

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council
at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th February 2025 at Harbertonford Village Hall

In attendance

Harbertonford Councillors

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

Harberton Councillors

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

Others

D.Cllr McKay: Present
C.Cllr Hodgson: Present
Clerk Ms Radford: Present
Members of the Public: 3

Public Session

- i) Land promoters working with owners of the Ford Farm site attended to inform councillors (cllrs) that an outline planning application will be submitted shortly. It was commented that the previous 'Permission in Principle' (PIP) application had been withdrawn following comments from South Hams District Council (SHDC) that the number of units should be increased in order to deliver on site affordable homes. The Parish Council's own comment on the PIP expressed disappointment that there were no affordable elements to this scheme. The new application will be an 'Outline Planning Application' for up to 17 dwellings, without specifying the final number. The land promoters have engaged with the Environment Agency, Devon County Council (DCC) and the Affordable Housing Officer at SHDC in order to respond to all the questions that those parties have asked of them. A concept has been approved by Devon County Highways (Highways) and a drainage for flood and foul has been reviewed and approved by SHDC, which has enabled a development line to be drawn. This has been forwarded to consultants to comment on trees and biodiversity. Once that comment has been received, final plans can be shared with the Parish Council. On being given the opportunity to ask questions, cllrs did raise questions about Natural Flood Management, querying whether there were plans to install 'leaky dams' on site. It was responded that DCC were in agreement with the Land Promoters that leaky dams were less suitable to this site than further up the catchment. This is for the reason that there is too much of a risk that material from the leaky dams be carried downstream and cause drainage issues. Willow will be planted and other measures in place to 'slow the flow'. It was confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been fully informed of plans and have undertaken a site visit. The Land Promoters are willing to return to speak with the Parish Council again when the application has been submitted and on the agenda for consideration. The plan will be submitted within the next few months.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above

RESOLVED: to sanction reasons for apologies given.

In the absence of the Parish Council's Chair, the Vice Chair chaired the meeting.

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 cllrs declared any interests (nature and scope) on items on the agenda.

3. Reports for information from:

- 3.1. County Councillor (C.Cllr)
- 3.1.1. Devolution The C.Cllr commented that Devolution will proceed, and the end of a two-tier system for local government will ultimately leading to the District Council being dissolved.
 - 3.1.2. Keep Britain tidy annual clean The C.Cllr promoted the National campaign, encouraging local people to join in. This year's campaign will focus on the impact of littering and fly tipping on the environment.
 - 3.1.3. Corporate Infrastructure and Scrutiny Committee It was reported that the C.Cllr's Locality Budget to be spent in the local community will be set at £5000 this coming year. Funding to support purchase of leaf blowers for Harberton Park have been awarded. The C.Cllr commented that she had advocated for the Locality Fund to be increased, as funding is determined locally and supports communities.
 - 3.1.4. LED Street Lights The C.Cllr reminded cllrs that the DCC 'Report a Problem' webpages provide access to information about the lighting network, where requests can be made to dim or reduce the operating times of individual streetlights on the network. Using LED lights and having the capacity to operate them is expected to save costs.
- 3.2. District Councillor (D.Cllr)
- 3.2.1. Devolution It was reported that an interim plan for reorganisation must be prepared by mid-March following which a firm an costed reorganisation plan should be in place by the 28th November 2025. Devon County Council has suggested that Devolution will cost approximately £7 Million, although experience from other Unitary Authorities suggest the process of reorganisation could cost a lot more. It was reported that the

cost of Devolution will not be provided by Government but that it will be up to the Local Authorities to find. The D.Cllr commented that this will reduce money in the system and will lead to a period of turmoil. The impact for the District Council is in how it considers its budget and its reserves plan, and on spending some of those reserves in the local community.

- 3.2.2. Car Parking Policy The District Council has agreed to the new policy, subject to a review in 6 months.
- 3.2.3. Environmental Fund The D.Cllr confirmed that he has a fund of £2000 across the Ward for local green projects, and encouraged applications. If the fund is not spent it will not be rolled forward.
- 3.2.4. Playpark Funding The D.Cllr has lobbied the District Council to use some of its reserves to best effect by supporting local play parks. He encouraged the submission of a costed plan for redevelopment of the Harbertonford Playpark, noting that some challenging work is required to properly and safely removing the footings of the previous play park equipment. It was commented that a joint application could be made by both Parish play parks.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

4. Minutes consider approval of the following minutes:

- 4.1. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council, 14th January 2025

RESOLVED: To sign the minutes as a correct record, without amendments.

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) No update.
- 5.3. Parish Lengthsman (Clerk) It was reported that Devon County Highways had produced a number of reports for the Clerk showing details of when drainage features in the Parish were last cleared. This has been provided to enable the information to be cross referenced with the Parish Council's last audit of buddle holes conducted in 2019, and to update Parish Council records with County Council reference codes. The Clerk will be sharing this material with members of Harberton ARK who have offered voluntary support in doing that cross referencing job.
- 5.4. Emergency Directory (Cllr Paine/Clerk) No update.
- 5.5. New Parish Council bank account (Clerk) Ongoing. It was noted that Lloyds are beginning to charge a fee for treasurers accounts, and the Council may wish to consider moving its current account.
- 5.6. Staff handbook inc. compliance with prevention of sexual harassment duty (Clerk) Ongoing
- 5.7. Grass cutting tender (Clerk) Ongoing

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

- 6. **Co-option of Parish Councillors** The Clerk has received no interest from any residents filling the remaining vacancy on the Parish Council.

7. Planning

- 7.1. Consideration of planning applications:

- 7.1.1. 0279/25/FUL Engineering works to create a turnout manège & change of use of land to mixed use of equestrian & agricultural at Land At Sx 757 577, Harberton

RESOLVED: To SUPPORT the application.

- 7.2. Notice of planning applications received for information only

- 7.2.1. 0178/25/PDM Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use of agricultural building/barn to 1No dwellinghouse (class C3) & for associated development (Class Q (a+b)) at Barn Opposite Hazard Cottage Harberton

- 7.2.2. 0298/25/PDM Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use of agricultural buildings/barn to 1No dwellinghouse (Class C3) & for associated development (Class Q (a+b)) at Land at SX 762 604, Harberton

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

- 7.3. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions Cllrs were informed that the Local Planning Authority had made no decisions on planning applications within Harberton Parish this month.
- 7.4. Receive a report on enforcement cases Cllrs were informed that a hard copy of the Enforcement Caseload was circulated for information. It was reported that the Clerk had raised a query with the Enforcement team on a development in the Parish that had been reported, that did not appear to be on the caseload but has been reassured that the case is under investigation. Cllrs were informed of two enforcement cases that had been closed; the first following the Local Planning Authority's conclusions that there was no breach of planning regulations and the second following approval of a planning application.

RESOLVED: That the information given on items 7.3 and 7.4 be noted.

8. Monthly reports *For information only*

- 8.1. Finance Committee update No update.
- 8.2. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update Cllrs were informed that there will be a tree giveaway at Harbertonford Village Hall on 1st March. The Clerk has received a written update from SHV which will be circulated in advance of the next meeting.
- 8.3. Neighbourhood Plan update It was reported that two technical packages of support with AECOM consultants are in process. Members of the Steering Group had met with consultants ahead of planned work to review the Site Options Assessment. Work to undertake a review of the Housing Needs Assessment to take into account most recent census figures is now in process. As noted in the public session, land promoters working with the owners of the Ford Farm site had hosted a site visit with some members of the Steering Group interested in viewing the site. The public session of the last meeting included discussion on what impact the Government's White Paper on Devolution in England and the changes in the National Planning Policy Framework could have on the Neighbourhood Planning process. The D.Cllr had been present to answer questions.
- 8.4. Harberton Playing Field update Standing orders were suspended to enable a member of the public to address the meeting. Cllrs were informed that the latest inspection reports have flagged a number of maintenance matters to get on top of. The MoP commented that it was good to hear that there is possible funding available from SHDC to support the playparks, as the grant received from the National Lottery Fund to renew the safety surfaces only went so far. It was suggested that a joint application could be made by both Parish parks. The meeting was reconvened.
- 8.5. Harbertonford Play Area update It was reported that works to coppice the sycamore in Harbertonford play park had been undertaken. Members of the Finance Committee had authorised an additional payment of £100 to the contractor to chip the brash instead of laying a dead hedge. This was in part by request of the neighbour to protect new hedge planting on the boundary, and as Sustainable Harbourne Valley would find the chippings useful to mulch the trees in the 'fruit corner'. It was noted that the Clerk has received a request from Harbertonford Primary School to use some of the woodchip to restore a muddy pathway in the forest school areas of the school site. A small group of committed play park volunteers have pressure washed all the play surfaces and the slide will be reinstalled on the bank in March. The group will also keep on top of maintaining the hedgerow that lines the footpath to the school gate. Whilst responsibility for the hedgerow is not clear, current park volunteers recognise that access is important for many in the community.
- 8.6. Harberton ARK update It was reported that a planned meeting between Harberton ARK members, Devon County Council Flood Team and the Environment Agency did not go ahead on the 29th January, because of the availability of officers. No new date has yet been proposed.
- 8.7. Clerk's update The Clerk had attended the meeting hosted by Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) to discuss the devolution White Paper. Cllrs can find links to a good summary of notes from that meeting questions asked and answered, and a copy of the meeting chat at item 12.2.4. The Clerk raised the following headlines:
- The new Unitary Authorities will be a merger between DCC and the other district/borough councils. Both will cease to exist, and a new authority be in place - it's not just 'closing down the districts'.
 - In response to questions raised about Local Planning and Neighbourhood Planning it was commented that Local Plans under development are still in progress, and Neighbourhood Planning processes will continue as they are. If a new authority is formed, these process will be handed over.
 - DALC has asked NALC to provide a briefing to Devon Councils and is looking to provide useful information and insights from other areas where Unitary Authorities have been formed. This could include from Cornwall, which is now fully established, and Somerset, which is a fairly new Unitary Authority and still learning lessons about the wider impact.
 - The question most often raised was whether Town and Parish Councils will be expected to take on more work. Some Councils see this as an opportunity to take on assets and services in their communities, with others concerned about capacity, particularly in relation to staffing. Many have commented on the longer-term impact that this will have on the precept demand, with Council looking to prepare increases to their budget as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the information from 8.1 – 8.7 be noted.
- ii) To agree to Harbertonford Primary School's request to use some of the wood chippings produced following tree works at Harbertonford Play Park.

- 9. Footway at Brockhills Cross** A request was made to the Parish Council to make efforts to enact the provision of a section of footpath between the junction of Old Road and the A381 at Brockhills, to a point directly opposite the turning to Harberton. In advance of discussion, the Clerk had raised the matter with DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer, who had responded that the Parish Council should ideally involve a consultant to consider a design and construction method. Other Parish Councils in the area had done this and involved DCC Road Safety Team for advice and auditing at an early stage. It was commented that the main issues Highways foresees is that: the grip in the verge must remain so the path will have to go over the top of it, the verge is not

level and not very wide near the grip entrance and although this verge is adopted highway (and part owned by DCC) DCC do not cut it so the PC will have consider this within its future maintenance.

During discussion it was commented that should the Parish Council pursue provision of a footway at this location, an effort should also be made to reduce road speeds. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan had included proposals for road speeds on the A381 between Totnes and Harbertonford to be reduced to 50mph, with a 30mph limit being put in place at Brockhills. Noting that the purpose of creating a footway would be to improve visibility for pedestrians crossing the road at Brockhills, there was discussion about the creation of a more formal crossing point, with the installation of an island. Cllrs commented road speeds would need to be reduced should a formal crossing point be created.

It was suggested that interim works to improve the surface of the verge could make it easier for pedestrian use whilst the viability of a footway was under consideration.

RESOLUTION:

- i) **ACTION: The Clerk** to seek quotes to engage a consultant to propose a design and construction method.
- ii) **ACTION: Cllr Morris** to liaise with the owner of the adjoining hedgerow and land
- iii) To apply to the District Council Environmental Fund to support interim works to level and reseed the verge, using a grass and wildflower mix.

10. Parish Statement *Consider submission of a short 'Parish Statement' as part of an evidence base to help Devon Association of Local Councils represent member councils on devolution matters.*

Cllrs were informed that DALC is collating evidence about the work that its member Town and Parish Councils do and would like to do, in order to better represent our members during the process of devolution. All member councils have been asked to submit a short pen portrait answering the questions: What's important to your community? What do you do for your community now? What would you like to do for your community?

The Clerk had compiled a list of bullet points, that highlighted current community interest in flooding and drainage, housing development and impact on flooding, road safety, listing local community interest groups and priorities as outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan. The statement listed financial contributions that the Parish Council makes to support grass cutting, defibrillators and the youth club. It was noted that the Parish Council already supports small voluntary and community organisations through making available small grants via the Community Benefit Fund but would like to do more to support sustainability of these groups, many of whom are operating with minimal funds.

RESOLVED: To accept the draft statement as prepared by the Clerk.

11. Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Terms of Reference *For Full Council to consider adoption of revisions made by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group* Cllrs were informed that members of the Harberton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had discussed and agreed revisions to the Steering Group's Terms of Reference. The revised document had been circulated to Parish Councillors in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED: To adopt revisions as made by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

12. Correspondence

12.1. E-Circulars for information Cllrs were informed of the list of regular e-circulars received.

12.2. Items of correspondence for information

12.2.1. Incident The driver of a vehicle that cause minor damage to a wall in Harberton wanted to make proactive contact and inform the Parish Council that they are taking steps to repair the damage.

12.2.2. Removal of bottle banks across the South Hams Cllrs were informed by press release that 47 bottle banks across the district will be removed throughout February and March. Banks have been selected for removal as almost all residents now have access to glass collections as part of their weekly kerbside recycling collection.

12.2.3. Alterations to evening 164 journeys Cllrs were informed that from 17th February, the last bus from Totnes will run at 20:05 on Mondays to Saturdays, instead of 20:50 due to staffing issues. A Fare Car has been arranged as a part replacement which will run from Totnes and as far as Salcombe. This service needs to be booked in advance by calling Price First Taxis.

12.2.4. DALC #07 2025 E Bulletin Cllrs are informed that this bulletin thanks all members that attended meetings to discuss the Devolution White paper. The notes from meetings, which include questions asked by Parish and Town Councils and answers given, have been added to DALC's [Devolution page in the DALC Knowledge Bank](#). Cllrs may also be interested in [NALC's presentation on the Devolution White Paper with associated timeline](#) and the [slide from the Smaller Councils meeting showing what work DALC is already undertaking on behalf of members](#). The website is password protected to member councils, but all councillors can [register to use the DALC website](#) here.

RESOLVED: That the information under items 12.1 and 12.2 be noted.

12.3. Items of correspondence for consideration *There were none*

13. Finance

13.1. Notice of income and expenditure since last meeting.

20th January 2025 £10.00 income from Harberton Parish Hall for annual ground rent.

13.2. To consider payments as per the February payment schedule

13.2.1. Payment 2502_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd February 2025 includes Clerk Feb salary £540.11, Neighbourhood Plan Feb Salary at £62.32, overtime payment 2 of 3 at £358.34= £960.77 no VAT

13.2.2. Payment 2502_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk February expenses claim for mileage at £8.19 and broadband for February at £7.50 = £15.69 no VAT

13.2.3. Payment 2502_3 to Harberton Parish Hall for hall hire on Tuesday Hall Hire for Neighbourhood Plan Meeting on 18th February 2025 19.00 – 21.00 2hrs @ £7 per hour= £14.00 no VAT

13.2.4. Payment 2502_4 to HMRC Shipley for NI Payment incurred on Feb Salary ESTIMATED = £27.98 no VAT

13.2.5. Payment 2502_5 to Colin Finch for Allotment rent = £500 no VAT

13.2.6. Payment 25-2_6 to Sylvan Wood Tree Services for invoice 2025112 to coppice Sycamore in Harbertonford Play Park, stack timber and chip brash wood = £1495 no VAT.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the income be noted.
- ii) That the above payments be approved.

14. Date and location of next ordinary meeting Tuesday 11th March 2025, Harberton Parish Hall.

Meeting closed: at 20:54

After the meeting closed there was the opportunity for informal discussion to raise matters for future consideration, at which the C.Cllr gave information about the availability of community composting schemes.