

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Full Council Meeting held remotely on Wednesday 8th July 2020.

Present: Councillors: Day (GD – Chairman), Botham (MB), Hill (TH), Cottell (PC), Kemp (MK), Kinnaird (LK), Cowen (LC), Cottle (SC) and Creasey (GC)

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 D Kinnaird, Miss E Kinnaird, Miss P Maton, Mr M Smith, Mr R Hawkins, Mr R Kemp

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Welcome by the Chairman – The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting which will be conducted in accordance with the UPC Protocol for Remote Meetings.

2. Apologies: Cllrs Hollyman (MH) and Stevens (DS)

B. PLANNING – See separate minutes.

C. FULL COUNCIL MEETING

1. Declarations of Interest: LK declared a non-pecuniary interest in items 5c and 8

2. Remote Public Participation by / Email input from members of the public and External Reports – None taken at this point, on this occasion the Chairman agreed to take public participation against specific agenda items.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10th June 2020

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting. | MB | LC | AGREED – 7 votes for and 1 abstention due to absence |

4. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2020 – On the basis that the few outstanding actions are all ongoing, BL made no comments.

5. Finance

a. Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June 2020 – BL referred to the comments in his Clerk's report, accounts are in good order but there is still a need to clarify the position in regard to the unattributed project budget.

b. Financial Assistance Application – As sponsor, MK read out the following:

"Case and proposal:

- *Mr Cook applied to UPC in June for financial assistance in respect of the large Oak Tree that came down recently near the sewage works.*
- *Mr Cook spends a considerable amount of time working on and protecting this very special area which I note is a designated green space in our Neighbourhood Plan. The area known as The Baishe, Cooks Glade and Snowdrop Walk is enjoyed by a large proportion of the community and includes two permissive paths.*
- *In June 2012 Mr Cook had drainage installed at considerable cost. At this time he applied for financial assistance but was unsuccessful.*
- *In addition to the general clearing and tidying My Cook has also gone to great lengths to protect what remains of the Old Mill. These remains are of historic interest and an ongoing project being carried out by*

Linda Jennings which will eventually lead to an information board at the site which will further enhance the area. The long term plan is to continue to maintain the land for the enjoyment of others. Enhance the area known as the picnic site by planting trees and bushes to shield the sewage plant. To place a bench seat part way up Paradise walk otherwise known as Snowdrop Walk. The culvert near the footbridge is also in need of repair.

- Additional expenses will be undoubtedly be incurred because the trees are in need of inspection and probably subject to remedial works.

MK proposed that the council consider contributing a minimum of £1,500 to Mr Cook's recent costs which amounted to £3,664 to remove and clear the enormous oak that came down and completely blocked the footpath. MK appreciated that some of you will perhaps feel that this is private land and therefore may ask if we should be spending council funds. Also, you may ask, will we be setting a precedent? I would like to suggest that each application should be viewed strictly on its own merits."

GD commented that this does appear a lot of money, but Mr Cook is improving the area for the benefit of the community. LC is basically in favour of a contribution, but wondered how much funding is available. BL confirmed that a budget of £4k overall for financial assistance had been agreed. MB questioned whether further applications could be made by Mr Cook if and when further works are identified, yes but each would be considered on its merits and availability of funds.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconded | Resolution |
|--|----------|----------|------------------------------------|
| To approve a one off contribution of £1500 | MK | LC | AGREED – 7 votes for and 1 against |

c. **Duck Warning Road Sign(s)** – MH written report was noted - attached on website only. MB reported that a further duck had been killed today, making a total of 5 since January. MB had also spoken to the owners of Stanley House who expressed concern that a new sign might be erected close to her house and windows. TH was not convinced that new signage will make any difference, too many signs anyway in Village. MB agreed and said this is more about driver behaviour rather than speed. Duck behaviour in the area is also a factor, they often appear quickly from between parked cars.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconded | Resolution |
|---|----------|----------|----------------|
| To erect new sign to the south of the pond as proposed in MH written report | GD | None | Vote abandoned |

LK asked if the 20mph roundels could be repainted on the road, MB responded that this task was already in hand on the UPC Highways survey.

6. Written Reports (See Appendix 1 attached on website only)

a. **Clerks Report** – BL emphasised the GDPR / privacy reminder, no further update required.

b. Councillor Reports

- i. **Highways** – no further clarification or update required.
- ii. **Pond Update** – MB reported that the planting scheme will be installed on 15th / 16th July 2020.
- iii. **Land adjacent to Yew Tree Cottage** – see also item 7 below
- iv. **Duck Sign Proposal** – see also item 5c above.
- v. **Urchfont Recreation Ground / Play Area** – no further clarification or update required.
- vi. **UPEG Report** – no further clarification or update required.

7. **Land Adjacent to Yew Tree Cottage** – TH referred to his written report and confirmed that an interest had been registered with the Land Registry by Mrs Minty, they have now requested further information. He had no idea of costs that might be involved. BL suggested that advice might be necessary from the UPC solicitor.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Mr Hawkins expressed the view that this would be a very useful piece of land for Council use, it could be developed into small cottages to support UWLNP objectives.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

GC commented that there is clearly conflict between Mrs Minty and the new owners of the cottage, LC asked why Mrs Minty did not want to co-operate with the new owners. TH responded that initiation of squatter's rights process (fencing) by new owners was seen as disrespectful to the memory of the late Mr Minty. TH asked whether UPC would be prepared to accept the land as a gift if offered by Mrs Minty?

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconded | Resolution |
|---|----------|----------|----------------------|
| To accept the proposal in principle and move forward with further investigation within a budget of £200 | TH | GD | AGREED – unanimously |

ACTION: FC/38/20 – TH

8. UPC Telephone Kiosk – GD opened this item by stating the following: *“On 25th May a gentlemen called George Floyd died in Minneapolis, Minnesota whilst being arrested. His death has caused a response wave which has gone around the world and sparked a range of subsequent events.*

The wording of our agenda item this evening was composed last Tuesday. It talks about a proposed Cultural and Historical Information display prompted by Black Lives Matter. On Thursday, I received a petition which requests permission to create a gallery of art, photography and history about racism to be showcased in the telephone kiosk by the Youth of Urchfont. The principal petitioners are Emily Kinnaird, Polly Maton, Izzy Barsby, Will Cook and Charlie Hinton. David Kinnaird had previously provided me with their names. As a matter of priority, I contacted the 2 who are over 18 years of age and requested their confirmation of their status in this group. I also requested parental approval for the 3 who are below the age of 18 years. All have been received, and copies of the e-mails are held by BL and GD.

In discussion with David Kinnaird, GD explained that he would place a discussion item on our agenda on the following conditions:

- 1) The display would be within the telephone box*
- 2) It would be an educational display, ideally part of an official curriculum or a piece of research work designed to educate and inform*
- 3) UPC is a non-political body, so there should be no politics and no sloganizing. The content must conform with established UPC policies, particularly Equal Opportunity (12), Crime & Disorder (13) and Equality & Diversity (23)*
- 4) Display would be subject to UPC approval in principle, and I would take up the offer of having the material reviewed in advance by the custodians of the telephone box and another independent Councillor. Should you approve this matter, Councillor Philip Cottell has agreed to lend his experience*
- 5) The display would need to fit within the scheduled programme for the telephone box*
- 6) As part of the learning experience, all or some of the principal petitioners should subsequently be invited to make a presentation in person, either to the next physical Annual Parish Meeting or (if that is too distant) a future UPC meeting.*

We are now going to hear a number of personal representations about this matter. I would urge Councillors to be very clear about the exact nature of the proposal we are discussing.”

The Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Miss Maton said that she is really passionate about the proposed display. She questioned the fact that the kiosk had been previously used for political displays, citing the VE day soldier for example. Wiltshire Council had expressed solidarity with BLM movement, protests had taken place in Wiltshire highlighting human rights and racial inequality issues. Polly believed that the display will highlight all of these issues, could link with other charities and be a great show for the Village.

Mr Kemp read out the following statement – *“On the initial suggestion of a resident, UPC adopted the Telephone Box (TB) when it was taken out of service, accepting to maintain it according to BT regulations for the benefit of the community. A volunteer group with both UPC and community representation took*

responsibility for coordinating TB-related activity i.e. refurbishment, maintenance, curation of its' use and a schedule of who, what and when any activity was agreed, on the understanding that;

1. It supported the interests of the community as a whole e.g. the school/village groups/cubs & scouts/community organised events.
2. It recognised national events /celebrations e.g. Easter/Christmas/Harvest.
3. It highlighted items of specific interest e.g. Scarecrow/support for 'good causes'
4. Local residents had an opportunity to exhibit artisan skills, workshops or art work. To date the TB has 'hosted' approx. 10 items of interest on this basis. Taking this into account I strongly object to the current request on the following grounds;

- Those given responsibility for the TB have addressed an associated (albeit differently worded request) on 2 previous occasions and arrived at a unanimous decision based on the stated parameters for its' use. In the spirit of our cohesive community this decision should have been accepted. Regrettably it was not and I see no justification for revisiting that decision now, save vested self-interest.

- While not mentioned in the current proposal (contrary to the initial request) BLM, a patently political movement is clearly the catalyst, a movement that is demonstrably contentious and of itself offers little, to enhance the lives of the Urchfont community.

- Both the previous and current request/s clearly indicate that it serves the particular interests of a specific group and therefore, regardless of merit, does not meet the criteria of applying to the broader community.

- The TB is a small space with limited capability to adequately illustrate the subject matter. Given other opportunities for those wishing to support the BLM movement and its' stated purpose, to (arguably) greater effect, it hardly satisfies.

Unfortunately a mood of "if you are not with us then you must be against us" currently prevails and it can be easier to acquiesce in the face of public demand, against the better judgement of the individual or organisation, when that position is both emotive and forcefully declared. This trend should be held in check if reasoned consideration and debate on important social issues is to be the basis for democratic decision-making.

Reviewing the matter tonight UPC have been presented with a 'petition', presumably with the objective of it being a supporting document. If so questions arise directly from it that also need to be considered i.e.

- The petition differs significantly from the initial requests rejected by the TB 'team' in language, tone and content; omitting support for BLM, police conduct in the USA and the aim of educating the people of Wiltshire.

Consideration might be given as to whether the original objective is simply being pursued by a different route.

- For the petition to have credibility it should reflect the whole community, not those already in agreement. cursory examination suggests a ratio of approx. 2:1 signatures vs. households (approx. 50 incl. the 5 applicants) and some apparently non-resident. I do not doubt the sincerity or motivation of the signatories but simply point out it is not representative. The sponsors may accept this nonetheless if it is instrumental in the debate UPC should consider deferring a decision until a future meeting giving all residents an opportunity to express their view.

- Despite the benign nature of the question posed it is clear from additional comments that the BLM movement and the (sometimes offensive) rhetoric associated with it resonates. While these may be the legitimate expressions of personal views, the politically divisive nature underlying the issue as a whole is clear and cannot be ignored. Setting aside the BLM aspect my reasons for opposing are primarily based on the fact that the proposal does not meet the criteria for the TB and furthermore a decision has twice been declared respecting that criteria. A decision now, in favour of the current proposal will undermine the genuine effort, work and time put in by the TB 'team' to date, with no obvious benefit to the community and sets an unwelcome precedent for similar requests to be made in the future on virtually any topic that comes to mind."

Miss Kinnaid – reiterated some of the content of her request to Community Bell as follows: 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! 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.

Mr Kinnaid read out the following: – "Since the death of George Floyd, I've been thinking a lot about how the ensuing discussions of racism provoke hostility and disbelief that it actually exists here at all. People are appalled at the racist injustice in America but refuse to believe in the depth of our problems. Most people I meet are reticent to discuss the issue and see it as somehow awkward, or political; or a topic only for the people it directly effects. Racism is a social reality in the UK. It will only be fixed when people from all backgrounds

across the whole of the UK work together to change this reality. Trying to fix and highlighting the problems that blight black lives is not an attack on white lives, or an attempt to belittle "all lives". This group of young people have grown up in Urchfont together - the idea of the display is entirely theirs. I am delighted and very proud of them - we live in an ethnically homogenous bubble and they have reached beyond that to grab this huge issue in our wider society and bring that back to Urchfont. I hope we can encourage this nascent passion for what is right. In doing so, and employing our lovely phone box as a symbol, we will have done something wonderful and positive to help make this next generation better than ours."

BL then read out verbatim the content of 15 email submissions UPC had received from members of the public: Stephanie Szakalo, Nicky Mitchell, John & Ann Blunden (with David & Rachel Leigh, Neil & Linda Duggen), Malcolm Taylor, Peter Cook, Paul Bancroft, Royston Thomas, Paul Melhuish, Colin & Marion Whitehead, Nigel & Sue Fowler, Liz & Malcolm Turner, Jim Stevenson, Martin Wingent, Dave Mottram and Martyn Hollyman – See Appendix 2 on Website only to see the submissions.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting but permitted ongoing interaction when invited

MK read out the following: *"the request to 'consider a Cultural & Historical information display' as per tonight's agenda, or, as per the circulated petition 'to create a gallery of art, photography and history to form a display about racism' was not what was presented to us the Appointed Working Group in early June. Stephanie has described very clearly the original request and therefore why it was refused. MK did not propose to waste council time by repeating what she has already said. However, I do want to tell you how saddened and disheartened I am at the intimidatory manner in which the matter has been pursued. You the council are being asked to overturn the decision of the appointed working group. The telephone box is a UPC asset and therefore should remain apolitical. Anything you give your approval to is an endorsement by Urchfont Parish Council as a whole. I don't wish to be involved in any further debate except to say that there is no doubt that racism is an issue that needs to be addressed. I have huge respect for Emily's enthusiasm and ambition but would ask that you consider whether a display in this tiny little bit of Community space is really going to educate the Community of Urchfont or achieve Emily's objectives? I believe that listening helps to resolve conflict and to build trust, not telling. And when we persist on a mission to convince others it actually says more about our need to be right than a need to hear or try to understand what others have to say."*

TH expressed the view that this item boils down to deciding what UPC actually want to use the kiosk for, local or wider national / international issues. Miss Maton quoted VE day, this was a local commemoration borne out by names on the war memorial and memories of the events held locally in 1945. Council needs to recognise precedents which might be set by agreeing to wider than local content. LK applauded the fantastic work that Community Bell does, but emphasised that the petition objective had now replaced the original request and recognises a letter from Lavington School which had been circulated to all councillors. Lack of community awareness is a key issue, as a mother and councillor LK had a responsibility to encourage the young to express themselves. In response to a question from GD, LK confirmed that the proposed display is based on part of the school curriculum. PC felt that he could not comment as he may be involved in the review of proposed display material, he confirmed that he is fully trained and up to date in diversity training as part of his other life activities. PC did however believe that we should always support youth in the community, they are the future adults. GD asked how widespread is the petition within the Village? Miss Kinnaird responded that her group was fairly limited, Miss Maton had covered the local area around Top Green but had been limited over doorstep visits due to COVID-19. SC commented that it is good to see young people standing up on issues, but BLM has received good and bad press. SC asked what the proposed display would actually be, what the context is, he suggested that focus on BLM and the knee is not the right way to proceed. LK reiterated that her daughter had offered to meet and discuss the display material. GD reiterated that this issue had been presented to UPC quite recently, no doubt publicity about BLM and associated groups had not been helpful. GD suggested that the organising group needed to recognise and take account of the community environment that they are seeking to influence. Mr Kemp expressed the view that from discussion Council members appear undecided but are tending to favour allowing display with moderation. Mr Kemp suggested that maybe the best way forward would be to defer a decision and seek wider community consultation, otherwise a backlash could result.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------|-----------|---|
| To propose that the telephone box be used only for local community purposes, as such this proposal covering the wider issue of racism should be rejected | TH | LC | AGREED – 5 votes for and 3 against |

9. Proposed Start of Wednesday Health and Fitness Sessions in Recreation Ground – A copy of this request from Kay Sherman had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting. BL explained that the earlier approval of the Sunday session restart had generated a high demand complicated by COVID social distancing requirements. He recommended approval of this request to make good use of the Recreation Ground. TH had witnessed the well-attended Sunday exercise sessions and could see no problem with extending the approval.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| To approve the proposed Wednesday sessions subject to the conditions previously applied to the Sunday sessions | GD | SC | AGREED – unanimously |

10. Tree Survey / Quotes – SC reported that he had obtained quote(s) from Green Farm for the works identified in the latest survey, in total this amounted to £1900. BL reminded councillors that UPC Finance regulations requires three competitive quotes for any purchase over £1000 unless Council decided to waive this condition dependent on circumstances. SC highlighted the tree in The Paddock (Tree 1637) as the one which is designated as the highest priority, it has been the subject of concern for several years as it is very close to properties and is multi-trunked. SC recommended that this tree should perhaps be dealt with first as a one off funding proposal to satisfy financial regulations. The remainder quoted overall at £1225 could be subject to further quotes and dealt with at a later date.

BL stated that he had received and distributed to all councillors an email from Vivian Mottram on the subject of trees within Urchfont, she raises a number of points which should be taken into account in deciding the way forward on this issue and also UPEG tree planting proposals. LK had visited Vivian, given her a copy of the UPEG poster and established that Vivian wants to be involved further.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| To approve funding of £675 to fell Tree 1637 (Option 2) and to seek at least two additional quotes for the remaining tree works | SC | GD | AGREED – unanimously |

Post meeting Note – It is worth checking whether Felling of this tree is in the conservation area and subject to prior planning approval?

ACTION: FC/39/20 - SC

11. B3098 Speed Zones – Following earlier perceived lack of understanding with regard to UPC actions and successes regarding speed zones on the B3098 either side of the Village and within Urchfont itself, BL provided councillors prior to the meeting with a chronological summary covering the last ten years including the criteria used by WC to determine speed limits. PW expressed the view that the Council will never convince WC to change speed limits without creating the right conditions. As a result of earlier changes/installation of physical warning measures designed to slow traffic, PW was of the view that average speeds had actually reduced down to between 40-45mph. More could be done by strategically placing planters or bicycles for example as a warning of the Village environment. However, speed must be brought down well below 40. PW had spoken with WC Director of Highways and he has agreed to investigate and report further measures which could be put in place to reduce the speed further. PW suggested that a request for metro-counters should be delayed until further measures are put in place and tested. LC cited Lockeridge using bicycles to highlight the village environment, PW commented that he had helped design that scheme. BL commented that speed reduction in the derestricted area east of the Village is not being helped by apparent increasing speed of many vehicles within the 30mph limit from the Townsend corner since Speed Watch activities were stopped, could this be reintroduced? SC pointed out that crossing the road by The Paddock has similar issues for children due

to increasing speed. PW confirmed that Speed Watch is still in place elsewhere across the County. As a previous member of the Speed Watch team, GD said that he would canvas opinion on re-establishing the group.

ACTION: FC/40/20 - GD

LK emphasised that at least 10 children regularly cross the B3098 from Foxley Fields / Uphill to access school buses, recognising that a lot has been done she believed that priority should be given to convince WC Highways to take action. PC added that he believed a wheelchair bound individual also regularly crosses at this point. PW commented that speed signs alone do not necessarily change driver behaviour, it is important to encourage Highways and UPC to put in new measures designed to slow speed. GD commented that pace of progress is an issue, he asked how long would it take for a new count if metro-counters are requested now and fail to provide a useable result. PW responded around 18 months.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| To continue introducing measures to try to further reduce speed on this unrestricted section of the B3098 and, following a settling in period, seek metro-counts later (maybe in 2021) to try and secure an extension of the 30mph limit | GD | MB | AGREED – unanimously |

12. UPC Environmental Group (UPEG) – details of the items to be approved had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting:

a. UPEG Terms of reference

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| To approve the TOR's unchanged | LC | MB | AGREED unanimously |

b. UPEG Logo

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Approved subject to correction of typo | GD | SC | AGREED unanimously |

c. Top Tips Leaflet

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Approved subject to correction of typo in logo | GD | SC | AGREED unanimously |

13. Refurbishment of allotment steps – in the absence of DS and unclear requirement, it was decided to defer this item to the next meeting.

14. Proposed new Parish Notice Boards for Foxley Fields and The Croft – LK confirmed that she had not made a specific proposal, but believed that additional boards are necessary to improve communication. This requirement will be included as part of her communication paper to be submitted shortly. TH commented that the original board in Foxley Fields was removed years ago due to vandalism.

15. August FC Meeting – GD explained that traditionally a meeting is not held in August unless urgent business determined otherwise. In the current COVID situation, he believed that a break is needed this year to allow councillors to take holidays. BL agreed that the FC meeting should be cancelled, but that it will be necessary to hold a planning meeting at some point to consider four applications received to date. It was agreed that BL and TH should consider when such a meeting should be held to satisfy consultation deadlines.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| To cancel the August FC meeting, but provide for necessary planning consideration. | GD | MB | AGREED unanimously |

ACTION: FC/41/20 – TH/BL

16. Update on Current Parish Issues not covered by above agenda items – None raised

17. External Meetings – none reported

18. Councillors' Other Reports

a. Devizes Parkway Station Proposal – GD reported that 10 projects had been given approval to compile outline business plans, including Devizes Parkway. This was reported on ITV local news on 7th July. If Devizes is successful in this planning process, implementation will be a long way off and subject to further funding and planning hurdles.

b. Lamb Inn, Urchfont – GD reported that, although UPC has not been officially notified, it is understood that the current landlords of the Lamb have terminated their tenancy. Wadworth's are presumably now looking for a new landlord, it was agreed that this should be included on the next meeting agenda for an update. BL confirmed that the Lamb Inn was established as a Community Asset on 26th July 2017 (listing expires on 26th July 2022).

c. Resignation – LK made the following statement: *"In light of the decision reached on Agenda item 8, I can no longer be a member of this Parish Council. It is clear my own world view is diametrically different from many of the views expressed here tonight. I am quite shaken by some of what I have heard - It is clear many have confused the Political element of the Black Lives Matter movement with the urgent need to address and confront racism.*

Our children have been off school since March 20th effectively losing ½ a school year. It's incredible they have shown the motivation to do this thing. There is no other platform – this is their village, and they form part of our current and future community.

I think our community is bigger than the duck pond - and it is our responsibility as a PC to show leadership. This is a real failure. Judging by the correspondence received its pretty clear that a curated thoughtful display on this matter, supported by the PC might perhaps have been the most visited exhibitions in the phone box! So - an opportunity lost to support a youth led initiative and I think it could impart a terrible message about the values of our community."

GD thanked LK for her contribution and support to UPC and the wider community.

19. Items for Future Agenda

- a.** Pathway to Oakfrith Wood (To be addressed when physical meetings in Village Hall are restarted with public attendance)
- b.** Refurbishment of allotment steps
- c.** Future of the Lamb Inn, Urchfont

Date of Next Scheduled Full Council Meeting: 9th September 2020 (Date for Planning Meeting to be decided)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

a. CLERK'S REPORT

1. Update on Clerk's actions from June Meeting

FC/31/20 – Japanese Knotweed article in Redhorn News – Article included in UPC section of June 2020 edition.

FC/32/20 – Request copy of invoice from Derek Cook to support Financial Assistance Application – requested

FC/33/20 – Presentation on Urchfont Pond – publish on website. Published under Latest News.

2. Finance – The Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June 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.

3. GDPR Reminder – The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not stipulate which email systems or devices should be used, but states that if a council permits use of personal email addresses and devices then all members of that Council must be aware of its data protection obligations and responsibilities. To date UPC has allowed councillors to use their personal computers and email addresses to conduct Council business, although their email addresses are not officially published. May I remind all councillors that, to comply with GDPR and avoid potential breaches, they must conduct Council business strictly in accordance with the UPC Information & Data Protection Policy (approved on 9th May 2018) and the UPC Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy (approved on 9th May 2018). Any issues should be notified to me as the delegated responsible officer.

4. B3098 Speed Zone Debate – Extension of the 30mph speed zones on the B3098 at either end of the Village has been a key UPC objective over at least the last 10 years. To aid debate at Item I have prepared a chronological summary of FC key debate and achievements over this period which is distributed to councillors with the agenda. I stress that this is a summary because it does not set out to cover the detail of all of the correspondence and debate that has taken place. It is designed to highlight the criteria used by WC, key successes and length of time that it actually takes to debate, justify, secure and officially process decisions with/by the Unitary Authority (WC). What it does show is that significant success has been achieved to the west of the Village but not to the east where DfT and WC criteria for speed zones are enforced. Nevertheless a lot of work has been done to put in place measures designed to slow traffic entering from the east. I have received three email expressions of concern about this topic from Foxley Fields / Uphill residents in the last couple of days, I have responded to each.

Now that the pedestrian crossing signs have been relocated either side of the informal crossing near Crooks Lane, I suggest that the next step is to apply to WC for metro-counters to be sited between the existing 30mph/derestricted sign by Walnut Close and the Gateway signs to the east of Crooks Lane with the view to again requesting the 30mph zone be extended or at least a 40mph zone introduced out to the Gateway Signs. Either success would be mirrored in Crooks Lane.

5. Internal and External audits – Internal audit of 2019/20 accounts is under way. A deadline of 13th July 2020 has been set to complete this audit, including completion of the internal audit report section of the AGAR. Documents will then be submitted to the external auditors prior to the deadline of 31st July, this is a later date than normal as facilitated by the Coronavirus Regulations 2020.

6. Children's Playground – in accordance with easing of Covid-19 restrictions the playground will be re-opened for public use on Saturday 4th July 2020. An advisory notice on minimising the risk of Covid-19 transmission will be placed on the website and posted in the Recreation Ground by the play equipment.

Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

i. Highways Report July 2020

Following our recent meeting with Richard Dobson to discuss our June Highways survey, we are pleased to report that progress is already being made with outstanding issues. The parish steward has now cleared the significant accumulated leaf fall on the pavement adjacent to Farmer's Field. You may also have observed the road sweeper around the village, clearing many of the gutters of straw and other detritus, which will go some way in preventing drains becoming blocked in the future. We are hoping to persuade them to return after the harvest, and look forward to success being made in other areas.

Cllrs Martyn Hollyman and Mark Botham

ii. Urchfont Pond Review July 2020

- At the full council meeting on June 10th the council approved a further day's electro - fishing and gave the go-ahead for the pond planting project.
 - On Friday 12th June Aquatic Management Services fished the pond. 900 more fish were caught making the total across the two sessions 2400 fish - 99.99% of the fish were goldfish. A polite reminder to all parishioners – It is illegal to put unwanted fish in public ponds and lakes and the cost of removing them and rectifying the nutrient imbalance they create is huge and unsustainable.
 - On Monday 15th June the UPC tender document (copy below) to create a planted island was issued to three contractors. Three quotes were received on 18th June. The successful contractor, Aquatic Management Services who provided the lowest quote and could fully satisfy the UPC requirement, was selected and advised of their success on the 22nd June. We will have an update on the installation date for the UPC meeting on 8th July.
- Dye will have been added to the pond on three occasions during the month.
- An application of "good bacteria" was carried out on 25th June by Cllrs Botham and Stevens. UPC is grateful to Tim Brewer MD of Microferm Ltd for supplying the bacteria at cost price.
- A Siltex treatment will have been carried out by 8th July.



Request for Quotation

Please complete each item below as requested.

Urchfont Parish Council requests you to provide a formal competitive quotation for the following:

The construction of a floating island 40m x1m to include the cost per unit of:

- Flotation units
- Planted coir mats

- Wild fowl fencing for the total perimeter
- fixing stakes / anchoring system
- Delivery
- Installation
- Lead time from order to delivery.

Module and planting specifics.

Please detail the size of each module.
Please state if you can provide a supply only solution.
Please detail the number of plants per square meter.

Please describe the selection of plants you would recommend to meet the objectives of Urchfont Parish Council (UPC), which are:

- To reduce the nutrient level in the water such that the blue green algae count is less than 20,000 cells per millilitre. (Please note 2400 fish have been removed from the pond in the last 4 weeks and the nutrient load is much reduced.)
- To create an aquatic environment that will attract a diverse range of aquatic species.
- To provide visual interest (colour / flowers) to break up the current vista of a red brick wall.

Please include with your quotation pictures and graphics you consider relevant, particularly close ups of the planted modules. Pictures of the connection and anchoring systems for the modules would be helpful.

Please state if your floating modules could be pinned to the back wall by stakes at the ends of and in front of the module. This would allow the modules to rise and fall without moving away from the wall.

Please submit any additional information you may see fit.

The quotation must be submitted to Bob Lunn, Parish Clerk by 12:00 on Thursday 18th June 2020.

CLlr Mark Botham

iii. Land adjacent to Yew Tree Cottage, The Bottom, Urchfont

This report seeks an acknowledgement, in principle, from Urchfont Parish Council to accept an offer from Mrs Sarah Minty to gift a parcel of land to Urchfont Parish (in the trust of UPC) if she is able to appropriate the land through lawful process. However, Mrs Minty would not wish to incur any further expense in connection with this land and therefore any costs i.e. solicitors fees etc. would have to be met by the Parish Council. The cost for any legal work is unknown at present and will need to be obtained.

The area in question is a small parcel of land approximately 0.1 acre (400 square metres) in size and located to the east (left) of Yew Tree Cottage. The new owners of Yew Tree Cottage (purchased in April 2018) do not own the land, however they have recently fenced off the land by erecting a small picket fence with a gate, around the whole area.

This action has prompted neighbours to question if this fencing of an otherwise vacant parcel of land is lawful.

HM Land Registry records the land as 'unregistered', which indicates that there are no individual title deeds for it. (Land Registration only began in 1925, therefore owners may exist but have not registered the land for themselves since this time).

Enquiries suggest that, although the action of fencing land is not unlawful, the taking control of the land by fencing it does not qualify as ownership. To enable an individual to legally own the land they must follow a lengthy process of registering the land through HM Land Registry and show adverse possession (commonly known as 'squatters rights').

The previous owner of Yew Tree Cottage was Mrs Jean Minty, (Mrs Sarah Minty's mother in law), who lived there from 1982. Alan and Sarah (Minty) lived in The Cavern, a neighbouring property, and regularly mowed the area in order to keep it tidy for the benefit of Mrs Minty senior and the community. They cared for the area for 32 years. Just prior to Alan's death, Alan and Sarah had begun the process of claiming the land under adverse possession by making a 'statement of truth' through their solicitor outlining the time they have kept the land tidy. Following Alan's death this process was put on hold. (Their interest in the land is recorded under HM Land Registry no WT433287)

Mrs Sarah Minty wants the land to continue to be retained for the benefit of the local community and to this end is prepared to seek to legally own the land through lawful process and if secured, gift the land to the Parish as a 'green space' in the trust of the Parish Council. She has already spent money on the process and does not wish to incur further expense but would be willing to assist with any administration procedure.

If the council decides it is unwilling to meet the cost of this process, Mrs Minty will not pursue the acquiring of the land. The new owners of Yew Tree Cottage have contacted Mrs Minty to acquire the land for themselves but Mrs Minty and her late husband's family do not wish for this to happen.

(*A squatter of unregistered land can acquire the right to be registered as the proprietor of the land if they have been in adverse possession of the land for a minimum of 12 years.)

Cllr Trevor Hill

iv. Duck Sign Proposal

Since the beginning of 2019, four ducks have been killed by motorists. The two principle reasons are that ducks do not follow the Highway Code, and motorists are not driving with due care and attention, particularly when passing parked cars.

The 20 mph signs at Townsend Triangle are poorly sited, and the 20mph road roundels have been obliterated. Anyone entering the village may be forgiven for thinking the speed limit is 30mph.

A duck sign would at least be a signal to drivers both to be alert to the ducks, and to drive with more care.

What type of sign is preferable? The existing sign when approaching the pond from the west is very attractive and compliments the village, although I do think that it lacks the authority and gravitas of a more formal triangular sign, referred to by PW at our last meeting. I am not however proposing its replacement, so to be clear, the proposal is to erect a new sign for those approaching from the Townsend direction. The ideal location is probably the telegraph pole opposite to Friar's Lane.

One final point, children are being encouraged to take their cycling proficiency tests and cycle to school. One day, if driving standards are not improved, then it might not be a duck that is the next statistic.

As I am unable to be at the meeting I will leave it to be voted on by those in attendance, and the above are my thoughts on the matter.

Cllr Martyn Hollyman

v. Urchfont Recreation Ground / Play Area.

ROSPA Risk Assessment

The minor recommendations made by ROSPA following the recent playground inspection have almost been completed. Still outstanding is the removal of graffiti in the shelter and the repair of the tarmac surface under the roundabout.

Litter

There is often litter in and around the shelter. On occasions, the bin in the play area is overflowing when the bin by the gate remains empty. Mark Goddard is always quick to respond if I contact him requesting the bins to be emptied for which I am grateful. Most of the litter consists of pizza cartons, plastic bottles and drink cans. All recyclable which throws up the question, should we install some recycling bins close to the shelter? Hopefully, this would encourage people to dispose of their rubbish responsibly. An agenda item for August or September perhaps?

COVID-19 and reopening of the play area

The UK government has recently published guidance for the reopening of playgrounds and outdoor gyms. I have since carried out a risk assessment. I will post notices on 4th July advising users of the Recreation Ground / Play Area how to minimise COVID-19 transmissions risk.

Cllr Maria Kemp

vi. Urchfont Parish Environment Group (UPEG)

1. Top Tips for carbon footprint reduction

At the last meeting, Councillors agreed a programme of milestones in their objective to become a Carbon Neutral Parish by 2030. Any early milestone agreed is set out below:

Objective 2: A Climate -aware community by 2022

Enabling Objective 2.1: The community has a comprehensive directory of carbon footprint reduction measures.

Milestone 1: A simple list of carbon reduction steps and encouragement to sign up to the Wiltshire Council Green Pledge into Redhorn News and by flyer into every home and business by 30 June 2020.

An updated flyer has been distributed to all councillors with this agenda for approval at the meeting. It is intended that the flyer is distributed as a UPC document. It will be distributed by volunteers.

The website Environmental Group page has some back-up information should members of the community wish to look further.

Councillors are requested to approve the content of the flyer (which has been professionally vetted for accuracy).

2. UPEG Logo

UPEG has been able to access the skills and time of a professional graphic artist at no cost to the parish. The logo presented here is the one most favoured by UPEG, covering the well-known issues of the Climate and Environmental Emergency, and elements of its mitigation.

Your agreement to the use of this logo on all UPEG correspondence, publicity etc on behalf of UPC is requested.

3. Tree Planting locations

One theme of the AOMs approved last month is a tree and hedge planting programme starting winter 20/21 and a request in the Redhorn News for suggestions resulted in over 20 planting locations being proposed. A number of these are on parish land, or what is believed to be parish land:

Suggestion 2 - Path to Oakfrith wood from School driveway to the wood

Suggestion 12 - the 'public' land in Walnut Close (is there a development covenant in place and is it still enforceable?)

Suggestion 13 - entrance to The Orchard (is there a development covenant and is it still enforceable?)

Suggestion 14 - the 'public' land in the Paddock (is there a development covenant and is it still enforceable?)

Suggestion 15 - Top Green

There may be other options that have not been suggested or offered by the Parish Council which could be added to the list.

In order to survey the planting locations and to secure the requisite young hedge or trees, these locations need to be considered within the next month and council agreement secured.

Cllrs Lewis Cowen and Lisa Kinnaird

APPENDIX 2 TO 8th JULY FC MINUTES

PUBLIC WRITEN REPRESENTATIONS REGRDING ITEM 8 – UPC TELEPHONE KIOSK

Stephanie Szakalo

“I approached the Parish Council in 2018 and requested their help in adopting the village phone box. BT were by then actively seeking councils, associations and charities to adopt phone boxes and I felt that it was hugely important that ours wasn’t simply decommissioned and in danger of falling into disrepair. If we could secure the future of our phone box, have some fun along the way and raise money too, even better! In summary my proposal to UPC was to:

- ensure that the phone box was well maintained and make it a visual asset to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike
- create our own ‘village gallery’. Somewhere for local artists, craftspeople, groups and associations to showcase examples of their work and projects
- raise funds through donations, to maintain the phone box and hopefully reinvest in the village or donate to local charities

At the Meeting of UPC on 10th January 2018 and as recorded in the minutes; ‘...*proposals for the use of the telephone box.....had been submitted in a document circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Discussions concluded that (the) proposals were positive and should be supported by the Council.*’

As soon as the phone box was decommissioned in November 2018, we embarked upon a programme of events, starting with a Christmas display that year. Since that time we have held 9 further events and exhibitions ranging from seasonal displays, projects undertaken by the local school and the First Urchfont Scout Group and Beavers, and exhibitions by local groups (The Sewing & Craft Group and The Allotment Group). Our first fundraising campaign for Wiltshire Air Ambulance went live on 3rd July. And the phone box has also been completely repainted thanks to the hard work of Martin Follett with funds gratefully received from The Scarecrow Festival.

In the last eighteen months, we have never been challenged about our decisions for use of the phone box or the way in which it has been managed or curated.

Until now.

On June 6th we received a message from Lisa Kinnaird saying... ‘*my daughter and a few of her friends have asked if they could do a display on Black Lives Matter and the history behind the movement. They are all 16yrs old and Emily is going on to study history at A level and believes education can help to raise awareness and fight racism.*’

Five emails have since been received from both Emily & David Kinnaird.

We replied to Emily & subsequently David with our decision and explained why their proposal didn’t fit in with our plans for the phone box.

When the fifth email arrived, I asked that it be handled directly by UPC. I felt that I was personally under scrutiny and I also felt hugely intimidated by the possibility that a group of young people wanted to deliver a petition to my home.

I (and my colleagues) have given a lot of commitment and put a huge amount of time and energy into making the telephone box a true village asset and somewhere that people might enjoy visiting now and again.

The original proposal back in 2018 was supported by the Parish Council and has never been called into question. And yet in the last four weeks we seem to have come under attack.

The fact of the matter is that the original proposal put forward by Emily simply does not fit in with our ambitions for the phone box. It is a personal request (albeit supported by a group of friends now renamed the 'Youth of Urchfont') and, in my opinion, the topic is political and inflammatory.

In the Petition recently submitted it states that *'Having had initial requests refused...we request the Community Bell to reconsider this refusal & permit us to create a gallery of art, photography and history to form a display about racism...'*

It is important to understand that this is hugely misleading and differs wildly from Emily's initial request which said:

'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!

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.'

It was upon this that our decision was taken.

We are always really pleased and excited to receive ideas for the phone box from across our Community.

Sadly all ideas won't be appropriate, possible or feasible. All we can do, as the appointed Working Group, is consider each one on their merits and take decisions along the way.

If this one decision is overruled, surely it calls into question our purpose because it would clearly open up the use of the phone box for a broader purpose (ie: personal and political issues) and begs the question 'where do we go from here?'

One of the issues that arose when I originally proposed that we adopt the phone box, was 'who will look after it'? It is notoriously difficult to entice people from the community to become involved and take responsibility for many of the things we enjoy in the village; be it volunteering in the village shop, helping manage the village hall, driving the village bus, looking after our footpaths and public rights of way. The list is endless. I (and my colleagues) made that commitment to the phone box. And so to allow this one incident to shatter the good intention of a great project and risk jeopardising the future of a wonderful village asset is a very sad situation.

I do wonder now whether this is now more about winning what has become a battle over the space inside a tiny phone box. Because surely there are better, more effective ways to, as Emily suggests, *'use education to raise awareness of racism especially in predominantly white Wiltshire!'* It might though just need a bit more thought and application to do so."

Nicky Mitchell - "Rather than repeat what has already been said:

As the third member of the Community Bell Group I would like to endorse the views of Stephanie and Maria regarding the initial request that was sent to us in June for consideration to display in the Telephone Box."

John & Ann Blunden, John & Rachel Leigh, Neil & Linda Duggen - "We are totally against the usage of the telephone box for political reasons. We believe that The Equal Rights Movement Campaign is not appropriate for a small village."

Malcolm Taylor - "I do not agree with the kiosk which is a village amenity being used as a possible political platform."

Peter Cook - "I was amongst those who welcomed the Parish Council decision to buy the telephone box. I expected it would only be used for promotion of Village clubs, events and anniversaries. I understand that a private application has been made to use the telephone box. I do not consider the telephone box should be used for the display and promotion of personal agenda, ideas and projects."

Paul Bancroft - "I have been urged to express my opinion on Item 8 that is tabled for the Urchfont Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 8 July 2020 concerning the phone box."

It is axiomatic that the Urchfont parish community relies very heavily on the time, talents and goodwill of volunteers to deliver much of the quality of life in the village that we are fortunate enough to enjoy. That very

much applies to the group of kind and talented volunteers, The Community Bell Working Group, that has taken on responsibility for providing or facilitating displays to utilize the old GPO telephone box in Urchfont High Street. The Working Group started its work in December 2018, since when it has created or facilitated 10 imaginative displays therein and has taken the trouble to have the telephone box carefully refurbished.

As I understand it, under the protocol agreed with UPC, the working party's principal purposes are:

- To ensure that the phone box is well maintained and make it a visual asset to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike.*
- To create our own 'village gallery' where local artists, craftspeople, groups and associations can showcase examples of their work and projects.*
- To raise funds through donations, to maintain the phone box and hopefully reinvest in the village or donate to local charities.*

That remit, as fully implemented, is onerous and time-consuming, and bears a significant responsibility, one that has been assiduously borne by the Working Group since inception in December 2018. As I understand it, Item 8 of the UPC agenda for 8 July 2020 seeks to outflank the judgement and mandate of the Working Group by appealing to higher authority. This is an attempt forcibly to violate the discretion of the Working Group and demonstrates a distinct lack of respect and appreciation for its worthy contribution to the village.

I therefore advocate that UPC councillors support and uphold the judgement of the Working Group and allow them, as trusted volunteers, to manage the telephone box in accordance with their protocol and judgement without let or hindrance."

Royston Thomas - "While we should all be aware of BLM as an important issue, I do not think the High Street Phone Box is the appropriate place for publicity matter such as this to be displayed. I call upon all councillors to reject the proposal."

Paul Melhuish - "The request to promote BLM, erect a tribute to George Floyd and to catalogue alleged police brutality from the High Street Telephone Box would be a totally inappropriate use of this Community facility.

The PC adopted the 'phone box for the purpose of promoting Community groups and it has also been used to celebrate religious festivals, school projects and to support charitable organisations. Whether or not there are clear guidelines for the use of the Box, it should not be turned into a platform for what is effectively now seen as a political movement. For these reasons, I believe an initial request has already been declined and this decision should be endorsed by the PC this evening.

That said, the PC could find itself in a very awkward position because BLM has twisted the argument to suggest that anyone who does not actively support the campaign is, by definition, against it. This is obviously utter nonsense but it's the "If you're not with us, you're against us" mentality. Hence the inference by various personalities when others have chosen not to 'take the knee'.

Any intelligent person with an ounce of common sense will acknowledge that racism exists, is abhorrent and should be stamped-out, forcibly if necessary; that is why there are specific laws in the UK to deal with it.

BLM has made a case which has now gone viral, although all lives matter, not just black lives. Armed with what has been said and written, most 'thinking' individuals can make up their own minds on this extremely divisive issue and probably already have. However, this resident of the Community neither needs nor wants constant reminders of the BLM message at every turn.

By all means let these campaigners put their posters and displays in their windows but not in the Community's High Street Telephone Box."

Colin & Marion Whitehead - "This is the first we have heard about the proposal regarding a BLM display and we wholeheartedly agree with the views expressed by Paul Melhuish's note. We trust the PC will have the good sense to refuse this request. We would also prefer not to see BLM material posted on trees, etc, around the village."

Nigel & Sue Fowler - "We wholeheartedly agree with Paul's letter and could not have put the point any better.

My grandchild is mixed race, having a black father and a white mother. At the tender age of eleven, my granddaughter, Martha, recently wrote a letter to Boris Johnson, telling him about how she has experienced many instances of racial abuse. Martha's letter was seen by the local paper, and published in the Bedford Independent. She has yet to get a response from Boris Johnson!

Black lives do matter, but so do ALL LIVES. We have the appropriate laws in place in the UK to handle racism and it is time that they were enforced. This is not appropriate use for the phone box."

Liz & Malcom Turner - "We were not aware that this issue was being discussed at the Parish Council meeting tonight. If it is appropriate for us to comment on individual agenda items then we would like to say that we are in total agreement with the points that Paul Melhuish has made in his document.

In our opinion, the phone box is a vehicle to promote community activities, village commemorations and fund-raising. It should not be used as a political platform to air the views of individuals or groups.

The other danger is that, if this was permitted to go ahead, there could be a risk of anyone with very strong views defacing or damaging the phone box."

Jim Stevenson - "Good For you, Paul, an accurate concise letter which, I believe, expresses the feelings of many...All Lives Matter."

Martin Wingent – "I agree wholeheartedly with Paul's comments and could not have written them better myself."

Dave Mottram - "Paul I agree entirely with your views. It is rather sad when campaigns like BLM are taken over by extremists."

Martyn Hollyman - "As I cannot be at the meeting tomorrow, I thought that I would share some of my thoughts on the telephone box petition.

I understand that the original objective was to have a display on the Black Lives Matter organisation. It has been increasingly clear that this is a political group with a much wider agenda than just black lives. There has been much coverage in the press recently, and I have attached a comprehensive article which gives a valuable contribution to this subject. The telephone box should not be a platform for political staging.

I am told that having been refused the aforementioned display, a revised version is now requested on the subject of racism. I personally do not think that this is a subject the telephone box should be used for, however as this is to be considered tomorrow, and if councillors do consent to such a display, then it should contain balanced material, vetted by either or both the telephone box trio Maria, Steph and Nikki and maybe two or three nominated councillors.

Balance is important, and I am happy to expand on this if required."