

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council
at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at Harberton Parish Hall

In attendance

Harbertonford Councillors

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

Harberton Councillors

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

Others

D.Cllr McKay: Present
C.Cllr Hodgson: Present
Clerk Ms Radford: Present
Members of the Public: 5

Public Session

- i) A Member of Public (MoP) thanked the Clerk for the support given in providing the opportunity for members of the public to meet the Chair of the Community Land Trust (CLT). It was commented that a lot of people really appreciated it.
- ii) A MoP queried the Clerk's involvement in supporting the opportunity for residents to meet with the CLT Chair. It was responded that this was not a formal meeting of the Parish Council; the Clerk had helped facilitate the opportunity as a helpful member of the community.
- iii) It was noted that a member of the Harberton Playing Fields Association was in attendance to give a view on the grass cutting tenders under discussion at item 11.

Agenda

1. Apologies were received as above

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 Cllr Morris declared an interest in item 7.1.2. As this was a matter for cllrs to raise information if they had it, Cllr Morris was not required to leave the room.

3. Reports for information from:

- 3.1. County Councillor (C.Cllr) Received the C.Cllr's monthly report.
 - 3.1.1. Council tax rise Devon County Council's (DCC's) portion of the precept will rise by 4.99%. Increase in Employers NI is a contributing factor.
 - 3.1.2. Local Government Restructuring The C.Cllr is part of a governance group meeting weekly to consider options. This includes opportunities for bringing services back into the authority rather than commissioning out to external contractors. Elections will take place on 1st May 2025.
 - 3.1.3. 20's Plenty Totnes and District Traffic and Transport forum would be grateful to have someone from Harberton Parish to join meetings. A lot of places in surrounding villages would like to have slower speeds. Cllr Butterworth expressed an interest.
 - 3.1.4. Totnes to Littlehempston path A lot of work has taken place and the project is moving forward positively.
 - 3.1.5. Devon Bus Forum The forum encourages increased use of bus services, including offering disability training to bring up the standard of the service.
 - 3.1.6. Road works in Harberton Parish The C.Cllrs report notes road closures on the Sundays in April at Brockhills Cross, to enable pole testing and/or replacement.
 - 3.1.7. Consultation on SEND services The C.Cllr encouraged responses to the consultation.
 - 3.1.8. Community Composting Hard copies of the community composting document were shared for information.
- 3.2. District Councillor (D.Cllr)
 - 3.2.1. Local Government Restructuring South Hams District Council (SHDC) has developed unitary authority plans that see mergers of District Councils across two geographic areas, plus Plymouth, with increases to their boundary. There is a huge amount of uncertainty and there is limited engagement with DCC. This may change after the elections.
 - 3.2.2. Community Transport Meetings have been held with community transport organisations to support co-ordination of services to make them more viable and regularly used.
 - 3.2.3. Play Parks Efforts are being made to bring together Harberton and Harbertonford park committees along with the primary school and see how everyone can collaborate on a proposal for investment in the parks.

4. Minutes consider approval of the following minutes:

- 4.1. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council, 11th February 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. Snow Warden registration and training Ongoing. Cllr Hambly is in the process of doing the training.
- 5.2. Parish Lengthsman The Clerk has passed DCC's drainage cleaning schedule to members of Harberton Ark should it be useful to cross reference this with the Parish Council's 2019 buddle hole survey.
- 5.3. Emergency Directory (Cllr Paine/Clerk) It was reported that Devon Communities Together has expressed interest in holding a flooding resilience meeting at Harbertonford Village Hall. The Clerk will follow this up in order to help establish if there is interest in Harbertonford to establish a similar group as now exists in Harberton.
- 5.4. New Parish Council bank account Ongoing.
- 5.5. Staff handbook inc. compliance with prevention of sexual harassment duty 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. 0249/25/FUL Installation of 38 ground-mounted solar panels with associated cable run to dwelling at Hallalen, Harberton

RESOLVED: To SUPPORT the application

- 7.1.2. 3720/24/CLE Certificate for lawfulness for existing use of building as dwelling at land at Sx 769 575 (Old Mill Leat) Harberton

RESOLVED: No councillors had any personal knowledge that conflicts with the documents in the application.

- 7.1.3. 0248/25/FUL Installation of 16 ground-mounted solar panels to replace existing polytunnel, with associated cable run to nearby dwelling at The Shippen, West Leigh Farm, Harberton

RESOLVED: To SUPPORT the application

- 7.1.4. 0540/25/TCA T1: Silver Birch - Reduce crown height by 6-8 feet, as it might soon reach overhead telephone lines at The Old Orchard, Harberton

RESOLVED: No objections.

- 7.2. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions Cllrs were given a verbal update on planning applications that had been approved by the local authority.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

- 7.3. Receive a report on enforcement cases *For information only* A hard copy of the enforcement caseload was circulated amongst cllrs for information. Cllrs were informed that a case concerning an unauthorised access point has been closed, following reinstatement of the hedgerow/bank.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

8. Monthly reports *For information only*

- 8.1. Finance Committee update No update. The next meeting will take place on 1st April 2025.
- 8.2. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update It was reported that a talk will take place in Harbertonford on Swifts Housemartins and other birds. A bring and swap is coming up. An update on the Harbertonford Park fruit corner was included in correspondence.
- 8.3. Neighbourhood Plan update It was noted that the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG) is still waiting on the updated Site Options Assessment report from consultants in order to inform site selection. The last meeting agreed for there to be an additional objective related to flooding and the task to draft a chapter about flooding was delegated to a committee member. Contact has been made with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for confirmation that the CLT housing numbers are included in the target development figures, and to request feedback on policy wording that would prevent new development until existing infrastructure is adequate to mitigate existing flooding and sewage issues. A response from the LPA had been received to advise that a policy seeking a ban on development wouldn't pass examination.
- 8.4. Harberton Playing Field update Standing Orders were suspended to enable a MoP to address the Council. It was reported that a volunteer day week coming up soon, with an advert in the village circular to encourage participation. A low key 'bring and swap' and family Easter trail fundraiser will be happening at the park. The

- HPFA representative has been in touch with the D.Cllr representatives from the Harbertonford Park, and Academy Head at Harbertonford CE Primary School with regard to fundraising. The meeting was reconvened.
- 8.5. Harbertonford Play Area update It was reported that members of the committee had now installed the slide against the bank and brought the toddler springs back. It was noted that the monthly inspection reports flag issues of concern but without categorising the severity of risk. E.g when reading that the 'chain on the swings is worn' the committee question how worn and if immediate action is required. The D.Cllr will follow this up.
- 8.6. Harberton ARK update It was reported that the Harberton Ark WhatsApp group is very active with lots of information shared between members. Surveyors had been on site in Harberton undertaking a full 3D model of the village accurate to 5mm, which incorporates Screw Lane, Mill Cross, the Old Forge, but stopped at Meadow Close. A proposal was made to DCC Flood and Coastal Risk Management team to include land further to the east. The workshop offered by DCC didn't go ahead on 29th January.
- 8.7. Clerk's update Following queries raised by cllrs, it was confirmed that there is a clause in the lease agreement with Exeter Diocese that Harbertonford Primary School can use the premises for recreational purposes during and after school hours.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

9. **Harberton Devon Air Ambulance clearance area sign** *Consideration of quotations received*
It was reported that the Clerk has invited quotations from three companies – two local and one national. Only one returned a quote in time for consideration at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To chase quotes, and carry the item forward to the next meeting.

10. **Footway at Brockhills Cross** *Update and consideration of actions to move project forward*

It was reported that:

- the Clerk's application to the District Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity Locality Fund for £500 to level and re-seed the verge with wildflowers was successful.
- contact has yet been made with the adjoining landowner.
- the Clerk had been in touch with an architect's practice and transport planning and highways management consultant to take steps to developing a design and construction method. The architect's practice assisted members of the Stoke Fleming community by producing technical drawings that helped a project to create a new footway to be realised. It was noted that the work was undertaken as a community project rather than a professional contract. Devon County Highways (Highways) was a very proactive partner working closely with a task and finish group. Similar assistance could be discussed with Harberton Parish Council, although the Parish Council may prefer to engage a traffic and highways consultant. The Clerk had also spoken with the transport planning and highways management consultant who had provided services to the Totnes to Littlehempston path project. The consultant's role is typically taking schemes from feasibility to developing/agreeing a preliminary design with the client/local highway authority, which can then be passed on to a civil engineering consultant to prepare the level of design required for construction. The fee for work to establish the feasibility a footway would be £1,500 plus disbursements.

RESOLVED:

- i) To first establish the view of the landowner before engaging consultants to undertake a feasibility study.
- ii) To carry the item forward to the next meeting, in order to report back on view of the landowner.
- iii) For the finance committee to consider where the costs to undertake a feasibility study would come from.
- iv) To pursue the funded project to level and reseed the verge in September. **ACTION: The Clerk** to identify a contractor with Chapter 8 training able to work on the highway.

11. **Grass Cutting Contract** *Consideration of tenders received*

Three quotes had been obtained for grass cutting of the Harberton Playing Field during the 2025/26 financial year. Quotes had been anonymised by the Clerk for the Parish Council's consideration. Members of HPFA were asked for their view on the quotations received.

RESOLVED: The contract be awarded to Simon Birbeck, who quoted £60 plus VAT per cut for 14 cuts per year.

12. **Community Composting Scheme** *To discuss interest in pursuing a parish scheme and consider actions*
Cllr Butterworth reported that he had received some community interest in the idea of a community composting scheme. The C.Cllr gave some advice in how to move a project forward, which included inviting people to get involved in a workshop, establishing demand for a community composting scheme. Once

demand is established, the process of looking for sites can begin. It was noted that the majority of interest had come from Harbertonford residents.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Butterworth invite those interested to a meeting/workshop and report back to the Parish Council.

13. **Annual Parish Meeting** *To consider date, agenda and arrangements*

Cllrs were reminded that it is the view of the National Association of Local Councils that a Parish or Town Council has a duty to assemble a meeting of electors of the Parish (the 'Annual Parish Meeting') between the dates of 1st March and 1st June inclusive. There was discussion on venue, date and format.

RESOLVED:

- i) **ACTION: The Clerk** to enquire to the availability of Harbertonford Village Hall on 6th May 2025.
- ii) The meeting to be convened by the Chair of the Parish Council.
- iii) Agenda items to include local updates and promotion of local groups and clubs, plus the following topics: Community composting, footway at Brockhills cross, emergency planning/erection of the emergency resilience shed, play park development.
- iv) To enquire if TRAYE is willing to cater for the event as before.

14. **Correspondence**

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

14.2. Items of correspondence for information

- 14.2.1. SHV Report to the Parish Council: Fruit Corner update Cllrs are informed that Sustainable Harbourne Valley (SHV) has provided an update to the Parish Council, now that it is three years since fruit and berry plants were planted on the slope in the Harbertonford Park. The report provided gives an update on growth of the trees and berry plants, the impact on benefits for wildlife and nature, opportunities for community engagement (including apple pressing, bulb planting and scything demonstration), and how the fruit corner contributes to SHV's goals. The report made reference to ongoing care and maintenance of the site, commenting that SHV has faced a challenge over the last year with mowing the access path up the bank. Any support from the Parish Council or Play Park committee to do this over the summer months would be appreciated.
- 14.2.2. DALC #10 E-Bulletin 2025 Cllrs were informed that Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) is holding a meeting for smaller councils between 10:00 – 11:30am on 8th April to update member councils on any new information on devolution following the interim plans submitted to Government by the deadline of 21st March 2025.
- 14.2.3. Town and Parish Council Update An update on Local Government Reorganisation Cllrs are informed that South Hams District Council has issued an email to all town and parish councils to provide an update on local government reorganisation. Following the Government's requirement for outline plans to be submitted by 21st March, the Leader of South Hams District Council has been working with the leaders of the other Devon districts to consider what proposals would make sense for local communities taking into account geographies, economies and the ability to continue delivering good quality services to residents. Leaders of seven district councils in Devon have now issued a joint statement setting out their intentions to work towards developing an outline business case for the formation of two new councils that combine our existing areas as follows: a unitary combining the South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon areas with Torbay; and, a unitary including East, Mid, North Devon, Torridge and Exeter. This may be referred to in the media as the 1-4-5 plan with the '1' being Plymouth.

The plan is being developed with a shared belief that a single Unitary Council would be too large to serve the best interests of local residents. The full statement can be [found here](#).

It is also anticipated that Devon County Council, Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Councils will develop and submit their own alternative proposals.

The Parish Forum arranged for 6 p.m. on 27 March at Follaton House will be used to provide an opportunity for Clerks and Councillors to hear from the Leader of the Council on the outline plan. Cllrs Hambly and Paine had expressed an interest to attend this meeting, when the invitation was circulated last year, and were put on the invitees list.

14.3. Items of correspondence for consideration

- 14.3.1. Let us know how your town or parish council will support the Great British Spring Clean Cllrs were informed that 'Keep Britain Tidy' is encouraging town and parish councils to protect the environment by joining the 10th Great British Spring Clean, taking place from 21 March - 6 April 2025. Town and parish councils that sign up receive a free digital resource pack with which to engage the community. Suggested ways that town and parish councils can support the campaign is by hosting clean-up events for others to join, promoting the campaign for others to take part, loaning equipment, collecting and processing litter collected by others, carrying out litter picks.

- 14.3.2. Road Flooding Emails Cllrs are informed that residents of East Leigh and those visiting the area for business or personal reasons are being affected by flooding on local roads. It appears that flooding has significantly worsened recently, with roads flooding even after only light rainfall. The Parish Council was asked if the matter can be taken up with highways and with the landowners to unblocked drainage channels which have worked well until recently. Three further emails were received from residents to support comments made by the original correspondent. Areas of flooding noted include: 1) just before Leigh Bridge as you leave Harberton by the log cabin. 2) at the bottom the hill along the back road out of East Leigh towards Harbertonford 3) a couple of areas going towards Diptford from East Leigh Cross before the right turn to Kerswill Farm, which flood regularly 4) a stretch of road outside High Barn. The fourth email on this topic commented that an 'unsuitable for vehicles' sign was helpfully installed at the Monks Oak Farm House end of the green lane. It was suggested that a similar advisory sign be installed at the opposite end of the lane at Keys Englebourne as a preventative measure, as some vehicles following SatNav are attempting access and getting stuck. Cllrs are informed that on the Clerk's advice, the original correspondent has reported the flooding issues on DCC's 'Report a Problem' website, and has provided a map of the most badly affected areas, to enable the Parish Council to follow this up.
- 14.3.3. Notice Board Cllrs are informed of an email commenting that the notice board opposite the Post Office and Stores in Harbertonford has now disintegrated due to its poor state of repair. The email comments that replacing the notice board in this vicinity is needed, and other noticeboards in positions which get heavy footfall would also be appreciated. The Clerk has responded to inform the resident that the current noticeboard is not Parish Council property, having been installed by the Environment Agency and left in place once work on the flood defences was completed. The Clerk had made the suggestion that an application could be made to the Community Benefit Fund for a replacement. On raising the matter at the meeting it was commented that the notice board was in the process of being fixed and no further action is required.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the information under items 14.1 and 14.2 be noted.
- ii) Item 14.3.1. was noted for information. No cllrs volunteered to support promotion of the British Spring Clean, but to forward the information to Sustainable Harbourne Valley for consideration.
- iii) Item 14.3.2. was noted for information **ACTION: The Clerk** to forward emails to the County Councillor and Devon County Highways.
- iv) Item 14.3.3 Noted for information.

15. Finance

15.1. Notice of income and expenditure since last meeting None

15.2. To consider payments as per the March payment schedule

- 15.2.1. Payment 2503_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd March 2025 includes Clerk Mar salary £540.11, Neighbourhood Plan Mar Salary at £62.32, overtime payment 3 of 3 at £358.34= £960.77 no VAT
- 15.2.2. Payment 2503_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk Mar expenses claim for mileage at £8.19 and broadband for March at £7.50 = £15.69 no VAT
- 15.2.3. Payment 2503_3 to HMRC Shipley for NI Payment incurred on Mar Salary ESTIMATED = £27.98 no VAT
- 15.2.4. Payment 2503_4 to Harbertonford Village Hall for Hall hire for meetings between April 2024 - March 2025: 7 x full meetings @ £25 each, 4 x Finance Committee meetings @ £10 each and 10 Neighbourhood Plan meetings @ £10 each = £315 no VAT
- 15.2.5. Payment 2503_5 to Harberton Parish Hall for hall hire 11th March 2025 19.30 – 21.30 2hrs @ £7 per hour= £14.00 no VAT
- 15.2.6. Payment 2503_6 to South Hams District Council for ground maintenance work during 2024 @ £684 plus £136.80 VAT = £820.80

RESOLVED: That the payments be approved.

16. Date and location of next ordinary meeting 7:30pm Tuesday 8th April 2025, Harbertonford Village Hall. Cllr Morris gave apologies for the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 21:12