

Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 8th July 2015 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall – Version 1

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM - Chairman), Donald (BD), Gibb (HG), Holt (SH), Thomas (RT), Clifton-Page (LCP) 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, Mr & Mrs Patrick Wheatley, Alison Taylor, Malcolm Taylor, Steven Wells, Mr & Mrs Paul Riddle, Trevor Hill and John Knight

1. **Welcome by the Chairman:** The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting, in particular prospective candidates for the vacant councillor posts. He expressed thanks to all five who had expressed interest in the vacant posts, a very welcome change in previous levels of interest.
2. **Apologies:** apologies were received from Nicky Mitchell and Graham Day, both on holiday
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared at the meeting
4. **Minutes:** to approve Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10th June 2015

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Richard Hawkins asked why page two had been changed on the website. BL explained that this was a minor text change in Item 7vi agreed by all councillors and PW following a complaint from the Chair of the School Governors. The intent and basic content of the item had not been changed.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
The minutes to be approved and signed as a true record of the meeting	BD	SH	Unanimously agreed

5. **Actions Status and Update Reports from the Minutes of 10th June 2015:** BL reported that all actions had been completed or would be covered later in the meeting except for the following which are ongoing:

- i. **Lydeaway Junctions** – Area Board 'issue report' drafted but awaiting information from councillors on accidents / incidents / near misses to ensure that report is based on specific rather than general statements / examples and as such will stand a chance of being considered. DM asked BL to circulate the initial draft to inform councillors
ACTION: FC/39/15 - BL
- ii. **WC Tree Preservation Officer Presentation** - trying to finalise date for presentation to Council.
ACTION FC/41/15- BL
- iii. **Grass verge ownership and maintenance** - responsibility briefing not yet complete.
ACTION: FC/45/15- BL

6. **Selection of two new councillors by co-option** – DM reiterated the procedure to be followed as contained in the UPC Co-option Procedure. Five candidates had expressed interest and BL reported that he had received a completed application form confirming eligibility from each applicant:

Paul David Baker
Lewis Michael Cowen
Trevor Earnest William Hill
Paul Riddle
Steven Howard Wells

Profiles of each candidate had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting and the Chairman confirmed that councillors did not require a debate prior to voting.

BD indicated that he would welcome the appointment of a second councillor from Wedhampton, as has been the case in the recent past.

DM invited those candidates present to say a few words in support of their case, noting that Lewis Cowen had sent apologies for non-attendance:

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Paul Riddle – although he had only moved into the area at the end of last year, he had been very much struck by the community environment within the Parish and believed that his listening and other skills, together with the fact that he now has retirement time to devote, could be used to benefit the community.

Steven Wells – he has only lived in Urchfont for just over 12 months but was born only 10 miles away. He has experience of being a councillor in Cornwall and has a good working knowledge of local council procedures.

Trevor Hill – has lived in Urchfont with his family for over 29 years, he was a police inspector with close working relationships with numerous parish councils and is involved in various activities within this vibrant Parish. He firmly believed that you only get out what you put in to life.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

A secret paper ballot was conducted and the votes on the completed papers were counted by the Clerk who announced that a clear majority decision indicated Paul Baker and Trevor Hill should be co-opted. Trevor Hill signed his 'Acceptance of Office' declaration at the meeting, BL was asked to offer the post to Paul Baker who was not in attendance. BL was also asked to thank all unsuccessful candidates.

ACTION: FC/46/15 – BL

(Post Meeting Note: Paul Baker accepted the post by email on 9th July 2015, email sent to unsuccessful candidates on 9th July)

DM thanked the unsuccessful applicants on this occasion and hoped that they would apply again in the event of any future vacancies and indeed become candidates for the whole council election in 2017.

7. Finance:

a. To report on progress of Internal Audit and preparation for External Audit: BL reported that the internal audit had been completed successfully without any observations or comments. The internal auditor had completed his part of the Annual Return which had been sent off to the external auditors with other supporting documentation by the due date. The results of this audit are expected in late August.

b. To receive Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June 2015: BL reported that the statement had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting but had not been subject to reconciliation with bank statements as these had not been received. Currently indicating an end of year reserve of £14,737, this is mainly due to the fact that project proposals / budgets have not yet been submitted against the pot of project money allocated. BL was asked to remind all project leads of the need to submit proposals for Council approval.

ACTION: FC/47/15 - BL

8. Lead Councillor, Clerk & other written Reports (attached on website only)

- i. **Liaison with Urchfont School and Pre-School** - no comments on, or updates received to submitted reports
- ii. **Cricket and Croquet Grounds including liaison with cricket and croquet clubs** - no comments on, or updates received to submitted reports
- iii. **Liaison with the Community Shop** – BD commented that the Scarecrow Committee had donated a new wooden litter bin to the Shop. The recently provided plastic bin will be returned to the Parish Council.

- iv. **Liaison with the Community Bus Committee** - no comments on, or updates received to submitted reports
- v. **Clerks Report** – the following issues in the written report were discussed:
 - a. **Proposed CAT of the Playing Field (Western End)** – BL again pointed out that no responses or acknowledgements to March 2015 emails had been received from WC in relation to 'blue line' calculations or to the UPC objectives submitted as requested in relation to the Playing Field. BL felt that this was both discourteous and bad practice. PW stated that he had finally managed to contact the officers concerned and would be having a meeting with them on 10th July during which he will be encouraging appropriate responses.
 - b. **Public Right of Way (PROW) Claim – Top Green to the School** – two emails from Richard Broadhead (WC Rights of Way and Countryside Manager) had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. The first summarised meetings with Urchfont School, indicated that an interim solution may be to introduce a time-restricted Traffic Regulation Order replicating the existing use of the footpath (UPC did not look on this suggestion favourably at their last meeting) and called for a working party to be set up comprising Richard Broadhead, one representative from the School and Governors, one representative from the Salisbury Diocese and two representatives from the Parish Council. DM responded to this email nominating Nicky Mitchell and Bill Donald as the UPC representatives. He also queried the phrase 'if the DMMO is confirmed ...'

In response Richard Broadhead clarified the procedure for the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) and is summarised as follows:

1st stage – WC to examine the evidence and make a recommendation (this has been completed)

2nd Stage- WC then makes the DMMO by advertising in the local press and publication of notices on the path. The DMMO is then subject to a 42 day public consultation process.

3rd Stage – Assuming that no objections or representations are made; the DMMO can then be confirmed. However, if objections or representations are received then a more stringent test 'on the balance of probabilities' instead of 'reasonably alleged' has to be applied and after further investigation by WC the case has to be referred to the Secretary of State.

Richard Broadhead advises that all this could take 3 to 18 months to reach a final decision. In the meantime the working group can be looking at solutions which might be implemented dependent on the final outcome.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Richard Hawkins expressed serious concerns on this extended process especially as he understands that parents have already been told by the School that the gate will remain closed whatever. Based on rumours, he is also very curious why the present Chairman of School Governors (who is standing down shortly at the end of her term of office) is apparently being kept on by the Governors to specifically focus on resolving the current PROW / DMMO decision. Mr Hawkins is confident that the pathway plan that he put forward some 18 months ago could still satisfy the needs of all parties.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

PW reiterated the fact that the process being followed by WC is in accord with statutory requirements.

DM thanked PW for fulfilling his action from the last meeting to initiate meetings to resolve this issue in the interest of all parties

9. Working Groups: written reports (attached on website only)

- i. **Community Access and Travel Plan Working Group** - no comments on, or updates received to submitted reports
- ii. **Cemetery Damage Working Group** – RT reported that all works had been completed, feedback had been good and no issues are outstanding.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To disband this Working Group as proposed in the written report	RT	BD	Unanimously agreed

iii. Section 106 Working Group

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Trevor Hill read out his statement which had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting in which he seeks reconsideration of the decision at the last meeting to focus all Section 106 funds on one recreation ground project. He believes that the Tennis Club should also be seriously considered for part of the funding.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

AS confirmed that the Working Group decision had been based on scoring of the three projects proposed, 24/7 accessibility for the whole community, maintenance costs and recognition that play equipment to cater for all ages is costly and will undoubtedly require additional back to back funding from other sources. However, final proposals have not been made to the Parish Council or any decisions made on the final outcome.

10. Meeting Structure – AS stated that he would like to make some suggestions for improving council efficiency and meeting structure, including the planning element. It was agreed that he should submit his ideas in writing to all councillors for consideration at the September meeting.

ACTION: FC/48/15 -AS

11. Local Council Award Scheme – In view of the time available, DM suggested and it was agreed that this item should be presented at the September meeting.

ACTION: FC/49/15 - BL

12. Update on WC commitments – PW reported that the bus hard standings / dropped kerbs and crossings works are proceeding well and is receiving favourable comments locally. BL reported that he had received favourable comments about the attitude and courteousness of the men undertaking the work.

13. Extension of Pavement at Stonepit Lane – AS confirmed that in much earlier Highways Committee activity, WC Highways had suggested that Urchfont lacked sufficient interconnecting pavements. Unfortunately no action was taken to rectify that situation. PW suggested that there is a need to raise a Devizes Area Board 'issue' on this particular requirement, but that there is a need to establish exactly what the issue and desired solution is with Ms Hanscomb. It was agreed that BL should hold a site meeting with Ms Hanscomb establish the facts and then submit the 'issue' statement. RT offered assistance if necessary.

ACTION: FC/50/15- BL

14. Manor Farmyard

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Penelope Ellis expressed much concern about changes taking place within and outside the site which do not appear to be in accord with planning permissions.

Richard Hawkins summarised his concerns raised in an email to UPC dated 20th June 2015:

- Pond Wall – talking to the first resident in the development it would appear that the pond wall is not included in the Site Management Agreement or any other paperwork that he has – who is going to be responsible for maintenance of the wall in future?
- Friars Lane Embankment – again this does not appear to be in the Site Management Agreement or other paperwork – who is actually responsible for it? A large rock recently fell into the road from the embankment.
- Works external to the development site – it appears these are being carried out contrary to Planning approvals /conditions and disregarding the Registered Village Status of Pond Green.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

SH reported that he is still awaiting a response from Redcliff management which he hoped would help to resolve all the issues and concerns raised. Friars Lane embankment is apparently unregistered at the Land Registry, despite being included in the development site planning application. RT was of the view that the pond wall and Friars Lane embankment are all within the construction site. The pond wall is in a bad condition with pointing missing and ivy /other plants growing out of it. He was of the view that the planning application was approved with conditions covering all these issues. However, RT welcomed the good news on replacement of already installed kerbing and road surfaces outside of the development site, thanks go to the WC planning and conservation officers. SH agreed to go back to Redcliff Homes to establish what the management company will be responsible for and whether the agreement is already available as evidence.

ACTION: FC/51/15 - SH

PW suggested that there is an urgent need to confirm the conditions which were part of the Planning Approval. It was agreed that SH would draft a letter to Karen Guest (Planning Officer) which will be sent out by SJ as the UPC Planning focal point.

ACTION: FC/52/15 – SH/SJ

15. Neighbourhood Plan – SH reported that the plan is nearing completion.

16. Proposed New footpath from The Croft to Cemetery – DM reported that a meeting (DM, RT, BL) had been held with Allotment Association representatives to discuss alternative routes to the cemetery from The Croft to try to minimise badger and dog damage. Two options had been suggested: the first to provide a new entrance directly from The Croft into the Cemetery (will require Aster agreement), the second to create a new path on allotment ground in the south west corner.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To gain quotes for the two options and make a recommendation to UPC on viability.	DM	BD	Unanimously agreed

DM agreed to obtain quotes and make recommendation

ACTION: FC/53/15 – DM

17. Proposed New Footpath across Top Green – An email from Kate Wysocki (WC Traffic Engineer) had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. This referred to potential options for establishing a footpath across Top Green as recommended by the working party on Taking Action on School Journeys Project. BL reminded councillors that Top Green is a 'Registered Village Green' and that this email is only seeking initial comments on path structure and surface; a feasibility report with suggested options will follow. PW stated that school travel plans seek to encourage pupils to walk to school rather than be driven which causes traffic and parking issues. BD made the point that the original path suggestion was through the centre of Top Green; this email suggests one along the southern edge. Discussion suggested that there may be massive public resistance to a path on Top Green because of its status; that UPC would prefer to see no path but just a cut through the bank on the western edge to provide a safer access to The Green and that a path along the edge may be seen as an opportunity for car parking.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Richard Hawkins commented that a path has not been required in the past, why now when the children enjoy walking across the grass of Top Green.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To look forward to receiving feasibility proposals based on a less engineered solution.	DM	SH	Unanimously agreed

It was agreed that BL should respond to Ms Wysocki as above.

ACTION: FC/54/15 - BL

18. Proposal to use Urchfont Pond for radio controlled model boats – an email request from Mr Cooper had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Alison Taylor, representing Friends of the Ducks, asked the Council to reject this application. She said that the resident ducks are not wild, they cannot fly, and that such activity would undoubtedly stress them more than necessary. The duck lady who was first approached had felt that she was pressurised into giving an initial positive attitude to the proposal. The application comes from someone outside of the Parish and it is understood that Devizes had rejected a similar proposal for use of 'The Crammer'.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

DM read out a letter of objection from Roger Chadwick which also urges rejection of the application. Consensus indicated that the application should be rejected, debate focussed mainly on defining the grounds for rejection.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To reject application on the grounds of resident duck/ geese welfare and general incompatibility with the normal village use and enjoyment of the pond	DM	LCP	Unanimously agreed

19. External Meetings – none reported

20. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda – SJ pointed out that she had received little guidance since SH stood down as Planning Chairman. She was of the view that there is a need to clarify Planning Chair activities and responsibilities (at meetings and otherwise). SH was of the view that the Planning Chair task will increase with the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. DM was of the view that all of this can be discussed as part of the Meeting Structure (see item 10 above) debate at the September meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: BD was of the view that a number of key meetings (e.g. PROW) may take place shortly and would need to be reported on in August. BL suggested that a written report may be all that is necessary to keep councillors aware of progress and issues. It was, therefore, agreed that at this point in time there is insufficient need to hold a Full Council meeting in August, but there may be a need for a planning meeting

dependent on applications. In the meantime the Chairman said he would continue to fulfil the role of Planning Chair.

Wednesday 9th September 2015, but a meeting can be called on 12th August if necessary, in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Meeting Closed at 10.05pm

Draft minutes prepared by Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council 10th July 2015

Signed as a true record of the meeting

LEAD COUNCILLOR, WORKING GROUP AND CLERK REPORTS – JULY 2015

A. Liaison with Urchfont School and Pre-School

I attended the Community Tea Party they invited us to on the 12th June. It was to raise money for the CMS Basic School they support in Juba, Sudan, There was a very impressive display of art work using recycled materials. This was from all the different age groups representing different activities they had been involved in. There is nothing else to report this month this month.

Nicky Mitchell

B. Cricket and Croquet Grounds including liaison with cricket and croquet clubs

Cricket Club- season going well and very successful junior coaching sessions being held on Sunday mornings. Up to 25 children have been there some weeks. Dates to note - Sunday 2nd August: match against Urchfont Manor. Spectators welcome, refreshments available. Saturday 3rd October: Annual dinner and awards.

Dave Mottram

C. Liaison with Community Shop

The biggest concern at The Shop is a dwindling pool of volunteers to fill the rota with. There is a real need to encourage new villagers to volunteer; and to think about sharing shifts so those that are too busy to do 3 hours can commit to half that time. As a 'last resort' the shop may have to close when these shifts can't be filled.

Helen Gibb

D. Liaison with Community Bus Committee

There is nothing to report on this occasion.

Bill Donald

E. Clerks Report

1. Current Negotiations / Proposals

- a. **Northern Pathway to Oakfrith Wood** – Dave Mottram and I have now signed the Transfer Documentation and returned it to the UPC solicitor for completion with WC. Sadly, the document still does not give as much detail on what is covered in the transfer (e.g. trees), but the UPC solicitor has gone as far as he can in trying to get further definition. The strip of land where most of the trees are located adjacent to the field on the northern border close to Oakfrith Wood is not registered with the Land Registry. However, I have received a copy of the tree survey which was carried out by WC of these and other trees along the path.
- 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. Philip Whitehead is trying to encourage responses from these officers.

- 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. Various interactions between the School and WC are known to be taking place, but UPC has not been involved. UPC and School articles appeared in the Redhorn Magazine (July Edition), but I have not received any feedback.
- 2. Councillor Resignations** – You are all aware that the WC Electoral Services did not receive the required written responses from elector's to warrant an election, as such they have authorised UPC to co-opt. I have received SIX expressions of interest to date and signed confirmation of eligibility applications; one has subsequently withdrawn but has said she would like to remain on the UPC radar in case of further vacancies in the future. See agenda item 6 for co-option process.
- 3. Annual Audits** – The annual internal audit was completed without observation on 12th June 2015, the auditor duly completed his part of the Annual Return. All required documentation was then sent to the external auditors, Grant Thornton, by the due date of 15th June 2015 and this has been acknowledged. We now await completion of that audit.
- 4. Briefing on Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests** – you will all have received my briefing document on these 'Interests', I hope that this helps to clarify the position following a number of issues raised during and as a result the last planning and FC meetings.
- 5. Tree Works at Cemetery/The Croft** – Mark Goddard informs me that the requested tree works to remove branches overhanging houses in The Croft is scheduled for 13th July; these works will also address trees overhanging the Bier House and Cemetery drive. At the request of an elderly resident of The Croft, I have also asked Mark to trim the rear of the cemetery hedge bordering The Croft which is overhanging and blocking the pathway access. All this work is hoped to be completed on the same day.
- 6. Correspondence and E-mails – including:**
 - Councillor vacancies and expressions of interest
 - WC authorisation to co-opt councillors
 - Registration of interests
 - Use of chemicals in the cemetery
 - Overhanging trees in The Croft
 - Grant Thornton receipt of audit documents
 - Community grants
 - Letter from David Kinnaird – School pathway
 - UPC Insurance policy renewal
 - 'Interest' Dispensations – various interactions
 - Electric equipment for Pond Green
 - Manor Farm – various concerns about Pond Green
 - Parish Council minutes – challenge from School Governor
 - Transfer of Pathway to Oakfrith – various interchanges with UPC solicitor
 - Fly tipping in The Bottom
 - Japanese knotweed reported in Old School Lane
 - Request under FOI for 2014 UPC Minutes
 - Report of men camping on Playing Field with dog
 - Request to use radio controlled model boats on Urchfont Pond
 - Statement from WC on likely election costs for Parish Councils

Bob Lunn

G. Community Access and Travel Plan Working Group

There is nothing to report except we will need 2 new members to replace Lisa Kinnaird and Emma Lyttle. Jane Sanger may be able to suggest a parent replacement for Lisa. I will have to contact Anya Watson, the new

Chairman SBG, as Emma was their representative. We will then arrange a meeting in September and may hopefully have had a Grant Application decision!

Also the ROW is very relevant to this group!

Nicky Mitchell

H. Cemetery Damage Working Group

The new parking area seems to be working well and several favourable comments from the public have been received.

No further actions are now proposed and it is recommended that the working party be "stood down".

Royston Thomas

I. Section 106 Working Group

There is nothing to report this month.

Andy Stevens