

**DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall**

**Present: Councillors:** Mottram (DM – Chairman), Day (GD – Vice Chairman), Mitchell (NM), Donald (BD), Hill (TH), Kemp (MK), Hawkins (RH), Creasey (GC), Stevens (DS) and Cottell (PC – after co-option at Item 2)

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

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

**Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting):** None

**1. Welcome by the Chairman –** Chairman welcomed all present. He reported that Royston Thomas had sent his thanks to all members of the Council for their card, gift and good wishes. DM expressed best wishes from the Council to Sandra Johnston who is recovering steadily following her operation.

**2. Apologies:** Cllr Cowen (LC), Planning Administrator Sandra Johnston (SJ)

**3. Co-option of new councillor to fill vacancy –** BL confirmed that only one 'expression of interest' had been received, from Mr Philip Cottell who had been an unsuccessful candidate at the 2017 election.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To co-opt Philip Cottell to the Council with immediate effect.	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

Having signed his Acceptance of Office documentation, PC immediately joined the Council for the rest of the meeting.

**4. Declarations of Interest:** DM declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 17c – Cricket Nets Proposal

**5. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports –** no public attendance and no external reports.

**6. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as an accurate record of the meeting.	RH	TH	Unanimously agreed

**7. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018 –** BL reported that all actions are actively in hand, but updates were given on the following:

Action 78/17 – Quotes for tree works and set up WG on Paddock Green – action needs to be re-assigned to another Lead Councillor following the retirement of Royston Thomas - see Item 12 below.

Action 109/17 – Farmers Field Project Funding – to be addressed at July meeting

Action 51/18 – General Review of Pavements – RH reported that he had not yet completed this action

Action 54/18 – State of Church Graveyard – GC reported that he had been informed that a new contractor has been appointed, improvement is expected.

**8. Finance**

**a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 –** BL confirmed that he had circulated the reports to all councillors with the agenda. BL commented that the accounts are in good order, that £7,027 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had been received in respect of the Beeches development and that the indicated end of year reserve is overstated due to lack of definitive spend data this early in the year. He reiterated his call for proposed project requirements and costs as soon as possible. No questions were forthcoming on the accounts.

NM asked when project information would be available on the proposed lay-by parking area in Crookwood Lane. BL stated that he and DM will be putting together an ITT for the works based on the design supplied by WC, DM asked PW whether he could provide an exemplar ITT in this respect.

**ACTION: FC/58/18 – PW**

(Post Meeting Note: Information was provided on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018)

**b. Annual Clerk and Planning Administrator appraisals / salary review** – DM confirmed that appraisals had been undertaken for both BL and SJ. Both had performed very well over the past 12 months, praising BL in particular for his stalwart approach to new GDPR requirements. Both had indicated a willingness to continue in their roles. DM explained the recommended pay increases following the appraisals.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To award the Clerk a pay increase with effect 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 in line with the NALC Pay Award 2018 + a move to NALC Scale Point 24 = overall increase of 5.33%.	DM	GD	Unanimously Agreed

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To award the Planning Administrator an increase in fee with effect 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 equivalent to the overall increase % awarded to the Clerk	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

BD pointed out that staff costs are becoming a higher percentage of the overall Council budget and this must be allowed for in future financial considerations. BL pointed out that increases have always been provided for in the UPC budget process (3.26% for 18/19 budget), but actual amounts are clearly dependent on pay awards which are traditionally announced by NALC well after the internal budget process. GD confirmed that the appraisal process is based on rigorous criteria, annual increases are not guaranteed unless warranted by performance.

**c. Gateway Sign (West)** – As requested BL had obtained a quote to replace the ageing and deteriorating gateway at the eastern boundary of Urchfont constructed in man-made timber (MMT). The quote had been circulated with the agenda and offered two versions, one which fully meets DfT and TSRGD requirements (£675.54 + VAT) and a second which does not (£662.92+ VAT). Debate concluded that the version which does not fully comply is more aesthetically acceptable due to the fact that the Urchfont nameplate fits between the two uprights rather than bridging the two.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To purchase the gateway sign which does not fully meet DfT and TSRGD requirements at a cost of £662.92 + VAT plus an additional £20 for Postcrete.	TH	BD	Unanimously agreed

**ACTION: FC/59/18 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note: Order placed on Glasdon 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018, delivery expected 3-4 weeks)

**d. Purchase of Farmers Field lay-by litter bin** – As agreed at the May meeting, BL confirmed that he had purchased a new bin for this lay-by at a cost of £221.74. Delivery is awaited, this bin will be added to the Litter Bin emptying contract.

**e. Annual provision for land expansion (£1000)** – BL sought confirmation that the Council wished to continue the annual provision of £1000 for new statutory allotment land in the event that there is need to expand the Cemetery at some point in the future. DM confirmed that existing cemetery space indicates that expansion may not be necessary for around 20-25 years. BL confirmed that this provision has existed for the last seven years and could be used for other UPC priorities if deemed necessary.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve the continued annual provision of £1000 to the allotment land provision fund.	GD	NM	Unanimously agreed

**f. Other Project Proposals** – No requirements / costs for other projects were proposed. However, the following was noted:

DM had written to the Chief Scout about funding for a new Scout Hut, no response had been received and he will follow up. RH commented that the Village needs a new storage facility not only for the Scouts but also other groups.

GD was asked to re-visit the 10 year strategy to see whether other projects can be identified.

**ACTION: FC/60/18 – GD**

DS suggested that a Wi-Fi hub would be useful on or about Pond Green which could be used by Scarecrows / others to facilitate card transactions. Some business is lost if customers do not have sufficient cash available. BD has approached Urchfont PO to see if they would be prepared to open longer hours to offer cashback facilities over the May bank holiday. BL to seek quote from BT.

**ACTION: FC/61/18 - BL**

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

**a. Clerks Report** – no comments received, updates on some items to be given later in meeting.

**b. Councillor Reports**

**i. Farmers Field** – see Item 14 below

**ii. Defibrillator Group** – DM congratulated the Group on this excellent initiative with the School.

**10. Outstanding Interaction with Wiltshire Council**

**a. Proposed Quid Pro Quo arrangement with WC for assuming grass cutting and litter bin emptying roles in Urchfont** – GD reported that he, GC and BL had been invited to a very useful meeting at County Hall on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018 to discuss physical and legal elements outlined in the draft agreement proposed by WC. As a result of that meeting UPC proposed some further amendments on 12<sup>th</sup> May, but the latest version of the agreement only arrived today. Initial indications are that the latest draft reflects significant progress on various issues, but further detailed consideration is necessary before final agreement can hopefully be reached – it is still work in progress. BL pointed out that he had asked for a clause to be inserted giving the local community right of access and use of the playing field outside of School operational hours. WC had rejected this on the basis that this understanding should be made with the School as prime educational user. A Memorandum of Understanding signed with the School in 2009 and never rescinded includes such a clause, as did a draft update proposed by UPC following the sale of the Manor. BL was asked to copy these MOU's to GD & GC.

**ACTION: FC/62/18 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note. MOU's copied to GD & GC on 14<sup>th</sup> June)

**b. PROW Urchfont School** – BD reiterated that WC had submitted the report to the Secretary of State at the beginning of April, a response is expected shortly. No progress meetings have yet been initiated by WC.

RH enquired what action is being taken about the proposed building works at the School which are to be built over the PROW route. Now that planning approval has been given by WC, albeit with conditions, GC stated that an approach will be made to the Education Dept for formal approval of the works. Assuming that the PROW is approved then a diversionary order application will need to be submitted before any works can commence. BD suggested that work on such an application should commence as soon as possible.

**11. Village Greens Risk Assessment** – RH apologised that this work has not yet been completed, he plans to present the updated version at the July meeting.

**ACTION: FC/63/18- RH**

**12. Lead Councillor Roles** – Changes were agreed as follows to the current Lead Councillor listing, BL to amend listing on the website and notice boards:

GD - add TV & Mobiles plus negotiation of the Delegation Agreement with WC for grass cutting and litter bin emptying.

Responsibility for Lydeaway and Potato Yard to be moved from BD to PC

GC - add Paddock Green

DS - add Pond Green including Christmas Tree & Lights and Duck House

RH – add Utilities – water, sewerage and electricity

DM – add Right Tree in the Right Place and actions from tree survey

**ACTION: FC/64/18 - BL**

**13. Footpaths to / from Wedhampton and A342 crossing** – BD reported that he had met with Richard Dobson (WC Highways Engineer) and agreed a landing point opposite Greengate Road, he is awaiting confirmation of the agreement from WC. He will then approach the farmer to try and re-instate footpath(s) from the landing point, this could be the subject of a project proposal in due course. DM asked whether the agreement with WC included provision of crossing signs etc., BD confirmed that this will be the subject of further discussion with WC.

**14. Farmers Field** – MK reported on a number of points as follows:

- The written report attached to these minutes gives details of a visit by three Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) Officers on 6<sup>th</sup> June. The WWT study report recommended clearing the pond completely of all plants and vegetation, this would be a very costly task. Whilst further investigation is necessary, the latest WWT visit identified a possible alternative reed bed location at the Junction of URCH 31 and 32 which would serve the same purpose.
- Sheds have been cleared, the barb wire fence at the entrance has been replaced with wooden post and rail, logs have been delivered for various uses and Urchfont Pre-School now regularly visit the Field. MK presented photographs of the children enjoying the facility.
- A number of unsolicited plaudits have been received.
- MK now intends to encourage Urchfont School to visit the Field, GC and NM agreed to promote the idea.

**ACTION; FC/65/18 – GC/NM**

- There is a need to produce better signage to promote the community aspect, maybe to even change the name of the field to encourage awareness e.g. Farmers Field Nature Trail. It was agreed that a competition for the School / Pre-School to design such a sign is a very good idea.

**ACTION: FC/66/18 – MK**

- MK is very wary of holding a community consultation / awareness BBQ when good progress is being made without it, it would involve a lot of work at a busy time. Maybe it could be considered later in the year or in the spring next year if necessary.
- The general maintenance budget may need to be increased from £100 in due course to cater for increasing tool maintenance.

DM asked about the perceived Friends of Farmers Field (FoFF) concern over installing a new entrance adjacent to the B3098 lay-by, UPC takes a more positive and bigger picture view in terms of aiding the initiative to extend the 30mph zone past Crooks Lane. MK expressed the view that FoFF concerns are diminishing.

**15. Best Kept Village Competition 2018** – DM re-iterated that the first judging round had now been completed, not sure when judges visited Urchfont but an initial report is expected from CPRE indicating whether the Village is shortlisted for the next round.

DM noted that grass was growing more rapidly during the judging period, he suggested that consideration should be given to changing the cutting requirement from fortnightly to weekly in the peak season to improve appearance. BD expressed concern that this would likely mean a higher proportion of the budget going to Urchfont rather than Wedhampton. No decision was taken on this issue.

**16. Parking on Village Greens** – BL pointed out that cars appear to be parking on Village Green grass areas more frequently than in the past, this tends to coincide with funerals / weddings at the Church. Largely dependent on weather conditions, this could result in damage to grass areas and prevent maintenance. NM commented that when Revd William Lang was in post, the Church provided directions to potential car parking areas when such events took place, albeit that one of those was Manor Farmyard before the development took place. DM pointed out that the Village Hall car park could be used if it is not required for other functions. It was agreed that DM and GC should arrange a meeting with Church representatives to try and resolve the issue.

**ACTION: FC/67/18 – DM/GC**

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

**a. Eastern Gateway Sign location** – Three complaints had been received from residents alleging that the new Gateway sign to the east of Crooks Lane obscures vision for vehicles exiting this junction. UPC asked the WC Highways Engineer for his views and he has responded that 'visibility is hindered' by the gates. He has suggested a number of options to improve this position, the preferred being to move the gate nearer to the fence. Further work now needs to be undertaken to establish the cost and practicalities of the work noting that there are underground services in this verge. An update will be given at the next meeting.

**b. Scarecrow Festival** – DM outlined an issue that had been reported to UPC and the Scarecrow Committee Chairman, namely that a family walking the ROW from Stert to the Festival had, in the last couple of years, encountered alleged aggressive cows in an unspecified field on the Urchfont side of the railway line. Debate concluded that this is not an issue for the Parish Council and it was agreed that TH should draft a written response to this effect which can be sent to the family.

**ACTION: FC/68/18 – TH**

**c. Cricket Nets proposal for Cricket Ground** – In view of the comments on this proposal from the internal auditor and councillors, DM (in his Cricket Club Chairman role) has submitted a supplementary application to the Scarecrow Committee seeking additional funding to cover VAT costs. As such this proposal is withdrawn from UPC. BD commented that this will be considered by Scarecrow next week.

**d. Playing Field / Urchfont Manor boundary Fence & Hedge** – the fence between the Manor and Urchfont Playing Field is not in good condition, retrieval of balls from Manor grounds has gradually made the fence and hedge worse. The Manor has indicated that they are prepared to have a lockable gate in a better fence to facilitate retrieval of footballs etc. in a controlled manner without further damage to either the fence or hedge, but the question is who is responsible for the fence. PW has agreed to investigate ownership post sale of the Manor.

**ACTION: FC/69/18 - PW**

**e. Model Boat Testing on Urchfont Pond** – an application was made in 2015 for model boats to be tested on the Pond, this proposal was rejected by UPC. An email has just been received asserting that the 2015 decision is laughable and the application should be reconsidered. DM suggested that three options should be considered as follows:

- Ignore the email completely
- Confirm that the UPC decision stands
- Seek further information to justify re-consideration
- PW suggested that a fourth option could be to just thank the sender' and note comments.

Debate concluded that the fourth option suggested by PW should be adopted.

**ACTION: FC/70/18 - BL**

**18. External Meetings** – None reported

**19. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda** - Councillors reported the following :

**a. Parking in front of Cemetery gates** – RH had been approached by a resident to say that the gates appear to be regularly blocked by cars who are believed to belong to allotment holders, this preventing her from accessing the Cemetery with her own vehicle. It was agreed that DS should investigate this with the

Allotment Association and point out the importance of keeping these gates free at all times, signs are clearly displayed at the Cemetery gate.

**ACTION: FC/71/18 – DS**

- b. **Speed Watch** -RH reported that he had experienced a far more friendly approach from Speed Watch teams elsewhere, on one occasion he had even received a thumbs up sign for complying with the limit. DM asked that Speed Watch should appear on the July agenda to consider impact on and comments from the community.

**ACTION: FC/72/18 – BL**

- c. **Greengate / A342 Junction Visibility Issues** - BD reported that he had highlighted the visibility issues at the Greengate Road / A342 junction to PW and BL, DIY action had been taken to trim verges in the past but this is really the responsibility of WC Highways on safety grounds. A report has been made to WC Highways.

- d. **Lydeaway Broadband** - PC reported that, as part of a WC funded experiment, some residents of Lydeaway are at last about to join the super-fast broadband age. Up until now it has barely achieved 2MB, anticipated implementation has been delayed but is now expected in July.

MEETING CLOSED AT 10.02pm

**Date of Next Meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**

Minutes approved as an accurate record of the meeting .....

25<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**a. CLERK'S REPORT**

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

**FC/39/18 – Provisional meeting dates 2019** – all confirmed with Village Hall

**FC/40/18 – Subscriptions Authorised** – WALC and Community First have been paid, remainder will follow when due.

**FC/41/18 – Asset register** – Insurance column removed

**FC/42/18 – Governance Statement** – signed and submitted to External Auditors by due date

**FC/43/18 – Accounting Statement** – signed and submitted to External Auditors by due date

**FC/44/18 – Discuss Cricket Net proposal with internal auditor** – discussed and advice circulated to all councillors.

**FC/45/18 – 18/19 Insurance** – see Item 4 below

**FC/47/18 – Contact next in line of 2017 unsuccessful candidates** – contacted Philip Cottell and result emailed to all councillors

**FC/48/18 – Publish approved GDPR documents** – see Item 3 below

**FC/52/18 – Confirm changed July meeting date with Village Hall** – 25<sup>th</sup> July confirmed, but 11<sup>th</sup> left in place in case of planning priorities

**2. Councillor Vacancy Notice** – Notice expired on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018, WC Electoral Services subsequently advised that there had been no letters from the electorate seeking a public election. UPC has, therefore, been authorised to co-opt a new councillor – see Agenda Item A3

**3. GDPR Update** – A new Menu page has been generated on the website which includes links to the UPC Information and Communication Policy, General Privacy Statement, Social Media Policy and Information Policy (FOI). I have also highlighted this on the website 'Home' and 'Latest News' pages and included reference to it in the June Edition of Redhorn News. As you know, I have also issued all councillors, staff and the Parish contractor with the Staff Privacy Notice. In my view this action at least goes some way to satisfying necessary compliance and publication requirements for GDPR by 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

**4. UPC Insurance** – In accordance with your decision to opt for a new 5 year Long Term Agreement with Community First / Zurich, I have renewed the UPC insurance for 18/19 commencing 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018.

**5. Proposed Quid Pro Quo agreement with WC in exchange for assuming grass cutting and litter bin emptying in the Parish** – Having submitted suggested changes on 20<sup>th</sup> April to the draft agreement proposed by WC, Councillors Day and Creasey together with myself were invited to meet with Philip Whitehead and WC officers on 10<sup>th</sup> May at County Hall to discuss the way forward. Following that meeting UPC submitted further suggested revisions on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, but to date we have had no response. A hastener was sent to all concerned on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in the hope that a revised draft will be available for consideration prior to and at the June FC meeting. An update to be given at Agenda Item 7a.

**6. Audit of 2017/18 Accounts** – The Internal Audit was completed on 4<sup>th</sup> June with no adverse comments, observations or suggested improvements; the Internal Auditors section has been completed in the Annual Accounting and Governance Statement. This Statement together with the required supporting documentation will be sent to the external auditors to reach them by the due date of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

**7. New Gateway Sign Location (East)** – UPC has now received three complaints that the new sign restricts visibility for traffic exiting from Crooks Lane; this was exacerbated by the length of grass growing on this verge recently. Other views have been expressed that, in comparison with a number of other local junctions (for example Blackboard Lane / B3098, Walnut Close / B3098 and Greengate Road / A342), this sign is perceived to be less of an issue and prompts more driver care when exiting the Crooks Lane junction.

Having contacted WC regarding the grass, which is their responsibility, arrangements were quickly made to have this cut by their contractor / Parish Steward during week commencing 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

As to the new sign itself, as requested I asked the WC Highways Engineer for his view on the location of the sign and whether it impairs vision, he has now responded that in his view it does and that UPC should consider a

number of suggested options for improvement – see email attached to the agenda. This issue is to be considered further at Agenda Item 15a.

**8. Parking on Village Greens** – it has been noted on a number of occasions recently that a significant number of cars are parking on the Pond Green grass triangle and pond verges when events are taking place at the Church. Cars were also noted to be parking on the grass verges in Church Lane. Whilst damage is less likely during dry weather, the grass will nevertheless be worn away if used regularly and especially during / after wet conditions. This is to be discussed further at Agenda Item 14.

**Bob Lunn**  
**Clerk to the Council**

**b. COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

**i. Farmers Field**

The Friends of Farmers Field played host to three officers from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on the morning of June 6.

They were first shown the donated materials for building two “bug hotels” – pallets, canes and other items – which would benefit children of Urchfont Pre-school who regularly visit the site.

But the main purpose of the visit was to view the pond and offer advice as to how it could be improved.

The main issue of the pond, and of water maintenance on the site in general, is the problem of the run-off of nitrogen-based fertiliser from adjoining fields at times of heavy rainfall.

The fertiliser increases the growth of weed and other plants, which choke the pond and adversely affect the water courses downstream of Farmers Field.

Until this problem is solved, there is little point in carrying out improvements to the area. One suggestion is planting a reed bed a little way south of Farmers Field, on the edge of the field at the junction of Urchfont 31 and 32 footpaths.

This would require the permission of the farmer, though there is some funding available from WWT. This funding, however, would only cover the provision of the reeds and the cost of planting etc. would have to be met from other sources.

They will provide us with estimated costings for the work that should be done.

The three officers were very impressed with what had been done so far but their concern is the water side of things. They suggested their colleagues in the education department at WWT would be able to offer advice on how to install other educational facilities, such as pond-dipping platforms.

**Lewis Cowen**

**ii. THE PARISH DEFIBRILLATOR GROUP**

On Tuesday 5th June we held a CPR Training Session for Yr6 at Urchfont Primary School.

There were 12 children participating and they were very attentive and interacted extremely well with the DVD instruction and our supervision. They seemed to enjoy it and were very proud to receive certificates at the end. Rest assured they will be very useful if needed in an emergency!

Thank you to the staff involved in setting it up and Mrs James for joining us and helping with the supervision. Carol Talbot agreed it would be an excellent addition to the Yr6 annual timetable.

**Nicky Mitchell**, Alison Taylor, Clare Milanes and Anthea Donald