

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes for the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council
at 7.30pm on Tuesday 9th September 2025 at Harberton Parish Hall

In attendance

Harbertonford Councillors

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

Harberton Councillors

Cllr Butterworth: Present
Cllr Camp: (Arrived item 3)
Cllr Hambly: Absent
Cllr Paine: Present
Cllr Morris: Present
Cllr Williams: Absent

Others

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

Public Session

No matters were raised by members of the public.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above.

RESOLVED: To sanction apologies

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 matters were declared on items on the agenda.

3. **Reports** for information from:

- 3.1. County Councillor (C.Cllr)

- 3.1.1. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) It was reported Devon County Council (DCC) is coming to the view that a single Devon wide Unitary Authority (not including Plymouth) is the most cost efficient proposal, and would ensure the smoothest transition from a two-tiered system. It was noted that disaggregating Children's Services and Adult Services could cost £130 million extra, whereas aggregating the services across the county could save £1 million. Attention is being paid to how local services could be supported and protected, the function and operation of the Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) being considered a potential model, and how this could be replicated in other areas, such as planning. It was noted that LGR is moving at a pace within the context that many elected members are new in post and having to get up to speed on unfamiliar of Local Government processes very quickly.
- 3.1.2. 20's Plenty It was reported that Parish and Town Councils can now apply to DCC for a 20 mph speed limit in their community without needing to have a high score for fatalities, provided they meet the costs themselves. Implementing a new speed limit could cost between £7000 - £25000. Parish Councils need to show that there is at least 50% support in the community for a new speed limit in order to be able to apply.
- 3.1.3. Broadband Rural broadband roll out continues in its failure to reach the hardest to reach people. The new DCC administration is working hard to address this and push projects forward.
- 3.1.4. Buses Stagecoach continue to struggle financially and are again trimming services in light of reduction to budgets. The Bus Improvement Plan has been put back. Public transport comes into the C.Cllr's portfolio, who is trying to link up various bus service providers.
- 3.1.5. New skate park has now opened in Totnes TRAYE has been part of the group helping with consultation.

- 3.2. District Councillor (D.Cllr)

- 3.2.1. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) It is unknown whether the recent departure of the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will have any impact on the Government's commitment to LGR, but has created uncertainty about the process never-the-less. District Councils across Devon are now considering an 8-1-1 structure (all current districts except Plymouth and Exeter creating one Unitary Authority), but other permutations continue to be discussed and considered. The amount of officer time that is going to the project is significant. Proposals will be submitted to the new Secretary of State by November. By March of 2026 a decision will be made, and by April Councils will be told. In May 2027 there will be elections to the new Unitary Authority, whatever form that takes, and then there will be a 12-month transition before that Unitary Authority takes control. From April 2027 District Councils will go into 'shadow mode' and will have no control over its own finances. There is some concern that there will be a loss of Council Officers in this period of unrest.
- 3.2.2. Water Quality Monitoring The new water quality website will be launched in October/November, giving everyone access to real time water quality data via its dashboard.
- 3.2.3. Waste SHDC has a new Head of Waste. One of their priorities is street cleaning, which is a big issue for lots of Parish Councils. Over the next few months there will be more clarity as to how this will happen.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

- 4. Minutes** Consider approval of the minutes of:
- 4.1. The Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council 8th July 2025
 - 4.2. The EGM (planning) of the Harberton Parish Council 14th August 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 (Cllrs Bowley and Hambly) Ongoing.
- 5.2. New Parish Council bank account (Clerk) Ongoing.
- 5.3. Brockhills Cross Footway (Clerk) Ongoing.
- 5.4. Community Composting Scheme (Cllr Butterworth) Ongoing.
- 5.5. Parish Parks Site Visits (Clerk) Ongoing. A site visit was not arranged during the summer hiatus. The Clerk will seek to arrange this as soon as possible. Cllrs who would wish to attend are not available on weekends during September.
- 5.6. New IT Policy (Clerk) Ongoing.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

6. Planning

- 6.1. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions The Clerk gave a verbal update on recent decisions by the Local Planning Authority
- 6.2. Receive a report on enforcement cases (for information only) Cllrs were informed that two of the cases on the current enforcement case load have been closed. One because it is a duplicate of another file on the caseload, which is already being handled by one of the enforcement officers. The second because the breach of planning control has ceased.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

7. Monthly reports

- 7.1. Finance Committee update The next meeting will take place at 6pm on Tuesday 7th October 2025 and be held at Harberton Parish Hall. This will enable cllrs to also participate in the Neighbourhood Plan consultation that would otherwise clash. Cllr Butterworth will attend having agreed to join this committee.
- 7.2. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update It was reported that a fruit pressing event will take place in the coming weekend. A grant has been received to support a workshop to make barn owl and swift boxes.
- 7.3. Neighbourhood Plan update The Steering Group has changed its meeting dates to the first Monday of the month to be more in step with the Parish Council's meeting cycle. A proposed questionnaire is for discussion at item 8.
- 7.4. Harberton Playing Field update It was reported that the bin had not been emptied in a timely way over the summer. No information is available on the collection schedule and whether this can be checked. It was commented that missing bin collections can be reported on the SHDC website. The next volunteer day is due to take place in October. The Air Ambulance landed at the site as part of a training exercise and noted that the remote light did not function. The local switch has been tested and shown to work. **ACTION: Cllr Stirrup** to liaise with Devon Air Ambulance Trust on further testing.
- 7.5. Harbertonford Play Area update It was reported that the rubbish bin hasn't been emptied all summer. Local residents have tried to empty it themselves due the unpleasant smell. The newly installed table tennis table has been very popular during the summer. The bats had unfortunately been broken but have been replaced. A new handrail is in place alongside the slide. Due to hot weather the grass stopped growing in August so no cutting has been needed since then.
- 7.6. Harberton ARK update In Harberton, a local gully has been cleaned by volunteers and contact has been made with the SHDC street cleaning team. A resident affected by local flooding did manage to place Aquasacs in sufficient time to protect their property, commenting that the Aquasacs are much easier to store and manoeuvre than traditional sandbags. It was commented that local volunteers have also been active in Harbertonford, clearing gullies by the road that contributed to localised flooding after heavy rain.
- 7.7. Clerk's update
 - 7.7.1. October 'in person' meeting of Clerk's and Councillors Cllrs were informed of a local networking event of Clerks and Cllrs in the Totnes area to take place on Wednesday 15th October.
 - 7.7.2. Green spaces meeting The Clerk had attended National Association of Local Councils training on management of green spaces at which there was an interesting presentation and opportunities to ask questions of a representative of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces. This is a movement of 7000 'Friends of Park' groups. The representative talked about means to support partnership between local people and councils in the management of green spaces. A key message was build up slowly, starting with a small group of individuals, a public meeting, an email list and start brainstorming what the community wants for its green space, and inviting members of the community being involved in supporting the spaces that they love, before discussing a constitution, which can be a barrier to engagement. It was suggested that the next steps could involve organising a green spaces meeting between any interested volunteers and the District Council that starts in one park and moves along to the next, and then to liaise with members of current groups to think about how volunteering/engagement could be made attractive to

potential volunteers. This would switch the emphasis from 'we need X to achieve Y' to focus on the benefits of involvement.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) That the information be noted.
 - ii) A play parks/green spaces meeting be arranged from October.

8. **Neighbourhood Plan Consultation** *To review proposed approach to consultation* Cllrs were informed that following revisions made by AECOM to the Site Options Assessment that the Steering Group had agreed to move forward with a reconsultation process and allocate sites on the basis of what is returned. A questionnaire as agreed by the Steering Group at its previous meeting had been circulated, and another with further revisions tabled. Parish Councillors were invited to comment on the content of both drafts.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) To move forward to consultation, subject to the following redraft:
 - ii) To amend the title to 'Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan – Parish Consultation Questionnaire';
 - iii) To provide a timeline that outlines the next steps of the HNP Steering Group and what will happen once the response have been given.
 - iv) Edit so that the dates in the timeline are in chronological order
 - v) Make the 'What has changed' section clearer, the current format is not clear.
 - vi) That providing a name is optional, respondents should be able to remain anonymous
 - vii) That providing a postcode is desirable

9. **Community Emergency Plan Meeting**

Following arrangement of this meeting for 24th September, it was noted that it will be rearranged due to changes in availability of the hall.

10. **Lengthsman Services** *To consider updating the Lengthsman Tender document and circulation channels* Cllrs had the opportunity to review the previous advertisement for Lengthsman's services in the parish, and to propose amendments before the contract is readvertised.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) to rerun the advertisement with the following amendments:
 - ii) to provide an end date to encourage responses ahead of the November meeting of the Parish Council.
 - iii) To ensure that the advertisement refers to the Parish Council's offer to pay for Chapter 8 training.
 - iv) That an agreement with a contractor include a clause that enables the Parish Council to be repaid the cost of training, if the Lengthsman ceases to provide services within a specified number of years.

11. **Parish Councillor Email Addresses** *To consider adopting formal council email addresses* Cllrs that had recently participated in 'Good Councillor' training had requested this item be discussed, having become aware of the risks associated when using personal email addresses, particularly in the processing of personal data.

The Clerk has undertaken some preliminary research, noting that there would be a cost of approximately £48 plus VAT per email address per year if using the current email provider, or a cost of approximately £29 per year if using a 'do it yourself' email service, which the Clerk would need to learn how to install and administrate.

It was discussed whether cllrs were willing to undertake a trial, using a free email provider for Parish Council related emails.

- RESOLVED:**
- ACTION: Cllr Paine** to propose a format for a gmail address.
- ACTION: ALL cllrs** to set up a new gmail address for Parish Council business, using the proposed format.

12. **Correspondence**

12.1. E-Circulars for information

12.2. Items of correspondence for information

- 12.2.1. Temporary Traffic Order - ROAD FROM ROLSTER BRIDGE CROSS TO ENGLEBOURNE, ENGLEBOURNE TO A381 TTRO2564406 Cllrs were informed of the road closure between 8th – 15th October 2025 to enable patching works. A signed diversion will be in place.

- 12.2.2. We welcome your views on the future of council services Cllrs were informed by press release of a series of events being held in September and October to hear from local residents and communities about Local Government Reorganisation. Engagement events will start at 18:15 and close at 20:00. Sessions are taking place on 17th September, 1st, 2nd, 8th and 9th October at the Watermark Ivbridge, Wembury village hall Wembury, Kingsbridge Community College, the Flavel Centre Dartmouth and Follaton House, Totnes respectively. An [online survey](#) (HTML) is also being promoted

- 12.2.3. Ground investigation works Moreleigh Rd 18 August 2025 The Parish Council has been informed that the Environment Agency has been carrying out some ground investigation on Morleigh Road and in some of the surrounding gardens. This is to investigate the feasibility of upgrading the culvert here to take more flow. The EA doesn't have any delivery path for the actual upgrade but are doing what they can to understand how this could be achieved so that works can be undertaken if and when funding becomes available.
- 12.2.4. South Hams Energy Assembly An invitation to the event in Kingsbridge on 18 October has been circulated, which aims to connect, support and inspire action to accelerate the transition to energy resilience in the South Hams.
- 12.2.5. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service - Community Conversations event Cllrs were informed of a Community Conversations about road safety, taking place at noon on 10th September. Cllrs may join through a link on the [website](#).
- 12.2.6. Harberton PC Play area renewal letter Sept 25 Cllrs were informed the play area agreements between the Parish Council and South Hams District Council automatically renew on 1st September, following which invoices will be raised at a cost of £243 + VAT per play area. The current service which is subsidised by South Hams District Council includes: Public Liability Insurance in respect of the play equipment and safety surfacing, monthly inspections by qualified South Hams District Council Mobile Locality Officers, plus an annual engineering report (currently by Allianz).
- 12.2.7. 20250826 South West Water Event An invitation 'Lets Talk Water' event in the afternoon of 22nd September hosted by South West Water (SWW) and promoted by Devon Community Resilience Forum was circulated. The events includes workshops on the importance of community working, challenges and ways to improve collaboration between community groups and organisations such as SWW, with insight from various community groups.

13. Finance

- 13.1. Notice of Conclusion of 2024/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return It was reported that the External Auditor has completed the review of the Parish Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and has raised no matters of concern. The External Auditor's Report and Certificate and a Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been posted on the Parish Council's notice boards and website.
- 13.2. To consider raising staff salaries in line with the 2025/26 National Salary Award Cllrs were informed that the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services has agreed on pay rates applicable from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The new pay rates are each increased by 3.20 per cent per annum.

RESOLVED:

- i) to increase the Clerk's rate of pay from £15.58 per hour to £16.08 per hour according to new pay rates for LC1 spine point 17, and to backdate those increases to 1st April 2025.
- ii) to increase the standing order that pays the Clerk's salary to reflect of the increase.

- 13.3. Review pension arrangements The Clerk reported that a pension scheme has been set up with Nest Pensions. To finalise arrangements, a Direct Debit mandate should be signed. The Clerk prepared exception schedules to lodge with Nest Pensions. The Pension Regulator confirmed that despite there being a missed enrolment date, the employee has the same rights to opt out if they so wish. The Clerk was enrolled in the pension scheme and chose to opt out. It has been confirmed by both The Pension Regulator and Nest Pensions that if the employee opts out of the scheme then no pension contributions are due. It is noted that the Clerk has the option to request to join a pension scheme in the future, and should automatically be re-enrolled in three years time.

RESOLVED:

- i) To sign the Direct Debit mandate
- ii) To note that no pension contributions are payable, unless the Clerk chooses to opt in at a future date.

- 13.4. To consider payments as per the Sept payment schedule

- Payment 2509_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd Sept 2025 includes Clerk Sept salary £557.44, Neighbourhood Plan July Salary at £64.32, overtime payment 3 of 3 at £244.08, backpay at £120.18 = £986.02 no VAT
- Payment 2509_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk Sept expenses claim for mileage at £5.85 and broadband for September at £7.99 = £13.35 no VAT
- Payment 2509_3 to HMRC Shipley for NI Payment incurred on September Salary ESTIMATED = £85.35 no VAT
- Payment 2509_4 to Harberton Parish Hall for hall hire for the meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan on 2nd September 19.00 – 21.00 2hrs @ £7 per hour= £14.00 no VAT
- Payment 2509_5 to Harberton Parish Hall for hall hire for the meeting on 9th September 19.30 – 21.30 2hrs @ £7 per hour= £14.00 no VAT
- Payment 2509_6 to PKF Littlejohn invoice SB20250057 for Limited assurance review of Annual Governance & Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2025 at £210 plus £42 VAT = £252.00
- Payment 2509_7 to Dartington Parish Council invoice 32 for Attendance at DALC training x 3 @ £25 each = £75 no VAT

- Payment 2509_8 to Devon Association of Local Councils invoice 6778 The attendance of Richard Morris at the Introduction to Planning webinar on the 25/06/25 at £35 plus £7 VAT = £42
- Payment 2509_9 to South Hams District Council for cost of play area agreements for both Harberton and Harbertonford parks at £243 plus VAT each = £583.20
- Payment 2509_10 to Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) Transfer of grant of £3500 to TRAYE for the 2025/26 financial year as agreed at Harberton Parish Council's meeting in January 2025 = £3500 no VAT
- Payment 2509_11 Direct Debit to Lloyds bank for September banking charge = £4.25 no VAT
- Update the monthly standing order that pays the Clerk's salary to £621.76

RESOLVED: That the payments be approved.

14. Date and location of meetings:

14.1. Next ordinary meeting 7:30pm Tuesday 14th October 2025, Harbertonford Village Hall

14.2. Next meeting of the Finance Committee of Harberton Parish Council 6pm Tuesday 7th October Harberton Parish Hall.

After the meeting was closed there was an informal opportunity for discussion and for cllrs to raise matters for the next agenda with the Clerk