

Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Councillors: Trustees' Meeting

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**A meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Councillors, the Trustees of:
Upwood & the Raveleys Allotments (Charity no. 264373)
was held on Monday 06 March 2017 at 6:30pm at Upwood Village Hall.**

Present: Councillors J. Edwards, H. Nel, J. Noble, R. Howe (Chairman), J. Paxton, A. Perkins, G. Slater.
In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), Ms. A. Miles (URCAA Chairman)

Minutes

- 01-03/17 To receive and approve apologies for absence.**
Councillor H. Smith, Councillor M. Tew, Mr. T. Brown, Mr. C. Dowdell, Mrs. E. Carter, Mrs. J. Evans.
- 02-03/17 To receive and approve the minutes of the trustees' meeting held on 04 April 2016.**
Copies of the minutes of the meeting held on 04 April 2016 had been circulated following their informal approval by the chairman. Councillor Noble proposed acceptance of the minutes. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal. All who had been present at the meeting were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The chairman signed the minutes.
- 03-03/17 To receive an update from Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotment Association (URCAA): strengths and challenges to date.**
- 04-03/17 To receive an updated business plan from URCAA**
- 05-03/17 To receive a financial statement from URCAA.**
Detailed reports (attached) had been prepared by URCAA committee members and these had been circulated to the trustees in advance. Ms. Alison Miles (URCAA Chairman) presented each report and updated the trustees on the achievements of the association over the last twelve months. Ms. Miles noted that Mr. Carl Dowdell has recently resigned from his role as treasurer and added her thanks for his support over the last five years.
- 06-03/17 To receive an update from Councillor Edwards (trustee with a portfolio responsibility for the allotments).**
Councillor Edwards noted that his role is purely advisory. He was pleased to report that there had been no need for URCAA to request his support over the last twelve months.
- 07-03/17 To consider a request to scatter cremated remains in the community orchard.**
URCAA had received a request from a sponsor to place cremated remains around the base of one of the fruit trees in the orchard. The trustees were appreciative of the family asking the permission of the landowner and agreed that permission should be granted. The trustees also agreed that URCAA be given the authority to grant requests of a similar nature should they arise in future.
- 08-03/17 Matters for future consideration.**
No decisions can be made under this item.
There were no matters for future consideration.
Councillor Howe congratulated Ms. Miles and URCAA noting the fantastic progress that has been made since the establishment of the new structure in September 2014. He added his thanks to all involved and summarised his high regard for all that has been achieved with "this is such a good news story".
- 09-03/17 Date of next meeting: 05 March 2018.**

Close of meeting: 7:50pm

 R. Howe - 5 March 2018.



Upwood and Raveley Community Allotment Association (URCAA) and Upwood Community Orchard

Chairman's Report, March 2017

Allotments

- Recruitment of 12 new tenants at the Upwood site - a result of plot size changes and a recruitment drive (special mention to Liz Carter and her successful publicity campaign)
- Upwood site now divided further so 38 plots of varying sizes, appealing to a wider range of allotmenters (31 tenants)
- Use of membrane to prepare plots for new tenants worked well so we plan to extend this to the Great Raveley site over the coming year
- Grass cutting (central track at the Upwood site) is now on a regular schedule with external contractor (Andy Davis). Inside hedge at Upwood site has been cut by a volunteer.

Weakness/Challenges:

- Need for replacement, and new, committee members to assist the running of the allotments
- Waterlogging at Upwood site over the winter
- Provision of water across Upwood site and at Great Raveley
- No recruitment of plot holders at Great Raveley site
- Increased amount of wildlife on site – new additions of rabbits and moles in 2016!

Orchard

- A fund-raising quiz in the autumn raised around £450 to put towards further development and maintenance.
- Four new apple trees have been planted so we now have 29 trees of varying sorts in the orchard. Twenty three have definite sponsors and there are two additional sponsors yet to be allocated a tree.
- Grass cutting is now on a regular schedule with external contractor (Andy Davis).
- All tree cages have had an annual maintenance check and velcro tabs used to allow for ease of access for future weeding.
- A new mini-flower bed has been added and will be planted up with a selection of grasses.
- Pond has been improved and is currently being planted up.

Weakness/Challenge:

- Engaging the wider local community in the Orchard.
- Improving access

Here's hoping to good weather and a good growing season

Ali Miles (URCAA Chairman 2016/17)

URCAA - Business Plan 2017/18 - Update date 050317

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

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

URCAA is responsible for:

- rent collection
- rule enforcement
- 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 38 allotment plots split into a range of sizes, to meet the varying needs of the community and changing ways in which people engage with allotments. Included at the Upwood site 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 access, water, and parking
- 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

- 35 of the available 38 plots are actively cultivated or managed by allotment holders at Upwood. (We are in the process of actively resizing plots with great success in the uptake of the 'mini -plots'. This has led to an increase in 10 plots since the 060316 report.)
- The Raveley site has 3 of the 5 plots in active cultivation.
- Currently there is not a waiting list for plots.
- The Upwood site 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

Re-sizing and clearance of vacant plots is being actively progressed at the Upwood site. What people want from an allotment has changed over time and this generally results in people wanting smaller plots than the historically defined allotment plot sizes. By creating smaller plot areas, and using weed suppressant membrane to reduce overall maintenance requirements, we will continue the drive to get more people actively engaged in the allotments. We plan to create some mini plots at the Great Raveley site to see if we can generate new interest at that site.

We arrange for the grass track through the Upwood plots to be cut regularly throughout the growing season. The inside of the hedge has already been cut by a volunteer and we will continue to encourage all plot holders to maintain their plot area.

2) Strengthening the association.

The URCAA committee has been made up of five members, including a representative from the Raveley site. Unfortunately, after five years, our Treasurer has had to stand down. The Chairman will cover the finances until we can establish a new Treasurer. Finding new committee members is now a priority for URCAA.

There is always a need to recruit additional members to share some of the everyday site management and to drive forward future projects but this is particularly important as the Association has grown. URCAA will seek to engage the wider membership in projects.

Recruitment and retention of plot holders remains a high priority.

3) Publicity.

Whilst we are managing the vacant plots, with natural turnover and some downsizing, there is always a need to attract new interest in the allotments. We will increase work to publicise plot availability in 2017 until such time as a waiting list is generated. Publicity through village newsletter, website publicity and potentially local free newspapers, will be ongoing. We hope to establish a publicity officer on the committee to reduce the workload on the Secretary..

4) Social events.

The committee aims to hold at least one social event in the year, to raise the Group's profile as well as engender a community spirit. (Ongoing maintenance, such as ditch clearance and hedge trimming, will be done on a self-help basis.) This year's event (tbc) will be discussed at the Association's AGM. We will open some plots for Upwood Open Gardens and Scarecrow competition. We have also offered to host scarecrows if people would like to take part but have no suitable place to display their scarecrow.

5) Community Orchard Project.

The Orchard will continue to be maintained. We have fully planted the area with trees now and are following up on finalising sponsorship. A wildlife pond has been established and is being planted up. Work this year will focus on improvements to the flower beds.

6) Water provision.

We have placed the four water troughs at the Upwood site and a 1000 litre water container at the Great Raveley site. Over 2017 we will continue to look at innovative ways to fill them as we work towards a long term aim of providing access to water for all plots.

Long Term Objectives. (Note: on hold as we establish plot-holders and strengthen the Committee)

7) Plumbed Water Supplies.

A successful application to the Community Chest included funds to help improve water storage for both sites. The long term aim is to have mains fed containers strategically placed around the sites so that we can attract more plot holders.

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:

- 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.
- Reduction in the number of plot-holders - there is a risk of interest in the allotment scene decreasing and further plot holders not coming forward.
- 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.

URCAA FINANCIAL REPORT - 31 March 2017

Date			
31/03/2017	Allotment Funds		£ 2,209.88
31/03/2017	Allotment Plot deposits		£ 270.00
31/03/2017	Petty Cash		£ 100.00
31/03/2017	Orchard Funds		£ 927.68
24/02/2017	Total Balance to C/Fwd to 16/17		£ 3,507.56
			Account Balance (3 funds)
01/04/2016	Allotment Balance B/FWD		£ 1,710.73
2016	Allotment Rents - collected to 31/03/2017		£ 686.00
2016/17	other income - membrane		£ 44.00
2016/7	Outgoings - Maintenance incl. Water		-£ 230.85
24/02/2017	Balance to C/Fwd to 17/18		£ 2,209.88
01/04/2016	Plot Deposit B/FWD		£ -
2016/17	Plot deposits held		£ 270.00
24/02/2017	Balance to C/Fwd to 17/18		£ 270.00
01/04/2016	Petty Cash Balance B/FWD		£ 100.00
	Petty cash Balance held by E Carter.		
24/02/2017	Balance to C/Fwd to 17/18		£ 100.00
01/04/2016	Orchard Funds - B/Fwd		£ 726.36
07/09/2016	Orchard Grant		£ 180.00
20/10/2016	Fund raising - Quiz night		£ 560.00
20/10/2016	quiz night expenses		-£ 67.25
2016/17	Tree Sponsorship		£ 200.00
2016/17	Tree Purchase & supports		-£ 339.29
2016/17	Maintenance & other costs		-£ 332.14
24/02/2017	Balance to C/Fwd to 17/18		£ 927.68
31/03/2017	Total Account Balances		£ 3,507.56
11/02/2017	Cheque no 000043 to be cashed		-£ 117.25
31/03/2017	Less Petty Cash held		£ 100.00
	Bank Balance as per statement 39 dated 03/02/17		£ 3,524.81
			E Carter Tree Purchase held by E Carter