



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Tuesday 8th June 2021

Present: Councillors: Botham (MB - Chairman), Hollyman (MH – Vice Chairman), Bamber (SB), Turner (MT) and Holt (SH – post Item A2)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & Bishops Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Mr. R Hawkins, Mrs N Mitchell, Mr. M Smith. Mr. T Hill, Mr. D Milner, Mr. S Holt

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Welcome by the Chairman – MB welcomed all to the first normal meeting of UPC following the elections and Annual Meeting in May. Having booked a seat at the meeting, the Chairman thanked Mrs. B Potter for sending her apologies.

2. Apologies – Cllrs. Stevens (DS) and Rotherham (PR) – BL confirmed that this meeting is quorate with four members attending.

3. New Councillor Co-Option - BL confirmed that he had received an eligible application from Mr. Simon Holt (SH). MB invited councillors to ask SH any questions. MT recalled that SH had on an earlier occasion said that he would not be submitting an application, why had he changed his mind? SH responded that he had changed his mind because he perceived that a good team had been elected to UPC in May which he felt he could work well with as a good listener and doer. MB commented that Simon and his wife had been amongst the first he had met when he came to Urchfont, they run their own businesses and he believed SH had a lot to offer to UPC and the community.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To co-opt Simon Holt as a UPC councillor with immediate effect.	MB	MT	AGREED Unanimously

4. Proposed UPC Mission Statement - "Urchfont Parish Councillors will work together to represent the needs and interests of the whole community and be the first port of call for residents to communicate their ideas or concerns"

MB commented that a mission statement might appear a bit grand for the Parish Council, but even small businesses have them to emphasize their key objectives. The website fully describes the responsibilities and how the council works, but it is considered that a mission statement will emphasize the relationship with the community. MT commented that the mission statement needs to be concise and precise, MH agreed and noted that MT has had a lot of experience of such matters in his former business life. SH suggested that the statement should be extended to include the words 'Agreed matters will be taken forward by UPC for the benefit of all in the community'. PW expressed concern that not all agreed matters will be for the benefit of all in the community and suggested that those words should be deleted, this was agreed by all.

BL read out the amended Mission Statement as follows:

Urchfont Parish Councillors will work together to represent the needs and interests of the whole community and be the first port of call for residents to communicate their ideas or concerns. Agreed matters will be taken forward by UPC.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To adopt the amended Mission Statement	MB	MH	AGREED Unanimously

B. PLANNING – See Separate Minutes

C. JUNE COUNCIL MEETING

1. Declarations of Interest – None declared at the meeting

2. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports – No participation at this time

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18th May 2021

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	MH	MT	AGREED with new councillor abstention

4. Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2021 not covered as separate agenda items below – BL reported that all outstanding actions are ongoing or will be covered by later agenda items.

5. Finance - To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st May 2021 – BL reported that these documents had been distributed to councillors prior to the meeting. He emphasized that the accounts are in good order, but with only two months of the financial year completed, it is not easy to realistically predict the end of year (March 2022) position. No questions were asked or comments made.

Having gained approval to renew the UPC Insurance Policy at the quoted price =/- 10% at the May meeting, he confirmed that he had now renewed the policy to include all risks cover for the new Farmers Field storage container at an increased cost of only 1.5%.

6. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other written Reports (attached at Appendix 1 on website version only)

a. Clerks Report – BL emphasized that he had submitted the application form for Urchfont to enter the CPRE Laurence Kitching 'Winner of Winners' competition which will be judged unannounced in July 2021. He has posted notices to this effect in notice boards and around the Village, put articles in the June edition of Redhorn News and on the Website 'Latest News' encouraging the community to improve tidiness of the Village and notified the grounds maintenance contractor. SH advised that he and his wife had decided to clean and clear growth around the Urchfont Gateway signs between now and July, this is one of the first things that the judges will see when they arrive and needs to give a good impression. MH volunteered to assist with this task.

b. Councillor reports

i. Urchfont Pond – In addition to his written report, MB clarified the following points:

- The brown foam seen floating in the pond is nothing to do with the blue/green algae problem, it is a good algae which in normal weather conditions rests on the bottom of the pond and digests the silt. Current weather conditions push it up to the surface from where it has to be cleared.
- Blue/Green algae appears like an oil slick on the surface in varying colour formations.
- The blue/green algae count has recently gone up to around 30,000, a great improvement on the original count of over 100,000 (has to be below 20,000 before warning signs can be safely removed. MB has discussed the problem with experts and it is comforting to note that if we had not removed fish, put in aeration systems and installed floating planted islands, the situation would have been considerably worse by now. A new type of dye has just been purchased which is designed to block further light which the algae thrives on. If this does not work then the next step may be to introduce hydrogen peroxide in safe concentrations. In the past Barley Straw extract could be used in ponds to combat algae. However the EU banned its use prior to Brexit. Hydrogen Peroxide is the chemical barley straw releases as it decomposes.

ii. Farmers Field – the written report was noted

7. Allocation of Lead Councillor Roles – MB stated that the roles have been reviewed, some have been deleted, amalgamated or added and re-allocated. The revised listing, which was displayed on the screen at the meeting, has been distributed to and agreed by all councillors prior to the meeting. MB stressed that this is a live

document which will be amended as changes are identified and/or as additional councillors are co-opted. More emphasis has been placed on youth in the community (SB to lead), on the environment (SH to lead) and, in the absence of a councillor from Lydeaway / Wedhampton, a liaison role has been added (MH to lead).

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To adopt the Lead Roles as presented with immediate effect, but subject to change as required in the future (to be posted on the website)	MB	SH	AGREED Unanimously

ACTION: FC/21/21 – BL

Note: See approved Lead Councillor Roles at Appendix 2 to these minutes (on website only)

8. Ideas for initiatives in support of the Mission Statement – MB referred to a set of initiatives displayed on the screen covering a wide range of ideas under the headings Youth/Children Environment, Engaging with the Parish / Attracting new councillors and Other Ideas. More ideas will be generated and reported on as time goes by, but MB considered these to be an essential framework to ensure success of the agreed Mission Statement. Surgeries is considered to be a key initiative where members of the public can meet councillors to discuss concerns and ideas, it is intended that MB and MH will hold the first of these surgeries and report back at the August meeting having first published a set of guidelines on how they will operate.

The current listing is not exhaustive, current ideas need to be developed and new ideas prompted. With this in mind it is intended to hold a UPC Team Building event to discuss this amongst other team building elements prior to reporting back at a subsequent UPC meeting. MB and BL to organise.

ACTION: FC/22/21 – MB/BL

9. UPEG – MB reported that UPEG has been very busy planting trees and hedges. Having completed the UPC Carbon Footprint calculation, Richard Bromley is now proceeding with the wider community calculation. These calculations can be used to measure the success of initiatives in the future. An environment event is planned to be held in the Village Hall on 24th July 2021 to which various environmental groups will be invited to attend and mount displays with the view to generating more interest in environmental initiatives and encouraging recruitment of further volunteers. Refreshments will be available. MB commented that he personally had become more involved with environmental issues since being involved with UPEG (e.g. wildlife areas in his garden), and encouraged others to find out more by attending the event. SB stated that it is essential that youth in the village should be involved as they are very conscious of environmental issues, she will liaise with SH in this respect.

MB stated that he believed that UPEG should support and contribute to the Churchyard re-wilding project and, following comments from Mr. Milner proposed the following contribution. The project will be represented at the event on 24th July.

Chairman closed the meeting for public participation

Mr. Milner stressed that all labour will be voluntary, funding will go towards the cost of plants in plug form. Wider experience has shown that planting from seed is not a successful option. A plant survey has been completed and sent to MB.

Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve a contribution of £250 from the UPEG budget to support the Living Churchyard Project	MB	MH	AGREED Unanimously

10. Issues raised at Parish Meeting on 18th May 2021

a. Councillor email addresses to be published (asked by Mr. M Smith)?

Chairman closed the meeting for Public Participation

Mr. Smith firstly stated that he was encouraged by the agenda items and applauded the efforts to improve communication with the public. To this end he reiterated his request to see councillor email addresses published as is the case with some other local councils, this would be more convenient than having to go through the Clerk as now or making a telephone call.

The Chairman re-opened the Council meeting

It was pointed out that:

- Legislation does not specifically require email addresses to be published.
- The current system of all correspondence being sent to the Clerk is to maintain a control to better satisfy GDPR requirements (personal data), maintain a central record of all activity and ensure enquiries are followed up appropriately.
- Personal email addresses can be used but access needs to be controlled to ensure privacy of personal data
- It is more complicated to satisfy FOI requests without the central control and record, especially if councillors leave the Council but keep council information on the personal computers / emails.
- UPC has a limited number of UPC email addresses available, additional costs may be involved if more are needed

PW suggested that the only way to really maintain control is to issue all councillor's with a UPC email address, this effectively changes their mindset to council work and their emails would be retained in a council specific email record. It could be policy that all emails should be cc'd to the Clerk to maintain control and records.

MB asked councillors whether they would be happy to be allocated a UPC email address. MH was of the view that he would prefer to maintain the current system of control and record keeping, SB and MT agreed. SH would prefer a UPC email address with all emails cc'd to the clerk. MB could see benefits in using UPC email addresses but also had some concerns, he suggested that he and BL should review the pro's and con's and make recommendations at the next meeting.

ACTION: FC/23/21 – MB/BL

b. What does Wedhampton get out of the PRECEPT (asked by Mr. R Day)? – BL reported that this was not the first time this question had been asked by a Wedhampton resident. He had previously written a long explanation confirming that the PRECEPT covered a wide range of council operational expenses as well as projects and identified the items that could be attributed directly to Wedhampton. In consultation with MB, it was agreed that a similar response should be sent to Mr. Day, nothing further has been heard. Both responses had included reference to the fact that Wedhampton does not currently have a councillor on UPC despite a lot of effort by himself and ex-councillor Bill Donald to try and encourage applicants prior to the May elections and more recently for co-option. It was generally agreed that encouragement to join UPC should continue, maybe with a specific article in Redhorn News.

ACTION: FC/24/21 – BL

11. Future Meeting Dates – BL stated that he had already booked the main hall for the 14th July meeting, but recognising that things could change because of possible delays in lockdown easing, he would like guidance on the following:

- Does UPC wish to continue, where possible, to use the second Wednesday in each month for meetings?
- When does UPC wish to return to using the Conference Room rather than the Main Village Hall?

Debate concluded that where possible the 2nd Wednesday of each month should be used and that a return to the conference room should be made as soon as possible.

12. Update on Current Urgent Issues not covered by above agenda items

a. 40mph Buffer Zone on B3098 - BL referred to the minutes of the April 2021 meeting which included a report from PW on the proposed introduction of a 40mph buffer zone on the B3098 to the east of Urchfont. BL reported that he had now received an email from Wiltshire Council advising that formal consultation is due to begin on the implementation of this proposal which will introduce a 40mph buffer zone to the east of Urchfont from the current start of the 30mph zone by Walnut Close to a point east of Crooks Lane, thus incorporating Crooks Lane within the 40mph zone up to where the 20mph zone starts before Foxley Fields. The announcement will be made in the Gazette and Herald on 17th June and the consultation period will end on 12th July 2021. BL commented that this is excellent news about an initiative which UPC has been trying to get implemented for a number of years, he thanked PW for his assistance in convincing WC Officers that this justified.

13. Other Reports from Councillors – MH reported that WC Highways had carried out further pothole work on the road to Redhorn Vedette, although the surface is much improved there are still some potholes remaining. MH also reported that the six monthly UPC highways survey will be carried out later this month and outstanding / new issues discussed with the WC Highways Engineer.

14. Items for Future Agenda include:

- a. Pathway to Oakfrith Wood** (To be discussed at the September 2021 meeting)
- b. Monitoring Ash Dieback**
- c. Use of councillor email addresses**

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 14th July 2021- 7.00pm Village Hall (Main Hall)

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40pm

a. CLERK'S REPORT

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

FC/19/21 – Check on status of Devizes Community Area Planning Partnership (DCAP) – have emailed Andrew Jack, Devizes Community Engagement Manager, awaiting reply

FC/20/21 – Book Village Hall (Main Hall) for next UPC meeting on 8th June – booked 19th May 2021. I have also booked 14th July 2021.

ii. Finance – The Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st May 2021 has been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting with this agenda. The accounts are in good order but this early in the financial year it is not possible to indicate the end of year reserve at 31st March 2022 with accuracy.

The internal auditor has collected all the 2020/21 documents and will complete his audit by 21st June to facilitate submission of documents to the external auditors by their deadline of 1st July.

iii. Co-option to fill vacancies – At the time of writing I have received one completed and eligible application for co-option from Mr. Simon Holt. Any completed and eligible applications received after 31st May 2021 will be considered at the July and/or subsequent meetings.

iv. CPRE Best Kept Village Competition 2021 – Laurence Kitching Winner of Winners – I have submitted the required entry form, Village Report and maps to CPRE by the stated deadline. I have also included an article in the June edition of Redhorn News encouraging the community to do their bit to try to win the award.

v. Councillor Fundamentals On-Line Training Course – Cllr Turner has been booked and confirmed on this course to be held on 21st June 2021.

Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

b. Councillors Reports

i. Urchfont Pond report June 2021

Minor algal blooms and scum have appeared on the surface of the pond in recent days. These have been physically dispersed or scooped out of the pond where possible. It should be noted that further more extensive blooms could occur.

The analysis of the pond carried out by Bernice Brewster on 19th May showed that there had been a 20% increase in the amount of algae in the pond since her pre covid measurement in early 2019. This was attributed to the weeks of bright sunshine but generally cold weather earlier in this year. (the sunshine stimulates the growth of the algae, but the cold slows down the growth of the plants)

The weather conditions are very similar to the last time there was a major bloom of red and green algae that covered the entire surface of the pond. If we had not taken steps to control the algae it is highly likely that the pond would be covered in a blanket of algae now.

Two additional measures to control the algae will be discussed at the next UPC meeting:

- Barley straw "sausages"
- Very dilute Hydrogen Peroxide.

Both options are entirely safe for the plants and ducks etc

Discussions are taking place with Aquatic Consultancy and Aquatic Management Services to determine what else can be done.

Cllr. Mark Botham

ii. Farmers Field

Rustic fence at rear of container is now completed. The Cubs and Beavers groups held 6 afternoon sessions during May. Wild flowers have been seeded in the glade area and near to the container and please keep off signs erected. Monitory of the ash dieback situation is being carried out on a regular basis, any trees that appear dangerous and likely to fall will be felled.

Cllr Pete Rotherham

LEAD COUNCILLOR AND LIAISON ROLES (Approved on 8th June 2021)

Councillor	Area of Responsibility
<p>Mark Botham (Chairman)</p>	<p>Highways including: (with Martyn Hollyman)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road safety • Parking • Speed Watch • Lydeaway / Wedhampton Junctions • Street furniture and Lighting • Bus Stops • Parish Steward • Grass Verges • Drains • Top Green <p>Urchfont Pond Algae Project Parish Trust Ex-Officio member of UPEG Liaison with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The press (with Vice Chairman)
<p>Pete Rotherham</p>	<p>Farmer's Field Pond Green Maintenance and events: Christmas Tree, Christmas Lights, Duck House and pond water replenishment (with David Stevens) Liaison with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Bus Committee
<p>Malcom Turner (Lead Councillor for Planning)</p>	<p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Applications including tree applications • Planning Policies and Procedures • Councillor Familiarisation with Planning Policies etc. <p>Trees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remedial Works from latest survey and general oversight of trees on Parish owned / managed land (with new co-opted member)
<p>Martyn Hollyman (Vice Chairman)</p>	<p>Highways including: (with Mark Botham)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road safety • Parking • Speed Watch • Lydeaway / Wedhampton Junctions • Street furniture and Lighting • Bus Stops • Parish Steward • Grass Verges • Drains • Top Green <p>Ex-Officio member of UPEG Liaison with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennis Club • Press (with Chairman) • Wedhampton and Lydeaway residents
<p>Sarah Bamber</p>	<p>Recreation Ground, Equipment and Football Pitch Liaison with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church • Youth (including schools, pre-schools etc) • Community Shop

Councillor	Area of Responsibility
David Stevens	Cemetery Social Media – Facebook, What’s App Pond Green Maintenance and events: Christmas Tree, Christmas Lights, Duck House and pond water replenishment (with Pete Rotherham) Liaison with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urchfont Allotment Association • Urchfont Cricket Club • Scarecrow Festival Committee • Candles Round the Pond Event
Simon Holt	Environmental Issues UPEG Trees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remedial works from latest survey and general oversight of trees on Parish owned / managed land (with Malcolm Turner) Liaison with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Rights of Way Volunteer Group • Friends of Oakfrith Wood

This list will be reviewed and updated when additional councillors are co-opted and/or when required..