

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held remotely on Wednesday 14th October 2020.

Present: Councillors: Day (GD – Chairman), Hill (TH), Kemp (MK), Cowen (LC), Creasey (GC), Stevens (DS), Hollyman (MH), Cottell (PC), and Rotherham (PR)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & The Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the remote meeting): Mr Rotherham (until Item A3), Mr Brocklesby

A. INTRODUCTION

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman** – the Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. He congratulated the Community Bell Team for the excellent Candles display which had raised over £900 to date and those involved in the charity event outside the Community Shop in support of McMillan Cancer which has raised over £1000.
- 2. Apologies:** Cllrs Botham (MB) and Cottle (SC). Cllr Cottell (PC) left the meeting following Item C3.
- 3. Councillor Vacancy** – BL confirmed that only one application had been received for co-option, he also confirmed that the applicant (Peter Rotherham) fully meets the eligibility criteria.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Mr Rotherham explained that he had moved to the Village from Derbyshire some 10 years ago and had previously held various senior positions in an IT company. He has been an active member of Friends of Farmers Field for the last 6/7 years and is passionate about the Parish.

Chairman reopened the Council meeting

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To co-opt Peter Rotherham with immediate effect.	GD	DS	AGREED unanimously

In view of the remote nature of this meeting, BL confirmed that formal appointment documentation will be emailed the next day for completion and return by PR.

ACTION: FC/47/20 – BL

(Post meeting note – documents sent by email on 15th October 2020)

B. PLANNING – See separate minutes.

C. FULL COUNCIL MEETING

- 1. Declarations of Interest** – None raised
- 2. Remote Public Participation / Email input from members of the public and External Reports** – no members of the public present and no written inputs received.
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th September 2020**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	GD	MH	AGREED with two abstentions due to absence

4. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2020

i. Action Status: BL highlighted the few outstanding actions as follows:

In the absence of PC, updates could not be gained on actions FC/71/19 (Lydeaway Milestone damage) and FC/81/19 (Wedhampton / A342 footpath signage).

No action had to date been taken on FC/19/20 regarding a CATG submission to move 20mph signs in Crookwood Lane. PW commented that the Hales Farm planning application might facilitate the move of these signs, this should be investigated by GD prior to applying to CATG. TH suggested that the published Highways report on the Hales farm application might give some indication.

ACTION: FC/48/20 – GD

All other outstanding actions to be updated through later items in the agenda.

ii. Complaint Update: In the absence of MB, the Investigating Councillor, MH read out the following statement which concludes the complaint investigation:

"At the September meeting Mark indicated that a complaint had been received which he had been asked to investigate.

The complaint made by David and Lisa Kinnaird concerned a series of emails between David and Emily Kinnaird and the Community Bell team which were not distributed to councillors prior to the July council meeting and de facto were not appended to the minutes of that meeting.

In response to the complaint Mark distributed the emails in question to all councillors. Councillors agreed unanimously that if they had seen the emails prior to the meeting on July 8th it would not have made any difference to the way they voted on Agenda item C8. As a result, the retrospective publication of the emails was considered unnecessary.

David and Lisa were advised of the above in a formal response.

Subsequent to receiving the Council's response David and Lisa requested Mark Botham as investigating councillor to review the decision not to publish the emails on the UPC web site as they considered them to be key to the public record in that they do not mention Black Lives Matter. In accordance with the UPC complaints process Mark arranged a meeting with David and Lisa, himself and Martyn Hollyman.

Mark and Martyn advised David and Lisa that having given the matter some considerable thought; the emails would be appended to the minutes of the October meeting. David and Lisa agreed that this action fully resolved their complaint and that it is now closed."

The emails and attached documents are published at Appendix 2 of these minutes (on the website only)

5. Finance

a. Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th September 2020 – both documents had been distributed to councillors prior to the meeting. Comments in the Clerks report were noted, including the fact that additional CIL funds had been received in October relating to the Uphill development.

GD asked when the Council is likely to receive the WC letter on possible 21/22 PRECEPT restrictions, PW responded that this could be expected in late October / early November. Anticipated reduction in council and business rate collections in 21/22 as a result of COVID will necessitate parish councils' consideration of a reduced PRECEPT demand which UPC will have to consider very carefully.

b. Ratification of UPEG printing (£25) and NALC event (£38.93) payments

Apart from ratifying £63.93 which had already been paid, BL suggested that maybe consideration should be given to increasing the overall budget for UPEG to around £100 for already proposed Hall hire and further printing costs in year. LC confirmed that UPEG discussions had already identified but not yet presented a budget requirement of around £800, but this would be mostly required in 2021/22. In view of the issues highlighted in the UPEG report at item 6biv, GD suggested that only the already spent monies should be ratified at this point.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To ratify a total of £63.93 that has already been expended on printing and NALC virtual event.	GD	TH	AGREED unanimously

c. New Projects / Budget Proposals

i. Verge Repairs - MH commented that there is a need to move forward with the assessment of necessary verge repairs and associated costs which are unlikely to be funded by WC. BL confirmed that specifying the required works and obtaining quotes is a fundamental part of a project manager(s) task in preparing a robust financial case for UPC approval, no decision is required at this stage.

ACTION: FC/49/20 – MB/MH

ii. UPEG composting scheme proposal - LC identified the proposed UPEG Parish composting scheme which may need funding in 21/22, GD commented that this should await the outcome of discussion at Items C6biv and C10.

iii. Children’s Playground - BL confirmed that the ROSPA report on the Children’s playground has not yet been received, he suggested that UPC should await its receipt and then consider possible project proposals highlighted in the September meeting minutes at Item 14.

6. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other Written Reports (See Appendix 1 – distributed to councillors and attached on website version only)

a. Clerks Report – no update given or clarification required. GD did, however, reiterate that there is little that UPC can do about Dog Waste Complaints apart from encourage irresponsible owners to improve their behaviours via articles in Redhorn News and on the Website. Complaints should be addressed directly to the WC Dog Warden who has the necessary enforcement powers to prosecute.

b. Councillor Reports

i. Farmers Field – PR reported that tree felling operations had restarted over the last three weeks following the restrictions imposed by COVID, around 70-75 trees have now been felled with the remainder to be completed by Christmas. BL reminded councillors that felling has to comply with the issued Forestry Commission Licence, MK acknowledged this but felt that there was no need at this stage to re-engage with the Commission. MK reported that future budget requirements are being compiled for presentation at the November meeting, including potential storage options for UPC equipment currently held by Phil Milanese which he wants removed ideally by Christmas. Storage could also be provided for Rights of Way equipment which is similarly looking for a new home. BL had previously suggested approaching the Snook’s to see if they would allow use of one of the containers by their grain dryer, TH warned that this may be prevented by planning approval conditions. PW suggested that planning approval conditions may not apply in this case as this could be considered permitted agricultural equipment. MK requested councillors to suggest any other storage options that may be available.

ACTION: FC/50/20 - ALL

ii. Highways – No further clarification required having received the advice under Item C5ci above.

iii. **Urchfont Pond** – no update given or clarification required.

iv. **UPC Environmental Group (UPEG)** – GD sought clarification from LC on why he recommended turning a blind eye to its existence and “suck it and see” regarding the setting up of a UPEG Facebook page following the decision taken at the September UPC meeting. LC stated that he had been monitoring the Facebook page, could see no particular issues and would like it to continue. GD also asked whether the proposed letter to Walnut Close had changed from the earlier version which had been commented on by BL, LC confirmed that no changes had been made. Further discussion on UPEG was deferred to Item C10 below.

7. **Land Adjacent to Yew Tree Cottage** – TH reiterated the background to this issue for the benefit of the new councillor. The UPC solicitor had expressed the view that the applicant could achieve ownership based on the case she has made, but she does not want to spend (it is believed around £500 to date) any more in pursuing the claim which could be costly (predicted to be £1500+) and could fail. The applicant would prefer that UPC pay to pursue the case for her and then she would gift the land to UPC but with a covenant preventing development. DS asked what would be the position if UPC took no further part, TH confirmed that the new owners of Yew Tree Cottage have fenced the land and after 12 years could pursue ownership through the Land Registry. GD expressed the view that the piece of land has very limited use, especially with a covenant preventing development, TH agreed. GC added that the cliff at the back of the land could be an added onerous obligation in terms of maintenance. Given the current scenario, MK expressed the view that UPC should not take this forward. PR, whose property overlooks the land in question, said that having erected the fence the owners of Yew Tree Cottage are maintaining the land well.

PW stated that once ownership of an unregistered piece of land has been secured by anyone, then development could be proposed through the planning process. PW expressed the view that if UPC does not pursue this case, then this could set a precedent for similar unregistered parcels of land within the Parish and the Council could be asked why they did not challenge ownership in 2020. Recognising that cost will be involved, PW nevertheless recommended that UPC should pursue this case to ensure the correct position is clarified. DS agreed that this is probably the right course of action, but was of the view that it could cost more than the predicted £1500. Before comments made by PW, TH would have dropped the case but now felt that UPC should pursue if permission is gained to use the case documentation held by Wansbroughs Solicitors. LC sought a better idea of likely costs before taking a decision on this matter, an estimate could be obtained from solicitors but the final outcome will be dependent on the actual work involved which cannot always be foreseen in legal issues. It was agreed that the report submitted by the UPC Solicitor should be circulated to all councillors to afford a better understanding of the issue for further discussion and potential way forward decision at the November meeting.

ACTION: FC/51/20 - BL

8. **Coronavirus** – TH commented that the previously distributed flyer ‘Connecting a Caring Community’ is now largely out of date and that such information is probably not now so necessary because people have themselves become used to coping with the COVID situation and have developed their own means of support. However, whilst Wiltshire is currently in Tier 1 (medium) under the recent Government announcement, who knows what the future may bring with increasing rates of infection elsewhere. On that basis BL had quite rightly suggested that UPC should at least reassure the community that the Parish Council have points of contact if and when they need assistance. TH and MK have agreed to continue as the UPC points of contact, BL should publish this and their contact information in Redhorn News and on the website.

ACTION: FC/52/20 - BL

9. **Tree Survey Actions / Quotes for Remedial Works** – in the absence of SC, no update was available although it was expected that tree 1637 will be felled on 16th October 2020. (Post Meeting Note: Tree 1637 will now be felled on 22nd October 2020 due to emergency work elsewhere)

10. **UPC Environmental Group (UPEG)** – GD requested LC to confirm that he had resigned as chairman and a member of UPEG with immediate effect, this LC confirmed but said that he would still like to support the Group in some way recognising the very good and important works being undertaken.

Now with no UPC leadership / membership, uncertainty over remaining current membership / objectives and of individual roles not being in line with the agreed Terms of Reference, GD directed that he and MB would in the short term fulfil the UPC representation roles on UPEG with immediate effect. In the circumstances all UPEG activities and current proposals, including those in the UPEG report to this meeting, will be suspended with immediate effect until GD and MB have the opportunity to meet with the group members and agree a better defined way forward for UPEG.

LC appreciated and welcomed this decision.

ACTION: FC/53/20 – GD/MB

- 11. B3098 Speed Zones** – PW confirmed his intention reported at the last meeting to meet with Highways Officers to determine the best way forward to try to extend the 30mph zone out to the east of Crooks Lane. Unfortunately this has not been possible to date but he hopes to pursue within the next month. In response to an offer from GD, PW declined UPC representation at his proposed meeting with Highways.
- 12. ROSPA inspection of Children’s Playground / Recreation Ground** – BL stated that the report on the notified inspection in September had not yet been received.
- 13. Update on Current Parish Issues not covered by above agenda items** – None reported
- 14. External Meetings** – LC reported that he had attended a virtual meeting of the WC Environmental Group at which he was invited to give a report on the good works and initiatives being undertaken by UPEG.
- 15. Councillors’ Other Reports** – None reported
- 16. Items for Future Agenda**
 - a. Preparing for the 20/21 budget and PRECEPT submission
 - b. Farmers Field
 - c. UPEG – the way forward update
 - d. Remedial Tree Works update
 - e. Land adjacent to Yew Tree Cottage
 - f. Pathway to Oakfrith Wood (To be addressed when physical meetings in Village Hall are restarted with public attendance)

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting: 11th November 2020

Minutes approved and signed as a true and accurate record 14th November 2020

a. CLERK'S REPORT

1. Update on Clerk's actions from July Meeting

FC/45/20 – To distribute the ROSPA report on the playground when received – not received to date.

2. Finance – The Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th September 2020 have been distributed to all councillors with this agenda. This information demonstrates that the accounts are in good order and gives detailed information on spend and anticipated spend against approved budgets. The higher than previously anticipated Reserve figure is directly as a result of the WC Small Business Grant payment (£10,000). The full second instalment of the 20/21 PRECEPT (£25,406.36) has been received from WC. However, as indicated by Philip Whitehead at the September meeting, we now await information from WC regarding 21/22 PRECEPT demands and the potential for restrictions. UPC will need to carefully consider approving any future requests for project funds in particular until we are better informed on the status of the PRECEPT 21/22.

Although not included in the September accounts, you should be aware that a WC BACS payment of £12,974.34 was received on 6th October 2020 in respect of CIL tranches 1 and 2 of 3 for the Uphill development.

3. Internal and External audits – Paperwork is still with the external auditors, I have not received any supplementary questions to date.

4. Website – As you are aware. I have been working with our website host to update the website to a more responsive design and using new page templates. As part of this exercise we have also been reviewing and amending the website content and infrastructure where possible to make it as compliant as possible with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 which had a deadline of 23rd September 2020. A link to the UPC Accessibility Statement now appears on the footer of each of the website pages and confirms that the website is currently only partially compliant for a number of stated reasons. I will continue working with the website host to improve compliance where possible, although some aspects are considered by them to represent a 'disproportionate burden' to correct fully (e.g. some .pdf and .word document accessibility).

5. Councillor Vacancy – To date I have received one eligible application for co-option to the Council, this will be considered under agenda item A3.

6. Dog Waste Complaints – I continue to receive complaints about irresponsible dog owners not clearing up after their dogs and the apparent disregard of my articles in Redhorn News and signs posted around the Parish. My response is to encourage people to report instances to the WC Dog Warden who has enforcement powers when sufficient evidence is available, there is little more that UPC can do locally in the absence of enforcement powers.

7. Boomcast Multi-Media Broadcast System – I have just (6th October) received details of the Easterton contact for this system which was mentioned by Philip Whitehead at the September meeting, I will be making contact and will report at the November meeting.

8. Meeting Dates 2021 – you should be aware that I have provisionally booked the following 2021 meeting dates with the Village Hall assuming that we are able to restart physical rather than remote meetings by then:

13th January, 10th February, 10th March, 14th April, 12th May, 9th June, 14th July, 11th August, 8th September, 13th October, 10th November, 8th December

Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

i. FARMERS FIELD REPORT

Felling

The felling programme has resumed and will continue until the remaining trees previously identified by the Forestry Commission have been removed. After that the trees that are left in Farmers Field will be assessed.

Official UPC 'no entry' signs have been ordered via Bob to replace the current hand-painted signs that are put in place when felling is in progress. The cost of this will come out of the maintenance budget.

Jeff Vickers is to be trained as an additional First Aider and the cost of this will come out of the project budget. We are assured there are sufficient funds in both budgets to cover these costs.

Pond/scrape

Phil Milanese has identified the flag irises growing around the pond as a problem that needs to be managed. The options to be considered are:

1. Apply chemicals to kill the plants – we consider this is bad for the environment, costly and success not guaranteed;
2. Excavate the pond and start from scratch. This is a very expensive option. A quote from Martin Bodman three years ago for similar work was just short of £4,000;
3. Fill the pond in. This is also an expensive option and would deprive wildlife of habitat;
4. Leave the area to its own devices and see what happens for a year or so – we are most in favour of this option as it involves no expense, has least impact on the environment and is very much in tune with the new fashion for 'rewilding'.

Barbed wire fence

The barbed-wire fence along the length of the site away from the road has been identified by volunteers as a health and safety hazard as it is very poor condition. The FF volunteers are quite willing to remove the wire and the options for replacement are;

1. Replace with stock fencing, which is difficult to manage when brambles grow, and is dangerous when strimming;
2. Replace with post-and-rail fencing – attractive but expensive;
3. Plant a hedgerow – we are most in favour of this option as it is excellent for the environment, wildlife and whips may be sourced via UPEG and Plant for Our Lives.

Rehousing of UPC-owned equipment

As has been previously reported, Phil Milanese intends to retire as leader of the FF volunteers at his 80th birthday in February of 2021. He would like all the UPC-owned equipment, including a ride-on mower, out of his garage by the end of this year. So we are seeking alternative accommodation for all the equipment, which takes up the space of a single garage:

1. Purchase a half shipping container which would involve the cost of buying the container and lifting it into place;
2. Build a breeze-block inner area within one of the existing sheds at Farmers Field, a cheaper option but it would require secure steel doors, not so cheap;
3. An empty residential garage but there are issues over insurance etc.
4. A local farm building – perhaps the Snook family might be approached.

It has been mentioned that the Rights of Way Group is also looking for accommodation for its equipment and we might join forces to find a mutually acceptable site for both groups. Also, UPC might also want to look into the possibilities of having its own secure building for its equipment.

Team leader

Following Phil's announcement of his impending retirement, a meeting was held at Farmers Field on Saturday September 26 at which it was mooted that the group, which is small and experienced, can manage without a leader for the time being. Pete Rotherham has agreed to continue overseeing felling operations.

Encouraging new members

Small information notices are to be placed at each entrance to Farmers Field to give information and contact details to anyone who might like to help. We might also put them up at the shop and on UPC notice boards if councillors agree. It is hoped when the COVID emergency recedes that a public barbecue could be held there and invite parishioners along.

Cllrs Maria Kemp and Lewis Cowen

ii. UPC HIGHWAYS REPORT

Late September saw both the Gulley Team at work on the B3098, and the Wiltshire sweeper clearing straw from our gutters. We are now focussing on how to address the damaged verges outlined in both our December and June reports. The three key areas then identified were:

- The inside edge of the bend at Cuckoo's Corner. A recent inspection showed no further deterioration since December.
- Top Green facing Green Farm. The verge continues to be eroded by vehicles, in part due to heavy farm traffic having to pass parked cars. The road condition is very poor here, and is one of three key sites Wiltshire Highways have agreed should be prioritised for resurfacing. It would seem sensible to wait until any resurfacing has been completed before reconstructing the verges, or risk them being further damaged.
- Opposite to Pond Green and adjacent to Beech House. The verge has been badly damaged, and the road alongside is so badly broken up that a drain cover now lies above the road surface making it redundant. The road needs repairing so that any verge re-instatement is effective. Currently a house extension is being built and no work should be undertaken until this has been completed due to works vehicles. This part of the village is aesthetically very pleasing, and is no doubt a big draw when attracting visitors to the Scarecrow festivals, and in promoting the Best Kept Village competition.

NOTES

Mark and I recently met on site with Geoff Potter to discuss what options for remedial work could be considered. In order to arrest any future erosion once the verges have been restored, it would be necessary to put in something to retain the earth which is necessary to prevent any recurrence. Whilst there is an aversion to kerbs, the best option seems to be irregular real stone kerbing, which is dark grey, low level, and blends in easily and unobtrusively with the village without being unsightly. It is already present in parts of Top Green, Pond Green and along a significant section of the High Street.

ACTION

Wiltshire Council are short of funds and may not see these repairs as a priority. We therefore seek permission from UPC to obtain quotations to effect the repairs listed above. UPC would at least be in an informed position on whether or not to budget for the said works. We have already received indicative quotes from Mr. Potter.

Cllrs Martyn Hollyman and Mark Botham

iii. URCHFONT POND UPDATE

- Siltex for the autumn and winter applications has been purchased and is on site. The autumn application will be carried out in the next 3 weeks weather permitting. (a still dry day is required)
- The rate of application of dye has been increased to counter the effects of the bright sunlight in September and the dilution of the dye by recent heavy rainfall.
- The planting scheme is working well – all plants now well established and removing nutrients from the water.

Cllr Mark Botham

iv. UPEG REPORT

As councillors will be aware, I have resigned from the parish council's environment working group, UPEG. I am painfully aware that I have not been the best ambassador for this very hard-working group, and I have not been able to bridge the credibility gap between UPEG members and councillors. For this I apologise, and it is now time for UPC to decide the next step with regard to addressing the climate emergency. I still firmly believe that climate change is the biggest threat to human existence and that every one of us must do their bit to ameliorate the situation.

UPEG Facebook page

Nothing illustrates better my failure in liaising between UPEG and UPC. At the last FC meeting I was unequivocal about my opposition to UPC having its own FB page but I did not present, as I was tasked, an argument for UPEG starting up its own page on a three-month trial basis. As a result, my motion did not receive any support. At UPEG's subsequent meeting, it was agreed that, as Community Bell, although not a working group still an adjunct of UPC, had its own FB page, there would be nothing amiss in setting up our own page as a try-out for three months. It has already proved itself in attracting support from members of the local community and the material that has been posted on the site is uncontroversial and of great interest to those ecologically minded. I would urge councillors, although they are not able to revisit the subject for another six months, to turn a blind eye to its existence and "suck it and see".

Walnut Close

It was UPEG's intention to present to councillors at the last FC meeting a letter it proposed to send out to residents of Walnut Close, asking them to consider the possibilities of planting either on their own land or on the public land in the close. It is by way of a survey of opinion. Last month the parish clerk made some very helpful and apposite observations, as a result of which we decided to withdraw the letter temporarily and see if we needed to make any alterations. Having looked at it again, I have been asked to submit the letter to councillors and get their feelings on it. If there are no objections, we propose that it is sent out under the UPC banner and that it comes from the parish clerk.

Planting

Further to our previous discussions with Nick Plank, which are ongoing, we have been approached by Derek Cook and his partner to plant trees on his land close to the Old Mill and abutting the sewage treatment works. At a site meeting on Wednesday September 30 with Derek, Surrey, Phil Milanese and James Noble of Plant for Our Lives, it was agreed that James will source a number of "whips" to plant in the areas discussed. We still propose to approach other landowners to see if they could host planting on their land.

Requirements from groups seeking council support

UPEG is proposing that all groups seeking financial support from UPC declare what steps they are taking to address the climate emergency. UPC has already committed itself to addressing climate change (as outlined in the AOMs) and it is only fair if this is fed down to groups benefiting from the parish precept. We suggest the

wording: "How the project or activity or the work of the group or organisation will contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions" with a recommendation for its adoption.

Proposed forum at the Village Hall

UPEG has already made a provisional booking at the village hall on Saturday March 20 2021 from 11am to 2pm for a proposed public forum on the climate emergency. Peter Newell has come up with a format for the event which will include display boards, guest speakers and the opportunity to talk to climate experts and ask questions, as well as to volunteer for local initiatives. Obviously, we cannot go forward on this event without the approval of councillors and Covid restrictions will be observed.

Future initiatives

UPEG has also discussed the possibilities of setting up a community composting scheme. We have also had a virtual meeting with a representative of the Nadder Valley Community Energy Group to discuss the idea of a community energy scheme. Both projects are in their very early stages and UPEG will update councillors on developments. We have also begun work to develop a sustainable travel plan and intend to work with the Urchfont Community Bus committee to seek ways to help each other.

The Future

Clearly, we have come to a crossroads as far as the environment group is concerned. UPEG is required to have two councillors in its composition and if no councillor is tonight prepared to make a commitment to it, UPC must decide where it wants to go with this initiative. After so much work has been done, it would be a shame to lose it. There remains the possibility to allow UPEG to continue as an independent body, but it would be more beneficial all round if it could remain under the auspices of UPC.

Depending on the result of tonight's debate, I would recommend councillors formulate a motion as to where it wants to go on this topic.

I would request councillor's vote on the proposals contained in this report.

Cllr Lewis Cowen

Emails referred to under Agenda Item C4ii above

From: davidjkinnaird@gmail.com
To: "theteam"
Subject: FW: All Students - Black Lives Matter Information
Date: 27 June 2020 16:16:59
Attachments: Talking about race.pdf

Hello Maria, Nicky and Stephanie,

I thought you might be interested to see the information that Lavington school has sent (yesterday) to parents in relation to Black Lives Matter and some guidance on how we might engage and support our children in learning about the topic. You will note that they regard as key ***“encouraging communities to engage in more difficult conversations about the treatment of black and ethnic minority groups in society”***.

I hope you find the note below and the information supplied by the school informative, and help put in context how important this topic, and having this conversation is.

You will have seen I am sure, that Emily did indeed create a message to display at our house and we have had much positive comments, and it must be said some more critical debate also.

There was however an overwhelming expressed view that there was absolutely nothing wrong with this topic for our phone box! Five young people (Emily, Polly Maton, Charlie Hinton, Will Cook and Izzy Barsby) from the village have therefore created a petition asking the Community Bell to reconsider and I expect this to be delivered to you, and to the Parish Council next week. They have only approached their peer group and friends, neighbours and family and I am sure you will see from the comments made that there is a desire to support this project and their initiative from our “locked-down” youth.

Can you let me know which of you would like to receive the petition and I can ask the Principal Petitioners to arrange a suitable time for them all to deliver to you.

This has been an excellent lesson for all involved in engagement, citizenship, direct action and campaigning and I am sure it will have a happy ending!

All my best wishes and thanks,
David

From: Lavington School <enquiries@lavington.wilts.sch.uk>
Sent: 26 June 2020 11:47
To: davidjkinnaird@gmail.com
Subject: All Students - Black Lives Matter Information
<https://www.parent-portal.com:443/share/document.do?docId=8837&authKey=5ukxmmzu2u75bbe32khm>

Dear Parents/Carers

Since the death of George Floyd, anti-racism protests have been sparked all over the world, through the #BlackLivesMatter movement. This is the largest civil rights movement in history with protests in all 50 US states, more than 700 US cities, at least 17 different countries, and across 4 continents.

Education has been a key call in these protests, encouraging communities to engage in more difficult conversations about the treatment of black and ethnic minority groups in society and also to develop awareness of these inequalities.

Our responsibility as a school is to provide opportunities and resources to assist with education, support the community and encourage inclusivity for all members of society.

Due to the current situation, we are unable to do this in person and so, in the interest of helping to facilitate these conversations and further education, we have produced an information resource. The resource is designed to provide information on the current affairs, the historical context and some methods of engaging with the movement, at different levels, for those that are interested in doing so.

As we are all aware, young people interact heavily with social media and this means that they may have access to a tsunami of images, reports, videos and posts on an unprecedented scale. In order to help with open, transparent and supportive conversations, we have compiled some resources that are appropriate for our young people. This is only a small collection of the resources and information that is available on this incredibly important and pertinent issue, but we hope that this will allow students to investigate the issue and develop their own sense of understanding, with your support and guidance.

We hope that with education and tolerance that we can continue to progress towards a fair and equal society for all.

Yours sincerely

The Lavington School Community

From: David Kinnaird

To: "theteam"

Subject: Re: Phone Box

Date: 14 June 2020 16:20:07

Hello all,

I am really saddened by this. Whilst I understand your interpretation of the purpose of the box means that you can refuse this request, you could equally have chosen to interpret this as a "group" of young people wishing to showcase their "project" on racism and allowed it. Your hands are not really tied by the adoption purpose. Of course they could choose some other way of doing this but the Phone box is one of very few public village assets, and so any project displayed here has greater resonance than elsewhere. It's symbolic. It's British. Its iconic. Its Tudor Crowns representing our Government are picked out in gold. It displayed a soldier on VE day. It had poppies on Remembrance Day. Its part of the fabric of Urchfont. You get the point I'm sure.

Looking at the scenes in London yesterday tells me that we have a huge problem in this country, and I am proud that Emily wants to be part of the solution. I would similarly like to be proud of my village, openly and fully engaged in calling out and stamping out racism – particularly when it is encouraging an initiative stemming from the youngsters.

I am not going to press further, but I am left pondering had a group of young people asked to create a display for the Queen's Birthday how would you have responded? I feel sure you would have readily agreed. The VE day soldier did not fit your remit but was allowed, so I am left with the impression that it is the subject matter and its perceived suitability, rather than the rules that has led to your refusal and this will leave a lasting concern in my mind. I really do think you have missed the point, and an opportunity. If the box is intended to be a "Showcase for the Village" – I would have hoped this could have been to show that even in rural Urchfont, we too disown racism.

It's a shame you didn't want to meet as I do think these things are better discussed openly, but thank you for the time you have taken to consider and respond to this request.

Best wishes as ever,

David

On Sat, Jun 13, 2020 at 5:54 PM theteam <urchfontcommunitybell@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear David

Thank you very much for your email regarding Emily's request.

Without a doubt, this is a hugely important and topical issue and our decision was in no way intended to dampen Emily's enthusiasm or to prevent her from finding a way to voice her views and raise awareness.

However, as we explained earlier, the phone box was adopted by the parish council in Nov 2018 with the very clear purpose of:

Ensuring that it is well maintained and make it a visual asset to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike.

To create our own 'village gallery'. Somewhere for local artists, craftspeople, groups and associations to showcase examples of their work and projects.

And to raise funds through donations, to maintain the phone box and hopefully reinvest in the village or donate to local charities.

Which is why Emily's request and the subject matter is not appropriate for the phone box.

It would have been lovely to meet with you both, but sadly there's little that we can add or that Emily can say to change our decision because of the reasons described above, and so it would serve little purpose.

We truly hope that Emily finds a way to express her views and with your support, she will be able to find alternative (and more effective) ways in which to express her views and raise awareness of this hugely important topic.

With best wishes

Maria, Nicky and Stephanie

On Fri, Jun 12, 2020 at 2:47 PM <davidjkinnaid@gmail.com> wrote:

Thank you all for letting me know and I look forward to hearing from you,

Best as ever

David

From: theteam <urchfontcommunitybell@gmail.com>

Sent: 12 June 2020 12:10

To: David Kinnaid <davidjkinnaid@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Phone Box

Hi David

Thank you for your email. We will be meeting this evening to discuss the matter further and will respond to you tomorrow.

Maria, Nicky & Stephanie

On Thu, Jun 11, 2020 at 9:39 PM David Kinnaid <davidjkinnaid@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Steph, Maria, and Nicki,

Thanks for responding to Emily's email in regard to the Phone Box and her request to mount a display highlighting the issues that surround racism and I have just had a long chat with her about it.

I don't want to create a big issue. I am however surprised and concerned with the negative message your response has given to an enthusiastic and passionate young adult. If we can all agree that racism is an issue in our society, then your refusal to allow a simple display about this is hard to understand. It is not political and it really should not be controversial in the UK in 2020. Emily is hugely into her history and took real effort to set out why this was important to her, why it resonates now and why awareness needs to be raised. She also offered to share her ideas and gain agreement on what was to be displayed. In turn, I don't believe that you have clearly explained your reasons for refusal.

Emily and I would be happy to meet with you to chat this through - if only for you to give a clearer explanation for saying no and for Emily to make her case in person. At that point maybe you could reconsider; or with a better understanding of any rules, Emily can withdraw her request. Alternatively, I am happy to write to Bob so this could be looked at by the PC as a whole, but its such a simple and earnest request that I hope we can come to some accord without troubling anyone else.

Let me stress - this has been entirely Emily's idea. I am delighted and very proud of her - we live in an ethnically homogenous bubble and she has reached beyond that to see issues in our wider society and is bringing that back to Urchfont. I hope we can encourage this nascent passion for what is right. If other young people from the village also get involved as I expect, then we will have done something wonderful and positive to help make the next generation better than ours. Thanks all and look forward to hearing from you,

David
01380 848107
07841 994646

From: Lisa Kinnaird
To: David
Subject: Fwd: Telephone Box Display
Date: 11 June 2020 21:51:05
Sent from my iPhone
Begin forwarded message:
From: Emily Kinnaird <mlekinnaird@gmail.com>
Date: 11 June 2020 at 21:43:48 BST
To: Lisa Kinnaird <lise.kinnaird@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Telephone Box Display

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Stephanie Szakalo** <urchfontcommunitybell@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, 11 Jun 2020 at 8:56 am
Subject: Re: Telephone Box Display
To: Emily Kinnaird mlekinnaird@gmail.com

Thank you Emily for your message, but I'm afraid our decision stands.
Best wishes
Maria, Nicky and Stephanie

On 10/06/2020 21:27, Emily Kinnaird wrote:

Thank you all for letting me know.

I am going to ask you to reconsider though! Over VE day the box had a soldier in I guess to remind us of the sacrifices made by British forces in WW2 in defeating facism. I cannot see that this recent display fits into the three categories above, but it was of course very relevant for the day. As I study the beginnings of WW2 you can see the rise in the awful anti-jewish and racism that led to deaths of millions, and was the cause that the British, Allied and Russians fought. A war in which many Black Colonial troops fought and died for us too in that common cause. I think we gradually are seeing more racism every day in Britain - and of course in the US. The horrible death of poor George Floyd really upset me. Held down and suffocated like an animal despite his cries for help. This is not the way it should be and I'm sure many dead soldiers would agree with me.

I want to show that Urchfont is anti-racist - and make people think about this issue. If it causes any controversy it will in a way prove that I was right to do it! I think the old, as well as the young need to think about these issues.

Please reconsider! I will carefully think about what we will display and let you see our ideas first.

Thank you,

Emily Kinnaird

On Wed, Jun 10, 2020 at 5:53 PM theteam

<urchfontcommunitybell@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Emily

Thank you very much for your email.

As you may know, the phone box was adopted by the parish council in Nov 2018 with the main purpose of: Ensuring that it is well maintained and make it a visual asset to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike. To create our own 'village gallery'. Somewhere for local artists, craftspeople, groups and associations to showcase examples of their work and projects. And to raise funds through donations, to maintain the phone box and hopefully reinvest in the village or donate to local charities.

We appreciate that the topic that you are aiming to raise awareness of is hugely important and your plans are commendable. However, it is not something that we feel is suitable for the phone box.

Perhaps you could work in collaboration with local schools or other local groups and clubs to help raise awareness in that way? It would certainly provide a much wider base from which to spread the word and engage with other young people.

Thank you again for showing an interest in the phone box and we wish you well in your endeavours.

Best wishes

Maria Kemp

Stephanie Szakalo

Nicky Mitchell

On Tue, Jun 9, 2020 at 2:59 PM Emily Kinnaird

<mlekinnaid@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello all,

My name is Emily Kinnaird. I'm 16 years old and I live on the High Street in Urchfont. Recently, me and my friends thought it would be beneficial if Urchfont showed its support for the Black community. I think it is important to use education to raise awareness of racism especially in predominantly white Wiltshire!

According to the last census in Devizes the population recorded was 18,064 of these 70 are black and 17,543 are white.

We thought it would be a good idea to do a display in the Urchfont phone box with a tribute to George Floyd and some statistics of police brutality in America and a bit about the history of slavery and colonialism. We hope this will help raise awareness, now is the time to be actively anti-racist not quietly non-racist.

Look forward to hearing from you soon,

Emily Kinnaird.