



ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

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Throughout this report the initials UPC = Urchfont Parish Council and WC = Wiltshire Council.

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW (Mrs. Nicky Mitchell)

At the Parish Meeting on Thursday 9th April 2015, Nicky Mitchell, the Chairman of the Parish Council gave the following report on Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) activities during 2014/15.

- **Council Operating Structure**

We have a full quota of 11 councillors, Andy Stephens was welcomed back in 2014. The new system of combining Full Council and Planning on a monthly basis is proving successful with Lead Councillors reporting back at regular intervals. One adjustment has been made as meetings were becoming very lengthy. The Lead Councillor/ Clerk Reports on the Agenda are now listed as Written Reports which are submitted to all councillors prior to the meeting. To date these have been listed on the website in the minutes of the meeting. It has been brought to our attention that the public are unaware of the items in the reports prior to our meetings so these will now be submitted with the Agenda and reported on in the Minutes posted on the website as from this month. There is not enough room in the notice boards for them all to be printed out.

- **Working Groups**

Working Groups continue to be created where needed, the latest being to gather and assess projects for the 106 Funding that will come from the Redcliffe Homes Development later in the year. This is being headed by Andy Stephens with Liz Clifton Page and Helen Gibb and relevant residents will be added when projects are decided. A display of the current status was provided.

Others Groups still running are:

Community Access/ Travel Plan - UPC Members are Nicky Mitchell, Royston Thomas, Bill Donald with Lisa Kinnaird, Emma Little and Jane Sanger from the school. This Group is looking at ways of improving the congestion at Top Green and Blackboard Lane during school drop off and pick up times. A School Travel Plan Survey was undertaken and completed at the school, the results of which are on the UPC Website. In conjunction with this a grant application for possible access pathways to be created has been submitted to Ruth Durrant, Wiltshire Council School Travel Plan Advisor. A site meeting with her at the end of April and the Group is very hopeful that it will qualify for some funding. Another project is to widen the 'lay-by' area along Crookwood Lane to create 10/12 parking places for school drop off and users of the playing field and tennis courts. Unfortunately an application to Wiltshire CATG failed as they don't fund parking so we are looking at other means of funding.

Cemetery Damage - Members: Dave Mottram, Royston Thomas and Bob Lunn. Following tyre damage to the Cremation Plot improvements are needed to the vehicle turning area to protect the plot. These are to be completed in the near future.

Farmers Field - Members: Charlotte Hill Baldwin, Phil Milanes and Friends of Farmers Field. To improve Parish usage as a wildlife centre. Most recently they have been confronting a problem of an invasive plant, Lesser Pond Sedge, which is seeing increasing growth in the pond and spreading to other areas of the village down water courses. 2 options were considered by the PC and it was decided to reduce the weed by 100% by digging out the whole of the scrape and treating regrowth with chemicals applied by an approved contractor. The building of a beehive has been put on hold until this work is completed. A new memorial bench in memory of Maggie Ducker is to be installed.

Urchfont Pond Scene Improvements - This Group has now been disbanded as almost all the proposals have been achieved. Three seats have been repainted, a smart new oak waste-bin replaces two old metal bins and a wooden post for Christmas tree lights has been removed. The new duck house has been ceremonially handed over, the official legal transfer to the Parish Council will happen later in the year. Hopefully the ducks and geese will be happy in their new, luxury accommodation which surely must be "The Best in the Land"! When the footpath behind the pond wall is completed and possibly the wall repaired, 2 new wooden duck floats will be installed to replace the old well-worn ones. New floats have already been purchased. An underground electric supply from the duck house to the heritage light for parish use is a project headed by Royston Thomas for the next financial year.

On behalf of the Parish Council the Chairman thanked all those residents and councillors involved in the Working Groups for their time and effort.

- **Other Matters**

School Path – Rights of Way claim - Early last year the Council was asked to act as the facilitator on behalf of some Urchfont residents regarding the pathway from Top Green to the School gate, challenging its status as a Right of Way. This is being investigated by Barbara Burke at Wiltshire Council and a decision is awaited.

Speed limits/ Road Safety - The Council is still trying to have the 30mph speed limit extended at either end of the village. Claire Perry visited and wrote a recommendation to Wiltshire Council Highways Department but to no avail. It is understood that the limit will be reduced from 50 to 40mph from the Gateway sign on the western end of the village up to the 30mph sign at Blackboard Lane. No movement the other end. However, 3 road crossing/ bus hard standing at Crooks Lane, Walnut Close and The Paddock are planned for 2014/15 to improve safety crossing at these points and potentially reduce speed on the B3098. Early last year the Council also applied for a 20mph speed limit through the village centre. Urchfont was fortunate to be chosen as one of 2 villages to have this in 2014/15. It will apply to all roads throughout the village not just the High Street, Blackboard Lane and Crookwood Lane. 20mph signage will be on all roads leading off the B3098.

Flooding in the Bottom - Progress here has been very slow. Atkins have carried out 2 structural surveys since last spring and publication of the latest results is awaited although they are now with Wiltshire Council. Talk of quick fix options before last winter never materialised. This issue has proved very frustrating and the cause of great anxiety to the residents at the Bottom. The PC has supported the residents throughout but unfortunately we are unable to have much influence.

All these projects have been ongoing, but it demonstrates how much time progression takes. Nothing is a quick fix!

- **Sale of Urchfont Manor**

It is now 2 years since the sale of Urchfont Manor and the PC has almost completed the resulting projects with Wiltshire Council regarding the Parish Facilities excluded from the sale. The path to Oakfrith Wood on the Northern perimeter of the Playing Field and farmer's fields has now been completed by Wiltshire Council. A 5 year tree survey was undertaken and necessary felling and pruning took place. A bridge was constructed over the culvert, post and rail fencing installed plus several access gateways. We are now in the final legal stages of setting up the CAT land transfer from Wiltshire Council to Urchfont Parish Council. When this is complete the PC will undertake some ground

improvements, where it gets very muddy, and install additional signage and litter bins. The Chairman said she is pleased that to date users seem very pleased with the new, wide pathway.

The owners of the Manor, Eleanor Jones and Chris Legg, have kept the permissive path open through their grounds to allow access to the Cricket Ground but the gates to the old path to Oakfrith Wood have been closed. The PC is grateful for this and as a reminder, pedestrians are asked to keep to the mown pathway, not to wander around the grounds and keep dogs on the lead.

The Manor has now leased the Cricket Ground to the Parish Council for 125yrs and the PC has in turn sub leased it to Urchfont Cricket Club for 125 yrs. At their AGM the official sub lease was signed and Dave Mottram, Cricket Club Chairman presented the PC with the designated Peppercorn Rent - a large jar of whole, black peppercorns from Fortnum and Mason no less. A delightful gesture!!

The final undertaking is the Playing Field. The PC is currently negotiating the details of a CAT transfer with Wiltshire Council and the School. It has dragged on a little but it is hoped now that this will be completed in the near future.

Recently, along with the Oakfrith pathway, a new post and rail fence was installed on the inside boundary of the school driveway with a gateway at the top end. It is hoped to have a footpath on the playing field side, up and round to the preschool gate, thereby keeping all pedestrians off the driveway. This is part of the Travel Plan Grant application as Wiltshire Council do not have the funding. The football pitch has been reinstalled to its adjusted position. The goalposts have been moved and new nets installed so football matches are up and running properly.

PC thanks go to Stephen Morgan and John Price at Wiltshire Council for the meetings and negotiations required for all these facilities. Alistair Everett the PC solicitor continues to examine the content of the leases and advise modifications where necessary. The PC is extremely grateful for his patience and diligence over many months now.

A separate CAT land transfer has been completed for Paddock Green which the PC now own and maintain.

- **Manor Farmyard Development**

The PC is very fortunate to have Simon Holt's expertise as a Chartered Surveyor when this development was proposed. He has worked closely with Redcliffe Homes, Wiltshire Planning Department and Conservation Department paying great attention to the detail of it all to ensure that it met with the majority of our villagers' approval. Not an easy task! The Chairman expressed PC gratitude to him for this work on this and many other planning applications that he has overseen.

- **Neighbourhood Plan**

Urchfont Parish Council was very keen to set up a Steering Group with detailed Terms of Reference to produce a Neighborhood Plan for the Parish. The Group was formed of Parish Councillors and residents, all of whom had relevant qualifications and skills to produce the Plan. That a Plan has been drafted, following so much Consultation and at such a reasonable cost, serves as testament to the hundreds of hours of volunteer time which have been expended. All households in the Parish have received the policy document extracted from the draft plan which is still being developed. The Chairman urged everyone to read this and respond if there are any issues. When the plan goes to Referendum, it is fundamentally important that all in the Parish vote for it. Without a Neighbourhood Plan our Parish will

be a soft target for house builders. The Chairman said that she firmly believed that this Plan will help to serve our community well in ensuring that the right number and type of houses are built in the best locations.

- **Thanks go to all those who contribute to the work of the Parish Council:**
 - Philip Whitehead who became our Wiltshire Councillor in May last year. He regularly attends our meetings and has been very supportive over the year.
 - All the Co-opted members of previous Committees and new Working Groups
 - Paul Papworth-Smith, our internal auditor
 - Alistair Everett for his continued time and patience with ongoing legal matters relating to the sale of Urchfont Manor.
 - Friends of Farmer's Field led by Phil Milanes
 - Elaine Bancroft, Alison and Malcolm Taylor, Lisa Kinnaird and other friends for looking after the ducks and geese in all weathers and managing their house move.
 - Sue Smith who keeps the Triangle planting looking beautiful.
 - The Rights of Way Group who continue their good work keeping the footpaths clear
 - Eleanor Jones and Chris Legg for allowing the Permissive Path through the Manor Grounds to the Cricket Ground.
 - Richard Hawkins for his design and photographic skills for our posters and Redhorn News covers.
 - All those who helped with the erection of the Christmas tree and its lights and those on the pond wall itself this year, in the absence of branches behind the wall. People generally seemed very pleased with the additional reflection created.
 - Martin Bodman and Geoff Potter for their assistance with heavy duty requirements around the village.
 - Richard Harris for his generosity in maintaining the electrical requirements of the defibrillators.
 - Kevin Summers who provides the skips at the Playing Field, The Croft and Wedhampton.
 - Colin Whitehead for his work coordinating Neighbourhood Watch
 - Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Stuart Davies, Julie Elliott, Bill Donald, Alex Hiscock, Simon Holt, Linda Jennings, William Lang, Dave Mottram, Geoff Potter, Phil Snook, Andy Stephens, Colin Whitehead and David Way as the Wiltshire Council adviser.
 - The Parish Steward employed by Wiltshire Council to undertake minor highways maintenance
 - Sarah Hanks, the WC Community Coordinator
 - Jenny Holt for planting thousands of bulbs throughout the village, the blooms of which will be very noticeable next spring.
 - Trevor Fackrell for his valiant efforts picking up roadside litter cycling along the A342 to Lydeaway and down to Foxley Corner.

Clerk to the Council, Bob Lunn, has a workload far beyond his allocated hours but continues to fulfil all requirements with no complaints. No doubt he will be very pleased when all the dealings with Wiltshire Council regarding CAT transfers are complete as they take up a lot of his time.

Our Planning Administrator, Sandra Johnston, continues to deal with all Planning application matters plus the Planning Committee Agenda and meetings. The PC is very grateful to her for running this so smoothly.

Last, but not least, the Parish Councillors. On behalf of the Parish residents the Chairman thanked all the Councillors for the time and effort they afford the Parish Council which, in many cases, is considerable.

The Chairman then said that this would be her last Chairman's Review after over 5 years in the PC Chair. She thanked past and current Councillors with whom she had worked. It had been a very interesting learning experience for an interloper to the village 11 years ago. She had been very privileged and flattered to have signed several CAT's and leases that run for 125 years. When they come up for renewal, we obviously won't be here, but people may wonder "who was she?" and, as Bob signed as well "who was he? To be in the historical annals of Urchfont she regards as an honour. However, without the support of the other Councillors this would have been difficult. Since being Chairman, the initial support of Peter Newell as Vice Chairman guiding her along the way was very important and, subsequently, Dave Mottram and she had worked very well together. Our Clerk, Bob Lunn, has been a huge support regarding the administration of the Council. Make no mistake, we are extremely fortunate to have our current Council made up of people of such high calibre and varied abilities. She said that for the most part she had enjoyed it but there had been some major challenges on her watch. The Council has always strived, with the best interests of Urchfont and the Parish always at heart, to do their best and she was sure, the Council will continue to do so. She added that she is not abandoning the Council, technically, she has another 2 years to run. She is flattered that the Council would like her to stay as a member and, let's face it, what would she do with herself without some involvement?!

MEMBERS OF URCHFONTS PARISH COUNCIL as at April 2015

Cllr Liz Clifton-Page	Red Gables, Blackboard Lane, Urchfont, SN10 4RD	07740 029078
Cllr Graham Day	The Farmhouse, Cuckoo Farmyard, Urchfont, SN10 4SL	01380 848484
Cllr Bill Donald	Paddocks, The Cartway, Wedhampton, SN10 3QD	01380 848113
Cllr Helen Gibb	The New Barn, Cuckoo Farmyard, Urchfont, SN10 4SL	01380 848474
Cllr Charlotte Hill-Baldwin	14 Greengate Road, Wedhampton, SN10 3QB	01380 848594
Cllr Simon Holt	The Tiled House, High Street, Urchfont, SN10 4QL	01380 840100
Cllr Nicky Mitchell (Chairman)	1 Oakston, High Street, Urchfont, SN10 4QL	01380 848410
Cllr Dave Mottram (Vice Chairman)	Cranfield, The Bottom, Urchfont, SN10 4SD	01380 840612
Cllr Margaret Simper	4 Ballingers, Urchfont, SN10 4RL	01380 840867
Cllr Andy Stephens	Jubilee House, Townsend, Urchfont SN10 4RR	07778 264506
Cllr Royston Thomas	Peppercombe, Peppercombe Lane, Urchfont, SN10 4QR	01380 848100
Clerk to the Council Bob Lunn	14 Walnut Close, Urchfont, SN10 4RU Email: urchfontpc@hotmail.com	01380 848737
Planning Administrator Sandra Johnston	24 The Paddock, Urchfont, SN10 4SH Email: Sandra-j@virgin.net	01380 848774

<i>Accounts subject to Internal and External Audit in due course</i>	2013/14	2014/15
PARISH COUNCIL OPENING BALANCE 1ST APRIL	£13,085	£7,446
INCOME		
Precept	£33,200	£40,836
Misc Income (Purchase Refunds, Duck Shed sale, Bank Interest, Pond, Tennis Court Rent, Magazine Refund)	£551	£536
Redcliffe Homes Donation	£0	£500
Cemetery	£1,265	£480
VAT refund	£1,033	£2,077
Total INCOME	£36,049	£44,429
EXPENDITURE - FIXED COSTS		
Clerk/Planning Administrator salaries / Fees / HMRC	£11,462	£11,552
Planning Administrator / HMRC prior year	£1,223	£0
Legal Fees	£1,968	£352
Subscriptions	£598	£582
Insurance	£1,250	£1,271
Payroll Bureau Costs (2014/15 includes £114 prior year costs)	£144	£216
Fixed Costs Sub-Total	£16,645	£13,973
EXPENDITURE - RUNNING COSTS		
Parish Contractor's 5 Year Contract Costs	£7,358	£7,477
Expenses & Training	£29	£209
Village Hall Hire	£238	£192
Office Equipment and Consumables	£1,219	£1,070
Audit Fees	£500	£300
Redhorn Magazine, PR & Marketing, Website Hosting & Fees	£2,162	£1,355
Chairman's Allowance	£84	£117
General Contingency	£420	£0
Allotment Land Provision	£1,000	£1,000
Play equipment maintenance / ROSPA Inspection	£86	£113
Ad Hoc Maintenance - Cemetery, Defibrillator, Notice Boards, The Triangle, Pond & Ducks	£2,705	£736
Skips & Chipper Services	£1,180	£1,160
Running Costs Sub-Total	£16,981	£13,729
EXPENDITURE - PROJECTS		
Street Furniture	£2,154	£0
Tree Survey Remedial Works	£0	£950
Pond Green Upgrades	£0	£454
Football Re-alignment, New Goal Posts and Nets	£0	£520
Projects Sub-Total	£2,154	£1,924
EXPENDITURE - OTHER COSTS		
VAT payments	£1,573	£1,592
Community & Other Grants	£4,335	£4,524
Other Costs Sub-Total	£5,908	£6,116
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (excluding commitments)	£41,688	£35,742
UPC Project Commitment Funds carried forward to 2015/16 (VC/UPC road safety & hard standings, Cemetery Damage, Bier House Repairs, Farmers Field)	£0	£7,987
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (including commitments)	£41,688	£43,729
PARISH COUNCIL CLOSING BALANCE AT 31ST MARCH (RESERVE)	£7,446	£8,146
OTHER MANAGED FUNDS		
Allotment Association		
Opening Balance at 1st April	£140	£327
Income	£713	£539
Expenditure	£525	£359
Closing Balance at 31st March	£327	£507
Neighbourhood Plan Facility Grant		
Opening Balance at 1st April	£0	£3,668
Income	£4,230	£0
Expenditure	£562	£3,668
Closing Balance at 31ST MARCH	£3,668	£0
Overall UPC Current Account Balance at 31 March	£11,441	£16,640
UPC Allotments Re-Provision Savings Account	£3,001	£4,002

Community Grants paid in 2014/15

Organization	Grant Awarded For:	Grant
Link Scheme	To supplement funds to meet expenses of volunteers and admin costs	£100
Urchfont Community Shop	Purchase of new electronic point of sale equipment	£1599
Urchfont Pre-School	To update equipment and resources	£500
Urchfont WI	To replace damaged Gateway planters	£300
St Michaels Project	To fund initial project costs	£500
Urchfont Crocket Club	To update facilities within the pavilion	£1500
Dauntsey's School	Donation for Christmas Tree	£25
	TOTAL PAID	£4524
Friends of Oakfrith Wood	Towards the cost of providing new entrance signage – payment deferred to 2015/16	£500

The Council is represented on the Devizes Area Board, Devizes Community Area Planning Partnership, Village Hall Management Committee and the Parish Trust. A Councillor is also appointed as liaison with the Ministry of Defence (Salisbury Plain).