

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

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 Councillors, the Trustees of:  
Upwood & the Raveleys Allotments (Charity no. 264373)  
was held on Monday 01 April 2019 at 6:30pm at Upwood Village Hall.**

**Present:** Councillors J. Edwards, R. Howe (Chairman) J. Noble, A. Perkins, G. Slater, J. Twose.

**In Attendance:** Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), Mr. T. Brown (URCAA Chairman)

### Minutes

- 01-04/19 To receive and approve apologies for absence.**  
Councillor Bacon: Holiday.
- 02-04/19 To receive and approve the minutes of the trustees' meeting held on 05 March 2018.**  
The chairman referred to the minutes of 05 March 2018 and asked whether his advice to make a bid to the Ramsey Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund to assist with funding of projects had been considered. Mr Brown confirmed that the URCAA committee had discussed this and he believed that an application would be prepared for 2019.  
The minutes of the meeting held on 05 March 2018 had been circulated in advance following the informal approval of the chairman. Councillor Noble proposed that the minutes be approved. Councillor Edwards seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.
- 03-04/19 To receive an update from Upwood and the Raveleys Community Allotment Association (URCAA): strengths and challenges to date.**
- 04-04/19 To receive an updated business plan from URCAA.**
- 05-04/19 To receive a financial statement from URCAA.**  
Extensive reports (attached) had been prepared by URCAA committee members and these had been circulated to the trustees in advance of the meeting. Mr Brown presented each of these reports and updated the trustees on the achievements of the association since the last meeting. He confirmed that Mrs Julia Evans was appointed as secretary at the recent AGM and Ms. Ali Miles remains as treasurer to the committee. He noted that Mrs Liz Carter is still actively involved and offered his thanks for her sterling work as secretary over the last few years.
- 06-04/19 To receive an update from Councillor Edwards (trustee with a portfolio responsibility for the allotments).**  
Councillor Edwards noted that his role is purely advisory and that he had nothing further to report.
- 08-04/19 Matters for future consideration.**  
*No decisions can be made under this item.*  
The chairman once again congratulated all who contribute to the ongoing success of this initiative which is of benefit to the whole community. He added that the association remains in excellent order and both the committee and the allotment holders work incredibly hard to make the allotment sites and the orchard productive and eminently presentable.  
The tenancy agreement between the trustees and URCAA will expire on 05 October 2020. The clerk will prepare documentation for review prior to the next meeting.
- 09-04/19 Date of next meeting: 06 April 2020.**

Close of meeting: 6:55pm



9-10-20

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

**Chairman's Report March 2019**

**Allotments**

- The Upwood site currently has a total of 32 tenants, maintaining 37 plots of varying sizes.
- The Great Raveley site currently has 4 tenants, maintaining 5 plots of varying sizes.
- The Upwood and Great Raveley sites have a combined total of 53 plots of which 42 are occupied.
- The vacant sites at Upwood consist of 10 x mini plot and 1 x ½ plot.
- There is nobody currently on the plot waiting list for the Upwood site.
- There are no vacant plots at the Great Raveley site.
- There is nobody on a waiting list for the Great Raveley site.
- Filling the galvanised water storage tanks on the Upwood site is difficult from a single tap. The tenants have been asked to devise a scheme to maintain the water levels in the tanks. Some allotment holders have rigged up their own water catchment system.
- The Great Raveley site has no fixed water supply and utilises a single 1000 litre rigid plastic container which has to be manually topped up. Two of the allotment holders have devised their own water catchment systems.
- There are some maintenance issues with the central track on the Upwood site resulting in uneven surfaces. Tenants have been requested to only use vehicles on the track when absolutely necessary.
- The new hedge adjoining the main road needs the protection removing from the young plants to allow them to mature now that they are large enough not to be attacked by the wildlife.
- The plot one site has a large amount of scrub and bracken that requires removing on a self-help basis.
- Vacant plots and the suppression of weeds are a concern. However, the situation appears to be under control with sufficient membrane being laid down
- Members of the allotment association have volunteered to carry out general maintenance of the new hedgerows and tidy up plot one commencing in April.
- Grass cutting for the track and the shared areas has been arranged under a new contract with CGM with the first cut having just taken place.

**Orchard**

- The orchard is now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year and is fully planted, with one dead tree having being replaced, and the remainder of the trees appearing to be in good health. Some trees even produced enough fruit last year to make jams and jellies.
- Winter pruning of the fruit trees has been carried out where required, and the tree supports adjusted to allow for new growth.
- The anti-rabbit mesh around the base of the trees has been inspected and repaired as required. Restrictive protection has been removed from the older trees where necessary.
- Grass cutting for the coming season has been arranged with CGM and the first cut around the trees has taken place.
- There are plans to introduce wild flower areas in the orchard once the weed situation is under control.

- The raised beds are being tended by a volunteer from the allotments, but a permanent “Keeper of the flower beds” is still being sought via an article in the village newsletter.
- The pond at the lower end of the orchard site continues to be a success at trapping run off water that would otherwise flood the parking area. Apart from its practical use, it is hoped the pond may also attract a variety of wildlife.
- A fund raising quiz took place in October 2018 in the Village Hall, and was well attended and raised a little over £371.
- A sign to draw attention to the orchard has been made and will be fixed permanently to posts shortly.
- Hedging has been planted on the southerly edge of the orchard and has established itself. Further planting along the edge adjoining the central track has been planned and will consist of scented flowering plants.

### **URCAA Financial Report**

- A summary of the UCRAA financial situation can be seen below.
- A full statement of accounts is attached.

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Item</u>                      | <u>Totals</u>    |
|-------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 26/03/19    | Allotment Funds                  | £2,868.06        |
| 26/03/19    | Allotment Plot deposits          | £630.00          |
| 26/03/19    | Orchard Funds                    | £1212.70         |
| 26/03/19    | <b>Total Balance of accounts</b> | <b>£4,710.76</b> |

### **Business Plan**

- A copy of the UCRAA Business Plan is attached.

### **Summary**

The URCAA and Community Orchard appears to be in good health financially, and has good support from the parishioners with almost all available plots under cultivation. A few minor matters need to be addressed, such as the water supply, plot one tidying and maintenance of the newly planted hedges, but there are no major cause for concern. The new maintenance contract with CGM appears to be on track with the first grass cut of the season having taken place.

# **URCAA – Business Plan 2019/20 – Update date 260319**

## **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 plus supporting officers. URCAA is responsible for 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 48 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 Great 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**

- 37 of the available 48 plots are actively cultivated or managed by allotment holders at Upwood.
- The Great Raveley site has 5 of the 5 plots in active cultivation.
- Currently there is nobody on the waiting list for vacant 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 will continue to be the responsibility of individual plot holders as they are expected to maintain their own plot area. Communal grass cutting has recently been contracted out to CGM.

#### **2) Strengthening the association.**

The URCAA committee has traditionally been made up of five members, including a representative from the Raveley site. At the recent AGM, we have had a change of personnel in the role of Treasurer. We have a publicity officer whose role to publicise the group and contribute articles to the village newsletter, website and free newspapers.

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 continue to publicise plot availability in 2019/20 through the village newsletter and the local free newspapers. We propose to start our own Facebook page to further publicise our group and hopefully attract new allotment holders.

#### **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.) An event in June was discussed at the Association's AGM to coincide with the village Open Gardens and Scarecrow completion.

#### **5) Community Orchard Project.**

The Orchard will continue to be maintained. We have fully planted the area with trees now and are fully sponsored. A wildlife pond has been established and has been planted up. Work this year will focus on improvements to the flower beds and hedge borders. We hope to recruit a volunteer from the community to maintain these 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 2019/20 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.

#### **7) On site toilet.**

At the recent AGM it was suggested that a toilet might be installed on site especially for the benefit of those plot holders who live some distance from their plots. Some sort of Eco Loo was suggested as that would require no permanent plumbing. The practicality and costs of this amenity require investigation.

#### **8) Shelter or communal hut.**

At the recent AGM it was proposed that a previous long term plan for a communal hut or shelter be moved to a short term objective. A building or shelter would engender a communal spirit if plot holders could share a space together on site.

### **Long Term Objectives.**

#### **9) Plumbed Water Supplies.**

The long term aim remains to have mains fed containers strategically placed around the sites so that we can attract more plot holders.

#### **10) 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.

#### **11) Expand or improve the Orchard.**

Plot one is not in use due to the poor soil in that area and has been considered as a candidate to be utilised in an expanded orchard area. This would require a significant amount of effort to re-generate this plot of land. Additional seating is being considered for the existing orchard in order to improve this community amenity.

## **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. At the recent AGM a small rent increase was considered due to the new maintenance contract with CGM. This was considered unnecessary at this time as the association funds are deemed to be healthy.

## **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 – 270319

|            |                                  |                  |
|------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 27/03/2019 | Allotment Funds                  | £2,868.06        |
| 27/03/2019 | Allotment Plot deposits          | £630.00          |
| 27/03/2019 | Orchard Funds                    | £1,212.70        |
| 27/03/2019 | <b>Total Balance of accounts</b> | <b>£4,710.76</b> |

### Income/Expenditure from 31/03/2018

**Allotments account summary** £2,868.06

|         |   |           |
|---------|---|-----------|
|         | <i>Opening Balance</i>                                      | £2,585.11 |
| 2018/19 | Allotment Rents - collected from 31/03/2018                 | £728.00   |
| 2018/19 | Water   | -£96.16   |
| 2018/19 | Material purchase (Padlock, membrane)                       | -£113.89  |
| 2018/19 | Maintenance (Grass cutting - note reduction as dry weather) | -£100.00  |
| 2018/19 | Admin – (Hall hire, stamps)                                 | -£135.00  |

**Orchard accounts summary** £1,212.70

|         |                        |          |
|---------|------------------------|----------|
|         | <i>Opening Balance</i> | £913.20  |
| 2018/19 | Fundraising (Quiz)     | £460.00  |
| 2018/19 | Maintenance            | -£100.00 |
| 2018/19 | Fundraising costs      | -£60.50  |