

A Community Landing Site for Harberton?

Collated letters of opinion compiled for the meeting of Harberton Parish Council (please note, these are comments received only before 11am on Thursday 5th July 2018. Any further letters received between this time and the date of the meeting will be collated and tabled).

Date	Name/Address	Message
21/03/17	<i>All names and addresses have been redacted for reasons of privacy</i>	<p>Hi</p> <p>Our recent minutes from this week's HPFA meeting for information.</p> <p>Thanks for your recent e-mail re clarification from DAAT about their proposals as regards HPF's use as a night landing site. As you will see from our minutes we also had extensive discussion around this issue and concluded that we did not support the proposal (it would have an impact and restrict our using the field as a community resource to a greater or lesser extent) but would not stand in the way if there was overriding support from the community.</p> <p>Another point to clear up - , our newest HPFA member and a local doctor included comments in the e-mail we forwarded regarding the defibrillator as well as the DAA proposal. We hadn't actually discussed it at a HPFA meeting as we consider it a 'village' matter rather than an issue for the HPFA.</p> <p>all the best,</p> <p>Extract from minutes 21st March 2017 (before the public meeting was held in April 2018)</p> <p><u>Devon Air Ambulance landing site in field</u></p> <p>The answers to some of our queries put to <i>redacted</i> of Devon Air Ambulance were discussed. It appears that occasional use of the Field for events and weddings would not pose a problem - DAA would just need to be informed in advance. He has said that ad hoc use of the field, i.e. for children wanting to camp at short notice, would however cause a problem.</p> <p>A trim trail or the possibility of planting orchard trees in the field should not affect any DAA activity as both would be around the perimeter of the site. He was not able to respond to requests for data - night-flying for DAA is a new initiative</p> <p>We also discussed thoughts on the project from our 2 local doctors, <i>Redacted</i> and <i>Redacted</i></p> <p>After much discussion, the consensus of opinion was:-</p> <p>Use of Harberton Playing Field as a community resource would be restricted to some extent by the DAA proposal. HPFA considers that DAA fulfils an incredibly valuable role but feels that it cannot support the proposal of using Harberton Playing Field as a night landing site. However we unanimously agreed that should the community as a whole be overridingly in favour of the scheme HPFA would not stand in its way.</p>
12/04/18		<p>Dear</p> <p>My wife and I would like to express our support for the siting of a Community helipad in Harberton on any area deemed suitable.</p> <p>With thanks</p>
04/06/18		<p>Dear Harberton Parish Councillors</p> <p>Devon Air Ambulance proposal for a night-landing site in Harberton</p> <p>I am writing to express some questions I have in relation to this proposal. I could not get to the re-arranged public meeting on 11 April and, unfortunately, will be out of Harberton on the evening of 12 June.</p> <p>I fully support people needing urgent medical help getting that help in as timely and effective a way as possible. At first glance, allowing DAA to create a night-time landing site on the playing field seems a positive contribution to that aim. However, on closer examination, I believe that agreeing to this installation will have a negative impact on the village with no measurable gain for our unwell villagers and visitors. You will already have a summary of key facts from evaluation and research about cost and benefit of this service, in its own right and in relation to land-based ambulance assistance. My points below are additional to that:</p>

		<p>1. The financial contribution to the capital cost required from the village could compete with already-existing needs, such as the Playing Field, the Community Land Trust, the Parish Hall, the Church repairs and improvements programme and the Cricket Club. Even if the cost were to come from a grant source (such as the LIBOR fund) that would prevent that money being applied for to support already-existing causes dear to the hearts of villagers, and proven to be beneficial and well-used</p> <p>2. There will also be on-going maintenance costs. The same concerns arise as in relation to the initial capital costs. If, for example, the Parish Council were to take on the maintenance costs this would reduce what is available, from an already small pot, for other causes</p> <p>3. For at least two decades village children have been able to use the playing field for over-night camping sessions. This has allowed safe but exciting adventure opportunities, often with little notice. Permission is sought from the playing field secretary and parents must support of course. It is unclear how this could continue if the DAA were able to land at night – would children not be allowed to camp?</p> <p>I do hope you will consider these points before making a decision. I have also heard it said that the village has given its opinion on the night-landing proposal – at the April meeting where just one person voted against. Might I suggest that that meeting cannot be taken as a vote of informed opinion by the village? The people at that meeting did not have the information now made available to you as councillors; the villagers were not made aware that the consultation meeting would take a vote; no abstention option was offered; and people who could not get to the meeting have not been invited to vote in another way (by proxy, by paper, online). If the 'view' of the village is to be ascertained, then more would need to be done to ensure that all villagers can take part knowing the import that will be attached to any vote taken. Thank you for reading this, and all best wishes for your deliberations</p>
07/06/18		<p>Ladies and Gentlemen,</p> <p>Re: Proposed Devon Air Ambulance night landing site on Harberton Playing Field</p> <p>We understand that Harberton Playing Field is only just large enough as a potential night landing site for DAA, meaning that almost the whole flat mown area would need to be kept clear on a daily basis, or inform DAA otherwise.</p> <p>Our Playing Field is an area for recreation and play for all, but primarily it is somewhere that children can do their own thing safely, freely and imaginatively, close to home in a welcoming environment. It is somewhere for independent unstructured outdoor play.</p> <p>The flat mown area has always been a play space with no pre-defined function so that it can be used in any way.</p> <p>From ^{our property} with its view down over the Playing Field we can see that there is a small lightweight goal being moved around to different positions on the flat area. Would this be in the way of a helicopter landing? Would there need to be a check that the area is clear at the end of each day? From 1989 to about 2013 there were permanent goal posts, kicking a ball around being a favourite activity. When the last set of quite expensive junior goal posts reached the end of their safe life they were not replaced as there wasn't the number of children of the age to use them in the village, but now there are a number of youngsters again and they appear to be once more playing with a goal. The current goal is small, portable and presently on the proposed landing site.</p> <p>Ours is not a sports ground that is used for a set purpose at set times and has plenty of space, it is a small recreational and play space that can be used freely. Before making a decision we would expect the Parish Council to be certain of how the two functions – a 'night time' DAA landing site and a free play environment - can be successfully married without limiting the recreation and play primary function of the Playing Field. Goal posts is an example of a possible problem to overcome. It was noticeable to ^{Redacted} the straw vote that, although the majority voted in favour of the landing site, the current Playing Field committee, who look after the area and are therefore possibly better informed, voted against.</p> <p>With regards</p>
05:55 14/06/18		<p>I would like to register my support for this proposal. Having a helicopter landing site for use by Devon air ambulance or other service in an emergency is a real benefit to the community.</p>

16:24 14/06/18	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>I would like to express my complete support for the proposed night time landing area at the Harberton playing fields.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p>
11:28 23/06/18	<p>Hello</p> <p>With our fine view down over the Playing Field from [our property] we see the daily comings and goings. The following observation is just FYI as we feel the HPC, and indeed most people who voted in the straw poll at the DAA information evening, may have the impression that the Playing Field is a big flat empty space with plenty of room to be used as a night time DAA landing site. Its not as simple as that.</p> <p>In a recent letter to the HPC, my husband and I mentioned how the Playing Field has been used for football and usually had goal posts.</p> <p>Over the past few weeks since we've been thinking about this we've seen a children's plastic goal, traffic cones and a large tyre left out on the field (being moved around a bit) and now there are two childrens' goals (one of which I think belongs to HPFA and the other to someone in the village with kids), and traffic cones with the large cones making a wider goal that's being used by some older lads/men. This is just how we expect the field to be used and are wondering how having play/sport objects left out might affect it being used as a DAA night landing site.</p>
23:23 30/06/18	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I fully support the helicopter landing pad on harberton playing field and feel that it would be so beneficial to the people of the village.</p> <p>Many thanks .</p>
20:32 01/07/18	<p>Hi</p> <p>I am writing in to give my full support to the helicopter landing sight proposed for Harberton playing field. If needed, this could save lives and I think it is a fantastic opportunity for the residents of Harberton to have such a wonderful service.</p> <p>Many thanks</p>
09:47 02/07/18	<p>Hello I support helicopter landing site, we live at REDACTED</p>
09:49 02/07/18	<p>Hello I fully support the Helicopter landing site at Harberton playing field.</p> <p>I live at REDACTED</p>
09:56 02/07/18	<p>Hello My name is , I'd like to inform you, I fully support the Helicopter landing site in Harberton, playing fields. I live at REDACTED</p> <p>many thanks</p>
20:25 02/07/18	<p>I fully support the Helicopter landing pad at the playing field as i feel it is a must in a rural village, and recent events have just shown that you never know when you might need it. For the little impact that it might have every now and again i really don't see any reason for any objection.</p> <p>Many thanks</p>
11:23 3/7/12	<p>Dear</p> <p>I want to express my strong support for the helicopter landing on Harberton playing field. It's a monumentally vital service and what a privilege it would be to have its access on our doorstep.</p>

		Kind regards
18:58 3/7/18		<p>Hello cat</p> <p>I am emailing to give my fully support to the helicopter landing site at Harberton playing field.</p> <p>Many thanks</p>
19:22 3/7/18		<p>Hello</p> <p>I want to give my full support to the helicopter landing site proposed for Harberton playing field. What a great opportunity for our village to have such a service.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
22:03 4/7/18		<p><u>NIGHT TIME LANDING SITE FOR DEVON AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE</u></p> <p>Can I add my concern to your correspondence on this question?</p> <p>My major concern with using the Harberton Playing Field as a night time landing site is its other community uses. Unable to 'plan' emergency landings, there will a temptation to limit community use as a playing field, certainly by night, for camping - I have had foreign visitors camp there and local children use it also; for overnight preparation for other community events; even for evening parking for village events. This is first and foremost a community playing field. I don't think it's a suitable site for a landing place, without even considering my wider doubts on efficacy of the Air Ambulance Service.</p> <p>***</p> <p>It is, no doubt, seen as unpopular to criticise what looks at a very superficial glance to be a wonderful service. However, some research into the actual statistics balanced against costs and real uses of service - so seductive as a fund-raising/ vote-clinching subject - shows the underlying economics are hidden and raise a lot of questions.</p> <p>Our local ambulance stations are considerably closer than the Air Ambulance station. Were we in the middle of Dartmoor, there might be an argument to be made. In Harberton, half a mile off the main road system, I believe the loss or disruption to the use of our playing field is too high a price to pay. <u>If you wish to approve a landing site, this is not it.</u></p> <p>***</p> <p>On a remote western Hebridean Isle, I had to call an ambulance to a person who suffered some sort of fit. It is interesting that the land ambulance - using several miles of single track roads - to which they were well used - arrived well BEFORE the hastily scrambled helicopter that flew from Glasgow (this, on a fine sunny day), and a fraction of the expense of course. Medical help was efficiently given, by the helicopter crew as it happened, and the patient evacuated in the helicopter, to be discharged about 65 miles away, soon afterwards (as are most helicopter 'rescues' when you research the statistics). I believe the land ambulance crew would have given first aid and advice as to care, and quietly returned to their local station. I believe that the helicopter crew, having flown 60 or 70 miles, felt bound to make a bigger issue of the 'rescue' (that wasn't a 'rescue'). The drama actually added stress to the whole situation: someone had to accompany the patient (now recovering); they had difficulties getting back to the island and their group from a 'rescue' many miles away (after all, they hadn't gone prepared) and were stressed by the helicopter ride, during which little comfort or care could be efficiently provided, unlike in the back of a land ambulance.</p> <p>If the Parish Council would like to be seen to improve ambulance services to Harberton, they could usefully lobby for changes to be made to the satellite navigation systems of utility vehicles that have caused ambulances to become 'stuck' in the lower lane to the village square and beside the Church House Inn and</p>

		<p>frequently cause confusion and lose precious time looking for addresses in the village centre. A bit of effort here would considerably improve services and speed of help for our community!</p> <p>Yours faithfully</p>
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Collated letters of opinion compiled for the meeting of Harberton Parish Council COMMENTS MADE after 5th July

Date	Name/Address	Message
06/07/18		<p>Dear</p> <p>We would both like to register a positive vote in favour of a Devon Air Ambulance site in Harberton. Please add our names to any list of villagers in favour of creating the site.</p>
06/07/18		<p>Please pass on my support for a night landing site / as rural and isolated as we are at Belsford with only one road in and out and a very steep one at that which gets easily cut off in inclement weather the closeness of an air ambulance site is very appealing and I think life saving . The issues of night lighting and pole seem small compromises in comparison to lives or limbs saved</p>
08/07/18		<p>Dear Harberton Parish Councillors</p> <p>Devon Air Ambulance proposal for a night-landing site in Harberton, and their response to previous concerns raised</p> <p>I think you will have the letter I wrote to you on 4 June. I would like to add some further reflections now that I have been able to see the two responses from DAAT to the concerns raised by another Harberton resident.</p> <p>First – I would like to say how much I appreciate The Clerk's care in making sure that the full information is on the website and in emailing me to point out when it was there. I would also like to add that my motivation in expressing concern about this proposal is totally about whether it would bring more benefits than disbenefits. I am the same as everyone else, including our councilors, in wanting anything that will improve or protect the health of any and all of our community. And, while I am involved in fundraising in the parish for other causes I would like to assure you that this really isn't an influence on my thoughts about the DAAT proposal – I am involved in fundraising for several local and national organisations and there is no reason not to have more local causes – so long as they do make a positive difference.</p> <p>And this remains my concern – that the DAAT proposal for a night-time landing site would not add benefit to our village, our community nor visitors here. But it will add complication, take away existing amenity and cost money over time.</p> <p>In reading DAAT's responses to the Harberton resident's concerns I can see that DAAT have tried to cover the points raised by the Harberton resident, and I appreciate that. But there are just too many instances in which they don't to give me enough comfort to allow support for their proposal. They often avoid answering the points raised. Instead: at times: 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. they appear to avoid responding – in their letter to Rotary, p2 para 7 they say that the research referred to is out of date, but they provide nothing more recent that would support their claims 2. they don't give information they say they have – in their letter to Rotary, p2 par 6 they say 'Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to provide a comparison to land ambulance outcomes as SWASFT do not review their patient treatment and outcomes in the same way that Devon Air Ambulance does.' But they do not then write about their outcomes, only the landings and treatments 3. they divert from the true focus – in their letter to the PC they give a graphical representation of their 2017 activity, but it shows no information about night-time landings and no information about actual outcomes for patients of DAAT's attendance. These, I would suggest, are the things that matter – not how active you are but how effective you are. In that context, I was disappointed in DAAT's long explanation of the recent, daytime, attendance they gave in Harberton. Because it doesn't relate to a night-time landing. I really do feel it is there to catch our emotional response – one any of us might have but which is not the best basis on which to make important decisions 4. they refuse to address some of the concerns raised – in the penultimate para of letter to PC they say 'Although there are other errors and inaccuracies within the letter, rather than go through them in turn we are happy for the service we provide to be considered on the basis of how it serves your community.' Why did they not respond in these letters?

		<p>I would like to add two final points to the above and my previous letter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should we also take account of the potential environmental impact of this proposal – of helicopter flights versus land ambulance and the impact on carbon levels? • I do have a concern about the source of funds for DAAT's expansion of night-time landing sites. Money is always helpful but where it comes from really matters too. If I have understood correctly, the government made a large grant to DAAT for the rollout of these sites from LIBOR fines. Instead of this money going into our under-resourced NHS (we now only have three land ambulances in our district) politicians decided to set up a separate grant scheme that took focus away from their NHS responsibilities and instead gave them good PR. We should all be wary of engaging in this practice of politicians making funding decisions directly and circumventing their civil service advisers which was such a disaster in the Kids Company case. <p>As before, thank you for reading this, and all best wishes for your deliberations</p>
08/07/18		<p>Dear [redacted]</p> <p>I have read all the comments on the Parish Council website and attended the presentation by DAAT at the Parish Hall but wanted express my opinion regarding this scheme.</p> <p>I am a supporter of DAA and consider that their daytime emergency flights have been, and continue to be, invaluable and save many lives. However I consider that siting a night-landing facility on Harberton Playing Field is unnecessary and a huge waste of money that could be better spent on providing more land ambulances and paramedics.</p> <p>My reasons for this view:-</p> <p>Harberton has a very small population Harbertonford, 2 miles away, has a night-landing site and some Harberton properties would be as near to that as to Harberton Playing Field Harbertonford is 5 minutes away by vehicle, especially at night when the roads are quiet I believe 1 or 2 sites are planned for Totnes Many of the incidents which benefit from Air Ambulance intervention are far less likely to happen at night eg equestrian emergencies, watersport incidents, agricultural accidents, sports injuries etc. Even road traffic accidents are presumably much less frequent after dark due to fewer vehicles on the road. Erecting a light tower is expensive and each DAA shout is many many times more costly than using land vehicles (I realise the Community Fund would be used for the tower) In mid-Winter flying after dark could mean cover from 1730 to 2200 (soon midnight), but nothing from midnight till say 0730 in the morning. In mid-summer it doesn't get dark till almost 2200 so at present it would make little difference having a 'night service'. When extended until midnight there's 2 hours extra cover over the present service.</p> <p>Perhaps my biggest problem is that the free use of our Playing Field for the enjoyment of our Village Community would be compromised if it became a night-landing site, necessitating lots of restrictions and extra admin.</p>
08/07/18		<p>Dear Harberton Parish Councillors</p> <p>Proposal from Devon Air Ambulance re night-landing site in Harberton</p> <p>I can't be at the meeting on 10th July when you will be making decisions about the above, so I'm writing to express my views about the proposal.</p> <p>I attended the DAAT briefing meeting in April and voted then in favour of the proposal (on balance I felt there could have been useful benefits for the village in extending the lighting cabling for use in the car park), but I wasn't impressed by the inadequate responses to the questions I asked.</p> <p>Since then I have read the paper from the Harberton resident which is now shown on your website. I have been persuaded by the various sources of evidence listed there and now question whether a night-time helicopter ambulance service can bring</p>

	<p>substantial benefits in patient outcomes. I have also read the DAAT response to this which sadly doesn't fully address the issues raised. It criticises the Harberton resident's document for being out of date on one point but fails to cite any contemporary sources on that which might refute what has been said; it dismisses many of the points in the rest of the paper without serious comment; and it fails to show any evidence of how having a night landing facility could enhance patient care outcomes for Harberton residents. Instead it makes broad statements about the general usefulness of Devon Air Ambulance, which is not in dispute. Here are my reasons why I don't think that Harberton Parish Council should approve this proposal for a night landing site in Harberton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no empirical evidence that it would make any significant difference to patient outcomes. More generally, their proposals and responses lack any defined outcomes for patients, and focus instead more on their activities. • Given there is already a night landing site in nearby Harbertonford and that DAAT always works in collaboration with the land ambulance service, an air evacuation via Harbertonford would be similarly time effective in the rare instance of a night-time evacuation of a Harberton resident. • For at least the last twenty years, children of the village have been able to enjoy informally camping overnight on the Harberton Playing Field. Making this important experience impossible or difficult for future generations would be a great loss. In making its decision the Parish Council will need to address how informal camping might continue. • The ongoing cost of supporting a night landing site would fall to the local community. This may not require very large amounts of money but would still use up local fundraising resources and/or grant aid sources which would then not be available for other village causes. <p>I would like to think that in your decision-making you would be more influenced by clear evidence than by what feels good or popular. I wish you all the very best in your deliberations. Yours sincerely,</p>
09/07/18	<p>Dear All,</p> <p>I am keenly interested but remain neutral as to whether or not DAAT is granted flying permission for night landings on the Harberton Playing Field.</p> <p>I believe that if permission is granted and put in place, the one longterm visible change will be a 10 metre pole with lights, and likely to be painted green.</p> <p>It has been made very clear that DAAT will be informed of booked overnight landing obstructions such as a wedding reception marquee or other booked activity like camping or car parking intruding on helicopter landing space. Such events will be logged in good time to their Dispatcher.</p> <p>However, there are sure to be occasions when items of play and the like are innocently left out on the field, or youngsters or others make camp without booking. Thus presenting an unexpected hazard for an incoming helicopter. I would not subscribe to a rota going out especially to check the field for debris every single nightfall.</p> <p>Best wishes, <i>Chair of Playing Field Committee</i></p>