

## Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Councillors: Trustees' Meeting

Parish Clerk – Mrs Carol Silverstone. 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 and the Raveleys Allotments (Charity no. 264373)

Was held on Monday 02 March 2015 at 6:30pm at Upwood Village Hall.

**Present:** Councillors J. Edwards, R. Howe (Chairman, G. Shelford, K. Sisman, G. Slater.

**In Attendance:** Mrs. C. Silverstone (Clerk), Miss A. Miles (Chairman, URCAA), Mr C. Dowdell (Treasurer, URCAA).

### Minutes

**12-03/15 To receive and approve apologies for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Paxton and Mrs L. Carter (work commitments). Councillors Hopkins and Noble were not in attendance. An apology was received from Councillor Noble after the meeting.

**13-03/15 To review the minutes of the trustees' meeting of 06 October 2014.**

Copies of the minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 06 October 2014 had been circulated in advance following their informal approval by the chairman. Councillor Slater proposed acceptance of the minutes. Councillor Shelford seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

**14-03/15 To receive an update from Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotment Association (URCAA): strengths and challenges to date.**

**15-03/15 To receive an updated business plan from URCAA.**

A comprehensive update and business plan had been received from Mrs Carter (Secretary, URCAA). Please find attached.

Miss Miles, Chairman of URCAA summarised the report confirming that morale is very good and that the allotments community is thriving. She asked if the trustees would have any objections to the planting of a hedge alongside the hayfield. All were in favour and trustees noted that this would be beneficial both for wildlife and as a windbreak.

**16-03/15 To receive a financial statement from URCAA.**

Mr Dowdell (Treasurer, URCAA) presented a healthy financial statement (attached) and noted that URCAA had received a financial grant from the Community Chest Fund and practical support in the form of hedging plants from the Woodland Trust.

**17-03/15 To receive an update from the trustees' working party.**

Councillor Slater congratulated the URCAA committee on their achievements and wished them continued success. All agreed that greater autonomy afforded by the new relationship between the trustees and URCAA has proven to be beneficial to all concerned.

**18-03/15 Matters for future consideration.**

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

**19-03/15 Date of next meeting: 07 March 2016.**

Close of meeting: 6:55pm



7 March 2016.



---

## **BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE UPWOOD & RAVELEY COMMUNITY ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION (URCAA).**

The Upwood & 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. URCAA has taken over the everyday running of the allotment plots situated in Upwood (Meadow Road site) and Great Raveley (junction with Raveley & Huntingdon Road) with guidance from the Allotment Trustees who report to the Charities Commission.

URCAA is responsible for rent collection, rule enforcement and 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 28 full plots split into a range of sizes to meet the varying needs of the community, included in this 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 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 water, parking and a communal area for storage.
- 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**

27 ½ of the 28 plots are actively cultivated or managed by allotment holders at Upwood. The unrented half plot will be left fallow and the upkeep maintained until occupied. The Raveley site has a half vacant plot. Currently there is not a waiting list for plots and various plot sizes can be made available to suit all standards. The area 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

Whilst the number of available plots is reducing, the remaining plot needs to be kept clear for future uptake, and there will be an ongoing need to help clear plots that become vacant, if necessary, throughout the year. Whilst much of this can be done through self-help, URCAA will invest in weed suppressant membrane to reduce overall annual maintenance costs and provide the means for plot holders to spray their plots for a reasonable cost by renting out a backpack sprayer and weed killer. We also need to arrange for the grass track through the Upwood plots to be cut regularly throughout the growing season.

Estimated cost: £200

#### 2) Security

Security has been dramatically improved with the recent installation of 2 padlocked gates at both entrances. With donations from the Woodlands Trust, URCAA has infilled the existing surrounding hedgerow to provide a constant physical barrier in the future. It is hoped to plant hedging alongside the Community Orchard site as a form of demarcation and wind protection; it is also hoped that a further application to the Trust will allow the hedging to be extended along the Huntingdon Road to complete the hedgerow at the top of the current hayfield.

#### 3) Strengthening the committee.

As a group, URCAA committee members now stands at four. There is always a need to recruit additional members to share some of the everyday site management and to drive forward future projects. URCAA would look to expand the committee and if possible, seek a member from the Raveley's site so they are fully represented. Target: At least 1 new committee member.

#### 4) Publicity.

Whilst the number of vacant plots has reduced, there is always a need to publicise plot availability until such time as a waiting list is generated. Publicity through village newsletter, website publicity and potentially local free newspapers, will be ongoing.

#### 5) Social events.

The committee intend to hold at least one social event a year in the summer, coupled with an Open Day and an entry in the Upwood Open Gardens, this will raise the Group's profile as



well as engender a community spirit. Ongoing maintenance, such as ditch clearance & hedge trimming, will be done on a self-help basis.

## 5) Community Orchard Project.

Fantastic local support with sponsorship now sees the site planted with a variety of heritage fruit trees and some wildflowers, with space for a further 10 trees once the drainage issues have been remedied. The site has suffered from drainage problems and the Group has undertaken some sub-soiling to remedy this. The Orchard will require ongoing maintenance but thanks to a fundraising quiznight remains self-sufficient. A successful application to the Community Chest, together with a generous donation from Josie & Ian Gaunt, will allow the group to permanently install a bench within the Orchard.

## 6) Track Maintenance.

Vehicle use, especially during the winter months, requires the upkeep of the track for the benefit of all site users. Some Allotment volunteers have installed some hard core in the worst areas to facilitate this, this will require attention on a self-help basis.

## Long Term Objectives.

### 7) Additional Water Supplies.

A successful application to the Community Chest included funds to help improve water storage for both sites. The size and position of these additional water storage containers is being considered carefully, the long term aim is to have mains fed containers strategically placed around the sites. URCAA has placed a 1000 litre water container at the Gt Raveley site, however the lack of mains supply means that this can only be filled through rainwater harvesting.

### 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- Damage caused by inappropriate use of vehicles on site or vehicular damage due to an unmaintained track.
- Damage caused by wildlife or vermin to crops, e.g. deer, birds or rodents is always ongoing.
- Waiting lists for plots - although this is not an issue at the moment as 1 plot still lies empty, the committee recognises that given the current economic climate, there may be an upturn in interest as people consider growing their own vegetables. The committee will be discussing how to manage waiting lists as well as promoting future uptake.

## URCAA FINANCIAL REPORT - 2 March 2015

	Account Balance made of 3 funds	
	Allotment Funds	£ 1,390.43
	Community Chest	£ 590.60
	Orchard Funds	£ 530.50
	<b>Balance</b>	<b>£ 2,511.53</b>
Date		
	<b>Allotment Balance B/FWD</b>	<b>£ 129.90</b>
08-Oct-14	Parish Council funds, transferred in from Trustees	£ 1,131.99
2014	Allotment Rents	£ 626.00
2014	Outgoings - overheads (Hall Hire for Meetings)	£ 38.28
2014	Outgoings - Maintenance incl. Water, 1st gate etc.	£ 459.18
	<b>Balance to C/Fwd</b>	<b>£ 1,390.43</b>
	<b>Orchard Funds - B/Fwd</b>	<b>£ 310.20</b>
25/09/2014	Fund raising	£ 275.30
24-Feb-15	Maintenance	£ 55.00
	<b>Balance to C/Fwd</b>	<b>£ 530.50</b>
	<b>Community Chest</b>	<b>£ 1,000.00</b>
19-Aug-14	Community Chest	£ 1,000.00
20-Dec-14	Second Gate & Padlock	£ 409.40
	Bench Installation	
	Water Containers	
	<b>Balance to C/Fwd</b>	<b>£ 590.60</b>
	<b>Total Account Balances</b>	<b>£ 2,511.53</b>
28/02/2015	Plot rent deposit to be cleared	£ 5.00
	Cheque no 000015 cashed	£ 40.00
	<b>Bank Balance as per statement dated 31/01/15</b>	<b>£ 2,546.53</b>
	The handover of responsibilities from the PC to the Trustees sees URCAA responsible for the everyday running, a transfer of funds was made (£1131.99) to reflect this handover. Site rents (incl. fields) = £626, other outgoings (incl first gate)=£497.46. Balance =£1390.43	
	C/Fwd Balance achieved from previous tree sponsorship. Quiz night (£275.30.) Subsoiling to aid drainage leaves balance=£530.50	
	The grant from the Community Chest paid for the second gate & padlock. Balance of £590.60 to cover bench installation in Orchard & water containers.	