



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 04 May 2020 at 7.00pm. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 came into force on 04 April enabling local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) until May 2021. This meeting took place via "Zoom Meetings".

Present: Councillors M. Bacon, J. Edwards (from item 04-05/20), R. Howe (Chairman), J. Noble, A. Perkins, G. Slater, I. Ward (from item 09-05/20).

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), Councillor Bull (District Councillor) and two members of the public (co-opted to the parish council at item 04-05/20).

Minutes

01-05/20 To receive and approve apologies for absence. There were no apologies for absence.

02-05/20 To receive declarations of interest.

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary 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.

03-05/20 To receive and approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 14 April 2020.

The minutes of the meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council held on 14 April 2020 had been circulated in advance following the informal approval of the chairman. Councillor Slater proposed that the minutes be approved. Councillor Bacon seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

04-05/20 To consider applications for two casual vacancies.

The parish council reviewed two letters of application and the chairman invited both applicants to address the council. Mrs Janice Burgess has lived in the parish with her family since 2001 and outlined her impressive professional background including positions in logistics and financial management with the Ministry of Defence and more recently as an employed barrister practicing in the area of healthcare professional regulation. Mr Paul Chegwiddden and his wife moved to the parish having found their "forever home" two years ago. He has served with the Royal Air Force for almost thirty years and outlined his extensive experience in management, leadership and communication. Both applicants explained that they had reached a time in their professional careers and personal lives whereby they could now dedicate time and expertise to the parish council, contributing to the development of this parish whilst protecting the essence of its traditional character and appeal.

Councillor Bacon proposed that both applicants be co opted as parish councillors. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The chairman congratulated Councillor Burgess and Councillor Chegwiddden, inviting them to join the council and noting that they bring skills and experience which will add immeasurably to the team. The clerk confirmed that "Declaration of Acceptance of Office" forms and Huntingdonshire District Council's (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 had been forwarded in advance. Councillor Burgess and Councillor Chegwiddden agreed to sign and return these after the meeting.

05-05/20 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.

06-05/20 To receive reports from county and district councillors.

There were no additional reports. Councillor Bull confirmed that the Covid-19 Pandemic has become the main focus of business for both organisations and the parish council is in receipt of regular updates.

07-05/20 Matters arising or carried forward from the previous meeting:

07-05/20.1 To receive an update on the work of Upwood and the Raveleys Covid Help Group.

(Voicemail Helpline: 07483 281 656 or email: covidhelp@upwood.org to volunteer or request support).

The chairman highlighted the phenomenal support of almost 100 volunteers who to date have responded to 26 requests for assistance. Requests range from collection of shopping or prescriptions to assistance with dog walking and more unusual but critical requests such as assistance to repair broken spectacles. To date all requests have been fulfilled within a 12-hour period. The Covid Help Group has acknowledged the exceptional community spirit within this parish and the active informal support network which continues to evolve.

08-05/20 Notification of planning items. There were no planning items.

09-05/20 Finance

09-05/20.1 To approve accounts for payment: 04 May 2020:

Reference	Description	Payee	Amount
SO	Clerk/RFO Salary. April 2020	Mrs C. Silverstone	£1,015.11
DD	Employee & Employer Pension Contribution	SALVUS Master Trust	£111.16
SO	Clerk/RFO Salary PAYE/NI	HMRC	£40.96
DD	Pension Administration Fee	SALVUS Master Trust	£24.00
623421669	Clerk's Expenses: Working from Home Allowance	Mrs C. Silverstone	£10.00
245499721	Glebe Paddock. Rent adjustment (minute ref. 174-04/20.2)	Jolliffe Daking	£24.00
DD	Data Protection Renewal 2020/2021	Information Commissioner's Office	£40.00
358346109	Annual Play Area Inspection	PlaySafety Limited	£82.20
778354897	Annual Insurance Renewal	Came and Company	£524.15

09-05/20.2 To note income received: 04 May 2020

Reference	Description	Received From	Amount
BACs	Precept	Huntingdonshire District Council	£25,000
BACs	VAT Return 2019/2020	HMRC	£2111.05
BACs	Refund of "Scribe" subscription 2020/2021 (minute ref. 174-04/20.7)	Starboard Systems Ltd. (Scribe Accounts)	£308.40

Councillor Noble proposed that the accounts be approved for payment and the income received be acknowledged. Councillor Burgess seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The chairman agreed to sign the list of payments on the agenda; Councillor Bacon and Councillor Perkins agreed to sign each of the invoices and authorise the payments. The chairman agreed to sign the bank reconciliation and Councillor Noble agreed to countersign this. (All documentation was returned to the clerk after the meeting).

09-05/20.3 To receive a summary of the clerk's hours of work during April 2020.

The clerk confirmed that she worked 68 of 50 contracted hours during April. Between August 2019 and April 2020, she worked 472.75 of 450 contracted hours, an average of 52.53 hours per month. The clerk has carried forward 78.75 unpaid hours from the financial year 2019 – 2020.

09-05/20.4 To receive an update from the internal auditor.

The internal audit took place remotely due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The process was not as rigorous as it would have been under normal circumstances, but the parish council effectively received a "clean bill of health". The auditor highlighted two matters for consideration: firstly that the ICO under the General Data Protection Regulations recommend the use of dedicated parish council (rather than personal) email addresses and secondly that the parish council's consideration of risk assessment and risk management should be recorded in the minutes at the time of resolving to undertake new actions and projects.

Councillors debated the use of personal email addresses and were generally of the view that as the only personal data received by a councillor is restricted to a name, address, telephone number and/or email address, and only then where a member of the public has requested assistance, an additional address could be deemed a

disproportionate burden. Whilst it would be possible for councillors to have @upwood.org addresses, consideration must be given to the webmaster who manages this domain on a voluntary basis. He already gives his time freely and informally to support the clerk and to maintain the smooth operation of the parish council's laptop. Further consideration will be given to this matter following the review of the parish council's Freedom of Information and Data Protection policies outlined in item 177-04/20.1

The clerk confirmed that the auditor had raised concerns regarding risk assessments for activities such as community gritting and for the annual litter pick event. The clerk confirmed that the former involves volunteering for Cambridgeshire County Council (thus Cambridgeshire County Council takes responsibility for the management of risk); the latter is organised in conjunction with The Great British Spring Clean and the District Council and a comprehensive risk assessment process is provided by the charity "Keep Britain Tidy". The chairman noted that the council will take care in future to promote its application of risk management.

- 09-05/20.5 To review the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/2020 and to consider approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020.

The clerk/responsible financial officer presented the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 and councillors were asked to confirm that they understand their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the accounting statements. Councillor Bacon proposed that the clerk and the chairman authorise the annual governance statement on the council's behalf. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

- 09-05/20.6 To consider approval of the Accounting Statements 2019/2020.

The clerk/responsible financial officer presented the accounting statements 2019/2020 and had signed a statement to certify that statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis following the guidance in "Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – A Practitioner's Guide to Proper Practices" and present fairly the financial position of this authority. Councillor Noble proposed that the chairman should sign the accounting statements on the parish council's behalf. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

- 09-05/20.7 To consider a grant application from Upwood Cricket Club.

The parish council reviewed an application for £9,400 to support the purchase of a refurbished ride on lawn mower (at a total cost of £14,500). Further applications had been made to Ramsey Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund for £8,000 for this purpose; and to the National Lottery and Communities Capital Fund to support the building of a new pavilion and storage facility. Upwood Cricket Club currently has over 130 members. The clerk confirmed that after annual financial support to Upwood Village Hall and the parish newsletter, the budget remaining for parish grants totals £300. The chairman proposed that the parish council approves a conditional award of £500 to be claimed when the balance to secure the purchase has been raised. Councillor Chegwiddden seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

- 09-05/20.8 To receive an update from HMRC regarding Employment Allowance Reform with effect from 06 April 2020.

The parish council has received correspondence from HMRC advising of changes taking place from 06 April 2020. The council was asked to make extra eligibility checks as claims are no longer automatically renewed. The implication of the letter is that the parish council has "claimed" the Employment Allowance (EA) in 2019/2020, yet it has not done so intentionally. The reform has initiated the facility to "opt in" or "opt out" which has not been apparent in HMRC's payroll software in the past. The clerk has made enquiries and parish councils are not exempt, thus in April 2020 a charge of £52.39 in Employer Gross National Insurance Contributions has been applied to the parish council's HMRC account. Initial advice from CAPALC suggests that the parish council may owe contributions dating back to 2014. The clerk will address this matter with HMRC but if this is the case the parish council must be prepared for a bill in the region of £3,600 (approximately £600 per year over 6 years).

10-05/20 Traffic, Highways & Road Safety

- 10-05/20.1 To review data gathered from the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) during April 2020.

To avoid infringing on Covid-19 regulations the two SIDs were left in the same position as they were in March. The graphics were turned off to save battery life and see if there was a difference to behaviour if motorists felt that their data was not being recorded.

SID 1 was positioned in Little Raveley to monitor vehicles approaching from Wennington. 2,630 vehicles were recorded, 86 (3.26%) of which were in violation of the 30mph speed limit.

SID 2 was positioned on Huntingdon Road monitoring vehicles approaching from Great Raveley. With the graphics turned off the percentage of vehicles exceeding the 40mph speed limit increased from 38.53% in March to 43.57% in April. Although Covid-19 restrictions have reduced traffic volume (an average of 470 vehicles daily

in April compared to approximately 1,700 in "normal" times) traffic speeds have increased considerably. Of the 14,199 vehicles recorded during April, 6186 were in violation of the 40mph limit. 4,327 vehicles were recorded travelling between 50 and 60 mph and 57 vehicles between 70 and 90 mph.

The chairman proposed that the parish council must prepare a strategy to enable this matter to be taken seriously. He suggested that the only feasible option would be the installation of average speed cameras as noted by Councillor Slater. He suggested that Councillor Bacon, Councillor Burgess and Councillor Slater should prepare a narrative to accompany the extensive supporting data provided by the speed indicator devices, for presentation to the leader of Cambridgeshire County Council. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

11-05/20 Community Matters

11-05/20.2 To receive an update from Upwood Village Hall regarding access to funds remaining since the closure of the youth club; to consider plans for a "pop-up" style youth club and to consider the submission of a grant to Ramsey Windfarm Community Benefit Fund to support the provision of youth activities in this parish.

The trustees of the funds remaining since the closure of the youth club have confirmed that they would wish for the money to be used for something tangible rather than as payment for activity sessions. Councillor Bacon presented a draft application to Ramsey Windfarm Community Benefit Fund to support the provision of four two-hour "One Leisure, Active Lives" youth activity sessions during the summer of 2021 (£527); and also to provide eight two-hour "pop-up" youth club/activity sessions for children and young adults once a month in October and November 2020, and from April to September 2021 (£960). These sessions would be coordinated by an outside provider utilising the playing field and/or the village hall (£200) depending on the weather. The total project cost equates to £1687. Councillors asked to revisit this item with a view to considering a sustainable strategy for the longer term, and the necessary financial commitment of the parish council.

12-05/20 Governance

12-05/20.1 To consider attendance at CAPALC's annual "Share the Vision, Shape the Future, Annual Conference on 26th November 2020 at a cost of £75 per person.

Councillor Slater proposed that the parish council should support the clerk's attendance at this conference. Councillor Noble seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

13-05/20 Correspondence and Communications.

13-05/20.1 Copy of communication between a parishioner and Shailesh Vara MP regarding the lack of progress to completion of works to footpath no. 4 leading from Helens Close towards Upwood Meadows.

The clerk has enlisted the support of Councillor Rogers (County Councillor) to resolve this matter which has been ongoing since September 2018 (minute reference 64-09/19.1).

14-05/20 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 Noble reported on the annual inspection of Bentley Close Play Area. The safety matting continues to present medium risk due to shrinkage. Replacement is not considered essential at this time although gaps of more than 30mm are deemed enough to enable a foot to twist and cause a fall. Councillors agreed that further professional advice and quotations should be sought for optimum longer-term maintenance.

The swing presents medium risk. The seats are stained with bird droppings. (but the area has been closed for several weeks due to the Covid-19 pandemic). Councillor Noble agreed to research the recommended "anti-bird" device for consideration.

All other items present low risk although some tasks were suggested, especially regarding missing parts on the shelf of the multi-play area and vandalism on the low swing. These will be addressed when the area is re-opened. Councillor Ward reported on the remote meeting held with the clerk and managers of CGM. This was followed by a site meeting. The parish council has ongoing concerns for the company's commitment to the schedule and the quality of the work carried out. Councillor Ward will continue to monitor the situation.

Councillor Edwards noted that the contractor for the Church Lane development had offered to level and tidy the area of grass at the junction of Church Lane and Huntingdon Road. The clerk confirmed that although the grass is cut as part of the parish maintenance contract, the land is owned by Cambridgeshire County Council.

15-05/20 Date of next meeting: 01 June 2020 at 7:00pm.

Close of meeting: 8:55pm

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M. Stone
2 June 2020