



## Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

**Upwood and the Raveleys Annual Parish Meeting  
at 8:00pm on Monday 09 May 2022. Upwood Village Hall**

**Present:** Councillors: D. Awit, J. Burgess (Chairman), J. Edwards, R. Mashford, J. Milner, M. Tew.

**In Attendance:** Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk) and no members of the public.

### Minutes

#### **1. Welcome by Councillor Burgess (Chairman, Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council)**

Councillor Jan Burgess had been appointed as Chairman to Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council at the Annual General Parish Council Meeting held earlier in the evening. She welcomed councillors to this meeting which provides an opportunity for registered electors to discuss parish affairs and pass resolutions thereon. It is also an opportunity for the parish council; higher tiers of local government; and community group leaders to share news of their activities over the last year. It is unfortunate that no residents or district or county councillors were in attendance.

#### **2. Apologies**

To receive and approve apologies for absence

Councillors G. Bonnett-Kolakowska: work commitment; R. Howe: personal; A. Costello (Cambridgeshire County Council): attendance required at another meeting; Mr. P. Charman (Resident).

#### **3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting. 04 May 2021.**

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 04 May 2021.

The minutes of the annual parish meeting held on 04 May 2021 had been circulated in advance following the informal approval of the chairman. Councillor Mashford proposed that the minutes be approved. Councillor Edwards seconded the proposal. No other councillors present had been in attendance at that meeting thus it was **resolved** to do so. Councillor Howe (chairman at that time) signed the minutes after the meeting.

#### **4. Report from the chairman of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council.** Please find attached.

#### **5. Financial report from the clerk to the council.** Please find attached.

#### **6. To invite community representatives to address the meeting**

Representatives of the following community groups had offered apologies and forwarded reports which had been shared with councillors ahead of the meeting and are attached to these minutes:

- Home to Home, prepared by Pauline McLeod, Chairman.
- St. Peter's Handbell Ringers, prepared by Vernon Cracknell.
- Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotment Raveleys Association, prepared by Trevor Brown and Upwood Community Orchard, prepared by Liz Carter.
- Upwood and the Raveleys Newsletter, prepared by Doug McLeod, Chairman.
- Upwood Cricket Club, prepared by Neil Tuffin.
- Upwood Golf Society, prepared by Howard Smith.
- Upwood Primary Academy.
- Upwood Ukuleles, prepared by Doug McLeod, Chairman.

- Upwood Village Hall Management Committee, prepared by Stephen Howes, Chairman.

7. **To invite the public to raise any matters of interest.** There were no matters arising.

8. **Questions for county and district councillors.** No district or county councillors were present.

9. **Chairman's closing remarks.**

The chairman thanked members of the parish council, all of whom have busy lives, for their continued commitment to this community. She noted the parish council's appreciation for the long-standing commitment of Councillor Robin Howe who stepped down from the role of chairman at the Annual General Parish Council Meeting earlier in the evening. Councillor Howe joined this parish council in September 2011 and has served as chairman since October of the same year. He will continue to serve as Vice-Chairman.

The chairman also echoed the sentiments of Councillor Howe in his report, noting her thanks to the clerk for her uninterrupted commitment to the parish council whilst caring for her husband throughout a debilitating illness until he tragically passed away at the end of December.

Finally, the chairman offered her thanks to the leaders of all the organisations who had submitted reports. As always, it is a great pleasure to receive news of the many and varied activities which are offered in this parish and these provide an enduring record of life in Upwood and the Raveleys.

The parish council would like to take this opportunity to remind you of The Ramsey Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund which provides £40,000 every year projects. Applications are invited for grants between £250 and £20,000 for projects located within Ramsey, Bury and Upwood and the Raveleys. 20% (£8,000) is designated specifically for projects in Upwood and the Raveleys. The fund is open to any community project which is for the benefit of residents of the local area and it can provide both capital and revenue grants. For further information and to make an application please see: <https://www.grantscape.org.uk/fund/ramseywindfarmcbf/> The closing date for 2022 applications is 11 August.

*Note that Applicants may now apply for further grants each year. However, they may not receive priority over organisations that have previously been turned away or those who are applying for the first time. Groups can receive consecutive annual grants for up to three years, but then there will need to be a break in funding (i.e., the group is not eligible to apply for a further grant in year four but can then re-apply again in year five). This is to ensure groups don't become reliant on the same source of funding and need to consider other forms of income generation.*



## Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

### ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2022 Report from the Chairman of the Council

In last year's annual report I outlined the four main priorities the Parish Council is addressing and these remain in place until further notice.

The first concern is the appearance of the parish, notably the grassed areas and hedgerows. We want these areas to be groomed and attractive to visitors and residents and have invested a great deal of time in selecting a new contractor to undertake this work. The first two cuts have been disappointing in some areas and we will soon hold a meeting with the management of BEAM to resolve this.

As part of our plan is to make the parish more attractive we have prepared the ground for planting four beds of wildflowers on both sides of Huntington Road. Seed will be planted during May and should be flowering from July onwards. We would like feedback from residents about this initiative, as we are of course spending taxpayer money to carry out this work. Councillor Edwards is responsible for preparing the ground for the planting and a resident Paul Charman, a keen and knowledgeable gardener, is advising on the best flower collection to attract bees and other insects.

CLlr Edwards also organised the recent litter pick across the parish which yielded 20 sacks of litter. The pick was attended by 5 councillors and 10 residents.

The second priority is road safety and speed control which I dealt with in earlier reports. One in five motorists exceed the speed limit and a small percentage exceed 70 mph in the 40 mph limit. One motorcyclist routinely exceeds 100 mph leaving and entering the village.

Reducing speed limits is clearly an important step but enforcement is much more important and we need the support of the police, the police and crime commissioner and our local MP to support investment in enforcement systems. This should include regular radar checks by the police but permanent monitoring devices such as radio cameras and average speed cameras represent the most effective deterrent. Competition for investment in these technologies is fierce across the county and we shall have to fight very hard if we are to succeed.

Housing developments under the portfolio of CLlr Burgess, have been limited in the parish during the last year, compared to those taking place in Bury and Ramsey. A number of executive homes are being built in Great Raveley on two sites, while Upwood have agreed planning permission for a single home behind Fisherman's Close. A local resident consortium has bought the 7 acre field behind Ailwyn House known as The Warren and have placed a no-building covenant upon it thereby protecting it permanently from unwanted development.

However, Ramsey and Bury have had 1600 new homes approved, or are in the HDC Local Plan (a 50% increase) without any significant changes to transport systems, education or health facilities. An alliance of the three parishes; Ramsey, Upwood and Bury (RUB) is supporting a campaign to have speed limits reduced and more investment in road and infrastructure improvements. The parish now has four speed indicator devices located on the four roads in and out of the parish and these collect valuable speed data to be used when campaigning for speed limit reductions. Councillor Bonnett-Kolakowska has led the campaign for speed reduction to 30mph along Huntingdon Road and the RUB Alliance will support the campaign to extend the 30 limit past the school and Fairmead to link with the 30 limit in Bury.

The third priority is the health and safety of children. CLlr Mashford continues to seek grant funding to modernise Bentley Close play area and has organised summer sports events with HDC. We are lobbying Evera Homes to ensure that Fairmead children have access to new play facilities connected to the airfield development. Similarly we are pressing the developer of the new homes planned for Farm Close to make provision for play areas given the loss of large areas of green space.

The fourth area of priority is improved communication between the Parish Council and residents and we made a start with this, again with the help of Councillor Mashford, by publishing full colour inserts in a new design format for the parish newsletter.

Covid had a lesser impact on parish activities in the last year compared with earlier years and meetings were all held in the Village Hall, a welcome resumption of normal service.

There have been a number of changes to personnel in the last few months including Nick Maddocks who retired in March, having represented Fairmead estate and has done sterling work with the children's playground in the last couple of years. Andrew Perkins decided not to stand for election in May and steps down after almost twenty years in office. Andrew has fulfilled many roles in his time, most recently as tree officer and with responsibility for grounds maintenance and his hard work, local knowledge and quirky humour will be missed by us all. His huge personality and experience will be hard to replace.

We also welcomed Michael Tew to the council during the year. He has enormous experience in local government as a current assembly member of the National Association of Local Councils and is a former county councillor. Michael resides in Bury and previously chaired Bury PC and will act as an important link with our neighbouring parish when it comes to speed control and road infrastructure strategies.

David Awit, who's family are relative newcomers to the parish, joined the PC last September and took responsibility for the new ground maintenance contract which led to the selection of BEAM as our contractor for three years.

We are pleased to learn that Fairmead resident James Milner will join the council following the recent local election. James is a serving policeman and an active member of the cricket club and will add his considerable experience to the Council.

Final mention must be given to the Clerk, Carol Silverstone. Carol cared for her husband Andrew throughout a debilitating illness, until he tragically passed away at the end of December. In spite of the enormous pressure on her time and emotions Carol continued her role as Clerk without interruption and ensured that the highest standards expected of a Quality Gold Award council were maintained throughout. She deserves our utmost sympathy and thanks.

Robin Howe  
Chairman, Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council  
09 May 2022



## Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting. 09 May 2022

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

In 2021/2022 the parish council worked with a budget of £39,627.80, £26,000 of which was raised through the precept. At the end of the year receipts totalled £32,132.35 and payments £37,770.82. The balance carried forward on 31 March 2022 was £42,976.64 (a decrease of £5,640.47 on the previous year).

Although the bank balance remains healthy, only £25,516 is held as a general reserve. £6,000 is reserved for a future cemetery extension and £9,000 is reserved for repair/replacement of play equipment. Also included in the year end bank balance is the remaining £2,463 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This may only be spent on infrastructure and this will be carried forward into the next financial year. The invoice for the Local Highway Improvement Initiative 2019/2020 for traffic calming in Great Raveley amounting to £6,619.00 was received and paid during 2021/2022.

The parish council has made a conscious decision to utilise some of its reserves rather than to make significant increases to the precept (and therefore council tax).

Comparing the forecasted budget with actual expenditure in 2021/2022 there are two notable variances:

- Active Lives children's activities during the summer of 2021 costing £490.02. This was an unbudgeted expense as the parish council had hoped that sponsorship would have been forthcoming.
- The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in savings of £130 for travel.

Other notable expenses and achievements in 2020/2021 include:

- Continued financial support to the parish newsletter (including a dedicated parish council insert) and the village hall.
- Ongoing support for continued professional development for the clerk and for councillors.

Two donations were gratefully received during 2021/2022: one, an anonymous donation of £300 from a resident was made to support the re-wilding of highway verges and the parish eagerly awaits some colourful displays throughout the summer months. The second donation of £1146.16 from Upwood and the Raveleys History Group reflects the results of a community fundraising project to cover the cost of a commemorative bench "to the Upwood walkers who enjoyed some freedom during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020/2021". The project was so successful that enough money was raised to purchase a second bench and this will "celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II". £108.52 remains unspent and the parish council awaits instructions from the residents' group regarding the purchase of a commemorative tree or similar enduring legacy.

The parish council remains fully compliant in all areas of governance and financial management. In April 2022, the parish council adopted a new "Code of Conduct" in line with Huntingdonshire District Council. All policies and procedures are reviewed and readopted at the Annual General Parish Council Meeting in May.

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 annual internal audit carried out in 2021 was 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. I expect this to remain the case for the forthcoming audit in May 2022.

In conclusion, the parish council continues to uphold the standards required to qualify for "Local Council Award Scheme's Quality Gold Award". This council is one of three councils in Cambridgeshire to have achieved this award and one of only fifty-three in England and Wales. The parish council should consider re-applying after the elections and expiry of the award in November 2022.

Carol Bilverstone. Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
09 May 2022

## **HOME TO HOME CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL AGM 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

For those who don't know Home to Home is a ladies group that meets on the last Monday of the month, unless a bank holiday interferes with our schedule, in Upwood Village Hall at 7.30pm. We have a mixture of outside speakers and member-led evenings, and all of our meetings are open to visitors, with the exception of December when we have a 'bring and share' Christmas party.

Covid 19 played havoc with our 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebrations due to have taken place in September 2020, however, never to be beaten, the committee decided to try meeting in person again in September 2021 (we had been kept together via emails from April 2020 – August 2021) and we started with a bang – Doug and Geoff presented their own inimitable take on a murder mystery evening using a Peruvian nose flute and a kazoo to 'play the music'. The committee were delighted with the turn-out, and our decision to buy mugs solely for the use of members plus really tasty cupcakes from Tom's Cakes and 'waitress service' were all gratefully received by the members. A more lasting memorial to Home to Home's 40 years of fun and friendship is the rose hedge we have sponsored at the Community Orchard.

Even though there wasn't going to be a Christmas Tree festival, founder member Jean led us for the October meeting in creating Christmas tree decorations, and we all made houses or bungalows to hang on our own trees (or use as lanterns!) While the ladies created, I went round with a questionnaire to gauge members' opinions of the way forward regarding Covid-19 and its current restrictions. November 2021 saw Darren Williams and his graphic artist talking us through the production of The Informer – it was fascinating to find out the workings of a local newspaper and be able to ask questions about format and production processes amongst other areas. Our usual 'bring and share' Christmas meeting had to be abandoned but members voted for more Tom's Cakes cupcakes and the committee supplied non-alcoholic fizz. We did various quizzes accompanied by Christmas music and everyone had a great time.

At the AGM in January the committee was re-elected en-bloc, with Anne-Marie announcing that she wished to resign from the committee in January 2023. The results of the questionnaire were discussed and decisions made as to the organisation of Home to Home in the future, keeping Covid-19 restrictions firmly in mind. Once the business was completed members worked in 2/3s to complete a 250 large-piece puzzle in as short a time as possible. Jill and Noreen (with a little help from me) finished nearly an hour before the final group finished!

So far, the 2022 meetings have been well attended and we have been rewarded with a couple of excellent speakers. Pete Brindley came in February to give his first talk about the wonderful organisation he volunteers for – the Blood Runners. It was a totally absorbing talk and all of us learnt a huge amount about this vital group. If you have any old mobile phones Blood Runners will happily take them off your hands, wipe them of personal data and the money raised is ploughed back into the Blood Runners service. In March we had another brilliant speaker but this time on the practical craft of pottery. Trevor Dyer came from his Godmanchester studio to both demonstrate and explain the art of potting. He created a wide range of pots as well as bringing along ones that we could buy. He is a real craftsman so do go along to his studio in Godmanchester to see for yourselves (but don't forget to take your wallet/credit card!) April was our Bunny Drive – exactly the same as a Beetle Drive except we draw festive bunnies! Great hilarity and lots of chocolate are the main ingredients of the evening as well as lots of dice throwing. Linda won far more of the 12 rounds than it should be logistically possible and finished as the overall winner, however she and her family don't really eat chocolate, so the prize of a large Easter egg went to runner-up Jill.

Our final 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary special is on 23<sup>rd</sup> May when we have the Raptor Centre from St Ives bringing their birds of prey - we are all really looking forward to a great flying display. This meeting will be held near the Community Orchard starting at 7pm as long as the weather is fine or in the village hall if the weather is inclement. Everyone is welcome but you will need to bring your own chair and £3 to help pay for the visit!

New members and visitors are always welcome to our meetings, so if you have never been to a Home to Home meeting do come along and give us a try, or ring me (the chairman) I will tell you more about this fun and friendly ladies group.

Pauline McLeod -chairman, Home to Home

## **St Peter's Handbell Ringers Report May 2022**

Upwood Handbell Ringers of St Peter's meet in St. Peter's Church from 2-4pm every Monday and on occasion in the evening. We usually practice in church but in winter-time we practice in our homes which has not been possible again this year.

Our team currently consists of 7 players from Upwood and surrounding villages and are hoping to recruit more people, giving training to potential new musicians .

Please see our facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=upwood%20handbell%20ringers>

Unfortunately, our meetings have been rather disrupted again this year. We were very pleased to restart our meetings in October 2021 but sadly stopped again from December-early March 2022 due to winter and the Covid climate.

However, the Bells had an interview on Radio Cambridgeshire in December 2021 and we also had an outside "Get Together" in February to choose a playout music program as we will be performing several times this year if all goes well.

It has been a real pleasure to practice again in church which is open to all and to have had few people coming in to listen and enjoy.

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

Vernon Cracknell

# **URCAA – Business Plan 2022/23 – Update date 010422**

## **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 routine 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 within the internal boundaries of the site.

Responsibility for the maintenance to the external boundaries of the site fall to the Upwood Parish Council.

The Upwood site currently consists of 45 allotment plots split into a range of sizes, large, medium, small and mini. The various sizes 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**

- Due to the relaxing of the Covid-19 situation, we have recently been able to hold a normal AGM this year in the village hall. As the current committee members have been in post for a number of years a completely fresh committee was voted in at the AGM. Hopefully new faces will bring continued enthusiasm to the running of the association.



- At the AGM, volunteers from with the tenants agreed to monitor the maintenance situation to ensure that the site continues to look its best.
- 45 of the available 45 plots at Upwood are actively cultivated and managed by allotment holders.
- There are no vacant plots at the Upwood.
- The Great Raveley site also has full occupancy.
- Currently there are 4 people on the waiting list for vacant plots. This situation is under review as land may need to be found unless current plots become available.
- 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 several personal tool stores, small sheds and water containers on Site for equipment storage and rainwater harvesting.

## **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

### **Short to Medium Term Objectives.**

#### **1) General Maintenance**

Re-sizing and maintenance of vacant plots is being actively progressed at the Upwood site over the past year. People's expectations from working an allotment has changed over time and this generally results in a requirement for wanting smaller plots than the historically defined larger allotment plot sizes. By creating smaller plot sizes and using weed suppressant membrane to reduce overall maintenance requirements, we have continued the drive to get more people actively engaged in the allotments, resulting in full occupancy. When plots were unoccupied, we covered the area with manure and membrane with a view to making the prospect of taking on a plot more appealing to any new members. The inside of the hedge, and shared access paths will continue to be the responsibility of individual plot holders as they are expected to maintain their own plot area.

Communal grass cutting is currently contracted out to CGM, and we will be reviewing this in the Autumn. This will leave the orchard grass paths to be cut on an ad-hoc basis by the tenants, therefore encouraging wild flowers and insects such as bees to flourish on the uncut areas.

A number of hedges have been laid with whips, and this work will continue this spring. This will enhance the look of the site, and have long term benefits for the wildlife.

Plot one is being actively managed by the members, enhancing the appearance of the site and encouraging wildlife and wildflowers to flourish.

#### **2) Strengthening the association.**

The URCAA committee has traditionally been made up of five members, including a representative from the Great Raveley site.

There is always a need to recruit additional members to share some of the everyday site management for example, and to drive forward future projects.  
A number of volunteers stepped forward at the AGM to monitor maintenance, manage publicity and social media sites.  
Recruitment and the retention of plot holders remains a high priority.

### **3) Publicity.**

Whilst we are managing vacant plots as they arise, 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 2022/23 through the village newsletter, the local free newspapers, social media and by any other means.  
The Facebook group page appears to be well supported and used for sharing gardening tips and sharing produce. We continue to add members to this group.

### **4) Social events.**

The committee would like to hold at least one social event in the year, to raise the Group's profile as well as engender a community spirit.  
As we emerge from the Covid-19 restrictions, then we will endeavour to organise an event involving the tenants, and perhaps the local community.

### **5) Community Orchard Project.**

The Orchard will continue to be maintained as nearly all the trees have survived another winter. New hedging has been planted and fencing erected over the past year to enhance the area and define the boundaries between the orchard and the other plots. Further planting and improvements will continue this spring.  
The dilapidated raised flower beds have been replaced after obtaining funding from Grantscape.

### **6) Water provision.**

There are currently four water troughs at the Upwood site and a 1000 litre water container at the Great Raveley site. Over 2022/23 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.  
We may have an opportunity to have an additional water supply installed at the top of the allotments free of charge. This may come about as a result of a proposed planning application that requires a utility trench to be installed on allotment land. The funding for this additional water supply may come in the form of an easement.

### **7) Rewilding.**

Returning land to nature, rewilding, is becoming more prominent in government policy and the public's thinking. The poor quality of the soil on the community plot (plot 1), and the presence of wildflowers in this area, has led the committee and volunteers to attempt to rewild this area. The intention is to suppress invasive weeds and scrub in order to allow more diverse wild plants to thrive. Work has continued on this project and good progress has been made. This work will continue this year and will encourage wild flora and fauna, such as bees. This will benefit nature and the community in the short and long term.

#### **8) On site toilet.**

An on-site toilet would especially benefit those plot holders who live some distance from their plots. Some type of Eco Loo that requires no permanent plumbing would be ideal. After being raised again at the recent AGM, the practicality and costs of this amenity requires further investigation.

### **Long Term Objectives.**

#### **1) Water Provision.**

Notwithstanding the water provision comments in the Short to Medium term plan, there still exists a need for further water provision on the Upwood site. It would appear that a local developer is likely to install a utilities trench on the allotments site. The trustees and the URCAA committee need to consider a proposed easement in the form of a water supply at the top end of the allotments.

There is no permanent water supply at the Great Raveley site, so this should also be Considered as a future project.

#### **2) Shelter or communal hut.**

A communal shelter hut or shelter is still an objective. A building or shelter would engender a communal spirit if plot holders could share a space together on site.

#### **3) Improve the Orchard.**

It intended that a gate be erected at the entrance to the orchard and extend the boundary fence and hedge to better enclose this area. Fund raising will be required for this project.

#### **4) Community raised beds.**

A proposal was put forward at the AGM to have some raised beds made available for the use of the residents of the local care home. This would require funding and further investigation.

### **FINANCE**

Allotment rents are now collected and managed by URCAA and retained for future Investment and day to day running costs. Currently there is enough income to manage and maintain the site with a small surplus generated for site improvements. URCAA aim to build up a reserve from any fund-raising events and maintain a minimum of £300 in reserve for any ongoing maintenance or unexpected expenses. All projects are dependent on fund raising, sponsorship and annual allotment rents collected by URCAA.

However, maintenance costs and water bills are always going up, so after many years, we have reluctantly increased the plot rents to cover this. Hopefully we can generate a small surplus that can be used to finance any future projects.

## RISK ANALYSIS

The main risks that the URCAA committee have identified are fairly insignificant, and some have been addressed, such as public liability insurance.

- Covid-19 – The easing of Covid-19 restrictions over the past year has reduced some of the concerns we had over public safety for example. Due to the open nature of the allotments, we cannot be responsible for the general public adhering to the latest government guidelines. The onsite notice board and signs at the entrances continues to draw attention to Covid-19 guidelines.
- Covid-19 – Again, due to the pandemic, the committee are unable to organise any fund-raising events. This could have impacted upon the association's finances, but we do not consider that to be an immediate issue. However, funding for any short to long term projects could now be reduced due to the recent rent increase.
- Public liability – As the allotments are an open site and therefore accessible to the general public as well as plot holders, public liability insurance is covered by the council.
- Individual liability - We have enrolled the URCAA into the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) which has the benefit of providing individual plot holders with free liability insurance.
- Reduction in the number of plot-holders – There is a risk of a reduced take up of allotments and new plot holders not coming forward. Fortunately, this has not been the case as more people have shown an interest in growing their own vegetables during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are currently running at 100% plot occupancy, and even have a small waiting list.
- Adverse weather – Severe weather could damage the site and the growing potential of the plants and vegetables, most notably drought, flooding and wind damage. This could dishearten plot holders resulting in a decline in allotment usage and therefore the funding needed to support the allotments. We are attempting to alleviate the flood problem by planting shrubs and hedging. An additional water supply would help in drought conditions.

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

### **Chairman's Report April 2022**

#### **Allotments**

1. The Upwood site currently has a total of 45 plots of varying sizes maintained by 42 tenants.
2. The Great Raveley site currently has a total of 5 plots of varying sizes maintained by 4 tenants.
3. There are 15 full sized plots, while the remainder have been sub-divided into smaller more manageable plots.
4. There are no vacant plots at the Great Raveley site.
5. There are also no vacant plots at the Upwood site.
6. There are currently 4 people on the plot waiting list.
7. The tenants using the site are predominantly from Upwood and Great Raveley, but a small number of tenants also come from Woodwalton, Bury, Ramsey and Ramsey Heights.
8. At the Upwood site a large area is let to a farmer tenant for the production of hay.
9. At the Great Raveley site a field section is let to a local farmer for the production of arable crops.
10. 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.
11. There may be a possibility of an additional water supply being installed at the top end of the allotments, but this is largely dependent upon a current planning application being submitted by a local builder. This would be in the form of an easement to compensate for running a utility trench across the allotment site.
12. 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.
13. There are some issues with the access track on the Upwood site with cars being driven in wet weather resulting in the ground becoming very churned up. Tenants have been reminded to only use vehicles on the track when absolutely necessary and not when conditions are bad.
14. The Community Plot (plot one site by Huntingdon Road) has very poor soil and is slowly being transformed into a wildlife area.
15. Vacant plots and the suppression of weeds are always a concern. However, with all the plots occupied, the situation appears to be under control. The majority of the plots are in a good condition and tenants have been reminded to keep their shared areas tidy.
16. Although the parish council has ended its maintenance contract with CGM, the allotment association is contracted to remain with them until the end of the growing season. At this time, the contract situation will be reviewed when we will either continue with CGM or find a suitable replacement contractor. A path around the Orchard will be maintained by strimming with access to the 2 seats. This will be carried out regularly by a member of the committee using URCAA & personal equipment.
17. We have increased the plot rent for the first time in many years. This was required to cover increased maintenance costs, water charges and to maintain a healthy balance sheet.
18. Part of the plot rent now covers individual membership of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). One of the benefits of joining this association is that plot holders now have National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG).

## **Orchard**

1. There is a separate report for the Community Orchard which can be seen on the Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council Google drive.

## **URCAA Financial Report**

1. A summary of the UCRAA financial situation can be seen below.
2. A full statement of accounts can be seen on the Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council Google drive.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Totals</u>
31/03/22	Allotment Account Balance	£3,777.04
31/03/22	Allotment Plots – deposits held	£1,320.00
31/03/22	Orchard Account Balance	£704.16
31/03/22	<b>Total Balance of accounts</b>	<b>£5801.20</b>

## **Business Plan**

1. A copy of the UCRAA Business Plan can be seen on the Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council Google drive.

## **Summary**

The URCAA and the Community Orchard appear to be in good health financially, and have good support from the parishioners. All available allotment plots under cultivation. We have a small waiting list, so may even have to consider releasing a small amount of land from the hay field or Great Raveley field plots. Maintenance wise, there are no major causes for concern. However, the grass cutting maintenance contract with CGM will be up for renewal in the Autumn. This contract will be reviewed as they have not proven to be reliable and need constant chasing for their work and billing.

At the recent AGM, a full change of officers has occurred, so this will be my last report as chairman before Adam takes over. I personally would like to thank the outgoing secretary and treasurer for their hard work and dedication supporting me and the association after being in post for many years.

Pending transactions to be cleared for end of Financial Year \*

## URCAA TRUSTEES FINANCIAL REPORT - 01/04/22

### **Bank account balance statement**

	<b>£5,801.20</b>	
Bank account adjusted for pending payments	£5,744.51	
Allotment accounts balance:	£3,777.04	
Deposits held:	£1,320.00	Need to adjust at end of FY
Orchard accounts balance:	£704.16	

### **Income/expenditure from 31/03/2021 to 31/03/2022**

#### **Allotment accounts summary at 31/03/22**

	<b>£3,777.04</b>
<i>Allotment accounts incl pending</i>	£3710.60*
Opening balance (01 Mar 21)	£3,088.50

Rental income	£1,297.50
Water costs	-£99.58
Padlock & noticeboard keys	-£49.80
Grass cutting (9 cuts)	-£302.40
Admin costs (printing, stamps etc)	-£39.22
Meeting costs (incl hall deposit - final payment tbc)	-£45.40
NSALG membership	-£139.00

#### **Summary (Allotments)**

Monies in	£1,297.50
Monies out	£675.40

#### **Orchard accounts summary at 31/03/22**

	<b>£704.16</b>
<i>Orchard accounts incl pending*</i>	£713.91
Opening balance (01 Mar 21)	£708.87

<i>Grantscape - grant award for raised beds +</i>	£2,312.00
Raised beds	-£1,662.00
Mulch	-£527.90
Plants	-£167.94

Maintenance, Bulb pots, seeds etc	-£98.87
Donation	£160.00
Orchard sign (was pending from 20/21)	-£25.00

**Grass cutting (one off cut)** -£60.00 Not invoiced or incl. in pending

#### **Summary (Orchard)**

Monies in (incl Grantscape and donation)	£2,472.00
Monies out	£2,541.71

## UPWOOD COMMUNITY ORCHARD – REPORT FOR TRUSTEES

During the past year we have seen some dramatic changes to the Community Orchard.

The grass cutting contract was cancelled in the spring of 2021 and the whole area allowed to grow naturally with mown paths created through the site to provide access. Visitors commented on how pleasant it now was to walk through or round the Orchard. Pernicious weeds (sow thistle and ragwort) were carefully eliminated whilst others such as wild carrot, knapweed and hawkbit were encouraged. The whole area was mown at the end of the summer to help spread the seeds. This was augmented by the donation of a bale of hay taken from Kings College Cambridge which was carefully shaken out over raked areas to, again, encourage a wider selection of wild flowers and grasses and small plugs of wild flowers were planted. Unfortunately, CGM managed to enter the Orchard and cut the grass at the start of this March, despite being reminded not to go near it. On the positive side they avoided all the obvious planting but have mown many of the wild flower plugs.

Volunteers were called upon in the autumn to create some wild flower 'smiles' - curved scrapes - which were then sown with collected wild flower seeds and there were signs of young plants which might make a colourful display amongst the grasses if they survived the cutting in March. In addition, daffodil bulbs taken from the old raised beds were planted in random clumps around the Orchard and are now in flower. These will hopefully colonise the area.

All of the trees have been surveyed over the winter with necessary pruning undertaken – plums to be done later this spring. One tree had died from waterlogging and was replaced, in a different location. The waterlogging of the lower part of the site is still a problem and some willow slips have been planted to help soak up the surplus and, hopefully, provide some willow for fencing projects in due course. In early February we welcomed the addition of a Japanese Flowering Cherry tree, planted in memory of the late Andrew Silverstone. In addition to the new tree, a new bench has also been added alongside providing two seating areas within the Orchard from which to enjoy the view across the fenland landscape.

The largest change, however, came with the successful application to the Ramsey Windfarm Community Fund, via Grantscape, for the supply of three new raised beds. The original wooden ones, which were made from recycled wood, had started to fall apart with one disintegrating completely and another losing a corner. The grant money came in two chunks, enabling us to purchase three recycled plastic, wood effect raised beds almost the same size as the original beds which were emptied and dismantled. The surviving plants were rehomed over the winter.

The new beds were delivered in January and erected with the help of two local volunteers. The second half of the grant money funded special mulch which arrived one frosty morning on a lorry too big to squeeze through the barrier and so was left, in bags, at the entrance. Fortunately our local knight in shining (yellow) armour



arrived with his forklift to move the bags into the site and the group of volunteers then filled the three beds.

The total spent on the beds and mulch came to less than the grant money requested and we were delighted when Grantscape confirmed that the remaining balance could be used to purchase some plants for the beds – this had originally been put down as our own contribution to the funding. We have therefore been able to not only replace the beds but also some of the plants with the grant monies. Additional plants have been purchased and two of the three beds are now planted up, the third will be planted up later in the spring with herbs. There is a possibility that it may be designated a Platinum Jubilee Herb bed if a suggested donation materialises. The untidy, impromptu bed by the hedge, created from the spoil from the old beds, has now been rebuilt and planted up and a new corner bed has been made from recycled timber, shortly to be planted up.

There is still plenty of work to do in the Orchard – we are currently putting a low fence along the top boundary to help define the extent of the Orchard. The rose hedge along the track is needing some attention and whilst a recent volunteer day saw all the tree bases cleared of grass, the mulching is ongoing. New slate labels for the trees have been purchased and will be placed by the trees as soon as the mulching is completed. Looking to the future, we would like to put wood surrounds around each tree to enable effective mulching and weeding of the tree bases and to provide a uniform look to the site. Funding for this project will come either from a fund-raising event or a grant application.

The Community Orchard is open to all and receives many visitors from outside the village. The Upwood Home to Home group are using it for their May meeting when the local Raptor Centre will be giving a flying display in the early evening. Primarily, however, it is a place of contemplation and reflection – a peaceful haven in troubled times.

The Community Orchard is run by a very small team of 3 volunteers – if anyone would like to join us you would be most welcome!

Liz Carter – Upwood Community Orchard  
30 MARCH 2022



## **Upwood and the Raveleys Newsletter Committee**

### **Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2022**

Due to the unusual circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic the newsletter committee held its first AGM since April 2019 on 27 April 2022.

The newsletter continued to be issued on a regular bi-monthly basis up until April 2020. In fact, the first National Lockdown started just as the April 2020 edition was about to be delivered but our distribution co-ordinator, Pam Dowdell, kindly stored the copies until it was delivered along with our first "lockdown" edition in June 2020. This was followed by a further lockdown edition in November 2020. My thanks go to everyone involved in producing these two issues, especially Pauline McLeod, who edited both issues, and Micromac Printers, who opened specially to print them both. Several parishioners have told me how much they appreciated receiving copies of the newsletter during this period. Well done everyone.

At the start of 2021, with another lockdown in place, it was felt that there was no purpose in producing further editions until restrictions eased and there was sufficient parish news on which to report.

With restrictions easing in the spring of 2021 the newsletter resumed its bi-monthly production cycle with edition no.110 in May 2021. It had been decided to offer an edition to the parish council as it might wish to produce its own copy in order to report in more detail on parish council matters. Unfortunately, it was not in a position to take us up on the offer immediately, but did produce an excellent guest edition in July 2021.

Following this, the parish council requested more regular copy space (4 pages) in each edition which the committee felt would totally unbalance the overall coverage. The committee suggested that the parish council produced its own 4 page insert to each issue, over which they would have full editorial control. This was agreed by the parish council and the first insert was published in December 2021.

In January 2022 we received news that our regular printers, Micromac, were going to cease trading in March 2022. We are very grateful to the assistance which Michael and Mac have given to the newsletter over the years and wish them both all the best in the future. Production has moved across to Parrotprint, also based in Ramsey, for the immediate future. Roger Broderick of Parrotprint has been very helpful in ensuring the transition has gone as smoothly as possible. At this point it should be noted that paper and printing costs are increasing at an alarming rate.

It was decided to undertake a short survey which was included in the February 2022 edition. *The results of the survey are attached as an appendix at the end of this report.* From the survey it was clear that the newsletter is still much appreciated by its readers, most of whom fall into the older age profile. However, it is clear that the younger members of the parish do not really engage with a print version, even though a digital version is always available on request as well as on the parish website. A low level of engagement from Farm Close and Fairmead Park is also a cause for concern.

Due to practical circumstances caused by the pandemic, the newsletter has been edited, largely single-handedly, by Pauline McLeod since April 2020. However, ill health and increasing family commitments are now making it very difficult for the other editors to help with sharing the load. This is also a matter of great concern which will need addressing urgently.

We are grateful to the continued financial support to our running costs provided by the parish council, without which we could not continue to function.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all the committee, deliverers and other volunteers for helping to keep the newsletter flag flying!

Doug McLeod

Chairman

Upwood and the Raveleys Newsletter Committee

28 April 2022

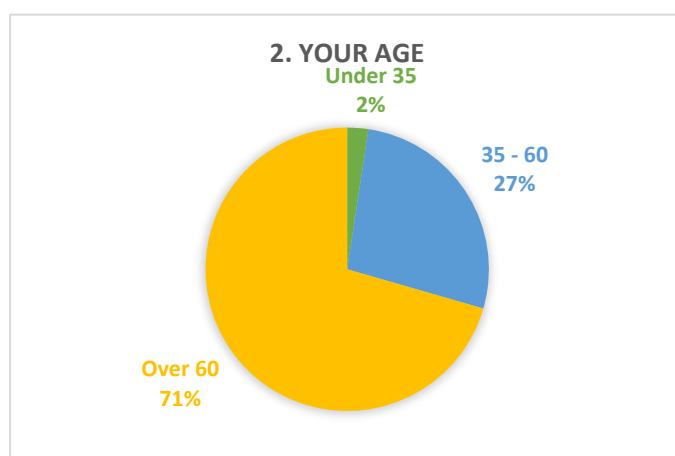
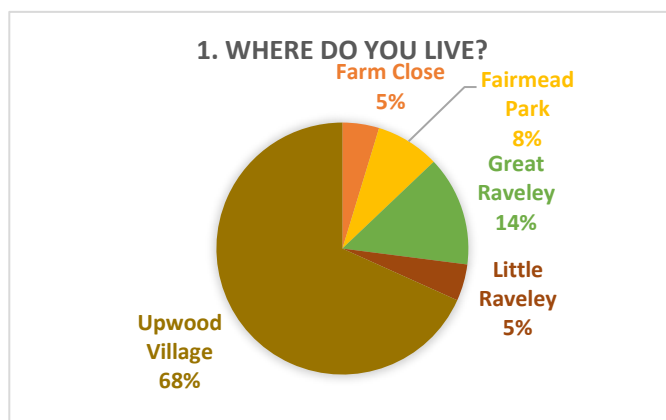
## APPENDIX TO CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO AGM – APRIL 2022

### NEWSLETTER SURVEY RESULTS

We received 85 responses (42 paper / 43 online).

It was reassuring that the vast proportion of replies were very positive in their support of the current newsletter.

There were also several offers of assistance which are currently being followed up.

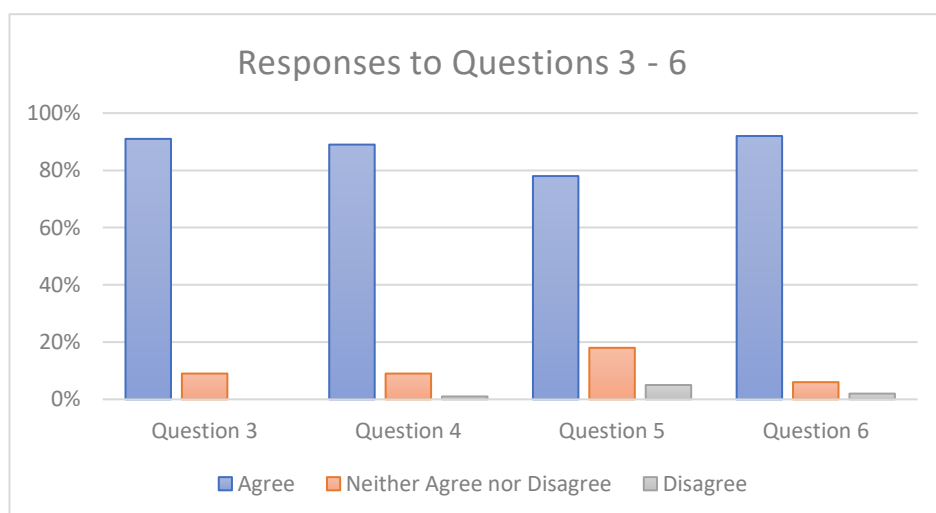


**Q3.** *I regularly read the newsletter.*

**Q4.** *A printed newsletter, delivered free to every home in the parish, is a valuable community communication.*

**Q5.** *The parish newsletter represents good value for money.*

**Q6.** *The current newsletter does a good job in communicating relevant news to the parish.*



Responses to **Question 7**, which asked what changes/improvements you would like to see in the newsletter, largely fell into 4 categories:-

- General responses
- Content Suggestions
- Paper Quality & Print Costs
- Social Media / Digital Presence

## Upwood CC Report Parish Council 05/05/2022

### Juniors

It gives me and the other coaches a real buzz to see many of the juniors that have attended Upwood enjoy the game and hone their skills. We continue to produce youngsters that can challenge for places in the county squads and it is wonderful to see their continued development. We will have 16 juniors representing the county in 2022. We also have 3 girls who play for the full Hunts County Women's team. With our three Level 2 ECB coaches and two new level one coaches we will continue to deliver the best coaching we can to ensure that the juniors continue to improve whatever level they are at in a fun and progressive way.

For 2022 we are putting in the following teams:

- One Under 9 six-a-side softball
- Two Under 11 eight-a-side hardball
- One Under 13 eight-a-side hardball
- One Under 13 eleven-a-side hardball
- One Under 15 eleven-a-side hardball

Summer training will continue on Monday nights from 5-10 to 6-20pm for Under 11's (school year 6 and below) and 6-30 to 8pm Under 12's and older.

Our under 13 team last year won the county cup and went onto represent Huntingdonshire in the Regional Final vs Horsford (Norfolk)

### Seniors

It looks like we will have record number of adult players this year and will be putting out the following teams throughout the season:

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> Team competing in the Hunts League Division 1

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Team competing in the Hunts League Division 3

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Team competing in the Rutland League Division 4 West

There will also be Friendly XI games with a mixture of youth and experience.

Adult Training will be on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 8 PM.

### Facility Improvements

As part of our continued drive to improve the facilities we have carried out some ground work since the end of the season. This year will be the first full year that the nursery ground will be used for all junior games for the Under 13 and below. The main square has also had some thorough Autumn restorative work and it looks magnificent and plays beautifully. Unfortunately, we had a number of break ins last year but thankfully the insurance covered most of the cost but of course not the inconvenience; most of the stolen items have been replaced. We have started to improve our

security and will continue to do so. As our old scoreboard was starting to fall apart, we have bought a second hand electronic scoreboard that looks very smart.

### Overseas Player

For a number of years the club has considered whether to get an overseas player over for the summer but due to a number of reasons we have not taken the plunge. However, as we are starting to get more and more talented youngsters we have looked into setting up a reciprocal arrangement with another club overseas where we can “exchange” young players in our respective summers. We are thrilled to announce that Jake Wynd who is a top order bat and spinner who joins us from Longford CC (Australia) and plays for Gippsland U21 has arrived in the UK and settling into his summer home in Ramsey. He has already seen a first-class game and visited Lords Cricket Ground. Unfortunately, whilst playing his very first game for Huntingdonshire in a friendly at Oundle school he trod on a ball during the warm up (shades of Glen McGrath Edgbaston 2005) but he was back on the field within three weeks. Jake will help out around the club particularly with the juniors.

The club would love to hear from anyone who might be interested in getting involved in anyway; we are always looking for new members, players, officials or supporters of any age or experience and we have a number of differing priced sponsorship options for local businesses. Please contact Neil at [npe.tuffin@gmail.com](mailto:npe.tuffin@gmail.com) or on 07968771138 or visit [www.upwood.play-cricket.com](http://www.upwood.play-cricket.com) for more information.

Good luck all for season 2022

Neil Tuffin

# Upwood Golf Society

Upwood Golf Society held its first event of the year on 22<sup>nd</sup> April at Lakeside Golf and Country Club. We are pleased to say that among the 32 players were 5 new members which made up for those who had other commitments. The Society not only includes players from Upwood but welcomes members from the surrounding area.

The day was in our usual format of a team round on the Par3 followed by a full English breakfast. Then on to the main course for a Team 9 hole Texas scramble followed by a 9 hole individual Stableford.

The event was rounded off with an excellent 3 course meal at the Ale House, Ramsey and prize giving. The overall champion for the day was Walt Coleman who was presented with the Steve Matthews Memorial Trophy.

Any golfer in the area is welcome to join us – both men and ladies. We cater for all abilities from beginners to low handicappers.

The next Open event is on 23<sup>rd</sup> September but we hope to organise some other Society games before then and something for the Jubilee event on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

For more information please contact Howard Smith 07770 847953.

## **Report 2021/22 – Upwood Primary Academy**

Well, as the world reopens its doors after a long 2 year hibernation, Upwood Primary Academy have revelled in all of the activities that we have been missing during lockdown. September started with a new Principal of sorts; Miss Warboys held her wedding day over the summer holidays so we welcomed her back as Mrs Woolner!

We have hosted some visitors into school this year. Marion Leeper joined us in March, taking every class on a verbal adventure with her story telling. The children from USTT up to Year 6 were enthralled by her tales. We also welcomed M & M Productions into the school hall for our first whole school event for over a year. They told the story of Oliver! for the children to watch.

World Book Day was a success, with the children and staff dressing up as their favourite story book characters. We had lots of fun literacy-based activities, including a 'Fantastic Mr Fox' treasure hunt and prizes for the best dressed. The children were all asked to design their own 'Mr Men or Little Miss' character, with the winners having their designs made into actual knitted models by Mrs Branch.

We are hugely excited to be offering some school experiences this year that we have had to cancel for the last 2 years. Our swimming pool has had some renovation work and is now ready to be reopened for PE lessons for all classes once the weather warms up. We are so fortunate to be able to offer this opportunity on-site for our children.

Our Key Stage 2 children will have the chance to participate in residential trips this year. Our Years 3&4 classes have the opportunity to visit Grafham Water for 2 nights and our Years 5&6 are off to Eaton Vale in Norfolk. These trips are invaluable for encouraging independence and other activities that some children may not otherwise experience, such as sailing, raft building and high ropes.

This year we will be celebrating the Queens Platinum Jubilee with a week long extravaganza of activities, including designing portraits of the Queen and making our own party hats and crowns. We will be celebrating on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May with a whole school party, with refreshments provided by our hardworking PTA, inviting everyone to come dressed in Red, White and Blue clothing.

We said a very sad goodbye to Mrs Jan Howe before Easter, who has resigned from the Academy Committee. Jan has been part of our school for over 30 years, as teacher, Deputy Headteacher, Acting Headteacher and then on retiring she joined the Governing Body and later the Academy Committee. Jan made a massive contribution to our school, including supporting with Year 6 SATs and most recently securing funding to keep our swimming pool going.

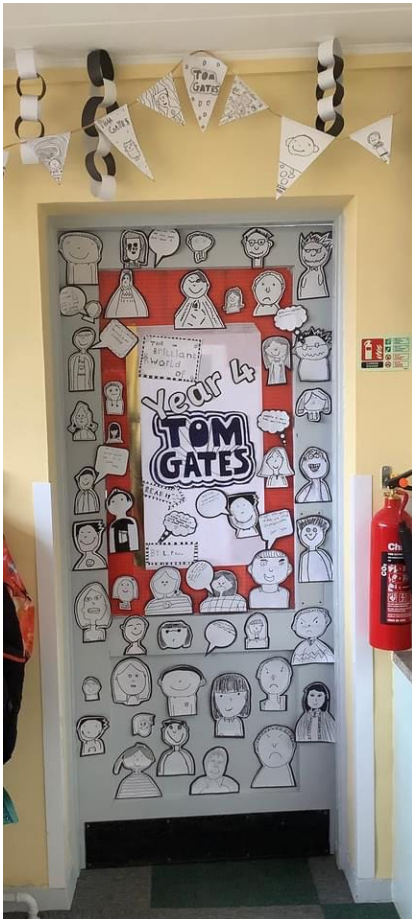
We have been proud to support different charities over the past year, raising money for Young Minds with a non uniform day, collecting donations of food and toiletries to be distributed to the local community via Ramsey Foodbank. We raised a huge £252.70 for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal and £117.60 for Red Nose Day, with the children coming into school wearing red clothing.

We would like to thank all of the residents of Upwood who continue to support our school with everything we do, striving to provide the best education for our local children. Our weekly newsletter, and all of our updates and activities, are posted on our website [www.upa.education](http://www.upa.education)

Photographs:

1. Winners of the Mr Men and Little Miss competition
2. Marion Leeper visiting for her storytelling adventures.
3. Our Foundation class wear red for Red Nose Day
4. Year 4's World Book Day door competition entry
5. Year 1 and 2 dressed up for World Book Day
6. Our fond farewell to Mrs Howe









## **Upwood Ukuleles**

### **Chairman's Report – May 2022**

Since our last AGM, in April 2019, it is an understatement to say that much has happened:-

- Because of the pandemic we have effectively been unable to perform in public or raise money for 2 years.
- Because of the Covid restrictions we have had to experiment with different ways of meeting up to practice:- via the somewhat frustrating medium of Zoom, in the open air where we have had to sit so far apart that we have been unable to hear anyone else playing except ourselves, and latterly meeting up in the village hall.
- We have learnt to make musical videos where we have had to listen to backing tracks and click tracks through earphones.
- We have managed to learn a bunch of new music and, in my opinion, improve our technical ability to boot.
- We have lost a founder member in tragic circumstances but we have also welcomed an incredibly enthusiastic new member to the fold.
- We have added more percussion to our music.
- We have expanded our Google drive library of guide tracks and up-to-date songsheets.
- We applied for, and received, another Grantscape grant to purchase extra microphones and stands.
- We have managed to persuade an internationally recognised musician to perform on our recording of one of his tunes.

And now, with the pandemic hopefully on the wane, we have been able to get back to performing in public again and our diary is starting to fill up. Along with that we have been able to reach the fantastic fundraising total of £50,000 for Magpas Air Ambulance in their 50<sup>th</sup> year – an achievement of which we should all feel very proud.

Well done, Upwood Ukuleles.

Doug McLeod

Chairman



## UPWOOD VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**April 2022**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the consequent government legislation banning face to face gatherings this is the first Annual General Meeting that we have been able to hold in two years.

One of the many tragedies of the pandemic has been the inability for people to mix and socialise, I think this has been particularly true for older people and those living alone where social gatherings are a major part of what they look forward to each week. Research now shows that isolation during the pandemic has had a significant negative impact on people's mental wellbeing.

An enduring lesson which I think we should all learn is to recognise the huge contribution that village halls and other community resources make in helping to people bring people together and live fulfilling and active lives and it is the community's responsibility to ensure that these facilities survive rather than just take them for granted.

Between lockdowns, the hall has managed to open albeit with safety measures and enhanced cleaning regimes using guidance provided by Cambridgeshire ACRE who have had to balance government mandates with village halls' limited means to be able to provide practical solutions.

The loss of financial income during lockdown was mitigated by a government grant of £10,000 and this has more than covered our lack of revenue. At a recent Management Committee, it was decided that the balance of the grant should be put to good use on a major project rather than get absorbed in operational expenses, so over the course of the next few months we will be getting the hall redecorated inside and out with the outside as a priority as there will need to be some repairs made to some of the deteriorating woodwork.

Now that government restrictions have lifted we have been pleased to see that groups are returning to the hall and our bookings are largely back to pre-pandemic levels. Let's hope that the pandemic is finally behind us and this level of activity will continue.

Sadly, the performing arts events organised by Doug which have been running for well over ten years have now come to an end and I would like to thank him for all his efforts not only with enabling the community to see internationally renowned performers but also raising significant funds for the hall.

Once again, we would like to thank the Parish Council whose grant helps us to cover our insurance costs.

Last but not least, my sincere thanks go to the Village Hall committee and its trustees whose tireless efforts continue to ensure that the hall remains a valuable community resource.

Stephen Howes  
Chairman,  
Upwood Village Hall Management Committee