

UPTON BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of the Upton Bishop Parish Council held on Tuesday 25th June 2024 at 7pm in the Upton Bishop Millennium Hall

Present

Councillors: Mark Rusby (Chairman), Mike Tyers (Vice Chair), Keith Cornwall, Vicki Eldridge, Michael Wallace

In attendance:

Andrée Mitchell (Clerk/RFO)

Public: 9

The meeting opened at 7:05pm.

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Paul Newman, Andy Parr, and Guy Cooper for work and holiday reasons.

2. To receive any declarations of interest or written applications for dispensation from Councillors on agenda items

There were none.

3. To consider, approve and sign the minutes of The Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2024

It was RESOLVED that the minutes were a true and proper record of the meeting and that Cllr Cornwall's first name be amended on the minutes from Robert to Keith. The minutes were signed by the chairman.

4. Public Question Time

4.1. To receive representations from members of the public

Designated maximum period of 15 minutes to accommodate members of the public who may wish to either raise relevant issues or ask the Parish Council questions

A member of the public queried the attendance record of a councillor and the co-option process. The Chairman explained the process for co-option undertaken by the Parish Council.

It was NOTED that there is a legal requirement a councillor to attend a meeting of the council within six months of the last attendance.

Post-meeting note: the relevant legislation is detailed in The Local Government Act 1972 Section 85, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/85> at the time of writing.

Cllr Tyers gave a report on behalf of the Millennium Village Hall (see Appendix A).

It was RESOLVED to include the Village Hall as a regular agenda item.

4.2. The Chairman donated the portrait of the King to the Millennium Village Hall on behalf of the Parish Council.

Signed by the Chairman: *Cllr Mark Rusby*

Dated: *3rd September 2024.*

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4.3. Ward Councillors report

Cllr Durkin was not present. Any report received will be put up onto the website.

5. Planning

5.1. To Comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:

5.1.1. 240214 - Stables at Upton Court, Upton Bishop, Herefordshire, HR9 7UN – Proposed conversion of existing stables into farm workers accommodation on the ground floor with a farm office on the upstairs. Application type: Planning Permission.

It was RESOLVED to SUPPORT the application 240214 with no comments.

5.1.2. 241275 - Stables at Upton Court, Upton Bishop, Herefordshire, HR9 7UN – Proposed conversion of existing stables into farm workers accommodation on the ground floor with a farm office on the upstairs. Application type: Listed Building Consent.

It was RESOLVED to SUPPORT the application 240275 with no comments.

6. Finance

6.1. To receive the most recent finance report and bank reconciliation

6.2. To consider the following invoices for payment

6.2.1. Clerk's salary – April, May & June 2024 as per agreed contract

6.2.2. HMRC – PAYE for April (£104.00), May (104.20) & June 2024 (£104.00) – totalling £312.20

6.2.3. Wayne Read – Lengthsman work April 2024 Road signs & general maintenance - £432.00 (no VAT)

6.2.4. Wayne Read – Lengthsman work May 2024 Grass cutting, general maintenance, grips & gulleys - £432.00 (no VAT)

It was RESOLVED to approve all the above payments.

6.3. To consider the payment of regular commitments between meetings to meet contractual and legislative deadlines.

It was RESOLVED to make regular payments between meetings to meet contractual and legislative deadlines.

6.4. To consider the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/2024

The Clerk/RFO presented the following AGAR 2023/24 items to councillors with reference to the National Association of Local Council's "Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide 2023."

6.4.1. To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/2024

Councillors received and **NOTED** the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2023/24.

It was NOTED that the council has recently appointed a Clerk/RFO and that systems would be further developed to meet the internal control objectives and recommendations during the year.

Signed by the Chairman: *Cllr Mark Rusby*

Dated: *3rd September 2024.*

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- 6.4.2. To consider the findings of the annual Internal Audit Report 2023/2024 and agree actions to address any identified areas for improvement.

Councillors received and **NOTED** the Internal Audit Report for 2023/24.
Five recommendations were **NOTED**.

It was RESOLVED to accept the recommendations and document the agreed actions to implement the audit recommendations and monitor them regularly at meetings during the year.

- 6.4.3. To consider and approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024.

It was NOTED that there were three areas in which the council has been unable to fully meet the requirement for a yes answer.

It was NOTED that the council had made every effort to be transparent within legal constraints.

It was NOTED that the independence of internal audit had been considered on appointment and that measures were in place to ensure independence of the audit service provided through HALC. And that the procurement of Internal Audit services for the current year will consider any risk of perceived non-independence including the use of a generic signature.

It was NOTED that all transactions are listed in the cashbook.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24. The statement was duly signed.

- 6.4.4. To consider any NO responses on Section 1 – and agree actions to address these areas.

It was RESOLVED to document the reasons for the NO responses on the Annual Governance Statement and agreed actions and monitor them regularly at meetings during the year.

- 6.4.5. To consider, approve and sign Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/2024 including the bank reconciliation 2023/24, the explanation of variances 2023/2024 and the bank reconciliation, accounts (Current & Reserve) and analysis, including cash book.

Councillors considered the Annual Accounting Statement for 2023/24 including the bank reconciliation 2023/24, explanation of significant variances 2023/24, and the bank reconciliation, accounts (Current & Reserve) and analysis, including the cash book.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Accounting Statement for 2023/24. The statement was duly signed.

- 6.4.6. To consider and approve the updated asset register and the asset risk assessment

It was NOTED that the Asset Register had been amended to reflect the actual price of the replacement laptop (less than the one that had broken and been replaced.)

It was RESOLVED to approve the updated Asset Register and the Asset Risk Assessment.

- 6.4.7. To consider, approve and set the dates of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights – 1st July to 9th August

It was RESOLVED that: the period for the Exercise of Public Rights will run from Monday 1st July 2024 through Friday 9th August.

Signed by the Chairman: *Cllr Mark Rusby*

Dated: *3rd September 2024.*

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- 6.5. To consider the appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2024/2025

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk/RFO will investigate options for appointment of an Internal Auditor for financial year 2024/25.

It was RESOLVED with one abstention that a mid-year review of the council's systems, processes and procedures should be undertaken. And that the Clerk/RFO will investigate options available and cost and report back to the council.

- 6.6. To consider continuing to use the "payments and receipts" accounting method for 2024/2025

It was RESOLVED that the council would continue to use the "payments and receipts" accounting method.

- 6.7. To consider adoption of the NALC model financial regulations

It was NOTED that the council's Financial Regulations are to be reviewed in the light of the new NALC Financial Regulations 2024.

It was RESOLVED that in the interim the current financial regulations are to be amended to remove named individuals and reflect the appointment of the new Clerk who is also the Responsible Finance Officer. And to remove the requirement for credit checks for signatories for the bank accounts.

7. Donations & Grants

- 7.1. To consider a request for a donation to the Lego Club

It was NOTED that the funding amount for Section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for 2024–2025 is £10.81 per elector for local councils in England.

It was NOTED that the Lego Club has been successful with many families taking part and that the grant request for £100 toward second hand Lego and associated benefit to the parish is commensurate with the provisions of Section 137.

It was RESOLVED to award the grant of £100 to the Lego Club

- 7.2. To consider a request for a grant towards replacement of one shed to the Upton Bishop Allotment Association.

It was NOTED that the Allotment Association Constitution states that the membership of the association shall consist of members who live or work within the parishes of Upton Bishop, Brampton Abbots or Foy, or such persons whose application of the membership is approved by the committee. And that there are currently 11 allotments.

It was NOTED that the contract with the association states that sheds must be maintained as provided by the Council, though fair wear and tear would be expected.

It was RESOLVED that the grant could not be awarded towards replacement of a shed as the likely benefit would not be commensurate with making a grant or donation under the provisions of Section 137 spending

It was RESOLVED that the meeting be extended beyond two hours duration should it be necessary, to enable the full agenda to be considered.

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8. Lengthsman

- 8.1. To consider an update on works carried out by the Lengthsman

It was reported that:

- The lengthsman work continues as planned out for this year.
- In April and May the focus had been on drainage, road signage visibility and enhancing the work from the Traffic Calming installations.
- The work carried out by the lengthsman did much to alleviate the recent storm runoff with some flooding in Ruddle Lane. However, there was a good deal of silt and debris build up on the lane and in drainage grips. The lengthsman carried out some immediate action work to clear the grips. He is planned this week to return to tidy up the remaining debris.
- The lengthsman had met with the footpath officer to consider and plan future footpath infrastructure projects.

- 8.2. To consider work to be carried out by the lengthsman

It was RESOLVED that the focus of the work for the lengthsman in June, July and August will be general maintenance, grass and vegetation cutting, some weed control, tidy of grips and gullies and any required work on street furniture. The priority being to enhance safety such as the clearance of vegetation to expose critical road signage and reduce areas of water build up on the highway.

It was RESOLVED to instruct the lengthsman to mow the grass on the triangle of land opposite the Moody Cow on the Upton Crews side.

- 8.3. To note the submission of the lengthsman grant papers to Hereford Council and the amended grant available.

It was NOTED that the lengthsman contract would be submitted to Herefordshire Council with the updated match funding numbers reflecting the £60 per/km match funding amount.

It was NOTED that the lengthsman programme would continue as planned.

- 8.4. To receive an update on drainage grant funding and consider actions arising from this

It was NOTED that there had been no further update from Herefordshire council on drainage grant funding, however it is anticipated that proposals will need to be fully worked up and costed once funding becomes available.

9. Footpaths

- 9.1. To receive an update from the Footpath's Officer and consider actions arising from this

A statement prepared by the footpaths officer was read out covering both items 9.1 and 9.2

- 9.2. To consider application for Herefordshire Council PROW grant funding

It was reported that:

- The footpaths officer met with the parish lengthsman to talk through potential future construction and maintenance plans of the parish footpath infrastructure.
- Herefordshire Council have made available some Public Rights of Way Grant Funding, namely £250,000 to Herefordshire Parish and Town Councils (147). The funding is available

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for replacement of minor assets such as stiles, fingerposts & gates as well as minor maintenance work.

- Councils are required to submit expressions of interest detailing any proposed works and costings. Allocation of funding will follow and be decided on a variety of factors.
- Four areas of work are recommended for applications: replacement of two separate flights of wooden steps on UB1 of the A449 Ledbury road; re-setting the concrete steps on UB1 opposite the phone box; and reconfiguring the steps and gate at Upper Foxhall Court.

It was RESOLVED that the footpath officer's recommendations for applications be approved and the applications submitted to Herefordshire Council for PRoW grant funding.

10. Highways

- 10.1. To consider road issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty

It was NOTED that there are a number of areas where there are potholes and other issues and that Councillors and parishioners are encouraged to report these to Herefordshire Council using the online reporting tool which can be accessed through:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road>

It was NOTED that the traffic calming scheme has two items still outstanding and awaiting reply.

It was NOTED that Cllr Cornwall had kindly offered to survey the drains in the parish where problems with full drains are occurring and produce report for submission to Herefordshire Council.

- 10.2. To consider the verges to be submitted to Balfour Beatty as only requiring one cut this year.
None.

It was NOTED that this item was no longer required.

11. To consider items for the next meeting – No discussion

The following items to be considered for the next meeting: Village Hall update, financial regulations, quarterly financial reporting

12. Date of next scheduled meeting – Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at the Millennium Hall, Upton Bishop

The meeting closed at 8:08 pm.

Signed by the Chairman: *Cllr Mark Rusby*

Dated: *3rd September 2024.*