

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2019 in the Village Hall.

Present: Councillors: Day (GD – Chairman), Hill (TH – Lead of Planning), Creasey (GC), Cottell (PC), Kemp (MK), Stevens (DS), Kinnaird (LK) and Botham (MB)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Mrs B Potter, Mr P Cook, Mrs C Cannon, Ms N Hammond, Mrs D Plank

A. Introduction

1. Welcome by the Chairman – GD welcomed all to the meeting, in particular he congratulated PW on becoming Leader of Wiltshire Council. He also thanked BL and DS for repairing the Cemetery Gate.

2. Apologies – Cllrs Cowen (LC) and Cottle (SC)

3. Nomination and Election of Vice Chairman – GD sought nominations for this post, none were forthcoming. It was agreed that this item will be carried forward to the September meeting.

B. PLANNING – see separate minutes

C. FULL COUNCIL MEETING

1. Declarations of Interest: TH declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5bi on the basis that he had used one of the bidding contractors in the past.

2. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

a. Historic Milestone at Lydeaway Junction – Mrs Plank raised the issue of the listed milestone which had been damaged by an electricity contractor vehicle and required extensive refurbishment as a result. Both she and Linda Jennings are prepared to project manage and undertake some of the work themselves, but need advice on the best way forward. See Item 4 below.

b. Cemetery Grass – Mrs Potter commented that the grass in the cemetery appears to be very long on occasions and suggested that the cutting regime during the summer months should be increased. BL confirmed that the Contractor is currently required to cut the grass on 18 occasions during the growing season, maybe this could be increased at extra cost to take account of growth. He will discuss with the contractor.

ACTION: FC/52/19 - BL

c. Best Kept Village Competition – Mrs Cannon reported that rumours suggested that two male County Round judges had been seen in the Village last week, but this is incorrect as the assigned judges are female. Two females had, however, been seen in the Village this week visiting the Community Shop and elsewhere. The results of the County round are expected in early August and winners will be presented with their awards on Saturday 15th September 2019. Urchfont may be asked to host the awards ceremony, but this has yet to be confirmed.

d. Farmers Field – Ms Hammond wondered why the long and potentially controversial discussion at the last meeting had not been reported in Redhorn News? GD responded that discussion of meetings is officially recorded in Council minutes available to all on the website and notice boards, they do not need to be fully reflected in Redhorn News. Ms Hammond commented that the Council is now intending to spend a lot of money on the training of volunteer chain saw operatives and the associated monitoring regime, when the valid point raised by Councillor Kinnaird that it would be more cost effective and minimise risks to use commercial contractors was effectively ignored. Ms Hammond then questioned the intended use of Farmers Field which she believed needs to

be reconsidered in consultation with members of the community. Use by prep school children had been highlighted but there is no mention of potential use for recreational facilities for older children / teenagers which are lacking in the Village (e.g. zip wire, exercise equipment, swings etc.). Potential anti-social behaviour would then be confined to the Field and should be the responsibility of parents to control. TH commented that recreational facilities are available for all to use in the Urchfont Playing Field / Recreational Ground. Ms Hammond added that Dogs are not allowed and so the Field is out of bounds to many in the Village, she rarely sees anyone using the Field. Mrs Cannon echoed the comments of Ms Hammond and went on further to say that many in the Village feel the same. Mrs Cannon did not understand the relationship between Friends of Farmers Field, who have been maintaining the Field since it was bequeathed, and UPC who are spending significant public money on its upkeep and development without the views of the community being taken into account, including residents of Lydeaway and Wedhampton. Mrs Potter added that two very close friends of the late Ernie Pottinger with dogs are upset that they cannot use the Field.

The Chairman re-opened the Council Meeting

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 12th June 2019

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconded | Resolution |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting | TH | MB | Unanimously AGREED |

4. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2019 – BL reported that there were no long outstanding actions requiring comment, all other actions are in progress towards completion. He highlighted one action from the last meeting for comment relating to the historic milestone. PC had taken pictures of the damage and sent these together with a report to WC Central Highways with the view to them claiming damages from the offending contractor. Whilst UPC is grateful to Diz Plank and Linda Jennings for offering to project manage the necessary refurbishment works, BL advised that we should await a response from WC Central Highways before proceeding further and possibly tripping over one another. PW agreed to pursue further within WC.

5. Finance

a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June 2019 – reports had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting. BL confirmed the comments made in his Clerks Report, no further comments / questions were raised by councillors. It was noted that the provision for the PROW fence project had been removed from the accounts following the Inspectorate decision.

b. Project Proposals

i. Crookwood Lane Lay-By – BL confirmed that he now had four quotes for this project which was initially envisaged several years ago and is based on a WC Highways design and specification. The latest of the quotes received needs updating to be consistent with the other three which are based on a higher grade of Ecogrid (E50) than originally specified due to envisaged heavy usage requirements, he had already spoken to the contractor on this and is awaiting a revised quote. Some doubt was raised over the intended use of Ecogrid instead of tarmac, but PW commented that Ecogrid is used extensively for this type of project and is far better than tarmac in a village environment. BL stated that this project needs to be moved forward as soon as possible when the revised quote is received, a project manager needs to be appointed to ensure that the chosen contractor undertakes and completes the work as specified and to WC Highways standards. It was suggested that this role should fall to one of the Lead Councillors for Highways. To be discussed further at the next meeting.

ACTION: FC/53/19 - BL

ii. Water supply to the Duck House and grass triangle – BL reported that he is still awaiting a quote from Wessex Water regarding installation of the mains water supply, Wessex Water have asked to meet him tomorrow (11th) at the Duck House to clarify the requirement and facilitate a quote by 18th July. A quote for £480 + VAT had, however, been submitted by a builder / plumber to carry out the 'owner' side of the connection to a tap in the Duck House compound and an extension facility underground to the Pond Green triangle used for Scarecrow Festival tea tents which can be isolated when not in use. In the circumstances, BL requested approval of a £1500 +/- 10% budget to enable him to initiate works when quotes are received. TH commented that in his experience Wessex Water Charges could exceed the proposed budget. Positive discussion is ongoing with the Scarecrow Committee as to their contribution towards this work and/or ongoing water usage.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconded | Resolution |
|--|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| To approve a budget of £1500 +/- 10% to facilitate action by the Clerk when all quotes have been received. | PC | MB | Unanimously AGREED |

(Post Meeting Note: The meeting with Wessex Water took place on 11th July, no issues were identified. Once the quote is received and accepted, 'Owner' side works will need to be completed well in advance of Wessex Water works to connect the mains and install a stop cock / water meter in the pathway.)

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

a. Clerks Report – BL had nothing to add to his report, items are updated where necessary in these minutes. GD asked what the minor internal audit comment was, BL said that a couple of items had been included in the Asset Register with a NIL value when it had been previously been agreed that a value of £1 should be attributed to such items.

b. Councillor Reports – Urchfont Pond Algae Progress Report – see item 8 below.

7. Councillor Vacancy – BL confirmed that UPC has been given approval to co-opt a new councillor as a result of the fact that no members of the electorate had requested an election. However, and despite widespread publicity, to date he has not received expressions of interest from anyone in the Parish and so co-option cannot be undertaken until an eligible candidate is identified. GD urged councillors to try and identify / encourage potential candidates.

8. Urchfont Pond – Algae - MB reiterated a number of the significant points raised in his written report (attached at Appendix on the Website only):

- Positive comments from residents that the water quality of the pond is improving, the red algae has not reappeared during the recent warm weather.
- Dependent on water quality, a decision will be taken in 2-3 weeks as to whether Dyafix dye needs to be added, but it is better if not needed.
- No complaints have been received about noise from the aerator pump, he considers that UPC should now purchase a more powerful pump (with same noise output and electricity wattage) and aerator to cancel ongoing rental costs. Cost is within current approved budget.
- Heron is doing a good job reducing fish stocks
- Recommended planting is a significant cost, he is awaiting further quotes before recommending commercial installation or DIY action.

9. Best Kept Village Competition 2019 - County Round – See comments under Item 2. BL added that he was rather disappointed with the 1st Round Judges report which was unhelpful by commenting only on all positives and no negatives. Whilst good news for the Village and all those who contributed in the community, the report did not in any way reflect the rather low score given (78) in comparison to scores in other districts (82 - 96) for medium category villages. Mrs Cannon agreed and stated that this is unfortunately a common trend in judge's reports.

10. Farmers Field

i. An update – *(Post Meeting Note added by BL - For the record, Farmers Field was bequeathed to The Parish Council of Urchfont by Ernie Pottenger in the year 2000 "to be used as they see fit for recreation or otherwise for the benefit of the inhabitants of the village of Urchfont and with the wish that the trees and bushes on the field be preserved so far as it is reasonably practicable" (quote from Wansbroughs Solicitors letter dated 23rd August 2000). The Field is also registered at the Land Registry as owned by the Parish Council of Urchfont.)*

Further to the comments made during public participation above, MK commented that future usage of the Field and the work planned was the subject of a flyer hand delivered to all households in the community prior to the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2018 and asking for feedback. Response was minimal, mainly wanting the Field to be left as a wildlife area. As to the reasons for suggesting the DIY option for tree felling, of the 200+ trees in the

Field 86 need to be felled in the first phase to minimise ash dieback. A commercial estimate for this initial work amounted to £2800, if the disease persists and further felling is required in the relatively near future then similar if not more commercial costs will apply. LK commented that her comments made at the last meeting were based on the view that risks were inconsistent with costs. GD asked whether any other councillor felt that UPC should be pursuing a different route on tree felling, no one indicated that UPC should reconsider. BL emphasised that if UPC pursues the DIY chain saw training and use route, then methods of control and oversight need to be put in place and understood by all concerned to satisfy insurance and H&S requirements.

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Mrs Potter suggested that an alternative to training FoFF operatives might be to use the volunteer Rights of Way members who she believes have the necessary equipment and necessary training. Ms Hammond still felt that there is a need for a fundamental review of the intended use of the Field and the associated use of public money.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

GD added that Farmers Field is a well meant legacy for Urchfont, one which requires upkeep and development with associated funding by the Parish Council.

ii. Updated Terms and Conditions for Chain Saw Use – MK suggested and it was agreed that discussion / approval of this should be deferred to the next meeting when more councillors should be present.

11. Village Greens Risk Assessment – PC reported that work is ongoing on this complex task. BL added that he had reviewed the 1st version but had not had the opportunity to get together with PC to discuss suggested changes. Noting that a risk assessment is a living document, it was agreed that a definitive version should be available for review at the September meeting.

ACTION: FC/54/19 - PC

12. Overhanging Tree in Friars Lane – BL had distributed an email from Mr Alan Crouch of Bluebell Cottage to all councillors prior to the meeting about a large Sycamore located on the Friars Lane bank which seriously overhangs his property and is considered a potential hazard. Earlier UPC enquiries with the Land Registry confirmed that there is no registered owner and that it does not appear on the titles for Manor Farmyard or Sawmills. Whilst Mr Crouch has indicated that he might be prepared to pay half the costs of felling or trimming this tree, he does not believe he should bear all the cost. BL added that costs might include planning permission as it is in the conservation area. PW suggested that the matter should be discussed with the WC Tree Conservation Officer who should be able to provide guidance.

ACTION: FC/55/19 - BL

13. Date for next Cemetery Working Party – Debate concluded that Saturday 7th September 2019 should be the next UPC working party date commencing at 10am.

ACTION: FC/56/19 - ALL

14. Is August Meeting Required? – Debate concluded that the August meeting should remain in place at this time unless there is no business to conduct, but that the agendas should be limited to key issues to minimise meeting length during the holiday season. PC and LK gave apologies for this meeting.

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

a. Crooks Lane Working Group – Working Group members met with the Snook family to discuss the suggestions made by the WC Highways Engineer to provide safe pedestrian access to the B3098. The Snook family have subsequently advised that they are not happy with any encroachment on their land to the east of Crooks Lane but will be happy to consider options for the bank on the opposite side of the road. The Group now plan to gather views from residents bounding Crooks Lane as to whether pedestrian access to the B3098 needs improvement, if so then more work will be undertaken to identify and cost potential solutions.

b. Parking Obstruction Round the Pond – GD referred to a complaint from a local resident about parking on roads on Pond Green which can cause obstruction for access, especially emergency vehicles. This particularly referred to the narrow carriageway along the Manor Farm House wall which is often used for parking. BL stated

that he is making enquiries with WC Highways to confirm that all roads are part of the public highway and should not be subject to any obstruction by vehicles. GD commented that the recent PCSO report indicated that parking infringements and obstruction are a WC responsibility, PW clarified that obstruction of the highway is a police rather than WC responsibility.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

c. Parking Outside Hanover House - Mrs Potter commented on the fact that parking outside Hanover House at the junction of the High Street and B3098 is regularly causing large vehicles to access the High Street via the No Entry side of the triangle. Maybe this is a site for double yellow lines.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

d. Football Goal Nets on the Playing Field – LK commented on the fact that new nets are needed, teenagers regularly use the football pitch and have commented to her on this requirement. PW stated that there are currently no nets. BL to investigate whereabouts of nets and confirm responsibility for purchase and funding.

ACTION: FC/57/19 - BL

e. Pathway from Wedhampton to Urchfont – PC reported that the pathway across the field at Lydeway is completed, but there is still an issue with the 'landing site' on the A342. He will talk further with Nick Plank to establish what is required.

ACTION: FC/58/19 - PC

16. External Meetings

Parish Trust - GD reported that he had attended the recent meeting of the Parish Trust. Three items were of particular interest:

- Contributions made for the UPC owned telephone kiosk in the High Street
- Derek Cook is seeking funding for a site display board to be erected at his Baish site
- Surplus funds of £464.10 relating to the completed UWLNP, it was suggested that these should be split 50/50 between UPC and the Trust. This suggestion appears reasonable. BL to advise the Trust accordingly.

ACTION: FC/59/19 - BL

17. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda – PW asked for Dog Pooh on Pathway to Oakfrith Wood to be added to the next agenda – this appears to be getting worse, maybe because many visitors do not realise that this is part of Parish Land used regularly by many in the community including young children from the School / Pre-School

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting: 14th August 2019 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

a. **CLERK'S REPORT**

1. **Update on actions from June Meeting**

FC/46/19 – To update the draft terms and conditions for use in Farmers Field – completed and sent to Cllr Kemp to discuss with Steve Russell from FoFF.

FC/47/19 – Seek updated quotes from two contractors – completed, see item 6 below.

FC/51/19 – Items to be included in July agenda – complete, see agenda above

2. **Finance** – Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June distributed to all councillors with the July agenda. Accounts are in good order but still with an overstated end of year bank balance pending better understanding of in year spending. In particular, project proposals and associated budget requirements are urgently required to try and ensure in year completion and spend.

3. **Audit of 2018/19 Accounts** – The internal audit and report has now been completed by Paul Papworth-Smith with only one very minor observation regarding the asset register. The approved Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19 together with the required supplementary information was submitted to PK F Littlejohn by email on 24th June 2019 in advance of their 1st July 2019 deadline. Their report is submitted sometime in September. The legally required Notice of Public Rights was published on the website and on notice boards on 21st June 2019 with an inspection period of 24th June to 2nd August 2019 if required.

4. **Cemetery Gate** – Cllr Stevens and I were able to adjust the gate so that it is now fully useable without any further works being required.

5. **Water Supply to the Duck House** – I have submitted an application to Wessex Water for a new water supply to the Duck House requesting a survey and quotation. Discussion has also taken place with a contractor to connect this new supply through the compound wall to a single weather protected external tap for Duck volunteer use and also to run a flexible pipe through ducting (which can be isolated when not in use) to the grass triangle used for the Scarecrow tea tents. It is hoped that quotations will be available for approval at this meeting. I have also approached Bill Donald to seek a contribution from the Scarecrow Festival Committee, he has agreed to take this forward when costs are available.

6. **Proposed Lay-By Project, Crookwood Lane** – I have now obtained three compatible quotes from requests to four contractors for this project. I will distribute details to councillors prior to the July meeting.

Bob Lunn - Clerk to the Council

b. **COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

Update on Urchfont Pond

- Aeration pump, Siltex and beneficial bacteria and enzymes added to the pond on 18/06
- No complaints about the low level noise (45db) made by the pump
- General view that the pond is "improving"
- Most of the floating clumps of green algae have gone.
- No reappearance of red algae despite high ambient temperatures.

Next steps

- Purchase pump to avoid rental charges. JPR recommended pump is:
- Hydra Laminar Air System ET 150T1000 with air enclosure – cost direct from manufacturer inc delivery is £480 excl VAT
- Leave as is for a further two weeks and then decide on addition of dyafix
- Finalise planting system by August meeting. o Quote received for £13000 – fixing method 1.8 metre stakes*
- DIY Option: Cost of 46 metres of pre-planted coir role including delivery £2500
- Further quotations due – delay is developing a fixing method not involving the wall or driving stakes into the clay bed.

* Contractor will not guarantee that the stakes will not cause leaks in the clay bed but believes that the clay will self-seal round the stakes.

Cllr Mark Botham