



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 14th December 2016 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM – Chairman), Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Thomas (RT), Day (GD), Gibb (HG), Hill (TH) and Chapman (JC)

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): Steve Hodges

1. **Welcome by the Chairman**
2. **Apologies:** Councillors Stevens (AS) and Baker (PB)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared at meeting
4. **Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports – None**
5. **Minutes of the Council held on 9th November 2016**

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To approve and sign unchanged as a true record of the meeting.	RT	GD	Unanimously agreed

6. **Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2016** – DM reported that most actions outstanding applied to ongoing or in progress matters. Only FC/45/16 – To investigate bikes on Salisbury Plain – did not appear to be resolved despite BD correspondence with the controlling authority. BL pointed out that this issue appears to relate specifically to incidents over the May Bank Holiday weekend this year when the Scarecrow Festival and Sarsen Trail events were in full swing; he further expressed the view that as a regular dog walker along the ridge above Urchfont he generally found off-road bikers to be courteous, safety conscious and caring when they pass pedestrians and animals. JC agreed with this view and believed that those responsible for the unsafe behaviour last year were not the bikers normally using this part of the Plain on a regular basis. TH suggested that the matter should be reported directly to the MOD Police for investigation and to seek assurance that they are aware of possible rogue bikers. It was agreed that BD and BL will contact the MOD agencies directly on this issue.

ACTION: FC/94/16 – BD/BL

7. **Finance**

a. **To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th November 2016** – BL confirmed that these statements had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. He emphasised the indicated reserve of £11073 predicted for the 31st March 2017 for subsequent debate on the 2017/18 budget. No comments were received or questions raised.

b. **Precept and Budget 2017/18 Preparation** – BL had circulated the 1st draft budget to all councillors prior to the meeting with the objective of refining this as a result of debate at the meeting and preparing a 2nd draft for approval at the January meeting prior to submission of the Precept demand to WC. BL quickly reviewed the 1st draft stating that most fixed and running costs had been closely based on the 2016/17 budget and actual expenditure. Proposed projects for 2017/18 had been listed to the value of £12600, but these would not be included specifically within the budget until requirements had been justified and approved by Council. Instead he had included a block budget of £13000 to cover projects, the same budget as in 2016/17.

BL then offered a range of Precept income options for consideration, together with details of the associated impact on the Band D Parish Council element of the overall Council tax, which would facilitate projected 31st March 2018 Reserve figures varying from substantially less than that predicted for 31st March 2016 to maintenance of the same predicted figure of £11073. BD asked whether the predicted 31st March 2016 Reserve could in reality be higher than £11073, BL was of the view that it could increase to around £13000 if budgeted funds are not expended; especially on projects. DM commented that additional responsibilities need to be taken into account (e.g. maintenance of additional land holdings) when agreeing the final precept demand. BL also reminded councillors that national consultation is ongoing on whether Parish Council Precept demands will be capped in the future, this prospect also needs to be considered. BD expressed the view that maybe we should consider a 'no change' scenario for Council Tax bands in 2017/18.

Following debate it was agreed that BL should undertake the following and circulate version 2 prior to the January meeting:

- i. Refine the indicated calculation of the year end reserve at 31st March 2017 taking account of any new requirements identified since the 1st draft was prepared and his view on funds which he considers may not be spent despite predications to the contrary at this stage.
- ii. Based on the above, provide additional Precept income options and impact statements related to Band D tax variations of 0% and 1.2% being the current rate of inflation.

ACTION: FC/95/16 – BL

BL asked PW whether he could give any insight into the likely increases in WC council tax demands. Whilst these have not been finalised and are subject to ongoing changes applied by Government, PW stated that WC are aiming for around a 2% general increase plus an additional 2% social care increase.

c. Maintenance Contract Renewal 1st April 2017 – BL confirmed that the current 5 year contract is due for renewal on 1st April 2017. However, this would coincide with the Urchfont Best competition and BL suggested that this may not be the best time to potentially change to a new contractor following competition. DM confirmed that the existing contractor had provided a good level of service and value for money throughout his contract with only a few minor issues being raised, he considered an extension to be the best way forward at this time. GD queried whether this would be in compliance with the UPC Financial Regulations. BL confirmed that the ITT issued in 2012 for the current contract included the statement at Clause 13 as follows ".....the Parish Council may wish to negotiate an extension to this contract" and, therefore, this facilitates an extension without competition if performance to date has been satisfactory.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To negotiate an extension of the current contract for a period of 12 months from 1 st April 2017, consideration of a further extension to be reviewed in December 2017.	TH	RT	Proposal agreed with only one councillor voting against.

d. To approve one of three quotes for Pond Electrics Phase 3 – RT explained that he had received three quotes for this work as follows:

- i. P J Dyke Paving & Groundworks (Melksham) - £3700 + VAT – commencement of work to be approx. 10 to 12 weeks from order, this is a large contractor who may have priorities elsewhere
- ii. Earle Contractors (Chippenham) - £2600 – no indication had been given as to when work could be started or whether VAT is payable – not easily contactable.
- iii. J&M Bodman (Urchfont) - £3200 + VAT – additional cost due to the need to employ WC approved road contractor, but has guaranteed that work can be completed for Scarecrow Festival.

On this basis RT recommended acceptance of the middle quote from J&M Bodman. In addition to the groundworks there will be a need to purchase and fit appropriate powermaster sockets at a cost of around £500. RT reminded councillors that the Scarecrow Festival Committee had agreed to contribute £3000 towards the cost for this phase. TH felt that a difference of £600 from the lowest quote needed to be justified

further. BD agreed especially as non-completion before the Scarecrow Festival would not be the end of the world.

It was agreed that RT should seek assurance from Earle Contractors that they have appropriate licenses, insurance and expertise to undertake the work within a reasonable timeframe from placement of an order. If this assurance cannot be gained for whatever reason then J&M Bodman should be approached to see with his quote is his best and final offer. When this information has been gained, an email decision can be facilitated so that an order can be placed.

ACTION: FC/96/16 - RT

e. New path from The Croft to cemetery – DM explained that the Council had currently approved a £300 + VAT quote based on putting a second gate in The Croft fence. Because this concept had been rejected by Aster, the work to provide a dedicated fenced path and gate within the allotment grounds required significantly more work and had generated a revised quote of £1050 + VAT. The requirement for this path had been confirmed at the recent annual Allotment Association meeting to stop the public walking through the allotment grounds to the cemetery, some exercising dogs off the lead, and to deter badgers. GD queried whether more than one quote is required as it exceeds UPC financial regulation criteria. BL commented that he is hoping to have the quote reduced to below £1000 if the Allotment Association agrees to remove a lot of material which they have discarded on the intended location for the path.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To approve a reduced quote of less than £1000 to be negotiated on the basis that the Allotment Association will remove and dispose of discarded loose material from the location of the proposed path.	DM	BD	Unanimously agreed

8. Defibrillator Contact System (VETS) & Free defibrillator – NM outlined two opportunities that she is pursuing:

a. To try and overcome the problem of households with only one or two occupants not being able to access and make use of defibrillators, NM has been making enquiries about a Voluntary Emergency Telephone Contact (VETS) offered by Community Heartbeat. A 999 call will automatically initiate telephone contact with ten local volunteers who can access a defibrillator and take it to a household in need. The service is offered free for the first year and is then £100 per annum thereafter. Unfortunately the service is not supported by all ambulance services at present, including she understands Wiltshire Ambulance. NM intends to continue making enquiries and will update the Council in due course.

b. With the aim of encouraging more defibrillators on the ground, the British Heart Foundation is offering to provide grants for empty wall cabinets and/or actual defibrillators + cabinets on the understanding that the public will be trained to use them and that they are accessible 24/7. Unlike our existing cabinets at the Village Shop and in Wedhampton, the cabinets on offer are not lockable for easy access; they must be connected to an electricity supply for heating purposes. NM submitted an application on 8th December for two cabinets which would be used to house the two units currently housed within the Village Hall and Planks Farm Shop and only accessible during opening hours plus an iPad defibrillator / cabinet as an additional unit to be located somewhere on the west side of Urchfont which is currently not well served. The application will be assessed by the Ambulance Service and then passed to the British Heart Foundation for approval of the grant. If unsuccessful, the Council could consider funding these items.

9. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other written Reports

a. Right Trees in Right Place Initiative – DM explained that a detailed paper proposing the way forward on this initiative had been circulated with the agenda. Debate concluded that the initiative should be put in place. DM suggested that RT should chair and set up the working group (WG) to pursue the objectives, RT agreed. SJ volunteered to be a member of the WG.

b. Pond & Surroundings – nothing further to report or clarify.

c. Highways – GD reported that the metrocams have now been removed from locations within the Urchfont 20mph zone and 40mph zone on the B3098 to the east of the village. PW was of the view that the results may be available prior to the January meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Mr Hodges asked who decides where the metrocams are sited and why? PW confirmed that WC Highways placed the equipment at the same reference points that were used prior to the introduction of the zones to ensure consistent readings and comparison.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting.

DM asked what the Highest Frequency Speed meant in the chart, GD explained that this was the % of speeders going at that speed. GD stated that the statistics indicate that speeding is still taking place but that the frequency is reducing. It was pointed out that a recent article in Redhorn News quoted the highest speed recorded this year was 66mph, according to the presented statistics this occurred in 2012 with 58 being the highest recorded speed in 2016 to date.

d. Clerks Report – BL gave an update on his Wedhampton Manor occupancy item. He had referred the issue to WC Planning Enforcement who had subsequently confirmed that “*Based on the evidence available, Mr Harris is using the property in line with current government legislation relating to the 'Rent a Room Scheme (2016)'. Therefore no breach of planning has taken place at the property.*”

10. Neighbourhood Plan -

a. To ratify email decision on SEA non-technical summary

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Decision
To ratify the email decision to submit the SEA non-technical summary	DM	BD	Unanimously agreed

b. Progress Report – DM confirmed that the SEA non-technical summary is out for a 6 week consultation period which ends on 6th January 2017. GD asked who is being consulted, DM advised that only Section 16 consultees had been expected but in the event it appears that it has been sent out to a wider audience including members of the public who had commented during previous consultation rounds.

11. Best Kept Village – JC reported that the joint Urchfont Best (UB) and UPC stand at the recent USPA Christmas event had been well received and that the ‘rubbish’ theme together with the sweets on offer had attracted a lot of interest from children. The Head Teacher has now invited UB to give a presentation to the School in the spring. UB are still trying to find representatives to cover social media and Foxley Fields. An article will appear in the January edition of Redhorn News.

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

a. Hobbit House, Wedhampton – BD reported that the situation at the house being used as a care home for one child resident had deteriorated significantly recently and required attendance of two police cars and an ambulance. The child from Swindon was removed and it has been agreed that she will not return to the property. However, within the last week a new child from Derby has moved in to the property and is being looked after by 4-6 non-resident carers, at this stage all appears to be well. It is understood that the

owner of the property has signed a 5 year lease with the care home, Esland. As a result of this situation PW has asked the WC Legal and Planning Departments to establish whether a change of use planning application should have been submitted prior to initial use of the property for this purpose. A report is expected before Christmas, but no indication has been given as what the outcome might be.

b. Litter Bin in the Cartway, Wedhampton – BD reported that, having consulted with BL, he had positioned a surplus litter bin in The Cartway mainly for the use of dog walkers. The bin is well used and is emptied regularly by BD and his wife.

c. Pooling water on access to No 18 Manor Farmyard – DM referred to the ongoing pooling of water on the access road across Pond Green to this property, a situation which we have been unable to get Redcliff Homes to rectify satisfactorily. UPC are considering surfacing the road with tarmac but recognise that an opportunity exists to co-ordinate improvement works to the adjoining WC highway to the Church which is deteriorating and rectification of damage to part of the Pond Green grass area caused by roofing contractors at Mulberry House which the owners of the property have offered to rectify. DM will try to co-ordinate a way forward with all parties concerned.

d. Farmers Field Management Plan – TH confirmed that the first stage survey had been completed as a prerequisite to writing the required report. It is hoped that this report will be completed during the first quarter of 2017. TH further reported that Martijn Antheunisse, who had completed the survey, has no objections to the proposal to flatten the banks of the Scrape at a quoted cost of £360 to facilitate mowing, but believes this should be undertaken in the spring to avoid hibernating amphibians and should only concentrate on the northern half of the pond. Martijn has also applied to the Wessex Water Bristol Avon Catchment Fund for a project to identify and solve water issues in the wider area, decisions will be available in February.

e. School Public Right of Way (PROW) – PW reported that a positive meeting between Richard Broadhead (WC) and the School was held last week, BD was unable to attend. One issue raised concerned the surface of the intended path down the inside of the playing field fence. Richard Broadhead is writing summary notes of the meeting for circulation. TH sought clarification on the best option from the UPC point of view; BD stated that this is finalisation of the PROW through the School that all parties are happy with.

13. External Meetings – GD reported on a positive meeting that he and TH had held with Martin Bodman regarding access routes for farm and commercial vehicles. Mr Bodman is aware of complaints regarding his vehicles and other large going through Urchfont and is already beefing up northern access directly onto the A342. There are other largely unmade tracks in the area which could be surfaced for such vehicles but at a considerable cost. Mr Bodman has agreed to keep in touch on this subject.

14. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda – None reported or requested

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 11th January 2017 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Meeting Closed at 10.10pm

Draft minutes prepared by Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council 15th December 2016

WRITTEN REPORTS FOR 14th DECEMBER MEETING

a. RIGHT TREES IN THE RIGHT PLACE INITIATIVE – A PROPOSAL

Background - Trees in some areas of the Parish are not in good condition, have become overgrown, or are inappropriate for their location. Coppicing appears to have taken place extensively until about 40 years ago. It may not be a coincidence that this stopped at about the same time that the conservation area was established and planning consent became necessary before large trees could be pruned.

UPC has also acquired more land over recent years, and a tree management plan is necessary for those areas.

Trees in some areas of land not owned by UPC but adjoining roads or public footpaths are also in need of a similar tree management plan. The plan should cover the improvement or removal of poor quality trees and the planting of new trees. The choice of new trees will be determined on a site by site basis, but need not be restricted to native trees.

During a recent visit to the village by David Wyatt of Wiltshire Council, he was very supportive of this type of initiative. Examples of the type of projects discussed are at Annex A.

David also suggested that a further tree survey should be carried out soon. Subject to the recommendations provided in this updated tree survey, the extent of tree works should be phased so as not to appear as wholesale tree felling. The categorisation of trees should be realistic and not upgraded unnecessarily to appease other parties. The trees within the urban environment are a fundamental part of the landscape and a pragmatic approach is to be used to formulate this initiative.

Early engagement of the community should be encouraged and positive comments from them could be addressed accordingly. The inclusion of family groups for tree planting would be an added benefit for future tree protection.

Proposal - It is proposed that a Working Group is set up by UPC to address these issues. This could be made up of:

- 1) Members of UPC
- 2) A representative from Wiltshire Council
- 3) Representatives from local bodies with an interest in Trees – e.g. Rights of Way Group, Friends of Oakfrith Wood, Friends of Farmers Field, School Governors or USPA.
- 4) Community involvement from the outset, useful opinions.

Terms of Reference - The suggestions below would need to be discussed and agreed at the first meeting of the working group:

- 1) Identify areas in need of improvement
- 2) Arrange local tree surveys at regular intervals (currently 3-4 years, but could be less frequent when the issues raised by the survey have been addressed). This survey would place trees in one of 3 categories: Low, Medium or High requirement for work to be carried out.
- 3) Choose a pilot site – possibly Paddock Green – to test the level of interest and support.
- 4) Develop and implement a plan for the pilot site. This should include discussion with and agreement from neighbours, land owners and other interested parties.
- 5) Develop a schedule for the implementation of improvements on the other sites identified
- 6) Obtain all necessary planning consents. David Wyatt suggested that once a detailed tree survey has been undertaken and submitted to him for consideration, it would be advisable to submit one large application whereby the consent time could be lengthened to save repeated applications.
- 7) Obtain and manage the budget, including application for any grants which may be available for such a project.

Conclusion - This working group could give the end goal of 'The Right Trees in The Right Place' a kick start and encourage other residents, land owners etc. to get involved.

Annex A - Examples of Pilot Projects – Possible 'Quick Wins'

1. Paddock Green

Tree planting – a row of suitable trees along the eastern side as soon as possible.

Removal of the existing trees which are in poor condition as soon as the new ones become established. Subject to professional advice, those which are considered too close to houses could be removed earlier. The plan would need to be approved by UPC as land owners and local residents. Budget – approx. 6 x new trees at £50, tree removal at £100 per tree. (Assumes use of 'free labour').

2. Southern Verge of B3098 between Stonepit Lane and Bus Stop

Clear shrubs etc. from a strip about 1.5 – 2m wide. This would leave the more substantial trees higher up the bank but provide a grass verge which could be kept mown. An alternative would be to install a footpath along this stretch of road, but would be considerably more expensive.

Either plan would need approval from UPC and Wiltshire Council Highways.

3. Land Opposite Urchfont Village Hall, the East of Peppercombe Lane opposite Sunnyside, and adjoining the garden of Manor Farmhouse.

This could involve removing some of the poor-quality trees (mainly Sycamore and Ash), tidying the verge as far back as the stone wall and bank. In addition the possibility of restoring the stone wall and planting new trees on the garden side of the wall might also be explored with the landowner.

This would need to be co-ordinated between the property owner, Wiltshire Council Highways, UPC, and other residents. Currently unsure about how this project could be funded!

4. Pond Green and along the Pond Wall

Early work on this may take place in conjunction with the repair work to the wall which is scheduled to take place during early 2017.

Dave Mottram / Royston Thomas

b. POND AND SURROUNDINGS

Phase II of the electrical work has now been completed by R & T Harris Ltd in time for the Christmas lights. The Christmas tree will be collected from Dauntsey's school and put up on 20th December.

3 quotations have been received for the phase III electrical work and it is anticipated that subject to agreement at the PC meeting on 14th December and the placing of orders, this work will be completed by April 2017 in time for the Scarecrow Festival.

Royston Thomas

c. HIGHWAYS

Metro Strips

Three metro strips have now been installed in Urchfont in support of the 20mph speed zones in the village. One is in High Street, one in The Green (near the pub) and another in Blackboard Lane. A fourth metro strip has been installed on the B3098 to the west of Urchfont in support of the new 40mph speed zone. On the

basis of earlier advice from Wiltshire Council, this is a fairly rapid installation given that the new speed zones were only activated this year.

In the fullness of time, the results from the metro strips may support the establishment of an authorised Speed Watch site (or sites) within the village. At the moment, authorised Speed Watch sites are restricted to the B3098.

Speed Watch

The Speed Watch team have now concluded their activity for 2016. Below is a table of statistics showing key metrics recorded by the team:

		2011*	2012*	2013*	2014**	2015	2016
No. of sessions		41	65	67	68	85	106
% of drivers recorded as speeding	%	6.7	9.8	9.4	7.5	8.2	7.3
Highest frequency speed	mph	37	36	36	36	36	36
% of speeders at this speed	%	29	41	49	43	52	51
Average speed of speeders	mph	39	38	38	38	38	38
Maximum speed recorded	mph	54	66	63	55	55	58
Total number of vehicles logged		7208	13270	14140	15867	19165	24612

Notes

* 12 months commencing in Feb

** Year To Date from Feb

Source: David Myers

There are some signs of progress in these data but as has been previously indicated, driver education regarding the need to comply with speed limits in built-up areas where pedestrians (particularly very young and old) are likely to be present is a slow business.

The team continues to be under-resourced, although some recruitment has been achieved. More volunteers needed!

Graham Day
Trevor Hill

d. CLERKS REPORT

- i. **Playground Upgrading** – The new playground is complete and open for public use. I have claimed the full amount of Section 106 funding available from WC (£57,810) and paid all Playdale invoices amounting to £69,750.35 which included £11,625.06 VAT which I will be claiming back from HMRC in due course. Analysis of the accounts identifies a balance of £314.61 which has been paid from Parish Council funds.

New signage has been attached to all playing field gates to highlight the fact that the public cannot access the playground across the playing field during school operational hours. This fact has also been included in the December edition of Redhorn News and on the website. A new gate to provide dedicated access to the recreation / play ground during school operational hours (required by the CAT agreement) has been installed as shown below.



- ii. **Councillor Vacancy** – At the date of writing I have still not received any enquiries or expressions of interest to fill this vacant seat.
- iii. **Parish Steward** – As the Parish focal point for liaison with the Parish Steward, I am identifying issues for the Steward to undertake during his visits to the Parish, but he is only likely to be on site for one working day per month (some months are not scheduled because of other priority work).

I have initially identified the following as the FIVE PRIORITY categories of Parish Council concern, this does not stop me identifying other issues but those falling within the priority category will obviously receive attention first:

1. Potholes
2. Drain cover and gully clearance – particularly in the High Street, Blackboard Lane and The Bottom to prevent flooding / pooling of the highway and potentially adjacent properties.
3. Ensuring clear pavements and verges (e.g. free of vegetation, weeds and leaves – a pedestrian safety issue)
4. Road Sign cleanliness and clearance of any obstruction to signs (e.g. overhanging vegetation)
5. Maintaining clear visibility at road junctions (e.g. overhanging / protruding trees, bushes etc.)

Remember that work will only be undertaken by the Parish Steward if it concerns an issue for which WC has responsibility.

Please remember to let me know of any issue within the Parish which you believe should be reported for action.

- iv. **Wedhampton Manor** – Following the reports and discussion at the last two meetings regarding occupancy of this property, have discussed this further with the Vice Chairman I have now referred the matter to WC Planning Enforcement for further investigation as suggested by Philip Whitehead. WC Enforcement have issued a case reference number and have indicated that they will report back to me in due course.
- v. **Wheelie / Recycle Box Kerbside Collections** – timely placement of bins / boxes for collection and recovery of those bins on the same day as collection is essential to minimise hazards to pedestrians and also preserve the appearance of the Parish. Bins should not be placed where they can be a hazard to pedestrians or vehicles. Unfortunately observation suggests that these guidelines are not followed by quite a few properties within the Parish. By way of an example, I have received a specific report that a significant number of properties in Foxley Fields leave bins out for longer periods; in one recent case I am informed that a lady tripped over a recycling box on the pavement in the dark and sustained significant injuries to her face, arms and hands. I will put the guidelines in the next edition of Redhorn Newson, but in discussion with the Chairman we believe that the guidelines could perhaps be emphasised as part of the 'Urchfont Best' initiative to gain maximum impact.

Bob Lunn