

Harbury & Deppers Bridge

Annual Parish Meeting

2024



Harbury & Deppers Bridge
Annual Parish Meeting
9 May 2024 at 7.30pm

Agenda

- 1 Welcome by Cllr Tim Lockley, Chairman of Harbury Parish Council.
- 2 Apologies.
- 3 Minutes of the annual parish meeting held on 25 May 2023.
- 4 Matters arising from the minutes.
- 5 Report from the chairman of Harbury Parish Council.
- 6 Reports from Harbury Parish Council working parties:
 - Planning
 - Environment
 - Properties
 - Finance & General Purposes
 - Climate
- 7 Reports from village organisations (if your organisation has not already provided a written report or you would like to add something further).
- 8 County & district councillors' reports & questions.
- 9 Any other business.
- 10 Close of meeting.

Minutes of Harbury Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday, 25 May 2023 at 7.30pm
Harbury Village Hall

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Tim Lockley, Chairman of Harbury Parish Council.

Present

14 electors of the parish and 4 parish councillors as follows:

Cllr Tim Lockley	Cllr Julie Balch
Cllr Sam Allen	Cllr Alan Knowles
County Cllr Chris Kettle	District Cllr Susan Ostrander
Sue Turner	David Turner
Liz Ball	Mike Ball
Nicola Thompson (HL News)	Lucy Bosley (Head Teacher, Harbury Primary)
Chris Woodhams (Harbury RFC)	David Bristow (Harbury Energy Initiative)
Janet Thornley (Harbury Heritage)	Andy Goss
Julia Fowler (Harbury WI)	Richard Fowler (Harbury Village Library)

In Attendance

Alison Biddle, Clerk to the Council

1. Welcome

Cllr Lockley welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

2. Apologies

Cllr Keith Thompson, Cllr Jess Dominick, Cllr Alex Potter, Mary Thompson, Sharon Hancock, Amanda Randall

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2022.

The minutes of the annual parish meeting held on Thursday, 12 May 2022 were agreed as a true and complete record of that meeting and were duly signed by the chairman.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Report from the chairman of Harbury Parish Council

A written report had been provided and was included in the booklet. Three parish councillors stood down at the recent election and no one came forward to take their place so there are now only 7 councillors and 3 vacant seats. This problem is not unique to Harbury but it is hoped that new councillors will be co-opted soon. Cllr Lockley said he personally found being a councillor very rewarding.

6. Reports from Harbury Parish Council working parties.

Written reports had been provided by the chairs of the working parties and were included in the booklet for people to read. In addition, the following comments were made:

Planning

There hasn't been much activity by the planning group this year. We are still waiting for SDC & WDC to produce the new local plan so that the Harbury NDP can be updated. The district councils are working together to produce the new plan but all the well -connected villages with rail stations etc. are situated in the green belt with the result that most of the proposed development is in the south of the district where there are very few connections. Harbury has already met its housing 'quota' under the existing plan.

Environment

The Swift Project was a notable achievement this year. The nesting boxes are now in situ and being used. The parish council will be planting some more mature trees during next winter in partnership with WCC. A resident raised the problem of cars parking on the greens which is preventing the mowing from being carried out properly. Cllr Lockley suggested this was discussed at the next PC meeting.

Properties

The cemetery hedge has been replaced with a new fence. We will look to soften the fencing with new planting next year. There has been no new play equipment this year but regular inspections and maintenance are being carried out as usual. The allotment well-being project is making progress. The PC asked if Biffa could empty the public litter bins more frequently than once a week but has been told this is not possible. New benches have been installed on the playing field at Deppers Bridge. The boundary wall at the play area in Manor Orchard has recently been re-built.

Finance & General Purposes

There was an increase in the precept for this current year because of the general high rise in inflation, e.g. the cost of electricity for the streetlights has doubled, but the increase was still below the inflation rate. David Bristow (HEI) asked whether it would cost less, and be better for the environment, if the streetlights were switched off a night. The parish council had looked into this some years ago and were advised at that time, that it wouldn't make any substantial difference to the cost. However, this could be reviewed.

Climate

This group works alongside HEI and Harbury Environmental Group as well as Harbury Library and Harbury Future Energy. The current focus is the Eco-Fair at this year's carnival. Last year they had over 200 visitors to the marquee and carried out a survey of people's top concerns which resulted in the Energy Saving Day which was run by HEI on behalf of the parish council. The group is looking forward to another great year.

7. Reports from Village Organisations

Various organisations had submitted written reports. Additional comments were made as follows:

Harbury RFC

Chris Woodhams thanked the parish council for the grant used to buy new flags and bibs for the minis team.

Harbury Primary School

Lucy Bosley introduced herself as the new head teacher, having taken over at the beginning of this school year. She praised Harbury as a 'fantastic' village, and thanked the parish council for the grant funding for their Christmas project and the reading books as reading is so important. She explained the school had also been hit by high inflation with some bills rising by 30%. She invited anyone who is interested to visit the school pond which was renovated last year with a grant from the parish council. There are numerous newts.

Harbury Library

Richard Fowler said that they had just had their annual meeting with WCC and this had gone very well. Harbury Library is regularly held up as go to example for community run libraries.

8. County & District Councillors' Reports & Questions

WCC

County Cllr Chris Kettle has been our county councillor for 2 years now. Recently, most of his attention has been focussed on the problems caused by various contractors who are digging up the roads to install fibre broadband. Initially, this was thought to be a good thing as it will achieve good broadband speeds for rural areas but it has caused lots of problems for local people. If anyone experiences problems, they should email Cllr Kettle with the details.

The other major focus has been on the improvements to the Harbury Lane/Fosse Way junction. Cllr Kettle presented a petition to WCC on this dangerous junction as long ago as 2011/12. Finally, Sec 106 funding was secured via the GLH development and work eventually began at the end of 2022. The work is progressing, although it is slightly behind schedule at the moment because moving the underground utilities took longer than expected.

Cllr Kettle has a delegated budget of £35,000 for minor highways works so if there are any small scale projects that need funding, these could be considered. In addition, the county councillors grant fund of £8000 will run again this year and is available to community groups and parish councils.

Public rights of way are a contention in many villages. WCC is responsible for their maintenance but there is only 1 rights of way officer so he has a very difficult job. Volunteer footpath groups are a good idea if possible. A resident asked about possible improvements to the cycle way between the Fosse Way and Whitnash which is very muddy and has overhanging branches. Cllr Kettle continued the conversation with them after the meeting had closed.

SDC

District Cllr Susan Ostrander introduced herself. She was the successful Liberal Democrat candidate in the recent elections. She was born in the USA, has lived in Southam for 6 years and is a secondary school teacher. She is excited, delighted and daunted to become a councillor. She has a keen desire to work collaboratively. She sees herself as a rural person and hopes to represent different local issues at SDC. Her political views, as a Liberal Democrat, will not have any bearing on her actions as she seeks to represent local people. SDC has just held its annual meeting and councillors have been appointed to its various committees. She thanked former councillor, Jacqui Harris, for all her work over the last few years.

9. Any Other Business

- Mrs Thornley thanked Cllr Kettle for his continued pressure on WCC to improve the Harbury Lane/Fosse Way junction.

10. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Parish Council Chairman's Report

The parish council has had another busy year supporting village organisations and working to protect and improve the parish. We welcomed some new recruits to the council, but we are still one member short. This is perhaps a reflection of how busy people are and that people are retiring later in life, but it puts extra pressure on the remaining councillors and limits what we can do to some extent. The work is very rewarding, particularly so when a project comes to fruition. New initiatives need time to implement – the seasonal lights are a good example, something that the entire village really enjoys but there's a lot of planning that happens in the background beforehand. So if you have a project you'd like to see happen in Harbury then please consider joining the council!

There are a number of ongoing planning matters that will no doubt draw some attention. Two solar farms have planning permission on either side of the village, and the one on Middle Road / the Fosse will have a notable visual impact. There's no large scale housing proposed for the village, though we are being impacted by the higher traffic generated by the Upper Lighthorne development. We have been consulted on the housing strategy for South Warwickshire and while it is inevitable that there will be more housing at some point, at the moment it doesn't seem imminent. And the lack of sustainable transport links remains a significant stumbling block for large scale development in this part of the district. After a long delay the work at the crossroads on the Fosse should be completed by the time you are reading this, though HS2 related disruption will continue for several more years. The car park at the playing fields has recently been extended as part of the Future Energy project, and the installation of EV chargers is going to be part of that.

Fulfilling my role as chairman would be impossible without significant support from all my fellow councillors and of course the parish clerk. Thank you to all of them.

Cllr Tim Lockley MBE
Chairman of Harbury Parish Council

Properties Working Party

Allotments

The well-being allotment is thriving with additional raised beds having been provided. The acquisition on behalf of the community of the allotments in Hall Lane has progressed well. Security of tenure has been established and we are working with our contractor to improve access and clear unwanted vegetation. The condition of the wall in Hall Lane is to be assessed and repaired as needed. We have engaged with the allotment holders and are working together to enhance the provision.



Play Areas

Members of the working party continue to inspect the areas weekly. In addition, a thorough annual inspection was carried by a qualified independent inspector. No major concerns were identified and we are working through the recommendations made.

The playing fields suffered damage due to extreme weather with flooding and high water levels. Damage was also incurred during the village bonfire preparations and we will be working with GASS and our contractor to repair the surface as soon as conditions allow.

Car Park Extension

We have been concerned about parking issues in the vicinity of the playing fields particularly during sports and village hall events and a public consultation on the possible extension of the car park has been carried out. In addition, a small extension to the car park has recently taken place as part of the Future Energy project to compensate for those parking bays which will be installed with EV charging points. I would record my thanks to Paul Quinney and colleagues on the project team for their work on this.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee, Councillors Dominick, Knowles, Gard, Potter and Mulley for their help and support.

Cllr Keith Thompson

Chair of Harbury Parish Council Properties Working Party

Planning

Many thanks to Cllrs Knowles & Thompson for their work towards the planning working party over the past year.

We are still waiting on national level planning reforms, and it has been remarkably quiet too on the new combined South Warwickshire Local Plan comprising input from both Stratford District Council (SDC) and Warwick District Council (WDC).

Stratford District Council currently has a phenomenally healthy 14.55 year land supply and even Warwick District Council has 7.16 years of land supply. This removes a presumption of development (that often overrides planning legislation) and puts both authorities in a much stronger position to be able to ensure development is located suitably. But the overriding issue with WDC having so much of their district in the green belt, could still be detrimental to SDC areas once the planning position is merged.

As part of the parish council, all councillors are required to independently examine any planning application that we are formally consulted upon. We continue to aim to provide sound responses to these applications. Do please continue to contact us with any queries, concerns or information about any planning application in the Harbury parish, so that we might remain reflective of the views of our parishioners. You can also directly comment on any application online at <https://apps.stratford.gov.uk/eplanning>. We do read all sections of planning applications including these comments to create and align our responses.

We also try to keep an eye on any approved in progress development. Stratford District Council has an enforcement team, but it is often the people who live near a development that might see any non-permitted actions. Again, please contact us if you have any queries, concerns or information.

Cllr Samantha Allen
Chair of Planning Working Party

Finance & General Purposes Working Party

I would like to thank our clerk Alison Biddle for her efforts and help over the past year - always making our roles significantly easier! I'd also like to add recognition for the contributions and commitment of my fellow working party co-councillors - Cllrs Dominick, Lockley, Potter and Thompson.

We have increased the parish precept for the new financial year 2024/25 from £128,900 to £138,886 resulting in a 7.63% increase in the band D rate. We continue see increased costs in most areas of our spending.

Beyond funding our normal responsibilities such as village maintenance, we also nominally allocated funds to the following areas:

- £5,000 for the community grants budget.
- £10,000 towards the new cemetery project to provide burial facilities.
- £14,500 for the street lighting budget, including electricity and repairs.
- £5,000 for works at our new Hall Lane allotments.
- £7,500 towards a skate park and BMX track replacement/upgrade project.
- £4,000 towards small items – benches and seasonal light replacements.
- £1,000 towards climate working party costs.
- £3,200 for councillors allowances (7 elected Councillors)
- £1,200 to support the Harbury Local Market raising funds for local groups.

We have allocated more than usual towards our street light budget this year. Electricity is a considerable proportion but the majority is for repairs and replacements. As Harbury Parish Council are in the slightly unusual position of owning our streetlights (other areas have lights owned and maintained by Warwickshire County Council), we also inherit all risks and costs associated with this. Over the past few years we have had damage to several lighting columns, which has not been reported or witnessed. It may seem like a victimless crime but, when it costs over £1000 per column to replace, this money has to be met from the precept if we have no one to recharge these costs to. Thankfully we have a 'low light village' with less streetlights than more urban areas, to reflect our rural position.

One of our bigger purchases during the past year has been the acquisition of the allotments on Hall Lane. We have always managed the allotments adjacent to Pineham Farm, accessed from South Parade, and over the next few years hope to bring the Hall Lane plots in alignment with these. The purchase of the Hall Lane site was a simple choice for us. We wanted to protect this central village location, and by continuing to have allotments at this site, we can safeguard this site in perpetuity. It was the original walled kitchen garden for Harbury Hall, so cultivation of this land has some history!

Our website www.harbury-pc.gov.uk is the best way of finding out any information about the council. We have an office at the Bull Ring Business Centre in Church Terrace and our clerk is here four mornings a week, Monday – Thursday.

Cllr Samantha Allen
Chair of Finance & General Purposes Working Party

Environment Working Party

Last autumn the parish council worked in co-operation with Warwickshire County Council to plan and conduct tree planting in and around the village, we now have some well-established trees on the green in Frances Road and at the junction of Bush Heath Lane and Bush Heath Road.



Those of you who make use of the many field paths on the outskirts of the village may have noticed some new gates to replace the old stiles, some of which were worse for wear. We are continuing to work with our contractor and the landowners to ensure the replacements are completed to their satisfaction. These new gates will improve access for all.



Both of these activities would not have been possible except for the hard work of the parish clerk, Alison Biddle, who is in constant contact with all stakeholders to ensure things happen.

Looking to the immediate future, the Environment Working Party will be conducting surveys over the spring and summer to ensure footpaths around the village are not obscured by overgrown plants and trees.

Cllr Alex Potter
Chair of Environment Working Party

Harbury Seasonal Lights

It has been another fantastic year for the seasonal lights and we were again blessed with many volunteers across the village. Our very own “Sad Dad’s” team were joined by 29 volunteers, 5 of our parish councillors and our District Councillor Susan Ostrander. We managed 130 hours between us on installation day, the weather was kind although cold at -3c and spirits were high.

Together we installed 675 metres of festoon lights and 72 stars, wreathes and spheres. We enjoyed a well-earned tea/coffee break, and bacon/sausage sandwiches kept us all going. Our thanks to The Shakespeare Inn for providing these for us.

Some of our spheres are in trees that are rather high up and we couldn’t install them without a cherry picker! Our thanks to Hiresafe for supporting us with this and donating their time and equipment. Two months later it was time to take them down, and we all reconvened again to safely pack them away.

We receive such wonderful feedback from our community each year and we are very happy to continue to brighten the dark nights. Our final thank you must go to all those powering the lights, we really could not do it without you!

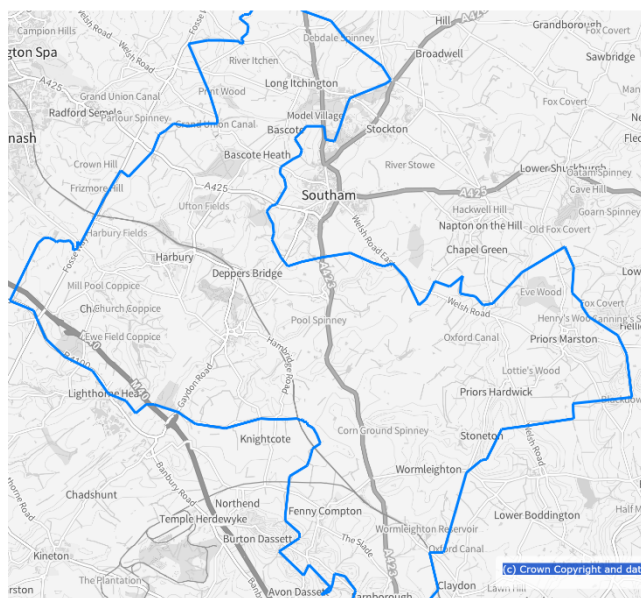
We look forward to seeing you all again in November.

Cllr Julie Balch
Seasonal Lights Working Party

County Councillor Report



The Feldon Division covers an area stretching from Long Itchington, north of Southam, through Ufton, Harbury, Chesterton, Bishop's Itchington, Ladbroke, Fenny Compton, Farnborough, Wormleighton, Priors Hardwick and Priors Marston and covers some 53 square miles (138 sq kms) and has over 9,000 adult residents.



There have, unsurprisingly, been a number of themes during the year that have been of concern to residents across the Division with probably the biggest issue being HS2 and the impact of its construction on residents, businesses and the road network across the Division.

In particular the closing of roads, with poor diversion route opportunities, has been particularly frustrating, along with some lorries not sticking to agreed access routes. Further the failure to control injurious weeds, particularly ragwort, has caused considerable concern to those with livestock businesses or equine yards close to land occupied by HS2.

Outside of HS2, the following have been of concern to residents:

- The volume and speed of traffic in villages and on our rural highways;
- The impact of new housing and the construction, and then residential, traffic from those sites on existing communities and transport infrastructure;
- It has been an unprecedented wet winter which has inundated roads and caused flooding in places where flooding had never been seen before. The flood risk management team at WCC has been looking at a number of sites along with the jetting teams who have been cleaning gullies across both Feldon and the wider Warwickshire road network;
- In addition the wet weather, along with some early frosts, also led to a significant number of potholes across the entire WCC road network. There has also been concern about the state of roads immediately past the county boundaries but regrettably WCC has no jurisdiction over roads in other counties;
- The proposed reorganisation of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and the impact of that on rural communities away from the major urban centres;
- The location and use of a number of former quarries across the District and the licensing of activities on those sites;
- The adequacy of affordable housing provision;
- Changes to school admissions numbers; and
- The care of those more vulnerable members of our community

Regrettably, whilst WCC would like to be able to have the funding to address every resident's concerns, the budget pressures on the county council mean that it does have to prioritise in some areas.

The overall expenditure budget for 24-25 is £628 million which, less central Government grants of £241 million, leaves £387 million to be funded by taxpayers through council tax. Certain of the services provided are demand led, one of which, social care and support is the biggest item of expenditure within the council's budget costing £225 million, being 58% of the overall net budget. So, for example, not every pothole can be filled on every road and the council does not have the resources to introduce road safety measures in every village that wants them.

On the upside, the long awaited Harbury Lane /Fosse Way crossroads improvements, a long term accident blackspot, will be completed by the end of this month. Also by Christmas, the sails on the Chesterton Windmill will have been reinstated and repairs made to the fabric of this listed monument.

On a personal note, I was elected chairman of the county council for the year 23-24 which has involved commitments across the entire county and in an executive role, I chair the Warwickshire Local Government Pension Scheme investment committee. The scheme looks after the pensions of some 57,000 LGPS members with some £2.9 billion of assets.

County Cllr Christopher Kettle

Chair of Warwickshire County Council & ward councillor for Harbury

Reports from Village Groups & Organisations

Harbury Energy Initiative

It was the resignation in her voice that I found most affecting. The chief executive of the Royal Meteorological Society was speaking on Radio 4 about 2023 being the world's hottest year on record. Not only was it the hottest year over the globe, but it was just a few hundredths of a degree below the 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels of the Paris

Agreement. The climate is variable, of course, so as El Niño gives way to La Niña, we can expect temperatures to shade downwards to some extent. However they are unlikely to drop a great deal as the variations are sitting on an underlying average of around 1.25 degrees above pre-industrial levels, so we are close to breaking the 1.5 degree barrier on a permanent basis. This does not mean we lose hope. The whole point of understanding the situation is to decide what action we should take - and every 0.1 degree of warming we avoid will mean less global damage.

The effect of climate news on children was brought home to us when we received an invitation to talk to the Year 3 class at Harbury School. They had been doing a project on "Eco Warriors" and were worried that not enough was being done about climate change. Kate Fowler, their class teacher, asked for a brief talk from HEI to show that, yes, lots of people are concerned and are



doing things. HEI and Harbury Environmental Group joined forces, and after a quick introduction we ran six different small group activities - including demonstrating miniature solar panels, a gravity light, cavity wall and internal wall insulation, consumption meters and LED bulbs, a discussion group, and Napton Environmental Action Team showed their thermal camera. Bob Sherman also demonstrated his electric car. The highlight for us, of course, was the children - bright, interested and asking many intelligent questions. Thank you Harbury School.

In June, at Harbury Carnival, HEI contributed to the second Eco-Fair organised by the Parish Council Climate Emergency working party. We spent some considerable time revamping our display boards for this event, taking the opportunity to include words and pictures to illustrate the different insulation and other energy saving techniques we had heard about at the event we ran on behalf of the parish council in March 2023. We did wonder about the wisdom of spending so long creating the display when it is the conversations that are more important, but the work proved worthwhile as the display has subsequently been taken to Low Carbon Warwickshire Network (LCWN) and other events in several other villages.

It became clear at the house energy saving event that we ran on behalf of the parish council in March 2023, that many villagers would like to discover where their energy and money escapes from their buildings. We have therefore set up a joint project with Napton Environmental Action Team to develop and share expertise on using thermal imaging cameras in our houses and community buildings. The cameras require very particular weather conditions to make them useful, so we decided that each village needs its own camera. Napton has won funding for its camera, but as yet Harbury has not. We will keep trying.

We have continued to monitor the performance of the school solar panels and are delighted to say that they are still working well. It is obvious that generation is going to be higher in the summer than the winter, but even so it was a surprise to see average generation of over 60kWh each day in June dropping to around 4 units a day in December.

The school is keen to allow the children to read the generation data - and learn some science and maths. This is not possible at the moment, because the meter is in the boiler house. We think it should be possible either to run a cable to a display panel as at the village hall, or to install equipment to collect data remotely over the internet. It has been very difficult to find a company that will quote for this work, so we are only just now becoming able to bid for funds.

As I reported last year, we have a wide range of environmental and other groups in the village. These include the Parish Council Climate Emergency working party, Harbury Environmental Group and the Bike Workshop and Repair Cafe, Harbury Future Energy (HFE) and the Low Carbon Warwickshire Network (LCWN). The scouts, the library and the church have also taken environmental issues on board. Because many HEI members are committed to several of these village and other organisations, the amount of activity that is specifically led by HEI has been reduced. As a result, we are now considering whether HEI and HFE should recombine. We would not, of course, take this action without full consultation, including with the parish council.

David Bristow
Chair of HEI

Harbury Village Library & Biblio's Cafe

Harbury Community Library and Biblio's Café have continued to flourish with numbers of users returning to pre-Covid levels. However there have been challenges. The steep rise in gas and electricity prices meant an extra £3000 in expenditure. However, this did not prevent us becoming a designated warm space with a welcome to anyone who wanted to sit for a while during library opening hours. An additional problem was caused by the boiler breaking down but thanks to the efforts of Ed Wilson we did not have to close. Temporary heaters were hired and the boiler was eventually repaired by the manufacturers. This was of course expensive and it is imperative that the boiler is replaced with a sustainable alternative. Ed Wilson is leading the work on this; schemes have been prepared and grants are being sought and it is hoped that the first phase will commence this year.



Richard Fowler who led the library for several years including through the challenging Covid period was forced to retire due to ill health. He not only worked hard for Harbury Library but was very involved in community libraries nationally which was recognised by the award of the BEM in the New Year Honours List. We were very fortunate that Janice Montague, a previous library leader, stepped in at short notice until we could find a replacement for Richard. I am delighted to say that Liz Ball and Michael Luntley are now sharing the role and have made an excellent start.

After nine years as chairman of the steering committee I retired at the recent AGM. I am delighted that Kay Garvey was elected as the new chairman and I am confident that with the support of our wonderful volunteers Harbury Library is in good hands.

Sharon Hancock
Chair of Harbury Village Library

Harbury Local Market

This year we have seen the market continue to be popular. The team: Karena, Steve, Jane & Mandy continue to be pro-active introducing new traders selling a variety of art, craft and food products. The continued support received from the parish council, covering the costs of hiring the village hall, makes a huge difference as we are able to pass on to the charity/community group all of monies raised on the day.



Members of Harbury Tennis Club receive £529 raised at the market

The monthly market is popular with villagers who know that the market is usually on the last Saturday of each month. Thanks to the Co-op for donating towards the cost of producing the flyers that were kindly delivered for us by the Harbury and Ladbroke News at the beginning of the year. The parish council has also covered the cost of producing the flag to advertise that the market is open.

During the last year since April 2023, we have raised £5,296 for local charities/community groups. The charities we supported this year were Harbury Rugby Club, Upper Lighthorne Junior Football Club, St Giles Church, Chesterton, Harbury Environmental Group, Harbury Junior Football Club, Harbury Senior Citizens, Harbury Tennis Club and Harbury Pre School.

We are looking forward to another successful year with the continued support from the parish council whom we would like to thank.

Steve Ekins & Team
Harbury Local Market

Harbury Village Show

The 2023 village show went very well. There were 67 adult entrants, and 17 children, contributing to a total of 424 entries!

The village show exists purely to display the talents and skills of people in the village and to that end we try to be accessible to all and not make a profit.

There are over one hundred entry classes to enable people of all ages and capabilities to showcase what they can do.



The village show committee is extremely grateful to the parish council for the financial aid they give to this event. Although we hold various fund-raising activities throughout the year, the grant from the parish council to cover the cost of hiring the village hall is a huge help.

Gordon Robbins
Harbury Show Committee

Harbury Twinning Association

Probably the most important event during the past year was when many of our members visited Samois-sur Seine at the end of May for our first exchange meeting since before the pandemic.

On arrival at the very picturesque village, we were greeted by the mayor with a drink and a finger buffet. What was nice to note was that this is the twenty fifth year that our villages have been twinned.



The next day we were given a guided tour of the nearby town of Gez-sur-Loing which is noted for the number of famous artists that lived and worked there. The town has a very attractive river scene with a superb bridge which featured in many of the artists paintings. It is also where Robert-Louis Stevenson lived and worked for a while.



What was most important for us all was to renew good friendships and also to make new friends. It was a fantastic weekend; the weather was good and the hospitality brilliant.

During last year we held many events here in Harbury which included a celebration of Bastille Day, a Christmas party and the Fete de Rois, or the Twelfth Night.

We are an active association and enjoy a number of activities. One of the favourite events is the boules or pétanque afternoon which last year was in October. During a week of persistent rain, we were fortunate that the afternoon of the game, although cold, was bright and sunny. A glass of Prosecco helped the game along and afterwards we enjoyed a buffet and a chat amongst friends.



In November, we held our annual general meeting followed by cheese and wine and a French film; Paris. During the meeting we explored ways of making the association more visible to the village and as always everyone is welcome to join in with us. Next month it is Harbury's turn to welcome our friends from Samois-sur-Seine to our village.

Ron Temple
Harbury Twinning Association

Harbury Heritage Group

Since our last report in March 2023:

- In May we helped the school by supplying information and a display on how Harbury celebrated the past coronations.
- In June we ran a stall at the carnival (jointly with the Harbury Society).
- In July we opened up the heritage centre to visitors on the open gardens weekend. We also hosted a group of visitors from the Brinklow, Bretford and Wolston History Society, giving them a tour of the village and providing afternoon tea.
- In August we welcomed a student who did some work experience with us.
- In September we gave a presentation on Harbury Windmill to the Whitnash History Society. We also held our annual 'Treasure Hunt' raising over £130. We had a visit from Harbury W.I. who came to look at 'their' archives.
- In October, for our AGM, we updated our constitution and supplied information for the school's harvest festival service.
- We joined the Friends of the Warwick Records Office and renewed our subscription to the British Association for Local History which also included our public liability insurance.

- We bought a scanner to scan and enhance old photographs (with the generous donations from the Harbury WI and the Harbury PC).
- Since November we have been backing up our collection by digitising our documents etc. This is ongoing.
- In December / January we digitised the 1921 Harbury Census and made it available to search on our PCs. Also, in December we gave a presentation to Year 4 on the 'Anglo-Saxons in Harbury'.
- In January we had a new external door fitted to the centre. (Thanks again to the **Harbury PC** and the school who provide most of the funding for this).
- In January we gave school group Year 1 a 'village tour' to help them with their topic.
- In February we held a fund-raising coffee morning at the Tom Hauley Room and made £200.
- In March we gave a presentation to the 'Friends of Harbury' on 'Harbury's Schools.'
- Also, in March we gave a presentation to The Harbury Society on Harbury Windmill.

We continue to add to the collection of documents, photographs etc. We have promoted our 'Village Tours' (4 x booked in for this Summer to date). We regularly submit an article to the Harbury and Ladbroke News magazine on an interesting topic. We up-date our website and Facebook page recording comments from local people to add to the archives. Open Days, (twice a month), continue to attract a trickle of visitors. We hold termly liaison meetings with the head teacher of the school and the staff are 'using us' for their topics when we can help.

Bill Timson
Chairman, Harbury Heritage Group

Harbury e-Wheels

After the years of Covid restrictions we have still not quite returned to 2019 levels of demand but this, our eighth, year has been slightly busier than the previous one.



We remain in a good financial position with sufficient funds for at least twelve months ahead. We have once again, therefore, not sought any financial support from Harbury Parish Council. This healthy bank balance is due in large part to another year of excellent fund-raising events organised by Peter Walshe, with another donation from the Warwickshire Freemasons in 2023. We also received grant funding twice from Benefact Movement for Good and one from Postcode Local Trust. Successful fund-raising events included the open gardens weekend, and murder mystery evening, Life on the Light Side.

Our cars, although now slipping into early middle age, have continued to work fine, regularly serviced by EZOO to keep them in good order. Nic Burt managed to secure a welcome reduction worth nearly £1000 a year in our rental payments and another significant and unexpected reduction in our insurance costs. Our current contract with EZOO ends at the beginning of October 2025 at which time we will need to replace the cars.

Our volunteer workforce has risen slightly with the addition of three new drivers, which has enabled us to more than replace retiring volunteers. In April we sought to recruit a few more as we never

seem to have quite enough. Two more trustees were appointed to the board, Andrew Cook and Michael Luntley, bringing the total to 9. During the year we carried out around 500 journeys, including over 50 delivering groceries to the food bank hub in Kineton. The school amassed large amounts of donations with their countdown to Christmas and we helped them to ensure this generous support reached the food bank.

Harbury Future Energy

Last year I began to report on the progress of the Harbury Future Energy (HFE) project. This project aims to develop a charging station behind the village hall, part powered by renewables. The project was originally over several years run at arm's length from e-Wheels by a small, delegated volunteer team of Philip Mayer, Peter Walshe, Hugh Tottle and Bob Sherman but has now become a Warwickshire County Council project working with the newly formed Harbury Future Energy CIC (Community Interest Company), which is chaired by Paul Quinney. This means that Harbury e-Wheels is no longer involved even at arm's length.

Bob Sherman FRSA BEM
Chair, Harbury e-Wheels

Harbury Society

Once again, a full and varied programme of talks and outings was enjoyed by Harbury Society members during the year. Two significant events which took place were the visit to the manor house in Park Lane in August and a party at Harbury Windmill in November. Both of these were to celebrate the formation of the society 50 years ago and enjoyed immensely by all who attended. Also, a stall was jointly shared by the society and the Harbury Heritage Group at the Harbury Carnival in June to, again, highlight the anniversary.

'Mapping the Oceans' was the title of the talk in April which revealed some of the hidden treasures below the waves. After outings to Wolfhampcote in May and to Lighthorne in July to learn of their respective histories, it was back inside in September to hear Peter Walshe's very entertaining presentation about his acting career. The speaker booked for October was unable to attend but, fortunately, Michael Luntley stepped into the breach and shone a fascinating light on a little-known aspect of Warwickshire history concerning the migration of agricultural workers to Brazil in the 19th century.

In January 2024, a meal and social evening was enjoyed by several society members at The Crown in Harbury. 'Amazing Bats' was the title of the talk given in February by Tricia Scott, Chair of the Warwickshire Bat Conservation Trust which helped to dispel some of the myths and 'bad press' these creatures attract. In March, Bill Timson, Chair of the Harbury Heritage Group, once again gave a very informative and amusing presentation, this time about the history of Harbury Windmill.

Two more Harbury Society Heritage Medals were awarded during the year. These were to Brendan and Fran Watts for their part in the ongoing preservation and conservation of the manor house and to Jeremy Atkins for commissioning the restoration of Harbury Windmill.



Ed Wilson (left), Chair of the Harbury Society, presenting a Harbury Heritage Medal and Certificate to Jeremy Atkins, owner of Harbury Windmill, at the Harbury Society's 50th Anniversary party.

Sue Turner
Secretary, Harbury Society

Harbury Swift Village Project



Swifts were once very common in Harbury, but, as in other parts of the UK, over the last 20 years, there has been a shocking 50% decline in their numbers. One of the causes of their decline is the loss of their traditional nest sites, due to renovation or demolition of older buildings.

In 2022, Harbury Parish Councillors agreed to give practical aid for swift conservation through their generous funding of forty bespoke swift nesting boxes. Most of the boxes were designed and constructed by local craftsman Craig Knowles, with a further ten boxes being made by enthusiasts from the Bishop's Itchington Men's Shed. With logistical and financial support from the Parish Council, installation of these boxes was successfully completed in April 2023 by a combination of Chris Beaton and his ladders and Richard Linforth and his 'cherry-picker'. Harbury Parish Council also funded the installation of a further ten boxes, which residents had purchased themselves to go alongside the Harbury Parish Council funded boxes, in an effort to create a 'colony-effect' for the swifts.

The Harbury Swift Village project received some excellent publicity during May and June 2023, with articles in the Courier, District Advertiser, Warwick & Leamington Observer and Country Life magazine. The project was also promoted alongside the Harbury Environmental Group at the carnival in June and through a monthly article in the Harbury and Ladbroke News.

The first swifts to arrive back in Harbury were spotted high in the sky over Bush Heath Lane on 2 May 2023, two days earlier than their arrival the previous year. Despite this early show, Harbury swifts were slow to return in any numbers. This lack of returners was not limited to our village, with widespread reports of fewer swifts in 2023 from members of the UK-wide Swift Local Network group. Throughout the end of May and into the start of June the prolonged, cold northerly wind had an impact on returning swifts. Warmer weather improves the nesting success of swifts in any given year.



Harbury Swift Village project was created to help the long-term recovery of these incredible birds and we should expect it to take a while for the swifts to locate the new homes. Although no one reported swifts nesting in the new boxes in 2023, swifts were seen inspecting some of them. It is not an easy task to get swifts to nest in new locations straight away because young swifts breeding for the first time find potential nest sites by following adult swifts that are already breeding. Most Harbury swift action was seen around boxes on houses where the owners were playing recorded swift calls, presumably because the young prospecting birds thought there were already breeding swifts present.

A few of the swift boxes were used by house sparrows. House sparrows, like swifts, are on the Red List of endangered species and also need protecting. Swifts and house sparrows can time-share and are able to fledge young out the same nest box in a single year, one after the other, so there should not be concern about the sparrows using the swift boxes.

Harbury Swift Village project has inspired residents of Lighthorne and Upper Lighthorne to set up their own project to erect swift boxes in their villages. Harbury Parish Council has been the gold standard in the Lighthorne residents' request for support from their own Parish Council.

Amanda Randall
Harbury Swift Village Project



To love, learn and grow together.

‘Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.’

1 John 3:18



Harbury Church of England Primary School has been part of the Arden Forest MAT for 18 months now, with myself serving as headteacher. There have been many changes since September 2022 and we are just starting to see the impact of these.

We use the Read Write Inc Phonic Scheme (RWI). This included a very generous grant from the parish council which led to us being able to match our reading books, which we send home, perfectly to the phonics books that we use within school. The whole staff have had phonics training and are regularly observed to ensure that the phonics sessions are consistent and high quality. The phonics results last year 2022-2023 were just below the national average. To ensure that we are monitoring progress in phonics we have implemented



a rigorous assessment system. This includes 6 weekly assessments for KS1 pupils to ensure that they are in the correct phonic group and that we can check in with pupils who are below where they should be.

Christian Distinctiveness

Over the past year and half we have re-established links with All Saints Church. Rev Andy Batchelor comes into school weekly to lead worship and we make regular visits to the church. We also have Open The Book worship which is led by volunteers from All Saints Church. Each year group has visited the church on multiple occasions linked to their RE topics. Additionally, at Christmas time we set up advent stations in church and around the school. We celebrate Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the end of year service at All Saints Church. We invite all parents and families to these services and they are well received.

We attended the ALIVE festival last summer which was organised by the Coventry Diocese. The ALIVE festival included an enormous picnic and worship songs for 9000 KS2 children all from Church of England schools in Coventry Diocese. It was a special occasion which all children who attended enjoyed.

Alongside our Christian distinctiveness we ensure that the pupils are introduced to the other world faiths and beliefs. We've had a visit from an imam from the Muslim faith and the year 1 pupils visit the Sikh temple in Leamington Spa.

Thrive

We are now a Thrive school and have two trained Thrive practitioners. The Thrive Approach is a dynamic, developmental, trauma-informed approach to meeting the emotional and social developmental needs of all children and young people. It is informed by recent developments in neuroscientific research and is underpinned by a theoretical base in child development theory, attachment theory and research into creativity, play and the arts.

Fundamental to the approach is the finding from neuroscientific research that children's brains develop in response to their experiences in relationships. This means that if we want to support optimal development in children, we need to understand their specific social and emotional needs at each age and then provide them with the right set of experiences and relationships to meet those needs. We have a regular Thrive breakfast on Wednesday mornings, group Thrive sessions and 1-1 Thrive sessions. We are finding that more pupils are needing support with their emotional wellbeing. All the schools in the Arden Forest MAT are Thrive Schools.

We are also grateful to the parish council for contributing towards an outside space to promote wellbeing and reading. This is in the planning stage and we are hopeful that this space will be available soon.

Academic Year 2024- 25

We are delighted that we have a full cohort of 30 pupils for this coming September 2024.

It has been my privilege to lead our dedicated team through a period of significant change and improvement. While we have implemented many changes to our educational framework and operational processes since September 2022, it is important to acknowledge that the impact of these efforts may not be fully reflected in our most recent SATs results. Standardised testing outcomes often reflect a combination of factors, including historical trends and student cohorts. However, despite any immediate fluctuations in assessment outcomes, I am confident that the groundwork laid during the past eighteen months will see improved results and tangible benefits in the long term, contributing to the wellbeing, development and academic success of all our students now and in years to come.

Lucy Bosley

Head Teacher, Harbury CE Primary School

Parish Council Attendance Record May 2023 to April 2024

The last ordinary election took place in May 2023 at which 7 councillors were elected, leaving 3 vacant seats. Two more councillors have since been co-opted; Cllr Kate Gard in September 2023 and Cllr Ed Mulley in January 2024. There is still 1 vacant seat. The council held 11 meetings in total during the year, including the annual meeting of the council and one extraordinary meeting. A total of 53 members of the public attended during the year.

Name of Councillor	Number Attended	Percentage Attended
Cllr Tim Lockley, Chairman	11/11	100%
Cllr Julie Balch, Vice-chair	10/11	91%
Cllr Sam Allen	10/11	91%
Cllr Jess Dominick	8/11	73%
Cllr Kate Gard (co-opted Sept 2023)	7/7	100%
Cllr Alan Knowles	10/11	91%
Cllr Ed Mulley (co-opted Jan 2024)	4/4	100%
Cllr Alex Potter	8/11	73%
Cllr Keith Thompson	10/11	91%

Parish Council Working Parties

Planning: Cllr Allen (chair), Cllr Thompson, Cllr Knowles

Environment: Cllr Potter (chair), Cllr Dominick, Cllr Allen, Cllr Gard, Cllr Mulley

Properties: Cllr Thompson (chair), Cllr Dominick, Cllr Knowles, Cllr Potter, Cllr Gard, Cllr Mulley

Finance & General Purposes: Cllr Allen (chair), Cllr Dominick, Cllr Potter, Cllr Thompson, Cllr Lockley

Climate: Cllr Dominick (chair), Cllr Balch, Cllr Gard

Seasonal Lights: Cllr Allen, Cllr Balch, Cllr Lockley

Staffing: Cllr Balch (chair), Cllr Lockley, Cllr Thompson



Harbury Parish Council Financial Report 2024

The following is an extract from the financial report (unaudited) which will shortly be available on our website. The report is a supplement to the council's formal statement of accounts which is contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Statement 2023/24 (subject to audit) which will also be published on our website in due course.

Year Ended 31/03/23		Income & Expenditure		Year Ended 31/03/24
		GENERAL PARISH FUND		
£	Income			£
119,677.00	Precept			128,900.00
1,530.63	Interest received - deposit accounts			4,216.88
37.02	Interest received - Tennis & Netball Courts Fund			381.30
1,274.83	Allotment rents			1,194.56
2,870.00	Cemetery fees			1,730.00
215.00	Playing field hire			230.00
34.29	Wayleave			34.29
1,159.73	Grass verge contribution - SDC			1,276.86
1,000.00	Grant funding			46,000.00
1,674.38	Sec 106 & CIL			748.91
3,736.26	Sports clubs conts to Tennis & Netball Courts Fund			3,922.74
1,132.11	Misc receipts			50,900.95
134,341.25	TOTAL INCOME			239,536.49
	Expenditure			
39,200.99	Admininstration & salaries			47,164.82
325.00	Training			417.00
1,509.32	Office equipment			183.92
4,809.32	Parish office			5,766.09
-	New Tree Planting			1,230.00
8,919.82	Grants			14,089.00
887.58	Platinum Jubilee			-
-	Neighbourhood Plan			-
	Running costs:			
1,418.75	Allotments			9,365.00
10,260.54	Cemetery			7,540.98
8,850.69	Open spaces			11,469.54
22,268.18	Playing fields & car park			41,933.08
2,480.00	Tennis & netball court works			12,645.00
1,892.40	Non-estate roads			1,930.20
8,122.39	Street lights			12,358.23
378.82	Climate			40.00
8,710.36	Purchase of village assets / village improvements			10,786.52
2,450.00	Councillors allowances			2,675.15
122,484.16	TOTAL EXPENDITURE			179,594.53

6. Grants Paid						
Payee	Nature of Payment				£	
Harbury Show	Village hall hire				385.00	
Harbury Heritage Group	Scanner				419.00	
Harbury Heritage Group	New door				225.00	
Harbury Local Market	Village hall hire				1,302.00	
Harbury Local Market	Advertising flag				155.00	
Harbury Juniors FC	Additional training costs				1,300.00	
Harbury School PTA	New outdoor space				2,000.00	(net)
Harbury Library	T/fer of reserve for new heating system				8,303.00	
					-	
	Total				14,089.00	

N.B. A donation of £100 was also made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

7. <u>Grants & Donations Received</u>						
From whom received			Nature of payment			£
Eastfields Solar Farm			Ex gratia community benefit			50,000.00
SDC (UK Shared Prosperity Fun			Car park extension (Harbury Future Energy,			46,000.00
						96,000.00
8. <u>Sec 106 & CIL Funds Received</u>						
From whom received			Nature of payment			£
SDC			CIL			748.91
						-
					Total	748.91

Funds Statement					
Year Ended 31.03.2023				Year Ended 31.03.2024	
£		General Fund		£	
131,713.08		Balance at 1 April		121,712.62	
- 10,000.46		Add surplus/less deficit for year		3,078.98	
121,712.62		Balance at 31 March		124,791.60	
		Tennis & Netball Courts Fund			
40,042.91		Balance at 1 April		43,209.93	
5,610.00		Add payment into account		5,890.00	
37.02		Add interest for year		381.30	
- 2,480.00		Less payment out of account		- 12,645.00	
43,209.93		Balance at 31 March		36,836.23	
		Library Fund			
8,303.00		Balance at 1 April		8,303.00	
		T/fer to library		- 8,303.00	
8,303.00		Balance at 31 March		-	
		New Cemetery Fund			
47,256.00		Balance at 1 April		57,256.00	
10,000.00		Add t/fer from general fund		10,000.00	
57,256.00		Balance at 31 March		67,256.00	
		Sec 106 & CIL			
-		Balance at 1 April		-	
1,674.38		Add new CIL receipt		748.91	
- 1,674.38		Less expenditure		-	
-		Balance at 31 March		748.91	
		Office Refurbishment			
2,772.00		Balance at 1 April		1,462.53	
-		Add t/fer from general fund		-	
- 1,309.47		Less expenditure		-	
1,462.53		Balance at 31 March		1,462.53	
		BMX & Skate Park Fund			
-		Balance at 1 April		10,000.00	
10,000.00		Add t/fer from general fund		5,000.00	
10,000.00		Balance at 31 March		15,000.00	
		Eastfields Solar Community Fund			
-		Balance at 1 April		-	
-		Add receipt		50,000.00	
-		Less expenditure		- 7,420.00	
-		Balance at 31 March		42,580.00	
		Future Energy Project			
-		Balance at 1 April		-	
-		Add UKSPF grant		46,000.00	
-		Less expenditure		- 32,789.23	
-		Balance at 31 March		13,210.77	
241,944.08		Total Net Assets		301,886.04	

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2024							
Year ended 31.03.2023				Year ended 31.03.2024			
£			Current Assets	£			
279.53			Payments in advance	1,293.66			
932.10			VAT Debtor	6,783.03			
110.00			Other debtors	-			
-			Cash with clerk to the council	-			
241,265.40			Cash at bank	295,462.67			
242,587.03				303,539.36			
			Less current liabilities				
- 642.95			Creditors & receipts in advance	- 1,653.32			
241,944.08			Total Net Assets	301,886.04			
			Represented by:				
131,713.08			General fund balance b/f	121,712.62			
- 10,000.46			Less deficit/plus surplus	3,078.98			
121,712.62			Balance 31 March	124,791.60			
			Specific funds:				
43,209.93			Tennis & Netball Courts Fund	36,836.23			
8,303.00			Library Maintenance Fund	-			
57,256.00			New Cemetery Fund	67,256.00			
-			Sec 106 & CIL	748.91			
1,462.53			Office refurbishment reserve	1,462.53			
10,000.00			BMX & Skate Park Fund	15,000.00			
-			Eastfields Solar Community Fund	42,580.00			
-			Future Energy Project	13,210.77			
241,944.08				301,886.04			

Contact Your Parish Council

Alison Biddle PSLCC, Clerk to the Council

Harbury Parish Council

2, Bull Ring Business Centre

Church Terrace

Harbury

Leamington Spa

CV33 9HL

Open 10.00am to 12.00pm Monday – Thursday

Tel 01926 614646 | clerk@harbury-pc.gov.uk | www.harbury-pc.gov.uk