

**DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall**

**Present: Councillors:** Mottram (DM – Chairman), 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):** Sandra Johnston (SJ - UPC Planning Administrator)

**1. Welcome by the Vice Chairman** – GD welcomed all to the meeting and advised that he would be chairing the meeting in view of the fact that the Chairman had only just arrived back from overseas.

**2. Apologies:** None

**3. Declarations of Interest:** None

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

**a. Urchfont Telephone Box** – Unfortunately Stephanie Szakalo was unable to attend the meeting to present her thoughts and proposals for use of the telephone box, but had submitted these in a document which had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Discussion concluded that her proposals were positive and should be supported by the Council. It was suggested that Stephanie should be part of a UPC Working Group (WG) to move the proposals forward, NM and MK volunteered to be part of that WG. It was noted that the box is within the conservation area and so its external colour should not be changed. BL was asked to find out from BT when the telephone apparatus is scheduled to be removed.

**ACTION: FC/01/18 - BL**

**5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**a. To consider request for removal of Item 16h from minutes** – PW confirmed his request based on the fact that this was not an published item on the agenda and was perceived as an aside to the Council debate. RH commented that he had raised the issue following a request from a resident and did not consider the question to be an aside. DM considered that the raising of the question was procedurally incorrect, RT and BD considered it inappropriate and should have been raised privately outside the meeting in the first instance.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To remove Item 16h from the minutes on the basis that it was procedurally incorrect.	GD	RT	Unanimously agreed

BL confirmed and clarified meeting protocol in terms of when items can and cannot be discussed and/or decisions taken at a meeting.

**b. To approve minutes of the December meeting**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
Following removal of Item 16h, the remainder of the minutes to be approved and signed unchanged as a true record of the meeting.	NM	RT	Unanimously agreed

**6. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017** – outstanding actions for more than two meetings were reviewed as follows:

**FC/65/16 – Invasive plants** – still awaiting report on locations from Martin Antheunisse. BL to seek an update.

**ACTION: FC/02/18 – BL**

**FC/52/17 – Set up and chair WG on scout hut re-build** – BD agreed to follow up as this has not progressed.

**FC/84/17 – Reconvene meeting with School on PROW** – Some confusion existed as to whether this referred to a UPC / School meeting or the proposed wider WC/UPC/School meeting. BD agreed to contact Richard Broadhead to establish the current position. GC perceived that the School is likely to want to wait until a formal decision is made by Secretary of State, he will nevertheless discuss further with School Governors at their next meeting.

**ACTION: FC/03/18 – BD / GC**

(Post Meeting Note: The October minutes appear to confirm the need for a UPC/School meeting by recording a statement read out from BD as follows: "In the meantime I hope to progress further the solution of a fenced path around the school. Thanks go to Sue Giddings, Malcolm Smith and Trevor Hill for speaking in favour of the order. DM proposed that he and BD should re-convene the meeting with the School to discuss the path further.")

**FC/86/17 – Establish cost of refurbishing rather than buying new bench in Recreation Ground** – DS apologised for not having completed this task, he will now establish costs and report back at the next meeting.

**FC/102/17 – Talk / write letters to perceived offending fly tippers** – whilst not an outstanding action, TH reported that he had spoken to the two residents in Urchfont and Wedhampton where building materials have been deposited in lay-bys / verges, they have both agreed to move the offending items shortly. GD commented on the fact that the Gazette & Herald had picked up and reported on the UPC comments on fly-tipping. BL confirmed that he will be writing collective letters to all householders adjacent to The Holloway to highlight the illegal practice of dumping garden waste and some non-biodegradable items on this footpath / bridleway.

## **7. Finance**

**a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017** – BL confirmed that all reports had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting; accounts were in good order and had been reconciled with bank statements. All payments in month are individually identified on the Bank reconciliation. The indicated reserve had reduced due to additional forecast expenditure but is expected to increase marginally due to income that had not been forecast. No questions were raised.

**b. Precept 2018/19** – BL confirmed that at the December meeting a decision had been made to increase the Precept Demand equivalent to an increase in the Parish element of Council Tax of 2%, this to be in line with the Wiltshire Council (WC) cap of 1.99%. WC have subsequently indicated that the 1.99% cap had been increased to 2.99% and that it is distinctly possible that this increase will be applied; but this will not be confirmed until after the deadline for the Parish submission. Discussion concluded with the following proposal.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
To confirm an increase in the Parish Precept demand (from £45420 to £47244.40) equating to a 2% increase in the Parish element of Council Tax. This will increase Band D property Parish tax by £1.76 per annum from £87.99 to £89.75). BL to submit the requirement to WC by the deadline of 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2018.	TH	RT	1 abstention, remainder agreed. Proposal agreed.

**ACTION: FC/04/18 – BL**

**c. Allotment Hedges** – Prior to the meeting, BL had circulated details of the Allotment Association confirmed request to reduce all hedges around the allotments to a height of 5 feet above allotment ground levels and the verbal estimate of £300 to achieve a reduction of between 2 and 4 feet in the hedge on the bank adjacent to the B3098. BL reminded councillors that the height of this latter hedge had been the subject of objections from neighbours in the past and as a result had been allowed to grow higher. Cutting of hedges has been a continual issue in that they can only be trimmed when they are dormant and free of nesting birds; allotment holders placing items against the inner side of hedges has also been an issue. Discussion concluded with the following proposal:

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve the reduction of all hedges around the allotments to a height of 5 feet above allotment ground level and the verbal quote of £300 specific to the reduction of the hedge on the bank adjacent to the B3098. BL to notify the contractor.	DM	DS	1 Abstention, remainder agreed. Proposal agreed.

**ACTION: FC/05/18 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note – Decision emailed to Contractor on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018)

**d. Proposal to recover business rates** – BL reported that an unsolicited proposal had been received from Goodman Nash (Property Agents in Devizes) suggesting that they could achieve a refund of circa £900 in previous business rates paid for Urchfont Cemetery (Details had been circulated to all councillors with the agenda). BL had challenged the figures based on the fact that UPC only currently pay £165.88 per year, although this could rise as a result of changes in business rates criteria. PW suggested that, before employing an agent, he could seek advice from within the business rates department of WC as to whether there is any scope for them to offer such reductions without UPC employing a property agent.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To seek advice from WC Business Rates Dept before considering the employment of a property agent further. BL to email PW with the details so that he can request the advice.	RT	TH	Unanimously agreed

**ACTION: FC/06/18 – BL/PW**

(Post Meeting Note: BL emailed details to PW on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018)

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

**a. Clerks Report** – BL updated the item on grounds maintenance and litter collection ITTs publication to confirm that he had requested the required advert in the Gazette & Herald to satisfy Financial Regulations and Standing orders in relation to such value contracts. BL had firstly requested publication on 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January but was shocked by the £674.20 publication cost; following discussion with GD the decision had been taken to place the item for only one week on 11<sup>th</sup> January at a cost of £377.20. GD asked whether councillors believed that the second week should nevertheless be purchased in the hope that more contractors will respond.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To restrict the advert to one week only (11 <sup>th</sup> January 2018)	TH	RH	Unanimously agreed

**b. Councillor Reports** - None submitted

**9. Farmers Field** - MK had discussed her ideas for a sensory garden within Farmers Field with LC and also with members of the wider community who had expressed enthusiasm for the idea, MK proposed that it should be discussed further at a meeting between UPC and Friends of Farmers Field (FoFF). TH expressed the view that UPC had paid for and approved the Management Plan proposed by Martijn Antheunisse, it should now be followed as the basis for change and encouraging wider use by the community. LC commented that parts of the Plan had already started with the felling of trees leading to a more open environment. A FoFF meeting is being held on 10<sup>th</sup> February which LC will attend to discuss the way forward, maybe MK should also consider attending. RH questioned whether the public should be better consulted on what is being proposed. DM suggested that the FoFF grand opening barbecue planned for the 28<sup>th</sup> April would perhaps better be used to explore what the public want and feel about the facility. The subject could also be raised at the Parish Meeting in April.

BL suggested that the approved Management Plan should be owned, actively managed and coordinated by UPC to ensure that the desired objectives for the Field are achieved taking account of the views/ideas of FoFF, councillors and others in the community; at present there appear to be disparate ideas / activities being pursued without appropriate coordinating controls in place. Works requiring Council funding cannot proceed without prior consideration and approval of the Council; there is no budget agreed at this time. GD agreed that there is a need to define more clearly what UPC as the owner of the Field is proposing to do and achieve.

It was agreed that an update report should be given to the February UPC meeting following the proposed FoFF meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February; this will inform debate on the coordinated and managed way forward.

**ACTION: FC/07/18 – LC/MK**

**10. Bridleway / Cycle Path** – MK reported that she, along with TH and Linda Jennings has been looking at potential improvement of existing paths to satisfy objectives in the UPC 10 year Strategy. MK highlighted a number of options for routes between Urchfont and Wedhampton, the main issue being to identify safe crossing points on the A342. MK has written to the WC Rights of Way Officer seeking his thoughts on the issue. PW stated that paths / bridleways do exist between Urchfont and Wedhampton, which would be suitable for bike riders / pedestrians / horse riders; some have deteriorated due to lack of use / disrepair but could be reinstated. BD welcomed the initiative, which he believed would not necessarily benefit horse riders, but could be good for pedestrians and bike riders if the necessary land owner approvals could be achieved and funding found to cover likely high costs of surface improvement. Applauding the work of the Rights of Way volunteers, BD would nevertheless like to see The Holloway surfaces improved to the benefit of all users. BD agreed to canvass Wedhampton residents on their use of existing pathways between their Village and Urchfont and whether this use would increase if the crossing of the A342 at the Greengate Road junction could be made safer.

**ACTION: FC/08/18 - BD**

**11. Date for Parish Meeting 2018** – BL reported that he had provisionally booked the Village Hall on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April, historically Friday has been the chosen day. Discussion concluded with the following proposal:

Proposal	Proposer	Second	Resolution
To confirm Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2018 as the date for the Parish Meeting.	DM	RH	Unanimously agreed

**12. Best Kept Village Competition 2018** – GD posed two questions, do we want to participate again this year and is there the appetite within the community for another large commitment? NM was of the view that the benefit from the intense activity associated with preparation for the event in 2017 was fantastic and involved a lot of people in the Village, in particular the coordinating and enthusiastic part played by John Chapman. DM also spoke very positively about last year’s event, reminded councillors that Urchfont only missed out on winning by 1 point, and offered to email all those who had been involved with the event last year to try to establish feelings and potential leading players before taking a final decision.

**ACTION: FC/09/18 - DM**

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

**14. External Meetings** – None reported

**15. Councillors’ Reports and Items for Future Agenda**

**a. Christmas Lights** – RT reported that the lights had been a great success; this despite the fact that a large quantity of the wall lights had failed and had to be replaced. He has taken this up with the supplier who is investigating appropriateness for outdoor use which was originally claimed. RT thanked councillors and others who had assisted with the erection and dismantling of the lights and Christmas tree including Martin Bodman, Jason Lanfear, Jonathan Wildman and Joe Mottram. In recognition of Dauntsey’s School supplying the Christmas tree, NM sought approval to send them a contribution for their charity as in previous years.

Proposal	Proposer	Second	Resolution
To increase the contribution of £25 in previous years to £50.	NM	RT	Unanimously agreed

**ACTION: FC/10/18 - BL**

- b. Farmers Field** – to be included on the February agenda for a report back on discussions with Friends of farmers Field.
- c. Speed Watch** – GD confirmed that it is the intention to give a presentation at the March meeting.

Meeting Closed at 9.15pm

**Date of Next Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**

**A. CLERKS REPORT – JANUARY 2018**

**1. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM FC MEETING ON 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**FC/97/17 – Precept requirement** will be submitted to WC by 20<sup>th</sup> January deadline subject to confirmation at January meeting.

**FC/98/17 – Quote for Gateway and Bollard installation** accepted on 17<sup>th</sup> December – see Item 2 below.

**FC/99/17** – Confirmed to Phillip Whitehead on 16<sup>th</sup> December that UPC **desire to take on grass cutting and litter bin emptying from WC**

**FC/100/17 – Maintenance and Litter Bin ITTs** - Due diligence checks on continuing in preparation for issue on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

**FC/101/17 – Proposal to write to Motocross organisers** - Responded to Potterne PC on 17<sup>th</sup> December rejecting their proposal.

**FC/102/17 – Fly-tipping** - Collective letters sent to households bordering the Holloway on XXXXXX.

**FC/103/17 – Allotment hedge reduction proposal** - Verbal quote of £300 obtained from Mark Goddard for on 18<sup>th</sup> December – see agenda item 4c.

**FC/104/17 – High Street speeding** - Follow up to David Byford article on in Redhorn (January) will be included in UPC section of February edition.

**FC/106/17 – Manor Farmyard planning conditions regarding planting** - Sandra Johnston requested to identify conditions, Sandra has subsequently written to all councillors.

**FC/108/17 – Case for speed reductions on the A342** - Responded to Clock Inn Residents Association on 17<sup>th</sup> December supporting their case.

**2. NEW GATEWAY SIGNS AND BOLLARDS** – Four bollards have been installed free of charge by WC adjacent to the bus stop by The Paddock entrance. Having accepted the installation quote for the gateway signs and remaining four bollards, I now await the installation date from Ringway. In the meantime I have constructed the gates from the component parts and they are now awaiting collection. When the new gates are installed we will need to remove the old gates – volunteers required?

**3. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND LITTER COLLECTION ITT'S** – Invitation to Tender's will be available from 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018 following finalisation of areas and locations to be included. At this stage the ITT's will, as agreed and subject to quid quo pro agreements with WC, include grass cutting and litter bin emptying currently undertaken by WC in Urchfont. An article on the ITT issue appears in the January edition of Redhorn News and an advert will be placed in the local Gazette shortly for contractors to apply. The timetable for ITT submission and evaluation is as follows:

- ITT available to contractors – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- ITT submission deadline – 1600hrs on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2018.
- Tenders will be opened – Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018
- Evaluation completion and notification of contract award – Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018
- Contract start date – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018
- Contract Duration – 5 years

Evaluation of tenders will be undertaken by myself and the Chairman, anyone else wishing to take part will be most welcome.

**4. REMINDER ON AGENDA PROTOCOL** – Can I please take this opportunity to remind all councillors that only items specifically included on the agenda for any given meeting can be discussed at that meeting. If you wish to raise an item for discussion at any particular meeting, this should be identified as an item for future agenda at the prior meeting or identified to me prior to issue of the relevant agenda.

Local Authority custom and practice / guidance specifically excludes 'Any Other Business' as an agenda category to avoid items being raised without prior notification to members of the public.

**Bob Lunn**  
**4<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

