



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 8th February 2017 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Thomas (RT), Day (GD), Hill (TH), Stephens (AS) and Chapman (JC)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL) **Planning Administrator:** Johnston (SJ)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Richard Hawkins, Janet Hawkins, Philip Cotell

1. Welcome by the Chairman

2. Apologies: Apologies received from Councillors Mottram (DM) and Gibb (HG). It was also noted that Councillor Baker (PB) had resigned with immediate effect on 8th February 2017 due to personal commitments.

3. Declarations of Interest: None

4. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports – None required at this point.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 11th January 2017

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Decision
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true record of the meeting	TH	JC	Unanimously agreed

6. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2017 – BL confirmed that all actions are in progress, none needed to be highlighted as outstanding.

7. Finance – BL confirmed that he had circulated a copy of the Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st January 2017 with the agenda for this meeting. He confirmed that the indicated reserve at the end of March 2017 remained unchanged at £14,013 assuming that all anticipated expenditure is completed. It is this reserve that was used for Precept calculation purposes. No questions were raised on this information.

BL confirmed that the Precept requirement of £45,420 had been submitted to and acknowledged by WC on 13th January 2017. The Precept determines a council rate increase of 1.99% for all property bands in the Parish (For a Band D property this equates to an increase of £1.72 per annum rising from £86.27 to £87.99). It was noted that some figures for prior years in the WC Precept Calculator appeared incorrect, BL was asked to check the accuracy with WC.

ACTION: FC/06/17 - BL

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

a. Councillor reports – none submitted

b. Clerks Report

i. New Footpath from The Croft to the Cemetery - BL confirmed that the new fenced path had now been completed, thus the public no longer have to go through allotment grounds.

- ii. **Cemetery Lane / Private Farm Track past the Grain Drier** – In consequence of an increasing number of enquiries from the public, BL had written to Mr Snook to seek his views on re-opening the track for public use. The response received from Mr John Snook gave the decision not to re-open this track to the public for the present for a number of stated reasons. Discussion concluded that this information should be publicised in Redhorn News and the website in response to public enquiries.

ACTION: FC/07/17 – BL

- iii. **Traffic Speed Metro-counters in Urchfont** – The results of the recent count showing that vehicles are in the main complying with the 20mph limits were welcomed. GD pointed out that it is important to note that the 85% percentile figures quoted show the speed at which 85% of recorded vehicles were travelling at or below – see chart in Clerks report attached on website. Only one road, Blackboard Lane, is considered eligible by WC for Community Speed Watch monitoring due to higher average speeds having been recorded.

9. Neighbourhood Plan - BD reported that he had circulated a summary of the likely way forward and timescales now that WC is considering the Plan following the Examiners Fact Check Report. Unfortunately timescales are largely dependent on time taken by WC to complete their actions leading to the Referendum. Having been asked to review the latest version of the Fact Check Report, GD expressed dissatisfaction that his comments regarding the Examiner’s insertion of the words ‘...viability of development’ had apparently been ignored and not forwarded to WC in the UPC formal response. TH supported this view. GD believed this to be an unnecessary change to the Plan which could prove difficult to manage in the future. He was of the view that this is yet another example of comments from UPC members being ignored or not considered fully because the control, management and approval process of UWLNP is flawed. He had received responses to his comments from DM and Simon Holt, but was still disappointed that his views had not been considered worthy of communication to WC. BL confirmed that he had submitted the UPC formal response to WC to this latest version of Fact Check Report based on text supplied by DM and Simon Holt. TH asked whether a copy of the updated Plan which apparently is already prepared by the Steering Group in anticipation of the WC review results could be circulated to councillors now to ensure that it will meet UPC approval, this would undoubtedly save time in the future. BD agreed to talk to Simon Holt to see whether this request can be satisfied.

ACTION: FC/08/17 – BD

The Chairman Closed the Meeting for Public Participation

Mr Richard Hawkins expressed the view that the use of the word ‘viable’ in this context is going to make Policy H2 difficult to enforce.

The Chairman re-opened the Council Meeting

PW stated that the word ‘viable’ is used all the time in planning scenarios, whether it is stated in the Plan or not he was of the view that developers will always assess the viability of a development prior to making an application. RT agreed with this view.

10. Best Kept Village – JC confirmed that the formal invite to participate had not yet been received. In the meantime actions are being progressed to ensure that we will be best prepared for the actual assessment process. A further report will be given following the next Working Group meeting.

11. PROW – BD reported that no further information had been received or action taken.

The Chairman Closed the Meeting for Public Participation

Richard Hawkins informed the Council that he had requested an update from WC (Richard Broadhead), but had not received a response.

The Chairman re-opened the Council Meeting

12. Scarecrow Festival – BD announced that he had taken on the liaison role with UPC, a role which in the past has been fulfilled by Rob Pendry. The primary reason for this briefing is to seek UPC approval to use green spaces in Urchfont for the Festival which will be held on 29th/30th April and 1st May in 2017.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Decision
To approve use of Urchfont green spaces for the Scarecrow Festival (Pond Green, Top Green and Paddock Green)	GD	RT	Unanimously agreed

The very comprehensive risk register has been updated to take account of, for example, use of the new electricity supply on Pond Green and the fact that gas urns and burners have been condemned and replaced. Some 50 volunteers have already been identified and preparations are well in hand for the event. GD asked whether the suggestion to hold the event every two years rather than annually had been considered further. BD advised that this would be the subject of a consultation and encouragement party for the community likely to be held shortly after the event this year.

RT took the opportunity to report that Phase III works to take the electricity supply to the triangle on Pond Green are scheduled to be undertaken by Bodman's / Valetta Surfacing on 1st March. An application for a Section 50 licence to cover these works had been submitted to WC and discussed with the Highways Engineer. A robust electrical socket box has been ordered by Richard Harris. Overall cost of this phase of the project is £3750 plus VAT, of which a contribution of £3000 is being funded by the Scarecrow Committee.

13. Parish Council Election Timetable and Process – BL reported that he had received no further information on the election timetable or process from WC, but reminded councillors that dates set in stone are that nominations must be submitted by hand before 4pm on 4th April 2017 and the election date had been set for 4th May 2017. Despite increased publicity, to date he had received no expressions of interest from members of the public to be nominated to stand for election. To overcome an uncontested election scenario, at least four new candidates are required based on current information. Word of mouth encouragement by councillors would still appear to be the best way forward.

ACTION: FC/09/17

14. Full Council Meeting April 2017 – BL explained that this will be the last meeting for current councillors, unless re-elected. Because it will be held after the election nomination deadline then it will be subject to compliance with Purdah regulations covering publicity during an election period, but otherwise it will be business as usual for Council operational matters including consideration of planning applications. The additional dilemma we have is that BL will not be available to clerk for that meeting and

SJ is unable to stand in due to other commitments (e.g. Scarecrow preparation and predicted planning matters). Options are to cancel the FC meeting (not the Planning Meeting), delay the meeting to later in the month or find someone to clerk and prepare minutes. Initially it was agreed to delay the decision on this issue until the March meeting, but PW then offered to clerk and prepare minutes for the this meeting on the scheduled date of 12th April. The Council accepted this offer with thanks.

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

- a. **Defibrillators** – NM confirmed that British Heart Foundation grants had been secured for a new defibrillator and cabinet plus two additional cabinets to house the existing defibrillators at the Village Hall and Planks Farm Shop externally for ease of access at all times. The cabinets are quite large, brightly coloured yellow and require a power supply for heating purposes. The location near The Croft for the new defibrillator and cabinet may not be as straightforward or acceptable as originally thought due to these factors, other suggested locations were at 'Wildman's' garage or maybe attached to a street lamp. RT wondered whether a planning application would be necessary for any of the external cabinets, especially if located in the Conservation Area or attached to a listed building. NM agreed to investigate further before taking any firm decisions.

ACTION: FC/10/17 – NM

Equipment and literature has also been received to facilitate mandatory free training in the use of the defibrillators and CPR. This training will be arranged for dates in March; details will be publicised in Redhorn New, the website and via posters in the Community Shop.

- b. **Farmers Field Management Report and Plan** – JC reported that the contracted report is expected to be completed and invoiced by the end of March. He also reported that WWT had gained a local grant of £10K for use on local area projects; this might facilitate a £2K award for use on Farmers Field.

16. External Meetings

- a. **Boscombe Down** – PW reported that as a result of lengthy negotiations, Boeing have announced that they will be basing an aircraft maintenance facility at Boscombe Down attracting up to 2000 new directly employed jobs and many more through supplier organisations locally.
- b. **Fly Tipping** – PW reported that WC had conducted a successful prosecution for fly-tipping, the offending unlicensed house clearance contractor being given a 3 month prison sentence. Experience shows that virtually all fly-tipping is by commercial operators.

17. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda - None

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 8th March 2017 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Meeting Closed at 8.52pm

Minutes prepared by Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

WRITTEN REPORTS

a. **COUNCILLOR REPORTS** – None submitted

b. **CLERKS REPORT**

- i. **2017/18 Precept Requirement** – As approved at the January meeting, I submitted the requirement demand to Wiltshire Council for £45,420 on 13th January 2017, receipt has been acknowledged. This represents a 1.99% increase in the Precept demanded compared to 2016/17 which translates to a 1.99% rise per annum in the UPC element of council tax for all household bands. For a Band D property, for example, this equates to an increase of £1.72 per annum or just over 3p per week.
- ii. **Parish Council Elections Timetable** – As at the date of writing I have not received any further information on the election timetable or process. I would remind you of the following key dates:
- 27th March 2017 -Election Notice will be published on or before this date, I am advised that it will be published earlier
 - 4th April 2017 – Completed Nomination Forms have to be hand delivered before 4pm on this date
 - 4th May 2017 – Election Day – assuming that the election is not declared uncontested due to number of nominations received (as indicated in earlier emails, it is likely that 2 existing councillors may not be standing for re-election. This together with the existing vacancy means that we are probably looking for at least four new candidates to secure an election.)

Despite beefing up notices in Redhorn News, on the website and notice boards seeking expressions of interest from new candidates, I have not received any to date. I understand that councillors may have identified 2 or 3 possible candidates, but they have not formally registered an interest with me.

- iii. **New footpath to Cemetery from The Croft** – a new fenced path is being constructed giving direct access to the cemetery from The Croft without having to go through the allotments, it is hoped that the work will be completed by 3rd February. The existing gate to the allotments opposite the cremation plots will be sealed off and new signage erected. My thanks go to an allotment holder's working party who at my request cleared a good deal of the rubbish that had accumulated across the site of the new path.
- iv. **Cemetery Lane / Private Farm Road past the Grain Drier** - Understandably, for mainly H&S reasons, the road leading up to the ridge from Cemetery Lane across Snook land has been closed to the public whilst the grain dryer was being built. Whilst the road is not a public right of way, it has in the past been used by the public mainly for dog walking as a relatively dry and clean option to the bridle paths and footpaths which can become very muddy, overgrown and hazardous to those on foot especially during winter months.

Since completion of the dryer I have been getting an increasing number of questions from local residents as to when the road will be open for use again, not only up to the line of electricity pylons but also access to the ridge. I, therefore, emailed Carole & John Snook and Phil Snook to gain their thoughts on re-opening the road, I suggested that they might consider making it a permissive route so that it can be closed when necessary.

I have now received a reply from John Snook which I have circulated to all councillors, in this he reluctantly states that it has been decided NOT to re-open the road to the public for the present. He includes the following in his letter:

“The use of our private farm road was enjoyed and appreciated by many people but was also being abused by some which caused us problems. We allowed it as a goodwill gesture to the residents of Urchfont but unfortunately some walkers were reluctant to move aside for farm traffic thus causing tractors etc to come to a standstill and it appeared as if the walkers were doing us a favour in moving aside! In addition the grass verges were littered with dog poo which made it unpleasant for tractor drivers should they have to get off their machines. The track was also being used on occasion by cyclists, horses and even some cars.”

- v. **Urchfont Traffic Metrocounters** – Traffic speed counters were installed at four locations in and around Urchfont towards the end of 2016. These were installed to check compliance with the introduction of the new 20mph and 40mph zones and to justify or otherwise the introduction of new Speed Watch areas or police enforcement. The results are shown below:

Location	Speed Limit	85th Percentile (speed at or below which 85% of vehicles travelling)	Average Speed	WC Decision
High Street (near Friars Lane)	20mph	22.1mph	17.8mph	No further action
High Street (Near The Orchard)	20mph	21.9mph	17.3mph	No further action
Blackboard Lane (south of Manor Close)	20mph	25.5mph	21.3mph	Eligible for Community Speed Watch monitoring
B3098 (west of Blackboard Lane)	40mph	44.3mph	38.7mph	No Further action

I understand that the Community Speed Watch co-ordinator is challenging these results largely because of the physical locations of the metro counters which he believes gives distorted readings.

Bob Lunn
2nd February 2017