

**DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 in the Village Hall.**

**Present: Councillors:** Day (GD – Chairman), Botham (MB – Vice Chairman from Item A3), Cowen (LC), Creasey (GC), Kemp (MK), Stevens (DS), Cottell (PC), Cottle (SC), Kinnaird (LK) and Hollyman (MH)

**Clerk to the Council:** Lunn (BL)

**Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings:** Whitehead (PW)

**Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting):** Mrs B Potter, Ms N Hammond, Mr N Hughes,

**A. Introduction**

**1. Welcome by the Chairman** – The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

**2. Apologies** – Cllr Hill (TH)

**3. Election of Vice Chairman** – GD explained that this post had remained vacant since May 2019 when Nicky Mitchell retired, he had canvassed councillors on several occasions to try to find a candidate for this post which he believed necessary to assist him and cover during periods of absence. However, he now believed that he had found a candidate who has been very active within the Council over past months, Mark Botham, who accepted the nomination.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To elect Mark Botham to the post of Vice Chairman with immediate effect.	GD	MK	AGREED unanimously

**B. PLANNING – see separate minutes**

**C. FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

**1. Declarations of Interest** – As a member of the Tennis Club, MH declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C5b.

**2. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports**

*The chairman closed the meeting for public participation*

Ms Hammond highlighted difficulties she has been experiencing with WC Planning Dept in relation to pre-planning advice for building a home for life within the current land boundary of Carina Cottage to meet health needs (e.g ground floor living). An earlier planning application two years ago was rejected by WC. To facilitate this proposal she has tried to sell Carina Cottage on its own or with the land, she has had interest in the house but not with the land. She has requested a meeting with the WC Chief Planning Officer and Conservation Officer but has been told that such a meeting will not be automatically granted. Issues being raised by WC are blocking of an open vista which Carina Cottage is entitled to; mistakes made by WC in approving back land development in the past which cannot be continued despite precedents having been set elsewhere in the Village; proposed new building not constructed of right materials despite being similar to Carina Cottage. Ms Hammond believes that her new build proposals will satisfy Neighbourhood Plan criteria. PW has already agreed to speak with planning on this matter, dependent on the outcome she may request an agenda item to discuss this further and gain support at a future UPC meeting

*The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting*

### 3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	SC	MB	AGREED with three abstentions due to absence from the August meeting

#### 4. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019 – BL reported that the list of outstanding actions is currently minimal but sought an update on the following:

**FC/48/2019 – Obtain Tree Works quotes** – SC reported that he is finding it difficult to obtain quotes from local tree surgeons, as a result he will now be widening his search for tree surgeons to gain quotes as soon as possible

**FC/58/19 – Wedhampton to Urchfont Pathway** – PC reported that whilst the pathway was basically now in place, the farmer involved had particular safety concerns with installing the proposed landing site adjacent to the A342 and is unlikely to proceed. GD commented that traffic on the A342 appears to be getting heavier, explanations for this were suggested as the consequences of roadworks nearer to Devizes and also diversions resulting from the closure of the A350. It was agreed that this action should be closed.

**FC/59/19 – Appointment of Lay-By Project Contractor** - GD confirmed that he and BL had met Geoff Potter to discuss and agree the terms of the contract covering the Crookwood Lane lay-by project. BL is now drafting this document. There are slight concerns that WC Highways may request traffic management limitations during the work (a process which has a lead time of up to 3 months) but PW indicated that he would assist in trying to remove this potential delay. In ordinary course, Geoff hopes to commence the work at beginning of October, and it should be complete by end November.

Although not a specific action, GD also confirmed that a 1-page Request/Approval letter had been signed by the Urchfont Village Cricket Club, UPC and the Owner of Urchfont Manor permitting work to commence on the new net practice facility.

### 5. Finance

**a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019** – BL reported that the accounts are in good order and that they had been reconciled with the bank. However, he referred to comments made in his written report and further explained an accounting anomaly which has reduced the indicated main account reserve at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 from £30,807 to £4,359. Because the agreed 2019/20 project budget and CIL funds are accounted for separately to ensure clarity of use, there is now an imbalance in the accounts following approval of the Lay-By project and Financial Assistance for the Cricket Club at the August meeting which indicates an in year overspend in the main account. He stressed, however, that overall funds are still available to approve further projects / financial assistance requests, but emphasised that when considering further approvals Council must be clear that sufficient funds are still available and from where. Accounts are a living entity and will obviously change each month dependent on actual spends against budgets. BL suggested a number of potential solutions. GD suggested that no changes to the way the accounts are portrayed should be made at this point but that the Council must recognise that funds will need to be transferred from the CIL account to the main account at some point to ensure that UPC maintained a closing year reserve in line with policy. This view was accepted, the situation to be updated each month..

#### **b. Application from Urchfont Tennis Club for Financial Assistance for new Club House project**

*Chairman closed the meeting for public participation*

Mr Hughes stated that membership of the Club is open to all in the community for an annual membership fee which is the lowest in the area, this fee then mainly facilitates upkeep of the courts. Other members of the community can contact the Club and use the facilities on an ad hoc basis for a nominal fee. There have been lots of complaints about the poor condition and lack of changing / toilet facilities to meet current needs, including the 30+ matches in the year, and the Club aims to encourage wider membership. Plans have now been approved by WC for a new Club House at a cost of £20k, funds have been secured from various sources but are some £3k

short. In response to questions Mr Hughes confirmed that there will not be electricity in the new club house and that the toilet will be serviced by a septic tank which he did not believe will need emptying very often.

*Chairman re-opened the Council meeting*

PW confirmed that he is a big supporter of the Club, he believed that all sports clubs are important to the community and in one way or another are all community inclusive. LC asked whether the Council could award less than the requested £3K, PC expressed the view that CIL money is available and that the full amount should be awarded to provide basic facilities on this site. GD stated that an enhanced tennis club is an integral part of the whole vision of developing the recreation ground area (green space, playground, tennis club, cricket/croquet pitch, Oakfrith Wood) and that the Crookwood Lane lay-by development project supports this ambition. However, it would be good if the tennis club could develop ideas by which its facilities could be used to support broader community activities.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
<b>Financial Assistance of £3,000 approved subject to confirmation that all other funds for the project have been secured and that the Club facilities are open for all to use via a defined process.</b>	<b>GC</b>	<b>MB</b>	<b>AGREED</b> unanimously

c. **Request for donation from St John Ambulance Wiltshire** – MH asked whether the Council has made similar donations in the past, BL confirmed that some had been made in the past where a specific benefit for our Parish had been noted. Debate could not identify any specific benefit or activity on the part of St John in the Parish and their letter did not reference any such contribution, although it was recognised that activities do apply in wider Wiltshire. MK expressed concern that a donation on this basis may inspire other organisations to similarly seek donations.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
<b>To decline the request for a donation</b>	<b>GD</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>AGREED</b> unanimously

**6. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other Written Reports (See Appendix attached on website only)**

a. **Clerks Report** – updates were given under other items on the agenda.

**b. Councillor Reports**

i. **Farmers Field** – MH commented that he and his wife had visited Farmers Field and as a result wondered whether wood from trees due to be felled could be used for furniture to recover some of the associated costs. Debate indicated that use for furniture is unlikely due to the diseased nature of the trees (mainly Ash dieback), but maybe it could be sold for firewood. MK to discuss with FoFF.

**ACTION: FC/65/19 – MK**

MB wondered whether the cut down wood could be used to provide supports for planting in Urchfont Pond, this could reduce anticipated costs considerably. MB to talk further with MK and LC.

**ACTION: FC/66/19 - MB**

ii. **Urchfont Pond** – BL commented that he had been disappointed that the requested Environmental Agency sampling had not taken place, even more so that they had advised that warning signs could be removed by the Council if evidence of algae had diminished, but this would be entirely at the Council’s own risk. In the circumstances MB confirmed that a water sample had today been despatched for testing and report to the independent consultant previously used by the Council, a decision on warning sign removal could then be more confidently considered. The consultant had also suggested that she could visit again in the New Year at a discounted cost (£270) to check on progress and take further samples

**7. Urchfont Pond – Algae** – see comments at Item 6bii above

**8. Best Kept Village Competition 2019 – Presentations Update** – BL confirmed that the final CPRE version of the programme had already been circulated to councillors, but highlighted the following practical points:

- BKVC Standard to be temporarily located outside Village Hall on Sunday morning (**David Stevens**)
- **BL** has Union Jack to cover Standard on the day
- **Assistance required from councillors to set up tables etc. in the Hall from around 10.30am**
- Presentations Ceremony - Sunday 15 September - 11.30am to 12.15pm
- Village Hall (Outside and Main Hall)
- Light refreshments will be served in Main Hall from 11.30am (Organised and run by Valerie Day), **GD requested assistance with this activity.**
- Unveiling of the BKVC Standard & Presentation of Wiltshire Council Plaque, Hills Group Plaque, County and District Round Certificates by the Lord Lieutenant of the County accompanied by sponsor representatives (Presentations to be received by Graham Day, Dave Mottram, Clare Cannon and Peter Cook)
- All in the Village are welcome to attend
- **David Stevens** was asked to put details of the presentation ceremony on the Community Facebook page, details have previously been advertised in Redhorn News and on Notice Boards.

**ACTION: FC/67/19 - ALL**

**9. Crooks Lane Pedestrian Access – Update** – GD reported that work is progressing to undertake a survey in October 2019 of users of Crooks Lane to gain their views on the need for a new pavement where the road narrows and joins the B3098. Nicola Sage has prepared a survey document (displayed on screen) which will be distributed to all households in Foxley Fields with a request for all residents aged 13 and over to complete the questionnaire and return it in a sealed envelope to meet UPC GDPR requirements. Additionally, Keith & Val Brockie have agreed to distribute the survey document to all households in Uphill and The Bottom who also use Crooks Lane for access to the B3098. Data from the survey will be analysed by the Working Group to inform the way forward.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To formally co-opt Nicola Sage onto the Council Working Group	GD	GC	AGREED unanimously

**10. Village Greens Risk Assessment** – PC had now completed the review and had identified some significant issues which he believed need attention, some of these may already be mitigated by other documentation, inspections, safety checks, processes etc. of which he is not fully aware. He had not made any recommendations.

An example of the grid format of the very large Assessment document was displayed on the screen to give councillors an idea of the process and coverage. On the basis that the original requirement centred specifically on Village Greens to sit alongside the Use of Parish Land Policy, BL wondered why the document now included the cemetery, allotments and other non-Village Green areas. PC believed it is necessary to cover all Parish Council owned land to ensure that all risks are fully understood and catered for. PC proposed that the document should be passed to BL for review and identification of particular areas of perceived concern. BL stated that the review will take some time and that he will undoubtedly involve lead councillors for particular areas. As part of the review he will check what guarantees / safety certificates etc. are actually in place to mitigate perceived risks. General debate centred on the complexity, magnitude and potential implications for increased administration and management which this could generate.

**ACTION: FC/68/19 - BL**

**11. B3098 Traffic Concerns** - BL stated that this item had been included in the agenda following apparent concerns being expressed on the Community Facebook page regarding various safety issues and that many councillors may not be aware of this activity. Commentators appeared to be unaware of what measures / actions had already and are still being progressed by the Parish Council to improve the situation. In response to an email from one resident, BL had outlined these actions / measures to hopefully better inform (this had been copied to all councillors prior to the meeting together with another email about perceived speeding in the High Street.) GD confirmed that he is passionate about enhancing road safety and is a member of the Speed Watch team, and encouraged others to transform their concern into action by joining the team. He is very receptive to new ideas

being brought directly to the Council. PW explained the criteria used by WC for setting speed limits which utilise metro-counters to record speeds and then set limits accordingly, he was already of the view that speed has reduced at the eastern end of the Village following the move of the Gateway signs east of Crooks Lane and installation of the informal road crossing. Maybe now is a good time to invite WC to undertake further speed measuring which, dependent on the results, could lead to move of the 30mph signs? PW also highlighted a speed reduction success in Lockeridge simply by introducing additional visual indicators for motorists that they are entering a village (e.g. by utilising children's bicycles parked on verges, planters and other static items). BL pointed out that he is still awaiting the installation of promised pedestrian / children crossing signs either side of the informal crossing by Crooks Lane which were promised by WC Highways in 2018, this is being progressed via the Devizes Area Board and PW is aware. PW suggested that BL should raise a CATG issue to initiate possible action to measure speeds by Crooks Lane with the view to lowering the speed limit from the current 60mph.

**ACTION: FC/69/19 – BL**

BL requested that councillors who regularly use the Community Facebook page highlight any activity or concerns being expressed in relation to this issue to the wider Council for awareness purposes.

**ACTION: FC/70/19 – ALL**

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

- i. **Lydeaway Historic Milestone Damage** – Having raised this damage with WC, PC believed that the issue had now been passed to the offending SSE contractor for action. WC is requested to maintain pressure for a response.

**ACTION: FC/71/19 – PC**

- ii. **Obstructed A342 View from Ostlers Yard** – PC reported that vehicles leaving Ostlers Yard have their view to the left obstructed by an Urchfont sign which has been mounted far too low. The sign was moved to its present location following completion of the Yard development, was subsequently damaged and refitted too low. He has reported this to WC who are investigating.

- iii. **Straw in Urchfont High Street gutters** – MH expressed concern about straw being swept off vehicles and potentially leading to blocked drains in the Village. Scarce WC road sweepers do visit the Village but are usually strategically timed around BKVC and Scarecrow Festival activities, other visits may be few and far between. PW suggested that UPC should ask Martin Bodman if he would lend his road sweeper to clear the straw.

**ACTION: FC/72/19 – BL**

- iv. **Missing Football nets on the Playing Field** – LK asked what action had been taken to re-fit nets to facilitate football activity, teenagers are constantly asking her about this issue. BL awaiting information from the Head Teacher of the School.

**13. External Meetings** – GD stated that he and BL had attended the Devizes Area Board on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019, two presentations on scam activities and how to protect against them were very interesting. It was particularly noted that whilst seasonal hawker visits to the area selling cheap items may be legitimate, residents can tell them to go away and if they persist then this should be reported to the police.

**14. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda** – No reports declared

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9pm

**Date of Next Meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**

**a. CLERK'S REPORT**

**1. Update on actions from August Meeting**

**FC/61/19 – Email to Philip Whitehead re waste collection trucks using Crookwood Lane Lay-By –** Complete - email sent as requested

**FC/62/19 – Respond regarding new Restricted By-Way –** Complete - email response sent.

**FC/63/19 – New signs required for The Paddock – contact WC –** email request sent to WC Highways

**FC/64/19 – New signage and litter bin for pathway to Oakfrith Wood –** items on order

**FC/65/19 – Highlight dog waste problem again on Redhorn News –** included in September edition.

**2. Finance –** The Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation have been distributed to all councillors with this agenda. The accounts are in good order, expenditure during the month is itemised on the bottom of the Bank Reconciliation. The key point that you will note is that the indicated UPC Reserve at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 has reduced from £30,807 to £4,359 (which should ideally be around the agreed £13,500). This is not an issue, however, but is directly as a result of the approval of the Crookwood Lay-By project and Cricket Club Financial Assistance application at the last meeting which obviously anticipates significant additional expenditure within the main UPC account in this financial year. The indicated Reserve will continue to fluctuate month on month dependent on further income being received, less expenditure than anticipated in some account lines and the transfer of funds from the separate UPC CIL balance (£23,424) where considered appropriate. We need to discuss the latter scenario and be aware when approving any further project or financial assistance / donation requests. I will explain further at the meeting.

**3. Audit of 2018/19 Accounts –** The accounts remain with the external auditors, no supplementary questions have been asked to date and their report is expected in September.

**4. Urchfont Pond –** Awaiting results of agreed Environment Agency sampling to see whether warning signs can be removed.

**5. Water Leak in Pond Green Track opposite No 1 Manor farmyard –** Having taken samples due to non-existence of water pipes on their plans, Wessex Water subsequently confirmed that the leak was chlorinated water and they would take ownership of the repair. I met with their inspector on 30<sup>th</sup> August to discuss the way forward and to sign 'consent to undertake works' paperwork on behalf of UPC. Works to identify and repair the leak are scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

**Bob Lunn**

**Clerk to the Council**

**b. Councillor Reports**

**i. Farmers Field**

Lewis and I held a meeting with Friends of Farmer's Field on Wednesday 28th August. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that all members of the team understood and agreed to abide by the recently approved Terms & Conditions for chainsaw use, to discuss potential training dates and any other matters arising. All members present agreed to abide by the Terms & Conditions for chainsaw use.

- Friends of Farmer's Field to investigate course dates that will fit in with personal work schedules.
- Maria Kemp to prepare a draft risk assessment
- Lewis Cowen to investigate means of chipping and disposing of brush following felling.
- Appropriate First Aid Training to be investigated.

Nothing further to discuss at this time.

**Clr Maria Kemp**

**ii. Urchfont Pond**

- 1) The pond was re-dosed with dye on 04/09
- 2) I will purchase sufficient barley straw extract to dose the pond and will apply in week commencing Monday 23/09. The extract breaks down into very weak humid acid and hydrogen peroxide. These two chemicals will cause the dye to break down quicker and hence the time delay to give the dye more time to take effect.
- 3) I will purchase 250kg of Siltex to commence the autumn treatment of the silt layer as recommended by Bernice Brewster.
- 4) The small clumps of green algae that were floating in the pond have by and large disappeared
- 5) The purchases above are within the approved budget.
- 6) Pond water top ups from the stand pipe have been curtailed for the time being as each top up adds yet more nutrients to the water - this will be reviewed as appropriate.
- 7) Overall - the pond currently looks good and the programme to restore the water quality is on track.

**Cllr Mark Botham**