



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Full Council Meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Wednesday 8th February 2023

Present: Councillors: Botham (MB – Chairman), Hollyman (MH - Vice-Chairman), Turner (MT), Bamber (SB), Rotherham (PR), Rotherford (JR), Moscrop (PM) and Scanlon (RS)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

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

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Trevor Hill, Nicky Hammond, Elaine Bancroft, Maria Kemp, Richard Kemp, Corrine Rotherham, Bill Donald, David Brock

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Welcome by the Chairman – MB welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies – Cllrs Holt (SH) and Gibb (HG)

B. PLANNING – See Separate Minutes

C. FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Declarations of Interest

PR – Pecuniary interest in items 5c (Tree in Peppercombe Lane) and 14a (Playing Field Fencing)

2. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Report

a. Funding for Urchfont Pond Ducks – Elaine Bancroft explained that funds are running very low to provide straw and feed for the Village ducks, this is mainly because of rising costs and the fact that fund raising events have been severely limited due to Covid and other restrictions. Costs are currently standing at around £384 per year and this amount is not currently available for 23/24. Elaine requested that the Parish Council contribute towards predicted 23/24 costs.

b. Farmers Field – Decision on access for dogs

MB invited the following to speak on this subject:

Richard Kemp – is passing on comments he had received from others in the community unhappy with the decision to allow dogs into the Field. Such comments are that there are plenty of other spaces elsewhere in the community to walk dogs and questioning whether dogs will be kept under control and waste recovered, there is plenty of evidence elsewhere which suggests that the latter will not happen. He referred to the fact that the Field had been bequeathed to the people of the Village under the stewardship of the Parish Council for the benefit of the whole community as a natural habitat.

Maria Kemp – read out a statement which is attached at Appendix V (on website version only) strongly suggesting that the decision had been taken without sufficient grounds or consideration. No consideration appears to have been given to how the trial period will be monitored or policed.

Corrine Rotherham – expressed the view that there is no sound basis to allow dogs, UPC should focus on provision of better access for disabled and young children. There is plenty of evidence in the surrounding footpaths of irresponsible dog walkers not clearing waste or leaving it hanging in bags on trees which is a health hazard and danger to other animals. Wildlife in the Field should be left undisturbed, dogs should not be allowed in at any time of the year.

Nicky Hammond – expressed the view that a lot of public funds have been spent on Farmers Field to date and appear to be increasing, details should be published in comparison to expenditure on other facilities in the Parish. She was also of the view that the Field should be left as a restricted access nature area.

PR summarised a letter that he said had been given to him by Phil Milanese on this issue (attached at Appendix V on website version only).

MB asked BL to confirm the stipulation contained in UPC Standing Orders regarding rescission of previous decisions, BL confirmed that Standing Orders Clause 30 states:

“A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except at a meeting at which the original proposer is present, and either by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 7 members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.”

MB asked SB whether she would be prepared to change her proposal, she declined on the basis that sufficient discussion had taken place including the fact that dogs will need to be strictly controlled (not recorded in minutes). However, she suggested that this needs to be on the agenda for the next Parish meeting, if public views do not want dogs then she will withdraw her proposal.

In accordance with Standing Orders, MB stated that the decision to allow dogs up until the end of March 2023 will remain unchanged and then reviewed post the Parish Meeting. However, although the council’s decision will remain no bins or signage will be purchased until after the vote at the Parish Meeting.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 11th January 2023

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	MB	MT	AGREED with 1 abstention due to absence

4. **Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2023** – As the list had been discussed at some length during the January meeting, it was agreed that BL should send the displayed and updated listing to all Councillors for feedback on their actions at the March meeting.

ACTION: FC/10/23 - BL

5. Finance

a. **Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st January 2023** – BL confirmed that these documents had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting and that the accounts are in good order. No questions were asked.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To ratify the list of payments made during February 2023	MB	MH	AGREED unanimously

b. **Grounds Maintenance and Litter Bin Emptying Contracts** – as approved at the January 2023 meeting, BL confirmed that he had negotiated an extension of the current contracts with Mark Goddard on the following basis:

Contract	Grounds Maintenance	Litter Bin Emptying (Including extra bins)	Village Hall
Year 1 increase 23/24	1.42%	2.75%	2.99%
Year 2 increase 24/25	3%	3%	3%
Year 3 Increase 25/26	3%	3%	3%

As these increases are within the 4% cap applied at the January meeting, BL intended to extend the contract on this basis from 1st April 2023.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To ratify the proposed 3 year extension of the grounds, litter bin emptying and Village Hall contracts based on the above increases in cost.	MB	PM	AGREED unanimously

c. **Request to fund / part fund works to large Ash tree adjacent to property boundary off Peppercombe Lane** – PW confirmed that WC will not normally pay for any tree works on unregistered land. However, there is potential to fund such works if the tree is considered to be a danger to a designated right of way. A meeting was being conducted today to establish whether this is the case, PW is awaiting a decision and will forward this to BL when received.

ACTION: FC/11/23 - PW

d. **Proposed new additional litter bin for Wedhampton** – PM proposed that an additional litter bin is required in Wedhampton at the entrance to The High Street, existing bins are at the far end of Greengate Road. She will arrange installation of the bin on a free of charge basis.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve purchase of a new litter bin for Wedhampton of the same type as previously supplied.	MB	JR	AGREED unanimously

ACTION: FC/12/23 – BL

e. **Proposal for funding for ducks on Urchfont Pond** – Following on from the request outlined by Elaine Bancroft during ‘public participation’, MB suggested that the Council should support the ducks financially as they have done in past years pre-covid. MH suggested that an enhanced contribution should be made in view of the importance of the ducks to the Village. MT suggested that feed should not be available to or attract the 15 – 20 wild ducks which frequent the pond as these could pass on avian flu to the fenced in ducks, Elaine Bancroft disagreed as many of these wild ducks were born and raised on the pond.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To contribute an enhanced amount of £450 for 2023/24	MH	MB	AGREED unanimously

ACTION: FC/13/23 - BL

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

a. **Clerks Report** – nothing further to report or clarify.

b. **Councillor reports**

i. **UPC Highways Report** – MH confirmed that he and MB had completed the UPC highways survey which had been sent to WC Highways and the sewer team. A copy of the full survey report will be distributed to Councillors. All salt bins have recently been replenished. A meeting with the Highways engineer is due shortly to discuss the report. Recognizing the enormous amount of UPC work in conducting the survey, PW had written to the WC Director of Highways to see whether a standardized format and reporting system could be devised for use by all Parish Councils – a response is awaited. PM asked when the no exit at the junction of Wedhampton High Street and the A342 would be introduced. PW confirmed that this was on the WC program for the required

consultation at the beginning of the next financial year in April, once completed the works will be undertaken unless there are objections. The next LHFIG (ex CATG) meeting is on 18th April 2023. PW asked about the replacement of the gateway signage in Crookwood Lane, BL confirmed that this was delayed due to the pandemic and that there is no budget assigned this FY.

7. Neighbourhood Plan – (see appendix II - TOR & Code of Conduct and appendix III - Minutes of January meeting on website version only) – MT confirmed that the primary objective of the Working Group (WG) is to review and update the current plan. MT referred to the draft TOR and Code of Conduct which he hoped Councillors had read so that they can be approved. BL suggested that the TOR should include details of the UPC approved and appointed membership of the WG and the mechanism to be adopted in the event that new members need to be added subject to the approval of UPC, MB agreed that this should be added and presented to the March meeting for approval.

ACTION: FC/14/23 - MT

MT, as the Deputy Chair of the WG, summarized the minutes of the last meeting attached at Appendix II and requested that all WG minutes should be included on the website.

ACTION: FC/15/23 – BL

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve the proposed NP WG Code of Conduct document	MB	PM	AGREED unanimously

8. Entrance to Pathway to Oakfrith Wood and Pathway to the School – (see appendix IV –on website version only) – Trevor Hill confirmed that a UPC WG was set up to consider options for upgrading the pathways, the WG comprised PW, HG, Trevor Hill, and Ian Walker (representing the school). He then referred specifically to the proposed plan for the entrance to the Pathway to Oakfrith Wood on screen and attached at Appendix IV. Work specification documents were produced for the entrance to the pathway (work for UPC) and pathway to the school (work for the school) and these were used to approach three contractors to provide quotes. PW confirmed that WC will contribute to the school for their pathway out of proceeds from the Hales Farm development.

In terms of the proposed works for UPC, three quotes had been submitted as follows:

Contractor	Part 1 Works	Part II works	Combined Total
L A Building	£3850.50	£3492.45	£7343.00
GAP Groundworks	£3500.00	£3000.00	£6500.00
Mark Goddard	£3750.00	£3350.00	£7100.00

All quotes exclude VAT.

Having sought the views of Councillors on the proposal and quotes, MB proposed the following and thanked Trevor Hill for his work on this:

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve the quote from GAP to conduct the combined works at a cost of £6,500 +VAT.	MB	MH	AGREED with one abstention

ACTION: FC/16/23 - BL

9. Electric Vehicle Charging Points for villages – RS briefly summarised the capital funding opportunities available through the scheme and the fact that the following sites would be eligible for the grant:

- Car parks owned by Wiltshire Council
- Highways in the Wiltshire County
- Larger sites not owned by Wiltshire Council

- Small sites not owned by Wiltshire Council (such as the Village Hall)

PW suggested that infrastructure is generally limited but thought that Urchfont might be relatively well off. BL emphasized the likely infrastructure task and cost of installing EV charging points where insufficient power supply is available close by. JR questioned whether implementation of such a scheme is economic in comparison to potential users home charging, costs will not be recovered if charging points are not used. RS pointed out that a prerequisite of any application for a grant is that a survey is carried out to establish potential current and future usage in the community. Debate concluded that RS should conduct such a survey across the Parish to facilitate preparation of a cost benefit analysis to better inform UPC on whether to submit a grant application.

ACTION: FC/17/23 - RS

BL confirmed that he will distribute a Power Point presentation prepared by RS to all Councillors on this subject.

ACTION: FC/18/23 – BL

(Post Meeting Note – Power Point presentation distributed to all councillors on 15th February)

10. Proposal to publish UPC Facebook page (see appendix VI on website version only) – PM referred to her email at Appendix VI and asked Councillors to try the example links if they had not done so already. She also confirmed that she is willing to administer and be the focal point for the page which individuals will need to join. MB asked whether it would be possible to set up a trial page, PM confirmed that she is willing to do this and report back at the March meeting to facilitate a final decision on future use.

ACTION: FC/19/23 - PM

11. Appointment of First Responders – JR reported that he had established that the closest trained first responder is in Etchilhampton. Whilst he would be keen on promoting the concept, there is no point in advertising now because the next recruitment session is not until June / July this year. It was suggested that this could be on the agenda for the Parish meeting.

ACTION: FC/20/23 - BL

12. Ongoing flooding at the junction of The Bottom and The Ham – PW reported that WC had scheduled works to be undertaken by a contractor, but he was not aware of specific timeframe.

13. Dogs in Farmers Field – see discussion and way forward under Item 2b above.

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

a. Recreation Ground Fencing – area of concern identified in ROSPA report – MB referred to earlier discussion about the need to replace fencing as identified by the recent ROSPA inspection of the playground. A specification to replace 93.5m of the wooden fence and gate posts was submitted to three contractors to obtain quotes in accord with UPC Financial Regulations. The following quotes were received:

L A Building - £8,245 / GAP Groundworks Ltd - £6,556 / All 4 Wood - £4,595 All costs exclude VAT

Proposal	Proposer	Secunder	Resolution
To accept the quote of £4,595 from All 4 Wood to facilitate works as soon as possible.	MB	PM	AGREED unanimously

ACTION: FC/21/23 - BL

b. Future of Urchfont Doctors Surgery – MT asked whether anything further had been decided or publicized on this essential service in the Village. MB agreed to contact the Village Hall who he understood were engaged in lease arrangements.

ACTION: FC/22/23 - MB

PW commented on the new Devizes Health Centre in Marsh Lane which had recently opened and is the first of its kind in the UK. This should not impact on the service provided by Market Lavington Surgery or the Urchfont surgery but will allow the closure of Devizes Community Hospital.

15. External Meetings – None reported.

16. Other Reports from Councillors

a. Electronic Speed Signs - JR requested an update on the proposed introduction of electronic speed signs on the B3098. Contrary to earlier indications, MB had found documentary evidence to show that WC will pay for posts and sockets. This together with the fact that quotes had been obtained for the speed signs will facilitate progress.

17. Items for Future Agenda

- i. Parish Notice Board for Foxley Fields

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 8th March 2023 - 7.00pm Village Hall (Conference Room)

APPENDIX I TO FEBRUARY 2023 UPC MINUTES

a. CLERK'S REPORT

i. **Finance** – Copies of the Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation at 31st January 2023 will be distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting. The accounts are in good order. The accounts have been updated to include all approved amendments to the budgets made at the January meeting.

ii. **PRECEPT 23/24 Submission** – The requirement approved at the January 2023 meeting was submitted to Wiltshire Council on 15th January (prior to the deadline Of 18th)

iii. **Grounds Maintenance and Litter Bin Emptying Contracts** – In accord with the decision taken at the January 2023 meeting, I sought quotes from Mark Goddard to extend his current Grounds and Litter bin emptying contract for up to three years. Having received his quotes for the first year of a 1.41% increase in the grounds contract price and 2.75% increase in the litter bin contract (taking account of additional bins) with a 3% increase to both for each subsequent year, I intend to shortly extend both contracts for three years up until 31st March 2026.

iv. **Dogs in Farmers Field – Item 13 on the agenda** - Can I please remind all councillors of the following wording in Standing Orders – Clause 30 Recission of Previous Decision:

“a. A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except at a meeting at which the original proposer is present, and either by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 7 members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.

b. When a special resolution or any other resolution moved under the provisions of paragraph (a) of this Order has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.”

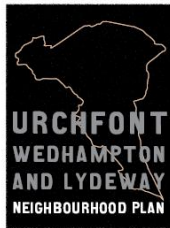
Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

i. HIGHWAYS REPORT JANUARY 2023

- A request was submitted to the Wiltshire Council Winter Team to replenish some of the Grit/Salt bins, some of which needed topping up. This was satisfied very promptly by the WC team.
- Mark and I have completed our six monthly highways survey, and a full report with maps has been sent to the Wiltshire Council Highway's engineer in preparation for our forthcoming meeting with him to discuss the same.
- A separate report with maps, focussing specifically on drains which are either blocked or that we suspect to be blocked has been sent to the Wiltshire Council Sewers team. Due to some periods of excessive rain, autumn leaf fall and much straw lining our gutters, the report contains the highest number blocked since we commenced these surveys in 2019.
- The full report has been sent to Bob Lunn who will append it to the minutes of our next UPC meeting.

Cllr. Martyn Hollyman.



UPC UWLNP Working Group Terms of Reference – Version 1 February 2023

The main objective of this working group is to develop the next iteration of the first UWLNP and associated documents which was made in April 2017 current. They will make any updates to the current plan which are allowable under current regulations.

In developing the UWLNP the working group will make its recommendations to UPC which is the decision-making authority.

In undertaking these tasks, the Working group will:

1. The Current Plan
 - 1a. Update and correct it in the light of changing guidance, law, and the requirements of the parish. Also update the plan to incorporate any changes which may affect housing development since the plan was made. (Examples are: more working from home; extra traffic delivering parcels, groceries etc.; potential impact of Devizes Gateway station; and the provision of affordable homes including rural exception sites.)
 - 1b. UPC, and particularly those councillors who are members of the working group will continue to ensure that they and Wiltshire Council take the current UWLNP into account when assessing new planning applications
 - 1c. Ensure that on a rolling basis Wiltshire Council and UPC have a common agreement of the housing supply within the Parish for the next 5 years. This may entail both removal of, and additions to, the list of approved sites.
 - 1d. Keep a log of progress against the plan and issue it to UPC on a regular basis.
 - 1e. Review and update the non-housing development action list produced. This can be found as the 'UPC Action Plan' in the list of UWLNP associated documents on the Parish Website.
2. Develop the next version of the UWLNP. This will take account of changes in the area and environment since the first plan was published. It will also involve a review of the objectives, policies, and the site assessment process. All lessons learnt from the development and implementation of the current plan will be taken into account.
3. Ensure that the review is community led. This means that the community is kept fully informed of what is being proposed and can make their views known throughout the process.

Working Group meetings are not open to the public and cannot take decisions on behalf of the UPC. Any proposed public consultation meeting should be agreed by UPC and could be hosted by UPC as a non-decision making event to gather wider public input for the working group to consider. These

should not be held on a regular basis but at key points when considered necessary and sufficient progress has been made. The public will otherwise be kept informed of working group progress by the monthly reports to UPC.

4. These ToR's will be subject to continual review.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (WG) Members Code of Conduct Open, Honest and Transparent

Roles

A Chairperson (and deputy Chairperson, for the occasions of their absence) will be nominated from within the working group. The Chairpersons role will be to ensure that the business of the WG is kept timely on track and in line with the WG Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct. The Chairpersons authority will carry no more weight than any other member of the group.

If a WG member is assigned a role or task as part of the NP review, they are required to conduct those responsibilities in accordance with the WG code of conduct.

Confidentiality

No Member of the WG shall disclose items discussed by the WG that are not agreed as being in the public domain by the WG. All items within WG minutes are considered as being in the public domain.

Meetings

Meetings are those which are directly related to or impact upon the business of the Working Group and the NP review.

No meetings shall take place with any individual, commercial enterprise or other body unless authorised in advance by the WG. In addition, no individual, commercial enterprise or other body shall receive any personal or financial benefit resulting from those meetings.

All meetings, as described above, must be attended by two WG members.

All meetings, as described above, must be minuted and the minutes made available to the WG prior to the next WG meeting.

Disclosure

All members must disclose any interest, pecuniary or non-pecuniary, in any body, commercial enterprise or individual that becomes involved in the review.

Anonymity

WG Members must advise those bodies, commercial enterprises and individuals they meet with; that their input will be made public in the form of reports and minutes. On occasion that input may be as simple as Y & Z met with X.

Terms of Reference

All WG members shall comply with its Terms of Reference.

Meetings attendance

All WG Members will endeavour to attend all meetings, ensuring that any apologies are sent to the chairperson as soon as possible.

APPENDIX III TO FEBRUARY 2023 UPC MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NP WORKING GROUP ON 31 JAN 23 IN URCHFONTS VILLAGE HALL

Present: Trevor Hill (TH); Linda Jennings (LJ); Dave Mottram (DM); Malcolm Turner (MT)
Mark Botham (MB) (first part)

Apologies: Stuart Davies (SD), Simon Holt (SH)

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 Jan were approved by SG members present.

2. MB stated that he could not continue as Chair of the Steering Group as he felt that there would be a conflict of interest between his roles as Chair of UPC and as Chair of the Urchfont Plan Steering Group (SG)

Decision:

- Following discussion of the SG Terms of Reference (TORs) and the SG members Code of Conduct, MB would stand down as Chair with immediate effect.

3. SG Terms of Reference (TORs)

DM had circulated updated TORs and members of SG had suggested amendments on various points. It was agreed that rather than "Steering Group" the title "Working Group" would better reflect its purpose.

Decisions:

- The updating of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) would be guided by a team known as the "Working Group" (WG) with immediate effect
- The TORs would be amended to reflect WG discussion and agreed changes
- **Action:** DM would produce a revised version of the WG TORs which would be sent to UPC Clerk in time for presentation at the UPC meeting of 8 Feb 23.

4. SG Members Code of Conduct (CoC)

MB had drawn up and circulated draft CoC. TH and MT had forwarded comments on various points which had been incorporated into a second draft; this was read out by MB.

Decisions:

- All references to SG would be changed to WG
- Changes to the second draft were agreed - principally to the points on "Roles" and "Attendance".
- **Action:** TH would amend the Members CoC and produce a revised version which would be sent to UPC Clerk in time for presentation at the UPC meeting of 8 Feb 23.

Having been thanked for his participation as Chair, at this stage MB retired from the meeting.

5. Chair of WG

It was agreed that the WG needed to elect a new Chair. At the last meeting of 4 Jan, it had been decided that MT would be deputy Chair of the Group and it was agreed that he should take over as Chair for the immediate future.

Decisions:

- MT would be Chair of WG for the immediate future and would report progress on the NP to UPC.

6. Next Steps – The Way Forward

There followed considerable discussion on how the next NP should be developed and at what point the community should be involved in the initial NP process. There was consensus that the objectives and policy chapters in the current UWLNP could be used as a starting point for identifying a framework for the new NP. Evidence would need to be gathered and the public consulted to identify issues and support changes. It was felt worthwhile to have an over-arching “aim” and some wording was discussed.

Decisions:

- All WG members would use the current UWLNP to devise draft objectives and identify where evidence collection and policy changes would be necessary
- All WG members would consider the wording “To produce a Plan which manages change to the development of the Parish for the period 2026 to 2036” as a NP “Aim”.

Action: All WG members to note decisions and tasks for the next meeting.

7. NP Documentation

It was agreed that there was a need for NP document integrity and security and that the best location for this would be UPC. All documentation could be available for viewing on the Parish website.

Decisions:

- All documents and minutes produced by WG and approved by UPC should be available for public viewing
- The current “Neighbourhood Plan” section of the Parish website required updating.

Action: MT would discuss the storage location of Parish Council documents and the updating of the Parish Council website with UPC Clerk.

8. Next Meetings

The next meeting would be held on 21 Feb 23 in the Village Hall.

After this date, future meetings would need to be held 15 days before UPC meetings so that any progress and WG recommendations could be circulated on UPC agendas.

Actions:

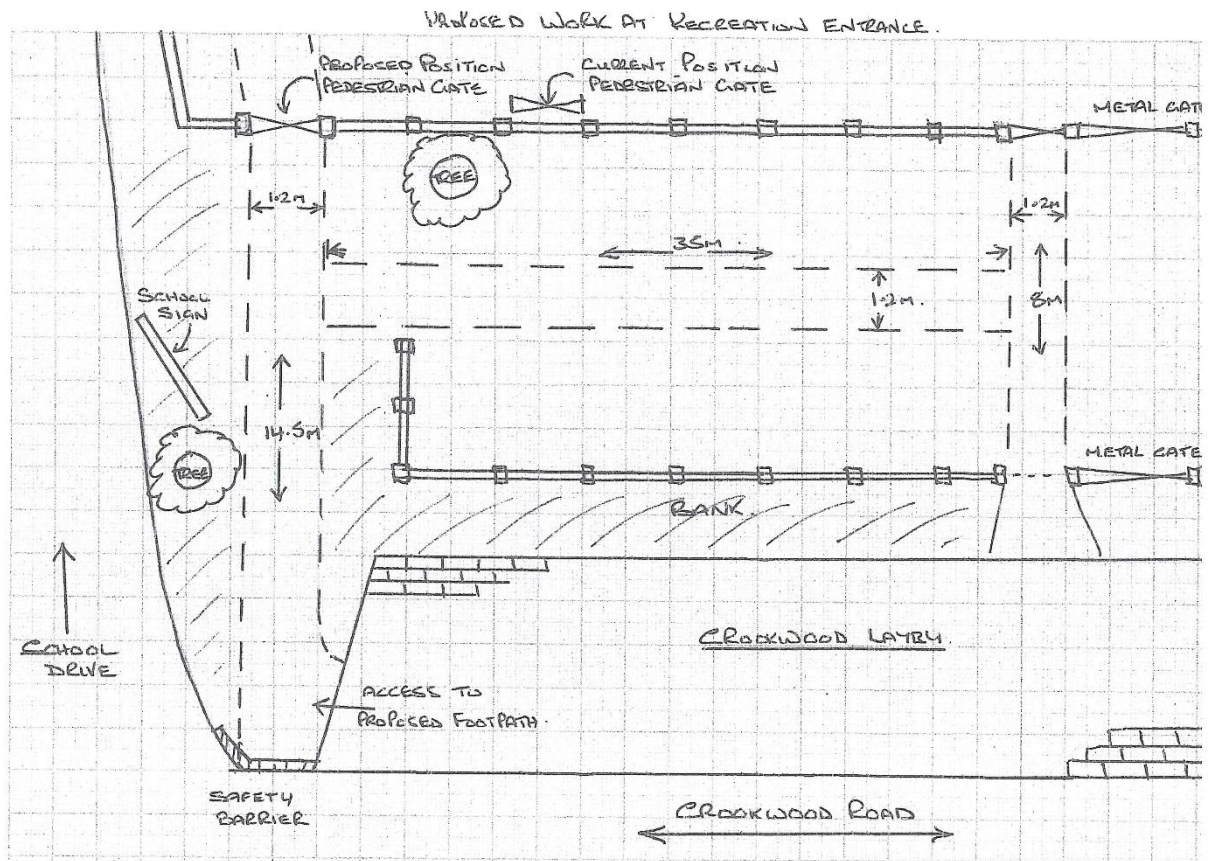
- TH would book the Village Hall Conference Room for WG meetings 15 days before UPC meetings
- All to note meetings arrangements.

APPENDIX IV TO FEBRUARY 2023 UPC MINUTES

Work Specification for Urchfont Primary School	
To create hardstanding footpath linking school carpark to Oakfrith Footpath.	
Part 1	
	Create a new hardstanding footpath from the school carpark wooden pedestrian gate, inside the Recreation Field to the pedestrian wooden gate at the eastern end of the length of wooden three rail fencing adjacent to the Oakfrith footpath
	1. Dig out, remove and prepare a 1.2m wide footpath for a length of 90 metres.
	2. The footpath should follow the line of the wooden three rail fence running adjacent to the school drive but leaving 1m grassed space between the footpath and the school drive fence
	3. Make up the hardstanding area with suitable hardcore material to a depth of 200mm, edged with 6 x 1 treated wooden edging with suitable membrane at its base and the surface finished with a compacted gravel type material
Part2	Create soakaway for surface water adjacent to School Drive
	1. Dig out and remove area of approx. 5 x 5m to necessary depth (approx. 1m)
	2. Fill with hardcore material to allow surface water to drain
	3. Cover hardcore with membrane finish top surface with appropriate stone type material for aesthetic look
Part 3	Replacing the length of fencing throughout the length of school drive.
	1. Remove old and reinstate wooden three rail fence which runs along the whole of the school drive, re-using current material where possible.
	2. Add or re-use wire Stock fencing to full length

Work Specification for Urchfont Parish Council	
To create hardstanding footpaths and reinstate old wooden fencing on the Oakfrith Path adjacent to the Urchfont Recreation Field.	
Part 1	
	Create a new hardstanding footpath from Crookwood Road at a point adjacent to the East side of the Crookwood Layby to join up with a new school hardstanding footpath within the Recreation Field at a point along the wooden fence line with a new pedestrian wooden gate. The northern end of this footpath should link into the eastern vehicle bay of the Crookwood Rd layby
	1. Dig out, remove and prepare a 1.2m wide footpath for a length of 15 metres.
	2. Prepare a gradual slope from its point at Crookwood Road/layby to the new pedestrian wooden gate
	3. Make up the hardstanding area with suitable hardcore material to a depth of 200mm, edged with 6 x 1 treated wooden edging with suitable membrane at its base and the surface finished with a compacted gravel type material
	4. Install safety rail at the North end of the path where it joins Crookwood Road to prevent children from running directly onto the road and creating the entrance to this path off the end (eastern) bay of the layby.
	5. Reinststate the grassed bank adjacent to the School Drive
Part 2	
	Create a hardstanding footpath along and following the current undefined line of the Oakfrith Footpath, from a point where it joins new footpath (as Part1) to a point adjacent to the metal gated access to the Recreation Field and pedestrian access to Crookwood Road.
	1. Dig out, remove and prepare a 1.2m wide hardstanding footpath for a length of 35metres.
	2. Dig out, remove and prepare a 1.2m wide hardstanding footpath from the current metal 'kissing gate' adjacent to Crookwood Layby for a length of 5 metres to the metal pedestrian gate access to the Recreation Field. To link up with new Oarkfrith footpath, as above.
	3. Make up the hardstanding area with suitable hardcore material to a depth of 200mm, edged with 6 x 1 treated wooden edging with suitable membrane at its base and the surfaced finished with a compacted gravel type material.
	4. Remove the current metal kissing gate and associated metal framework.

	5. Extend the current wooden fence to match existing to leave an opening of 1.8m wide where the metal kissing gate has been removed
Part 3	Remove and reinstate the length of fencing which is broken/rotten adjacent to the Oakfrith Path.
	1. Remove and reinstate wooden three rail fence which runs between the Oakfrith Path and the Recreation Field, re-using current material where possible.
	2. Remove and relocate wooden pedestrian gate from its position (eastern end) on this fence line to a new position approx. 1.5m from the East end of the fence so that it is directly in line with a proposed school footpath inside the recreation field.
	3. Reuse or replace Wire Stock fencing to all wooden fences



Dogs in Farmers Field

Email received from Mrs Maria Kemp on 1st February 2023 regarding decision on dogs being allowed into Farmers Field

Dear Councillors

I refer to the decision taken on 14th December to permit dogs into Farmers Field from the 1st October to 31st March as a trial period, with a budget of £400 set aside for bins and signage.

It is unclear from the December minutes what justification there is for this decision except for the October minutes referring to the missing gate. Since the gate had been re-instated before the December meeting the side issue of dog access was no longer relevant. I also note there appears to be no reference as to how the 'trial period' is to be monitored.

The observation that (some) beaches operate a no-dog policy during the summer months is true but that doesn't mean this is practical for Farmers Field. Beaches are patrolled, monitored and regularly cleaned at significant expense to the local council.

Further to the above, I would be grateful if consideration is given to the following:

- a) According to the UPC website 'the general policy and overall intent of Farmers Field is as a wildlife refuge and community project where humans come second. Diversity of flora and fauna is one of the most important aspects, and it is hoped that Farmers Field can be used by the village school, and others for educational purposes.'
- b) The Neighbourhood Plan states 'Farmers Field: donated by the late Ernest Pottenger, planted by him and the community, to be used as a peaceful recreational area to benefit wildlife'
- c) Nationally we are constantly reminded that wildlife is at risk and more needs to be done to protect and restore the balance of nature. Indeed UPC's Environmental Policy states a commitment to 'encouraging the initiatives of volunteers, authorities and commercial business to positively improve the natural environment for the benefit of biodiversity and habitat.
- d) It is a fact that both people and dogs disturb wildlife and there is plenty of evidence stating clearly that people with dogs, on or off a lead, are far more detrimental to wildlife than people without dogs.
- e) Farmers Field is small and a mere fraction of the area widely available (and used by most dog owners) in and around the parish.

With due consideration to the protection of wildlife and the UPC stated aims (a & b) and bearing in mind the above points I urge the council to reconsider its position on Farmers Field. In addition, I would appreciate an explanation as to how the trial is to be monitored and evaluated. Many thanks for your time.

Kind regards Maria Kemp

Statement Read Out by Maria Kemp at 8th February 2023 Meeting

Ref Item 13. UPC Wednesday 8th February 2023

There is a statement that I have heard now and again on the village grapevine and at the occasional Parish Council meeting and it goes like this:

"No one goes to Farmers Field and it has cost the Council a fortune"

As for the cost. absolutely right, it has. Maybe not a fortune but a significant cost no doubt. There's been the cost of equipment to look after and maintain the field. The cost of tree felling due to Ash Dieback including training for the volunteers who have and still give their time freely to deal with the problem. Then, more recently the purchase of a storage facility following the retirement of Phil Milanes after 18 years of storing the equipment at his home.

Unfortunately, this can be the downside of a bequest. Whether a bench (or as in this case a field),

unless a financial provision is made at the time there will eventually be a cost for maintenance or repairs.

As for the "no one goes there statement"; a) it's untrue, b) why do we need to increase the footfall anyway? and c) I have always noted that the majority of people making the statement don't actually go there!

Ernest Pottengers' bequest statement is very simple. There are many interpretations of it floating around the village and no doubt folk will believe what they want to believe but the fact is he has bequeathed this tiny piece of land to the residents of Urchfont and the UPC are its guardians.

Urchfont has everything, School, Shop, Pub, Pop up Cafe, Church, Bus service, Tennis Club, Cricket Club and so much more. In addition, we have endless footpaths and open spaces for everyone to enjoy including with their dogs if they so wish. However, It is a fact that both people and dogs disturb wildlife and there is plenty of evidence stating clearly that people with dogs, on or off a lead, are far more detrimental to wildlife than people without dogs.

Is it really too much to ask that we offer this tiny piece of land as a safe dog free space for young and old to enjoy peacefully and as a small contribution to support our country's rapidly dwindling wildlife?

The perception that few people in and around Urchfont actively care about Farmers Field is hardly justification to blindly hand it over without due consideration for those who do.

I would argue that there were insufficient grounds at the December meeting to even raise the subject which simply stems from the status of the gate noted at an earlier meeting. Secondly, there appears to have been no thought given as to how a trial would be organised ie; what will be trialled? how will it be trialled? who will monitor the trial and for how long? How will the impact on nature be measured?

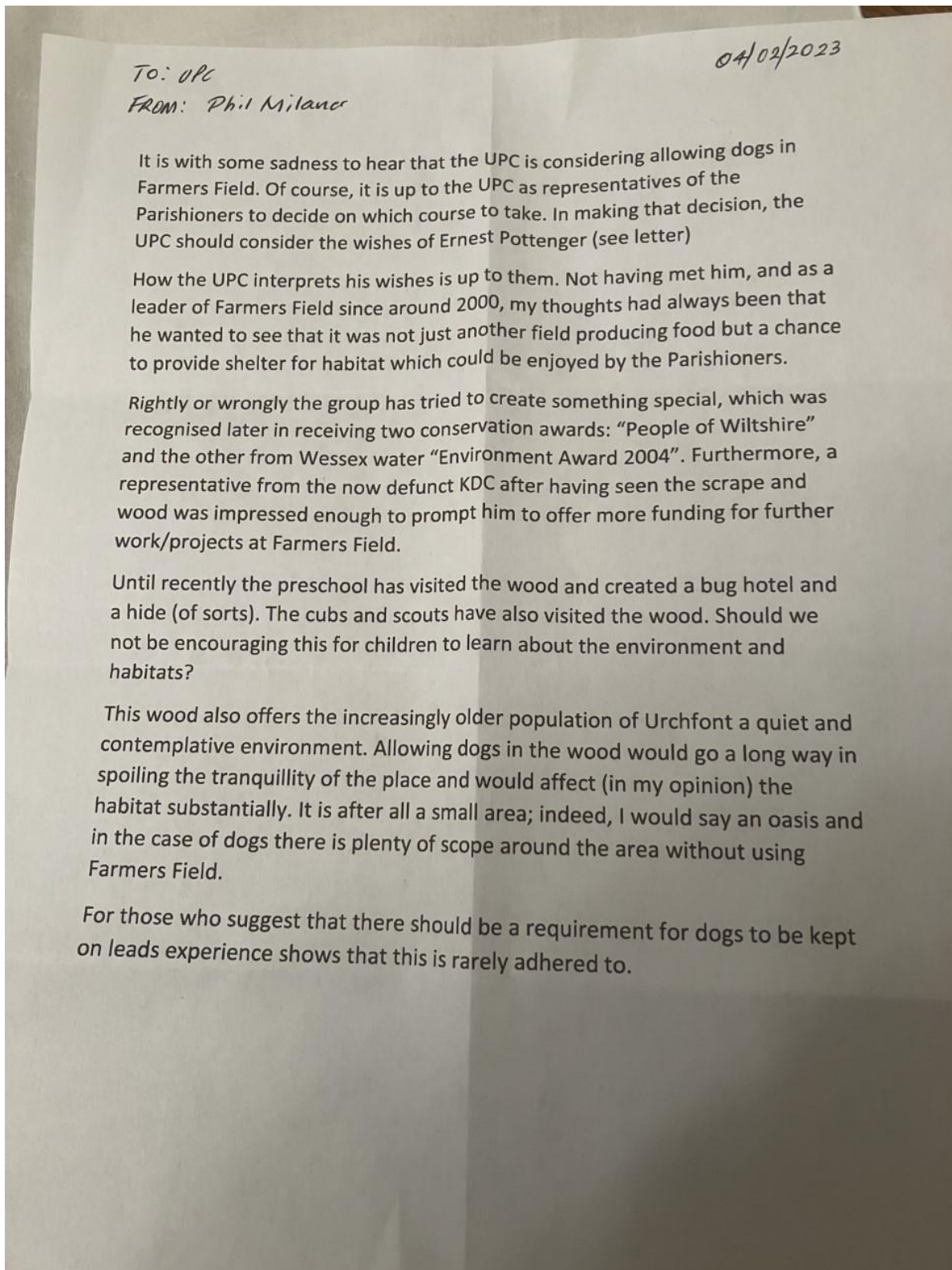
I note the reference to Standing Orders - Clause 30 stating "A decision of the council shall not be reversed within six months except for a few special circumstances"

I feel strongly that the proposals in December and January were put forward in haste and without due consideration of their ongoing implications. The minutes from the January meeting include specific qualifications not shown in the agenda item itself ie that dog access would be on a "trial basis" and "dogs should be kept on leads etc" I submit that these caveats should have been integrated with the December proposal, as such that proposal and subsequent vote should be considered null and void.

Thank you for
your time.

Maria Kemp

Letter circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting by PR said to have been received from Phil Milnes set up the Friends of Farmers Field group in 2000 and led the team until I took it over from him a few years ago.



Proposal for the initiation of a UPC Facebook Page from Pam Moscrop

However as per my actions - Please find link for proposed FB page for the UPC council.. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089327347535>

I know there are some reservations to having a social media account however a number of other local parish councils have one and as social media is how most people get their information or communicate i fee we need to move with the times.

A Facebook Page is **an excellent way for councils to connect with current and future parishioners, promote events and share information about the wider community**

Examples of other parish council FB pages are

Market Lavington - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/961400954313223>

Bishops Cannings - <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBCPC>

Chirton and Conock - <https://www.facebook.com/ChirtonandConock>

We could use this page to promote council meetings, community events, UPEG, an also give the parish access to raise any queries, comments, or feedback directly.

A prime example of why this is needed is the current conversation going on in the Urchfont FB page where perception is the council aren't accessible and some don't even know how to contact us. See post by Jack Hyner on the 4th Jan. I have a call with him to hear his thoughts and concerns set up.

Please have a look at the draft page and the other parish council links and let me have your thoughts.

Kind regards

Pam