

## **DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Urchfont Parish Council held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in the Village Hall (Main Hall).**

**Present: Councillors:** Day (GD – Chairman), Mitchell (NM – Vice Chairman), Cowen (LC), Kemp (MK), Creasey (GC), Cottell (PC), Hill (TH) and Cottle (SC)

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

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

**Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting):** Peter Cook, Martin Wingent, Nicky Hammond, Gill Hill, Kit Dark, Anne & Keith Moore, Dana Cooper, Paul Everson, Mike Wilmott, Vivian Mottram, Malcolm Smith, Val & Keith Brockie, Sandra & Ian Johnston, John Knight, Pauline & Jim Stevenson, Brian Roberts, Clare Cannon, Nicola Sage, Martin Covington, Peter Bailey, Roy Ellis, Kieren Dobie

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

**1. Welcome by the Chairman** – GD welcomed all to the meeting including members of the public. He then went on to outline the format of the meeting for any new members of the public attending.

**2. Apologies:** Cllr Maria Kemp (MK). GD reported that Cllr Mottram (DM) had resigned from the Council with immediate effect earlier today, as a result BL confirmed that he will shortly be asking WC Electoral Services to issue a formal Notice of Vacancy for two vacant posts.

**3. Presentation by Mike Wilmott (WC Head of Development Management)** – GD introduced Mr Wilmott (MW) who had been invited to this meeting to talk to councillors about the specific matters documented in the agenda. MW, who has been with Kennet and Wiltshire Councils for 30 years, explained that he is responsible for all planning activity and staff based in Trowbridge, Chippenham and Salisbury. Current government strategy is to deliver more new houses, they are trying to remove barriers, increase permitted development rights and provide more funding to encourage more development applications. WC is moving to more efficient use of IT and communication systems, all plans are now web based fed by the Planning Portal. Only the appointed case officer holds hard copies of plans.

Some things do not change, responsibility to consult on all applications remains in place to establish local feelings about an application. By law consultation is for a three week period, WC normally apply four weeks and may extend longer for major developments. However, by law a decision has to be made within eight weeks of an application being registered. Results from consultation and examination of the application itself will then be compared with core strategy, government guidelines and any other plans such as made neighbourhood plans. At all stages the emphasis is on ensuring planning criteria are met rather than aesthetics. If a site for development is not in the Core Strategy or made neighbourhood plan then it will not normally be acceptable unless there are special or overriding circumstances. In seeking the view of Parish Councils in particular during the consultation stage, WC is looking for a clear statement on acceptability within the community which is represented. If there are objections, these need to be based on planning criteria only. If conditions are to be suggested in either a support or an object scenario, these need to be clearly stated for WC to consider within legislative constraints and guidance.

Turning to neighbourhood plan amendment issues, although he is not an expert MW acknowledged that recent legislation changes permit WC to consider and approve proposed minor changes to correct errors for example in a made plan. However, these will only be considered if they do not have a material impact on planning application criteria, policy or regulation. A made neighbourhood plan remains in place unchanged until it is replaced at the end of its term (2026 in the case of UWLNP), it cannot be amended significantly during this term. However, a new iteration of the plan can be initiated and implemented earlier by going through the full plan initiation procedure including independent examination and referendum, a lot of work.

GD pointed out that UPC meet once a month, this may conflict with the 3 or 4 week consultation deadline. MW responded by saying that this is unfortunate but that WC have overcome this in the main by delegation rather than relying on meeting scenarios. A consultation period may be extended for a major development, but for a single property change it would not be considered reasonable to extend where an owner expects decisions sooner rather than later.

TH asked whether WC stipulate / use a yardstick to determine the number of affordable houses to be provided in a new development. MW responded that WC look for around 30-40%, but definitions in the National Planning Policy Framework have been revised to now include shared ownership as well as rented properties. Definitions are getting wider and less defined. TH asked whether there is a defined marketable value for affordable homes, MW explained that this is not straightforward but is set within government guideline / definitions. GD asked whether MW could provide these guideline/ definitions to UPC, MW agreed to provide. MW commented that at present demand for affordable housing is greater than availability. Unless Government make more funds available then this position is unlikely to change.

GD asked how WC communicates updated messages on neighbourhood planning. MW said that WC will be moving from its Core Strategy to the Wiltshire Local Plan in due course, UPC will be consulted during the Plan preparation process which will include, for example, overall house numbers required, requirement allocation to specific communities etc. This will then inform local communities in preparation for their own new neighbourhood plans.

NM asked what the criteria are for determining if affordable houses should be provided on a new site, MW responded that this is currently not less than ten houses.

PC asked why WC is encouraging tiles on new properties rather than more energy efficient materials, MW responded that the Government is making it more difficult for WC to insist on energy efficient materials.

*The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation and invited one question*

Malcolm Smith asked MW how much notice planners have to take of the made neighbourhood plan, in particular local infrastructure matters. MW responded that planners are required to consider a made neighbourhood plan, it is presumed that if a development site is in the plan then local infrastructure issues will have also been considered. By way of example, MW cited the Devizes Plan which states that no more than 65 houses can be built on a single site within the town boundary. However, an application was received that met all planning and neighbourhood plan conditions except that it stipulated more than 65 houses on a site that could clearly accommodate the increased number. A balanced view had to be considered rather than just compliance with the plan.

*The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting*

GD thanked Mike Wilmott for his presentation and response to questions.

**B. PLANNING – see separate Planning Minutes**

**C. FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

- 1. Declarations of Interest:** None declared at the meeting.
- 2. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports –** No participation or reports.
- 3. Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
To accept and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	PC	TH	One abstention, remainder AGREED

**4. Action List Status Review and Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018** – BL reviewed long outstanding actions as follows, the remainder of past actions are all in progress:

FC/78/17 – Tree Works resulting from survey & Paddock Green WG – this needs to be reallocated to a new lead councillor.

FC/67/18 – Meet with Church re parking on Pond Green – GC reported that he had initiated talks with the Village Hall Chairman to establish the extent and availability of car parking in the Village Hall in the event of a significant church event. He will then contact the Church to ensure that they liaise with the Village Hall and also deter parking on grass areas in the Village / Pond Green.

FC/89/18 – Finalise Village Greens risk assessment – PC reported that little progress had been made but he intended to focus his attention on completion as soon as possible

## 5. Finance

**a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018** – BL briefly reiterated and displayed on screen the comments in his Clerk’s Report which is attached at the appendix to these minutes (website version only). No questions were raised by councillors.

**b. 2019/20 Precept / Budget** – BL confirmed the budget / Precept timetable (displayed on screen) highlighting the fact that the Precept Demand had to be agreed at this meeting. He then displayed an updated draft budget, based on current information, and an assessment of the Precept Demand necessary to balance the budget with funds that might be available. This amounted to an increase of 1.92% in local council tax equating to an annual increase of £1.72 for a Band D householder. BL stressed that any change in actual financial circumstances between now and the end of March or a decision to demand a different level of Precept will inevitably impact project budgets rather than fixed / running costs. He then screened a chart displaying the impact on local council tax over a range of Precept increases from 0% to 5%. GD pointed out that we need to potentially cater for additional costs such as those associated with elections which are now charged to parish councils, but these could probably be catered for initially from the agreed reserve funds. GD was of the view that UPC should set the demand at between 2 and 3% increase. TH was of the view that similar small increases should be demanded each year rather than varying increases from large to small, he suggested a 2% increase this year which is similar to last year. BL summarised by saying that it is really down to councillors choice of what level of council tax increase it feels will be acceptable against the needs to satisfy all potential financial requirements, whatever level is decided he will adjust the 2019/20 budget accordingly to be finalised and approved at the March meeting.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To demand a Precept of £49,216 which will represent a 2% increase in local council tax per annum (an increase of £1.80 per year for a Band D property). BL to submit demand by the WC deadline.	TH	GC	Unanimously AGREED

**ACTION: FC/03/19 - BL**

### c. Project Proposals

**i. Duck House Electrics** – BL had circulated the quote from R & T Harris for the lighting and socket requirements specified by Duck House volunteers. This will be facilitated from the electricity supply box in the Duck House compound. NM had received a suggestion that battery powered lighting could be an alternative, but this would not facilitate socket supply and would require additional maintenance.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To accept the quote of £500 + VAT from R T Harris and initiate works	TH	DS	Unanimously AGREED

**ACTION: FC/04/19 – BL**

**ii. Printing of Welcome to Urchfont Booklet** – LC had circulated the quote to all councillors prior to the meeting. BL confirmed that further quotes are not required under UPC Regulations unless councillors thought otherwise. Consensus indicated that the quote appeared very reasonable for the required number of copies. It is intended that a copy will be delivered to all households in the Parish and the remainder being available for any future residents if a copy has not been left in a vacated property.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To accept the quote of £434 to print 650 copies of the approved booklet. LC to initiate printing.	LC	NM	Unanimously AGREED

**ACTION: FC/05/19 - LC**

**iii. Water Supply to the Duck House / Pond Green** – BL stated that the Duck House volunteers had requested a water supply / tap in the Duck House to negate the need to transport fresh drinking water supplies by bottle. It had further been suggested that this supply could be extended onto Pond Green to facilitate supplies to the Scarecrow Festival etc. BL sought agreement in principle for this project and to seek two quotes from Wessex Water to provide such metered facilities. DS (as a Scarecrow committee member) was asked to approach the Scarecrow Committee to see whether they would be prepared to contribute to this project.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To agree to this project(s) in principle and to initiate provision of quotes for Council approval in due course	DS	SC	Unanimously AGREED

**ACTION: FC/06/19 – BL & DS**

**iv. Rat proofing of the Duck House** – BL reported that there is an increasing rat problem in the Duck House, whilst we will never eradicate rats totally in this environment we can take preventative measures to minimise the problem. He had contacted WC Pest Control and had received very useful advice on preventative measures that can be taken including using a rat catcher to clear the House of any current activity (poison must not be used), putting metal plates across the bottom of all doors to prevent rats chewing the wood to gain entry and putting chicken wire / wire wool across the open access to the roof space. BL sought an initial budget provision of £100 to initiate these works. BL had already approached DS about some of these works which he may be able to undertake.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve a budget of £100 to cover rat prevention works in the Duck House.	NM	TH	Unanimously AGREED

**v. Tree Works on Pond Green** – Residents of Manor Farmyard had asked whether the trees around the Duck House could be lopped to prevent overhang across the internal pathway / gardens. During site visits on 8<sup>th</sup> January, councillors had reviewed the situation and agreed with the proposed requirement including removal of the large branch overhanging Pond Green. BL was tasked with contacting a tree surgeon for advice on the extent of lopping required and to obtain a quote. A TCA planning application will also be required once the extent of works is established.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To agree in principle with this proposed project and to task BL with seeking tree surgeon advice / quote and initiating planning application.	TH	DS	Unanimously AGREED

**ACTION: FC/07/19 – BL**

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

**a. Clerks Report** – no clarification required.

**b. Councillor Reports – Path No. 51 Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order** – TH updated his report by confirming that UPC is on the list of supporters and will therefore need to make representation to the enquiry by the end of January, TH is currently drafting this and will circulate to councillors for comment. WC have already appointed a barrister to act for them.

**7. Lead Councillor Roles** – A brief review of the roles indicated that most assigned to councillors who had resigned are being covered adequately anyway in the short term, it was agreed that formal reallocation could wait until the current Council vacancies had been filled. However, GD agreed to take on the website updating project because this is well overdue. BL reminded councillors that where they are designated as a lead councillor they should take a pro-active rather than just a reactive approach, as such he intends to re-direct some queries / comments / complaints / actions that he receives rather than deal with them all himself in future. General and more specific TORs exist for some roles, these should be complied with.

**8. Welcome to Urchfont Booklet** – LC had circulated the latest draft prior to the meeting. TH thought it was good and fully satisfied the requirement, NM agreed. On the basis that one or two councillors had not had the

opportunity to review the latest draft, LC agreed to hold off sending it to the printers for a few days to facilitate any additional input.

**ACTION: FC/08/19 – ALL (who had not reviewed)**

**9. Environmental Friendly Initiatives** – nothing reported, it was agreed that this item should lapse until such time as initiatives are identified.

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

**a. Urchfont Christmas Lights / Tree** – GD commented that the lights worked well and had been well received in the community. He thanked all who had been involved in installation and dismantling, in particular the help provided by and goodwill of the Bodman family. Although a number of bulbs had failed, no new bulbs had been purchased at this time. NM commented that she felt that all the bulbs needed to be of the same type, not mixing soft and bright white. BL commented that he had received a complaint that the lights at not remained on for the Christmas midnight mass, GD suggested that this needs to be investigated for next year because it is thought that the timers were set to facilitate this. NM asked for a letter of thanks, together with the usual donation for their charity, to be sent to Dauntsey's School for the excellent tree that they provided again this year, this was agreed.

**ACTION: FC/09/19 – BL**

**b. Telephone Kiosk Grand Opening** – NM confirmed that preparations are well in hand for the grand opening of the High Street Telephone kiosk on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

**c. Drain at Lydeway** – PC reported that the damaged drain at Lydeway has been re-built by WC and appears to functioning much better.

**11. External Meetings** – None reported

**12. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda** – PW requested that the increasing issue of dogs being allowed into the Recreation Ground / Playing Field is an item on the February agenda, this was agreed.

**ACTION: FC/10/19 – BL**

**There being no further business, the meeting Finished at 9.45pm**

**Date of Next Meeting: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**

Draft minutes prepared by the Clerk to the Council – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019

a. **CLERK'S REPORT**

1. **Update on actions from December 2018 Meeting**

**FC/118/18 – Fund and arrange brown road sign for Community Shop** – in progress

**FC/119/18 – Prepare updated budget / precept spreadsheet for January meeting** – in progress

**FC/120/18 – Submit UWLNP amendment to WC** – submitted to Mike Wilmott

**FC/122/18 – Statement from DM re omission from October minutes to be made on January Planning Agenda** – on agenda

2. **Finances at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018** – Finances are in good order as shown on the statements attached to the agenda; the bank reconciliation was completed satisfactorily. Indicated reserve at year end is now more accurate but is still dependent on full allocation, spend or carry forward of project budget(s). Details of all actual expenditure during the month are shown on page 2 of the bank reconciliation.

3. **Draft Budget / Precept 2019/20** – As agreed at the December meeting, I will be updating and presenting the updated draft documents to facilitate approval of the Precept demand at this meeting. This will facilitate submission to WC by their January deadline. As agreed, the final UPC budget will be submitted for approval at the March 2019 meeting when we have a better idea of actual 2018/19 spend and what project monies are likely to be carried forward.

4. **Councillor Vacancies** – You will be aware that we still have a vacancy following the resignation of Bill Donald. I will be asking WC to issue a formal Notice of Election shortly.

**Bob Lunn - Clerk to the Council**

b. **COUNCILLORS REPORT(S)**

**Title of Order: (Parish of Urchfont) Path No. 51 Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order 2015 (Next to Urchfont Primary School)**

The Planning Inspectorate has now sent to all supporters and objectors to the above Order. The letter sent to all recipients and UPC Clerk included a statement; "The Council had not submitted its statement of case within 8 weeks of the start date".

I have been in contact with both the Planning Inspectorate and the Rights of Way and Countryside team at Wiltshire Council and the above statement is incorrect. Wiltshire Rights of Way team had submitted their 'statement of case' some months ago and WC has complied with all documentary submissions relating to the making of this order.

The Planning Inspectorate has asked for numbers of public who wish to attend and speak at the Public Inquiry and as a consequence I have been contacting those resident's who are in support of this order to provide this information. To date, I have had a healthy response and full details of numbers should be available at the February meeting.

Trevor Hill