

**DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall**

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

1. **Welcome by the Chairman**
2. **Apologies:** Lewis Cowen (LC)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None Declared
4. **Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports** – No public present
5. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To accept the minutes unchanged as a true record of the meeting.	GD	RH	Agreed, 1 abstention.

**6. Finance**

**a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017** – BL confirmed that both statements had been circulated prior to the meeting with the agenda. There are no issues with the accounts apart from the fact that there is still £6412 unallocated project budget funds which need to be attributed, hopefully this would be resolved under Item 6b.

**b. Project Proposals 2017/18**

- i. **New bench for Recreation Ground** – MK proposed the purchase of a new man made timber, long lifetime bench requiring minimal maintenance to replace the existing under the large tree in the centre of the Field. TH believed that the existing bench frame is still in good order, albeit the wooden fittings required cleaning or replacement; as such he was of the view that the bench did not need replacing. On the basis that the steel frame is in good order, it was suggested that maybe the wood could be replaced with long life man made timber; DS was tasked with examining the bench, establishing likely costs of such refurbishment and reporting back to Council.

**ACTION: FC/86/17 – DS**

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To approve funds up to £550 for either a new bench or refurbishment of the existing, both in man-made timber material, whichever is cheaper.	DM	BD	Unanimously agreed

- ii. **Printing of 'Welcome to Urchfont' booklet** – Whilst originally intended for newcomers to the Village, RH believed that based on current demand it would be beneficial to distribute to all households in the first instance. The proposed cost includes the initial printing to facilitate this objective. RH hoped to be able to complete the booklet by the end of 2017 and distribute early in the New Year.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To produce sufficient booklets for distribution to all households within this FY within the budget of £400.	GD	RT	Unanimously agreed

- iii. **Pedestrian Gate in Cricket Ground** – DM explained that an off road route for use by pedestrians, utilising the permissive path through Urchfont Manor, to Witchell Lane and generally to the west of Urchfont had been requested by members of the public. The only way to achieve this is to allow access via the cricket ground by installing a pedestrian gate alongside the existing vehicle gate into Witchell Lane. A quote has been requested. Dogs would be permitted to access the cricket ground on leads.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To approve the supply and installation of the proposed pedestrian gate up to the value of £500.	BD	GD	Unanimously agreed

- iv. **Website Upgrade** – The website had now been operational for over 5 years and needs to be updated and facilities enhanced. DM explained that he and BL intend to visit eMango to establish what can be achieved within the proposed budget.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To approve a budget of £250 for the updating of the website.	DM	RH	Unanimously agreed

- v. **Moderate Risk Tree Works post survey** – RT confirmed that he had received a quote for these works in the Recreation Ground which had been identified as moderate risk within the tree survey and required early works. BL reported that the School tree survey had also identified the issues and that he had assured the Head Teacher that UPC would complete remedial works shortly.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To accept the quote of £425 and instruct initiation of works as soon as possible.	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

- vi. **PROW Pathway Provision** – BL indicated that a provision of £4287 (balance of unallocated project pot budget) would ensure that at least some funds are earmarked for this important initiative and facilitate ongoing opportunities for discussions with the School.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To approve a partial budget of £4287 towards the cost of fencing the intended pathway, the balance to be included in the 2018/19 budget.	GD	TH	Unanimously agreed

- c. **Preparing for 2018/19 Budget and Precept** – BL confirmed that it is intended to present a final budget and Precept requirement to UPC at the December meeting, although there is room for final adjustment prior to the WC submission deadline for the Precept of 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Whilst the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the budget had been circulated with the agenda, BL presented an updated 2018/19 budget and Precept requirement taking account of all the bids / funding requirements for projects made by councillors and the expected income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which had been confirmed by WC. This updated budget indicated an increase in the Precept equating to almost an 11% increase in the Parish element of council tax.

Whilst the detailed content of the presented budget was agreed in principle, debate concluded that the indicated increase in council tax was not acceptable and should be limited to 2% which is basically in line with inflation and the expected WC council tax increase in 2017/18. Additionally, the indicated level of UPC Reserve (emergency fund) at the end of 2018/19 (£13,500) was questioned by RT as being too high even though it mirrored previous years. Debate concluded that up to 25% of the overall budget is generally regarded as an acceptable level for reserve funds, this view was supported by PW and BL confirmed that the UPC reserve level had never been questioned by internal or external audit. It was agreed that this principle should be officially adopted by UPC:

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To propose that UPC Policy is that the level of the Reserve Fund should not exceed 25% of the overall annual budget.	DM	BD	Unanimously agreed

Following debate, BL was tasked with presenting the budget in a different way to:

- Limit the increase in council tax to 2%
- Account for the expected CIL income as an opportunity budget 'below the line' to take it out of the Precept calculation.
- Generate a project pot budget for 2018/19 not dissimilar to that in 2017/18 which will facilitate the 2% tax increase.
- Maintain the anticipated UPC Reserve (emergency fund) at the end of 2018/19 at £13,500, basically in line with previous years.

**ACTION: FC/87/17 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note: Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> draft budget distributed on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017)

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

**a. Clerks Report** – Commenting on the maintenance contract ITT, DM stated that he and BL had agreed to separate out litter bin clearance from the main maintenance contract draft ITT being prepared for the December meeting. Litter bin collection had generated the most complaints to date. All contractors can bid for both contracts.

**b. Councillor Reports** – None Received

**8. 10 Year Strategy Plan & Wiltshire Local Plan Review** – It was agreed that the updated listing of proposed strategies based on the UWLNP actions list following the strategy meeting last week should be circulated to all councillors. GD thanked all councillors for their input to the strategy meeting last week.

**ACTION: FC/88/17 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note: Circulated to all councillors on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017)

TH confirmed that he had reserved two places at the Trowbridge briefing on the Wiltshire Local Plan Review, TH and DM will attend, they will report the event at the December meeting

**9. Unallocated Lead Councillor Roles** – The following roles were discussed and the indicated councillors agreed to take on the lead / liaison roles:

- Church - GC
- Utilities (Gas, Electricity, Sewerage) - RT
- TV and Mobile networks – BD
- Youth - BD

**10. Trees in the Parish**

**a. Tree Survey Report** – RT reported that actions to facilitate the recommendations in the survey report are now underway, moderate risk to be completed shortly and low risk probably next financial year.

**b. Paddock Green and Commemorative Tree Planting Working Group** - RT indicated that he is intending to send a leaflet to all residents of The Paddock seeking volunteers to join the working group on the future of trees on Paddock Green.

**Chairman closed the meeting for public participation**

SJ questioned whether this initiative was aimed at only Paddock Green or would also cover the adjoining green known locally as Bowden's Green (basically both sides of the pathway). DM confirmed that both greens should be considered, as such residents of Bowden's should also be invited to join the working group.

**The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting**

RT reported that he had submitted a tentative form to WC with regard to 1<sup>st</sup> World War commemorative tree planting and the desire of UPC to be involved, this would be updated when he had solicited views of local residents to determine planting location (either Top Green, Paddock Green or Pond Green). DM commented that Top Green

had been ruled out following debate at the October meeting and that use of Pond Green is probably inappropriate due to the need for open space for events such as the Scarecrow Festival. BD expressed the view that, whichever space is chosen, the green space should not be overloaded with trees which would limit recreational use of green space.

**11. Public Right Of Way (PROW) through Urchfont School** – BD reported that he is now awaiting Richard Broadhead to call the next joint meeting as soon as possible with all interested parties. In the meantime UPC have obtained a quote (£6210) for 1.8m high fencing along the pathway route agreed at the last UPC meeting with the head teacher and chair of Governors. Such fencing will not only facilitate the path but it is suggested will improve security for the School. DM suggested that this fencing could be installed as a separate initiative prior to the PROW designation decision, if approved the PROW route could then be diverted to the already installed path. A further meeting with the School will be initiated to discuss this further. GC commented that in a recent meeting with Richard Broadhead, the School and Governors were advised that the PROW process could take between 18 months and two years to finalise. BD suggested that UPC need to encourage the School to lobby the Diocese on the desirability of the proposed pathway with or without the PROW decision.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To agree that UPC will fund a fencing solution for the pathway (PROW designated or not) up to the value of the quote received (£6210)	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

**12. Farmers Field Vision and Management Plan** – BL had circulated the latest version of the Plan provided by Martijn Antheunisse on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017. MK commented that the Plan is good but she feels that it does not draw the community into the destination. BD commented that he liked the Plan but felt the proposed activity is spread over a longer than necessary timeframe, we need to get things moving more quickly and involve interested groups in the community. DM expressed the view that dogs should be permitted on leads for a trial period, this could be reviewed if problems occur. DM also suggested that we should stop re-cycling the same ideas and move forward positively, RH suggested a clear basic plan is needed to ensure progression of agreed ideas. Overall consensus indicated that the Plan from Martijn should be accepted as the final version and the outstanding invoice paid when received, this will enable UPC to take full ownership and progress the way forward with Martijn, Friends of farmers Field and other local groups as and when necessary. The Council expressed their thanks to Martijn and his colleagues at WWT for the time and effort devoted to production of the comprehensive Plan. BL to write to Martijn on this basis, checking on any copyright issues at the same time.

**ACTION: FC/89/17 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note: Email sent to Martijn on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017)

Expanding her view that the Plan would not necessarily attract more people to the facility, she presented a few ideas which she believed would achieve this objective based on local and wider research. The facility needs to be perceived as a safe environment for all ages, be presented as an end destination rather than a just a through route and should incorporate a range of activity / sensory sections. RH commented that all these good ideas could easily fit in with Martijn’s Plan. It was agreed that MK should talk to LC about her ideas, which have the full support of the Council, and jointly make proposals on the way forward at the December meeting. DM suggested that a small UPC working group should then be set up to progress implementation.

**ACTION: FC/90/17 - MK**

**13. Crookwood Lane Lay-by** – BL reported that he is still waiting for promised draft plans and costings from WC for this proposed project. PW advised that he had contacted WC officers and this information will be provided shortly.

**14. Urchfont Telephone Box-** DM reported that despite earlier indications of a required 90 day consultation period, a contract had been signed within a few days for the transfer of ownership of the box (not the land it stands on) in Urchfont to UPC. The phone will be removed, but lighting still provided by BT. Stephanie Szakalo (Old Butcher’s Shop) has offered to care take the box and propose ideas for future use.

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

- a. Shredder / Chipper Service** – DM thanked BL for arranging the annual chipper service which will be held over the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> December 2017.
- b. Urchfont War Memorial** – BL reported that he had just received notification from Historic England that the Memorial in the churchyard of St Michaels and All Angels Church has been granted Grade II listed status.
- c. RUH – Forever Friends Cancer Appeal** – DM reported that a request had been received from RUH to attend a future council meeting to brief on this appeal intended to fund a new cancer unit. DM expressed the view that this should be declined on the basis that we should not offer this facility to one hospital when we are served by at least three major units, this view was supported by the Council. BL to respond accordingly.

**ACTION: FC/91/17 – BL**

- d. Christmas lights / tree** – RT sought volunteers to assist with the installation of the tree and Christmas lights in December, date to be notified.

**ACTION: FC/92/17 – ALL**

The current status of the fixings for lights on Pond Wall was not clear. DM expressed the view that on the basis that Redcliffe Homes had originally accepted the stainless steel eyes and instructed their now departed contractors (eyes now lost), they had clearly accepted that the eyes would be installed in the wall. It was agreed that on this basis RT should proceed with purchase and installation of new eyes.

**ACTION: FC/93/17 – RT**

- e. UPC Use of What's App and Facebook** – DS reported that the use of What's App for an internal UPC messaging service is being set up. All members of UPC need to install (if not already used) the What's App on their smart phones for this purpose.

**ACTION: FC/94/17 – ALL**

DS reported that he is in the process of setting up a UPC information Facebook page which will be used to disseminate information provided by BL. DS will be the administrator of this 'closed' page which will not facilitate comments from or access by the wider public.

- f. Missing Rocking Horse in play area?** – TH reported that he had noted that the old play area rocking horse has not been reinstalled in the new play area as intended. BL commented that this item required maintenance before re-installation, but he was not aware of the current status, he agreed to investigate.

**ACTION: FC/95/17 – BL**

(Post Meeting Note: email sent on 10th November to try and establish current status)

- 16. External Meetings** – None reported

- 17. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017** – DM confirmed that outstanding actions had been minimised and all that remain are ongoing for various acceptable reasons.

- 18. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda** – PW suggested that the proposed transfer of grass cutting from WC to UPC wef 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 should be included on the next agenda.

**ACTION: FC/96/17 - BL**

**Date of Next Meeting: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**

Meeting Finished at 10.10pm

Draft minutes prepared by the Clerk to the Council 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**A. CLERKS REPORT – NOVEMBER 2017**

**1. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM FC MEETING ON 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2017**

- a. **COMMUNITY SHOP AIR CONDITIONING PROJECT (FC/71/17)** – David Myers instructed to proceed with purchase (including painting of external unit) on 20<sup>th</sup> October, invoices to be sent to UPC for payment.
- b. **POND GREEN TRACK RE-SURFACING / DRAINAGE (FC/72/17)** – Quote from Bodman's accepted on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017, works to commence as soon as possible. I asked that notice is given of works commencement to facilitate notice to the owners of No 1 Manor Farmyard.
- c. **NEW GATEWAY SIGNS FOR EAST OF URCHFONT (FC/73/17)** – Signs ordered and acknowledged on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Expected delivery date around end of November.
- d. **INSTALLATION COSTS FOR GATEWAY AND BOLLARDS (FC/74/17)** – I have written to WC Highways on 30<sup>th</sup> October requesting installation costs for the gateway signs and reminding them that they promised costs for the bollards on 6<sup>th</sup> October, response awaited.
- e. **DONATION TO WILTSHIRE CAB (FC/75/17)** – a donation cheque for £100 was sent to CAB on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017.
- f. **UPC POLICIES, PROCEDRES AND REGULATIONS (FC76/17)** – all updated documents approved at the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017 have been published on the website.
- g. **PARISH MAINTENANCE CONTRACT RENEWAL (FC/80 & 82/17)** – an ITT will be prepared for approval at the December FC meeting to include grass cutting currently undertaken by WC in Urchfont and community verges in Wedhampton. The approved ITT will be issued in January 2018 to facilitate the award of a new 5 year contract with effect 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

**2. WEDHAMPTON UPC NOTICE BOARD** – Jonathan Wildman and I have installed the new man made timber notice board requiring no maintenance and with a 5 year warranty.

**3. UPC BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2018/19** – The 1<sup>st</sup> Draft version of this budget is circulated to all councillors with this agenda for discussion at Agenda Item 5c. It incorporates all the suggested projects for 2018/19 and assumes that all the 2017/18 project budget has been allocated (see Agenda Item 5b) and will either be spent in year or carried forward to specific projects. The WC Council Tax calculator for 2018/19 will be issued later in November at which time I will update the budget to show the impact of varying levels of Precept demand and the impact on Council Tax per annum. I have written to WC to try to ascertain the likely level and timing of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments which could influence the amount of Precept demanded for 2018/19. The 2<sup>nd</sup> draft budget will be issued for discussion at the December meeting taking account of comments received.

Bob Lunn  
2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017