



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 9th November 2016 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM – Chairman), Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Thomas (RT), Day (GD), Stephens (AS), Gibb (HG), Baker (PB), Hill (TH) and Chapman (JC)
Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL) **Planning Administrator:** Johnston (SJ)
Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Philip Whitehead (PW)
Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): John Knight

1. **Welcome by the Chairman**
2. **Apologies:** None
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None
4. **Proposal to exclude the public / press during discussion of Item 16**

The Chairman explained that to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 it was proposed to hold item 16 'in camera'. Recognising that the electorate has the right to know what the Council is doing, GD questioned whether this proposal is appropriate. BL confirmed that this is covered by legislation and UPC Standing Orders to protect the identity of claimants and those being the subject of perceived claims or criticism.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Decision
To exclude the public / press from item 16 to discuss the outcome and learn lessons from a code of conduct case and perceived councillor behavioural issues.	DM	BD	1 abstention 9 in favour Proposal Agreed

5. **Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports** – there were no requests from the public to participate.

6. **Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2016**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Decision
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true record of the meeting.	BD	GD	Unanimously Agreed

7. **Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2016.** DM reviewed the list of outstanding and ongoing actions with particular reference to the following:

FC/45/16 – Bikes on Salisbury Plain – BD reported that he is still awaiting a response from Richard Broadhead.

FC/70/16 – Meet with Tree Officer to discuss right trees in right place – DM reported that he and RT met with the WC Tree Officer on 8th November, they had agreed the basis of a 5 year plan to improve the quality and position of trees in the Parish. Areas particularly discussed on the day were:

- Paddock Green – potential to plant new trees along the Paddock side and then remove the older and larger trees along the centre path
- Pond Green – condition of ash trees, one is in a particularly poor condition
- Trees along the road side verge from Stonepit Lane towards the new bus hard standing – trees could be removed to create a 1.5 – 2m grass verge. The option to create a footpath was also considered.

It is proposed to produce a draft plan for discussion at the Parish Meeting in March 2017; the plan can then be informed by owners and other residents in the Community. The Plan could then be incorporated into the ten year UPC Strategic Plan. RT proposed that Astil should be invited back to update their earlier tree survey; he would seek an estimate in this respect for budget purposes. He also suggested that there may be a need to set up a working group to facilitate and oversee progress on the 5 year plan. BL reminded councillors that the Plan and proposed survey needs to incorporate trees within the recent land transfers to UPC of Oakfrith Path and the western end of the playing field.

FC/85/16 – Update concerned Wedhampton resident on Wedhampton Manor issue – BD reported that whilst he had updated the resident, she had raised additional concerns regarding the 10 or more people alleged to be resident in the property, does this fall within a rent scheme or more controlled multiple occupancy scenario. PW advised that the issue should be referred to the WC Enforcement Team who will investigate and determine whether any regulations are being breached.

FC/86/16 – Look for volunteers for Urchfont Players – it was agreed that this action can be closed.

8. Finance

a. To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st October 2016 – Having distributed these statements to all councillors prior to the meeting, BL highlighted the following factors:

- i. Inclusion of the 106 funds part received and the balance expected from WC. He had made a claim, with photographic evidence of works completion, for the balance of the available funds (£29,018) on 9th November. A small balance of £315 will need to be paid from UPC project funds to cover the additional turf required to complete the project.
- ii. The Statement indicates that a claim(s) for VAT refund in the order of £13.8k will need to be made during the year, BL had submitted a claim on 9th November for £7,485.54 to cover payments to the end of October 2016; this includes a significant VAT element for the first playground payment which is not funded by Section 106 monies from WC.
- iii. The bank reconciliation had been completed successfully.
- iv. On current predictions a reserve of £11,072 is indicated at 31st March 2017.
- v. Being only just over 4 months until the end of the financial year, it is important that all budgeted funds are spent or identified as surplus for budget adjustment.

ACTION: FC/90/16 - ALL

b. Precept and Budget 2017/18 Preparation – to consider way forward, including request for budget proposals – BL outlined the programme for budget and Precept claim 2017/18 preparation as follows:

- i. Preparation of initial budget draft – prior to December meeting. Whilst he already had a good idea of the usual expenditure and income streams, BL requested councillors to submit bids to him for 2017/18 funds that they anticipate will be required for any fixed, running or project costs by 25th November 2016.

ACTION: FC/91/16 - ALL

- ii. Consideration of initial draft at the meeting on 14th December 2016
- iii. Finalisation of the 2017/18 Budget and Precept claim at the meeting on 11th January 2017
- iv. Submission of the Precept claim to WC by the deadline of 20th January 2017

9. Councillor Vacancy – BL reported that he had received confirmation from WC Electoral Services that they had not received the required request from electors to hold an election to fill this vacancy, UPC is now authorised to co-opt as soon as is practicable. He went on to say that currently he is not aware of any expressions of interest from the Community electors to join the Council despite the invites posted in the November edition of Redhorn News, on the website and notice boards.

10. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other written Reports (attached on website)

a. Highways Report – GD proposed that UPC should support the offer of land from John Snook to improve the B3098 highway west of Urchfont from Witchell Lane to around the Village Gateway sign. DM suggested that as an alternative to carriageway widening of this stretch, this land could be used to facilitate the 'missing' stretch of footpath to Easterton. BL suggested that UPC could support the offer via a submission to the Area Board for consideration. PW advised that the cost of works to provide whatever improvement would be significant, as such the issue would most likely be subject to a WC 'substantive fund' submission which is dependent on proof of benefit to the Community.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Decision
To support the John Snook offer by raising the issue to the Devizes Area Board for consideration.	GD	BD	Unanimously Agreed

ACTION: FC/92/16 – BL

b. Clerks Report – BL indicated that he would update through other agenda items.

11. Section 106 Playground Project – BL reported that the project is almost complete. The final task to lay the safety rubber mulch is expected to be completed on 10th November, leaving just the removal of safety fencing and the storage container. BL will be meeting the Playdale Area Manager on 10th November to sign off the project and agree that the whole playground can be opened for public use. BL particularly thanked Emma Beaumont for her practical assistance with the project; AS thanked present and former members of the Steering Group together with Geoff Potter for the work that they had undertaken to facilitate the project. BL reported that none of the new equipment in the construction site had been damaged by intruders, but person(s) had clearly breached the safety / security fence on a number of occasions. Evidence of small fires in the wooden shelter remained a concern. DM asked whether the shelter is still required; consensus indicated that it is of value for shelter in adverse weather and as a meeting place by children. NM indicated that in a recent meeting with the School Head Teacher it had been suggested that the school CCTV system could probably be extended to cover the playing field and playground if costs could be shared. RT and TH both indicated that if this was possible then the camera equipment would need to be good enough to identify culprits in the event of an incident. It was agreed that NM in consultation with the School Head should initially investigate feasibility, costs and practicalities for further consideration at the December meeting. PB suggested that NM also asks the School Head to emphasise to her pupils the fact that the playground equipment is for their benefit and should not be misused or damaged.

ACTION: FC/93/16 – NM

(BL Post Meeting Note: Safety mulching, new gate to the UPC land holding, new signage put up on all playing field gates, responsibility notices replaced in play area and meeting with Playdale Area Manager all took place on 10th November. Fencing will remain in place until at least 12th November to allow safety mulching to set sufficiently before use

12. Neighbourhood Plan - DM reported with disappointment that the examiner had at this late stage in her examination had discovered that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) submitted with the Plan did not contain a non-technical summary. Linda Jennings will undertake the work, but then it will then be the subject of a further six week WC consultation period (not public consultation). DM emphasised that the Steering Group are not responsible for this further delay; the circumstances further indicate the need for a standard check list for all councils preparing neighbourhood plans.

13. 'Urchfont Best' - Best Kept Village Competition– JC reported that the first meeting of the working group had been held at the end of October resulting in a proposed list of category and area co-ordinators. A bee logo had been adopted. The competition entry will focus on Urchfont only, not the whole Parish. He stressed that this is not just a competition entry, but facilitating a longer term benefit brought about by all working together to improve the Community. He suggested an initial budget of around £400 this year to cover publicity and incidental costs, more may be required in 2017/18. It is intended to put an article(s) and maybe a flyer in Redhorn News, BL has created a temporary page under 'About the Community' on the website (to be developed) containing the proposed co-ordinator listings and notes of the first meeting. A stand will also be manned at the USPA Christmas Fayre on 2nd December.

14. Update on Current Parish Issues not covered by above agenda items

- a. **USPA Christmas Fayre** – this will be held on 2nd December, UPC / Urchfont Best have been invited to have a stand to promote their activities. Having agreed to take up the offer, JC agreed to co-ordinate and facilitate the production of display material including photographs and handouts. BL offered to update the UPC tri-fold handout and provide some photos of the new playground.
- b. **Liaison with the School** – NM reported that the School Head Teacher had questioned the fact that UPC were again raising the ownership of the eastern end of the playing field when she thought that this had been resolved. NM sent her an extract from the minutes of the meeting on 19th October which clearly indicated that the Council had only deferred the issue (minutes of FC meeting on 11th May 2016 Item 17c) pending completion of the western end CAT and now wished to pursue a number of options for the future to safeguard use by the community in perpetuity. In clarifying this position NM gave assurances that none of the options sought in any way to compromise the use of the playing field by the School as now; just establish formally that the field will remain green space for use by the community.

15. External Meetings – None to report

16. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda – None reported

17. The outcome and implications of a Code of Conduct case and associated behavioural issues – Discussion not minuted for publication in the public domain, no proposals were made and voted on during this session.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 14th December 2016 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Draft minutes prepared by Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council 10th November 2016

WRITTEN REPORTS FOR 9th NOVEMBER MEETING

a. HIGHWAYS

Road Improvements – John Snook proposals to WC Highways

West of Urchfont on B3098

In pursuit of action item 18a at the October full council meeting, I met Mr John Snook on Monday 31st October. We met at Goosehole Farmhouse, which is located at the western edge of Urchfont on the B3098.

Mr. Snook owns Goosehole Farmhouse, and land on both sides of the B3098 stretching westwards from the point where we met. From this point up to the 50mph traffic sign, the road narrows from its standard width. In addition, the road follows a mild bend. The combination of road narrowing and bending severely restricts sight lines for drivers in both directions. As with much of the B3098 to the west of Urchfont, there is no pavement for walkers at this point.

Mr. Snook is offering to gift a strip of land (of about up to a metre width) to allow the road to be widened to comprise two full lanes. If implemented, this scheme would reduce traffic collision risk by virtue of a wider road and increased sight lines. Most of this section of the road lies within the new 40mph speed limit. Obviously there is a risk that an improved road may encourage more speeding by motorists. However, the counterveiling argument is that regardless of motorist speed, a standard-width, better designed road is likely to result in risk reduction for motorists and pedestrians.

A342 junction at Lydeaway

Mr. Snook is one of many complainants about the design of this junction. I advised him that we had discussed the nature of his complaint, but that it is exceedingly unlikely that Wiltshire Council will take any measures to introduce changes/improvements.

Conclusion

I think it is worthwhile having a short discussion at the meeting on 9th November to decide whether UPC wishes to indicate support to Wiltshire Council for Mr. Snook's proposal (and his gift of land).

Councillor Graham Day
Councillor Trevor Hill (in absentia)

b. CLERKS REPORT

- i. Playing Field Proposal (Eastern End)** – As agreed at the October meeting, I will in due course be initiating discussions with WC to try to secure an agreement to protect this part of the playing field for the community in perpetuity. I have started to gather together previous documentation and arguments on this topic in preparation for a meeting with the Parish Council Solicitor before approaching WC. I expect this task to take an extended time, but hope to make exploratory approaches to WC before Christmas.

- ii. **Playground Upgrading** – Installation of the new playground is well advanced with completion of the equipment construction phase due on 4th November, I am due to inspect and sign off this phase on that date. The next phase is to install safety mulching under and around some equipment, this is now expected to be completed mid-week commencing 7th November instead of on the 15th originally forecast (weather dependent). I have a final sign off meeting scheduled with the Playdale Area Manager on 10th November. In the meantime all or part of the new facility will remain fenced for H&S and security reasons.

A new gate to provide dedicated access to the recreation ground during school operational hours (required by the CAT agreement) is expected to be installed by 4th November.

- iii. **Councillor Vacancy** – The deadline for electors to write to Electoral Services to ask for an election expires at the end of 3rd November. I will update you at the meeting on the way forward, either an election at a cost to the Parish or co-option. I have put an article in the November edition of Redhorn News and a notice on Notice Boards seeking expressions of interest from members of the community who might want to become a councillor. I have not received any such expressions to date.

- iv. **Parish Steward** – The Parish Steward Scheme has now been re-introduced, you may have already seen his brightly coloured vehicle in and around the Community. I am the nominated contact point for the Parish Steward, I have already met with him and discussed local requirements for his attention. He will be visiting the Parish normally once per month and will concentrate on priority tasks which I can identify, for example the clearance of debris and grass growing across the pavement adjacent to Farmers Field (now completed). Please let me know of any task which I could add to my priority listing, obviously it needs to be something which WC is responsible for (e.g. potholes, trees / shrubs overhanging the highway, covered road signs, pavement issues)

- v. **Preparation for Budget and Precept 2017/18** – It is intended to present the first draft of the budget at the 14th December 2016 meeting and for the Council to approve the final budget / Precept Requirement at the 11th January 2017 meeting. The budget will help to determine and generate the level of Precept requirement from WC, the submission deadline for which is 20th January 2017. There will be no Top-Up grant for 2017/18. To assist in the preparation of the initial draft budget, it would be useful if councillors can let me know about any expenditure they expect to be proposing for 2017/18 (Fixed, Running Cost or Project based) by the end of November. I will talk more about this under agenda item 7b on the 9th November.

I have already circulated to all councillors on 28th October 2016 the response that I made to the Consultation paper on the 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement.

Bob Lunn