



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Full Council meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Wednesday 8th May 2024

Present: Councillor's: Moscrop (PM – Chair), Bamber (SB – Vice Chair), Rotherford (JR), Hill (TH), Kendall (PK), Waddell (JW), Shears (SS) and Stephens (AS)
Councillor for Urchfont & Bishops Cannings: Philip Whitehead (PW)
Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)
Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Brenda Potter, John Durbin

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Welcome by the Chair – PM welcomed all to the meeting. Noting that Councillors Gibb and Holt had resigned since the last meeting, PM thanked them both for their contribution, effort and service to the Council during their tenure. She also thanked The Scarecrow Festival Committee, organisers, volunteers, and contributors in the community for the excellent festival the previous weekend which by all accounts had been a great success. Thanks was also directed to the farmers who had provided parking at both ends of the Village which had significantly reduced traffic and congestion on the B3098.

2. Apologies - None

B. STATUTORY ANNUAL BUSINESS

For the benefit of new councillors, BL explained the purpose and process for the following statutory business which must be undertaken every May.

i. Election of the Chair – BL asked PM whether she was prepared to stand again for this post, which she confirmed and then asked councillors for any other nominations – none were made.

| Proposal | Proposer | Second | Resolution |
|---|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| To elect Pam Moscrop as Chair of the Council | TH | JR | AGREED unanimously |

ii. Election of the Vice Chair - BL asked SB whether she was prepared to stand again for this post, which she confirmed and then asked councillors for any other nominations – none were made.

| Proposal | Proposer | Second | Resolution |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| To elect Sarah Bamber as the Vice Chair | TH | AS | AGREED unanimously |

iii. Appointment of Lead of Planning – As the previous incumbent, Simon Holt had resigned, BL called for nominations for this role. SB nominated TH, but he declined. JW volunteered to take on the role with guidance from TH and others.

| Proposal | Proposer | Second | Resolution |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| To appoint Jackie Waddell as Lead of Planning | TH | JR | AGREED unanimously |

iv. Election of Representatives – BL noted that these representatives had already been chosen in April 2024 as part of the agreed Lead Roles.

- a. Devizes Area Board
- b. Parish Trust

v. **Appointment of Internal Auditor** – BL recommended the re-appointment of Paul Papworth-Smith who has successfully carried out this role for several years.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| To re-appoint Paul Papworth-Smith as the internal auditor | PM | SB | AGREED unanimously |

vi. **To Approve Annual Subscriptions (23/24 costs in brackets)** – BL explained the purpose and usefulness of each of these subscriptions.

- a. Community First (£40)
- b. NALC & WALC – 24/25 invoice received £519.90 including £86.65 VAT
- c. Society of Local Council Clerks (£187)
- d. Local Councils Update (£80)
- e. ICO (£35)

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| To approve continuation of all the above subscriptions during 24/25. | PM | SB | AGREED unanimously |

End of Statutory Business

C. **PLANNING** – See Separate Minutes

D. MAY FULL COUNCIL MEETING

1. **Councillor Declarations of Interest** – None declared at the meeting.

2. **Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports**

Top Green - PW, as a resident, pointed out that the newly restored edge to Top Green has again been damaged. Coines were apparently removed by Scarecrow organisers and an unidentified tractor ran across the newly laid edging. WC will not be taking any further action to have the work repeated by the Hazel Green developer. Brenda Potter pointed out that cars parked around Top Green now seem to park further into the middle of the road which forces passing vehicles to mount the Green. BL suggested that maybe now is a good opportunity to try to have the road widened by WC to take account of parking and larger vehicles using these roads. PW agreed to speak with planning and Highways on this suggestion. TH volunteered to make some temporary repairs. AS was asked to raise the issue at the Parish meeting.

ACTION: FC/24/39 – PW/AS

3. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10th April 2024**

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting. | PM | JW | AGREED with one abstention due absence from meeting |

4. **Outstanding Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2024** – BL had updated the listing based on information provided. However, following the resignation of Cllr Holt several of his outstanding actions need to be reattributed. It was noted that most of these related to planting and verge issues, it was suggested that these could perhaps be undertaken by UPEG. TH agreed to discuss with UPEG. It was agreed that action 70 could be deleted.

ACTION: FC/24/40 - TH

5. Finance

i. **Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 30th April 2024** – BL confirmed that the Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting and that the accounts for the first month of the new financial year are in good order. The first 50% installment of the PRECEPT had been received from WC.

ii. **Financial Spend Items during April 2024** – Individual spend is shown on the Bank Reconciliation and was displayed on screen at the meeting.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|--|----------|----------|--------------------|
| To ratify all spend items made during April 2024 | PM | SB | AGREED unanimously |

iii. **First Responder's Kit Contribution** – JR conformed that we now had two trained 1st Responders in the Parish (Carol Blood and Neil Jones) but that they currently only had one medical kit between them. JR had gained promises of £500 from the Parish Trust and £1500 from Scarecrows, but this left the fund £1000 short to acquire this which is rented and updated from the Responder organisation. JR proposed that this should be funded by UPC.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|----------|----------|--------------------|
| To include a £1000 contribution in the budget towards the rental of the 1st Responders kit. | JR | SS | AGREED unanimously |

PM commented that the Wedhampton defibrillator had been returned from the supplier and is due to be reinstalled with battery, it is hoped that this will now function correctly having been repaired under warranty.

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

a. **Clerks Report** – JR stated that he is willing to set up initial briefing sessions for new councillors in advance of any formal training courses being available.

b. Councillor reports

i. **Highways** – TH stated that contact had been made with some of the Crookwood Lane landowners following the recent serious flooding but understands that WC are dealing with this. PW added that underground pipes are an issue in this area, inspections have been undertaken. PM will be asking LHFIFG to speed up implementation of the one-way exit from Wedhampton onto the A342, a further accident has happened here which has demolished a road sign and narrowly missed the new litter bin.

ii. **Urchfont Pond Report** – in addition to the report, it was noted that fish are now successfully spawning in the pond.

iii. **First Responders** – nothing further to add.

iv. **Community Shop Report** – SB confirmed that a very good AGM had been held with no disruption. She added that the Scarecrow weekend had proved very successful for the shop with an increased turnover of 11% compared to the previous year. JR asked whether he could see a copy of the shop P&L account, SB agreed to try to facilitate.

ACTION: FC/24/41 - SB

7. Parish Meeting – 18th May 2024

– It was noted that several councillors could not attend this event, PM, TH, SS and JW.

It was agreed that the acquisition and serving of drinks and nibbles will be coordinated by SB. AS agreed to speak with Steve Osborne to see if any drinks were left over from Scarecrows.

ACTION: FC/24/42 – SB/AS

Discussing the draft agenda, added additional presentations on Highways including interaction with WC (AS), First Responders (JR), recruitment of new councillors (JR) and youth council proposals (PK). SB will undertake the UPC Annual Report presentation, PW agreed to talk on a related subject. All speakers are to prepare their own Power Point presentations. SB will speak with Ian Walker to ensure that the hall will be set up with chairs, tables, and other equipment. It was agreed that all attending will meet at the Hall at 5.15pm.

ACTION: FC/24/43 – ALL ATTENDING

8. Speed on the A342 at Wedhampton – PM highlighted an email received from a Wedhampton resident with a driveway onto the A342 suggesting that the speed limit on the A342 should be reduced below 50mph. PW stated that the speed limit on this stretch had previously been 60 and did not believe that WC could justify reducing below 50mph. Whilst he had some sympathy, he believed that the issue is more one of visibility rather than speed limitation. PW agreed to draft a response to the resident.

ACTION: FC/24/44 - PW

9. Use of Un-Registered Land in the Parish – Based on the suggestion from PW at the last meeting, TH made a proposal to purchase and plant five apple trees on the grass area alongside Yew Tree Cottage and turn it into a community garden. The owners of Yew Tree Cottage have currently fenced the unregistered land presumably with the view to claiming it after the statutory period. TH also pointed out that the area previously mentioned as unregistered at the end of The Croft has been legitimately purchased.

| Proposal | Proposer | Seconder | Resolution |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| To approve a budget of £200 to purchase trees and a bench to be located on the unregistered land alongside Yew Tree Cottage. | TH | PM | AGREED unanimously |

10. Speed Indicator Signs on the B3098 – TH reported that he and JR had visited the supplier in Fordingbridge only to find that the property was locked, and the company apparently closed down. TH subsequently stripped down the sign, purchased and bought a new control unit which worked for around 24 hours and then failed again. Information from Woodford Valley PC suggests that they have had the same unit for around 4 years, and it has rarely worked for any length of time. It may be that UPC will need to consider buying an alternative unit from a more reliable source.

11. Urchfont Parish Neighbourhood Plan (See latest WG minutes at Appendix II on website version only) – TH noted that both Simon Holt and Debbie Carr-Jones had resigned from the WG, this left a serving UPC Councillor vacancy in accord with the WG TOR. JW volunteered to take on this role. TH will brief her on the role and progress to date.

ACTION: FC/24/45 - TH

TH further reported that the Plan is progressing well. A lot of work is being undertaken and policies are being drafted.

JR stated that preparation of the last Plan was considered somewhat contentious and recent events have highlighted further issues, he suggested that members of the WG must abide by the UPC Code of Conduct. BL pointed out that only serving UPC Councillors are accountable to the UPC Code. The WG has its own Code of Conduct which should be updated to mirror the UPC Code with accountability to UPC. TH agreed to prepare a draft for UPC approval.

ACTION: FC/24/46 - TH

12. Wiltshire Youth Council – PK had distributed a proposal to all councillors (now attached at Appendix III on website version only) which identified that 25% of individuals identified in the last census are aged between 0 and 29. PK emphasized that she is very passionate about trying to get younger people more involved in the community and believes that the Youth Council initiative is a good opportunity to do this. She intends to speak with the Schools and Scouting organisations, Pm confirmed that the lead of Scouts is very interested to be involved. Consensus concluded that this is a very good idea and should be developed.

13. UPEG Daffodil Planting Proposal (distributed to councillors 1/5/24) – PM reiterated the proposal to reintroduce daffodil planting in Urchfont and the fact that UPEG are seeking a £500 contribution from UPC. However, residents in Wedhampton would like their location to be included in the project. PM agreed to contact UPEG to see how much this would add to the anticipated cost.

ACTION: FC/24/47 - PM

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

i. **Recreation Ground Playground** - SB reported that Playdale works to upgrade / repair the playground equipment is scheduled to commence week commencing 13th May 2024.

ii. **Lifebuoy at Urchfont Pond** – SB reported that she has been in touch with the Cubs to agree a suitable date for installation when they can be present. JR was of the view that it should not be positioned by the Duck House, would be more visible at the Manor Farm entrance end of the pond. PM stated that it must be visible, maybe where a lifebuoy was placed for Scarecrow Festival. PW suggested that it should be erected now and be useable, it can be changed if negative comments are received.

15. External Meetings – TH reported that he had attended the Parish Trust meeting and noted that they had a small budget to use for local small projects.

16. Other Reports from Councillors

i. **Bus Shelter Mural Proposal** – TH reported that no responses had been received to the request for mural ideas / artists.

ii. **Pavement infill** – TH had received one quote of £3000 for tarmacking this currently grassed area of pavement, further quotes are being sourced as this appears excessive.

iii. **Bank opposite Stonepit Lane** – JR reported that he had received an issue from Derek Milner asking who the four operatives are who had excessively strimmed this bank recently. BL stated that the Parish contractor had previously trimmed this bank after complaints that growth was restricting vision for motorists on the B3098. He will check whether he undertook this work recently but thought it unlikely because of the number of operatives.

ACTION: FC/24/48 - BL

17. Items for Future Agenda (not identified from agenda items above) – None raised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 12th June 2024 - 7.00pm Village Hall (Conference Room)

A. CLERK'S REPORT

i. **Finance** – Copies of the Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation on 30th April 2024 will be distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting. The accounts are in good order at the end of the first month of the new financial year. The first Precept payment (50%) has been received from WC.

ii. **Councillor Status** –With three new councillors co-opted at the March meeting, this momentarily filled all eleven seats on the Council. However, with Pate Rotherham declaring and having his resignation accepted with effect immediately after the March meeting, the Council has ONE vacancy. The formal vacancy notice was published on Parish Notice Boards on 22nd March. WC Electoral Services have advised that no electorate representations were received by the deadline and that the Council is authorised to co-opt. Subsequently we have received the resignation from Helen Gibb which has been notified to Electoral Services, we expect a formal Vacancy Notice shortly. This means that the Council has TWO vacancies with no expressions of interest being received.

Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

B. COUNCILLORS WRITTEN REPORTS

i. Highways report for May 2024

Bus Shelter, Townsend

The bus shelter has been cleaned and Trevor Hill (TH) gave the walls a coat of white paint.

A342

Work has continued to improve the surface of the road between Chirton and Lydeaway.

Drains inspection.

TH and I conducted an inspection of the drains in the village of Urchfont and listed those which need urgent attention. The drains in Lydeaway and Wedhampton will also be inspected before the next council meeting.

A list of drains with issues will be prepared and presented to Wiltshire highways for urgent work.

The work on the ditch at Stonepit Lane has now been completed. The UPC would like to thank Geoff Potter and Pete Huntley for carrying out the works promptly and to high standard.

Speed Indicator Display

Geoff Potter and Pete Huntley also installed the two posts to accommodate the SID system. The system was working well; however, it has since developed a fault. The control unit is faulty and has been removed to get it repaired or replaced.

Registering myself as "point of contact".

Given that I have just re-joined the council, I have made myself known to the Parish Steward and the chair of LYFIG informing them that I will be the point of contact for highways matters within the Urchfont parish.

Inspection cover near the telephone box - High Street.

I have noticed the inspection cover near the telephone box in the High Street has large deep holes within it, making it a serious trip hazard or worse for children and animals. I have reported it on the My Wilts app and rung Wiltshire Councils highways dept asking them to escalate repairs, given the numbers of visitors we will have over Bank Holiday weekend. For now, I have borrowed 4 cones from the Scarecrow Festival and placed them over the hazard.

Highways

Please can I remind everyone that my role of Highways within the UPC is a liaison one, as a Parish, we have no authority or responsibility for Highways. If anyone has issues with the roads, potholes, Flooding etc, you should still report issues to Wiltshire highways online or through the My Wilts App and make us aware of what you have reported.

Cllrs Andy Stephens and Trevor Hill.

ii. Urchfont Pond Report

There are still traces of the red alga *Euglena sanguinea* on the surface of the pond. These have been present since the flash flood at the end of March and will remain until they use up the nutrients introduced by the flood.

The water is quite cloudy due to the presence of particles the size of micro-algae which I am unable to identify by internet research. Comparison of similar shapes suggests that they may be structural elements of sponges, but an expert on freshwater sponges tells me that particles like these are only made by marine sponges. A thorough search of micro-algal shapes has found nothing that resembles these particles.

These odd particles were visible in the first half of 2023, reaching a peak in May and disappearing by June. This year genuine micro-algal numbers are being held in check by the added calcium and there is a reasonable chance that the water will begin to clarify in June.

Eric Ahlquist via Cllr John Rotherford

iii. First Responders

Neil Jones is now fully qualified and working with other First responders in Upavon and Devizes but really needs his own equipment- on the agenda

We will start advertising again in June to hopefully recruit two more first responders to work with Carol and Neil

Recruitment

With two vacancies I have two potential candidates but will continue advertising and drop more leaflets in certain areas - we need to help our new councillors with induction information

Cllr John Rotherford

iv. Urchfont Community Shop AGM

The annual AGM for the UCSA was held in the village hall on Saturday 13th April. It was well attended with 35 members present, including eight Committee members.

Bill Donald (Chair) thanked all the volunteers for their ongoing support throughout 2023.

Thanks were offered to UPC for their kind financial contribution to the alterations that were made to the stock room and toilet facilities. All the works were completed on time and within budget.

Bill reported that weekly sales were up 15% year on year, and that average weekly sales in the fourth quarter grew to £3,000. The 2023 Scarecrow festival brought in sales of £7,000 and sales over the Christmas period were also excellent.

The Committee were re-elected unanimously for a further 12 months.

The 2024/25 Committee comprises of:

Bill Donald (Chairman)
Maria Kemp (Vice Chair)
Liz Turner (Secretary)
Sarah Bamber
Mary Craddock
Anthea Donald
Pauline Guiney
Stephanie Szakalo

Minor changes to the Rules of the Association were proposed by the Secretary and were carried unanimously.

There was an open forum Q&A Session at the end of the meeting where members were able to ask questions and the meeting ended with refreshments and an informal chat with Committee members and attendees.

Please note that the full minutes of the AGM, along with the minutes of all of UCSA meetings are published on the UPC website and are available for all to read.

Cllr Sarah Bamber

APPENDIX II TO MAY 2024 UPC MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NP WORKING GROUP ON 23 APR 24 IN URCHFONT VILLAGE HALL

Present: Debbie Car Jones (DCJ); Trevor Hill (TH); Keith Hills (KH); Simon Holt (SH)(part); Linda Jennings (LJ); Dave Mottram (DM); Sally Stephens (SS); Malcolm Turner (MT)

Apologies: Stuart Davies (SD); Rob Dolan (RD)

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 26 Mar 24 had been passed to UPC and approved.

Matters Arising

- There was no progress to report on the use of the UPC website pages for NP information and publicity
- SS confirmed that a repeat of April's Redhorn News "Call for Sites" notice had been arranged for May's edition and that she was keeping a log of any site submissions
- The distribution of posters on posts around the Parish had been completed
- TH brought up the subject of landowner liaison and there followed a period of acrimonious discussion and some abusive language after which, SH left the meeting. The meeting resumed with 7 WG members.

2. CALL FOR SITES

SS reported that as at the date of this meeting, no application form for site development had been requested or received.

Decision: It was agreed that no further action would be considered until after the submission deadline of 31 May.

3. FEEDBACK ON UPNP SECTIONS

Housing

KH outlined the structure of the draft housing section. All agreed that this was an excellent professional document and that its structure could serve as a basic reference for all the Plan sections. TH felt that part of it might form the background to an overview of the UPNP.

KH had updated the existing text to reflect recent policy changes; LJ and SH had added evidence. There was some discussion about the housing objective; that it might be tweaked to reflect the allocation of land *through* the site selection process. The term “low cost housing” was considered, but it was evident that the term ‘affordable housing’ was recognised by government and throughout the housing industry. SS pointed out that some definitions might be unfamiliar to the community and suggested the inclusion of a glossary.

KH had drafted policy wording intended to prevent affordable housing policy avoidance by development applications for less than 5 large homes on sites which could easily accommodate more.

DM raised concerns about the impact of new development on traffic movements within and adjacent to Urchfont village. The WG had no feel for the impact that traffic generated by an extra 34 homes would have. Possibly Wiltshire Council may have traffic generation stats but even empirical data might be useful.

Decisions:

- A glossary should accompany the UPNP
- Further information about the impact of new housing development on traffic density and flow was required

Action: KH offered to seek sources of empirical data on traffic increases generated by new development.

Community facilities

DM reported that, apart from the doctors’ surgery, the existing community facilities were being maintained.

Character and setting of villages

LJ had been working with MT on this section and on the Natural Environment section. She explained that it was evident that there was some overlap between the 2 sections and that it might be better to amalgamate them. However, work was required on the views and landscape settings (currently in the Natural Environment section of the UWLNP) to include them in any new UPNP section.

Natural environment

MT had drafted out a new outline UPNP section, but explained that there might be some additional areas of Green Space. Further investigation was necessary. LJ had contacted the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Office to see if the current list of UWLNP nature conservation sites was up to date. A response was awaited.

Traffic and movement issues

TH had circulated a new Transport and Utilities section showing evidence, new narrative and policies. 34 new homes would clearly have an impact on existing utilities, but TH pointed out that the UPNP as a planning document could have limited influence on their future provision. Any utilities issues raised would best dealt with by UPC. It was agreed that the provision of safe access was one of the key issues in assessing sites for development, particularly given the road structure in the Parish - but it was pointed out that “major’ development would require developers to provide a Highway Impact Statement.

Working environment

SS had circulated a draft working environment section based on the latest policy documents and, included a list of existing employment sites and businesses. Having seen the structure of the Housing section and comments for MT, she decided to review the layout of the Working Environment section.

Decision re all UPNP Sections:

Work should to continue to bring each section up to the level of a completed draft.

Action: All WG members.

4. UPNP UPDATE PRESENTATION

TH reported that the Chair of UPC had asked for an update presentation on progress with the UPNP, as part of the Parish Council's AGM on 18 May 24. Several UP WG members were away at this point, but SS volunteered to speak so that the community would be kept informed and involved in UPNP progress.

Decision: The UPNP WG would make a contribution to the UPC AGM

Actions:

- DM/SS, assisted by KH, would give a short presentation on UPNP progress to the councillors and audience at UPC's AGM on 18 May
- All WG members would consider, and send to DM/SS/KH, points for inclusion in the presentation.

5. 2ND QUESTIONNAIRE

SS reported that it is possible to change the pdf status of the UWLNP 2nd questionnaire, so that the questions contained therein could be reviewed to establish their use for the latest round of public consultation. It was stated that a copy of the old questionnaire was available, on the UPC website. MT offered to show the questionnaire to a professional editor in the village to seek her comments.

Decision: A second questionnaire was required to gather further detailed community opinions and the

UWLNP 2ND questionnaire on the UPC website could serve as a starting point

Action: All WG members would consider the content of the UWLNP 2nd questionnaire then formulate questions for a 2nd UPNP questionnaire for discussion at the next meeting.

6. AOB

LJ reported that she had spoken to David Way in WC's Planning Policy Dept to seek the latest information about Local Plan Progress. The latest forecast is that WCLP will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in the last quarter of 2024, with adoption anticipated in the third quarter of 2025. With this in mind, the UPNP should not be submitted before the autumn of 2025.

All to Note.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 28 May 24 in the Village Hall commencing 7pm.

All to note.

Proposal – Urchfont Parish Youth Council

Why?

- Looking at the census and the demographics we need to ensure all voices are represented within our Parish.
- We should encourage & nurture our youths in our communities to be interested in the community in which they live.
- Possibility to be part of the wider Wiltshire Youth Council. Next elections to be held Jan/Feb 2025
- Potential future Parish councillors and possibly Wiltshire councillor/MP.
- Ability to grow as individuals with the mentoring and support of seasoned Parish councillors.

How?

- Align with the principles of the Urchfont Parish Council in terms of numbers, nominated Chair/secretary
 - We would be asking young people aged 11 to 17 years old to put themselves forward.
- Introduce a chaperoned forum (like our monthly council meetings) for the volunteer councillors to meet. Maybe an hour before our council meeting?
- Give a slot to the chair of the Youth council in the official council meeting to bring forward suggestions and ideas