



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 12th December 2018 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Day (GD – Chairman), Mitchell (NM – Vice Chairman), Cowen (LC), Kemp (MK), Creasey (GC), Cottell (PC), Hill (TH) and Cottle (SC)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Paul Scarffe, Patty Frankel, John Knight, Malcolm Smith, Roy Ellis

1. Welcome by the Chairman – the Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Mottram (DM) and Stevens (DS). GD read out a statement from DM:

"Please accept my apologies for not being able to attend the UPC meetings on 12th December. As some of you are already aware, I was disappointed with some of the feedback from the team building event on 28th November. Furthermore, I was astonished by some of the views expressed by the Chairman at a meeting between himself, the Vice-Chairman, the Parish Clerk, and myself on 7th December. Give my current state of mind, I don't believe that I would be able to make a positive contribution to the meeting, and this could further damage the apparently tarnished reputation of UPC."

3. Council Status Update – GD commented that the Council is going through a period of significant change and reflection as a result of recent events, resignations and public perception issues. Three councillors and the Planning Administrator had resigned since September. One new councillor had joined the Council (SC) and one had been re-elected (TH), this leaves one vacancy which will be subject of a WC Notice of Vacancy in the New Year. 9 Councillors and the Clerk recently met for a teambuilding event to discuss lessons learned and prepare for the future and all made a commitment to work together as a team and to abide by policies and procedures.

4. Declarations of Interest: GD registered a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5a as his wife is involved in the distribution of Redhorn News.

5. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation.

a. Redhorn News Update – Paul Scarffe, Treasurer and member of the management team of Redhorn News, has been with the magazine and its predecessors for 28 years. The magazine is distributed widely within the Redhorn Team Ministry area, with some Parish Councils contributing to the cost of production to provide free copies to their parishioners. Paul thanked UPC for its significant 50% contribution and support within the Parish, the balance being contributed by the Scarecrow Committee and the Community Bus Committee. Due to a necessary change to a more reliable printing contractor, costs have risen from an average of around £400 to £680 per month. The new contractor is also able to provide a better quality and more colour pages. Redhorn News is proud to have come 7th out of over 400 similar magazines in a nationwide competition.

To date Urchfont Parish has received 520 magazines each month at a cost of £2,080, 50% being contributed by UPC. Increased housing means that the number of copies has increased to 550 at a new cost of £5 per copy = £2,750. To cover its costs, the Management Committee are, therefore, requesting UPC to increase its contribution in 2019/20 to £1375 (an increase of £335 per annum).

b. Community Shop – Patty Frankel, one of the managers of the shop, handed out pictures of the triangle where they would like to display a sign, a suggested sign and brown road signs opposite Blackboard Lane. The objective being to generate increased use of the shop by passing motorists on the B3098 and to secure a longer term future. GD expressed the view that motorists would not easily read such a sign, LC was more concerned about

safety on the bend at that point if motorists are distracted by signs. LC suggested that a brown sign similar to the one opposite Blackboard Lane might be a good compromise at the Triangle junction with the High Street. PW advised that UPC would need to fund a brown sign, he agreed to find out who in WC would arrange for the sign to be erected. The following proposal was then made:

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To fund and arrange for a brown sign to be erected at the B3098 junction with the High Street	GD	NM	Unanimously Agreed

ACTION: FC/118/18 – BL

c. Perception of UPC in the wider community is worrying – Malcolm Smith expressed this view as a result of ongoing issues and Council performance specifically relating to DM which he believes are not being resolved satisfactorily. He believed that the community is being disenfranchised as a result of DM's continuing absence from meetings and lack of credible explanations for his behaviour, examples had already been aired at the Planning meeting. Mr Smith urged the Council to put pressure on DM to resign. LC commented that no one has the right to unseat a councillor, BL confirmed that this can only happen as a result of a public full council election (the next scheduled for 2021) or if for whatever reason a councillor becomes ineligible as defined in legislation. PW stated that he has been asked to resign 2-3000 times due to perceived incompetence, he is still here. He asked how many people in the Parish are actually up in arms about the performance of the Council or individual councillors, he believes from his local interaction that more than 80% of parishioners are unaware of the perceived issues. He strongly suggested that to continue a witch hunt does nothing to improve the situation and is likely to be more detrimental to the Council.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting.

6. Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 14th November 2018

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To accept and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	NM	LC	Unanimously Agreed

7. Action List Status Review and Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meetings held on 14th November 2018 – BL went through the outstanding actions and the following was agreed:

FC/3/18 – Reconvene a meeting with School on PROW – this is awaiting action by WC.

FC/67/18 – Meet with the Church re parking on Pond Green – GC agreed that this remains outstanding but that he will arrange a meeting early in the New Year.

FC/89/18 – Village Greens Risk Assessment – having been recently re-assigned to PC, he is reviewing the draft produced by Richard Hawkins with the view to producing a draft to present to Council in the New Year.

FC/101/18 – Speak to Geoff Potter re lay-by project – GD confirmed that he had opened a discussion with Geoff Potter to discuss his possible input to the project, including the submission of a quote for the work.

FC/103/18 – Respond to Nicky Hammond letter – GD agreed to take on this action and respond.

FC/105/18 – Check on School communication with parents on PROW – GC confirmed that the Chair of School Governors had written to all parents.

8. Finance

a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th November 2018 – BL briefly re-iterated and displayed on screen the comments made in his Clerks report which is attached at the appendix to these minutes (on website version only).

b. 2019/20 Precept / Budget – BL had circulated his initial thoughts on this item to all councillors prior to the meeting, but took the opportunity to run through potential Precept impact on local council tax and likely 2019/20 budget requirements in more detail. GD noted that because of an increasing housing stock across Wiltshire, the increased tax base will provide an initial increase of revenue of 2.1% even with no precept increase. The key to deciding the level of precept to request lay in considering the 3 major categories of UPC spend: Fixed Costs; Running

Costs; and Projects. The latter was the category that could provide long-term benefit to Parish residents, and he was confident that UPC now had the capability to manage multi-year project investment proposals whilst maintaining appropriate reserve levels. BL stressed that no decisions were needed tonight but that the Precept demand needed to be finally decided at the January 2019 meeting. He would prepare an updated spreadsheet for distribution to all councillors prior to the January meeting to facilitate this decision and proposed finalising the 2019/20 budget at the March meeting to take account of better information of actual 2018/19 spend.

ACTION: FC/119/18 - BL

c. Redhorn News – Proposed Increase in Council contribution – GD commented that the request made under item 5a to raise the UPC contribution appeared perfectly reasonable, but that the increase should apply for a minimum of two years. On this basis he made the following proposal:

Proposal	Proposer	Secunder	Resolution
To approve the increased UPC contribution to Redhorn News of £1,375 to apply for a minimum of two years with effect 2019/20	GD	LC	Unanimously Agreed

d. Potential Project Proposals

i. TH highlighted the recent downpours in the Village which had caused flooding and pooling in various locations due to blocked drains and gullies, unfortunately WC do not consider these as a significant risk or priority in 20 / 30mph zones. He wondered whether UPC should consider hiring in a Vactor vehicle to clear drains and gullies subject to WC agreement. PW confirmed that a WC Vactor had been deployed in the community within the last week. However, drains cannot always cope with torrential downpours and in most cases the real problem is because of drains flowing into private field drains and ditches which are not fully functional. WC will take action if the field drains are particularly blocked. He was of the view that WC would not approve use of a private Vactor and suggested that in any case hire of such vehicles is very expensive. PW suggested self-help by residents to regularly clear drain covers outside of their property.

ii. BL reported that he had requested a quote from R T Harris for the installation of lighting and power sockets in the Duck House, this will be presented for approval when received. A further quote will be requested for a water supply to the Duck House in due course, this will also be used during the Scarecrow Festival.

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

a. Clerks Report

b. Councillor Reports

- i. Farmers Field
- ii. Secretary of State Public Inquiry for PROW Path no.51
- iii. Welcome to Urchfont Leaflet – see item 12 below
- iv. Telephone Kiosk – now decorated for Christmas

10. UPC Beeches Investigation Report – As documented in the Clerks written report, the UPC investigation report was sent to the WC Monitoring Officer on 5th October 2018 with a request for him to review and comment on the content. GD read out the response that had been received as follows:

"Monitoring Officer only has jurisdiction in relation to Standards matters. The report relates to the application of internal processes and procedures and does not contain issues relating to Standards issues. As such, we cannot comment upon the report primarily because the Monitoring Officer has no jurisdiction in relation to the internal operational issues raised within it."

GD stated that on this basis the findings and recommendations documented in the Investigation remain extant, the conclusions being reported to Jim Stevenson by email on 23rd August 2018 and published in the Clerks Report attached to the agenda and minutes of the meeting on 12th September 2018. As such the matter is now closed.

11. Proposal to Amend UWLNP – BL reported that he had now received the wording of the proposed minor amendment from DM with a request to process it through WC to correct an error.

ACTION: FC/120/18 - BL

12. Welcome to Urchfont Booklet – the latest draft had been circulated to councillors with the agenda, LC apologised for the omission of an item on Friends of Oakfrith Wood which will be corrected. LC sought a view on the number of copies to be printed so that he can secure a quote for printing. Discussion concluded with the following proposal:

Proposal	Proposer	Secunder	Resolution
To distribute an updated version to all councillors and secure a quote for printing 650 copies, with the objective of approving both at the January meeting.	GD	PC	Unanimously Agreed

13. Environmental Friendly Initiatives – Nothing to report.

14. Preparing for Christmas – GD stated that the wall lights were now working, but some bulbs were still a cause of concern, as highlighted last year, and may need to be replaced. He made the following proposal:

Proposal	Proposer	Secunder	Resolution
To allocate a budget of £100 to enable purchase of warm white replacement bulbs if required	GD	NM	Unanimously Agreed

The Christmas tree is scheduled to be available for collection from Dauntsey’s School on 18th December. GD will confirm with Martin Bodman that his equipment will be ready to erect the tree at 11am on 18th December. Some connecting cables for the lights have been mislaid and may need to be replaced. It was agreed that GD and SC will assume responsibility for the electricity supply / connection keys over the Christmas / New Year period, they will collect these from BL.

ACTION: FC/121/18 – GD/SC

15. Update on Current Parish Issues not covered by above agenda items – None reported

16. External Meetings – No reports given.

17. Councillors’ Reports and Items for Future Agenda

- a. Two items are earmarked for the January meeting:
 - i. Re-allocation of Vacant Lead Councillor Roles following resignations
 - ii. Mike Wilmott (WC Head of Development Planning) visit
- b. GC reported that, as he left the planning session, Mr Lee had thanked all councillors for the work that they do.
- c. NM reported that DM had asked her to raise an issue of missing comments from the minutes of the Planning Meeting on 10th October. BL confirmed that Approved Minutes cannot be updated, it was agreed that the matter could not be discussed further as part of this meeting. PW suggested, and it was agreed, that this item should be added as a statement under Matters for Report on the agenda for the Planning Meeting on 9th January 2018 rather than as a discussion item due to the elapsed timeframe.

ACTION: BFC/122/18 - BL

The Chairman wished all Councillors and residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.28pm

Date of Next Meeting: 9th January 2019 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

a. CLERK'S REPORT

1. Update on actions from October/November Meeting

FC/96/18 – Send UPC Beeches Investigation Report to Monitoring Officer – see Item 4 below

FC/97/18 – Invite WC Planning Officer to November meeting – Mr Wilmott has now agreed to come to the meeting on 9th January 2019 – see item 8 below.

FC/102/18 – Review of Complaints Procedure – in progress

FC/104/18 – Response to WC regarding the Service Delegation Agreement – Agreement now signed, see item 5 below.

FC/108/18 – Uphill Development to be on December agenda – see Planning Agenda Item 7b

FC/109/18 – Welcome to Urchfont draft to be sent to Lewis Cowen – draft sent 18th November 2018

FC/110/18 – Risk Assessment paperwork to be sent to Philip Cottell – paperwork sent 16th November 2018

FC/112/18 – Service Delegation Reminder to Phillip Whitehead – reminder sent 15th November 2018, see item 5 below for update.

FC/113/18 – Reminder to Philip Whitehead regarding overhanging trees in Friars Lane – reminder sent 15th November 2018

FC/114/18 - Write to Angela Dutton family regarding memorial bench in the cemetery – emailed 19th November 2018

FC/115/18 – Send holding reply to Mr Bratchell regarding proposed signage – email sent 19th November 2018

2. Finances at 30th November 2018 – Finances are in good order as shown on the statements attached to the agenda; the bank reconciliation was completed satisfactorily. A further VAT refund claim has been paid bringing the total refunded this year to £3,670. Indicated reserve at year end is now more accurate but is dependent on full allocation and spend of project budget. Details of all actual expenditure during the month are shown on page 2 of the bank reconciliation.

3. Councillor Vacancies – Having elected two councillors uncontested recently, we still have a vacancy following the resignation of Bill Donald. This will be the subject of a WC Notice of Election shortly.

4. UPC Beeches Investigation Report – The report was sent to the WC Monitoring Officer for review on 5th October 2018 as tasked at the closed meeting on 3rd October 2018. We have now received a response from the Team Leader of Public Law and Compliance stating that the:

"Monitoring Officer only has jurisdiction in relation to Standards matters. The report relates to the application of internal processes and procedures and does not contain issues relating to Standards issues. As such, we cannot comment upon the report primarily because the Monitoring Officer has no jurisdiction in relation to the internal operational issues raised within it."

5. Service Delegation Agreement – The Agreement has now been finalised and signed by the Clerk and Chairman on behalf of UPC. We are now awaiting its return dated and sealed by WC. This Agreement facilitates the potential transfer of the remainder of the Urchfont Playing Field to Urchfont Parish Council in the event that the School closes at some point in the future. In return the Parish Council took on unfunded responsibility for WC grass cutting and litter bin emptying in Urchfont from 1st April 2018.

6. Code of Conduct – The 'No Further Action' decision of the WC Monitoring Officer was reported at the November meeting, we have since heard that this decision has not been challenged and that the case file has now been closed. However, at the direction of WC Governance, the content of the various documents associated with this case remain confidential to avoid potential Data Protection breaches.

7. Overhanging Trees in Friars Lane – local residents have now agreed amongst themselves to fund / arrange for a number of trees to be cut down / trimmed to a greater extent than would have been undertaken by WC to remove just branches overhanging the highway; at least some of this work was completed over the weekend 1st/2nd December.

8. Mike Wilmott (WC Head of Development Planning) – has agreed to attend the meeting on 9th January 2019; he has been specifically asked to provide councillors:

- a. with a better understanding of WC planning terminology used in the consultation process for planning applications, including WC interpretation and recognition of the various UPC consultation responses (e.g. Object, object with conditions, support, support with conditions, no comment etc.). The objective is not only to better inform councillors, several of whom are newly elected, but also instill public confidence in Parish Council handling of the planning process.
- b. an insight and guidance into the recently changed legislation which we understand facilitates amendment of made Neighbourhood Plans and how WC would be involved in that process. You may recall that the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan was made on 20th April 2017.

Bob Lunn - Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLORS REPORT(S)

i. Farmer's Field Update

Large areas of scrub have been cleared with the help of the hired brush-cutter in order to plant bulbs and wildflowers. 400 Wild Garlic bulbs donated by Paul Wylie have since been planted and a further 350 out of a recent purchase of 500 were planted on Saturday. The remainder to be planted very soon if not already. The recent purchase cost has been covered by a voluntary donation. Ferns from Mike McDonald were also planted. Bluebells will be purchased and planted in the spring. Considerable thought has gone into the planting plan and it is the intention to have swaths of colour developing over the next five years to make the field more attractive to visitors.

We have a new and very welcome addition to the Friends of Farmer's Field team who has contributed enormously in a very short space of time and has also provided me with some helpful information and links. Most recently, 'Protecting our Water, Soil and Air'. 'A Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers' from DEFRA which covers run-off from fields etc. Please see the link below. If we are to ever resolve the issue of the over fertilisation of the pond we are going to have to address the issue of run-off from U32. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution>

I have further developed my original plan for an art competition to design a new and welcoming sign for the entrance to Farmer's Field. I would like to propose a competition that is open to all the children in the parish to design the new sign. They would be provided with the details of appropriate content and size. For a minimal entry fee, they would be able to enter as many times as they wish. All entries received would be displayed in the village hall with refreshments made available to all visitors. I hope to develop a voting system so that all parishioners and visitors are able to help select the winning sign if they wish. At this time we have a promise of £100 to put toward prizes. I am yet to consider how this will be best used. It may be that we also have a post event display in the telephone box for the winner and runners-up. This is yet to be discussed.

I am hopeful that most of the refreshments, in particular, the cakes, will be donated. My aim is to hopefully raise the funds to cover the cost of the new sign and if the event works particularly well it may well provide additional funds towards other future costs such as information boards. Most importantly the children will be taking ownership of the new sign and contributing to the ongoing development of Farmer's Field as a community nature reserve.

Cllr Maria Kemp

ii. Secretary of State Public Inquiry for PROW Path no.51

UPC and interested parties have now been given Notice of Order by the Secretary of State to hold a Public Inquiry into the Public Right of Way Path no. 51 (adjacent to Urchfont Primary School).

The Inquiry will be held at Urchfont Village Hall, starting on Wednesday 24th April 2019 at 10.00am. The Inquiry is expected to last up to 3 days but this will ultimately depend on how many members of the public, either for or against, attend and how many of those will give their statements in person.

Urchfont Parish Council initially facilitated the process of submission of correspondence on behalf of residents of the Parish in support of this order.

UPC will be offering once again to act as a facilitator for residents who support the making of this order in terms of submission of information to this inquiry and I have been asked to co-ordinate the community response.

In the New Year I will be writing to supporters to ask if they will be attending the Inquiry and whether they intend giving their statements in person, and offering any help, as and if required.

I will keep UPC updated as to progress at forthcoming meetings.

Cllr Trevor Hill

iii. Welcome to Urchfont Leaflet – progress report

After Bob sent me the copy that Richard had given him, I went through it, cutting what wording I could to make it more accessible to readers.

Then I approached Louise Scammell, a former resident of Urchfont, who is a professional designer, and she has agreed to undertake the design for a one-off fee of £50, which I am quite willing to underwrite.

I had hoped to have a draft of her design for councillors to view by this meeting and, if so, I will make it available for perusal before the meeting.

I have approached Richard with regard to meeting up to discuss the new design and what approaches he has made, if any, to prospective printers but so far he hasn't come back to me.

I have not seen any figures for print runs and would appreciate guidance from councillors as to how many ought to be printed off in the first instance.

Cllr Lewis Cowen

iv. High Street Telephone Kiosk – Christmas Update



We are planning to decorate the Telephone Box for Christmas next week so please keep an eye out as you walk / drive by!

We have applied for a Scarecrow for the festival in May and are planning an Official Opening of the kiosk in January!

Cllrs Maria Kemp / Nicky Mitchell and Stephanie Szakalo