

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd October 2018 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM – Chairman), Day (GD – Vice Chairman), Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Cowen (LC), Creasey (GC) and Cottell (PC)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for Items 1 to 3 of the meeting only): Trevor Hill, Malcolm Smith and Ian Johnston

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman** – the Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public.
- 2. Apologies:** Councillors Kemp (MK) and Stevens (DS), Planning Administrator Johnston (SJ)
- 3. Public Participation**

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Trevor Hill (TH) was invited to speak. TH said that he found it rather ironic that on the 12th September meeting he had suggested a closed session to discuss the Chairman's conduct, but that this was not supported by fellow councillors, now he found himself about to be excluded from a closed session to discuss the way forward. He firstly thanked councillors who took the time and trouble to contact him to discuss his concerns following his resignation. Being on the public side he then stressed the realisation of how important being a councillor is and how the public who you represent expect you to set high standards in honesty and integrity.

Referring to the Chairman, TH said that by any standard he considered the Chairman's conduct during the Beeches enquiry to be appalling. TH stated that he is still extremely angry at this conduct, but that he was not really sure what angers him the most, his view:

- That the Chairman was prepared to withhold information about a close friend and wanted the Clerk to send out an email response to Jim Stevenson which was a blatant lie. (Clerk's Note: email was not sent following his consultation with the Vice Chair and TH), OR
- That the Chairman continually denies doing anything wrong when confronted with the facts, OR
- The Chairman's silence when offered the opportunity to defend himself at the meeting on 12th September.

Whatever the Chairman's motives, TH expressed the view that they were not in the interests of the Council or for the greater good of the community which the Council represents.

TH went on to say that the previous chairman, NM, believed that UPC set a high standard for other councils to follow, sadly that position has changed and UPC reputation is now very low in the community. The following closed session offers councillors an excellent opportunity to decide how they can restore public confidence, in the words of Donald Trump 'make this council great again'. But when deciding the best way forward, TH suggested that councillors need to decide who they wish to lead the Council into the future and the qualities they should demonstrate. TH then handed out a copy of a UPC in Confidence email sent by BL to himself and GD (copied to DM) during the Beeches enquiry which he suggested councillors should read.

He finished by saying that he was deeply saddened that he was not given the opportunity to sort this mess out 'in house', and that as a consequence he had no alternative but to submit a Code of Conduct breach report to the WC Monitoring Officer. He then handed out a copy of the UPC Code of Conduct and highlighted Clause 10 which relates to confidentiality, something he suggested that some councillors need to comply with.

TH thanked the Council for this opportunity to speak.

Malcolm Smith stated that he had never been a member of a council, he is just an ordinary guy and member of the community which normally allows the Council to get on with its business except when it is perceived to be going wrong. Talking to some councillors and members of the community, the Council is currently seen as a 'closed shop'. He suggested that this is made worse by resorting to 'closed meetings', it would be better if all meetings and minutes were open to the public.

GD thanked Trevor and Malcolm for their contributions.

The Chairman re-opened the Council Meeting.

DM thanked all members of the public for attending. Members of the public then left the meeting room.

4. Proposal to exclude the public / press during discussion of Item 5 – in view of the in confidence / sensitive nature of the business to be transacted, it is considered in the public interest that the press and public be excluded.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| To exclude the public and press from rest of the meeting in view of the in confidence nature of the business to be transacted. | DM | BD | Four voted FOR and two voted AGAINST (not including the Chairman). Resolution AGREED |

5. To discuss and agree the way forward.

In accordance with legislation, Item 5 discussion will not be included in published draft minutes except for any formal resolutions (proposals / decisions) that are made during or as a result of that discussion. The latter will be worded to ensure that sensitive information is not undermined or disclosed. UPC in Confidence draft minutes will, however, be recorded and distributed to councillors.

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

Draft minutes prepared by Clerk to the Council – 4th October 2018