

## **HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes for the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at Harbertonford Village Hall.

### **In attendance**

#### **Harbertonford Councillors**

Cllr Beamish: Present  
Cllr Bowley: Present  
Cllr Davies: Present  
Cllr Palmer: Present  
Vacancy  
Vacancy

#### **Harberton Councillors**

Cllr Camp: Apologies  
Cllr Hambly: Present  
Cllr Paine: Apologies  
Cllr Morris: Present  
Cllr Williams: Apologies  
Vacancy

#### **Others**

D.Cllr McKay: Present  
C.Cllr Hodgson: Present  
Clerk Ms Radford: Present  
Members of the Public: 4

### **Public Session**

- i) Two members of the public (MoP) were in attendance to listen to discussion about moving the zebra crossing. Both commented on the dangers of using the crossing in its current location. One commented that they have taught their daughter never to use the crossing as it is so dangerous to use. It was commented that there has been lots of discussion in the village that residents want something that works.
- ii) A parish councillor commented that the online survey may not be accessible to everyone and asked if there was an alternative means to respond.
- iii) Following the community conversation event held on the 10<sup>th</sup> June, a MoP attended the meeting to express support for an artist's hub or a creative space where people can bring their ideas together.

### **Agenda**

1. **Apologies** were received as above. **It was RESOLVED** to sanction reasons given for apologies.
2. **Declaration of Interests**
  - 2.1. Register of Interests Cllrs were reminded of the need to update their register of interests if any had changed. Declaration of interests No interests were declared on items on the agenda.

**NB:** Item 9 was taken out of order, however the minutes appear in the order of the published agenda.

### **3. Reports for information from:**

- 3.1. County Councillor (C.Cllr) Cllrs were informed that the C.Cllr had circulated a monthly report that evening that cllrs could read after the meeting. The following issues were raised:
  - 3.1.1. 20s plenty The C.Cllr is pressing for Devon County Council (DCC) to adopt a policy to reduce speed limits to 20 mph where people live and work. The C.Cllr argues that speed is such a big killer it would be simpler and safer if there was a blanket policy change, of which there would be economies of scale if rolled out across the whole county. DCC is waiting to see the impact of new 20mph areas piloted across the county.
  - 3.1.2. Second question was about air quality Following the publication of a 10 year study by Imperial College London of ill health through proximity to traffic emissions, and the increasing concern about small particles from tyres polluting the air, DCC needs to sanction an action plan to work towards air quality objectives. The C.Cllr commented that it is hoped the new administration at South Hams District Council (SHDC) will begin necessary monitoring.
  - 3.1.3. Planning and ecology Query was made asking why there is an inconsistency when reviewing planning applications to approaches to biodiversity. It was commented that every time there is a big planning application, we lose wildlife.
  - 3.1.4. Width of pavements in response to concern around air emissions It was commented that an area of Dartington may have pavements widened to reduce impact of air emissions on properties.
- 3.2. District Councillor
  - 3.2.1. New Executive It was reported that the new administration at SHDC has elected a new Executive. The D.Cllr informed cllrs that he is now part of the Executive and the new lead for Climate Change and the Environment. The D.Cllr has an ambitious target to reduce CO2 emissions by 12% per year and will set up an advisory panel on devising a programme of work to reach this goal. It was commented that the Council has been very inward looking to date and with the new administration is hoping to involve more people in finding solutions to complex issues.
  - 3.2.2. Renewable energy The D.Cllr is going to put in a motion in support of de-regulation to enable the selling of local electricity. All local renewable energy projects are on hold as they are not currently considered viable. It was commented that efforts are being made to change the default position on from 'no' to 'yes' when considering installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels on listed buildings unless there is a really good reason to object. The D.Cllr is promoting inclusion of PV on buildings within the development of the new town in Plymouth (Sherford) as none are planned.
  - 3.2.3. Enforcement All issues as raised by cllrs have been sent to enforcement.

4. **Minutes It was RESOLVED** to accept/not accept the following minutes as an accurate record
  - 4.1. Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023
  - 4.2. Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023
  
5. **Report Matters Arising from the Minutes** Not otherwise on the agenda and for information only
  - 5.1. Harberton Devon Air Ambulance clearance area sign (Clerk/Cllr Williams) Ongoing. The helicopter signs available online are not fit for purpose. The Clerk will develop a design with appropriate wording.
  - 5.2. Screw Lane Drainage (Cllr Williams) Ongoing.
  - 5.3. Parish Lengthsman (Clerk) Ongoing.
  - 5.4. Bank signatory updates Signatory documents have been returned by Barclays due to an error by staff in checking of ID documents. Updating signatories for the Lloyds account is ongoing.
  - 5.5. Harbertonford Playpark extension of lease See item 8.
  - 5.6. Snow Warden registration and training Cllr Bowley has prepared an email address for use of the snow warden.
  - 5.7. Overgrown hedge on Morleigh Road, above Wheelwrights It was reported that the property is now under new ownership. Cllr Beamish had made the assessment that the hedge wasn't sufficiently overgrown to take further at this stage.
  - 5.8. Conflicting road closures and diversions It was reported that following the C.Cllr's intervention, the Network Coordination Supervisor at Devon County Highways (Highways) had checked dates of all road closures due, provided dates and information for each and noted that there appears to be no issues with a conflict of works in the area. It was commented that Highways has received a number of complaints about both the Immediate works and SWW works taking place at the same time and also about the number of vehicles not using the official diversion and choosing to use the smaller roads, often leading to congestion. Highways has replied to those complaints however, cannot enforce the use of the official diversion and drivers will always try to find an alternative – sometimes not really suitable route.  
Cllrs commented that for the first few days that the Morleigh Road was fully closed to traffic a small canteen and mini-digger had been placed on site but no other works were taking place. It was noted that it was likely that arrangements could have been made for both to be sited at an off-road location, such as the football club and the road be kept open for longer. The C.Cllr agreed to raise this for Highways for future reference.
  
6. **Planning**
  - 6.1. Consideration of planning applications
    - 6.1.1. 1300/23/HHO and 1301/23/LBC Householder application and listed building consent for proposed replacement single storey garden room, new window & french doors at Dundridge Grange, Harberton  
**It was RESOLVED to SUPPORT** the application.
  - 6.2. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions Cllrs were informed of the following decisions made by the planning authority
    - 6.2.1. 0769/23/HHO and 0771/23/LBC Householder application for solar PV panels to garage roof at Little Belsford Harberton Conditional Approval
    - 6.2.2. 1143/23/LBC Listed Building Consent for internal layout alterations at Dundridge House Harberton Conditional Approval
    - 6.2.3. 1660/23/ARC Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 2 (ExternalMaterials) and 3 (Roof slates) of planning consent 4187/22/VAR at Moore Farm Harberton Discharge of condition Approved The details have been reviewed by a Senior Planning Officer and are considered acceptable.
  - 6.3. Receive a report on enforcement cases (for information only) A hard copy of the enforcement caseload was circulated amongst cllrs for information. A cllr asked the D.Cllr why bins are being collected at the address of a property on the enforcement caseload asking the D.Cllr to follow this up.
  
7. **Monthly reports**
  - 7.1. Finance Committee update No update
  - 7.2. Community Land Trust update No update
  - 7.3. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update It was reported that a programme of activities continue. An event on managing church yards is coming up. The group is looking at proposals to take on some land on Bow Road..
  - 7.4. Neighbourhood Plan update It was reported that the Community Conversation event took place on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June and was well attended by a varied group of Parish residents bringing a variety of opinions. Facilitation of group conversation on three main questions resulted in lots of notes and suggestions from attendees, including the suggestion to undertake a call for green sites. The overriding theme to come from the conversation was the value that people placed on community. AECOM consultants have produced a draft Design Code for comment, which the Clerk will circulate to cllrs as well as to the Neighbourhood Plan committee for their comment, should they wish.
  - 7.5. Harberton Playing Field Association (HPFA) It was reported that the HPFA has contracted someone to undertake the category A errors included on the annual report from Allianz and other maintenance works. A volunteer day is planned to help with some of the other issues.
  - 7.6. Harbertonford Play Park Improvements Committee No update. Cllrs were informed that the Allianz inspection had been undertaken on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 with no category A defects. B errors (that require rectification) included

reference to a loose perimeter green fence panel, the pedestrian access gate that is not fully closing and debris on the safety surface. It was noted that the turtle spring and wooden structure were not inspected as they had been removed from site. Inspections are, or will shortly become, overdue. Any item without a current inspection report should be withdrawn from service.

7.7. Clerk's update None

8. **Harbertonford Playpark extension of lease** Cllrs were informed that the Exeter Diocese had responded to the Parish Council's request for an extension of the play park lease due for renewal. The relevant diocesan committee considered the request for the longer-term lease and were content in principle to help minimise costs over time. Indeed, to this end, they were also open to exploring further the freehold sale should this be of interest to the Parish Council. For either option to be progressed, the diocese informed the Parish Council that it will be necessary for a Charities Act Report to be obtained so that the diocese can receive independent advice on the value. The diocese's standard practice is to require the initiating party, i.e. the Parish Council in this case, to underwrite the cost of the Report. The Report is likely to cost in the region of £600 (+/- £100) plus VAT.

After discussion **it was RESOLVED** that the Parish Council should reply that the Parish Council is interested in considering the option of the freehold sale, subject to cost.

In response to a query from the diocese as to the length of lease that would be desired **it was RESOLVED** to propose a lease of 25 years in length.

**It was RESOLVED** that the Parish Council is willing to pay the fee of approximately £600 plus VAT to pay the Charities Act Surveyor.

9. **Proposed alternative layout for Harbertonford zebra crossing** consideration of proposals taking into account community responses to survey *This item was taken earlier in the meeting, however the minutes follow the order of the published agenda.* Cllrs had received a summary of responses to the online questionnaire with papers from the meeting. The clerk provided a headline summary to the meeting as follows:

52 people had responded to an online questionnaire and 2 had forwarded comments by email. Of these, 45 were Harbertonford residents, 3 were Harberton residents, 3 lived in the rural parish. Only 1 respondent lived outside of the Parish.

- 30 respondents strongly supported the proposals as drawn
- 14 respondents were in support
- 2 were neutral
- 3 opposed plans
- 4 strongly opposed plans, however 2 of these made supporting comments. It was noted that the instruction given did not tally with the likert scale, and therefore the responses given may not have accurately recorded opinion.

Those in support/strong support commented that:

- The proposed location offered greater visibility
- Cars don't stop for the crossing in the current location and there is a high number of near misses
- The current location is unsafe
- It is better to move the crossing that keep it where it currently is.

There was concern that people won't walk further to use it, people may more likely nip across the road at the bridge.

Those in opposition or strong opposition commented on:

- Anticipating new safety issues at Woodland Road – it's a single track lane so could be build up on the A381 if there isn't the same width of splay. Large vehicles won't be able to turn.
- Road narrowing and access issues at Woodland Road, would cause a build up in traffic at this pinch point, and doesn't solve the issue of traffic approaching at high speed.
- Traffic lights – a pelican crossing would offer a better solution.

Comments suggested that the following summary questions be put to engineers:

- Were plans based on local observations or on a desk exercise?
- Can there be more than one crossing? (i.e. on the bridge, at entrance to Moreleigh road?)
- Could there be traffic lights or a pelican crossing?
- Can there be more road markings?
- Can there be traffic calming or measures to reduce speeds?
- Could cameras/speed cameras be installed as well?
- Can speed limits be reduced?
- Can pavements be widened?

- Concerns about impact of installing the crossing at the bus top – visibility of when there is a bus there
- Concern about loss of parking on the splay to Woodland Road
- Concerns/comments about the potential congestion/reduction of traffic flow at Woodland Road
- Concerns/comments about traffic turning out of Old Road.

Additional comments were made referring to:

- Improvements to be made to the pavement, which itself is a trip hazard in poor repair, and that the pavement between Old Road towards the garage is not wide enough.
- More/better signage is required to reduce road speeds.
- The possible effect of the crossing on Old Road/Woodland Road and other perceived black spots – i.e. the Brockhills junction
- The poor repair of road surface
- Poor visibility of the junction at Old Road – with calls for a mirror or round about or other.
- General comments about finding ways to reduce the traffic on the A381.

A representative of the engineers that have undertaken scoping work on behalf of Highways was in attendance at the meeting, and was invited to speak in response to the queries raised.

The engineer made the following comments:

- The number of comments referencing traffic speeds and speed limits were noted, however this was a Devon County traffic policy issue that would need to be taken up with Devon County Council (DCC) directly.
- Plans were drawn up having both undertaken desk research and having visited the site. A topographical survey was completed, along with swept path analysis to check manoeuvrability. The engineer commented that he can understand the daunting nature of that area, hence one of the reasons to focus on improvements outside of the old pub.
- Widening the footway north of the crossing is beyond the scope of what engineers have been asked to do, but it was commented that the road is very restricted on the desire line between Old Road and the crossing. There isn't a huge amount of widening on the plan as it is difficult to find the space.
- There are no plans to provide more than one crossing. In considering a redesign of the road layout the engineers are seeking to achieve three objectives: safety, convenience and accessibility and are trying to get the best overlap between all those elements. By bringing these plans to the community engineers want to check whether the design delivers on this, particularly in relation to the convenience objective. It was commented that engineers did look at options at moving to crossing to the south side of the bridge and were of the opinion whilst there would be better visibility for the south bound traffic, there would be compromises of visibility to the north bound. The location as proposed is therefore considered the best alternative solution to the status quo. A cllr commented that the plans as drawn are moving the crossing in the wrong direction in his view. There were comments that not everyone will choose to cross at the new location.
- It was noted that several consultation respondents asked if traffic lights could be installed. The engineer responded that it is DCC's would want to use the appropriate crossing for the appropriate use, and that a new location should work well as a zebra crossing. The benefits are that a pedestrian could walk straight up to use it, and a group, such as a school group walking in a line, could continuously use the crossing without having to wait for another red light. It was commented that funding is a barrier to using a signalled crossing and that the accident data does not provide sufficient evidence for the area to be prioritised for this type of investment. At the moment the criteria for an area to become accident blackspot is for 5 accidents to have taken place within 50 meters of the site within a 5 year period. Data for Harbertonford records one accident taking place in 2021. Currently there are 70 sites in Devon that are accepted as accident blackspots that have been prioritised for funding. Speed traffic data provides evidence that 85% of people are travelling within the speed limit. Some people just don't drive at the speed limit no matter what you do.

During discussion further comments were raised about road speeds, on suggestions to provide a footway built across the river on the outside of the current bridge (western side) could provide safe access to a crossing on the south side of the bridge, however the width of the pavement outside the pub and the splay at the junction to Woodland Road were the main concerns raised. It was commented that there is an understanding that Highways is obliged to make a pavement wide enough so that someone on a mobility scooter or someone pushing a pram could use it. Guidance states that the minimum width of a pavement should be 1.2m. The current redesigned plans do not reach guidance widths.

It was commented that two HGV's struggle to pass one another on the road, and can currently use the splay at Woodland Road as a passing place. It was queried whether there is any reason why there must be two way traffic on this section of road? Commenting that narrowing the road would have a beneficial impact of slowing traffic.

Concern was raised on access for farm traffic and trailers should the Woodland Road splay be narrowed and restrict access to local farms for those who are already feeling isolated. It was confirmed by engineers that the redesigned splay would only enable a vehicle of 7.5m to turn in there. It was commented that enabling access for the Environment Agency to undertake works at Palmers Dam should be taken into account.

Comments were made expressing frustration that all decisions are restricted by costings, asking if considerations to approaching analysis are constrained by available resources. Questions were asked of the expected costs of the scheme, which the C.Cllr agreed to follow up with Highways.

In closing discussion it was commented that these plans are not being forced on the community, however offers an alternative to the status quo that looks reasonable to Devon County Council. Should the Parish Council assess that there is a consensus to take plans forward, plans will be put to road safety auditors, and a package will be put to the contractor.

It was asked whether the community is being asked to accept the plans as written or if there is scope to suggest alterations. Will the community lose the chance of getting anything done? Neither question was answered.

It was confirmed that engineers are seeking the Parish Council's view as a representative of the community. It was agreed that the issue be discussed again at the next meeting to allow time for those residents who might not be able to respond online to comment.

10. **20's Plenty Campaign** *consideration of engagement with the campaign* Cllrs had been provided with a summary paper in advance of the meeting which noted that a MoP had requested that the clerk re-present cllrs with the proposal to engage in the 20's Plenty campaign. Cllrs were reminded that at the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 the Parish Council had passed a motion to support the 20's plenty for Devon County campaign, to call on Devon County Council to implement 20mph within Harbertonford village boundary and to write to the County Council to request 20mph speed limits on streets throughout Devon where people live, work, shop, play or learn, with 30mph as the exception on those roads, where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allow a higher limit. At the time of passing this motion there was no interest from individual cllrs to support any further initiatives suggested by the campaign, such as compiling a petition or purchasing any banners or stickers.

A Harbertonford resident requested a table at the Community Conversation to distribute '20s Plenty for Us' stickers and sign their names to a petition so that the level of community support could be assessed that volunteers might come forward to support ongoing engagement. Members of the finance committee approved the purchase of 50 wheelie bin stickers, on the basis that the zebra crossing consultation provided evidence that this was a matter of importance to the community. Some stickers were handed out to community conversation attendees. The petition attracted 19 signatories of which 4 said that they'd be willing to join a campaign group.

Cllrs were asked again if there would be any volunteers to drive the campaign forward. Whilst there was no volunteer willing to lead the campaign Cllr Palmer agreed to seek signatures for the petition at the primary school and another cllr agreed to make wooden boards to mount stickers so that they could be erected on residential roads in the village.

The Clerk reported that emails have been exchanged co-ordinators of the Totnes 20s plenty campaign. The C.Cllr commented that she is representing the view of Harberton Parish Councils and others in support of 20mph limits at DCC.

**It was RESOLVED** that in writing a letter to DCC Cabinet Member for Climate Change the clerk would provide a summary of those responses to the zebra crossing survey that focused on road speeds rather than simply sign the template letter as provided by the 20's Plenty Campaign. The C.Cllr requested to be copied in.

## 11. Correspondence

- 11.1. **Bidwell Brook Partnership** Cllrs were informed of a new partnership made up of representatives from Friends of the Dart, Dartington Recreation Association, The Apricot Centre, Devon Wildlife Trust, the Westcountry Rivers Trust and coordinated by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from Dartington and Rattery Parish Councils, and the Heart of Dartington and Rattery Environment Group, to take co-ordinated action to create a nature-rich landscape surrounding Bidwell Brook and its tributaries. As main tributary of Bidwell Brook, the Wren Brook, is on the Harberton/Dartington Parish boundary, cllrs are asked to advise the BBP Steering Group as to the best way of securing Harberton Parish council's support for this project. Cllr Richard Morris agreed to represent Harberton Parish Council on that committee, subject to availability. As one of the objectives of the group is to undertake water testing, connections could be made with Sustainable Harbourne Valley who are already undertaking regular water testing of the Harbourne.

- 11.2. Monitoring Officer Guidance Cllrs were forwarded guidance from the Local Authority's monitoring officer on the topics of: declaring interests at meetings; use of social media; access to information; applying for and granting dispensations along with a message in response to a worrying trend in the nature of complaints about the behaviour of town and parish councillors towards their clerks and other employees for information.
- 11.3. South Hams District Council Announces New Structure Cllrs were informed by press release that South Hams District Council announced its new Council structure for the next four-year term. Cllr Julian Brazil, Ward Member for Stokenham, was elected as Leader of the Council, with Cllr Dan Thomas, Ward Member for Newton and Yealmpton, chosen as his Deputy Leader. Cllrs McKay, Birch, O'Callaghan, Abbot, Hodgson and Hopwood will join the Executive Committee. The Chairman announced for the coming year will be Cllr Guy Pannell, Ward Member for South Brent. Top priorities for the council will be local housing and the environment and biodiversity crisis.
- 11.4. Requests for graveyard maintenance grants Cllrs were informed that requests have been made for annual maintenance grants for both Harberton and Harbertonford graveyards. It was RESOLVED to make a contribution of £500 to St Andrew's, Harberton and a contribution of £450 to St Peter's, Harbertonford as budgeted. Grants would be made under the power to contribute towards expenses of cemeteries: Local Government Act 1972, s.214 (6),
- 11.5. Notice board opposite Post office in Harbertonford Cllrs were informed of a letter received by a local resident commenting that the notice board is in a bad state of repair and dangerous when someone opens it to display posters. As the notice board is not a Parish Council asset that the Clerk take an ACTION to contact The Harbertonford Community Ltd to ask if repairing or replacing the notice board is something that it is interested in supporting.
- 11.6. Deadline passed for election candidate expense forms and election costs Cllrs were informed that those cllrs who had not completed and returned forms should do so urgently. Any elected candidate (including those elected uncontested) is not permitted to sit or vote in the council until the expense return is delivered or until there is an authorised allowance for the failure. If they do, there are penalties of £50 for every day on which they sit or vote and a failure to make a return and declaration is an illegal practice. It was noted that all Harberton Parish Councillors had completed and returned forms ahead of the evening's meeting.

## 12. Finance

- 12.1. Notice of income and expenditure since last meeting. None.
- 12.2. To consider payments as per the June payment schedule
- 12.2.1. Payment 2306\_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 includes Clerk June salary £483.60, Neighbourhood Plan June Salary at £55.80 and overtime payment 3 of 3 at £320.85 = £860.25 no VAT.
- 12.2.2. Payment 2306\_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk expenses claim dated 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 for mileage at £12.78, broadband at £7.50 and reimbursement for 20s Plenty stickers at £60= £80.28 no VAT
- 12.2.3. Payment 2306\_3 to HMRC for Employer Gross National Insurance Contributions (NICs) due in June = £14.11 no VAT.
- 12.2.4. Payment 2306\_4 to Sally Lougher for reimbursement for printing materials for Community Conversation = £85.20 no VAT
- 12.2.5. Payment 2306\_5 Cemetery expenses contribution Harbertonford 2023/24 = £450 no VAT. Paid under the power to contribute towards expenses of cemeteries: Local Government Act 1972, s.214 (6).
- 12.2.6. Payment 20306\_6 Cemetery expenses contribution Harberton 2023/24 = £500 no VAT. Paid under the power to contribute towards expenses of cemeteries: Local Government Act 1972, s.214 (6).

13. **E-Circulars for information** Cllrs were informed that regular e-circulars were received from 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, Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement (GLEAM), Harberton Village Email, Healthwatch Devon, Information Commissioners Office, One Devon Integrated Care Board, Parish Online, Rural Services Network, SLCC Membership. Any could be available to forward to cllrs at their request.

## 14. Matters at the discretion of the Chairman:

- 14.1. Defibrillator Training A query had been raised concerning availability of training. The Clerk responded that the package provided by the Community Heartbeat Trust should offer annual training which usually alternated between Harberton and Harbertonford.
- 14.2. Support for children with Special Needs and Disabilities A question was raised concerning support for a family in the Parish. This was taken up by the County Councillor.

15. **Date and location of next ordinary meeting** The next ordinary meeting will take place on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and will take place at the Parish Hall in Harberton.

*Meeting closed at 9:35*