



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 02 November 2015 at 7.00pm at Upwood Village Hall.

Present: Councillors J. Edwards (after item 96-11/15), F. Hopkins (until item 100-11/15), J. Noble, J. Paxton, A. Perkins, R. Singleton, G. Slater, H. Smith (after item 92-11/15).

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Bilverstone (Clerk), County Councillor Michael Tew and 5 members of the public.

Minutes

In the absence of the chairman, this meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Slater

- 90-11/15 To receive and approve apologies for absence.**
Councillor R. Howe: Medical.
- 91-11/15 To review applications for the casual vacancy.**
The clerk had received one application for the casual vacancy. Mr Howard Smith had provided councillors with an outline of his professional life and of his extensive commitment to the community. The chairman gave councillors the opportunity to ask questions of Mr Smith before asking him to leave the room. Councillors agreed unanimously that Mr Smith's wealth of strategic experience would be a great asset. Councillor Slater proposed that Mr Smith be co-opted to the parish council. Councillor Hopkins seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was resolved to do so. Councillor Smith signed a declaration of office and the chairman offered a warm welcome to the team
- 92-11/15 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.
- 93-11/15 Public participation.**
To allow up to 10 minutes (3 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.
- 94-11/15 To receive and approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 05 October 2015.**
The minutes of the meeting of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council held on 05 October 2015 had been circulated in advance following their informal approval by the chairman. Councillor Paxton proposed acceptance of the minutes. Councillor Noble seconded the proposal. All who had been present were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. Councillor Howe would be asked to sign the minutes.
- 95-11/15 Matters arising or carried forward from the last or previous meeting.**
95-11/15.1 To consider phase three of the tree work in St. Peter's Churchyard.
Councillor Perkins had met with Mr Papworth to review phase three. Mr Papworth will provide the council with a detailed appraisal and quotation for review at the next meeting. Councillor Slater noted that the council has already overspent on this budget heading by £664 and asked if the work could wait until the

next financial year. All agreed that the council would act on the advice of Mr Papworth and draw on reserves if necessary.

95-11/15.2 To consider the replacement of two plastic panels on the play equipment in Bentley Close. The condition of the two plastic panels had been highlighted as presenting low risk under two consecutive annual inspections. Councillor Noble has repaired the panels on several occasions but this is not sustainable and she proposed that the panels be replaced at a total cost of £212.40 + VAT. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal, all were in favour and it was resolved that the clerk would place an order with Kompan Ltd. Councillors will make arrangements for their installation on arrival.

96-11/15 To receive reports from county and district councillors.

Councillor Tew reminded members of the severe budget cuts planned within the county council. These will impact on all services. Councillor Smith asked for specific examples. Councillor Tew explained that winter road maintenance will be cut by 25% and that adult social care will be cut by £26 million with view to saving £41 million in total. On a local level, the total budget for highway maintenance and repairs (across 14 parishes) has dropped from £15,000 to £3,000. Councillor Perkins suggested that this was false economy and Councillor Tew agreed. The county council will continue to devolve further responsibilities to parishes (although councillors suggested that the services currently provided to this parish are minimal). The five parish forum has proved to be a successful initiative and this will help to promote community resilience. All councillors and parishioners were urged to participate in the consultation (see the link at 102-11/15.3). Councillor Tew offered his congratulations to Councillor Hopkins and the Community Led Plan team on their professional launch of the plan.

97-11/15 Notification of planning items. There were no planning items.

98-11/15 Finance

98-11/15.1 To approve accounts for payment: 02 November 2015:

Date	Ref. No.	Payee	Description	Amount
02.11.15	786560898	Mrs C. Silverstone	*Clerk/RFO Salary. October 2015	£725.73
	521242624 252019284		Expenses: Working from home allowance + travel	20.80
02.11.15	616185626	HMRC	PAYE/NI	£7.33
02.11.15	56801325	Jolliffe Daking	Rent. Glebe Paddock	£200.00
02.11.15	350148650	CAPALC	Councillor Training: Councillor Singleton	£105.00
			Annual Clerk's Catch-Up Day	£25.00
02.11.15	280640481	Mr A. Davis	Cut 11 to parish grass + annual cut to cemetery hedge	£500.00
02.11.15	Ch. 300051	Ms. H. Green	Reimbursement of expenses. CLP launch. Stationery & refreshments	£56.55

*Clerk's note: including back-pay from 01 August 2015.

98-11/15.2 To note income received: 02 November 2015:

22.10.15	000028	Smiths Funeral Directors	Interment of cremated remains	£50.00
02.11.15	000029	V & N Gowler	Commercial Land Rent	£996.00

Receipts and payments were approved unanimously. The invoices, cheque and receipts were signed by Councillor Paxton and Councillor Perkins and electronic payments authorised after the meeting.

Councillors were asked to approve the updating of the Unity Trust mandate to remove Ms. Huskinson and Mrs Hopkins (see item 99-11/15) and to enable viewing access for Councillor Smith.

1. The amendments to the mandate for the operation of the bank account, payment instructions and banking services be approved and provided to the bank by persons authorised to do so in accordance with the bank's procedures and the mandate.
2. The bank is entitled to rely on the mandate until it receives a later mandate amending it.
3. The bank will be notified in writing of any changes to the organisation as per the terms and conditions of the account.

- All were in favour and it was **resolved** that the clerk would circulate the forms for signature.
- 98-11/15.3 To consider the council's responsibilities for staff pensions and automatic enrolment. The parish council is required to make a declaration of compliance to the Pensions Regulator by 01 December 2015. Further to the previous meeting, the clerk has spent considerable time researching options for auto-enrolment. Councillors had been provided with details of the "Nest" and "Salvus" schemes and the clerk outlined both. She explained that very little strategic advice or guidance has been offered to local councils and that clerks are working in isolation to address this complex issue. Councillors were uncomfortable in making a decision based on limited knowledge and experience. The clerk advised that Goddard Perry, the providers of the "Salvus" scheme have a thirty year history and provide pensions for companies such as Heinz and Philips. Although they have a £300 set-up fee, their management costs (0.6 % + £1 per enrolled employee per month) is less than "Nest" at 2.1%). Nest is a new government initiative which has been established for the purpose of auto-enrolment but it has been subject to unfavourable press reports regarding complex data transfer and administrative processes. The clerk explained that she had spoken to an advisor from "Salvus" who had assured her that technical support would be available (and that is why they charge an initial set-up fee); and that data transfer is achieved through an Excel based software package. Councillor Smith asked whether the council would be required to make decisions regarding the investment portfolio. The clerk did not believe that this was the case and that the software is purely for the calculation of contributions and the transfer of data. Councillor Singleton proposed that the council adopts the "Salvus" scheme. Councillor Smith seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.
- The legal minimum employer pension contribution rate is 1% in 2016/2017; 2% in 2017/018; and 3% in subsequent years but individual employers are required to consider their commitment to employees. Further to discussion, Councillor Smith proposed that Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council commits to a fixed contribution rate of 5% to all employees. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The clerk agreed to update the budget and to prepare the declaration of compliance.
- 98-11/15.4 To consider a recommendation from the finance working party regarding budget requirements for 2016/2017 and beyond; and for the precept, 2016/2017.
- The finance working party presented an extensive multi-year budget and action plan for councillors' consideration. The clerk confirmed that the working party had based their calculations on three previous years and had considered the requirements and aspirations of the portfolio responsibilities of councillors. They had also considered the council's reserves and its longer-term financial requirements such as the need to purchase land for a new cemetery and the future maintenance and repair of the chapel of rest. Councillor Paxton thanked the finance working party for its considerable commitment to this project and proposed that councillors accept the budget (£27,129.00 for 2016/2017, £38,156 for 2017/2018 (including £10,000 (which would be covered by a grant) as provision for the potential preparation of a neighbourhood plan) and £30,370 for 2018/2019). Councillor Edwards seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The finance working party recommended that the precept for 2016/2017 remains at £22,000 (a shortfall and therefore a dip into reserves of £3,179). Councillor Noble proposed that the clerk applies for a precept of £22,000. Councillor Singleton seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. Councillor Slater noted that although the council would make every effort to work within the agreed budget for 2016/2017, future years would be subject to review and were not set in stone. The multi-year budget and action plan merely provides a framework for the council's work over the coming years. The clerk confirmed that she would publish the budget in the parish newsletter, in the Ramsey and Warboys Informer and on the website.
- 98-11/15.5 To consider the clerk's application to attend SLCC training:
 "Planning De-mystified" (Brampton. November 2015. 2.5 CPD points. £145 + VAT)
 "Regional Roadshow" (Peterborough. April 2016. 2.5 CPD points. £69 + VAT)
- Councillors considered that both training opportunities would be beneficial. Councillor Singleton proposed that the council supports the clerk's applications. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal. All were in favour; and it was **resolved** to do so.
- 98-11/15.6 To consider a request for financial support from the Newsletter Committee.
- Councillors had reviewed the financial statement and projection from the newsletter committee. All agreed that the newsletter is a vital communication tool. Councillor Paxton proposed that the parish council offers £525 in keeping with previous years and commensurate with the figures provided in the financial projection. Councillor Noble seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

99-11/15 Community Led Plan:

99-11/15.1 To receive an update regarding the launch event held on 24 October.

Councillor Hopkins reflected on the excellent launch of the plan and the positive report in the Ramsey and Warboys Informer. Paper copies of the plan have been distributed to every household in the parish. The three working parties will continue to address the action plan and the CLP team will meet in the new year to review progress. Councillor Hopkins announced her decision to resign from the parish council, explaining that since beginning a new career as a teacher, she now needs to work towards a better work-life balance. Councillor Slater thanked Councillor Hopkins for her exceptional commitment over the last couple of years both to the community led plan and to the council. Councillor Hopkins' CLP legacy has provided the parish council and the community with a framework for the future. Councillor Hopkins added that she had enjoyed her time as a councillor and should a vacancy arise at a later date, she would be very interested in returning. Councillor Hopkins left the meeting at this time.

Councillor Paxton proposed that the clerk make arrangements to advertise a casual vacancy. Councillor Noble seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

The clerk reminded councillors that the Local Council Award Scheme at "Quality" and "Quality Gold" level require the parish council membership to comprise at least two thirds elected councillors i.e. 6 of the 9 positions.

99-11/15.2 To receive a formal announcement from Ramsey Windfarm Community Benefit Fund regarding the parish council's application for funding to support the work of the Communications Working Party.

The total bid amounted to £2,915. Councillors were very pleased to learn that the bid has been successful and £3,000 will be awarded to the parish council for the following projects:

Re-location of parish council noticeboards (St. Peter's Churchyard & Great Raveley)	£545
Purchase of noticeboard for village hall	£110
Purchase of laptop, external drive, case, mouse, software for the newsletter editorial team.	£610
Colour printing of newsletter pages	£588
Provision of ADSL, WiFi, and installation of additional power socket in the village hall.	£572
Digital projector & cradle for the village hall.	£490

Councillor Edwards proposed that councillors authorise the clerk to liaise with the village hall and newsletter committees; and with Andy Davis to facilitate completion of the work once the funds have been received. Councillor Smith seconded the proposal. All agreed that the additional £85 would allow for a little flexibility for each element of the project and that when all costs have been incurred and the projects completed, any excess funds be awarded to the newsletter committee for ongoing costs. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The clerk will present all invoices for authorisation by the parish council at its monthly meetings and she will prepare a separate financial statement to account for the grant.

100-11/15 To consider the award of a new grass cutting contract (to take effect from spring 2016).

Councillors reviewed three quotations. One was significantly more expensive. All agreed that Andy Davis has (within the council's budgetary restraints) kept the parish tidy and well maintained. All agreed that they would prefer to support a local contractor with strong connections to the community and that there was no need to make changes for the sake of it. Councillors and the clerk have been appreciative of Mr Davis' flexibility and his positive working relationship with the council. Councillor Singleton proposed that the council accept Mr Davis' quotation for a three-year contract. Councillor Perkins seconded the proposal. All agreed that Councillor Edwards should have the authority to spend an additional maximum of £100 per annum on parish maintenance should the need arise. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

101-11/15 To consider the adoption of the following policies and procedures:

- 101-11/15.1 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
- 101-11/15.2 Equal Opportunities Policy
- 101-11/15.3 Grant Awarding Policy
- 101-11/15.4 Community Engagement Policy
- 101-11/15.5 Statement of Intent: Training of staff and members
- 101-11/15.6 Management of Records Policy



Councillor Smith suggested to councillors that each of the above policies had been produced to guide councillors and to ensure that decisions are sound and based on proper procedure. He proposed adoption of all of the above. Councillor Paxton seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

The clerk noted that adoption of these policies fulfils the requirements of the Local Council Award Scheme and that the council now has a complete set of up-to-date policies and procedures.

102-11/15 Correspondence and Communications.

- 102-11/15.1 Renewed concerns from a parishioner regarding commercial activity on Upwood Airfield. The clerk has spoken with the parishioner and advised making contact with Bury Parish Council and the District Council.
- 102-11/15.2 An invitation from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the "Community Gritting Scheme". Councillor Edwards agreed to investigate this initiative.
- 102-11/15.3 A request for financial support from East Anglian Air Ambulance. The letter received was not personal to this parish council but a general request. All agreed that financial support through section 137 is legitimate; and that the air ambulance is a very worthy cause, potentially of benefit to all. However, in light of the county council budget cuts and the climate of austerity it was decided that the parish council should focus specifically on the needs of the immediate community at this time.
- 102-11/15.4 An invitation from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the supply of Winter Health Information Packs. Councillor Tew provided packs at the CLP launch and local groups such as "Meet and Munch" will ensure that packs are distributed to those who would find them helpful.
- 102-11/15.5 Guidance Notes from Huntingdonshire District Council: Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 102-11/15.6 Transparency Act: Funding Opportunity. Funding is available to support compliance with the new legislation. Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council is better equipped than most to deal with this initiative but the clerk has asked the webmasters if funding for equipment or training would help them in enabling to the council to fulfil its responsibilities.
- 102-11/15.7 An invitation to consider the "Timebank" initiative. All agreed that "Timebank" is a positive initiative and that it could be a valuable framework for community resilience. Councillors agreed that they would like to revisit this at a later date.
- 102-11/15.8 Notification of Huntingdonshire District Council's review of its electoral arrangements (see <https://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/forms/elections/electionReview.html>).
- 102-11/15.9 Verbal concerns expressed regarding the effectiveness of the street light at the junction with Thatchers Close. This issue has been reported to the County Council and the parish council is waiting for a response.
- 102-11/15.10 Concerns regarding the facilitation of a speed and traffic survey near Upwood Primary School. The Roads and Road Safety Working Party together with the County Council Highways team, District Councillor Robin Howe, County Councillor Michael Tew and Shailesh Vara, MP have expressed concerns regarding the reduction from 60mph to 40mph within 50m of the entrance to Upwood Primary School. The installation of cameras has been dismissed as there are no suitable lamp posts for their installation. A suggestion had been received that the parish council apply for the installation of pressure point strips to gather data on the speed of traffic along this stretch of road. Councillors debated this proposal and decided that Community Speedwatch be asked to conduct a survey in the first instance with a view to asking for pressure strips at a later date. Councillor Noble confirmed that she is a Community Speedwatch volunteer and that she would make the necessary arrangements.
- 102-11/15.11 Notification regarding a proposal from Huntingdonshire District Council to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)
- 102-11/15.12 Cambridgeshire County Council update on riparian responsibilities for flood risk.
- 102-11/15.13 Cambridgeshire County Council briefing regarding budget proposals.
Full details can be seen at the following:
<http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/committee-document.aspx/committees-new/general-purposes/2015-10-20/Reports/9920/151020-6-Appendix.doc>
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/challenge
- 102-11/15.4 Concerns from a commercial land tenant regarding the increased rents for 2015/2016.



Councillor Perkins reminded members that the council has gradually increased the rent on its agricultural land over the last three years to bring it to a level commensurate with commercial market value. He suggested that as the price of commodities had collapsed since the decision to increase the rents in March 2015, the parish council may wish to review its decision. He agreed that the resolution made in March was reasonable and reflected market value at that time. Councillors agreed that the parish council has a duty to optimise its assets on behalf of all the community and that although sympathetic to the farming community at this time, the rents have historically been low and that the resolution made in March for this financial year should remain in place. All agreed that that the council should continue to review rents on an annual basis.

103-11/15 To receive verbal reports from Parish Councillors on matters arising from their portfolio responsibilities.

No decisions can be made under this item.

Councillor Noble confirmed that she has been in contact with Upwood Primary School with regard to visiting its School Council. A date has yet to be confirmed.

Councillor Slater confirmed that the Local Highway Initiative bid specifically to address traffic calming in Great Raveley has been submitted.

104-11/15 Matters for future consideration.

No decisions can be made under this item.

Councillor Paxton expressed concerns for the increasing volume of large lorries moving through the parish and asked for this to be raised as an agenda item at the next meeting.

105-11/15 Date of next meeting: 07 December 2015, Upwood Village Hall, 7:00pm

Meeting Closed: 9:20pm

Gandh Slater
8/12/2015.