



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

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A meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council was held on Monday 05 June 2017 at 7.00pm at Upwood Village Hall.

Present: Councillors J. Edwards, J. Noble, J. Paxton, A. Perkins, G. Slater, H. Smith, M. Tew.

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), County Councillor T. Rogers and 4 members of the public.

Minutes

21-06/17 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Councillor Howe: Holiday

Councillor Nel: Family Commitment

In the absence of the chairman this meeting was chaired by Councillor Tew, Vice Chairman.

22-06/17 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.

23-06/17 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.

24-06/17 To receive and approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 08 May 2017.

Copies of the minutes of the meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council held on 08 May 2017 had been circulated in advance following their informal approval by the vice chairman. Councillor Slater proposed acceptance of the minutes. Councillor Smith seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The vice chairman signed the minutes.

25-06/17 Matters arising or carried forward from the last or previous meeting.

25-06/17.1 To consider a proposal for councillors to wear identification cards.

The vice chairman proposed that councillors and the clerk should wear identity cards when carrying out official duties. He suggested that this initiative has proved successful in promoting community engagement in other local parishes. The clerk presented a quotation from the district council for the printing of 10 personalised plastic identity cards and the provision of holders and lanyards at a cost of £31.45. The vice chairman proposed that the clerk obtain a quotation for photo-ID cards. Councillor Noble seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was resolved to consider this further at the next meeting.

25-06/17.2 To consider a proposal to hold parish council "surgeries".

Based on the experience of other local parish councils, the vice chairman has proposed that councillors consider holding a regular "surgery" attended by at least two councillors to promote community engagement and to enhance the council's other forms of communication. Councillors agreed to trial this initiative but felt that such events should take place at various locations in the parish rather than just in the village hall. Suggestions included the Cross Keys Public House, the cricket pavilion and the school. Councillor Noble proposed that the vice chairman makes enquiries regarding the availability of these facilities and that this item

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Tew'.

be reviewed at the next meeting. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

25-06/17.3 To receive an update on considerations for the provision of community defibrillators.
This item was deferred until the next meeting.

25-06/17.4 To address the concerns of Upwood and the Raveleys Allotments Association regarding the removal of a section of the boundary hedge from the Upwood allotments site.
Approximately 20m of traditional and long-established hawthorn and mixed native hedging has been removed from the northern boundary of the Upwood allotments site and replaced with cherry laurel.
The clerk has taken advice from Mr John Chrisp, Solicitor, Serjeant and Sons; the legal department of the National Allotments Association and the Local Planning Authority (Huntingdonshire District Council). There is significant protection in law for countryside hedgerows but this ceases to apply when the hedgerow becomes the curtilage of a dwelling.
The allotments date back to the Inclosure act of 1853 and have charitable status.
The vice chairman closed the meeting to allow representatives of Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotments Association (URCAA) and Mr Manton of Fisherman's Close to speak.
The allotments association is saddened and disappointed by this course of events, particularly as members have spent considerable time and effort in restoring and re-planting traditional hedging on this site.
Members of the association are resigned to the fact that the hedge has gone and nothing can be done to restore it. However, they would like to see this section restored by the re-planting of a mixed blackthorn and hawthorn hedge. No offence has been committed in legal terms but this is a moral and a neighbourly issue. No approach was made either to the allotments association or to the parish council prior to removal of the hedge. The association is concerned that if the parish council does not take action then it could be seen as a precedent for the future.
Mr Manton explained that the previous owners of his property had carried out little maintenance and that he had assumed that the overgrowing hedge was therefore his responsibility. He apologised that he had not consulted with the allotment association or the parish council and regrets not having done so as he and his family had no intention of causing harm or upset.
It was agreed that there are three issues which should be addressed: firstly, ownership and thus responsibility for the hedge and tree line; secondly its ongoing maintenance; and thirdly the prevention, if possible, of any further removal of the allotments boundary.
Councillor Smith proposed that Councillor Edwards endeavours to determine ownership of the hedge by physical investigation to determine the historical presence of a ditch. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to re-visit this matter at the next meeting.

26-06/17 **To receive reports from neighbouring parishes.**
Councillor Slater represented Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council at Bury's Neighbourhood Plan meeting. Councillor Tew reported on plans to create a cycle path linking Upwood, Bury and Ramsey utilising and upgrading the existing paths along Ramsey Road and on the golf course to create a safer alternative route within and between the parishes for pedestrians and cyclists. This is likely to cost in the region of £1.5 million, some of which should be covered as part of the agreement to develop the former USAF clinic and the Upwood Airfield sites. Bury Parish Council is also liaising with the Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport (HACT) regarding additional provision of public transport in this area.

27-06/17 **To receive reports from county and district councillors.** There were no reports.

28-06/17 **Notification of planning items.** None received.

29-06/17 **Finance**

29-06/17.1 To approve accounts for payment: 05 June 2017.

Date	Ref. No.	Payee	Description	Amount
05.06.17	137958225	Mrs C. Silverstone	Clerk/RFO Salary. May 2017	687.42
			Expenses: Working from home allowance, travel	19.31

05.06.17	16180435	Mr B C Edwards	Cemetery Officer Salary. April – June 2017	87.34
05.06.17	95660523	HMRC	PAYE/NI	27.59
05.06.17	*DD	SALVUS Master Trust	Employee + Employer Pension Contributions. May 2017 @ £73.00	73.00
05.06.17	844471739	Mr B Fryer	Felling of an ash tree in Charters Spinney	380.00
05.06.17	669071193	Mr S Howes	Reimbursement of parish website & domain fees re. minute ref. 15-04/17.4	62.26
05.06.17	814026647	Playsafety Limited	Annual Inspection. Bentley Close Play Area	79.80
05.06.17	60315944	Mr A Davis	Parish Grass Cutting (no. 5 & 6)	790.00

*A direct debit instruction has been established for payments to SALVUS Mastertrust (minute reference: 16-04/17.3).

Councillor Smith proposed that the council approve the accounts for payment. Councillor Slater seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The vice chairman signed the list of payments on the agenda and the bank reconciliation. Councillor Noble who is not a signatory or a member of the finance working party also signed the bank reconciliation. Councillors Paxton and Slater signed the invoices and authorised the online payments after the meeting.

29-06/17.2 To note income received: 05 June 2017: None received at the time of publication.

29-06/17.3 To review the internal audit 2016/2017.

The parish council has once again had a successful audit. However, the clerk has expressed concern in two areas: Firstly that the auditor awarded a score of 2 (substantial assurance) for the council's risk assessment processes. He noted that the "council has adequate documentation" and "that risks are not formally scored but this is probably not necessary given the size of the parish". Presentation of exactly the same processes and documentation at the previous audit was awarded a score of 1 (high assurance) when he noted that "Records of inspections are available and the risk management policy includes assessment of all risks". The clerk has expressed concern for a lack of consistency.

The National Association of Local Councils updated the Model Financial Regulations in May 2016. The auditor enthusiastically informed the clerk that he "had caught out" the majority of parish councils, this one included, which had not updated their regulations accordingly. The clerk has expressed concern to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC) to whom the parish council pays a significant affiliation fee, that this information had not been shared effectively. The council is asked to approve the new regulations under item 29-06/17.4.

Councillor Slater suggested that the council considers changing its auditor. The clerk confirmed that the auditor himself had suggested that as he has acted as auditor for this council for a number of years it would be appropriate to engage another. The clerk will make enquiries regarding the availability of alternative auditors. The vice chairman congratulated the clerk on another successful audit and thanked her for her continued efforts to maintain sound governance of the parish council.

29-06/17.4 To acknowledge the Notice of Public Rights & publication of the unaudited annual return of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017.

Councillor Paxton proposed the council approves the publication of the Notice of Public Rights and unaudited annual return of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017. Councillor Smith seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The document will be published on the parish noticeboards and on the website until 14 July.

29-06/17.5 To consider the adoption of financial regulations (revised May 2016)

See item 29-06/17.3. The only significant change to these regulations relate to the "Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which apply to contracts over the value of £25,000. Councillor Slater proposed that the council adopts the revised financial regulations. Councillor Edwards seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

30-06/17 Parish Maintenance

30-06/17.1 To review the annual inspection report for Bentley Close Play Area.

Councillor Noble made the following recommendations:

The classification of this particular product has been raised from low to medium risk but no action is required.

The ground is slightly eroded at one of the entrance gates. Risk is low with no action required but Councillor Slater has laid some gravel to fill the depression.

The sleeve to the low swing is damaged. No action is required and councillors agreed that monitoring should continue.

A part is missing from the shelf on the climbing equipment and Councillor Slater has removed a loose bolt. The purpose of the bolt is unclear but Councillor Noble will make enquiries with a view to replacing and securing the part to ensure the area is safe.

The shrinkage of the surface was noted but risk remains low. All agreed that no action is required other than to retain a line item in the budget should its replacement become necessary.

It had been suggested at a previous meeting that a cradle swing should be provided and that this could be accomplished by removing one of the seats and fitting a new cradle swing to the existing chains. The cost would be £76.73 inclusive of VAT and postage. Councillor Smith proposed that Councillor Noble be authorised to spend up to a maximum of £100 to purchase the cradle swing and the missing part from the climbing frame. Councillor Perkins seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

31-06/17 Traffic, Highways & Road Safety

31-06/17.1 To receive an update from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding Local Highway Initiative plans for traffic calming on Ramsey Road.

Councillors studied the draft plans and hope to have a breakdown of costings for review at the next meeting.

32-06/17 Correspondence and Communications

32-06/17.1 Statement of accounts & financial forecast received from Upwood and the Raveleys Newsletter Committee.

33-06/17 To receive verbal reports from Parish Councillors on matters arising from their portfolio responsibilities.

No decisions can be made under this item. There were no verbal reports.

34-06/17 Matters for future consideration.

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

35-06/17 Date of next meeting: 03 July 2017, Upwood Village Hall, 7:00pm.

Close of meeting: 8:30pm