

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council
at 7.30pm on Tuesday 10th December 2024 at Harbertonford Village Hall

In attendance

Harbertonford Councillors

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

Harberton Councillors

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

Others

D.Cllr McKay: Apologies
C.Cllr Hodgson: Apologies
Clerk Ms Radford: Present
Members of the Public: 14

Public Session

- i) A member of the public (MoP) made a query on the draft minutes, identifying a typographical error that needed correction.
- ii) The same MoP commented that the current Neighbourhood Plan does not yet include a section on flooding, suggesting that the Parish Council make a strong steer that this be included. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has tasked a working group to make recommendations on what the plan should say about flooding. It was noted that the Steering Group is due to meet on Tuesday.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above. **It was RESOLVED** to sanction reasons for 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 No interests were declared on items on the agenda.
3. **Reports** for information from:
 - 3.1. County Councillor No report.
 - 3.2. District Councillor No report.
4. **Minutes** Having made one minor amendment to correct a typographical error, **it was RESOLVED** to sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council of 12th November 2024 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. Snow Warden registration and training (Clerk) Cllr Hambly reported that he had received a link to book available training.
 - 5.3. Parish Lengthsman (Clerk) Ongoing. It was reported that the response from the Flood Risk team at Devon County Council (DCC) was that the Clerk should liaise with DCC Highways when looking for support.
 - 5.4. Emergency Directory (Cllr Paine/Clerk) It was reported that no members of the public offered comments on '5 things to share about flooding' at the recent flooding meeting. The Parish Council's website is holding a repository of information about flooding for the meantime.
 - 5.5. New Parish Council bank account (Clerk) Ongoing It was reported that all pending changes to signatories to the Barclays Account have now officially been cancelled. The new Unity bank account is still not functional until paperwork is completed.
 - 5.6. Staff handbook inc. compliance with prevention of sexual harassment duty (Clerk) Ongoing.
 - 5.7. Mental health impacts of flooding meeting (Clerk) Despite having registered an interest to attend, Harberton Parish Council was not invited to join this focus group discussion.
 - 5.8. Grass cutting tender (Clerk) Ongoing.
6. **Co-option of Parish Councillors** It was noted that two vacancies remain on the Parish Council, one in the Harberton Ward and one in the Harbertonford Ward. There had been no volunteers to fill either vacancy.
7. **Planning**
 - 7.1. Consideration of planning applications:
 - 7.1.1. [3577/24/HHO](#) and [3578/24/LBC](#) Householder application and Listed building consent for proposed reinstatement & remediation works at Hernaforde Farm, Harbertonford **It was RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application.
 - 7.1.2. [3697/24/LBC](#) Listed Building Consent for replacement of external doors with flood doors at 5 Hernaforde Barns, Harbertonford **It was RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application.
 - 7.1.3. [3698/24/LBC](#) Listed Building Consent for replacement of external doors with flood doors at 6 Hernaforde Barns **It was RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application.
 - 7.2. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions The following decision of the planning authority was noted:

2741/24/HHO Householder application for construction of detached carport outbuilding with EV charging point & repair of clock tower with Bat Mitigation works at East Wing, Tristford House, Harberton APPROVED

- 7.3. Receive a report on enforcement cases (for information only) No new enforcement caseload had been received since the last caseload was circulated at the November meeting.

8. Monthly reports

- 8.1. Finance Committee update The next meeting will take place on 7th January, at which a proposed budget for the 2025/6 financial year will be drafted.
- 8.2. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update No update
- 8.3. Neighbourhood Plan update It was reported that the Clerk has received notification that the applications for technical support have been accepted. The Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG) can now move forward with a review of the 2023 Site Options Assessment. When it last met, the HNPSG discussed management of meetings, following which a protocol on suspending standing orders to hear from members of the public was agreed. It had been suggested by the Devon Association of Local Councils that the HNPSG may wish to review its Terms of Reference and this will be discussed at the next meeting. It was reported that a working group has been given a brief to make recommendations on what the Neighbourhood Plan should say about flooding. It was noted that new members of the committee were due to meet earlier in the week to go through the full draft plan, which should put all members in a good position to move forward in full understanding of the document. A list of actions has been compiled to move the plan forward to completion. At the upcoming meeting the HNPSG will be making a recommendation on expect costs of finalising the plan in the next financial year. It was also noted that the Chair of the Parish Council had resigned as Chair of the Steering Group and that the HNPSG would need to elect a new Chair.
- 8.4. Harberton Playing Field update Standing orders were suspended to enable a representative of Harberton Playing Field Association (HPFA) to speak. It was noted that the most recent monthly inspection report had been received noting a number of defects that HPFA hopes to resolve in January. It was noted that the rocking horse will be removed until a fix can be undertaken.
- 8.5. Harbertonford Play Area
- 8.5.1. Update from Harbertonford Play Area Action Committee (HPAAC) It was reported that the Senior Community Development Officer had been in touch with the Clerk to comment on a potentially dangerous defect of steel reinforcement bars protruding from the ground around the site where the old play equipment had stood. Cllr Beamish had removed these, reporting that the stump from the footings had rotted away, leaving the three steels that were anchoring it to the concrete base. It was noted that there are other remnants of the wooden structure that will also be fixed into the ground with rebar and members of HPAAC will monitor their condition regularly. It was commented that a volunteer day will be arranged to undertake maintenance issues highlighted through the monthly inspection reports.
- 8.5.2. Play area lease update It was reported that the final lease agreement has been signed in full and a hard copy received by the Clerk. The rent payment for 2023 and 2024 was authorised at the Ordinary meeting in July 2024, subject to the lease being signed. With all paperwork being completed, payments should now be fully authorised.
- 8.6. Clerk's update It was reported that the Link Academy Trust has submitted an expression of interest to Devon County Council's Green Impact Fund for five photovoltaic (PV) installations and four LED upgrades across its schools just before the application window closed. Harbertonford CE Primary School would be one of the project beneficiaries if successful. There was not sufficient time to put the application to a meeting of the Parish Council to authorise a formal letter of support, but this has been provided by the District Councillor.

9. Flooding in Harberton Parish

- 9.1. November Flooding Meeting update The Clerk provided an update to cllrs who were not able to attend. There was good public attendance, with a higher proportion of Harberton residents in attendance than residents from Harbertonford.

During the meeting speakers from Devon County Council and the Environment Agency provided updates Land Management work that has taken place since the flooding event of September 2023 and to provide information to residents on community flood resilience and potential of Natural Flood Management measures. This included a presentation from a member of the Environment Agency Land Management Team about work done on the fields above Screw Lane, and impact of the time and investment already made by the farmer to reduce soil compaction and in moving the gateway, commenting that impact had been good. Following queries raised by the public, the officer commented that he is satisfied with the crops sown since.

It was noted that the application made to enable the implementation of Natural Flood Management measures wasn't successful, but the team will continue to apply for funding. It was commented that DCC's own 6-year budget is already oversubscribed and getting something into the programme before 2027 would be unlikely. It was commented that flood defences installed in Harberton 20 years ago continue to work quite well and should withstand a 1 in 100 year flooding event. It was commented that the flooding event in September 2023 followed unprecedented levels of rainfall.

The focus for Devon County Council is now on resilience and adaptation – how DCC can help communities help themselves and support the community in taking forward Natural Flood Management schemes. The Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team made the following offers to support this:

- An offer was made by members of the Flood Risk team to meet with any emerging flood risk group to go through the process of getting Natural Flood Management initiatives off the ground, give a steer on what next steps and to answer questions, before offering a follow up workshop at a future point. This first session has now been arranged to take place on 29th Jan 2025.
- An offer was made to share the Natural Flood Management bid – only based on computer modelling so far, but makes suggestions on 3 enlarged ponds in Harbertonford, a series leaky dams and hedge reinstatement, and in Harberton, soil management, creating an upstream pond and tree planting.
- Devon County Council has committed to undertake more modelling to identify if any more can be done, i.e. in re-engineering the current flood schemes.

A representative from the Environment Agency gave a presentation on flood resilience with reference to the following available resources:

- ‘Your watercourse’ document about responsibilities for managing watercourses
- Flood Hub - which offers links to useful resources.
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) provides helpful information about Natural Flood Management designs.
- ‘Flood Mary’ is a self-styled flood advocate whose website shares cheaper ways that people can protect their properties and become more resilient to flooding. It was suggested that local residents could find this site helpful.
- Personal flood plans were introduced and encouraged, as was the implementation of a community emergency plan.

Following an intervention from the floor there was some discussion about whether Screw Lane should be allowed to flood to act as a natural break tank. Different views were expressed in informal discussion.

9.2. Harberton Village Flash Flood Alert System *Consideration of report produced by a MoP*

It was commented that the report provided good practical information about how people can prepare themselves for flash flooding. Cllrs queried what action the author would like the Parish Council to take in response. Standing orders were suspended in order to allow the author to respond, who commented that the report was not written for information, not for any action to be taken. The request for action has been made by residents as follows on item 9.3.

9.3. East Harberton Flash Flood Defence Proposal *For consideration and approval in principle* Cllrs had received a

paper compiled by residents of Harberton laying out challenges and risks of flooding in the Ford Farm area of Harberton and possible action that could be taken to alleviate risk to properties. This includes better management of flood attenuation ponds upstream, a proposal to create a series of ‘leaky dams’ to control the peak flow and manage gradual release, and to regularly clear the culvert to prevent silt build up. The paper proposes that work would be undertaken by residents, who would also aim to secure funding through local grants and crowd funding. **It was RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to hear views from members of the public present. The following matters were noted during discussion:

- The report was introduced commenting that the Ford Farm stream is prone to flash flooding which has the potential to affect at least 11 properties. It was commented that what is required is more joined up thinking, community spirit and funding to future protect residential properties from flooding events. It was commented that if the Parish Council is willing to give ‘in principle’ support to the proposals, the group of residents can take next steps.
- A MoP commented that it would be helpful if the Parish Council could aid communication with landowners to discuss ‘leaky dam’ proposals. It was noted that positive relationships have been built with those landowners contacted so far.
- A cllr commented that use of the terms ‘East’ and ‘West’ Harberton could be confusing and potentially unhelpful as there are no formal ‘East/West’ delineations in the village of Harberton. It was suggested that proposals should be initiated across the whole village, or that there are specific projects that are undertaken under a collective banner. MoPs present commented that this project is taking place under the ‘Harberton ARK’ banner and that nomenclature used should not be a barrier to moving ideas forward.
- It was commented that residents are looking for the support of the Parish Council in its awareness of flooding matters and that when applications for development, flooding must be one of the major points for consideration. Cllrs were in general agreement of this. It was noted that once complete and adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will provide a strong framework for the Parish Council to refer to when responding to planning proposals.
- It was noted that Cllr Paine had taken on an action on behalf of the Parish Council to compile an Emergency Directory and it was commented that it would be advantageous if the work being undertaken by ‘Harberton ARK’, and the Parish Council was joined up. It was commented that it would aid communication between the flooding group and the Parish Council if someone from the flooding group were to also become a Parish Councillor.
- Suggestions on wording a motion for Parish Council consideration were made.

Having heard from the public the meeting was reconvened.

It was RESOLVED to make the following statement: This Parish Council recognises the propensity for Harberton to flash flood. It gives its full support to Parishioners to pursue the investigation of land management, in partnership with landowners and acting with the Environment Agency, to reduce or mitigate flash flooding in Harberton.

- 9.4. Update on Emergency Planning discussion with Environment Agency *For consideration* It was reported that the Clerk had met with contacts at the Environment Agency and Devon Communities Together to discuss a 'fit for purpose' approach to Emergency Planning for Harberton Parish. It had been suggested by the Environment Agency to hold a meeting in Harbertonford in the New Year to talk about the practicalities of flood preparedness, how people share news of potential flooding and how residents can help each other. A meeting would provide the opportunity to introduce the new 'Community Shed' due to be built in Harbertonford to store sand bags and other useful tools and ask if there are residents in the community who can help to do annual stock checks of materials. The meeting would also introduce Natural Flood Management options to Harbertonford residents and join up any initiatives taking place in both parish villages. **It was AGREED** that the Clerk pursue funding from Devon Communities Together to hold a meeting early in 2025.
- 9.5. Environment Agency response to Harbertonford Yeolands Stream query for the near miss event on the 24th of November 2024 *For information* Cllrs were informed the Environment Agency Duty Incident Officer noted that there had been an alarm at the Harbertonford Yeolands Stream Screen and had monitored the situation but did not deploy resource to the location because the level had dropped, and the alarm reset to 'normal'. Following review this was because, unbeknown to the duty officer, members of the community were managing levels at the screen. The Environment Agency therefore requests that in the future, where the community sees an issue at the screen, please can residents call the incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 and make the following report: "*For the attention of the Devon Flood Incident Duty Officer – The screen on the Yeolands Stream in Harbertonford near Totnes is blocked, please can an Operations team be sent to clear and support the community. Feedback from the Flood Incident Duty officer is requested ASAP*". Doing this should close the potential loop where the Flood Incident Duty Officer is unaware that there is a continuing issue. It will also help in incidents where alarms are not triggered correctly or not reported to the duty officer in a timely way, both scenarios do occur on occasion.

In addition, learning from this near miss event will be shared at the next duty officer meeting to raise awareness around this issue. It will be highlighted that a call to the residents who have provided their details on the for the duty procedures should be considered even if the alarm has gone off but returned to normal.

10. **TRAYE Grant Consultation update** *Consideration of responses received to date* Cllrs were advised that 17 people have responded to the questionnaire to date. 2 have sent in letters of support. The online questionnaire will remain open until 5th January. Of the 17 people that have responded, 11 (64.7%) strongly agree with the statement: *It is my view that Harberton Parish Council should give a larger grant to Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement Project (TRAYE) in order to protect youth services in Harberton Parish. I therefore support the increases that need to be made to the precept in order for that grant to be afforded.* In addition to those who strongly agreed, 1 respondent (5.9%) agreed, 1 (5.9%) was neutral, 4 (23.5%) strongly disagreed, however when looking at the reasons for supporting or objecting, 3 gave comments that were in support of provision, and only 1 made comments that objected.

Once the questionnaire has closed, a full summary will be provided to the Finance Committee in order to support them in making a recommendation to the Parish Council on allocation of funds from the 2025/26 budget.

11. 2025/26 Budget

- 11.1. Receipt of 2024/5 Quarter 3 Budget report A budget report was circulated to all cllrs with meeting papers, showing actual spending to date and expected expenditure at the end of the financial year.
- 11.2. Budget proposals During discussion it was noted that the 'Emergency Plan' budget line could be increased to £500 to enable some support of grass roots flooding initiatives. There was general agreement that that the Parish Council makes two budget recommendations – one that proposes the full grant requested by TRAYE, and one that doesn't. It was queried whether 17 responses provided sufficient representation. On discussing potential contributions to the parish play parks it was commented that there would be benefit on undertaking a major engagement piece with the Parish; what they want to do with the precept over time, and if residents were to support a substantial increase to accommodate community endeavours such as providing a lump sum to revamping the parks, establishing a good quality car park (for example).

12. Correspondence

- 12.1. Environment Agency publication - Your watercourse rights and roles *For information* Cllrs are informed that the Environment Agency forwarded the Clerk this informative document for circulation/publication.
- 12.2. Temporary Traffic Order - LEIGH BRIDGE TO BROADPARK STILE, Harberton (TTRO2560421) *For information* Cllrs were informed of a road closure affecting roads from Leigh Bridge to Broadpark Stile in order to enable South West Water to supply a new water source. Road closure will be in place between 10th – 21st February 2025 and an alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be in place. This will divert traffic from Leigh Bridge to Broadpark Stile via Eastleigh Cross, Monkey Oak, Rolster Bridge, Woodland Road, Main Road, Old Road, Brockhills Cross and Bennetts Cross.

- 12.3. Devon Community Resilience Forum Newsletter - November 2024 *For information* Cllrs were informed that this newsletter includes news about two funding opportunities. [The Royal Countryside Fund](#) will be awarding grants of up to £25,000 for rural communities. One of the four themes is 'Building emergency resilience in rural areas'. The [Devon Emergency Resilience Fund](#) is open for another round, where up to £1500 is available to support small schemes and resilience equipment and a smaller grant of £250 to help communities develop an Emergency Plan.
- 12.4. Street Signs – Harberton *For consideration* A resident has written to the Parish Council to ask if road/street signs for Harberton village i.e. Tristford Road, Vicarage Ball, Fore Street etc could be erected in suitable places. The correspondent commented that it is very difficult for delivery vans and new residents to find their way around and that they are sure that residents would be more than happy to have appropriate styled street signs on their walls if needed. Without knowing the best way to get this matter addressed the resident thought the best starting point would be via the Parish Council. **It was RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to Highways for a response.
- 12.5. Thank you Harberton Parish Council *For information* The Parish Council has received a letter of thanks from the CEO of Citizens Advice South Hams for the donation of £250 made to the charity. .
- 12.6. Parish Forum - 27 March 2025 *For consideration* Cllrs are informed that I write to inform that the next Parish Forum has been arranged to be held at 6.00pm on Thursday, 27 March. The purpose of the Forum sessions is to establish a mechanism for the District Council to engage with its local parish councils. The Forum will be a hybrid session with an option to attend the session at Follaton House in person or remotely via MS Teams. **ACTION: Cllrs Paine and Hambly** expressed an interest. **The Clerk** will RSVP on their behalf.
- 12.7. National Association of Local Councils Chief executive's bulletin – 5 December 2024 *For consideration* Cllrs are informed that this bulletin includes news that NALC has published an [anti-terror checklist](#) developed by the Martyn's Law Steering Group. The checklist outlines actions that parish and town councils of all sizes can take to enhance their preparedness for local terrorism risks which align with the anticipated requirements of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, also known as Martyn's Law, which is currently being passed through parliament. By adopting these measures, parish and town councils can proactively contribute to the safety and security of their communities. Next week, the Bill will enter its Report Stage in the House of Commons. In preparation, NALC has sent MPs a briefing, which sets out broad support for the legislation while highlighting areas requiring further clarification, such as funding and other support to assist in its effective implementation. One of the items on the checklist is to ensure that any charities or organisations within the Parish that run venues are aware of the Martyn's Law requirements. Cllrs were informed that the Clerk has downloaded the check list, **it was AGREED** that **ACTION: the Clerk** forward information about Martin's Law to the committees of Harberton Parish and Harbertonford Village Halls, and ask what policies they are putting in place.

13. Finance

- 13.1. Notice of income and expenditure since last meeting. None
- 13.2. To consider payments as per the ~~November~~ December payment schedule **It was RESOLVED** to make the following payments.
- 13.2.1. Payment 2407_12 to Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance. Balancing payment on 2023/24 lease (£250 - £60 already paid in 2023) 2024/25 Lease Payment due on signing the lease = £440 no VAT
- 13.2.2. Payment 2412_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd December 2024 includes Clerk Dec salary £540.11, Neighbourhood Plan Dec Salary at £62.32, overtime payment 3 of 3 at £199.34 = £801.77 no VAT
- 13.2.3. Payment 2412_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk November expenses claim for mileage at £8.19, and broadband for December at £7.50 = £15.59 no VAT
- 13.2.4. Payment 2412_3 to UXG Contractors for invoice 826: Job 1: Remove rope swing at Harberton Playing Fields @£120 Job 2: Raise oak canopy Harbertonford Play Park @£20 = £140 no VAT
- 13.2.5. Payment 2412_4 to Harberton Parish Hall Hire for 17th December 2024 19.00 – 21.00 19.30 – 21.30. 2hrs @ £6.50 per hour = £13.00
- 13.2.6. Payment 2412_5 to Waterman Tree Company was not authorised as an invoice had not yet been presented.
- 13.2.7. Payment 2412_6 to Society of Local Council Clerks ref MEM250980-1 Annual Membership Subscription = £144 no VAT
- 13.2.8. Payment 2412_7 to Paul Westlake for invoice 1076: Grass cutting in Harbertonford Village green 14 cuts @ £30 Per cut and Play Area 17 cuts @ £30 Per cut = £930 no VAT
- 13.2.9. Payment 2412_8 to HMRC Shipley for NI Payment incurred on December 2024 Salary ESTIMATED = £6.04 no VAT
14. **E-Circulars for information** It was reported that e-circulars regularly received include: 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, Friends of the Dart, 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, South Hams Society.
15. **Matters at the discretion of the Chairman:** *Councillors may use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas.*

- 15.1. Personal expressions of support Cllrs wished to express support to individuals who had been subject to intense lines of query from members of the public present at the November meeting of the Parish Council and had been in receipt of emails outside of the meeting. Comment was made on managing participation and discourse in meetings to ensure that no individual cllr feels vulnerable in their position on the council. The Clerk has been providing some support. It was commented that the matter to which the queries related have been referred onward to the relevant organisations and agencies.
 - 15.2. Responding to comments on social media As a matter of transparency and clarity, the Chair addressed a post being circulated through social media channels commenting on his suitability as Chair to the Parish Council. In response, both cllrs and MoP in attendance expressed their full confidence in the Chair.
 - 15.3. 'Harberton ARK' liaison An offer was made from a MoP to act as liaison to Harberton ARK, but did not wish to take on all aspects of the Parish Councillor role. The Clerk commented that a precedent has been set by the HPFA for a regular agenda update slot, and the MoP could be the link liaison person to provide a regular 'Harberton ARK' update.
- 16. Date and location of next ordinary meeting** 7:30pm Tuesday 14th January 2025, Harberton Parish Hall.