

Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Councillors: Trustees' Meeting

Parish Clerk – Mrs Carol Bilverstone. Kilimanjaro, 9 Meadow Road, Upwood, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE26 2QJ
Telephone: 01487 812447. E-Mail: parishclerk@upwood.org

**A meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Councillors, the Trustees of:
Upwood & the Raveleys Allotments (Charity no. 264373)
Was held on Monday 05 March 2018 at 6:30pm at Upwood Village Hall.**

Present: Councillors J. Edwards, R. Howe (Chairman) H. Nel, J. Noble, J. Paxton, A. Perkins, G. Slater, H. Smith, M. Tew.

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), Mrs L. Carter (URCAA Secretary), Mr. T. Brown (URCAA Chairman).

Minutes

- 01-03/18 To receive and approve apologies for absence.** Ms. A. Miles (URCAA Treasurer)
- 02-03/18 To receive and approve the minutes of the trustees' meeting held on 06 March 2017.**
The minutes of the meeting held on 06 March 2017 had been circulated in advance following their informal approval by the chairman. Councillor Paxton proposed acceptance of the minutes. Councillor Nel seconded the proposal. All who had been present at the meeting were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The chairman signed the minutes.
- 03-03/18 To receive an update from Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotment Association (URCAA): strengths and challenges to date.**
- 04-03/18 To receive an updated business plan from URCAA.**
- 05-03/18 To receive a financial statement from URCAA.**
Detailed reports (attached) had been prepared by URCAA committee members and these had been circulated to the trustees in advance. Mrs Liz Carter and Mr Trevor Brown presented each reports and updated trustees of the achievements of the association over the last twelve months.
- 06-03/18 To receive an update from Councillor Edwards (trustee with a portfolio responsibility for the allotments).**
Councillor Edwards noted that his role is purely advisory and that he had nothing further to report.
- 07-03/18 Matters for future consideration.**
No decisions can be made under this item.
There were no further matters for consideration.
The chairman congratulated all who have been instrumental in the continued successful practical and financial management of the allotments. He reflected on the huge progress made over the last few years and the positive social impact of the community orchard and the planted area. He recommended making a bid to the Ramsey Windfarm Community Benefit Fund to assist with the funding of projects, noting the benefits not just to allotment holders but to the wider community.
- 08-03/18 Date of next meeting:** 01 April 2019 (note that the annual meeting has been changed from March to April to coincide with the URCAA AGM).

Close of meeting: 6:50pm

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

Chairman's Report March 2018

Allotments

- The Upwood site currently has a total of 37 tenants maintaining plots of varying sizes.
- The Great Raveley site currently has 4 tenants, also with plots of varying sizes.
- The vacant sites at Upwood consist of 1 x mini plot, 1 x ½ plot and half a large old plot that is awaiting clearance and sub-dividing into possibly 4 mini plots. Apart from waiting for better weather, the layout of this large vacant plot may depend upon the demand from the parishioners.
- There is one person on the plot waiting list for the Upwood site, but they are not in a position to take one on until the Autumn.
- There are no vacant plots at the Great Raveley site and there is nobody on a waiting list.
- The hayfield hedge on the Upwood site is awaiting tidying up, and as the regular trimmer has been indisposed, the Parish Council are dealing with this matter.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Dog fouling continues to pose a minor problem with instances of owners exercising their dogs on the hayfield. The hayfield is not a public space so 'Keep Off' notices need to be in place.

Orchard

- The orchard is now fully planted with all the trees appearing to be in good health.
- 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.
- Grass cutting for the coming season has been arranged with Andy Davies.
- 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 being sought via an article in the village newsletter.
- The boundary hedgerow has been tidied and will have its first trim this spring when growth restarts.
- The pond at the lower end of the orchard site appears 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 handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RDH' with a flourish above it.

URCAA Financial Report

- A summary of the UCRAA financial situation can be seen below.
- 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>
26/02/18	Allotment Funds	£2,576.11
26/02/18	Allotment Plot deposits	£510.00
26/02/18	Petty Cash	£26.24
26/02/18	Orchard Funds	£913.20
26/02/18	Total Balance of accounts	£4,025.55

Business Plan

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

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, dog fouling and hayfield signage, but no major cause for concern.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D.H.' or similar, located in the bottom right corner of the page.

URCAA – Business Plan 2018/19 – Update date 270218

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 has taken over 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 38 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

- 35 of the available 38 plots are actively cultivated or managed by allotment holders at Upwood. (We are in the process of actively resizing plots with great success in the uptake of the 'mini-plots'. This has led to an increase in 10 plots since the 060316 report.)
- The Great Raveley site has 4 of the 5 plots in active cultivation.
- Currently there is one person on the waiting list for 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 has already been cut by a volunteer and we will continue to encourage all plot holders to maintain their plot area.

2) Strengthening the association.

The URCAA committee has traditionally been made up of five members, including a representative from the Raveley site. We have had a change of personnel in the role of Chairman and Treasurer since last year. We now also 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.

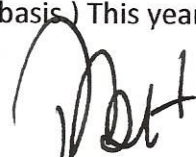
Recruitment and retention of plot holders remains a high priority.

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 increase work to publicise plot availability in 2018 until such time as a waiting list is generated. Publicity through village newsletter, website publicity and potentially local free newspapers, will be ongoing.

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.) This year's event



(tbc) will be discussed at the Association's AGM. We will open some plots for any Upwood organised event should they occur, such as previous years 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 following up on finalising sponsorship. A wildlife pond has been established and has been planted up. Work this year will focus on improvements to the flower beds. 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 2018 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.

Long Term Objectives.

7) Plumbed Water Supplies.

A successful application to the Community Chest included funds to help improve water storage for both sites. The long term aim is to have mains fed containers strategically placed around the sites so that we can attract more plot holders.

8) 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.

9) Primary School Project

Previous mention has been made about offering one of the plots as a community plot for use by the local primary school. A volunteer would be needed to start up the project and offer seeds to grow easy return produce. School parties, under adult guidance, would cultivate these areas, fitting in with natural history and green studies within the school curriculum.

10) Communal Hut.

There is a long term aspiration to raise money to purchase a communal hut. As well as funds for the hut, additional funds will be needed to:

Provide shelving and storage cupboards so that allotment holders can store implements etc. Offer some portable heating and lighting; provide a couple of tables and some chairs to shelter from inclement weather.

Estimated cost: TBD



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.

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 – 260218

26/02/2018	Allotment Funds	£2,576.11
26/02/2018	Allotment Plot deposits	£510.00
26/02/2018	Petty Cash	£26.24
26/02/2018	Orchard Funds	£913.20
26/02/2018	Total Balance of accounts	£4,025.55

Income/Expenditure from 31/03/2017

Allotments

2017/18	Allotment Rents - collected from 31/03/2017	£726.00
2017/18	Sale of weed membrane	£14.00
2017/18	Water	-£103.55
2017/18	Maintenance (Grass cutting, weed membrane)	-£260.00
2017/18	Admin – stamps, hall hire	-£56.16

Orchard

2017/18	Tree sponsorship	£130.00
2017/18	Orchard maintenance	-£205.08