

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 13th September 2017 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM - Chairman), Day (GD – Vice Chairman), Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Thomas (RT), Hill (TH), Cowen (LC), Creasey (GC), Kemp (MK), Hawkins (RH) and Stevens (DS)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Sandra Johnston (UPC Planning Administrator), Phil Milanés, Martijn Antheunisse (WWT), Malcolm Smith

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman**
- 2. Apologies:** None, all councillors present.
- 3. Declarations of Interest:** TH declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 16 – Tennis Club Lease.
- 4. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports**

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Farmers Field Management Plan and recommended actions – Martijn Antheunisse (MA) from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) made a presentation updating the Council on progress of the requested Management Plan for Farmers Field which is based on a five stage plan from now until 15-25 years. MA was keen to get feedback from councillors to ensure that his recommendations and proposals to make the best of the facility for the future are acceptable. He demonstrated the 5 stage plan by referring to 5 pictorial plans which he handed out and described briefly as follows:

Stage 1 – The current scenario – an underused facility due to layout and public awareness of its existence; specific issues relating to the pond / scrape and a large number of ash trees subject to disease and other woodland issues.

Stage 2 – A landscape vision for years 5 – 15

Stage 3 – Wildlife

Stage 4 – Infrastructure plans for years 1 – 5. External funding may be possible.

Stage 5 – Interventions – need to develop the pond and facility generally. Some action can commence this coming winter, but the current maintenance regime will need to be redesigned significantly. The volunteers currently do an excellent job; MA will work closely with Phil Milanés (PM) and the volunteers to achieve this re-design. PM commented that some change had already been achieved, for example he now undertakes all the internal mowing as and when necessary instead of Mark Goddard.

BD commented that Friends of Oakfrith Wood had offered to help with work on the ground, GC commented that they would have a lot of experience to offer with trained and experienced volunteers in woodland skills. In terms of making the public more aware of the facility, NM suggested an open day when development is underway and RH suggested articles in Redhorn News to tell the public what is planned to improve the facility.

BL sought clarification as to when the concept / vision / management plan report would be completed for approval / adoption by UPC and payment of the agreed fee; unless a completion date is agreed then the fundamental report and recommendations effectively become subject to ongoing change and not in a made document for UPC adoption and implementation. DM confirmed that he is basically content with the grand scheme but would like to see specific targets for the next 12 months. It was agreed that MA would send electronic copies of the pictorial stage plans for circulation to councillors; he would welcome any feedback. It was agreed that MA will try to complete and circulate his finished report prior to the November FC meeting when the way forward can be discussed further. (Post Meeting Note: Stage Plans circulated to councillors on 14th September)

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 12th July 2017 (No meeting held in August)

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To accept and sign the minutes unchanged as a true record of the meeting.	TH	GD	Unanimously agreed

6. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2017 – DM confirmed that no actions are outstanding; some are subject of ongoing progress.

7. Finance

a. To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st August 2017 – having circulated these statements to all councillors with the agenda, BL emphasised the need to allocate budgets and more importantly spend against specific approved projects to facilitate generation of a more realistic indicative spend and Reserve figure at year end – at present the indicative figure is unrealistically high at £21,932.

b. External Audit of 2016/17 Accounts and Governance – BL reported that he had received the external audit report from Grant Thornton UK LLP on 12th September which stated:

“On the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met.”

A Notice of Conclusion of Audit and the auditor’s report will be published on the website shortly in accord with legislation.

c. Project Proposals – Details of the following proposals were distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting.

- i. Community Shop Air Conditioning System - £748.50
- ii. Pond Green Track Resurfacing - £2,000
- iii. 8 x Additional roadside bollards - £1,000
- iv. 2 x ‘Pedestrians Crossing’ Road Signs - £350

Discussion at the meeting concluded with the following proposal covering Project proposals:

Proposal	First	Second		Decision
To agree that all proposed budgets above should be approved and action taken in year to implement the stated projects subject to: Project i – planning permission and Area Board grant application being approved. External air conditioning unit to be in a less dominant colour to blend in with surroundings if at all possible. Project ii – gaining a further two quotes to satisfy financial policy. Project iii – confirmed agreement with WC that they will install free of charge.	NM	RT		Unanimously Agreed

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

- a. Clerks Report** – where appropriate, updates to the report are indicated within specific agenda items
- b. Councillor Reports** – none were submitted

9. Proposal to wear name badges at all Council and Site meetings – deferred to October meeting.

10. Lead Councillor Roles – Following consultation with all councillors, DM had circulated details of proposed revised roles prior to this meeting. In the absence of any comments or proposed changes, it was agreed that the revised listing is implemented with immediate effect and could be published on the website. DM sought volunteers for four roles detailed at the bottom of the list which have not been allocated to date.

ACTION: FC/63/17 - ALL

BL commented on the need for all councillors to fully understand their proactive and reactive responsibilities in accord with the published generic terms of reference (TOR). However, BL believed that these do not go far enough and presented a proposed revision including a number of suggested responsibilities for specific roles. It was agreed that this proposal should be circulated for comment to all councillors; a revised TOR document is to be presented for approval at the October meeting.

ACTION: FC/64/17 – BL

(Post Meeting Note: Proposed TOR circulated to councillors by email on 15th September 2017)

11. UPC Policies, Procedures & Regulations – deferred to October meeting.

- i. UPC Health & Safety Policy
- ii. Terms of Reference Policy
- iii. Administrative Procedures
- iv. Cemetery Regulations

12. Use of emails in the decision making process – deferred to October meeting

13. UPC 10 Year Strategy – GD gave a presentation on an updated Strategy taking account of the made UWLNP content. The presentation contained details of recent UPC successes, current UPC obligations, suggested short / medium term objectives and three suggested options for the future:

- Reduction / elimination of large farm and agricultural vehicles transiting through Urchfont
- Water turbine in The Bottom generating electricity
- Potential main line railway station at Lydeaway

GD agreed to issue a copy of the presentation for distribution to all councillors.

ACTION: FC/65/17 – GD

(Post Meeting Note: Presentation distributed to all councillors by email on 14th September)

DM advised that it is the intention to discuss this document further at a councillor gathering (not Council meeting at this stage) to be arranged probably between the October and November meeting dates. DM to arrange.

ACTION: FC/66/17 – DM

14. Use of Facebook / What's App for UPC information – deferred to October meeting.

15. Tree Survey Report – deferred to October meeting

16. Tennis Club Lease Initial Draft – Having received the requested draft lease document from the UPC Solicitor, BL had asked TH to discuss it with the Chair of the Tennis Club Committee. TH reported that initial discussions had taken place and whilst the lease was accepted in principle there are a number of queries / issues that need clarification. These are being documented and will be sent to BL to consult further with the solicitor.

ACTION: FC/67/17 – TH

(Post Meeting Note: Tennis Club comments received on 15th September)

17. Reducing Speed Limits (60mph) on B3098 east of Urchfont and Crooks Lane - DM and BL met with the WC Highways Engineer who had agreed to the re-location of the Gateway signs to a position east of Crooks Lane; he had subsequently provided underground service maps to facilitate the re-location by UPC. DM had also gained the agreement of the Snook family to the siting of the signs partially on their land. The WC Engineer had also agreed to facilitate the provision of 'Pedestrians Crossing' signs (at UPC cost) to give driver's further warning of the informal road crossing near Crooks Lane. Discussion continued on whether this re-location project would be a good opportunity to replace the ageing gateway signs in this location with new low maintenance versions made of a high grade and robust man made material. It was agreed that BL should seek a quote for such replacement signs for consideration at the October meeting. When completed this project will better embrace Crooks Lane / Foxley Fields within the Village and be another step towards potential extension of the 30mph zone.

ACTION: FC/68/17 - BL

18. Grass Verges – Wedhampton – deferred to October meeting

19. Potential Motocross Scenario – Consensus indicated that this event had not on this occasion been a problem for Urchfont in terms of traffic or undue noise, probably because traffic had mainly approached the site from Potterne Wick to avoid the low bridge on Crookwood Lane. PW confirmed that the main problem had been the very late notification of the event taking place, the fact that planning regulations / conditions had not been complied with knowingly or otherwise and the lack of time for any enforcement action to take place without potential legal consequences. He was particularly concerned that no plans had been agreed for emergency service attendance. PW was not aware of likely future events, but meetings are nevertheless taking place shortly within WC to establish the facts with organisers and to ensure that proper advance notice of intended future events is given to WC who will ensure compliance with planning / other regulations and take enforcement action if necessary. PW agreed to provide feedback to UPC on the outcome of these meetings. It was agreed that BL should respond to Easterton P C stating that UPC intends to wait for further information from WC before deciding whether any PC action is warranted.

ACTION: FC/69/17 - BL

20. Public Right Of Way (PROW) – BD reported that a productive meeting had been held with the School, more agreement had been achieved on the proposed route of the path if the definitive PROW order is made, and in particular the School had been more open to agreeing a compromise regarding the driveway crossing point. GC reiterated the fact that assuming the WC Planning Committee endorse the current WC decision on the PROW at their October meeting, then the case will be put to the Secretary of State for approval of the definitive order. Part of the approval process may involve a public enquiry or other opportunity for all parties to argue their case.

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Malcolm Smith expressed strong views about the fact that, when the School is operational and even when the PROW is finally approved, anyone wishing to take children to the playground has to walk round three sides of the playing field. Why can't the public cross the playing field on a direct route?; what criteria or rule stops this from happening?; no one in WC will talk to him about this despite having been told by the education department, Ofsted and the School that WC is responsible. The School have made it quite clear that they do not want the path, but have not defined why. He intends to be present at the WC Planning Committee on 5th October.

PW responded that WC will not comment while a case such as this is being progressed, but basically if the desire is to walk directly across the playing field then a new PROW application case will probably need to be submitted. BD responded that the School basically objects to the path because they perceive it will reduce security and safeguarding, PW agreed with BD that in his view the proposed arrangements for the PROW path will actually improve security.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

On the subject of the WC Planning Committee, to be held on 5th October commencing at 3pm in the Devizes Corn Exchange, it was agreed that BD, NM and RT would attend to represent UPC. PW confirmed that the report to be considered will be available in advance of the meeting.

21. Update on Current Parish Issues not covered by above agenda items – none identified

22. External Meetings – References were made during the meeting to the useful WC seminar on planning which several councillors and the Planning Administrator attended on 12th September 2017

23. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda -

- a. **Recreation Ground Exercise Scheme** – to consider data provided on trial period and longer term arrangements
- b. Due to lack of meeting time, it was agreed that items 11, 12, 14, 15 and 18 above are to be deferred to the October meeting agenda

Date of Next Meeting: 18th October 2017 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Meeting Closed At 10.10pm

Draft minutes prepared by the Clerk to the Council – 14th September 2017

A. CLERKS REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2017

1. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM FC MEETING ON 12th JULY 2017

- a. **REPOSITIONING OF GATEWAY SIGNS** – Dave Mottram and I had a site meeting with the Highways Engineer on 1st April and agreed in principle that the signs could be moved to a position east of Crooks Lane. This will be discussed further under agenda item 15.
- b. **REQUEST FOR DONATION – CAB** – a letter has been sent to CAB inviting them to attend either the October, November or December FC meeting to give you details on how the specifically support people in the Parish of Urchfont and facilitate a donation decision.
- c. **POND GREEN TRACK RESURFACING** – I requested and have received a quote from Martin Bodman to realign, resurface and lay drainage on this track. As the quote exceeds the £1000 rule, I am now seeking an additional two quotes before a decision can be taken, but nevertheless include the project for budgetary approval under agenda item 5c.
- d. **COMMUNITY SHOP REACTION TO PROPOSED FUNDING SCHEME** – I contacted the shop with the proposed funding scheme (50% Area Board Grant application, 25% UPC and 25% Shop / other funding); they accepted. I have now submitted the Area Board Grant application and also a UPC planning application for the proposed project. The Community Shop application for UPC financial assistance will be considered at agenda item 5c.
- e. **GRASS VERGES WEDHAMPTON** – I requested details of WC owned / adopted land for Wedhampton and Lydeaway via Philip Whitehead. This has just been received; I will review and give details under agenda item 16.

2. **BANK SIGNATORIES** – Action has been completed with Lloyds Bank to remove Simon Holt and Andy Stephens from the list of UPC account signatories and to include Royston Thomas and Graham Day as new signatories. This now facilitates 4 current signatories in total, including Dave Mottram and Nicky Mitchell.

3. **AUDIT OF 2016/17 ACCOUNTS** – Whilst I have not yet received their report, I have had some interaction with the auditor and provided additional information primarily in relation to the approvals and handling of the Section 106 funding for the playground project; being a significant activity in 2016. They appear content with the documentation and justifications provided. They will also be suggesting some adjustments to the UPC asset register in terms of declared values; to some extent this appears to contradict advice given by earlier external auditors.

4. 'MY WILTSHIRE' REPORTS – AUGUST SEPTEMBER

- a. Flooding in The Bottom – 7th August – Completion report received
- b. Street Lamp constantly on in the Croft – 7th August – completed
- c. Verge erosion and associated flooding in the High Street – 14th August - referred to the Highways Engineer for investigation.
- d. Street Lamp not working in The Bottom - 3rd September - scheduled for repair 8th September
- e. Flooding on the B3098 bend outside Urchfont House – 3rd September -scheduled for gully cleaning on 5th September - completed

5. **OVERHANGING TREES IN FRIARS LANE** – Despite hastening, no response has been received from the agent representing the owners of this overgrown land and the trees have not been cut back; the Chairman has now tasked me to instruct the UPC solicitor to write to the owners seeking urgent action due to the fact that the trees are impeding WC waste collections.

6. **WATER LEAK ON POND GREEN** – This was successfully and quickly resolved by Wessex Water.

7. **COUNCILLOR VACANCY** – As electors did not request an election following the resignation of John Chapman, UPC was authorised to co-opt. In accordance with the decision taken at the July meeting (Item 8iii), I took steps to offer the post to Maria Kemp who accepted.

8. **UPC POLICIES REVIEW** – I have reviewed all UPC Policies and Procedures and now include a number at agenda Item 9 for approval of proposed updates. Where some policies only required updates just to email addresses or contact details, I have amended these without the need for Council approval.

Bob Lunn
6th September 2017