Harlaxton Parish Council

Chair: Andrew Cartlidge

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Parish Council Meeting
7:30pm on Wednesday, 30 September 2026
Harlaxton Village Hall, 3 Church Street, Harlaxton, NG32 1HU

Minutes

1. Meeting Opened: 7:30pm
2. In Attendance: Cllrs Wicks, Clawson, Smith, Phillips and Cartlidge. With thanks given to Cllr Leadenham of SKDC.
3. Apologies (Non-Attendance): None. It was noted that Cllr Vernon of LCC was not present.
4. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests: Cllrs Wicks, Smith and Cartlidge acknowledged membership of HSSC. Cllr Wicks and Cllr Clawson acknowledged being employed by Harlaxton Manor, and Cllr Cartlidge advised that his employer sponsors the Harlaxton Cricket Club and that he is a member of the Village Hall Committee.
5. Resolution to approve minutes of the PCM of Wednesday, 29 July, 2026. This was agreed as a true record and signed.
6. Public Forum (15 Minute Presentation/Discussion): A resident raised questions concerning the recently installed sandbag storage bin at Trotters Lane. It was confirmed that the bin was positioned broadly in the same location as the previous bin. LCC Highways had previously approved the location. The bin is secured by a combination padlock, and the access code will be provided to residents in the immediate vicinity who may need access during a flooding event. Approximately 20 sandbags are intended to be stored in the bin. The sandbags used during a flooding event should generally be treated as disposable.
7. Update from County Councillor Vernon [not present and no update provided]
   - 7.1. Update on LCC meeting from 12 December: Councillors discussed the continuing lack of substantive progress following the multi-agency site meeting held with Lincolnshire County Council in December 2025. Councillors noted recent correspondence from LCC on riparian ownership and responsibilities. Councillors considered that, despite this correspondence, insufficient evidence remained of coordinated progress on the drainage and flood-management issues identified during the site meeting. Matters discussed included the drainage infrastructure around High Street, Trotters Lane, Gregory Close and the A607, as well as the condition of various gullies, culverts, ditches and associated watercourses. The Chair had circulated a draft response to LCC requesting substantive progress, details of investigations undertaken, clarification of responsibility for affected watercourses and drainage assets, and arrangements for the previously discussed multi-agency meeting involving LCC, the Internal Drainage Board, the Parish Council, relevant landowners and other stakeholders. Councillors were asked to consider the draft over the following few days and submit any amendments before it was issued. District Councillor Leadenham was also asked to support the Parish Council in progressing the matter. Cllr Phillips reported that, on 9 September, he had encountered an LCC officer attempting to locate an access point to the culvert beneath High Street, and had directed the operative to the inspection chamber at No. 59 High Street. The officer indicated that a further CCTV investigation of the culvert would be required. No timescale for that work was available at the time of the meeting. ACTION: Chair to finalise and issue the response to LCC following receipt of any further councillor comments.
8. Update from District Councillor Leadenham
   - 8.1. Update on Regulation 18 proposal by SKDC [Land to the west of The Drift]: Cllr Leadenham reported on the position following the cessation of the emerging Local Plan process and the consequential uncertainty surrounding potential future development sites. The Council discussed the implications for Harlaxton and particularly the land west and north of The Drift towards Barrowby. The Archer traffic survey tubes noted on the A607 were discussed. Cllr Leadenham advised that, to the best of his knowledge, LCC Highways or Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership had not commissioned the survey and that it was likely to relate to development interests. Cllr Leadenham also reported a telephone conversation with James Perry concerning the existing nine-dwelling development and the wider land. Mr Perry advised that he had not been involved in any proposals to develop the wider land and had had no recent communication with the other landowners.
   - 8.2. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – LAND WEST OF THE DRIFT: S26/0398 – Condition 3, Surface Water Drainage. The Council considered the Chair's draft formal complaint concerning SKDC's decision to approve the discharge of Condition 3 relating to surface water drainage. The complaint addressed, amongst other matters, the lack of demonstrated downstream hydraulic capacity, the condition and ownership of the

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receiving ditch and downstream system, future maintenance responsibilities, the proposed concentrated discharge from the development and the adequacy of the evidence relied upon when the condition was discharged. RESOLVED: The Parish Council unanimously approved submission of the formal complaint to South Kesteven District Council concerning the handling and determination of application S26/0398.

9. S26/0307 / S26/1497 – Variation of approved plans: It was noted that S26/0307 had been withdrawn following advice from the Planning Authority and had subsequently been replaced by application S26/1497. The Council discussed the differences between the development approved under S24/0070 and the revised proposals now presented through S26/1497. Particular concern remained that the revised scheme represented a material change from the character, layout and principles upon which the original nine-dwelling cul-de-sac had been approved. Councillors discussed the treatment of the land beyond the approved development, the originally proposed open/natural area, the potential facilitation of future development and continuing concerns regarding drainage. The Chair had circulated a detailed draft objection to councillors. RESOLVED: Subject to any final comments or amendments from councillors, the Parish Council approved submission of the draft objection to S26/1497 on behalf of Harlaxton Parish Council. District Cllr Leadenham received copies of the Parish Council's draft representations and was asked to actively and positively support the Council's concerns.
10. Finance
    10.1. AGAR Return: The Chair reported that the external audit had now been completed. The external auditor's principal observation concerned the Parish Council continuing to use a generic Gmail address rather than an email address hosted on a domain owned by the authority. The Council noted that arrangements would therefore need to be made for a compliant .gov.uk or .org.uk domain and associated email address before the next AGAR submission. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit was published within the required timescale. The AGAR position was noted and accepted.
    10.2. Invoices/Expenses: The Chair reported a bank balance of £49,566.78 prior to the payments considered at the meeting. This included the £15,000 insurance settlement received earlier in the year. The remaining 2026/27 precept payment of £12,604.50 was expected on 1 October 2026. Councillors noted that a significant proportion of the available reserves was allocated to the proposed accessible WC project at Harlaxton Sports & Social Club and that grant funding would therefore remain important. The following payments were considered and approved:
    PKF Littlejohn LLP – External audit: £252.00
    RoSPA Play Safety – Annual play-area inspection: £118.80
    Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils – Additional 10 hours website management: £240.00
    Tidy Gardens & Grounds Ltd – August grass cutting: £318.00
    Tidy Gardens & Grounds Ltd – September grass cutting: £636.00
    Maplebeck Tree Care Ltd – Gregory Close tree survey: £450.00
    Harlaxton Sports & Social Club – Village Fayre marketing boards and live music: £179.20
    Cllr Andrew Cartlidge – Materials and expenses associated with car park pothole repairs, planting and associated Parish Council works: £413.95
    RESOLVED: All of the above invoices and expenses were approved for payment.
11. Obelisk/High Street Planters: The Council reviewed the article prepared for the forthcoming edition of Village Voice. The revised article includes an appeal for new volunteers to assist with the village planters, following the existing volunteers' decision to step back from their regular maintenance role. The Council recorded its considerable thanks to the volunteers who have maintained and improved the planters over recent years. It was agreed that the Village Voice appeal should make clear that, if replacement volunteers cannot be found, the Council may need to reconsider the long-term future of the planters and adopt a substantially lower-maintenance alternative. The Council also considered the planting area close to the junction of High Street and Pond Street. Existing volunteers previously raised safety concerns because maintenance required them to work immediately adjacent to the highway. RESOLVED: Remove the planting area at the High Street/Pond Street junction and return the area to grass. Further publicity seeking volunteers will initially run through Village Voice. Additional leafleting/signage can be considered subsequently if necessary.
12. Hedge Cutting 2026: Four quotations were received:
    Quote 1 – £500.00 plus VAT (£600.00)
    Quote 2 – £540.00, no VAT
    Quote 3 – £600.00 plus VAT (£720.00)
    Quote 4 – £2,362.53, together with exclusions/additional requirements
    It was noted that Contractor 2 had undertaken the work satisfactorily in previous years and had also submitted the lowest current quotation. RESOLVED: The Council awarded the 2026 hedge-cutting contract to Contractor 2.
    12.1. Gregory Close Tree Works: The Council then considered quotations for the remedial works identified within the recently commissioned Gregory Close tree survey. Quotations received were:
    Quote 1 – £1,110.00 plus VAT (£1,332.00)
    Quote 2 – £1,925.00 plus VAT (£2,310.00)
    Quote 3 – pending
    It was noted that several other contractors had been approached. Contractor 3 had attended, but a quote had not yet been received by the meeting date. RESOLVED: Contractor 3 would be given until Wednesday, 7 October 2026 to submit its quotation. If a compliant quotation lower than Quote 1 were received, the work would be awarded to Contractor 3. Otherwise, the works are to be awarded to Contractor 1.

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13. Grass Cutting 2027: Two quotations had been received despite approaches to a substantially larger number of contractors:
    Quote 1 – £4,845.00 plus VAT
    Quote 2 – £5,117.00 plus VAT
    The scope was based upon 17 cuts over the season. Councillors considered the standard of work undertaken by the current contractor during 2026 and were generally satisfied with the service following some initial issues at the beginning of the contract. RESOLVED: The 2027 grass-cutting contract was awarded to Contractor 1.
14. HSSC:
    14.1. Play Area: The Council reviewed the monthly play-area inspection records prepared by Cllr Wicks. Cllr Cartlidge noted that several defects or maintenance items had remained on the inspection reports for some time and proposed that, given the Council's financial position, these should now be addressed and resolved by an external contractor. Particular discussion concerned the timber balance equipment, where movement varies according to ground conditions. RESOLVED: Cllr Wicks is to prepare a brief specification covering the outstanding repair/replacement items and obtain competitive quotations from suitable play-equipment repair/installing contractors. The intention should be that, after completion of the works, routine monthly reports should, as far as reasonably practicable, avoid carrying forward maintenance items.
    14.2. Village Fayre: The Council recorded its thanks to Cllr Smith, villager Sue Car and all volunteers who organised and supported the Village Fayre. Cllr Smith reported that the event had been well attended and received positively. Councillors thanked Cllr Wicks and Debbie Wicks for their time supporting the children's activities.
    14.3. Accessible WC: Cllr Wicks advised that three quotations had now been obtained for the proposed accessible WC works. The next stage is to progress the grant funding applications. It was suggested that another villager, who has experienced and success in grant applications, may be able to provide assistance with preparation of the grant application. Councillors asked for meaningful progress before the next Parish Council meeting with a grant application submitted. ACTION: Cllr Wicks to progress with grant applications for the accessible WC and provide an update at the meeting on 2 December 2026.
    14.4. Pothole Repairs: Cllr Cartlidge advised that substantial progress had been made in repairing potholes within the HSSC car park with grateful thanks to villager Zak Walker for virtually all of the physical work required, although some further work remained outstanding. Cllr Wicks asked who had paid for the labour, and Cllr Cartlidge explained that they had paid it personally rather than from Parish Council funds. Councillors considered that the Chair should not personally bear that cost when assistance was necessary to undertake Parish Council works. RESOLVED: The Chair was instructed to submit an expenses claim form for consideration at the next meeting. Councillors formally recorded their thanks to Zak Walker for his assistance.
    14.5. Car Park White Lining: The Chair advised that quotations had not yet been sought for the car-park white lining, pending further progress in resolving the potholes. AGREED: This item was deferred to the next meeting.
15. Pearson Gregory Field Working Party: It was further agreed that work associated with the wider Pearson Gregory Field Working Party should continue and, wherever practicable, correspondence should be issued from the official Parish Council email account.
    15.1. The Council considered quotations for the proposed gate works.
    Quote 1 – £390.00 plus VAT (£468.00)
    Quote 2 – £570.00 plus VAT (£684.00)
    It was noted that Contractor 1 had previously undertaken fencing work satisfactorily for the Parish Council. It was noted that villager Irvin Metcalf had also made an informal offer of assistance for one element of the work; however, Councillors considered that, because the Council now wished to progress the wider gate works, it would be preferable to proceed with the contractor quotation while thanking Mr Metcalf for his kind offer. RESOLVED: The gate works were awarded to Quote 1.
16. Highways:
    16.1. Anglian Water pipe in Culvert under High Street: Councillors noted the update given earlier in the meeting by Cllr Phillips regarding the LCC officer's attendance on 9 September and the proposed further investigation/CCTV survey of the culvert. The matter remains ongoing.
    16.2. High Street Gullies: The condition of the High Street gullies and associated drainage assets had been covered within the earlier discussion under item 7.1 and should be included in the Parish Council's response to LCC, requesting progress following the December 2025 site meeting.
    16.3. Community Speed Watch: The Council recorded its thanks to all Community Speed Watch volunteers for the significant number of sessions undertaken in recent months, particularly on the A607. Recent sessions had identified a significant number of vehicles travelling above the relevant intervention threshold. CSW volunteer Cartlidge reported correspondence with the Community Speed Watch administration team about the possibility of a mobile enforcement officer attending. The Police/CSW response indicated that a mobile camera operator may support organised CSW sessions if advance dates, times and locations are supplied. However, the CSW working party considered that requesting a programme covering two to three months was difficult to reconcile with a volunteer group whose availability generally becomes known only shortly before each session.

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16.3.1. The current stock of high-visibility garments was also discussed. There are insufficient larger sizes for the current volunteers. RESOLVED: The Parish Council approved the purchase of two additional 2XL Community Speed Watch high-visibility garments.

16.4. SID: The Council noted that the two batteries presently used with the Speed Indicator Device date from approximately 2021 and now retain charge for a significantly shorter period. RESOLVED: The Council authorised expenditure of up to £100.00 to purchase two replacement SID batteries.

17. The Manor

17.1. Chainlink Fence to Bowls Club: The Council discussed the damaged chainlink fencing adjoining the Bowls Club/Manor boundary, which was caused by a Manor contractor. It was agreed that the Council should approach the Manor again regarding the outstanding repair. In parallel, the Council should obtain quotations so it has a clear cost for carrying out the works if the matter cannot otherwise be resolved. A further defective section/hole within Parish Council fencing near the play area was also identified. AGREED: Quotations are to be obtained from suitable fencing contractors for the relevant repair works, with an update to be provided at the 2 December meeting. Representatives associated with the Manor agreed to raise the matter again internally.

17.2. Meeting the Dean: The Parish Council had been invited to meet the new Dean of Harlaxton College. Councillors welcomed the opportunity to develop the relationship between the Parish Council, the village, and the College. It was agreed to propose Monday or Tuesday during the week commencing 19 October as initial dates, subject to the Dean's availability. Potential matters for discussion include the outstanding chainlink fence, refuse bins on Manor land which the Parish Council currently pays to empty via the Community Cleaner, recent concerns about fireworks, and opportunities for College students to undertake community volunteering. The possible use of quieter/silent fireworks at future Manor events was noted as a matter which had already been raised informally. The Council also discussed the potential for students to assist with low-risk community activities, including maintaining the village planters. A Manor representative present at the Council meeting agreed to help by preparing suitable wording for a possible community-volunteering proposal for consideration by the Parish Council and College. ACTION: Chair to liaise with the Manor to arrange the meeting.

18. James Murden Book: The Council noted progress with the sale and distribution of the James Murden book. Cllr Phillips advised that they'd sold 5 books, netting £10. Thirty books had been supplied to the Manor for sale, and a further sale point was to be established at the village shop. The Council thanked Cllr Wicks for preparing the laminated notices/signage to accompany the books. Approximately 103 copies remained available.

19. Trotters Lane Sand Bin: This matter had principally been dealt with during the Public Forum. The Council thanked Cllr Wicks for completing the installation and preparation of the sandbag bin. The bin is secured by combination padlocks, and the code will be supplied to nearby residents who may require emergency access. Expenses for the padlocks will be submitted by Cllr Wicks.

20. HPC email address: The Council considered the requirement arising from the external audit for HPC to operate an email address on its own domain. Three potential suppliers/options had been investigated:
Freethought – approximately £36.00 per year including VAT for the .gov.uk domain/DNS arrangements
iomart – £17.40 plus VAT per year for the domain, but with limited technical support unless additional services were purchased
Active Council – a more comprehensive managed service but at a significantly higher initial and recurring cost.
Cllr Cartlidge explained that the preferred technical arrangement would retain the familiar Gmail/Google environment while moving the visible Parish Council address onto its own .gov.uk domain through Google Workspace. This would also allow the Council to retain its historic email and Google Drive information. Councillors considered Freethought to be the preferred supplier at this stage because of the balance between cost and the technical assistance offered. AGREED: The current preference is to proceed with Freethought for the .gov.uk domain, together with the additional Google Workspace, and the Council should proceed at the discretion of Cllr Cartlidge, who would circulate the proposed arrangement and costs before implementation.

20.1. Cllr Wicks asked who had funded the Google storage associated with the Parish Council over the last few years. Cllr Cartlidge confirmed that following the departure of a previous Clerk some years ago, he had funded this personally. Councillors requested that these historic costs be identified and submitted as a legitimate Parish Council expense rather than continuing to be met personally by the Chair.

21. Any other business: Clerk Arrangements. Cllr Cartlidge, who is currently serving as Acting Clerk, explained that they had not yet decided whether to stand in the May 2027 election and raised the need to consider continuity of the Clerk/administrative function. Cllr Cartlidge asked Councillors to consider at the 2 December 2026 council meeting whether the position should be formalised before May, without remuneration, to provide continuity of records, accounts, email, correspondence, administration and banking should the composition of the Parish Council change following the elections. Councillors elected after the May 2027 elections could then consider whether the role should remain or be reallocated. AGREED: Appointing Cllr Cartlidge as Clerk to be considered at the Parish Council meeting on 2 December 2026.

22. Next scheduled Meetings
Parish Council Meeting - Wednesday, 2 December 2026 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall

23. Closed Session [if required]: None

24. Meeting Closed: 10:03pm

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