

**DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall**

**Present: Councillors:** Mottram (DM - Chairman), Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Gibb (HG), Holt (SH), Thomas (RT), Baker (PB), Day (GD) and Stephens (AS)

**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):** Penelope Ellis, Richard Hawkins, Mrs Debbie Mackey

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman** – the Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, in particular newly co-opted Cllr Paul Baker (who signed 'Acceptance of Office' prior to meeting).
- 2. Apologies** – were received from Cllrs Liz Clifton-Page and Trevor Hill, both on holiday.
- 3. Declarations of Interest:** AS declared an interest in allotments
- 4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015.** No meeting was held in August.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Decision
To accept and sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting	BD	SH	Unanimously agreed

**5. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015** – DM reported that a new method of documenting and reviewing actions had been agreed with and prepared by BL, the spreadsheet had and will in future be circulated with the agenda. The action status as at 9<sup>th</sup> September is shown in App 1.

**6. Finance:**

**a. Completion of External Audit** – BL reported that the audit had been completed by Grant Thornton UK LLP without observation. The statutory completion of audit notice has been posted on notice boards.

**b. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015** – BL reported that both documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. The statement currently indicates an end of financial year reserve of £13,206, but this will reduce as project funding in particular is approved.

**c. To review projects progress** – BL reported that as UPC are now six months into the financial year there is a need to progress some projects which do not yet have an agreed budget approved by Council from the projects 'pot'. Documented proposals with quotes are required for each prior to any spend or initiation of works. The projects are:

- Gateway sign replacement – BL
- Pathway to Oakfrith Wood signage and enhancements – BL/DM
- Farmers Field Project (budget of £500 brought forward from 2014/15) - ??
- Top Green upgrades including seat and fingerpost – NM/RT
- Pond Christmas tree fixings – NM/RT
- Christmas lights renewal – NM/RT
- New UPC internal display boards – SH
- New path fencing / gates in allotment – DM
- Preparation for Best Kept Village - NM

- Any other proposed project - All

BL reported that Pond Green upgrade, Cemetery Damage and Bus Hard Standing / Road Crossings had been completed and invoices paid. Repairs to the Bier House are ongoing.

Nominated councillors / officers are to prepare proposals for Council approval, funds will be largely allocated on a first come basis.

**ACTION: FC/55/15 - ALL**

## **7. Lead Councillor, Clerk & other written Reports (attached at App 2 - on website only)**

- i. **Top Green, Triangle, Paddock, other green spaces and footpaths** – Nothing to report
- ii. **Broadband** – PB reported that the fibre network in the Village has reached capacity and BT are not taking further orders for connection, although they hope the situation will improve by the end of September. GD believed that Cuckoo Corner internet speeds had been seriously degraded since implementation of fibre, this is borne out by evidence circulated by David Gibb. DM stated that internet speeds are very much dependent on how far you are from the BT green cabinets situated in the High Street and by Walnut Close. BD commented that Wedhampton is not scheduled to get fibre. BL was tasked to try and find out from BT the definitive reason for the fibre capacity issue and why speed over copper cables appears to have reduced as a result of the fibre introduction.

**ACTION: FC/56/15 - BL**

- iii. **Christmas tree and Lights (including electrical supply status)** - no comments on or updates received to submitted reports
- iv. **Allotments including liaison with Allotment Association** – no comments on or updates received to submitted reports
- v. **Clerks Report** – DM congratulated BL and Alistair Everett (solicitor representing UPC) for completion of the land ownership transfer of the Pathway to Oakfrith Wood from WC, this has taken a long while but is well worth the wait.

BL reported that the WC Community Focus Days are to be phased out as a result of WC operational changes. In future Parish issues will be prioritised and actioned by Community Coordinators based on reports input through the My Wiltshire App. BL makes and logs these report inputs on behalf of the Parish Council. PW further commented that it is the intention to revert to the Parish Steward system from April 2016, this all brought about by changes to the way works are managed. The Balfour Beatty contract has been terminated, with all of their sub-contracts (about 65% of work) novated to WC. Some parish work will continue to be undertaken by Balfour Beatty until April 2016.

## **8. Working Groups: written reports (attached at App 2 - on website only)**

- i. **Community Access and Travel Plan Working Group** – NM reported that two new members had joined the Group – Lindyanne Ehrnrooth and Kate Milanes. Next meeting in two weeks.
- ii. **Section 106 Working Group** – DM praised the Group for recruiting three new non-council members.

**9. Draft Planning Policies, Procedures and Meetings** – DM reported that draft proposals had been largely completed by SH, these are now being finalised and will be circulated by DM shortly for discussion and hopefully approval at the October meeting.

**ACTION: FC/57/15 - DM**

DM summarised key elements of the proposals:

- i. Informal discussion with applicants prior to application submission
- ii. Site visits for all applications
- iii. New builds to be subject of dedicated planning meeting
- iv. Controversial applications to be subject of planning item on Full Council monthly agenda
- v. Minor non-controversial applications to be determined at Site meeting and ratified at next Full Council meeting
- vi. Opportunity to decide whether the Council needs a planning chairman or lead councillor for planning

PW was of the view that item 9v could be non-compliant with predetermination criteria set by Wiltshire Council (WC) and suggested that the position should be checked with the WC Planning Officer(s). DM commented that this is no different to current procedure for applications considered by the Planning Group, but agreed that this should be checked before procedure approval.

**ACTION: FC/58/15 – DM/SH**

**10. Local Council Award Scheme** – BL gave a presentation on the new scheme introduced this year to replace the Quality Council scheme. The new scheme comprises three levels of Award, Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold and is centred on meeting 41 criteria overall and focussed significantly on what is published on-line. Whilst BL considered that UPC already meets the majority of the criteria for all levels of award, work would be needed to ensure compliance and tweak some elements. However, because of the composition of the current membership of the Council (7 elected and 4 co-opted members), UPC can only apply for the Foundation Award at this stage, he had checked this with WALC who had confirmed that no dispensation would be given in this respect. Costs are involved for each level of award.

DM thanked BL for the comprehensive presentation. Discussion centred on the fact that applying for just the Foundation award level would undermine the status of UPC in terms of being awarded Quality Council in the past, already being recognised by other Parish's as being a forward thinking and well organised council and gaining little or no benefits from this level of award.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Decision
Not to apply for the Foundation level award now but to review the position in early 2017 with the view to going for Quality or Quality Gold awards following the 2017 elections	BD	PB	Unanimously agreed

## 11. Update on WC matters

- i. **PROW to Playing Field** – BD confirmed that the promised joint meeting with the School and WC had not yet been scheduled. PW confirmed that he will not be involved in these discussions, or those relating to the playing field CAT, because as an Urchfont resident he is too close to the subject(s). He has, however, suggested to all parties involved in both issues that they should consider appointing new representatives (apart from WC Officers and the Head Teacher) to bring fresh eyes to resolution of these controversial topics. Discussion took the view that this is a very good idea, although some concern was expressed by GD that current players might be perceived to have failed to date. NM, one of the current players on this issue, said that she is happy with the suggested way forward and looked forward to solutions being found. It was agreed that BL should respond to PW accepting his 'fresh eyes' proposal. It was further agreed that BD should be the UPC lead representative along with PB for the PROW issue.

### Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Richard Hawkins expressed concern that it is already 15 weeks since the WC report was published, negotiations are likely to be dragged out as long as possible and that in the end the decision could be rejected by any one party. PW confirmed that the PROW decision is being progressed by WC despite the delayed joint discussions.

### Chairman re-opened the Council meeting.

- ii. **Outstanding responses from WC on Playing Field CAT objectives and School play area criteria** – BL reported that a response to UPC emails in March / April 2015 had finally been received from John Price on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015, this had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. DM expressed the view that the response proposed solutions but did not appear to address or satisfy the UPC objectives, it also re-introduced the prospect of a fence around the School required playing area (Red Line on plan). It was agreed that the re-defined School play area requirement (Red Line on plan) better reflected the correct position than an earlier version. PW expressed the view that John Price is being sensible about the fence because this might be required by Government legislation at some point in the future and should be considered. PW accepted that the response did not appear to fully recognise or take account of the UPC objectives for the playing field, he suggested that UPC should reflect this in their response to WC and should also set out the Council position on proposed CAT areas. PW confirmed that any playing field land which is not the subject of a CAT to UPC would remain with WC. BL was tasked with preparing and circulating a draft response to John Price for final agreement at the October meeting.

**ACTION: FC/59/15 – BL**

12. **Review of Councillor Roles and Feedback** – DM reported that consultation with individual councillors had been completed, apart from HG & AS, during which a lot of good points have been raised for improving Council operation and efficiency. DM proposed that these ideas should be discussed and a way forward agreed at an informal gathering of councillors with a buffet supper and skittles in October / November. DM to circulate dates based on Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

**ACTION: FC/60/15 - DM**

**13. Manor Farmyard** – SH reported that Plot 19 application changes had now been approved. He also confirmed that Redcliffe Homes and the site management company is responsible for maintenance of the pond wall and the footpath / strip of soil running behind the wall, this will be documented in the site management contract. This had all been confirmed in an email from Redcliffe Homes, SH was asked to copy this email to the Clerk to put on record. All residents will contribute to the production costs of the contract and make an annual payment towards maintenance.

**ACTION: FC/61/15 - SH**

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Penelope Ellis asked about responsibility for maintenance of the escarpment at the back of the site and the footpath behind the affordable homes. SH confirmed that the escarpment is also the responsibility of the management company, but thought that the footpath would be the responsibility of individual home owners.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

SH commented that the site agent had expressed concern that members of the public are approaching him direct with issues rather than going through UPC - SH as the agreed and publicised route. SH has written an article for the next edition of Redhorn News reminding the public of this agreed route for any issues relating to the Redcliffe development. DM requested that this article should be sent to the Clerk for review before publication.

**ACTION: FC/62/15 - SH**

**14. Neighbourhood Plan** – SH reported that all the latest plan documents are now out for review with the Steering Group prior to submission for graphic design work. DM was of the view that the proposed plan document(s) is well structured and should be supported by the community. DM requested that SH circulate the specific solution that had been devised to add / delete items from the management strategy scoring matrix (Action: FC/22/15 – SH on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015)

**ACTION: FC/63/15 - SH**

**15. Rejection of Lydeaway & Wedhampton Junctions CATG 'Issue'** – DM expressed Council disappointment at the CATG rejection of this issue, but was not surprised because of lack of definitive evidence to support the case. Basically, changes are unlikely to be considered by WC unless there are significant and/or fatal accidents along this stretch of road, but UPC should continue to collect evidence (via the Clerk) to support future attempts to gain improvements. PW commented that most accidents are shown to be as a result of driver error and not road layout or design, WC will only consider implementing costly changes if road layout can be shown to be contributing to significant accidents. The suggested roundabout at Lydeaway junction could cost in excess of £250k for example. BL asked whether the damaged sign at Lydeaway junction, which currently points in the wrong direction completely and confuses drivers and adds an additional hazard, can be repaired or removed urgently. PW agreed to initiate such urgent action.

**ACTION: FC/64/15 – PW**

**16. Proposal to use Urchfont Pond for radio controlled model boats** – In view of ill-informed comments that had been made on social media as well as by some local residents on this issue, DM proposed that a statement should be minuted to clarify the position as follows:

- i. Mr Cooper is a member of a national association of Model Boat makers. They have a database of locations where they have permission to sail boats. There are none listed for Wiltshire. There was a risk that Urchfont pond could be put on this list.

- ii. The volunteers who look after the Urchfont ducks and geese, and some local residents, were against Mr Cooper's proposal. One main reason is that the majority of the ducks and geese cannot fly. UPC took a parochial view to support the local residents rather than Mr Cooper who lives outside the Parish.
- iii. The pond is not considered suitable for testing these boats which are about 4ft long. The implication of testing them is that they may break down and need to be retrieved from the pond. Wading into the pond is not allowed because of potential exposure to diseases and the fragile clay lining. Also the back wall of the pond is about 6ft high, preventing easy retrieval of such boats from that portion of the bank.

All councillors present agreed that this statement should be included in the minutes.

**17. External Meetings** – none were reported.

**18. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda** – GD requested, and it was agreed, that the new bus hard standings should be on the next agenda for discussion due to issues emanating largely from school bus route changes.

**ACTION: FC/65/15 - BL**

**Meeting Closed at 9.42pm**

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**

Prepared by Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015

## APPENDIX 1 to Minutes of FC Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015

ACTIONS STATUS AS AT 9th SEPTEMBER 2015						
Action FC/XX/15	ACTION	Date	Action on	Target Completion	Current Status at 9th September	
13	Finance to allocate budget to projects as and when projects defined and agreed by Council	11-03-15	DM/BD/BL	As and when	Ongoing	
18	Seek clarification on 'defined area calculation' for School playground / field. Email sent to John Price WC on 16th March 2015.	11-03-15	BL	Soonest	Complete - email response received 7/9/15	
22	Neighbourhood Plan - management strategy in place but more specific solution to be considered to add/delete on scoring matrix	15-04-15	SH	Before October Meeting	Ongoing	
23	To establish why 16th March email on Playing Field CAT to John Price and UPC objectives to Stephen Morgan (23 March), have not been responded to by WC Officers (reminders sent by BL and NM in April and May but still no response or acknowledgement)	15-04-15 13-5-15	PW		Complete - Email Response received 7/9/15	
26	Review lead roles and identify replacements due to resignations	13-05-15	DM/BD	Informal Councillor meeting	Ongoing	
28	Investigate potential for registering further 'green spaces' in the Parish in addition to Pond Green and Top Green.	13-05-15	BL	No Target	Ongoing	
37	WC to be asked through PW to propose a documented solution and host a site meeting on the School PROW decision	10-06-15	PW	Ongoing	Process agreed but meeting not yet scheduled	
41	Invite WC tree preservation officer to give presentation to Council meeting	10-06-15	BL	For October meeting	Ongoing	
45	Clarify verge ownership and maintenance in Parish	10-06-15	BL	No target	Ongoing	
46	To offer new councillor post to Paul Baker and send thank you to unsuccessful candidates	08-07-15	BL	Soonest	Complete - Email 9/7/15	
47	Remind all councillors of project leads	08-07-15	BL	Soonest	Complete	
48	To circulate ideas on Council meeting structure	08-07-15	AS	Soonest	Overtaken by wider review	
49	Local Council Award Scheme - to present at September meeting	08-07-15	BL	09-09-15	Complete - Presented on 9th September 2015	
50	Extension to pavement at Stonepit Lane - BL to meet with Jane Hanscombe to discuss options and then raise WC 'issue'	08-07-15	BL	Soonest	Complete - Meeting 13/8/15	
51	To establish Manor Farm management company responsibilities	08-07-15	SH	Soonest	Complete - SH confirmed verbally	
52	Letter to be sent to Karen Guest reference Manor Farmyard planning conditions	08-07-15	SH/SJ	Before October Meeting	Not Complete	
53	Obtain quotes for new path in Allotments from The Croft	08-07-15	DM	For October meeting	Ongoing	
54	Proposed new footpath across Top Green - report Council view to WC - Kate Wysocki	08-07-15	BL	Soonest	Complete - Email 13/7/15	

## APPENDIX 2 to Minutes of FC Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015

### LEAD COUNCILLOR, WORKING GROUP AND CLERK REPORTS – SEPTEMBER 2015

#### A. Top Green, Triangle, Paddock Green other green spaces and footpaths

Nothing to report on this occasion.

#### Helen Gibb

**B. Broadband** - Broadband in Urchfont. High speed fibre optic is now available in Urchfont. People are reporting speeds of up to 80mb/sec. This seems to depend on the distance from the green box to their house. To date I have not heard of any connection problems or other issues.

#### Dave Mottram

#### C. Christmas Tree and Lights, including electrics provision

It is hoped that the new electrical arrangements will be in place to be used for Christmas 2105, but this is very dependent on Redcliffe Homes completing the legal handover of the Duck Compound to UPC in sufficient time. The PC will then be able to enter into a supply contract with Scottish & Southern Electricity.

The old lights used round the pond are time expired and liable to breakage in stormy weather. Consideration is therefore being given to purchasing new LED lights for the pond wall, and quotations will be sought.

Richard Harris has agreed to carry out the electrical installation of the new pillar at no charge.

Volunteers are requested to complete the foundations for the new pillar as soon as possible.

#### Royston Thomas

#### D. Allotments including liaison with Allotment Association

No new issues have been reported. Dave Mottram is currently seeking quotes for the agreed new path from The Croft to the Cemetery. The latest allotment water bill from Wessex Water has been paid from Allotment Association funds. I understand that all available plots are currently taken.

#### Bob Lunn (in the absence of a nominated lead councillor)

#### E. Clerks Report

##### 1. Current Negotiations / Proposals

- a. **Northern Pathway to Oakfrith Wood** – As confirmed in my recent email, the CAT land ownership transfer of the path from Wiltshire Council to UPC has now been completed. The UPC solicitor is currently registering this change of ownership with the Land Registry.
- b. **Proposed CAT of Playing Field (Western End)** – Responses have still not been received from WC (Stephen Morgan and John Price) to the various emails sent since March 2015 questioning the proposed boundary calculations / plan or in response to the objectives submitted in support of the CAT negotiations.
- c. **Status of Right of Way Claim to WC – School Pathway** – No definitive progress has been initiated or made since the decision in favour of the Parish claim on this issue. The proposed WC led working party meeting has not yet taken place.

##### 2. Issues sent to Devizes Area Board / CATG – Two issues were sent to WC as follows:

- **Extension of Footpath and crossing points at Stonepit Lane**

WC Highways have been requested to review my suggested solutions and propose costs to the next meeting of CATG for consideration.

- **Lydeaway and Wedhampton junctions on the B3098**

Disappointingly, this issue was rejected on the following basis – ‘This was discussed but unfortunately there was no evidence that suggested there was a serious enough problem that required intervention. The number of collisions over the past 5 years is low and visibility is good. In addition, I (Richard Rogers) have been informed by highways that they have previously audited this junction and no problems have been found. The CATG agreed that no further action should be taken.’

**3. Annual External Audit** – The annual external audit was completed by Grant Thornton UK LLP without observation on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015. A procedural comment was made about the timing of the Annual Governance Statement assertion 6 compared to completion of the internal audit, in my view UPC has ongoing procedures in place to satisfy the requirement. A copy of the completed ‘Annual Return and Statement of Accounts’ has been published on the Parish website and a ‘Notice of Conclusion of Audit’ posted on notice boards in accord with legislation.

**4. Repairs to the Cemetery Bier House** – Simon Holt and I met with the stonemason at the Bier House on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015. He confirmed that he has already undertaken some of the required stone works which need finishing. We discussed the guttering issues and agreed how this can be resolved, works in this respect will commence shortly.

**5. Maintenance Contract** – Contracted works have and are being completed satisfactorily, a few specific / additional tasks have / are being undertaken:

- Tasked tree works in and around the Cemetery and The Croft have been completed.
- At the request of Revd Lang, I have now tasked Mark Goddard to cut back the overhanging hedge between the Cemetery and allotments adjacent to grave rows 21 – 25, this hedge is causing difficulties for funeral directors who have to move coffins to these rows during burials.
- I have tasked Mark Goddard to carry out grass cutting of the pathway to Oakfrith Wood, specifically on this occasion a 5ft pathway leaving the edges to grow as wildlife habitat.
- Specific requests for grass cutting for special events (Candles Round the Pond and Taste of Wiltshire have been agreed / completed.

**6. WC Community Focus Day – 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015** – Met with WC Community Coordinator on 13<sup>th</sup> August to walk the Parish and agree tasks to be undertaken on Focus Day as follows:

- Blocked drains, drain covers and gullies – various locations, potential flooding issue
- Weed growth and straw on pavements and in kerbs/gullies in many locations, main cause of blocked drains and lack of tidy village appearance
- Overhanging brambles, bushes and nettles, especially in Old School Lane and in The Bottom where the road is significantly narrowed / salt bins overgrown
- Pot holes and road edge erosion in several locations
- Bushes at the end of The Orchard need trimming

Some of the above works were undertaken on the day, but limited manpower resource and availability of machines limited this activity, but will be undertaken on later dates. I also took the opportunity to raise the following:

- Additional finger requested on Top Green sign pointing to School - this has been rejected due to lack of funding and the fact that this is not a statutory road sign (speed limit or traffic warning / instruction sign). UPC could fund and add a finger if considered essential.
- Repair of road sign at Lydeaway Junction - again this is not considered a statutory road sign and its repair is, therefore, low down on the priority list. I suggested that it would be better removed altogether in the meantime rather than displaying confusing directional information at a dangerous junction.
- Flooding of dropped kerbs in The Orchard - this is not considered a 'safety' issue by WC, just an inconvenience to pedestrians and as such is very low priority for any works. I also pointed out that one of the new dropped kerbs installed at the road crossing by Crooks Lane is subject to flooding (yesterday) despite a

drain being only a couple of feet away. Pedestrians including children will inevitably avoid the road crossing rather than walk through the large puddle. Sarah agreed to report this to the installing contractor.

- Repairs to The Cartway in Wedhampton - despite being raised by Bill Donald in February, no works have been undertaken to improve the junction with the track down to the water works. Sarah agreed to find out the latest on this issue which she believed was with the WC Highways Major Works team and report back to me.
- Flooding issue in the High Street, Wedhampton - a long standing potential safety issue which seems to suffer from lack of clarity on who should own the problem, WC or Wessex Water. Sarah agreed to try and find out what the current status of the issue is and report back to me.

## **7. Correspondence and E-mails – including:**

- Request to test powered boats on Urchfont Pond
- Invitation to participate in Forces TV item on boats on pond rejection
- Housing development sites enquiry
- Lydeaway Junctions anecdotal evidence
- Passenger transport review – implications for buses in the Parish
- Local Councils Award Scheme
- Manor Farm issues – various
- Proposed Traffic Regulation Orders for Urchfont 20mph and 40mph changes
- Interaction with WC Monitoring Officer on two new UPC councillors
- Taking Action on school journeys project
- Responses to Area Board 'Issues' submissions
- Urchfont loss of telephone / internet issues
- Notification of play area inspection in September
- WC Online update on fibre implementation
- Funeral and memorial applications – various
- Scenes and characters in Erchfont – BFI film clip
- WRHA Manor Farm affordable rented and shared ownership properties
- Legal completion of land ownership transfer to UPC of the pathway to Oakfrith Wood

## **Bob Lunn**

**G. Community Access and Travel Plan Working Group** - Nothing to report. I am awaiting confirmation of 2 new members and a meeting will be arranged in September.

## **Nicky Mitchell**

## **H. Section 106 Working Group**

We have recruited three new members and group is now as follows.

Liz Clifton Page  
Helen Gibb  
Emma Beaumont  
Katie Walters  
Trevor Hill  
Andy Stephens

We have not yet been able to meet as a whole group due to holidays, we are looking to meet as soon as everyone is available.

As a reminder, the groups focus will be on what equipment should be provided in order to make a robust 106 application, we will also be looking at a phase two, being the possibility of looking at match funding to provide other recreational facilities beyond obtaining the 106 funds.

This report is short and brief, we should be able to update you next month on our first full meeting.

**Andy Stevens**

