of the public during and after the presentation, with the responses given.

Question	Response
Who is in control of the lights?	The desk-based HEMS staff (Helicopter Emergency Medical Service) and the helicopter pilots themselves. Lights are controlled by mobile phone: each light has its own operational telephone number.
Where is the (switching) device kept?	It can be near the lights, but normally it would be in the building connected to the distribution board. If the area is in poor signal area, you can connect a boosting aerial.
How does the helicopter know its drift into the wind?	Good question, I'm not a pilot! There is no need for a windsock at the sites.
Are we able to use the lights as well?	Yes. They are a community asset. They come with a switch, so yes, you can turn them on.
Is there any maintenance?	Very low maintenance. <i>The Parish Clerk advised the public that the Parish Council has a maintenance contract with the organisation that installed the column in Harbertonford. The cost to the 2018/19 budget will be £89.95 plus VAT.</i>
Can residents use the site in Harbertonford?	If you needed onward transfer, you might get taken there. You'd probably be taken to the site in Borough park, Totnes. There is a benefit to having a site near to you; e.g. if we land in Harbertonford at midnight and have to get those pilots to you.
There is an ambulance station in Totnes.	You have one ambulance a night in Totnes. If they are sending an air ambulance, they are sending another service as well, not just us.
Comment made about weighing up a change of use of the playing field with the provision of a community landing site.	You would not be changing the use of the field. The site can be taken out of operation at any time by getting in touch with DAAT – e.g. should children be camping on the field for example. The Chair of the Parish Council commented that the Harbertonford Playing Field Association is obliged to let the Parish Council know in advance if any events are likely to take place anyway, and DAAT could be informed at the same time.
What does the helicopter need to land on?	The land is flat enough. Even if the land has been disturbed by cars. This land is perfectly adequate.
Is it likely to become a whole night service at any point?	Our vision is to provide a 24-hour service. We are going to operate until 2am in the next 6 months. Once we've got to 2am, there would be some analysis about whether this would be affordable or cost effective.
Do you have doctors on helicopters?	Yes. We predominantly carry 2 paramedics, often have trauma doctors on board as well through MA course at Plymouth University. We have 6 doctors on rotation both day and night.
Can the air ambulance land anywhere within the day time? (i.e. not on this site)	Yes

What is the hourly operational cost?	We use an annual figure of £5.5m. <i>[Member of the public suggested that it would be appropriate to have a relative cost of operation]</i> We are a charity and as such have no burden on public purse. As long as the board of trustees is satisfied with the costs... I don't have facts of cost per airlift aren't prepared to put a price on life.
Has the South West Ambulance Service established a need for a night landing site in Harberton?	No. They are not selecting sites. <i>Do they think their service is less effective without it?</i> We have done some research alongside SWAS to build up a mental map of landing sites, looking at where we would have sent an aircraft - centres of population from villages to towns. <i>I was interested in whether they had expressed a concern with an ability to provide a service?</i> No. In 2016/17 flew two patients from Harberton in the daytime.
You say you quite often have a doctor on an aircraft. Is it fair to say that you'll have enhanced care from an air ambulance crew?	Yes. We have enhanced paramedics and high-level equipment. In the last few months, we've flown into Harbertonford at night for an road traffic collision (RTC). The paramedics went in a land ambulance with the patient as they had the advanced training.
This is night only. But your ambition is to have 24 hour operations. How does that sit with night flights only here?	Operationally in daylight hours we'll fly anywhere that we want to. If you needed an air ambulance in the daytime, they could fly here, to a field, anywhere. We're just looking for pre-surveyed sites to use in the night time.
Would the air ambulance land within the 50x50 square	On a compact site like this/
The Chair commented that the purpose of the meeting tonight is to give people the opportunity to learn more about the project, to air concerns and ask questions. The Parish Council would like to take a straw poll to get an indication of support. The Parish Council will then go away and discuss at a future meeting, at which point members of the public can speak at the public session at the beginning of that meeting, or write to the Parish Council for their views to be taken into account.	
Can see benefit. But comment that it would be a 'good thing to have' potentially to get to the right place quickly. It is not based on any empirical evidence .	Looking at the data between 2008 to 2011, there were 8 cases that if there had been a night landing site it would have made a difference. I can't tell you we're going to come in x number times of year. You're right, there are a multitude of factors. However, establishing night landing sites gives paramedics the best chance to getting to you as quickly as possible.
Observation: I think there needs to be stressed that there is only one ambulance in Totnes. If that ambulance is busy, you'll have to wait.	
You said you had to provide a green mast in the DNP. Is that an option here?	Yes – if you want one.
I just want to say, listening to these comments, ambulances more under pressure with less funding available. You do such an amazing job and having the opportunity for this service in the village for one light is a no brainer. We'd be mad not to say 'thank you very much'	
There are 8 cases in which the ambulance would have been tasked. Can you give any information about detrimental effect?	No.
Public Comment: I had a heart attack. When the paramedic came out. They couldn't make it. I had to wait half an hour for an ambulance.	
Public Comment: The population is ageing, which increases the likelihood of someone having a life threatening event . I agree with [member of the public above], it's a no brainer.	

Public Comment: We are not talking about a new runway at Heathrow... <i>we need/there needs to be a sense of perspective General sounds of agreement</i>	
Can the lighting for the column be on a sensor?	Lights would be switched on and off using a mobile phone switch. Light would very specifically focused on the centre of the playing field.
Parish Councillor comment: At the end of the day council has to go away and make a decision about this. I thought there would be a lot of complaints and people wouldn't want it. Some people say it costs of lot of money, but if it is your wife, baby, husband you'd want it. It is like an insurance, from my point of view it would be essential to have it. I've been on the Parish council for 40 years because I want to help people and meet people's needs.	
We have a need for lighting in the car park, can we put other lights on it?	If you are putting the trench in (for power supply), you might like to use it. <i>The clerk commented that the application for the column at Harbertonford prohibited use of the column for any other purpose. Should the community wish to use the column for other lighting, this would have to be included within the application. There were some comments of objection from some meeting attendees concerned about light pollution.</i>
How would you like to be notified about the activity taking place on the playing field? Through the Parish Council?	We are aware that there is concern about the issue of camping. If there is a period of time that it is more manageable for the community to say that the site should be out of use (i.e. the months of July/August) the site can be taken offline – any period of time from a few days to a few weeks. Other landing sites elsewhere in the region do this.
Can you have an area for camping and shift landing spot to one end?	The site here is not quite big enough to do that.
Comment from the Chair of the Harbertonford Playing Field Committee: At times there has been fairly impromptu camping on the field with the approval of Playing Field committee. Notifying DAAT could make the process a little more complicated, but having thought about this issue for several months, there are systems that could be put in place: i.e. nominate three different people who could call in. The reason I have abstained tonight is that [a valued member of the playing field committee] is concerned that it is going to change the use. What is clear is that we can use the field, we haven't relinquished control. We have the added facility of a night landing site, that can add to the care of the local residents. I had concerns about it too as don't want to lose control of the playing field – and I want to see the light focused in the right direction.	
Closing comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no requirement for markings on the ground. • The site can be taken offline from three or four days to several weeks. • Any future infrastructure installed would need to maintain an open landing area, so the community would need to consult with DAAT to review any plans (should the landing site remain operational) • Once operational, there would be an ongoing relationship with the landowner (the Parish Council) the tenant (the Harberton Playing Field Association) and user groups. 	

Members of the public were asked to give a show of hands to indicate their view on proposals having heard the presentation and having had the opportunity to ask questions and receive responses. These figures were tallied with those who had given their view as they had left the meeting

Of the 35 people who had attended:

28	Were in support
3	Objected
It was noted that 4 had abstained. Phil Sheardown requested that his abstention was noted for the record.	