

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 25th July 2018 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM – Chairman), Mitchell (NM), Donald (BD), Hill (TH), Kemp (MK), Hawkins (RH), Creasey (GC), Stevens (DS) and Cottell (PC)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW) – From item 14 only due to other commitments

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Brenda Potter, Malcolm Smith

1. **Welcome by the Chairman** – the Chairman welcomed all councillors and members of the public to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** Councillors Day (GD) and Cowen (LC)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None
4. **Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports** – members of public were invited to speak under individual agenda items. There were no external reports.
5. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 13th June 2018**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	BD	TH	Unanimously agreed

6. **Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2018** – the following updates were received, other actions are known to be ongoing or complete:

FC/41/17 Draft Welcome to Urchfont Leaflet – RH reported that he had not progressed this action, he agreed to submit an updated draft to the September meeting.

FC/52/17 – Scout Hut Rebuild Proposal – DM had written and sent copies to the Chief Scout but had not received any response. BD commented that Scarecrow Committee are looking at alternative storage options.

FC/78/17 Tree Works and Paddock Green Working Party – As DM had only recently assumed responsibility, no progress has yet been made. Ongoing

FC/109/17 - Farmers Field Funding Proposals – not yet available, some items had been identified but not in any detail. Ongoing

FC/28/18 – Prioritisation of Projects – Few projects have yet been identified – ongoing

FC/34/18 – Draft ITT for Crookwood Lane Lay-By – Not yet completed, but now advised to seek quotes from local contractors rather than publishing full ITT requirement. Ongoing

FC/49/18 – Village Green Risk Assessment – current scenarios changing have prevented finalisation, hopefully draft to September meeting. Ongoing

FC/51/18 – State of Village pavements – RH reported that he has reviewed and submitted a report using the App to WC who have referred the issue to a highways engineer – Complete

FC/65/18 – Promote Farmers Field to School – MK intends to pursue in September. Ongoing

FC/66/18 – Initiate competition for Farmers Field sign – MK intends to pursue in September. Ongoing

FC/67/18 – Meet with Church re parking on Pond Green – GC had spoken with Ian Smith who has agreed to meet on the issue. Ongoing

FC/71/18 – Deter parking at Cemetery Gate – DS reported that he had sent an email to the Secretary of the Allotment Association asking her to publicise issue to allotment holders. Complete

7. Finance

a. **Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June 2018** – BL had circulated with the agenda and made comments in his Clerk's report attached. No clarification was requested at the meeting.

b. Quote for moving Gateway Sign (East)

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To accept the quote of £298.02 + VAT. DM & BL to agree positioning of sign with operatives	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

BL reported that he had now received the new gateway sign to replace the deteriorating sign west of the Village. In view of its verge location close to the B3098 it was agreed that a quote should be obtained from Ringway for installation.

ACTION: FC/73/18 - BL

c. Other Project Proposals

i. **Dropped Kerbs in The Croft** – BL reported that a request had been made to PW by a disabled resident in The Croft for dropped kerbs to be installed at the far end. PW requested BL to submit the request to CATG on behalf of the lady concerned, this request has now been approved at a cost of around £2000. However, as is normal CATG practice, they have requested that UPC contribute 25% of this cost. TH asked how many dropped kerbs are involved and where these will be located, BL stated that CATG have not provided this information. TH suggested that UPC needs to review this with CATG before final agreement to the contribution.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve in principle a contribution of up to £1000 subject to detailed agreement with CATG on location and number of dropped kerbs to be installed.	DM	RH	Unanimously agreed

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

a. **Clerks Report** – some comments to be updated under subsequent items. It was agreed that the Definitive Map Modification documents should be sent to BD.

ACTION: FC/74/18 - BL

b. Councillor Reports

i. **Defibrillator grant** - DM thanked NM for obtaining this ring fenced grant from the Scarecrow Committee.

9. Outstanding Interaction with Wiltshire Council

a. **Proposed Quid Pro Quo arrangement with WC for assuming grass cutting and litter bin emptying roles in Urchfont** – BL confirmed that no response had been received from WC to his email comments on 20th June 2018, an updated version of the proposed agreement is still awaited.

b. **PROW Urchfont School** – As the indicted response time of six weeks from the Secretary of State had now well passed, BD reported that he had written to Richard Broadhead (WC) last week for an update, but had not received a response. GC had similarly tried to contact him by phone but without success.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Malcolm Smith expressed very strong views on what he perceived to be very unacceptable time delays on this issue and the apparent lack of action on the part of WC and UPC to resolve. Has the planned meeting with the School been arranged to discuss potential implementation?

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

DM expressed disappointment that UPC efforts to resolve the issue are being disregarded, a lot of work and effort has been put in to try and move it forward as soon as possible. The meeting with the School is in the hands of Richard Broadhead (WC).

PW subsequently confirmed that he had not heard anything on the submission to Secretary of State. He emphasised that these submissions have no prescribed time limit for response and in some cases can take months or even years. He suggested that BD should again write to Richard Broadhead for an update and copy PW in so that he can pursue internally.

ACTION: FC/75/18 - BD

10. Village Pond / Greens

a. Village Greens Risk Assessment – RH confirmed that he had not progressed this matter pending outcome of current pond issues.

b. Pond Green Policy or new Bye-Law – Potential consideration for initiation of a bye-law stemmed from an issue raised following the Scarecrow Festival weekend concerning potential profiteering by commercial traders. DM referred to the excellent research and brief prepared by BL (circulated with the agenda) which suggested that preparation and administration of a bye-law is far too complex and is not justified, but that Council policy should be enhanced to provide the necessary guidance and requirements for use of village greens / Council owned land at any time by any individual / organisation. Council permission cannot be assumed under the umbrella of a major event scenario (e.g. Scarecrow Festival).

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
Pond Green Policy to be modified to cover all village greens / council owned land and to provide requirements / permissions for use of the land. Bye-Law is not required.	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

It was further agreed that BL should prepare a draft updated policy in consultation with BD for approval by the Council.

ACTION: FC/76/18 – BL/BD

c. Maintenance of Urchfont Pond – DM commented that to date there is no short or long term maintenance plan / funding in place for the pond, this had been highlighted by the current algae issue. DM suggested that this needs to be the subject of further consideration initially between himself and DS.

ACTION: FC/77/18 – DM/DS

DM stated that a better understanding had now been established in terms of water flow to and from the pond, this is facilitated by two sumps under the two courtyards in Manor Farmyard which work together to supply rainwater to the pond and retrieve surplus water via the overflow pipe. The latter will provide some filtering of any algae but inevitably this may contaminate local streams in due course. A number of suggestions had been made locally regarding the removal of the current algae (e.g. draining the pond, cleaning the bottom of the pond, use of chemicals), DM suggested that nothing should be done without guidance from the Environment Agency.

BL confirmed that he had registered and discussed an incident (incident registration number confirmed) with the Environment Agency to seek their advice and guidance on what steps to take to remove the algae safely without environmental contamination of surrounding waterways and/or harm to wildlife. Full details and photos had been submitted, a response is awaited. Initial EA reaction was concern about potential contamination of surrounding waterways and the impact on wildlife.

(Post Meeting Note: Environment Agency sampling identified that as well as the red algae, the pond water contained potentially harmful blue / green algae. Warning notices warning the public to avoid contact with the water have been posted around the pond and an item added to the website under 'Latest News'.)

Chairman Closed the Meeting for Public Participation

Brenda Potter commented that in the past surplus water from dairy activities in Manor Farmyard had continually replenished and circulated / aerated water in the pond, she believed that surface rain water is now insufficient to provide this activity. DM commented that this had not been the case for many years and that the pond is regularly topped up from the mains.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting.

11. Footpaths to / from Wedhampton and A342 crossing – BD reported that he had now received written agreement in principle from WC Highways regarding pedestrian crossing points on the A342. However he is delaying further discussions with the local farmer until after crops have been harvested. It is likely that UPC project funding will be required to fund works associated with this proposal.

12. Farmers Field

a. Progress Report – DM reported that he had met last week with LC and BL to discuss the way forward. In view of the fact that this Field is Council owned and that public interest is increasing fast, it was concluded that the Field is not managed or operated in a sufficiently controlled manner to protect the Councils interests / wider objectives and /or potential liabilities. The work previously and currently undertaken by Friends of Farmers Field (FoFF) is applauded and much appreciated, but nevertheless it is considered necessary to initially document the following set of UPC operational / managerial parameters for all to comply with:

- I. No chainsaw work is to be undertaken by any member of Friends of Farmers Field / or others without completion of appropriate PUWER training / certification, use of required PPE and specific insurance to cover chain saw use.
- II. No barbed wire fencing is to be used anywhere on site, any existing to be replaced by chain link or similar.
- III. Proposed new entrance at the layby on the B3098 will be implemented utilising a safe access / exit gate.
- IV. Any purchases of tools and/or day to day maintenance costs to be justified and pre-authorised by the Council.
- V. All development work / project costs to be agreed in advance by the Council broadly in line with the general principles of the WWT Management Plan.
- VI. Single written quote is required for any work / materials if less than £1000, otherwise THREE written quotes are required.
- VII. All accidents on site (FoFF, Council or members of the public) are to be reported by email to the Council.

MK reported that FoFF still have an issue with the proposed new entrance at the layby primarily on the basis that it may attract unwanted attention from those using the lay-by for refreshment stops etc. The new litter bin at the lay-by is already very well used by such passers-by and has made a great difference in terms of litter on the ground. FoFF suggest that the entrance could go on the track at the end of the Field. BL suggested that this may not meet the potential criteria for the Council objective of extending the 30mph zone past Crooks Lane.

TH asked about storage of tools and equipment on site, especially those purchased by UPC. DM suggested that these should all be listed on the UPC asset register and that there should be a safe storage and maintenance requirement on FoFF volunteers.

MK reported that she had now received the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) report on water issues which indicated that the suggested reed bed in adjacent bridleways might not be a good idea and that in any case the works could not be subject of a WWT grant. WWT have indicated that they intend to produce a management plan for the pond which would include several options for UPC to consider. BD commented that options are important, we need to ensure a one off fix for the identified issues.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To adopt the proposed initial set of operational / managerial parameters as Council policy to be complied with by all with immediate effect. Additions may be made to the listing by UPC in due course.	DM	DS	Unanimously Agreed

MK commented that FoFF may find the set of parameters hard to live with, but agreed that they are necessary to protect Council interests. DM offered to speak with FoFF on this if necessary.

b. Chainsaw Training / Certification – Detailed requirements and likely costs had been supplied by Friends of Oakfrith Wood covering necessary training, PPE, equipment and insurance for tree work; this was circulated with the agenda. DM suggested that there are alternative options when chainsaw work is required; for example use of trained operatives from Oakfrith Wood and / or local commercial tree surgeons which UPC is prepared to fund. The cost of training and provision of appropriate equipment for FoFF was considered excessive for the amount of tree work which will be necessary in the future.

Chairman closed the meeting for Public Participation

Brenda Potter expressed the view that it would be irresponsible and inappropriate to train volunteers when services are available locally from professional qualified operatives.

Chairman re-opened the Council Meeting

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
That UPC will not fund chainsaw training, certification, provision of associated PPE, chainsaw equipment or specific insurance for FoFF volunteers.	DM	TH	Unanimously Agreed

13. Road Safety – Traffic Speed

a. Speed Watch – 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.

b. Speed Indicator Devices (SID) – At the request of GD and others, BL had explored the potential use of Speed Indicator Devices, details had been circulated prior to the meeting. Example costs per unit indicated £2400 (battery powered) and £3125 (solar powered). Various views were expressed in favour of and against the use of SIDs which provide 24hr coverage rather than irregular action by volunteers. Cost was considered a big issue.

It was agreed that further discussion of both Speed Watch and use of SIDs should be delayed to the September meeting when GD will be present.

ACTION: FC/78/18 - BL

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

a. Playing Field / Urchfont Manor boundary Fence & Hedge – PW had confirmed that the fence is owned by Urchfont Manor. DM advised that further discussions need to take place with the School and Manor before any action is taken. He had asked BL to establish what legal responsibilities if any the Council / School had in terms of protecting neighbouring properties from intruders retrieving balls etc.

ACTION: FC/79/18 - BL

b. Overhanging Trees in Friars Lane – DM reported that he had met with WC Officers who had agreed to write to two property owners in Friars Lane requiring them to cut back overhanging trees, if they do not respond then WC enforcement action will be taken. Some other overhanging trees are on land without a registered owner, DM proposes to walk the ground with the WC Tree Conservation Officer to establish a way forward. Some residents are prepared to contribute to removal costs.

c. Damage to car in Crooks Lane – a potential large tree problem had been identified in Crooks Lane following damage to a car by a large fallen branch. The trees in question are on land owned by a local farmer who has already removed the fallen branch and offered to pay for any damage to the car. UPC has no enforcement

powers to require work to make these trees safe, it is hoped that the farmer will take a responsible view and carry out any work necessary to make trees safe.

d. Best Kept Village Competition 2018 – Disappointed at losing again this year by only one point, DM recorded thanks on behalf of the Council to all those who contributed to preparations for this competition, such preparations benefit the community generally.

e. Everleigh Recycling Centre – DM referred to the proposed closure of this very useful re-cycling centre and encouraged anyone to reject the proposal by filling in the consultation questionnaire which can be found on the WC website under 'Rubbish and Recycling'.

f. Scarecrow Festival – Footpath issue over cows – TH had spoken to the lady who made the complaint about perceived aggressive cows in a field as she made her way with her family from Stert to the Festival this year. She had been very vague about the actual field / her route, but admitted that her children had started running on the footpath and the young cows had naturally followed.

g. Wessex Water works in Wedhampton – BD reported that Greengate Road had been closed for notified works this week but there had been a distinct lack of co-ordination / timing in terms of placement / removal of diversionary signs and traffic light operation. This led to much confusion on the part of residents and visiting traffic.

h. Fly-Tipping at Rose Cottage Wedhampton – Whilst TH had approached the owner some while ago, BD reported that the items have not been removed. TH agreed to contact the owner again, if necessary putting the issue in writing.

15. External Meetings – None reported.

16. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda – DS requested an agenda item to discuss adding the Village Hall to the finger post on Pond Green.

ACTION: FC/80/18 - BL

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9pm.

Date of Next Meeting: 12th September 2018 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

It should be noted that dependent on application deadlines, there may be a requirement to hold a separate Planning Meeting on 8th August.

a. CLERK'S REPORT

1. Update on actions from June Meeting

FC/59/18 – Purchase of Gateway Sign (West) – The order was placed on Glasdon on 15th June 2018, delivery is awaited.

FC/61/18 – Wi-Fi Hub for Duck House – enquiries are in hand to obtain quote(s).

FC/62/18 – Playing Field MoU's with School – copies of the 2009 signed and 2013/14 draft versions sent to Graham Day, Graham Creasey and WC solicitor on 14th June.

FC/64/18 – Amend Lead Councillor roles – roles amended on the website and notice boards.

FC/70/18 – Response sent to Model Boat Testing email sent on 15th June 2018.

FC/72/18 – Speed Watch on July agenda

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. To date (4th July) we have not received the latest version.

3. New Litter Bin – The new litter bin for the lay-by at farmers Field has been installed and added to the litter bin emptying contract.

4. Finances at 30th June 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. Details of all actual expenditure during the month are shown on page 2 of the bank reconciliation. Having now completed quarter one of the financial year there is a need to progress provision of project funding proposals to ensure spend can be completed within year.

5. Research into potential bye-law(s) – stemming mainly from comments received from a member of the public post the Scarecrow Festival weekend, the Chairman asked me to review and consider whether a bye-law would be worth pursuing in respect of the use all village green areas. Making a bye-law is quite a complex process involving submissions to Secretary of State, public consultation and the ability to enforce. On the face of it this all seems a bit over the top for the Urchfont community which does not really have a great deal of incidents / problems which could probably be overcome by reference to Council policies and procedures (possibly enhanced). Furthermore some bye-laws could in fact be detrimental to / hinder some events and all will need to be enforced possibly involving significant additional resources, costs and legal action. To be discussed at Item 8b of the agenda, a copy of my full report is attached to the agenda.

6. Farmers Field Funding Proposals and Chainsaw Training / Insurance – A meeting will be held on 20th July between the Chairman, Clerk and councillors Cowen and Kemp to discuss possible funding requirements for Farmers Field. Research has also indicated that chainsaw training / certification and specific insurance is likely to be required for designated volunteers, especially as use of the Field by the public and the associated risks increase. This will all be discussed further at Item 10b on the agenda, see emails attached.

7. Definitive Map Modification Order – WC have resolved to make a definitive map modification order to upgrade Bridleways 12, 11 (Part) and 19 Chirton to restricted byway and to add a restricted byway in the parishes of Chirton and Urchfont. This is the result of investigations following an application made in 2004. WC intend to make the Order week commencing 9th July, including issue of a formal notice served on all interested parties which will facilitate a six week period of statutory objection. I hold a copy of the WC Decision Report should you wish to examine this.

Bob Lunn
Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Defibrillator Grant

Delighted and very grateful to be awarded a ring fenced Grant from the Scarecrow Charity Committee for £1000!
A thank you letter is on its way.

Nicky Mitchell