

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 11th May 2016 in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM – Chairman), Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Thomas (RT), Chapman (JC), Gibb (HG), Holt (SH), Stephens (AS)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL) **Planning Administrator:** Johnston (SJ)

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

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Richard Hawkins, Roy Ellis, Rodney Gillington, Ian Johnston, Robert Lee

1. Welcome by the Chairman – the Chairman welcomed all present and explained that the meeting consisted of two sections, the annual meeting covering statutory requirements followed by a normal monthly meeting

2. Apologies: Cllrs Day (GD), Hill (TH) and Baker (PB)

Statutory Annual Business

3. Election of Chairman – the Chairman called for nominations for this post, only one was made.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Dave Mottram to continue as Chairman	NM	SH	Unanimously agreed

4. Election of Vice Chairman – the Chairman made the following proposal, no other nominations were received.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Bill Donald to continue as Vice Chairman	DM	NM	Unanimously agreed

5. Declaration of Interests in items 6 – 9 inclusive – None declared

6. Election of representatives – DM called for nomination for the following representatives:

- a. Devizes Community Area Planning Partnership (DCAP)** – SH commented that he had previously represented the Council, attended a number of meetings and put forward suggestions, all of which were ignored. PW commented that the role of this group has become less crucial as the Area Boards have developed. It was agreed that TH, in his lead councillor role for planning, should be asked to investigate and propose whether there is still a need to be represented on DCAP.

ACTION: FC/31/16 - TH

b. Devizes Area Board

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Dave Mottram	RT	NM	Unanimously agreed

- c. Urchfont Village Hall User Group** – Whilst DM is currently the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, he intends to relinquish the post as soon as a new Chairman can be identified. On this basis he indicated that he would be prepared to continue as the Parish Council representative on the User Group but only until a new Village Hall Chairman is elected.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Dave Mottram	NM	SH	Unanimously agreed

d. Army Training Estate Liaison

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Bill Donald as the nominated lead councillor for this liaison role	DM	NM	Unanimously agreed

e. Parish Trust

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Nicky Mitchell to continue in this role	SH	RT	Unanimously agreed

7. Election of Internal Auditor

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Paul Papworth-Smith to continue in this role	DM	HG	Unanimously agreed

8. Programme and venue for meetings in 2016/17 – BL presented a proposed list of second Wednesday of each month dates for FC and Planning meetings up to and including December 2017.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To approve the proposed list and authorise booking of the Village Hall conference room for the specified dates.	RT	BD	Unanimously Agreed

9. Approval of Annual Subscriptions

- a. Community First - (15/16 = £36)
- b. Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) – provides access to NALC advice and guidance (Invoice received for 2016/17 - £353.23 + £70 VAT = £423.88)
- c. Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) - (15/16 = £149)
- d. Local Councils Update - (15/16 = £75)

BL summarised the value that these subscriptions provided for the Council in terms of legislative updates, legal and financial advice, discounted publications, insurance and information on training and products. BD requested that BL keep a log on the value that WALC membership as the most costly subscription provides and report this at the Annual Meeting in 2017.

ACTION: FC/32/16 - BL

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To approve renewal of all listed subscriptions	BD	DM	Unanimously agreed

End of Statutory Annual business

10. Declarations of Interest in items 11 to 25 – None declared

11. **Minutes** of the Council Meeting held on 13th April 2016 – BL sought approval for Version 1 of the minutes which included minor amendments proposed by JC and TH (highlighted on copy circulated with the agenda)

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To approve and sign the Version 1 of the minutes unchanged as a true record of the meeting	RT	NM	Unanimously agreed

12. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2016 – DM reviewed the outstanding actions as follows:

- FC/53/15 – Allotment Gate** – still awaiting approval from Aster, have been hastened.
FC/67/15 – Replacement Village Gateway – will be available shortly

FC/77/15 – Welcome to Urchfont Leaflet – DM/SH progressing draft

FC/78/15 – Urchfont 2016 Film – AS cannot see being able to undertake this project this year due to other work commitments – AS to provide written explanation and forecast

ACTION: FC/33/16 - AS

FC/23/16 – Way forward on UWLNP Steering Group – see item 19b below

13. Finance

- a. To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th April 2016 (circulated prior to the meeting)** – BL thanked BD for his assistance in constructing the new accounts spreadsheets which now incorporate a number of improvements. In particular BL highlighted new indicators under the Reserve Analysis section which give an indication of budget funds which currently have not been spent, earmarked or forecast to be spent. In this first month this indicates £16,377 in this category, but this is largely due to project pot funds which will not be allocated until individual project requirements and quotes are approved by Council. The intention is that this indicator will reduce significantly as the year progresses and/or action can be taken to re-allocate funds in the budget. BD asked why the predicted Reserve at 31st March 2007 is some £4.5k less than at the start of 2016/17. BL confirmed that this is directly as a result of the approved budget, if the end of year reserve is to increase then the budget will need to reduce and/or ad hoc income increase.

BL reported that the new on-line banking facility is working well and now gives him better visibility of available funds and the need to transfer funds between accounts. DM thanked BL for all his additional time and effort required to secure a letter of apology and positive action from Lloyds Bank over lack of communication with the Council and withdrawal of agreed banking facilities without notice. The apology included compensation of £150 which DM proposed should be paid directly to BL in recognition of his sole efforts and additional time to correct and protect Council financial interests, reputation and governance.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
Compensation payment of £150 to be paid to BL	DM	NM	Unanimously agreed

- b. To report on progress of 15/16 internal audit –** BL reported that all documents are now ready for the internal audit, these are scheduled for collection on 12th May with an audit completion date before the June FC meeting to facilitate approval of the Annual Financial and Governance Statement prior to despatch of papers to the external auditors before 17th June.
- c. To receive a report on the updated Asset Register –** BL had circulated an updated Asset register prior to the meeting which incorporated the new Duck House and a number of other changes. BL suggested that the asset register now needed a fundamental review to update historic valuations prior to the next annual meeting in 2017. It was agreed that BL should undertake this review in consultation with DM and BD.

ACTION: FC/34/16 – BL/DM/BD

- d. To approve the insurance renewal from 1st June 2016 –** BL reported that he had received the renewal notice covering the 2nd year of a three year long term agreement through Community First which guarantees no increase in premiums unless changes are made to the itinerary or tax premiums. The unadjusted renewal cost for 2016/17 is £1037.34, BL suggested that changes to include the Duck House and cover malicious damage to Oakfrith Path fencing might add around £100.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To approve renewal of the insurance including any additional costs due to change additions.	RT	BD	Unanimously agreed

- 14. Annual Clerk and Planning Administrator appraisals / salary review –** Item deferred to June meeting. Appraisals to be undertaken before next meeting.

ACTION: FC/35/16 – DM/SH

- 15. Financial Regulations (UPC3) and Financial Risk Management (UPC6) Update –** BL reported that for governance purposes these two policies / procedures need to be updated to take account of the use of on-line banking facilities. BL had circulated draft revisions prior to the meeting.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To approve the updated UPC3 and UPC6 unchanged and with immediate effect.	BD	RT	Unanimously agreed

16. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other written Reports (attached on website)

- a. **Travel Plan – Top Green Update** – NM reported that the grant to undertake access works on Top Green has been approved by WC. In consultation with the School Head Teacher, it has been agreed that UPC will contract the work and when completed the School will submit the invoices (with photographic evidence) to WC for payment. WC confirmed that no planning approval is required for this work on a Registered Village Green
- b. **Clerks Report** – BL updated his report; he had now secured agreement from WC to allow waste collection vehicles to enter the Manor Farmyard development to collect wheelie bins and recycling boxes subject to obtaining an indemnity from Redcliffe Homes in respect of any damage to road surfaces prior to road adoption. It was agreed that BL should write to Redcliffe Homes urging them to sign the indemnity quickly to overcome the major issue of increasing number of bins having to be put outside of the site around the Village Pond. It should also be pointed out that adoption may take several years. BL commented that the positioning of wheelie bins for collection within Manor Farmyard is a matter for agreement between the residents and WC, some residents are currently concerned that their properties may be inundated due to their positioning in the site which has no specific provision for such activity. DM thanked BL for facilitating this way forward to overcome a controversial community issue.

ACTION: FC/36/16 - BL

DM reiterated a statement in the Clerks report about the lack of written reports by lead councillors, he does not want the minimum two report requirement from each councillor to all come in at once near the end of the year.

ACTION: FC/37/16 - ALL

17. Update on negotiations with WC:

- a. **PROW to Playing Field** – BD reported that no working party meetings had been held recently. He did, however, report the good news that residents of The Ark have agreed in principle to the potential need for new fencing at the rear of their property if the PROW is approved.
- b. **Playing Field CAT (Western End)** – BL reported that he now had the draft Transfer Deed and comments from the UPC solicitor. Whilst right of access for maintenance purposes has been granted through the existing gate off Crookwood Lane / Oakfrith Path, this does not allow pedestrian access to the CAT area and as such there is a requirement for a new gate in the Oakfrith Path fence directly into the CAT area. BL had spoken at length with John Price (WC) on this issue as the requirement for the new gate appeared unjustified in view of the virtual division of the two playing field areas. However, WC are adamant that this requirement should be included in the CAT document now to cater for any possible changes to the status of the eastern end of the field due to legislation and/or education authority requirements. PW supported the line being taken by WC Officers. Council confirmed that they wished to proceed with the CAT transfer as soon as possible but asked whether the existing Crookwood/Oakfrith Path gate and right of access route (coloured brown on CAT map) could be included within the CAT to negate the need for a new gate or whether WC would be prepared to pay for the new gate as they are essentially transferring land without access. BL was tasked with asking these supplementary questions and, whatever the answers gained, with completing the CAT transfer as soon as possible.

ACTION: FC/38/16 – BL

(Post meeting Note: Email sent to John Price 12th May 2016 seeking answers to gate questions.)

In anticipation of completing the CAT, DM suggested that more planning should take place now with regard to maximising and improving use of the area using Section 106 funds / match funding for all age groups. AS commented that planning is in place for use of Section 106 funds and obtaining match funding, including an aerial slide, but these are being jeopardised by the delay in obtaining the funds from WC. The suggestion of a cycle track is unlikely due to lack of space now that the path to Oakfrith Wood has taken space previously available. It was agreed that the 106 Working Group will give a progress report at the June meeting. BL was tasked to again seek a progress report on the payment of funds from WC.

ACTION: FC/39/16 – AS

ACTION: FC/40/16 – BL

(Post Meeting Note: email seeking update on 106 funding availability sent on 12th May 2016)

- c. Playing Field Proposal (Eastern End)** – BL read out an email from the WC solicitor which expressed the view that she does not believe that an application to the Secretary of State for Education for CAT of any part of the eastern end of the playing field would be successful due mainly to strong objections from the Education Authority and the School, as such the cost/time of preparing the case and the consultation which would have to be undertaken by the Parish Council would not be warranted. Whilst this view was noted, the Council was not happy that their objective of safeguarding the whole playing field for community use in perpetuity would not be met. They agreed to reserve judgement and consider their position further on this issue whilst concentrating now on the CAT of the western end.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Robert Lee expressed concern with this position and requested the Council to fully consider the potential impact on the community of not being able to use the whole playing field.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

In response to Mr Lee, NM and BL both commented that discussions/negotiations had been ongoing for some years with the sole intention and objective of protecting the whole playing field for community use in perpetuity, unfortunately various factors are preventing achievement at this time.

- 18. Urchfont Picnic Site** – BL reiterated the position on this lease reported in his written report, namely that concerns had been forwarded to the MOD solicitor on a number of issues relating to environmental contamination concerns, use and responsibilities. A response is still awaited. BL stated if the eventual answer is that they are not willing to renegotiate with a small Parish Council then he is likely to recommend to the Council that they should not take on the lease. PW confirmed that the lease with WC had lapsed 2 to 3 years ago and had been subject to ongoing renegotiation ever since, hence the question to UPC about taking on the lease. As an alternative BL had approached Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (Emma Chapman) to see whether they would be prepared to take on the lease, unfortunately the answer was no unless they could also take on some additional land around the site which is more suitable for their needs (i.e. the wildlife pond at the top of Stonepit Lane). Ownership of this additional land needs to be determined to potentially facilitate further consideration by WWT, BL to try and ascertain ownership.

ACTION: FC/41/16 - BL

19. Neighbourhood Plan

- a. To receive a progress report** – SH confirmed that the examiner had been appointed by WC, but due to delays in her current work she is not likely to begin examination of UWLNP until mid-June.
- b. To approve proposed ongoing responsibilities of Steering Group** – DM reported that as required by Council the Steering Group (SG) members had been asked for their views on when they believed the

Group should be disbanded. SH reported that the SG response had been to continue until comments had been received from the examiner and any agreed changes are made to the Plan as a result. At that point the SG should be disbanded and the plan handed to UPC to take forward to the referendum.

Proposal	1st	2nd	Decision
To accept the views of the Steering Group members	SH	NM	Unanimously agreed

20. School Travel Plan / Top Green Grant Application – see comments at item 14i above.

21. Manor Farmyard

Chairman closed meeting for public participation

Richard Hawkins asked about ongoing and future responsibility for the pond wall, he expressed disappointment that the responsibility may fall to the community if Redcliffe Homes deny responsibility. He also commented on the poor quality of the surface of courtyards within the development.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

SH commented that written confirmation had been received from John Snook and his solicitor that the Pond Wall was included in the sale of the site to Redcliffe Homes. BL confirmed that, based on the Snook response, Redcliffe Homes had been asked in February 2016 to confirm that they own the wall and what their future plans for it are. Despite a number of reminders a response has not been received to date. BL was asked to send another reminder.

ACTION: FC/42/16 – BL

(Post Meeting Note: email reminder sent to Redcliffe Homes on 12th May 2016)

SH understands that the builder of Plot 19 has been asked by Redcliffe Homes to undertake repairs to the wall above the water line, this may include the removal of adjacent tree stumps. RT commented that he understands that a planning application has to be submitted for pond wall maintenance work in accordance with the site planning approval conditions, SH was asked to contact Karen Guest (WC) to seek sight of these maintenance proposals.

ACTION: FC/43/16 - SH

Commenting on the courtyard surfaces, JC stated that residents are not happy with the second attempt to provide practical surfaces and have reported this to Redcliffe, but are not expecting much to change.

SH reported that he had taken further pictures of flooding on the driveway to No 18 and sent these to Redcliffe Homes who have indicated that they will be willing to take some remedial action.

DM reported that repairs to the bund damaged by a scaffolding contractor had been repaired prior to the Scarecrow Festival, thanks go to the Chapmans for facilitating this. SH reported that workmen on Plat 19 had come to the rescue of wilting grass on the bund by providing water sprinklers.

22. Commemorating 90th Birthday of the Queen – DM expressed the view that this is not the type of commemorative event that the Parish Council normally organises, this is best left to other community groups within the Parish such as those who organise the Village Fete. UPC is willing to give support and possibly contribute to funding for such events if arranged. It was agreed that NM should approach the School and organisers of the Village Fete to see whether they have anything planned. BD reported that Wedhampton already have a tea party scheduled in June.

23. Update on Current Parish Issues not covered by above agenda items – DM

- a. **Scarecrow Festival 2016** – Consensus indicated that the event had again been a great success, BD indicated that takings were slightly down due mainly to poorer weather on the Monday. It was agreed that BL should write to the Festival Committee expressing congratulations from UPC.

ACTION: FC/44/16 - BL

- b. **Feedback from Parish Meeting 22nd April 2016** – Based on a slightly different format, consensus indicated that the meeting attended by around 40+ persons went very well. Good comments were received about the presentation by PW which gave a better understanding of WC activities.

- c. **Motor Bikes on Salisbury Plain** – JC reported on increasing trail bike activity along the ridge, often at excessive speed and disregard for others using the area. This was particularly noticed over the May Bank holiday weekend when the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust 'Sarsen Trail and Neolithic Marathon' event took place. AS commented that many of the bikes are not registered and therefore difficult to identify. BD believed that the bikes are incorrectly using the permissive bridleway. SJ commented that similar problems are being experienced elsewhere on Salisbury Plain. PW suggested that a WC Rights of Way oversees uses of bridleways and specifically seeks to control use by bikes and 4x4's; he suggested that Richard Broadhead (WC) should be contacted to gain contact details for Group members. It was agreed that BD, in his Army Ranges Lead Councillor role, should investigate further and identify Parish Council concerns to appropriate MOD / WC groups.

ACTION: FC/45/16 - BD

- d. **Dog Attack** – DM expressed concern about the recent dog attack which took place on the path to Oakfrith Wood and was reported in the May edition of Redhorn News, maintaining public safety on UPC owned land is obviously important. We have received information about the dog and owner involved and this is being verified by DM before considering what and if any action is to be taken, for example the issue of a written warning.

ACTION: FC/46/16 - DM

24. External Meetings – None reported

25. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda

- a. **Future Viability of the Community Shop based on latest accounts and forecasts**

- b. **Rat problems in and around the Pond Green** – It was agreed that RT should contact WC Environmental Services about the increasing number of rat sightings coming out of the Pond Wall. RT to report at the next meeting.

ACTION: FC/47/16 - RT

- c. **Whether to enter Best Kept Village competition in 2017** – include on July meeting agenda.

BL to add items to appropriate agendas.

ACTION: FC/48/16 - BL

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 8th June 2016 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Meeting Closed at 9.35pm

Draft minutes prepared by Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council – 12th May 2016

WRITTEN REPORTS – MAY 2016

a. School Travel Plan – Top Green Update

We have received a response from Wiltshire Planning Department advising us that Planning Permission is not required for the proposed work on Top Green.

This was sent to Ruth Durrant and she will be getting back to us soon regarding the Grant Application.

Nicky Mitchell

b. Clerks Report

- i. **Playing Field CAT (Western End)** – I have now received the draft Transfer Deed for this part of the playing field which has undergone an initial review by the UPC solicitor. The solicitor has made a number of comments on various clauses which I am now reviewing before agreeing potential amendments. It is hoped that this review can be completed shortly in consultation with the solicitor and WC officer responsible, the draft amended where appropriate and put forward for WC agreement.
- ii. **Playing Field Proposal (Eastern End)** – In line with the UPC request, WC are proposing to make application to the Secretary of State to CAT the eastern end of the playing field to UPC (excluding the School required play area outlined in red on earlier plans). I am assisting WC with the completion of this application which is expected to take some time to progress.
- iii. **Transfer of Duck House to UPC** – Ownership of the duck house and the land upon which it sits was transferred to UPC from Redcliffe Homes Ltd with effect 21st April 2016. UPC is now responsible for the maintenance of the duck house and the walls surrounding it, the house is being added to the Council insurance policy. Completion of this transfer now facilitates installation of the electricity distribution pillar within the duck house compound for wider electrical supply facilities on Pond Green (e.g. Christmas lighting, Scarecrow Festival facilities etc.)
- iv. **Lease for Urchfont Picnic Site** – The UPC solicitor has now reviewed the MOD lease for this site which is said to be non-negotiable. However, the UPC solicitor has raised a number of concerns regarding definitions, contamination, use and wider liabilities which I share. With his agreement I have forwarded these concerns to the MOD solicitor dealing with the lease seeking clarification and whether some changes would be permissible to give the Parish Council more risk protection and clarity on responsibilities / liabilities. A response is awaited.
- v. **Manor Farm Yard – Waste Collections** – At the present time up to 19 wheelie bins (plus recycling boxes) have to be deposited around Urchfont Pond on collection days because the collection vehicles are not permitted to enter the development by WC. This will get worse in July when the 'green waste' collections will change to the same day as household and recycling collections, potentially increasing the number of wheelie's to 38 (plus recycling boxes). I have requested WC to review the continued need for collection vehicles not to enter the Manor Farmyard site, this they have agreed to do at an on-site inspection on 6th May. It would appear that the issue is not connected solely with road adoption, but the ability of vehicles to negotiate ongoing building works.

- vi. Clerk and Planning Administrator Appraisals** – these annual appraisals have been delayed this year and as a result cannot be reported at the May meeting as the foundation for salary reviews. The Chairman has indicated that the appraisals will take place before the June meeting and will be reported at that meeting.

- vii. Lead Councillor Written Reports** – Councillors are reminded that the Lead Councillor Terms of reference requires that they 'Report to the Council regularly, minimum twice per year'. In the past I have specified the Lead Councillor reports required for each Council meeting, but it was agreed when the new lead councillor roles were determined that it would be left to Lead Councillors to decide when to provide a written report. Since January I have only received four written reports (Pond Environs & Events, Section 106 and School Travel Plan x 2). The Chairman has asked me to remind all councillors of this requirement for a minimum of two reports per year, he does not want all to be submitted at the same time towards the end of the year.

- viii. Finance**
 - a. Financial Statement & Bank reconciliation** – The first 2016/17 financial statement and bank reconciliation will be circulated prior to the meeting. I have made a number of changes on the statement content which I will explain at the meeting.
 - b. Issues with Lloyds Bank** – You will recall that I reported at the last meeting that difficulties experienced with Lloyds over lack of communication and action on Council accounts issues had been resolved. I have subsequently received a letter from the Lloyds complaints manager acknowledging the fact that the bank had performed badly on all the issues I had raised with them, apologising and offering compensation of £150 which has subsequently been accepted and received.

Bob Lunn