

UPTON BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on
Thursday 13th July 2023 at 18.00 at Millennium Hall, Upton Bishop

Present

Councillors: Mark Rusby (in the Chair), Paul Newman, Michael Wallace, Andrew Parr, Keith Cornwall and Mark Shuttlewood

In attendance

Clerk Helen Tinson – on behalf of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils); and 12 members of the public.

1. Consideration to access HALC Clerk Cover for the meeting:

It was RESOLVED: to access HALC's CiLCA qualified Clerk Cover for the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Mike Tyers and Karl Lumsden and Ward Cllr Barry Durkin.

3. Declarations of interest & written dispensation requests: Cllr Paul Newman declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 (website). Cllr Michael Wallace declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6.5.4 (Millennium Hall hire).

4. Minutes:

4.1. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 15th May 2023:

It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair. 1 member abstained from voting.

5. Public Participation Open Session:

5.1. Ward Councillors Report: It was noted that the report has been circulated to members and is available to download on the Parish Council website: www.uptonbishop.gov.uk.

5.2. Representation from Members of the Public:

5.2.1. A query was raised concerning the current irregularity of meetings. The Chairman confirmed that the aim is to continue meeting at 19:00hrs on the first Tuesday of every other month but sometimes meetings had to be changed due to unavailability of people or venue, or to make a timely comment on a planning application.

6. Finance:

The Chairman reminded members that the need to update Policies and Procedures had been discussed at previous meeting (7th February 2023, minute reference 08/2023 item 10 Policies and Procedures) and that the process of updating policies has been started and will be completed with the input of the new Clerk once in position. However, the external audit requires some documents to be updated now and therefore members were asked to consider the following policies:

6.1. Updated List of Councillor Responsibilities: It was reported that Cllr Mike Tyers has been removed as a bank signatory in order to independently check internal controls. Cllr Keith Cornwall queried the legality of the Chairman carrying out Clerk duties. The Chairman advised that advice had been sought from Herefordshire Council's Legal Department and Monitoring Officer. It was recognised that the council is currently in exceptional circumstances and whilst it was agreed it is not best practice, it was confirmed that is not illegal for the Chairman to cover the duties of the clerk until a new clerk has been recruited. The Chairman reminded members that it was only possible to commence the recruitment of a new clerk in May (15th May 2023, minute reference 18/2023 item 12 Recruitment) but it is understood that expressions of interest have already been received.

It was RESOLVED: to adopt the updated list of Councillor Responsibilities. 5 in favour, 1 object.

6.2. Reserve's Policy: Members received and considered the draft Reserves Policy.

It was RESOLVED: to adopt the Reserves Policy. 5 in favour, 1 object.

6.3. Risk Management Policy: Members received and considered the draft Risk Management Policy.

It was RESOLVED: to adopt the Risk Management Policy. 5 in favour, 1 object.

6.4. Risk Assessment: Members received and considered the updated Risk Register.

It was RESOLVED: to adopt the Risk Register. 5 in favour, 1 object.

6.5. Payments:

It was NOTED: that the following payment will be taken by Direct Debit:

6.5.1. Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), £1719.13

It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:

6.5.2. Wayne Reed, Lengthsman - June, £400.00

6.5.3. HALC, Clerk Cover (3/5/23 and 15/5/23), £558.24 inc VAT

6.5.4. Millennium Hall, Meeting Room Hire (April/May/June), £80.00. Cllr Wallace abstained from voting in accordance with his declaration of interest.

7. Planning:

Members considered responding to the following applications for determination by Herefordshire Council:

7.1. 231861: Old Gore Crossroads, Hereford. Removal of approximately 50m of mature hedgerow to facilitate sufficient forward visibility to new traffic signal heads.

Concerns were raised about the loss of an established hedgerow which provides a valuable biodiverse habitat within the parish. Further concerns were raised about whether the complete loss of the hedgerow was necessary from a traffic perspective and members wished to suggest that a trim (to the normal requirements for a hedgerow) would facilitate sufficient visibility.

It was unanimously RESOLVED: to OBJECT to the application.

7.2. 231698: Land at Bouldon, Upton Bishop, HR9 7UD. Replacement dwelling and access alterations and re-cladding / new windows & doors to the existing outbuilding.

No objections were raised.

It was unanimously RESOLVED: to SUPPORT the application.

8. Footpaths:

Members received a report from the Parish Footpaths Officer:

8.1. A plan has been prepared for the installation of gates to replace stiles as part of the AONB project to improve access which is expected to proceed through the summer and into the autumn. Although disjointed for a number of reasons, it is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year.

8.2. Some general tidying work on parish footpaths has been carried out.

9. Highways:

Members received an update and agreed actions as required:

9.1. £125,000 Traffic Calming Project: BBLP engineers have completed site survey work at all three proposed sites. They are currently developing the outline plans which will go to internal review for validation and then costing.

9.2. Lengthsman: The Lengthsman has carried out works during June (as per invoice approved) and during August plans to attend to ditching work best carried out in dry weather, and safety work to cut back overgrowth on tight bends C & U roads.

9.3. Lengthsman Funding 2023/24: The Acting Clerk informed members that they are eligible to apply to Herefordshire Council via BBLP for grant funding for Lengthsman works as part of a 5-year funded scheme. Grants of £140 per km of C and U roads are available as well as further matched funding on a 50/50 basis up to the total cost of the eligible grant.

It was unanimously RESOLVED: to apply for the grant funding of £140 per km of C and U roads within the parish.

It was unanimously RESOLVED: to apply for match funding to the value of the Lengthsman's budget for the current year.

It was unanimously RESOLVED: to use the agreed Lengthsman's contract to form the basis of the work proposed for the grant.

10. Website:

Members received a report noting recent events that have taken place in the parish together with information about forthcoming events. Parishioners were encouraged to regularly check for parish information as upcoming events are now posted on the front page of the website. There was a discussion on the future of twitter posts following the announcement that Tweetdeck (the platform for managing multiple posts) will only be available for users who pay an annual fee.

It was RESOLVED: not to spend Parish Council funds for the use of Twitter. The website volunteer will report back to the Parish Council if management of the Twitter page becomes difficult. Cllr Paul Newman refrained from voting in accordance with his declaration of interest.

A query was raised about the new clerk's proposed involvement with the website. The Chairman reminded members that this was discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 15th May 2023 (minute reference 17/2023 item 10.2) and it was confirmed that the new clerk will manage the Parish Council specific element of the website which it is understood is manageable within the hours provided. The village information will continue to be maintained by a local volunteer.

11. Items for the next Agenda: Members raised the following items for the next agenda:

11.1. Finance Report Q1

22/2023

- 11.2. Update on Traffic Calming Scheme
- 11.3. Update on Clerk Recruitment

- 11.4. Website Report

12. Date of the Next Meeting:

- 12.1. TBC but anticipated: Tuesday 5th September 2023, 7pm, Millennium Hall, Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

The meeting closed at 6.53pm.

SIGNED *M R Rusby* DATE *5 Sep 23*