



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF UPWOOD AND THE RAVELEYS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

May 2019

Upwood and The Raveleys Parish occupies an area of c. 12 square miles and is home to around 1300 residents. Population levels have been stable for the last 25 years with little new home development in the parish and few employment opportunities. However, community life is very active, providing recreation and pastimes of all kinds and an excellent primary school encourages young families to bring up their children in the area. People on the whole appreciate their parish and surroundings very much.

The priority of the Parish Council continues to be the provision of a safe and pleasant environment in which residents of all ages can enjoy the residential and rural landscapes and a healthy and rewarding lifestyle.

The Council is responsible for the care and maintenance of public spaces, verges and some hedgerows. The annual costs the parish council had budgeted for 2018/19 were almost £9,000. A re-tendering was carried out late last year resulting in the striking of a new contract with County Grounds Maintenance with whom we have agreed an annual charge of just over £4000 (net of VAT); a very significant saving.

The council is not responsible for the maintenance of public footpaths in the parish; these are the responsibility of the landowner and come under the jurisdiction of the County Council with whom we have to negotiate when pathways are overgrown or impassable. The goal is to create a tidy and pleasant environment which affords access and enjoyment to walkers and residents alike.

The work done in the churchyard by the PCC and the parish council in recent years is a case in point, previously forlorn and overgrown, with vegetation blocking views from the street of the wonderful Anglo-Saxon building, the work done has transformed the churchyard into a place where worshippers and visitors alike can appreciate the beauty and tranquillity of the site.

Unfortunately, we continue to battle with litter and fly tipping in the parish, both worsening problems. A recent voluntary litter pick produced over 50 sacks of rubbish collected by parish residents from hedgerows, verges and footpaths. Can you believe it? 50 sacks full of stuff people have chucked away!

Indiscriminate fly tipping continues to blight our landscape and while we urge residents to be vigilant and to report incidents promptly, we are working with other agencies to monitor hot spots more closely in an attempt to catch the disgusting offenders red handed.

Whilst I am on the subject of antisocial behaviour, I regret to report that our attempts to get dog owners to clean up after their animals are having little effect. Footpaths are blighted with dog mess every 50 yards or so and for those residents who hang blue plastic bags containing dog droppings on bushes like a bizarre ornament, really do need to ask themselves some serious questions. The penalty for dog-fouling is a fine of up to £1000 and the council will not hesitate to prosecute residents who fail to respect this very simple convention.

I am pleased to report that the financial position of the council remains strong partly as a result of the tight budgetary control system in place, which monitors both actual and forecast expenditure very closely. The Council maintains a three-year plan which is updated each year along with the annual budget. This forward view allows provision to be made for large capital projects which may be necessary in future. Reserves are currently being built up to fund a future extension of the cemetery and a refurbishment of the children's play area in Bentley Close.

The Council receives funds from all new homes built in the parish from a scheme known as the Community Infrastructure Levy, each property yielding between £1500 and £3000 in CIL receipts from the District Council.

In the last year there have been seven homes completed with receipts of £14,000, which is a big contribution to parish finances. The CIL receipts must be used to improve infrastructure in the parish and some of the money has been earmarked for traffic calming measures in Great Raveley and in future, if all goes well, for speed restrictions in Little Raveley.

Residents are understandably worried about the increase in traffic, including heavy goods vehicles in the parish and the installation of SID, the mobile speed indication device has revealed an alarming percentage of drivers are flaunting the speed limits to a dangerous extent.

As more and more houses are built in Bury and Ramsey the pressure on our roads will only increase and, in the absence of a strong Police presence, the only solution is to install more and more traffic calming systems on our local roads.

The Parish Council comprises nine elected or co-opted residents, one Clerk and Clive Edwards the cemetery officer. Carol Bilverstone is the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and custodian of all clerical records relating to the parish. Her splendid work was rewarded last year with the Local Council Gold Award for exceptional performance; one of only 40 such awards in England and Wales to date and the only one awarded to a village parish in Cambridgeshire thus far.

We have lost three councillors in the last year, Howard Smith, Dan Hall and Helen Nel and I would like to thank them all for the contribution they made in the time they served on the council. We were delighted recently to welcome Upwood village resident, Mark Bacon to fill one of the vacancies and I am sure he will make a great contribution in future. There are still two vacancies to fill and we are anxiously awaiting applicants to come forward as we have a very ambitious programme to fulfil. When we recruit at least one new councillor the following responsibilities may be slightly adjusted.

So, a word of thanks to the other parish councillors, beginning with Jason Edwards who puts his extensive knowledge of local land and bye-ways to good use by looking after the care and upkeep of our footpaths, ditches, hedgerows along with our parish boundaries. Jean Noble has responsibility for the upkeep and appearance of the public areas; the parish aesthetics, as well as overseeing health, safety and risk, notably in the play and recreation areas. Jean is also the Community Speedwatch coordinator. Andrew Perkins also has a number of duties; planning, which involves site visits to all proposed sites, as well as the health and care of parish trees and he shares with Jason an oversight over all land owned by the parish. Garth Slater takes responsibility for traffic, highways and road safety and has been instrumental in the winning of competitions to fund traffic calming measures, including our new friend SID (a mobile Speed Indicator Device). Garth also acts a stand-in chairman in my absence; at least until a new deputy chair is elected. Jodie Twose is responsible for resident liaison in Little Raveley (her home village) and Great Raveley, but her professional knowledge of ecological issues is having a positive impact upon council policies.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the whole council team including Carol and Clive. Everyone works so hard and I know, have the interests of residents of Upwood and the Raveleys first and foremost in their minds.

Robin Howe
Chairman
Upwood and The Raveleys Parish Council



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting. 13 May 2019

Financial Report from the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer to Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

In 2018/2019 the parish council worked with a budget of £43,262, £25,000 of which was raised through the precept. At the end of the year receipts totalled £42,120 and payments £29,441. The balance brought forward on 31 March 2019 was £58,705 (an increase of £12,679 on the previous year).

Although the bank balance is healthy, only £27,914 is held as a general reserve. £4,000 is held as reserves for a future cemetery extension (with an additional £2,000 to be added to this fund in 2019/2020); and £5,000 is held for repair/replacement of play equipment (with an additional £4,000 to be added in 2019/2020). £1,500 has been set aside for further improvements to the public right of way leading from Bentley Close towards Upwood Meadows. The parish council is waiting for invoices from Cambridgeshire County Council totalling £5282 for two Local Highway Improvement projects (traffic calming between Upwood and Bury and the purchase of the Speed Indicator Device). Also included in the year end bank balance is £10,509.67 received in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2018/2019. This may only be spent on infrastructure and this will be carried forward into the next financial year.

Comparing the forecasted budget with actual expenditure in 2018/2019, there are four notable variances:

- The cash book has been complicated by receipts of £3,517 and subsequent salary payments for the clerk's services to other local councils. If the clerk works for other councils in future, salary payments will be facilitated by CAPALC.
- The parish council purchased a new laptop and "Office" software, exceeding its budget by £393. This was an essential investment as the previous device was obsolete. The parish council received a donation of £50 for the old laptop which was bought in 2013.
- SALVUS Master Trust, the parish council's pension provider, introduced an unexpected administration fee of £20 + VAT per month. This had not been budgeted for.
- The long dry summer of 2018 resulted in an underspend of £2,800 on grass cutting.

Other notable expenses and achievements include continued financial support to the parish newsletter and the village hall; ongoing support for continued professional development for the clerk and for councillors; and continued investment in the upkeep and maintenance of parish grass, trees and hedges, particularly in the churchyard and on the allotments. The parish council has incurred legal fees of £540 to upgrade the title of Charter's Spinney to protect the land from adverse possession by Cadent Gas Ltd.

Two successful bids to the Local Highway Improvement Initiative resulted in the implementation of traffic calming measures on Ramsey Road, and the purchase of a mobile Speed Indicator Device. It is hoped that both initiatives will help to slow traffic and promote and improve road safety in the parish. The parish council has recently learned that its 2019/2020 LHI bid for traffic calming measures in Great Raveley has been successful. Details of this are published in the minutes of the meeting held on 01 April 2019.

The parish council is fully compliant in all areas of governance and financial management. In 2018 it adopted a suite of policies to fulfil the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation. The council has also subscribed to a data protection service through Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC).

The parish council prides itself on its transparency and a significant amount of information relating to the business of the parish council is readily available on the parish website. The Facebook page provides an additional communication channel.

The two internal audits held in 2018/2019 were extremely positive and despite significant effort the internal auditor failed to find any areas of the parish council's financial administration or governance in need of attention.

In conclusion, the parish council continues to uphold an enviable reputation which has been further enhanced by the achievement of the "Local Council Award Scheme's Quality Gold Award". This council is one of two councils in Cambridgeshire to have achieved this award and one of only forty in England and Wales.

Carol Silverstone
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
13 May 2019

Upwood Golf Society

With the Cross Keys no longer available, a number of the village golfers have been asking "what is happening about the Golf Society". Jon Hopkins and Howard Smith have decided to start Upwood Golf Society. This will not be tied to any venue but will be able to take advantage of offers.

We will have our first Golf Day on 6th September 2019 at Lakeside (Pidley). The format will be 9 hole team event on the Par 3, full English breakfast, 9 hole Texas Scramble and 9 hole individual Stableford on the Lodge course. The evening will be at the Ale House Kitchen for a three course meal, (Steve, Matt and Olly playing on the day). We will be able to have guests join us in the evening as the venue is so much larger; pricing will be around £60.00 for the day.

We are also hoping to have transport back to the village organised as well.

Please let me know if you will be joining us or have any questions at hjsuk@btinternet.com and I will send you the full information. Also please let anyone who would be interested in a fun days golf know about the event and give them my contact details.

Howard and Jon

Report from the Art Group for 13th May, 2019

The Art Group founded by the late Frances Ashfield continues to meet regularly on Saturday mornings in Upwood Village Hall. The group decided last year to meet only on two Saturdays in the month, namely the first and third of the month. We do not have a meeting if a Saturday falls on a Bank Holiday. This decision will be maintained in the coming year.

We are a small group of keen amateur artists and produce a wide variety of art in many different styles and using a whole range of medium watercolour paints, acrylic paints, oil paints, coloured pencils, plain graphite pencils and also pen and ink. Our subjects vary from still life, buildings and outdoor scenes, plants and flowers, wild animals, horses, pet dogs and cats, and also portraits.

There will be a display of our art, some of which will be for sale, in the Village Hall on the open gardens day in June where visitors will be able to view some of our work and note our different styles.

We always welcome new members to come and give us a try. In the school holidays we would be delighted to welcome youngsters but only if accompanied by a parent. We do have some materials available free of charge.

Gill Shelford

Home to Home Chairman's Report for Annual Parish meeting; May 2019

Home to Home is a ladies group that was formed over 35 years ago by a group of young mums who wanted to do something to express themselves rather than just being defined as 'so and so's mum'. 35 years on we are not so young anymore but the group continues to meet on the last Monday of the month and some of the members, like me, were there at the start. So Home to Home must be doing something right!

Our AGM is in January so this report comes in the middle of our 2019 programme but obviously there was a lot of our 2018 programme happening after my report to the Parish AGM last year so here's a short resume.

In May Sue Clark gave us all the chance to have a go at quilting, with some amazing results. June is usually our trip out and last year saw us travelling all the way to Ramsey Walled Garden where members not only enjoyed a guided tour but a lovely strawberry tea, courtesy of the committee members.

July's meeting was called 'Flowers in all shapes and forms' and it certainly lived up to its name. Members were invited to bring along various arrangements under 4 headings (a single rose, a garden in a saucer, an arrangement of annuals in a jam-jar and the biggest weed). We used buttons as 'currency' and voted using our buttons. The money collected in exchange for the buttons was given to Magpas. We certainly enjoyed the evening and will be repeating the idea in a couple of years. The September meeting was a first for Lisa Fiore from Simply Snugg in Ramsey. Lisa had never given a talk to a group before so she brought along her husband for moral support and together they told us about upcycling and gave us the chance 'to have a go'. In October Heather helped us to create our cupcakes for our Home to Home contribution to the Christmas Tree festival.

November saw us hosting talented local florist Judith Hyde. We sold tickets in advance and on the night 60 ladies crowded into the village hall to watch Judith create some wonderful Christmas arrangements, constantly giving us invaluable tips so that we could create our own. The raffle was very well supported, not surprising when Judith's arrangements were the prizes. We raised £300 and were able to donate £100 to 3 charities of Judith's choice. For the first time our December meeting was a 'bring and share' meal and our members certainly didn't stint when it came to bringing their festive favourites. Pass the parcel brought great hilarity and members immediately asked for a repeat in the 2019 programme.

At the AGM in January Josie & Karen resigned from the committee and Julia & Tina offered to take their places. Another varied programme has been planned for 2019. Despite the success of our experiment with having fewer paid speakers and more members' evenings last year somehow we have managed to have more speakers than originally planned— it was just the way the programme took shape! In February June Darmody told us all about the St Thomas a Becket's link with Uganda and we had the opportunity to buy some of the wonderful products the people make to help support themselves. Tom Milner took us through our paces in March when he not only told us about why we should be exercising but he gave us a taste of some seated exercise as well. He also offered to help us start any number of other activities including dance and walking groups. April saw us madly shaking our dice trying to throw a six so that we could start drawing our bunnies. The Bunny Drive made a welcome return and again proved very popular.

The rest of the programme is a mix of members' evenings and speakers but regardless of the topic Home to Home is always very welcoming and we would love to encourage more people to come along and join us – we meet on the last Monday of the month (unless there is a bank holiday) in the Village Hall and meetings start at 7.30pm. As I said last year our programme is on the parish website and there is always information in the parish newsletter and an advert in the Informer newspaper so if you haven't been to a meeting yet why not make 2019 the year that you do. We look forward to welcoming you.

Pauline McLeod

Chairman

Home to Home

Meet and Munch

M&M has continued throughout the year although sadly, our numbers have decreased for both members and volunteers. However, there have been happy meetings with good food served - lunches for Autumn and Winter and teas during the summer months.

Our Summer party is in June and since it is 50 years since the first moon landing, this is going to be our theme. Fortunately, the food will not be freeze dried nor served in foil pouches! The year 6 children from Upwood Academy are going to provide us with some artwork with which to decorate the hall. This has been much appreciated in the past and we thank them for the artwork they produce.

We are an open, friendly group and would love to see new members joining or more volunteers as 'many hands make light work'!

Jan Howe

Co-ordinator for Meet and Munch

St Peter's Handbell Ringers Report 2019

Upwood Handbell Ringers of St Peter's have changed their evening meetings to 2-4pm every Monday in St. Peter's Church. We usually practice in church but during the winter we practice in our homes.

Our team currently consists of 9 players from Upwood and surrounding villages and are always willing to recruit and welcome or train new musicians.

As last year, our facebook page has been well visited.

We played out at many venues:

- The Ramsey Senior Lunch Club,
- Benwick ladies group,
- The Crocus Café in Peterborough with their Dementia Goup
- The Gables Care Home in Chatteris,
- The Hartford Medway Centre
- St Peter's Christmas Tree Festival.

Our performances are well appreciated and bring joy in people's lives especially in Care Homes and Dementia Day Centers.

However, we have had struggles with illnesses in the group and unforeseen absences and we decided for this year 2019 to slow down, taking the opportunity to learn a new program with new technics to overcome this problem.

Vernon Cracknell

St Peter's Church Report 2019

This past year we have had 2 baptisms, 1 weddings, 1 wedding blessing, and 2 funerals, this was a lovely chance to celebrate in our beautiful church. Our thanks goes to Peter Haddon who has provided such wonderful pots of flowers for us all to enjoy on our way into church, it makes the church look so welcoming, often mentioned in the visitor's book

We said a very fond farewell to Fred Cracknell and Michael Perkins at their Memorial Services, both had been good servants to St Peters Church. I think we have all realised just what a lot of things Michael did, not just opening and closing the church but keeping an eye on all the comings and goings. We did think because of the reported thefts of lead from church roofs it would be a good idea to have our church roof alarmed and this has been done. The church is still open in daylight hours, again something that is often mentioned in the Visitors Book.

Breakfast Club which we hold in the Village Hall is after Wednesdays Morning Prayer and is well attended, if you have not been, it is a opportunity to meet others in the village and get to know them, not all those who attend the Breakfast Club come to the service. Breakfast club is from 9am to 10am

We had a delightful evening when Fenharmonics filled the church with their beautiful music. Then a bit later in the year the band Vernon Cracknell plays with, came and we had an evening of the big band sound. We hope that both groups will come again.

St Peters still is involved with the Food Bank that is run from St Thomas a Becket, but our Harvest Festival goods were taken to the Salvation Army in Kings Ripton.

Open the Book still goes into Upwood School every week in term time. We also have different year groups coming to visit the church at other times especially Harvest.

There was a good attendance on Remembrance Sunday, we now have a 'There But not There Tommy' sitting in a pew, a reminder of those from this Parish who gave their lives that we might live in peace. This was purchase by the Breakfast Club.

We had another good Christmas Tree Festival and we must say 'thank you' to AnneMarie Cracknell for organising it, she does put a lot of effort in to it to make it successful.

The Carol Service was well attended with St Thomas a Becket's choir leading the singing and readers from the Benefice.

This coming year we are having a Flower Festival with the theme 'All things Bright and Beautiful' a theme we did in the 1980's.

Although we are a small congregation we do appreciate the support that we get from the Parish Council and folk that live in the village.

Jean Place April 2019

Juniors

We are now training outside weather permitting on Monday nights. Times are

5-30 till 6-30 for the younger ones (School Year 1 to 4)

6-30 till 7-30 for the older ones (school Year 5 to 9).

Junior membership is £10 for the whole summer's coaching and £2 a game.

The aim is that everyone who regularly attends trainings will be guaranteed to play in some games. We are entering a record six teams in the league this year

- One under 9 six-a-side softball
- One Under 11 eight-a-side hardball
- Two Under 11 six-a-side softball
- One Under 13 eight-a-side hardball
- One Under 13 11 a side hardball

We have had over 40 juniors attend so far this year which again is a record. It is worth noting that Upwood seems to be bucking the trend of declining numbers playing junior cricket and disappointingly other teams have already pulled out of games for lack of numbers.

County Success

Our junior county success continues. Last year our Under 9 Wagtail team won their league last year as did the U11 softball team. The under 11 8 a side hardball team won their league and finished county runners up.

Sophie Lawrence and Annabelle Woodward were both part of the county girl's under 13 squad last year and our also attending the Essex Cricket Academy. Both used to attend Upwood Primary but now moved onto secondary school. Hannah Cooke who joined us last year also plays with Annabelle and Sophie for the county. Jessica Lawrence (Sophie's sister) has also being selected to represent the County Under 11 Girls following trials this winter.

Upwood now have five boys presenting the county. Jacob Milner and George Tuffin are part of U11 Boys Performance Squad and they also used to attend Upwood Primary. Three new Hunts county squad boys have also joined Upwood this year Alex Buckle and Ed Parncutt (U11) and Ollie Parncutt (U13.)

Adults

In 2018 our 1st team won promotion to Hunts League Division 1 and the seconds finished third in Division 5. As last year was a success and we attracted some new players we have entered a Saturday 2nd team into Hunts League Division 4. This is somewhat of a gamble and there will be times when putting two teams out will be hard but it is important to keep the club going forward and to provide games for the older juniors when they are ready.

Adult membership is £10 for the year and £10 a game (which includes a tea).

New Developments

We now have some wonderful new training nets that already have been made significant use of both by juniors and adults. Although we did get a grant for half the cost the club has had to take out a hefty loan to pay for the rest. With this in mind we are looking to consolidate where we currently are at with regards to our facilities and concentrate on fund raising to increase club coffers.

Tenure

The issue of tenure for the cricket club after it seems many years has still not being fully resolved. Things have moved on and we now have draft version of the tenure agreement and correspondence to say that this is progressing albeit slowly. Hopefully, we will have a full agreement in place before the end of the summer.

Passing of Upwood Legend

Many people at the club and local cricket in general were saddened to hear of the passing of club stalwart Ed Ward earlier this year. Ed was a real character around Upwood and Huntingdonshire cricket.

He will be remembered fondly throughout Upwood Cricket Club as an opening batsman, groundsman, handyman, friend and possibly most importantly as the person who led the way in creating the Upwood junior section, the foundations laid by Ed with regards to the juniors is still flourishing today. There are many senior players in Huntingdonshire cricket past and present who learnt their trade under Ed's tutelage.

Rip Ed and thanks for the memories.

As always we are looking for new members of any age or experience in particularly someone who could offer a little of their time as groundsman, scorer or umpire; if interested in joining in any capacity please contact Neil at npe.tuffin@gmail.com or on 07968771138 or Chairman Rob Landymore at Robert.Landymore@paralleluk.com for more information.

Archive Group Report

The archive group no longer meets as a group although the archive is still very much available on line and will hopefully become more active in the next 12 months.

The one big improvement in the past year is that the archive now has a 'Share It' field which should make it easier for users to share photos and memories with friends and family.

A security certificate has also been added which should prevent log-in problems for anyone logging on as a user.

Upwood and Raveley Community Allotment Association (URCAA) and Upwood Community Orchard

Chairman's Report March 2019

Allotments

- The Upwood site currently has a total of 32 tenants, maintaining 37 plots of varying sizes.
- The Great Raveley site currently has 4 tenants, maintaining 5 plots of varying sizes.
- The Upwood and Great Raveley sites have a combined total of 53 plots of which 42 are occupied.
- The vacant sites at Upwood consist of 10 x mini plot and 1 x ½ plot.
- There is nobody currently on the plot waiting list for the Upwood site.
- There are no vacant plots at the Great Raveley site.
- There is nobody on a waiting list for the Great Raveley site.
- Filling the galvanised water storage tanks on the Upwood site is difficult from a single tap. The tenants have been asked to devise a scheme to maintain the water levels in the tanks. Some allotment holders have rigged up their own water catchment system.
- The Great Raveley site has no fixed water supply and utilises a single 1000 litre rigid plastic container which has to be manually topped up. Two of the allotment holders have devised their own water catchment systems.
- There are some maintenance issues with the central track on the Upwood site resulting in uneven surfaces. Tenants have been requested to only use vehicles on the track when absolutely necessary.
- The new hedge adjoining the main road needs the protection removing from the young plants to allow them to mature now that they are large enough not to be attacked by the wildlife.
- The plot one site has a large amount of scrub and bracken that requires removing on a self-help basis.
- Vacant plots and the suppression of weeds are a concern. However, the situation appears to be under control with sufficient membrane being laid down
- Members of the allotment association have volunteered to carry out general maintenance of the new hedgerows and tidy up plot one commencing in April.
- Grass cutting for the track and the shared areas has been arranged under a new contract with CGM with the first cut having just taken place.

Orchard

- The orchard is now in its 6th year and is fully planted, with one dead tree having being replaced, and the remainder of the trees appearing to be in good health. Some trees even produced enough fruit last year to make jams and jellies.
- Winter pruning of the fruit trees has been carried out where required, and the tree supports adjusted to allow for new growth.
- The anti-rabbit mesh around the base of the trees has been inspected and repaired as required. Restrictive protection has been removed from the older trees where necessary.
- Grass cutting for the coming season has been arranged with CGM and the first cut around the trees has taken place.
- There are plans to introduce wild flower areas in the orchard once the weed situation is under control.

- The raised beds are being tended by a volunteer from the allotments, but a permanent "Keeper of the flower beds" is still being sought via an article in the village newsletter.
- The pond at the lower end of the orchard site continues to be a success at trapping run off water that would otherwise flood the parking area. Apart from its practical use, it is hoped the pond may also attract a variety of wildlife.
- A fund raising quiz took place in October 2018 in the Village Hall, and was well attended and raised a little over £371.
- A sign to draw attention to the orchard has been made and will be fixed permanently to posts shortly.
- Hedging has been planted on the southerly edge of the orchard and has established itself. Further planting along the edge adjoining the central track has been planned and will consist of scented flowering plants.

URCAA Financial Report

- A summary of the UCRAA financial situation can be seen below.
- A full statement of accounts is attached.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Totals</u>
26/03/19	Allotment Funds	£2,868.06
26/03/19	Allotment Plot deposits	£630.00
26/03/19	Orchard Funds	£1212.70
26/03/19	Total Balance of accounts	£4,710.76

Business Plan

- A copy of the UCRAA Business Plan is attached.

Summary

The URCAA and Community Orchard appears to be in good health financially, and has good support from the parishioners with almost all available plots under cultivation. A few minor matters need to be addressed, such as the water supply, plot one tidying and maintenance of the newly planted hedges, but there are no major cause for concern. The new maintenance contract with CGM appears to be on track with the first grass cut of the season having taken place.

URCAA – Business Plan 2019/20 – Update date 260319

BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE UPWOOD & RAVELEY COMMUNITY ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION (URCAA).

The Upwood and Raveley Community Allotments Association was formed in 2012 with its own constitution and a management committee comprising of the 3 key positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer plus supporting officers. URCAA is responsible for the everyday running of the allotment plots situated in Upwood (Meadow Road site) and Great Raveley (junction with Raveley and Huntingdon Road) with guidance from the Allotment Trustees who report to the Charities Commission.

URCAA is responsible for:

- rent collection
- rule enforcement
- elements of ground maintenance to the internal boundaries of the site.

Maintenance to the external boundaries of the site fall to the Upwood Parish Council.

The Upwood site currently consists of 48 allotment plots split into a range of sizes, to meet the varying needs of the community and changing ways in which people engage with allotments. Included at the Upwood site is a communal plot as well as a community orchard. The site is divided roughly in half with one half of the land being rented for hay production.

The Great Raveley allotment site consists of 5 defined plots and a block of land which is rented for crop production.

The URCAA Group's mission statement is to provide a community-managed resource for the purpose of self-sustainment and crop production for local residents and aims to achieve this by:

- Providing plots which local people can hire at a reasonable annual rent.
- Providing basic facilities on site including access, water, and parking.
- Create a social group that shares a common interest in growing vegetables, crops or flowers.
- Encourage community schemes that utilise the site for all groups.

CURRENT SITUATION

- 37 of the available 48 plots are actively cultivated or managed by allotment holders at Upwood.
- The Great Raveley site has 5 of the 5 plots in active cultivation.
- Currently there is nobody on the waiting list for vacant plots.
- The Upwood site is flanked by natural hedgerow on two sides with a restricted access track running through the site, leading to two secure points of entry onto the

site.

- There is a parking area opposite the plots at the Meadow road entrance, together with a standpipe tap for the hand watering of crops.
- There are a number of personal tool stores, small sheds and water containers on Site for equipment storage and rainwater harvesting.

PLANS FOR THE NEXT YEAR

Short Term Objectives.

1) General Maintenance

Re-sizing and clearance of vacant plots is being actively progressed at the Upwood site. What people want from an allotment has changed over time and this generally results in people wanting smaller plots than the historically defined allotment plot sizes. By creating smaller plot areas, and using weed suppressant membrane to reduce overall maintenance requirements, we will continue the drive to get more people actively engaged in the allotments. We plan to create some mini plots at the Great Raveley site to see if we can generate new interest at that site.

We arrange for the grass track through the Upwood plots to be cut regularly throughout the growing season. The inside of the hedge will continue to be the responsibility of individual plot holders as they are expected to maintain their own plot area. Communal grass cutting has recently been contracted out to CGM.

2) Strengthening the association.

The URCAA committee has traditionally been made up of five members, including a representative from the Raveley site. At the recent AGM, we have had a change of personnel in the role of Treasurer. We have a publicity officer whose role to publicise the group and contribute articles to the village newsletter, website and free newspapers.

There is always a need to recruit additional members to share some of the everyday site management and to drive forward future projects but this is particularly important as the Association has grown. URCAA will seek to engage the wider membership in projects.

Recruitment and retention of plot holders remains a high priority.

3) Publicity.

Whilst we are managing the vacant plots, with natural turnover and some downsizing, there is always a need to attract new interest in the allotments. We will continue to publicise plot availability in 2019/20 through the village newsletter and the local free newspapers. We propose to start our own Facebook page to further publicise our group and hopefully attract new allotment holders.

4) Social events.

The committee aims to hold at least one social event in the year, to raise the Group's profile as well as engender a community spirit. (Ongoing maintenance, such as ditch clearance and hedge trimming, will be done on a self-help basis.) An event in June was discussed at the Association's AGM to coincide with the village Open Gardens and Scarecrow completion.

5) Community Orchard Project.

The Orchard will continue to be maintained. We have fully planted the area with trees now and are fully sponsored. A wildlife pond has been established and has been planted up. Work this year will focus on improvements to the flower beds and hedge borders. We hope to recruit a volunteer from the community to maintain these flower beds.

6) Water provision.

We have placed the four water troughs at the Upwood site and a 1000 litre water container at the Great Raveley site. Over 2019/20 we will continue to look at innovative ways to fill them as we work towards a long term aim of providing access to water for all plots.

7) On site toilet.

At the recent AGM it was suggested that a toilet might be installed on site especially for the benefit of those plot holders who live some distance from their plots. Some sort of Eco Loo was suggested as that would require no permanent plumbing. The practicality and costs of this amenity require investigation.

8) Shelter or communal hut.

At the recent AGM it was proposed that a previous long term plan for a communal hut or shelter be moved to a short term objective. A building or shelter would engender a communal spirit if plot holders could share a space together on site.

Long Term Objectives.

9) Plumbed Water Supplies.

The long term aim remains to have mains fed containers strategically placed around the sites so that we can attract more plot holders.

10) Sensory Garden Project.

There is the opportunity to establish a community sensory and easy access garden for use by all members of the community. Interest may also be provided through willow structures or gazebos. With a network of paths, raised planting beds and seating areas, all ages can contribute to the maintenance, layout, planting and upkeep of the area. With close proximity to the care home and footpath access, it could be seen as an opportunity for residents to grow plants on a small scale, as well as establish an area for relaxation.

11) Expand or improve the Orchard.

Plot one is not in use due to the poor soil in that area and has been considered as a candidate to be utilised in an expanded orchard area. This would require a significant amount of effort to re-generate this plot of land. Additional seating is being considered for the existing orchard in order to improve this community amenity.

FINANCE

Allotment rents are now collected and managed by URCAA and retained for future

Investment. It is hoped that there is enough income to manage the site on a day to day basis with a small surplus generated for site improvements. URCAA should build up a reserve from fund raising events and maintain approximately £300 in reserve, for ongoing maintenance.

All projects are dependent on fund raising, sponsorship and annual allotment rents collected by URCAA. At the recent AGM a small rent increase was considered due to the new maintenance contract with CGM. This was considered unnecessary at this time as the association funds are deemed to be healthy.

RISK ANALYSIS

The main risks that the URCAA committee have identified are:

- The Site's personal liability is now included within the Parish Council's existing cover, however the risk remains due to unauthorised entry by dog walkers and ramblers.
- Reduction in the number of plot-holders – there is a risk of interest in the allotment scene decreasing and further plot holders not coming forward.
- Adverse weather – severe weather could damage the site and the growing potential of the plants and vegetables, most notably drought, flooding and wind damage can dishearten plot holders and see a decline in allotment usage and funds to support the site.

URCAA FINANCIAL REPORT – 270319

27/03/2019	Allotment Funds	£2,868.06
27/03/2019	Allotment Plot deposits	£630.00
27/03/2019	Orchard Funds	£1,212.70
27/03/2019	Total Balance of accounts	£4,710.76

Income/Expenditure from 31/03/2018

Allotments account summary		£2,868.06
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	<i>Opening Balance</i>	£2,585.11
2018/19	Allotment Rents - collected from 31/03/2018	£728.00
2018/19	Water	-£96.16
2018/19	Material purchase (Padlock, membrane)	-£113.89
2018/19	Maintenance (Grass cutting - note reduction as dry weather)	-£100.00
2018/19	Admin – (Hall hire, stamps)	-£135.00

Orchard accounts summary		£1,212.70
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	<i>Opening Balance</i>	£913.20
2018/19	Fundraising (Quiz)	£460.00
2018/19	Maintenance	-£100.00
2018/19	Fundraising costs	-£60.50

Upwood & The Raveleys Local History Group – Parish Report 2018/19

The 2018/19 year began on a very selfish note where the chairman spoke about some small skirmish that took place in 1991 outside his hotel window in Bahrain. The programme committee again provided us with interesting and thought provoking presentations from a wide variety of speakers. We enjoyed the invasion of the 9th Roman Legion Hispania and the links to the local area. We learnt about the evolving design and fashionable status of gardens and buildings at Stowe from Andrew Sankey which was backed up with a successful guided tour of the gardens from Andrew too. Later in the year we were visited by Mark Knight to talk about the continuing story of Must Farm and the astounding discoveries that have been found literally on our doorstep. We also received a talk from Andrew Tatham and his outstanding research into the Berkshire Regimental photograph and his popular display at Ypres where he gathered over 200 living ancestors of the original photograph for a wonderful event. Finally we heard about the history of Ramsey Railway from Alan Mott and the East and West stations which existed at one time in the town.

Visits included tours of Peterborough cathedral and an after-hours visit to the Norris Museum. Each visit and talk was engaging and informative, but as always this cannot be achieved without efforts from willing volunteers - these visits and talks cannot organise themselves.

As we look forward to 2019/20, I wish to thank the existing History Group committee including Ian Gaunt, Mervyn & Judith Harvey and Mike Quincy for their efforts in keeping the history group afloat. I also wish to thank Tina Lamb who in the background, has been diligently transcribing the historic minutes from 1894 of the Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council. She is encountering some fascinating subjects that ring forward though the years which I hope we can hear about soon but I gather that mobile phone masts were not on the agenda 100 years ago. My thanks also go to Julia and her dedicated delivery of refreshments throughout the year at timely moments.

As it appears again from year to year, we desperately need volunteers to run the small posts within the group. We don't have a secretary, there is a place on the programmes committee and existing holders of some posts would like to pass them onto new people. Please approach myself if you would like to help.

Andrew Silverstone
Chairman
Upwood & the Raveleys Local History Group