

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council at 7.30pm on Tuesday 12th December 2023 at Harbertonford Village Hall.

In Attendance

Harbertonford Councillors

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

Harberton Councillors

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

Others

D.Cllr McKay: Present
C.Cllr Hodgson: Present
Clerk Ms Radford: Present
Members of the Public: 0

Public Session

No members of the public were present.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above. **It was RESOLVED** to sanction reasons 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 For cllrs to declare any interests (nature and scope) on items on the agenda.
3. **Reports** for information from:
 - 3.1. County Councillor (C.Cllr) The C.Cllr had circulated a monthly report. The following key issues were highlighted:
 - 3.1.1. Community self-delivery of Highway improvements Devon County Council's (DCC's) Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee had looked at a proposal from the Director of Services to enable communities to trial the self-delivery of minor road improvement works to the road network where they have the resources and ability to take on these commitments. This would include initiatives such as installation of Vehicle Activated Signs, 20mph speed limits, footways etc. Concern had been raised that smaller Town or Parish Councils with less resource would not have the capacity to take on these projects and clear guidance would need to be provided to enable projects to be carried out appropriately. An approach was discussed in which Town and Parish Councils could pay DCC to carry out such schemes, i.e. DCC offering a tendering service.
 - 3.1.2. Bus Service Improvement Plan It was noted Government funding will not provide new buses but focus on getting people back onto the buses/increasing bus use. The C.Cllr asked about using funds to install additional zebra crossings to enable people safe access to bus stops on busy roads. On that basis new zebra crossings have been proposed to link to bus stops at Bridgetown Hill, Huxhams Cross, Dartington and The Lamb in Totnes.
 - 3.1.3. Plymouth to South Devon Freeport It was reported that the C.Cllr had asked a question about DCC's £15m involvement in the project, now that South Hams District Council (SHDC) has changed its plans meaning that the spine road DCC has committed to provide may no longer be required.
 - 3.1.4. Closure of residential care homes It was noted that three care homes in the C.Cllr's division have now closed. It was commented that a number of homes have been operating under capacity since the pandemic.
 - 3.2. District Councillor
 - 3.3. Corporate Strategy Cllrs were encouraged to respond to the strategy, now referred to as the 'Council Plan'. It was commented that the plan includes strategy for community investment, including housing. The D.Cllr has linked the Harberton CLT with the South Hams District Council (SHDC) Housing Officer in relation to the support that the District Council can provide. The next stage will be in the creation of a Delivery Plan.
 - 3.4. Community Forests It was reported that using funding from DEFRA, the Woodland Trust and other funders, SHDC will be taking over 56 acres of land in South Brent to turn it into a community forest and mixed habitat area. A community share offer will be launched in South Brent for further funding. The land will be owned by SHDC and leased to South Brent Community Trust to manage it. It was commented that a similar project is also happening in Kingsbridge.
 - 3.5. Rivers It was reported that the D.Cllr is seeking to liaise with agencies and organisations such as Friends of the Dart, West Devon Trust, Devon Catchment Partnership, Environment Agency to assist in co-ordinating activities.
 - 3.6. Waste The D.Cllr asked for feedback on waste collection services, commenting that there has been a significant reduction in complaints received since the new system was implemented. The D.Cllr commented that the waste team has done an extraordinary job. The Clerk had one query relating to collection in areas where waste produced exceeded the capacity of bins such as the encampment at Harpers Hill, in the Totnes Parish but close to the Harberton Parish boundary.
4. **Minutes** **It was RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council 14th November 2023 as an accurate record.

- 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) Ongoing
 - 5.2. Bank signatory updates (Clerk) Ongoing
 - 5.3. Snow Warden registration and training (Clerk) Ongoing, see item 10.3.
 - 5.4. Annual Tree Survey (quotes for tree work) It was reported that a request for quotes has been sent to four suppliers. Any quotes received will be considered at the next meeting in January.
 - 5.5. Parish Lengthsman (Clerk) Ongoing
 - 5.6. Church House Inn platform (Clerk) It was reported that the Clerk has been liaising with the D.Cllr and Devon County Highways with regards to the raised seating area that has been constructed on the highway outside the Church House Inn. The matter has now been passed on to those agencies for action.
- 6. Co-option of Parish Councillors** No interest had been received. It was agreed to circulate an appeal for interest in the new year to fill the three vacancies on the Parish Council.
- 7. Planning**
 - 7.1. Consideration of planning applications
 - 7.2. 3887/23/TCA Works to a tree in a conservation area: G1: Mixed species - crown lift to 6m from ground level, pollard to 6m from ground level at Land at SX 776 584, Harberton. **It was RESOLVED SUPPORT** the application
 - 7.3. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions Cllrs were informed of the following decisions of the planning authority:
 - 7.3.1. 3252/23/TCA T1: Willow - fell due to close proximity to storm drain and dwelling at Merlewood Cottage, Harberton. No Objection Raised
 - 7.3.2. 3147/23/LBC Listed building consent for plaster/cornice repairs, roof renewal, reinstatement of water damaged window shutters/architrave at Dundridge House, Harberton. Conditional Approval
 - 7.4. Receive a report on enforcement cases (for information only) The December 2023 caseload has not been received to date. Cllrs were informed of one case that was added to the caseload in May 2023 has been closed as it has been found that the breach of planning control has ceased.
- 8. Monthly reports**
 - 8.1. Finance Committee update No update. The next meeting was due to take place on 2nd January 2024. It was noted that neither Cllr Camp nor Cllr Morris would be able to attend. **ACTION: Clerk** to circulate alternative dates within that week.
 - 8.2. Community Land Trust update (CLT) It was noted that the D.Cllr has made introductions to the CLT Secretary with regard to new support that the District Council is able to give to the CLT.
 - 8.3. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update It was reported that the programme of talks will be advertised on the village newsletters and Sustainable Harbourne Valley website.
 - 8.4. Neighbourhood Plan update Members of the Steering Group had met with consultants to discuss when and how a Strategic Environment Assessment will be completed. A community conversation with a focus on green energy is in planning for February. The next meeting will take place 18th December 2023.
 - 8.5. Harberton Playing Field Association (HPFA) No update.
 - 8.6. Harbertonford Play Park Improvements Committee It was reported that a community work day took place on 25th November at which all the safety surfaces were power washed and works were undertaken to an oak tree on site. The willow sculpture received attention at a work day three weeks before. It was noted that weather has not been dry enough to repair the wet pour surface, which will be attended to as soon as possible.
 - 8.7. Clerk's update No update
- 9. Renewal of Harbertonford Play Park Lease** It was reported that negotiations are ongoing.
- 10. Emergency Planning**
 - 10.1. Update on progress of Emergency Directory It was reported that Cllr Paine has drafted introductory text for circulation in village newsletters. The next opportunity for inclusion in Village Life would be for the January edition. The Clerk will forward to both village publications at the same time.
 - 10.2. Harberton Flood Alert System It was reported that a member of the public has raised the concept of a community operated flood alert system using rain gauges and gauges and culvert flow monitoring. Contact had been made with South West Water (SWW) to understand if there are any gauges, flow monitoring devices or telemetry in the local area that could be accessed by the community, or if SWW would allow installation of a rain gauge at the reservoir and grant access for it to be serviced. There has been little community interest in to date, however there is the potential for it to be discussed further if there is community response to the Emergency Directory. Cllrs agreed with the Clerk that this was an initiative that is worth further promotion.
 - 10.3. Flood and Snow Warden It was noted that dates for training had not transpired as the registration process had not been finalised. **ACTION: The Clerk** will follow up with Highways. The C.Cllr offered to provide support if required. **ACTION: The Clerk** agreed to follow up actions that had come out of the multi-agency flood meeting, specifically the support offered by engineers at SHDC in helping provide a survey that would help the farmer at Screw Lane consider options for repositioning the gateway, and to follow up Highways offer of surveying the drainage system on the A381 from North Park Corner to the centre of Harbertonford.

11. **Tristford Road/Vicarage Ball Junction** After discussion it was agreed that there was little appetite for the Parish Council to progress road signs or road layout measures at the triangle junction where Tristford Road and Fore Street meets Vicarage Ball. It was commented that the current road layout encourages caution.

12. **Annual Review of GDPR Policy Documents Part 2** *For annual review*

12.1. Document Retention and Disposal Policy were reviewed and no amendments made.

12.2. HPC Retention of Documents Appendix A were reviewed and no amendments made.

12.3. HPC General Privacy Notice were reviewed and no amendments made.

12.4. HPC Staff, Councillors and Role Holders Privacy Notice were reviewed and no amendments made.

13. **Correspondence**

13.1. South Hams Community Action: Request for support *For consideration* Cllrs were informed that the Parish Council had received the annual reports for South Hams Community Action (formerly South Hams CVS) for the year 2022/23 and a request for the Parish Council to consider providing a donation to support the organisation's services in 2024. It was noted that South Hams Community Action is a charity that relies on funding to enable it's work with local community organisations and to help groups with advice on governance, funding and volunteering. The organisation also provides training, advice and information sessions, and promote volunteering across the district. The covering letter comments that many voluntary and community groups offer a wide-reaching role to support community wellbeing by providing activities and support, not just for lonely and vulnerable residents but for the wider community. South Hams Community Action would like to do more to help support local communities and groups in many other key areas of need. This includes volunteer recruitment and training, fundraising support and advice, transport to social activities and befriending for our lonely and vulnerable residents of all age groups. It would also like to build its team to offer more one-to-one support to residents. **It was RESOLVED** to give a grant of £200, as the same value that had been given in the 2022/23 financial year.

13.2. Planning Training for Town & Parish Councils *For consideration* Cllrs were informed that following requests, South Hams District Council has arranged planning training for interested Town and Parish Councillors on Wednesday 24th January. There will be two sessions: 4.00pm to 5.30pm: '*The Planning Process*'; and 5.30pm to 7.00pm: '*Development Management*'. Both sessions will be 'chaired' by the Chairman of SHDC's Development Management Committee, Cllr Mark Long, and will be held remotely over MS Teams. As a result, there will be no restrictions on the number of attendees. A Teams meeting link will be provided once RSVPs have been collated. **ACTION: The Clerk** would forward information on how to join to Cllrs Bowley, Davies and Morris.

13.3. Devon County Council: Connect me news update *For information* Cllrs were informed that this e-bulletin included news that the Government has confirmed plans to finalise a Devolution Deal with Devon and Torbay. Which means that, subject to negotiations, Devon and Torbay will be given a wide ranging package of powers and funding transferred from Whitehall to local government. More information can be found on the [Devon County Council's website](#) (html).

13.4. #51 2023 DALC E-bulletin *For information* Cllrs were informed that this e-bulletin includes a recording from the most recent 'Connect Event' which focused on Devolution Deals and how a deal with central government could benefit Devon's communities. As Devon was one of nine areas invited to take part in the Government's 'levelling up' programme Devon County Council's Programme Manager, Phill Adams, provided an update us on the current status of a Deal for Devon and meeting participants were able to ask questions and discuss the powers and funding likely to come from a Deal, and how a Deal will be governed locally through a Combined County Authority. A [link to the recording is provided for Councillors wishing to find out more](#) (html).

13.5. Renaming of AONBs to National Landscapes *For information* Cllrs were informed that AONBs have been renamed National Landscapes. The press release comments this is a significant milestone for the UK and the next step in fully realising the National Landscape's vision to be the leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people's health and wellbeing. More information can be found at www.national-landscapes.org.uk (html)

13.6. Council Helping Residents With Their Energy Costs *For information* The Parish Council has been informed by press release that SHDC is helping households across the District improve the energy efficiency of their home and is encouraging residents to check whether they are eligible for an upgrade to their current heating systems and insulation. Residents who can benefit will have a combined gross household income of less than £31k each year, and are also living in the most poorly performing properties as measured by their Energy Performance (EPC) (D-G properties) and are not heated from the gas grid. Lower income households could save between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills. Households who think they may be eligible for the scheme can find out more at www.southhams.gov.uk/hug2

13.7. Notification of Road Closure – Work Ref LM212MB10457630A on Bow Road, Harbertonford *For information* Cllrs are informed that South West Water has applied for a road closure to complete utility works outside number 1 to outside number 17 Bow Road. These works will take place between 29/02/2024 and 04/03/2024. A helpline number has been provided should further information be required. The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - Bow Road, Old Road, Luscombe towards Harbertonford, Luscombe Cross to Painsford Cross, Painsford Cross to Bow Road along Zc322, Bow Road and vice versa.

13.8. #53 2023 DALC E-bulletin *For information* Cllrs are informed that this bulletin includes a link to a blog from DALC's County Officer, Cara Stobart, providing some thought-provoking insight into balancing financial

responsibility and community investment, in the context of financial pressure faced by principal authorities and the uncapped precept of parish and town councils. The Clerk will share the news blog with members of the Finance Committee ahead of the 2024/25 annual budget meeting.

- 13.9. Temporary Traffic Order - A381, Harberton (TTRO2454267) *For information* Cllrs are informed of a road closure on the A381, Harbertonford between 12th February 2024 to Friday 22nd March 2024 to enable resurfacing and drainage work with pedestrian crossing. The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via A381 southbound, A379 towards Modbury, A3121 via Ermington, Ugborough, A38 Via Brent Cross, A385, A381.
- 13.10. The Freeport is on Track Following Review *For information* The Parish Council has been informed by press release that the District Council has undertaken a thorough review into the risks and opportunities of the Plymouth and Devon Freeport and has come to the conclusion that the Freeport has the potential to benefit residents in the South Hams. A report by an Audit and Governance group at South Hams District Council also made several recommendations to manage any possible risks. The report acknowledged that concern had been expressed by some residents, therefore there is greater need for a programme of communication and engagement within the community. The review recognised the importance and scale of the projects as well as the positive impacts it would have for the region. South Hams Council, a founder member of the Freeport alongside Plymouth City and Devon County Council, will be focusing on improvements to the environment, the green economy with ethical, inclusive and sustainable opportunities for small businesses, and well-paid employment within the South Hams area of the Freeport.
- 13.11. Notice and invitation to TRAYE project Steering Group meeting Fri.15.12.23 @3pm *For consideration* Cllrs have been informed that two representatives of the Parish Council have been invited to attend the next meeting of the TRAYE steering group at 3pm on Friday 15th December 2023. An agenda has been provided along with a draft Service Level Agreement between TRAYE and Parish Councils that will be discussed at the meeting. It was noted by the Clerk that other local Parish Clerks have sought advice and discussion on whether it would be appropriate or relevant for a Parish Council to enter into a Service Level Agreement. The Clerk commented that Parish Councils have no powers to provide Youth Services unless the principle authority (i.e. the County Council) was to delegate powers and hand them over to the Parish Council, but only on approach and if it was something the Parish Council was keen to do. Without any powers, any spending would be out of Section 137 as there is no general power of competence to spend on whatever the Parish Council wants to. It was noted that the Parish Council has rather provided a grant to TRAYE on receipt of an application, by way of a contribution to the service that the charity offers to the community. **ACTION: Cllr Beamish** would consider attending the meeting if possible.

14. Finance

14.1. 2024/25 Budget

- 14.1.1. Receipt of 2023/4 Quarter 3 Budget report The Clerk had prepared a budget report showing spend at the end of Quarter 3 and projected spend for the end of the 2023/24 financial year. This was circulated to all cllrs ahead of the meeting to support any discussion on proposals for the budget for 2024/25.
- 14.1.2. Budget proposals for 2024/25 financial year Cllrs made the following suggestions for projects requiring precept funding in the next financial year: Community Shed for Harbertonford; increase in costs for rent of the Harbertonford Play Park; a project to digitise Parish Council minutes from earliest recorded meetings in 1916 to 2000, when minutes were first typed.
- 14.2. Notice of income and expenditure since last meeting.
- 14.3. To consider payments as per the December payment schedule **It was RESOLVED** to make the following payments:
- 14.3.1. Payment 2312_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd Dec 2023 includes Clerk Dec salary £518.27, Neighbourhood Plan Dec Salary at £59.80, backpay payment 2 of 2 at £160.84 and overtime payment 3 of 3 at £93 = £831.91 no VAT.
- 14.3.2. Payment 2312_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk expenses claim dated 6th December 2023 for mileage at £5.85 and broadband at £7.50 = £13.35 no VAT.
- 14.3.3. Payment 2312_3 to HMRC Shipley for NI Payment incurred on November 2023 Salary = £10.20 no VAT.
- 14.3.4. Payment 2312_4 to Shipley for NI Payment incurred on December 2023 Salary = £10.20 no VAT.
- 14.3.5. Payment 2312_5 to Harbertonford Play Park as transfer of ring-fenced funds on the committee opening their own bank account = £766.10
- 14.3.6. Payment 2312_6 to Paul Westlake invoice 964 for grass cutting in Harbertonford. Village green 10 cuts @ £30 Per cut and Play Area 10 cuts @ £30 Per cut = £ 600.00 no VAT
- 14.3.7. Payment 2312_7 to George Grimshaw to provide catering for Harberton Parish Community Conversation on 10th June 2023. 50 people at £1.95 per head= £ 97.50
- 14.3.8. 2312_8 South Hams CVS grant = £200

It was RESOLVED that Paul Westlake be asked to continue to cut the grass in Harbertonford in 2024 at the same price per cut as in 2023.

15. **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.

16. Matters at the discretion of the Chairman

- 16.1. Harbertonford shop closure It was commented that the shop will be closed for 7 days which may have considerable impact for the more vulnerable members of the community. It was commented that the Community Shop will be trying to do what it can to support people whilst the shop is closed.
 - 16.2. Unauthorised encampment at Peak Cross It was noted that a court date has been set for 2nd January 2024.
 - 16.3. Harbertonford Play Park It was asked whether a replacement key to the gateway connecting the primary school to the park could be provided to enable school children to use the park at breaktimes. It was commented that the parish council had replaced the padlock recently and the school had the keys. It was noted that the issue of the park during school times was not a matter of access, but of having sufficient members of staff to supervise access to a public space, as well as the school's own fenced play areas.
- 17. Date and location of next ordinary meeting** 9th January 2024, Harberton Parish Hall.
Cllr Morris gave apologies in advance.