

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes for the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council
at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th November 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: Apologies
Cllr Camp: Apologies
Cllr Hambly: Present
Cllr Paine: Present
Cllr Morris: Present
Cllr Williams: Present

Others

D.Cllr McKay: Present
C.Cllr Hodgson: Apologies
Clerk Ms Radford: Present
Members of the Public: 7

Public Session

- i) The D.Cllr made a statement within the public session in response to concerns raised by residents about the status of the Community Land Trust (CLT) site at Oak Tree Field. The D.Cllr commented that he had prepared the statement in an attempt allay concerns where possible. It was made clear that comment made by the D.Cllr does not constitute a statement on behalf of South Hams District Council (SHDC) or the CLT. It was reported that a grant of £104,500 was made by the District Council to the CLT to purchase the land, and grant of £10,000 was made to Housing Association Hastoe at a later date. As the Local Planning Authority SHDC considered the application in 2010, and following the Officer's recommendation for refusal it was called in to the Development Management Committee and given approval subject to meeting conditions, including Section 106 contributions. The planning permission that was granted has now lapsed. The D.Cllr commented that as there are no ways in which a lapsed permission can be granted, a reapplication is the only way forward. This puts all parties in a difficult position. Both the CLT and SHDC are looking at ways to protect their interests. The CLT has submitted a complaint about the planning process which the District Council disagrees with. SHDC needs to consider the risk of not recovering the grant if the CLT goes into liquidation. It is a complex situation that is actively and seriously being looked into by officers and until the complaint process has been concluded, the future of the land cannot be determined. It was further commented that the CLT is a private organisation that has no obligation to respond to public queries and that all parties are trying to do their best in very difficult circumstances. The CLT trustees are dedicated people working hard to do the best for their community. Whilst one of the Directors of the CLT is also a Parish Councillor, this does not make the Parish Council complicit in any discussion. The Parish Council may take an interest but has no duty or powers in this matter. The D.Cllr does not believe it right for the Parish Council or its meetings to be used as a go-between between the CLT and the District Council. The D.Cllr commented that his contact details are publicly available and offered local residents a meeting.
- ii) Members of the public present thanked the D.Cllr for preparing this statement and welcomed a meeting. Residents commented that they were pleased to have received some further background information.
- iii) The D.Cllr reported that the planning officer responsible for the Ford Farm application has informed him that South West Water has commented that there is no capacity for the development at present which may have an impact on SHDC's decision on the site. The D.Cllr understands that the applicant is giving due consideration to these issues and may come back with a proposal in response. Information is available on the planning portal.
- iv) The Land Promoters for the Ford Farm site wanted to convey to the Parish Council that they believed that their concerns raised with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group about the AECOM report should have been resolved before going out to reconsultation. It was reiterated that the land promoters were not permitted to engaged in the consultation exercise because of the live planning application on the site, noting that all constraints identified by AECOM were approved by statutory consultations through the planning process. Ahead of the Parish Council's consideration of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan it was commented that the Joint Local Plan considers Harberton a sustainable village and if the land at Ford Farm is not allocated, the Neighbourhood Plan will have no allocation for any affordable housing, or any housing at all. It was further commented that it would be inconsistent, if the results of the re-consultation would influence the Parish Council's consideration of the live planning application, if the planning application and the processes involved have no influence on the Neighbourhood Plan.
- v) The Neighbourhood Plan Chair responded to comment on the complexity of the Neighbourhood Planning process; the job is to decide whether to allocate land for housing. The decision was made not to include representations from the land promoters at the consultation. It was reiterated that land promoters would be welcome to deliver their own consultation event in the community to discuss the benefits of their site if they wished.

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 Cllr Williams declared that he has a non-pecuniary interest as a Director of the Community Land Trust (CLT).

3. **Reports** for information from:

- 3.1. County Councillor (C.Cllr) No update.
- 3.2. District Councillor (D.Cllr) reported that all Local Government Reorganisation proposals will go to the Secretary of State on November 28. The outcome of this is expected in early 2026. Elections to the unitary authority will be held in May 2027. There will be a transition period, with District Councillors serving an additional year, before the new unitary authority comes into effect.

4. **Minutes** Consider approval of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council 14th October 2025

RESOLVED: To sign the minutes as a correct record with minor 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. Brockhills Cross Footway (Clerk) The Clerk has made a query with the grass cutting contractor to ask for a quote to level and reseed the verge at Brockhills. **ACTION:** It was agreed that **the Clerk** request a quotation from the specialist that worked with the Littlehempston path to consider including in the 2026/27 budget.
- 5.3. Community Composting Scheme (Cllr Butterworth) Ongoing.
- 5.4. Parish Parks Site Visits (Cllrs Beamish and Stirrup) It was agreed that Cllrs Beamish and Stirrup decide a date between them and invite any other interested parties to join if available.
- 5.5. Parish Councillor's Email Addresses (Clerk) It was noted that some Cllrs have created new email addresses and others need some additional support.
- 5.6. Signage in Harberton (Clerk) It was reported that the Clerk has written to Devon County Highways to request that the signage warning of the narrow highway between the Church House Inn and St Andrew's church wall, Harberton, be repositioned. The Neighbourhood Highways Officer is liaising with the traffic team on the possibility of placing signage. It was reported that the private landowner has agreed to replace the sign that was in place on his land. It was noted that the Blakemore finger post sign is no longer standing.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

6. **Planning**

- 6.1. Consideration of planning applications

- 6.1.1. 3056/25/TCA T1: Ash - re-pollard to 6m from ground level to maintain cyclical pruning. At 4 Victoria Cottages Harberton

RESOLVED: To SUPPORT the application

- 6.1.2. 3133/25/ARC Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 (Bats) of planning consent 2164/25/LBC at Harberton House, The Square, Harberton

RESOLVED: To SUPPORT the application.

- 6.1.3. 3173/25/PDM Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use of agricultural building to 1No dwellinghouse (Class C3) & for associated development (Class Q (a+b)) at Barn Opposite Hazard Cottage, Harberton

RESOLVED: To make NO COMMENT on the application.

- 6.1.4. 3186/25/LBC Listed building consent for Installation of fan & vent to basement at 3 The Mill, Woodland Road, Harbertonford

RESOLVED: To SUPPORT the application.

- 6.2. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions There were no cases to report.
- 6.3. Receive a report on enforcement cases (for information only) Cllrs were informed that an enforcement case concerning alleged unauthorised structures has closed as a site visit from the Planning Authority confirmed removal of a yurt.

7. Monthly reports

- 7.1. Finance Committee update No update.
- 7.2. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update It was noted that South Brent Turbine Group contributed to a recent talk. A presentation about the Totnes Archimedes' Screw, rooftop solar and retrofitting properties was also given.
- 7.3. Neighbourhood Plan update It was agreed that matters would be covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 7.4. Harberton Playing Field update Harberton Playing Field Association (HPFA) had a good turnout for the volunteer day and were grateful to those who came out in support. The new leaf blower purchased with the C.Cllr's Locality Fund was used. Suggestions were made about park improvements and how funding could be spent. It was noted that a ring of beech trees planted 25 years ago in order to support a roped off platform have now reached sufficient maturity to take this opportunity forward. There is interest in installing hedgehog houses. HPFA would support a contract extension with the grass cutting contractor.
- 7.5. Harbertonford Play Area update It was reported that the minor matters raised by the monthly inspection report from SHDC have been actioned. The leaf blower purchased with the C.Cllr's Locality Fund has also been used in Harbertonford. The grass is currently too wet for mowing. Whilst there is still not a formal play area committee, there are people interested to support, depending on their capacity to volunteer time.
- 7.6. Harberton ARK update No update.
- 7.7. Tree Warden Update No update.
- 7.8. Clerk's update
 - 7.8.1. Flooding Workshop A new date for the workshop is still under discussion as team members from Devon Communities Together weren't available on the proposed date of 12th November. A date early in the new year is now most likely.
 - 7.8.2. Totnes Cluster Town and Parish Council Networking meeting The Clerk and Chair had both attended a networking meeting for representatives of town and parish councils in the Totnes area. During the meeting there was a chaired discussion in which councillors asked questions about Local Government Reorganisation and proposed ways in which councils in the area could work together. The Totnes Town Clerk sent a follow up meeting sharing slides from the recent DALC Connect Event on the topic of Local Government Reorganisation. The key messages from that meeting:
 - It is important for Town and Parish Councils to keep up to date on what is happening and ensuring that we continue to advocate for our sector.
 - DCC seemed quite open to the idea of talks on devolution, potentially with funds to cover the costs – this came out after Town and Parish reps were understandably concerned about having to take on liabilities like toilets without anything like car parks to offset costs.
 - It was suggested that Town and Parosh Councils should be building in some financial reserve to cover associated costs that may come down the line. The new Unitary will take over in April 2028, which only gives two full years to build in these contingencies.
 - There is still uncertainty and concern about the structure changes in relation to who will be responsible for what. For example will planning be done by the new Unitary or will the new Neighbourhood Area Committees have delegated local responsibilities. Further work and clarification is required.
 - 7.8.3. Harberton Parish Natural Flood Management (NFM) Meetings The Clerk has continued to be invited to these short project management meetings. It was reported that a short report about options for NFM in Harberton Parish as commissioned from Westcountry Rivers Trust by the Environment Agency will be completed by the end of the year. A decision was made to delay finalising the flood risk modelling report commissioned of WSP by Devon County Council in order to be able to refer to the options that will be outlined in the Westcountry Rivers Trust report. It is expected that this report will remain internal between the agencies involved, in order to support funding bids for future flood resilience projects. It has been discussed whether an executive summary could be drafted that could be circulated more widely in the community.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

8. Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.1. Receive outcome of housing re-consultation Standing orders were suspended to allow members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG) and working groups to speak. Cllrs had received the minutes of the HNPSG meeting summarising the outcome of the housing re-consultation, a more detailed summary of results was tabled for information. It was noted that 86 responses were received, of which 77.9% responded 'No' to the question *"Do you agree that the Ford Farm site should be included in the Harberton Neighbourhood Plan, following its reclassification by AECOM as 'Amber' (marginally suitable if constraints can be mitigated)?"* The Harberton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG) has therefore made the

decision not to allocate that site in the Neighbourhood Plan. It was commented that the HNPSG has sought to separate out the live Outline Planning Application (OPA) on that site from the Neighbourhood Planning process. Whilst all members of the committee made personal objections to the OPA, not all members objected to allocation of the site in the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.2. Review the updated draft of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.2.1. the new format and general direction of travel It was noted that the Parish Council had made comments on an earlier draft of the Neighbourhood Plan chapter by chapter. Having undertaken a review of that draft the HNPSG had agreed to simplify the structure, carrying forward policies that had already been approved, simplify and streamline new chapters considering the potential audience for the plan.
- 8.2.2. all new chapters but in particular the Housing chapter Cllrs were asked to read the draft in order to comment.

RESOLVED: Cllrs were positive about the new structure and agreed with the direction of travel.
Cllrs to send comments on the next draft to the Clerk

9. Tree Works The Parish Council considered three quotes received to undertake tree works recommended by the annual tree inspection report.

RESOLVED: To split the three jobs between two contractors, and

- contract Pitman Trees to undertake Job 1 to fell Ash T1484 at Harberton Playing Fields to ground level and remove all arisings from site at a cost of £360 plus VAT.
- contract Pitman Trees to undertake Job 2 to raise the crown of T1 Oak at Harbertonford to 2.5 metres above ground level at a cost of £50 plus VAT.
- contract Liam Walton (Sylvan Wood) to undertake job 3 pollard ash tree number T1484 at Harbertonford play park at 2-3m in height. Chip all brash into the pile from previous tree works and stack the timber in large lengths near the base of the tree at a cost of £1900 no VAT.

10. Purchase of Aquasacs Consider seeking grant funds to support purchase

RESOLVED: To encourage an application to the Community Benefit Fund for the cost of aquasacs.
To consider purchase of a delivery of aquasacs within the 2026/27 Budget.

11. Correspondence

11.1. E-Circulars for information Cllrs were informed of the regular e-circulars received. Any may be requested.

11.2. Items of correspondence for information

- 11.2.1. 20251016 Electric Vehicle Charging - Harbertonford school open to discussing using the playground A Member of the Public (MoP) has informed the Clerk of a meeting held with the Academy Head who indicated an openness to putting electric vehicle charging in the school playground, where some residents park overnight. The information is shared should this open up options for electric vehicle charging plans in the village.
- 11.2.2. 20251022 #46 2025 DALC E-bulletin Cllrs are informed that this ebulletin includes an invitation to one of DALC's regular free 'Connect' events for DALC members. The event 'Connect Event: The Changing Roles of Town and Parish Councils Through LGR - Devolution and Partnership Working' took place on November 5. Slides and a recording of the session will also be available via DALC's website after the event.
- 11.2.3. 20251024 Libraries Unlimited - Annual Report 2024-25 The Parish Council has received a link to Annual Report 2024-25 - Libraries Unlimited also providing a link to how the charity can be supported: Support Us - Libraries Unlimited.
- 11.2.4. 20251027 Advance notice - South Hams Community Awards 2026 The Parish Council is asked to consider potential nominations for the award. The Chairman of the District Council and a panel of judges are looking for nominations for people who make a difference in the community, in the following categories: Young Persons Award (for under 18s); Community Champion Award (for over 18s); Community Organisation Award; Climate and Biodiversity Champion Award (individual or group). A link to the online nomination form when nominations open and all nominations will need to be submitted by end of January 2026
- 11.2.5. 20251009 #47 2025 DALC E-bulletin Cllrs are informed that this ebulletin encourages responses to the draft Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) that sets out a shared vision for restoring Devon's wildlife and natural habitats. The Strategy identifies where and how we can work together to protect and enhance nature, from river catchments and woodlands to coastlines and urban green spaces. Public consultation runs until 05/11/25. www.naturerecoverydevon.org.uk The bulletin advertises the next Connect Event at 1pm on 11/11/25 called 'All Things Traffic' that provides an opportunity to understand the policy and processes which shape how we manage traffic on our highways and the associated infrastructure such as white lines and signs.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

11.3. Items of correspondence for consideration

- 11.3.1. 20251021 Oaktree Field, Harberton/CLT Cllrs were informed that a Member of the Public has written to the Council a second time disappointed with the response to their letter considered by the Parish Council at the prior meeting, October 14 and the process of how items of correspondence are considered. The letter dated October 21 notes that the CLT received a grant to purchase the land commenting the PC should be taking an active interest in what is happening. The CLT, the Parish Council and South Hams District Council are asked to give a proper account of the up to date position and plans for the CLT and the land at Oaktree field.

Commentary was made by cllrs that defamatory statements made in letters was a concern.

RESOLVED: Matters were covered in the public session.

- 11.3.2. 20251022 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Precept Survey Cllrs were informed that local residents and businesses are asked to respond to a five-minute form asks how people feel about the service they receive, and will influence the amount the Service receives from council tax in 2026/27.

RESOLVED: Cllrs to look at the link to the survey it as individuals before the deadline of December 3.

- 11.3.3. 20251104 0828/25/OPA land at Meadow Close Harberton - expected change of Statutory Consultee response The Parish Council was forwarded an email by a Member of the Public sent to the Local Planning Authority with regard to the Ford Farm site. The email noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had voted not to allocate the site in the Neighbourhood Plan, following the outcome of a reconsultation exercise. The member of the public has therefore asked the Development Management Officer to factor this into their deliberations on the live OPA on the Meadow Close/Ford Farm site, and post the email with information about the outcome of the consultation exercise and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's decision on the planning portal for the public record.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council should atleast consider the possibility of changing its response to the Local Planning Authority in light of new information.

ACTION: The Clerk to seek advice from the Devon Association of Local Councils on whether an EGM or a special motion would be required.

ACTION: Cllrs Williams and Stirrup to submit a special motion to request the matter discussed, if such protocol is required.

12. **Finance**

- 12.1. To note receipts and payments made between meetings It was reported that
- No receipts or payments had been made between meetings.
 - It was noted that payment 2510_3 to The Information Commissioner's Office as the annual data protection fee was £5 less than the £52 advertised, as the Parish Council paid by Direct Debit. = £47.00
- 12.2. To consider payments as per the November payment schedule*
- Payment 2511_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd November 2025 includes Clerk salary £557.44, Neighbourhood Plan Salary at £64.32, overtime payment 2 of 3 at £61.10 = £682.86 no VAT
 - Payment 2511_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk November expenses claim for mileage at £8.19 and broadband for November at £7.50 = £15.69 no VAT
 - Payment 2511_3 HMRC Shipley for NI Payment incurred on November Salary ESTIMATED = £39.88 no VAT
 - Payment 2511_4 to Harberton Parish Hall for Committee Room hire for the meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan on 4th November 19.00 – 21.00 plus room hire for the meeting of the Parish Council on 11th November 19:30 – 21:30, a total of 4 hrs @ 7.00 per hour = £28 no VAT
 - Payment 2511_5 EXPECTED Direct Debit to Lloyds bank for November banking charge = £4.25 no VAT
 - Payment 2511_6 Wessex Solutions inv 0745 on site checks to Harberton Community Landing Site switches at £149.81 plus £29.96 VAT = £179.77

RESOLVED: The information at 12.1 be noted
To make payments as per the November payment schedule.

13. **Date and location of next meeting** Tuesday 9th December 2025 at Harbertonford Village Hall.