

## **HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council at 7.30pm on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 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: Present  
Cllr Morris: Present  
Cllr Williams: Present  
Vacancy

#### **Others**

D.Cllr McKay: Present  
C.Cllr Hodgson: Present  
Clerk Ms Radford: Present  
Members of the Public: 10

### **Public Session**

The chair opened the meeting to invite members of the public (MoPs) to give their views and question the Parish Council on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for future consideration, before the meeting of the Parish Council officially begins. MoPs may not take part in the Parish Council meeting itself.

- i) A Harberton resident whose house was affected by flooding on 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> September addressed the Parish Council to ask what role the Parish Council has in responding to the emergency and in trying to make sure that appropriate mitigation action is being investigated. It was commented that in response to flooding events 17 years ago, some members of the community worked with Parish Council and Environment Agency to get major works done. It was commented that up until 2 weekends ago those flood works were very effective. At the time it was commented that works would be 1 in 100-year proof. Flooding events will become more frequent due to climate change. It was commented that property values have shrunk by millions, and local residents are facing increases in insurance costs. It was commented that it is really important that the Parish Council acts as voice for the community so that action is taken.
- ii) A second MoP commented that he would like to better understand the role of the District Council and County Council is following a flooding event such as the one experienced on the 16/17<sup>th</sup> September. The MoP commented that they hadn't seen anyone from the District or County Council in the village in the aftermath of the flood and was not aware if Devon County Highways (Highways) had been present. The MoP commented that he had to ring the District Council to have the skip taken away, commenting that it would have been helpful if the second skip was provided before the weekend. It was asked whether there was a lack of understanding as to what could be expected from either local authority.
- iii) A MoP asked whether the Parish Council or District Council had any powers to direct landscape changes, for example to oblige the farmer to change over to pastoral farming methods.
- iv) The District Councillor (D.Cllr) responding to the matters that had been raised commenting that he had arranged the skip having visited the village and on becoming aware that local residents needed it. He commented that he did not understand precisely why the skip could not be collected until the weekend few days after it was reported to be full. The D.Cllr has also arranged for damaged white goods to be collected by the local authority in the next few days. One of the affected residents is co-ordinating collection of white goods with neighbours. South Hams District Council (SHDC) had done the best that it could in the circumstances to help with the mess. With regards to the long-term solution, the D.Cllr is calling a meeting to include the Parish Council, District Council, Devon County Council (it is the County Council that is the flood authority) as well as Devon County Highways (Highways) and the Environment Agency to sit down and look at what has happened and to consider an approach that is not cost prohibitive but can reduce the risk of impact to a manageable level. The D.Cllr commented that there are engineering solutions and management solutions and all those options need to be talked about. It was noted that District Council Officers used to have regular flood mitigation meetings with all the agencies involved but this doesn't happen anymore, proposing that this is a practice that needs to be reinstated. It was commented that there are some residents in Harbertonford that have been flooded three times in five years and there must be something that can be done. A MoP asked if members of the public could attend the meeting with agencies. It was suggested by the Clerk that the Parish Council acts as a conduit between agencies and local residents. The D.Cllr commented that there is also a drop-in meeting being held in Harberton next Tuesday (17<sup>th</sup> October) in order to gain local knowledge from residents of what happened and how it happened to help consider potential solutions. In response to the question about land use, other members of the District Council have had similar experiences in the wards they cover and have come up with an informal arrangement with local landowners to ensure that fields that could cause the problems could be in permanent pasture. In instances in which land is rented, this could be included in the rental agreement for example. It was noted by the D.Cllr that clearly in this instance the farmer was not to blame as the upstream fields were actually being laid down to permanent pasture, having been lightly tilled and seeded.
- v) A MoP commented that a couple of days after the flood, two people from the Environment Agency visited Harberton to speak to villagers and were showed the wall that had come down from the mud and straw that caused the surge. They said that fields above the village should definitely not be ploughed. It was commented that the Environment Agency asked the farmer to deep plough his field after the flooding event which had had done, and direct drilling the grass was the right thing to do.
- vi) Several people made the comment that it was unfair to point fingers at the farmer, and that this was an unfortunate and unlucky set of circumstances.

- vii) It was commented that it was not clear if anything can be done to compel the landowner, but there are flood mitigation funds that landowners can be directed to. There was comment on the possibility that moving the gate could have a positive impact, as could planting of trees in the orchard next door, or the creation or deepening of attenuation ponds. It was commented that it would be useful to have hard facts from the Environment Agency in order to put the impact of the flooding event into context.
- viii) A MoP commented that they have photographs of the last major flood that took place at the bottom of Harberton and this flood event was a lot worse. The previous flood led to the creation of a significant flood scheme that cost thousands of pounds. A Cllr commented that the Parish Council took out a bank loan to take on those flood works and there has not been significant flooding for 23 years. It was commented by a MoP that she and her husband used to regularly check on the pipes every time there was rain.
- ix) It was commented that despite recent works to the culvert in Harbertonford, residents still experienced flooding, because the culvert was insufficient for the amount of water. It was noted that this was a significant event, with a massive volume of water that was coming from three different directions at the same time.
- x) The D.Cllr commented that the University of the West of England is undertaking work to help District Councils understand changing contexts of flood risk in the next 10 years due to expected increases in extreme weather. Research and knowledge exchange should help councils inform councils so that they can better prepare.
- xi) When asked who from the County Council would have been in attendance in the aftermath of the flooding event the C.Cllr commented that they understood that the Highways team were going out to clear mud and clean drains and gullies. It was commented that it was local farmers that cleared mud and the upstream farmer arranged for a sweeper from Cornworthy to clean the road at Vicarage Ball. A MoP wanted to reinforce that without help from local farmers the community would still be under mud.
- xii) A MoP commented that they had been present when Highways had attended, and whilst straw had gone everyone it hadn't gone any further into the gullies and it was surprising how clean it was on inspection.
- xiii) A MoP commented that he keeps hearing about flooding on Screws Lane commenting that there is a gully there that can silt up. He commented that local people used to clear this but no-one has gone out there to do it. Why don't local people come out and do these things? He commented that residents can't expect local authorities to do it, particularly now they are strapped for cash.
- xiv) Having heard from all MoPs who wished to raise issues about flooding, the owner of the site at Rolster Bridge Quarry addressed the meeting to make additional comment on plans to operate a glamping site. Comments made at the last meeting about the lack of available green space in the village had been noted by the landowner, who commented that plans are to use the site for glamping for 6 months of the year (under the extended 28-day rule) but for the remaining 6 months the site could be used as a community hub. It was commented that there were plans to keep chickens and bees on site, which could be educational for local children. In response to comments made at the last meeting, the landowner confirmed that waste water from the toilet and shower is collected and emptied off site as needed. A Cllr asked why the landowner doesn't just apply for planning consent. The landowner responded that operating within the extended 28-day rule is a better fit for the business plan. They have met with the planning officer and will liaise with the camping club to find out what they can do.
- xv) MoP were reminded that there are three vacancies on the Parish Council and volunteers are encouraged to come forward to increase the Parish Council's capacity in representing the community on matters of importance, such as flooding and other emergency planning.

The public session closed at 20:05 at which point the majority of members of the public left the meeting.

## Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above. **It was RESOLVED** to sanction apologies given.
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.
  - 2.2. Declaration of interests on items on the agenda
    - Item 7.1.3 Cllr Williams is neighbour to the applicant and would not vote on a motion when proposed.
    - Item 10 Cllr Morris commented that his garden was briefly impacted by flooding. Cllrs agreed that Cllr Morris need not withdraw from the meeting when this matter was discussed and that he could contribute fully.
3. **Reports** for information from:
  - 3.1. County Councillor (C.Cllr) Report
    - 3.1.1. Response to the flooding event
      - 3.1.1.1. Apologies The C.Cllr opened her report by apologising on behalf of Devon County Council in response to reports that Harberton village did not experience a good service in response to recent floods. The C.Cllr will follow this up as extreme weather events are only getting worse. In her capacity as a D.Cllr at South Hams District Council (SHDC) she is raising the issue of use of out-of-date flood risk data by some planning applicants. It has been noticed some drainage reports refer to data from 2013 and therefore plans that are given consent are not always fit for purpose, for example in using the correct size of storage tanks. It was suggested that it could be possible to look at retrospective attenuation in Harberton, to hold water at peak flow to slowly release it. The C.Cllr that there is quite a lot of new knowledge about flooding and that new measures to manage impact may be available.

- 3.1.1.2. Community responses to slow flood water The C.Cllr commented that the Environment Agency produced a film approximately 3 years ago featuring community responses that can be used to try and slow the water down such as strategic tree planting for example.
- 3.1.1.3. Loss of Lengthsman services The C.Cllr commented that the reduction of lengthsman services at county level and 'dumping' the responsibility on Parish Councils was wrong, and that the loss of the regular service came with a loss of knowledge – such as where all the buddle holes were, managing relationships with landowners and having an awareness of which areas were most affected when floods occurred.
- 3.1.2. Highlights from the C.Cllr's report The C.Cllr had circulated a report by email earlier that evening and highlighted the following issues in a verbal update:
  - 3.1.2.1. Active Travel The C.Cllr had asked a question to Full Council if there is funding for implementation of safe cycling and walking routes in the South Hams. The response was that DCC had received funding for scoping, and there 'may or may not be' monies for implementation.
  - 3.1.2.2. 20's plenty motion The C.Cllr's proposal for DCC to approve and adopt the 20's plenty proposal for 20mph speed limits where people live, work and play did not pass. It was commented that the score sheet used to assess requests for a 20mph limit give the 'best score' to areas in which there have been three fatalities, and minus scores if there are zebra crossings in place. It was commented that DCC and is not going to allow new criteria, and are only allowing four new 20mph zones in the county per year.
  - 3.1.2.3. Waste Management Suggestions have been made for DCC to look at changing the way the data is reported on so doesn't act as a disincentive for recycling.
  - 3.1.2.4. Consideration of bringing Devon Highways services back in house As part of the ongoing review of DCC revenue cost and expenditure considerations are being made to bringing Highways services back in house rather than commissioning services from 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations. Reports have been made of poor repairs being made by contractors. SHDC's experience of bringing waste services back into the Council has shown that this can make services more efficient.
  - 3.1.2.5. Corporate strategy opportunity to comment on the Freeport The C.Cllr has asked questions around transparency and public accountability of the freeport and to ask if the Council believes that its borrowing to support the scheme is considered a good investment
  - 3.1.2.6. Mobile library service The cabinet's decision to stop the mobile library service run by Libraries Unlimited has been called in for further scrutiny and to recommend that cabinet reconsider their position.
- 3.2. District Councillor
  - 3.2.1. Consultation on the Corporate Plan The D.Cllr hopes that the Parish Council has received its invitation to comment on the corporate plan. Members of the public are also invited to comment, links to consultation are available on SHDC's website. It was commented that the corporate plan broadly outlines goals around big issues, such as housing, planning and enforcement, routes for active travel, climate change etc.
  - 3.2.2. Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) It was commented that the National Planning Policy Framework allows Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) whereby a developer can effectively pay for their planning application to be processed. There was a temporary moratorium on PPAs which is no longer in place. It is the D.Cllr's opinion that whilst PPAs are legal, they should not happen.
  - 3.2.3. Flooding The D.Cllr reiterated that he is trying to arrange a meeting between Parish, District and County Councils and agencies to talk about joint approaches to mitigate the risk of flooding in the Harberton Parish in order to support the development of a coherent plan.

#### 4. Minutes:

- 4.1. **It was RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council 12th September 2023 as an accurate record.
- 4.2. Cllrs reviewed the minutes Finance Committee of Harberton Parish Council 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023. Members of the Finance Committee were given the opportunity to comment on any inaccuracies before they were published as a draft. It was noted that a change had been made to item 3.2, where references to the Quarter 1 bank reconciliation were corrected to refer to the Quarter 2 bank reconciliation.

#### 5. Report Matters Arising from the Minutes

- 5.1. Harberton Devon Air Ambulance clearance area sign (Clerk) Ongoing. There was a query as to whether there were still goals used on the Playing Field and if signs were necessary. It was noted that there the Devon Air Ambulance had landed in the playing field in the afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> October to attend to an accident in the area.
- 5.2. Screw Lane Drainage Cllrs were informed that the Devon County Council (DCC) Flood Risk team has been informed of the willingness of the Old Orchard landowner to discuss possible solutions to drainage issues at Screw Lane. Emails have been exchanged in which the Flood Risk team confirmed they are very interested to progress discussions about land management issues in the area. Cllrs were informed that the DCC Flood Risk Team will liaise with the Environment Agency's new Land Management team for further action.
- 5.3. Bank signatory updates Cllrs were informed that the Clerk has begun the process of making an application to Unity Bank for a new account details will be required from all signatories of the account.
- 5.4. Harbertonford Playpark extension of lease (Clerk) See item 9
- 5.5. Snow Warden registration and training (Clerk) Ongoing
- 5.6. Annual Tree Survey (quotes for tree work) (Clerk) Ongoing
- 5.7. Fly tipping in Harberton Cllrs were informed that there had been no further news on whether the Council has taken any action following witness reports of fly tipping at the gravel pits on the A381.

- 5.8. Update clarification of 28-day rule (campsites) Following discussion of this issue at the previous meeting, the Clerk had received confirmation from the D.Cllr that the 28-day Permitted Development Rights require that while the structures are on-site, even when not being used for camping/glamping, will count towards the 28-day limit (now extended). Commenting that those structures are used for storage when not in use for glamping is probably not sufficient to avoid the need for planning permission.
- 5.9. Power cuts in the Parish Cllrs were informed that the Clerk had written to National Grid (no longer Western Power) which was followed up with a phone call and email in which the following information had been shared:
- The short interruptions in the power supply are due to a safety mechanism on the network when contact is made with a power cable. Most often caused by trees, can sometimes be due to cattle rubbing themselves against poles or '3<sup>rd</sup> party activity in and around the infrastructure' – i.e. people building over cables as noted below.
  - Every interruption to power is recorded centrally by National Grid – showing that there is no pattern to the power cuts (i.e. not at a particular time of day)
  - To find out where the faults are, Helicopter checks are being made of all the lines in the area and engineers are doing visual checks on foot.
  - Following these checks National Grid has identified several sites to clear trees. It was noted that tree growth has been extensive and unusual this year due to unusual weather.
  - Checks have uncovered an issue where a resident built over the top of a high voltage cable and damaged it. National Grid is in the process of remedying this.
  - There is no need for residents to keep a record of the interruptions as National Grid automatically collects this data. The most useful thing that residents can do is to report any issues that they spot concerning power lines in their local area to National Grid, as local residents will likely pick up issues more quickly than by National Grid engineers – local knowledge is very useful in these circumstances.

6. **Co-option of Parish Councillors** There were no members of the public present who put themselves forward to co-option for the three Parish Council vacancies.

## 7. Planning

### 7.1. Consideration of planning applications

7.1.1. 2682/23/HHO Householder application for a new dormer extension at 4 Mount Pleasant, Old Road, Harbertonford **It was RESOLVED to SUPPORT** the application.

7.1.2. 3254/23/VAR Application for variation of conditions 4 (access track) & 5 (drainage scheme) of planning consent 1812/23/VAR at Moore Farm, Harberton **It was RESOLVED to MAKE NO COMMENT** on the application.

7.1.3. 3252/23/TCA T1: Willow - fell due to close proximity to storm drain and dwelling at Merlewood Cottage, Tristford Road, Harberton Can The Parish Council was in **SUPPORT** of the willow to be felled. **It was RESOLVED** to respond with the suggestion that the applicant plant 3 trees in exchange for the one to be felled within the vicinity.

7.2. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions Cllrs were informed of decisions made by the planning authority:

7.2.1. 2703/23/ARC Application for approval of details reserved by condition 6 (Windows, Doorways and Sills) of planning consent 1812/23/VAR at Moore Farm Harberton Discharge of condition Approved

7.3. Receive a report on enforcement cases (for information only) A hard copy of the enforcement caseload was circulated amongst cllrs for information.

## 8. Monthly reports

8.1. Finance Committee update Cllrs were informed that a meeting of the Finance Committee had taken place on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 at which the quarter 2 budget report was reviewed and the quarter 2 bank reconciliation was signed, showing a balance of £66909.45 including reserves. Three recommendations were made for the Parish Council's consideration and after discussion the following resolutions were made:

8.1.1. Grant to TRAYE **It was RESOLVED** that a Community Benefit Fund grant of £1000 be made to Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement project towards a project costing £2500 to support TRAYE to deliver an open access youth group for young people aged 8 – 16 years old in Harbertonford. Cllrs were informed that the session runs on a Thursday evening every two weeks at the Harbertonford Village Hall. The funding will go towards the salaries of 2 trained Youth workers who run youth club sessions, and to pay for the free food, drink and resources provided at each session.

8.1.2. Grant to the Harbertonford Christmas Tree Fund **It was RESOLVED** that a Community Benefit Fund grant of £400 be made to Frances Harvey of Harbertonford for the Harbertonford Christmas Tree Fund. Funding would support purchase of a suitable tree, transportation, erecting it, putting on lights etc and running costs. Any remaining funds would be carried forward to support similar costs in 2024. The Finance Committee recommended that the grant should be made with the conditions that the applicant provide a brief report to the Parish Clerk on how funds have been spent in 2023, and confirmation that any surplus would be expected to be held on behalf of the village for the following year's tree.

8.1.3. Clerk's overtime in Quarter 2 **It was RESOLVED** to approve the Parish Clerk's request for 20 hours of overtime for quarter 2, totalling £279.00 be approved and paid in three instalments of £93.00 in October, November and December 2023.

- 8.2. Community Land Trust update No update.
- 8.3. Sustainable Harbourne Valley (SHV) update It was reported that the recent apple day at Harbertonford Park was successful. The committee is developing a winter programme of talks and films which will be advertised on the SHV website and through the Harberton Village Circular and Village Life.
- 8.4. Neighbourhood Plan update It was reported that officers from South Hams District Council attended the last meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss the outcomes of the Site Options Assessment and further support that can be given to help development of the plan. A review of the current draft is moving forward.
- 8.5. Harberton Playing Field Association (HPFA) No report
- 8.6. Harbertonford Play Park Improvements Committee It was reported that progress is being made in the establishment of a bank account for the Committee. It is hoped that there will be more interest in the work of the committee over the next few months.
- 8.7. Clerk's update Nothing to report.
9. **Renewal of Harbertonford Play Park Lease** The Clerk had informed the Director of Property at Exeter Diocese that the Parish Council is still keen to continue discussion on entering a 25 year lease, but not at a rent of £500 as proposed by the Charities Act report. There was some back and forth with the Diocese as to whether the figure of £500 was set because of the details relating to the erection of the fence. The Director of Property commented that there is no point of contention in relation to the fencing, but the rent has been assessed on the market rate. The Clerk has had further contact from the surveyor to negotiate the rent, asking if the Parish Council is willing to meet halfway and agree an annual rent of £250. After discussion it was agreed to continue negotiation for a lower rent, as £250 is still a marked increase on the current rent of £60 per year. **It was RESOLVED** to delegate discussion on agreement of the rent for the play park to Cllr Richard Morris, who was given figures for the amount of rent the Parish Council wished to pay and a maximum amount should there be a negotiation.

## 10. Flooding in Harberton Parish

- 10.1. Summary Update on flooding across the Parish Following heavy rainfall between 16th - 18th September several properties and some of the roads and land around property in both villages of Harberton and Harbertonford were affected by flooding. Ahead of the meeting the Clerk had circulated a number of documents to provide cllrs with information about the extent and impact of the flooding for residents. This included:
- i) Responses received to public questionnaire following flooding event on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023
  - ii) Photographs of flooding in Harberton
  - iii) Notice of emergency closure of category 12 road ref uUCR 302 between near Copplethorn Cross and Belsford.
  - iv) Report on flooding in Harberton produced by Harberton resident, Peter Cogley
  - v) Grant funding available

In addition, the Clerk has been in contact with the District Councillor and some Harberton residents with regard to the District Council's support in providing a pallet of sandbags, a skip for damaged possessions, and collection of white goods.

It was noted that Devon County Council flood risk team has booked the Parish Hall on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October for members of the public to 'drop in' and speak with representatives from the County Council about their experiences of the flood.

- 10.2. Flooding in Harbertonford *Receipt of information and understanding of specific circumstances of flood event and consideration of any Parish Council actions*

It was reported that the Clerk has sought information from the Environment Agency for a debrief of what happened, as various points of view have been shared by residents as to the effectiveness of the culvert on the Moreleigh Road. A response from the Environment Agency is expected by the end of the week.

Cllrs reported that properties on Moreleigh Road, particularly on Harbourne Terrace were badly affected, commenting that the culvert could not take the water and the road drains were not big enough. Comments were made that the warning system did not work and by the time that residents were aware of flooding it was too late to distribute the available aquasacs. Frustration was expressed at the inconvenience of the 6 week road closure in the summer to enable works on the culvert, and that residents had experienced no improvement in their experiences of flooding.

Cllrs reported that Hernaford Farm had experienced a wash out, with water entering one of the new barn conversations and all four buildings in the courtyard were flooded when they had never experienced flooding before. There were comments on the amount of farmland now being cropped for maize to ensure there is enough dry matter for cows to eat during the winter, but that this can create issues on the ability of the fields to absorb water after harvesting. Observations were also made on the reduction in hedgerows, which would also have an impact on Natural Flood Management.

It was commented that in the aftermath of the flooding it has become apparent that there are individuals who are attempting to 'do their bit' by regularly clearing drains of leaves, but there is no one person co-ordinating activity. It was commented that there needs to be one co-ordinated group and that all individuals and agencies should come together to share expertise and, in the cases of agencies and authorities, equipment.

It was noted that those people in the village who were not personally affected had no idea of the impact that the heavy rain was having on their neighbours, asking if there could be some kind of audible village alarm or siren that would call out others to help in cases of emergency. It was noted that in some circumstances the ringing of church bells would act as a warning or emergency call. It was commented that anyone can sign up to the flood alert warning system to which you can sign up to receive alerts by email, text or phone call.

10.3. Flooding in Harberton *Receipt of information and understanding of specific circumstances of flood event and consideration of any Parish Council actions.*

It was noted from the reports circulated in advance of the meeting that areas in Harberton that were most affected included Orchard End, St Clements Terrace, St Andrew's Cottages, Preston Farm, Town Farm Barn and properties on Vicarage Ball. It was noted that properties that suffer most from run off from Luscombe Cross and rising levels of the stream (i.e. area around Ford Farm and Church Farm B&B) were not adversely affected this time. It was noted that roads around Belsford were affected and that the surface of the green lane washed away with deposits blocking access to the hamlet by the only road accessing it.

It was noted that the peak surge took place at approximately 2:30am, with the content from the runoff from the fields (mud and chopped straw) being taken into properties. It was noted that members of the local farming community came out in support, the upstream landowner had been in the village doing clean up and brought additional support and equipment from Cornworthy.

It was noted that the fields upstream had been arable for approximately 20 years and had just been seeded to pasture. It was unfortunate timing that the storms came before the seed rooted. It was noted that the farmer is following land management advice from the Environment Agency.

10.4. Funding opportunities *Consideration of Parish Council applications to funding available*

10.4.1. Devon Communities Together Cllrs were informed that up to £1500 could be available for the Parish Council to make an application to help communities be better prepared in the event of an emergency, including flooding. Whilst the official deadline has passed, it was confirmed by Devon Communities Together that the grant is permanently available to those who have a current Emergency Plan or are updating one. The Clerk had expected that some comments would be made through the questionnaire that would offer suggestions to what grant funding could be used to support, such as specific tools or skip hire for example. Nothing immediately obvious had been raised by residents, and the District Council had made arrangements for skip hire and collection of white goods. The Clerk will pursue a meeting with Devon Communities together, see notes at 10.5 below.

10.4.2. Natural flood management programme It was reported that the Environment Agency and DEFRA had announced £25 million fund in place to improve flood resilience through a National Flood Management programme and help meet the aims of the government's policy statement on flooding a coastal erosion, Environmental Improvement Plan and National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. Any person can apply as the lead applicant. The Clerk has made an approach to Environment Agency to ask if it would be worth the Parish Council putting together an application focusing on the area around Screw Lane. Compiling an Expression of Interest to the fund would be a significant amount of work, particularly as a bid needs to prove cost effectiveness of a programme, and the Clerk would need support from Parish Councillors and/or members of the public to compile an Expression of Interest by the deadline of 10<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr Paine volunteered to support, commenting that whilst they have little experience of Natural Flood Management or the infrastructure required, they would be able to help with pulling together dates and making sure that the project gets going. To support had been made aware of a fund : The C.Cllr suggested that the Clerk make contact with the West Country Rivers Trust and the South Devon Catchment Partnership to enquire if any organisations to come together on a joint bid, or if any support could be made available to the Parish Council in the development of an Expression of Interest. **ACTION: The Clerk** will follow this up.

10.5. Emergency Directory/Emergency Planning Cllrs were aware that progress on reviewing the Harberton Parish Emergency Plan had stalled due to concerns by volunteers involved about personal liability. Cllr Paine and the Clerk had suggested an Emergency Directory be compiled instead and that work on this would resume.

It was commented that a Community Emergency Directory could pull together information that is less readily known in the community, such as the extent to which services are provided by larger authorities and where resources are available that support community self-help. Mapping software available through the Parish Council could provide information on where aqua sacs could be found in times of flood, where grit bins are found if roads are icy and where community support is most needed during more extreme weather events. It was noted that some villagers who used to 'get things done' are now unable to physically help in ways that

they did before or have moved or passed away and that those more recent to the area were not aware of the roles that volunteers have played in managing the impact of flood, ice or snow.

Devon Communities Together has offered to deliver a short Powerpoint presentation to councillors and anyone else involved in reviewing the Parish Emergency Plan with a Q&A session afterwards and some coaching with a response team. Concerns about personal liability could be covered during this session. It was suggested that Cllr Paine and the Clerk would liaise with Devon Communities Together on the suggestion for a meeting that could be opened to anyone from the community who wanted to contribute.

It was suggested that that container at Harberton Playing Field could be used as a storage point for equipment. The suggestion of installing a 'Community Shed' at the car park in Harbertonford was also made.

- 10.6. Parish Lengthsman It was noted that the Parish Council had not yet received interest in response to the need for a Parish Lengthsman. The Clerk has a meeting scheduled with other Clerks in the local area and hopes to discuss if there is interest in working together across parishes. It was suggested that the Parish Council include co-ordination of the support from voluntary flood wardens within the Parish Lengthsman role. It was noted that training would be required along with interest from a pool of volunteers.

## 11. Correspondence

- 11.1. 20230913 Data Protection fee - Reminder to renew Cllrs were informed that the annual data protection renewal fee is due. £35 will be collected by Direct Debit on or around 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
- 11.2. 20230919 Abandoned Land Rover at Harberton Parish Hall Cllrs were informed that a Spanish Land Rover has been parked in the Parish Hall car park all summer, it had been presumed dumped and the Parish Council had been asked if SHDC should be contacted or what the legal position would be if the vehicle was removed privately. The Clerk reported that the Parish Hall committee has now heard from the vehicle owner and that it is expected that the land rover will be removed within the week. It is noted that had this not been the case, the Parish Hall committee members are of the opinion that it is the Parish Council as landowners who would need to approach SHDC to have the vehicle removed.
- 11.3. Invitation to South Hams CVS AGM Cllrs were informed of the invitation to attend the South Hams CVS AGM at Follaton House in Totnes on Tuesday 17 October from 12 noon to 2pm. In addition to learning about South Hams CVS recent work and future plans there will be guest presentations on 'Enabling healthy communities in the South Hams' with the Assistant Director for Health and Social Care in West Devon, Devon County Council and Livewell, and 'Working together with our Communities' with the Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Community Development at South Hams District Council. After the AGM there will be a networking lunch. Cllrs wishing to attend should RSVP. There was no interest.
- 11.4. District Council invests in more housing The Parish Council has been informed by press release that a top priority for the new administration is that the District Council boosts its stock of homes to address the district's immediate and future housing needs. New investment in the council's housing supply is supported by the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). LAHF is a government grant offered to councils to help with the pressures around placement breakdown for Homes for Ukraine guests and to support Afghan families stuck in bridging hotels. Under the first phase of funding earlier in the year, the Council bought seven properties in Sherford, on the outskirts of Plymouth, and will welcome its new tenants in December 2023. Due to an underspend in the project, the Council has agreed to buy one more property. The location of the new home is still to be decided. The Council has also agreed to put £475,000 towards buying three properties under the second phase of funding which will be available before spring 2024. By the end of the project, the Council will own 11 homes through the LAHF scheme.
- 11.5. Plans Shape Up for Future Talks The Parish Council is informed via press release that the Executive Committee of South Hams District Council has set out its draft aims and ambitions for the next four years in their proposed Corporate Strategy for 2024-2028. The draft corporate strategy has been developed in response to known challenges, such as the lack of truly affordable housing for local people and the climate and biodiversity crisis. A series of 'Let's Talk' consultations with local people will take place between 25<sup>th</sup> September – 20<sup>th</sup> October and will include an online survey on the full strategy, a series of 'short polls' available through social media, conversations with key partners, including town and parish councils, public consultation sessions across the District and a paper survey for those who are not online.
- 11.6. District Council finances are in a good position moving forwards The Parish Council has been informed by press release that the Council has published its draft accounts for 2022/23 which show there was a small surplus of just £57,000 (0.5%) against a net budget of £10.464m for 2022/23. In 2022/23 the Council faced additional costs and a shortfall of income of £1.9m. Many of these costs were a result of the current economic climate with high inflation and the cost of living crisis. The extra costs came from inflation pressures, utility, IT and extra insurance, the local government pay award and a shortfall in planning income. These extra costs and shortfall in income were balanced by the Council generating additional investment income. This income of over £1m, taking advantage of high interest rates, came from the careful planning and management of the Council's cash funds. The Council also received more income of £0.9m from its car parks and the Dartmouth Lower Ferry, along with income from its business units.
- 11.7. Consultation Agreed for Support Scheme for Vulnerable Residents The Parish Council has been informed by press release that the District Council will consult on its Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25. The scheme is reviewed each year to provide support for residents on a low income with paying their council

tax. With the ongoing cost of living crisis the District Council is firm in its aims to offer an extra helping hand to those residents who need it across the District. The targeted consultation will run from Monday 2 October 2023 to Sunday 12 November 2023.

- 11.8. Council working to improve frontline services for residents The Parish Council is informed by press release that littering, dog fouling and fly tip enforcement are to get a renewed focus from South Hams District Council. Enforcement of individual offences relating to littering, dog fouling and fly tip enforcement have proven to be notoriously difficult. The Council has pledged to use Community Protection Notices more widely for persistent offences. This is an additional tool for the Council in the fight against littering and dog fouling. At the same time the Council will look to work with community and voluntary groups and parish and town councils to keep the South Hams looking and feeling as tidy as possible.
- 11.9. Memorial plaque for John Horswill **It was RESOLVED** that the Parish Council has no objection to the family of John Horswill to install a permanent memorial plaque either on the back of the bus stop or on the bus stop green at the same time the Harbertonford Christmas tree is erected in 2023. It was noted that the tradition of organising the village tree was something that John was known for in the community and that John's son Lee will be again arranging the village Christmas tree in 2023 in memory of his late father.
- 11.10. Halloween Event at Tigley Cross Cllrs were informed that a member of the public had been in touch by telephone to inform cllrs that a resident a Tigley Cross served a notice banning him from playing loud music on site is advertising a Halloween event there. Neighbours understand that there are plans for there to be loud music playing throughout the night and into the following day. Concerns were also raised that toilets and showers have been installed on site without planning permission, and there are people living on site. The MoP has been in touch with the District Council but wanted the Parish Council to also be aware.
- 11.11. #42 2023 DALC E-bulletin Cllrs are informed that this e-bulletin advertises dates for the 'Being a Good Councillor' courses should any cllrs wish to book.
- 11.12. Proposed road closure - Harberton, South Hams Cllrs are informed that Devon Tree Services is applying to Devon County Council for a temporary road closure between Little Grove Farm and Westridge House (close to Tigley) on 8<sup>th</sup> January to carry out tree works on behalf of Airband. As the road closure is on a dead end lane, operatives will allow access for residents and emergency vehicles.

## 12. Finance

- 12.1. Notice of income and expenditure since last meeting None
- 12.2. To consider payments as per the October payment schedule **It was RESOLVED** to make the following payments:
  - 12.2.1. Payment 2310\_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2023 includes Clerk Oct salary £483.60, Neighbourhood Plan Sept Salary at £55.80 and overtime payment 1 of 3 at £93 = £632.40 no VAT.
  - 12.2.2. Payment 2310\_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk expenses claim dated 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023 for mileage at £5.85 and broadband at £7.50 = £13.35 no VAT.
  - 12.2.3. Payment 2310\_3 to Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement for donation from Harberton Parish Council 2023/24 budget towards youth services in Harberton Parish = £1000 no VAT
  - 12.2.4. Payment 2310\_4 to Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement as Community Benefit Fund grant to support youth services in Harberton Parish = £1000 no VAT
  - 12.2.5. Payment 2310\_5 to Frances Harvey as grant from Community Benefit Fund for the Harbertonford Christmas Tree = £400
13. **E-Circulars for information** Cllrs were informed of e-circulars received: 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 NHS Integrated Care Board, Parish Online, Rural Services Network, SLCC Membership.

## 14. Matters at the discretion of the Chairman

- 14.1. Landslides around Monkey Oak Lane It was commented that due to recent heavy rains there have been landslides at Monkey Oak lane with gravel from Monkey Oak being carried into the road.
- 14.2. Harbertonford Car Park It was reported that a member of the public had expressed interest in purchasing the car park at Harbertonford bridge from the Parish Council. The member of public had been informed that if they would like the Parish Council to seriously consider this then they should come to a meeting.

15. **Date and location of next ordinary meeting** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Harberton Parish Hall.

Meeting closed at 21:50