



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

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A meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council was held on Monday 04 February 2019 at 7.00pm at Upwood Village Hall.

Present: Councillors M. Bacon (from item 141-02/19.1), J. Edwards, D. Hall, R. Howe (Chairman), J. Noble, A. Perkins, G. Slater, J. Twose.

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), Councillor Bull and Councillor Tavener (District Council), Councillor Clark (Chairman, CAPALC) and 13 members of the public.

Minutes

The chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting and invited Councillor Henry Clark, Chairman of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils to present Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council with its Local Council Award Scheme Quality Gold Award.

Councillor Clark congratulated councillors and the clerk on this outstanding achievement which confirms good governance, sound financial management and transparency. He noted that this parish council engages effectively with its community; it undertakes training and development of both staff and councillors; and it has made a commitment to continuous improvement. Councillor Clark noted that Upwood and the Raveleys is the only small council in Cambridgeshire to have attained this prestigious award and he hopes that it will lead the way for others to follow.

The chairman accepted the award on behalf of the parish council and thanked councillors for their continued commitment to the community. He noted that achievement of this award is largely down to the tireless efforts of the clerk who continues to ensure that procedures and policies are in place to support services of the highest standard. The chairman reminded the council of its chequered history: In 2011/2012, the council suffered from serious financial mismanagement; a previous clerk was sentenced to twelve months in prison for the theft of council funds; and the community had little faith in its council. He reflected on the council's transformation, noting that residents have renewed confidence and interest; and this was in evidence as two residents would compete for a single vacancy at this meeting. The chairman added that the council is far from perfect, but the quality gold award celebrates the high standards it has achieved and recognises its commitment to continuous improvement. The chairman thanked Mr. Chris Shaw for taking photographs of the presentation.

138-02/19 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Councillor Rogers (County Councillor): attendance required at another meeting.

139-02/19 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. There were no declarations of interest.

140-02/19 To receive and approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 07 January 2019.

The minutes of the meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council held on 07 January 2019 had been circulated in advance following the informal approval of the chairman. Councillor Slater proposed that the minutes be approved. Councillor Perkins seconded the proposal. All who had been present were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

141-02/19 Casual Vacancies

141-02/19.1 To consider applications for the casual vacancy arising from the resignation of Councillor Howard Smith.

The parish council had received two letters of application for this vacancy and these had been shared with councillors prior to the meeting. Applicants were invited to give a short presentation and councillors were given

the opportunity to ask questions prior to completing a paper ballot. Mr Mark Bacon was invited to join the council with a majority of four votes (the chairman did not vote).

Councillor Bacon has lived in the village with his family for 25 years. His three children attended school in Upwood and then in Ramsey. He has an impressive career history, serving in the RAF for 14 years, and then with Cambridgeshire Constabulary for 24 years before retiring and returning to the police as a civilian. He has played an active role in the wider community. He and his family initiated the raising of funds for Bentley Close Play Area; he has been involved with work to improve Upwood Village Hall; he was instrumental in the establishment of the youth club; and more recently served as chairman on the Ramsey 1940s committee.

141-02/19.2 To consider the advertisement of a casual vacancy arising from the resignation of Councillor Helen Nel.

The chairman proposed that the vacancy be advertised. Councillor Noble seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

142-02/19 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.

A member of the public enquired about the specification for work planned for the path in the churchyard. The chairman confirmed that this would be addressed under item 144-02/19.1.

143-02/19 To receive reports from county and district councillors.

Councillor Rogers forwarded a written report noting that the Combined Authority has agreed to subsidise the bus services for another year so the future of the number 30 bus connecting Ramsey to Huntingdon is secure for the time being. The Local Highway Improvement Initiative results are due to be published at the end of this month and parish councils are advised to start preparing for the next round which will commence in July.

Councillor Bull congratulated the parish council on its achievement of the Quality Gold Award. He noted that the district council has confirmed a district council increase of 2.6% to council tax for 2019/2020 but added that the actual increase to residents will be greater to take account of the county council and police element of the tax.

The district council is introducing a car parking strategy designed to address affordability and ease of payment. Parking bays will be wider and parking facilities more convenient. The district council is exploring options for Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and hopes to secure a freehold or 100-year lease agreement. Improvement works to the A14 are on schedule and work to the A1 is currently ahead of schedule. The flyover will be removed and access to Huntingdon town centre designed to facilitate access to shops and services rather than to encourage through-traffic. Councillor Bull noted that the most effective way to contact the district council is via its online portal at: <http://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/> rather than by telephone.

144-02/19 Matters arising or carried forward from the previous meeting.

144-02/19.1 Further to item 112-12/18.1, to consider advice regarding the collapse of the church path and with regard to Local Government Act 1972, s.215 to review quotations for its repair.

The clerk had invited four local builders to tender for this work. Two quotations had been received and shared with councillors prior to the meeting. Councillors considered both in some detail and agreed that both are well-known and reputable local contractors. The chairman closed the meeting to allow a member of the public to comment on the route taken by the drain as it meets the downpipe. Councillor Bacon noted the significant difference in cost between the two quotations. He suggested that as Mr Pilkington has undertaken previous work to the church path and has proposed to carry out the work by hand rather than by mechanical means, that the parish council accepts his quotation to complete the work for £875 +VAT. Councillor Hall seconded the proposal. Councillor Twose abstained from voting. All others were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

144-02/19.2 Further to item 127-01/19, to acknowledge that the chairman of Upwood and Raveleys Parish Council and the Ward Councillor for Warboys and Upwood have received invitations to join the Advisory Group for Ramsey Windfarm Community Benefit Fund.

The chairman reminded members that he had asked county and district councillors for clarification on the allocation of funds from Ramsey Windfarm Community Benefit Fund at the previous meeting. The Ramsey Wind Farm provides an annual fund of £40,000 for community projects. 60% of the fund is allocated to applications from Ramsey and 20% each allocated to applications from the parishes of Upwood and the Raveleys and Bury. One bid had been submitted from a community group in Upwood and the Raveleys for £1954 and although this was confirmed to “meet the criteria”, it “was not given priority on this occasion”. The chairman expressed concern at the last meeting that £37,660 had been awarded to projects in Ramsey in 2018, leaving a balance of £2,340.

His understanding from his previous experience as a district councillor on the advisory group was that unallocated monies within each parish area should be rolled over to the following year. The chairman noted that there was an anomaly in the allocation of funds in 2018 but through his, and Councillor Taverner's appointments to the advisory group, he is committed to ensuring that this doesn't happen in future.

The clerk will remind community groups of the opportunity to apply for funding when she invites representation at the Annual Parish Meeting in May. The closing date for applications is 21 August 2019. Further information may be found at <http://www.grantscape.org.uk/fund/ramseywindfarmcbf/>

144-02/19.3 To receive an update on future of The Cross Keys Public House.

The chairman confirmed that the owner of the pub is currently negotiating a five-year lease agreement. The chairman closed the meeting to allow a comment from a member of the public who suggested that the pub has been advertised for sale with Everard Cole. The chairman re-opened the meeting noting that this would contradict the information shared with him by the owner.

Clerk's note: The Cross Keys is not listed for sale on Everard Cole's website. However, an internet search will result in a pdf document advertising the pub as being for sale with the company in 2010. The clerk has confirmed that Everard Cole has not been instructed to sell the property since that time. She has asked that the document be removed from the internet as it is causing confusion for concerned residents and it is not helpful to the current owner, but the company has suggested that this may not be possible.

145-02/19 Notification of planning items.

There were no planning applications.

146-02/19 Finance

146-02/19.1 To consider the renewal of membership to Cambridgeshire Acre prior to authorising payment in 146-02/19.2.

Councillor Noble proposed that the council renews its membership to Cambridgeshire Acre. Councillor Hall seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

146-02/19.2 To approve accounts for payment: 04 February 2019

Date	Ref. No.	Payee	Description	Amount
04.02.19	455249294	Mrs C. Silverstone	Clerk/RFO Salary. January 2019	737.49
			Expenses: Working from home allowance, stationery, travel.	13.49
04.02.19	676708180	HMRC	PAYE/NI. January 2019	10.20
04.02.19	DD	SALVUS Master Trust	Employee + Employer Pension Contributions. January 2019	78.70
04.02.19	DD	Salvus Master Trust	Small Employer Fee	24.00
04.02.19	785833676	Canalbs Ltd.	Internal Audit. Mid-term	124.25
04.02.19	768202458	Mr A. Davis	Parish Maintenance "Autumn cuts to cemetery and allotments hedges + adjustments to cemetery gates (ref. 17-10/17.5)	580.00
04.02.19	40191819	Cambridgeshire Acre	Membership Renewal (minute ref. 146-02/19.1)	57.00

Councillor Bacon proposed that the accounts be approved for payment. Councillor Edwards seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The chairman signed the list of payments on the agenda and two signatories signed each of the invoices and authorised the online payments after the meeting. The chairman signed the bank reconciliation, and this was counter-signed by Councillor Twose.

146-02/19.3 To note income received: 04 February 2019:

Date	Ref. No.	Payee	Description	Amount
22.01.19	000027	Mr & Mrs Rowley	Donation received from the sale of surplus books & DVDs from the book exchange.	39.27

Councillors thanked Mr & Mrs Rowley for organising the sale of surplus books and DVDs, and for the donation.

146-02/19.4 To consider a subscription to “Scribe”, a purpose-built, web-based local accounts software package at a cost of £257 + VAT per year.

The chairman and the clerk reported on their attendance at a webinar illustrating the benefits of this package which fulfils all requirements of local council financial administration whilst allowing export of data to Microsoft Excel for further analysis as required. The subscription includes independent access for the Clerk/RFO and two councillors. Both the clerk and the chairman consider the benefits to outweigh the cost. The package is recommended by several Cambridgeshire councils. Councillor Hall proposed that the parish council subscribes to this package. Councillor Twose seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

146-02/19.5 To acknowledge receipt of the mid-term internal audit report and to consider recommendations.

The auditor offered her congratulations to the parish council on attaining the Quality Gold Award and suggested that as it was to be expected her audit report is excellent.

The following recommendations were offered:

- that the Council joins the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) “to access the vital range of expert services they provide”. The clerk has reviewed the services and taken advice from the CEO of CAPALC. Neither consider membership to be advantageous to such a small burials authority. The clerk has undertaken training provided by ICCM and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and considers this to be sufficient at this time. The chairman agreed that no further action should be taken on this matter.
- that anyone undertaking litter picking, particularly on parish land, must be insured. This will require being trained; wearing protective clothing; and having the necessary equipment for removal of dangerous waste such as sharps, etc. The clerk has sourced a 2-2.5 hour e-learning course offered by Morton Training Limited entitled “Litter Picking & Environmental Maintenance” at a cost of £49.95 + VAT. The chairman suggested that training for such tasks would prove onerous, expensive and de-motivating for volunteers. All agreed that the parish council should continue to apply a common-sense approach.
- that any changes to pay, hours or responsibilities approved by the council in the minutes are reflected within the formal contract and job description. These amendments should be presented to the next council meeting for signature and placed on file to ensure they are legally binding. The clerk had sought further advice from SLCC's Specialist Employment Advisor and has received confirmation that provided that salary updates are recorded in the minutes there is no regulation that requires the contract of employment to be updated every time. The chairman agreed that no further action should be taken.
- that councils do not accept the donation of defibrillators “as they are proving to be an administrative nightmare”.

The parish council currently has two audits per year based on the advice of CAPALC, although the clerk and the chairman have questioned the benefits. The clerk confirmed the requirement to appoint an internal auditor on an annual basis and therefore this will be raised as an agenda item at the beginning of the next financial year.

147-02/19 Traffic, Highways & Road Safety

147-02/19.1 To receive an update on the implementation of the Speed Indicator Device (SID).

The speed indicator device has been in operation since 08 January. Councillor Slater has shared a significant amount of data with councillors but confirmed that he is having difficulty interpreting it. The device is recording “values” and “vehicles” and these do not appear to correspond although he did confirm that an average speed of 31mph and a maximum speed of 63mph had been recorded. Councillor Slater will attend training later this week and report back at the next meeting.

148-02/19 Public Involvement & Engagement and Parish Council Development

148-02/19.1 To receive an update on the draft strategic plan from the youth involvement and engagement working party.

This item was deferred and will be re-visited when councillor portfolio responsibilities are reviewed at the beginning of the new council year in May.

149-02/19 Parish Maintenance.

149-02/19.1 Further to minute reference 133-01/19.1 to acknowledge that Country Grounds Maintenance (CGM) has accepted the three-year contract for parish maintenance; and to consider its quotation for the additional collection and disposal of arisings from St. Peter’s Churchyard.

CGM has quoted an additional £21 per cut (£294 per year) for the removal and disposal of arisings from St. Peter’s Churchyard. Councillors were undecided and agreed to re-visit this matter at the next meeting.

150-02/19 Correspondence and Communications.

150-02/19.1 A letter of concern from residents regarding parking arrangements on High Street.

The chairman has addressed the concerns with the owner of the vehicles and this matter has been resolved.

150-02/19.2 A verbal complaint concerning the overgrown hedge at the junction of High Street and Longholme Road.

The clerk has written to Luminus Group to confirm ownership and to request that the hedge and the land at this junction is maintained in a tidy and respectable manner. The hedge has become hazardous to pedestrians using the pavement and it is also impeding visibility for motorists. Luminus Group has confirmed that the land will be cleared of fly tipping within the next two weeks and that the hedge will be attended to in due course.

150-02/19.3 A letter of concern from a resident regarding the lack of street lighting between Upwood and Bury.

The chairman and Councillor Twose reported that in general terms improvements to street lighting will be considered (subject to budget constraints) by the county council based on night to day accident ratios; a proven accident record (bearing in mind the causes of the accidents); evidence of night time incidents; and where simpler engineering alternatives have been tried and have not been successful. Councillors agreed that the significant environmental and economic costs to light this path would be prohibitive and could not be justified based on the concerns of a single resident. It was noted that the more overgrown areas of the path lie within Bury parish. The chairman reminded members that Bury Parish Council has made reference to potential investment in the path between Bury and Upwood Primary Academy in its Neighbourhood Plan.

150-02/19.4 Bury Village Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 (second draft).

The chairman reminded members that a neighbourhood plan is a statutory document which may be used to support claims to limit built development. 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is payable to local councils with a neighbourhood plan (approximately £3,500 per dwelling) as opposed to 15% which is payable to those local councils without a neighbourhood plan. There is currently insufficient housing development in this parish to warrant preparation of a neighbourhood plan, although the parish council has previously approached neighbouring councils with a view to preparing a combined plan. The cost of producing a plan ranges between £15,000 and £20,000.

150-02/19.5 A letter from a resident regarding road safety and the pros and cons of traffic calming measures.

150-02/19.6 A letter from a resident regarding The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 and the requirement to register any pre-1949 paths currently unrecorded on the definitive rights of way map by 2026 to ensure continuation of public rights.

The parish council understands that all public rights of way in this parish are recorded. However, if residents are aware of other historic paths in the parish which are un-registered they are asked to contact the parish council to ensure the continuation of public rights.

151-02/19 To receive verbal reports from Parish Councillors on matters arising from their portfolio responsibilities.

No decisions can be made under this item.

Councillor Slater reported that the plastic bolt covers ordered for the play area were not fit for purpose. He has however made some alterations and the work has been completed.

Councillor Edwards noted that at least two traffic accidents have occurred since the patching work to the road surface between Upwood and Bury was completed. He suggested that the road surface by the entrance to Kingsland Farm and at the 40mph sign by the school is potentially hazardous. The clerk offered to report both sites to Cambridgeshire County Council.

Clerk's note: Highway faults including issues with verges, pavements and public rights of way may be reported directly to the county council at: <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>

Councillor Perkins informed councillors that a copper beech memorial tree has been planted in St. Peter's Churchyard (minute reference 84-10/18.3).

Councillor Twose expressed concerned at the increasing amount of litter in this parish. She acknowledged that some is deposited by passing traffic but was shocked to see waste being blown from the blue bin collection lorries. She suggested that the council should consider a community litter picking event. The chairman agreed and asked that this be added to the agenda for the next meeting but reminded members that the last time such an event was organised there had been no support from residents.

152-02/19 Matters for future consideration. No decisions can be made under this item.

153-02/19 Date of next meeting: 04 March 2019, 7:00pm. Upwood Village Hall.

Close of meeting 8:50pm