



Harlaxton Parish Council

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PARISH MEETING 7:30pm Monday, 28 April 2025

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction: Chair's Opening Address:

Good evening, everyone, and thank you for coming. I am Andrew Cartlidge, and I welcome you not only as the current Chair of Harlaxton Parish Council, but as a fellow resident concerned, as I know many of you are, about the future of our village.

This is one of two Parish Meetings this week. Tonight's meeting is geared to help the Parish Council respond to the planning application. The meeting on Wednesday, 30 April is the Annual Meeting of the Parish, colloquially known as "the cheese and wine evening", when the village comes together to celebrate all that is good and going on in the village, and the opportunity to meeting the various and numerous organisations and clubs that the village has to offer.

Returning to tonight's meeting, this is not a Council Meeting. This Parish Meeting is being held in accordance with the Local Government Act, and open to all registered electors of Harlaxton. Every elector of the Parish of Harlaxton has the right to attend. Every elector has the right to speak. And every elector has the right to vote on any formal resolutions that may arise. No other party has an automatic right to be here. Apart from our District Councillor, who has been kindly invited to attend tonight, are there any other non-electors present? If there are, depending on the circumstances, the villagers present may wish to ask you to leave. [none were present]

Okay. I hope that we will all treat each other with decency and kindness. If there are any interruptions or unpleasant behaviour, you will be told to leave this meeting. There will be no exceptions. Please don't test me.

Housekeeping: There are three fire escapes; these are the entrance you've just come through, through the committee room, and the third is through the boiler room, here. The designated meeting place is the obelisk just down the road. There are WC's back through the entrance foyer and to the left, with the accessible WC through the large door just over there. Please remain seated throughout the meeting. There will be time for discussion later on, so please be patient. [Headcount, 97]

Background: Several weeks ago, David Wilson Homes agent, Meeting Place, approached the Parish Council seeking a meeting to 'engage' with the community about DWH's proposals for the land west of Swinehill. In response, the Parish Council called a Parish Poll, held on 20 March. This was an official process run by South Kesteven District Council. The question asked was:

"Should Harlaxton Parish Council formally oppose the proposed development on the land to the West of Swinehill?"

A total of 363 villagers turned out to vote, which is around 52% of the electorate. When you consider that local elections often only achieve 30-40% turnout, 52% demonstrates villagers' significant commitment to express their opinions. Of those 363 who turned out, 352 were in favour that the Parish Council should formally object. That's an overwhelming 96.4% of votes cast which were in favour of the Parish Council objecting to the proposal. That vote provided the Parish Council with a clear and unambiguous mandate, which we will work through tonight.

[Continued...]

At that time, no planning application had been submitted.

DWH's agent persisted in asking for a meeting to engage with the parish, which was suggested for tonight, 28 April. However, despite their outwardly amicable overtures, in the background, DWH proceeded to submit an outline planning application S25/0558 for 200 homes on 26 March. Doing so before any meaningful, respectful dialogue with this Parish could take place. Their actions, as many have rightly noted, suggest that their intent to engage was more a procedural tick-box exercise than a sincere attempt at community consultation. Accordingly, the Parish Council responded to the agent saying:

"It is deeply disappointing that your client has chosen to proceed in this underhand way, bypassing meaningful, open dialogue with the community, and instead moved directly to a planning submission. The decision to do so effectively undermines any claim to a genuine interest in local feedback or respectful engagement. It is hard to view the submission as anything other than a blunt bullying attempt to bludgeon through a proposal that continues to meet with widespread and well-evidenced opposition from the whole village, the District Councillor and the County Councillor. In light of this, any further consideration for a meeting will now be deferred until after the current application has been determined by the local planning authority. It would be wholly inappropriate to host a session under the pretence of an amicable discussion while formal proceedings are now underway."

The outline planning application, S25/0558 is now open for public comment, and the time to respond is now, or at least ideally well before 17 May, the supposed deadline. Tonight's meeting with guidance from the Working Party is to **help the Parish Council fulfil its mandate to make a formal objection to the development.**

Before we continue, I would like to acknowledge the presence of our District Councillor, Robert Leadenham, who represents the villagers' needs to SKDC. Rob will help explain the planning process and what we can expect regarding procedure and timescales.

So, in terms of tonight's agenda:

- I will shortly hand over to our District Councillor for a few brief remarks about the planning process.
- Then, we will hear from the **Working Party**, a group of committed residents who have worked hard to analyse the developer's submission in detail. Their goal tonight is not only to share their findings, but to run a workshop aimed at equipping us, the Parish Council, with the tools to submit a well-structured, **material planning objection** in accordance with the mandate set by the Village Poll. The working party will tell us that it is vital that comments are sent to the Planning Authority, focusing on valid material planning considerations, things like highways, flood risk, heritage impact, biodiversity, and the Local Plan, not just emotional or biased opinions and feelings.
- The final section of the meeting will be an open floor, where registered electors may raise any other relevant parish matters.

On that note, I thank you all for taking the time to be here. The strength of a village lies in its people, and your presence here tonight demonstrates exactly that.

I will now invite our District Councillor Leadneham to speak briefly on the planning process. Thank you.

2. Brief remarks by District/County Councillor

District Councillor Robert Leadenham outlined the current application position and reminded everyone that as many people as possible should write in to express the opinions on the SKDC website or by letter, stating that just because there are already some comments up there, it doesn't mean that your comments aren't still needed. Please take this opportunity to make your voice heard.

3. Presentation by the Swinehill Working Party

The working party presented a series of slides and talked through several principal material objections for consideration. There were some questions from the floor with responses and advice by those on the Working Party.

4. Any Other Business: None

5. Close of meeting: The Chair thanked the working party for their tremendous efforts in preparing for tonight, thanks Cllr Robert Leadenham for kindly attending and their ongoing support, and the audience for their interest and efforts in looking out for the village.