

**DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 in the Village Hall.**

**Present: Councillors:** Hill (TH – Acting Chairman), Creasey (GC), Cowen (LC), Cottell (PC), Cottle (SC), Kemp (MK), Stevens (DS) and Botham (MB)

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

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

**Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting):** Brenda Potter, Andy Stephens

1. **Welcome by the Acting Chairman** – TH welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting. As only acting chairman, he pointed out that he would not be utilising the casting vote procedure.
2. **Apologies** – Cllrs Day (GD), Mitchell (NM) and Kinnaird (LK)
3. **Declarations of Interest** – None received
4. **Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports**

**Badgers in the Cemetery** – Mrs Brenda Potter acknowledged the response she had received from BL outlining UPC enquiries made in 2017, but challenged the Natural England advice that badgers would not dig down more than a foot. Instances elsewhere have shown that they dig their sets well down into the ground and could therefore disturb remains in the Cemetery. Evidence of increasing sets is appearing in URCH 31, it won't be long before they extend into the Cemetery. Mrs Potter suggested that other councils have already deployed stock proof fencing and even electric fencing in their cemeteries to prevent damage, surely UPC could do the same. In response to a question from BL, Mrs Potter identified Potterne and Devizes. Mrs Potter proposed that UPC should seriously consider introduction of stock proof or electric fencing in Urchfont Cemetery, it was agreed that this should be put on the May agenda and that BL should make enquiries with Potterne and Devizes.

**ACTION: FC/32/19 – BL**

**URCH 31 Pathway Fly-Tipping** – Andy Stephens objected strongly to the way in which UPC is dealing with the issue of fly-tipping on this pathway; attention should be paid directly to the half a dozen or so known offenders in properties adjoining the pathway rather than harassing all householders bordering the path. He was particularly incensed by the regular articles in Redhorn News which he believed accused him and all bordering householders of fly-tipping, something which could affect his property price in the event that he decided to sell.

**5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	MK	DS	1 abstention due to absence, remainder <b>AGREED</b>

**6. Action List Status Review and Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019** – BL reviewed the outstanding action list which is getting shorter, but highlighted the following still outstanding actions:

**FC/78/17 (18/10/17) – Obtain quotes for tree works identified in the tree survey and set up working group on Paddock Green trees** – this action has been assigned to two councillors who have subsequently left the Council. The Survey Report needs to be reviewed and action taken to resolve issues identified. SC volunteered to take this action, BL to provide him with background information.

**ACTION: FC/33/19 – BL**

**FC/65/18 (13/6/18)– Promote Farmers Field to Schools** – MK suggested that this an ongoing initiative in concert with NM as the lead on the School – Action considered complete.

**FC/66/18 (13/6/18)– Initiate competition for Farmers Field sign** – MK stated that this had been put on hold pending further development of the site and would be considered at a later date as part of the FF activity. Action complete.

**FC/67/18 (13/6/18) – Meet with Church re parking for events** – GC reported that this is ongoing, a meeting has yet to be arranged.

**FC/89/18 (12/9/18) – Finalise Village Greens Risk Assessment** – PC admitted that he is struggling with this very complex requirement which has legal implications. As a trained assessor he has identified potential issues with various facilities (e.g. Urchfont Pond, the scrape in Farmers Field and Oakfrith Wood) which he needs to investigate further. Councillors pointed out that Oakfrith Wood should not be included as it is not owned or managed by the Parish Council, however, the pathway to the wood is owned by UPC. PC stated that he is still striving to finish the document by the May meeting, but this may not be possible. BL suggested that he produces a draft document now identifying areas where he needs further information and asks appropriate individuals to provide that information. This on the basis that at least there will be a document published in draft form which could generate necessary actions sooner rather than later and also ensure that only UPC owned / managed areas are being covered.

## 7. Finance

**a. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019** – Having distributed these end of accounting year statements to all councillors with the agenda, BL confirmed that the accounts had been reconciled with bank statements as documented in his Clerk’s report attached in the appendix to these minutes (website only). He also confirmed that he will now be preparing the 2018/19 accounts and supporting documents for internal and external audit. No questions were raised by councillors.

### b. Project Proposal(s)

**i. Tree Felling in Farmers Field** – LC reported that whilst volunteers had offered to contribute towards the cost of chainsaw training, the UPC insurance company had insisted that any tree felling activity must be undertaken by commercial tree surgeons who have their own insurance. BL is awaiting responses from a number of other insurance sources, but LC feared that UPC may in the end have to fund commercial tree surgeons to fell the 80 plus trees at a significant cost. PC asked whether enquiries with agricultural colleges had been undertaken as they are always seeking training sites and have their own insurance, MK said that this idea had previously been rejected largely because of logistic problems. LC said that he will be contacting the Woodland Trust to seek ideas on the tree felling way forward.

**ii. Quote for reducing trees on Pond Green** – TH outlined the requirement in relation to two Ash trees alongside the Duck House on Pond Green , a TCA planning application has been submitted (considered in the Planning session this evening)

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve a budget of £350 subject to approved planning application	TH	DS	Unanimously <b>AGREED</b>

**iii. Updated and New Signage** – BL explained that he had received a number of requests to update warning signage around the pond and for ‘no horse riding’ signs on a number of footpaths, in addition other requirements may be identified in connection with preparation for the best kept village competition. BL proposed that an initial budget of £100 be approved to facilitate ad hoc signage requirements.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve a budget of £100	TH	MK	Unanimously <b>AGREED</b>

**iv. Any other project proposals** – None proposed

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

**a. Clerks Report** – updates given by BL under other agenda items where necessary.

**b. Councillor Reports**

- i. **Crooks lane Working Group** – To supplement the written report, GC explained that he had written to the Aster Housing Group to gain their views and that BL is arranging a meeting with the WC Highways Engineer to discuss initial thoughts / ideas and whether WC would be prepared to contribute to subsequently agreed works.
- ii. **Observations on Parish Roads and Associated Issues** – MB supplemented his report by stating that this is work in progress, he will make recommendations in due course. He had already met with GD and will be meeting with BL to discuss the history of some issues and potential ways forward.
- iii. **Parish Trust AGM** – BL confirmed that he is researching the basis of refunding unused Neighbourhood Plan ring fenced funds in the Parish Trust accounts.

**9. Fly Tipping on Footpath 31 (between Stonepit Lane & Cemetery)** – BL reported that he had put on hold his March meeting action to send a second letter to all bordering households pending feedback from PW on the potential for involvement of WC Enforcement Officers. PW confirmed that Enforcement Officers will investigate shortly and will write to households where fly-tipping is evident. However, it is very difficult to prove conclusively that a particular household or person(s) is responsible, but if they can WC will prosecute. MK reported that she, Linda Jennings and MB had undertaken a review of the path recently and had removed barbed wire which had unravelled down the bank from one property and could be hazardous to domestic animals and pedestrians. They were approached by the householder(s) responsible who said that it was used to deter badgers from their property, but understood why it had been removed from the bank. MK also highlighted a plastic sack dumped near Stonepit Lane which contained all charity leaflets which had obviously not been delivered but just dumped. PW confirmed that this should be reported to WC and they will challenge / prosecute the charity who have a clear responsibility to ensure that leaflets are not dumped but delivered as intended.

**ACTION: FC/34/19 – MK**

(Post Meeting Note: MK sent photos of the offending sack to PW on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019)

BL reported that he is being made aware of more widespread dumping of garden rubbish, an example being grass cuttings dumped on the bank opposite Stonepit Lane across the B3098. When it is dumped it is still green but quickly turns brown, stands out and is unsightly.

**Chairman closed he meeting for public participation**

Mrs Potter agreed on increased fly tipping in the area, she quoted a recent incident of two mattresses being dumped in Crookwood Lane which she decided to pick up in her vehicle and take to the household waste site.

**Chairman re-opened the Council meeting**

Whilst commending her action, BL advised Mrs Potter that rather than taking action herself she should have reported this issue to WC using the My Wiltshire App, WC will collect the offending items and may even be able (although probably not in this case) to identify and prosecute who dumped the items.

**10. Spring Working Party in the Cemetery** – TH reported that a number of councillors and family members had attended and had a successful morning tidying untended graves, surrounding areas and filling in badger damage. LC suggested that the WPs should be held more often and it was agreed that one should be held in September / October. Lead Councillor Cemetery (DS) in consultation with BL to arrange.

**ACTION: FC/35/19 – DS/BL**

**11. CPRE Best Kept Village Competition 2019 / Great British Spring Clean (22<sup>nd</sup> March to 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019)** – BL reported that NM and Clare Cannon were leading on this issue. Clare is now drawing together the necessary application documentation which will be signed by BL next week and submitted prior to the deadline of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019. A display board will be prepared for display at the Parish Meeting to promote the competition and hopefully encourage community participation before the initial judging which commences in mid-May. Notices encouraging participation in the Great British Spring Clean event have been displayed on Notice Boards as a precursor exercise to the competition. PC suggested that schools had been encouraged to successfully participate in such

competitions elsewhere in the country by demonstrating and promoting gardens maintained by children, GC agreed to explore whether the Urchfont School could contribute in this respect.

**ACTION: FC/36/19 - GC**

**12. PROW (Public Enquiry 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 – Urchfont Village Hall)** – TH reported that WC Rights of Way have employed a barrister to support evidence gathering, anyone can submit certified written evidence if they cannot actually attend the Enquiry in person, anybody can attend on the first day of the Enquiry and present evidence whether or not they have submitted anything in the past.

**13. Parish Meeting (26<sup>th</sup> April 2019)** – BL reported that LK, with the assistance of her daughter, had prepared an up to date poster (displayed on screen) for publication throughout the Parish two weeks prior to the event. UPC want to encourage as many members of the community to attend this public meeting and hopefully make known their ideas for future community improvements during the Q & A session. BL went through the proposed agenda and emphasised that assigned presenters need to preparing their presentation material now. In terms of wider preparation on the night, he requested all councillors to attend the Village Hall at 6pm to assist in setting up the Hall and erecting display material. LC suggested that it might be a good idea to have slips prepared for people to write down questions and ideas during the pre-meeting drinks and nibbles session, MK suggested that use of post it notes stuck on a display board might be better. BL to obtain post-it notes and pencils.

**ACTION: FC/37/19 - All**

**14. Pathway to Oakfrith Wood** – BL thanked PW for making road planings available for improving the surface of this pathway, he had been informed by Phil Milanes that much of this material had now been used by distributing to the most needed areas which become very muddy. Phil had further suggested that the remaining material could now be used to improve the improvised lay-by in Crookwood Lane. Whilst PW applauded the work completed by Phil and a handful of volunteers, he was of the view that the remaining road planings should be spread along the length of the path to a central width of say a metre to avoid damage to vegetation on the edges caused when people have to avoid muddy central areas. He suggested that maybe the Parish Contractor could be employed to use a small digger/tractor to deliver the skelping to various points on the path and then encourage volunteers to help spread. PW emphasised that he had taken a one off opportunity to get a couple of tons of this very limited material, it would be a great pity not to use it on this much used and popular pathway; he will not be able to get further supplies. BL to discuss with and obtain a quote from the Parish contractor.

**ACTION: FC/38/19 - BL**

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

i. **Crookwood Lane Gateway** - In response to a comment from Brenda Potter, TH agreed to remove the damaged sign in Crookwood Lane prior to the BKV competition judging. BL confirmed that new signs are on order.

**ACTION: FC/39/19 – TH**

ii. **Rights of Way waste disposal** - MK raised the issue of disposing of waste material resulting from local rights of way activity, especially following concerted activity prior to the Scarecrow Festival. She had already spoken to BL regarding the possibility of getting the UPC Parish Contractor to remove and dispose of this spoil, BL suggested an alternative of providing a skip in a central location for this purpose. It was agreed that MK would speak with Linda Jennings to agree dates when this would be required and where the designated disposal point should be, BL to then make appropriate arrangements.

**ACTION: FC/40/19 – MK/BL**

**16. External Meetings** – None reported

**17. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda** – No reports given. It was agreed that 'Preventative measures to keep badgers out of the Cemetery' should be on the next agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 8.48pm

**Date of Next Meeting: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (Annual Meeting) in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm**



**a. CLERK'S REPORT**

**i. Update on actions from March 2019 Meeting**

**FC/23/19 – Make enquiries with UPC Insurance Company re use of chainsaws** – A response has been received which indicates that the insurance company would any such work to be carried out by professional tree surgeons with their own insurance. Further enquiries are being made to establish whether other insurance companies will provide coverage for use of chainsaws by volunteers.

**FC/25/19 – Publish revised Lead Councillor Roles** – published on the website on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**FC/26/19 – Write another letter to households bordering Footpath 31 regarding fly-tipping** – on hold due to lack of response from WC enforcement and also additional evidence which suggests that it may be only one or two houses responsible and also evidence that tipping is happening elsewhere in the Village.

**FC/28/19 – Article on CPRE Best Kept Village** – published in April edition of Redhorn News

**FC/29/19 – Revise Parish Meeting Agenda** – completed and published as provisional on website

**FC/31/19 – Keep Philip Whitehead (PW) informed on The Croft dropped kerb scenario** – all correspondence to and from WC has been copied to PW. At least some of the work is scheduled to be started this week.

**ii. Finances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019-** End of year Financial and Bank Reconciliation statements have been circulated to all councillors with the agenda. Actual reserve at 31<sup>st</sup> March amounts to £21,521 plus £7,027 CIL fund + £6,786 project budget carried forward to 2019/20 + £1,012 Allotment funds which totals £36,436 overall balance which has been reconciled with bank statements.

The accounts and supporting documents for 2018/19 will now be prepared for internal and external audit (PKF Littlejohn LLP) examination, including preparation of the Annual Financial and Governance Return (AGAR) which will be presented to the May meeting for Council approval.

**iii. Planning Application for Tree Works on Pond Green** – You will note that I have submitted an application for works on the two ash trees alongside the Duck House on Pond Green, this appears at item 5e on the Planning Agenda. The works are necessary to resolve an issue with branches overhanging Manor Farm and also to make the erection of event tenting on the Green easier by removing a low hanging branch which is also entangled with telephone cables. A quote for these works appears at Item 7bii on the FC Agenda.

**Bob Lunn - Clerk to the Council**

**b. COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

**i. Crooks Lane Working Group** - We had an introductory meeting with the Snook family last week to discuss options about provision of enhanced pedestrian facilities along Crooks Lane. They were supportive of efforts to provide a pavement along one side of the road within the overall limits of their established fence lines – they are the landowner on both sides of the highway.

The next step is to arrange a visit by the Wiltshire Council highways engineer to take advice on what might be possible, and illustrative cost estimates. This is being arranged for the earliest possible date.

Councillors Graham Creasey & Graham Day  
3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

**ii. Observations on Parish Roads and Associated Issues** – As the newly appointed Lead Councillor for Highways (Jointly with the Chairman) I have been reviewing the state of play on a variety of aspects which fall under this role. As a result I make the following observations which I intend to discuss further with the Chairman and Clerk to the Council to establish the history in relation to some and to establish the best way forward to hopefully gain improvement:

- a. Car Park at the end of Stone Pit Lane being used as a store / delivery point for roofing contractor – pallets, rolls of roofing materials, planks, fixings and a ladder

- b. Footpath along High Street is degrading to various degrees from Inglefield to Peppercombe Lane
- c. Multiple drainage issues causing standing water leading to erosion all around the pond and its environs.
- d. 20mph speed limit painted on the road by Newbury House has all but worn away – (see 5 below)
- e. A number of very feint white lines at road junctions e.g. Peppercombe Lane and High Street and the yellow zig-zag lines outside the school. If this is local policy to keep the impact of street signs and lines to a minimum it is not an issue, perhaps apart from the school lines.
- f. Lots of leaves and twigs littering the pavement down Blackboard Lane from the start opposite Manor Close to the entrance to The Cricket Club. This will encourage moss and eventually lead to deterioration of the footpath.
- g. A potential issue could arise once all the houses in the Peppercombe Development are sold in that car drivers leaving the village hall are not used to traffic coming up the hill and visibility of traffic coming from the development is not great.
- h. The mini green triangle at the foot of the village green is suffering from vehicular damage and the road on the western face of the green needs repair / resurfacing.
- i. There are large areas of surface tarmac missing at the far end of The Paddock and at the start of Bowdens on the bend after Manor Close.
- j. All the street furniture appears to be in good condition. (seats, bins, bollards and signs)
- k. There are weeds growing between the kerb and the road in many locations – is this something UPC should consider tackling?

#### Planned Activities prior to the next meeting

- Conduct a drainage survey to see where pooling occurs and its effect if any.
- Complete the review of village roads etc.

#### **Councillor Mark Botham**

**iii. Parish Trust AGM** - The Parish Trust held their AGM followed by a Committee Meeting on Wednesday 3rd April.

The finances are in good order and they are happy to receive Grant Applications for suitable projects. The finances still show £464.10 ring fenced for Neighbourhood Plan which is now completed. I have asked Bob research how much can be returned to UPC and PT (50:50?), and to notify Peter Cook accordingly?

There will be no Calendar produced this year as demand was less last year and the surplus had to be destroyed making it a non-profit item! Ideas for future fund raising are being investigated.

#### **Councillor Nicky Mitchell**