

Youth Services Consultation

Responses to Online Questionnaire

This questionnaire was drafted in November 2024, and on following the Parish Council's approval at the meeting of 12th November, information about the consultation and a link to find the online questionnaire was circulated via Village Life (Harbertonford), Harberton Village E-Circular and shared on village Facebook groups. A total of **18 responses** were received. The questionnaire format follows, with a summary of responses given to the 5 questions asked.

Harberton Parish Council's consultation on Precept increases for local youth services

The Parish Council is due to set its 2025/26 budget soon and will need to decide whether to raise the precept (the Parish Council's portion of Council Tax) to contribute more money to the youth club.

The *Totnes and Rural Area Youth Engagement Project* (TRAYE) that runs the youth club has said that the club will be at risk of closing if the Parish Council is unable make a larger donation to its annual costs.

If TRAYE were to be given the funds it is asking for, it would cost the average Council Tax payer approximately £3.50 more on the annual tax bill next year.

The Parish Council wants to hear what you and other residents in the parish think before making a decision.

This simple questionnaire is being circulated to collect local opinion.

Please respond by midnight on Sunday 5th January 2025 in order for your views to be taken into account.

You can alternatively write to the Parish Clerk by the 5th January 2025 with your comments: clerk@harbertonparishcouncil.org or give your views by attending the December meeting of the Parish Council where the budget will first be discussed, at 7:30pm on Tuesday 10th December 2024, held at Harbertonford Village Hall.

Need more information before forming an opinion?

Information about the youth club, the organisation that runs it, what it costs, how much funding the Parish Council has been asked to provide, what that means for the Parish Council's budget has been made available on the Parish Council's website here: <https://www.harbertonparishcouncil.org/youth-services-consultation/>.

1. Please give us your **postcode** or the name of the town/village you live in, so we have an idea of who is responding to this questionnaire:

Harberton Ward	Harbertonford Ward
'Harberton' x 3 TQ9 7SA (Central Harberton) x 2 TQ9 7SN (Central Harberton) x 3 TQ9 7SG (Central Harberton) TQ9 7RZ (Tristford/Cholwell area) TQ9 7LL (Sandwell area) TQ9 7SR (East Leigh area) TQ9 7SS (Foales Leigh area)	'Harbertonford' x 1 TQ9 7TA (Central Harbertonford) TQ9 7TP (Central Harbertonford) TQ9 7SD (Central Harbertonford) TQ9 7LE (Higher Poulston area)
Total = 13	Total = 5

2. Have you looked at the information that this questionnaire is asking for feedback on? *The information available on the Parish Council website*

	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Yes, I've personally looked at the information provided	15	83.3%
No, I haven't personally looked at the information, but someone has told me about it	3	16.6%

No	0	0%
Not answered	0	0%
Total	18	100%

3. How much do you agree or disagree with the following 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.

	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
1 = Strongly disagree	4 <i>(NB of these respondents, 3 gave comments <u>in support of youth services</u>)</i>	22.2% <i>(NB if updating to take into account those who marked 'Strongly disagree' but who then made qualitative comments <u>in support of youth services</u>, the percentage 'Strongly Disagreeing' would only be 5.5%)</i>
2 = Disagree	0	0%
3 = Neither agree nor disagree	1	5.5%
4 = Agree	1	5.5% <i>(NB if updating to take into account those who marked 'Strongly disagree' but who then made qualitative comments <u>in support of youth services</u>, the percentage in agreement would rise to 22.2%)</i>
5 = Strongly agree	12	66.6%
Not answered	0	0%
Total	18	100%

4. Please tell us more about why you are in support or in opposition to increasing the grant to TRAYE, and therefore to the increase in the precept. If your opinion is divided or you are unsure, please let us know more about that here.

Those who "Strongly disagreed"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong need for youth engagement and TRAYE is providing activities that help to fill this need. • Our young people need youth clubs to stay open • Children in this rural area need access to activities • As I understand it, the local youth club is partly run by volunteers but since 2017 it has employed youth workers who are trained in 'safeguarding', amongst other things. According to the consultation information to which we were referred in support of the proposal: > "most of [the running cost] is spent on fees for 3 professionally
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	<p>trained Youth Workers and the paid project manager who oversees their work and ensure that safeguarding standards are met. Costs have increased over the years because of safeguarding recommendations on staff to young person ratios.”</p> <p>I am not against a youth club, and I applaud all voluntary efforts to run it, but I am against spending more on ‘safeguarding’. My experience of what goes by the name of ‘safeguarding’ suggests that it is an overly bureaucratic response to some terrible crimes, that it has no secure theoretical foundation and instead promotes a spying-like culture, that it misses its target by failing to prevent further similar crimes, and that it is itself the cause of anxiety, stress, suicide, unnecessary expense and work. At its best, all ‘safeguarding’, as it is currently peddled, can achieve is to enable some dull-witted social workers to say that they ticked all the boxes and they are therefore not to blame when something terrible happens on their watch. I do not wish to pay for this social workers’ insurance policy.</p> <p>The comments collated in support of the idea of a higher tax all conflate the issue of whether a youth club is a good thing with the issue of whether further expenditure on ‘safeguarding’ and social workers is called for.</p> <p>The proposed increase is justified solely and specifically by reference to the youth club but I do not suppose that it is proposed to ring-fence the increase as being limited to the stated purpose, so there is no guarantee that it would always be available for the youth club. If the youth club fails for some reason, or if someone thinks of a ‘better’ idea, there is no promise that the increase would be refunded or stopped. Indeed, there are statements in the information document to the effect that the increase may not be enough for the purpose, so if it relies upon other peoples’ money the Youth Club may fail anyway. The proposal is in reality just a proposal to increase the general revenue of the parish council coupled with a short term budget line for the youth club’s social workers. I fail to see that either are necessary or desirable.</p>
Those who “Neither agreed or disagreed”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst it is a small amount, it is the principle that matters. Any Council Tax should be used to the benefit of as many as possible. This is a special interest group. We have far more important problems affecting us all, most recently flooding, always bus services, parking, etc etc. Youth services does none of these, no give-back. Parents need to fund their children, not the taxpayer. If this is agreed, then what comes next? An endless chain of tin-cupping for the next group who've over-reached?
Those who “Agreed”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My child really enjoys youth club and it provides an important sense of community in our village
Those who “Strongly agreed”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel it is Important to have local youth services in Harberton parish We have three children who will in time use these services. It is important that it is local and gives young people the space to develop independence, life skills and make friends in the local area. • Providing for young people and young families should help with the socio-economic sustainability of the villages, which is a concern that has Been repeatedly expressed in the parish over time. • Youth work is so essential in providing young people with somewhere safe, creative and productive to spend time locally, when not in school. The closure of youth clubs previously resulted in an increase of youth crime, mental health and drug misuse around the country.

	<p>Supporting young people in this way is a top priority for me. I don't have kids, I just know it's important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we should invest in the health and happiness of the youngsters in our villages. • Our youngsters need to have somewhere safe and supervised to congregate. Otherwise they will find 'something' to do. Always better to channel their energies. • There is little other provision for our younger community members. • The kids in the local area have no other provision. Many kids have no means of transport to other activities and this is the only thing that they can walk to in Harbertonford and it's a really important social aspect to their lives. Lots of kids do not have parents who can afford to pay for clubs, this club shows that they are valuable and worthy of investment and care. It means a LOT to many kids and the reduction and change of location has been felt • So many families access this service regularly, children in the village used to (in my opinion) dangerously wander the village, including the main Kingsbridge road. The youth club offers a safe space for them to play and learn. • A small contribution to make for a worthy cause. • Amazingly good value at negligible cost. Even if it helps just one young person, it must be supported. Getting young people together face to face MUST have huge benefits. Modern restrictions to group activity is uncreative and socially very negative. Get them together, keep them together, support them. • I am in support of increasing the grant to TRAYE as feel that's it's a really brilliant service they're providing for young people - my young sons go to their youth club in Harbertonford & Harberton regularly and get so much out of it. There aren't as far as I know any other youth clubs in the village • Children in rural communities risk missing out on social experiences and anything that can be done to support children and children's services only benefits the community as a whole, also making our parish an attractive place to live and to grow up in. The absence of these services can lead to isolated children, less socialised children and both of these consequences can lead to mental health issues, poor behaviour in the community and the lack of community cohesion.
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5. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about this proposal that you think should be taken into account when the Parish Council makes it's decision?

Those who "Strongly disagreed"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NB Despite 'strongly disagreeing' this person made comment in support of TRAYE at Q4. Think about the consequences of this provision being closed</i> • <i>NB Despite 'strongly disagreeing' this person made comment in support of providing youth services in rural areas at Q4. Access for Harberton as well as Harbertonford. Baby and toddler group would also be good. TraYe needs to advertise their services more to local families. TRAYE needs to have more healthy activities and sport.</i>
Those who "Neither agreed or disagreed"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC needs a clear STRATEGY and POLICY for where the precept is to be spent. These requests can then be filtered by a set of rules, the first of which is the degree, and scope, of the benefit to the maximum. This would fail that first filter
Those who "Agreed"	<p><i>No further comments were made.</i></p>
Those who "Strongly agreed"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £3.50 a year doesn't seem so much. • Please please value our children - arguably more important than anything else we choose to invest in. They are our future. Their

	<p>physical and mental health matters. Rural kids are isolated and will tend towards and online life if they do not have youth club to draw them out together</p> <p>The school kids tried to do things like smoothie sales to raise money to keep youth club going - it shows how much they care!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being an old bloke, I'm not sure if this is known sufficiently in Harberton or not. Personally, I wasn't aware... Perhaps an information drive in the villages, maybe even by the young people it affects most? We are beginning to get a faintly younger demographic in harberton at present. Let's encourage that. Our community NEEDS young people to keep us old ones alive and smiling, that diversity is the nature of 'community'. • I think it is a forward thinking move to safeguard services for children in an era where this is more important than ever. And at the cost of a coffee, perhaps cheaper these days in fact, I'm all in.
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Youth Services Consultation

What follows is Information compiled and presented on the Harberton Parish Council website <https://www.harbertonparishcouncil.org/youth-services-consultation/>. This was accompanied by a link to a short questionnaire, having discussed with Parish Councillors what questions should be included.

Summary

The Parish Council is due to set its 2025/26 budget soon and will need to decide whether to raise the precept (the Parish Council's portion of Council Tax) to contribute more money to the youth club.

The *Totnes and Rural Area Youth Engagement Project* (TRAYE) that runs the youth club has said that the club will be at risk of closing if the Parish Council is unable make a larger donation to its annual costs. If TRAYE were to be given the funds it is asking for, it would cost the average Council Tax payer approximately £3.50 more on the annual tax bill next year.

The Parish Council wants to hear what you and other residents in the Parish think before making a decision.

What do you think?

Need more information before forming an opinion?

This *[web]* page provides information about the youth club, the organisation that runs it, what it costs, how much funding the Parish Council has been asked to provide, what that means for the Parish Council's budget and information on how much local taxes are spent on the youth club. You can click on the questions in the list below to get taken straight to each section if you like *[this functions on the website, not here in this word document]*, or read through from top to bottom:

- What is the Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement Project (TRAYE)?
- How did TRAYE get involved in the Harbertonford Youth Club and what does it offer?
- Why is TRAYE asking for more money to run the youth club?
- How much does the youth club run by TRAYE cost the tax payer?

- What have people in Harberton Parish already said about the youth club run by TRAYE?
- What do you think? Do you think the Parish Council should increase financial support to TRAYE?

What is the Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement Project (TRAYE)?

Following a cut in grant funding in 2013, Devon County Council reduced funding for youth services county wide.

Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) has been delivering community youth work and developing opportunities for young people in rural communities in South Hams and Teignbridge for the last 8 years. This followed a cut in grant funding in 2013, leading to Devon County Council reducing spending on youth services county wide.

TRAYE was set up as a partnership, supported by Parish Councils in eight parishes, with voluntary trustees that oversee the project.

Whilst TRAYE is overseen by volunteers, the Youth Workers that deliver the sessions are professionally qualified and are trained in Safeguarding, First Aid, Food Safety and Health and Safety at work. TRAYE Youth Workers are also trained in Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Trauma Informed Practice and this ensures that they have an up to date knowledge of what young people are facing in their daily lives.

For more information about what TRAYE does, you can [download the organisation's most recent annual report here](#).

How did TRAYE get involved in running Harbertonford Youth Club and what does it offer?

Harbertonford Youth Club was run by local volunteers for many years, but in 2017 those volunteers asked the Parish Council to help them get some more professional help. To give the help that was asked for, Harberton Parish Council and Rattery Parish Council made a successful joint bid for funding from South Hams District Council to expand the work that TRAYE was doing in other parishes into Harbertonford (and Rattery) for one year, as a pilot. TRAYE began operating a club from Harbertonford Village Hall every other week since then, and the Parish Council has made a small financial contribution to the club every year.

TRAYE has told the Parish Council that there is now a thriving group regularly coming along; there is a list of 54 active members, with approximately 15-30 young people aged 8+ attending each session. Sessions include arts and crafts, singing, dancing, playing games out on the field, team building exercises and activities that focus on health and wellbeing. Free snacks and drinks are always available, and young people can talk to Youth Workers about things that are on their minds. Trained youth workers can also offer one-to-one support to vulnerable young people and can provide information about other support services available. Youth Workers have seen relationships develop and friendships blossom between regular attendees, and where there are conflicts can help resolve them through sitting down and having a chat.

Recently TRAYE has started running sessions in Harberton on some Friday evenings as well as running sessions in Harbertonford on some Thursday evenings.

Why is TRAYE asking for more money to run the youth club?

TRAYE has calculated that it costs approximately £7000 per year for it to run a fortnightly youth club in a parish. This includes some costs for hall hire and food, but most of it is spent on fees for 3 professionally trained Youth Workers and the paid management staff who oversee their work and ensure that safeguarding standards are met. Costs have increased over the years because of safeguarding recommendations on staff to young person ratios. For children between the age 8-10 the ratio is 1 Youth Worker to 8 young people, and a ratio of 1:10 for those over 10 years old. All Parish Councils where youth clubs are run have been asked to contribute 50% of the annual cost of running the youth club. TRAYE trustees fundraise elsewhere for the remaining 50%.

TRAYE trustees have indicated to the Parish Council that if it can't commit to this level of financial support, then TRAYE can't continue to run the Youth Club in Harberton Parish.

How much does the youth club run by TRAYE cost the tax payer?

The Parish Council made a contribution of £1750 to TRAYE in the 2024/25 financial year from the Parish Council's budget. This was an increase on the £1000 given the year before. The additional £750 given in 2024/25 cost a tax payer living in a Band D property an extra 86p for the year. If the the Parish Council had made the full £3500 contribution that TRAYE had requested, the additional £2500 needed from the budget would have cost the tax payer living in a Band D property £4.12 extra for the year. These figures are laid out **in the table** below.

The Parish Council will make a decision on increasing the budget for TRAYE in this coming financial year (April 2025 to March 2026). Until the Parish Council sets its budget in January it is difficult to estimate how much the precept will rise in total, but using Council Tax figures from the 2024/25 financial year, the cost of meeting TRAYE's request for funding would cost approximately £3 – £4 more a year for the average tax payer (Council Tax Band D household).

There are a couple of other factors to bear in mind:

Estimates on increases to Council Tax are difficult to make as the number of households paying Council Tax in the parish can change year on year, and that the actual cost to individual households can go up or down by a few pounds or pence.

It is possible that TRAYE will ask the Parish Council for more money, as salary costs and the costs of materials, refreshments and hall hire also increase. On being asked this, TRAYE indicated an estimated 3% rise in their costs per year.

Contributing to the youth club is one of many projects that the Parish Council supports in a year. The Parish Council may consider making other increases in the 2025/26 budget for other projects that need fund or where costs are expected to increase with inflation. You can find [the Parish Council's 2024/25 budget here](#) if you'd like to look at it to see what the Parish Council expected to spend money on this year. This gives an idea of where the Parish Council starts when considering how to set the next year's budget.

An illustration of cost to the local tax payer if a larger contribution were to be made:

	ACTUAL 2024/25 figures	Illustrative figures if TRAYE had	Difference
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		<i>received the full amount they requested in 2024/25</i>	
Total precept (the total annual amount the Parish Council receives from Council Tax)	£21,364	£23,364	+£2000
What the Parish Council's precept cost a Band D Council Tax payer in the year 2024/24	£39.73	£43.44	+£3.71
The Parish Council's contribution to TRAYE	£1750	£3500	+£1750
The percentage of the Parish Council's precept donated to TRAYE for the Youth Club	8.2%	15%	+6.8%
The increase in contribution made to TRAYE, in comparison to the previous financial year (when £1000 was given)	£750	£2500	+£1750
Increases of the annual cost of TRAYE to a Band D Council Tax payer in the year 2024/25	86p	£4.12	+£3.26

What have people in Harberton Parish already said about the youth club run by TRAYE?

Staff, youth workers and trustees working with TRAYE [came to a meeting of the Parish Council in February 2024](#) to advocate for the benefits their activities bring to young people in the parish and to their families. A letter was read out from a single parent in Harbertonford, who wanted to let the Parish Council know that the club meant a lot to him and his child. The Parish Council was told that other parents of TRAYE regulars had made similar endorsements via TRAYE's WhatsApp group.

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish held in Harbertonford in May 2024 the floor was opened to hear views about the potential increases in costs to Council Tax to keep the youth club running. The following comments were noted:

- Harbertonford is a living village where children and young people deserve services. Not all children in the community are affluent. The increase to the precept would be negligible. We need more investment in young people.
- It would be fantastic to fund it, however it would be good to let the young people know that there is a risk of a loss of the sessions and engage them in fundraising to meet the costs.
- There has been a decimation of statutory youth services. The fact that TRAYE and the sessions in Harbertonford exist at all is wonderful and it should be supported.
- A couple of attendees that spoke on the subject had been youth workers or worked in youth services in the past and could see the issue that TRAYE faces. One commented that it is a monumental role that these youth providers have in the community. The price of the increase to the precept is a couple of coffees per household and they (personally) would wholly support the increase to invest in young people.

- It was commented that there is no youth club in Harberton any more. Are parents in Harberton aware of TRAYE? Can there be more representation from TRAYE? It was commented by TRAYE's project manager that there are other parishes with two villages, and the youth club has trialled running sessions in one village for half the year, and in the other village for the other half. Some kind of arrangement could be considered in Harberton Parish.
- Looking at the figures, it appears that TRAYE is a bargain and offers good value for money. We are fantastically fortunate to have this facility and this service. I have a 13 year old, and knew that TRAYE existed but wasn't fully aware of the range of activities so hearing about TRAYE this evening has been an eye-opener. It would be great to have this facility right in the heart of the community.
- As a parent I am supportive of TRAYE as my family would benefit, but taking a wider view, not investing in youth is a bit of an 'own goal'. Young people need to have healthy, positive activities. It was commented that a loss of services for young people can result in expressions of anti-social behaviour.

Those people in the community who came to the Annual Parish Meeting appeared to be in unanimous support of raising the precept to support the continuation of youth services. The Parish Council is keen to canvas views from the community as a whole, before making a final decision on setting its budget.

What do you think?

Do you think the Parish Council should increase financial support to TRAYE?

Do you share the positive opinion of those people who came to the Annual Parish Meeting in May, or have a different perspective?

An short online questionnaire will be available from this page very soon, but if you would like to share your views on the subject before that questionnaire becomes available, please email the Parish Clerk clerk@harbertonparishcouncil.org

Letters in support of funding TRAYE

Received in May 2024 following the Annual Meeting of Harberton Parish

Hi Cat,

I was hoping to attend the annual parish meeting, but family demands prevented me from doing so...

I see that there was an agenda item to discuss the value of youth services to the community, and whether the precept should be raised to pay for these services.

In my view the youth services provided for the young people in our community is essential... Not least because it shows our young people that we think they are worth investing in and taking care of, that their needs and interests are recognised and valued. There are rural communities throughout the South Hams that, through changing demographics, don't feel the need to offer anything for young children, but we aren't one of those places. We have young children in our village who need to feel valued, that need stimulation and activity, and it would be a really short-sighted not to continue to fund the youth services provision.

I also happen to know through my work that the precept cost per head in our parish is one of the smallest in the District. I understand that many people are experiencing financial pressures at present, but your services represents excellent value for money for the whole community, not just the

children. If the services weren't provided there would be additional pressures on individual families to find extra support and activities, often relying on car trips elsewhere, ferrying kids in and out of Totnes or beyond, which embodies how our disconnected and isolated our rural communities have become. In my experience people do not oppose increases in financial contribution if they think the funds are used responsibly and to add value to the community, and I think that will be the [case.in](#) respect of the youth services.

The youth services provide communal activities for a wide age range, in a valued village facility, that most children can walk to. I hope that the parish council can recognise these benefits and feel able to explain this within the context of any precept rise required to raise funding.

Kind regards
Harbertonford resident

Received in May 2024 following the Annual Meeting of Harberton Parish

Hi Cat,

I was hoping to attend the parish council meeting last night ref the village youth club. Unfortunately [Redacted] was stuck at work and I was on childcare duty so couldn't make it.

However I did want to feed into the future funding conversation – and am fully supportive of the (very low) precept being raised to fund this if necessary. Both the boys really value the village youth club (as do we, as parents). Its offers them a safe space to socialise with peers across different ages, away from their home and also away from screens. It offers a great balance between structured activities and free 'play'. These opportunities are increasingly reduced, particularly away from screens/technology – and yet we know they are really important for the wellbeing of young people, increasing social connection and reducing isolation.

Best wishes,
Harbertonford resident