

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held on Wednesday 9th March 2016 in the Main Hall of Urchfont Village Hall

Present: Councillors: Mottram (DM – Chairman), Donald (BD), Mitchell (NM), Thomas (RT), Day (GD), Hill (TH), Gibb (HG), Baker (PB), Holt (SH) and 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, Peter Cook, Rob Pendry

1. Welcome by the Chairman

2. Apologies: None

3. Declarations of Interest: None

4. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports if any – Rob Pendry was invited to give his pre-Scarecrow Festival brief as follows:

Rob stated that this would be the 19th Festival and would again be held over the May Bank holiday weekend 30th April to 2nd May:

- The Festival will be focussed on similar areas of the Village as in the past to facilitate safe pedestrian access from car parks and around the 58 scarecrows on show, 3 in Manor Farmyard.
- Wiltshire Wildlife and Wiltshire Air Ambulance will have displays in addition to the usual refreshment and ice cream facilities.
- A ten page risk assessment has been updated to cover additional items such as leaving tent pegs in the ground, a situation which resulted in considerable damage to the mower belonging to the UPC maintenance contractor at some point last year. A metal detector will be used after the event to ensure clearance.

SH raised the issue of parking in the High Street, could it be restricted to householders by use of a permit? Rob Pendry acknowledged this difficult problem, but the road is a public highway and so it is very difficult to restrict parking. Experience shows that some visiting drivers will totally ignore requests/warnings from Festival officials.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10th February 2016.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To approve the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting	TH	NM	Unanimously agreed

6. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2016

Outstanding items reviewed, all others are either completed or in progress:

Action FC/53/15 – Gate & New Path to Cemetery from The Croft– awaiting approval form Aster Ltd - ongoing

Action FC/87/15 – To remove broken bench below tree in Playing Field – bench had been inspected and considered fit for purpose – Action complete

Action FC/9/16 – Re-site litter bin in The Chute – Complete, thanks go to TH

7. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 29th February 2016 – BL stated that he had circulated these to all councillors prior to the meeting. The current forecast reserve at the end of the financial year is £11,212, but he expected this to increase due to increased income recently and a shortfall in expenditure.

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

- i. **Section 106** - no comments on or updates received to submitted reports

- ii. **School Travel Plan - Top Green Grant Application** – NM has asked for this item to be discussed at the April meeting

ACTION: FC/13/16 -BL

- iii. **Clerks Report** – BL gave updates on the following:

Transfer of the Duck House to UPC – BL had now received the draft Transfer Deed and is scheduled to meet with the UPC solicitor on 11th March to discuss and finalise details. It is hoped that the transfer can be completed by the end of March which would allow sufficient time to install planned electrical installations before the Scarecrow Festival weekend. BL was asked to circulate a report to all councillors after the meeting.

ACTION: FC/14/16 - BL

Councillor Vacancy – confirmation had been received from Electoral Services that only one elector had written requesting an election; as such UPC is authorised to co-opt a new councillor. Two expressions of interest had been received to date. Further advertising calling for additional expressions will be published and the application process completed in time for the co-option to take place at the April meeting.

ACTION: FC/15/16 - BL

9. Update on negotiations / issues with WC

- i. **PROW to Playing Field** – nothing to report
- ii. **Playing Field CAT (Western End)** – No further progress - See Clerk's Report (attached on website)
- iii. **Playing Field Proposal (Eastern End)** – No further progress - See Clerk Report (attached on website)
- iv. **Urchfont Picnic Site** – BL read out the email from WC giving details of the lease, this had already been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. In summary the annual cost is £150 per annum for the lease plus rough grassland cutting costs (normally twice per year) plus clearance of litter and debris from the site. Salisbury Plain bylaws impose restrictions in terms of flying kites, drones, model planes etc. and prohibition of camping and caravans. Whilst the site is currently well used by people from within and outside the Parish, the fact that it exists as a picnic site is not well known and would perhaps be better used if advertised as such (similar situation as Farmers Field in terms of public awareness). Some concerns were expressed about potential increased costs and liabilities in terms of insurance etc., but it was generally felt better to preserve the facility for public use rather than returning it to the military if WC do not want to renew its current lease.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
UPC to negotiate and take over lease from WC subject to confirmation of detailed new lease arrangements and termination clauses for both parties. BL to facilitate in consultation with lead councillor for army ranges	DM	TH	Unanimously agreed

ACTION: FC/16/16 – BL/BD

10. **10 Year Strategy and Plan (distributed)** – in view of time constraints, the Chairman postponed discussion of this item until the April meeting. He thanked GD for his work on this strategy and plan.

11. **Future Plan for Farmers Field** – in view of time constraints, the Chairman postponed discussion of this item until the April meeting. He thanked TH for his work on this plan.

12. **Planning Policy & Procedures Proposal** – Version 03 of the draft proposal had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Debate centred on pre-application meetings and whether these should always be in front of the Full Council or at least a quorum of members rather than just a minimum of two with authorisation. SH expressed the view that protection clauses exist in the proposed document to minimise numbers of councillors involved. PW was of the view that it is difficult to be prescriptive on this issue, it depends on the size of the development rather than on maybe a minor extension to an individual property where advice might be casually

sought in the street. SJ expressed the view that she did not want empowerment to authorise a pre-application meeting alone, it was agreed that the wording should be changed to authorisation from two out of three of Chairman, Lead Councillor or Planning Administrator in Clause 4.2b. Additionally it was agreed to re-instate the words requiring all councillors to be informed in advance of pre-application meetings being held.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To approve version 03 of the proposed policy unchanged subject to agreed amendment of clause 4.2b and associated words in Appendix 1 (Roles and Responsibilities of the Planning Administrator)	BD	GD	Unanimously agreed

On the subject of quorum, currently legislation and UPC procedures require a minimum of four voting councillors for the Full Council but for planning it is increased to a UPC required minimum of six. Debate centred on whether the planning requirement should be reduced in line with legislation for the Full Council or otherwise.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To endorse the proposal to change the planning requirement to a minimum of 5 voting councillors.	TH	BD	Unanimously agreed

DM stated that it had been agreed that TH would take on the role of Lead Councillor for Planning with immediate effect supported by SH. SJ suggested that a vote of thanks should be given to SH for all his past work as Chairman and Lead Councillor for Planning, this was endorsed by all present.

13. Manor Farmyard

- i. To ratify email decision to send letter to WC Planning Officer regarding building of Plot 1,** Manor Farmyard contrary to planning approval. Letter was sent to Karen Guest on 2nd March 2016 following email approval by all councillors. BD thanked SH for construction of the letter. DM reinforced the fact that UPC had now done as much as is possible to encourage changes in accord with the planning approval; the public should make any complaints of a similar nature direct to WC Planning Dept.

Proposal	First	Second	Decision
To ratify email decision in accord with UPC procedures	DM	PB	Unanimously agreed

- ii. To receive a report on meetings / interaction with Redcliffe Homes and residents** – SH reported the following:

- There have been comments about the location of the two Manor Farmyard street signs which was agreed between Redcliffe and WC. Various alternative positions have been considered but none gave sufficient visibility from all directions to warrant a change.
- Verges around the Pond will be repaired and rolled by the Redcliffe contractors.
- The bund at the entrance is currently higher than it will be due to spoil from the road resurfacing. This will be tidied, lowered and grassed so as to not interfere with visibility from Friars Lane or the development entrance. This is an essential feature to separate out Manor farmyard entrance / Friars Lane and deter vehicles from cutting the corner. Hatched lines on the road will mark out better the junctions between Friars Lane, High Street and the Manor Farmyard entrance.

BL thanked DM on behalf of a member of the public for removing large numbers of plastic bags containing household waste from outside Manor Farmyard when they were not collected by WC, and for taking these to the household waste site. DM in turn thanked Malcolm Taylor for his assistance in this task. In view of

the fact that the entrance road into Manor Farmyard has now be surfaced, BL was asked to write to WC waste & recycling collection to find out when the kerbside collection vehicles will be permitted to enter to collect wheelie bins from the site instead of from around the Pond.

ACTION: FC/17/16 - BL

RT expressed concern about the stones that had been laid from Plot 1 across Pond Green (behind and on further from the Duck House to the highway), this is not a particularly good surface and could damage mowing machinery working on Pond Green. BL confirmed that he is trying to establish the extent of Pond Green Registration to see whether this stretch of access is included.

14. Parish Meeting Preparation – DM proposed the following for the Parish Meeting on Friday 22nd April 2016, which it is hoped will encourage a good attendance:

- a) Councillors to mingle and talk with the public whilst refreshments are served. It has been confirmed that a controlled amount of wine / soft drinks can be made available for consumption by all present at such an event
- b) Someone to go round seeking questions from the public which will later be answered by lead councillors. SJ volunteered to undertake this task.
- c) DM will then present his Parish Council report
- d) It has been suggested to new residents of Manor Farmyard that they present a view of the wider Urchfont in their eyes, this suggestion appears to have been looked upon favourably.
- e) PW has yet again agreed to speak on current WC issues and answer questions
- f) Question and Answer session to satisfy questions gathered under item b).

DM/BL will prepare or facilitate all the documentation for this event, including the provision of advertising posters.

ACTION: FC/18/16 – DM/BL

15. Update on current Parish issues (See Clerk's Report under 6iv – attached on website)

i. 20 mph zone

- The new zone has been implemented throughout Urchfont apart from on the B3098, it is now legally enforceable.
- DM emphasised the fact that repeater signs are a legal requirement for enforcement purposes.
- BL reported that to date he had received only two complaints from adjoining houses about the location of a sign outside their listed houses in the conservation area. WC have agreed to move the sign to a more suitable location but still outside the properties in question.
- The suggestion that speed within the 20mph zone should be immediately monitored and then subject to Speed Watch checks has been shelved for the time being.
- TH asked why some road junctions have only one 20mph sign as you enter a road and one 30mph sign as you leave the road, whereas others have two in either direction – e.g. Blackboard Lane and The Paddock where they join the B3098, is this legal? PW agreed to find out.

ACTION: FC/19/16 – PW

- In terms of the new 40mph B3098 stretch from the junction with Blackboard Lane out to the Gateway Signs towards Eastcott, it was agreed that GD should check through Speed Watch whether this is having any effect in reducing the speed in the Urchfont 30mph zone.

ACTION: FC/20/16 - GD

ii. Damage to highway verges – DM reported that the number of damaged grass verges appears to be increasing due in part to weather conditions, parked cars and the impatience of some drivers when trying to pass in narrow streets. Some repairs will be undertaken around Pond Green by Redcliffe contractors, others will be monitored / repaired in consultation with WC Highways. PW confirmed that this a very common problem across Wiltshire.

16. External Meetings – None reported

17. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda – it was agreed that consideration of events to commemorate the Queen's 90th Birthday should be discussed at the next meeting. At this point nothing appears to have been planned within the Parish, although it was understood that the WI and Village Fete organisers might be considering such events.

ACTION: FC/21/16 - BL

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th April 2016 in Urchfont Village Hall Conference Room commencing at 7.00pm

Meeting Closed at 10.20pm

Draft minutes prepared by Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council 11th March 2016

a. Section 106

The 106 group met on Sunday 14th February.

Our discussions were to look for match funding opportunities to add to the recreation area, possibly to provide sections of adventure areas to occupy children on the footpath to Oakfrith wood and creating a path from the Crookwood lane entrance past the tennis courts to the hard standing providing access for wheelchairs and baby buggies.

Emma was following up communications with Playdale to try to gain a better price on the play equipment, however as we cannot commit without the fund being available which makes negotiations hard to conclude.

We are looking at match funding but feel that time spent on this should be limited, as not to hold up the progression of installing the new play area once the 106 fund is made available, as we would like it installed before the summer holidays.

Andy Stephens

b. School Travel Plan - Top Green Grant Application

The school has been advised that Taking Action on School Journeys Challenge (TAOSJ) can consider providing a grant to the improvements to Top Green.

However, due to Parish Council concerns over the feasibility report as Top Green is registered to the PC as Common Land, Wiltshire Council are unable to implement the scheme. They suggest the school liaises with the PC and submits a quote by 15th March and Cabinet approval will be sought later in March.

Our main concern was the many legal restrictions in place regarding the Common Land.

Below is the final paragraph of the Commons Act 1876 which I think gives us grounds to proceed as it is for the improvement of access onto that high end of the Green.

" Additionally under Section 29 of the Commons Act 1876, any encroachment on, or enclosure of a village green, and any erection on, or disturbance, or interference with the green, made otherwise than with a view to its better enjoyment, is deemed to be a public nuisance."

In view of this I have spoken to Ruth Durrant who agrees we could pursue the Grant so Martin Bodman will be giving us an estimate to submit to her department. If granted she pays the PC after the work is completed.

In the meantime we will need to check whether we need planning permission!!!

I am liaising with Carol Talbot.

I have requested this item to be on the Agenda for the UPC April meeting. A full and comprehensive discussion can take place then.

Nicky Mitchell

c. Clerks Report

- i. **Playing Field CAT (Western End)** – as of 3rd March, the UPC solicitor had still not received any draft transfer documentation from the WC solicitor. He has hastened WC in this respect.
- 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 have been sent a copy of the application form and have been asked for UPC assistance with completing sections on 'community use' and 'consultation'. This is being progressed.
- iii. **Transfer of Duck House to UPC** - as of 3rd March, the UPC solicitor had not received any draft conveyancing documentation from the Redcliffe Homes solicitor, he has hastened action. He is, however, progressing the UPC request for a 'solicitors' understanding agreement' in relation to the installation of the electrical pillar and new supply contract prior to completion of the handover.
- iv. **New 20mph and 40mph zone** – Following public demand for improved road safety, UPC initiated negotiations with WC to change speed limits in and around Urchfont. Two elements of this negotiation with WC have now finally been implemented following public consultation and with the issue of revised Road Traffic Orders on 8th February 2016. New traffic signs have now been installed implementing the 20mph zone throughout Urchfont, apart from on the B3098, and the new 40mph zone on the B3098 from Blackboard Lane to the Gateway signs out towards Easterton. Painting of road markings is still awaited. These new zones are now legally enforceable by the police. Ongoing negotiations with WC to try to get similar speed zone reductions at the eastern end of the Village on the B3098 out past Crooks Lane will continue.
- v. **Damage to Grass Verges** – An increasing amount of damage by vehicles driving over grass verges and Village Greens has been experienced recently in the Parish. The latest being significant damage caused to a corner of Top Green which displaced earth/grass and uncovered a Wessex Water valve chamber. Much of this is because of increased or inconsiderate parking in relatively narrow roads, which causes large vehicles to mount the grass areas to get past, but some is undoubtedly caused because of driver impatience. Phillip Whitehead has agreed to investigate with WC what can be done to protect the Village Greens in particular.
- vi. **Councillor Vacancy** – at this time we have not been notified whether an election has been requested by at least 10 Parish electors or whether the Council is authorised to co-opt a councillor, I will know the answer before the meeting on 9th March. I currently have TWO expressions of interest for the post but we will still need to follow the defined route for advertising the post and completion of applications/declarations dependent on the above decision. I have advised the Chairman that, in the event of a co-option, the process can be completed prior to the meeting on 13th April when a new councillor can be selected.
- vii. **Finance** – the financial statement and bank reconciliation will be circulated prior to the meeting on 9th March. This is currently showing a Reserve forecast for the end of year of £11,112. However, this figure will increase or decrease dependent on expenditure and income during March 2016. It is imperative that if you have indicated a potential spend which is shown in the forecast, that you ensure that it is spent and that any claims for expenses or purchases are presented to me by the 25th March at the latest to facilitate payment.

Bob Lunn