



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Full Council Meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Wednesday 13th October 2021 v1

Present: Councillors: Botham (MB - Chairman), Hollyman (MH – Vice Chairman), Bamber (SB), Turner (MT), Stevens (DS), Rotherham (PR) and Moscrop (PM)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & Bishops Cannings: Cllr Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Mrs B Potter

A. INTRODUCTION

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman** – MB welcomed all to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies:** Cllr Holt (S H) who is currently in hospital, the Council wished him a speedy recovery.

B. PLANNING – See Separate Minutes

C. OCTOBER COUNCIL MEETING

- 1. Declarations of Interest** – None declared at the meeting
- 2. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports** – No issues raised
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 8th September 2021 (No meeting held in August) - to approve**

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

4. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2021 not covered as separate agenda items below

- SB reported that at the time of writing the report on the Community Shop she neglected to include Barbara Myers as one of the Managers. Barbara worked alongside Stephanie Szakalo and Anthea Donald as Managers of the shop in the period following Patty Frankel's resignation. SB had apologised to Barbara for the omission.
- BL reported that he had received an email and letter from Richard Hawkins in response to comments made in the 8th September minutes under Item 11 on the UWLNP. The letter had been copied to all councillors prior to the meeting and as requested by Mr. Hawkins is published at Appendix II of these minutes (on website only).
- BL reviewed outstanding actions as follows:

FC/1/21 – Damage to milestone at Lydeway – Ongoing - PW asked for copies of the latest emails on this subject so that he can pursue resolution.

ACTION: FC/36/21 - BL

FC/12/21 – Update of UPEG Terms of Reference – MB stated that this is currently on hold.

FC/22/21 – Organise UPC teambuilding event – MB said this is awaiting recruitment of councillors.

FC/25/21 – Ongoing - Restart discussion on footpath from Wedhampton to Planks – PM reported that she had discussed this Nick Plank and he has agreed to consider further. PW commented that the A342 crossing will need to be discussed with WC Highways to ensure adequate and safe landing points for pedestrians are installed on both sides of the road, this may require adjusting the route of the path.

5. Finance

a. **To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th September 2021** – these documents had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting and are supplemented by comments in the Clerks report at Appendix I (on the website only). No questions were asked or clarification requested at the meeting.

b. Proposals for project finance

Repairs to footpath alongside Urchfont Church (to include steps) – MB commented that the footpath running alongside the Church from Pond Green to Church Lane is deteriorating fast, he estimated that 50% was wearing away down to the subsurface not helped by a significant amount of weeds. It is understood that this path is not owned by the Church, but ownership cannot be proven. PW offered to get a search undertaken by WC Property Dept, BL to send him an email prompt. It was also suggested that proposals to resurface the path should be advertised in Redhorn News to see if anyone claims ownership. MB was of the view that UPC should not get into protracted investigations about ownership of the path but get on with the repair to the benefit of all.

i.

ACTION: FC/37/21 – BL

PR offered to kill the weeds on the path to prevent further deterioration.

ACTION: FC/38/21 – PR

Works will need to be scoped and a suitable contractor found to undertake improvements to this well used path, MB made the following proposal to secure funding.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To assign a budget of up to £5k to repair the pathway.	MB	MH	AGREED unanimously

ii. **Repairs to the Playground Shelter** – DS suggested that the shelter is in need of repair, especially of the roof. DS to put forward a costed proposal at the next meeting.

ACTION: FC/39/21 – DS

iii. **New Community Notice Board in Wedhampton** – PM suggested that the community notice board alongside the Parish Council notice board in Wedhampton is in much need of replacement. Whilst not a UPC board, BL suggested that it could be replaced by the same type of Man Made Timber board as the UPC board with an approved contribution from the Council (Financial Assistance Process). PM to prepare a costed proposal for the next meeting.

ACTION: FC/40/21 - PM

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

a. **Clerks Report** – BL added that the long awaited metro-counters had been installed in the High Street by WC, results will inform the debate about perceived speeding or maybe driving without due care and attention and what can be done to limit this.

b. Councillor reports

i. **Highways** – MH reported that the 'white lines' team had randomly refreshed some line in Urchfont, but not all. The sewers team have also been active clearing gullies, but the drain cleared by the Parish Steward opposite Sawmills has again been clogged by mud largely from the undeveloped plot behind. The whole stretch of road opposite Rivendell needs clearing of mud. BL will speak to the Parish Steward.

ACTION: FC/41/21 - BL

ii. **Ash Tree in The Paddock** – Nothing to add or clarify

7. **Environmental Event** – MB confirmed that the event will now take place on 20th November between 11am and 2pm. He had talked to most local groups with an environmental interest and all had indicated that they will try to attend. The WWT team report is due to be published shortly and will be presented at the meeting.

8. **Update of Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan)** - MB made a number of comments / proposals on the subject stressing that this would be a **revision** of the Plan.

Firstly, neither he nor any other councillor can prevent any parishioner from raising any topic they wish to be discussed by UPC on the Plan. However, he urged all parishioners who wish to discuss or raise questions about the Plan to restrict them to the current revision and not the plan signed off getting on for 5 years ago. That Plan is in place and was recognised by WC as being a well-made plan. The Parish has not been subject to unwelcome proposals from developers as a result. This council cannot move forward if it has to address things that happened in the past apart from 'lessons learned' – hence the presentation the Council previously agreed that SH and Dave Mottram could present.

Secondly, SH is unfortunately rather unwell currently and will be unable to present the lessons learned document for some time. As he was leader of the last neighbourhood planning team, MB believed his input is invaluable. So MB proposed to reschedule the meeting before the end of November. If Simon is still not fit enough to do the presentation MB will ask Dave Mottram to present the plan to the team so that we don't lose any more time. The PowerPoint slides that SH and David have prepared will be published, as well as the response to it from the New NP Revision team, for all to see.

MB then proposed that all current council members should form the New NP Revision team. MB proposed that the Revision Team should have two subgroups:

One group consisting of MB, MT, MH and SH (basically those members of the council with no formal day job!) who will put the revision together and a second group of SB, PM, DS and PR (Basically those of us who are more gainfully employed during the week!) to review and scrutinise the proposals. BL to review overall and ensure transparency of the revision for the public as it is developed.

Going forward, regular monthly UPC meetings will have an NP revision item on the agenda. MB further proposed that every 6 months UPC should hold a public meeting in the main hall at which an update will be presented to the Parish that everyone is welcome to attend.

Subsequent discussion by councillors concluded that the above facilitates a positive way forward that can be adjusted if necessary with experience.

9. Speeding in Urchfont – MB outlined the reasons why it is considered necessary to hold a public meeting on this topic as follows:

- Speeding has been a frequent topic raised at UPC meetings over the last 3 years.
- MB and MH met with Richard Mathews earlier in 2021 following a very near miss Richard had on his mobility scooter turning into Stanley House on the High Street. It was agreed with Richard that UPC would investigate what could be done to control speeding in the Parish and involve the parishioners in the review.
- Two weeks ago on Facebook, Paula Chandler raised the subject of speeding vans in the village and asked what the Parish Council was going to do about it, MB agreed to explain the steps that UPC was taking at this meeting.
- Some residents in Urchfont still appear unaware of the 20 mile limit despite repeater signs.

The next step will include a review including the following:

- Obtain the last metro count data and understand the "size" of the problem and where it is worse.
- Work with Wiltshire Highways to expedite the resolution of known issues, such as the gateway 20mph signs at Townsend.
- Deliver constant reminders in Redhorn news, Facebook etc.
- Try and persuade someone to restart the Speed Watch group – sorely missed since David Myers retired from running it with regular support from the community police team.
- Work with Wiltshire Highways to identify what street furniture / signs / physical barriers could be made available in the village.
- Assess the desirability and affordability of employing a traffic calming design consultancy to develop a costed solution for the Parish.
- Present possible schemes / initiatives to the parish at a public meeting, including a voting system for parishioners to identify what they like and do not like.
- Get Highways agreement to any scheme proposed
- Take proposal(s) to UPC for approval and financial sign-off prior to implementation

It is proposed to hold the public meeting on this topic during the first quarter of 2022 in Urchfont Village Hall exact date TBA.

Consensus from subsequent debate indicated that this was a good way forward.

PW commented that the new Police Commissioner is keen to get community police more involved with Speed Watch activities, also that metro-count results recognise that 15% of all drivers will exceed the designated speed limit and recommend potential changes to limits on this basis.

10. Entrance to Pathway to Oakfrith Wood – Following the discussion on the entrance to the Pathway to Oakfrith Wood at the last meeting, councillors recognised that there is a need to improve the bank adjoining the School driveway. PW commented that the Travel to School Plan published in 2014 recommended improvements to Top Green, which were subsequently implemented by UPC, and provision of a pathway inside the fence running up the School driveway. WC funding was not available for this at the time, but S106 funds from the approved Hales Farm development will now be used to facilitate the pathway. PW suggested that some funds out of the £18.5k S106 monies may be available to UPC for improving the bank. It was agreed that MB and MH should consult with PW to establish just what funding and resources may be available for this initiative.

ACTION: FC/42/21 – MB/MH/PW

11. Devizes Gateway – MB intends to ask SH to investigate how UPC can become more involved in the project. PW stated that there is currently a 2 month delay in the project to facilitate more work on the proposal and provide significantly more information. Whilst this might appear negative, it is actually positive and indicates that the proposal is receiving appropriate levels of attention to facilitate a station around 2024. PW also commented that if and when a station is operational, additional traffic will be using the A342 and probably the B3098.

12. Best Kept Village Awards 2021 – BL pointed out that the plaque is different this year (brass oblong) and will not match those currently mounted on the Old Post Office wall. BL suggested that it might be better mounted somewhere at the Village Hall, together with the certificate. It was agreed that BL should discuss and agree this with the VH Manager.

ACTION: FC/43/21 - BL

The location of the presented tree (Rowan Ash) with plaque is still under consideration, proposals included Pond Green (avoiding tent locations), Paddock Green or Top Green. MB to discuss with councillors and agree location.

ACTION: FC/44/21 - MB

13. Update on Current Issues not covered by above agenda items

i. **B3098 40mph Buffer Zone** – PW reported that no objections had been received to this zone on the eastern entrance to Urchfont, necessary works had been placed with a contractor and as such the zone should be implemented shortly.

14. External Meetings – Nothing reported

15. Other Reports from Councillors

i. **Parking in the High Street** - A member of the public had commented to councillors that around 27 cars had recently been seen parked at one time from the Triangle to Friars Lane, this was considered unreasonable, a potential hazard for pedestrians and cause access problems for emergency vehicles. Recognising that many residents do not have off street parking along this stretch, it was nevertheless noted that residents need to reflect on parking habits to ensure safety and accessibility at all times.

16. Items for Future Agenda – None apart from those included in the above

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 10th November - 7.00pm Village Hall (Conference Room)

Meeting Closed at: 9pm

a. CLERK'S REPORT

i. Update on Clerk's actions from September 2021 Meeting

FC/35/21 – Copy of Tree Survey report to be sent to PW - Complete

ii. Finance – The Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th September 2021 has been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting with this agenda, the accounts are in good order. The second and final instalment of the 21/22 Precept (£26,051.75) has been received from WC and a VAT refund claim for £2954 has been paid by HMRC. The External Audit has been completed by PKF Littlejohn LLP without observation or comment, the Parish Council Annual Reports and Returns page on the website has been updated accordingly.

iii. Co-option to fill vacancies – At the time of writing I have received no further applications or expressions of interest for the three vacancies.

iv. Traffic Survey – Wedhampton – I have received the following update from WC on traffic surveys in general, we still await specific news on the requested survey in Wedhampton:

“Wiltshire Council has recently commenced a new contract and we have been working with the new Contractor to ensure that our needs are met in terms of the data that we receive. Unfortunately, this is taking longer than anticipated, and with many parish/town councils having waited months for the results of traffic surveys, we have taken the decision to clear the backlog of traffic survey requests as soon as possible using our previous Contractor.”

Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

i. UPC HIGHWAYS REPORT OCTOBER 2021

- The Wiltshire Line Marking team have at last refreshed some of the road markings that we requested nearly two years ago. Unfortunately they only completed part of our request and much still needs to be done, especially at the most dangerous junctions. We will continue to chase this.
- The recent rain exposed some blocked drains which we will be reporting.
- Following a complaint from Mr. Summers about the overgrown foliage in Friar's Lane, which requires cutting back. Wiltshire Highways promised to do this four weeks ago but so far nothing has been done. We are planning to undertake this ourselves within the near future.
- Following a failed promise by Wiltshire Highways to mark the pavement opposite to the pond in preparation for resurfacing on 18th August, we received an apology and further promise that it was scheduled for 23rd September. Another failed promise.
- The lamp post in Friar's Lane which had been knocked sideways has now been removed for repair, and we look forward to its return.

Cllrs Martyn Hollyman and Mark Botham

ii. OVERHANGING BRANCH FROM THE ASH TREE ON THE PADDOCK.

The outstanding work to remove the overhanging branch from this tree was carried out last month by Mike Burns, Rowan Tree Surgery. The cost of the work - £80 + VAT, was approved by the Clerk and Chairman of UPC. No further work on this tree is anticipated in the near future.

Cllr. Malcolm Turner

Letter received from Mr. Richard Hawkins on 6th October 2021

To Urchfont Parish Councillors

I have read the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Wednesday 8th September 2021 and whilst accepting they are a true record of what was said wish to comment on the statement made by Councillor Holt in Agenda Item 11 – Update of Neighbourhood Plan.

Firstly, I would like to make it perfectly clear that the reason neither myself or my wife Janet do not want to engage with Mr. Holt (or ignore him as stated in the minutes) has nothing to do with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Holt states that 187 parishioners voted for or against sites. He has no evidence of who voted for specific sites as voting was by a count of parishioners holding up coloured cards. The owners of potential sites were present, and I know of an instance where a parishioner was threatened by a site owner because they voted against his site. Any future votes must be by secret ballot with voting slips retained for transparency.

The number of affordable homes which have been built or consented to is 6 not the 9 quoted. Two have been built at Uphill and 4 have been consented at Hales Farm. No others are detailed in the Plan.

Councillor Holt makes reference to 3 referrals of the UWLNP to WC and states these were all refused. I am unsure what he is calling a referral!

My first query to WC was asking why The Steering Group were communicating with the Examiner of our UWLNP which was not in compliance with the relevant legislation. I received an email from WC stating this was perfectly normal but now know that an email was sent to the Steering Group after my query stating they had been told to stop communicating with the Examiner!

I sent a further communication (marked In Confidence) to WC after the Plan had been adopted. It detailed several abnormalities relating to the management of the UWLNP including:

- Communicating with the Examiner (as above).
- Failure to disclose information from the Examiner to either the public or Parish Councillors which they were requested to do.
- Steering Group Councillors denying at a Parish Council meeting that they had received any communications from the Examiner and confirming that nothing significant had been communicated to her.
- Asking why a WC officer advised the Steering Group not to make the Examiner's questions available to the public until after they had their meeting to approve the Plan.

The only response I received from WC was to say that 'The period for challenging the validity of the Neighbourhood Plan as a basis for decision making has long expired'.

I assume my 3rd referral to WC was regarding the Uphill Planning Meeting and subsequent submission to the Ombudsman, which I sent details to you last month. The Ombudsman found no fault with the decision-making process but could not answer my question whether the action was 'reasonable'.

The sentence 'A 'lessons learnt' presentation will be made to UPC which it is felt will be a lot more positive than reviewing the Plan word by word looking for mistakes' I find quite interesting. A proper review/proofreading of the final document should have been carried out prior to a council vote. I even wrote to the council expressing my concerns that councillors had not had sufficient time to review the final document.

Richard Hawkins