

# **Harbury & Deppers Bridge**

## **Annual Parish Meeting**

### **2025**



Harbury & Deppers Bridge  
Annual Parish Meeting  
8 May 2025 at 7.45pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome by Cllr Tim Lockley, Chairman of Harbury Parish Council.
2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of the annual parish meeting held on 9 May 2024.
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 & Deppers Bridge Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Thursday, 9 May 2024 at 7.30pm**  
**Harbury Village Hall**

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

**Present**

13 electors of the parish including 6 parish councillors as follows:

Cllr Tim Lockley	Cllr Julie Balch
Cllr Sam Allen	Cllr Alan Knowles
Cllr Alex Potter	Cllr Ed Mulley
Liz Ball (Harbury Library)	Mike Ball
Stephen Friling	Bob Sherman (Harbury Future Energy
Sharon Hancock	Lucy Bosley (Head Teacher, Harbury Primary School)
John Holden (Harbury News)	

**In Attendance**

Alison Biddle, Clerk to the Council  
District Cllr Susan Ostrander

**1. Welcome**

Cllr Lockley welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

**2. Apologies**

Cllr Keith Thompson, Cllr Kate Gard, Mary Thompson, Simon Nicholson, Nicola Thompson

**3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25 May 2023.**

The minutes of the annual parish meeting held on Thursday, 25 May 2023 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. There are vacancies for parish councillors. The parish council achieves a lot but is currently two councillors down. People were urged to step up and help.

A new local plan (SWLP) is currently in the process of development which will shape and influence the local area but it will be several years before it is adopted. There is always going to be more development in this area but some constraints will apply. Transport links are poor which makes it difficult to have sustainable development here.

County Cllr Kettle had promised that the Harbury Lane/Fosse Way junction improvements would be completed by now but it still needs power connections. The carriageway on the far side of the junction has a broken edge. WCC Highways is aware of this and it is on their list of jobs to do.

## **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**

Cllr Allen had attended the SWLP briefing recently. They are now looking at preferred options for new development. The proposed development at Sharmer Farm Cottage is green and sustainable. Cllrs Allen and Mulley had visited and suggested they make contact with Harbury Energy Initiative regarding their plans.

### **Environment**

Several good sized trees have been planted and these are now becoming established. It is hoped that more can be planted. A couple of stiles on a popular field path have been replaced with gates which is a real improvement. A survey will be carried out around the village to identify overgrown hedges which are encroaching on pavements. Members of the public mentioned that drainage is also an issue.

### **Properties**

Cllr Thompson chairs the properties group but was not able to attend this evening. The council has purchased the Hall Lane allotments. A survey report of the boundary wall has just been received which has identified repairs works. These, along with other improvements, will cost a lot of money; it is a multi-year project. The surface on the recent extension to the playing fields car park is causing access problems but the council will ensure that this is resolved so that it is accessible to everyone.

### **Finance & General Purposes**

The council is continuing to save money towards a new cemetery. Streetlights are costing more; the electricity is much more expensive and the costs of replacement lanterns has also increased. LEDs are always used these days. It has been a bad year as there have been many faulty lights. It has taken a long time for repairs to be completed which has been exacerbated by delays with suppliers. The streetlights on the main spine road through Oakfields has recently been adopted.

### **Climate**

Cllr Jess Dominick was chair of this group but she has recently resigned from the council. It will not be possible to organise the Eco Fair this year. The council needs to think about the future of this group.

## **7. Reports from Village Organisations**

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

### **Harbury Energy Initiative**

This group is considering combining forces with Harbury Future Energy.

### **Harbury Primary School**

The school is maintaining its community links. It uses the library, the church and the heritage centre. They will be visiting the windmill too. They have a full quota for next year with 11 children on the waiting list. The school is very grateful for the donations from the parish council.

### **Harbury Library**

There has been a big change in personnel. Kay Garvey is now the chairperson. The committee is focussed on governance and aligning various roles. They are also clearing out space and working on providing a new heating system.

### **Twinning Association**

The membership is aging both here and in France but there is no interest from younger people. A group from France will be visiting in 2 weeks.

## **8. County & District Councillors' Reports & Questions**

### **WCC**

County Cllr Chris Kettle was not present.

### **SDC**

District Cllr Susan Ostrander reported that it had been a really busy year but she was really enjoying the role which is so diverse. She has never been a councillor before so this was her first year. She has been listening to residents, trying to work out how she can help and does a lot of liaison work. There is a lot of communicating; she attends 3 different parish councils, one parish meeting, and follows 6 different Facebook groups. She also meets with community groups e.g. the library and the heritage centre. She is a reserve member of the planning committee so attends site visits and has completed training on this. She also sits on the audit and standards committee. Some of the processes are very complex so communications and connecting with people is fundamental.

## **9. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **10. Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 8.15pm

## Parish Council Chairman's Report

There are important changes afoot in local government. By the end of the current parliament the government will have introduced single tier authorities across the England. This means that our current system of district and county councils will end, and currently it looks most likely that there will be a single countywide authority because only the entire county meets the guidance that unitary authorities should have at least half a million residents. It's possible that Stratford and Warwick will bid to have a separate south Warwickshire council, given the significant demographic and economic differences between the north and south of the country, but I consider that outcome unlikely. While there should be some overall cost savings by merging the administration of the existing councils, I doubt if we will see a reduction in bills given the squeeze on local government finances. Indeed, our bills might rise as we currently have the lowest district council tax in the county and it's more likely that the new rate will be 'harmonised' at the average (or perhaps nearer the top end).

Where this leaves the current discussion about the south Warwickshire local plan is unclear. This document, which is intended to set out the strategic direction for growth and housing up to 2050, is currently undergoing extensive consultation. Our response to it has been to urge the concentration of growth in locations that already have the necessary infrastructure to cope. This will mean looking again at the small settlements in the west of the district that have railway stations, even if some of them are in the green belt. The old strategy of putting ever more housing in the east of the district (especially Harbury, Long Itchington, Bishop's Itchington, Southam and Upper Lighthorne) without any more infrastructure is simply not sustainable as it just puts more and more pressure on the roads. I am not sure what will happen to this plan under a new unitary authority, and the government has stated that it will dilute or remove the currently power of local councils to block unsuitable or unsustainable development.

The silver lining to all this is that the role of the parish council, small-scale local government that is responsive to immediate local needs, will not be changing. While we will need to interact with the new structure above us, we will retain our power to raise a local precept that is spent in the parish, supporting local groups and ensuring Harbury remains a safe and pleasant place to live.

We have welcomed several new councillors this year. My thanks to those who have volunteered their time to join us, and I am sure we will all benefit from their insights and hard work. As always, I am hugely grateful to Alison for all her dedication and support as our clerk.

**Cllr Tim Lockley MBE**  
**Chairman of Harbury Parish Council**



## Properties Working Party

### Allotments

The well-being allotment is thriving with the additional raised beds in full use.

The acquisition on behalf of the community of the allotments in Hall Lane has progressed. Security of tenure has been established and we are working with our contractors to improve access and clear unwanted vegetation. The condition of the wall in Hall Lane has been assessed and discussions are progressing with the nominated contractor regarding repairs to the wall and access through the wall to the site. We have also liaised with Warwickshire County Council Highways to ensure that the work does not jeopardise or affect road safety

### Play Areas

Members of the working party continue to inspect the areas weekly. In addition, a thorough annual inspection was carried by a competent independent inspector. No major concerns were identified and we are reviewing carefully the recommendations made. It was pleasing the note that the very detailed report compiled by a specialist external contractor raised no significant concerns or serious issues.

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

Pat Summers, a former parish council colleague and friend, sadly passed away in 2023 and we have worked together with Pat's family to provide a commemorative bench in Pat's memory, located near the sports facilities. A picture accompanies the report



### 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 so are pleased that the car park has been extended to provide additional spaces as part of the Harbury Future Energy project which will require some spaces to be dedicated for electric vehicle charging points. In response to concerns raised by residents we also commissioned the installation of a central tarmac section to allow easier passage of wheelchair and buggies. The accompanying photograph shows the finished area.



We anticipate provision of electric car charging points at some stage. I would record my thanks to Paul Quinney and colleagues for their work on the car park extension.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee, Councillors Knowles, Gard, Potter and Mulley and also Simon Nicholson, our handyman, for their help and support

**Cllr Keith Thompson**  
**Chair of Harbury Parish Council Properties Working Party**

## Environment Working Party

Following on from last year's successful collaboration with Warwickshire County Council, which saw new trees planted on Frances Road and at the junction of Bush Heath Lane and Bush Heath Road, the parish council has continued its commitment to enhancing the village environment.

This year, we had hoped to extend tree planting to the verges along roads leading into the village. Unfortunately, Warwickshire County Council did not authorise planting in these areas. However, we were still able to make progress by planting new trees on The Pound, further contributing to the village's green landscape.



In addition, work has continued to improve access to the many footpaths surrounding the village. The replacement of old, worn stiles with new kissing gates is nearing completion. We remain in partnership with local landowners to ensure these upgrades are completed to a high



standard and to the satisfaction of all parties. These improvements will make our footpaths more accessible and enjoyable for all users.

**Cllr Alex Potter**  
**Chair of Environment Working Party**

## Planning Working Party

Many thanks to the planning working party councillors, and to the whole of the parish council who diligently review all planning applications for the Harbury & Deppers Bridge parish.

We have had outline plans for the new South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) 2025-2050 which take the new government requirements for housing growth from December 2024 into account. Our combined plan originally indicated a housing need of approximately 1206 dwellings per annum for the SWLP area. This has been revised to a requirement of 2188 dwellings per annum.

We were originally concerned that the merging of the two areas put the Stratford District Council (SDC) in a weak position, requiring any shortfall from the Warwick District Council (WDC) area to be met. But this looks increasingly less likely with the latest preferred options plan. WDC has a significant amount of green belt land, and up to now this has been disproportionately protected. Recategorisation of this green belt land will be undertaken in certain areas, and a grey belt definition introduced. Many of these grey belt areas have excellent travel links in place, making development in those areas more sustainable options. SDC does still maintain a very healthy five-year housing land supply of 24.65 years for the five year period 1 Apr 2024 – 31 Mar 2029, which puts them in a strong position to judge planning applications independently and without additional control and potential overruling due to lack of land supply.

The most recent preferred consultation was lengthy indeed, and overwhelmingly apparent that it was very much undertaken by desktop-based software, with little local knowledge and oversight. Designating the Chesterton Windmill and surrounding historical Roman fort remains as a strategic growth location was somewhat farcical. You will be pleased to know that we did give some excellent constructive feedback to this!

A primary area that may be a preferred site for development though was designated X2. This is land to the right hand side of Harbury Lane, as you travel over the Bendigo Mitchell crossroads towards Leamington. It includes the space currently used by Leamington Brakes Football Club.

The principle of large-scale development, although with hugely high impacts for the direct locality, is a move towards a more rounded strategic form of development. The previous Local Plan used a distributed development strategy. This resulted in new dwellings being shared (mostly) fairly across the Stratford upon Avon area. The issue with this is the infrastructure is impossible to then place. If you have shared 5000 new homes across a 30-mile radius, where then do you then put the primary schools, the secondary schools, the doctors etc. in order to meet the needs of the new dwellings...?

The biggest changes we may see going forwards will come with devolution. To reduce some layers of local government, we will be part of an even bigger area. It remains to be seen how much impact this will have on planning and indeed, our services.

As part of the parish council, all councillors are required to independently examine any planning application upon which we are formally consulted. 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 Sam Allen**  
**Chair of Planning Working Party**

## **Finance & General Purposes Working Party**

I would like to thank our clerk Alison Biddle for her valuable assistance over the past year - always making our roles considerably more straight forward! I would also like to add recognition for the contributions and commitment of my fellow working party co-councillors.

The Harbury and Deppers Bridge parish precept has been raised from £138,886 to £147,711 for the financial year 2025/26. This equates to a 6.24% raise in the band D rate. We continue to see increased costs in most areas of our spending. We spend the parish precept on many regular responsibilities such as maintenance and improvement to many publicly accessible areas, bin emptying, street light powering, tree planting plus supporting parish organisations with grants. And so many more things as well!

This year we've apportioned some of our precept to include the following:

- £5,000 for the community grants budget.
- £10,000 towards the new cemetery project to provide burial facilities.
- £15,000 for the street lighting budget, including electricity and repairs.
- £7,500 towards a skate park and BMX track replacement/upgrade project.
- £3,500 towards small items – benches and seasonal light replacements.
- £3,200 for councillors' allowances (7 elected Councillors)
- £1,174 to support the Harbury Local Market raising funds for local groups.

Big expenses that we are anticipating this year include improvements to our newly acquired Hall Lane allotments and hopefully some additional inclusive play equipment in the park. We are looking to fund these out of our general reserves.

We also allocate funds each year (held safely in our reserves) to bigger wish list projects, such as a new future cemetery and skate park. Capital improvements are impossible to fund out of just our annual precept funds. We therefore often use windfall money (from developments such as the Eastfields Solar Farm) for our community projects such as the well-being allotment project and increasing the tree planting in our parish.

Although we continue to save towards a large-scale upgrade to our skate park facilities, it is a slow process. It seems likely that we will not have the money to replace this before our current equipment reaches end of life. We think that there may be an option to combine our existing allocated funds and look for outside grant funding towards new equipment. We would like to put out a request for a community champion to assist us with this process. Please get in touch if you may be able to help?

Our website [www.harbury-pc.gov.uk](http://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**

## Harbury Seasonal Lights

It has been another successful year for the seasonal lights team, which brings councillors, volunteers and businesses together to brighten up our village.

This year we had to replace lots of festoon bulbs and a few of our LED spheres too so further investment was made.

Due to inclement weather, installation took place over several days in November, and we are very thankful for the efforts of everyone who supported with this. This included our Sad Dads team who install our festoon lights, 6 parish councillors and over 40 volunteers who split into teams to install spheres in trees, wreaths and stars. The Shakespeare Inn provided bacon sandwiches, tea and coffee to keep us warm and Hire Safe kindly lent us their cherry picker and operator so that we could install those lights that are very high up. As always, we could not light our village without the support of home and business owners who provide us with power so our thanks go to them too.

It's always quicker to take the lights down than it is to install them and this took place at the beginning of February on a cold but sunny day. We reflected on our stormy winter which resulted in many more of the festoon bulbs needing to be replaced so we will turn our attention to this over the summer to be ready for November again.

**Cllr Julie Balch**  
**Seasonal Lights Working Party**

## Community Allotments

The community allotment scheme was developed for people who love to grow, and enjoy being outdoors, but are not able to take on an allotment plot. The raised beds make it easier for those who are less mobile and it is lovely to see our community gardening together, forming new friendships and enjoying this outdoor space.

We've had a busy year and are thrilled to have been able to install a brand new shed and greenhouse and also build a further 4 raised beds, gravelling the area around them. This makes a total of 11 raised beds, and currently 8 are in use. Planting is already well underway for this year but if you would be interested in taking on one of the available raised beds, please contact the parish clerk on 01926 614646 or call into the office Monday to Thursday between 10 am and 12 noon.

**Cllr Julie Balch**  
**Community Allotments**

## District Councillor Report

It's been another busy year working with residents, parish councils, and colleagues at both district and county levels to support our local communities. The work takes many forms, depending on the help people need.



Just as a reminder, Stratford-on-Avon District Council is responsible for areas including:

- Housing and homelessness services
- Leisure, sport, parks and open spaces
- Local planning and building control
- Licensing and environmental health
- Waste collection and street cleaning
- Council tax collection and electoral services

### Casework

Much of my time is spent on casework – individual queries that come via email, phone, or drop-ins at Councillor’s Corner. This year, I’ve helped residents with issues including but not limited to:

- **Planning queries** – especially where work appears not to follow approved plans, often involving enforcement action
- **Neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour** – usually in partnership with housing associations or the police
- **Housing issues** – supporting tenants and liaising with Housing Associations and the District Council
- **Fly-tipping** – reporting incidents and chasing unresolved cases
- **Environmental health concerns** – such as noise, burning, or unpleasant odours

### Communication and Representation

A key part of my role is ensuring good communication between the district council, local parishes, residents, and service providers. This includes:

- Attending parish council meetings in Harbury, Ladbroke, Ufton, and Chesterton
- Holding regular Councillor’s Corner sessions at Harbury Indoor Market
- Writing monthly for the *Harbury and Ladbroke News*
- Sharing updates on local Facebook groups to keep residents informed of consultations, changes to services, or local events
- Attending Southam Safer Neighbourhood meetings and feeding back on policing and safety issues

### District Council Work

I also attend meetings at Elizabeth House in Stratford, most notably:

- **Full Council meetings** – where district councillors debate and vote on policies affecting the district
- **Audit and Standards Committee** – which reviews financial reports, audits, complaints, Freedom of Information requests, and Code of Conduct matters

## Planning

Planning continues to be a major part of my role where I:

- Review planning applications
- Discuss plans with residents and parish councils
- Submit comments on the planning portal
- Call applications to committee when appropriate and present to committee as required
- Attend planning committee as a substitute member

This year, the **South Warwickshire Local Plan** took up significant time. I attended training, supported residents to respond via the consultation website, and shared updates through local channels.

Thank you to everyone who has offered their support and kindness, asked questions, or got involved in making our area a better place to live. It has been a privilege to spend another year working alongside so many people dedicated to serving the local community.

District Councillors Susan Ostrander

[Susan4harbury@gmail.com](mailto:Susan4harbury@gmail.com) or [sue.ostrander@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:sue.ostrander@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

## Reports from Village Groups & Organisations

### Harbury Village Library & Biblio's Cafe

Harbury Village library (HVL) has continued to provide an active village hub. There were approximately 18,000 visits over the year averaging 50 visits per day. Biblio's cafe continued to deliver an excellent service whilst absorbing significant increases in costs; thus, providing an affordable social venue for our community and visitors.



The major achievement of the year was the completion of the heating project, which replaced the old gas boiler with a new electric, more ecological, system for both the library and preschool. The project was funded by grants, contributions via S106 council funds and library reserves, and also a donation of £8,303 from the parish council. The project, led by Ed Wilson, was delivered both on time and on budget.

Recent new goals have focused on improving the environment, particularly for children and their families. Generous donations from individuals have enabled HVL to purchase new

furnishings, and the newly formed fund-raising team is active, sourcing new funds for further improvements. There has also been an enhanced cultural offer, including “spoken word” events being hosted via the “Live and Local” arts provision, and pop-up poetry. A notable development has been the provision for home-schooled children, enabling this group to come together for social and educational activities.

**Kay Garvey**  
**Chair of Harbury Village Library**

## Harbury Village Show

The village show in 2024 attracted a pleasing number of entrants. There were 73 adults which was up on last year and 30 children which was almost double the number on last year. Jointly this came to a total of 486 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.



The grant from parish council to cover the cost of hiring the Village Hall is a huge help which the whole village benefits from.

**Gordon Robbins**  
**Harbury Show Committee**

## Harbury Heritage Group

- In April we wrote and published a new book 'Life in Victorian Harbury'. (150 copies sold)
- In April we helped Year 4 with their topic 'Tudor Houses in Harbury'.
- On 8<sup>th</sup> May – we conducted a village tour for the Long Itchington History Group.
- In May we put together a display for the 50th anniversary of the Harbury and Ladbroke News.
- Also, in May we carried out a 'spring clean' of the Heritage Centre.
- On June 8<sup>th</sup> we ran a stall at Harbury Carnival jointly with Harbury Society. Theme 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day
- On June 9<sup>th</sup> we conducted a village tour for the Lighthorne History Group. Including a cream tea.
- On June 30<sup>th</sup> we opened up for Harbury Garden Walkabout and welcomed over 50 visitors
- On July 1<sup>st</sup> we gave a presentation to the school reception class 'Monsters in Harbury' about the dinosaur fossils found in the quarry 100 years ago.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> July -we conducted a tour of the village for the Warwickshire Local History Society including refreshments and a visit to the Heritage Centre.
- On 18<sup>th</sup> Aug we conducted a tour of the village for the Warmington History Group as above.
- Also, in August we bought and fitted a new sign to the Park Lane fence which includes a link to our website.
- On Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> -we held our annual fund-raising Village Treasure Hunt – aimed at young families - 24 teams took part.
- In October we provided the school with display material for – 'Harvest Time'.
- Also, in October we replaced the external floodlights at the Heritage Centre.
- On November 6<sup>th</sup> we gave a presentation on 'Harbury in WW2' to Harbury Cubs
- In December we provided research material for a 3<sup>rd</sup> yr student (Harbury based) to aid her dissertation. She is studying Architecture at UCL.
- On January 11<sup>th</sup> we held a fund-raising coffee morning at the Tom Hauley Room.
- On January 14<sup>th</sup> we gave a village tour to Year 1 to help them with their topic 'Our Island – Your Island'. This included a short presentation on 'The History of Harbury' in the Heritage Centre.
- Since our AGM in October, we have been sorting the 'Mike Bloxham Collection' of photographs on Monday mornings in the Heritage Centre.
- We have applied for 2 x grants to fund the WW2 Plaque Project in conjunction with the parish council.

We continue to add to the collection of documents, photographs etc. We have promoted our 'Village Tours' (2 more 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 adding responses to our archives. Throughout the year we have opened twice a month to the public and receive a steady stream of visitors.

**Bill Timson**  
**Chairman, Harbury Heritage Group**

## Harbury e-Wheels

Harbury e-Wheels was launched at the end of October 2015 and received regular financial help from the parish council in the early years, which was extremely valuable. For many years now we have not needed to request further assistance. With another good fundraising year behind us the charity is in a strong financial position with good funding opportunities during the next year and we will not be making any requests to the parish council.



The now regular annual Harbury Open Gardens weekend has proved very successful and benefitted further last year from the kind offer of guided tours of the windmill in Mill Lane. This year the event will take place on 28th and 29th June.

Over the years we have increased our volunteer force, developed new systems and helped hundreds of people. Every year our drivers cover more than 10,000 miles and the coordinators process 500 or more requests. We continue to deliver weekly to the food bank in Kineton, working again this year to deliver the children's donations from their Christmas Reverse Auction.

New volunteers are very welcome as the original founding members are, inevitably, ageing, as are the cars. This year we will be replacing our two cars and Nic Burttt has already started to investigate options. Because of our good financial position, we should be able to cover the costs of this change. Four new volunteer drivers joined us during the year and our coordinator team has remained constant and unchanged. The work the latter carries out for the charity is not seen by the public but is essential for making the system work.

There have been and will be some changes to the board. Philip Mayer resigned from the board earlier this year and a further change is to come in 2025 when I hand over the chair to Nic Burttt. I have chaired the organisation since Hugh Tottle and I founded it in 2015 and it is time for new leadership. I shall remain on the board, however.

**Bob Sherman FRSA BEM**  
**Chair, Harbury e-Wheels**

## Harbury Swift Village Project

Harbury Swift Village project was created to help the long-term recovery of these incredible birds and we should continue to expect it to take a while for the swifts to accept the new homes. Although no one reported swifts nesting in the new boxes in 2024, swifts were again seen inspecting some of them. Most Harbury swift action was seen around boxes on houses where the owners were playing recorded swift calls, presumably because swifts prefer to nest close to one another in the safety of a colony and the young prospecting birds thought there were already breeding swifts present. In order to try to replicate this, five sound systems will be installed during April 2025, in appropriate places adjacent to some of the parish council nest boxes.



Some generous donations to the Harbury Swift Project have enabled the purchase these swift call systems plus five timer switches. The sound systems will increase the chances of birds 'discovering' and nesting in the boxes. The volume can be set quite low so it is clear to birds but not so loud as to annoy the human ear. The calls only need to be played for a few hours each day, in the early morning and late evening when swifts are most active.

A survey of Harbury swifts will be carried out by volunteers during the 2025 breeding season. Harbury Swift Village Project will be represented in the parish council tent at Harbury Carnival on 7 June and also at the Harbury Garden Walkabout on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June, which coincides with Swift Awareness Week 2025 (June 28<sup>th</sup> to July 6<sup>th</sup>).

Harbury Swift Village project has continued to inspire residents of other neighbouring villages to set up their own projects to erect swift boxes in their villages. Harbury Parish Council has been held up as a great example in Napton and Moreton Morrell as residents request for support from their own parish councils; and residents in Leek Wotton are also currently looking in to how they may help swifts in their village.

**Amanda Randall**  
**Harbury Swift Village Project**

## Harbury Preschool

Harbury Preschool has continued to welcome new children this year, with 34 children now attending preschool every week. In our autumn term, we focused on Signs of Autumn, Mini Beasts, Diwali and Christmas. The children enjoyed activities such as mud kitchen, loose parts play and different sensory activities. The spring term has seen us looking at healthy eating, exercise and The Tiger Who Came to Tea. As we go into summer, we are looking

forward to getting out into the garden, learning about growing, and preparing for Harbury Carnival and the Open Gardens.

Outside of teaching, the preschool has faced several challenges this year. There have been huge changes in the way government funding is provided, which has meant many hours of number crunching and reading policy documents. Our parent-led committee has worked closely with preschool management to figure out how to work within the guidelines while also remaining financially viable. We also faced some staffing challenges over Christmas and the new year, but we have been pleased to welcome new members of staff this year, plus the return of another colleague, which has brought our teaching team back to full, vibrant strength.

In addition, we are currently facing the prospect of needing to carry out significant roof repairs. Following a generous grant from Harbury Parish Council, as well as contributions from other sources, we are well on our way to our fundraising target, with the plan to carry out the roof repairs in July/August 2025, while the pupils are on summer holidays. Done properly, these roof repairs should allow future generations of local preschool children to continue to access safe, outstanding early years education in the village.

**Sarah Wilkinson**  
Harbury Preschool

## Save the Great Western

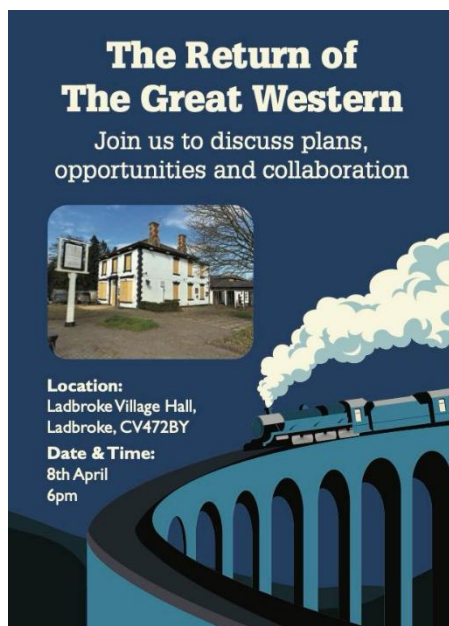
In April 2024, Harbury Parish Council generously funded the “Save the Great Western” community group’s application to become a member of The Plunkett Foundation. The membership provided expert advice to the community group regarding the derelict pub and how the property could be bought back into use with a community focus.

Work undertaken by the group under the guidance of The Plunkett Foundation includes:

- Successfully registering the property as an Asset of Community Value with Stratford Council, via Harbury Parish Council;
- Establishing and formalising the community group as a registered Community Benefit Society (CBS);
- Undertaking building surveys and drain surveys of the property (self-funded)
- Undertaking surveys of the local community;
- Growing the Facebook group and online presence;
- Monthly CBS meetings;
- Commencing work on a business plan for the Great Western;
- Liaising with The Crown Estate (land had transferred to The Crown).

In late 2024/early 2025 the CBS was contacted by a local businessman, Shane Bland, who had spent a significant period of time on due diligence on the pub, and an offer to purchase to The Crown. Meetings were held between the parties and it was clear that there was a close alignment of objectives.

A non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the roles of both parties, their joint objectives, and intent to work together was prepared, reviewed by Plunkett legal advisors, and signed in March 25, with the first community information event being successfully held by Shane with support from the CBS on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at Ladbroke Village Hall.



Shane has a clear vision for the pub, whilst also keen to work with the community on ideas and opportunities for future community use and events. A recording of the event is available here

<https://www.youtube.com/@thegreatwestern> and has been shared with Harbury PC and the Facebook Group.

There was lots of lively chat, and even a cheer at the proposal to re-instate the track and train within the bar. Shane has also spent a sum of his own money in properly boarding up the pub to ensure security, using local contacts via Yvonne Lanchester, the DBCBS chair.

The intention is to open the pub later this year, with a focus on local suppliers, trades and contributors over the coming months. The CBS will now move to a “Community Backed” pub initiative rather than a “Community Owned” project.



If you are interested in registering your details as a tradesperson (paid), potential future employee, or have any other ideas, queries or questions for Mr Bland and his team, please contact [hello@thegreatwestern.pub](mailto:hello@thegreatwestern.pub). If you are interested in joining the CBS and supporting the community related initiatives, please contact [yvonne.lanchester@gmail.com](mailto:yvonne.lanchester@gmail.com)

**Sarah Taylor**  
**Save the Great Western Community Group**





## Parish Council Attendance Record May 2024 to April 2025

The council held 11 meetings in total during the year, including the annual meeting of the council. We have 10 councillors. A total of 98 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	8/11	73%
Cllr Sam Allen	10/11	91%
Cllr Chris Bradley (co-opted June 2024, resigned February 2024)	6/6	100%
Cllr Kate Gard	11/11	100%
Cllr Alan Knowles	10/11	91%
Cllr Ed Mulley	8/11	73%
Cllr Alex Potter	7/11	64%
Cllr Robert Stockdale (co-opted July 2024)	7/8	88%
Cllr Ashley Sylvester (co-opted March 2025)	2/2	100%
Cllr Keith Thompson	10/11	91%

## Parish Council Working Parties

<b>Planning:</b>	Cllr Allen (chair), Cllr Thompson, Cllr Knowles
<b>Environment:</b>	Cllr Potter (chair), Cllr Mulley, Cllr Stockdale
<b>Properties:</b>	Cllr Thompson (chair), Cllr Knowles, Cllr Potter, Cllr Gard, Cllr Mulley
<b>Finance &amp; General Purposes:</b>	Cllr Allen (chair), Cllr Potter, Cllr Thompson, Cllr Stockdale, Cllr Lockley
<b>Climate:</b>	Cllr Stockdale (chair), Cllr Allen, Cllr Balch, Cllr Gard
<b>Seasonal Lights:</b>	Cllr Allen, Cllr Balch, Cllr Lockley
<b>Staffing:</b>	Cllr Balch (chair), Cllr Lockley, Cllr Thompson, Cllr Stockdale

## Community Grants Awarded by Harbury Parish Council in 2024/25

Harbury Show	Village hall hire	£385
Harbury Carnival	Entertainment	£483
Friends of the Great Western	Plunkett Foundation Membership	£200
Harbury Toddler Group	Parachute	£60
Harbury Pre-school	Roof repairs	£2,000
Harbury RFC	Event shelters	£1,559.88
Harbury Local Market	Village hall hire	<u>£1,172.50</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£5,860.38</b>

## Contact Your Parish Council

<p style="text-align: center;">Alison Biddle PSLCC, Clerk to the Council  Harbury Parish Council  2, Bull Ring Business Centre  Church Terrace  Harbury  Leamington Spa  CV33 9HL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Open 10.00am to 12.00pm Monday – Thursday  Tel 01926 614646   <a href="mailto:clerk@harbury-pc.gov.uk">clerk@harbury-pc.gov.uk</a>   <a href="http://www.harbury-pc.gov.uk">www.harbury-pc.gov.uk</a></p>
--

## Harbury Parish Council Financial Report 2025

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 2024/25 (subject to audit) which will also be published on our website in due course.

Year Ended 31/03/24		Income & Expenditure		Year Ended 31/03/25
		<b>GENERAL PARISH FUND</b>		
<b>£</b>		<b>Income</b>		<b>£</b>
128,900.00		Precept		138,886.00
4,216.88		Interest received - deposit accounts		4,557.60
381.30		Interest received - Tennis & Netball Courts Fund		1,017.01
1,194.56		Allotment rents		1,206.11
1,730.00		Cemetery fees		2,660.00
230.00		Playing field hire		330.00
34.29		Wayleave		134.41
1,276.86		Grass verge contribution - SDC		1,345.81
46,000.00		Grant funding		-
748.91		Sec 106 & CIL		-
3,922.74		Sports clubs conts to Tennis & Netball Courts Fund		4,123.20
50,900.95		Misc receipts		25.70
<b>239,536.49</b>		<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>154,285.84</b>
		<b>Expenditure</b>		
47,164.82		Admininstration & salaries		48,111.61
417.00		Training		175.00
183.92		Office equipment		681.13
5,766.09		Parish office		5,774.02
1,230.00		New Tree Planting		620.00
14,089.00		Grants		5,860.38
-		Platinum Jubilee		-
-		Neighbourhood Plan		-
		<b>Running costs:</b>		
9,365.00		Allotments		4,541.61
7,540.98		Cemetery		9,653.07
11,469.54		Open spaces		10,198.02
41,933.08		Playing fields & car park		52,395.11
12,645.00		Tennis & netball court works		1,570.00
1,930.20		Non-estate roads		1,968.84
12,358.23		Street lights		14,143.32
40.00		Climate		55.00
10,786.52		Purchase of village assets / village improvements		5,040.94
2,675.15		Councillors allowances		2,800.00
<b>179,594.53</b>		<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>163,588.05</b>

Funds Statement					
Year Ended 31.03.2024				Year Ended 31.03.2025	
£		General Fund		£	
121,712.62		Balance at 1 April		124,791.60	
3,078.98		Add surplus/less deficit for year		9,011.09	
<b>124,791.60</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>133,802.69</b>	
		Tennis & Netball Courts Fund			
43,209.93		Balance at 1 April		36,836.23	
5,890.00		Add payment into account		6,191.00	
381.30		Add interest for year		1,017.01	
- 12,645.00		Less payment out of account	-	1,570.00	
<b>36,836.23</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>42,474.24</b>	
		Library Fund			
8,303.00		Balance at 1 April		-	
- 8,303.00		T/fer to library		-	
<b>-</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>-</b>	
		New Cemetery Fund			
57,256.00		Balance at 1 April		67,256.00	
10,000.00		Add t/fer from general fund		10,000.00	
<b>67,256.00</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>77,256.00</b>	
		Sec 106 & CIL			
-		Balance at 1 April		-	
748.91		Add new CIL receipt		748.91	
-		Less expenditure	-	748.91	
<b>748.91</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>-</b>	
		Office Refurbishment			
1,462.53		Balance at 1 April		1,462.53	
-		Add t/fer from general fund		-	
-		Less expenditure		-	
<b>1,462.53</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>1,462.53</b>	
		BMX & Skate Park Fund			
10,000.00		Balance at 1 April		15,000.00	
5,000.00		Add t/fer from general fund		7,500.00	
<b>15,000.00</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>22,500.00</b>	
		Eastfields Solar Community Fund			
-		Balance at 1 April		42,580.00	
50,000.00		Add receipt		-	
- 7,420.00		Less expenditure	-	27,491.63	
<b>42,580.00</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>15,088.37</b>	
		Future Energy Project			
-		Balance at 1 April		13,210.77	
46,000.00		Add UKSPF grant		-	
- 32,789.23		Less expenditure	-	13,210.77	
<b>13,210.77</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>-</b>	
<b>301,886.04</b>		<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b>292,583.83</b>	



Balance sheet as at 31 March 2025							
Year ended 31.03.2024				Year ended 31.03.2025			
£			<b>Current Assets</b>	£			
1,293.66			Payments in advance	1,722.57			
6,783.03			VAT Debtor	2,257.96			
-			Other debtors	-			
-			Cash with clerk to the council	-			
295,462.67			Cash at bank	290,809.51			
<b>303,539.36</b>				<b>294,790.04</b>			
			<b>Less current liabilities</b>				
- 1,653.32			Creditors & receipts in advance	- 2,206.21			
<b>301,886.04</b>			<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>292,583.83</b>			
			<b>Represented by:</b>				
121,712.62			General fund balance b/f	124,791.60			
3,078.98			Less deficit/plus surplus	9,011.09			
124,791.60			Balance 31 March	133,802.69			
			<b>Specific funds:</b>				
36,836.23			Tennis & Netball Courts Fund	42,474.24			
67,256.00			New Cemetery Fund	77,256.00			
748.91			Sec 106 & CIL	-			
1,462.53			Office refurbishment reserve	1,462.53			
15,000.00			BMX & Skate Park Fund	22,500.00			
42,580.00			Eastfields Solar Community Fund	15,088.37			
13,210.77			Future Energy Project	-			
<b>301,886.04</b>				<b>292,583.83</b>			