



Upavon Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 12th March 2025 7pm

Village Hall, Andover Road, Upavon

MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm

25/12	Absence apologies and Declaration of Interests (CLB) Present: Chairman Charles Leigh-Bennett (CLB), Vice-Chairman Andrew Flack (AF), Anthony Gallagher (AG), Rebecca Lamb (RL), Phil Garside (PG), Tom Bradshaw (TB), Rosalind Ayling (RA), Bee Barff Clerk (BB), Paul Oatway WCC (PO), Lesley Dolan Village Hall Committee and 9 members of the public. Apologies: Apologies were received from Grant Ingleton Lt Col (GI).	
25/13	Minutes of previous meeting (CLB) The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 15 th January 2025 were approved and signed as a true copy by the Chairman. (CLB).	
25/14	General Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Updates from PO - PO provided an update on the WC 2025/26 budget, which stands at £527 million - a £37 million increase. While the government suggested a 5% rise, WC opted for a 4.5% increase, maintaining financial stability with healthy reserves. PO expressed disappointment over a £7 million reduction in the rural services grant, redirected to urban areas, mainly in the Midlands. Budget allocations include £194 million for adult care, £75 million for families and children, £43 million for highways, £49 million for environment and waste, £38 million for education, £28 million for special needs, and £2.1 million for bus service improvements. PO acknowledged ongoing A345 and A342 concerns and supports RL's point on the Whistledown footpath, committing to ask Mark Stansby to revisit the site for potential WC adoption. AG requested an update on bridge support, as the engineer has yet to visit, and PO will follow up.II. Trenchard Lines – no updatesIII. Village Hall – The Village Hall roof has been successfully repaired with the help of an Area Board grant. The next projects will focus on renovating the kitchen and replacing the fire exit door. A new treasurer will be introduced as the long-standing treasurer is stepping down after eight years. New social activities for 2025 will be planned soon.	
25/15	Recruitment of Councillors CLB emphasised that UPC is continuing to welcome applications from prospective new councillors, especially with the current Chairman's retirement at the end of this term. Potential candidates must submit their	

	forms to the election office by 2nd April, as the new Parish Council will commence in May 2025.	
25/16	<p>Finance</p> <p>Bank reconciliation on 7th March 2025 has been shared and approved. No cheques to sign. BB mentioned that following discussions in the last meeting regarding the increase of the Village Hall donation from £250 to £1,000, councillors considered making adjustments to other donations. It was suggested that donations to Citizens Advice and Link be discontinued and that the Royal British Legion donation be reduced by £50. All councillors agreed, and these changes will be reflected in the 2025/2026 budget. RL suggested that, in the future, information should be provided on how much money per household in Upavon is allocated to donations and other properties. BB mentioned that this is normally covered in the Chairman's report at the May meeting each year.</p>	
25/17	<p>Councillor updates of work undertaken since last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. SIDs police reporting (AF) AF reported ongoing communication with the police to improve information flow and enforcement officer visits. AG enquired about the SID near Trenchard Lines, and AF clarified that it belongs to Trenchard Lines and is their responsibility. However, he is still requesting access to the data from it to share with the police. John Cabra also mentioned that the SID batteries, purchased in 2019, are due for replacement. II. Rights of Way & Landmarc update (AG/CLB) Andover Road has been cleared, but the fly-tipping issue around specific properties remains unresolved and is under investigation by Wiltshire Council. Fly-tipping reports can only be submitted via the My Wilts app, which has already been done. AG has direct contact with the relevant officer at Wiltshire Council and will follow up if the issue is not resolved soon. All other registered pathways are clear. III. Community Centre / Blue bus CLB reported that the Blue Bus has successfully provided entertainment for the village kids over the past four years. However, he emphasised that this is only a temporary solution, and there is a need to secure funding to establish a Community Centre. The potential seed money of £20,000 from CIL, which was originally ringfenced for the Community Centre project, has been relocated to fund the riverside park pathways. CLB also informed the council that the development of the Old School site has been postponed until 2030 by Wiltshire Council. This is a disappointment, as the Community Centre project could have been linked with the Old School site development. AF mentioned that the Blue Bus was highly praised at the Area Board meeting, and a grant has been approved to support the Blue Bus in Upavon. Lesley also mentioned that the Village Hall is an ideal location for various occasions and entertainment for the kids, including hosting the Blue Bus visits, with the added benefit of parking available next to the hall. 	
25/18	Issues for discussion	

	<p>I. WC Rural Play area and land transfers The legal paperwork for the transfer is still in progress. Once finalised, we will move forward with planning. PG mentioned that the boundary of Alexander Field was incorrectly stated in the legal documents and emphasised that this must be corrected before proceeding further.</p> <p>II. Village Hall donation It was agreed at the last meeting that the annual donation from UPC to the Village Hall would be increased from £250 to £1,000. The financial solution for this has been confirmed and is covered above.</p> <p>III. Rushall pathway CLB and a few councillors met with Colin Gale, Chairman of Rushall Parish Council, to discuss the pathway linking Whistledown to Rushall. There is currently a gap between the path from Rushall and the end of the Upavon boundary. Colin is actively exploring ways to fund the completion of this path. While Upavon is happy to support the idea, AG pointed out that the proposed path lies outside of Upavon Parish land, meaning no financial support will be available from the Parish Council. Additionally, since the Whistledown path is not owned by the Parish Council, there are concerns about the quality and ongoing maintenance of the path if it is connected. RL is in the process of writing letters to Wiltshire Council regarding the responsibility for the Whistle down paths, as discussed in the previous meeting.</p> <p>IV. Widening of the A342 RL raised the issue of the A342, requesting enforcement of landscaping conditions, including replacing dead trees and plants. She also called for the relocation and improvement of the footpath along the A342 due to safety and maintenance concerns. RL will write a letter to WC regarding these matters. AF mentioned that this issue was raised at the LHFIG meeting and will be discussed again.</p>	
25/19	<p>Clerk's Report & Correspondence BB has been working on the VAT return online. This process is meant to be straightforward; however, the login details have been lost over the past two years due to changes in clerks. With the generous help of Donal Connon, previous VAT returns were done manually, which required significant paperwork and time. BB is still working on resolving the issue with HMRC, but if it is not resolved in time, the return will be submitted manually this year.</p> <p>BB and AG had a meeting with the Emergency Contact Hub officer. An Emergency Contact Hub is a place for communities to support one another in an emergency. Primarily, these hubs are designed for community members to help themselves but also have a direct link to emergency services in the local area. This scheme will be invaluable in emergencies, serving as a key point of contact for local authorities and highways teams to identify and resolve issues efficiently. UPC is in the process of setting up the hub and updating Upavon's outdated emergency plan, with further details to be provided in due course.</p> <p>BB also mentioned that the local election notice has been published. The current Parish Council will conclude its term, and a new Parish Council will be formed at the May meeting. Anyone interested in joining Upavon</p>	

	Parish Council for the next four years should check the notice board or website for details. Nomination papers must be submitted to the office by 4:00 pm on Wednesday, 2nd April.	
25/20	Reports from other bodies – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) AF reported that the Riverside Park pathway will be set on the west side of the A345, 1.5m wide, with the SID and telegraph post being moved, and the area resurfaced. The initial plan is in place, with a total cost of just over £44K. UPC has been asked to contribute £740 towards a Topo survey (total £1,850), with LHFIG funding the remaining £1,110. AF also mentioned that the North Newnton pathway is being extended to connect Rushall Road to the bus stops on the A345 along Upavon Road. II. Pewsey Community Area Partnership (PCAP) - none III. Pewsey Area Board - AF attended, covered above, 25/17. 	
25/21	Questions and queries from the public Lesley requested that financial statements be posted more frequently on the notice board and website to encourage community involvement. CLB noted that while frequent updates may not always be feasible, they will be considered. AG mentioned that the village entrance gateways need updating, and BB is currently obtaining a quote from Simon, estimating £800-£1,000 per gateway while exploring cost-effective options. AF noted that this is sourced from a dedicated provider and was also discussed at the LHFIG meeting. VE Day was mentioned, and CLB suggested leaving the celebration to the local pub. A member of the public reported dead and fallen trees near the Greyflags path, and AG will investigate the responsibility for maintenance.	
25/22	Close The meeting closed at 8.39pm.	

Bee Barff
Clerk to Upavon Parish Council

21/03/2025

Dates of future meetings on 2025 all at 7pm

- Wednesday, 14th May (including the Annual Meeting)
- Wednesday, 16th July
- Wednesday, 17th September
- Wednesday, 19th November