



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

Parish Clerk – Mrs Carol Bilverstone. Kilimanjaro, 9 Meadow Road, Upwood, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE26 2QJ
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A meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council was held on Monday 02 September 2019 at 7.00pm at Upwood Village Hall.

Present: Councillors M. Bacon, J. Edwards, R. Howe (Chairman), J. Noble, A. Perkins, G. Slater, I. Ward.

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), Councillor Rogers (County Council), Councillor Tavener (District Council) and no members of the public.

Minutes

52-09/19 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Councillor Twose: Maternity Leave. Members wished Councillor Twose and her family all the best in the coming months and were pleased to learn that she plans to resume her council duties in the new year.
Councillor Bull: Attendance required at another meeting.

53-09/19 To receive declarations of interest.

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011. There were no declarations of interest.

54-09/19 To receive and approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 01 July 2019.

The minutes of the meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council held on 01 July 2019 had been circulated in advance following the informal approval of chairman. Councillor Slater proposed that the minutes be approved. Councillor Ward seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

55-09/19 To consider applications for one casual vacancy.

There have been no applications. Residents are invited to apply to the clerk or to seek further information from any member of the council.

56-09/19 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. There was no public participation.

57-09/19 To receive reports from county and district councillors.

Councillor Rogers noted that applications for the Local Highway Improvement Initiative are progressing slowly. He updated members on proposals for the relocation of Cambridge Airport. Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group is considering three potential new locations: Cranfield, Duxford and Wyton. The A14 Improvement Scheme is progressing well, the work remains within budget and the 21-mile upgrade is planned to open by December 2020.

58-09/19 Matters arising or carried forward from the previous meeting.

58-09/19.1 Further to minute reference 49-07/19.2, to receive an update regarding broadband provision in this parish.

Further to correspondence over approximately nine months, the chairman has written to Openreach to request the following: a report to customers following a full review of the reasons for ongoing poor service levels; an article for the parish newsletter; and representation at a parish council meeting to allow residents to meet Openreach face-to-face.

A representative from “High Level Complaints - Customer Resolutions” has responded to confirm that engineers have identified cable that needs replacing and that processes had not been followed correctly during the transfer of customers to a new cabinet. In addition, 4 distribution points (which connect the customer to the network) were missed in the changeover. Corrective measures are underway but the migration process which follows can take up to 6 weeks as authorisation is required from communication providers. The contract manager will contact the chairman after 09 September with a further update.

59-09/19 Notification of planning items.

The parish council was not granted a time extension to allow for consultation on the following two items:

19/01284/HHFUL | Single storey rear and side extension | 17 Blenheim Road, Upwood. PE26 2PS

19/01345/HHFUL | Conversion of existing garage to annex | Chestnut Farm, Great Raveley. PE28 2QX

59-09/19.1 19/01482/HHFUL | Single storey extension | Mcllwaine Grange 1 Battle Road, Upwood. PE26 2PT

Councillor Bacon suggested that there is a precedent for similar home improvements at Fairmead and that this extension would enhance the property and the street scene. Councillor Perkins proposed that the parish council approve the application on this basis. Councillor Bacon seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

60-09/19 Finance

60-09/19.1 To approve accounts for payment: 02 September 2019

Reference	Description	Payee	Amount
SO	Clerk/RFO Salary	Mrs C. Silverstone	£754.42
SO	Cemetery Officer Salary	Mr B.C. Edwards	£99.70
DD	Employee & Employer Pension Contribution	SALVUS Master Trust	£80.50
DD	Pension Administration Fee	SALVUS Master Trust	£24.00
SO	Clerk/RFO & Cemetery Officer Salary. PAYE/NI	HMRC	£35.12
932260729	Clerk's Expenses: WFH, travel, postage, stationery	Mrs C. Silverstone	£51.95
31282837	Parish Grass Cutting (Invoice 6 of 8)	The CGM Group (East Anglia) Ltd.	*£605.70
247068110	Membership Fees	Society of Local Council Clerks	£136.00
137169491	Speed Indicator Device	Morelock Signs Limited	£2931.60
620015474	Councillor Training (Councillors Bacon & Ward)	CAPALC	£150.00
48189285 366425380	Serjeant and Son Solicitors	Registration of cemetery & land in Bentley Close (Search & Land Charges + Legal Fees)	£1050.00
934084664	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Limited Assurance Review of AGAR 31 March 2019	240.00

*payment of £605.70 was made to CGM on 01 August in accordance with minute reference 58-09/17.1, allowing invoices received from the parish maintenance contractor for grass cutting during July and August to be paid in a timely manner.

60-09/19.2 To note income received: 02 September 2019:

Reference	Description	Received From	Amount
000029	Cemetery Fee: Interment.	Dignity Funerals Ltd.	£75.00
000030	Unexplained repayment of PAYE*	HMRC	£194.66

*advice was sought from HMRC regarding an unexplained credit balance on the parish council’s PAYE account and a refund has been made without explanation. Payroll is facilitated through HMRC’s “Basic Tools” package which automatically calculates PAYE/NI. Employee payments are correct, and the parish council is exempt from employer liability. The parish council must accept this payment and it has been recorded as miscellaneous income for accounting purposes.

Councillor Noble proposed that the accounts be approved. Councillor Ward 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 Noble.

60-09/19.3 To receive the annual appraisals and to consider recommendations for the salary review of the parish clerk and cemetery officer.

The chairman and acting vice-chairman carried out the appraisal of the parish clerk. The chairman confirmed that the appraisal had taken the same form as in previous years to assess aspects of financial management, governance, minutes and record keeping, relationships and future development. The clerk had specifically asked for a review of her hours of work. She is currently contracted for 42 hours per month (36 hours when adjusted for holidays). Since signing her contract in 2013 she has taken on a number of additional duties, some of which arise from the increased complexity of rules and systems imposed from outside such as GDPR, administration of a pension scheme and the standards demanded by the Local Council Gold Award accreditation; while some are due to the transfer of duties previously carried out by others. The clerk's timesheet for the last 12 months shows an average of 50 hours worked each month. Taking this into account the chairman and the vice-chairman proposed that the clerk's contracted hours be increased to 58 per month (50 hours net of holidays) and in addition to provide a maximum of up to 10 hours per month for exceptional projects. Authorisation of additional hours would be given only by the chairman and vice chairman. The chairman confirmed that the clerk has been asked to prepare a monthly timesheet showing the allocation of hours and this will be scrutinised by the finance working party at the quarterly review meetings. He noted that the increase in basic hours increases the annual salary by £3,679.93 (38%), but that this is entirely consistent with the hours required of the clerk. He recommended that the clerk remains on the same spine point (34) at this time. He suggested that the clerk continues to perform her duties to an excellent standard and holds a vital and much respected position within the council and the parish. Councillor Ward seconded these proposals. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The clerk thanked councillors for their continued support.

The clerk carried out the appraisal of the cemetery officer. Mr Edwards is employed for just one hour per week, but his role is key to the practical day to day care of the cemetery and he provides a crucial service to the parish council and to cemetery visitors. Mr Edwards is content with his current terms and conditions of employment. He confirmed that he does not wish to join the parish council's pension scheme but understands that he may change his mind at any time. He also confirmed that he would like the additional maintenance tasks assigned to him over the last few years to be re-allocated and that he no longer wishes to be considered for additional hours.

The clerk and the chairman agree that the addition of a single spine point to a contract of only one hour per week is not meaningful (this would equate to an increase of £9.97 per year). The chairman proposed that the parish council offer meaningful recognition with a rise to spine point 11 which would equate to an increase of £74.05 per year. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

60-09/19.4 To receive an update from the finance working party.

The chairman, acting vice-chairman and the clerk have reviewed the financial statements to date and predict that the parish council will underspend by almost £5,000 in respect of its budget of £51,104.00 (including plans to utilise £11,000 from reserves) for the financial year 2019/2020. Further to finalisation of the budget in November 2018 (minute ref.: 97-11/18.4), the following scenarios have impacted the budget:

- An overspend of £490.00 on legal fees for the land registration of the cemetery and Bentley Close play area.
- Increasing the paid hours of the parish clerk will result in an overspend of £2,500 to staff costs.
- £9057 remains in the budget for spending against the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- £1000 remains in the budget for spending related to the Community Led Plan.
- The parish council has yet to be invoiced by the county council for the highway projects between Upwood and Bury and for the Speed Indicator Device (LHI 2017/2018 & 2018/2019). These projects were budgeted for in their respective years and those funds (totaling £5281.72) are now held in reserves.
- Savings of approximately £1,000 on the amount budgeted for parish maintenance although this could be utilised to facilitate part of the works to Charter's Spinney considered in item 62-09/19.3.

60-10/19.5 To consider the adoption of revised Model Financial Regulations, published by NALC in July 2019.

Councillor Noble proposed that the parish council adopt the revised regulations. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

- 60-10/19.6 To acknowledge completion of the Limited Assurance Review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2019.
The audit of accounts for the year end ended 31 March 2019 is complete and the accounts have been published on the noticeboards and the parish website at:
<http://www.upwood.org/images/Notice%20of%20Conclusion%20of%20Audit.%2031%20March%202019.pdf> The chairman thanked the clerk for her commitment to securing another successful audit.
- 61-09/19 Traffic, Highways & Road Safety**
- 61-09/19.1 To receive an update regarding implementation of the traffic calming scheme for Great Raveley (LHI 2019/2020).
The parish council has received a letter of objection to this scheme based on concerns for access of agricultural machinery. The parish council had considered the farming community during the initial planning and design of the scheme and Cambridgeshire County Council has confirmed that the road will be narrowed to 4.0m which should not impede access for agricultural vehicles (although additional research will be undertaken to confirm this). All agreed that the scheme should be sympathetic to the needs of all users, whilst curtailing speed. The chairman will liaise with the farmer to ensure that this is the case.
- 61-09/19.2 To review data gathered from the Speed Indicator Device (SID) during July and August 2019.
The SID was located in Great Raveley during the month of July to record vehicles travelling from Huntingdon Road towards Woodwalton. Of the 10,174 vehicles recorded, 29.19% were in violation of the 30mph speed limit with 8 vehicles recorded travelling in excess of 50mph.
The SID was located in Meadow Road from 01 August to 15 August to monitor vehicles travelling from Huntingdon Road into the village. Of the 1,479 vehicles recorded (approximately 100 each day) 3.12% were in violation of the 30mph speed limit. 30 vehicles were recorded travelling in excess of 40mph and three of these exceeded speeds of 50mph.
The SID was located in High Street (by Thatcher's Close) from 15 August to 31 August to monitor vehicles approaching from the junction with Ailwine Road travelling towards Meadow Road. Of the 1190 vehicles recorded (approximately 75 per day), 24 (2%) were in violation of the 30mph speed limit and six of these exceeded speeds of 40mph.
- 61-09/19.3 To receive an update regarding implementation of the traffic calming scheme for Little Raveley (LHI 2020/2021).
Further to minute reference: 46-07/19.5 and following consultation with residents of Little Raveley (seven broadly positive responses have been received), an application has been submitted to extend the 30 mph zone fifty metres towards Wennington at the western approach to the village to incorporate the speed limit signage into new white gates (similar to those approaching Woodwalton on Bridge Street).
On approaching Great Raveley from Wennington, the application details the installation of a buffer zone with "dragon's teeth" on the approach to the 40mph signs which would be located 200 metres from the re-sighted 30mph signs. This would be supported by the addition of red stripes and a SLOW sign painted across the road 100 metres from the 30mph signs.
Councillors agreed that it is not possible at this stage to prove whether the presence of SID has had an impact on driver behaviour, but all agreed that it will be interesting to compare statistics gathered before and after implementation of the planned traffic calming strategies.
- 62-09/19 Parish Maintenance.**
- 62-09/19.1 To receive an update from Huntingdonshire District Council regarding strategies for dealing with fly tipping (minute reference: 15-05/19.1 & 30-06/19.1).
The parish council has received a positive response and councillors are satisfied that appropriate action is being taken.
- 62-09/19.2 To receive an update on the effectiveness of the new parish maintenance contract.
Further to minute reference: 47-07/19.2, the chairman, the clerk and Councillor Ward met with the parish maintenance contractor. Quotations were provided and accepted for the upgrades and additions listed at the previous meeting at a cost of £63 + VAT per cut (a maximum of £882 + VAT per year). The contractor has made significant effort to meet the standards required. The parish maintenance map and the updated schedule have been published on the parish website.
The chairman respectfully requested that residents do not cut areas of parish or county council land, rather that they report any concerns so that they may be resolved for the long term. The parish council will

continue to monitor and review the work carried out under the new contract, but all confirmed that no further action is currently required.

62-09/19.3 Further to minute reference 47-07/19.1 to consider a strategy for future management of Charter's Spinney. The Chairman, Councillor Twose and Councillor Ward and a member of the public visited the site in late July and made the following observations and recommendations:

Observations:

The spinney is poorly maintained with much deadwood, which is overcrowding, over shading and potentially hazardous. It is heavily overgrown with brambles, nettles and umbellifers. The area is dark, unwelcoming and visually unappealing. Several of the old trees have large, dead branches, while younger trees are planted too closely together. The canopies require raising to allow light to reach the ground. The central ride has been narrowed by encroaching vegetation and the northern entrance is obscured by overhanging branches.

Recommendations:

1. To commission a survey by tree specialists to identify the overall scale of the work, the potential cost and ultimately, a work plan. (Councillor Perkins has since visited the site to make a preliminary assessment and Councillor Ward has begun some of the necessary thinning).
2. To obtain quotations to clear the undergrowth in the eastern half of the Spinney with a view to stimulating new growth and improving the appearance from Huntingdon Road.
3. The undergrowth in the western half of the spinney should remain untouched to enable migration of wildlife (including the retention of nesting hedgehog habitat), except for the removal of brambles on the western edge and the thinning of several saplings.
4. The Charter's Spinney sign at the southern end should be exposed by cutting back surrounding vegetation and the sign should be re-painted.
5. The overgrowth obscuring the tree planted on behalf of Councillor Colin Racey should be indented to allow visual access.
6. All the rides should be cut to the correct width allowing a metre of uncut area at both sides to provide a transition strip for wildlife.
7. The triangle of open ground behind the bench could be cultivated and planted with native bulbs and wildflowers. (This is best undertaken in the spring or autumn, using wildflower plugs, ensuring the mix is appropriate for the habitat).

All councillors were broadly in favour of these proposals and agreed the necessary work be commissioned to assess the work required and to arrive at a financial plan for approval and subsequent inclusion in the 2020/21 budget. All work will be scheduled with respect to resident fauna and nesting birds. The chairman, Councillor Perkins and Councillor Ward agreed to obtain advice and quotations for this work.

62-09/19.4 To consider coordination of a working party to clear overgrowing vegetation and brambles from graves in the cemetery.

This was last carried out in the spring of 2017 and the event was well supported. Councillors agreed to coordinate a working party on 05 October from 10:30am until 12:30pm. The clerk will advertise this via the parish website, Facebook, the parish newsletter and the Ramsey and Warboys Informer. Volunteers should meet in the cemetery and come prepared with protective gloves and footwear and are asked to bring hand tools such as loppers and secateurs if possible.

62-09/19.5 To consider the purchase and installation of an additional litter bin.

This item relates to a request made via the Upwood community Facebook page further to ongoing concerns for dog-fouling along the public right of way to Rolts Wood and on the approach to and within Upwood Meadows National Nature Reserve and Lady's Wood.

The clerk confirmed that Huntingdonshire District Council is currently reducing the number of litter bins with a view to encouraging people to take litter home. Approval of an additional bin in Upwood would be subject to monitoring and an assessment of need. Consideration would also be given to re-location of an existing bin. If approval is granted, the cost of a new "Glasdon" litter bin would be £366.67 + VAT but it would also be subject to an annual service charge of £252.64 + VAT. Installation or relocation would be carried out by the district council at no additional cost.

The Wildlife Trust confirmed in April 2019 that consideration had been given to the provision of a litter bin at Upwood Meadows National Nature Reserve but that the cost of provision and servicing would be prohibitive (please see minute ref.: 185-04/19).

Councillors debated this matter and agreed that whilst they recognise that the problem exists, the investment in additional litter bins is unlikely to resolve it. They suggested that the litter bin at the junction

of Ailwine Road and Huntingdon Road should be sufficient to serve those using the path to Rolts Wood; and that the litter bins on the junction of Meadow Road/Meadow Lane and in Bentley Close should be sufficient to serve those accessing the nature reserve. Councillors suggested that the district council's policy is laudable but unrealistic.

62-09/19.6 To consider a proposal from "Home to Home" for a living memorial to commemorate the group's 40th anniversary in 2020.

Members would like to create a living memorial to the club by gifting and planting spring bulbs and/or a tree (subject to guidance from a specialist as to the type of tree and positioning). The group would wish to enhance the environment rather than adopt a dedicated area. The group also would not want to be responsible for the upkeep of the area once the planting has taken place. Councillors agreed that spring bulbs could be planted at the village sign or that native bulbs and/or a tree would enhance the proposals outlined above for Charter's Spinney.

63-09/19 Parish Land

63-09/19.1 To receive an update from Serjeant and Son Solicitors regarding land registration documents for the "new" cemetery and land in Bentley Close (the play area) (minute ref.: 48-07/19.1).

Registration documentation has been prepared by Serjeant and Son Solicitors for submission to land registry on receipt of payment (please see item 60-09/19.1 above).

63-09/19.2 To consider correspondence regarding the proposed implementation of a three-year tenancy agreement for "Gravel Pits" (minute ref.: 48-07/19.3).

The agent for the tenant of "Gravel Pits" has advised that the tenant is not prepared to enter into a tenancy agreement with the parish council as by virtue of the length of time he has been renting the land he has security of tenure under the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1986. The parish council is concerned that the tenant is subletting the land but considering the annual income realised is only £168, pursuing this matter is unlikely to be cost effective. All agreed that the status quo should be allowed to prevail.

The clerk confirmed that the tenant of "Dockfields" and "3-2-20" has signed a three-year tenancy agreement in advance of the renewal date of 01 November 2019.

64-09/19 Correspondence and Communications.

64-09/19.1 Several verbal and written complaints from parishioners regarding the quality and frequency of parish grass cutting (please see item 63-09/19.2 above).

64-09/19.2 Notification of a new Care Network Cambridgeshire initiative "Open Arms".

64-09/19.3 An invitation from Cambridgeshire County Council for volunteers to join its "Community Gritting Scheme" (please see: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/gritting-roads-cycleways-and-paths/help-with-gritting-and-clearing-snow/>)

Councillor Slater and Councillor Edwards confirmed that they will continue to support this scheme and between them they service High Street, Meadow Road, Bentley Close and Helens Close. Volunteers are sought to assist with clearing snow and gritting of pavements in other areas of the parish.

64-09/19.4 A letter of objection to the plans for traffic calming measures in Great Raveley.

This was addressed under item: 61-09/19.1 above.

64-09/19.5 An invitation to attend to attend the Huntingdonshire District Council Healthy Open Spaces and Play Strategy workshop. 12th September 2019, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

65-09/19 To receive verbal reports from parish councillors on matters arising from their portfolio responsibilities and matters for future consideration. *No decisions can be made under this item.*

Councillor Bacon confirmed that he has carried out research regarding the provision of matting for the basketball hoop in the playing field and that it may be more cost effective to consider installation of a more permanent hard standing. The clerk will liaise with the diocese to seek permission. The chairman asked that the parish council consider quotations at the next meeting.

Councillor Perkins confirmed that a tree branch had been made safe in St. Peter's Churchyard.

Councillor Ward confirmed that he is ready to start the repair and re-painting of the chapel of rest windows. Councillor Noble expressed concern for ongoing vandalism of the football nets. She offered to source a quotation for additional hoops.

66-09/19 **Date of next meeting:** 07 October 2019 at 7:00pm

Close of meeting: 9:20pm