



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

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A meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council was held on Monday 04 September 2017 at 7.00pm at Upwood Village Hall.

Present: Councillors J. Edwards, H. Nel, J. Noble, J. Paxton, A. Perkins, G. Slater, H. Smith, M. Tew.

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), County Councillor T. Rogers and 1 member of the public.

Minutes

50-09/17 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Councillor Howe: Holiday

In the absence of the chairman this meeting was presided over by Councillor Tew, Vice Chairman

51-09/17 To receive declarations of interest.

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Perkins declared an interest in item 58-09/17.6, Upwood Village Hall.

52-09/17 Public participation.

To allow up to 10 minutes (2 minutes per person) for any members of the public and councillors declaring the existence and nature of a prejudicial interest to address the meeting in relation to the business on this agenda. There was no public participation.

53-09/17 To receive and approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 03 July 2017.

The minutes of the meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council held on 03 July 2017 had been circulated in advance following their informal approval by the vice chairman. Councillor Smith proposed acceptance of the minutes. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The vice chairman signed the minutes.

54-09/17 To receive reports from county and district councillors.

Councillor Rogers informed members that he will attend a symposium on the pooling of county council pensions. Cambridgeshire County Council pensions are currently pooled with other county councils in the East of England. The clerk confirmed that any changes to the management of county council pensions would not impact on the pension scheme provided by the parish council.

55-09/17 To receive reports from neighbouring parishes.

Councillor Tew has met with Sergeant Street regarding ongoing problems of anti-social behaviour on the Upwood Airfield site. Demolition will not take place until a developer has been identified to realise the plans for 160 new homes. Councillor Tew also informed members that whilst local police officers will continue to be based at Huntingdon Police Station, they will have access to welfare and computer facilities at Ramsey Fire Station in the near future (there will be no permanent police presence at the site and it will not be a combined police/fire station).

56-09/17 Matters arising or carried forward from the last or previous meeting.

- 56-09/17.1 To receive an update on considerations for the provision of community defibrillators.
Councillor Nel presented quotations for a defibrillator with housing (£1600) and for the housing alone (£600). She informed members that no one has come forward to support the raising of funds for this initiative and she reminded members that this is outside the remit of the council's budget for the current year. She will continue to look for grants. Councillor Rogers suggested contacting Earith Parish Council as it is also considering the provision of community defibrillators.
- 56-09/17.2 To re-visit the concerns of Upwood and the Raveleys Allotments Association regarding the removal of a section of the boundary hedge from the Upwood allotments site.
Further to the last meeting, the clerk has spoken informally with residents of the neighbouring properties and established good neighbourly relationships and an open dialogue so that issues or proposals which may impact on the boundary hedge may be addressed as and when the need arises. One property has recently been sold and the clerk will meet with the new residents in the coming weeks. The parish council has received further correspondence from the residents who removed the section of hedge, and from Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotments Association.
The parish council has been advised that the offer to re-plant the mixed hawthorn hedge adjacent to the cherry laurel with whips provided by the Woodland Trust (minute reference: 40-07/17.4) was made as a personal offer by a member of Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotments Association and not by the association itself. URCAA is supportive of the re-planting and may be able to offer assistance with the work but have expressed concerns regarding responsibility. The residents who removed the hedge have written to the parish council to confirm that they are not in favour of the re-planting.
The tenant of the hayfield has agreed to trim the allotments side of the hedge and URCAA has asked that the parish council take responsibility firstly for reducing its height (but leaving the trees) and secondly for the ongoing maintenance of the top of the hedge.
The vice chairman closed the meeting to allow the parishioner who removed the hedge to speak. Although she agreed initially to the re-planting of a traditional hedge she has since changed her mind and stated that she would want assurance that the allotments hedge would be maintained in its entirety prior to "allowing" the additional hedge to be planted. She threatened to remove any newly planted hedging if the parish council does not comply.
The vice chairman added that the parish council must protect its property and expressed concern firstly that laurel is toxic and therefore would present problems if the land were ever let for grazing; secondly, the parish council has a duty to preserve the visual and environmental impact of the hedge.
The parishioner suggested that the hedging had been removed because it was dead. Councillor Edwards asked why only this section was dead whilst the rest of the hedge line is thriving. He then continued to express concern that the parishioner had put the parish council in a difficult situation because she took it upon herself to remove the hedge without consultation with her neighbours.
The parishioner stated that she has been "victimised"; that parishioners "are too afraid to come to parish council meetings"; that "information is not readily available"; that "posts are removed from the parish council's Facebook page"; and that "people have been told to email the parish council but they never receive a reply".
The clerk confirmed that she is the sole administrator for the parish council's Facebook page; that posts have never been removed from this site (although the parish council does reserve the right to remove inappropriate material); and that she responds to all correspondence. She added that this parish council exceeds the requirements of the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (2014) and that every detail of the council's business is available on the parish website.
Councillor Smith suggested that if parishioners do not wish to attend council meetings, they could also take the opportunity to engage with the parish council surgeries (held on the second Saturday of each month from 2:00pm to 3:30pm).
The vice chairman re-opened the meeting. Councillor Smith proposed that three quotes are sought to reduce the height of the hedge. Councillor Nel seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

57-09/17 Notification of planning items.

- 57-09/17.1 17/01435/TREE | Removal of dead wood and epicormic growth, and lifting of crowns to various trees | Fairmead Park. *The closing date for consultation on this application was 01 August and a time extension was not possible. The planning officer advised that comments would be accepted from individual councillors on this occasion.*

58-09/17 Finance

58-09/17.1 To approve accounts for payment: 04 September 2017.

Date	Ref. No.	Payee	Description	Amount
04.09.17	527896901	Mrs C. Silverstone	Clerk/RFO Salary. August 2017	687.42
			Expenses: Working from home allowance, stationery	24.24
04.09.17	97374104	Mr B.C. Edwards	Cemetery Officer Salary. July – September 2017	87.34
04.09.17	92430583	HMRC	PAYE/NI	27.59
04.09.17	DD	SALVUS Master Trust	Employee + Employer Pension Contributions. August 2017	73.00
04.09.17	905721613	Mr A Davis	Parish Grass Cutting (no. 9, 10, 11)	1185.00
04.09.17	899905096	Little Paxton Parish Council	Councillor Training (Councillor Smith)	30.00
04.09.17	739711237	Kompan Ltd.	Special tool for the swings on Bentley Close Play Area.	10.80
04.09.17	278098014	Huntingdonshire District Council	Printing Services: ID cards & lanyards	31.45
04.09.17	853014907	SLCC	Annual Membership Renewal	121.00
04.09.17	430662933	SLCC Enterprises Ltd.	Regional Training Seminar 2017	82.80
04.09.17	574951972	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Audit Fee	120.00

Councillor Paxton proposed a motion for the council to approve the payment of invoices in a timely manner to the parish maintenance contractor during July and August. She suggested that it was unreasonable to delay these payments for approval at a parish council meeting. Jean seconded this proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

The vice chairman signed the agenda to authorise the list of payments. He also signed the bank reconciliation which was counter-signed by Councillor Nel.

58-09/17.2 To note income received: 04 September 2017: None received at the time of publication.

58-09/17.3 To review the annual appraisals and to consider recommendations for the salary review of the clerk and the cemetery officer (to take effect from 01 August 2017).

The cemetery officer and the clerk have once again received outstanding appraisals.

The parish clerk (line manager) and Councillor Paxton appraised Mr Edwards and noted that he continues to provide a crucial service to the parish council and to cemetery visitors. They recommend that his salary be increased by one spine point (from NJC 12 to 13). This would equate to a rise of 19p per hour which is equivalent to £9.94 per year (the cemetery officer is employed for one hour per week). Councillor Smith proposed that the parish council authorise this recommendation. Councillor Noble seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

The chairman appraised the clerk and has asked that the council consider the award of an additional spine point. He concludes:

“Carol has referred me to the minutes of the parish council meeting of October 2016 which read as follows: The clerk was appraised by the vice-chairman and has received an outstanding appraisal. The vice-chairman proposed that the clerk be awarded an additional spine point (rising from point 37 to point 38 on the NJC pay scale) and noted that as point 38 is the top of the “LC2” range there can be no further progression without significant changes to the roles and responsibilities of this position in the future.

Whilst this is technically true, it is also the case that the parish council is responsible for setting and awarding additional spine points. In recognition of the achievement of the Quality Award I would therefore like to propose that Carol is awarded an additional spine point which would take her to point 39 on the NJC pay scale. This would result in an increase of £288.41 per annum (£24.03 per month) plus an additional £14.37 employer’s pension contribution”.

Councillor Slater agreed with the chairman’s sentiments and suggested that councillors should override the clerk’s advice on this point and take responsibility for awarding the additional point. Councillor Noble proposed

that the clerk's salary be increased to spine point 39. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

On behalf of herself and the cemetery officer, the clerk thanked councillors for their kind sentiments and their continued support.

58-09/17.4 To receive the communication working party's application to the Ramsey Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund (re. minute reference: 44-07/17.5).

The parish council should expect to hear the results of this application at the end of October.

58-09/17.5 To consider a grant application from Upwood and the Raveleys Newsletter for the continued provision of a newsletter to every household in the parish.

Councillors considered the grant application for £525. The clerk confirmed that this amount was the same as that awarded in previous years and that provision had been made in the budget. Councillor Smith proposed that the grant be awarded. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

58-09/17.6 To consider a grant application from Upwood Village Hall for ongoing running costs, principally the cost of the insurance renewal.

Councillors considered the grant application for £1000. The clerk confirmed that this amount was the same as that awarded in previous years and that provision had been made in the budget. Councillor Nel proposed that the grant be awarded. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal. Councillor Perkins abstained from voting. All other councillors were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

58-09/17.7 To acknowledge receipt and publication of the notice of conclusion of audit and the completed annual return for the year ended 31 March 2017.

The notice of conclusion of audit and the completed annual return for the year ended 31 March 2017 has been published on the noticeboards and on the parish website.

58-09/17.8 To review correspondence from St. Peter's Parochial Church Council regarding the safety of the church gates and to consider quotations for their repair.

One of the gate posts has deteriorated to the point where it has become unsafe for the gate to be used. The clerk has attempted to source three quotations to repair and re-seat the post and to align the gates allowing them to be opened and closed safely and effectively. Two quotations had been received. Councillor Edwards suggested that J and H Edwards trading as Upwood Produce could provide a third. It was agreed to re-consider this item at the next meeting.

59-09/17 Traffic, Highways & Road Safety

59-09/17.1 To receive an update from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding Local Highway Initiative plans (2017/2018) for traffic calming on Ramsey Road.

Councillor Tew, Councillor Slater and the clerk continue to liaise with Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Officers and plans are underway. Councillor Tew noted that Bury Parish Council has applied to Ramsey Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund for funds to purchase a speed indicator device (SID). If the application is successful this will support the strategy for traffic calming between the two parishes.

59-09/17.2 To consider making an application to the Local Highway Initiative 2018/2019 (closing date = 15 October 2017) Councillor Nel proposed that the parish council applies for a speed indicator device (SID). She reminded members that speeding was one of the major concerns expressed through the community led plan. (An SID is a temporary vehicle activated sign which could be moved to different locations within the parish. They are designed to change drivers' speed behaviour). Councillor Edwards seconded the proposal. Councillor Perkins abstained from voting. Councillor Slater offered to prepare the application for review at the next meeting.

60-09/17 Correspondence and Communications

60-09/17.1 Huntingdonshire District Council Parking Survey (details posted on the parish council's Facebook page and on the noticeboards. (closing date = 11 August).

60-09/17.2 An invitation from Cambridgeshire County Council to host "Keeping Safe Online" courses.

The clerk offered to promote this as an opportunity to ascertain whether or not there is a need.

60-09/17.3 An update from Community Road Watch inviting parish councils to hire a traffic data logger.

60-09/17.4 An invitation to attend the Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Council Conference. 09 October 2017.

The clerk and Councillor Nel have registered to attend this conference.

61-09/17 To receive verbal reports from Parish Councillors on matters arising from their portfolio responsibilities.

No decisions can be made under this item.

Councillor Smith and Councillor Nel reported on their attendance at a meeting of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 draft consultation. They agreed that it had been informative and stressed the need for all to engage and comment on such consultations. Councillor Nel confirmed that she had commented on the lack of infrastructure planned to support new development in Ramsey and Bury. These developments although in neighbouring parishes, will have a direct impact on Upwood and the Raveleys. The consultation is now closed but will be re-opened for a two-week window in October.

Councillor Nel was pleased to inform members that she had recruited two volunteers from Great Raveley: one had joined Community Speed Watch; the other has joined the parish newsletter editing team.

Councillor Noble confirmed that Community Speedwatch is now self-sufficient in this parish (with three trained volunteers) and sessions are being run on a monthly basis. Both Councillor Noble and the clerk are appreciative of the support provided by Mr Mike Brookes, Forcewide Watch Coordination Officer – Speed Watch & Neighbourhood Watch. It is hoped that the Community Speed Watch signs will be re-instated in the near future.

Councillor Noble also reported on her most recent litter-picking session around the village. The clerk continues to report instances of littering and fly-tipping to the district council. Parishioners are reminded that they may report such issues direct via the following link: <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste/?more=true> Councillor Edwards expressed increasing frustration at the amount of time and money the parish council is having to spend due to the anti-social, immoral and criminal behaviour of the minority. He asked what could be done to instil a sense of respect into today's society. Councillors agreed with these sentiments but were unfortunately unable to offer a solution.

62-09/17 Matters for future consideration.

No decisions can be made under this item. There were no matters for future consideration.

63-09/17 Date of next meeting: 02 October 2017, Upwood Village Hall, 7:00pm.

Close of meeting: 8:40pm