

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 9th March 2021. This was a remote meeting (video and telephone conference call) of the Parish Council held on the digital platform Zoom.

In Attendance

Harbertonford Councillors

Cllr Beamish: Present by phone
Cllr Bowley: Present by video link
Cllr Hambly: Present by video link
Cllr Janes: Present by phone
Cllr McDonnell: Present by phone
Cllr Waite: Present by video link

Harberton Councillors

Cllr Camp: Present by video link
Cllr Croft: Present by video link
Cllr Hockings: Present by phone
Cllr Phillips: Present by video link
Cllr Williams: Present by video link
VACANCY

Others

D.Cllr McKay: Present by video link
C.Cllr Hodgson: Present by video link
Clerk Ms Radford: Present by video link
Members of the Public: 2

Public Session

No members of the public wished to address the meeting.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** No apologies
2. **Declaration of Interests**
 - 2.1 Register of Interests: Cllrs were reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
 - 2.2 No interests were declared on items on the agenda.
3. **Reports** The County and District Councillor had circulated reports ahead of the meeting. The following issues were raised:
 - 3.1 County Councillor (C.Cllr)
 - 3.1.1 Road configuration at Harbertonford It was reported that as no additional funds are forthcoming the Harbertonford project has been deferred.
 - 3.1.2 Tree felling on A381 stopping short of the bend Following a query at a previous meeting, the C.Cllr could now report that the vegetation works were halted to avoid a dangerous situation with the surface of the road. Works uncovered a 40mm drop in the road surface. Resurfacing works are scheduled in which a meter of carriageway width will be regained.
 - 3.1.3 Devon County Highways response to issues raised Flooding at Gerston Cross was raised. The C.Cllr agreed to follow this up with Highways and put a response in writing on behalf of the Parish Council to comment that residents are unsatisfied as responses are inadequate. It was proposed to request a site meeting as councillors have a view on a logical solution.
 - 3.1.4 Potholes It was commented that some works have been undertaken but major pot holes appear to have been excluded.
 - 3.1.5 Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) The C.Cllr had circulated the annual report for TRAYE with accounts. There was a query on the accounts, asking for more detail on the £3,581.92 spending on "Monese top ups (supported by receipts)". The C.Cllr reported that the COVID Prompt Response Fund from Devon County Council (DCC) supported young people to access refurbished laptops at a cost of £80 each. The Monese Top Ups were specifically loaded to support that project. Providing laptops enabled young people to access TRAYE activities online and to also do their schoolwork.
 - 3.1.6 Donated Cookbooks The C.Cllr reiterated a call for cook books to distribute with food boxes, particularly cook books written for children. It was confirmed that food boxes are personalised, and the cookbooks would be distributed according to the food preferences of the families who benefit.
 - 3.2 District Councillor (D.Cllr)
 - 3.2.1 Accident on the Zebra Crossing The D.Cllr highlighted the work he is doing to follow up accidents that have taken place on the crossing with the relevant authorities.
 - 3.2.2 Speed Watch The D.Cllr commented that the speed watch initiative should be revived once restrictions are lifted.
 - 3.2.3 Thanks for report The D.Cllr was thanked for providing a written report in advance. Cllrs found this to be very helpful.
4. **Minutes** After making amendments **it was RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council 9th February 2021 as an accurate record.
5. **Report Matters Arising from the Minutes** for information only
 - 5.1 Harberton Devon Air Ambulance clearance area sign Ongoing
 - 5.2 Highways Issues Having given a short verbal summary of headline issues at the last meeting, the Clerk had forwarded full written advice from Devon County Highways (Highways) to all councillors including responses to Traffic Speeds at East Leigh Hamlet; slow sign on blind summit near Dundridge; road width signage on Tristford Road; Screw Lane flooding; Snow Warden scheme; Water/Ice on Woodland Road; new fence limiting vision of splay at Higher Dorsely Barton; Stop Sign/road markings at Tristford Road – Vicarage Ball

junction. It was reported that the interactive signs on the A381 at Harbertonford are not working. The Clerk was asked to raise this with Highways. It was reported that the Snow Wardens are getting weather updates from Highways.

- 5.3 Overhanging branch at Harberton Playing Field Cllr Williams and Camp reported that having a closer look the job is more complex than it appeared before. The trees are now growing around the BT cables and the bank makes access difficult. It was agreed to request three quotes to have pruning works undertaken by a professional. Cllr Camp offered to meet prospective contractors on site if necessary. It was agreed to bring this back as an agenda item at a future meeting.
- 5.4 Marquee in Harberton Square It was reported that other cllrs had been approached by a member of the public (MoP) with concerns that parking and access through Harberton Square is difficult due to the marquee and seating outside the pub. The outgoing Chair had agreed to raise this with the landlord. **ACTION: Cllr Camp** agreed to visit the landlord.

6. Planning

- 6.1 Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions The following decision of the planning authority was noted: 3865/20/HHO & 3866/20/LBC Householder application for proposed repair, replacement and erection of walls including a lean-to store at Sampsons Barn Main Road Harbertonford **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**
- 6.2 Receive a report on enforcement cases Cllrs were informed that the number of items on the caseload has reduced.

7. Monthly reports

- 7.1 Finance Committee update No update
- 7.2 Neighbourhood Plan update No update
- 7.3 Community Land Trust update No update
- 7.4 Clerk's update No update

8. Harberton Parish Parks and Playing Fields

- 8.1 Harberton Playing Field Association (HPFA) A virtual meeting has been arranged between the outgoing and incoming committees on 23rd March led by the chair of HPFA and hosted by the Clerk in order to discuss ongoing park management.
- 8.2 Harbertonford Play Park
- 8.2.1 Consider February 2021 inspection report & update on reporting process Cllrs had received the inspection report showing damage to one of the swings. Cllr Bowley agreed to visit the park and remove the swing and to provide some costs for replacement. The Clerk had been in touch with the South Hams District Council (SHDC) officer to ask for more guidance on training Localities Officers receive prior to undertaking inspections in order to establish whether comments made on reports are advisory in nature, or if issues are being flagged as an unacceptable risk. The officer responded that there is no guidance as such, that the exercise is more about record keeping (for insurance and safety purposes) and flagging up obvious/major issues. Notwithstanding it would be expected that Localities officers take into account risk/severity and will make equipment safe/unusable where necessary or flag up defects requiring immediate attention. The onus is on the Locality officer to clearly indicate whether a defect is urgent and requiring immediate attention or advisory. A link to routine inspection guidance from ROSPA was provided. The Clerk reported undertaking further reading on 'managing risk in play' proposed that the new committees for both play areas consider producing a 'risk benefit assessment' to provide a framework within which monthly reports can be considered for action.
- 8.1.1 Update on long terms plans for the park Cllrs were informed that a productive meeting had been held on 16th February with interested parties to consider an approach to moving forward. The group discussed holding a consultation process with the community to agree an approach. The D.Cllr had identified some potential funding from LiveWest however it was agreed that a vision is needed for the park. There was a general sense amongst people in the meeting that the green space is a valuable asset to lots of different groups in the community; it's not just a play space for children or a safe space for young people to hang out, but also the space being used by people doing circuit training, yoga etc and could be valued by the community as a haven for wildlife. Meeting attendees had offered to do some necessary maintenance jobs, prune fruit trees, encourage others to come forward to help, and to ask Sustainable Harbourne Valley members to help with hedge laying. Members offered to share information about funding opportunities and write bids. Cllr Beamish reported that a number of residents had joined him to remove the cut willow from the park.

There was some discussion on arrangements for grass cutting, as access is via school grounds, out of hours access is challenging. Solutions discussed included using the same contractor as the school to cut the playground, requesting access out of school time, or replacing one of the fencing panels with a wider gated access for a ride on mower.

Cllrs Bowley, Hambly and Phillips would like to be included in future correspondence and can offer practical help to the park.

9. **Meeting arrangements after 7th May 2021** The Clerk had circulated guidance from Devon Association of Local Councils with regard to resumption of face to face meetings as the legislation to hold virtual meetings expires on 7th May 2021. The Clerk had made enquiries on the availability of meeting venues in the Parish. It was reported that the Committee Room at Harberton Parish Hall would be too small to hold meetings and maintain appropriate social distancing requirements and the school may not be available. The Parish Hall committee has not decided when it will reopen and the main hall would not be available until 8:15pm. The Clerk has made a request to the Village hall, which is expected to be available, and the committee will consider offering a slightly reduced price.

As no venues will be open until June, **it was RESOLVED** to hold both the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council on 4th May 2021. The Clerk will liaise with the internal auditor to see if it would be possible for the internal audit to be completed in time to enable the Parish Council to approve the end of year accounts before the 7th May.

In following discussion on the subject some Parish Councils are expecting to continue virtual meetings, despite expiration of the legislation, arguing that online meetings will be more democratic as public attendance would not be limited in number. The Clerk will be attending a meeting of local clerks to discuss varying approaches to bring a number of options back to the Parish Council at April and May meetings.

10. **Parish Councillor Vacancy for the Harberton Ward** Cllrs were informed that the notice to advertise the vacancy was posted on the 24th February 2021. Unless ten or more electors of the Harberton Ward, on or before the 16th March 2021, submit a request in writing for an election to be held, the Parish Council can take steps to fill the vacancy by co-option.

11. Correspondence

- 11.1 Totnes and parishes boundary trees The Parish Council and the five other parishes that border Totnes have been approached with a suggestion to plant and protect at least 2 oak trees on the parish boundary as part of a project to restore a wildlife corridor, respond to changes in climate and enhance the environment. The oaks will be donated. It was reported that an area at Stancombe has been identified subject to permission by the landowners. Approaches have been made by interested parties to landowners in the area. **ACTION: Cllr Camp** agreed to liaise with the planning team and the County Councillor to get trees planted on the boundary. The D.Cllr commented that he has introduced an idea that everyone in the South Hams has a tree ascribed to them and planted within the district.
- 11.2 A Balanced Budget Despite a Challenging Year *For information* Cllrs were informed by press release that SHDC has agreed a balanced budget that puts money aside for both services and key issues, which are important to the District's residents. This includes the Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity work, post COVID Recovery and Renewal Plans and funding for the Community Volunteer Services, capital works programme including disabled facility grants. Seasonal Localities Team posts have been created to ensure that the local area is kept environmentally clean and COVID safe over the holiday season. Council tax will increase by £5 per household per year to balance the budget.
- 11.3 New Recycling Service - Information for you to share *For information* Cllrs were informed that a campaign to raise awareness of the new recycling service was launched on 22nd Feb with roll out commencing on 8th March area by area. New recycling containers will replace recycling bags and food waste will be collected weekly. Publicity materials have been shared with the Harberton Village Circular and Harbertonford Village Life.
- 11.4 Thank you letters *For information* The Parish Council had received thanks from Citizens Advice South Hams and from St Andrews PCC for grants.
- 11.5 Covid Winter Grant Scheme *For information* Cllrs were informed that Citizens Advice Devon is working on behalf of DCC to distribute a fund supporting vulnerable households with the cost of fuel or food due to the continuing hardships caused by Covid-19. The fund can provide vouchers, top up smart meters online or even make payments to online fuel accounts. Vouchers to the value of £28 or £80 can be granted, depending on the clients' circumstance.
- 11.6 Voting safely at the elections *For information* Cllrs were informed by press release that SHDC is making preparations to help residents vote safely at the upcoming elections. Registered electors can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone to vote on your behalf, by a proxy vote. Those wishing to vote by post are encouraged to register to do so now, using the Electoral Commission website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voting-person-post-or-proxy/voting-post
- 11.7 Land Claim This item was not discussed as the correspondence had been withdrawn by the member of public who sent it.
- 11.8 Prevention measures still vital with highest case numbers in Exeter, Mid Devon and West Devon, more community testing rolls out and schools prepare to reopen for all students *For information* It was noted that the C.Cllr had forwarded the bulletin to all cllrs, which reminds residents that whilst the vaccine roll out to priority groups is helping people see a return to normality, we are not there yet. Community testing is still vital and more testing sites are being rolled out across the county. Confirmed cases of Coronavirus are falling in Devon, with the highest case numbers amongst 20 – 39 year olds. Clinically vulnerable residents are being added to a 'shielded patient' list who are being contacted to let them know what local support is available while they are following shielding guidance. The bulletin includes updates on return to schools, the roadmap out of lockdown and that people with learning disabilities will now be prioritised for vaccination, new free Psychological First

Aid courses on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people affected by coronavirus, or other emergencies or crisis situations.

- 11.9 New recycling service to help lower carbon footprint *For information* Cllrs were informed by news release that under the new SHDC recycling scheme food waste treated in Devon, while garden waste will be composted locally for use on farms within the South Hams. Mixed garden and food waste was processed together in Oxfordshire previously. Keeping the resources local will have the added benefit of lowering the carbon footprint associated with transporting the waste across country, as well as the garden waste being put to good use on South Hams farmland. There was some discussion on expectations for roll out. The scheme has been tested and proven across other local authorities. The purpose is to increase recycling to benefit the environment, not an exercise in money saving.
- 11.10 DALC Newsletter #09 2021 *For information* Cllrs were advised that DALC has entered into a new partnership with Parish Online, making the mapping service available to members at a discount.

12. Finance

- 12.1 Notice of income and expenditure since last meeting.
- 12.1.1 01/03/21 Deposit £10: Annual ground rent from Harberton Parish Hall
- 12.2 To consider payments as per the March 2021 payment schedule
- 12.2.1 Payment 2103_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd March 2021 includes Clerk March salary at £441.31 and Neighbourhood Plan March salary at £50.92 = £492.23 no VAT
- 12.2.2 Payment 2103_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk expenses claim dated 4th March 2021 includes mileage at £2.34, Zoom subscription reimbursement at £14.39, Mobile phone credit at £5.00, Broadband costs at £7.50, plus Quarter 3 overtime payment 3 of 3 noted on payslip at £145.12 = £174.35 no VAT
- 12.2.3 Payment 2103_3 to Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement Project as a donation to activities in the Parish = £500
- 12.2.4 Payment 2103_4 to Harberton Playing Field Association for Community Benefit Fund Grant: Refunding invoice to paint play equipment= £374 no VAT
- 12.2.5 Payment 2103_5 to Community Heartbeat Trust for Harberton and Harbertonford Defibrillator annual support for period 01/08/2021 - 01/08/2025 and annual training seminars = £1120 no VAT

13. **E-Circulars** for information, including Citizens Advice South Hams, Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency, Devon Communities Together, Devon County Council Community News Round-up, Devon Home Choice, Emergency Planning newsletter, Harberton Village Email, Healthwatch Devon, Information Commissioners Office, Public Sector Executive, Rural Services Network, SLCC Membership, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust.

14. Matters at the discretion of the Chairman: Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

- 14.1 Sustainable Harbourne Valley (SHV) Update Cllrs were informed that SHV has launched as a small charity with over 40 official members and a new website. The group is regularly meeting by Zoom and has lots of interesting projects in the pipeline.
- 14.2 District and County Councillor written reports The D.Cllr and C.Cllr were thanked again for providing a written report ahead of the meeting.
- 14.3 Harberton Stream at Ford Farm It was reported that the stream at Ford Farm has silted up. It was commented that it would be appropriate to leave maintenance until the amount of water goes down so to help visibility when using a digger and bucket and to ensure that the sand does not get washed down the drainage pipe. It was agreed to ask for support from a local volunteer who has provided regular assistance in the past. It was commented that the stream was cleared out in the autumn.
- 14.4 Branch in passing place between Rolster Bridge Cross and Monkey Oak Barn It was commented that a large branch was placed within the passing place blocking its usefulness as a passing area. The issue had been reported by a MOP via the DCC website but this had not resulted in any action. **ACTION: The Clerk** agreed to follow up with highways.

15. **Date of next ordinary meeting** Tuesday 13th April 2021