

Harberton Parish Annual Parish Meeting

7.00pm on Tuesday 12th April 2022 at Harbertonford Village Hall

In attendance: Cllr Peter Beamish (also Dashing Devon Dukes), Mike Bishop (Harbertonford Football Club) Cllr David Camp, Laurence Dixon (late arrival), Cllr Douglas Hambly, Frances Harvey (St Peters Church PCC, Harbertonford, Feofees, Harbertonford Christmas Tree project), C.Cllr Jacqui Hodgson (and representative of Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement project) , John Mills (Harbertonford Football Club). D.Cllr John McKay (late arrival), Cllr Tania Paine, Cllr Nick Williams.

Cllr Apologies: Cllrs Chris Bowley, Emma Croft, John Hockings, Steve Hockings (also Harberton Playing Field Association), Cllr George Waite.

Invitee apologies: Jean Blackler (Harbertonford Village Hall), Liz Fearn (Harberton Parish Hall), Anne Burns (Harbertonford CE Primary School), Jill Powell (Harberton and Harbertonford History Society), Jane Hutchinson (Harberton and Harbertonford Defibrillator), Chris Alton (Sustainable Harbourne Valley)

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received 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** No report.
 - 2.2. **Harbertonford Playground Committee**

There was no formal report as there is still no office 'committee', but it was commented that there has been support in bringing the park back to life with recent collaboration with Sustainable Harbourne Valley (SHV) and the planting of a new fruit corner within the year which also involved the school. Some parents have been involved in conversations about what next for the park and helped begin removal of the rotten equipment. Parish Councillors have cleaned the park and undertaken some maintenance jobs.
 - 2.3. **Harbertonford Allotment Society** *A written report was provided by Plot Supervisors Linda Summers and Clare Middleton.*
 - 1) **Comings and Goings:** At the end of last year all of the plots were fully subscribed, but for a variety of reasons we have sadly said "Goodbye" to Phil & Cathy Dixon, Simon & Carmen Wishey, Jane Baldock, Kate & Tom Kempton, Nicola & Myrtle, and Jimmy and Liz Swendells. It felt at times like a mass exodus, however these plots were all quickly taken up and so we extend a warm welcome to Jenni & John Richards, Verity Depulford, Heather Holcroft-Pinn & Alex Latham, David Abensour & Donna Billingham, Jo & Gavin Middlewood, Jem Friar & Emma Roberts, Kelly & Lee Britton and Jane Hutchinson. (Jan Wooster counted 41 current members of the Allotment Society - and what a wonderful crowd we are!)
 - 2) **The Summer Work Day:** (Sat 3rd July) Thanks to the easing of Covid restrictions, we had a very successful Work Day with a great turn-out of allotmenters who were rewarded with delicious cakes and copious cups of tea. Three sheds were repaired, marker posts between plots were repainted and boundary hedges attended to. (Did we plant whippies in the hedge, or was that last year?)
 - 3) **The Allotment Open Day :** (Sat. 24th July) This is an opportunity to welcome friends, villagers and passers-by to come and see what we are doing on our plots. The Open Day started off ominously wet, but Linda & Clare were determined to go ahead! Posters and signs were put out, bunting was raised, the kettle put on and cakes made available. The effort paid off as the sun burst through and it became a wonderful social event. Sales of plants and produce raised £50:10p for the Society's kitty.
 - 4) **The Village Flower & Produce Show:** (Sat. 7th Aug.) After a year's absence this event returned to the Village Hall, as usual on the first Saturday in August. For those who don't know, the Allotment Society usually has a stall of produce for sale under gazebos on the football field. However, because of poor weather this year we had to hastily set up camp in the back room of the Hall. Allotmenters were incredibly generous, both with their time and donations of produce enabling the Society to take a grand total of £93:63p. An enormous thank-you to everyone who made this possible.
 - 5) **The Autumn Work Day:** (Sat. 9th Oct.) More hedge-laying at the top of the plots and the construction of the second "dead hedge" were the main tasks

on this occasion. The “dead hedge” provides a tidier solution for the disposal of those woody and spiky materials which can't be easily composted and it also provides an invaluable shelter for insects and other wildlife. Once again, there was a wonderful turn-out of enthusiastic allotmenters, and we were richly rewarded with fabulous vegetarian curries made by Jenna & Linda. Thanks to both for the wonderful grub - what a memorable day it was!

6) Wildlife on the plots: There has been a mixture of delight and frustration at the same time. There has been the addition of a third small pond and the Buddleias at the top and bottom of the plots have attracted a pleasing diversity of butterflies. Several allotmenters took advantage of the splendid wild-flower seeds distributed free by the Sustainable Harbourne Valley group, thereby attracting many pollinating insects, (and looking very pretty). The Voles and Moles have, however, continued to proliferate and cause frustration but we are hoping that Jan's adopted feral cat, Bertie Wooster, will take on the mantle of mouser and voler on the plots where dear old Dylan left off.

7) The season ends: As the year draws to a close we all need to think about putting our plots to bed by giving a final cut to the grass - Rob did the last communal mow this week - covering bare ground with cardboard and manure and securing any items which might blow about in the winter gales.

8) Season summary: It was a curious growing season with a long, cold Spring followed by a soaking wet May leading to a very late start to planting & germination. As ever, some crops prospered and others struggled but the allotments as a whole have looked productive, diverse and well-tended this year. Now we have a short rest and start all over again next year.

2.4. St. Peter's Church, Harbertonford *Verbal report provided by Frances Harvey, Church Warden*

Hopefully we have now come out of some of the Covid restrictions and our church is open everyday between 11-4pm when anyone is most welcome to go in.

We started our coffee mornings again last July and they seem to be enjoyed by all who attend (sometimes not many of us).

We are working closely with the school. Last week they came to the church for their Easter Service which was enjoyed by parents and children alike. They made some beautiful Christmas tree decorations last year and came down to decorate the small Christmas tree in the church yard which was most enjoyable. We hope to be doing more with them next term.

There is some remedial work needed on the vestry but funds need to be raised before work can begin. The yew tree has to be reduced to allow more light into the church.

Sustainable Harbourne Valley are taking care of a small patch at the back of the churchyard to enable that to be re-wilded. We soon hope to get some signs to that effect.

We are very grateful to the Parish Council for continuing to support us with a grant towards the upkeep of the church yard. Last summer we had some brilliant volunteers who helped with grass cutting. We have also developed a very nice garden which is cared for by Ruth Clakre and helpers. Several people on bus journeys commented on how good the yard looked last year, which is very nice to hear.

We hope to keep the church thriving but badly need some input from families of all ages.

I think during the last 2 years we have all learnt that people matter more than buildings so we try to visit a few people for perhaps 15 minutes who are unable to get out much. I find this much more rewarding than continually worrying about how to pay bills and raise money for repairs. Next money raising event is a soup and puddings event next Tuesday 19th April 12 – 2 at the Village Hall. Everyone Welcome.

2.5. St. Andrew's Church, Harberton No report.

2.6. Harbertonford Village Hall *Written report received from Jean Blackler*

This last year has been extremely difficult due to the pandemic. We had opened in June 2021 only to have to cancel any Christmas bookings and dances due to Covid rearing its head again.

The hall is now open for use and the bar is open on a Friday night and skittles on a Sunday night. There are few regular bookings at present although bookings for ad hoc events – children birthdays etc. are beginning to come in now. Hopefully this will increase as the year goes on.

Events are planned for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations on Friday 3rd June with events on the Football field, picnic and cream teas in the afternoon and a dance in the evening with a live band. Suggestions from the village have been requested but are slow in forthcoming.

We are always looking for some younger people to join the committee and bring new ideas. The present committee are working hard to keep the hall up to standard. The hall is a great community asset.

2.7. Harberton Parish Hall *Written report received from Liz Fearn, Parish Hall Chair*

Since our last report in 2019, Harberton Parish Hall has had periods of closure due to national lockdowns. We have been able to open, either fully or in a limited way, whenever this was allowed, thanks to the work of several members of the committee who studied and implemented the government guidelines to ensure that the hall was as safe as it possibly could be. Thanks too, to our cleaning team, who have been especially vigilant in keeping the premises immaculate.

The executive has not changed and there have been few changes to the committee. We are grateful to Nick Williams for replacing Ginny Davidson as Parish Council representative. While we could not meet in person, we met regularly through Zoom, or issued monthly updates. We did not miss any AGMs.

We have applied for all the grants available during the pandemic and have received £31,902, which has enabled us to continue our ongoing maintenance and improvements programme. Since our last report to the Parish Council, this programme has included:

- refurbishment of the floor in August 2019,
- a full Fire Risk Assessment in March 2020 which resulted in some improvements to outside lighting,
- repair of window frames in the summer of 2020,
- installation of a new boiler in March 2021,
- a full safety check of electrical installations, which resulted in the replacement of the distribution board.

Other projects completed have included the erection of the Air Ambulance landing light and a very successful Pantomime "Treasure Island" in February 2020.

Our bank balance at 31/03/22 stands at £29897.

Looking ahead, we have a comprehensive list of works to undertake which will use the grant money to improve the facilities we offer to our community. We anticipate that this will reduce our balance to a normal level. Our priorities are to replace the lights on our car park steps, to improve the surface of the slope leading down to the entrance and to refurbish the floor and area around the male toilets.

Bookings remain strong and we are confident that we can continue to provide an excellent resource for all residents of our parish.

2.8. Harberton Feofees *Verbal report from Frances Harvey*

There is not too much to report but the Feofees committee are now able to get together in person for discussion. We have two new members come onto the committee. When the charity set up many years ago by the landed gentry, 1 or 2 bags of coal were delivered to the elderly people in both villages. I am pleased to say we have moved on from coal to £20 Morrisons vouchers. Last Christmas we delivered 35 vouchers, 22 in Harberton and 16 in Harbertonford. Vouchers are purchased by the interest which comes from the investments. We hope to be able to repeat this for next Christmas, even with interest rates low or non-existent.

2.9. Harbertonford CE Primary School *Written report received from Anne Burns, Academy Head*

In the past year the children at the school have started to recreate their links with the community. During the last Lockdown, they used the windows to display work and messages for people in the village to look at during their daily exercise. They have worked closely with the Church to create and distribute Random Acts of Kindness to people who were isolated or alone, including hand made Christmas cards and pots of bulbs. They have also had the opportunity to work with Sustainable Harbourne Valley developing "Fruit Corner" and been very grateful of their support in developing the

school grounds on our Green Team days. We are very grateful for the support from several volunteers from the village who are part of our PTFA or help listening to readers.

- 2.10. Harberton and Harbertonford History Society** *Written report received from Jill Powell, Secretary*
Since our last update to you in April 2021 the History Society has continued to run popular online talks covering a range of local history topics. One positive aspect of the online version of talks is that we have expanded our audience to include attendees from other history societies across the county and beyond.

We are progressing well with the Oral History Project and with the easing of restrictions more filmed interviews have been possible. Dr Will Barrett and Elliot Morgan have continued to be generous with their time and flexible about filming opportunities. They have now interviewed six local participants with stories to tell, along with several of our committee members. They have also filmed a rehearsal at Harbertonford C of E Primary School of Valery Belsey's play covering the past 100 years of life in Harbertonford. As a result, included in the final version of our film will be some of the play's re-creation of the life of children and adults working in the Woollen Mill.

The film's aim is to bring alive the history of the Mill through the people who lived and worked there, but the inclusion of the children's involvement will now add an additional expressiveness we hadn't originally planned.

Will and Elliot have now moved on to the post production phase of the filmmaking when they bring together their recorded material with a selection of the photographs and other material that we have gathered during our interviews with participants. This process should be completed by the end of May.

Once we have the final version of the completed film, it is our intention to arrange social occasions when we show the film to residents of both villages, and also to the child actors in the 100 years play at an event at the local primary school. In due course we will offer the film to other local schools as an education resource as well as having it available on our website.

As we said in our previous report, the film, along with the recordings, photographs and documentation will not only hold great interest for the current population of Harberton and Harbertonford, but will constitute a valuable historical record of significance to a much broader audience. Mills of various kinds were common in Devon villages and throughout the country, so we anticipate the film to be of wide interest.

From the interview transcripts it is obvious that all the participants enjoyed reflecting on their lives in Harbertonford and clearly feel very attached to the village. They appear to have valued taking part and having their stories acknowledged. Sadly, three of the participants have died since filming took place. We appreciate their kindness and generosity of time in taking part. We are all poignantly reminded of just how important it is to record these personal and social histories before people's stories are lost forever.

We hope to make more films in the future covering other subjects such as school, work and the local farming economy. Those recordings and other material will also be available for further research.

- 2.11. Sustainable Harbourne Valley (SHV)** *Written report received from Chris Alton, Member*

In October 2020 SHV were very pleased to receive a grant of £1,000 from Harberton Parish Council Community Benefit Fund for the purposes of setting up and maintaining a website (domain name, hosting, email and images), obtaining insurance, purchasing wildflower seed and signage.

Thanks to Emma's IT skills and hours of her time, the website was built and launched in February 2021, and SHV was constituted as a small charity. Insurance was taken out in April and a bank account set up in June. Successful wildflower seed events were held in the spring and autumn. Arrangements to install signage are still in process, but it is hoped that signs will soon be erected in Harberton Playing Field, Harbertonford Play Park 'Fruit Corner', and St Peter's Church.

The total budget came in at £126 more than the estimated budget submitted to HPC. However, during 2021 a total of £265 in donations was raised which enabled us to cover this shortfall, pay our quarterly bank charges and cover some small events expenses.

The donations were raised at events such as a Bee Brick Workshop, a Seed Swap, Wildflower Seed Giveaways, a Plant Stall at the Harberton Open Gardens event, and the 'Grow & Share' stall.

We received a grant from the SHDC Biodiversity Fund of £485 for River Monitoring kits, Drain Markers, 'Slow Down Hedgehog Area' signs and wildlife demarcation.

A further grant of £1200 was received for the 'Fruit Corner' project in Harbertonford Play Park and tree planting took place in February.

On 31st December 2021 the bank balance stood at £769. This included £600 of money which had just been received from SHDC for the Fruit Corner, £94 remaining from the SHDC grant for demarcation of wildlife areas, and £75 remaining from donations.

Our plans for 2022, include the following:

- Progressing the Drain Marker scheme to discourage pollution of the river
- Participation of wildlife friendly gardens and plant stalls at village Open Gardens events
- Continue working on wildlife friendly methods on various areas of land in the parish (e.g. Harbertonford Churchyard)
- Further develop the new 'Fruit Corner' in Harberton Play Park
- Continue to support other parish groups such as Harberton Playing Field and Harbertonford School Gardens
- Following the success of wildflower seed events last year, and a native hedgerow tree sapling event this year (for use in private gardens), we plan to hold further events to promote the growing of native species.
- Use the 'Nature Spots' mapping tool on our website to map wildlife friendly areas in the parish, such as ponds and wildflower meadows which will help work towards habitats which link up and will therefore more beneficial to wildlife.

Underpinning all these plans are the website, insurance and bank account, which together provide a contact point for new members, information about events and projects, cover for events, the facility to apply for funds and the IT tools for developing the 'Nature Spots' parish mapping.

The further funding we are now requesting will enable us to ensure we can maintain these essential items, without which our ability to function as an effective group will be greatly reduced.

2.12. Harbertonford Christmas Tree Project *Not discussed in the meeting. See note at end of minutes.*

2.13. Harberton and Harbertonford Defibrillator *Not discussed in the meeting. See note at end of minutes.*

2.14. Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) Project *Verbal report from Jacqi Hodgson, Chair*
TRAYE youth services have been operating in the area for 7 years and in Harbertonford for 3 years now. During the pandemic the service switched to providing youth services through Zoom meetings, with support from very creative youth leaders. Numbers (in the whole area) increased from 450 to 550 young people, showing that demand for online services were high. Numbers have dropped more recently, but with support from new youth workers in Harbertonford numbers are starting to be brought back up. A lot of activities focus on the wellbeing of children – asking them how they are feeling as well as laying on activities. There is often lots of food involved, as are activities that help them get talking and to make new friends. Youth workers have watched with interest as the Young People don't reach for their phones. The new Harbertonford youth workers are doing a lot of outreach, to encourage participation. It's free on entry so if you know anyone who wants to come please let them know. It's free on entry. TRAYE is now developing a new website which carries a lot of videos made with young people. The charity would love to have a representative of Harberton Parish on its steering group.

2.15. Harbertonford Football Club *Verbal report from John Mills and Mike Bishop*

The Football Club is very grateful for the grant in 2020 which enabled refurbishment of the changing room after the ceiling fell down due to a leaky water pipe. That grant was used to change all the ceilings to modern plastic ceilings, and the opportunity was while the ceiling was down to rewire and put

a new boiler in at the same time. An additional toilet between the two changing rooms has also been installed so that it's not necessary to share one toilet between changing rooms any more.

The club is also grateful for the recent grant awarded to help put a hard standing in the car park area, transforming a grassy area that can get marshy in wet weather. Parking in the village is dire at the moment, and villagers are grateful to have the opportunity to park cars in the car park. It is also used as a through pass for lorries that can't turn around in the narrow lanes. After works are done there should be parking for 7 additional cars. This work hasn't been started yet as the whilst the materials are ordered and paid for, they are yet to arrive. A smaller lorry is required to make the delivery due to the narrow lanes leading to the club.

The Football Club has just got the one team at the moment. In 2021 a new manager was brought in to take the club to the next level, but this didn't work out. A new manager is being brought in who has experience through Torquay United in developing kids football. It would be great to get a youth team together. The club is looking forward to the next season.

2.16. Dashing Devon Dukes *Verbal Report from Peter Beamish, music leader*

Dashing (Dartmouth and the South Hams) Devon Dukes (D tuned Ukuleles) is operating an after school club. Have been attending regularly in the last 3 months. Before lockdown the group worked with 30 children across the South Hams who would come together and perform spontaneously. The group has seen the children grow in their talents, with older children progressing from the ukulele to play guitar. When the group has 6 guitars and 12 ukuleles it can make a big sound. The group is hoping to muster something for the Jubilee and hopes to grow through another season of public performances. Peter provides two opportunities for children in Harberton Parish - the after school club in Harbertonford Village Hall and a Friday lunchtime session in the school playground.

3. Chair's report *Cllr David Camp*

There has not been an Annual Parish Meeting in the past two years due to the impact of the pandemic.

Whilst it was not possible to have face to face meetings the Parish Council continued to hold 'virtual' meetings when this became possible, although for part of this summer the Parish Council operated under 'delegated powers' where some Parish Council business was delegated to the Clerk to undertake in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Council. The Parish Council is now back to face to face meetings.

The Parish Council has welcomed new Parish Councillors, Prana Simon, Hannah Thomas and Tania Paine. Steve Hockings rejoined the Parish Council but is due to leave us again. Martin Phillips also left the Parish Council as did Gwen Janes, who served for many years. Thanks particularly to Gwen for her long service to the community.

With Steve's departure there will now be a vacancy for a Harberton Ward Councillor that the Parish Council will seek to fill as soon as possible.

The big projects so far this year have included:

ongoing work on the park in Harbertonford to remove the rotten wooden structure.

The work to reduce traffic speeds in Harbertonford is an ongoing process and an application to put in place new speed limits as described in the Neighbourhood Plan have been put forward to Devon County Highways.

A group has formed to relaunch work on the Neighbourhood Plan and get it back on its feet. Work is beginning on a new 'Emergency Plan' to build on the work of the community groups that sprang into action during the Covid lockdown.

All these projects could do with volunteers and people to help drive these projects forward.

4. Any other business There was no other business.

The meeting was closed.

5. Post meeting notes

Reports from the Harbertonford Christmas tree project and the Harberton and Harbertonford Defibrillator project were missed by mistake during the meeting. Written reports as received are included as an addendum to the formal minutes:

5.1. Harbertonford Christmas Tree Project *Written notes provided by Frances Harvey*

Having spoken to John Horswill it was reported that through receiving the grant from the community benefit fund (for which they are very grateful) they were able to buy and light the tree through the Christmas period. It benefits not only Harbertonford but by all who pass through the village and in these times we need to bring as much light and joy into everyone's lives as we can.

5.2. Harberton and Harbertonford Defibrillator *Written report received from Jane Hutchinson, Harbertonford Volunteer*

The defibrillators are freely accessible in both villages for anyone to use and members of the public dials 999 in relation to a cardiac arrest South West Ambulance Service will advise of the location of the Defibrillator if they are within 200 metres of its location. The defibrillators are visually checked weekly and a report logged on line to confirm the Defibrillator and its accessories are still present and in good working order at least monthly.