

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 12th September 2018 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall v.1

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM – Chairman), Day (GD – Vice Chairman), Donald (BD), Hill (TH), Cowen (LC), Kemp (MK), Hawkins (RH), Stevens (DS) and Cottell (PC)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Jim & Pauline Stevenson, John Knight, Keith Brockie, Malcolm Smith, David & Barbara Myers, Sue & Graham Houlden, Peter Cook, Ian Johnston

1. **Welcome by the Chairman**
2. **Apologies:** received from councillors Mitchell (NM) and Creasey (GC)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None
4. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 25th July 2018**

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Resolution
To accept and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	TH	BD	Agreed – 7 votes for + 1 abstention

5. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2018 - The following actions remain outstanding with minimal or no action taken:

FC/41/17 – Prepare draft Welcome to Urchfont Leaflet – RH reported no progress

FC/52/17 – Scout Hut Re-build – BD reported no response from Scout organisation, he will write again to local Leader

FC/49/18 – Village Risk Assessment – RH reported no further progress

FC/63/18 - Village Green Risk Assessment – RH reported no further progress

FC/67/18 – Meet with Church on parking – DM reported some progress made on use of Village Hall parking, but meeting still needs to take place

6. Finance

a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st August 2018 – reports were circulated with the agenda. BL summarised his comments in his Clerk’s written report. No questions were asked.

b. Quote for installing new Gateway Sign (West) – BL reminded councillors that this is necessary in view of the hazardous position of this sign immediately adjacent to the B3098.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Resolution
To accept the quote of £848.16 + VAT and instruct the contractor to commence work.	DM	GD	Unanimously agreed

ACTION: FC/81/18 – BL

(Post Meeting Note: Ringway instructed to proceed on 14th September 2018)

c. Larger Litter Bin for Stonepit Lay-By – DM explained that the contract with Mark Goddard required him to identify bins that require emptying more than the scheduled collections, this bin falls into this category. In this instance, it was noted that the bin may be being used by local resident(s) to empty parked vehicles in the lay-by. MK commented that whenever she had reported the bin as full, Mark Goddard had emptied it promptly.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Resolution
To agree to the purchase of the new bin at a cost of £184.78 + VAT	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

ACTION: FC/82/18 - BL

d. Other Project Proposals

- i. Replacement of damaged Gateway Sign in Crookwood Lane + opposite Gateway – DM** commented that this sign had been damaged recently by an unknown vehicle. BL pointed out the impact point on screen by what looked to be a blue coloured vehicle. DM suggested that the replacement signs should be moved to the wider verge west of the current location, this will require replacement of both signs not just the damaged one. BL requested approval of a budget to purchase both signs but commented that he was hoping to recover costs for the damaged sign from insurance. In view of the new location, it is considered that these signs can be installed by UPC without the need to employ a contractor.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Resolution
To approve a budget of £1250.00 + VAT, based on Glasdon Internet price lists, and to proceed with purchase and insurance claim.	DM	GD	Unanimously agreed

ACTION: FC/83/18 – BL

- ii. Quote for Farmers Field Fencing – see Item 14 below**
iii. Other Project Proposals – see Item 11c below

7. Beeches Investigation Update – GD reported that having received questions from a member of the public regarding the Beeches development and an ex-councillor, UPC launched an enquiry and produced an internal report. The enquiry was delayed due to the absence of investigating councillors on summer leave. The report was presented to a 'closed' meeting of the Full Council on 22nd August at which the following decisions were taken:

- i.** To respond to the author of the original email (the original email and response is documented in the Clerks report (see Appendix on website only) and were also read out and displayed on screen at the meeting)
ii. To take no further action.

GD went on to say that UPC has insufficient traceable evidence, rather than suspicion, speculation or perceptions, to take any further action. If any member of the public feels that they have such definitive evidence then they should report it direct to the WC Monitoring Officer.

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Malcolm Smith asked the Clerk whether he had received any other correspondence from members of the public on this issue and if so why it had not been identified in this update, BL responded that he had received emails from one other person. Both GD and BD added and re-iterated that UPC had investigated the overall issues raised, come to conclusions and had insufficient traceable evidence to warrant further action. Malcolm Smith asked whether the minutes of the 'Closed' meeting could be published to clear the Holt's name which he believed had been tarnished in the community. BD reiterated that the UPC conclusions are being published with the agenda and minutes of this meeting, by their very nature the minutes of 'Closed' meetings are confidential to the Council.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

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

- a. Clerks Report – no update required**
b. Councillor Reports

- i. Telephone Box Adoption – DM** pleased to see progress, MK stated that the group is moving forward with plans pending removal of the telephone which BL will again hasten. The Parish Trust has pledged £200 towards the project.

ACTION: FC/84/18 - BL

- ii. Farmers Field – see Item 12 below**
iii. Community Speed Watch (CSW) – see Item 13 below

9. **UWLNP** – A paper produced by BD had been distributed to councillors with the agenda.

The Chairman closed the meeting for Public Participation

Malcolm Smith stated that the Council view that the made UWLNP is set in stone is incorrect. He understands that UPC can submit amendments to the WC examiner to consider / approve to get the Plan updated. Mr Smith cited the following examples of where he believed the Plan should be changed / amended as soon as possible:

- The fact that the Uphill scenario quoted is incorrect regarding the view.
- Objections are now being raised by UPC on the current Uphill application regarding access which appear to conflict with statements made in the Plan.
- There is a failure on the Affordable Housing policy stated
- UPC could opt to remove the Uphill site and put a replacement site in the Plan, although he recognised that bureaucracy would probably mean that planning approval will be granted and work started on the site before any change to the Plan can be made.

DM reminded Mr Smith that this agenda item is about UWLNP, not the Uphill site.

The Chairman re-opened the Council Meeting

BD referred to his circulated paper which seeks to inform councillors on the facts of UWLNP production and approval. The Steering Group wanted to have change control within the Plan, but were instructed by WC not to proceed. If there is a way to implement changes then this needs to be investigated further. As far as the Uphill site is concerned, this was documented in the SHLAA as a development site way back in the 1990's. The Parish voted on all the sites in the Plan, he did not understand and was angered by the current level of objection to Uphill which does deliver affordable housing. BD feels the Plan Design Statement is very important and expressed disappointment that the Council did not object to the current application on design grounds. He reminded all present that UPC is only a consultee, WC is the approving authority. He also re-iterated from his paper that the Plan does not legislate what houses a developer can build, but said that is good to note that to date developers are conforming to the Plan. BD reiterated the purpose of his paper is to confirm Council support for the Plan on the basis that it had been democratically voted for by the public referendum. DM confirmed that the view at Uphill had been changed in the Plan before submission to the Examiner, the revised view is from north of the proposed development.

RH reiterated his view expressed at previous meetings that questions from the Examiner had not been disclosed to the public as required by law. TH commented that the 'Fact Sheet' had asked whether there was a conflict on the viewpoint at Uphill, the Steering Group said no. Whilst not disagreeing generally over publication of questions / answers, BD said that when these were received from the Examiner the Steering Group had been told by WC that public consultation was closed. RH contended that this WC advice was wrong and that UPC should ask for the Uphill and Wildman's Garage sites to be re-visited in the Plan. DM commented that the Wildman's garage site would need a change of use approval before housing development could go ahead.

BD stressed that one of the objectives of the Plan was to keep all development north of the B3098, if this objective is overturned at some point in the future then he believes there will be significant issues raised regarding loss of view. RH commented that he is getting constant questions from the public regarding the lack of affordable housing in the Parish, PC said that three houses proposed in the Uphill development are subject to Section 106 agreements that secure a significant reduction in price against market value. Whilst TH did not originally vote for Uphill to be included in the Plan, he now recognises that it does offer an opportunity to provide affordable houses.

MK expressed the view that constant negative references regarding the Plan can only be destructive, UPC and the community needs to look forward and use the made Plan to best advantage. UPC should be working hard to get appropriate and acceptable development in the Parish. BD took the decision not to seek the intended vote of confidence in the Plan at this point due to the disparity of views expressed, further work clearly needs to be done to clarify and overcome highlighted issues and establish whether changes can be made without compromising the overall Plan itself.

ACTION: FC/8518 – BD

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 having sent comments to WC on 20th June 2018, UPC had finally received an updated draft agreement on the 4th September 2018. Initial review of the amended document indicated the following: WC now believes that ownership of the School access road should be transferred to the Diocese; a new clause has been inserted to define that if the School ever becomes an academy that the WC owned part of the playing field will have to be leased to the School for 125 years, but retaining rights of public access outside of School operational hours in the lease (which they hope would be accepted by the School); and the continued rejection of the phrase 'best endeavours' in relation to completing their part of the agreement. Having registered a personal interest because he has access rights over part of the School driveway, PW commented that the road should have actually been transferred when the School was originally built, but that this has only now been highlighted because of this draft agreement. PW believed that this will have no impact on UPC or the community at large because pedestrian and maintenance access can still be gained from other sides of the Playing Field. RH asked whether UPC would gain all the land currently owned by WC by CAT if the School closes, the displayed plan did not appear to be correct. GD advised that the plan was only indicative and would need to be finalised in the agreed delegation agreement. GD asked PW when he thought the draft agreement would be finalised and approved by all parties. As UPC has been undertaking the delegated responsibilities defined in the agreement since April 2018, he hoped that the agreement would now be completed quickly by all parties. GD stated that the latest version would be further reviewed by GD/GC and BL and comments sent back to WC as soon as possible.

ACTION: FC/86/18 – GD/GC/BL

b. **PROW Urchfont School** – BD reported that the letter from the Secretary of State dated 16th August had asked about UPC availability and potential venues for the Public Enquiry, BL had responded that any dates are possible for UPC and suggested the Village Hall subject to availability. BD suggested that UPC needs to start preparing for the Enquiry by ensuring that signed affidavits or endorsed original statements are available. PC, as a magistrate, is able to assist with this and to sign statements FOC. RH was tasked to identify who should provide this evidence and potentially be available to attend the Enquiry.

ACTION: FC/87/18 – RH/PC

11. Village Pond / Greens

a. **Draft Parish Land and Use Policy (to supersede Pond Green Policy)** – DM thanked BL for producing the draft. BD commented that the draft was very good and that he had shown it to the Scarecrow Committee regarding the need for commercial businesses to seek direct approval of UPC instead of operating under the umbrella of the Scarecrow Festival approval, they had noted this.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Resolution
To approve and publish the Policy unchanged.	DM	BD	Unanimously agreed

ACTION: FC/88/18 – BL

(Post Meeting Note: Published on website 14th September 2018)

b. **Village Greens Risk Assessment** – RH reported that he had not completed this assessment. PC offered to assist to finalise the assessment as soon as possible, this was agreed.

ACTION: FC/89/18 – RH/PC

c. **Maintenance of Urchfont Pond** – DM suggested that three possible projects should be considered:

- i. Electricity supply to the Duck House to assist Friends of the Ducks especially during autumn / winter months. Electricity supply is already within the Duck House compound.
- ii. Water supply to the Duck House and potentially Pond Green to negate the need for transport of water in containers for the ducks and to be available for events on the Green. Water supply is close by in Manor Farmyard – BD suggested that the Scarecrow Committee might be willing to contribute to this initiative.
- iii. Potential use of a fountain in the Pond to prevent / control algae.

BL confirmed that the latest advice received from the Environment Agency (EA) suggests that the blue / green algae will naturally disperse in November, but it could reappear in the spring. The Council was only alerted to the problem due to the spread of red/orange algae which was reported to the EA who undertook sampling. UPC has taken measures on advice from the EA to alert the public of potential risks by notices around the Pond and articles on the website and in Redhorn News. PC suggested that having identified the algae problem, UPC needs to be seen to be

proactive in reducing risks. LC suggested that it might be better to wait and see what happens in the spring, this year has seen exceptional weather conditions. It was agreed that further EA sampling should be requested in November and in the spring, this may or may not identify that further action needs to be taken. TH questioned whether a fountain might change the perception of the Village Pond and create an ongoing cost, he suggested that oxygenating plants might be a possible alternative. It was agreed that DM and DS would investigate all initiatives further and solicit quotes for presentation at a later meeting.

ACTION: FC/90/18 – DM & DS

12. Footpaths to / from Wedhampton and A342 crossing – BD reported that he will be meeting with the land owner shortly to discuss proposed changes to the footpath across his land and the A342 crossing points. PC reported that he been approached by quite a number of residents regarding accidents at the Lydeaway Junction and the need to get the speed limit on the A342 to be reduced to 40mph, he requested that this item be put on the next meeting agenda for discussion. PW commented that WC looks into all police reports of accidents at a particular location and decides whether any action is required to minimise the risk, BL reminded councillors that WC had in the past rejected requests for action to change Lydeaway Junction.

13. Pond Green Finger Post – DM commented that in theory this is a good idea to add a finger pointing to the Village Hall, but it might also necessitate uprating signs at the junction of Peppercombe and the High Street. PW suggested that any change to road signs at Peppercombe might need WC Highways approval. BL tasked to seek quotes for new finger post signage and also to seek advice from WC (Richard Dobson) on Peppercombe signage.

ACTION: FC/91/18 - BL

14. Farmers Field – LC supplemented his written report (see Appendix on website only) with the following additional comments. A delightful BBQ was held on 9th September attended by Friends of Farmers Field members, children, parents and councillors. Children took part in various activities which helped to demonstrate the educational and environmental benefits of the Field. Councillors had also been given an updated maintenance / capital requirements and asset sheet produced by Phil Milanes. Debate centred on the quote (£1955) submitted for post and rail fencing which was considered very expensive, two more quotes are being sought. It was agreed that alternative and cheaper alternatives should be considered such as stock fencing, but not barbed wire. In addition it was agreed that the maintenance and capital cost requirements should be refined and summarised in a costed proposal for the Council to approve.

ACTION: FC/92/18 – LC

DM commented on the excellent progress being made to move this facility forward. Debate concluded that exceptionally Phil Milanes should be reimbursed for past ride on mower maintenance which had not been approved in advance.

Proposal	Proposed	Seconded	Resolution
To exceptionally reimburse Phil Milanes with prior cost (£493.23) of maintaining ride on mower subject to production of invoice and on the strict understanding that any such expenditure in future must have prior UPC approval or will not be paid.	DM	MK	Unanimously agreed

15. Road Safety – Traffic Speed – DM stated that this discussion had been started at the July meeting but held over due to the absence of GD.

The Chairman allowed free interaction between Council and the public on this item

a. Community Speed Watch (CSW) – GD referred to his written report (see Appendix on website only). The CSW Team had been upset and disappointed by the comments made at earlier Council meetings about perceived aggressiveness and numbers employed on the task at each session. Whilst a supporter of CSW, LC was of the view that having a speed gun pointed at you can in itself be considered an aggressive act, especially if you are not speeding. PW disagreed, the CSW Team have a right to point cameras to do their job. As an ex-police officer and keen supporter of CSW, TH countered that continuously pointing a speed gun is perceived as an aggressive act. Maybe the CSW team could minimise pointing guns at cars once readings have been taken. David Myers said that whilst drivers may perceive that the gun continues to be trained on them for an extended period, in reality the gun may be pointing at following or traffic in the opposite direction. Having started the issue of aggressiveness, RH expressed the view that a friendly response or gesture by the Team to those not speeding, as witnessed in other areas, could improve community perceptions. SJ commented that the Team need to be careful with their language,

the police do not like phrases such as 'catch speeding drivers' to be used. In her view public perception of CSW is not good.

LC also commented that the team on the roadside is sometimes larger than four, when in other areas it is only two. Barbara Myers responded that the CSW local co-ordinator and/or police officers may be present on occasions which increase numbers to 5/6, but they are not part of the local CSW Team. The Team consider four members necessary to record sufficient data to accurately identify all speeding vehicles. DM questioned the need to record all traffic going away from the Team, surely this could lead to mistakes. David Myers responded that it is necessary to record all vehicles to ensure that any vehicle which then speeds up before a derestricted sign can be identified, he cited the example of the car which was travelling at 66mph by the time it reached Walnut Close from Townsend.

From the recent Redhorn News article, DM was amazed at the number of man-hours expended by the CSW volunteers. He wondered whether there are defined thresholds at which a speeding problem is perceived and when CSW action has achieved a significant reduction so as to be able to curtail their activity. Barbara Myers responded that the Team only collect data, they do not make judgements which is a police matter. PW commented that speeding has generally reduced across Wiltshire, but a continuing CSW presence serves to remind drivers to keep to the limits.

b. Speed Indicator Devices (SID) – GD stated that the CSW Team do not support the idea of SID's on the basis that they quickly fade into the background if in fixed positions and lose effectiveness. The team have not identified a suitable version. David Myers said that versions employing data logging would be best, BL stated that this was available in the version displayed at the July meeting. PW commented that WC did use SID's but no longer because of the fact that their effectiveness fades if not moved every three weeks or so, this becomes a drain on resources. DM expressed the view that smiley faces are better than mph, the latter tends to become a challenge to some drivers. PC asked whether sharing SIDs with other local Councils might be worth thinking about, PW warned that risks are involved when moving the devices close to a highway. It was agreed that BL should write to other local councils to seek their views on sharing, including the cost of purchase and maintenance.

ACTION: FC/93/18 - BL

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

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

a. Overhanging Trees in Friars Lane – DM reported that he had met with WC on 11th July to discuss trees overhanging the highway opposite Sawmills and from properties in The Ham. Latest information is that WC letters will be sent to the respective property owners today with the possibility of enforcement action if no action is taken. In the meantime it is understood that Friars Lane residents have been in conversation with property owners in The Ham who have agreed to make improvements but only if a contribution to cost is made by the residents, this situation may require Council involvement in due course.

b. Trailers parked on grain dryer site behind Cemetery – A number trailers have had their wheels removed, been repainted and repositioned between the grain dryer and the bridleway. One or more have been offered to the Scarecrow Committee for storage purposes instead of using the scout hut. PW was of the view that this may require planning permission, especially if planning conditions apply for this site. TH pointed out that there is a facility on the WC website to seek guidance on such issues. It was agreed that BD should pursue with WC.

ACTION: FC/94/18 - BD

17. External Meetings – None reported

18. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda

a. TH stated that having been part of the investigating group on the Beeches issue, he found this particularly difficult because he felt that the Chairman (DM) had not been completely open and honest throughout. Following a one to one meet with DM he now felt that he had no confidence in him as chairman and as such he (TH) is quite willing to stand down from the Council. However, he is quite happy to outline in detail his issues and offer the Chairman the chance to respond at a closed meeting of the whole Council. BL confirmed that this would have to feature on an agenda with the necessary resolution to exclude the public. TH asked if the Council wanted such a meeting.

Commenting that TH is a very valuable member of the Council, GD said that he would welcome a closed meeting. MK asked TH if the Council decided to have a meeting as he suggests, did he feel it would provide an opportunity to resolve the situation or was he going to resign anyway. BD also asked whether reconciliation could be achieved by a meeting so that no one has to stand down. Discussion then started to go into the detail of the issues, at this point

BL on a point of order reminded councillors that members of the public were still present. No conclusion was reached on the benefit of a closed meeting or otherwise. Acknowledging that he had probably made everybody feel very uncomfortable on this issue, TH then stated that he would resign at the end of this meeting. SJ expressed the view that she had great confidence and complete trust in TH as Lead Councillor for Planning, he has gained significant knowledge in planning matters and is thorough in all that he does. If TH resigns SJ felt that she did not want to train up or work with a new lead and as such would resign as Planning Administrator at the end of October 2018. GD wished to record thanks to TH and urged him to reconsider, GD would be prepared to take part in any discussion to try to resolve the situation. DM concluded discussion by saying that he was very sad not to have been able to resolve the differences with TH and respected his decision to resign. On behalf of the Council DM thanked TH for all that he achieved in a thankless role. BL asked both TH and SJ to confirm their intentions in writing to facilitate appropriate notifications.

ACTION: FC/95/18 – TH/SJ

(Post meeting note: TH submitted his resignation confirmation on 13th September 2018)

b. Items for the October agenda are:

- i. Playing Field / Urchfont Manor boundary Fence & Hedge** – DM indicated that the owners of the Manor may wish to attend and contribute to this item
- ii. Environmental Friendly Initiatives** – Having been mentioned in the 10 year strategy, DM felt that now was the time to discuss such initiatives further.
- iii. Speed on the A342** – see item 12 above

ACTION: FC/95/18 - BL

Meeting Finished At 9.50pm

Date of Next Meeting: 10th October 2018 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Draft minutes prepared by Clerk to the Council – 14th September 2018

a. CLERK'S REPORT

1. Update on actions from July Meeting

FC/73/18 – Obtain quote for installation of Gateway sign (West) – quote obtained, on agenda for approval at September meeting Item 5b.

FC/74/18 – Definitive Map Modification documents to go to BD – sent to BD

FC/76/18 – Produce a draft overall Village Greens Policy – To be considered under Agenda Item 10a

FC/78/18 – Speed Watch and SIDs to be on September agenda – on September agenda Item 14

FC/79/18 – Legal responsibilities of protecting neighbouring properties – I can find nothing which defines such responsibilities.

FC/80/18 – Village Hall to be added to Finger Post to be on September agenda – on September agenda at Item 12

2. Proposed Quid Pro Quo agreement with WC in exchange for assuming grass cutting and litter bin emptying in the Parish

– Following the meeting with WC at County Hall on 10th May and our subsequent submission of suggested revisions, we received an updated version of the proposed Agreement on 13th June. Following a subsequent meeting with Graham Day and comments from Graham Creasey, I submitted further proposed revisions on 20th June and asked for an early response prior to the July meeting. An updated version of the Agreement and explanations as to why certain matters are not agreed was received on 4th September, this is now being considered and an update will be given at the meeting under Agenda Item 9a.

3. Finances at 31st August 2018 – Finances are in good order as shown on the statements attached to the agenda; the bank reconciliation was completed satisfactorily. Indicated reserve at year end remains overstated at this stage due to insufficient actual expenditure data and project commitment. Details of all actual expenditure during the month are shown on page 2 of the bank reconciliation, I have attached July and August reconciliation statements as there was no meeting in August. Having now almost completed half of the financial year there is an urgent need to progress provision of project funding proposals to ensure spend can be completed within year.

4. Beeches Development Investigation – As you are aware the Council received an email from a local resident on 13th July 2018 expressing the following concerns:

“Sir, There is a lot of discussion within the village community about the provision of affordable houses in the village and in particular, one affordable house in the new development at the Beeches, namely Hartley House. It is clearly shown on sites such as “Rightmove” etc. as being sold for £187,000, and I have been told the Land Registry states that the cost of the plot was loaned to the purchaser by Qudos, the developer erecting the houses. As the purchaser of Hartley House at the time of planning approving was a prominent member of the Parish Council and spoke on several occasions in favour of this development, I believe the village has a right to know the answer to several questions.

- a. Did the councillor concerned express an interest, either financially or otherwise, in the development at the time planning approval was discussed or thereafter?
- b. Were any entries made in the Gratuities Book regarding the Development?
- c. How can a four bedroom detached house with double garage be sold at what looks like less than the building cost while other less substantial properties in the same development are available for over twice the price?

I ask these questions as many members of this community, and myself, are somewhat surprised by this transaction and believes it could seriously diminish the credibility of our Parish Council.”

Following a UPC internal investigation, ‘closed’ Council meeting on 22nd August and agreement of the response wording with the Chairman, I sent the following to the author on 23rd August by email:

“Your concerns raised in your email of 13th July 2018 were discussed at a Council meeting last night and I have now been authorised to send you the following response:

A Council investigation has concluded that UPC Planning Policies and Procedures were fully complied with based on information available at the time, specifically in answer to your questions:

1. The councillor concerned made non-pecuniary declarations of interest at all meetings where the various applications for this site were discussed, and OBJECT decisions made, by the Council up until 26th

September 2016 when he resigned from the Parish Council. This is all recorded in published minutes of the meetings which can be found on the website.

(Note: A SUPPORT decision was not taken by the Council until 12th April 2017; planning approval was granted by Wiltshire Council on 11th May 2017)

2. The Parish Council is not required to hold a 'gratuities book'. Serving councillors have a personal responsibility to notify the Wiltshire Council Monitoring Officer within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over £25.
3. The Council has satisfied itself that the quoted figure of £187,000 relates solely to the purchase of the land and not the whole built property. It has further satisfied itself through independent means that the total cost and payments made for the property was £187,000 + £423,000 = £610,000; and that stamp duty has been paid on the full amount.

It is hoped that the above answers your concerns."

This item will be covered under Item 6 on the agenda.

5. Damage to Gateway Sign on Crookwood Lane – The sign has been seriously damaged due to vehicle impact, but I have not been able to obtain any information who might have caused this. The sign needs to be completely replaced and maybe relocated further out of the Village on a wider verge. Based on the replacement MMT sign purchased for the B3098 (West), this will cost around £662.92 plus VAT. If the location is changed then consideration should also be given to obtaining a new MMT gate for on the opposite side of the road to replace the existing timber gate at around £573.20 plus VAT. However, the damaged sign is covered under the Council insurance policy and I will submit a claim to hopefully recover some of the cost.

Bob Lunn - Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

i. Telephone Box Adoption Project Update - The TB Group, Stephanie, Maria and Nicky, met to discuss ideas for using the telephone box space once BT have removed the telephone.

We are happy to curate the space and are considering the following

1. An Opening Ceremony. A secret to be revealed at the time!
2. An Exhibition Space, 1month per quarter rented out for fundraising
3. Flexible times for Community Groups to promote their activities. eg: Art, School, Garden Club etc.
4. The Group will create appropriate exhibitions throughout the year but there may be periods when the box is empty..... No pressure required!
5. Shelves will be designed and made for display purposes.
6. We plan to request a start-up grant from the Parish Trust.

Cllr. Nicky Mitchell

ii. Farmers Field Report - A meeting was held in the Lamb Inn on Wednesday August 29 between councillors Lewis Cowen, Maria Kemp and members of the Friends of Farmers Field group.

Cllr Kemp explained that a budget would have to be presented to the next full council meeting on September 12 and this meeting had been called to ascertain what was required for the regular maintenance and long-term development of the village asset.

Phil Milanes said that UPC owned a sit-on lawnmower while he also used his own petrol-driven push-along mower. These machines would need an annual service and Shire's (Rose's) charge £85 each machine.

A brush cutter, a more powerful one than that owned by UPC, would need to be hired once a year and the likely cost would be £31.50. The cost of petrol to fuel the machines is estimated to be £50 a year. The council's hedge cutter would also require a service every two years.

Among the items that would need to be purchased is a wheelbarrow and a second petrol-driven strimmer as well as rakes and a spade. Also required are bowsaw blades, a pair of loppers and an axe. Although the axe would be useful in felling trees, chainsaw services will need to be bought in.

The Friends of Oakfrith Wood have been approached to provide these, but they replied that they are not insured to operate chainsaws other than in Oakfrith Wood. Local tree surgeon Ian Pocock would charge £200 a day.

Phil Milanes said that there are between 180 and 190 ash trees affected by ash dieback which will need felling in the near future. If they are not, there is a chance they may be brought down in high winds and as some of them are on the boundary of Farmers Field adjoining the public footpath, UPC could be liable if anyone is injured by a falling tree.

It was stated that the current situation when volunteers bring along their own equipment is not acceptable. Although volunteers do so happily at the moment, goodwill can waste away if taken for granted.

It was accepted that the present barbed-wire fence bounding the footpath is not appropriate and should be replaced by post-and-rail fence. Phil M will get an estimate for this work.

An Oxford kissing gate is also required by UPC. Phil will get an estimate for this but it is thought to be in the region of £550.

A seed and bulb-planting scheme has been worked out by Mike McDonald and the cost has already been covered by funding found by Cllr Kemp.

It emerged at the meeting that Phil M has paid £493.23 out of his own pocket for repairs to the sit-on mower. He had asked to be reimbursed but was told he needed to approach the council before approving the work. It was felt at the meeting that this was unfair as Phil was unaware of this procedure and it is a lot of money for an individual to find, especially as he was undertaking work on behalf of UPC for no payment.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE COSTS

Service to sit-on and push mowers	£170
Hire of brush cutter	£31.50
Cost of petrol	£50

COST OF NEW TOOLS

Wheelbarrow	£150
Purchase of second strimmer	£300?

Rakes, Spade, Bowsaw blades, Axe, Loppers, Waders

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Post-and-rail fence, Kissing gate

ASSET REGISTER (All the equipment owned by UPC is kept securely on Phil's premises.)

Murray Sit-on mower, Dual hedge/brush cutter, Fork, Spade, Loppers, 2 manure drags (used for clearing weeds from pond), 1 large rake

Cllr. Lewis Cowen

iii. Community Speed Watch (CSW) - References to CSW in Urchfont appeared in the minutes of the June and July meetings. The June minutes state: *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.*

The Minutes for the July meeting state: *Following the report in the July edition of Redhorn News, DM expressed the view that he is not sure what Speed Watch is actually achieving for the amount of hours spent by volunteers, have we actually got a real problem with speeding locally and why are so many in the community unhappy with Speed Watch activities and attitudes. TH was of the view that speeding is a universal problem and that anything that can*

be done by these volunteers to minimise the issue must be supported by UPC, BD agreed. RH expressed the view that Urchfont volunteers are seen by some in the community as being rather aggressive and overmanned compared to other local groups.

I shall try to briefly address some key issues here, drawn from the notes of a volunteers' meeting held in August in response to the referenced UPC minutes. For interest, I attach a copy of the Generic Risk Assessment Form for CSW:

- 1) Thumbs up, interaction with motorists – the team agree that there should be no signals of any sort made to motorists. The role of a CSW volunteer is to record data, and then pass that information to the police. CSW volunteers are not judge and jury. For their own safety, CSW volunteers are expressly forbidden from entering into protracted and potentially heated debates with motorists;
- 2) Team size – from the risk assessment, you will see that each CSW team should comprise between 2 and 4 members. The exact "modus operandi" of each team is left to the individuals concerned. The Urchfont CSW teams always comprise either 3 or 4 members and our volunteers are happy with this;
- 3) Clothing – all CSW volunteers must wear hi-viz jackets supplied by Wiltshire Police;
- 4) Operating issues – CSW volunteers are not allowed to block the rights of way of pedestrians and must not operate covertly – ie they must be overt and visible to motorists
- 5) Sites – CSW sessions can only take place at sites approved by Wiltshire Police;
- 6) "why are so many in the community unhappy with Speed Watch activities and attitudes " – this comment is a puzzle. All volunteers report that almost all passing pedestrians thank CSW volunteers and praise them for the job they are doing. Similar sentiments are occasionally supplied via e-mail and other means;
- 7) "seen by some in the community as being rather aggressive" – this comment caused real distress to some CSW volunteers, who are friends and neighbours in our community. They find it hard to understand how a small group of people "armed" only with clipboards and pencils can be perceived as aggressive. In a spirit of seeking to improve practice and change perceptions, the CSW volunteers request that councillors convert general statements about complaint into specific instances or examples so that lessons can be learned and any failings remedied to the maximum extent possible;
- 8) "have we actually got a real problem with speeding locally" – a typical speed watch session will see between 200-300 cars per hour pass through Urchfont, and the long term average is that there will be a speeding vehicle every 3 minutes. For the purposes of CSW, speeding is defined as travelling at or above 36mph in a 30mph zone. At a session in which I participated last week, about 8% of the vehicles were speeding. The police dedicate their resources to sites according to perceived need – Special Constables were in Urchfont 3 times in June.

At their meeting, all of the current volunteers confirmed their desire to continue. Councillors may have seen the excellent article in the July Redhorn News. More effort will be placed on recruiting new team members.

Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)

At the meeting, volunteers discussed SIDs and their usefulness to Urchfont. There were mixed opinions and no over-arching consensus except that only models which show the actual vehicle speed have any utility and most models which had been encountered would not provide long-term benefit and would probably be a waste of money.

Cllr. Graham R Day