

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Harberton Parish Council
at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13th January 2026 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: Present
Cllr Hambly: Apologies
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: 1

Public Session No comments

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above.
Cllrs were informed that Cllr H Palmer had submitted a letter of resignation as Cllr to Harberton Parish Council. Cllrs extended their thanks to Cllr H Palmer for her service.
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 interests were declared on items on the agenda.
3. **Reports** for information from:
 - 3.1. County Councillor No verbal report. Cllrs had received a written report.
 - 3.2. District Councillor
 - 3.2.1. Local Government Reorganisation A response from Government on submitted proposals is expected in February. A lot is still unknown, including the role of Parish Councils going forward.
 - 3.2.2. Climate Emergency Action The D.Cllr commented that following a national meeting of 1200 delegates held in Westminster on the subject of climate change the D.Cllr is working with the organisers of the event to work locally about the impact of climate change, and what more can be done to spread the message that action is required now. Parish Councils will be invited to participate and support this work.
 - 3.2.3. Promoting a local, circular economy A new website, AmaZen has been launched, providing a marketplace for local producers to promote their products online, and support the local economy. The D.Cllr is supporting this initiative. Work is also under way to co-ordinate community transport initiatives.
 - 3.2.4. South West Water (SWW) The D.Cllr has had contact with the SWW's new Local Authority Liaison Officer, who has invited conversation about any concerns or issues in the area. The D.Cllr hopes that this is the beginning of a dialogue, as opposed to a one-off conversation.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted

4. Minutes

- 4.1. Consider approval of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council 9th December 2025*
- 4.2. Review the minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee of Harberton Parish Council 12th January 2026

RESOLVED: i) To sign the minutes at 4.1 as a correct record without amendments.
ii) To note the minutes at 4.2. No corrections were made before publishing them as a draft.

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) No update
- 5.2. Brockhills Cross Footway (Clerk) No update
- 5.3. Community Composting Scheme (Cllr Butterworth) No update
- 5.4. Parish Parks Site Visits (Cllrs Beamish and Stirrup) Cllr Beamish, Stirrup and D.Cllr McKay will agree a weekend date.
- 5.5. Parish Councillor's Email Addresses Clerk to send a test email, as some cllrs are experiences issues with receiving mail.
- 5.6. Parish Lengthsman Update (Clerk) The Clerk reported that contact has been made with the interested contractor and that suitable training is being sourced.

6. Planning

- 6.1. Receive a report on planning or appeal decisions The Clerk gave a verbal report on recent decisions made by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.2. Receive a report on enforcement cases (for information only) It was reported that there have been no additions to the enforcement caseload since August 2025. 16 cases remain under investigation.

7. Monthly reports

- 7.1. Finance Committee update Cllrs were informed that a meeting of the Finance Committee had taken place on January 12, at which the 2025/26 Quarter 3 budget report and quarterly bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed. The bank reconciliation showed a balance of £54,060.45 including reserves. Recommendations of the Finance Committee on awarding of grants, the Clerk's salary, a proposed budget and precept demand for the 2026/27 financial year are for consideration at items 8 and 9.
- 7.2. Sustainable Harbourne Valley update It was reported that a Green Gathering had been held in the pub, with another planned to take place at Daynes Farm soon. Owl boxes are being installed, bat boxes are being built, one being installed in one of the churches. Meetings have been held with Bidwell Brook partnership about water quality along the length of the Bidwell Brook.
- 7.3. Neighbourhood Plan update Members of the committee have continued polishing the draft plan, which has now been produced. The draft plan has been circulated the draft plan to statutory consultees on 12th January, and available on the Parish Council website. A google form is available on the website to collect comments. Members of the steering group are meeting to review the timeline, as the consultation period will be extended so that the Strategic Environmental Assessment, in process, can be published alongside the Regulation 14 draft plan.
- 7.4. Harberton Playing Field update The committee is looking to extend the wet pour surfaces and to make fixes to the slide. A volunteer day will take place shortly.
- 7.5. Harbertonford Play Area update A volunteer day will be arranged in February. Reports from SHDC have identified faults with the slide handrail, and non-slip material on the sleepers. The rigour of the assessment is questioned. **ACTION: The Clerk** to send most recent reports to the D.Cllr for him to pick up queries
- 7.6. Harberton ARK update Volunteers were out clearing drains during recent heavy rains. The West Country River Trust have completed work on their report on possible Natural Flood Management options that could be employed in the Parish. It had been confirmed that Harberton village has been added to the surface water flood forecasting system trial, and DCC is looking for 8-10 Harberton village residents who would be happy to join the WhatsApp channel and provide feedback throughout the trial period. **ACTION: The Clerk** to send details of the trial and how to sign up to Cllr Morris for circulation to Harberton Ark.
- 7.7. Tree Warden Update No Update
- 7.8. Clerk's update No update.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

8. Finance Committee Recommendations

- 8.1. Community Benefit Fund Grants An application for £437.98 was made by Harbertonford School PTFA to support the purchase of two specific outdoor learning resources for Early Years: a Wooden Square Sand Box and Outdoor Wooden Scales and Bucket Set.

RESOLVED to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to award a grant of £437.98

- 8.2. Clerk's Overtime The Finance Committee had reviewed the Clerk's overtime request.

RESOLVED to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation that the Clerk carry 20 hours of TOIL into the next quarter, and that the requested that overtime of 42.4 hours for Quarter 3 be approved and paid in three instalments of £227.26 in January, £227.26 in February and £227.27 in March.

9. 2026/27 Budget

- 9.1. Consideration of proposed 2026/27 Budget Cllrs reviewed the budget as proposed by the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED to set the 2026/27 budget as follows:

2026/27 Proposed Budget		2025/26 Budget £	2026/27 Budget £	Difference +/-
1	2026/27 Proposed Budget			
2	Income			
3				
4				
5	Precept	26797	34550	7753
6	Harberton Parish Hall Ground rent	10	10	0
7	Bank interest	0	0	0
8	VAT refund	836.79	1000	163.21
9	County Council Locality Fund Grant	0	0	0
10	Harberton Playing Field Association	0.05	0.05	0
11	Project Grant income (misc)	0	0	0

12	Other Misc. income	0	0	0
13	Repayments			
14	Allotments	500	500	0
15	Earmarked Reserves			
16	<i>Community Benefit Fund</i>	0	0	0
17	Office Equipment	265	500	235
18	Training reserves	688.8	541	-147.8
19	Parish Defibrillators	950	950	0
20	Elections	2323.72	2750	426.28
21	Maintenance reserves	4075	74	-4001
22	Parish Lengthsman Project	3500	3350	-150
23	Emergency Planning	300	500	200
24	Website	220.02	277.68	150.21
25	Service Level Agreement DAAT Ligthing column	550	370.23	217
26	Neighbourhood Plan	1195.46	767	-428.46
27	Parish Council Grants Fund	500	1000	500
28	Totals	42711.84	47139.96	4428.12
29	Income minus expenditure			
30				
31	Expenditure			
32		2025/26	2026/27	+/-
33	Room Hire	300	350	-50
34	Subs	700	700	0
35	Insurance	750	750	0
36	PCC Grants Harberton	550	550	0
37	PCC Grant Harbertonford	500	550	-50
38	Salary	7000	7669.4	-669.4
39	Salary overtime	2100	2100	0
40	Neighbourhood Plan Salary	810	958.88	-148.88
41	Neighbourhood Plan Salary Overtime	1000	0	1000
42	Tax/NI payments	886.5	1294.21	-407.71
43	Pension	0	250	-250
44	Clerk Expenses	125	100	25
45	Office Expenses	100	250	-150
46	Professional Fees	500	1000	-500
47	Broadband	90	150	-60
48	Grasscutting Harbertonford	900	900	0
49	Grasscutting Harberton	1000	1000	0
50	Playground Inspections	600	600	0
51	Harbertonford Playground Lease	250	250	0
52	Allotment	500	500	0
53	Youth Provision [TRAYE]	3500	4000	-500
54	Annual Tree Inspection	700	700	0
55	Grant funded projects	0	0	0
56	Contingency/Reserves	500	1000	-500
57	Community Benefit Fund	0	0	0
58	Parish Parks	2000	2000	0
59	Parish Council Grants Fund	1000	2000	-1000
60	Citizens Advice South Hams	300	400	-100
61	Earmarked Reserves			
62	Office Equipment	500	750	-250
63	Training	700	700	0
64	Parish Defibrillators	950	1250	-300
65	Elections	2750	3000	-250
66	Maintenance Reserves (Includes trees)	4000	4000	0
67	Parish Lengthsman Project	4000	5000	-1000

68	Emergency Planning	500	500	0
69	Website	600	600	0
70	Service Level Agreements: annual maintenance works Landing Site Maintenance	550	550	0
71	Neighbourhood Plan	1500	767	733
72	Totals	42711.5	47139.49	-4427.99
73	Income minus expenditure	0.34	-0.47	

Budget notes (by line)

- 5 The precept is the balancing figure
- 6 Ground rent set in lease
- 8 2026/27 budget figure calculated on VAT paid out to date
- 10 As per lease agreement.
- 14 As per lease agreement.
Community benefit fund is accounted for separately, hence there being no 'income' and
- 16 'expenditure' figures within the budget.
- 17 - 27 Remainder of reserves carried forward
Noting that whilst there is a difference in size between sites, the graveyard in Harbertonford is
- 37 more expensive to maintain as the majority of the site is strimmed rather than mown.
The National Pay Award has not yet been agreed. It is expected that payscales will rise with the
- 38 minimum wage, but no guidance as to how much. It is proposed to increase by 6 spine points,
plus an increase of 3%
- 39 Whilst under budget in 2025/26, the budget for overtime is retained at the same amount due to
uncertainty around the impact of Local Government Reorganisation on Parish and Town Councils.
The significant overspend on this line is due to overtime undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.
A 'Neighbourhood Plan Overtime' line has therefore been created below. It is proposed to budget
- 40 for a 6.7% increase in the Clerk's rate of pay.
It is expected that the Neighbourhood Plan will be finalised within the year, and therefore any
- 41 overtime can be met flexibly within the annual salary figure.
- 42 Projected NI figures are based on projected payscale increases
- 43 NEW LINE: Budgeting for approximately 3% of salary.
- 44 Decreased due to Clerk's expected reduction in car journeys, having moved.
- 45 Increased in reflection of increases to spending in the 2026/27 financial year.
Increased in order to meet any potential needs arising out of impacts of Local Government
- 46 Reorganisation
- 47 Increased in line with increases to real costs.
TRAYE's request for an increase to the 2026/7 contribution was considered by the Parish Council
- 53 and approved in December 2025.
On review of the reserves, reserves policy and on the advice of the internal auditor, the Parish
Council agreed to increase the general reserve to approximately £8000 -9000 by 2025/6 financial
year, and £10,000-11,000 by the 2026/27 financial year. It is estimated that the Parish Council will
have approximately £10,500 in reserves at the end of the financial year. Noting that if the Clerk's
salary increases, so will employment costs and the general reserve required. Any underspend in
- 56 'contingency' within the year will contribute to building the General Reserve.
This new line was proposed in 2025/26 budget so that applications can be made by both
Harberton and Harbertonford Parks for an annual grant of up to £1000 directly to the Parish
Council, instead of to the Community Benefit Fund. Harbertonford Park has not drawn down
- 58 these funds as yet.
No spending against this reserve to date, as is intended to build up until the Community Benefit
- 59 Fund is exhausted. Noting that there is £1000 under 'income' within Earmarked Reserves.
Unspent in financial year. Reserve was increased in the 2025/26 year to enable the purchase of a
new laptop. This was increased again in 2026/27 expecting the cost of a laptop to have
- 62 increased.
- 63 Reserve replenished.
Replenish the reserve by estimated annual cost of defibrillators, and expectation of maintenance
- 64 costs in Quarter 4 of 2025/26.
The Finance Committee has been seeking to increase this reserve to £3000 over the last three
- 65 years.
The reserves are significantly depleted due to costs of tree works in 2025/26. Noting that the
reserve was already unexpectedly depleted in 2025/26 due to significant tree works required in
- 66 winter of 2024/25.
The reserves is increased expecting some progress of the Lengthsman project in the next
- 67 financial year.

- 68 *This reserve was increased to £500 in the previous financial year, and remains unspent. The Finance Committee recommended in 2025/26 that a reserve should be built up to and kept to £600 to allow for email hosting as well as website hosting. Noting that billing periods fall at*
- 69 *approximatley every 3 years.*
- 70 *Propose earmarked reserve renamed to 'Landing Site Maintenance'*
The end of year includes estimated costs of printing posters and fliers for Regulation 14 consultation, leaving approx 767 for the remainder of the project, expected to be completed within
- 71 *the 2026/27 financial year.*

9.2. Consideration of the 2026/27 Precept Demand

RESOLVED that the 2026/27 precept be set at £34,550. The Parish Band D parish rate will be £60.96 per year, which is an increase of £14.24 on the previous year (equivalent to 30.49%).

10. **Correspondence**

- 10.1. E-Circulars for information Cllrs received a list of regular e-newsletters that can be forwarded on request.
- 10.2. Items of correspondence for information
- 10.2.1. 20260106 Totnes Area Clerk Cluster Meeting Cllrs were informed that the next Clerk and Councillor cluster session proposed for 20th January will now be deferred until 17th March when it is hoped that more information about Local Government Reorganisation will be available. The meeting will take place from 5pm at Totnes Guildhall, with wine and nibbles available, and an opportunity to meet councillors from neighbouring parish and town councils.
- 10.2.2. 20260106 Local Government Reorganisation - Town and Parish Council Briefing Cllrs were informed of an invitation from South Hams District Council to attend an online briefing on Wednesday 21st January at 18:00 to hear from the Leader and some of the South Hams Officers that have been working on the Local Government Reorganisation plan submitted by the District Council to Government. The meeting provides the opportunity for councillors to ask questions ahead of the Government consultation opening in early February. The plan is available via the following link: www.reimaginingdevon.org. A Microsoft Teams invitation can be forwarded to any cllrs interested in attending. **Action: The Clerk** to forward to Cllrs Bowley and Paine.
- 10.2.3. 20260107 Budget Briefing for District, Parish and Town Councillors Cllrs were informed of an invitation to join Budget Briefing meeting being held by Devon County Council on Thursday, 15 January 2026. This session provides an opportunity for DCC Councillors and Officers to present its proposed budget priorities for the next financial year and to invite feedback that helps shapes spending priorities.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

10.3. Items of correspondence for consideration

- 10.3.1. 20251129 Bus Shelter Painting Cllrs are informed that a response to the call for help to paint the bus shelter has been received and further contact required to take the offer forward.

RESOLVED To circulate to Harbertonford Cllrs for someone to make an introduction.

- 10.3.2. 20251219 Footpath Maintenance Cllrs are informed that South Hams Ramblers now have a dedicated Path Maintenance Team offering free labour on most jobs relating to path upkeep that the council may have. Volunteers are fully insured through Ramblers. An invitation is made to contact the team if more information is required. Cllrs discussed whether there were areas in need of maintenance. It was noted that the boardwalk down by Lee Bridge is very slippery.

RESOLVED to write a notice for inclusion in the circulars, asking if there is any maintenance needed on the local footpaths. put something out locally in the circulars, asking if there is any maintenance needed on the local footpaths.

- 10.3.3. 20251228 Harbertonford grass areas Cllrs are informed that an invoice has been received from Paul Westlake for grass cutting in Harbertonford. The contractor is willing to continue cutting the grass at the same price per cut, should the Parish Council wish him to do so.

RESOLVED to engage the contractor Paul Westlake to cut the grass in Harbertonford for the 2026 season, at a cost of £30 per cut.

- 10.3.4. 20251228 Your defibrillator pads will expire in 30 days Cllrs are informed that the adult pads for the Harberton defibrillator expire on 28th January 2026 and should be replaced. It was noted that tamper tags were also needed in Harberton. The Clerk has made attempts to contact the Community Heart Beat Trust (CHT), but had not received a reply. It was commented that higher frequency of checks may be required as a condition of the arrangement with CHT.

RESOLVED

The Clerk to pursue replacement pads and tamper tags in Harberton. **Cllr Morris** agreed to undertake more frequent checks in Harberton if they were required. **Cllr Davies** offered to make any additional checks required in Harbertonford, if show what to do. **The Clerk** will make an introduction to the Harbertonford volunteer.

11. Finance**11.1. To note receipts and payments made between meetings**

- Income 05/01/26 from Harbertonford Allotment Society for annual rent = £500 no VAT
- Payment 2512_7 to Pittman Trees for invoice 1569 Harberton Playing Fields-T1484 Ash – section fell to ground level, remove all arisings from site. £360.00 ex VAT and Harbertonford Play Park
- T1 Oak – crown £50.00 ex VAT. Total £410 plus £82 VAT = £492

11.2. To consider payments as per the January payment schedule

- Payment 2601_1 to Cat Radford, payslip dated 22nd January 2026 includes Clerk salary £557.44, Neighbourhood Plan Salary at £64.32, overtime payment 1 of 3 at £227.06 = £849.02 no VAT
- Payment 2601_2 to Cat Radford, Clerk January expenses claim for mileage at £4.59 and broadband for January at £7.50 = £12.09 no VAT
- Payment 2601_3 HMRC Shipley for NI Payment incurred on January Salary ESTIMATED = £64.80 no VAT
- Payment 2601_4 to Geosphere Ltd for invoice 18UG024-0005 Parish Online - Mapping Software (per Year) Dec 17, 2025 – Dec 17, 2026 at £90 plus £18 VAT = £108
- Payment 2601_5 to Harberton Parish Hall for Room hire for the meeting of the Parish Council 13th January 19.00 – 21.00 total of 2 hrs @ 7.00 per hour = £14 no VAT
- Payment 2601_6 to Paul Westlake invoice 1183 for grasscutting in Harbertonford: Village Green 10 cuts at £30 per cut and Play Area 18 cuts at £30 per cut = £840
- Payment 2601_7 To Liam Walton (Sylvan Wood) invoice 2026006 Ash tree number T1484 at Harbertonford play park. Pollard 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. = £1900 no VAT
- Payment 2601_8 EXPECTED Direct Debit to Lloyds bank for January banking charge = £4.25 no VAT

RESOLVED

- i) The information at 11.1 be noted
- ii) To make payments as per the January payment schedule.

12. Date and location of next meeting Tuesday 10th February 2026, Harbertonford Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 20:25