



**Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall**

**Present: Councillors:** Day (GD – Vice Chairman), Mitchell (NM), Thomas (RT), Hill (TH), Donald (BD), Kemp (MK), Hawkins (RH), Creasey (GC), Cowen (LC) and Stevens (DS)

**Clerk to the Council:** Lunn (BL)

**Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings:** Whitehead (PW)

**Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting):** Peter Cook, Nicky Hammond

**1. Welcome by the Vice Chairman**

**2. Apologies:** Dave Mottram (DM)

**3. Declarations of Interest:** LC declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 16e

**4. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports**

**a. X72 substitute bus service** – Peter Cook, Chairman of the Bus Committee gave a report on the service provided by Urchfont Community Bus due to the closure of the B3098 in Easterton due to road works. Wiltshire Council (WC) requested that the Urchfont bus covered the Urchfont – Devizes – Urchfont section of the X72 route for 5 days, this was reduced to 3 days when road works were completed early. Whilst no additional passengers to normal used the Urchfont – Devizes route, five new passengers used the Devizes to Urchfont service on a daily basis and expressed their thanks. Peter thanked the volunteer drivers who took up this additional task. The Council endorsed this thanks to the Committee and drivers.

**b. Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Report** – PCSO Sam Burnside briefly attended the meeting to introduce himself as the local contact point for any issues. He had recently distributed his December report on crime in the Devizes area, BL confirmed that this had been circulated to all councillors. At this time of year in particular, doorstep cold callers can be an issue. These can sometimes be aggressive and persistent, any general concerns can be reported to 101 or dial 999 if an aggressive incident occurs. He confirmed that letters are being sent to speed offenders noted by Speed Watch and that he has personally made visits to persistent offenders. Unfortunately at this time PCSO's in Wiltshire are not permitted to assist Speed Watch volunteers / use radar guns and have no powers to issue penalty notices.

**c. Urchfont Telephone Box** – this item had to be postponed until the January 2018 meeting.

**5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>Decision</b>
To approve the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	RH	NM	Unanimously agreed

As a follow-up to the minutes, GD noted the very successful installation of the new lights around the pond and hoped that this facility would provide a useful asset for the parish for many years to come. He thanked the installation team of RT, TH, NM, GC, Jonathan Wildman and Mr & Mrs McEvoy for their efforts last week.

**6. Finance**

**a. To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017** – BL confirmed that he had distributed these documents to all councillors with the agenda, these showed details of all transactions made during November and forecast expenditure to the end of the financial year. The anticipated reserve at the end of March 2017 had reduced due to various factors.

**b. Precept 2018/19** – Having distributed to all councillors an updated budget and Precept proposal following the November meeting, BL gave a further update as follows:

- i. PW had confirmed that the WC Council Tax is most likely to be capped for 2018/19 at 1.99%, this is expected to be confirmed next week.
- ii. At the November meeting councillors had indicated a desire to cap the Parish Council element of council tax at 2% equating to an increase in Band D property tax from £87.99 to £89.75 per annum.
- iii. Subsequent reassessment of the distributed budget based on current information indicated that Fixed and Running Costs will remain unchanged, but the availability of funds for projects is likely to reduce by around £3k after taking into account expected CIL funding and carry forward of the PROW budget.

BL posed the question, "Does the Council want to proceed on the basis of a Precept demand which will result in a 2% increase in Council Tax (Parish Council element) per annum?"

BL also suggested that discussion of the detail of the actual 2018/19 draft budget should be deferred and be presented and approved at the March 2018 meeting when more definitive information is available on 2017/18 financial status; the potential funding for projects will determine what can be achieved in 2018/19 taking account of UWLNP and UPC 10 year strategy factors. Discussion resulted in the following proposal.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To set the Precept at £47,245 which will result in a 2% increase in the Parish Council element of Council Tax for 2018/19, subject to potential variation at the January meeting dependent on confirmed WC increase. 2018/19 budget to be presented to the March meeting.	GD	BD	Unanimously agreed

**ACTION: FC/97/17 – BL**

**c. Project Proposal - Installation of Urchfont gateway signs & bollards.**

BL explained that whilst he had been given delegation of £1000 at the November meeting to satisfy this requirement, subsequent quote submission from Ringway came in at £1,858.82 (distributed to all councillors) taking account of the fact that WC had now indicated that they will install four of the eight bollards free of charge utilising their internal workforce. BL sought approval for this quote based on the fact that it includes traffic management and responsibility for avoiding underground services, tasks which would be risky for UPC to undertake itself. He also sought a waiver of the financial regulations three quote requirement on the basis that Ringway had been recommended by WC and that they had the resources and necessary highways approvals / licences.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To waive the three quote requirement and accept the quote of £1858.82 + VAT from Ringway. BL to action.	TH	DS	Unanimously agreed

**ACTION: FC/98/17 – BL**

**7. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other written Reports (See Appendix attached on website only)**

- a. **Clerks Report** – no clarification required, some items discussed later on agenda.
- b. **Councillor Reports** – none submitted

**8. Assume responsibility for WC grass cutting and litter bin emptying in the Parish from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018**

– BL explained that UPC had indicated at the November meeting the intention to take on the responsibility for grass cutting and litter bin emptying currently undertaken by WC contractors. PW commented that this is a brilliant idea, which would be welcomed by WC in the light of current financial constraints. Unfortunately he confirmed that no funds will be transferred to UPC to undertake the task. However, on the basis of information from the November meeting he had already held discussions with WC Officers on potential quid pro quo beneficial arrangements that could be put in place for UPC and had received a very positive response. If UPC is interested in developing this arrangement, he would hold further talks within WC to confirm opportunities and report back. He was confident that these arrangements could be finalised before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and legal documentation put in place as appropriate.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
UPC is prepared to take over grass cutting and litter bin emptying from WC in exchange for development of potential quid quo pro beneficial cooperation arrangements for finalisation before 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018. BL to confirm this to PW.	GD	RT	Unanimously agreed

**ACTION: FC/99/17 – BL**

**9. Maintenance Contract & Litter Bin ITT's** – BL had distributed draft ITT's to all councillors with the agenda, these took account of the transfer of grass cutting and bin emptying discussed at Item 8 but the final contract could be amended if agreement with WC could not be reached prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. BL requested approval in principal for the ITT's subject to final due diligence checks on the actual areas to be covered for the various tasks. The proposed programme is as follows:

- Advert will appear in January edition of Redhorn and local Gazette
- ITT to be published 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Submission deadline 17<sup>th</sup> February 2018 – 1600hrs
- Evaluation to be complete by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018
- Contract start date 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018

BD asked whether the one litter bin in The Cartway, Wedhampton could be included in the ITT. GD suggested that a value should be included in the ITT for the required contractor public liability insurance of at least £5million.

**ACTION: FC/100/17 - BL**

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To accept the draft grass cutting and litter bin emptying ITT's in principle subject to inclusion of the above items and further due diligence checks on areas before issue.	GD	NM	Unanimously agreed

**10. Update of UPC Financial Regulations** – BL explained that the primary objective of the update distributed to all councillors with the agenda is to facilitate payment of invoices (by internet banking) that have already received full Council approval documented in minutes and without the need to gain two further signatories.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To approve and publish the draft update unchanged.	BD	RH	Unanimously agreed

**11. Crookwood Motocross** – BL had distributed a proposal from Potterne PC suggesting that they together with Easterton and UPC should write to the organisers of these events expressing the many concerns raised about access, lack of prior notice, impact on other events etc. This especially because WC appear to be having difficulty communicating with the organisers. BL had also distributed an update from PW in which he confirmed that the end of November deadline for a response from the organisers had been missed and that WC are working towards the issuance in January 2018 of an Article 4 Directive which would negate the legal use of farmers land for 14 days per year for such events and a further 14 days for preparation without the need for specific prior planning approval. PW expressed his personal view that there are many other plots of agricultural land in Wiltshire better suited for this type of activity away from villages and with direct access onto main highways,

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Having had the update from PW and noting that WC action is in hand, BL to respond to Potterne PC stating that UPC wish to await further WC updates in the New Year before participating in a local council letter to the event organisers.	GD	BD	Unanimously agreed

**ACTION: FC/101/17 – BL**

**12. Local Footpaths** – MK presented a number of photographs taken primarily in the Stonepit Lane lay-by and the Holloway depicting the fly tipping of building materials and proliferation of garden waste and non-biodegradable objects. In the Holloway it would appear that garden rubbish is just being tipped over adjacent

garden fences by the owners or their gardeners. It was agreed that TH should identify the owners of properties bordering the Holloway as a precursor to a collective letter being sent to all by BL. TH also agreed to approach another Urchfont resident again about the building materials in the Stonepit lay-by, and to speak to a resident of Wedhampton about materials being stored on a public lane. PW confirmed that WC is prepared to issue penalty notices in relation to fly-tipping on council owned land, he offered to check the status of the Holloway in this respect (BL to email PW).

GD thanked MK for her diligence in pursuing these matters.

**ACTION: FC/102/17 – TH / BL**

**13. Crookwood Lane Lay-by** – BL reported that, despite chasing, he is still awaiting the promised draft plans and costing information from WC following the meeting with PW and Richard Dobson (Highways Engineer) on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

**14. Allotment Hedges** – DS reported that he had attended the Allotment Association AGM at the end of November and had been asked to propose the reduction of ALL hedges around the allotments down to a height of five feet. BL had briefly discussed this with Mark Goddard, who is intending to trim the hedges later this month or early in January, who indicated that this would be a significant task because the trunks of the hedges at this height will be much thicker to remove and require different equipment. It was agreed that BL should obtain a quote from Mark Goddard for this work in comparison to the current accepted trimming height.

**ACTION: FC/103/17 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note – Quote requested from Mark Goddard on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017)

**15. Tree Shredder / Chipper Service** – BL reported that despite publication in Redhorn News, on the website, on Parish notice boards and on Facebook, no material was deposited for shredding / chipping over the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> December 2017. Ian Pocock had reported a significant reduction in the amount deposited in 2016 compared to previous years. BL suggested that the Council should consider withdrawal of the annual service with effect 2018. Discussion concluded with the following proposal:

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Due to lack of public demand, remove the annual tree shredder / chipper service with effect 2018.	RH	RT	Unanimously agreed

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

**a. Perceived Speeding in Urchfont High Street** – RH reported his discussion with a resident (David Byford) about his concerns over perceived speeding vehicles in the Urchfont High Street 20mph zone, in particular his view that this was in the main parents on school runs and white van drivers. Mr Byford has agreed to write an article in Redhorn News on the subject, it is suggested that UPC follow this up with an article the following month. GC asked whether Speed Watch could be deployed in the High Street; it was confirmed by GD that this is not an authorised zone for such activity.

**ACTION: FC/104/17 – BL**

**b. 2018 Best Kept Village** – GD suggested that Urchfont should again enter this competition in 2018, but there is firstly a need to identify a coordinator to follow in the footsteps of the sterling work undertaken by John Chapman in 2017. Councillors were asked to consider potential candidates for this task.

**ACTION: FC/105/17 – ALL**

**c. Redcliffe fencing behind Pond Wall** – the issue was again raised of redundant fencing belonging to Redcliffe which remains behind the Pond wall. BL commented that this is really an issue for Manor Farm residents to pursue, indeed this is already being done by Lynda McEvoy. UPC had offered to temporarily store the fencing at the Village Hall pending collection, but to date Redcliffe had not responded. Mrs Mcevoy is also challenging the tree planting behind the wall with Redcliffe; PW suggested that planning conditions for this development should be checked to establish whether a possible breach exists. BL to ask the Planning Administrator to check the planning conditions.

**ACTION: FC/106/17 – BL**

**d. Air Conditioning Unit at the Community Shop** – GD commented on the fact that the external heat exchanger had not been installed in accordance with planning approval, it was now sitting on slabs adjacent to / on the footpath. Comments were also made about its potential vulnerability to damage and tampering in this location. As Liaison Councillor with the Community Shop, NM was tasked to investigate and establish who had approved the relocation and on what basis.

**ACTION: FC/107/17 – NM**

(Post Meeting Note: BL emailed David Myers (copied to NM) on 14<sup>th</sup> December alerting him to these concerns and confirming the fact that the unit had not been installed in accord with planning approval. NM subsequently spoke to the Shop Chairman and he is now organising the re-location of the external unit with the contractor to the correct position on the wall.)

**e. Clock Inn Residents Association request for support** – BL had circulated a request from this Association seeking support for their attempt to get the speed limit reduced on the A342 from Stert to past The Clock Inn. Following discussion it was agreed that BL should respond supporting the initiative in principle but encouraging the Association to be more specific in their application about what they actually want to happen, e.g. speed limit to be reduced from 60 to 50mph.

**ACTION: FC/108/17 – BL**

**f. Urchfont Dental Surgery awards** – TH reported that the practice had been awarded Best Team (South West) at the Dentistry Awards 2017 and the Head Nurse/Deputy Practice Manager had been awarded Best Team Member (South). Parish Council congratulations go to all members of the Practice.

**g. Tree felling in Farmers Field** – LC reported that he had assisted Friends of Farmers Field (FoFF) in removing trees identified in the WWT Plan. FoFF are now keen to move forward to create the new access points to the field and other ideas, it was confirmed that they need to put forward a proposal for funding approval to facilitate this including provision of appropriate gates.

**ACTION: FC/109/17 – LC**

**h. Christmas tree on Pond Green** – RT requested assistance for the erection of the Christmas tree on Pond Green on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 1200 noon.

**ACTION: FC/110/17 - ALL**

## **17. External Meetings**

**a. Wiltshire Council Local Plan Review** – TH attended a meeting on this with the Chairman, see minutes of Planning Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December for more detail.

**b. Allotment AGM** – DS attended, see item 14 above

**c. Commemorating 1<sup>st</sup> World War** – RT attended a meeting to discuss the WC proposal to plant commemorative trees. It became clear that WC intend to plant a lot a trees in various locations and that the UPC request for one to three trees did not fit into that scheme (as is the case for Easterton and a number of other village proposals). If UPC want to plant trees then this will have to be self-funded. LC was of the view that tree planting is not an appropriate method of commemorating such a major and devastating event, surely it would be better to add something to the existing war memorial.

**18. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017** – BL reported that all actions had been completed or were in progress, none are unduly outstanding.

## **19. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda**

**a. Urchfont Telephone Box** – postponed from this meeting.

**b. Speed Watch** – it is intended to give a presentation at the March 2018 meeting.

**Meeting Closed at 9.45pm**

**Date of Next Meeting: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**

**The Parish Council wish all residents in the Parish a very happy and safe Christmas and all the very best for 2018.**



Signed as a true record of the meeting ..... 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018

## APPENDIX TO DECEMBER UPC AGENDA

### A. CLERKS REPORT – DECEMBER 2017

#### 1. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM FC MEETING ON 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**FC/87/17 – Draft Budget** - Updated 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft budget was circulated to all councillors on 9<sup>th</sup> November, this has subsequently been updated further and will be presented at the December meeting. However, all that is really necessary at this point is to confirm that UPC intends to increase the Precept by an amount equalling a 2% rise in Parish Council element of Council Tax, an intention indicated at the November meeting. WC have indicated that this is in line with their anticipated Council Tax increase for 2018/19. It is suggested that the detail of the budget can then be refined for presentation at the March 2018 meeting when more factual information is available on carry forward and Reserve elements of the 2017/18 accounts.

**FC/88/17 – 10 Year Strategy** – Updated action listing following strategy meeting circulated to all councillors on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

**FC/89/17 – Farmers Field Plan** – Martijn advised on 10<sup>th</sup> November that the version of the plan discussed at the November meeting had been accepted as the final version, no further work is necessary. He was requested to submit an invoice for the balance of the agreed funding, this is still awaited.

**FC/91/17 – RUH Cancer Appeal** – Email sent declining the offer of a presentation, but supporting the concept of the appeal.

**FC/95/17 – Missing Play Area Rocking Horse** – enquiries have established that the rocking horse is still with Emma Beaumont awaiting further repairs, she has agreed to have it installed as soon as possible.

**FC/96/17 – Transfer of WC Grass Cutting to UPC** – this item is on the December agenda for discussion at item 6.

**1. NEW GATEWAY SIGNS AND BOLLARDS** – These have all been received and are awaiting installation. WC will install four bollards free of charge during week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> December. A revised quote has been received from Ringway for the installation of the Gateway Signs and additional four bollards, this is on the agenda at Item 4c as the cost exceeds the amount previously delegated to me. Whilst the quote may seem a lot at first glance it must be remembered that it covers traffic management and installation above / around underground cabling. Council are requested to waive the three quotation requirement for this task on the basis that the contractor was recommended by WC and have all the necessary highways approvals / licences.

**3. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND LITTER COLLECTION ITT'S** – As agreed it is intended to put the UPC grounds maintenance contract commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 out to competition. The current contract was for a period of five years with an extension of an additional one year ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. It is proposed to assume responsibility for the grass cutting and litter bin emptying in Urchfont currently undertaken by WC, assuming that an acceptable agreement can be reached with WC on a quid pro quo arrangement (this to be discussed at agenda item 6). Council is asked to approve the draft ITT's subject to further due diligence checks on the specific areas to be covered for the various tasks included; the drafts are based on the ITT issued for the current contract.

**4. TREE SHREDDER / CHIPPER SERVICE 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER** – Despite advertising this service on the website, Redhorn News, notice boards and Facebook, as of the morning of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December nothing had been left for shredding / chipping. A further reminder was put out on Facebook that morning but it would appear that there was basically no demand for the service. I am awaiting a report from Mark Goddard as to whether any material was actually deposited by the time he attended on Sunday afternoon. If take up this year is confirmed as minimal, and taking account of a reported drop in use in 2016 compared to previous years, it is suggested that the Council should consider withdrawing this annual service from 2018.

**Bob Lunn**  
**7<sup>th</sup> December 2017**