

## **Article submitted to The Bridge magazine in November 2019**

### **New entrance signs**

We've now received the three new cast iron entrance signs for the village and we're really pleased with them. You can see the picture on our Facebook page (Harrold Parish Council), 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 cables/pipes. One of them 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 is proving somewhat trickier and at present we're not sure where this should go, so we may proceed with the first two to start with; the boundary between Harrold and Odell meanders up Odell Road and appears in conflict with Post Office addresses in the Little Odell area.

### **Christmas lights**

At the time of writing (early November) we are finalising plans for the Christmas lights on The Green. The original string lights broke strand by strand over the years and finally gave up in 2018; the council was spending hundreds of pounds each year to replace the failing strands. Leaving the lights up through the year reduces their lifespan significantly, not least because they have also been vandalised. Taking them down and then getting them back into the branches of such tall trees every year is a monumental effort and requires a team of tree surgeons with ropes – expensive and not practical on an ongoing basis – it also increases the risk they will get broken. We have been testing the use of Christmas light projectors and they seem very effective, although it still presents its own installation challenges. This year will therefore be an experiment and we ask you to be understanding of this: crossed fingers. The Christmas tree next to the Coop will still be in place, as usual.

### **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 will be reviewed and discussed by the Parish Council during November. This will be followed by a further village consultation and discussions with the 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 view remains that the Catesby Estates plan is an unwelcome distraction, especially given that it is clearly out of step with the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Harrold and the expectations of the community and Bedford Borough Council. The council therefore submitted a formal objection, written by a professional planning consultant, to the Borough Council planning department in response to this application. The Borough Council's views were in-line with those of the Parish Council; the applicant then made an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (UK Government level), to whom the Parish Council also made an objection, and the first public inquiry was due for 12<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Church walk fence**

In relation to the poor state of the fence towards the top of Church Walk: we have exhausted all options to determine ownership and concluded that the “wedge-shaped” strip of land does not have an owner. We are therefore looking at the cost of replacing the fencing from the High Street down to the first house on Church Walk (on your right as you walk towards the church). The council has already agreed to finance the works on the Beech tree in that area, which showed in a survey as needing work to keep it safe. A planning application for completing the work was submitted to the Borough Council.

### **Harrold Centre grant**

The council is pleased to have allocated £5,000 of funding towards the running costs and future projects at the Harrold Centre. The council provided substantial financial support through the redevelopment of the centre and remains fully supportive; there is also an appreciation of the time and effort put in by the volunteers of the Centre Committee.

### **Harrold Playing Field Association (HPFA) sports pavilion refurbishment**

The council has been holding aside £100k of savings for renovations to the scout hut and sports pavilion. The scout hut work is now complete and £70k remains for the pavilion. The schedule of work provided by the HPFA includes essential repairs to the roof, electrical improvements, access and facilities for wheelchair and internal redecoration. The council understands the HPFA are in the process of creating detailed building plans and the council will start the funding process by covering these costs.

### **Parking restrictions for the High St and The Green**

We are on a waiting list with the Borough Council for the consultation process and implementation of the amendments to parking restrictions that we requested earlier in the year around the High St and The Green. 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 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):

Harrold Parish Council, Brookfield House, 79 Harewelle Way, Harrold, MK43 7DW.

07388 125821. [clerk@harrold.org.uk](mailto:clerk@harrold.org.uk)

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

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

The next meetings are 8th January and 12th February – there is no meeting currently planned for December. 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.