

## Article submitted to The Bridge magazine in March 2021

### **Parish council meetings**

The parish council is continuing to follow advice from our guiding bodies not to hold physical meetings at present. The council will therefore continue to meet using video conferencing for the near future ([www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)).

### **Flooding**

In late December, Harrold and other villages were badly hit by surface flash flooding, followed by flooding of the main river a couple of days later.

**Learning from the floods:** The borough council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, are obliged to create a Flood Investigations report (with input from the Environment Agency) to clarify what happened during the Christmas surface flooding and river flooding, and what can be improved. This is expected in the coming months.

**Harrold Flood Group:** The parish council is partway to having an active Flood Group to assist during flood situations. A Flood Plan has been drafted and is being refined by the group – this document states how the group will operate. Six parish councillors and six parishioners have joined the group. The Flood Plan needs to be reviewed and approved by the borough council Resilience Team before the group can start operating. The group also needs training on the use of equipment and needs to run a practice version of events. In a flood scenario, the group will be the intermediary between the Resilience Team and residents and is likely to be involved in the following activities: monitoring river levels/surface flooding and communicating with the borough council Resilience Team over expected water levels, door knocking (set routes) if the flood threatens homes, assisting parishioners affected by flooding (evacuation to agreed locations, protecting houses with aqua sacks – modern sandbags), assisting during the clear up and getting information to flood-affected residents, amongst other tasks.

**Internet Flood Camera:** The parish council is supporting a request to the Environment Agency to install a public internet flood camera by the bridge; funding has also been set aside. The EA have carried out a site visit and are assessing the viability and costs; they previously confirmed that they have budget available. Borough council Highways have provisionally approved the installation pending confirmation of equipment specifications and ongoing maintenance contracts. The location sits within Carlton parish, so the parish council have been consulted to request support. A camera in this location will: 1. Allow people to plan their journeys around the state of the road before leaving their homes. 2. Provide flood-severity information to the newly-formed Harrold Flood Group to inform their decisions in a flood situation.

**Flood channel improvements:** The parish council has reallocated and committed funding towards a proposal to improve the flood channel that protects Harrold from surface flooding from the fields to the north. The proposal includes extending the coverage of the channel, speeding the flow of water down it, and increasing the rate at which it empties in the north east. We are currently working with landowners and the borough council to secure improvements. The borough council's Director of the Environment has assigned an engineer to: "scope out the works, determine the efficacy of the proposal, highlight any legal/consent issues/responsibilities, determine costs and potential funding sources and provide an initial suitable staged timeline to progress this forward". Borough Councillor Alison Foster has also put forward a sizeable contribution from her ward fund, having walked the channel and seen the potential for improvement.

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are pleased to have submitted the final version of the plan for independent examination following multiple consultations with Harrold residents and statutory consultees. The Neighbourhood Plan is on the parish council's website in the Neighbourhood Plan section. If you are unable to view the documents online then you can contact the clerk to view a paper copy. The borough council are now inviting you to send in your views on this version. Representations must be made in writing to the borough council, preferably using the consultation form available on the borough council website: [www.bedford.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning)

Responses can be:

- emailed to: [planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk); or
- Posted (with a stamp) to: Planning Policy Team, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP.

Representations must be received by 5pm on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

All comments will be taken into consideration by the independent person appointed to formally examine the neighbourhood plan.

Following the independent examination, and if no issues are found with the plan, we will prepare for a referendum for the village to adopt the plan this year. The earliest this can happen is May 2021 due to the government's Covid restrictions. The outcome of this lengthy and laborious process, is having control over the location, type and amount of development in Harrold, backed by the public through multiple consultations. Please note that there is no route to avoid all development in Harrold, as the numbers are assigned by the government and passed down to us by the borough council in their Local Plan.

## **Harrold Parish Council Facebook page**

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

Address for correspondence (only):

David Brough, Clerk and Proper Officer, Harrold Parish Council, 3 Saxon House End, Harrold, MK43 7FS.

07870108315. [harroldparishcouncil@outlook.com](mailto:harroldparishcouncil@outlook.com)

[www.harroldparishcouncil.com](http://www.harroldparishcouncil.com)

[www.facebook.com/harroldpc](https://www.facebook.com/harroldpc)

The next council meeting dates are: 14<sup>th</sup> April, 12<sup>th</sup> May (Annual Council and Annual Parish Meetings), and 9<sup>th</sup> June. These are expected to be held using Zoom for the near future, but please check the agenda of each meeting for details.