

## Annual Meeting of Harberton Parish Council

7:00pm Tuesday 13th May 2025 at Harberton Parish Hall

### In attendance

#### Harbertonford Councillors

Cllr Beamish: Absent  
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: Present  
Cllr Morris: Present  
Cllr Williams: Present

#### Others

D.Cllr McKay: Present  
C.Cllr Hodgson: Present  
Clerk Ms Radford: Present  
Members of the Public: 10

### **Agenda As outlined in the Parish Council's Standing Orders**

#### **1. Election of the Chairman**

Cllr Hambly stood down as Chair to the Parish Council. It was agreed that Richard Morris Chair item 1 of the agenda. Richard Morris was nominated, seconded and unanimously elected as Chair of the Parish Council. Cllr Morris took the chair.

#### **2. Election of the Vice Chairman**

Tania Paine was nominated, seconded and unanimously elected as Vice Chair of the Parish Council.

#### **3. Delivery of acceptance of office form(s) by**

- 3.1. the Chairman of the Council Cllr Richard Morris signed the declaration of acceptance of office as Chair of the Parish Council in front of the Clerk.  
~~3.2. all Councillors, in an election year only~~

#### **4. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities**

It was agreed that this item would be covered elsewhere on the agenda.

#### **5. Review of the terms of reference for committees**

- 5.1. Finance Committee Terms of Reference\* The Terms of Reference was reviewed. The Clerk had proposed amendments to wording of clause 2 in recognition that the Committee will review applications for financial assistance to the Parish Council's new Grant Scheme and grants made from the Parish Council's annual budget, as well as those made through the Community Benefit Fund.

**RESOLVED:** to accept the amendments as proposed by the Clerk.

- 5.2. Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference\* The Terms of Reference was reviewed.

#### **RESOLVED**

- i) to task to Clerk to liaise with the Chair of the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reviewing the terms of reference.
- ii) The purpose of the review would be to clarify as to what point individuals who have influence over the direction of the plan are required to declare interests.

#### **6. Receipt of nominations and appointment of members to existing committees**

- 6.1. Finance Committee Cllrs Morris and Camp agreed to join the Finance Committee. **It was RESOLVED** to carry forward this item to the June meeting of the Parish Council.  
6.2. Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group No Parish Councillors came forward to represent the Parish Council on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It was agreed to postpone this to a future meeting.

#### **7. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4**

There were none.

#### **8. Review and adoption of appropriate:**

- 8.1. Standing Orders\* It was noted that the Clerk had undertaken a review of the Standing Orders, checking the document against the most recent model document available through the National Association of Local Councils.

**RESOLVED** to accept the Clerk's recommendations:

- i) Clause 14 d Code of Conduct Complaints: Refer to the 'Principle Council' rather than the District or Unitary Council
- ii) Clause 15 Proper Officer: update in line with 2025 model standing orders: *"at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee"*
  - *serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email)",* and minor renumbering.
- iii) Clause 18: Financial controls and procurement. Update in line with 2025 model standing orders as follows *"Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details."* AND respond to internal auditor's recommendation to update SO.18. to reflect Financial Regulation 5.7 regarding the tender threshold, and include wording as follows: *"For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts."*
- iv) Use gender-neutral language (e.g. "Chair") throughout.

8.2. Financial Regulations Were reviewed. No amendments were made.

9. **Review of arrangements, (including legal agreements), with other local authorities, not for profit bodies and businesses** None.

10. **Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back**

10.1. Harberton Playing Field Association There was no volunteer to join the HPFA. It was agreed to continue the practice that the Association feedback through email updates to the Clerk and/or forwarding the minutes of recent meetings, unless a representative came forward at a future meeting.

10.2. Harbertonford Playground Association (Harbertonford Play Area Action Committee (HPAAC)). **It was RESOLVED** that Peter Beamish and Jill Davies continue to represent the Parish Council on the committee, subject to Peter's consent.

10.3. Harberton Parish Hall **It was RESOLVED** that Richard Morris continue to be the representative of the Parish Council and report back to the Parish Council when necessary.

10.4. Sustainable Harbourne Valley **It was RESOLVED** that Douglas Hambly represent the Parish Council and report back from meetings.

~~11. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;~~

12. ~~**Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment**~~ (*Asset Register*\*) It was noted that the asset register was reviewed and agreed at the last meeting of the Parish Council on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

13. **Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks** The Clerk had received three insurance quotations, one from Zurich, one from Hiscox through Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited and one from Ecclesiastical Insurance Office via Clear Councils. Quotations were produced on information contained within the asset register, approved by the Parish Council at the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Having read through each of the three insurance schedule and policy wording documents, the Clerk had prepared a summary document comparing the quotations and tabled this for consideration by councillors. Cllrs reviewed this at the meeting, discussing policy areas and levels of cover.

## **RESOLVED**

- i) To accept the renewal quotation from AJG Insurance Brokers Limited for a policy with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited.
- ii) to enter into a 3 year binding Long Term Agreement with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited, at a premium of £653.68. This means Harberton Parish Council will commit to keep the policy with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited for the period of the Long Term Agreement, which will expire 3 years from the original inception date.

**14. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies**

- 14.1. Devon Association of Local Councils It was noted that it had been resolved to continue membership at the April 2025 meeting of the Parish Council.
- 14.2. Society of Local Council Clerks **It was RESOLVED** to continue membership.

**15. Review of the council's complaints procedure**

- 15.1. Harberton Parish Council Complaints Procedure It was reported that the Clerk had undertaken a review of the Parish Council's 2024 Complaints Policy and compared it against other policy documents in use by other parish councils. The Clerk proposed to adopt the Society of Local Council's Complaints Procedure in common use by other Town and Parish Councils, with some adaptations as seen in live examples elsewhere, and carrying over the use of a Formal Complaints Form from the Council's previous policy.

**RESOLVED** To adopt the Society of Local Council's model Complaints Procedure with amendments as proposed by the Clerk.

- 15.2. Harberton Parish Council Vexatious Complaints Policy It was noted that on the request of a Parish Councillor, the Clerk had prepared a Vexatious Complaints Policy for consideration of adoption, using the Society of Local Clerk's model policy as a basis, with some local adaptations.

**RESOLVED** To adopt the Society of Local Council's model Vexatious Complaints Policy with the Clerks' amendments.

**16. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation**

- 16.1. Freedom of Information Policy **it was RESOLVED** to approve the format of the Freedom of Information policy, and that information would be updated following this meeting of the Parish Council so that all policies and procedures contained within the PDF are up to date.
- 16.2. Subject Access Request Policy and Procedures were reviewed and **it was RESOLVED** to make no amendments.

17. **Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media** (*Communications Protocol\**) It was noted that following the request of a Parish Councillor, the Clerk had undertaken a review of the Parish Council's policy for dealing with the press and media in order to include a section on use of Social Media. Having reviewed a number of model documents, the Clerk proposed to the Parish Council that an adapted 'Communications Protocol' also covers expectations around communications with the public, with the Parish Council itself and document confidentiality.

**RESOLVED** To adopt the Communication's Protocol as drafted by the Clerk with/without amendments.

**18. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures; (*Human Resources (HR) Policies*):**

- 18.1. Disciplinary Policy and Procedures were reviewed and **it was RESOLVED** to make no amendments.
- 18.2. Grievance Policy and Procedures were reviewed and **it was RESOLVED** to make no amendments.
- 18.3. Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy Cllrs were informed that the Clerk had drafted this policy in order to comply with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, which introduced a positive obligation on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment where the unwanted conduct is of a sexual nature. Having reviewed a number of available policies, the Clerk proposed that the Parish Council adopt the National Association of Local Councils Model Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy with minor amendments.

**RESOLVED** To adopt National Association of Local Councils Model Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

- 18.4. Anti Bullying and Harassment Risk Assessment The Parish Council reviewed the risk assessment, as prepared by the Clerk.

**RESOLVED** To adopt the Anti Bullying and Harassment Risk Assessment as drafted by the Clerk.

- 18.5. Consideration of adoption of a Staff Handbook or any additional HR policies required The Clerk had reviewed the NALC Staff Handbook and others available. It was agreed that compiling such a document for a Parish Council of this size with one part time employee was disproportionate. It was agreed that the

Parish Council can seek advice on employment matters from DALC as they arise, or refer to ACAS for the most recent up to date legislation.

- 19. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.** The maximum expenditure that could be incurred under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 in the 2024-25 financial year was £10.81 per elector. With 1076 people on the 2024 register of electors, the maximum Harberton Parish Council could spend under section 137 was £11,631.56. Cllrs were informed that the Parish Council had incurred £4611.96 of Section 137 spending in the 2024-25 financial year, well below the capped allowance. It was noted that in the 2025-26 financial year the allowance has risen to £11.10 per elector. As there are 1083 electors on the 2025 register of electors, the maximum allowance for the Parish Council in the 2025-26 year is £12,021.30.

**20. Meetings**

- 20.1. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council

**RESOLVED**

- i) to continue hold meetings of the Parish Council at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month, alternating between Harberton Parish Hall and Harbertonford Village Hall.
- ii) there would be no ordinary meeting of the Parish Council in August unless urgent business required it.
- iii) the next annual meeting of the Parish Council would take place at 7pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026, immediately preceding the ordinary May meeting.

- 20.2. Councillors consent to receive agendas by email **It was RESOLVED** that councillors consented to receiving agendas by email.

Meeting closed at 19:34