

Article submitted to The Bridge magazine in January 2020

New entrance signs

The three new cast iron entrance signs and their oak posts are still waiting for installation – taking up room in my house... You can see the picture on our Facebook page in the pictures section, or please email me and I'll send you it. We are now working with the Borough Council to arrange installation, which also requires a location survey for utility cables/pipes. One of the signs is planned for the corner of Hall Close, so it can be seen as you enter Harrold from over the main bridge. The second will replace the current metal entrance sign at the Lavendon end of the village. The third should be along Odell Road coming down into Harrold from the Little Odell junction.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is now reaching its final stages. After the latest village consultation in early Summer concluded, a draft plan was prepared. The draft plan was reviewed and discussed by the parish council during November. This will be followed by a further village consultation and discussions with Bedford Borough Council before the draft plan will be submitted for official examination in Q1 2020. The process will be concluded with a Village Referendum following the official examination.

Planning: Planning application for Odell Road (aka "90 dwellings")

Application number: 19/00842/MAO. Proposal: Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and outline planning permission for residential development of up to 90 dwellings...

The parish council notes the rejection of an appeal and refusal of planning permission by the government's Planning Inspectorate following a public inquiry at the end of last year. There were many people involved in this process, but from a parish council perspective, thank you to Cllr Sebastian Reger for attending the inquiry and presenting the council's objection. To recap: The parish council viewed the application as an unwelcome distraction, especially given that it was clearly out of step with the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Harrold and the expectations of the community and Bedford Borough Council. The parish council therefore submitted a formal objection, written by a professional planning consultant. The borough council's views were in line with those of the parish council and permission was refused; the applicant made an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (UK Government level) which is what has now resulted in the appeal being rejected and planning permission refused.

Budget and precept for 2020/21

The parish council has approved an increase in the precept from £74,708 to £81,128; this is the amount of council tax levied by the parish council to carry out its services. This is formed of a 1.9% increase for inflation and the remaining increase is to account for £5k annual funding to the Harrold Centre Committee to ensure the long-term viability of the Harrold Centre building. The overall percentage increase in the precept should show on individual tax summaries as an 8.6% rise, or £9.19 per year per Band D household; bringing the total annual Band D household cost up to £116.13.

Parking restrictions for the High St and The Green

The borough council consultation process is currently in progress for implementation of the amendments to parking restrictions that we requested earlier in the year around the High St and The Green – these are the yellow signs you may have seen on posts in this area. In June, the council

accepted the proposal from BBC Highways for a single yellow line extension along the High St, double yellow lines at the narrow section on The Green (to stop the road being blocked) and removal of one of the High St school bus bays. Freeing up the inside of the bend on the High St was presented as the best option for allowing larger vehicles to pass through at peak times. You can view the proposal in the Appendix of the June 2019 Minutes on our website, or I can send this out via email upon request.

Orange recycling bags

You can put these bags out with your recycling if your orange wheelie bin becomes full. These are available at Harrold Butchers and at the Coop. Please only take the amount you need; we assist the Borough Council in running this service and we only get restocked on an ad hoc basis.

Harrold Parish Council Facebook page

If you would like updates on Parish Council activity then please join the Harrold Parish Council Facebook page. Link is below.

Address for correspondence (only):

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www.harroldparishcouncil.com

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The next meetings are 12th February, 11th March and 8th April. The Annual Parish meeting for electors (ie you), and the Annual Parish Council meetings will be held in May. All are very welcome and encouraged to attend; there is a public open forum at 7.30pm at every meeting. Please email the clerk if you wish to address the council as we may wish to add the item to the main agenda so that we can take immediate action. Please note that the clerk role is part time, so you may not receive an immediate response to correspondence, although I do try to be flexible and spread my time through the week.